INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST IN ROMANIA

FINAL REPORT

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President of the Commission: Elie Wiesel

Editors: Tuvia Friling,
Radu Ioanid, Mihail E. Ionescu

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Foreword

On the initiative of Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania was established on October 22, 2003. The Commission was conceived from the very beginning as an independent research body, free of any influence and political consideration. The Commission's budget and composition were approved under Government Decisions no. 227 of February 20, 2004, and no. 672 of May 5, 2004, respectively.

At the invitation of the President of Romania, Mr. Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and honorary member of the Romanian Academy, accepted the chairmanship of the Commission.

The Commission's aim was to research the facts and determine the truth about the Holocaust in Romania during World War II and the events preceding this tragedy. The results of the research by the Commission are presented in this Report, based exclusively on scientific standards.

The Commission met three times – in Washington from May 16 to May 22, 2004, in Jerusalem from September 6 to September 9, 2004, and in Bucharest from November 8 to November 13, 2004 – to evaluate the state of research and draft the Final Report. On November 11, 2004, the Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania was presented to the President of Romania.

We hope that the Commission's conclusions and recommendations will promote the education on and understanding of the Holocaust among all citizens, and particularly the youth of Romania, as well as contribute to further research on the subject.

Besides Mr. Elie Wiesel, the Commission included respected experts in history, the humanities, and the social sciences from Romania and abroad, survivors of the Holocaust, representatives of national and international Jewish and Roma organizations and representatives of the Romanian Presidency: Tuvia Friling (State Archivist of Israel), Radu Ioanid (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) and Mihail E. Ionescu (Institute for Political Defense and Military History, Bucharest) – vice-chairmen; Ioan Scurtu (Commission secretary – "Nicolae Iorga" Institute of History, Bucharest), Viorel Achim ("Nicolae Iorga" Institute of History, Bucharest), Jean Ancel (Yad Vashem, Jerusalem), Colette Avital (member of the Israeli Parliament), Andrew Baker (American Jewish Committee), Lya Benjamin (Center for the Study of Jewish History, Bucharest), Liviu Beris (Association of the Survivors of the Holocaust in Romania), Randolph Braham (City University of New York), Irina Cajal Marin (Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania), Adrian Cioflâncă ("A.D. Xenopol" Institute of History, Iaşi), Ioan Ciupercă ("Al.I. Cuza" University, Iaşi), Alexandru Elias (Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania), Alexandru Florian ("Dimitrie Cantemir" University, Bucharest), Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu (Centre de Sociologie Européenne, Paris), Hildrun Glass ("Ludwig-Maximilians" Universitaet, Munich), Menachem Hacohen (Chief Rabbi of Romania), Vasile Ionescu (Aven Amentza Roma Center), Corneliu Mihai Lungu (National Archives of Romania), Daniel S. Mariaschin (B'nai B'rith International), Victor Opaschi (Presidential Counselor), Andrei Pippidi (University of Bucharest), Ambassador Meir Rosenne (Israel), Liviu Rotman (University of Tel Aviv), Michael Shafir (Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty), Paul Shapiro (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum), William Totok (Arbeitskreis fuer Geschichte, Germany), Raphael Vago (University of Tel Aviv), George Voicu (National School for Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest), Leon Volovici (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) – members.

Speech Given by Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, at the Meeting Dedicated to the Holocaust Remembrance Day in Romania – October 12, 2004

Messrs. Presidents of the Legislative Bodies,
Your Holiness, Father Patriarch,
Your Eminence, Chief Rabbi,
Honorable religious leaders,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Ambassadors,
Dear guests,

Having emerged from the darkness of totalitarianism, Romania has embarked on a long and not so easy road to the recovery of memory and the assumption of responsibility, in keeping with the moral and political values grounding its new status as a democratic country, a dignified member of the Euro-Atlantic community.

Upon deciding to establish a "Holocaust Remembrance Day," we intended to bring pious homage to all those who suffered as a result of the discriminatory, anti-Semitic and racist policies promoted by the Romanian state in a troubled moment of our national history. This dark chapter in our recent past, when the Romanian Jews became victims of the tragedy of the Holocaust, must not be forgotten or minimized. While paying homage to the dead or deported, to those forced to leave the country, to those deprived of their belongings, of their rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, and treated like inferior beings, we search our conscience and try to understand the causes and consequences of our abdication of the values and traditions of our people, of the obligations assumed affer the Great Union of 1918.

A critical evaluation of the past is always necessary, so as not to forget it, but also to set with clarity the landmarks of our effort to build ourselves, as part of constructing the future of our nation. Such remembrance is all the more appropriate when it refers to tragic events befallen for so long by an unmotivated silence.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The outbreak of World War II found Romania unprepared to face its multiple challenges. Under the shield of neutrality, proclaimed almost immediately, the Romanian leadership of the time hoped to be able to prevent the country's involvement in a conflict that was foreign to us and could result in many losses and no gains.

However, the evolution of events brought Romania into the whirl of the war much sooner than expected. In June 1940, under an agreement with Germany, based on the

Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, the USSR gave Romania an ultimatum, whereby it forced our country, under the threat of hostilities, to surrender Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Then, on August 30, 1940, under the Vienna Dictate, Germany and Italy forced Romania to surrender Northern Transylvania to Hungary.

Against this background of profound national tragedy, following a coup, a radical change of political regime took place in Romania. General Ion Antonescu came to power, and in a first stage (from September 1940 to January 1941) he relied on the political force of the Legionary movement – an extremist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic, antidemocratic, and pro-Nazi party. In November 1940 Romania joined the Axis, rallying to the group of states dominated by Hitler's Germany. Anti-Semitism and the crusade against Bolshevism gradually became the main topics of the official propaganda, which attempted to manipulate public opinion.

Germany's war against the USSR, launched in June 1941, which Ion Antonescu joined from the very beginning based on the need to recover the territories abducted by the Soviet Union a year before, enforced this obedience to the political aims and ideological orientations of Hitler's Germany.

Pressure from the pro-fascist organizations in the country, as well as from Hitler's Germany and fascist Italy, led to the promotion of anti-Semitism as a state policy as early as the time of the Goga-Cuza government (December 1937 – February 1938); but it was on August 8, 1940, under the royal dictatorship of Carol II, that a systematic policy of excluding Jews from the life of Romanian society began.

After the instauration of the Antonescu-Legionary dictatorship in September 1940, the anti-Semitic policy became extremely harsh: laws were adopted that excluded Jews from schools and universities, bars and theatres, the army and the liberal professions; commissions for Romanianization took over Jewish properties; forced labor was imposed on the males of the Jewish population.

During the Legionary rebellion of January 1941, a genuine pogrom took place, in which 120 Jews were killed. After the Legionnaires' removal from power, the anti-Semitic policy continued at even higher levels. Of the most serious events we mention the pogrom of Iaşi, in June 1941, when thousands of Jews perished.

A significant aspect, practically the most important chapter of the Holocaust in Romania, refers to deportations. Initially, the regime led by Ion Antonescu planned the deportation of all citizens of Jewish origin from Bessarabia and Bukovina, following that later on, the citizens of Jewish origin from other areas of the country would be subjected to the same policy. The place chosen for deportation was Transnistria, the territory between the Dniester and the Bug that came under Romanian administration.

Massive deportations started on October 9, 1941, and continued for a year. Romanian citizens, our fellow men, about 120,000 of them, were taken from their homes and embarked on true death trains or marched through rain and snow tens and hundreds of miles, across the Dniester. On the way, as well as in Transnistria, many thousands Jews died as a result of the inhuman treatment, freezing, illness, or even shooting.

In memory of these people, at the proposal of several organizations of Holocaust survivors and the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania, as well as from the consciousness of our moral duty to the memory of the Romanian Jews who had to suffer during those terrible years, the government has decided to make October 9 the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day in Romania.

Deportations were not the only component of the Holocaust. I will only mention the retaliations of October 1941 in Odessa, following the explosion of the city's Romanian Military Command. In August 1942 the Romanian side was presented with a plan prepared by the German authorities that aimed to send all the Romanian Jews to the Belzec death camp. However, this plan was never put into practice, and Antonescu decided in October 1942 to put a stop to the deportations to Transnistria.

It must be said here that the evolution of the attitude of Ion Antonescu's regime in this regard was determined by the evolution of the war. In the phase of the German victories on the Eastern front, the repression against the Jewish population reached its height, and the regime's leaders often stated that the so-called Jewish problem was almost solved. As the tides of war changed, the attitude of Ion Antonescu's regime became more nuanced, and measures were taken that limited the number of victims. This resulted in Romania being one of Germany's allies where a significant part of the Jewish population on their territory managed to survive. Moreover, many Jews from Northern Transylvania, under Horthyst occupation at the time, succeeded in saving themselves by fleeing to Romania with the help of Romanian citizens and the tacit agreement of some officials.

The terrible tragedy of the Holocaust was possible due to the complicity of top state institutions – secret services, army, police, etc. –, as well as of those who executed, often overzealously, Marshal Antonescu's orders.

On this Holocaust Remembrance Day it is also natural to mention the fact that many personalities – politicians, high priests, military officers, writers, journalists, actors, other public figures – intervened with the state authorities to cancel, or at least to ease, certain frustrating and repressive measures. Many Romanians, known or unknown, risked their freedom, and even their lives, to save their Jewish fellow men from death. Those who are known are acknowledged today by the State of Israel as "Righteous among the Nations," and we are certain that many others are going to be found from now on. Recently, a Romanian priest was awarded, at a venerable age, this high distinction for his courage to help his Jewish fellow men in Transnistria. Such deeds ennoble a human being and the community to which he or she belongs. Mention must be also made of other similar acts of human solidarity in support of Jewish compatriots made by many simple Romanians, such as the Transylvanian Romanians who, as we have reminded here, helped many Jews in occupied Transylvania illegally cross the border to Romania.

We bring homage today to the resistance of the Jewish community, which knew how to organize itself so as to oppose the tragedy and ensure its existence and continuity. From the organization of its own educational system under circumstances in which young Jews were forbidden access to state schools, to continuing its specific cultural life, including the functioning of the Barasheum Theater, from the repeated interventions by the authorities to acts of revolt, from the support granted to the deportees by those who had remained in the country to actions designed to help organize the emigration of thousands of Jews to Palestine.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Commemorating for the first time the Holocaust Remembrance Day in Romania, I take the opportunity of this solemn reunion to propose that we all bow down before the memory of the victims of this tragic event, which is part of our past, just as the representatives of the religions living together in Romania have done under our administration.

According to the latest research, over 250,000 people were killed during the Holocaust in the territories under Romanian administration for the sole guilt of having been born Jews, destroying people for their origin. To these we must also add the over 12,000 citizens of Roma descent who died in Transnistria in similar circumstances.

The Holocaust was one of those serious historical issues whose approach was avoided both during the communist regime and after 1990. There were attempts to hide the facts, or even distortions of the truth. In not a few cases there was also a transfer of responsibility. The Ion Antonescu regime was credited, for instance, with having saved the approximately 400,000 Jews who were still alive at the end of the war, while the liquidation of the over 250,000 Jews of Romania and the occupied Soviet territories was turned into the responsibility of the German troops in the country and Berlin's orders.

Undoubtedly, Germany's Nazi regime bears the main responsibility for the European Holocaust. But it is Ion Antonescu's regime that is responsible for the initiation and the organization of the repressive actions and the extermination measures directed against the Jews of Romania and the territories under Romanian administration. Reality cannot, and must not, be concealed. Assumption of one's own past, with its goods and evils, is not just an exercise in honesty but also the proof of a democratic conscience, of the responsibility of the Romanian state's leadership, which, at a turning point in its history, did not manage to rise up to its essential mission, namely, to ensure the security of all its citizens, regardless of their ethnic origins.

The Holocaust tragedy has today a special significance. Such a tragedy must never be repeated, and for that, no effort is too small for the younger generations to know and understand the entire truth. This is the best way to prevent future repetition of the past's tragedies.

An international commission was established for the in-depth study of the Holocaust in Romania, which includes renowned experts led by Professor Elie Wiesel, a native of Romania and winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace. The Commission's report will be presented in a few weeks at a meeting to be held in Bucharest. The document shall provide the basis for a complete activity of future investigation into this tragic phenomenon and informing public opinion, particularly the young generation. In its turn, the Ministry of Education and Research has decided to include in the school curricula an optional course dedicated to the Holocaust in Romania. We also see with satisfaction that the press, radio, and television stations have lately devoted increasing space to this phenomenon, approaching it from objective positions.

These actions are part of a wider program that aims at knowledge of the past and the events related to the Holocaust. This program includes the adoption of legislative measures banning fascist, racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic organizations and symbols as well as the cult of persons guilty of crimes against humanity and peace. The first such measure was taken by the government in March 2002 and was met with satisfaction by the Jewish organizations and the overwhelming majority of public opinion.

Also as of 2002, the National Defense College has been organizing a course in the history of the Holocaust. All these represent the implementation of the commitments made by Romania when joining the Final Declaration of the International Forum on the Holocaust in Stockholm, a group established in 1998 at the initiative of prime minister Goran Persson, with the aim of promoting education meant to remember the tragedy of the Holocaust and stimulate the historical research of this phenomenon.

We sincerely wish to understand why, in a country like Romania, which in 1918 had managed to fulfill its destiny through the Great Union of December 1, which had taken an ascendant course of economic and social development, which had political structures and institutions compatible with the great Western democracies, and which had successfully integrated the values of the Western culture and civilization, the development of such a virulent anti-Semitic trend, which degenerated into the monstrosities of the Holocaust, was possible. The interwar Romanian anti-Semitism was the result of a democratic failure and of the refusal of the political elite and a large part of the intellectual elite to assume this failure. It also was a serious moral perversion.

When a nation suffers from a trauma of the kind suffered by Romania in the 1940s, it can lose its way in the absence of a civic spirit and a consciousness of values and moral duty. There is, however, no excuse for those who cynically and cold-bloodedly sent their fellow citizens to death, who discriminated, humiliated, and excluded them from society.

The recent past obligates us to create mechanisms and institutions designed to serve as the society's antibodies against these illnesses of the spirit that are racism, anti--Semitism, xenophobia.

This time, Romanians and Jews are on the same side of the barricade, a sign that we have learned the lesson of solidarity and mutual respect.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my opinion, the Holocaust Remembrance Day should lead, first and foremost, to a deeper knowledge of this collective tragedy. Beyond the concrete historical facts, very important are the educational aspects, the change in the perception of an event of such tragic dimensions.

This first commemoration of October 9 should mark the conscious and sincere assumption of a painful episode of our national history, which the public conscience and our collective memory must neither conceal, nor hide, nor relativize in significance.

Looking forward to the future, tenaciously pursuing the objectives that await us as members of the North-Atlantic Alliance and future members of the European Union, we have the duty to understand and assume all the moments and lessons of the past. Holocaust Remembrance Day should be a moment of reflection for all of us, an occasion to meditate on totalitarianism and its tragic consequences, on community relations and values of human solidarity, on the perenniality of democracy, legality, and the respect for the fundamental rights and liberties of citizens.

Message from Elie Wiesel, Chairman of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania

What is true about individual human beings is also true of communities. Repressed memories are dangerous for, in surfacing, they may destroy what is healthy, cheapen what is noble, undermine what is lofty.

A nation or a person may find various ways to confront their past but none to ignore it. It is this principle that has motivated you, Mr. President, to repair years of forgetfulness and face the demands of History by creating this body of scholars and witnesses, teachers and social activists. It is in their name that I have the honor to speak and present to you, the Romanian people and the entire civilized world, the report the International Presidential Commission has prepared on Romania's ambivalent but not monolithic role in the implacable and tragic events during the Holocaust years.

For my part I am indebted to its members – all eminent scholars, teachers and social activists from various countries and backgrounds – for their extraordinary efforts in analyzing that singular era with skill, talent, sensitivity, sincerity and fairness. Their endeavor, President Iliescu, will constitute an invaluable contribution to and perhaps the understanding of the history of that era, its evil aberrations as well as its heroic martyrs.

Why have so many citizens betrayed humanity, theirs and ours, in choosing to persecute, torment and murder defenseless and innocent men, women and children? Granted, Jews were not the only ones to be singled out; there were others, particularly the Roma. But remember: though not all victims were Jews, all Jews were victims – why? There were good and brave Romanians who risked their own lives and saved the honor of their nation by opposing the oppression and death of their fellow citizens – and they deserve our deepest gratitude – but why were they so few? And also, why has Romania waited so long to come to terms with its past?

All these questions, and many related others, all pertinent and related to the painful subject, have been studied and explored in depth without any particular reservation or complacency. All the relevant documents were examined, all the available testimonies investigated. When questions were ambiguous or not sufficiently clear, we said so. As we did when a difference of opinion regarding the interpretation of certain events or figures.

For us this was our sacred mission: to honor truth by remembering the dead. For them, it is too late; but not for their children – and ours.

November 11, 2004

Message of President Traian Băsescu at the Ceremony for the Commemoration of the Martyr Jews Killed on January 21-22, 1941

Today, January 20, 2005 we are paying our pious respects to those who, starting with 1941, died in the extermination acts for the only fault of being Jewish.

The pogrom started by the legionnaires in Bucharest in 1941, where 120 of our Jewish fellow citizens died is just a phase in the series of events which victimized common people, with common lives, thrown in the midst of history's storm and killed during actions that cannot possibly be ever justified by anyone.

Ethnocentricity, which in the modern age represented one of the ways used by the South-Eastern European countries to build their national identities is to this day tempting for any society that finds itself at a cross-road. And not just by chance the lack of a mature civic spirit is sometimes coexistent with the emergence of a stronger and stronger xenophobic sentiment.

Romania is no longer a society at a crossroad. Its choice of the democratic values is obvious and there is no way back. We can only support those voices, attitudes and actions that will eventually lead to the crystallization of a civic spirit which is going to be intolerant towards intolerance, which will promote the idea that people can only be judged according to what they do and not to their genetic and cultural inheritance.

I think that, under these circumstances, the practice of dialogue is more than needed, as it is benefiting everyone and it can contribute to the avoidance of all limitations and confinement.

A phenomenon at the scale and tragedy of the Holocaust cannot and must not be forgotten.

One of the objectives of my mandate will be that of fighting all xenophobic and anti-Semitic acts, of reminding everybody that there was a time when the respect for the other was only a slogan emptied of any actual meaning.

I consider that to say what happened in the past to our Jewish fellow is a duty we have towards those who lived in those times, towards the youth of this country who have to send a common message of coexistence and cultural exchange.

That is why I consider the educational process to be overwhelmingly important.

I think that the subject of the Holocaust needs to be more and more present in the Romanian schools and universities, so that the mistakes of the past will never be repeated again. The memory of the Holocaust should not be just a one day event.

There was much talk of the danger of annihilation, of uprooting that was considered to be too high a price for the contemporary human being to pay. From the point of view

of otherness, any of us need not only the feeling of belonging to some place, some past but we also need an "other" who is our equal, for us to discover ourselves as autonomous, independent individuals.

The youth who are shaping their distinctive personalities today must know their past, where they come from in order for them to know where to go from here.

I am counting on the support of institutions like the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem and the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington to consolidate together this process of molding our youth on the basis of the respect for truth and moral values.

I take this opportunity to salute every collaboration with institutions, research centers, Jewish organizations or foundations that can help us to start further such activities.

I think that such an approach is even more necessary in a country that is a unique area of Sephardic and Ashkenazi confluence, which defines its special profile among the countries that enjoyed the presence of Jewish people during the centuries.

We can take pride in our original Jewish inheritance which significantly imprinted Romanian culture and civilization. I would say that it is our duty towards our great personalities, not only those belonging to the Jewish community, but of the whole Romanian people, to reestablish the truth and to make it known by all means we have at our disposal. That is why I think that the application of the recommendations of the International Commission for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania is a decisive step in this direction.

I am sure that the remarkable progress Romania has made so far for the research, education and commemoration of the Holocaust will continue in the future.

I'm ending with the beautiful words of the traditional prayer NIZKOR (We will remember).

Background and Precursors to the Holocaust. Roots of Romanian Anti-Semitism. The League of National Christian Defense and Iron Guard Anti-Semitism. The Anti-Semitic Policies of the Goga Government and of the Royal Dictatorship

The Roots of the Romanian Anti-Semitism

The roots of Romanian anti-Semitism are intertwined with the origins of the modern Romanian state and the emergence of the rich national cultural tradition that accompanied unification of the principalities, independence, and the creation of Greater Romania. The anti-Semitism that manifested itself in Romania between the two world wars grew directly from seeds sewn at the major turning points of the country's development starting in the mid-nineteenth century. For reasons that may have differed from person to person or group to group, strong anti-Semitic currents were present in various forms and with varying intensity in the political, cultural and spiritual life of the Romanian society for most of the century that preceded the accession to power of the National Christian Party in 1937, the installation of the Royal Dictatorship in 1938, and the Antonescu – Iron Guard National Legionary State in 1940 – that is, for most of the century that culminated in the Holocaust.

The anti-Semitic actions of that succession of governments drew inspiration from the anti-Semitic themes that had entered the Romanian lexicon of ideas long before the thirties and long before the Nazi rise to influence and then to power in Germany. While each of these three governing configurations mixed the essential elements of widespread anti-Semitic concepts somewhat differently – leaning more or less heavily on certain themes, perhaps adding to native concepts notions adapted from non-Romanian anti-Semitic expression, and advocating sometimes greater and sometimes lesser violence to accomplish their goals – they all represented essential continuity with Romanian anti-Semitic ideas that had their origins in the pre-World War I era. It is true that politicians with radical anti-Semitic views achieved greater legitimacy in the public eye after Hitler's accession to power in Germany. But what was novel under the National Christian Party, during the Royal Dictatorship, and especially when control passed to the Iron Guard and Antonescu, was not the nature of the anti-Semitism they espoused, but the fact that anti-Semitism had passed from the realm of verbal expression and occasional outbursts of anti-Semitic violence by private groups or individuals to the realm of government policy and state action.

The anti-Semitic policies of the National Christian Party government, the Royal Dictatorship and the National Legionary state set the stage for far worse that was yet to come under the wartime regime of Ion Antonescu. Antonescu wanted to eliminate the

Jews of Romania through "Romanianization" (*românizare* – the deprivation of property and livelihood), deportation, and finally murder. This change was supported – or at least accepted – by the majority of the country's political, cultural, and religious elite. And little wonder. Even this adjustment in policy was within a framework of fundamental continuity with the ideas that had been an integral part of the political, intellectual, and spiritual discourse from the nineteenth-century struggle for creation of an independent Romanian state to the establishment of Greater Romania, which Antonescu and his acolytes were seeking to reestablish.

The Jewish Community of Greater Romania

The Jewish community of Greater Romania was diverse and numerous, with roots in the histories and civilizations of the Regat, of Habsburg Austria, of prewar Hungary, and of the Czarist Empire. According to the national census of 1930, there were 756,930 Jews, or 4.2 percent of the total population, in the country at that time, and there was undoubtedly some increase during the decade that followed. Jews constituted 13.6 percent of the urban population of approximately 3,632,000, and just 1.6 percent of the rural population of approximately 14,421,000. Over two thirds of the country's Jews lived in cities and towns, less than one third in rural areas. The Jewish population was not spread evenly across the country, as the following table demonstrates:

Jews as a percentage of population,
by province and urban/rural area, 1930[*]

	Population		Jews as %	Jews as % #	Jews as %
	Total	Jews	of Total	of Urban	of Rural
Romania	*18,057,028*	*756,930*	*4.0*	*13.6*	*1.6*
Oltenia	1,513,175	3,523	0.2	1.6	<0.1
Muntenia	4,029,008	94,216	2.1	7.8	<0.1
Dobrogea	815,475	4,031	0.5	1.8	<0.1
Moldavia	2,433,596	162,268	6.5	23.1	1.2
Bessarabia	2,864,402	206,958	7.2	26.8	4.3
Bukovina	853,009	93,101	10.8	30.0	3.9
Transylvania	3,217,988	81,503	2.4	8.6	1.3
Banat	939,958	14,043	1.2	5.8	0.2
Criş.-Mara.	1,390,417	97,287	6.4	16.7	3.8

* See Institutul Central de Statistică, *Recensământul general al populaţiei României din 29 decemvrie 1930*, 10 vols. (Bucharest, 1938-1940), vol. 9, pp. 440-443. For a summary presentation of the statistics, see Sabin Manuilă and D.C. Georgescu, *Populaţia României* (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1938).

While sharing many common interests and concerns in the new state, the Jewish population was composed of several distinct communities, differentiated by the political

history of the region in which they lived, the degree to which they had been assimilated to Romanian language and culture, the degree and visibility of their adherence to Jewish tradition and religious practice, and other factors.

Unfortunately, virtually every segment of Romania's Jewish population was viewed with antagonism by the Romanian elites that had succeeded in 1918-1920 in bringing all Romanians under a single state authority for the first time in the modern era.

The Jews of the Regat, assimilated in Walachia but less so in Moldavia, were perceived unfavorably for all the reasons that had fostered the growth of Romanian anti-Semitism in the decades leading up to the Great War – political, economic, cultural and religious – and because foreign support for their struggle to obtain citizenship had led to a widespread sentiment that the Jews, with the help of outside powers, were seeking to limit the sovereignty of the Romanian state. The Jews of Transylvania and Crişana-Maramureş, the majority of whom spoke either Hungarian or Yiddish, were viewed as "foreign" not only because they were not Christian, but because their cultural identity and political loyalty in post-1867 Austria-Hungary had been cast clearly with the Magyar majority in Hungary. Constituting 5 percent of Ausgleich Hungary's population, the Jews had been counted as "Hungarians" in Hungary's prewar cultural identity census, thus allowing the Hungarians to claim majority status in their state. These Jews were perceived by Romanians to be sympathetic, or potentially sympathetic, to Hungarian revisionist claims. The Jews of Bukovina, culturally aligned with the Germans in the Habsburg monarchy or speaking Yiddish, were also stigmatized by Romanians as "foreigners" who had lived well in a region of historical Moldavia pared off by the Habsburgs in 1775 and only returned to Romania in 1918. Finally, the Jews of Bessarabia – numerous, principally Yiddish and Russian-speaking, and more of a presence in the countryside than in other regions of the country – served as the model of the stereotypical foreign Jew against which anti-Semites in the Regat had been agitating for decades.

In this atmosphere it is not surprising that anti-Semitism was common coinage in the newly expanded Romanian state created in the aftermath of World War I. Anti-Semitism manifested itself in three forms – political, cultural/intellectual, and popular.

Anti-Semitic Precursors

In a parliamentary speech he delivered as leader of the National Christian Party in December 1935 and later published as a pamphlet entitled *România a românilor*, Octavian Goga, a poet and a political and spiritual leader of the struggle of Transylvanian Romanians for political rights before World War I, repudiated the Romanian press :

> …because it is not produced by Romanians. People who do not have burial plots in Romanian cemeteries think that they can direct our soul, the ethereal impulse of our thought ; they imagine that any moral manifestation of ours is their patrimony and grasp it with their filthy hands ; they have transformed their printing presses, quite simply, into a tool for the ruination of Romanian society.

His attack on Jews was greeted enthusiastically by National Christian Party members of the Chamber of Deputies. Goga, who as prime minister three years later would initiate

decree-laws that deprived tens of thousands of Jews of their citizenship and other rights, was not satisfied. He wanted to link the stance of his party to the "noblest spirits" of Romanian tradition. Later in the speech, citing the peasantry as the foundation of the Romanian "race," he added :

> I might say that for decades before the war the entirety of Romanian ideology was constituted on this basis : we have to establish a *national* state. Who represents our race ? The peasants… There is no monopoly in this way of thinking ; it is the result of all the fibers of our intellectual thought from before the war.

At this point, Goga was interrupted by Pamfil Şeicaru, who was editor of *Curentul* and who certainly understood the national slogans and mood of the day. Şeicaru shouted out : "Beginning with Eminescu, from 1876." Then a National Liberal Party parliamentarian broke in to add "Kogălniceanu." And Goga concluded :

> …I could say, without exaggeration, that the entire nineteenth century constitutes one current of logical thinking along this line.[1]

Clearly it was not just Goga who identified the antecedents of Romanian anti-Semitism in the intellectual, cultural and political patrimony of the country. There was a general sense, expressed on that particular day in Parliament, that aspiring to an exclusionist, race-based *România a românilor* was part of the national inheritance passed down from the founders of modern România and its culture. Goga concluded his speech with a call to recognize the instinct of "differentiation based on race" and "differentiation based on religion" ; and to recognize that the "organic entity" of the Romanian people and Romanian soul cannot absorb foreigners and is being unjustly assaulted by an invasion of "foreigners" – Goga's shorthand for Jews.

Was this, indeed, Greater Romania's inheritance ? There are sufficient examples that can be cited in the political, cultural and religious spheres to support the notion that anti-Semitism must be dealt with as an integral part of the sweep of Romanian history.

One of the issues that evoked an enormous outpouring of anti-Semitic sentiment of every sort from the mid-nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth was the juridical status of Jews in the new Romanian state. The leadership of the 1848 uprisings in Walachia and Moldavia had called for the emancipation of the Jews and political equality.[2] However, after the uprisings were crushed and as the status of the principalities became the subject of diplomatic negotiations among the European Powers, improvement of the juridical status of Jews in the principalities became an issue of international interest. With no action to improve the status of Jews forthcoming from within the principalities during the period of European guardianship that followed the Crimean War, the Powers pressed the issue, gently at first and then more insistently, as the principalities sought first unification and ultimately independence. This external pressure caused extreme resentment among a Romanian elite seeking to establish Romanian self-determination and sovereignty, and reinforced in the minds of many questions that still persisted a

1. All citations are from Octavian Goga, *România a românilor* (Sibiu : Tipografia Săteanului, 1936).
2. See Article 27 of "Dorinţele Partidei Naţionale în Moldova" and Article 21 of the "Proclamaţia de la Islaz," cited in Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România, 1866-1919. De la excludere la emancipare* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1996), pp. 52-54. The French edition appeared in 1978.

century later about the loyalties and motivations of Romanian Jews seeking full citizenship and equal rights in the Romanian state.

Thus, in the Convention of Paris (August 19, 1858), which set the terms on which the European Powers would accept the unification of Walachia and Moldavia, Article 46 opened the door to, but did not require, the eventual grant of full juridical rights to the Jews :

> Moldavians and Walachians will all be equal before the law, in tax status and will have equal access to public functions in both Principalities... Moldavians and Walachians of all Christian rites will have equal political rights. The benefit of these rights may be extended to other cults (religions) through legislation.

Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza took important steps in this direction during his six years on the throne of the United Principalities. Article 26 of the Communal Law of May 31, 1864, granted certain rights, including the right to vote in municipal elections, to certain categories of Jews who fulfilled specific conditions. The Civil Code he proposed in 1864, which came into effect a year later, allowed for granting citizenship to Jews under certain very limited conditions. No Jews actually received citizenship under Cuza, however, and there was a general sense in his last twenty-four months in power, as internal as well as external opposition to his rule grew, that the reforms he inaugurated would not last. Nevertheless, these improvements in the situation of the Jews sharpened opposition to his rule among the political and cultural elite and hastened the coup that removed Cuza from power in early 1866.[3]

A real explosion of openly expressed anti-Semitism occurred as the prospect of achieving national independence became more certain. During discussions of the new Constitution of 1866, Romanian leaders began to portray Jews as a principal obstacle to Romanian independence, prosperity, and culture. Later, the extended debate over the acceptance or rejection of the requirement levied in the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, which granted Romania independence on condition that citizenship be granted to Jews, further radicalized these views.

When the majority Conservative/minority Liberal government charged with drafting a new constitution presented a draft text that included the language, "Religion cannot be an obstacle to obtaining citizenship," the drafting committee in Parliament immediately modified it by adding the sentence, "Regarding Jews long established in Romania, a special law will regulate their gradual admission to naturalized status." As Parliament met to consider this new text, street demonstrations against the provision in any form took place outside the building, followed by a destructive rampage through the Jewish quarter of Bucharest.

Ion Brătianu, minister of finance in the Government that had proposed the original text, but whose Liberal Party was generally unsympathetic to citizenship rights for Jews and would lead the opposition to any such measure for the next half century, immediately attacked the already weakened proposal, declaring in the parliamentary session of June 19, 1866, "…we have stated that the Government does not intend to hand the country over to the Jews, nor to grant them rights that affect or damage in the slightest way the

3. On the period of Russian domination of the principalities and of European guardianship following the Crimean War, see Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1984), chapters 1 and 2 ; and Iancu, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-65.

interests of Romania." The following day he labeled the Jews a "social plague" (*plagă socială*) for Romania, that :

> ...pure and simply because of their large number threaten, as everyone acknowledges, our nationality… Only [strong] administrative measures can save us from this calamity and prevent this foreign underclass from invading our country.[4]

Two days later, a revised text that specifically excluded Jews from acquiring Romanian citizenship was introduced as Article 7 of the new constitution :

> The status of Romanian citizen is acquired, maintained, and forfeited in accordance with rules established through civil legislation. Only foreign individuals who are of the Christian rite may acquire Romanian citizenship.

By the end of the year the harsh restrictions of Article 94 of the Organic Law, imposed on the principalities by Russian occupiers in the 1830s, were reinstated.

Brătianu's anti-Semitic language sharpened from that point on, as his influence in succeeding governments grew. As minister of interior in 1867, Brătianu issued a series of Circulars to prefects across the country ordering them to enforce harsh exclusionary measures against the Jews, restricting their right to live in rural areas, expelling them from certain livelihoods, and exposing them to physical expulsion from Romania. Protests from abroad, from foreign governments seeking to guide Romania toward independence as well as from Jewish organizations, further intensified Brătianu's anti-Semitic rhetoric.[5] Setting the tone for many of his countrymen, who looked to him for national leadership, Brătianu responded to a parliamentary question from P.P. Carp about these policies by laying blame on Romanians who hired Jews for creating a situation in which "they have latched on to our land so tightly that we will never be able to get rid of them," and laying blame on the Jews for bringing down the wrath of the Great Powers of Europe on Romania and serving as tools in the hands of the nation's enemies :

> …Jews, even when they commit crimes, are better treated than others… Not because Jews have greater morality than Christians, at least when it comes to fraud, but because whenever you lay a hand on a Jew, all Israelites, not only in Romania but abroad as well, come screaming… [I]f you lay a hand on a Jew, even one caught in a crime, a Consul comes to you and says, "This is my subject." Whether he is or is not a foreign subject, a Consul always appears to say he is… This is what the enemies of our nation are doing today ; they are taking the Jews and using them to attack us.[6]

Two years later he summarized his view in a single sentence : "The goal of the Jews is nothing less than to put an end to our national existence."[7]

Brătianu was not the only 1848 revolutionary to adopt such extreme views as Romania moved toward independence. Thus we find Cezar Bolliac labeling the Jews "a real

4. *Monitorul Oficial*, June 19 and 20, 1866.
5. See Iancu, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-80.
6. Parliamentary Speech of April 30, 1868, in *Din scrierile şi cuvântările lui Ion C. Brătianu*, vol. 1 (Bucharest : Carol Göbl, 1903), pp. 441, 445-446.
7. *Monitorul Oficial*, January 4, 1870.

parasite" and complaining that while Jews are the same everywhere, nowhere is the Jewish problem more severe than in Romania :

> It is frightening, gentlemen, to see the spread, day by day, of this deadly congregation, but even more frightening to realize that nowhere has it sunk its roots in as deep as here.[8]

And Mihail Kogălniceanu, whose anti-Semitism was recalled during Goga's speech in Parliament in 1935, as government minister in 1869 resumed the process of expelling the Jews from Romanian villages to deprive them of their livelihood. When foreign governments protested, Kogălniceanu responded angrily that Romania's treatment of Jews living there was no one else's business.[9]

Lesser political figures echoed the national leadership. Parliamentary Deputy I.C. Codrescu of Bârlad, for example, published one of his parliamentary speeches in its entirety in a pamphlet entitled *Cotropirea judovească în România*. He attacked the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* and painted Jews as anti-national elements undermining Romanian character both in the countryside and in urban areas :

> The term *Romanian Jew* is an insult hurled at our nation… Whatever the Jew is, Jew he will remain… Must we really resign ourselves to permanently seeing an enemy population such as this among us ? Gentlemen, the growth of this element has always proven so dangerous for all countries that no people has hesitated to take the most energetic steps, and often the most crude, to get rid of them.[10]

Anti-Semitic expression was not limited to Romania's founding political elite. It was also widespread among the cultural and intellectual elite of the country ; that is, among people trained to understand the importance of universal values, people who, through their genius, were establishing the cultural values of the nation. In 1866, as Brătianu, Bolliac and others were establishing the anti-Semitic themes that would resonate for a century in the political sphere, philologist Bogdan-Petriceicu Hasdeu wrote that Jews bring hatred upon themselves and provoke economic ruin because they are characterized by three "hideous" traits : "the tendency to gain without work, the absence of any sense of dignity, and hatred of all other peoples."[11]

When the European Powers stipulated in Articles 43 and 44 of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 that recognition of Romanian independence was to be conditioned on the grant of citizenship and political rights to Jews, the voices of the new country's cultural elite were as outraged as any in the political realm. The philosopher Vasile Conta, arguing that the real goal of the Jews was to drive Romanians out of Romania and establish a purely Jewish country there, declared in the Chamber of Deputies, "If we do not fight against the Jews, we will die as a nation."[12] The poet Vasile Alecsandri added a vitriolic attack :

> What is this new challenge, what is this new invasion ? Who are these invaders, where do they come from, what do they want ?… They are an active, intelligent people, tireless in

8. *Monitorul Oficial*, December 20, 1870.
9. See Iancu, *op. cit.*, 1996, pp. 105-109.
10. Speech of December 16, 1869, in I.C. Codrescu, *Cotropirea judovească în România* (Bucharest : Noua Typographia a Laboratorulilor Români, 1870).
11. *Industria naţională, industria străină şi industria ovreească faţă cu principiul concurenţei* (Bucharest, 1866), p. 30.
12. Speech of September 5, 1879, in Vasile Conta, *Opere Complecte* (Bucharest : Librăria şcoalelor, 1914), pp. 647, 660.

> fulfilling their mission. They are adherents of the most indiscriminate religious fanaticism, the most exclusive (to themselves) of all the inhabitants of the earth, the most inassimilable to the other peoples of the earth… Their country is the Talmud ! Their power is without limit, because it is based on and supported by two other forces : religious freemasonry and gold.[13]

The novelist and essayist Ioan Slavici, in his *Soll şi Haben – Chestiunea ovreilor din România*, characterized the Jews as a "disease" that is virtually impossible to get rid of and, tapping into the religious anti-Semitism that motivated the mass of the population more than the elite itself, described Judaism as "the denial of all religions" and the God of the Jews as "the denial of all Gods." Blaming the Jews for Romania's problems, he suggested expelling them, but was certain that no one would accept them. Thus, he concluded :

> The solution that remains for us is, at a signal, to close the borders, to annihilate them, to throw them into the Danube right up to the very last of them, so that nothing remain of their seed ![14]

Thirty years later, a more mature Slavici, in a series of essays written in 1908 and entitled *Semitismul*, had not mellowed in tone at all. Blaming the Jews themselves for their fate – a favorite tactic of anti-Semites – he called for the use of all resources against them, and again suggested that a violent solution would be acceptable :

> The hatred that has welled up against these people is natural, and this hatred can easily be unleashed against all of them that have inherited wealth or acquired it themselves, and could lead at the end to a horrible shedding of blood.[15]

Thus from the earliest decades of the development of modern Romania, there was a strong anti-Semitic current in the country's political and intellectual life that was not on the fringes of society, but at its very heart. Moreover, the language used to discuss the Jews was extreme, even in those early years. Restrictions on where Jews could live, denial of citizenship, denial of livelihood, physical expulsion, blood-letting, talk of drownings in the Danube, assault on Jewish religious belief and practice, designation of Jews as foreign agents, enemies of the state and of the nation – the language of separation, de-humanization, and killing – appeared early on the Romanian scene.

In fact, the extreme anti-Semitic language introduced in those years echoed through the following decades, right up to, during and even following the Holocaust. Much has been written about the anti-Semitism of Mihai Eminescu. His opinions about the Jews were complex and not as extreme as sometimes stated. But it is important that it was credible for a large segment of the population in the thirties when the name of the country's national poet was invoked repeatedly, as during Octavian Goga's 1935

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13. Speech in Senate, October 10, 1879, cited in Iancu, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
14. Ioan Slavici, *Soll şi Haben – Chestiunea ovreilor din România* (Bucharest, 1878). For anyone who has read Holocaust-related documents in the archival repositories of Romania, there is a chilling echo of Slavici's language in the language of Romanian perpetrators of the Holocaust. Many Jews were drowned in the Dniester River during the forced deportations of Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina to Transnistria in 1941. The river was the Dniester, not the Danube, but Antonescu's intention to eliminate the entire Jewish community of the region, to the last individual, was the same.
15. Ioan Slavici, "Semitismul (IV)," *Tribuna*, vol. XII (1908), no. 133 (June 18/July 1).

parliamentary speech, as the forebear of rabid twentieth-century anti-Semitic extremism in Greater Romania.[16] Eminescu was not alone among the cultural leaders who expressed anti-Semitic opinions during the period between the achievement of national independence and the establishment of Greater Romania. Historian Alexandru D. Xenopol declared at the turn of the century that only baptized Jews should be eligible for Romanian citizenship and that those who did not convert to Christianity should be physically removed from the country.[17]

Even Nicolae Iorga, maturing during this period, despite his genius and admirable accomplishments in scholarship and other fields, must be acknowledged to have been blind on the issue of anti-Semitism. A creature of the culture he came to epitomize, Iorga joined with A.C. Cuza in 1910 to establish the National Democratic Party, the first explicitly anti-Semitic political party in Romania. His early writing was steeped in blatantly anti-Semitic language. In a speech in the Chamber of Deputies in 1910, which he later republished in a pamphlet that included an introduction by A.C. Cuza entitled "The Nationalists and the Problem of the Kikes" (*Naţionaliştii şi problema jidovească*), Iorga reacted to Jewish demands for citizenship rights by charging that "Jews from everywhere, the entirety of Kikedom" had lined up against Romania and that granting rights to Jews would so fundamentally change the character of the state that :

> …Romania would no longer be Romania. Its entire mission would disappear, its future destiny could not be maintained.

Echoing the voices that decades earlier had charged the Jews with wanting to displace the Romanians from their lands, Iorga argued that the Jewish question was the most significant issue facing the Romanian nation, since its essence was :

> …the question of our rights in all areas and in the whole expanse of the territory to which we alone have ethnic and historical claim.[18]

In another speech published the same year, Iorga attacked Zionism as a movement intended not to create a homeland for Jews in Palestine, but aimed at expelling Romanians, so that Romania might become the Jewish homeland :

> Zionism, represented by the newspaper *Adevărul*, is cultivating Jewish national sentiment, and it is cultivating it against us… Some non-Zionist Jews do not hate us, but the Zionist Jews all hate us and cannot forgive us for the fact that we are where we are and that, because there is not room for both them and us here, we do not depart for Zion, in order to leave this space for them.[19]

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16. On Eminescu, see the excellent summary in Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Anti-Semitism : The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s* (Oxford : Pergamon, 1991), pp. 10-13 ; G. Ibrăileanu, *Spiritul critic în cultura românească*, 3rd ed. (Bucharest, 1929), pp. 153-192 ; and for an Iron Guard perspective published after World War II, D. Murăraşu, *Naţionalismul lui Eminescu* (Madrid : Carpaţii, 1955), esp. pp. 183-202. In many respects, Eminescu's opinions were similar to those of nationalist poets in other European countries in this era.
17. See A.D. Xenopol, "La question israélite en Roumanie," *La Renaissance latine*, October 15, 1902, pp. 165-192 ; and "Naţionalism şi anti-Semitism," *Noua Revistă Română*, vol. 5, pp. 277-280.
18. *Problema evreiască la Cameră* (Vălenii de Munte : Tipografia Neamul Românesc, 1910).
19. Parliamentary speech "În chestia manifestaţiilor studenţeşti : Ce represintă adevărul," December 17, 1909, published in N. Iorga, *Două cuvântări în chestia muncitorilor/în chestia agitaţiilor evreieşti* (Vălenii de Munte : Tipografia Neamul Românesc, 1910), p. 48.

After Iorga and A.C. Cuza parted ways in 1922 – after a dozen years of political partnership – Iorga tempered his anti-Semitic language for a period, though never denying that he was anti-Semitic.[20] Still, in 1937, with Nazi Germany threatening the peace of Europe, with extreme right-wing movements on the verge of power inside Romania, and with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country clearly in jeopardy, Iorga issued a call to arms against the Jews in his *Iudaica*. It is difficult to understand his motivation. Perhaps he hoped to ride a wave of popular sentiment back to political prominence. It is possible that he wanted to deflect growing sympathy for extreme action against the Jews by directing Romanians to overcome the Jewish menace by competing with them. This would have been in keeping with the more moderate anti-Semitic stance Iorga had adopted following World War I and his criticism of the radical anti-Semitism of Cuza's League of National Christian Defense (*Liga Apărării Naţional-Creştine* – LANC) and Corneliu Z. Codreanu's Iron Guard (*Garda de Fier*).[21] Whatever his intention, however, *Iudaica* was not moderate in tone by objective standards. Writing in response to a series of articles on the history of Romanian Jewry by Dr. Wilhelm Filderman, President of the Federation of Jewish Communities, Iorga asserted that the country had no need for Jews, as could be seen in his beloved Vălenii de Munte, "a Romanian place without Jews" (*o localitate românească fără evrei*). He then dredged up all of the canards of Romanian anti-Semitism – national, economic, religious, moral, social, cultural, demographic, and political – of the previous ninety years to support the following assault on Jews :

> [The Jews] are at work to accumulate for themselves, as an invading nation, as much as they can. Even in the liberal professions, in education, in science, in literature, as lawyers, as doctors, as architects, as professors, more and more of them, with philologists, with philosophers, with journalists, with poets, with their critics**,** *they are quite simply throwing us out of our own country*… They are razing our churches, taking over our shops, occupying our jobs, and, what is even more devastating, *they are falsifying our soul, they are degrading our morality by means of the journalistic and literary opiates with which they enchant us*.
>
> Instead of preferring to relieve the pressure, which through prudently organized emigrations would reduce their proportion in cities to a level that could be acceptable in a national setting, they seek to advance their banner at every moment and with whatever means lie at their disposal, and in order to hide their advance, they resort to changing their names in real life and to pseudonyms in literature.
>
> *We must organize ourselves for a war of conscience and work. Let us band together where we still are able to do it. Let us set out to regain through daily effort and with perfect understanding, by breaking ties with those who want to take our places, and let us reconquer what we have lost.*
>
> *They with their own, for themselves, as they have wanted. We with our own, for ourselves, that's what we want !* [author's emphasis][22]

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20. Iorga's relationship with A.C. Cuza preceded the creation of the National Democratic Party. In 1906 Cuza was writing articles for Iorga's journal *Neamul Românesc* ; see *Enciclopedia Cugetarea* (Bucharest : Georgescu Delafras, 1940). Iorga expressed his opinions about Cuza and his political activity in several of his books. See, for example, N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor – Întregitorii* (Bucharest, 1938), vol. 10, pp. 305, 460, 489-493 ; and *idem*, *Supt trei regi*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1932), p. 77. See also William O. Oldson, *The Historical and Nationalistic Thought of Nicolae Iorga* (Boulder : *East European Quarterly*/Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 84-88.
21. On Iorga's shifting attitudes, see Volovici, *op. cit.*, *passim* ; and Oldson, *op. cit.*
22. N. Iorga, *Iudaica* (Bucharest : Bucovina E. Torouţiu, 1937).

These were not the words of Octavian Goga, who would become prime minister a few months after Iorga wrote *Iudaica* ; nor of A.C. Cuza, whose entire *raison d'être* was anti-Semitism ; nor of Corneliu Codreanu, although they captured some of the intense animosity of Codreanu's language. They were the words of a man recognized by many as the intellectual mentor of the nation.

Anti-Semitism in the Mainstream Political Parties of Greater Romania (1919-1937)

With the Romanian political and intellectual elite steeped in anti-Semitic sentiment and producing anti-Semitic rhetoric uninterruptedly for decades, it was not surprising that the two principal political parties of Greater Romania, the National Liberal Party and the National Peasant Party, were indifferent, at best, to the situation of the country's Jewish minority. While neither party had openly anti-Semitic positions in their political platforms, neither did they take positions that were designed to ensure equal rights, equal status and security to the Jews. The granting of citizenship en masse to Jews, which was forced upon Romania as a condition for international recognition of its expanded post-World War I borders, angered broad strata of the leadership in both parties. Their anger at having lost the stranglehold on the citizenship issue that had been maintained since the Treaty of Berlin simmered throughout the interwar period and regularly emerged to the surface in parliamentary discourse and in the press.[23]

Both the Liberals and those who presumed to represent the interests of the peasantry saw the Jews as adversaries in economic terms to their own aspirations and those of their constituents. In the minds of the Liberals, control of the country's industry and banking system had to be wrested away from the Jews. And despite the weight of evidence to the contrary, both the National Liberals and the National Peasantists, not to speak of more openly anti-Semitic political organizations, found it more convenient to place blame for the peasant uprising of 1907, the most traumatic internal crisis experienced since the country's independence, disproportionately on the Jewish leaseholders (*arendaşi*) who represented Romanian landowners on many rural estates in Moldavia, rather than exploring the root causes of the unrest. This was Iorga's position, as well, and certainly colored the attitude of General Alexandru Averescu, who had put down the uprising with armed force in 1907 and served twice as prime minister after 1918.[24]

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23. Anti-Semitic violence broke out in Bucharest and Brăila immediately after the withdrawal of German troops in November 1918, and occurred in different localities with regularity throughout the interwar period ; see, for example, Andrei Pippidi, *Despre statui şi morminte* (Iaşi : Polirom, 2000). For a description of developments under the National Liberal and National Peasant governments, see chapter 6 in Carol Iancu, *Les Juifs en Roumanie, 1919-1938 : De l'émancipation à la marginalisation* (henceforth : Iancu, *Les Juifs*) (Paris-Louvain : E. Peeters, 1996).
24. For a short analysis of the economic issue by one of Romania's leading interwar sociologists, see Ştefan Zeletin, "Finanţa şi antisemitismul," in his *Neoliberalismul* (1927 ; reprint, Bucharest : Nemira, 1997). For the classic discussion of the peasant uprising of 1907, see Radu Rosetti, *Pentru ce s-au răsculat ţăranii* (Bucharest : Atelierele grafice Socec, 1907) ; Rosetti, writing under the pseudonym Verax, had published four years earlier *La Roumanie et les Juifs* (Bucharest :

Moreover, both the Liberal and the National Peasant parties included powerful figures who were intent on using opportunities that presented themselves to promote anti-Semitic policies whenever it was possible to do so, in particular in the economic and education spheres. While these parties were in power, Jews in different parts of the country were subjected to regular outbreaks of violence and received little effective protection. And the Jewish community found itself regularly on the defensive, constantly battling in order not to lose rights recently obtained. When Romanian Jews appealed for help from Jewish communities and organizations abroad, or from foreign governments, this reinforced the position of those who sought to portray the Jews as anti-Romanian. Other political parties that led governments between 1918 and 1937, such as Alexandru Averescu's People's Party (1920-1921, 1926-1927), Iorga's National Democratic Party government of experts (1931-1932), and the National Peasant Party governments led by Alexandru Vaida-Voievod (1932-1933), were more openly anti-Semitic in their posture, stimulating public and governmental discussion of the possible introduction of *numerus clausus* (sometimes *numerus valahicus*) legislation regarding Jews in higher education, the economy, and state administration. Still, while all of these governments may have condoned non-governmental anti-Semitic acts, none of them enacted or implemented anti-Semitic legislation.

This situation changed during the long National Liberal Party government headed by Gheorghe Tătărescu between 1933 and 1937. While it at times encouraged some movements of the Right, the Tătărescu government also sought to control the rise of right-wing extremist and violently anti-Semitic movements inside Romania – the Iron Guard and the League of National Christian Defense, in particular, as well as Vaida-Voievod's breakaway Romanian Front (*Frontul Românesc*). It sought as well to blunt the impact of other right-leaning movements sympathetic to Nazi Germany, including Gheorghe Brătianu's "Young Liberal" Party and Goga's National Agrarian Party. As the flavor of debate sharpened inside Romania, especially after the rise of the Nazi Party to power in Germany, the Tătărescu government introduced certain laws that, while not explicitly aimed at Jews, began the systematic process of stripping away the resources and rights of Jews.

The "Law for the Use of Romanian Personnel in Enterprises" (1934) called for at least 80 percent of the personnel in all economic, industrial, commercial, and civil enterprises to be Romanian and for at least half of the administrative board to be Romanian. It also required special approval of a committee appointed by the ministries of war, labor and industry for all hiring by industries involved in national security and defense affairs.[25] While not explicitly aimed at the Jews, the law had a much greater impact on them than other minorities, who frequently lived in compact ethnic areas where implementation of the law was impracticable. For the first time Jews were confronted with the possibility of a government-managed process that would deprive them of their jobs and professions. Some Jews who worked for the railroad system and the postal and telegraphic service were demoted or simply fired. Despite international

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I.V. Socecu, 1903), a detailed study of the status of the Jews in Romania that focused attention on the direct contact between Jews and the Romanian peasantry and called for continued denial of citizenship rights to the Jews. For a modern analysis, see Philip G. Eidelberg, *The Great Rumanian Peasant Revolt of 1907* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974).

25. Lege pentru utilizarea personalului românesc în întreprinderi (Bucharest: *Monitorul Oficial* and Imprimeriile Statului, 1934).

protests, the law remained on the books. In its wake, professional schools began to deny admission to Jewish students, and some private professional associations, like the Bucharest Bar and then the National Bar Association (in May 1937), expelled their Jewish members. University campuses became centers of anti-Semitic sentiment and "action," and street violence against Jews increased.

In December 1936, a parliamentary commission began consideration of a draft law to review the citizenship lists through which Romania's national minorities, including the majority of Romanian Jews, had obtained Romanian citizenship. This sweeping draft did not become law, but the Tătărescu government issued a series of less ambitious decree-laws and administrative orders aimed at limiting or eliminating the presence of Jews in the liberal professions, finance and other branches of the economy.[26]

This record of Romania's mainstream political elite opened the door to the more radical anti-Semitic policies that would follow during the short-lived National Christian Party government, under the Royal Dictatorship, Antonescu and the Iron Guard. The National Christian Party government proved to be a watershed in Romanian interwar political development.

Anti-Semitism of the National Christian Party. The National Christian Party in Power (December 1937 – February 1938)

After its creation in 1935 as a nationalistic and virulently anti-Semitic party of the conservative Right,[27] the National Christian Party (*Partidul Naţional-Creştin* – PNC) of Octavian Goga and Alexandru C. Cuza was unquestionably the leading competitor of the Iron Guard on the Right of the Romanian political spectrum. During the thirties, the National Christian Party (and, before 1935, Goga's National Agrarian Party) was the principal Romanian recipient of German National Socialist support, despite the closer ideological affinity of the Iron Guard movement to Nazism.[28] And while the PNC's time in power was short, the anti-Semitic policies that Goga and Cuza pursued survived their precipitate fall from power and exerted considerable influence on the policies of the governments that followed. A significant number of PNC adherents served in the governments of the Royal Dictatorship and resurfaced again in the civilian bureaucracy of wartime dictator Ion Antonescu.[29]

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26. On the Tătărescu government and the restrictive measures introduced in 1937, see Iancu, *Les Juifs*, pp. 295-303.
27. For useful definitions and distinctions between the "conservative Right," "radical Right," and "reactionary Right," see Eugen Weber, "The Right," in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (eds.), *The European Right : A Historical Profile* (Berkeley and Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1966), pp. 1-28.
28. Armin Heinen, *Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail – o contribuţie la problema fascismului internaţional*, (Bucharest : Humanitas, 1999), pp. 314-319 (original in German : *Die Legion Erzengel Michael in Rumanien – Soziale Bewegung und politische Organization*, Munich : R. Oldenbourg, 1986). Also addressed in Paul A. Shapiro, "German Foreign Policy and the Romanian National Christian Party," manuscript, 1971.
29. Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and Others : A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Stanford : Hoover Institution Press, 1970), pp. 328-329.

Octavian Goga (1881-1938) and Alexandru C. Cuza (1857-1944) both had long careers in Romanian politics. Goga's prestige rested on his status as a great nationalistic poet and on the reputation that he had acquired during World War I as an outspoken advocate of the integration of his native Transylvania into the Romanian state. Having fled from Transylvania to Romania in 1914, at war's end he became minister of public education in the short-lived coalition government of the National and Peasant Parties, led by Alexandru Vaida-Voievod. After this he joined the People's Party of wartime hero General Alexandru Averescu and served in the Ministry of Interior, first as deputy and then as full minister, during Averescu's administrations of 1920-1921 and 1926-1927.[30] In April 1932, Goga left the People's Party and founded the National Agrarian Party (*Partidul Naţional-Agrar*). The new party's published platform (1932) was pro-monarchy and conservative, but also nationalistic and anti-Semitic.

The roots of Goga's anti-Semitism are clear. In prewar Vienna Goga had come under the influence of Karl Lueger, Vienna's Christian Social mayor. Convinced that the Jews were the most active "agents" of the policy of Magyarization in prewar Hungary, Goga found Lueger's sermons against "Judeo-Magyars" convincing and important. As Hungarian pressure for Transylvanian border revision grew in the thirties, Goga drew on this experience of his youth and identified a suitable response to the renewed danger of "Magyarization." His response was anti-Semitism and a reliance on Romania's youth, part of which was already coalescing into violence-prone anti-Semitic movements, to move from word to deed and eradicate the Jewish (and "Hungaro-Semitic") threat. Goga's *Mustul care fierbe*, a collection of essays published in 1927, captured his increasingly extremist position. Goga saw the situation as one of war between Romanians and Jews, and called for the defense of "racial purity," "prerogatives of the blood," and "the organic truths of the race." He warned that developments were "pushing the traditional patience of the people to its extreme limits," and praised a coming "purifying storm" in which the youth would save the nation from "parasites." He called for a "national offensive" to save the Romanian nation.[31] Harking back to

30. In 1907, while a subject of Austria-Hungary, Goga won the Herescu-Năsturel Prize, joining the ranks of only two prior recipients, Mihai Eminescu and George Coşbuc. At the outbreak of World War I, he resigned from the National Party of Transylvania and fled to Romania. See V. Curticăpeanu, "L'Action d'Octavian Goga pour l'unité politique roumaine," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, vol. IV, nos. 3-4 (July-December 1938). In conflict with Iuliu Maniu since the outbreak of the war, Goga participated in the Averescu Government's dismantling of Transylvanian regional autonomy plans in 1919 and remained at odds with Maniu thereafter, over issues that included attitude toward King Carol II, democratic versus authoritarian rule, attitude toward Germany, organization of the peasantry.

31. On the National Agrarian Party's platform of 1932, see International Reference Library, *Politics and Political Parties in Roumania* (London : International Reference Library, 1936), p. 433. The platform called for, among other things, an increase in royal prerogatives, a reduction in the size and powers of the Parliament, greater censorship of the press (which Goga saw as excessively "Judaized"), and agricultural modernization. On the evolution of Goga's thinking regarding the Jews, see Jean Ancel, *Contribuţii la istoria României. Problema evreiască, 1933-1944* (henceforth : Ancel, *Contribuţii*) (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2001), vol. 1, part 1, pp. 30-33 ; Volovici, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-44 ; and Paul A. Shapiro, "Prelude to Dictatorship in Romania : The National Christian Party in Power, December 1937 – February 1938" (henceforth : Shapiro, "Prelude"), *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* (Pittsburgh), vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring 1974), pp. 45-88. See Octavian Goga, *Mustul care fierbe* (henceforth : Goga, *Mustul care fierbe*) (Bucharest : Imprimeria Statului, 1927), pp. 55, 88-89, 140 and *passim*. On Lueger's influence, see Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 and 28.

pre-World War I rhetoric about a Jewish "invasion" of Romania, Goga described the Jews as "impure secretions" of Galicia, who were threatening the very existence of the Romanian state.[32]

The political influence of Alexandru C. Cuza, professor of Political Economy and Finance at the University of Iaşi, was very localized if measured by the votes he received in parliamentary elections. Electoral support for Cuza never expanded far beyond the North Moldavian districts surrounding his native Iaşi and, after World War I, the heavily Jewish districts of Bessarabia. Cuza's career in politics, however, was remarkable for its longevity and consistency, which provided a native Romanian foundation for the development of more radical and more dangerous anti-Semitic movements than that of Cuza himself. Cuza's entire political philosophy was built around a single issue, resting on a set of anti-Semitic convictions that he pursued steadfastly throughout his career.

First elected to the National Chamber of Deputies in 1892, Cuza maintained his seat there, with a single hiatus between 1927 and 1931, until the beginning of the Royal Dictatorship in 1938, at which point he became a member of the Crown Council. Between 1895 and 1923, Cuza helped establish six different political movements. In 1897 he joined with A.D. Xenopol, whose views have been cited earlier, to found the Romanian League against Alcoholism (*Liga Română contra Alcoolismului*), a platform that he used to charge the Jews with breeding alcoholism among Romanians as a means of increasing Romanian mortality rates.[33] In 1910 he joined with Iorga to found the National Democratic Party, which advocated extreme measures, including violence, to reduce the influence of the Jews. When the two men parted ways following the creation of Greater Romania, Cuza founded the Christian National Democratic Party (1919) and then, together with N.C. Paulescu, the National Christian Union (1922). The National Christian Union adopted the swastika as its official symbol in 1922, before the Nazis. Finally, in 1923, Cuza established the League of National Christian Defense (*Liga Apărării Naţional-Creştine* – LANC).[34]

Cuza was a prolific author of anti-Semitic tracts, which he did his best to disguise as analytical or scholarly work, and for some of which he plagiarized broadly from foreign propagators of anti-Semitism.[35] Some of these publications began as extended parliamentary speeches, which Cuza carefully edited for subsequent publication. The titles are indicative of the content : *Despre poporaţie – Statistica, teoria şi politica ei* ; *Scăderea poporaţiei creştine şi înmulţirea jidanilor* ; *Jidanii în război* ; *Naţionalitatea în artă – Expunerea doctrinei naţionaliste* ; *Jidanii în presă* ; *Numerus clausus*.[36]

Every such work, to which Cuza added hundreds of political pamphlets, newspaper articles, introductions and reviews, consisted of a condemnation of the Jews as the origin

32. Goga, "Primejdia străinilor," in *idem*, *Mustul care fierbe*, pp. 395-398.
33. A.C. Cuza, *Ce-i alcoolismul ?* (Iaşi : Tipografia Naţională, 1897), and *Lupta împotriva alcoolismului în România* (Iaşi : Tipografia Naţională, 1897).
34. On Cuza's political career, see Ancel, *Contribuţii*, pp. 23-30 ; Iancu, *Les Juifs*, pp. 185-194 ; and Shapiro, "Prelude," *loc. cit*. For a sympathetic description by another notable figure in interwar Romania, see Pamfil Şeicaru, *Un junimist antisemit – A.C. Cuza* (Madrid : Carpaţii, 1956).
35. See E.M. Socor, *O ruşine universitară – Plagiatul d-lui A.C. Cuza*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1923).
36. See, for example, A.C. Cuza, *Ţăranii şi clasele dirigente* (Iaşi : Tipografia Naţională, 1895) ; *Despre poporaţie – Statistica, teoria şi politica ei* (1899 ; 2nd ed., Bucharest : Imp. Independenţa,

of whatever problem was being discussed. Cuza professed an insistent, violent, racist and religious anti-Semitism. Influenced by Chamberlain, Drumont, Mommsen, Renan and Gobinau, he sought inspiration wherever he could find support for his obsessive hatred, whether the source was foreign or Romanian. His arguments ranged from the economic and cultural, which were common in Romanian anti-Semitic parlance before World War I, to racial anti-Semitism, which Cuza enunciated very clearly as early as the 1890s and which remained a constant theme after that. In 1893 in his *Meseriaşul român*, Cuza described the Jews as "an alien race" that was destroying the Romanian race. Fifteen years later, in *Naţionalitatea în artă*, he wrote of the Jews' "racial inferiority" and the danger of "race mixing." By 1930 he was identifying his movement with Adolf Hitler racial anti-Semitism, and he welcomed Hitler's rise to power three years later as an opportunity to end the international "domination" of the Jews.[37]

The parliamentary platform of the League of National Christian Defense called for the complete elimination of the Jews: "The sole possible solution to the Kike problem is the elimination of the Kikes." To accomplish this, the platform proposed withdrawing political rights and revoking the right of Jews to be considered "natives"; revoking name-changes; reviewing all grants of citizenship and revoking any made without proper documentation; expulsion of all Jews who had entered the country after 1914; expulsion of Jews from rural areas and cession of their lands to ethnic Romanians; expropriation by the state of Jewish-owned land and industrial plants in the petroleum industry; exclusion of Jews from public offices or jobs; gradual expropriation of Jewish urban property; introduction of a *numerus clausus* in all areas of education and economic activity; and stricter laws and harsher enforcement of infractions of the law relating to counterfeiting, contraband, usury, pornography, and white slave traffic. Cuza clearly drew his parliamentary program from all the themes of traditional Romanian political anti-Semitism, though he considered the *numerus clausus* simply as an interim step leading to enforcement of a *numerus nullus*.[38] He added the racial element in a series of 10 theses on "nationality," "religion" and "action." The Jewish nation, he wrote,

> …is a bastard and degenerate nation, sterile, without its own land and not constituting a complete, productive social organism, (…) thus living from its beginnings until today superimposed on other nations, exploiting their productive labor, and thus a parasite nation.[39]

1929); *Scăderea poporaţiei creştine şi înmulţirea jidanilor* (Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia Neamul Românesc, 1910); *Jidanii în război* (Bucharest: Institutul Grafic Steaua, 1923); *Naţionalitatea în artă – Expunerea doctrinei naţionaliste* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1908); *Jidanii în presă* (Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia Neamul Românesc, 1911); *Numerus clausus* (henceforth: A.C. Cuza, *Numerus clausus*) (Bucharest: LANC, 1924); *Plagiatul populaţiei, o calomnie "moro judaico" sau cum lucrează Cahalul împotriva goimilor, după Talmud* (1911).

37. A.C. Cuza, *Meseriaşul român* (Iaşi, 1893), p. vi; "Problema jidănească şi Adolf Hitler," speech delivered on December 12, 1930, in *Îndrumări de politică externă – Discursuri parlamentare rostite în anii 1920-1936* (Bucharest, 1941); and "Doctrina cuzistă şi hitlerismul," *Cuvântul*, April 25, 1933.
38. A.C. Cuza, *Numerus clausus*.
39. *Idem*, *Doctrina naţionalistă creştină – Cuzismul, definitii, teze, antiteze, sinteza* (Iaşi, 1928), pp. 12-17.

The League adopted as its banner the Romanian tricolor with a black swastika in a yellow circle in the center of the flag.

After World War I, Cuza also wove into his anti-Semitic litany traditional Christian anti-Semitic themes (and canards) and new interpretations based on Christian theology and philosophy.[40] He was influenced in this direction by Nicolae C. Paulescu (1869-1931), a professor of physiology at the Medical Faculty in Bucharest and world-renowned specialist in biochemistry and physiology. Paulescu was also self-trained in philosophy, which he sharpened into an anti-Semitic weapon, and, like Cuza, authored pseudo-scientific works that served as vehicles for racial and religious hatred. Paulescu served as co-publisher and wrote regular articles for *Apărarea Naţională*, Cuza's newspaper starting in 1922. He wrote articles and books that sought to merge theology, medicine, and science into "philosophical physiology" (*fiziologia filozofică*), which was in reality simply a route through which he could express an obsessive anti-Semitism that made his views very appealing to Cuza. Paulescu found the origins of Jewish perfidy in the Talmud, which he determined was a tool for the extermination of other nations, and the kehillah, which he argued secretly plotted the disasters that afflicted the rest of mankind. While he could not have anticipated the Nazi death camps, Paulescu's condemnation of the Jews was so total that he even went so far as to raise the possibility of "exterminating" the "infesting evil parasites" in the way "bedbugs are killed." "Can we perhaps exterminate them in the way bedbugs are killed?" Paulescu suggested in his *Fiziologia filozofică – Talmudul, Cahalul, Francmasoneria*. "That would be the simplest, easiest, and fastest way to get rid of them."[41] Interestingly, not only was Cuza influenced by Paulescu, but the young Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, future founder of the Iron Guard, specifically acknowledged the powerful impact of Paulescu's ideas on his development.[42]

Nichifor Crainic (1889-1972) was another theoretician of religion whose work had an important influence on Cuza and on the younger generation that would assume the radical anti-Semitic banner in the interwar period. Crainic was Professor at the Faculty of Theology, University of Bucharest, which became a hotbed of anti-Semitism among

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40. See *idem*, *Învăţătura lui Iisus – Judaismul ori teologia creştină* (Iaşi, 1925); and *Doctrina cuzistă – Lupta pentru credinţa şi problema învăţământului religios cu ilustraţii din Thora* (Iaşi, 1928). Cuza's argument that it is possible to separate the New Testament from the Old is also addressed in Şeicaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18. Efforts, especially by Jewish writers, to counter the impact of such arguments, as in Horia Carp, *Străinii în Biblie şi Talmud* (Bucharest, 1924), and I. Ludo, *În jurul unei obsesii – Precizările unui evreu pentru românii de bună-credinţă* (Bucharest: Adam, 1936) had little effect.

41. See, for example, Nicolae C. Paulescu, *Fiziologia filozofică – Talmudul, Cahalul, Francmasoneria* (Bucharest, 1913); *Fiziologia filozofică – Sinagoga şi biserica faţă de pacificarea omenirii*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Apărarea Naţională, 1923); *Complot jidano-francmasonic împotriva neamului românesc* (Bucharest: Apărarea Naţională, 1924); *Degenerarea rasei jidoveşti* (Bucharest, 1928); and *Tălmăcirea apocalipsului, soarta viitoare a jidănimii* (Bucharest, n.d.). The quoted phrases are from *Complot jidano-francmasonic*, p. 31, and *Fiziologia filozofică – Talmudul*, pp. 11, 55. Paulescu's influence was substantial. For a similar approach, arguing that Jews must be treated as a disease, see J.D. Protopopescu, *Pericolul ovreesc* (Bucharest: Atelierele Grafice Steaua, 1922).

42. Corneliu Z. Codreanu, *For My Legionaries – The Iron Guard* (henceforth: Codreanu, *For My Legionaries*) (1st ed. *Pentru legionari*, Sibiu: Totul pentru Ţară, 1936; English ed., Madrid: Libertatea, 1976), pp. 36-37.

university students.[43] Crainic advocated creation of a Romanian spirit that was "anti-Semitic in theory and anti-Semitic in practice."[44] He applied his theological and rhetorical skills to breaking the Judeo-Christian relationship by arguing that the Old Testament was not Jewish, that Jesus had not been Jewish, and that the Talmud, which he saw as the incarnation of modern Jewry was, first and foremost, a weapon to combat the Christian Gospel and to destroy Christians.[45]

Crainic's influence on his generation was substantial, as he was able to tap into the appeal of the mysticism and nationalism of Romanian Orthodox Christianity and use it to sway intellectual, student, and ordinary Christian citizen alike in favor of the racist, anti-Semitic movements that he saw as essential to secure the existence of Romania and the Romanian nation.[46] The Romanian Orthodox Church itself had strong anti-Semitic leanings, both in its senior hierarchy and among local clergy. Patriarch Miron Cristea did not speak out against anti-Semitism. To the contrary, he demonized the Jews and called for their departure from Romania :

> One has to be sorry for the poor Romanian people, whose very marrow is sucked out by the Jews. Not to react against the Jews means that we go open-eyed to our destruction… To defend ourselves is a national and patriotic duty… [Y]ou have sufficient qualities and opportunities to look for, find and acquire a country, a homeland that is not yet inhabited by others… Live, help each other, defend yourselves and exploit one another, but not us and other peoples whose entire wealth you are taking away with your ethnic and talmudic sophistications.[47]

As a political player loyal to King Carol, the Patriarch did try to limit the influence of the Iron Guard on local clergy. Thus, in March 1937, at the request of the Tătărescu

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43. It was here that Viorel Trifa, leader of the Student Movement of the Iron Guard, leader of the demonstration that ignited the Iron Guard rebellion in January 1941, and later Romanian Orthodox Archbishop of the United States, received his training. Despite his high ecclesiastical position, Trifa was denaturalized and deported from the United States because of his Iron Guard past. For a sympathetic rendition of Trifa's life, see Gerald J. Bobango, *Religion and Politics : Bishop Valerian Trifa and His Times* (Boulder : East European Monographs, 1981). On his deportation, see *The Washington Post*, August 15, 1984.
44. See "Problema evreească", in Nichifor Crainic, *Lupta pentru spiritul nou – Germania şi Italia în scrisul meu dela 1932 încoace* (Bucharest : Cugetarea, 1941), pp. 142-145.
45. This issue had preoccupied Crainic early in his career and grew in intensity as it took on greater political significance. For an early statement, see Nichifor Crainic, "Problema biblică," in *Icoanele vremii* (Bucharest : H. Steinberg, 1919), pp. 203-207. For later statements and development of the centrality of this religious-based argument, see *idem*, *Punctele cardinale în haos* (Bucharest, 1936) and *Ortodoxie şi etnocraţie* (henceforth : Crainic, *Ortodoxie*) (Bucharest : Cugetarea, 1937).
46. On Crainic's influence, see Z. Ornea, *Anii treizeci – Extrema dreaptă românească* (Bucharest : Editura Fundaţiei Culturale Române, 1995). See also Volovici, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-99. For an early expression of the separation of the Jewish Old Testament from the Christian New Testament, see Iacov, Metropolitan of Moldavia, *Înfruntarea jidovilor asupra legei şi a obiceiurilor lor, cu dovedirea din Sfânta şi Dumnezeeasca Scriptură atât din cea veche, cât şi din cea nouă* (Iaşi : Macarie, 1803). For an argument on the same point 135 years later, presented in the journal of the Theology Faculty where Crainic taught, see Pr. I. Popescu Mălăieşti, "Iudeii şi Românii," *Raze de lumină*, vol. 10, nos. 1-4 (Bucharest : Facultatea de Teologie, 1938), pp. 5-63.
47. See Cristea's attacks on the Jews in *Apărarea Naţională*, August 24, 1937, and *Curentul*, August 19, 1937. The quotation is from *Curentul*, August 19, 1937, as cited in Volovici, *op. cit.*, p. 55. See Cuza's enthusiastic reaction in *Apărarea Naţională*, August 24, 1937. On Miron Cristea, see Ancel, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-168.

government, the Patriarch assembled the Holy Synod of the Church and issued a decision that forbade local clergy from joining Iron Guard "nests" (*cuiburi*), allowing political demonstrations or symbols in their churches, or addressing politics in their sermons.[48] When Cristea became the first prime minister of the Royal Dictatorship in 1938, his government tried to subdue the anti-Semitic violence that had been unleashed under Goga and Cuza, but did not alter the anti-Semitic legislation they had introduced (see below). Thus Crainic's philosophy fit well within the theological-political stance of the Church.

Crainic had a long association with Cuza. He served as secretary general of the League of National Christian Defense and then, after its merger with Goga's National Agrarian Party, fulfilled the same function for the National Christian Party. After the brief government of the National Christian Party fell from power, Crainic became minister of national propaganda in the pro-Nazi government of Ion Gigurtu (July 4 – September 3, 1940), the last government of the Royal Dictatorship and the first in which a number of Iron Guard ministers participated. Days later, Crainic hailed the arrival of the National Legionary state as a passage from "death to resurrection."[49]

In addition to playing a traditional political role, the League of National Christian Defense organized militant student groups, led initially by Codreanu, and blue-shirted paramilitary units called *Lăncieri* that disrupted university life, terrorized the country's Jews, and contributed to the street violence that became increasingly prevalent as the interwar years progressed. The League's electoral strength in the twenties never exceeded 4.76 percent of the vote. It fell to less than the 2 percent required by law for parliamentary representation in the 1927 and 1928 elections after Codreanu had broken away from the League to found his own movement, the Iron Guard. But, by the 1933 elections the League had recovered to 4.47 percent of the vote, and Cuza's party acquired nine seats in the Chamber of Deputies. While the party was an influential voice of uncompromising anti-Semitism and was feared on the streets, it was losing influence to the youthful Iron Guard, and the likelihood that it would achieve political power was remote.

With encouragement from the royal palace, Crainic appears to have played a critical role in organizing the merger of the National Agrarian Party and the League of National Christian Defense to form the National Christian Party (PNC). The merger took place on July 16, 1935. Cuza, 78 years old, was elected "supreme chief" of the new party, while Goga, at 53, became its president and *de facto* leader. Crainic became secretary general. The new party pooled the parliamentary seats of the separate Goga and Cuza parties, giving the PNC a total of eighteen seats. The League's swastika was adopted as the official symbol of the new party. Goga's newspaper *Ţara noastră* became the official party newspaper. Goga and Cuza were quick to associate the PNC with international fascist causes and retained the *Lăncieri* as their paramilitary force. Between 1935 and 1937, the *Lăncieri* were responsible for Jew-baiting and brutality that rivaled that perpetrated by the Iron Guard. Clashes between the *Lăncieri* and Iron Guard units were not

48. Iancu, *Les Juifs*, p. 301.

49. See Crainic's praise of Cuza's work in Nichifor Crainic, "Naţionalitatea în artă," *Gândirea*, March 1935; and his effusive welcome of the National Legionary state in "Revoluţia legionară," *Gândirea*, October 1940.

unusual and were often bloody.[50] Imitating Hitler and Mussolini, Goga and Cuza organized massive displays of disciplined manpower in an effort to establish a claim to power. They assembled 200,000 blue-shirted men in Bucharest on November 8, 1936, on the occasion of a PNC congress.[51]

The platform of the PNC included the anti-Semitic positions that had been in the platforms of Goga and Cuza's pre-merger parties. They were pro-monarchy, but advocated modifications to the 1923 Constitution to ensure ethnic Romanian domination in all areas of national life. They sought to guarantee the "national character" of the press and all cultural activity. The *numerus clausus* was to be imposed on the Jews. They wanted to expel Jews if they or their ancestors had entered the country "by fraud" or "after the signing of the peace treaty." In addition to the *numerus clausus*, Jews who remained in the country were to be excluded from all public offices and the civil service.[52] Unlike the Iron Guard, Goga and Cuza did not call for regime change, but they were anxious to assume the reins of government in order to implement the anti-Semitic measures they had advocated for decades.

Goga and Cuza wanted to establish closer relations with Germany, but not at the risk of the country's borders. They had been actively courted by elements of the Nazi regime. As early as 1934, Alfred Rosenberg and Arno Schickedanz of the Nazi Party's *Aussenpolitisches Amt* settled on Goga as the most promising leader of any future *Volksbewegung* in Romania :

> A basically sound anti-Semitic tendency existed in [Romania]. But in spite of repeated efforts this tendency had never risen above the limitations of a club because of scientific [academic] doctrinaire leadership. What was lacking was the guiding leadership of a political personality. After manifold, groping trials, the Bureau believed to have found such a personality – the former minister and poet, Octavian Goga.

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50. While the analyses by the authors reflect the political era in which these books were written, on the activity of the National Christian Party, see Florea Nedelcu, *Viaţa politică din România în preajma instaurării dictaturii regale* (Cluj : Dacia, 1973), and Gheorghe T. Pop, *Caracterul antinaţional şi antipopular al activităţii Partidului Naţional-Creştin* (Cluj : Dacia, 1978). On Crainic's role in the merger, see Nedelcu, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92. On other factors leading to the merger, see Shapiro, "Prelude," pp. 50-54. On PNC violence, see Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-296 ; and microfilmed *Siguranţă* and Police files in United States Holocaust Memorial Museum/Romanian Information (Intelligence) Service (henceforth : USHMM/SRI), RG 25.004M, esp. roll 97, files 560 and 566 ; roll 106, files 1153 and 1154 ; and roll 107, files 1157 and 1159.
51. The PNC leadership made a nationwide call (*chemare*) for its adherents to descend on Bucharest, hoping to assemble 500,000 men in order to "demonstrate to the country and the whole world our unmatchable power in the country, and thus our right to govern." The appeal to the "soldiers of the swastika" called for the assembly to be peaceful, but noted that those who did not come would be considered deserters (see the poster issued by the PNC organization of Neamţ county in USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M.) Goga claimed later that 200,000 adherents had participated. The German minister to Romania, Fabricius, estimated the number at between 100,000 and 120,000 ; see Shapiro, "Prelude," p. 51.
52. Using the standard that they proposed, Goga and Cuza estimated that more than one quarter of Romania's Jews would have been expelled under these guidelines. On the platform, see International Reference Library, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-177 ; and Cristian Sandache, *Doctrina naţional-creştină în România* (Bucharest : Paideia, 1997).

From 1934 on, Goga was their principal Romanian client, and they provided him with both material and advisory assistance.[53]

The king's objections to German involvement in Romania's domestic politics kept the PNC far from the reins of power until 1937. The December elections of that year, however, resulted in a dramatic change of the party's fortunes. Precipitated by the expiration of the four-year term of the Parliament elected in December 1933, the elections represented the first and last time in interwar Romania that the party that organized the elections did not secure a parliamentary majority.[54] The National Peasant Party, Iron Guard, and Gheorghe Brătianu's "Young Liberal" Party concluded an "electoral non-aggression pact" to combat governmental manipulation of the elections, but in the process the National Peasant Party and the Young Liberals eliminated themselves from suitability to govern in the king's eyes. The election campaign was marked by violent armed clashes between the PNC's *Lăncieri* and the Iron Guard.[55] The *Aussenpolitisches Amt* tried to arrange an alliance between the PNC and the Iron Guard, but failed.[56] Codreanu saw the PNC as simply a different face of the established regime, and instructed his followers not to vote for PNC candidates under any circumstances, even in districts where no Iron Guard candidate was running.

The PNC ran an independent list of candidates in the elections. The German minister in Bucharest gave them little chance of success, and recommended to the German Foreign Ministry that Germany not endorse any right-wing party, but count on the victory of Tătărescu's Liberal Party, which was "increasingly anti-Semitic, increasingly willing to deal with Germany [and prepared] to protect the German minority."[57] When voting took place on December 20, 1937, the PNC received only 9.15 percent of the vote, barely more than the combined 8.56 percent of the vote Goga and Cuza, running separately, had attracted in 1933. Significant support for the party existed only in Northern Moldavia and Bessarabia – Cuza's traditional base. In all other parts of Romania the Iron Guard was clearly the dominant party of the political Right.[58]

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53. Afred Rosenberg's *Aussenpolitisches Amt* (APA) of the NSDAP claimed to have been the decisive force for uniting Goga and Cuza, hoping to create a pro-German political party that might be acceptable to King Carol; see "Short Activity Report of the APA of the NSDAP, 1935" (IMT Document 003-PS), Office of the United States Chief Council for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington, 1946), vol. 3, p. 15. The quoted passage is from "Brief Report on the Activities of the APA of the NSDAP from 1933 to 1943" (IMT Document 007-PS), *ibid.,* vol. 3, p. 36. Rosenberg devised many plans to filter German funds to Goga and the PNC. In 1934 he tried to manipulate a Romanian-German clearing agreement to provide 700,000 RM. He passed funds to the PNC through Radu Lecca, a Bucharest correspondent of the *Volkischer Beobachter*, who later served the Antonescu regime as chief of the Government's Commissariat for Jewish Affairs. A number of payments are clearly documented, as are shipments of swastika badges and campaign literature printed in Germany. Figures for the total aid provided are thus far not available.
54. A useful analysis from this perspective is Matei Dogan, *Analiza statistică a "democraţiei parlamentare" din România* (Bucharest: Editura Partidului Social-Democrat, 1946).
55. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, p. 293.
56. "Brief Report on the Activities of the APA of the NSDAP from 1933 to 1943," *loc. cit.*, p. 36.
57. Fabricius Report to German Foreign Ministry, July 6, 1937, Captured German Documents, U.S. National Archives (henceforth: NARA) Microcopy no. T-120, series 1986, frame 440810-821.
58. The results for parties that achieved the 2 percent minimum for representation in the Chamber of Deputies, were as follows: Government bloc 35.92 percent/152 seats; National Peasant Party

Despite this poor showing in the elections, within a matter of days Octavian Goga was prime minister. Because the Liberal Party failed to achieve a parliamentary majority even while organizing the elections, and because of his strained relations with the leadership of the National Peasant Party, King Carol's choices were actually limited. He feared that the Iron Guard might try to topple him from the throne, or move the country abruptly closer to Germany and Italy diplomatically, or simply bring chaos.

In the PNC's favor, the party leadership did not appear to constitute a threat to the king's authority. With limited popular support, the PNC might prove a pliant tool for Carol's achievement of his own authoritarian goals. The appointment of Goga might appease the Nazis without undermining Romania's security arrangements with Britain and France, to which the king gave great significance. Carol might have been trying to steal the thunder of the more threatening Iron Guard by calling on the right-wing, conservative, but vociferously anti-Semitic PNC. The king may have viewed summoning Goga and Cuza to govern as simply an interim step toward new elections or a calculated maneuver to demonstrate that parliamentary democracy could no longer function in Romania. Whatever the king's motivation, a nominally National Christian Party government took office on December 28, 1937. Cuza became minister without portfolio; his son Gheorghe became minister of labor. To limit the freedom of action of the PNC leadership both at home and abroad, the king appointed ministers of his own choosing who were not PNC members to key security, military, and diplomatic positions in the new government. In spite of these precautions, the appointment of the PNC government was greeted with alarm in Western Europe because Goga was considered to be a "declared disciple and worshipper of the brown-shirted Messiah of Nazi Germany."[59]

However limited their power, Goga and Cuza lost little time in seeking to implement their anti-Semitic platform. In his inaugural proclamation, prime minister Goga declared:

> Romania for the Romanians! That is the birth certificate of the new Cabinet. We believe in the rebirth of the Romanian nation with its Christian Church. We believe that it is a sacred duty to impress the stamp of our ethnic domination in all areas of political life.[60]

Governing through decree-laws, without parliamentary sanction, the PNC directed its first administrative measures against the Jewish minority. Jewish journalists were deprived of their press privileges. Newspapers considered by the government to be Jewish owned or dominated, including *Dimineaţa*, *Adevărul*, and *Lupta* as well as Jewish provincial newspapers that appeared in Yiddish and Hebrew, were shut down. Jews on public payrolls were fired, and all state aid to Jewish institutions was withdrawn.

20.40 percent/86 seats; Legionary movement 15.58 percent/66 seats; PNC 9.15 percent/39 seats; Magyar Party 4.43 percent/19 seats; National Liberal Party (Gh. Brătianu) 3.89 percent/16 seats; Radical Peasant Party (G. Iunian) 2.25 percent/9 seats. For a statistical analysis of the 1937 election, especially relating to the respective strength of the PNC and the Iron Guard in different counties, see Shapiro, "Prelude," *loc. cit*. See also C. Enescu, "Semnificaţia alegerilor din decemvrie 1937 în evoluţia politică a neamului Românesc," *Sociologie Românească*, vol. 2, nos. 11-12 (November-December 1937), pp. 512-526.

59. On the King's motivation to call the PNC to govern, see Shapiro, "Prelude," *loc. cit*. The quote is from A.L. Easterman, *King Carol, Hitler and Lupescu* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1942), p. 101.
60. As cited in Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, *L'Envoyé de l'Archange* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1939), p. 186.

Accused of poisoning the peasantry and prostituting young Romanian Christian girls, Jews were declared unfit to hold liquor licenses or to employ non-Jewish female servants under the age of forty. Yiddish, long used as a language of public administration in Bessarabia and Northern Moldavia, was declared unacceptable. (A decree to ban all Jewish lawyers from the bar was drafted, but not promulgated.) Certain Jewish real properties, such as the land and buildings of the Jewish Center (*Cămin evreiesc*) in Cernăuţi, were taken over by the state.[61]

Most significantly, in accordance with the PNC platform of 1935, the government announced Decree-law no. 169 of January 22, 1938, calling for the review of the citizenship status of Jews. The law in effect invalidated citizenship granted to Jews after the beginning of World War I. It required that within forty days of the publication of citizenship lists all Jews, however long their families had resided in Romania, submit their citizenship papers, along with specified supporting materials, for "verification." Jews who did not comply or whose supporting materials were considered deficient would be declared "foreigners." In addition to loss of political rights, this would also mean the loss of employment or professional rights for many Jews, and potential deportation at the pleasure of the government.[62]

These anti-Semitic measures were intended by Goga and Cuza to increase the PNC's popularity before new elections were held and to reassure their patrons in Berlin that they could move Romania closer to Germany, the king's preemption of the government's foreign policy, defense and security functions notwithstanding. They also had a dramatic impact on Romanian Jews. Many lost their jobs almost overnight. Some Jews who lived in rural areas found themselves deprived of a way to make a living and had to move to a town or city, leaving any real or unmovable property behind. All experienced the insecurity of not knowing where the government's fist would strike next and whether any documentation would satisfy the overseers of the citizenship review. While the PNC government was ousted from power before the review process was completed, Decree-law no. 169 remained in force under the Royal Dictatorship. When final statistics were tallied, of the 203,423 family requests for review submitted, 73,253 Romanian Jewish families – a total of 225,222 Jews – lost their citizenship as a result of the National Christian Party's initiative.[63]

The consequences were disastrous not only for the Jews, but for the new government and country as well. Romanian Jews declared an economic boycott, withdrew their bank deposits, sold their stocks, and organized a tariff and tax strike. Jews outside Romania brought the situation before their respective governments and the League of Nations.

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61. On the PNC government's anti-Semitic decrees and ordinances, their effects, and the reactions they evoked inside Romania and abroad, see Ancel, *Contribuţii*, pp. 65-84 ; Iancu, *Les Juifs*, pp. 303-313 ; and Shapiro, "Prelude," pp. 72-74. Once it had been seized, the Jewish Center was turned over to the Metropolitan Church of Bukovina.
62. For the government's referat and the text of the decree, see Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944*, vol. 1, *Legislaţia antievreiască* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1993), pp. 25-32.
63. See Ancel, *Contribuţii*, p. 81 ; and the official report "Studiu asupra problemei evreieşti în România, 1942," from which his statistics are drawn, in Jean Ancel (ed.), *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem : Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986), vol. 10, no. 107, p. 255. Iancu provides slightly different statistics in Iancu, *Les Juifs*, p. 312. An official tabulation presented under the Royal Dictatorship appeared in *Monitorul Oficial*, November 24, 1939, cited in part in Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 33-36.

France and Britain both used the opportunity that the anti-Jewish measures provided to express their dissatisfaction with a government they perceived to be tilting toward Nazism and Nazi Germany. By the end of January, the Quay d'Orsay had let it be known that France would consider itself relieved from its alliance obligations to Romania, which included a border guarantee, military training assistance, and armaments credits, unless the anti-Semitic measures were repealed. On January 22, the British government informed the Romanians that King Carol's state visit to Great Britain scheduled for March 21 would be postponed indefinitely. The British minister to Bucharest, Reginald Hoare, told the king's confidant Constantin Argetoianu that Britain wanted the immediate removal of the Goga government.[64]

In the face of growing economic chaos and diplomatic pressure from Romania's allies, the situation of the PNC government deteriorated rapidly. Having hoped to assume the lead position on the Romanian Right, Goga and Cuza appeared to be losing ground to the Iron Guard in spite of interior minister Armand Călinescu's efforts to suppress Codreanu's movement. Neither Italy nor Germany extended full support either. After an Iron Guard delegation to Rome was welcomed by huge crowds and with full official honors, Goga's protest led Italian foreign minister Ciano to conclude that the PNC government was one of transition, "a sort of von Papen government" that would soon yield to a Codreanu take-over.[65] When Goga used his New Year's message to Hitler to seek a German guarantee of Romania's boundaries, Hitler's Presidential Chancellery did not permit the message to be published in Germany and offered no guarantee.[66] Fearing that Germany, too, might prefer the Iron Guard, Goga charged that 17,000 kilograms of printed material had been shipped to the Iron Guard via the German Foreign Ministry (*Auswärtiges Amt*) and demanded that German support for the Iron Guard be terminated.[67]

Internal harmony within the PNC also deteriorated. Cuza wanted radical action against the Jews and rapid movement toward adherence to the Axis. In addition, he sought a free hand to utilize the *Lăncieri* in street actions against the Jews and against the Iron Guard. Cuza was furious when Goga, seeking to schedule a new set of elections, opposed the terror campaign that resulted. Cuza also objected when Goga first made exceptions to anti-Semitic decrees for personal friends and then sought to delay parts of the anti-Semitic campaign until after the elections.[68] As for rapid movement toward adherence to the Axis, Goga had been given little power for initiative in foreign affairs and was in no position to satisfy Cuza's demands. Protesting foreign minister Micescu's

64. Shapiro, "Prelude," pp. 73-75.
65. *Ciano's Hidden Diary, 1937-1938*, trans. Andreas Mayor (New York, 1953), p. 62, entry of January 7, 1938.
66. *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, *1918-1945*, series D (Washington, 1957-1966), vol. 5 (henceforth: *DGFP*), document 157, Memorandum of the Presidential Chancellery, January 1, 1938.
67. Heinburg of Foreign Ministry to War Ministry, Abteilung Ausland, January 3, 1938; and Foreign Ministry to Presidential Chancellery and *Reich* Chancellery, January 5, 1938; in Captured German Documents, NARA Microcopy no. T-120, series 1945, frame 435399-400 and 435408. Also *DGFP*, document 164, Chief of Reich Chancellery to Foreign Minister, January 18, 1938.
68. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, König Carol und Marschall Antonescu – Die Deutsch-Rumanische Beziehungen, 1938-1944* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1954), p. 16; and Fabricius to Foreign Ministry, February 12, 1938, in Captured German Documents, NARA Microcopy no. T-120, series 1988, frame 440988-997.

visit to the League of Nations, Cuza and his son refused to take part in the reception arranged to welcome the foreign minister home from his first diplomatic journey.[69]

When the electoral campaign opened on February 6 for the parliamentary elections scheduled for March 2, violence of such alarming proportions broke out that there was fear, including among German diplomats on the scene, that the situation would degenerate into total chaos. On the first day of the campaign fierce clashes took place between Iron Guard units on the one hand and Cuzist *Lăncieri* and Călinescu's government security forces and police on the other.[70] Codreanu reported that two Iron Guard men were killed, 52 wounded, and 450 arrested.[71] Goga was stunned. Through intermediaries that are not yet conclusively identified, he reached an agreement with Codreanu to end the violence. On February 8 they announced that while both the PNC and the Iron Guard would present lists of candidates for the scheduled elections, the Iron Guard had agreed to abstain from participation in the electoral campaign.[72] This collaboration by Goga with the leader of a movement that King Carol correctly thought was trying to remove him from the throne was more than the king could tolerate. He summoned Goga on February 10 and demanded his resignation. On February 11 he declared the Constitution of 1923 invalid. Four days later he outlawed political parties, and on February 20 he promulgated a new constitution establishing a royal dictatorship.

As Romania's entanglement with Nazi Germany grew more intimate, the National Christian Party government of December 1937 – February 1938 was hailed in both countries as the initiator of their collaboration and the regime responsible for the rise to prominence of wartime dictator Ion Antonescu. In 1943 Alfred Rosenberg wrote, "Antonescu today appears in practice as executor of the heritage bequeathed to him by Goga."[73] Antonescu stated, "Romania fulfills today the dreams and the ideals of A.C. Cuza and Octavian Goga, setting out to solve the Jewish Question [according to] the Nazi program."[74] This continuity of purpose regarding the Jews was understandable and part of a progression in Romanian thought that Goga, Cuza, and Antonescu could trace back nearly 100 years. Adherents of the PNC reappeared as part of the wartime regime's civilian bureaucracy after Antonescu ended his brief cooperation with Codreanu's successors and crushed the Iron Guard uprising of January 1941.[75]

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69. Institutul de Studii Istorice şi Social-Politice de pe lângă Comitetul Central al Partidului Comunist Român (ISISP), *Studii privind politica externă a României* (Bucharest, 1969), p. 201.
70. Fabricius to Foreign Ministry, February 9, 1938, in Captured German Documents, NARA Microcopy no. T-120, series 1988, frame 440972-975.
71. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, p. 295.
72. On Goga's anger and his own claim to have served as intermediary, see the account by Michel Sturdza, future Iron Guard foreign minister in the National Legionary state, in Michel Sturdza, *The Suicide of Europe* (Boston: Western Islands, 1968), pp. 104-105. On the Goga-Codreanu agreement, see Weber, "Romania," *loc. cit.*, p. 551; Fabricius to Foreign Ministry, February 9, 1938, in Captured German Documents, NARA Microcopy no. T-120, series 1988, frame 440972-975; and Shapiro, "Prelude," pp. 83-84. Codreanu's order to the Iron Guard to cease electoral activity is in a Manifesto dated February 8, 1937, in Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *Circulări şi Manifeste* (hencenforth: Codreanu, *Circulări*) (Colecţia "Omul Nou", 1951), pp. 232-233.
73. "Brief Report on the Activities of the APA of the NSDAP from 1933 to 1943," *loc. cit.*, p. 40.
74. *Blood Bath in Rumania* (New York: The Record, 1942), p. 33.
75. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-329.

Anti-Semitism of the Iron Guard

Octavian Goga and A.C. Cuza were clearly the products of the traditional political regime established in the mid-nineteenth century and inherited by Greater Romania after World War I. They functioned within it, conceived their political strategies based on it, rose to power through it, and clung to it as their power evaporated. The same could not be said of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and the movement he founded, the Iron Guard. The PNC was pro-monarchy and pro-Carol ; the Iron Guard was not. The leadership of the PNC sought to maintain relations of equality, if not cordiality, with the political leadership of other political parties ; the Iron Guard did not and defined itself differently, not as a party, but as a "movement." The PNC wanted to retain parliamentary government, even if it was to be reshaped and organized along more elitist and corporatist lines ; the Iron Guard sought to overturn the parliamentary regime. Goga and Cuza valued their relationships with the national cultural and religious establishment at the top of Romania's social pyramid ; the Legion was anti-establishment, embracing youthful "action," peasantist populism, and mystical religiosity as exemplified by the (often illiterate) local clergy. The PNC officially embraced the *numerus clausus* ; the Iron Guard rejected it as not sufficiently radical to solve the "Jewish problem."[76]

Son of a long-time associate of A.C. Cuza, Codreanu became a law student at the University of Iaşi, where he imbibed the raw anti-Semitism and pseudo-scientific theory that Cuza and N.C. Paulescu professed. He became politically active at the university under Cuza's protection, becoming president of the Law Students Association and, inspired by articles in *Apărarea Naţională*, which Cuza and Paulescu had founded in 1922, founded the Association of Christian Students that same year with the purpose of "defending our fatherland against Jewish invasion." The leaders of the Association embraced the principles of "anti-democracy," "discipline," and "leadership."[77]

At the founding of the League of National Christian Defense in March 1923, Cuza entrusted the youthful Codreanu with the task of organizing the League on a nationwide basis, which he set out to do through the organization of a youth corps outside the traditional political model. Cuza had first organized student paramilitary units in 1922, when he was one of the chairmen of the short-lived National Christian Union, but they were clearly subordinated to the Union's senior leadership. It did not take long for conflict to develop between Cuza and Codreanu. Cuza wanted to run the League along the lines of a traditional political party, albeit an extremist and sometimes violent one, and to press within the parliamentary system for specific anti-Semitic goals. Codreanu, on the other hand, not only wanted more power for himself, in keeping with the "leadership"

76. Numerous scholarly studies of the Iron Guard exist, and an abundance of ideological, historical, and memorial literature has been left by Iron Guard leaders, members, sympathizers and exiles. Among the more important scholarly analyses are Armin Heinen, *Die Legion Erzengel Michael in Rumanien – Soziale Bewegung und politische Organisation* (Munich : R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1986) ; Radu Ioanid, *The Sword of the Archangel – Fascist Ideology in Romania* (Boulder : East European Monographs, 1990) ; Francisco Viega, *La Mistica del Ultranacionalismo – Historia de la Guardia de Hierro* (Barcelona : Bellaterra, 1989) ; Eugen Weber, "The Men of the Archangel," in George L. Mosse (ed.), *International Fascism* (London and Beverly Hills : Sage, 1979), pp. 317-343 ; Eugen Weber, "Romania," in Rogger and Weber (eds.), *op. cit.* ; and Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*

77. Codreanu, *For My Legionaries*, pp. 45, 48.

principle, but also sought to make the League a revolutionary "movement of moral rejuvenation," in which organized violence, not only against Jews but against the establishment, was an acceptable, even preferred, method of accomplishing the movement's goals. By 1927 relations between the two men had become so strained that Codreanu and his followers resigned from the League on June 24. They founded their own movement, first called the Legion of the Archangel Michael, then the Iron Guard.[78]

Anti-Semitism was a central element of Iron Guard ideology. In 1937, Codreanu wrote in his Circular no. 119 :

> The historical mission of our generation is the resolution of the kike problem. All of our battles of the past 15 years have had this purpose, and all of our life's efforts from now on will have this purpose.[79]

The anti-Semitism of the Iron Guard harkened back to the Romanian voices of anti-Semitic intolerance that had inspired Cuza and others in the decades before the Iron Guard appeared on the scene. In *Pentru legionari*, Codreanu specifically acknowledged the inspiration he had received from Conta, Alecsandri, Kogălniceanu, Eminescu, Hasdeu, Xenopol and others, not to mention A.C. Cuza, Paulescu and more modern purveyors of anti-Semitism. All the traditional themes were absorbed by the Legion : refusal of citizenship rights ; mass invasion of Jews from the East ; Jewish over-population in Romania's cities ; exploitation of the peasantry through alcohol, tobacco, and other vices ; control of the press ; de-nationalization of Romanian culture ; outright service to Romania's enemies ; and representation of foreign interests.

Guardist anti-Semitism also contained new elements, however. It was not directed against the Jews alone, but also against "Judaized" Romanians – especially politicians – who had been corrupted by Jews and were allowing the "takeover" of Romania by Jews. It embraced dictatorship as an organizational principle and violence as a tool to combat the Jewish menace – the "Judaic State" – which had organized itself around the Talmud and the Kehillah, and more recently in the form of Bolshevism and communism.[80] And it glorified spiritual struggle and morality grounded in the mystical imagery of the Romanian Orthodox Church.[81]

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78. The relationship between the two men and the issues around which it developed and faltered are described in Codreanu's autobiographical statement of purpose, *Pentru legionari* (*For My Legionaries*), first published in 1936. For Cuza's defense of the student movement before the resignation of Codreanu from the League of National Christian Defense, see *Mişcările studenţeşti şi cauzele lor – Declaraţie făcută înaintea comisiunei de anchetă de A.C. Cuza* (Bucharest : Tipografia Deleormanul, 1925). The term *Iron Guard* is used to designate Codreanu's movement in this chapter, recognizing that the official name of the movement changed from time to time (e.g., Legion of the Archangel Michael, All for the Fatherland) and that the term *the Legionary movement* is also widely used by scholars.
79. Codreanu, *Circulări*, p. 199.
80. *Idem*, *For My Legionaries*, pp. 103, 222-224.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-127, 213-214. The first passage relates how the saint's name day and an icon of the Archangel Michael, which Codreanu and his colleagues viewed while imprisoned in Văcăreşti Monastery in 1923, provided inspiration for naming the new youth movement they planned – the Legion of the Archangel Michael. Saintly purity, the sword, and the battle against Satan were central concepts. The second passage, subtitled "Matter versus Spirit" by Codreanu, cited "moral strength," "unshaken faith," and "matter's subordination to the spirit" as the guarantors of victory over the "satanic forces coalesced with the purpose of destroying us."

These three elements produced dramatic consequences. Beginning in 1923, Codreanu began identifying "traitors," Romanians who betrayed their people "for Judas's silver pieces," with the intention of killing them. The fiercest punishment, argued Codreanu, "ought to fall first on the traitor, second on the enemy."[82] The first list of "traitors" drawn up in 1923 included six Cabinet ministers, headed by George Mârzescu, who had drafted the principal law through which Jews obtained citizenship following the promulgation of Romania's new constitution that year. Over the next 18 years, Codreanu's movement was responsible for vicious incidents of street violence, aimed mainly at Jews; the assassination of two incumbent prime ministers (Ion Duca in 1933 and Armand Călinescu in 1939); and the murders of numerous Cabinet ministers and other local and national personalities in both the political and cultural spheres. With their battle against the established order integrally linked together with their "life and death" battle against the Jews, Iron Guard violence culminated on November 26-27, 1940, with the murder of sixty-four leading personalities and defenders of the interwar political order (including one former prime minister) at Jilava Prison; the murder of six additional police prefects the same night; the seizure from their homes, with the intention of killing them, of seven additional political and internal security leaders (including three former prime ministers); and the brutal murders of Nicolae Iorga, also a former prime minister, and former minister Virgil Madgearu of the National Peasant Party, also on the same night. The Iron Guard Rebellion of January 1941 also began as an assault on the established order, at this point personified by Ion Antonescu, but of course was again integrally related to street attacks on the Jews, for whom the *rebeliune* was a "pogrom" in which at least 120 Jews were murdered.[83]

The Iron Guard was considered by King Carol to be a threat to his policies, his place on the throne, and possibly to the dynasty itself. The movement was declared illegal three times by three separate governments in the early thirties, was aggressively surveilled by the Tătărescu government of 1933-1937, and was pursued relentlessly during the Royal Dictatorship. Codreanu himself was murdered in November 1938 while in custody of the state security police (*Siguranţa*). The assassination of Armand Călinescu in September 1939 was followed by yet more arrests and the flight of some members of the movement to Germany. Following just six months of relative freedom of action during the government of Ion Gigurtu (July-September 1940) and the National Legionary state (September 1940 – January 1941), the movement was again outlawed following the Iron Guard Rebellion. Clearly, the tying together of anti-Semitism and anti-establishment ideology had its costs.

The mystical-religious component of Legionary anti-Semitism also went beyond the traditional anti-Semitic themes of the Church. The Iron Guard did not reject earlier ideas. It used the myths of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to propagandize village clergy; condemned rabbis, the Talmud and the Kehillah as satanic weapons for Jewish domination; and argued that the Old Testament was not of Jewish origin and that modern

82. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

83. Comandantul Militar al Capitalei, *Asasinatele dela Jilava, Snagov şi Strejnicul – 26-27 noemvrie 1940* (Bucharest: *Monitorul Oficial* and Imprimeriile Statului, 1941); Preşedinţia Consiliului de Miniştri, *Pe marginea prăpastiei – 21-23 ianuarie 1941*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: *Monitorul Oficial* and Imprimeriile Statului, 1942); and Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră. Suferinţele evreilor din România, 1940-1944*, vol. 1, *Legionarii şi Rebeliunea* (Bucharest: Atelierele grafice Socec, 1946).

Jews (*iudei*, *evrei*, *jidani*) were not the descendants of the Biblical Hebrews. Codreanu emphasized the national-religious connection, charging the Jews with seeking to break the "spiritual link" between the Romanian people and God, so that the Jews could destroy the Romanian nation.[84] The language used by Legionary writers was replete with religious symbolism. The elite corps of the Legion was dubbed the "Brotherhood of the Cross" (*Frăţie de Cruce*), Iron Guard members who were killed fighting for Franco in Spain were called "the crucified ones" (*Crucificaţii*).[85]

Codreanu's critics accused him of seeking to emulate Mussolini and Hitler. But in contrast to the fascist movements in Italy and Germany, which were areligious or anti-religious in nature, the Iron Guard "was a movement of religious rebirth or, perhaps more precisely, a movement of regeneration with religious overtones."[86] This was, of course, for a purpose. In *Pentru legionari*, Codreanu relates a supper with his followers in Văcăreşti Prison after their plot to kill "Judaized" Romanian political leaders was discovered. He says to his disciples, "I am compelled to bring you sad news. The betrayer has been identified. He is in our midst, sitting at the table with us." The betrayer is identified, and Codreanu forgives him.[87] The language of sacrifice (*jertfă*), of gladly accepting death to save the nation, of crucifixion and of resurrection (*reînviere*) was used constantly by Iron Guard writers and by Codreanu himself. When the names of fallen Iron Guardists were read out at meetings and demonstrations, "present" (*prezent*) was the accepted refrain. And after Codreanu's death, it was not uncommon for members of the Legion to use the phrase "The Captain is with us!" (*Căpitanul e cu noi!*) or to refer to his "resurrection."[88]

The Legion's combined call for spiritual renewal, immersion in the mystical, violent battle against Satan (i.e., the Jews), Romanian Orthodox faith, "leadership" by an appropriately anointed figure, and overthrow of the established ("Judaized") order had immense appeal for the generation of young Romanian intellectuals that developed during the interwar period, just as traditional anti-Semitism had proved a magnet for the country's nineteenth and early-twentieth-century elites. The Iron Guard appeared to offer an integrated, purposeful philosophy of life and of death. The new generation of intellectuals for whom anti-Semitism was an integral part of their Legionary "credo" (*crez*), however, were not pseudo-scholars of the Cuza or Paulescu type. They were the main protagonists of Romanian cultural and intellectual identity in the mid-twentieth century. Some of those who survived World War II, like Eliade and Cioran, living outside Romania, became internationally recognized intellectual icons after the Holocaust, hiding their

84. Codreanu, *For My Legionaries*, p. 106.

85. See "La Icoană," *Pământul Strămoşesc*, August 1, 1927, in Ion Moţa, *Cranii de lemn – Articole 1922-1936*, 3rd ed. (Bucharest: Totul pentru Ţară, 1937), pp. 19-22. On this elite group, see Gh. Istrate, *Frăţia de Cruce* (1935; reprint, Colecţia "Omul Nou", 1952); Bănică Dobre, *Crucificaţii* (1937; reprint, Colecţia "Omul Nou", 1951).

86. Eugen Weber, "Romania," *loc. cit.*, p. 534.

87. *For My Legionaries*, pp. 126-127.

88. For numerous examples of Codreanu's use of related language, see Codreanu, *Circulări*. See *Corneliu Zelea Codreanu – Douăzeci de ani dela moarte* (Madrid: Carpaţii, 1958), p. 27. Also, the poem by Radu Gyr on p. 9: "Mormântul tău e numai Înviere/ Prin tine luminăm de Veşnicie." Ion Tolescu's article in the same volume, pp. 175-182, draws an explicit parallel between Codreanu and Jesus, closing with a drawing of an unidentified figure carrying a cross on his back.

past while demonstrating their genius. Others, like Crainic and Noica, faded into Romanian prison life, but saw the power of their thinking affect a post-Holocaust generation of Romanian youth that was also seeking, as they had done earlier, a destiny better than that offered by the country's established (communist) order. Some lesser lights, like Vintilă Horia and Horia Stamatu, continued their affiliation with the Iron Guard in exile after the war, trying to maintain Legionary vitality and hoping for a final resurrection of the movement before their own days ended.

The Legion produced a number of theoreticians whose ideas were important within the movement but less so in Romanian society as a whole. Nicolae Roşu, Vasile Marin, and others wrote books praising the Legion's new role on the Romanian scene, and especially the virtues of Codreanu.[89] None of these individuals had the ability to influence and impress that belonged to Nae Ionescu, Mircea Eliade, Nichifor Crainic, Emil Cioran, or Constantin Noica. These latter figures did not emerge from within the Iron Guard, but in the early thirties discovered in the movement the appealing promise of a "national revolution." These were the years when Greater Romania's promise, so glittering in the aftermath of World War I, appeared to be slipping away. Disillusioned by the failure of the "restoration" of Carol II to the throne in 1930 to address the country's woes, the so-called young generation of philosophers and scholars turned to the Legionary movement in pursuit of a national "resurrection."[90] Newspapers on the political Right, literary journals, and bookstores were filled with their writings. Their quest for philosophical, spiritual, and political renewal inclined them toward fascist doctrines, while their ethnic, nationalist, Romanian Orthodox focus impelled them toward the Legionary movement. Nae Ionescu joined first, and the others followed.[91]

Whatever their attitudes toward Jews before they affiliated with the Iron Guard, these thinkers all adopted radical anti-Semitic language and incorporated the anti-Semitic orientation of the Iron Guard into the intellectual framework they called "Romanianism."[92]

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89. Nicolae Roşu, *Orientări în Veac* (Bucharest: Cugetarea, 1937), and *Dialectica naţionalismului* (Bucharest: Cultura Naţională, 1935); and Vasile Marin, *Crez de generaţie* (henceforth: Marin, *Crez*) (Bucharest: Bucovina, 1937).
90. On the intellectual ferment on the Right in the thirties, see Ornea, *op. cit.*, and Volovici, *op. cit.* On the "young generation" in particular, see Ornea, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-220, and Volovici, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-94. On Iorga's political role in the early thirties, see his *Doi ani de restauraţie – Ce a fost, ce am vrut, ce am putut* (Vălenii de Munte: Tiparul Datina Românească, 1932). In the eyes of the "young generation," Iorga epitomized the values of the "old regime." He had been King Carol's tutor in the monarch's youth, and the Legion considered Carol an enemy. Iorga served as prime minister in the so-called "government of specialists" from mid-1931 to mid-1932, which declared the Iron Guard illegal. He also served on the Crown Council during the Royal Dictatorship from 1938 to 1940, again a period when the Iron Guard was outlawed.
91. Nae Ionescu used this phrase and dated his conversion to the Legion to fall 1933, just before it was banned by the National Liberal Party government of Ion G. Duca; see Ionescu's introduction to Marin, *Crez*. For professions of Legionary faith of the others, see, for example, Mircea Eliade, "De ce cred în biruinţa mişcării legionare" (hencenforth: Eliade, "De ce cred"), *Buna Vestire*, December 17, 1937; Emil Cioran, *Schimbarea la faţă a României* (Bucharest, 1937); Crainic, *Ortodoxie*; C. Noica, "Între parazitul din afară şi parazitul dinăuntru," *Vremea*, January 30, 1938.
92. On "Romanianism" (*românismul*) and the contribution made to it by each, see Volovici, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-94.

Nae Ionescu took the lead in definitively excluding the Jews from Romanian Christian society :

> Christians and Jews, two bodies alien to one another, which cannot fuse into a synthesis, between which there can only be peace… if one of them disappears.[93]

Cioran echoed the same sentiment of inevitable separation :

> The Jew is not our fellow being, our neighbor. However intimate we may become with him, a precipice divides us, whether we want it or not. It is as if he were descended from a different species of ape than we are and had been condemned from the beginning to a sterile tragedy, to everlasting cheated hopes. We cannot approach him as a human because the Jew is first a Jew and then a man.
>
> …We Romanians can only save ourselves by adopting a different political form. The Jews have resisted with all the means available to their subterranean imperialism, cynicism and centuries-old experience. What we must understand once and for all is that the Jews are not interested in living in a consolidated and self-aware Romania."[94]

Noica did the same :

> What we regret is that [the Jews] are forbidden to see and understand all that is good and truthful in Legionarism. We regret their suffering at not participating in any way, with not even a hope, with not even an illusion, in Romania's tomorrow.[95]

In 1936, Mircea Eliade returned to the language of the mid-nineteenth century to describe a Jewish invasion of the country and to excoriate the Romanian political class for permitting Romania to be overrun by Jews :

> Since the war, Jews have occupied the villages of Maramureş and Bukovina and gained the absolute majority in the towns and cities of Bessarabia… And if you tell them [the political leaders] that in the Bucegi you no longer hear Romanian, that in Maramureş, Bukovina, and Bessarabia they speak Yiddish, that the Romanian villages are dying and the face of the towns is changing, they consider that you are in the pay of the Germans or assure you that they have passed laws for the protection of national labor.[96]

In his public declaration of support for the Iron Guard a year later, Eliade, too, made it clear that the relationship between Romanians and Jews was, in fact, a battle to the death :

> Can the Romanian nation end its life in the saddest decay witnessed by history, undermined by misery and syphilis, conquered by Jews and torn to pieces by foreigners, demoralized, betrayed, sold for a few hundred million lei ?[97]

Iron Guard anti-Semitism, of course, was not limited to abstract consideration of the nature of Jews, Romanians, and their (non-)relationship. Legionary writers produced

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93. "Prefaţă" to Mihail Sebastian, *De două mii de ani* (Bucharest : Naţionala-Ciornei, 1934), p. xxviii.
94. Cioran, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-133 (English translation cited from Volovici, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 119-20).
95. Noica, *op. cit.*
96. Mircea Eliade, "Piloţii orbi," *Vremea*, September 19, 1936.
97. *Idem*, "De ce cred," *loc. cit.*

works intended to incite pogroms and crimes, and designed practical proposals of mass murder. In 1938, Alexandru Răzmeriţă, a Romanian Orthodox priest, described a plan for the total elimination of the Jews in the cities and their deportation to forced labor camps in the countryside. Attempts to escape the work camps would be punished by execution.[98] Traian Herseni developed Legionary racial theory, which combined the "doctrine of inequality" with a "doctrine of the betterment of the human races." Calling the racial purification of the Romanian people "a question of life and death," Herseni argued for a eugenics program and the complete separation of inferior races from the ethnic group.[99]

Weakened by Carol's dissolution of political parties in February 1938 and decimated after the killing of Codreanu and the assassination of prime minister Armand Călinescu in reprisal in November 1938 and September 1939, respectively, the Iron Guard got its first opportunity to give practical implementation to its anti-Semitic ideology from inside government during the last few months of the Royal Dictatorship.

The Royal Dictatorship and the Jews

On February 13, 1938, Patriarch Miron Cristea, the first prime minister under the Royal Dictatorship, issued a position statement that could not have been encouraging to Jews. The Patriarch established the following goals:

> ...Repair of the historical injustices of all sorts done to the dominant Romanian element, without acts of injustice toward the long established national minorities... Reexamination of the acquisition of citizenship after the war and annulment of all naturalizations made fraudulently and contrary to the vital interests of the Romanians... This reexamination... will also promote broader economic participation by the Romanian element. The organization of the departure from the country of foreign elements that, recently established in the country, damage and weaken our Romanian ethnic national character. Romania will cooperate... with other states that have an excess of Jewish population, helping [the Jews] to find their own country...[100]

The new Constitution promulgated by King Carol one week later promised equal rights to Romanian citizens, regardless of ethnic origin or religion (Paragraph 5), but also called for "preference to the majority nation"; allowed for laws that could differentially limit those rights (e.g., Paragraphs 12 and 22, regarding education and press freedom); restricted civil and military service to Romanian citizens belonging to "the majority strata of society" (Paragraph 62); and effectively prevented Jews, with the exception of the Chief Rabbi, from serving in Parliament. Provisions regarding the granting of citizenship to people who were not "ethnic Romanians" returned to the terms

98. Alexandru Răzmeriţă, *Cum să ne apărăm de evrei – Un plan de eliminare totală* (Turnu-Severin: Tipografia Minerva, 1938), pp. 65-69.
99. "Mitul sângelui," *Cuvântul*, November 23, 1940; and "Rasa şi destinul naţional", *Cuvântul*, January 16, 1941.
100. Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniştri*, p. 31.

of Article 11 of the 1877 Constitution, requiring a separate special law for each individual case.

This ambiguous, self-contradictory set of statements and provisions foreshadowed the inconsistency and uncertainty that would characterize the situation of Romania's Jews during all but the last months of the Royal Dictatorship. In this matter as in others, Carol and his ministers were trying to balance between policies that might keep the increasingly assertive Nazi regime in Germany satisfied and policies that would enable Romania to retain a degree of credibility and its security arrangements with France and Britain. Carol was cracking down on the Iron Guard internally and resisting the Nazis diplomatically. A more aggressive stance toward the Jews might have provided some maneuvering room vis-à-vis the Germans, but Carol knew, based on the recent protests from Paris and London that Goga's policies had elicited, that clearly-defined new anti-Semitic policies would set off reactions there that he wanted to avoid.

As a result, no new anti-Semitic legislation appeared for well over two years of the "new regime." But the Royal Dictatorship continued to implement the "review of citizenship" called for by the PNC government's Decree-law no. 169, which remained in force. This resulted in 225,222 Romanian Jews being deprived of their citizenship. In many cases citizenship was lost not because the mandated procedures had not been followed when citizenship had been granted, but simply because the documentation available then had been lost or scattered, or because it was beyond the financial means of some families to assemble the necessary evidence. The law was implemented by local authorities that were more lenient toward the petitioners in some districts and more severe in others, thus introducing a high degree of anxiety and uncertainty into the process. Jews might be expelled from their positions in one administrative district, while in another district Jews who had lost their jobs or whose shops had been closed during the PNC regime were allowed to go back to work. Still, a large number of Jews were no longer able to earn a living when they lost their citizenship, and it was not unusual for state authorities at both the national and the local levels to suggest to Jews that they might be better off emigrating "voluntarily."[101]

While no new explicitly anti-Semitic laws were promulgated until August 1940, a series of administrative decisions and instructions gradually imposed greater separation and material hardship on the Jews. While in theory Jews were not excluded from the Front of National Rebirth (*Frontul Renaşterii Naţionale*), the only political "party" permitted in the newly declared Royal Dictatorship, in practice Jews could not gain admission. Responding to their requests was postponed, because it made little sense to admit Jews whose citizenship status was being reviewed, and in order not to unnecessarily strain relations with Germany over the Jewish issue. When the Front of National Rebirth gave way to the Party of the Nation (*Partidul Naţiunii*) in June 1940, the situation became clearer. Members of the Iron Guard just released from prison were admissible into the new party ; Jews were not. In September 1938, the Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered that Jews who had lost their citizenship had to register as foreigners. Again, implementation of the order was inconsistent ; but the humiliation was not. In Bukovina, Royal Resident Gheorghe Alexianu, who would later serve the Antonescu regime as

101. See, for example, the radio remark of foreign minister Grigore Gafencu on February 1, 1939, cited in Ancel, *Contribuţii*, p. 104.

governor of Transnistria, ordered Jews who had lost their citizenship to register and suggested that it would be appropriate for them to sell their property and businesses within fourteen days. He also banned the speaking of Yiddish in public, which made it more difficult for the Jews of the region to function professionally, survive commercially, or simply live normally.

Additional administrative measures reinforced the gradual "disengagement" to which Jews were subjected. Recipients of foreign university and professional degrees were required to seek recertification of their degrees in order to teach or practice their professions. Job applicants had to include documentation of their ethnic origin with their requests, encouraging the evaluators to make ethnicity part of their decision-making process. Because many Jews had been forced to study abroad to avoid becoming victims of Iron Guard and LANC youth group violence at Romanian universities and professional schools, this measure was especially damaging as well as demeaning for Jews. Restrictions were placed on Jewish participation in banking and accounting, pharmacies, publishing houses, and other fields of professional activity.[102]

The Romanian government continued to hope that Jews would leave the country "voluntarily" as their conditions deteriorated. The government tried through diplomatic channels to encourage a cooperative effort for mass emigration of Jews from Romania, Poland, and other European countries.[103] As time passed, however, fewer and fewer Romanian Jews had the connections abroad or the resources necessary to emigrate. Moreover, the Evian Conference in July 1938 demonstrated just how few countries were prepared to receive even a modest number of Jews.

Anti-Semitic violence during the first two years of the Royal Dictatorship was limited. The Iron Guard had been dissolved at the beginning of the new regime, as had the PNC's *Lăncieri*. Interior minister and later prime minister Armand Călinescu gave priority to preventing Legionary violence from upsetting the country's already difficult political situation. After Călinescu himself fell victim to Legionary assassins in September 1939, reprisals and arrests by the government took additional large numbers of Iron Guard members off the streets. Others found refuge in Nazi Germany.

This ambiguous but "survivable" situation for the Jews changed dramatically after the German defeat of France at the beginning of June 1940 and the Soviet ultimatum to Romania for the cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina at the end of the same month. With only Germany available as a possible shield against further territorial demands from Romania's neighbors, King Carol acted with a sense of urgency. The king called on Ion Gigurtu to serve as prime minister and help convert the authoritarian one-party state the king had installed two years earlier into a fascist-style dictatorship that would be acceptable to Nazi Germany. Gigurtu was an industrialist with strong German connections. He had served as minister of industry and commerce in the PNC government and was minister of public works and communications in the government led by Gheorghe Tătărescu that was in place in June 1940. The king abolished the Front of National Rebirth and established the totalitarian Party of the Nation, with restricted access, in its place. He appointed three Iron Guard leaders, recently returned from their

102. On this period, see *ibid.*, pp. 111-120.

103. See statement of December 31, 1938, by foreign minister Grigore Gafencu, cited in Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 36-37.

refuge in Germany, in addition to a group of former National Christian Party officials, to ministerial posts. Nichifor Crainic became minister of national propaganda.

In the wake of the loss of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union, major incidents of anti-Semitic violence shook the relative physical security that Romanian Jews had enjoyed during much of the Royal Dictatorship. Romanian military units assaulted Jews throughout southern Bukovina following the spread of rumors that Jews had vilified Romanian troops as they withdrew from the ceded territories. Major assaults on Jews by military units and civilians took place in Dorohoi and Galaţi as well.[104]

As part of its frantic effort to realign Romania's diplomatic position, the Gigurtu government quickly made it clear to the Nazi leadership in Berlin that it intended to change Romania's policies toward Jews to bring them closer to the German model. During a visit to Berlin in late July, Gigurtu assured both German foreign minister von Ribbentrop and Hitler himself that Romania hoped to solve its Jewish problem "definitively" in the context of a German-led "total solution" for all of Europe. Gigurtu told Hitler that "he was determined to move ahead step by step with the process of eliminating the Jews."[105] On the delegation's return home, foreign minister Mihail Manoilescu, who had accompanied Gigurtu to Berlin, declared on July 30:

> …Romanians cannot succeed in being masters of their own house, as they would like, unless the problem of the Jewish element in our country is resolved through categorical and decisive measures. In this regard we are determined to undertake serious and well planned measures, and to carry them out… In this way we will fulfill to a degree greater than ever before in our history the venerable slogan of Romanian nationalism: Romania for Romanians and only for Romanians.[106]

The Gigurtu government began to consider concrete new actions against the Jews as soon as it assumed office.[107] Through a decree-law issued on August 9, 1940, it established a definition of Jews based on both religion (*rit*) and race (*sânge*), with either criterion sufficient to identify an individual as a Jew. Decree-law no. 2650 dramatically altered the juridical status of Jews, with little regard to whether they were Romanian citizens or not. Jews might be "Romanian citizens" (*cetăţeni români*), but they could not achieve the status of "Romanians by blood" (*români de sânge*), and that distinction was sufficient basis to establish a regime of extensive legal discrimination. Jews were separated into three categories for the purpose of further regulating their status, but all of the categories were subjected to major restrictions on their political, civic, economic, and cultural activity. Jews were excluded from government office and other public functions, numerous professions, the boards of both public and private enterprises, and ownership of rural property or economic activity in rural areas. They were subjected to numerous

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104. On anti-Semitic violence during this period, see Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*: *The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), pp. 38-43; and Ancel, *Contribuţii*, pp. 199-227.
105. *DGFP*, document 233, Memorandum of Conversation between Gigurtu and German foreign minister von Ribbentrop, July 26, 1940; and document 234, Memorandum of Conversation between Gigurtu and Hitler, July 26, 1940.
106. Cited in Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 53.
107. See the government's communiqué regarding "broad-ranging discussions" (*ample discuţiuni*) of the principle elements of policies regarding "the solution of the Jewish problem" (*soluţionarea problemei evreieşti*), in *ibid.*, p. 49.

additional restrictions that endangered their ability to earn a living. Jews could no longer adopt Romanian names, and, following the model of Germany's infamous Nuremberg Laws, conversion to Christianity provided little protection from the discriminatory measures aimed at Jews. The decree-law required the development of special regulations regarding education for Jews, from primary school through professional and post-graduate study.[108] A separate decree-law forbade intermarriage between Jews and "Romanians by blood."

In the few weeks that passed between the loss of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina – the beginning of the end of Greater Romania – and the establishment of the National Legionary State led by Ion Antonescu and Iron Guard leader Horia Sima in September 1940, the physical and economic security of Romanian Jews deteriorated rapidly. The day on which they would suffer the full cumulative fury of nearly a century of Romanian anti-Semitism was near.

Conclusion

With the benefit of history and hindsight, it should not have been a surprise that in the thirties and forties large segments of the Romanian population accepted the anti-Semitism of the League of National Christian Defense, the National Christian Party, and the Iron Guard, and then either participated in or acquiesced to the murderous crimes committed by the Antonescu regime against the Jews. It should have been no surprise that the intellectual icon Mircea Eliade, who gained international acclaim for his spiritual study of eastern religions, had extreme right-wing roots in Greater Romania. Nor that Viorel Trifa, having become the Romanian Orthodox Archbishop of the United States, was stripped of his American citizenship in the seventies because of his leadership role in the Iron Guard rebellion and anti-Semitic pogrom in Bucharest in January 1941. Nor that in France in 2003 it became impossible to honor an accomplished scientific figure of Romanian origin, N.C. Paulescu, because Paulescu had authored flagrantly anti-Semitic tracts in Romania in the twenties. Nor that a staunchly xenophobic and anti-Semitic political party pretended to political power – and even the presidency of the country – in post-communist Romania.

The political and intellectual roots of these tragic realities stretch back to the emergence of modern Romania. For well over 100 years many of the country's most respected political and cultural leaders embraced anti-Semitism and with consistency and perseverance inserted it into the rich mixture of action and inspiration that came to constitute modern Romanian political culture and modern Romanian intellectual life. It was not possible during the communist era to undertake the difficult task of critically examining the pillars of Romanian consciousness who made anti-Semitism part of the Romanian mainstream. Much of the work required to understand fully the legacies left by these individuals still remains to be done.

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108. For the extensive discriminatory provisions of the Decree-law on the Juridical Status of Jews Residing in Romania (Decret-lege privitor la starea juridică a locuitorilor evrei din România), see the introduction (*referat*) presented by minister of justice Ion Gruia and the text of Decree-law no. 2650, in Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 37-50.

Understanding the deep roots of anti-Semitism in Romanian politics and culture will make it easier to confront the factual record that is emerging regarding Romania's role in the Holocaust from the hundreds of thousands of Romanian Holocaust-era documents that are now available for research. The Holocaust did not arrive in Romania like a meteorite from outer space. Nor did it arrive from Nazi Germany. The rise of fascism and Nazism in Western Europe may have increased the confidence of Romanians with radical anti-Semitic views, and may have increased the chances that they might one day play a role in government. But their anti-Semitism was not dramatically altered by those developments. Hitler's rise did not substantially change Romanian anti-Semitic ideology. Hitler's rise opened the door to the possible implementation of anti-Semitic programs that had been discussed in principle for decades. The anti-Semitism of the National Christian Party and the Iron Guard, the genocidal regime of Ion Antonescu, and the lengthy history of Holocaust denial in Romania since World War II all rested firmly on the foundations of a century of anti-Semitism preached at the highest levels of Romanian political and intellectual life. The separation, expropriation, deportation, and murder of Jews were not new themes in the thirties and forties. The Holocaust had deep Romanian roots and must be dealt with as an integral part of Romanian political and cultural history.

Romanian-German Relations before and during the Holocaust

Introduction

It was a paradox of the Second World War that Ion Antonescu, well known to be pro-Occidental, sided with Germany and led Romania in the war against the Allies. Yet, Romania's alliance with Germany occurred against the background of the gradually eroding international order established at the end of World War I. Other contextual factors included the re-emergence of Germany as a Great Power after the rise of the National Socialist government and the growing involvement of the Soviet Union in European international relations. In East Central Europe, the years following the First World War were marked by a rise in nationalism characterized by strained relations between the new nation-states and their ethnic minorities.[1] At the same time, France and England were increasingly reluctant to commit force to uphold the terms of the Versailles Treaty, and the Comintern began to view ethnic minorities as potential tools in the "anti-imperialist struggle."[2] In 1920, Romania had no disputes with Germany, while its eastern border was not recognized by the Soviet Union.

Romanian-German Relations during the Interwar Period

In the early twenties, relations between Romania and Germany were dominated by two issues : the reestablishment of bilateral trade and German reparations for war damages incurred during the World War I German occupation. The German side was mainly interested in trade, whereas the Romanian side wanted first to resolve the conflict over reparations. A settlement was reached only in 1928. The Berlin government acted very cautiously at that time. In regard to internal political affairs in Romania, German policy was one of strict neutrality.[3]

From 1928 onward, Germany began to pursue its political and economic interests more actively. This shift affected all aspects of Romanian-German relations. It was not

1. See Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, Series "A History of East Central Europe," vol. 9 (Seattle : University of Washington Press, 1974).
2. Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons : A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2003) [*Stalinism pentru eternitate. O istorie politică a comunismului românesc*, Iaşi : Polirom, 2005].
3. For context see : Hans-Paul Höpfner, *Deutsche Südosteuropapolitik der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt : Lang, 1983).

until this period that the fate of the German minority became an issue in bilateral relations. The German side now granted not only modest financial support to their cultural and religious organizations, but also a measure of political support. As another way to further the interests of its minorities abroad, Weimar Germany tried to establish itself as a protector of the international ethnic minority movement. In this respect, it also began to take an interest in the situation of the Hungarian and Jewish minorities in various eastern European countries.[4]

German-Romanian relations, both political and economic, suffered after the Nazis seized power in Germany and demanded a radical revision of the World War I peace treaties. This policy was diametrically opposed to Romanian interests. But soon enough, economic relations between the two countries were to improve again : the beginnings of the German-Romanian rapprochement date back to 1936. Romanian officials were motivated by economic interests and by security considerations ; they wanted Germany to keep Hungarian revisionism in check and to protect Romania against potential Soviet threats.[5] Nazi foreign policy placed particular emphasis on economic penetration of the southeastern European states.[6] This, in turn, helped Romania to alleviate some of the effects of the Great Depression. Germany was, in effect, the only open market for southeastern European grains, the region's most important export.[7] As a result, by 1938 Germany had become Romania's most important commercial partner, accounting for almost 50 percent of Romania's foreign trade.[8]

But Romania managed to deepen trade relations with Germany without being forced to forsake the protection of its Western allies.[9] It is worth mentioning that in the pre-Antonescu period, the new eastern European states, notably Romania and Czechoslovakia, believed they could trust French and British guarantees, in part due to their opposition to Mussolini's proposal to revise the Versailles Treaty.[10]

Political relations, therefore, remained precarious. The increasingly aggressive German revisionist policy was interested not only in a reorientation of Romanian foreign policy, but also in a change in its internal affairs. Ideologically and financially, Germany

4. Sabine Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der europäische Nationalitätenkongreß 1925 bis 1938. Nationale Minderheiten zwischen Lobbystentum und Großmachtinteressen* (Marburg : Verlag Herder Institut, 2000).
5. Rebecca Haynes, *Politica României faţă de Germania între 1936 şi 1940* (Iaşi : Polirom, 2003, p. 18).
6. Jean Ancel (ed.), *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry During the Holocaust* (henceforth : Ancel, *Documents*), vol. 9, *Romanian-German Relations, 1936-1944* (New York : Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986) ; *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945* (henceforth : *DGFP*), vol. 8, *The War Years, June 23, 1941 – December 11, 1941*, ser. D (1937-1945) (London : Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964).
7. Harry M. Howard, *The Policy of National Socialist Germany in Southeastern Europe*, Harry S. Truman Library, pp. 10-529.
8. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, König Carol und Marschall Antonescu. Die deutsch-rumänischen Beziehungen 1938-1944* (Wiesbaden : Steiner, 1954), p. 45.
9. I. Benditer and Ion Ciupercă, "Relaţii româno-germane în perioada 1928-1932," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie "A.D. Xenopol"* (henceforth : *A.I.I.A.*), 8 (1971), pp. 317-330.
10. Ion Ciupercă, "N. Titulescu şi rolul statelor mici în viaţa internaţională contemporană," in *Titulescu şi strategia păcii* (Iaşi : Junimea, 1982) ; *idem*, "Locarno oriental, semnificaţia unui eşec (1925-1937)," *A.I.I.A.*, vol. 34, no. 2 ; E. Bold and I. Ciupercă, *Europa în derivă (1918-1940). Din istoria relaţiilor internaţionale* (Iaşi : Casa Editorială Demiurg, 2001).

supported the Romanian radical right and anti-Semitic groups, which helped to undermine Romania's democratic order from within. According to German historian Armin Heinen, Octavian Goga was the first Romanian politician to be financed by Nazi Germany.[11]

Germany also played an active role in the internal conflicts of the German minority in Romania, and supported and financed the creation of a Nazi movement from within. During the thirties Berlin succeeded in bringing the ethnic Germans in Romania under its control.[12] The fact that anti-Semitism in Germany had become official state doctrine, encouraged anti-Semitism elsewhere, especially in Romania. The rise of this German--influenced anti-Semitism, which intensified Romanian anti-Semitism, occurred even before German efforts to draw Romania away from its former allies had begun to take effect.[13]

As the thirties advanced, German diplomacy also encouraged direct measures against Romanian Jews, such as forcing them out of German-Romanian commercial relations. It pressured German companies in Romania not to employ Jews or let them sell German goods. In 1939 the German Foreign Office required each of its Romanian consulates to supply comprehensive information on the number of Jews in its area and their role in the community's business life. At the signing of the economic agreement in March 1939, the leader of the German delegation reported to Berlin that, aside from the real economic cooperation intended by the agreement, it also aimed to eliminate Jews from the Romanian forest industry.

However, German anti-Jewish actions were still somewhat restrained during this period for fear of a negative impact on the German minority in Romania. Thus, in 1937 the German Ambassador in Bucharest protested against the Romanian government's plans to introduce the "Law for the Protection of National Labor." If enacted, this measure would have required Romanian firms to employ, at minimum, 75 percent so-called Romanians by blood. The Romanians repeatedly reassured the Germans that this measure was not an attempt to damage German interests and was intended to affect only the Jews. Indeed, the Romanians did request German help in achieving the intended "elimination of the Jews," a request to which the German diplomats had no principal objection.[14]

The German-Soviet rapprochement exemplified by the Ribbentrop-Molotov Agreement (August 23, 1939), the fall of France in June 1940, and Romania's humiliating territorial losses that same summer were all incentives for a closer relationship with Germany. Arguably, the range of options available to the Romanian government in 1940 was narrowing. After the loss of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union in June 1940, the Romanian government envisaged Germany as a defender against Hungarian and Bulgarian revisionism. Yet, Romanian hopes for German protection were not to be realized, as

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11. Armin Heinen, *Die Legion "Erzengel Michael" in Rumänien. Soziale Bewegung und politische Organisation. Ein Beitrag zum Problem des internationalen Faschismus* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1986), pp. 322-335.
12. Wolfgang Miege, *Das Dritte Reich und die deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1933-1938* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1972); Johann Böhm, *Deutsche in Rumänien und das Dritte Reich* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1999); Vasile Ciobanu, *Contribuţii la cunoaşterea istoriei saşilor transilvăneni 1918-1944* (Sibiu: Hora, 2001), pp. 179-219.
13. Hildrun Glass, *Zerbrochene Nachbarschaft. Das deutsch-jüdische Verhältnis in Rumänien 1918-1938* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996), pp. 357-457, 527-560.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 544-547.

Hitler supported Hungarian and Bulgarian territorial claims against Romania.[15] At the same time, the use of population transfers as a policy tool was gaining credibility ; Romanian foreign minister Mihail Manoilescu saw population transfers as a way to ease Bulgarian and Hungarian demands for territory. Such moves were part of a broader debate about ethnic homogeneity within the borders of nation-states, and its legitimation in diplomatic statements further encouraged harsh anti-minority rhetoric and policies. It was only a small step from here to "cleansing the land," the implementation of ethnic purification – a small step, which triggered the tragedy of the Jews and Roma under Romanian authority during World War II.

In fact, however, the shift from Franco-British to German protection actually occurred before the end of March 1940 – three months before the defeat of France – apparently because the Romanian government had lost faith in an Allied victory. As a symbol of this fundamental change, the Romanian government signed an oil agreement with Germany after months of negotiating. Throughout the war Romania remained a sovereign state, but committed itself more and more to dependence on its new ally, which initially had seemed so overwhelmingly powerful. Romania delivered its raw materials and put its army at Germany's disposal, thereby helping to keep the German war machine going.

Moreover, Nazi Germany insisted that Romania sign an agreement granting extensive autonomy to the German minority in Romania. Thus, the ethnic Germans, in effect, erected a small state within the state. This *de facto* territorial entity was built directly by the *Reich* and followed the Nazi model ; and in 1943 Romania was forced to allow ethnic Germans to join the Waffen-SS instead of being drafted into the Romanian army.[16] In a parallel to German maneuvers removing the German minority from Romanian sovereignty, Nazi Germany also attempted to gain control over Jewish life in Romania, with the intention of destroying Romanian Jewry. Beginning in spring 1941 Gustav Richter, diplomat and member of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA – *Reich* Main Security Office), was active in Bucharest. His job was to ensure that all regulations regarding Romania's Jews were to be formulated in accordance with the German example. In strict conformity with German directives, the Romanian Jews were to be exterminated.

Antonescu and Germany

When Antonescu came to power in September 1940, it was not obvious that he would be Berlin's favorite. The Nazis identified him as a potential leader through their embassy in Bucharest ; yet the German Ambassador's endorsement of Antonescu was accompanied by a cautionary note : Antonescu had criticized the Munich Conference and Anglo-French appeasement.[17] Nevertheless, when Antonescu's Romania joined the Axis on November 23, 1940, Antonescu showed an unabashed commitment to "the German option." The vision of the Antonescu regime was that of a Romania able to retrieve its lost

15. Constantin Iordan, "La neutralité dans le sud-est européen (1939-1941). Le cas de la Bulgarie et de la Grèce. Quelques repères," *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes*, 3 (1991), p. 171.
16. Ciobanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-264.
17. Gh. Barbul, *Le troisième homme de l'Axe* (Paris : Editions de la Couronne, 1950), p. 189.

territories and to participate in the new international order planned by the Tripartite Pact.[18] In his plea against German support for a Ukrainian state or for Bulgarian territorial claims, Mihai Antonescu, vice president of the Council of Ministers, added to this vision a racial element during his meeting with Hitler on November 27, 1941 : "For me, the greatest challenge of European reconstruction is the solving of the Slav problem ; " to ensure an enduring peace, it was necessary to "link the German action against the Slavs with the one of the Latin race ; our position vis-à-vis the Slavs must not be toned down by hesitation and any policy viewed at the isolation, neutralization, or occupation of Slavic territories may be considered legitimate."[19]

Mihai Antonescu further added that German support for Ukrainian and Bulgarian claims would be tantamount to an injustice to Romania and the Romanian people, which "is and was anti-Slav, just as it has always been anti-Semitic."[20] This rhetoric was well received by Hitler, who used the opportunity to declare that there was space in Europe only for Germanic and Latin "races" and that these two races needed to work together against the Slavs. He also promised Mihai Antonescu that Romania could "grab as much [territory] in the East as it pleases," as long as Romanian settlers were sent to help win "the common fight against the Slavic race."[21] Yet, Hitler made no firm promises to support the return of Northern Transylvania to Romanian sovereignty.

Romania, Germany, and the Final Solution

"The Jewish problem," or the treatment of Jews in Romania, was neither an issue nor the core of a conflict or cause for dissent between Germany and the National Legionary government. It had no impact on the stance of Nazi Germany with regard to the leaders of the Legionary regime in Romania. In the beginning, Berlin viewed the Legionary offensive against Jewish property and the Jews themselves as characteristic of a fascist revolution in Romania similar to that which had taken place in Germany. At the two meetings between Marshal Ion Antonescu and Hitler (November 22-23, 1940, and January 14, 1941), the treatment of Jews was not even addressed seriously. Romania's complex political situation and Germany's immediate interests at the time – preparations for war with the Soviet Union and the campaign in the Balkans – constituted the backdrop for a special Romanian-German relationship. The Nazi government (Hitler, the Foreign Ministry and Ribbentrop, and the German military mission and embassy in Bucharest) was chiefly interested in Romania's resources – primarily wheat, produce, and oil – and in subordinating the Romanian army to the *Reich* in the upcoming war. The anti-Semitic policy, which was already central to the ideology of the new Romanian fascist government, was of less interest to the Germans. Another reason the "Jewish problem" was a matter of only secondary importance was that at that time the objectives and proportions of the Final Solution had not yet been clearly formulated ; the Nazis, therefore, did not pressure Romania into adopting their policies.

18. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 9, pp. 134-135.
19. *Ibid.*, no. 105, p. 280.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

Some of the anti-Semitic propaganda in the Romanian press was financed by the German embassy in Bucharest through bribing journalists and newspapers and by providing financial support to the two anti-Semitic parties, the National Christian Party of Octavian Goga and A.C. Cuza and the Legion. On August 15, 1940, *Porunca vremii*, the semi-official newspaper of the anti-Semitic movement, stated: "Any attempt at strengthening Romania will fail as long as the Jewish problem in Romania is not solved according to the wonderful German model." In conformity with the Nazi model, the solution implied a "staunch repression" and "expulsion" of the Jews from Romania. This is but one example out of hundreds of similar newspaper items.

The Legionnaires believed, and they were not entirely incorrect, that their movement had the full support of the Nazis and that the *Reich*'s guarantees of Romania's crippled borders after June-August 1940 were warranted by the existence of a fascist regime in Romania. On the last day of the Iron Guard rebellion (January 23, 1941) when the Romanian army indiscriminately killed armed Legionnaires, their semi-official paper *Cuvântul* warned Antonescu that the destruction of the Legionary movement would threaten the very existence of the Romanian state and Romanian sovereignty: "Only the existence in Romania of a national movement similar to the National Socialist and fascist ones guarantees our future."[22]

Antonescu also believed that the Legionnaires had the full trust and support of the Germans.[23] It seemed that in the minds of Hitler and the Nazis, "Romania cannot be ruled in opposition to the Iron Guard."[24] On October 15, 1940, Antonescu declared his readiness "for close political, economic, and military cooperation with Germany" and sent Valer Pop, who was known to be pro-German, to Berlin as a special envoy.[25] He then invited a German military mission to Romania to train the Romanian army and consolidate the border defense. The German officers who visited Romania, led by General Tippelskirch, were favorably impressed by the *Conducător* (Ion Antonescu; the Leader) but not by his deputy, Horia Sima, and reported as much to Berlin.[26]

In January 1941, during the struggle between Antonescu and the Iron Guard, the *Fuehrer* was obliged to choose between two potential partners for the *Reich*. Although the Legionary movement was the ideological counterpart to National Socialism, Hitler favored Antonescu because he exerted firm control over his army and upheld Romania's economic commitments to the *Reich*. At the January 14, 1941, meeting with Antonescu, Hitler basically granted him a free hand to crush the Legionnaires. Even before that meeting, it was clear that those with a military role in Berlin supported Antonescu: Hitler, the *Wehrmacht* generals who had met with Antonescu, the head of the military delegation in Bucharest, various economic offices, and the representative in Bucharest, Wilhelm Fabricius.

Himmler and all of his organizations as well as Goebbels, on the other hand, supported the Iron Guard. On January 24, Goebbels, who did not know that the battle had already been decided, wrote in his diary: "In Romania, nothing is clear yet. The

22. *Cuvântul*, Bucharest, January 24, 1941.
23. Horia Sima, *Era libertăţii. Statul Naţional Legionar* (Madrid: Editura Mişcării Legionare, 1982), vol. 2, p. 79.
24. *DGFP*, vol. 11, no. 652, p. 1094.
25. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 9, no. 61, p. 129.
26. *DGFP*, vol. 11, no. 75, pp. 126-128.

Legionnaires are continuing their revolt, and Antonescu has issued orders to shoot them. The *Fuehrer*, for his part, says that he wants an agreement with a state and not with an ideology. Still, my heart is with them."[27] Several days later, after learning of the Legionnaires' defeat, Goebbels added in his diary : "I am with the *Fuehrer*. He continues to support Antonescu, since he needs him for military reasons. That is one point of view. But it wasn't necessary to wipe out the Legion."[28] Himmler's emissaries in Romania helped the commander of the Legionnaires, Horia Sima, and the heads of the movement to escape to Germany. Throughout the war years, the leaders of the Iron Guard remained in Germany under relatively comfortable conditions, albeit with restrictions on their freedom of movement ; Sima and his henchmen could serve as an alternative to Antonescu's regime if something went wrong in Bucharest. In return for their assistance to the Iron Guard, Antonescu forced Himmler's representatives and members of the Foreign Office, as well as known Gestapo agents to leave Romania, thereby ensuring himself control over domestic matters.[29]

It should be noted that Romanian-German cooperation and Antonescu's consent to satisfy most of the German economic and military demands stemmed in part from his fear of the Soviet Union. For almost four years – from September 1940 to August 1944 – this fear was greater than his fear of Germany. The economic obligations Antonescu accepted increased from month to month and became a heavy burden on Romania's finances and natural resources, particularly grain and oil. Yet, something unprecedented for a Nazi ally or satellite country happened in Romania : the local pro-Nazi party was forcefully deposed ; its active members were arrested, and its leaders were saved from the death penalty only by representatives of the National Socialist party and the Gestapo. Thus, during the years of the Antonescu government, Romania did not have an actual fascist party. After removing the Legionary element from power, the Antonescu government continued to implement the anti-Jewish measures, which aimed primarily at the confiscation of Jewish property and the elimination of Jews from the national labor market.

In January 1941, Hitler and Göring revealed their plan for the invasion of the Soviet Union, Operation Barbarossa, to both Ion and Mihai Antonescu and agreed on the participation of the Romanian army in recovering Bessarabia and Bukovina. Mihai Antonescu stated : "Following these talks, Romania's participation in the war on the side of Germany was agreed ; we set the day, and only we, Marshal Antonescu and I, knew the day when Romania and Germany would declare war on Russia."[30] Several months later, in March, "special emissaries of the *Reich* and Himmler," as they were described by Mihai Antonescu, arrived in Bucharest to discuss the fate of the Jews in Romania. The emissaries arrived just after the suppression of the Iron Guard rebellion, "when the political situation was still uncertain."[31] This was the first attempt by Himmler and the RSHA to take over the "handling" of the Jews of Romania, done at a critical juncture in the relations

27. Joseph Goebbels, *Tagebücher* (Munich-Zurich : Herausgeben von Ralf Georg Reuth, Series Piper), vol. 4, 1940-1942, p. 1524.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 1525.
29. *DGFP*, vol. 12, no. 258, pp. 443-444.
30. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 9, no. 162, p. 423. The offical protocol does not mention that Hitler shared the secret of operation Barbarossa.
31. Cable from Mihai Antonescu to Romanian legation in Ankara, March 14, 1944, Foreign Ministry Archives, Ankara file, T1, p. 108.

between the two states at a time and when a huge German force (680,000 troops) was stationed on Romanian soil. Mihai Antonescu, however, refused to relinquish this control, and it was during this period that he and the Germans reached certain understandings regarding the deportation and extermination of Bessarabian and Bukovinan Jews.[32]

The subsequent arrival in Romania of SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Gustav Richter at the end of April 1941 would have grave implications for the fate of Romanian Jewry. Richter, a special envoy of the RSHA, was an "expert" on "Jewish problems." In August 1941, believing that Germany stood on the brink of victory, Mihai Antonescu informed his Cabinet that he had discussed the solution to the Jewish problem with representatives of the *Reich*: "I can report to you that I have already conducted intensive negotiations with a high-ranking German representative... with regard to the Jewish problem. [They] understand that the Jewish problem will ultimately require an international solution, and they wish to help us to prepare this international solution."[33]

On May 16, 1941, in a report to his immediate superior, Ambassador Killinger, Richter recounted the first achievements:

1. All draft laws... from the Undersecretariat of State for Romanianization will be sent for my confirmation before being seen by... Antonescu.
2. [The dissolution of] all Jewish political organizations, associations and unions, except for the Jewish religious communities, the blocking of their bank accounts and confiscation of their property, the total interdiction of... their legal or underground activity. Their property will be transferred to the future Jewish Center.
3. The creation of a Jewish Center of legal public character as the sole authorized Jewish organization.
4. The obligation to report and declare all Jewish property.
5. The creation of an evacuation (*Aussiedlung*) fund by the Undersecretariat of State for Romanianization, which would constitute the financial resource for the coming evacuation of the Jews from Romania.[34]

This was the Richter's working program – essentially, the application in Romania of "the directives for the handling of the Jewish problem" (the Final Solution) as they had been conceived in Berlin shortly before the invasion of the Soviet Union. These included the incitement of the local population against the Jews and the toleration of anti-Jewish violence; defining what constituted a Jew; forcing Jews to wear distinctive yellow badges; and the establishment of ghettos. The third paragraph of these directives explained: "One of the primary goals of the German measures was supposed to be the forceful isolation of Jewry from the rest of the population."[35]

Before the war with the Soviet Union, Romanian-German military relations had already become closer, and the joint preparations for war intensified with Antonescu

32. Transcript of the conversation between Ribbentrop and Mihai Antonescu (excerpts), September 23, 1942, United Restitution Organization (URO), *Sammlung* (Frankfurt: URO, 1959), vol. 4, no. 13, p. 578.
33. Transcript from Cabinet meeting of August 5, 1941 (excerpt), Interior Ministry Archives, file 40010, vol. 9, p. 40.
34. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, no. 129, pp. 401-404 (reproduced from Yad Vashem Archives, Microfilm JM13102.)
35. *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof Nürnberg* (Nuremberg, 1947), vol. 14, file no. 218-PS, p. 302.

seeking not only the return of Bessarabia and Bukovina but also to strengthen Romania in the face of the "Slavic threat." Antonescu's June 12, 1941, visit to Munich to finalize the details of Romanian-German military cooperation had a decisive impact on the fate of the Jewish population of Bessarabia and Bukovina. At that time, under the influence of his generals, Hitler did not give much credit to the operational capability of the Romanian army, charging it only with the "defense of Romanian territory against penetration by Russian forces."

At the same time, he wished to stress his personal appreciation of the Romanian dictator. He offered Antonescu the post of commander in chief of both the German and Romanian troops in the Romanian territories and to provide him with a liaison headquarters under the command of General Hauffe, head of the German military mission to Romania.[36] This was not the only manifestation of trust and appreciation for the Romanian dictator. Hitler's translator, Paul Schmidt, later stated that Antonescu "was the only foreigner from whom Hitler ever asked military advice when he was [having] difficulties."[37]

As Mihai Antonescu reminded Ribbentrop, he had reached certain understandings (*Abmachungen*) with the SS on the policy toward the Jews of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and also Transnistria.[38] Following the meeting in Munich, the earlier conversations with the RSHA delegation, and the *Abmachungen*, the Romanian leaders in Bucharest drew up their own guidelines for the military forces and gendarmerie. The fate of the Bessarabian and Bukovinan Jews was therefore quickly decided. Once he returned to Bucharest from Munich, Ion Antonescu – now the commander of the Romanian-German troops in southern Europe – decided to imitate the Nazis and implement his own plan for a "Final Solution," which he would call "the cleansing of the land."[39] Before the ethnic cleansing began, Romanian leaders, convinced of German victory, made known to the inner circle of the civil administration their plans regarding the Jewish population in Bessarabia and Bukovina, known as the "lost provinces."

On June 19, General Ilie Şteflea, one of Antonescu's reliable senior officers, communicated to the army, by means of a confidential circular, Antonescu's order "to identify all *Jidani*, Communist agents or sympathizers… as the Ministry of Interior must know where they are in order to ban their movement and in order to be able to enact whatever orders I may transmit at a given time."[40] This order echoed instructions issued earlier by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel to the *Wehrmacht*.[41] In late July 1941, the Romanian army quickly deported up to 25,000 Jews to Moghilev in Ukraine, but the German army forced the Jews back, shooting roughly 12,000 of them.[42] Antonescu sought the assistance of Ambassador Killinger, arguing that the return of the Jews to Bessarabia was "contrary to

36. *DGFP*, vol. 12, no. 614, p. 105.
37. Paul K. Schmidt, *Hitler's Interpreter*, ed. R.H.C. Steed (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 206.
38. See footnote 32.
39. Jean Ancel, "The Romanian Way of Solving the 'Jewish Question' in Bessarabia and Bukovina, June-July 1941," *Yad Vashem Studies*, 19 (1988), pp. 187-232.
40. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 1.
41. Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law no. 10 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1951), vol. 10, pp. 990-994 (special instructions for Operation Barbarossa issued by the *Wehrmacht* High Command on May 19, 1941, including "Directives for the Conduct of the Troops in Russia").
42. Cable from Gen. Rioşanu to Gen. Antonescu, July 18, 1941, State Archives, fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, file no. 89/1941, p. 16.

the guidelines that the *Fuehrer* had specified… in Munich regarding the treatment of the eastern Jews."[43] It was clear that both Ion and Mihai Antonescu were not always ready to heed the instructions of their German advisors, whose specific task was to help the Romanians with "certain migrations in territories under Romanian and German sovereignty."[44]

Shortly before June 21, 1941, the Romanian Special Intelligence Service (*Serviciul Special de Informaţii* – SSI) created a select unit called the *Eşalon Special* (Special Echelon), which bore similarities to the *Einsatzgruppen* and was entrusted with the mission of "defending the rear of the Romanian army from espionage, sabotage, and terrorist actions."[45] Like the *Einsatzgruppen*, the *Eşalon Operativ*, as it was also called, was divided into smaller *echipe* (teams). The Echelon was comprised of 160 elite men and was soon assigned to Bessarabia. Its first operation was carried out in Iaşi, on July 29 and 30, 1941. From Iaşi, the Echelon moved on with the Romanian Fourth Army into Bessarabia, where it collaborated with *Einsatzkommando* 11B in the executions in Bălţi and Chişinău. In fact, as soon as the Echelon and other Romanian military units involved in the killings crossed the Prut River, they collaborated with the *Einsatzkommandos*.[46] Nonetheless, relations between the various units of *Einsatzgruppe* D and the Romanian army, gendarmerie, police, and Special Echelon were far from ideal. The Germans were content only when the Romanians acted according to their directives and were dismayed at the disorder the Romanians displayed.[47]

Himmler's emissaries, acting within the framework of the *Wehrmacht*, also continued their missions in the Romanian-occupied territory of Ukraine known as Transnistria. Representatives of the German and Romanian armies met on August 17, 1941, in Tighina to discuss the boundaries of Transnistria and the distribution of responsibility therein. Due to the inability of the *Einsatzgruppen* to keep up with the attacking forces and to "handle" all the Jews at the same time, the Jews were not to be transferred across the Bug river yet; instead, they were to be placed into labor camps until such time as they could be moved east, "following completion of military operations."[48] This agreement, concluded on August 30, 1941, prevented the Romanian regime from forcing the remaining Jews in Bessarabia and Bukovina as well as the up to 200,000 Ukrainian Jews who had survived the first wave of executions by *Einsatzgruppe* D across the Bug.

On August 7, 1941, Mihai Antonescu asked Himmler to send Gustav Richter, who had returned to Berlin in July after great success, back to Bucharest.[49] Antonescu praised Richter's activity, stating that he hoped to work with Richter again, "[s]ince the Jewish problem requires an international, radical and final solution, particularly by using the German experience in this field…"[50] Already, following Richter's advice and under some

43. *DGFP*, vol. 13, no. 207, pp. 318-319.
44. Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniştri* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996), no. 99, p. 265.
45. Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră* (Bucharest: Socec, 1948), vol. 2, p. 43 (testimony of Eugen Cristescu, former head of SSI).
46. NO-2851, NO-2952, NOKW-3233.
47. NO-2651, NO-2934, NO-2939, NO-2949, NO-2950.
48. Tighina Agreement, concluded between General Hauffe and Gen. Nicolae Tătăranu, August 30, 1941. Nuremberg Documents, PS-3319. Romanian version: Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 9, no. 83, pp. 188-191. For German version, see *ibid.*, vol. 5, no. 62, pp. 59-63.
49. Luther to Killinger, August 27, 1941, Nuremberg Documents, NG-4962.
50. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 3-6.

pressure from the German embassy, the Romanian authorities had set up the Central Office of Jews of România (*Centrala Evreilor din România*; the Jewish Center) – the Romanian equivalent of the *Judenrat*, banned all Zionist activity, carried out a census of "persons of Jewish blood," and launched technical preparations for the deportation of Romanian Jews to the Belzec death camp. Moreover, the large-scale massacres of Jews and Antonescu's tenacity in implementing the Final Solution in liberated Romanian territory, and later in Transnistria, had aroused admiration among the Nazis and Hitler, in particular.[51]

On January 23, 1942, two days after the Wannsee Conference, Richter asked Mihai Antonescu to put a halt to the emigration of Jews from Romania, "given the impending Final Solution of the Jewish problem in Europe." Mihai Antonescu consented in principle to the request, although ships carrying Jews continued to leave Romania.[52] However, Ion Antonescu did not have patience to wait for the German outcome of the Final Solution. At the Cabinet meeting of December 16, 1941, he stated that "the question of the Yids is being discussed in Berlin. The Germans want to bring the Yids from Europe to Russia and settle them in certain areas, but there is still time before this plan is carried out."[53]

According to Radu Lecca, commissar for the solution of the Jewish problem and Richter's Romanian counterpart, "when [Lecca] first met Richter and discussed the reorganization of the Jews with him, [Richter] already had all the plans prepared."[54] In late April 1942, Richter abandoned his anonymous status and – going above the heads of the Romanian government – informed the Jews of Romania that their fate was sealed. He published an article in the embassy newspaper advising the Jews not to seize upon "false hopes" regarding the possibility of preventing the Final Solution. "The Jewish problem in Romania will be solved within the framework of Europe," stated Richter.[55] He also focused his attack on the Zionist movement and Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization; and indeed, over the coming months, he did not rest until he had secured a ban on Zionist activity and the closure of the Zionist headquarters in Romania.[56]

The negotiations regarding the "European solution" – that is, regarding the Jews of the *Regat* and southern Transylvania – were conducted diligently and effectively. These Jews were not slated for extermination in the eastern territories or in Russia, but in the death camps in Poland. In June 1942, under the impact of impressive German victories in the USSR and following the Romanian army's advance to the Caucasus and its crossing of the Don River, Antonescu agreed to the Final Solution for Romanian Jews, which entailed their deportation.[57] During July-October 1942, plans were drawn up for the deportation of Romanian Jews to extermination camps in the General Government.

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51. Goebbels, *op. cit.*, pp. 1659-1660.
52. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 3, no. 311, pp. 494-495.
53. *Procesul marii trădări naţionale* (Bucharest, 1946), pp. 34-35.
54. Transcript of interrogation of Radu Lecca at Securitate in Bucharest, July 8, 1953, Interior Ministry Archives, file 40010, vol. 123, p. 82.
55. "Jüdische Fata Morgana," *Bukarester Tageblatt*, April 26, 1942; copy: Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 3, no. 360, p. 588.
56. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 53, p. 98.
57. Jean Ancel, "Plans for Deportation of the Rumanian Jews and Their Discontinuation in Light of Documentary Evidence (July-October 1942)," *Yad Vashem Studies*, 16 (1984), pp. 381-420.

By spring 1942 there were approximately 300,000 Jews left in Romania.[58] With the exception of the town of Cernăuţi, Bessarabia and Bukovina were already *Judenrein* (cleansed of Jews).

Two German documents, dated July 26, 1942, and August 11, 1942, mentioned the future deportations of Romanian Jews: the first, signed by Heinrich Müller, head of Section IV B of the RSHA, was addressed to the German Foreign Office; the second, a report by Martin Luther of the German Foreign office, was addressed to the *Reichsführer*-SS, Heinrich Himmler.[59] During his interrogation in Jerusalem, Adolf Eichmann admitted that he had actually authored the letter bearing Müller's signature.[60] The letter advised Undersecretary Martin Luther, a departmental (Inland II) chief in the Foreign Office, that the deportation of the Romanian Jews was to begin on September 10, 1942.

Gustav Richter left a detailed Nazi plan for the deportation of 250,000 Jews to the Belzec camp in Poland for extermination, enumerating the principal elements of the process: instructions for implementation, including logistics and operational planning; measures to conceal and mislead in order to allay the fears of the Jewish population; settling the legal problems between Romania and Germany; and the use of the local *Judenrat*. According to Richter's plan, the deportees would lose their Romanian citizenship upon crossing the border, and those "unable" to work would be subject to "special treatment." In line with the directive issued by the RSHA, Richter obtained a pledge in writing from Mihai Antonescu, expressing his consent to the deportations.[61] The fact that Richter took great pains to obtain a written pledge from Ion Antonescu's deputy is illustrative of the delicate situation of Eichmann's subordinates in German-allied countries, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Italy, in which the Nazis could not enforce deportations directly, but required the cooperation of the governments in question.

By August 19, 1942, preparations for the solution to the "Jewish question" in Romania were complete with regard to both the political issues involved and the practical steps to be taken. Richter's plan was preceded by a lengthy period of negotiations, from the end of December 1941 through July 1942. There were two versions of the plan: the Romanian and the German.[62] On September 11, 1942, Lecca presented the Romanian plan, also the product of negotiations with Richter, to Mihai Antonescu. This plan confirmed the essential Romanian consent to the deportations, but established a series of exceptions, while the German proposal was significantly more restrictive. It also provided for the deportation of Jewish former citizens of Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Croatia, since they had lost their former nationality according to an agreement between Germany and those countries.

Lecca added a stipulation to the Romanian plan, which allowed for the emigration to Palestine of 3,000 Jews in exchange for a payment of two million lei. This payoff was to be made to the Jewish Center "in order to establish a fund supplying cheap credit to the

58. According to the May 1942 census of "residents of Jewish blood," there were 292,192 Jews in Romania.
59. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 41, p. 78, and nos. 104-105.
60. Minutes of Eichmann's pre-trial interrogation by the Israeli Police, Yad Vashem Archives, Police d'Israel, Adolf Eichmann, pp. 1768-1771. Eichmann admitted that *Sonderbehandlung* ("Special Treatment"), the term used by Müller, meant "killing".
61. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 65, p. 120.
62. With respect to Richter and Lecca's plan, see *ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 391-398, 406-415.

new Romanian enterprises, which will replace the Jewish ones."[63] The Nazis did not keep their plan secret. Certain of its implementation, they hurried to announce the forthcoming deportations in the August 8 edition of the *Bukarester Tageblatt*, a German newspaper published in Belgrade. When the trains to Belzec failed to start rolling, Richter published another article in the same paper, entitled "Servants of the Jews," in which he denounced Baron Neumann (a wealthy converted Jew) and Wilhelm Filderman (head of the Federation of Jewish Communities; FUCE) for trying "to foil the deportation of Jews by every means, rallying influential Romanian figures in politics and the economy for this purpose."[64] Richter vehemently railed against those Romanians trying to prevent the deportation of the Jews, claiming that Europe would be rid of Jews by the end of the war and that Romanian relations with Germany would be damaged if they did not join the common effort to deport the Jews. Richter sent this article to Eichmann on November 15, 1942, in explanation of his failure to deport Romanian Jewry.

In Filderman's opinion, the German threats actually helped the cause of Romanian Jews because they provoked negative reactions among the ruling elite, who felt very strongly about the independence of their country.[65] Thus, Richter and Lecca's plans failed, and the deportation of Romanian Jewry did not take place. Ambassador Killinger, accompanied by Richter, visited Mihai Antonescu on November 26, 1942, to demand an explanation for why the deportation of Romanian Jews to the General Government had not begun. The Romanian foreign minister replied that Marshal Antonescu had "decided only to explore the possibility of an evacuation from Transylvania, but that the implementation had been postponed."[66] After Stalingrad, the Romanian government officially informed Berlin that "the only solution to the Jewish problem in Romania is emigration."[67] Antonescu did not yield to the Nazis despite intense pressure – initially through the German Ambassador and later during the April 1943 meetings with Hitler and Ribbentrop – to fulfill his commitment to deport Romanian Jews.[68] Thus, Antonescu and his regime spared Jews in the *Regat* and southern Transylvania from the Nazis and the Final Solution.

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63. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 167.
64. *Bukarester Tageblatt*, October 11, 1942. See also Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 151, pp. 297-298.
65. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 152, p. 302.
66. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 186, p. 365.
67. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 285, p. 524.
68. Andreas Hillgruber (ed.), *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler* (Frankfurt: Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1970), p. 233. The conversation with Ribbentrop took place in Salzburg on April 14, 1943. On October 8, 1942, Mihai Antonescu told Killinger: "Marshal Antonescu's opinion is that at present the situation is too delicate to allow forceful action with regard to the Jews." U.S. National Archives (NARA), RG 220, Records of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Killinger cabled the German Foreign Office (December 12, 1942) that the Marshal "refused to give his consent to the radical solution of the Jewish problem since he has in the meantime learned that the Jews were not Bolsheviks" (Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 203, p. 399).

The June-July 1940 Romanian Withdrawal from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina and Its Consequences on Interethnic Relations in Romania

Introduction

Long after the end of the Second World War, the summer 1940 annexation of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the county of Herţa by the Soviet Union was still a taboo subject in Romanian historiography. Gradually, however, as Romania loosened its relations with Moscow, studies began to be published on this topic, along with research on interwar Romania. As a result of the studies on Bessarabia and Bukovina, Romania became the only country from the former Soviet bloc where research was published on the Ribbentrop--Molotov Pact. This matter, however, was largely subordinated to the problematic relationship between Romania and the Soviet Union. When bilateral relations deteriorated, references would appear to the June 1940 Soviet ultimatum forcing Romania to relinquish sovereignty over the two provinces. When relations improved, communist Romanian propaganda avoided talk about the ultimatum. Due to these vacillations, until 1989 the best studies of the annexation of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, and the county of Herţa were written abroad.[1] After 1989, this omission of Romanian historiography was partly rectified. From this point onward, both general and specialized research of varying scholarly quality began to tackle the subject.[2] At the same time, a series of documents

1. Among the works analyzing the subject : Grégorie Gafenco, *Préliminaires de la guerre de l'Est* (Fribourg, 1944 ; Romanian version, 1996) ; Platon Chirnoagă, *Istoria politică şi militară a războiului României contra Uniunii Sovietice* (Madrid : Carpaţii, 1965) ; Maria Manoliu-Manea (ed.), *The Tragic Plight of a Border Area : Bassarabia and Bucovina* (Los Angeles : American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1983) ; Mihai Pelin, "Săptămâna Patimilor," in Iosif Constantin Drăgan (ed.), *Antonescu, Mareşalul României, şi războaiele de întregire* (Venice, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 29-130.
2. From the works published we note : Ion Constantin, *România, marile puteri şi problema Basarabiei* (Bucharest : Editura Enciclopedică, 1995) ; Florin Constantiniu, *Între Hitler şi Stalin. România şi Pactul Ribbentrop-Molotov* (henceforth : Constantiniu, *Între Hitler şi Stalin*) (Bucharest : Danubius, 1991) ; *idem*, *1941 : Hitler, Stalin şi România* (henceforth : Constantiniu, *1941*) (Bucharest : Univers Enciclopedic, 2002) ; *idem*, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, 3rd ed. (Bucharest : Univers Enciclopedic, 2003) ; Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *Bătălia pentru Basarabia* (Iaşi : Moldova, 1990) ; Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu and Ion Constantin, *Basarabia în anii celui de-al doilea război mondial* (Iaşi : Institutul European, 1995) ; Dinu C. Giurescu, *România în cel de-al doilea război mondial (1939-1943)* (Bucharest : All Educational, 1999) ; Mircea Muşat, *Drama României Mari* (Bucharest : Editura Fundaţiei România Mare, 1992) ; Ioan Scurtu and Constantin Hlihor, *Anul 1940. Drama românilor dintre Prut şi Nistru* (henceforth : Scurtu and Hlihor, *Anul 1940*) (Bucharest : Editura

from Romanian and foreign archives were published that enhanced the understanding the events of June-July 1940.[3] Equally important were the revelations of published memoirs, which proliferated in the post-1989 period.[4]

Despite the richness of the research on Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, and the county of Herţa, relations between ethnic Romanians and ethnic minorities (notably Jews) for the June-August 1940 period remain under-researched. If before 1989 the topic was not approached due to the ban issued by the communist regime, during the post-communist transition it remained on the backburner despite the repeal of all official bans.[5] Few scholars inside Romania addressed this topic.[6] Possible causes for the hesitation of Romanian researchers to approach this subject may include limited access to archives and especially the reluctance to deal with a painful and uncomfortable past that contradicted a self-image forged during the years of communist rule. More recently, however, as Romania has begun to integrate into European and Euro-Atlantic security and political structures (namely, NATO and the EU), Romanian historiography has become more interested in this subject as well as the broader issue of Romanian participation in the Holocaust – a taboo for many decades. Gradually, the topic began to be approached at scholarly conferences and in doctoral dissertations, books and scholarly articles, and media broadcasts. The following chapter examines the withdrawal of the Romanian civil administration and troops from Bessarabia and its impact on relations between ethnic Romanians and the local Jewish population. It uses evidence from

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Academiei de Înalte Studii Militare, 1992) ; *idem*, *Complot împotriva României. 1939-1947* (Bucharest : Editura Academiei de Înalte Studii Militare, 1994) ; Ion Şişcanu, *Raptul Basarabiei* (Chişinău : Universitas, 1992) ; *idem*, *Uniunea Sovietică – România, 1940* (Chişinău : Arc, 1995).

3. Vitalie Văratec and Ion Şişcanu (eds.), *Pactul Ribbentrop-Molotov şi consecinţele lui pentru Basarabia. Culegere de documente* (Chişinău : "Universitatea," 1991) ; Ion Mamina, *Consilii de Coroană* (Bucharest : Editura Enciclopedică, 1997) ; Florica Dobre, Vasilica Manea, and Lenuţa Nicolescu, *Anul 1940. Armata română de la ultimatum la dictat. Documente*, 3 vols. (Bucharest : Europa Nova, 2000).
4. The following are among the most important memoirs : Carol al II-lea, *Între datorie şi pasiune. Însemnări zilnice*, vol. 2 : *1939-1940*, eds. Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă and Narcis Dorin Ion (Bucharest : Şansa SRL, 1996) ; Raoul Bossy, *Amintiri din viaţa diplomatică*, vol. 2 (Bucharest : Humanitas, 1993) ; Grigore Gafencu, *Jurnal. 1940-1942* (Bucharest : Globus, 1991) ; Paul Mihail, *Jurnal (1940-1944)* (Bucharest, 1999) ; Constantin Pantazi, *Cu Mareşalul până la moarte. Memorii* (Bucharest : Publiferom, 1999) ; Constantin Sănătescu, *Jurnal* (Bucharest : Humanitas, 1993) ; Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal. 1935-1944* (Bucharest : Humanitas, 1996).
5. Among the notable exceptions, see : Dinu C. Giurescu, "Evreii din România, 1939-1944", in Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann în Ierusalim. Un raport asupra banalităţii răului* (Bucharest : All, 1997) ; Mihai Pelin, *Adevăr şi legendă* (Bucharest : EDART, 1994) ; Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Armata, mareşalul şi evreii. Cazurile Dorohoi, Bucureşti, Iaşi, Odessa* (Bucharest : RAO International Publishing Company, 1998).
6. For a notable exception, see : Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944* (henceforth : Benjamin, *Evreii*), vol. 1, *Legislaţia antievreiască* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1993) ; *idem*, *Prigoană şi rezistenţă în istoria evreilor din România. 1940-1944. Studii* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2001). Among the scholars from abroad during this period : Jean Ancel (ed.), *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust*, 12 vols. (Jerusalem : Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986) ; *idem*, *Contribuţii la istoria României. Problema evreiască, 1933-1944* (henceforth : Ancel, *Contribuţii*), 2 vols. (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2001) ; Radu Ioanid, *Sabia Arhanghelului Mihail. Ideologia fascistă în România* (Bucharest : Diogene, 1994 ; English edition : Chicago, 2000) ; *idem*, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1997).

Romania's National Archives, the Romanian Military Archives, and the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further research in former Soviet archives is needed.

The Internal and External Circumstances of the Annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina

The International Context: Soviet-German Relations (1939-1940)

The annexation of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the county of Herţa was a direct result of the radical changes in the balance of power at the end of the thirties. These changes determined that central and southeastern Europe would remain at the disposal of the two totalitarian Powers, Germany and the USSR. On August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression treaty, the "Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty/Pact." The Soviets demanded the addition of a secret protocol in which the two powers divided up spheres of influence: central and southeastern Europe – an area stretching between the Baltic and Black Seas – as well as Finland, Estonia, and Latvia were assigned to the Soviet sphere; Lithuania and the town of Vilna were assigned to the German sphere. Germany and the Soviet Union then divided Poland, roughly following the line of the Narev, Vistula, and San Rivers. In southeastern Europe, with Germany declaring "complete disinterest for these regions," the Soviets claimed Bessarabia.[7] Here it is worth nothing that the German version of the Pact referred to Romanian "regions" to be ceded to the Soviet Union, whereas the Soviet version named only Bessarabia. The Soviets would subsequently use the German version in June 1940 to make additional requests for Northern Bukovina and Herţa County.

The Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty constituted the prelude to the Second World War, which began on September 1, 1939, with Germany's attack on Poland. On September 28, 1939, during a visit to Moscow by German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, a treaty of friendship and border recognition was concluded between Germany and the Soviet Union; this treaty, however, made no changes to the initial agreement on southeastern Europe. During the following period, Germany and the Soviet Union took steps to enforce their agreements on the respective spheres of influence. Moscow moved to impose "mutual assistance treaties" (i.e., terms of occupation) on Estonia (September 28, 1939), Latvia (October 5, 1939), and Lithuania (October 11, 1939), which allowed the Soviet government to send 85,000 troops to those countries. In contrast to the Baltic States, Finland opposed Soviet demands on territorial revisions and refused to grant the Soviet troops access to its facilities. Consequently, on November 30, 1940, the Red Army attacked Finland. The war raged on until March 12, 1940, when the two countries signed a peace treaty.

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7. Văratec and Şişcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

The Internal and International Situation of Romania (September 1939 – June 1940)

The signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty worsened Romania's geopolitical situation, as it was consequently inserted between the two Great Powers, Germany and the USSR, both of which – though particularly the Soviet Union – were hostile to Romania. Faced with this situation, the Romanian Crown Council of September 6, 1939, decided to proclaim the neutrality of Romania. At the same time, the government in Bucharest tried to secure Romanian borders and avoid military confrontation by operationalizing the Balkan bloc of neutral countries, the Balkan Agreement of 1934, and by attempting to reach a non-aggression pact with the Soviets with the assistance of Turkish mediation. There is evidence that the Soviets wanted to impose on Romania the "Baltic model" – mutual assistance treaties followed by swift occupation – yet Finnish resistance during winter 1939/1940 forced the Soviets to delay the application of this strategy.[8]

The end of Soviet-Finnish hostilities in spring 1940 allowed Moscow to focus on "the Romanian case." On March 29, 1940, V.M. Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, informed Romanian authorities that the absence of a non-aggression treaty between the two countries was because of "the existence of an unsolved legal problem: i.e., that of Bessarabia, whose annexation by Romania was never recognized by the Soviet Union." He then added that the Soviet Union "never considered the return of Bessarabia by military means."[9] This sudden Soviet concern with Bessarabia signaled that Romania was now a focus of the Kremlin's attention. Through April and May 1940, Romanian-Soviet relations became ever more strained; still, the uncertain developments on the Western Front prompted caution in Moscow. When German victory seemed assured, Stalin decided to occupy the Baltic countries and to directly address his issues with Romania. Soviet preparations for combat soon began on June 9, 1940, when massive Soviet forces were placed on Romania's northern and eastern borders.[10] Faced with German victory, the Romanian government decided on May 28, 1940, to intensify its rapprochement with Germany, whom it considered the only power capable of containing the Soviets.[11] This about-face in foreign policy was accompanied by an increased collaboration of the Royal Dictatorship with the German-backed Iron Guard.

The Soviet Ultimatum to Romania (June 26-28, 1940)

On June 23, 1940, the day after the signing of the German-French truce, Molotov met Schulenburg, the German Ambassador in Moscow, and proposed to discuss the situation of Bessarabia and Bukovina. The mention of Bukovina – which was a former Habsburg

8. For a more detailed discussion, see Constantiniu, *1941*, pp. 94-98; and Vitalie Văratec, *6 zile din istoria Bucovinei (28 iunie – 3 iulie 1940). Invazia şi anexarea nordului Bucovinei de către URSS* (Rădăuţi-Bucovina: Editura Institutului Bucovina-Basarabia, 2001), pp. 12-26.
9. *Idem*, *Preliminarii ale raptului Basarabiei şi nordului Bucovinei, 1938-1940* (Bucharest: Libra, 2000), pp. 229-230.
10. Details in Văratec and Şişcanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-41.
11. Grigore Gafencu, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

territory incorporated into Romania in 1918 and not part of the 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov deal – irritated the Germans, who opposed Molotov's terms. Negotiations were renewed between June 24 and June 25, resulting in the Germans yielding to Soviet demands on Bessarabia, yet maintaining their opposition to the cession of Bukovina. Faced with this opposition, the Soviets compromised by asking only for northern Bukovina.

These negotiations fractured the German-Soviet relationship.[12] Arguably, the ensuing tensions were at the heart of the secret German resolution to attack the Soviet Union. As early as the beginning of July 1940, the German High Command drew up the first study on a campaign against the Soviet Union, the Lossberg Plan. In any event, the Soviet--German negotiations sealed Romania's fate. The Kremlin decided to rapidly enforce the negotiated terms of the Moscow agreement with Germany. On June 26, 1940, at 10 p.m., Molotov handed a note to Gheorghe Davidescu, chief of the Romanian diplomatic mission in Moscow. The note demanded the "return" of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union as well as the "transfer" of northern Bukovina to Soviet sovereignty. The answer from Bucharest was expected the next day. But, due to faulty phone lines, the text of the ultimatum did not reach Romania until the morning of June 27.[13] The situation was made even worse by Davidescu's refusal to take the map the Soviets had attached to the ultimatum note. The map included Herţa in the Soviet claims, though it was not included in the text of the ultimatum note. Since the Romanian government was not aware of this map, the exact location of the new Soviet border remained unknown, with dramatic consequences for the Romanian authorities and troops in Herţa.

The day of June 27, 1940, was tense for the Romanian government, as it became obvious that Romania was militarily and politically isolated : Germany advised the Romanians to yield to Soviet demands, Italy did the same, and the governments in Belgrade and Athens insisted that Bucharest should not disturb regional peace through military resistance. Only Turkey – ready to enact the Balkan Pact, which provided for armed action against Bulgaria in case of Bulgarian aggression – promised to back Romania.[14] When the two Crown Councils convened on June 27, the options available were stark : acceptance of Soviet demands (surrender, in other words) or armed resistance. Hoping to maintain the rest of Romanian territory, the majority of Council members decided to surrender.[15] The Romanian government sent its official response to Moscow on June 28 :

> In order to avoid the grave consequences that might follow the use of force and the opening of hostilities in this part of Europe, the Romanian government is obliged to accept the conditions of evacuation indicated in the Soviet response.[16]

The Romanian government did demand that the Soviet-imposed, four-day deadline for evacuation be modified in order to ensure better organization of the operation. The

12. Constantiniu, *Între Hitler şi Stalin*, pp. 104-105 ; *idem*, *1941*, pp. 114-115.
13. Texts of the notes of July 27-28, 1940, in Ioan Scurtu, Constantin Mocanu, and Doina Smârcea, *Documente privind istoria României între anii 1918-1944* (Bucharest : Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1995), pp. 529-530 ; Scurtu and Hlihor, *Anul 1940*, pp. 146-148.
14. Dobrinescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-150.
15. For the Crown Councils' discussions, see Mamina, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-209.
16. Dobrinescu, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

Soviets rejected this demand. This decision to surrender has remained a controversial topic in Romanian historiography. Before 1989 Romanian historians had, for the most part, praised the realism of the adopted solution. Over time, however, the decision came to be criticized.

Another important element of the Soviet ultimatum was the surprise it produced both in the political establishment and in popular sentiment. The background of this surprise was the rapid fall of France, Romania's long-time advocate, which was perceived as a terrifying blow. Writing about the decision to surrender, Romanian diplomat Alexandru Cretzianu mused:

> It is enough to say that the king, the prime minister, and the military chiefs seem to have lost, for a brief moment, their dearest illusions and, at the same time, their lucidity. They were simply unable to find the necessary strength to face up to the disaster.[17]

Yet, the fall of France and the shock it provoked did not make the decision to surrender any less questionable, particularly as the same Romanian government had issued categorical statements during the preceding months indicating that they would not accept surrender without putting up military resistance; for example, on January 6, 1940, in Chişinău, King Carol II affirmed his resolution to protect Bessarabia at any price.[18] Moreover, the government had been flooded with intelligence revealing Soviet intentions, although the technical details of the aggression were not known; nevertheless, it remained passive. After the opening of hostilities on the Western Front, many politicians and military commanders contented themselves to hope for WWI-type developments. As a result of the surrender, Romania lost 50,762 square kilometers (44,500 km^2 in Bessarabia and 6,262 km^2 in Northern Bukovina). Of this land lost, 4,021,086 hectares were agricultural (20.5% of farmland in Romania). The ceded territories were home to 3,776,309 people, of whom 53.49 percent were Romanians; 10.34 percent were Russians; 15.3 percent were Ukrainians and Ruthenians; 7.27 percent were Jews; 4.91 percent were Bulgarians; 3.31 percent were Germans; and 5.12 percent were of miscellaneous ethnicity.

The annexation of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, and the county of Herţa by the Soviet Union had important consequences for the domestic and international situation of Romania. In foreign policy, Romania strengthened its relationship with Nazi Germany. On July 1, 1940, the Romanian government gave up on the Anglo-French guarantees of April 13, 1939. The next day, Carol II requested a German military mission to come to Romania. Domestically, on July 4, 1940, a new government was formed, led by Ion Gigurtu, a politician well connected to the government and big businesses of Nazi Germany. The Iron Guard (the Legion) was represented in the new government by three officials: Horia Sima, minister of religion and arts (though Sima would resign on July 8), Vasile Noveanu, minister of treasury, and Augustin Bideanu, undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Finance. The composition of the new government signaled that Romania was orienting toward the Axis Powers. The goal of these changes was not the reinstatement of an old foreign policy tradition, as the government alleged, but a desperate attempt of the Carol II regime to avoid new territorial losses while preserving political power.

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17. Alexandru Cretzianu, *Ocazia pierdută* (Iaşi: Institutul European, 1998), p. 6.
18. Carol al II-lea, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 85.

The Evacuation of Romanian Military Units from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina

The Situation of Romanian Military Forces in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, June 1940

From September 1939, the majority of Romanian military forces were deployed between the eastern Carpathians and the Dniester River. Deployed here was the Army Group I (which had subordinated the Third and Fourth Armies), the Mountain Corps with the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Cavalry Divisions, and eight fortification regiments. In fact, 65 percent of Romanian military forces – 1,200,000 troops – were deployed on the Eastern front. According to Operational Order no. 18 of June 15, 1940, the Third Army was to wage war on the Ceremuş and Upper Prut rivers. The fallback position was along the Rodna Mountains – Little Siret – Sihna – Jijia line of defense, with a "red line" defense in the Zupania – Prislop – Cârlibaba region. In Bessarabia, the Fourth Army was to defend the Corneşti – Lower Răutul – Dniester line. The defense of Northern of Bukovina and Bessarabia was the responsibility of the same armies, which were augmented with specially constituted army units.[19]

The growing tension on Romania's eastern border made army commanders ask for details on their missions in the event of Soviet aggression and the adoption of preliminary measures to evacuate selected property and staff from Bessarabia. For example, on June 12, 1940, the Fourth Army proposed that the families of officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and civil servants as well as the property of cultural institutions, churches, factories and warehouses be sent to Romania. The government did not approve these demands for political reasons.

At the same time, the Army High Command drew up a series of evacuation plans for the territories between the Dniester and the Prut. The *Tudor* Plan was based on the railway timetable during peacetime. It also called for the movement on foot of convoys and evacuation caravans. The *Mircea* Plan, on the other hand, was based on the wartime railway timetable, with caravans moving only during the night. These blueprints were not connected to the international situation and were to be operationalized only "in the event special orders [were] issued."[20] According to the plans, prefects, recruiting centers, police and gendarmerie as well as local priests were put in charge of the evacuation operations. Orders were issued that military headquarters and administrative offices were not to abandon the ceded territory until combat units were ready to launch complete evacuation operations.[21] The civilian population could be evacuated as ordered, whereas "non-sympathizing ethnic minorities" were slated to remain. The evacuation of reservists and paramilitaries was the first priority, and the evacuation of the civilian population was to come before the evacuation of property.[22] Particularly problematic was that the two

19. Romanian Military Archives (henceforth : AMR), fond 948, 3rd Section, Operations, file no. 1891, f. 128-131.
20. *Ibid.*, file no. 1836, f. 23.
21. *Ibid.*, f. 24.
22. *Ibid.*

plans split a population of millions into privileged and pariah categories, with the latter being denied the choices of regular citizens. Although the documents were technically strictly secret, their content was largely known, especially those provisions concerning ethnic minorities. This provoked distress among the ranks of ethnic minorities, and particularly among the Jews. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Jews took part in actions against Romanian authorities or the Romanian administration.

The Odessa Commission and the Soviet Advance

The Soviet ultimatum demanded that the Romanian troops evacuate the territory of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in four days, beginning on June 28. It also proposed the establishment of a joint commission to discuss the problems concerning the Romanian Army evacuation and the takeover by the Soviet troops. In its response, the Romanian government accepted the idea of the commission and asked for an extension of the evacuation deadline. On the same day, Gen. Florea Tenescu, chief of the General Staff, appointed Gen. Aurel Aldea as the head of the Romanian government delegation in the Romanian-Soviet evacuation commission. The second representative was Col. Hagi Stoica (Ret.), ex-commissioner for Polish refugees. Among other duties, Aldea was charged with drafting daily evacuation plans for the Romanian troops.[23]

The Romanian delegation headed for Odessa, where the commission was to meet, during the night of June 28. During the first meeting, the Romanian representatives protested against the excessively fast advance of the Soviet troops and asked that a plan be drawn up for the evacuation of Romanian troops and the advance of the Red Army with the intent to separate the two armies by a day's march. The Soviet representatives rejected this proposal, arguing that the Romanian delegation had arrived too late. At the same time, they delivered a draft agreement on the two armies' march schedule to the Romanian party and asked for the transfer of all responsibility for the evacuations to the Romanian command, including responsibility for "misunderstandings that might arise between the Red Army and the Romanian army."[24] The Soviet party accepted a one-day extension of the evacuation – until the July 3, 1940, at 2 p.m., Moscow time. The Soviets also demanded that the Romanians hand over maps concerning military and civilian infrastructure in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Joint evacuation commissions were to be set up on the Red Army's advance lines.

During the second meeting on June 30, 1940, Romanian negotiators made a series of observations regarding the Soviet draft agreement, and the commission adopted "the evacuation plan of the Romanian troops from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina." At the same time, the commission drafted seventeen evacuation plans for the Romanian troops and assigned a joint evacuation commission for each of them. Yet, as early as the night of June 27/28, 1940, without waiting for the Romanian response, the Soviet troops crossed the border at five points. On June 28, 1940, the Romanian cities of Cernăuţi, Hotin, Bălţi, Chişinău, and Cetatea Albă were already under Soviet occupation. Soviet Commanders dispatched mobile units (motorized infantry and cavalry) to move quickly toward the Prut River, in advance of the Romanian evacuating troops. The Soviet troops

23. Archives of the External Affaires Ministry (henceforth: MAE), fond 71/USSR, vol. 206, f. 2.
24. *Ibid.*, f. 6.

would regularly establish checkpoints to disarm, threaten with death, and humiliate the Romanian military.[25] As Soviet troops reached the Prut on June 30, 1940, and dug in, the issue of the one-day march time between the two armies became meaningless – a fact expressed by Lieutenant-General Kozlov, the Soviet representative.[26] It was an accomplished fact that completely swept aside the Odessa Commission deal on the four-day evacuation deadline. Needless to say, the faster-than-agreed Soviet army advance created serious problems for the Romanian army's evacuation from Bessarabia and the Northern Bukovina.

The Evacuation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina

The first Soviet ultimatum of June 26, 1940, was preceded by Romanian army preparations for defensive combat (Mobilization Order no. 18). Yet, on June 28, 1940, at 7 : 00 a.m., Romanian commanders of Army Group One of the Third and Fourth Armies received Order no. 6006 from the Romanian High Command, informing them of the cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina and ordering them to evacuate several major cities (Cernăuţi, Cetatea Albă, and Chişinău) on the same day. Army commanders were asked to take steps to prevent Romanian troops from opening fire on the Soviets or reacting to Soviet provocations as well as to prevent the destruction of property. Commanders were also asked to contact Soviet troops and prepare Romanian army units to move westward toward the Prut River in two to three hours.[27]

The Soviets, however, displayed uncommonly aggressive tactics, which put Romanian troops, especially those stationed in Bessarabia, in very dangerous or fatal situations. Alexandru Cretzianu of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs recorded : "Continuous waves of protest from the Chief of the Army High Command reported an increasing number of incidents, which left numerous dead and wounded behind." Moreover, "having to obey the order not to defend themselves against Soviet aggression, some Romanian army officers committed suicide." Therefore, the Romanian Army High Command "insisted that the order prohibiting the Romanian military to shoot back in self defense be revoked."[28] The Cretzianu notes summarize the reports of Romanian field commanders about the humiliation,[29] abusive arrest,[30] and disarmament of the Romanian troops.[31]

In general, most in the Romanian military showed competence, honesty and discipline. On the other hand, however, there were many instances in which parts of the Romanian military did not conform to these values or simply disintegrated. For example, feeling they needed to protect their families – a perception amplified by Soviet propaganda – many minority soldiers and Romanian natives from Bessarabia deserted their units and returned home with their gear. As a consequence, Army Divisions 12, 15, 21, 26 and 27 lost more then half of their men because of desertions. On July 4, 1940, the

25. AMR, fond 948, file no. 527, f. 37 (Report of Captain C. Georgescu, 26th Infantry Division).
26. MAE, fond 71/USSR, file no. 98, f. 47.
27. AMR, fond Micro-films, roll P 21645, frame 399, file no. 948, file no. 1067, f. 54, 55.
28. Cretzianu, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
29. *Ibid.*, fond 948, file no. 155, fond 107, 109.
30. *Ibid.*, f. 108.
31. *Ibid.*, fond Micro-films, roll I.II, 2.1644, frame 104.

Third and Fourth Armies reported that 233 officers, 26 NCOs, and 48,629 soldiers did not report for duty (of which only 5 officers, 6 NCOs and 42 soldiers had died).[32] The scope of disintegration of some army units was so great that a large amount of war materiel was simply abandoned behind the evacuation lines. Also, some army commanders were so surprised by the surrender and its terms that they did not draft any evacuation plans. Sometimes there was absolutely no communication between entire army units. Many commanders showed lack of leadership and military courage, and in many units the evacuation resembled flight more than a consummate evacuation. On July 3, 1940, at 2 p.m., the Soviets declared the new Romanian-Soviet border definitively closed.

At this point, the tragedy of the Romanian army and civil administration was nearly over, and many were safely evacuated; still, a good number were trapped behind.[33] The Romanian representatives on the Odessa Commission pleaded for the repatriation of 15,000 people and the return of abandoned army materiel captured by Soviet troops. As the Soviet representatives on the Commission refused to give their written consent, repatriation depended on the goodwill of local Soviet authorities, who had released only 3,000 people by the end of August 1940.[34] For many of those released, the condition of liberation was to consent in writing to serve the interests of the Soviet Union.

The evacuation of the Romanian army from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina took place in the absence of evacuation preparation, as on June 26 and 27, 1940, Romanian field commanders received orders only on combat preparations. In addition to the surprise of the decision to surrender, one can add the exceedingly short evacuation period, the Soviet disrespect of evacuation deadlines, and the provocations and abuses by the Soviet military as causes of the problems associated with the evacuation. The humiliation of having to abandon Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina without a fight as well as the severe terms of the surrender generated strong resentment in the ranks of the military toward King Carol II and his regime; the army was demoralized and blamed politicians for the debacle. In numerous reports and investigations it was pointed out that the order to withdraw was received with bewilderment, disillusion, and concern by the military. For example, one report stated:

> The abandonment of Romanian territory without a fight disoriented both the officers and the rank-and-file soldiers who, although aware of their inferiority in numbers and war material, had resolved to resist at any price the Soviet army, whom they looked down on as badly trained.[35]

Attitudes and Actions of the Jews during the Evacuation of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and County of Herţa

One of the dominant myths in Romanian historiography about the period of June 28 – July 3, 1940, was that the Jews in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina behaved disloyally toward the retreating Romanian troops and civilian administration. This belief, though false, was used to justify subsequent anti-Jewish Romanian actions.

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32. *Ibid.*, fond no. 3, file no. 1, f. 139; fond Micro-films, roll P.II.1.1124, frame 507.
33. *Ibid.*, roll P.II.2.653, frame 500.
34. MAE, fond 71/USSR, tome 99, f. 105.
35. *Ibid.*, fond 948, Section 1, file no. 155, f. 108.

The Situation of the Jews of Romania (1919-1940)

On December 9, 1919, within the framework of the Versailles Treaty, the Romanian government, together with France, England, Italy, and the United States, signed the Treaty on Ethnic Minorities. This agreement obliged Romania to grant citizenship to all ethnic Austrians and Hungarians born in former Habsburg lands that became part of Romania in 1918 (Transylvania and Bukovina). The same document granted citizenship to all Jews who then lived in Romania and who did not hold other citizenship. These obligations were subsequently codified in the new Romanian Constitution (1923), which prohibited discrimination based on religion, religious denomination, ethnic origins or language (articles 7 and 8).[36] A new law was passed on February 25, 1924, to extend citizenship to former citizens of the Habsburg and Russian empires who resided in Transylvania, Banat, Crişana and Maramureş; it was extended to those in Bessarabia between March 27 and April 9, 1918, and to those in Bukovina on November 28, 1918.[37] This legislation was in force for nearly a decade and a half. During this time, the Jewish population participated freely in all domains of Romanian life.

At the same time, however, anti-Semitic currents became bolder. Their political manifestations were the League of National Christian Defense (LANC), led by A.C. Cuza and from 1930 the Iron Guard (also called The Legion of Archangel Michael). Running under the name *Totul pentru Ţară* (Everything for the Motherland), the outlawed Iron Guard won 15.53 percent of the votes in the 1937 elections and was ranked third on the political scene. Yet, none of the parties won more than 40 percent of the votes (the minimum required by Romanian law), and King Carol II used the opportunity to establish a personal dictatorship by appointing an outside party, the National Christian Party (*Partidul Naţional-Creştin* – PNC), to form the government. The PNC was established in 1935 through the merger of Cuza's LANC and nationalist Octavian Goga's National Agrarian Party. This government, led by Octavian Goga, lasted forty-four days.

The Goga government instituted Romania's first official anti-Semitic measures. On January 21, 1938, the Goga government issued State Decree no. 169 on the Revision of Citizenship, which required Jews to register documents proving they had not settled in Romania between 1918 and 1924 within twenty days of the publication of "nationality logs" by the local municipalities. Even though in the Old *Regat* this deadline was extended, it nevertheless proved to be far too brief for all Jews to register or find the required papers. In addition, Romanian civil servants entrusted with the procedures committed many abuses. As a consequence, of 617,396 Jews whose citizenship status was "reviewed" (84 percent of the 728,115 Romanian Jews), 225,222 lost their citizenship and were considered foreign residents. They were able to remain in Romania with renewable one-year permits. A prelude to advancing foreign and domestic anti-Semitism, the citizenship review severely affected the situation of Romanian Jews and foretold a succession of anti-Semitic measures that would lead to the tragedy of Romanian Jewry.

36. Scurtu, Mocanu, and Smârcea, *op. cit.*, p. 558.
37. Benjamin, *Evreii*, vol. 1, *Legislaţia antievreiască*, pp. 26-27.

The Jews and the Romanian Withdrawal from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina

There are rich archival resources on the situation of the civilian population in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina from June 28 to August 30, 1940. Numerous military records (such as operation logs, reports, notes, and diaries) and civilian documents (administrative reports, police reports, personal diaries) indicate that some Jews from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina participated in anti-Romanian/pro-Soviet actions during this period. Scholars who emphasize the relevance of these documents point to such actions as the flying of Soviet flags, rallies of support for the Soviet Union, desecration of Romanian government signs, public monuments and Romanian Orthodox churches, participation in Soviet actions to disarm Romanian soldiers and officers, confiscation of Romanian government property, mistreatment of Romanian army personnel, and even murder. It is also argued that these actions were more numerous in towns with large Jewish populations (such as Cernăuţi, Cetatea Albă, Storojineţ, Hotin, Soroca, Chişinău, Bălţi, Ungheni, and Ismail) or in villages situated on the retreating routes of Romanian army units.

Some historians argue that the high number of such incriminating documents reflects a historical reality : the Jews in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were anti-Romanian.[38] However, a critical examination of the documents depicts something quite different than the catastrophic picture presented to the public since the cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. First, it is important to note that many of the so-called incriminating documents contained generic evaluations and accusations about such collective entities as the "Jews from Bukovina," "Jews from Chişinău," "the Jewish population from Bălţi," and "Jews and communists from Româneşti." Moreover, field reports do not indicate any specific situations and give no names.

Second, given the dramatic circumstances in which these documents were written, there were myriad instances of rumor spreading and exaggeration, as many in the withdrawing army and civilian population saw "communists," "Jews," and "Jewish communists" everywhere. Many times, these distortions were used to disguise the poor organization of the withdrawal. For example, after Gen. Constantin Atanasescu abandoned his troops and fled from Tarutino to Galaţi (a city in the Old *Regat*), his actions were blamed on ethnic minorities, including Jews ; the cases of Gen. Ioan Ralcu and Gen. Marin Popescu were similar.

Third, many Romanian historians popularized narratives of mystification to make the 1940 attacks against the Jews justifiable. For example, in his book on Marshal Antonescu, historian Gheorghe Barbul invented the story of two Romanian officers caught up in the events of 1940 and 1941 : in the first, Captain Enescu, committed suicide after the humiliation he was forced to endure by the Jews in Edineţ, Bessarabia, during the withdrawal ; in the second, Captain Niculescu, a witness to that event, swore revenge and upon his return with the army to Edineţ in 1941 executed a number of Jews there ; when offered redemption on the battlefield by Antonescu, he gave his life in the siege of Odessa.[39] Not only the story, but also the two protagonists were entirely fabricated.[40]

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38. Ancel, *Contribuţii*. See also Alexandru Şafran, *Un tăciune smuls flăcărilor. Comunitatea evreiască din România, 1939-1947* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1996), p. 18.
39. Gheorghe Barbul, *Memorial Antonescu. Al treilea om al Axei* (Iaşi : Institutul European, 1992), p. 131.
40. Pelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-101.

Fourth, if the Jews were disloyal to Romania, they would not have withdrawn with Romanian troops, as many did, especially those who were prosperous. Fear of Soviet occupation was pervasive among ethnic Romanians and Jews alike. Unfortunately, some Jews were prevented from joining the evacuation columns by the Romanian authorities, who were enforcing the *Tudor* and *Mircea* evacuation plans. Fifth, ethnic Ukrainians in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were known to espouse pro-Soviet attitudes and gave the Red Army a warm welcome. As these reports do not distinguish between Jews and Ukrainians, it is impossible to evaluate the level of Jewish participation. However, it is well known that only ethnic Germans, who were later re-settled, showed reserve, aware that they enjoyed the protection of the Third *Reich*. Sixth, even some ethnic Romanians welcame the Soviets in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Such was the case in the town of Soroca, where local notables such as Mayor Gheorghe Lupaşcu, former prefect Petre Sfeclă, National Renaissance Party (NRP) leader Alexandru Anop and school inspector Petre Hriţcu organized a rally to welcome "Soviet liberators." As King Carol II noted on July 30, 1940, this was not an isolated case:

> News from Bessarabia is even sadder. Unfortunately I was right about the so-called NRF, as some of its leaders there seemed to have converted to Bolshevism and were among the first to welcome the Soviet troops with red flags and flowers.[41]

Confronted with an extremely serious crisis and doubting their regime could survive, Romanian government officials turned the Jews into a political "lighting rod," channeling popular discontent toward the minority. Notable in this report is the reaction of the Romanian press, whose rage was directed more toward Jews than the Soviets, the real aggressors. Given that the Romanian press was censored in 1940, the government must have played a role in this bias. A typical form of anticipatory scapegoating was to let Jewish leaders know that the Romanian authorities might launch acts of repression against the Jews.[42] In his memoirs, Chief Rabbi Alexandru Şafran noted that on June 26, 1940, minister of interior Mihail Ghelmegeanu asked to meet with Şafran and Filderman, whereupon he politely asked them to warn the Jewish population in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina not to launch provocations against the Romanian military and civilian authorities there.[43] After late June, Jewish leaders were denied access to high-ranking Romanian officials.

The actions of the Jewish community leaders did not help. To express the Jewish community's disapproval of abuses committed against Romanian troops in Bessarabia, the Federation of Jewish Communities decided to send the chief rabbi to deliver a speech in the Romanian Senate. Despite the crisis resulting from the loss of territory, however, the Romanian Parliament was not in session; so the Jewish position was instead made public on July 3, 1940, the day of national mourning. The official document professed the loyalty of the Jews from the Old *Regat* to Romania and its ideals and reminded Romanians that Jews had given their lives as soldiers in Romania's war of independence in 1877, the Balkan War of 1913, and the Great War.[44] At the same time, the July 10,

41. Carol al II-lea, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
43. Şafran, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.
44. *Apud* Stoenescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

1940, issue of the newspaper *Curierul israelit* included an article pointing out the differences between the Jews from the Old Kingdom and those from the surrendered territories. It also severely criticized the anti-Romanian attitudes of those Jewish citizens who acted against Romanian authorities and troops during the evacuation.[45] The purpose of these Jewish efforts was to diminish violence against the Jews living west of Prut and to safeguard good relations with the Romanian population. The withdrawing Romanian army in Bessarabia and Bukovina had to deal with both the aggression of Soviet troops and the hostility among some of the population of Bessarabia, including some members of the local Jewish communities. Upon this reality, Romanian authorities superimposed the myth of collective Jewish guilt, resulting in a series of violent acts against the Jews living in territories under Romanian sovereignty.

Anti-Jewish Violence in Dorohoi and Galaţi

The Romanian withdrawal from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was marked by a series of aggressions toward the Jews. They took place both in the surrendered territories and in the Old *Regat* province of Moldavia. The orders to commit violence against the Jews and even to kill them were not given by the Romanian High Command or by other high military structures. Rather, the situation started to unravel from below at the level of small units or individuals. They were usually expressions anti-Semitism, of anger at the humiliation endured during the withdrawal, or of the "scapegoating" syndrome, which permeated popular opinion in Romania at the time, shaped as it was by a censored popular press. These acts of physical violence had no specific motivation. They were simply outbursts of rage against ordinary Jewish citizens who found themselves withdrawing with the Romanian troops and civilian authorities.

The available evidence points to a number of killings committed against Romanian Jews by the Romanian army. Thus, in Ciudei in Storojineţ county and in Zăhăneşti in the county of Suceava, Maj. Vasile Carp, commander of the 86th Mountain Regiment ordered the execution of several Jews. Romanian army troops also executed two Jews in Comăneşti and one in Coştina ; another eight Jews suffered the same fate, and the list of murders would continue.[46] Jewish soldiers serving in the Romanian army were not spared either. On many occasions they were expelled from their units, humiliated, beaten, or even killed for no reason. This is all the more surprising as there is no evidence that Jewish officers abandoned their units during the withdrawal from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, which stood in stark contrast with the behavior of many Romanian officers. Also, the percentage of Jewish soldiers who deserted during the withdrawal was not higher than that of their Romanian counterparts.

Another serious development observable until mid-July 1940 was the physical brutality committed by soldiers or civilians against Jews traveling by train in the eastern Romanian province of Moldavia.[47] Sometimes, the victims were ethnic Romanians

45. Ancel, *Contribuţii*, p. 251.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 251.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 211-217. For the Carp case, see also AMR, fond 948, section 2, information, file no. 941, 1513.

mistaken for Jews. The scope of violence committed on the trains was so great that the government sent armed soldiers to patrol trains and railway stations, arrest stray soldiers, and issue orders warning against the perpetration of such acts. As a consequence of these measures, by mid-July, this form of violence subsided. Acts of destruction and pillaging of Jewish property by the Romanian military were also widespread. For example, on July 2, 1940, in Siret, Moldavia, twenty-four Jewish stores were pillaged, causing damage estimated at two million Romanian lei ; and Jewish individuals were robbed and beaten, as happened to Valerian Boca, former superintendent of the University of Cernăuţi.[48]

Nevertheless, the most serious anti-Jewish actions of the Romanian army were the killings in Dorohoi, which had a sizeable Jewish population, and Galaţi. The scope of these killings almost equaled that of pogroms.[49] The murders in Dorohoi occurred against the backdrop of Romanian-Soviet clashes caused by misunderstandings about the exact location of the new Soviet-Romanian border. Two Romanian officers – Captain Ioan Boroş and Under-lieutenant Alexandru Dragomir, both of the 16th Artillery Regiment – died in the clashes. Yet, during the same skirmishes with the Soviets, a Jewish soldier – Iancu Solomon of the 16th Artillery Regiment – was also killed as he attempted to protect his commander. This heroic gesture, however, went unnoticed by the perpetrators of the Dorohoi killings, most of whom were enrolled in the 3rd Group Border Guards and the 8th Artillery Regiment.

The attacks against Jews in Dorohoi began on July 1, 1940, during the funerals of Captain Boroş and private Solomon in the Dorohoi cemetery. Romanian soldiers murdered the ten Jewish soldiers who attended the funerals on site. The carnage continued in other parts of the city, as well, leaving several dozen more Jews dead. After this brief episode, Romanian army soldiers went on a rampage in the city, killing scores of Jewish civilians (the official body count was fifty-three murdered Jews). In addition to the killings, many Dorohoi Jews were wounded. These attacks ceased only upon the intervention of Gen. Constantin Sănătescu, commander of the 8th Army Corps, who reprimanded Gen. Theodor Şerb, commander of the Corps of Border Guards. Sănătescu remarked : "I am surprised by these acts of banditry committed by what I thought were elite units." He ordered an investigation to be conducted and the guilty to be punished.[50] The 8th Army Corps and Border Guards Corps' subsequent investigation found that the responsibility lay mainly with Captains Gheorghe Teoharie and Constantin Serghie. Investigations also showed that the perpetrators purposefully distorted the facts by inventing stories about the Dorohoi Jews committing acts of aggression against the Romanian army throughout the city and about rumors of a Soviet attack panicking the troops.[51] Yet, none of the perpetrators was court-martialed. The army instead dispensed administrative punishments (reassignment, brief arrest) to the officers and privates involved.

The Romanian army was responsible for an even higher number of civilian deaths during the events that took place on June 30, 1940, in Galaţi, a Romanian city that was an important evacuation center during the withdrawal from Bessarabia. More than 10,000

48. AMR, fond 948, section 2, Information file no. 941, f. 558-556.
49. *Ibid.*, f. 435.
50. For these cases, see Ancel, *Contribuţii*, pp. 217-227 ; Stoenescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-139 ; Marius Mircu, "Pogromurile din Bucovina şi Dorohoi", *Viaţa literară* (Bucharest, 1945).
51. AMR, fond, Border Guard Corps, file no. 2769, f. 851.

evacuees of different ethnicities were then crowded into the city, and in the tense atmosphere created by the evacuation, retreating Romanian army soldiers simply opened fire on a crowd of civilians, killing roughly three hundred, most of them Jews. The stated reason was that the civilians had disobeyed army orders or had broken off guarded columns. The exact number of Jews killed in Moldavia during the withdrawal from Bessarabia and Bukovina ranges between 136 (of which ninety-nine bodies were identified) to several hundred or even thousands.

There was not a high level of Romanian army leadership involved in the bloodshed. Rather, the killings were a consequence of local initiatives. In fact, high-ranking commanders ordered an end to the anti-Jewish crimes. Like General Sănătescu, General Aurelian Son, commander of 11th Army Corps, demanded on July 4, 1940, that his subordinates :

> …confront the excesses of the lower-ranking Romanian military and the Romanian population against Jews, as they are signs of a real pogrom.

He went on to call on all army unit commanders to "take all necessary measures" to "calm" the soldiers as well as the civilian population. Also, Colonel Mihai Chiriacescu, chief of the General Headquarters of the same army corps, warned, "The army must have no other preoccupation but that of defending the country." He also ordered that "during the military education meetings with the troops, officers must insist that any action directed against the Jews is prohibited" and that perpetrators would be court-martialed.[52]

Such interventions of the Army High Command structures made the violence stop, but the relationship between Jews and the Romanian population remained irreparable, even though the direct responsibility for these brutalities and killings belonged to isolated groups or individuals ; they occurred against the background of an anti-Semitic psychosis, which scapegoated the entire Jewish community in Romania. This fixation was encouraged by many Romanian civil and military authorities as well as the popular press.

Anti-Jewish Measures of the Gigurtu Government (July-August 1940)

After the surrender of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, and the county of Herţa, Romania sped up its rapprochement with Germany. The surrender also radically affected the Carol II regime, which chose to bring the Legion into the government. At the same time, the absurd argument that the Jews were responsible for the surrender became a popular myth among Romanians. These two developments accentuated the reactionary and anti-Jewish character of the Carol II regime.

On July 4, 1940, the Gigurtu government was inaugurated and immediately proceeded to take discriminatory measures against the Jews, arguably to placate public opinion, please the Axis Powers, and persuade Germany to guarantee Romania's national security. Thus, on August 8, 1940, at the request of the new government, Carol II proposed a bill (*decret-lege*) on "the legal status of Jews residing in Romania." The bill identified as a Jew any individual of the Judaic faith, including those born of mixed

52. This order was issued in a July 19, 1940, document.

marriages. Jews were divided into three categories : (1) Jews who came to Romania after December 30, 1918, (2) Jews who became citizens between 1879 and December 30, 1918, a category that included Jews decorated in Romania's wars (1877, 1913, 1916-1919) and (3) individuals not belonging to any of the first two categories.

This bill literally excluded Jews from Romanian society by depriving them of the rights and obligations they were previously allowed. For the first and the second categories, the obligation to serve in the army was replaced by an obligation to pay extra taxes and to do community work. All Jews were prohibited from buying real estate in the countryside and adopting Romanian names. Racial segregation of Jews was ordered in the school system. Jews were to be terminated from all public institutions within a period of three to six months (the firing of Jewish public servants had in fact begun in July 1940) under threat of prison terms of up to two years. Mixed marriages were prohibited by law and punishable by two- to five-year prison terms. The anti-Jewish legislation of the Gigurtu government reflected the growth of anti-Semitism in Romanian society and the amplification of this phenomenon generated by the evacuation of Bessarabia and Bukovina.

As Germany prepared to force Romania to cede Northern Transylvania to Hungary, the Carol II regime further weakened national solidarity by waging a war against Romania's Jewish citizens. The fall of the regime at the beginning of September 1940 led to Antonescu's even harsher dictatorship, to a clampdown on what little was left of civil liberties under Carol II, and to a state-run genocide of the Jews. The beginnings of this genocide can be located in the developments that occurred during the Romanian withdrawal from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in the summer of 1940.

Anti-Semitic Propaganda and Official Rhetoric concerning the Judeo-Bolshevik Danger : Romanian Jews and Communism between 1938-1944

Introduction

"Judeo-Bolshevism," one of the central themes of fascist ideology, places the alliance between Jews and communists at the origins of the communist movement and the Bolshevik revolution. It considers Jews to be the true inspirers and culprits of undermining public order. Although it is a variant of an older conspiracy-theory view of history – the "Judeo-Masonic" plot narratives – the theory of the Judeo-Bolshevik plot has an even wider historical diffusion and greater political implications.

In the history of anti-Semitism, the "Judeo-Bolshevik danger" has been dealt with from at least three different and complementary angles. The first is its treatment as an epistemological formula, which places Judeo-Bolshevism into the cognitive structure of pre-scientific ("primitive") thought, which makes it a hyper-deterministic concept, as in the "diabolic causality," analyzed by Léon Poliakov.[1] The second analytical approach is that of political history. This approach characterizes studies on revolutionary socialist movements, their position with respect to anti-Semitism, and the problem of the emancipation of the Jews. Finally, the theme of Judeo-Bolshevism is approached by studies on the social history of the European Jewish communities from the point of view of the effects of fascist and Stalinist violence. The steadfastness with which Jews are demonized and blamed for all social crises indicates the reproductive force of certain archaic stereotypes that cross the ages and render impotent scientific explanations. This steadfastness necessitates an analysis of the topic that is both historical and trans-historical. The following chapter, therefore, will focus on three historically determined aspects of the available literature on the period of Romanian history stretching from 1938 to 1944.

First, from the point of view of political history, it focuses on the fact that a number of members of the Jewish minority in Romania joined labor movements during the interwar period and regarded these allegiances as modes of emancipation and integration in the social and political life of Romania. During the interwar years, due to its multiethnic, atheist and internationalist character, the socialist movement placed itself into the avant-garde of the modernization process in Romania.

It nevertheless must be stressed that militants of Jewish origin did not act as representatives of the Jewish community, as religious belonging was meaningless in an atheist

1. *La causalité diabolique : essai sur l'origine des persécutions* (Paris : Calmann-Lévy, 1980).

movement or party. The overrepresentation of ethnic minorities within the communist parties of those years was a direct effect of the nationalist conflicts and discrimination against minorities that plagued interwar Romanian politics. While generally favorable to granting equal rights to the Jews, neither the Romanian socialists nor the Romanian communists spared the use of anti-Semitic stereotypes in their discourse and imagery, such as the caricatured representation of capitalism and the bourgeoisie in the form of the Jewish usurer. It turned out that the critique of international plutocracy could turn into a locus of encounter for nationalist and left wing positions. This locus later became the breeding ground for Nicolae Ceauşescu's nationalist-socialist regime.

Second, in terms of the history of political ideas, conspiracy theories on the world Jewish plot (among which the Judeo-Bolshevik theory is but one variety) are the products of a diabolical representation of history,[2] and the result of the secularization of religious superstitions (Karl Popper). Diabolic causality systematically assigns to a group or certain individuals the power to trigger malefic events because they would benefit these groups or individuals. "Diabolic causality" is typical to "primitive mentalities" (Levy-Bruhl) and is defined by scholars as pre-scientific or pre-logical (Leon Brunschvig). It demonstrates the perpetuation of certain mystical forms of thought in modern society as well as certain manifestations of intellectual regression in Soviet societies.[3] It is necessary to distinguish between the reproductive capacity of such superstitions in any society and their political operationalization in ideological constructions with criminal effects, such as "Judeo-Bolshevism."

Third, a major argument against the thesis of the Judeo-Bolshevik plot is the typically nonviolent history of pre-Holocaust European Jewish communities. Contrary to the anti-Semitic thesis, Jews were generally loyal to bourgeois democratic regimes. This loyalty was based on the twin historical processes of social assimilation and social mobility. The adherence to ideologies of revolutionary salvation was statistically negligible and in effect was a direct consequence of the growth of anti-Semitic political nationalism in late nineteenth century.[4] Moreover, the Jewish "habitus" was characterized, in fact, by the absence of narratives of domination and by the delegitimation of violent action, especially physical violence. The Jews' relationship with violence, which generated the "fascist-Stalinist mentality" during the thirties and the forties in Central Europe, was lower in comparison to other ethno-religious communities.

This is demonstrated by the fact that the Jewish community censored violence relating to many facets of social life : economic relationships, education, social status relationships, neighborhood and interethnic relationships, marital or extramarital sexual relations, and forms of socialization (e.g., the relationship with the consumption of alcoholic beverages). Together, all of these factors led to a form of collective censorship that limited the violence in the Jewish community. The non-violent nature of the Jewish community was largely due to the exemption of its male members from military service and their ineligibility for military careers, which shielded the Jews from the ritual exercise of combat experienced by other ethnic communities.

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2. Mircea Eliade's thesis on the "terror of history" can be cited among the examples.
3. Leszek Kołakowski or Alexandre Zinoviev, quoted by Poliakov.
4. See for example, Victor Karady, "Les Juifs et la violence stalinienne," *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociale*, 120 (December 1997), pp. 3-31.

French sociologist Victor Karady, based on a thorough investigation, has described the life of Hungarian Jews during the first half of the nineteenth century, which was similar to Jewish life in Romania.

> If the crimes and misdemeanors against the state were rather rare, physical aggression and violence was even rarer among their population. The number of Jews who committed petty crimes was proportionally smaller than in the general population and smaller still with regard to violent crimes. This [self-]censorship of aggressiveness applied equally to physical damage (arson) or burglary… which affect other people's goods. The inclination of abstaining from physical violence of any kind seems to be confirmed in a general way. The only important exception is a duel, which belongs to the honor code of the elites, assimilated with the old aristocracy but repressed by the penal code. [One] is right to see in the over-representation of the Jews in duels the exception which confirms the rule. In short, violent crimes represent only one-fifth (20.3 percent) of the infractions committed by the Jews in comparison to the more-than-double proportion… (42.1 percent) of non-Jews… In this respect, we already evoked family morality (and as a hypothesis, school education), their rapport with the state, toward sexuality, toward their recreational activities, fields from which one could say that assimilated Judaism from the period of the old Hungarian regime [until the war] is proof of a better control of aggressiveness and the correlative impulses of a renouncement of using physical force.[5]

The use of massive violence against Jews during the Holocaust led to deep identity shifts in the Jewish psyche ; the moral pact with the "old society" was torn and the adoption of a radical strategy began : Zionist de-assimilation and, to a lesser extent and for a shorter period of time, the adoption of socialism. In Romania, the de-assimilation strategy was the dominant strategy after 1944 and was spurred by both the Holocaust and the subsequent policies of forced assimilation and nationalist discrimination of the Communist regime.

Characteristics of the Coverage of "Judeo-Bolshevism" in the Wartime Press

A Single Discourse

The Romanian press between January 1, 1938, and August 23, 1944, was notable for its ideological monotony : dailies and most magazines adopted the same normative stances (the same opinions, vision, beliefs) and the same interpretations of domestic and international politics. The wide diversity of opinions that characterized the interwar Romanian press gradually disappeared after 1938 and was soon replaced by a single opinion : the opinion first of the Goga government, then of the Royal Dictatorship, and eventually of the Antonescu governments.

Two days after its investiture, the Goga government (December 28, 1937 – August 23, 1944) shut down democratic dailies such as *Adevărul*, *Dimineaţa*, and *Lupta*, signaling that press censorship was the new rule in town. Other radical changes came during the Royal Dictatorship. When the king turned his Front of National Rebirth (*Frontul Renaşterii*

5. Karady, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

Naţionale) into the Party of the Nation, defined with unconcealed pride as a "a single and totalitarian party," in June 1940, he also issued a decree-law that explicitly criminalized "the advocacy, by word or in writing, of changing the political organization of the state provided for under the decree-law establishing of the Party of the Nation."[6] Nichifor Crainic, an influential intellectual and journalist with extreme-right views and the minister of propaganda in 1940, "completed" what the National Christian government had started, as he himself argued: "Octavian Goga performed a splendid act of Romanian justice when he suppressed *Adevărul*, *Dimineaţa*, and *Lupta*. The rest could only be achieved in 1940 when, as minister of propaganda, I eradicated all Jewish dailies, weeklies, and monthlies in Romania. The holy right to speak for the Romanian nation belongs exclusively to Romanians. We can speak for the foreigners in our country because we are masters of this land."[7]

Later, in 1942, in a triumphant survey of the Antonescu government, Mihai Antonescu devoted a special chapter entitled "National Propaganda," which provided statistics on the regime's measures to repress freedom of speech: "The healthy Romanianization of the press has led to the suspension of 30 worthless journals, of which 12 were dailies and 18 were periodicals; 4 were foreign and 26 were Romanian; it also led to the suppression of 171 useless journals and the suppression of obscene magazines, and the waste of forbidding their publication."[8] At the same time, the Ministry of Propaganda established its own publications – *Cuvântul Mareşalului către săteni*, *Basarabia*, *Bucovina*, *Transnistria*, *Argeşul*, *Pentru Jertfitori*, *Dacia Traiană*, *Soldatul*, *Der Soldat*, and *Il Soldato* – in which servitude to the government was of course total.

But, it was not only the government publications that reflected this monolithic political discourse; it could also be found in seemingly independent, but in fact government-affiliated, widely distributed newspapers and magazines, such as *Curentul*, *Viaţa*, *Universul*, *Gândirea*, *Convorbiri literare*, *Vremea (Războiului)*, *Revista Fundaţiilor Regale*. And clearly, the notorious extreme-right publications, such as *Porunca vremii* and *Sfarmă Piatră*, spread the repressive government discourse. The leitmotif of this single discourse adopted by the entire Romanian press of the time can be summarized in two words: anti-democratic and pro-totalitarian. In the words of Pamfil Şeicaru, editor and owner of *Curentul*, the dominant idea during those years was that "democracy [had] been liquidated,"[9] that a diametrically opposite political order in the vein of fascism or

6. "Transformarea Frontului Renaşterii Naţionale în 'Partidul Naţiunii,' *Universul*, 57, no. 170, June 23, 1940, p. 1.
7. Nichifor Crainic, "După douăzeci de ani," *Gândirea*, 20, no. 10, December 1941, p. 515; not was only the minister of propaganda adept at censorship, which he deemed a cause of national spiritual health, but he was also a known intellectual figure of the time. Ion Al. Brătescu-Voineşti, for example, advocated for the "necessity even during a time of peace, of an institution to discourage, like in the past, ordinary people from becoming forgers of public opinion," this is used as a reason to create "a plan of reorganization of the censorship services" and send it to the leader of the state: see Ion Al. Brătescu-Voineşti, "Am văzut pe Mareşalul," *Curentul*, 16, no. 5408, March 8, 1943, pp. 1, 5.
8. "Doi ani de guvernare a Mareşalului Antonescu. Expozeul d-lui prof. Mihai Antonescu la radio," *Viaţa*, 2, no. 501, September 10, 1942, p. 7.
9. "Stat totalitar," *Curentul*, 13, no. 4458, July 11, 1940, p. 1; see also Vasile Netea, "Stat şi Naţiune," *Vremea Războiului*, 14, no. 646, May 3, 1942, p. 1; Nichifor Crainic, "Aliaţii lui Hitler" (henceforth: Crainic, "Aliaţii"), *Gândirea*, 20, no. 7, September 1941, pp. 337-340.

national-socialism[10] was going to replace democracy in the historical process of political transformation that, from a Romanian point of view, was desirable, even imperative. These premises were inevitably leading to the cult of the European figures who, through their politics, embodied the "new direction" of history : Adolph Hitler, Mussolini, Salazar, Ion Antonescu, and others. The Romanian media was not only full of praise for these men,[11] but also for their opinions, speeches, and articles as well as those of their deputies – Goebbles, Alfred Rosenberg, Ribbentrop, Manfred von Killinger, and Count Ciano, among others – their works often reproduced in their entirety or summarized generously and always exceptionally appreciated.

From "Judeo-Democracy" to "Judeo-Communism/Judeo-Bolshevism"

One of the frequently used arguments to demonize democracy at the time was that democracy essentially meant "the establishment of foreign and Kike rule," as Traian Brăileanu, minister of national education, religion, and arts in the National Legionary government put in during a press conference.[12] Frequently associated with the "Judeo--masonry"[13] and "plutocracy"[14] arguments, democracy appeared to these critics to be a wholly Jewish idea or an idea employed to serve Jewish interests exclusively. According to Nichifor Crainic : "The fact that until recently Romanian nationalistic claims ended in tragedy was due to international Jewish power, which was grafted onto Western democracies and exercised genuine terror on those countries' governments. In a way, we were the vassals of this *Judeo-democracy*, and Romanian nationalism could not achieve anything without the consent of Judeo-democracy [a.n.]."[15]

The surviving Western democracies were presented the same, as being infiltrated and controlled by the Jewish element. The American administration was described as a puppet in the hand of the Jews,[16] as was the British government under the leadership of

10. Following are two editorials with very telling titles : Leonida C. Pop, "Naţional-socialismul – axa de purificare a Europei," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 77, June 1941, p. 1 ; Mircea Pop, "Actualitatea fascismului," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 214, November 2, 1941, p. 1.
11. It is very difficult to list all the articles published on this issue. Some self-evident examples are : "Adolf Hitler, sinteză a veacurilor," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 24, April 24, 1941, p. 5 ; Ion Băleanu, "Adolf Hitler, omul providenţial al Europei," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 22, April 20, 1941, p. 6. Even in moderate magazines one can find such examples : see C. Rădulescu-Motru, "Mareşalul Ion Antonescu," *Revista Fundaţiilor Regale*, 8, nos. 8-9, August-September 1941, pp. 243-248, in which the *Conducător* is described as Romania's savior.
12. The phrase is from "Problema elitelor în Statul Legionar. Conferinţa d-lui prof. Traian Brăileanu, ministrul Educaţiei Naţionale, Cultelor şi Artelor" (Conference held by Traian Brăileanu, minister of national education, religion, and arts in the National Legionary government), *Curentul*, 14, no. 4640, January 13, 1941, p. 3.
13. For example : General Băgulescu, "Caracatiţa iudeo-masonică," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4648, January 21, 1941, p. 6 ; and "Declaraţiile d-lui Prof. Ion Zelea Codreanu făcute presei," *Curentul*, 13, no. 4525, September 16, 1940, p. 5.
14. For example : "Între plutocraţie şi comunism," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4839, August 6, 1941, p. 3.
15. "Importanţa decretului-lege pentru exproprierea imobilelor urbane ale evreilor. Declaraţiile făcute presei de către d. Nichifor Crainic, ministrul Propagandei," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 3, April 2, 1941, p. 7.
16. See, for example : "'Prietenii' lui Roosevelt. Un reportaj de cifre şi nume extrem de clare şi nu mai puţin semnificative," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 262, December 20, 1941, p. 7. Texts supporting such

Winston Churchill.[17] In the view of many Romanian publications, Great Britain's genuine European spirit had been perverted by the influence of a non-European one: "Today's intercontinental war will have to decide between the European spirit [embodied by Hitler] and the Anglo-Saxon one, which was also created by Europe, but was distorted by Judaism. Victory, as in all ages, can belong only to Europe, which represents the aristocracy of the spirit."[18]

The Romanian press was flooded by the rhetoric of the Axis as defender of Europe, particularly after June 1941. Typical of the Romanian representation of "Europe" and "the European spirit" were such tropes as "holy war," "crusade," and "victory of the Cross."[19] Against this rhetorical backdrop, Romania was considered to have "a decisive role for the history of the old continent,"[20] a banality that was obsessively repeated in journals and magazines.[21] The public discourse was saturated with sacrificial-triumphalist and heroic references, constructing a salvationist mythology of the war waged by Germany and its allies.

The formation of the alliance between Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union was seen as the key moment that led to a shift in focus from "Judeo-democracy" to "Judeo-communism." The Romanian press construed this military alliance through what they perceived as the arch-commonality of the communist and capitalist worlds: the Jewish element. In England, "the diabolical work of the Jews were introduced to the fortress in order to ruin it… The land of Carlyle, the apologist of heroism, has become a jungle ruled by the soulless hordes of communist Judeo-Masonry."[22]

In fact, the interconnection between "Judeo-democracy" and "Judeo-communism" was an older idea in Romanian political culture, frequently cultivated in the thirties; so, this sudden and quasi-total wartime switch had, in effect, been prepared earlier. Tudor Teodorescu-Braniţte, a remarkable democratic journalist, noted this conflation of democracy and communism, which extremist spirits were already using aggressively, in the last issue of *Adevărul* to escape total censorship:

> The fact that a significant part of public opinion today is lost and has repudiated liberty to embrace dictatorship is not its fault, but is instead the fault of those who contributed to this societal loss of direction. Let us not forget that for years moderate and sincere democrats were

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points of view are very numerous. Sometimes they are borrowed from the German press ("Puterea reală în Statele Unite va fi acaparată de evrei. Evreul Bernard Baruch…," *Viaţa*, 2, no. 508, September 17, 1942, p. 8) or from the Italian one (Virginio Gayda, "Internaţionalismul american nu este altceva decât un asalt disperat al iudaismului" [editorial, published under the title "Teze italiene"], *Curentul*, 14, no. 4755, May 12, 1941, p. 1).

17. Ştefan Ionescu, "Yankeii, lorzii şi evreii…," *Viaţa*, 1, nos. 259-260, December 18, 1941, pp. 1, 3.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
19. A random example: "Romania, apărătoarea Europei," *Curentul*, 16, no. 5354, January 1, 1943, p. 1.
20. Romulus Dianu, "Înţelegerea," *Curentul*, vol. 16, no. 535, January 17, 1943, p. 1.
21. Not only *Curentul* but also its director excelled at presenting Romania's war against the Soviet Union in this light. "At Stalingrad," he concluded in an editorial, in flagrant disagreement with the reality on the front, "the Germans and the Romanians represent the millenary tradition of military honor that has changed the history of Europe" (Pamfil Şeicaru, "Profetului de la Stalingrad," *Curentul*, 16, no. 5374, February 2, 1943, p. 1). The director thus proved that he was consistent with himself, for he had long considered Romania to be fulfilling a "European mission" in this war; *idem*, "Misiunea noastră europeană: faţa la Est," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4856, August 23, 1941, p. 1.
22. Theo Maiorescu, "Neomenie engleză… sau isterie iudaică," *Viaţa*, 2, no. 530, October 9, 1942, p. 3.

labeled "Bolsheviks," even though the labelers knew they talked about people committed to freedom and legality within the limits of constitutional monarchy. In so doing, they sought to compromise and put out any initiative of genuine and well-reasoned democracy.[23]

Thus, democracy and communism seemed to many to be conceptually related and organically linked : communism appeared to be little more than an elementary, radicalized form of democracy.

The alliance between the Soviets and Anglo-Americans was seen as the ultimate, irrefutable evidence of the essential resemblance between democracy and communism. Despite passing misunderstandings between the two political orders and their differences in form, which were sometimes acknowledged by the very people who emphasized the similarities in their "essence," as early as the forties, both were increasingly presented as the work of the same author (Judaism), having the same goal (Jewish dominance), and being deeply hostile to Europe. The official Nazi viewpoint, based on what Hitler called the "Judeo-Bolshevik plot" and the "anti-German plot organized by Jews and democrats as well as Bolsheviks and reactionaries,"[24] was therefore well received in the Romanian press at the time.

The Judeo-Bolshevism Thesis

If the "Judeo-democracy" thesis was not very widespread in Romania during the interwar years, that of "Judeo-Bolshevism" was much more popular. Yet in many contexts, the two arguments were used interchangeably.[25]

There was a sudden increase in the use of the Judeo-Bolshevism argument after the June 1940 Soviet ultimatum, which resulted in territorial losses and Romania joining the Axis in the war against the Soviet Union. If the representation of the Jews as being disloyal and traitorous toward the Romanian state was not new, the punishment, which began in January 1938, was justified after the 1940 territorial losses, and the media perception of the Jewish minority, derived from the official one, was simplified even more : the inclination toward communism was considered as defining for the Jews. The journalistic discourse insinuated that there was an irresistible link between the Soviet Union and the Jews from the Romanian state, especially those from Moldova, in keeping with the position of the Romanian authorities.

Many in the press regarded the Soviet Union as a product of Jewish militancy. The theory that the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution had been led by Jews knew many versions : "The Bolshevik revolution was prepared by Lenin and a long list of Kikes : Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Uritzky… All these Russian names conceal those of Bronstein, Radomirsky, Apfelbaum… The secret meeting of October 10, 1917, where the decision

23. Tudor Teodorescu-Branişte, "Criza democraţiei," *Adevărul*, 51, no. 16,539, December 30, 1937, p. 1.
24. "A început războiul de salvare a ţărilor din ghearele bolşevismului. Textul integral al Proclamaţiei Fuehrer-ului adresate poporului german," *Viaţa*, no. 85, 1, June 25, 1941, p. 1. See also Hitler's speech, "The International Kike, England, and Soviet Russia," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 225, November 13, 1941, in which expressions such as "Judeo-Bolshevism" and "Anglo-Kikishness" abound.
25. Romulus Dianu, "Capitalismul englez se bizuie pe bolşevism ! …," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4798, June 26, 1941, p. 1.

was made to launch the armed revolt, included seven kikes, five Russians (three of whom were married to Jewish women), and a Pole"; [26] this all was regarded as "the greatest Jewish audacity of all time."[27] The regime thus installed could mean only Jewish dominance; for example, the fact that the "ferocious Stalin had the Jew Kaganovici as an advisor was solid proof of the Cominern's orientation."[28] Mihai Antonescu himself paid special attention to this topic when he stated, "In the Soviet Union intellectuals are slaves, peasants are stones, and Jews are masters."[29] In his turn, Nichifor Crainic, whose political and journalistic position weighed heavily in the epoch, was never shy to speak of "Judeo-Russians" and "Judeo-Bolshevik Russia" and to blame the loss of Bessarabia and Bukovina on the Jews.[30]

It was not only dailies that invoked "Judeo-Bolshevism" in reference to the Soviet Union, but so did magazines and reviews with the most respectable pasts. *Convorbiri literare*, for example, joined the general choir, using in its editorials phrases like "the Judeo-communist Bolshevism of the Soviet republics" and "the Judeo-Bolshevik Bela Kun."[31] The editor-in-chief himself (I.E. Torouţiu) spoke of "the apocalyptic confrontation between the Judeo-Bolshevik super-state and the civilized peoples of Europe, in a genuine crusade."[32] The Judeo-Bolshevik argument was, needless to say, widespread in journals with a tradition of far right extremism (*Sfarmă Piatră*, *Porunca vremii*).[33] In short, media representations, always molded propagandistically, often made use of the terms "Jew," "communist," and "Bolshevik" interchangeably, a fact that went unchallenged.

Under these circumstances, soon after the Soviet Union's extension up to the Prut River, the Romanian Jews' attraction to the Soviet state became a sort of leitmotif in the contemporary press. In July 1940, *Curentul* published "reports" from the post-June 1940 Romanian-Soviet border, which described a continuous exodus of Romanian Jews toward the newly-Sovietized Bessarabia: "It is interesting to note that most people now crossing the Prut are Jews, irrespective of social class or years of residence in the country. On Portului Street I saw long columns of carriages full of luxury suitcases and chests filled with fine clothes, expensive things, etc.; and near or beyond them, we saw groups of

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26. A. Pomescu, "Cea mai mare îndrăzneală a lui Israel," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4837, August 4, 1941, p. 2.
27. *Ibid*. The theory that the communist revolution meant "Jewish domination" was abundant in the Romanian press at the time; see also Cătălin Ropală, "Încercare de a pătrunde sensul revoluţiei comuniste," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 270, December 30, 1941, p. 5.
28. Alex. Hodoş, "Războiul pe care Israel îl va pierde," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4833, July 31, 1941, p. 1.
29. "Două concepţii," *Universul*, 59, no. 181, July 6, 1942, p. 3.
30. Crainic, "Aliaţii," p. 337.
31. "Pentru un nou răsărit," *Convorbiri literare*, vol. 74, no. 7, July 1941, p. 709. It is interesting to note that the Romanian intervention in Hungary at the end of the World War I – to suppress the communist movement led by Bela Kun – was now appreciated by many Romanian publications as a kind of protochronic act in the fight against Judeo-Bolshevism. For example, Horia I. Ursu, "Rolul poporului român în apărarea Europei," *Vremea Războiului*, 14, no. 640, March 8, 1942, pp. 1, 14. The Romanian perception of the Hungarian revolution as having to do with "Judeo-Bolshevism" was nothing new and even enjoyed a certain prestige, given that such an interpretation had been proposed by important figures in Romanian culture like N. Iorga (see, for instance, his articles: "Bolşevism?... O nouă formă a şarlataniei imperialiste," *Neamul Românesc*, vol. 14, no. 62, March 17, 1919, p. 1, or "Bolşevismul unguresc," *Neamul Românesc*, vol. 14, no. 63, March 18, 1919, p. 1).
32. "Suflete închiriate," *Convorbiri literare*, 74, nos. 8-10 (August-October 1941), p. 949.
33. "Alianţa judaismului cu bolşevismul," *Porunca vremii*, 11, no. 2299, August 9, 1942, pp. 1, 3.

Jews who, judging by their clothes, were cultured people of a certain status."[34] The author did not use the term "Judeo-Bolshevik" or "Judeo-communist" to designate the travelers, but he was convinced that something irresistible attracted Jews toward the Soviet world, something irrational, chimerical, befitting their "spirit."

The belief that all of Bessarabian and Bukovinan Jewry celebrated Moscow's annexation of the two regions, thus revealing their anti-Romanian, pro-Soviet sentiments, was widespread and knew a variety of expressions, from blunt assertions to the presentation of allegedly irrefutable "evidence." For example, an article in *Viaţa* (director : Liviu Rebreanu) in November 1941 about the demographic problems of Chişinău and supposedly based on unassailable statistical data (furnished, of course, by the Romanian authorities), asserted :

> When Soviet Russia conquered Bessarabia last year, the city of Chişinău had 120,000 inhabitants. Because for the Jews of Romania, the Bolshevik heaven represents a powerful point of attraction, many Jews resettled in Bessarabia, so that under Bolshevik domination, Chişinău reached almost one million inhabitants. After Chişinău was set on fire by the retreating Bolsheviks, the city was left with 38,000 inhabitants. This was the number recorded by the Romanian administration.[35]

In the same order of ideas, the newspaper *Universul* (directed and owned by Stelian Popescu) published, for instance, photographs of happy people with the following caption, "Judeo-communist manifestation in Chişinău for the kidnapping of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina by the red beasts." The comment accompanying the photographs pointed out once more, "The hideous faces of those in the photographs are those of the Jews of Chişinău." Although the images contained no clue, however small, to support such identification, the author's certainty knew no bounds. The end of the article was an encouragement for retribution : "We recognize the difficult work of our authorities in identifying those who were our enemies and assassins. But once identified and proven that they participated in the unbelievable and awful horrors, no mercy."[36]

"No mercy" had long been the underlying motto of the only political and journalistic discourse in Romania. From the time of the Goga government, the anti-Jewish laws and measures continued without interruption, taking away elementary political and civil rights, with the press approving them every time, sometimes explicitly in journalists' comments,[37] other times implicitly, through popularization.[38] In such a political and social climate the anti-Jewish acts, even when committed outside of the established legal

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34. "Exodul evreiesc din portul Galaţi continuă," *Curentul*, 13, no. 4470, July 23, 1940, p. 1.
35. "Populaţia actuală a Chişinăului," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 225, November 13, 1941, p. 1.
36. Elefterie Negel, "Bucuria evreimii la răpirea Basarabiei," *Universul*, 58, no. 213, August 9, 1941, p. 7
37. Pamfil Şeicaru, for example, commenting on the Goga government's law on the revision of citizenship, excelled in the superlative : "An act of decisive political importance, a testimony of nationalist faith, a pledge of sincerity given to the country (…). It is the merit of the Goga government to have fulfilled the Romanian sensibility through the decision to revise all citizenships – in order to exclude all who fraudulently sneaked in from the benefit of political rights, all who have benefited from the moral defect of the state administration (…). It is an act of reassurance and affirmation of our sovereignty (…), a safeguard for the future, the animation of the most righteous of expectations." See Pamfil Şeicaru, "O chezăşie a sinceritătii," *Curentul*, 11, no. 3580, January 20, 1938, pp. 1-2.
38. The Romanian press of the time offered constant support to the anti-Semitic policies of the regimes between 1938 and 1944. The anti-Jewish laws and administrative measures were popularized and

framework, enjoyed a sort of legitimacy and, consequently, an implicit impunity. The January 1941 pogrom perpetrated by the Legionnaires in the Văcăreşti and Dudeşti areas of Bucharest drew upon this kind of propaganda. Three weeks passed before the Romanian press ran stories on the murders, plunders, arsons, and murders "against the innocent Romanian inhabitants, and particularly in the Jewish quarters of Dudeşti and Văcăreşti, where genuine pogroms were perpetrated."[39] An official communiqué released at the time – reporting 236 dead, of which 118 were Jews – ending with a sentence suggesting mitigating circumstances for the perpetrators: "More than half of the dead were communists recruited from among the ranks of workers, craftsmen, traders, drivers, apprentices, etc."[40] In other words, they deserved their fate…

Journalistic references to Romanian Jews as promoters of communism increased considerably after Romania joined the war against the Soviets in 1941. July and August 1941 issues of the newspaper *Curentul* described at length the "destruction of Chişinău" and the burning of its cathedral, for which the daily undoubtedly blamed local pro-communist Jews: "Kikes, the great pioneers of communism, during their flight across the Dniester did not forget to set fire to the dearest altar, not only of Bessarabia but of Romania

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sustained on a regular basis by the media: the citizenship revision laws (for example: Isaia Tolan, "Revizuirea încetăţenirilor," *Curentul*, 11, no. 3581, January 21, 1938, p. 7); Decretul-lege pentru oprirea căsătoriilor între românii de sânge şi evrei, Decretul-lege privitor la starea juridică a locuitorilor evrei din România (*Curentul*, 13, no. 4483, August 11, 1940, p. 4); the exclusion of Jewish lawyers from the bar and Jewish employees from the National Railroad Company (CFR); the removal of all Jews from cultural institutions ("Eliminarea evreilor din teatre şi orice formaţiuni artistice. Decizia Ministerului Cultelor şi Artelor," *Curentul*, 13, no. 4520, September 11, 1940, p. 1) or from the national education system (Lorin Popescu, "107 zile de muncă în câmpul şcolii, al bisericii şi al artelor," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4630, January 1, 1941, p. 9); the expropriation of Jewish rural and urban estates ("Importanţa decretului-lege pentru exproprierea imobilelor urbane ale evreilor. Declaraţiile făcute presei de către d. Nichifor Crainic, Ministrul Propagandei," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 3, April 2, 1941, p. 7); the decree-law establishing the Jews' duty to perform "community work" ("Toţi evreii din Capitală sunt obligaţi să presteze muncă în folos obştesc," *Universul*, 58, no. 217, August 13, 1941, p. 3), the establishment of the Jewish Center (*Centrala Evreilor din România*) ("Spre rezolvarea problemei evreilor în România," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 264, December 22, 1941, pp. 1, 3); the new status of Jewish doctors ("Organizarea şi funcţionarea Colegiului Medicilor," *Universul*, 60, no. 270, October 3, 1943, p. 7); the confiscation of Jews' radios (Alex. Hodoş, "Israel într-o nouă robie…" [henceforth: Hodoş, "Israel într-o nouă robie…"], *Curentul*, 14, no. 4871, September 7, 1941, pp. 1, 7); the military taxes imposed on Jews ("Evreii care locuiesc în străinătate vor plăti înzecitul taxelor militare," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 215, November 3, 1941, p. 3), the law against "camouflaging Jewish interests" ("Numele persoanelor care au camuflat interesele evreieşti," *Viaţa*, 2, no. 492, September 6, 1942, p. 5); the increase in the price of bread for the Jews (*Porunca vremii*, 11, no. 2307, August 20, 1942, p. 3); etc. Romanian newspapers also regularly reported, in detail and sympathetically, on anti-Semitic measures instituted by other countries in an attempt to demonstrate that what was happening in Romania was in line with what was happening in "civilized Europe" ("Evreii din Franţa în tabere de muncă," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 47, May 17, 1941). Other papers printed abundant foreign anti-Semitic literature (*Porunca vremii*, for instance, published Edouard Drumont's sadly famous book *La France juive* under the title *France Turned Kike* as a serial in 1942).

39. "Un rezumat complect asupra modului în care s-a desfăşurat rebeliunea," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4663, February 7, 1941, p. 7.
40. "Bilanţul rebeliunii," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4663, February 7, 1941, p. 8.

itself."[41] *Curentul* depicted events in Northern Bukovina in the same way. Even the paper's director, Pamfil Şeicaru, who in his texts was generally reserved regarding "Judeo-Bolshevism," joined his colleagues in poisoning Romanian public opinion: "One year of Bolshevik occupation has taught Jews how to hate and commit acts of unparalleled immorality, so that now the cohabitation of Jews and Romanians in Bessarabia would be tantamount [to] provocation."[42]

The year of Soviet occupation of Bessarabia was presented everywhere as the year of Jewish occupation. *Viaţa*, for instance, also wrote about "the reign of the kike element between the Prut and the Dniester;" the newspaper maintained that in the Bessarabian education system that the role of teacher was entrusted to the Jews, "the majority [of whom were] degenerate individuals from a moral point of view." The end of the article formulated the following vengeful conclusion: "They came [the Jews]; there they will return while we Romanians will rebuild the nests spoiled by the year of Judeo-communist occupation."[43]

This media climate fit the intentions of the Antonescu government, which saw Jews as sworn traitors. The first measure Ion Antonescu, "Leader of the State," took once Romania had entered the war was to "remove" the Jews from the rural areas of Moldova – convinced, of course, that they were all potential friends of the enemy; the newspapers at the time printed the government press releases with titles in large red print.[44] That the Antonescu government saw Romanian Jews – and not just those in the rural areas – as sworn traitors was apparent a few days later when the press failed to show any signs of horror, concern, or doubt when it coldly announced, "Five hundred communist Jews were executed in Iaşi," the brutal but predictable consequence of the "Judeo-Bolshevik" mania brought to a climax. The official communiqué on the Iaşi pogrom pointed to Iaşi's "Judeo-Bolshevik population," which was supposedly guilty of having shot at Romanian and German troops, and urged ethnic Romanians to inform on Jews under threat of execution: "Whoever fails to reveal in due time these rioters against public safety and order shall be executed together with their entire families."[45]

By then, "Judeo-communism" had turned into an endemic political and media psychosis. The official repressive measures reached a terrifying level of abuse and arbitrariness. A communiqué released after the genocide of Iaşi informed the public opinion that the authorities were determined to go even further: "Any attempt to repeat these vile aggressions shall be mercilessly repressed. For every Romanian or German soldier

41. "Barbaria bolşevică a distrus capitala Basarabiei," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4832, July 30, 1941, p. 5; C. Mironescu, "Jidanii alături de 'tovarăşii' bolşevici sunt autorii distrugerii Chişinăului," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4837, August 4, 1941, p. 7; or Radian Eugen, "Dinamitat şi incendiat, Chişinăul nu mai este azi decât un imens morman de ruine. Cârdăşia jidanilor cu bolşevicii," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4843, August 10, 1941, p. 5.
42. "Românizare şi birocraţie," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4891, September 27, 1941, p. 1.
43. Savin Popescu Lupu, "Jidovii apostoli. Cum au dărâmat localurile de şcoală. Apostoli-felceri. Despre imoralitatea evreicei învăţătoare. Urmele jidovilor în şcoli," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 271, December 31, 1941, p. 5.
44. There are countless articles praising this measure. To illustrate with two examples: "A început lupta pentru purificarea rasei," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4801, June 29, 1941, p. 3; and "Evreii din comunele rurale vor fi îndepărtaţi. Comunicat," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 89, June 29, 1941, p. 1.
45. "500 de evrei comunişti executaţi la Iaşi. Ei au tras din case focuri asupra ostaşilor germani şi români. Comunicat," *Universul*, 58, no. 175, July 2, 1941, p. 1.

killed, fifty Judeo-communists will be executed."[46] The press only welcomed the resolute manner in which Antonescu's authorities intended to move against the "treason"[47] of the "Judeo-communists."

In such a context, the life of Bessarabian and Bukovinan Jewry became a nightmare. "All Jews here," wrote a war correspondent for *Curentul*, posted in Bessarabia, "are spies, they are all ready to sabotage any measure serving the national interest and would give their lives to be able to contribute anything to the Bolsheviks' success."[48] This was why, the daily continued, "the safety measures against these are getting harsher day by day. Jews between the ages of 16 and 55 were evacuated from all boroughs and towns, and from now on, their residence is in the camp."[49] With unrestrained satisfaction, the war correspondent then described the tragedy of the Jews as he saw it: "On the roads of Moldova, I met numerous convoys of carriages and full trains of wandering Kikes… And the women and elderly who remained in the boroughs and towns wore a distinctive patch sewn on a yellow armband – the Kikish yellow star. Their time has finally come.… Therefore, let us carry on this holy war with dignity, for it will bring us two final victories: the defeat of Bolshevism and the destruction of Judaism."[50]

The situation was the same in Bukovina, and the press did not hesitate to advertise and support the measures taken by the Romanian administration there. Alexandru Rioşanu, Ion Antonescu's envoy to Bukovina, issued several ordinances establishing the regime of the local Jews, such as the conditions in which they were allowed to travel and buy supplies and the duty to wear the yellow star. One of these ordinances was publicized through posters that read, "The population shall be informed that… 50 Jewish leaders from Cernăuţi were arrested and imprisoned, and they will guarantee with their lives and belongings the complete silence of the Jewish population. If the Jews commit the slightest act of violence against the Romanian or allied armies, all hostages shall be executed immediately."[51] The anti-Semitic policies thus developed all the attributes of state terrorism, and the Romanian press regarded them as justified. The current and concrete acts of justice concerning the Jews became genuine models of abuse or even crime, with the press reporting them approvingly.[52]

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46. "Pentru fiecare ostaş german sau român vor fi executaţi 50 iudeo-comunişti. Comunicat," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4806, July 4, 1941, p. 1.
47. C. Şoldan, "Trădări...," *Universul*, 58, no. 178, July 5, 1941, p. 1.
48. Aurel Popoviciu, "Evreii, uneltele şi aliaţii bolşevicilor", *Curentul*, 14, no. 4809, July 7, 1941, p. 7.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 12
50. *Ibid.* The cynical description of the situation of the Jews in Bessarabia can be found in a number of articles. See, for example: C. Mironescu, "Bolşevicii îndemnau la desfrâu tineretul din Basarabia," *Curentul*, 14, no. 4843, August 10, 1941, pp. 1, 4.
51. *Apud* "Noul regim al evreilor din întreg cuprinsul Bucovinei," *Universul*, 58, no. 211, August 7, 1941, p. 7.
52. See, for instance, the section on "5 comunişti care pregăteau acte de sabotaj au fost condamnaţi la moarte şi executaţi," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 223, November 11, 1941, p. 6. The article presents the arrest, on November 2, of a group of six "communists," who "were preparing acts of sabbtoage" out of which five were of Jewish origin (Paneth Francisc, Paneth Lili, Moses Francisc, Kornhauser Adalbert and Iosipovici Ada) and one of Hungarian descent (Naghy Elisabeta), on their being sentenced to death by the Court Martial of the Military Command of Bucharest three days later, followed by their execution on November 7, 1941. Others were victims of the enforcement of the "Law of sabotage and illicit speculation," which targeted Jewish merchants.

Solutions to the "Judeo-Bolshevism" Ideology

In the political and journalistic imagery outlined above, "Judeo-communism" appeared to be the theory of absolute evil, which synthesized and amplified – against the background of the ongoing war – as a kind of ideological corollary, the "defects" of Jewishness as perceived in traditional anti-Semitism. From this point of view, the ideas of Goebbels, Nazi minister of propaganda, were echoed generously in the Romanian press at the time: "Kikes are the cause of war. This is why our treatment of them does not subject them to any injustice. They deserve this treatment. It is the government's task to finish them off for good;"[53] or, "It was the Jews who wanted this war... This may lead to serious decisions, but that is of no consequence considering the size of the danger... By conceiving a plan of total destruction against the German people, they [the Jews] have signed their own death sentence."[54]

This theory was largely shared by the Bucharest regime. Antonescu himself concurred when he told Filderman: "The war initiated by Judah against Germany now turns against Judah himself."[55] In its turn, the Romanian press contributed to this atmosphere with its articles, writing about "the war of Jews"[56] and the fact that "today's war with all its misfortunes was prepared, and its fire maintained, by the power of Jewry throughout the world."[57]

In the face of the type of "Jewish danger," which defined the majority's situation as one of legitimate defense, the search for radical measures became imperative. When reading the press of the time, one can see that the "Final Solution" to the "Jewish problem" was often discussed and desired. "Only by stepping over the corpses of Judaism and Bolshevism, will humankind be able to find peace, prosperity, and the

53. "Cum trebuiesc consideraţi jidanii. Consideraţiunile d-lui dr. Goebbels," *Viaţa*, 1, no. 230, November 18, 1941, p.3.
54. Joseph Goebbels, "Războiul şi evreii," *Viaţa*, 3, no. 738, May 10, 1943, p. 3 (reproduced from *Das Reich*). Similar views, shared by other German or Italian officials, were also promptly publicized in Romania. "The war was unleashed by the Jews... It was only the destructive hatred of the Jewish instinct that unleashed this war against creative Europe," asserted the head of the press in Nazi Germany (see "Alianţa plutocraţiei şi bolşevismului tinde la nimicirea Europei. Discursul d-lui dr. Dietrich la Congresul ziariştilor europeni," *Viaţa*, 3, no. 786, June 28, 1943, p. 8). His aide said the same thing: "The Jew is the enemy of all peoples... Judaism has been the factor on which this war has been founded, whose engine it is, moreover" (see "Vice-şeful presei Reichului despre problema evreiască," *Universul*, 60, no. 276, October 9, 1943, p. 7). This stereotype was also imported from fascist Italy: "The war waged by the Axis is thus revealed as a fight for freedom from the yoke of banks and Judaism" (see Gayda, *op. cit.*, p. 1).
55. "Presa germană despre răspunsul dat de Mareşalul Antonescu evreilor: 'Războiul deslănţuit de Iuda împotriva Germaniei se întoarce acum împotriva lui însuşi,'" *Viaţa*, 1, no. 213, November 1, 1941, p. 8.
56. Ilie Rădulescu, "Războiul evreimii," *Porunca vremii*, 11, no. 2320, September 4, 1942, pp. 1, 3.
57. Alex. Hodoş, "Ascultă, Israele!" (henceforth: Hodoş, "Ascultă, Israele!"), *Curentul*, 14, no. 4857, August 24, 1941, p. 1. See also Aurel Popoviciu's article cited above, pp. 7, 12.

spiritual mission conferred by Providence," wrote Ilie Rădulescu, director of the far-right newspaper *Porunca vremii*.[58] A.C. Cuza, "specialist" for many decades on the "Jewish problem," often gave interviews or made statements in which he invoked the imperative of a "unitary solution"[59] to the Jewish issue, such as the re-settlement of Jews in non-European lands, like Uganda, Madagascar, Rhodesia or Palestine.[60] *Curentul* often dedicated articles to this topic, sometimes pleading for the mass expulsion of Jews[61] and providing suggestions – ostensibly motivated by humanitarianism – for the location of their re-settlement (e.g., Bolivia),[62] other times, hinting that "the solution to the Jewish problem will perhaps be of an heroic nature… to cure them and save the world order."[63] The newspaper *Unirea* embraced the same "solution" by formulating explicit threats in case the Jews would not consent to their "voluntary" departure from Romania: "It hinges only on the… availability of the necessary instruments for liquidation plans to be operationalized."[64]

Between Myth and Reality: Jewish Participation in the Communist Movement

First, the affiliation, support, or sympathy for a political party or civic organization represents a freely-assumed individual act. This choice is the result of a combination of various factors, such as internal economic and social stability, character of the political regime, the international political situation, family affiliation, level of education, professional affiliation, intensity of religious feelings, affiliation with community or civic structures, age, and residence. Therefore, when a non-democratic political regime practices overt ethnic and racial discrimination, those belonging to heavily-discriminated communities tend to be more open to political parties or civic organizations that are most focused on fighting the established system and/or the racial or ethnic policies applied by the political regime. This type of individual political reaction should not be confused with the reaction of the ethnic community.

Second, community civic structures have their own autonomy and identity. They elaborate on specific reactions of members of the community in response to exceptional historic situations. Within the context of non-democratic political systems (those that do not recognize ethnic or religious communities or practice chauvinistic or anti-Semitic

58. Rădulescu, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
59. "Problema jidovească nu se poate rezolva decât prin aplicarea unei soluţii unitare. Importante declaraţii făcute ziarului *Curentul*, de dl consilier regal prof. A.C. Cuza," *Curentul*, 13, no. 4466, July 19, 1940, p. 1.
60. "D. prof. A.C. Cuza propune un congres anti-evreiesc. Trebuie găsit un teritoriu în care să fie colonizaţi Evreii" [interview], *Curentul*, 11, no. 3603, February 12, 1938, p. 9.
61. Hodoş, "Israel într-o nouă robie..."
62. "Posibilităţi de emigrare în Bolivia pentru evreii din România," *Curentul*, 11, no. 3626, March 17, 1938, p. 11.
63. Hodoş, "Ascultă, Israele!".
64. X.Y.Z., "Rezolvarea problemei evreieşti. Nimic nu va putea împiedica lichidarea ei categorică şi definitivă," *Unirea* (1941), *apud* Mihail E. Ionescu and Liviu Rotman (eds.), *The Holocaust and Romania* (Bucharest, 2003), p. 313.

politics that may lead to minority exclusion from the civic, economic, or political community of rights and even to genocide) the representatives of civic community structures may resort to liberation or rescue actions on behalf of and for the benefit of their community ; the efforts of Dr. Wilhelm Filderman, head of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, to prevent deportations and help the Jews who had already been deported provide a good example. These attitudes are largely presented in the chapter of this report entitled "The Life of the Jewish Community under Ion Antonescu and the Jewish Community's Response to the Holocaust in Romania."

Third, between 1938 and 1944, the Communist Party in Romania had messages and politically critical attitudes toward the anti-Semitic policies of the state during the dictatorial governments. In general, Romanian Communist Party (Partidul Comunist Român – PCR) adopted the positions of the Communist International on issues related to minorities or antifascism.

PCR documents from the 1938-1944 period from the Romanian National Archives describe some of the party positions concerning the Jewish problem. From this perspective, three attitudes of the Communist Party appear. First, a direct rejection of the discrimination and anti-Semitic political actions organized by the state ; second, an implicit reaction ; and third, a reaction of trivialization of the Holocaust in Romania.

Clearly, with the exception of the last type of reaction, in any other situation the messages of the PCR during those years would have been at least potential sources of attraction for the Jews from Romania who lived under an acute feeling of multiple insecurities. A few examples that illustrate Communist Party attitudes include *the critique of the Romanianization process* and a rejection of the alleged positive affect of this process on the economic and social status of the Jews.[65]

> The Antonescu-Sima government instituted the "Romanianization of personnel" across the entire country, based on law, to fire tens of thousands of Jewish and Hungarian workers and clerks and replace them with their subordinates, especially with those originating from the ranks of the refugees… In the Jewish and Hungarian businesses and foreign capital (except the German) a few thousand highly-paid Romanianization commissars were nominated… Under the slogan "Romanianization of industry and commerce," the Legionnaires and their armed followers began the expropriation of small and large Jewish stores all over the country with threats of death. The Legionary regime led by General Antonescu and Horia Sima not only instigated division but also divided, either by law or without the law, the belongings of the Jewish population."[66]

The PCR also harshly criticized the violent anti-Semitism of the extreme right. In January 1938, following anti-Semitic actions in Transylvania, the PCR felt obliged "to explain to the masses, using the Marxist repertoire, the meaning of periodical pogroms : they are not accidents, but a product of the policies wished by the dictatorship of finance capital… By informing the masses about the attitude of revolutionary workers, communists will raise sympathies for revolutionary workers' organizations within minorities." The filtering of anti-Semitism through the lens of class struggle and the radical opposition

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65. Arhivele Naţionale ale României (ANR), fond CC/PCR-Cancelarie, no. 2520, file no. 5/1941, "Scrisoare despre înfrângerea rebeliunii legionare," Istoria Partidului Comunist Român (Institutul de Studii Istorice şi Social-Politice de pe lângă Comitetul Central al Partidului Comunist Român – ISISP documentary), vol. 5, doc. 3, "De la regimul legionar la dictatura militară," February 1941.
66. Istoria PCR, vol. 5, doc. 3, "De la regimul legionar la dictatura militară," February 1941.

between the bourgeoisie and proletariat led the PCR to criticize the political positions of Jewish community leaders: "At the same time the Communist Party must show, through the facts (the speeches of Ely Bercovici, Filderman in the Parliament, the complete absence of the Hungarian Party), all the cowardice and humiliations of the minorities' bourgeoisies and to unmask those who are the allies of the liberals: the Union of Romanian Jews, the Hungarian Party that made alliances with the executioners of their own people."[67]

The antifascist documents or those against the dictatorial political regimes expressed, among other things, the Communist Party's position in favor of equal rights for minorities. Titles included: "Defending nationalities' rights and exposing the demagoguery of the government on this issue"[68] and "Against the national policy of persecution, the cancellation of the decrees on the revision of citizenship, and the cancellation of the 'law for the protection of national labor'... for equal rights to all people in Romania."[69]

The Jewish problem was also present in the correspondence between the Romanian Communists and their relations within the Third International. Typical is a letter written after the Legionary rebellion:

> [T]he Iron Guard lost much of its influence and this rebellion opened the eyes of many people. The murders, pillaging, and arsons that were committed have been underreported in the press. On January 21-22, 1941, before the Iron Guard initiated serious attacks upon the Board of Ministers, Antonescu did not interfere. Legionnaires sacked at will the Bucharest districts of Văcăreşti, Oţeşti, and others. On Domniţei Street, Legionnaires organized genuine orgies. A group of Jewish men and women were beaten to death with iron bars in the middle of a circle of "dancing" Legionnaires. At the city slaughterhouse, the Jews were hung on slaughterer's hooks for cows, and we have photographs of those atrocities.[70]

The PCR, through the civic association it controlled, allowed the Jews to militate for specific objectives; for example, in the Union of Patriots, the PCR stated that "The Jewish group must have its own commission to allow the Jews to take care of purely Jewish issues."[71]

The PCR also organized networks of aid to the Jews from the Vapniarka camp in Transnistria, where the majority of those detained were Jews and Communists.[72] It is worth mentioning that in 1942 when the Romanian communists remained interned in the

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67. ANR, file no. 3/1938, "Instrucţiuni. Sarcinile PC din România faţă de agitaţiile anti-Semite."
68. ANR, file no. 13/1939, "Scrisoare trimisă din ţară, informează despre acţiunea întreprinsă de Secretariatul PCR cu prilejul Consfătuirii reprezentanţilor partidelor politice din România, 16 mai 1939," May 19, 1939.
69. ANR, file no. 11/1938, "Platforma – Contra pericolului crescut de fascism şi război, pentru unirea poporului român cu popoarele conlocuitoare. Către toţi cetăţenii dornici de pace, democraţie şi progres. Către poporul român şi popoarele conlocuitoare din România," May 1938.
70. ANR, file no. 5/1941, "Scrisoarea tov. Zimmer adresată tov. Draganov despre înfrângerea rebeliunii legionare," March 1941.
71. ANR, file no. 28/1943, "Proces verbal încheiat în şedinţa CC/PCR din 29-30 august 1943, în care s-a analizat situaţia internaţională şi locul României în cadrul acesteia, sarcinile PCR în etapa actuală precum şi raporturile dintre Uniunea Patrioţilor, PSD etc.," August 30, 1943.
72. ANR, file no. 39/1943, "Proces verbal întocmit în şedinţa CC/PCR din 3 oct. 1943 intitulat *Şedinţa Sergiu*" where mention is made to "Frontul Plugarilor ajută regulat Vapniarka," inv. 2348, file no. 3/1943, "Corespondenţa unor evrei deportaţi în Transnistria," 1943.

Târgu-Jiu camp, over 400 Jewish communists were deported to Vapniarka. Because they were fed peas for cows, most of them returned to Romania paralyzed. Over forty Romanian communists of Jewish origin who had been sentenced to prison were moved from Vapniarka to the Rybnitsa prison. Only three of them survived.

At the same time, however, there were instances in which the PCR did not adopt a direct position about the Holocaust, instead talking indirectly about atrocities or putting Jewish victims under the more generic rubric of "cohabiting nationalities." Although its indictment of the Antonescu regime was made clear in a document issued in the aftermath of the Iaşi pogrom, which acknowledged the "poverty, hunger, forced labor, serfdom, destructive war in the interest of German fascists, internments in concentration camps and mass executions of Jews and Romanian patriots," the PCR confined itself to referring to the Jewish victims there as "the 2,000 patriots from Iaşi," whose murder "may not deter the Romanian people."[73]

A report of the Central Committee Secretariat of the PCR of May 20, 1938, described the difficult situation of Jews following the Citizenship Revision Law, without naming the Jews at all, although the law was directed at them:

> The royal dictatorship wages savage terror on cohabiting nationalities through its "citizenship revision" bill, which stripped the citizenship of tens and thousands of people. By barbarously applying "the law of national labor protection," thousands more men and women lost their jobs. The royal dictatorship runs a chauvinist policy of stirring Romanian people against cohabiting people and thereby endangers the security of the country in the case of aggression of fascist countries against Romania.[74]

A document of the PCR Central Committee following the Legionary rebellion defined the Legionary movement as "stirring and feeding wild chauvinism in the Romanian people, by stirring hate among nationalities, by forcing workers to work between twelve and sixteen hours a day for miserable wages, by fomenting pogroms against the revolutionary working class and the oppressed nations."[75]

Fourth, as sociologist Andrei Roth has shown, during the interwar years, Jews were over-represented in the Romanian Communist Party. This means that their proportion was higher than the proportion represented by the Jewish minority as a demographic group versus the entire population. "In spite of this," writes Roth, "this over-representation of Jews in the communist movement does not mean that the majority of the Jews were communists or that the majority of the communists were Jews." For example, in 1933, the Jews represented 4 percent of the population, and at the same time, in the Communist Party, which had 1,665 members, they represented 18.22 percent (303 communists in a community of over 750,000 Jews). The Jews represented the third ethnic group after the Hungarians (26.8 percent) and Romanians (22.65).[76] Between 1933 and August 23, 1944, the number of party members changed. According to a CC/PCR document, in

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73. Istoria PCR, doc. 7, "Platforma-Program din 6 septembrie 1941 intitulată: Lupta poporului român pentru libertate şi independenţă naţională," elaborated by CC/PCR, September 1941.
74. *Ibid.*
75. ANR, file no. 32/1941, "Circulară a CC/PCR în care se enumeră sarcinile organizaţiilor de partid după rebeliunea legionară," February 1941
76. Dinu C. Giurescu, "Evreii români, 1939-1944," *Realitatea evreiască*, no. 51, 1997.

1940 the party allegedly had between 3,000 and 4,000 members; by August 23, 1944, they numbered only around 1,000.[77]

Judeo-communism was propaganda meant to divide people. It was not based on PCR membership statistics or on its political strength. PCR membership between 1938 and 1944 was very small. Together with its sympathizers, the communists could not count on more than 4,000 people. Moreover, between 1924 and August 23, 1944, the PCR was outlawed and had extremely limited resources for influencing the political actions taken by those in power. Romanian Magyars and Jews joined the PCR because, at that time, the party was militantly antifascist, both ideologically and programmatically, and it made many pro-minority overtures. The PCR's attitude concerning the minorities was in accordance with the thesis of the Third International and stipulated, in general, the principle of self-determination.

Fifth, the Jewish population suffered during the occupation of Bessarabia and Bukovina by the Soviet army and administration during the summer of 1940. There are statistical data and nominal lists concerning the deportation of the Jewish citizens of Bessarabia and Bukovina. The deportations were made on the basis of the ideological criteria of the "class struggle." Under these circumstances, Jews in the Zionist movement, considered by the Soviets to be a bourgeois political organization, as well as those belonging to the petty bourgeoisie (tradesmen) and traditional parties of Romania were deported. The following statistics concerning the deportation or detention of the Jewish population by the Soviet authorities between 1940 and 1941 are derived from data from Chişinău:[78]

Locality	People deported	Jews deported	Percentage of jews deported
Chişinău	589	158	26.82
Bălţi	291	116	39.86
Bender	203	64	31.52
Briceni	46	18	39.13
Lipcani	35	18	51.42
Cahul	149	45	30.20
Călăraşi	60	31	51.66
Bravicea	28	14	50.00
Cimişlia	67	15	22.38
Total	**1 468**	**479**	**32.62**

Conclusions

This chapter argues that the tropes of "Judeo-Bolshevism" and "Judeo-communism" were expressions of totalitarian anti-Semitic and nationalist propaganda during the years of 1938 to 1944, and they continue to be today. They are far from being mere conceptual

77. For the number of Communist Party members between 1933 and 1945, see Ioan Chiper, "Consideraţii privind evoluţia numerică şi compoziţia etnică a PCR, 1921-1952," *Arhivele totalitarismului*, 6, no. 21, 4/1998.

78. D. Boicu (ed.), *Cartea memoriei, catalog al victimelor totalitarismului comunist* (Chişinău: Ştiinţa, 1999).

points of reference for clarifying and evaluating the genesis and the transformations of Romanian communism. These two expressions became widely used instruments of the nationalist chauvinist repertoire, fashioned to avoid confrontation with real political and economic problems and to channel support toward a primitive and rigid social disposition fed by ethnocentric and racist ideas. The facile activation of such attitudes, through anti-Semitic slogans derived from the strategy of "scapegoating," incited irrationality and divided people. The only real reason for such expressions is a mental propensity, be it individual or collective, to react to these slogans in a predictable manner : the dehumanization and punishment of a human collectivity.

Membership in a political party or movement is an act of individual will that is determined by historical, national, and international circumstances, social and familial milieux, and education. The overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the left political movements during the interwar years was strongly influenced by the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe.

While studies on the impact and perception of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth have become more accessible, those concerning the complex relationships between political parties and community institutions, or the implication of people and personalities belonging to various ethnic communities in the political arena, still represent an understudied chapter.

The Holocaust in Romania

The National Legionary State and Its Attempt to Solve the "Jewish Question"

According to Antonescu's supporters, the leadership of the Legion had three objectives in terms of the Jews: to take revenge, instill terror, and acquire property.[1] In order to reach these objectives, the Guard had to control the state's repressive functions. The National Legionary government of September 14, 1940, had fifteen ministers appointed by the Legionary movement. Additionally, by September 20, 1940, Legion members also held the key position of prefect in forty-five counties.[2]

The Legionnaires started abusing Jews (through beatings, abusive arrests, torture, massive lay-offs from the civil service, economic boycotting of Jewish businesses, and vandalism of synagogues) immediately after they entered the government.[3] The Jewish community was worried by the rapid fascization of much of Romanian society. This process was visible in public statements made by intellectuals as well as anti-Semitic outbursts in the ranks of labor unions and professional associations with which Jews were affiliated.

The Instruments of Legionary Terror

When the Iron Guard came to power, the organizational infrastructure for carrying out its plans was already in place. Its most dangerous instrument was the "Legionary Police," an organization modeled on the Nazi paramilitary units. Formally established on September 6, 1940, to defend the new regime and oppress its adversaries, its leaders saw it as a Romanian version of the German SA. Antonescu himself blessed the organization at the beginning. It is also important to point out that in late October 1940, Himmler sent representatives of the *Reich* Main Security Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* – RSHA), headed by Heydrich, to Romania in order to establish a liaison with the Legionary

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1. In September 1941, the Antonescu regime published two volumes of investigative work that revealed the criminal and terrorist character of the Legionary movement. The report was entitled *Pe marginea prăpastiei, 21-23 ianuarie, Bucureşti, 1941* (henceforth: *Pe marginea prăpastiei*) (Bucharest: *Monitorul Oficial* and Imprimeriile Statului and Imprimeria Centrală, 1941).
2. Aurică Simion, *Regimul politic din România în perioada septembrie 1940 – ianuarie 1941* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1976), pp. 68, 76.
3. Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră: Suferinţele evreilor din România, 1940-1944*, vol. 1, *Legionarii şi Rebeliunea* (Bucharest: Diogene, 1996), pp. 56-57.

movement. Although German intelligence indicated that the Legion was not pleased by this visit, the eventual outcome was an organization modeled largely on the structural and functional blueprints of the SS.[4] With regard to its personnel, it is worth noting that in September 1940, the official publication of the Antonescu regime described the Legionary Police as "an assembly of unskilled, uneducated, ruthless and underprivileged people."[5] The Legionnaires also colonized the Ministry of Interior and occupied key positions in the National Police Headquarters (*Direcţia Generală a Poliţiei*). Another direct terror organization controlled by the Legion was the Corps of Legionary Workers (*Corpul Muncitoresc Legionar* – CML), a so-called labor union established in 1936 and strengthened after King Carol II banned unions proper. After September 1940, this organization was reorganized in the form of a paramilitary unit (*garnizoană*).

Students represented another recruiting pool for the Legion's death squads. Since its establishment in the early twenties, the National Union of Christian Students (NUCS) unequivocally held the banning of Jewish students from universities as one of its main objectives. After September 1940, NUCS became an actual terrorist organization controlled by the Legion. The head of this student organization, Viorel Trifa, was a Nazi-educated student leader. This was a new student organization modeled on the leadership system of German students so that the organization would fit into the authoritarian structure of the "new Romanian state."[6] The Iron Guard also recruited from middle school and high school students who had been instilled with the imagery of the slain Codreanu as a kind of Orthodox saint and guardian of the Romanian people. The Legion failed to make the army join its ranks, yet many retired army officers did offer their skills to assist in organizing the Legion's paramilitary units.[7] Legion leaders ordered these organizations and groups of individuals to commit murder, taking care to absolve them of their responsibility by inundating them with religious language and symbols. Likewise, clergymen who joined the Legion granted these proselytes moral absolution, while Legion leaders told them that the "time of revenge on all the opponents of the Iron Guard" was near.[8] Finally, it should be stressed that while the Legion controlled the county *Prefecturi* as well as the Ministry of Interior and the Bucharest Police Headquarters, Antonescu controlled the army, the gendarmerie, and the Intelligence Service.

The Anti-Jewish Attacks Orchestrated by the National Legionary State

On November 27, 1940, several Legionary terror squads carried out "revenge" for the assassination of C.Z. Codreanu. These actions were directed against leaders of the Royal Dictatorship and against Jews. As a result, sixty-five former leaders of the Royal Dictatorship were murdered in their Jilava prison cells. Two days later, Legion assassins shot former prime minister Nicolae Iorga. These events poisoned the Legion's relationship with Antonescu, and particularly his relationship with Horia Sima, the commander of

4. Wilhelm Hoettl, *The Secret Front : The Story of the Nazi Political Espionage* (London, 1953), p. 178.
5. *Asasinatele de la Jilava, Snagov şi Strejnicu, 26-27 noiembrie 1940* (Bucharest : *Monitorul Oficial* and Imprimeriile Statului, 1941), p. 166.
6. Horia Sima, *Era libertăţii. Statul naţional-legionar* (Madrid : Editura Mişcării Legionare, 1982), pp. 137-139.
7. Simion, *op. cit.*, pp. 92, 96.
8. *Pe marginea prăpastiei*, vol. 2, pp. 85-87

the Legion. The "revenge" against Jews commenced with illegal fines and taxes and progressed to random searches and arrests, robberies, deportation from villages, torture, rapes, and Nazi-style public humiliation, and they increased in number as the day of open confrontation with Antonescu neared. On November 29, Antonescu ordered the Legionary Police to disarm.[9] The intended effects of his order, however, were attenuated by the minister of interior, who ordered the transfer of "competent staff" from the Legionary police to regular police units.[10]

The Evacuation and Expropriation of Rural Jews

The deportation of Jews from villages in many regions of Romania is of particular importance, as the isolation of Jews from the rural population always figured high in the anti-Semitic narrative of the Legion and the Legion's intellectual references.[11] In addition, the deportation aimed to seize Jewish property. These actions were illegal, even by the standards of the anti-Semitic legislation adopted by the National Legionary government. The deportation campaign was well planned, and the deportation order was issued verbally by the interior minister.[12] The campaign started in October 1940 and basically ended two months later in December. Local Legion commanders were the chief organizers. Jews were deported from dozens of villages where they had lived for more than a hundred years.[13] Specially-established "commissions for the administration of Jewish property" took part in the expropriation proceedings before county courts.[14] In smaller villages, the robbers – whether they were Legionnaires or ordinary citizens – were unconcerned about the illegality of their actions. Only in larger villages and small towns did they bother to force Jews to sign sales contracts, and the "agreement" to sell was sometimes obtained after the owner had been illegally detained.[15]

As a consequence of these actions, Jews residing in the countryside became refugees in county capitals, where they took up residence with Jewish families that were themselves subject to robberies. Some of the elderly deportees were veterans of Romania's wars, who proudly wore their military medals. By mid-December 1940, the Legionnaires were confident enough to start robbing Jews in Bucharest of their property. Homes and other immovable property were prized. After severe beatings Jewish owners reluctantly signed sales contracts and requests for the termination of rent contracts.[16] The deportees never returned to their homes, as Antonescu himself agreed that deportation was desirable. Out of 110,000 Jews residing in the countryside, about 10,000 of them became refugees.[17]

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9. Simion, *op. cit.*, p. 400; *Pe marginea prăpastiei*, p. 201.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
11. Sima, *op. cit.*, pp. 251, 253; Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 203.
12. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 203.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
14. Jean Ancel (ed.), *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust* (henceforth: Ancel, *Documents*) (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986), vol. 2, no. 37, pp. 75-76.
15. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 152; for the list of the villages, *ibid.*, pp. 152-153.
16. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 42, p. 84.
17. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 138, p. 556; Alexandru Şafran, *Memorii* (Jerusalem, 1991), p. 55.

Army units located far from Bucharest also took part in the Legion's anti-Jewish actions. On Yom Kippur (October 12) in 1940, for example, army personnel participated in a Legion-organized day of terror in Câmpulung Moldovenesc, a town controlled, in effect, by Vasile Iaşinschi, the Legionary minister of labor, health, and social welfare. Thus, Colonel Mociulschi, commander of the local army base, ordered army soldiers to prevent Jews from entering or leaving their homes while police and Legionary squads burgled and pillaged. The booty was collected in the local Legion headquarters. Later, the local rabbi, Iosef Rubin, was tortured and humiliated (he was made to pull a wagon, which his son was forced to drive), and the synagogue was vandalized and robbed.[18]

A particularly harsh episode was the forced exile and even deportation of what the regime called "foreign Jews" (roughly 7,700 people in 1940). Antonescu gave the order and set a two-month deadline for all foreign Jews to leave Romanian territory.[19] Hundreds of them were subsequently arrested and their property confiscated. The arrested were then taken to Dorneşti, a new customs point on the Soviet border, where they were forced to walk on Soviet territory. Since Romanian authorities did not inform the Soviets about this, the Soviet border patrol shot to death dozens of these foreign Jews. After similar episodes were repeated, the Romanian authorities decided to intern the survivors in the Călăraşi-Ialomiţa camp in southern Romania.[20]

The Bucharest Pogrom

The fate of Romanian Jews during the brief term of the National Legionary government depended on the developments in the power struggles taking place within the Legion as well as between Antonescu and the Legion. Various Nazi officials, including representatives at the German embassy in Bucharest, German intelligence officers, and members of the German minority from Transylvania, indirectly contributed to the fate of Romanian Jews through their influence on relations between Antonescu and the Legion.

As the Legion grew rich by taking possession of most Jewish property, Marshal Antonescu and his supporters began to perceive the Legion as a threat. The Marshal agreed that Jews should lose their property, yet he did not agree with the means and pace of expropriation. Neither did he agree with the fact that an organization and individuals, rather than the Romanian state and Romanian people, benefited from these actions. This conflict demonstrates that the confrontation between the Legion and Antonescu was not a confrontation between a gross, violent anti-Semitism and a compassionate, humane attitude, or between a savage form of nationalism and a form of "opportunistic" anti-Semitism. Rather, the Legionnaires wanted everything, and they wanted it immediately; Antonescu, while sharing the same goal, intended to achieve it gradually, using different methods. The Marshal stated this clearly in an address to Legion-appointed ministers: "Do you really think that we can replace all Yids immediately? Government challenges are addressed one by one, like in a game of chess."[21] By early January 1941, Antonescu was

18. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 138, p. 556; Şafran, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
19. *Pe marginea prăpastiei*, vol. 1, p. 164
20. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 102, p. 344.
21. *Pe marginea prăpastiei*, vol. 1, pp. 178, 184.

convinced that the Legion's actions no longer served the interests of Romanian nationalism and that the Legion had become an instrument of extortion for its own members.[22]

On January 14, 1941, Antonescu met Hitler in Obersalzberg and obtained agreement on his plan to do away with the Legion.[23] The days preceding the Legionnaire rebellion against Antonescu and the pogrom that occurred simultaneously were marked by strikingly vehement anti-Semitic statements from the Legion's propaganda apparatus. The Legionary movement's print media, while avowing its support of Nazi Germany's anti-Semitic policies with increasing frequency, indicated in detail what was soon to follow on the "day of reckoning."[24] The rebellion began when armed Legionnaires occupied the Bucharest Police headquarters, local police stations, the Bucharest City Hall, several ministries, and other public buildings. When army soldiers attempted to regain control of these buildings, the Legionnaires opened fire on them. Although Hitler had granted him a free hand, Antonescu maneuvered cautiously in order to avoid irritating the Nazi leadership in Berlin and to let the Legionnaires compromise themselves through their own actions.[25] This strategy included keeping the army on "active defensive." Until the evening of January 22, the army's actions were limited to returning fire when shot at first and to encircling sites controlled by Legionnaires. This allowed the Iron Guard to kill Jews and to pillage or burn their property unimpeded in several counties of Bucharest. As a result, Jewish homes and businesses over several kilometers – on Dudeşti and Văcăreşti streets – were severely damaged. The army offensive ended the rebellion on the morning of January 24.

At this point it was clear that the Bucharest pogrom was part of a Legion-drafted plan and not the manifestation of a spontaneous outburst or the strategic exploitation of a moment of anarchy. The pogrom was not a development isolated from the terrorist atmosphere and policy typical of the National Legionary State, but the climax of the progression. The army did not take part in the Bucharest pogrom. The perpetrators came from the ranks of organizations controlled by the Legion: Legion members and members of terrorist organizations, police from the Ministry of Interior and the *Siguranţă* (the security police), and Bucharest *Prefectură* personnel. Many ordinary civilians also participated.

The minister of interior ordered the burning of Jewish districts on January 22, 1941; this signaled the beginning of the pogrom.[26] Yet, the attack on the two Jewish districts as well as on neighboring districts inhabited by Jews had, in effect, been launched at noon the day before. Moreover, by January 20, 1941, the Legion had already started to launch mass arrests of Jews, taking those apprehended to the Bucharest *Prefectură*.[27] Almost two thousand Jews, men and women from fifteen to eighty-five years old, were abusively

22. Sima, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 282.
23. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, series D (1937-1945), vol. 11, no. 652, pp. 1089-1191 (henceforth: *DGFP*).
24. *Cuvântul*, January 21, 1941.
25. Mihail E. Ionescu, "Tehnica şi resorturile teroarei în perioada dictaturii legionar-antonesciene," în *Împotriva fascismului* (Bucharest, 1971), p. 202; N. Mareş, "Note despre asasinarea lui Madgearu şi Iorga, 4 decembrie 1942," CC/PCR Archive, fond 103, file no. 8218, p. 3.
26. S. Palaghiţă, *Garda de Fier. Spre Învierea României* (Buenos Aires, 1951), p. 147.
27. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 77.

detained and then taken to the Legion's fourteen torture centers (police stations, the Bucharest *Prefectură*, the Legion headquarters, Codreanu's farm, the Jilava town hall, occupied Jewish buildings, and the Bucharest slaughterhouse).[28] The arrested included wealthy Jews and employees of Jewish public organizations.

The Bucharest slaughterhouse was the site of the most atrocious tortures. On the last day of the rebellion, fifteen Jews were driven from the *Prefectură* to the slaughterhouse, where all of them were tortured and/or shot to death. Antonescu appointed a military prosecutor to investigate the events. He reported that he recognized three of his acquaintances among the "professionally tortured" bodies (lawyer Millo Beiler and the Rauch brothers). He added, "The bodies of the dead were hanged on the hooks used by slaughterers."[29] Mihai Antonescu's secretary confirmed the military prosecutor's description and added that some of the victims were hooked up while still alive, to allow the torturers to "chop up" their bodies.[30]

Evidence indicates that the CML actively participated in the pogrom – torturing, killing, and looting. The "Engineer G. Clime" CML headquarters was a particularly frightening torture center. There, CML teams tortured hundreds and shot dozens of men and women.[31] Also, members of the CML selected ninety Jews of the two hundred who had been tortured in the CML torture centers and drove them in trucks to the Jilava forest. After leaving the trucks, these Jews were shot from a two-foot distance.[32] Eighty-six naked bodies were found lying in the snow-covered forest, and the mouths of those with gold teeth were horribly mutilated.[33] Rabbi Tzwi Gutman, who was shot twice, was among the few who did not die in this massacre.[34] His two sons were killed. In all, 125 Jews were killed during the Bucharest pogrom.[35] The Bucharest pogrom also introduced the chapter of mass abuse of Jewish women, who were sometimes raped in the presence of their families.[36]

In addition to the slaughter, there were also severe Legionary attacks on synagogues during the Bucharest pogrom. The assault began in the afternoon of January 21, climaxed during that evening, and continued the next day. This was a predictable turn of events because, since its establishment in 1927, Iron Guard rallies typically ended in acts of vandalism directed against synagogues. The Legionnaires attacked all synagogues at the same time, burning Torah scrolls, pillaging religious objects, money, furniture and valuables, and vandalizing the interior of the synagogues. In some instances, the Legionnaires began their attacks during the prayer, which happened at the Coral Temple (those who were present at the time were taken to Jilava and killed). In the end, the perpetrators set the synagogue on fire, and two burnt entirely to the ground. One of these was the Cahal Grande Synagogue, one of the most beautiful in Europe. When fire brigades – alarmed that the fire might reach adjoining buildings – came to put it out, they were

28. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 186.
29. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 72, pp. 195-197; *Jurnalul de dimineaţă*, no. 57, January 21, 1945.
30. Gh. Barbul, *Mémorial Antonescu – Le troisième homme de l'Axe* (Paris: Couronne, 1950), vol. 1, p. 106.
31. Memo of the Federation, March 8, 1941.
32. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 72, pp. 195-197; *Jurnalul de dimineaţă*, no. 57, January 21, 1945.
33. Memo of the Federation, March 8, 1941, p. 297.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 298-304.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 291. The list of victims can be found in the *Revista cultului mozaic*, no. 592.
36. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 72, p. 197

prevented from doing so by the Legionnaires overseeing the scene.[37] Antonescu's military prosecutor who investigated the events gave a graphic description of what he saw: "The Spanish Temple seemed like a giant torch that lugubriously lit the capital's sky. The Legionnaires performed a devilish dance next to the fire while singing 'The Aria of Legionnaire Youth' and some were kicking three naked women into the fire. The wretched victims' shrieks of despair tore through the sky."[38]

Finally, the Legionnaires, their affiliated organizations, and regular mobs all participated in destroying and pillaging Jewish commercial and private property during the pogrom. Some homes were burned down or completely demolished. In total, 1,274 buildings – commercial and residential – were destroyed.[39] The Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania evaluated the damage to be worth 383 million lei (this sum also includes the damage to synagogues).[40] After the Legionary rebellion was put down, the army found 200 trucks loaded with jewels and cash.[41]

The Political and Ideological Foundations of the Antonescu Regime (February-June 1941)

The Antonescu regime arose against the backdrop of tumultuous political and social developments in Romania during the thirties. "The national-totalitarian regime, the regime of national and social restoration," as Antonescu described it, was an attempt to realize nationalist ideas and demands, which preceded the 1940 crisis, when Romania was thrown into turmoil after being forced to cede parts of its territory to its neighbors.[42] However, even as this crisis precipitated Antonescu's rise to power, his regime owed its existence to Nazi rule in Eastern Europe.

The Antonescu regime, which was rife with ideological contradictions and was considerably different from other fascist regimes in Europe, remains difficult to classify. It was a fascist regime that dissolved the Parliament, joined the Axis Powers, enacted anti-Semitic and racial legislation, and adopted the "Final Solution" in parts of its territory. At the same time, however, Antonescu brutally crushed the Romanian Legionary movement and denounced their terrorist methods. Moreover, some of Romania's anti-Semitic laws, including the "Organic Law," which was the basis for Antonescu's anti-Semitic legislation, were in force before Antonescu assumed power. And, the regime did succeed in sparing half of the Jews under its rule during the Holocaust.

The political and ideological foundations of Antonescu's regime were established earlier by prominent Romanian intellectuals, extremist right-wing and traditional anti-Semitic movements, nationalist politicians who opposed democracy in Romania, and nationalist

37. Memo of the Federation, March 8, 1941, p. 304.
38. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 72, p. 197.
39. The list of burned buildings can be found in Carp, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-244.
40. Memo of the Federation to Antonescu (April 1, 1941), p. 339.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 377.
42. Letter dated June 23, 1941, from Antonescu to leaders of the opposition, Bucharest State Archive; I.C. Drăgan (ed.), *Antonescu, Mareşalul României, şi războaiele de reîntregire* (Venice: Centrul European de Cercetări Istorice, 1988), vol. 2, p. 213.

organizations and political parties that arose in the thirties under King Carol II. Even prior to these developments, the Romanian system of parliamentary democracy had been destabilized and its principles challenged from various quarters. Antonescu did not redefine the goals of Romanian nationalism ; rather, he sought to achieve them. Thus, it appears that the political philosophy of the new regime, its methods of rule, and its ideological-intellectual matrix were distinctly Romanian and not imported from Germany ; and they were inextricably bound with the local hatred of Jews.

Likewise, the underlying principles of Antonescu's "ethnocratic state" were conceived earlier – in 1932 by Nichifor Crainic, the veteran Christian-nationalist and anti-Semitic combatant who would serve for a brief spell as Antonescu's minister of propaganda, and by Octavian Goga, leader of the National Christian Party with A.C. Cuza.[43] Crainic insisted that his program was an elaboration of the Romanian nationalism formulated as early as 1909 by one of Romania's outstanding intellectuals, Nicolae Iorga : "Romania for Romanians, all Romanians, and only Romanians." The cosmopolitan, multi-cultural foundation of the democratic state, Crainic pointed out, "cannot create a nation-state." Crainic's concept of an ethnocratic state was also based on the fundamental principle that "the Jews pose a permanent threat to every nation-state."[44] His call for the nationalization of Jewish property as well as other "practical" ideas, were translated into anti-Semitic statutes under Antonescu and served as benchmarks for Antonescu's policies. The core of the Romanian rendition of fascism, as reflected in Antonescu's regime without the Legionnaires, consisted not only of anti-Semitism, but also the rejection of fundamental Western philosophies : liberalism, tolerance, democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of organization, open elections and civil rights.

After the Legionary rebellion was put down, the Antonescu regime considered itself to be the successor of the political, cultural, and spiritual ideas of the anti-Semitic nationalism of the Goga government. In short, the Antonescu regime adopted the objectives of this Romanian fascist ideology rather than drawing upon the principles of National Socialism. Antonescu's regime without the Legionnaires did not negate the anti-Semitic legacy of the Legionary movement and did not cease the state onslaught on the Judaic faith and values or on humanist values. Rather than negating the anti-Semitic legacy of the Legionary movement, the Antonescu regime made it clear that it would continue the anti-Semitic policies of the National Legionary government.[45] An anti-Semitic journal even warned the Jews who felt relieved after the repression of the Legionary rebellion to stop deluding themselves, because the repression was not ordered by Antonescu "to soothe the Jewish community."[46]

The nature, timing and span of Antonescu's policies vis-à-vis the Jews depended solely on his own initiatives. After the repression of the Legionary uprising and at the very beginning of his term as sole Leader (*Conducător*) – before he accepted Hitler's arguments about the necessity of the Final Solution – Antonescu outlined the blueprints

43. See Goga's speech and political program, *Timpul*, January 2, 1938.
44. Nichifor Crainic, *Programul statului etnocratic* (Bucharest : Colecţia Naţionalistă, 1938), pp. 3-5, 12.
45. See Crainic's statement to the press : *Timpul*, January 4, 1941.
46. *Porunca vremii*, March 7, 1941.

of his policies vis-à-vis the Jews in the Old *Regat* and southeastern Transylvania. The basic principles of these policies were valid until the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union and were published in the press, which advocated a radical solution to the "Jewish issue" inspired by the tenets of "radical nationalism," and threatened that any other approach should be considered a betrayal of Romanianism.[47] The main components of this policy as it was implemented during the following months were: continuing Romanianization using state-sanctioned means (legislation, trials, expropriations) rather than terror; the gradual elimination of Jews from the national economy (based on his assumption that Jews had great economic power, which led to undue influence in other realms); and the integration of anti-Jewish repression in the regime's official plans, designed to lead to such aspects of "national rejuvenation" as the creation of an (ethnic) Romanian commercial class and of an (ethnic) Romanian-controlled economy. At the beginning of his term Antonescu adopted a cautious attitude:

> I will solve the Jewish problem simultaneously with my reorganization of the state by gradually replacing Jews in the national economy with Romanian public servants. The Legionnaires will have priority and time to prepare for public service. Jewish property shall be largely nationalized in exchange for indemnities. The Jews who entered Romania after 1913 shall be removed as soon as this becomes possible, even though they have since acquired citizenship. Jews will be allowed to live, yet they will not be allowed to capitalize on the resources of this country. Romanians must benefit first. For the rest, this will be possible only if opportunities remain.[48]

Like the 1937 Goga government, Antonescu also waged a symbolic war against Judaism, which the regime, the press, and some Romanian Orthodox Church clergy portrayed as satanic, deviant, and anti-Christian. Additionally, Jews were directly blamed for causing the regime's domestic difficulties ensuring the general welfare of the citizenry.[49]

The Antonescu regime was not "revolutionary" in terms of its intellectual proponents or the composition of the civil service. Basically, with few exceptions, the civil servants of past regimes of all political stripes (including high-ranking civil servants, such as ministers), the professional class, middle class, and academics showed growing support for the regime. Motivated by their fear that the Romanian economy would otherwise fall into Nazi hands, even Liberal Party members joined in this effort (Antonescu appointed a Liberal Party member as minister of the economy). This widespread collaboration of mainstream Romanian politicians and intellectuals does not, however, mean that all Romanians identified with the anti-Semitism of the Antonescu regime. The anti-Semitic press indicated the existence of several "pockets of intellectual resistance" in the Romanian majority which rejected the regime's onslaught against the Jews.[50]

Ultimately, Antonescu's regime was not the embodiment of the most intense Romanian extremist anti-Semitism and nationalism. During the Second World War, there were even more extremist anti-Semitic political groups, such as the Legionnaires, who were

47. *Timpul*, February 20, 1941.
48. *Timpul*, September 30, 1940.
49. Filderman, Draft of Memoirs, Yad Vashem Archive, P-6/58, p. 151.
50. *Înviérea*, April 27, 1941.

ready to act on their hatred and exterminate the Jews. Unlike them, Antonescu was also guided by strategic considerations, at least in regard to the Jews in the *Regat* and southern Transylvania, since he understood their usefulness to Romania. Moreover, even his anti--Semitic legislation excluded specific categories of Jews, such as decorated and reenlisted soldiers, considered to have "made a real contribution" to the welfare of Romania.

Forced Labor under the Antonescu Regime

The Antonescu regime continued the forced labor campaign started under the National Legionary State. Jews were ordered to pay the so-called military taxes – officially levied because Jews were exempt from mandatory army service – and to do community work under army supervision.[51] In total, 84,042 Jews, aged eighteen to fifty, were registered to supply free labor.[52] Some Jews were ordered to work in their own towns, which was usually an opportunity for public humiliation, while others had to work in labor camps on construction sites and in the fields, under military jurisdiction. Jewish labor detachments were used to build an extra set of railway tracks between such far-away towns as Bucharest and Craiova, Bucharest and Urziceni, or Bumbeşti-Livezeni-Petroşani.

Life and work conditions in these camps were horrendous.[53] Medical assistance was scarce and hygiene precarious. The sick and the crippled were sometimes forced to work and, as the "mobilization" was done in haste and with little bureaucratic organization, many workers had to wear their summer clothes until December 1941, when labor camps were temporarily closed. In some camps, Jews had to buy their own tools and pay for their own food, and livable accommodation was provided only when guards and administrators were bribed. When work needed to be done around villages, rural notables (priests, teachers) usually expressed fear that Jews would be placed in peasant homes, concerned as they were about the "destructive" influence Jews might have on peasants. Explicit orders were given that accommodation for Jewish workers could not be provided within a three-kilometer radius around Romanian villages.

In exchange for an official ransom, Jews declared "useful" to the economy were exempted from forced labor and allowed to have jobs. As the decision to grant "useful" status to a Jew was an important source of corruption, top military and civilian leadership vied for control of the "revision process" – the review of the situation of working Jews, which began in March 1942. The civilian bureaucracy, led by Radu Lecca who headed the government department charged with "solving the Jewish issue," temporarily won the power struggle over the military, which nevertheless continued to be involved. This was, in fact, a state-sanctioned mechanism of extortion that enriched army and civilian bureaucrats who were empowered to establish the amount of the ransom. It resulted in the strengthening of the culture of bribery in the Romanian administrative and military systems, which contrasted violently with the tough stance

51. Instructions on the Decree no. 3984 of December 5, 1940, *Monitorul Oficial*, 113 (July 14, 1941), pp. 5-8.
52. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 21, p. 251.
53. For an extended description, see *ibid.*, vol. 3; Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 190-197.

of the regime.[54] It was also decided that the ones unable to work or pay a high ransom were to be deported.[55] In June 1942, the Chief of Staff ordered that Jewish workers who committed certain "breaches of work and discipline" (lack of diligence, failure to notify changes of address, sexual relations with ethnic Romanian women) were to be deported to Transnistria along with their families.[56] Those Jews in labor detachments often met with severe punishment, such as whipping and clubbing.

In the end, the essence of the "revision" was that the labor camp system was considered to be damaging to the economy. So, beginning in 1942, labor detachments became the preferred system. However, this reorganization of the Jewish compulsory labor system was also an abysmal failure, even according to a report of the Chief of Staff issued in November 1943, which concluded that the Romanian economy could not do without the skills of the Jewish population.[57] This episode in the life of Romanian Jewry left deep social scars. Many careers were ruined, the education of Jewish youth was interrupted, old Jewish authority structures and practices broke down, and the corruption of the exemption system undermined upright social mores. Many became very sick or crippled and dozens, maybe hundreds, perished.

The Evacuation of Jews from Small Towns and Villages during the Antonescu Regime

Ion Antonescu continued what had begun under the National Legionary State: the evacuation of Jews from villages and small towns. On June 18, 1941, he ordered these Jews to be moved to county (*judeţ*) capitals and borroughs. Some of these capitals had only a meager Jewish presence, so the rural Jews were crowded into warehouses, abandoned buildings, synagogues, Jewish community buildings, and other precarious forms of accommodation. The local Jewish communities could not cope with the needs of the evacuated rural Jews, whose household belongings had been confiscated upon deportation.[58]

Male Jews, eighteen to sixty years old and living in the area between the Siret and Prut Rivers, were ordered to be interned in the Târgu-Jiu camp in southern Romania. The Jews evacuated from Dorohoi and southern Bukovina as well as the survivors of the Iaşi death train were interned in other southern Romanian camps in the counties of Romanaţi, Dolj, Vlasca, and Călăraşi-Ialomiţa. Many Jews were declared hostages by order of Antonescu himself.[59] Antonescu ordered his chief of staff to set up several

54. For a description of the scope and form of corruption practices in the exemption system, see the memoirs of Radu Lecca himself: *Eu i-am salvat pe evreii din România* (Bucharest: Roza Vânturilor), pp. 180-181.
55. Government press release, *Universul*, November 24, 1941.
56. Instrucţiuni generale ale M.St.M., no. 55500, June 27, 1942; Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 21, pp. 32-44.
57. Note of Antonescu's Military Cabinet, November 17, 1943, Romanian State Archives in Bucharest, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Military Cabinet, file no. 4/1943, p. 167.
58. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 210, p. 497.
59. *Ibid.*, no. 166, pp. 451-452.

temporary labor camps in southern Romania.[60] As one intelligence officer later stated, this was part of a larger strategy to remove Moldavian Jews through "deportation and extermination."[61] The property of the evacuated Jews was nationalized, and some of it was simply looted by locals. During the evacuation, villagers often openly expressed their joy at the Jews' departure and insulted, humiliated, or attacked them. On several occasions the deportation trains stopped in the same train stations as military trains on the way to the front, and many soldiers used the opportunity to show their approval of the deportation or to use violence against the Jews.

By July 31, 1941, the number of evacuees had reached 40,000 people.[62] Four hundred forty-one villages and small towns were thus cleansed.[63] Jews were forced to wear a distinctive patch beginning in July/August, though Antonescu repealed the measure on September 9, 1941, after Filderman's protests. The revocation, however, did not apply to Jews from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria, for whom a special degree was issued.[64] The obligation to wear the distinctive badge revealed Romanians' anti-Semitism, as numerous ordinary people displayed excessive zeal in making sure their Jewish compatriots wore their patches, and wore them properly.[65] As the deportations had a grave impact on the economic life of many villages and towns, Antonescu grew concerned by September 1941 and took steps to divide Jews into two categories: "useful" and "useless" to the economy. This represented his first step away from complete Romanianization: "There are certain Jews who we cannot replace… We forced between 50,000 and 60,000 Jews out of villages and small towns, and we moved them into cities where they are now a burden to the Jewish communities there, since they have to feed them."[66]

The Iaşi Pogrom: The First Stage of the Physical Destruction of Romanian Jewry

The evacuation of Jews from Iaşi – where 45,000 Jews were living on June 29, 1941 – was part of a plan to eliminate the Jewish presence in Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Moldavia.[67] "Cleansing the land" meant the immediate liquidation of all Jews in the countryside, the incarceration in ghettos of Jews found in urban centers, and the detention of all persons suspected of being Communist Party activists. It was the Romanian

60. Summary of the government session of July 22, 1941, Archive of the Ministry of Interior, file no. 40010, vol. 11, p. 27.
61. Testimony of Col. Traian Borcescu, chief of the SSI counterespionage division, November 12, 1945, *ibid.*, file no. 108233, vol. 24, p. 122 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives [henceforth: USHMM], RG 25.004M, microfilm 47).
62. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 197, p. 492.
63. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 368, pp. 598-611.
64. Decree no. 3303/1941 of the General Chief of Staff, August 8, 1941, NDM, Fourth Army Collection, file no. 79, p. 138.
65. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 3, no. 62, p. 115.
66. Minutes of the September 9, 1941, government session, NDM, file no. 40010, vol. 77, p. 52.
67. Telephone Communication from prefect of Iaşi, Captaru, to Ministry of Interior in Bucharest, June 29, 1941. Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 40010, vol. 89, p. 478; a copy can be found in USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 36.

equivalent of the Final Solution. The pogrom against the Jews of Iaşi was carried out under express orders from Ion Antonescu that the city be cleansed of all Jews and that any Jew who opened fire on Romanian or German soldiers should be eliminated without mercy. Section Two of the General Headquarters of the Romanian army and the Special Intelligence Service (SSI) laid the groundwork for the Iaşi pogrom and supplied the pretext for punishing the city's Jewish population, while German army units stationed in the city assisted the Romanian authorities.

On June 27, 1941, Ion Antonescu issued the formal order to evacuate Jews from the city via telephone directly to Col. Constantin Lupu, commander of the Iaşi garrison. Lupu was instructed to take steps to "cleanse Iaşi of its Jewish population."[68] On the night of June 28/29, as army, police, and gendarmerie units were launching the arrests and executions, Antonescu telephoned again to reiterate the evacuation order. Lupu made careful note of his mission:

> Issue a notice signed by you in your capacity as military commander of the city of Iaşi, based on the existing government orders, adding:
>
> In light of the state of war... if anyone opens fire from a building, the house is to be surrounded by soldiers and all its inhabitants arrested, with the exception of children. Following a brief interrogation, the guilty parties are to be executed. A similar punishment is to be implemented against those who hide individuals who have committed the above offenses.
>
> The evacuation of the Jewish population from Iaşi is essential, and shall be carried out in full, including women and children. The evacuation shall be implemented *pachete-pachete* [batch by batch], first to Roman and later to Târgu-Jiu. For this reason, you are to arrange the matter with the Ministry of Interior and the county prefecture. Suitable preparations must be made.[69]

Before these orders were issued, an understanding was reached with the commander of the German army corps (the *Wehrmacht*) in Iaşi about the methods to be employed against the Jews. But Colonel Lupu was unable to control the situation and faithfully carry out Antonescu's order, and was therefore stripped of his post on July 2, 1941. During his court-martial by the Fourth Army Corps in January 1942, the order he had received from the Marshal and his deputy, Mihai Antonescu, came to light.

The expulsion of the Jews from Moldavia was part of a larger plan, influenced by the belief of Ion and Mihai Antonescu in the German army's ultimate victory, which would also encompass the physical extermination of Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina.[70] The first step of this plan, according to Ion Antonescu's order to General Steflea, then chief of the army general staff, was to "identify all Yids, communist agents, or their sympathizers, by county [in Moldavia]" so that the Ministry of Interior could track them, restrict their freedom of movement, and ultimately dispose of them when and how Ion

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68. Lupu to Gen. Antonescu, July 25, 1941, Romanian State Archives, fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, file no. 247/41, f. 10.
69. "Telephone order," June 28/29, 11:00 p.m. Investigative file in matter of Col. (res.) Constantin Lupu, 1941, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 28, p. 183; copy in USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 48.
70. Testimony of Col. Traian Borcescu, November 12, 1945. Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 24, p. 122; copy in USHMM, roll 47. Ion Antonescu explicitly referred to this unwritten plan in the directives he sent from the front to Mihai Antonescu on September 5, 1941; see I. Antonescu to M. Antonescu, September 5, 1941, Archvies of Office of Prime Minister, file no. 167/1941, pp. 64-65.

Antonescu chose.[71] The second step was to evacuate Jews from all villages in Moldavia, and to intern some of them in the Târgu-Jiu camp in southern Romania.[72] The final step was to provide grounds for these actions by transforming Iaşi's Jews into potential collaborators with "the Soviet enemy," thereby justifying retaliatory action against rebels who had not yet rebelled. To achieve this, Antonescu issued a special order, which was relayed by the security police (*Siguranţa*) to police headquarters in Iaşi on June 27, 1941: "Since the *Siguranţă* headquarters has become aware that certain Jews have hidden arms and ammunition, we hereby request that you conduct thorough and meticulous searches in the apartments of the Jewish population… "[73]

On the basis of Antonescu's order to General Steflea, directives were issued to the Ministry of Interior, which commanded the gendarmerie and police, and the Ministry of Propaganda, headed by Mihai Antonescu. These directives were then translated into an actual plan of operation by military command structures (Military Cabinet and Section Two) and the SSI in coordination with the two ministries. Antonescu's second order to Colonel Lupu to evacuate all 45,000 of the city's Jews and his authorization to execute any Jew "who attacked the army," in effect gave the gendarmerie and police *carte blanche* to torture and murder Jews and to evacuate thousands of them by rail to southern Romania.

The SSI, by order of Antonescu and the General Staff, established a special unit shortly after Antonescu's meeting with Hitler on June 11, 1941. Operation Echelon No. 1 (*Eşalonul I Operativ*) – also known as the Special Echelon – consisted of some 160 people, including auxiliary personnel, selected from the most talented, reliable, and daring members of the SSI. Their assignment was to "protect the home front from acts of espionage, sabotage, and terror."[74] The Echelon left Bucharest for Moldavia on June 18, accompanied by a Romanian-speaking officer from the Intelligence Service of the German army, Major Hermann Stransky, who served as liaison between the *Abwehr* and the SSI.

On June 26, anti-Semitic agitation in the local press suddenly intensified. At the same time, the police were flooded with reports from Romanians claiming that Jews were signalling enemy aircraft, hiding paratrooper agents, holding suspicious gatherings, and the like. The emergence of this psychosis was no accident; it was contrived by the Section Two and the Special Echelon. The scheme behind the pogrom was explained in advance to the 14th Division headquarters and the commanders of the police and gendarmerie.[75] On June 26, against a backdrop of threats issued in the local press by General Stavrescu, commander of the 14th Division, Romanian soldiers (many of whom were

71. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 39.
72. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 136, pp. 414-415.
73. Order to Iaşi police headquarters from *Siguranţă*, June 27, 1941, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 40010, vol. 89, p. 283; copy located in: USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 36.
74. Testimony of Cristescu, July 4, 1947, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 54, p. 226; Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 42-43. It is plausible that *Einsatzgruppe* D served as a model for this special unit; for more information on the temporary deployment of *Einsatzgruppe* D on Romanian territory in Bessarabia, see: Jean Ancel, "The Jassy [Iaşi] Syndrome (I)" (henceforth: Ancel, "Jassy Syndrome"), *Romanian Jewish Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1987), pp. 36-38.
75. Affidavit of Col. Captaru, May 1946, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 36, p. 46; copy in USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 43.

inebriated) began to break into Jewish flats near their camps on the outskirts of the city.[76] Although some who joined in the rioting or looting were former Legionnaires and their followers as well as supporters of Cuza's anti-Semitic movement, most were civilians who armed themselves or were given weapons in advance of the anti-Jewish actions.

Other signs of impending violence included the mobilization of young Jews to dig huge ditches in the Jewish cemetery about a week before the pogrom[77] and the marking with crucifixes of "houses inhabited by Christians."[78] The next stage of preparation began on June 27, when authorities officially accused the Jews of responsibility for Soviet bombings. All heads of administration in Iaşi convened at the palace of the prefect – ostensibly to reach decisions regarding law and order – to deploy the forces that were to participate in the pogrom. False attacks on soldiers were then organized to rouse the soldiers' anger and create the impression of a Jewish uprising and the need for strict measures against it. Jewish "guilt" was thus already a *fait accompli*. At 9:00 p.m. on June 28, an air alert was sounded and several German aircraft flew over the city, one of them signaling with a blue flare. Shots were immediately heard throughout the city, chiefly from the main streets where army units marched their way to the front.[79] The numerous shots fired wherever there were soldiers posted in full battle dress created the impression of a great battle, and Romanian military men accompanied by armed civilians began their attack on wealthy Jews residing in the city center where the false shootings had taken place.[80]

Pillaging, rape, and murder of Jews began in the outskirts of Iaşi on the night of June 28/29. Groups of thugs broke into their homes and terrorized them. The survivors were taken to police headquarters (*Chestură*). Organizers of the pogrom, such as General Stavrescu, reported that the "Judeo-communists" and Soviet pilots, whose planes had been shot down, had opened fire on the Romanian and German soldiers. In response, Romanian troops and gendarmes "surrounded the buildings from which the shots had been fired, along with entire neighborhoods, and evacuated those arrested – men, women and children – to police headquarters. The guilty were also executed on the spot by the German/Romanian forces that captured them."[81] Romanian officials who were either unaware of the plan or knew only part of it, recounted the start of the pogrom differently. For example, Nicolae Captaru, prefect of the county of Iaşi, who had no knowledge of the plan, reported to the Ministry of Interior: "There are those who believe that the shots were the act of organized individuals seeking to cause panic among the army units and civilian population… According to the findings gathered thus far, it has been shown that certain individuals are attempting to place the blame on the Jews of the city with the

76. Excerpt of Iaşi pogrom trial, June 26, 1946, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 1, section 2, p. 11; copy in USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 47.

77. Testimony of Natan Goldstein, n.d. [August 1945], Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 31, part 1, p. 62; copy located in: USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 41; Testimony of Gheorghe Leahu, October 29, 1945, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 26; copy in USHMM, roll 48.

78. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, no. 44, p. 110.

79. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 43, p. 108.

80. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, no. 9, p. 35.

81. Report on pogrom, June 30, 1941, by Stavrescu to Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 40010, vol. 89, pp. 475-476; copy located in Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, no. 39, p. 93.

aim of inciting the Romanian army, the German army, and also the Christian population against the Jews in order to provoke the mass murder of Jews."[82]

Those participating in the manhunt launched on the night of June 28/29 were, first and foremost, the Iaşi police, backed by the Bessarabia police and gendarmerie units.[83] Other participants were army soldiers, young people armed by SSI agents, and mobs who robbed and killed, knowing they would not have to account for their actions. The implementation of the Iaşi pogrom consisted of five basic elements: (1) spreading rumors that Jews had shot at the army; (2) warning the Romanian residents of what was about to take place; (3) fostering popular collaboration with the security forces; (4) marking Christian and Jewish homes; and finally (5) inciting rioters to murder, rape, and rob.[84] Similar methods were used in the pogrom plotted and carried out by Romanian units in Dorohoi one year earlier in July 1940.

In addition to informing on Jews, directing soldiers to Jewish homes and refuges, and even breaking into homes themselves, some Romanian residents of Iaşi also took part in the arrests and humiliation forced upon the convoys of Jews on their way to the *Chestură*. The perpetrators included neighbors of Jews, known and lesser-known supporters of anti-Semitic movements, students, poorly-paid, low-level officials, railway workers, craftsmen frustrated by Jewish competition, "white-collar" workers, retirees and military veterans. The extent to which they enlisted in the cause of "thinning" Iaşi's Jewish population – as the pogrom was described at a Cabinet meeting in Bucharest[85] – is a topic in and of itself, and worthy of separate study. War criminals among Romanians numbered in the hundreds, and not all of them were located and identified after the war.[86]

The idea of the pogrom crystallized in the headquarters of the General Staff and its secret branch, Section Two, and in the SSI. These offices collaborated with the *Wehrmacht* in Romania and the headquarters of the German 30th Army Corps in Iaşi. During the course of the pogrom, Romanian authorities lost control of events, and the city of Iaşi became a huge area in which the soldiers of both armies, the gendarmes, and Romanian policemen and civilians – organized and unorganized – hunted down Jews, robbed them, and killed them. This temporary loss of control and the fear of Antonescu's reaction to it led the various branches of the Romanian regime to fabricate excuses for their ineffectiveness in the final hours of the mayhem, casting the blame on each other and, together, on the Germans.[87]

The German soldiers in Iaşi acted on the basis of an understanding with the Romanian army.[88] They were divided into cells and sent out to arrest Jews, assigned to escort convoys, and stationed at the entrance to the *Chestură*. They, too, broke into homes –

82. Report of Captaru to Interior Minister, June 29, 1941, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 40010, vol. 89, p. 482.
83. 360 policemen gathered in Iaşi to be deployed in Chişinău and in other Bessarabian cities after the liberation of the province. Most of them had served in Bessarabia before 1940.
84. Ancel, "Jassy Syndrome," pp. 43-46.
85. Protocol from November 13, 1941, Cabinet meeting, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 40010, vol. 78, p. 13; copy located in: USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 35.
86. List of 286 civilian participants in Iaşi pogrom, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 40, pp. 115-127; copy located in: USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 43. The list does not include army personnel, gendarmes, and ordinary police, nor does it identify all the criminals.
87. See USHMM, RG 25.004M, file no. 108233.
88. Affidavit of Capt. Ioan Mihail, January 25, 1942, in Lupu file, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 108233, vol. 29, p. 221; copy in USHMM, roll 48. Mihail served as interpreter during conversation with General Salmuth.

either with Romanian soldiers or alone – and tormented Jews there and during the forced march to the *Chestură*. They shot into crowds of Jews and committed the same acts as their Romanian counterparts. In addition, they photographed the pogrom, even going so far as to stage scenes. It is important to note here that the units of *Einsatzgruppe* D, although they operated in territories reclaimed by Romania after June 22, 1941, did not operate in Romania itself – and thus did not participate in the Iaşi pogrom – nor did any other SS unit.[89]

Antonescu's administration did not allow the SS or Gestapo to operate on Romanian territory after the Legionnaires' revolt. The representatives of Himmler and of the Foreign Department of the Nazi Party were forced to leave Romania in April 1941; they were joined, at Antonescu's request, by the known Gestapo agents in Romania.[90]

The Iaşi Death Trains

On June 29, 1941, Mihai Antonescu ordered the deportation of all Jews from Iaşi, including women and children.[91] The surviving Jews were taken to the railway station and were beaten, robbed, and humiliated along the way.[92] Moreover, the Iaşi sidewalks were piled with dead bodies, and the deportees had to walk over some of them along the street leading to the station.[93] Once they were at the station, the deportees were forced to lie face-down on the platform and in the square in front of the station. Romanian travelers stepped on them as Romanian and German soldiers yelled that anyone raising his or her head would be shot.[94] Finally, Jews were forced into freight train cars under a volley of blows, bayonet cuts, clubbings and insults. Many railway workers joined the pandemonium, hitting the deportees with their hammers.

The intention of extermination was clear from the very beginning. As it was later established in the Iaşi trials, the train cars in which Jews were forced had been used for the transport of carbide and therefore emitted a stifling odor. In addition, although no car could accommodate more than forty people, between 120 and 150 Jews – many of them wounded – were forcibly crammed inside. After the doors were safely locked behind them, all windows and cracks were sealed.[95] "Because of the summer heat and the lack

89. This conclusion is based on an examination of the reports of the *Einsatzgruppe*. See Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, and Helmut Krausnick and Hans Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges, die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, 1938-1942* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1981), pp. 195-200. See also Ancel, "Jassy Syndrome."
90. Letter from Himmler's office to Ribbentrop, April 2, 1941, *DGFP*, vol. 7, no. 258, pp. 443-444.
91. Major Plăşnilă to Military Court, September 13, 1941, Ministry of the Interior, *Arhiva Operativă*, file no. 108.233, p. 344.
92. Diary of Hirsch Zielle submitted to the People's Court, 1944, Archives of the Ministry of Interior, vol. 37, p. 25; USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 3.
93. Testimony of Jean Haimovici, 1945, Archives of the Ministry of Interior, vol. 37, p. 49; USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 48.
94. Testimony of Manase Iscovici, September 7, 1944, *ibid.*, vol. 42, p. 403; USHMM, *ibid.*, roll 43.
95. Bucharest Tribunal Indictment, June 26, 1948, Archives of the Ministry of Interior, vol. 1, p. 59; USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 47.

of air, people would first go mad and then perish," according to a survivor.[96] The deportation train would ride on the same route several times.

The second train to leave Iaşi for Podu Iloaiei was even more crowded (about 2,000 Jews were crammed into twenty cars). The last car contained the bodies of eighty Jews who had been shot, stabbed, or beaten.[97] In the summer heat, those crammed inside had to wait for two hours until departure. "During the night," one survivor recounted, "some of us went mad and started to yell, bite, and jostle violently; you had to fight them, as they could take your life; in the morning, many of us were dead and the bodies were left inside; they refused to give water even to our crying children, whom we were holding above our heads."[98] When the doors of the train were opened, the surviving few heard the guards calling on them to throw out the dead (because of the stench, they dared not come too close. As it happened on a holiday, peasants from neighboring villages were brought to see "the communists who shot at the Romanian army," and some of the peasants yelled, "Kill them! What's the point of giving them a free ride?"[99]

In the death train that left Iaşi for Călăraşi, southern Romania, which carried perhaps as many as 5,000 Jews, only 1,011 reached their destination alive after seven days.[100] (The Romanian police counted 1,258 bodies, yet hundreds of dead were thrown out of the train on the way at Mirceşti, Roman, Săbăoani, and Inoteşti.)[101] The death train to Podu Iloaiei (15 kilometers from Iaşi) had up to 2,700 Jews upon departure, of which only 700 disembarked alive. In the official account, Romanian authorities reported that 1,900 Jews boarded the train and "only" 1,194 died.[102] In total, up to 14,850 Jews were killed during the Iaşi pogrom. The Romanian SSI acknowledged that 13,266 Jews died,[103] whereas the figure advanced by the Jewish Community after carrying out its own census was 14,850.[104] In August 1942, the army labor recruiting service in Iaşi reported that it could not find 13,868 Jews.[105]

The Romanian Authorities and Solving the "Jewish Problem" in Bessarabia and Bukovina

"The special delegates of the *Reich*'s government and of Mr. Himmler," as Mihai Antonescu described them, arrived in Bucharest in March 1941 to discuss the fate of Romanian Jewry. The delegation was comprised of several SS officers, a member of the

96. Testimony of Iancu Florea Rîmniceanu, June 18, 1948, Archives of the Ministry of Interior, vol. 1, p. 699; USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 47.
97. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 33.
98. Testimony of David Bandel, 1944, Archives of the Ministry of Interior, vol. 45, pp. 338-339; USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 47.
99. Testimony of Israel Schleier, 1945, *ibid.*, vol. 24, p. 85.
100. Inventory, July 7, 1941, Archives of the Ministry of Interior, file no. 108233, vol. 37, p. 281.
101. Telephone Report no. 6125, July 1, 1941, *ibid.*, file no. 40010, vol. 89 (page no. illegible); Report of Triandaf, July 1, 1941, *ibid.*, vol. 30, p. 217 (copy in USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 49).
102. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, no. 64, p. 141.
103. Report of SSI Iaşi, July 23, 1943, Consiliul Securităţii Statului, documentary fond, file no. 3041, p. 327; Cristian Troncotă, *Eugen Cristescu, asul serviciilor secrete româneşti. Memorii* (Bucharest: Roza Vânturilor, 1997), p. 119.
104. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 49.
105. Report of Georgescu to Romanian government, November 8, 1941, Romanian State Archives, fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet collection, file no. 86/1941, p. 251.

Gestapo, Eichmann's special envoy to Romania and the future attaché in charge of Jewish affairs at the German Legation. "They formally demanded," Mihai Antonescu would later claim, "that the control and organization of the Jews in Romania be left exclusively to the Germans, as Germany was preparing an international solution to the Jewish question. I refused."[106] But this was a lie; not only had Mihai Antonescu accepted, but he bragged in government meetings that he and the *Conducător* had consented. During their third meeting on June 12, 1941, in Munich, Hitler revealed the "Guidelines for the Treatment of the Eastern Jews" (*Richtlinien zur Behandlung der Ostjuden*) to Antonescu. The Romanian leader later mentioned the document in an exchange of messages with the German Foreign Office;[107] and Mihai Antonescu noted that he had reached an understanding with Himmler's envoys regarding the "Jewish problem" in an August 5 government session. The agreements with the SS concerning the Jews in Bessarabia and Bukovina were acknowledged during talks between Mihai Antonescu and Nazi foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop at Hitler's Zhytomyr headquarters on September 23, 1942, when Ribbentrop asked Mihai Antonescu for continued Romanian cooperation to exterminate the Jews in the Old Kingdom and southern Transylvania. Mihai Antonescu agreed to deport the Jews of Romania and replied that in Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria an understanding had been reached with the SS for the execution of these measures.[108]

The adoption of the Final Solution was apparent in the *Conducător*'s rhetoric. On June 22, 1941, he boasted that he had "approached with courage" the Romanianization process,[109] disowned the Jews, and promoted cooperation with Germany "in keeping with the permanent interests of *our vital space* [emphasis added]."[110] Anticipating Germany's victory, Romania's leaders informed the government (on June 17/18, 1941) of their plans for the Jewish population in the two provinces. The leadership left no doubt about the significance of the order to "cleanse the land." Mihai Antonescu's July 3, 1941, speech at the Ministry of Interior was distributed in limited-edition brochures entitled, "Guidelines and Instructions for the Liberation Administration." Guideline 10 revealed the regime's intentions regarding the Jews: "This is the… most favorable opportunity in our history… for cleansing our people of all those elements foreign to its soul, which have grown like weeds to darken its future."[111] He elaborated on this theme during the Cabinet session of July 8, 1941:

> At the risk of not being understood by traditionalists… I am all for the forced migration of the entire Jewish element of Bessarabia and Bukovina, which must be dumped across the border… You must be merciless to them… I don't know how many centuries will pass before the Romanian people meet again with such total liberty of action, such opportunity for ethnic

106. M. Antonescu to Romanian legation in Ankara, March 14, 1944, Romanian Foreign Ministry Archives, "Ankara" file, vol. 1, pp. 108-109.
107. *DGFP*, vol. 13, no. 207, pp. 318-319.
108. Note on Mihai Antonescu's conversation with Ribbentrop, September 23, 1942, in United Restitution Organization, *Dokumentensammlung*, Frankfurt, 1960, vol. 3, p. 578.
109. Romanianization was the Romanian equivalent of Aryanization.
110. I. Antonescu to I. Maniu, June 22, 1941, in Drăgan, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, no. 13, p. 197.
111. M. Antonescu, "Pentru Basarabia şi Bucovina. Îndrumări date administraţiei dezrobitoare" (Bucharest, 1941), pp. 60-61.

cleansing and national revision… This is a time when we are masters of our land. Let us use it. If necessary, shoot your machine guns. I couldn't care less if history will recall us as barbarians… I take formal responsibility and tell you there is no law… So, no formalities, complete freedom.[112]

Policies and Implementation of Ethnic Cleansing in Bessarabia and Bukovina

The order to exterminate part of the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina and deport the rest was given by Ion Antonescu of his own accord under no German pressure. To carry out this task he chose the gendarmerie and the army, particularly the *pretorate*, the military body in charge with the temporary administration of a territory. Iosif Iacobici, the chief of the General Staff, ordered the commander of the General Staff's Second Section, Lt. Col. Alexandru Ionescu, to implement a plan "for the removal of the Judaic element from Bessarabian territory (…) by organizing teams to act in advance of the Romanian troops." Implementation began July 9. "The mission of these teams is to create in villages an unfavorable atmosphere toward the Judaic elements, thereby encouraging the population to… remove them on its own, by whatever means it finds most appropriate and suited to the circumstances. At the arrival of the Romanian troops, the feeling must already be in place and even acted upon."[113] Sent by the General Staff, these teams indeed instigated Romanian peasants, as many Jewish survivors, astonished that old friends and neighbors had turned against them, later testified. The army received "special orders" via General Ilie Şteflea, and its pretor, General Ion Topor, was in charge of their execution.[114]

The special orders were reiterated every time military or civil authorities avoided liquidating Jews for fear of the consequences or because they did not believe such orders existed. In Cetatea Albă, for example, Major Frigan of the local garrison requested written instructions to execute the Jews. The Third Army pretor, Colonel Marcel Petală, traveled to Cetatea Albă to inform Frigan of the provisions regarding the Jews in the ghetto. The next day, 3,500 were killed.[115]

The Romanian Army

The first troops to enter Bukovina were primarily combat units : a cavalry brigade as well as the 9th, 10th, and 16th elite infantry battalions (*Vânători*), followed immediately by the 7th Infantry Division under General Olimpiu Stavrat. The route these units followed was

112. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, no. 15, pp. 199-201.
113. "Plan de înlăturare a elementului evreiesc din teritoriul Basarabiei," NDM, Fourth Army Collection, roll 781, file no. 0145-0146, n.p.
114. For the Romanian army's enforcement of the "special orders," see Jean Ancel, *Contribuţii la istoria României. Problema evreiască* (henceforth : Ancel, *Contribuţii*) (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2001), vol. 1, part 2, pp. 119-125.
115. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, no. 15, p. 214.

crucial to the fate of the Jews in northern Romania, where some of the largest Jewish settlements – Herţa, Noua Suliţă, Hotin and Lipcani – comprising thousands of inhabitants, were concentrated.[116] The execution of the special orders was carried out by only a very small number of soldiers under Pretor Vartic's command. These actions were recorded by Dumitru Hatmanu, the pretor's secretary who accompanied the unit, and can thus be retold with great precision.[117]

The first killings took place at Siret (southern Bukovina), five kilometers from the new border with the Soviets. The Jews of the town were deported on foot to Dorneşti, twelve kilometers away. Dozens of Jews who were not able to walk – the elderly and some crippled – remained behind with a few women to care of them. These Jews were driven to a valley not far from town, where the women were raped by several soldiers of the 7th Division. The elderly were brought to Division headquarters and accused of "espionage and attacking the Romanian army." That same day, all of them were shot at the bridge over the Prut in the presence of the inhabitants of Siret, who had been brought to the execution site.[118]

On July 3, in the Bukovinan village of Ciudei, 450 local Jews were shot.[119] Later that day, two hundred Jews of Storojineţ were gunned down in their homes. On July 4, nearly all Jews of the villages of Ropcea, Iordăneşti, Pătrăuţi, Panca, and Broscăuţi, which surrounded the town of Storojineţ, were massacred with the active collaboration of local Romanians and Ukrainians.[120] The radius of murder was extended on July 5 to include thousands of Jews in the villages of Stăneşti, Jadova Nouă, Jadova Veche, Costeşti, Hliniţa, Budineţ, and Cireş as well as many of the surviving Jews of Herţa, Vijniţa and Rostochi-Vijniţa.[121] The slaughter of Cernăuţi's large Jewish population, which would last for days, also began on July 5, as the combined German-Romanian armies entered that city.[122]

Herţa was conquered by the 9th Battalion on July 4/5, after a successful incursion. The Jews who came to welcome the soldiers were met with beatings and forced to undress. On the same day, the 7th Division, under the supervision of General Stavrat and his aide, entered Herţa. Vartic immediately named a new mayor and formed a "civil guard" whose unique function was to identify the Jews and round them up with the help of the army. A total of 1,500 Jews were assembled in four synagogues and a cellar by patrols of soldiers and the civil guard who severely beat the victims.[123] The round-up of

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116. Crimes committed by Romanian troops who occupied Northern Bukovina as well as crimes at Siret are described in detail in "Charge Sheet against General Stavrat," in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6 (henceforth: "Charge Sheet"). This information is confirmed by suvivors' memoirs and numerous testimonies in the Yad Vashem Archives (henceforth: YVA), Collection 0-3. Another important source is Hugo Gold (ed.), *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina: Ein Sammelwerk*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Olamenu, 1958).
117. "Charge Sheet," p. 425.
118. *Ibid.* See also Gold, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 105-108.
119. See Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, pp. 145-153. See also Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 29.
120. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 30.
121. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 30-31. See also: Marius Mircu, *Pogromurile din Bucovina şi Dorohoi* (Bucharest: Glob, 1945), pp. 23-51; and Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, p. 148.
122. See chapter 20, about the the fate of Cernăuţi Jews in Ancel, *Contribuţii*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 230-278.
123. "Charge Sheet," p. 426.

the Jews was completed rapidly with the aid of a local fiddler who was familiar with the Jewish homes.[124] The new local authorities and the army representative compiled a list of "suspects" and the next day, July 6, a selection of Jews to be shot was made pursuant to the orders of the army.[125] A member of the civil guard identified the "suspected" Jews. The civil guard also forcibly removed young Jewish girls from the synagogues and handed them over to the soldiers, who raped them. Jews – primarily women with small children and the elderly – were brought to a mill on the outskirts of the city and shot by three soldiers.[126] The shooting of this large group posed certain technical problems, as no thought had been given to the need for graves. Therefore, after the execution, a heap of corpses lay in a pool of blood, guarded by a soldier, who "from time to time fired shots with his rifle when one of the dying moved."[127] Conversely, a smaller group of thirty-two Jews, mainly young men, was brought to a private garden where they were forced to dig their own graves. They were then lined up facing the graves and shot dead. In addition to larger actions, there were countless instances of individual terror and murder. For example, the rabbi of the community was murdered in his home together with his entire family; a five-year-old girl was thrown into a ditch and left to die; and a soldier, who had just participated in the massacre of the thirty-two Jews, then proceeded to shoot a young mother solely for personal gratification.[128] Any survivors were later deported to Transnistria.[129]

The 16th Batallion, followed immediately by the 9th and 10th Battalions, occupied Noua Suliţă on July 7, 1941. After only one day, 930 Jews and five Christians lay dead in the courtyards and streets.[130] On July 8, the 7th Division entered the city and found it in a deplorable state. Pretor Vartic took command and detained 3,000 Jews in a distillery.[131] Additionally, fifty Jews were shot – at the behest of Vartic and with the approval of Stavrat – allegedly in retaliation for "an unidentified Jew [who] had fired a gun at the troops."[132] While Lieutenant Emil Costea, commander of the military police, and another officer refused to kill Jews, several gendarmes from Hotin quickly murdered eighty-seven in their stead.[133]

Despite Russian resistance, the scope of the task, and challenging physical terrain, Bessarabian Jewry suffered the greatest losses to the Romanian campaign to "cleanse the land." On July 6, just one day after the Romanian re-conquest of Edineţi, some five hundred Jews were shot by the troops, and sixty more were murdered at Noua Suliţă. July 7 marked the liquidation of the Jews of Pârlita and Bălţi, and on the following day thousands of Jews were shot in Briceni, Lipcani, Făleşti, Mărculeşti, Floreşti, Gura-Kamenca and

124. *Ibid.*, p. 426
125. *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427.
126. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
127. *Ibid.*
128. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 429. See also: Testimony of Steinberg, in YVA, Romanian Collection 0-11/89. This account is confirmed also by two other testimonies in YVA, 0-3/1915, 3446.
131. "Charge Sheet," pp. 429-430.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 430.
133. *Ibid.*, p. 431.

Gura-Căinari.[134] By July 9, the wave of exterminations implemented by the combined German-Romanian forces had reached the Jewish settlements of Plasa Nistrului (near Cernăuţi), Zonlachie, Rapujineţ and Cotmani in Northern Bukovina, and dozens of small villages became *Judenrein* (cleansed of Jews).[135] On July 11, Lincăuţi and the village of Cepelăuţi-Hotin were "cleansed" of their Jewish inhabitants.[136] On the same day, *Einsatzgruppe* D began its activities at Bălţi.[137] On July 12, the 300 Jews of Climăuţi-Soroca were shot.[138] July 17 marked the onset of the extermination and deportation of the tens of thousands of Jews of Chişinău. Several thousand Jews, perhaps as many as 10,000, were killed on that single day.[139] In the month of July, the *Einsatzgruppe* also shot 682 Jews in Cernăuţi, 551 in Chişinău, and 155 in Tighina, and by August 19 it had murdered 4,425 Jews in the area between Hotin and Iampol.[140] The liquidation of Bessarabia's greatest Jewish center had thus begun and would continue until the last Jew was exterminated or deported in late October 1941. The slaughter of the Jews of Cetatea Albă (southern Bessarabia) followed approximately the same pattern. This was the general itinerary of the first phase of the Romanian Holocaust, implemented with the aid, but not under the coercion, of the German Eleventh Army and *Einsatzgruppe* D.

The Gendarmerie

The gendarmerie was ordered to "cleanse the land" a few days before June 21, 1941, in three places in Moldavia: Roman, Fălticeni, and Galaţi.[141] On June 18 and 19, the gendarmerie legions to be deployed were told about the special orders. The inspector general of the gendarmerie, General Constantin (Piki) Vasiliu, instructed the officers in Roman: "The first measure you must undertake is *cleansing the land*. By cleansing the land we understand: exterminate on the spot all Jews in rural areas; imprison in ghettos all Jews in urban areas; arrest all suspects, party activists, and people who held

134. The fate of the Jews of Briceni, Lipcani, Făleşti, Mărculeşti and Floreşti has been described in Jean Ancel and Théodor Lavi (eds.), *Pinkas Hakehilot. Rumania* (*Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities: Romania*) (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1980), vol. 2. See also: "Bill of Indictment against the Perpetrators of the Iaşi Pogrom," YVA, 0-11/73; and Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, no. 39, pp. 410-411.

135. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 35; see also Addendum to Jacob Stenzler's deposition, YVA 0-11/89, PKR III, pp. 261-262.

136. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 35. The shooting of the Jews of Cepelăuţi-Hotin is better known due to the testimony of Eng. Leon Şapira, a native of this town; see: YVA, Romanian Collection 0-11/89, PKR III, pp. 116-117.

137. *Einsatzgruppe* D carried out the orders regarding the extermination of the Jews. On June 21, 1941, the entire *Einsatzgruppe* D left Dueben and reached Romania on June 24. See Ereignissmeldung UdSSR (detailed reports of *Einszatzgruppe* D actions in the USSR, quoted from the Nuremberg trial), no. 37, July 29, 1941, regarding the killings in Bălţi. Copy in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 16, pp. 23-24.

138. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 36.

139. *Ibid.*, p. 36. See also Jean Ancel, "Kishinev," in Ancel and Lavi, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 411-416.

140. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, rev. ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), vol. 2, p. 768.

141. Jean Ancel, "The Romanian Way of Solving the 'Jewish Problem' in Bessarabia and Bukovina, June-July 1941," *Yad Vashem Studies*, 19 (1988), pp. 207-208.

accountable positions under the Soviet authority and send them under escort to the legion."[142] As one of his subordinates recorded later, the commander of the Orhei gendarmerie legion told his subordinates to "exterminate all Jews, from babies to the impotent old man; all of them endanger the Romanian nation."[143] On July 9, the administrative inspector general of the new Bessarabian government reported to the governor, General C. Voiculescu, from Bălţi county, that "the cleansing of the land" began as soon as the gendarmes and police arrived.[144]

In Roman, the Orhei Legion was given the order to "cleanse the land" by its commander, Major Filip Bechi. He spoke frankly, saying that they were "going to Bessarabia, where one must cleanse the terrain entirely of Jews."[145] He made a second announcement to the chiefs of the sections that "the Jews must be shot."[146] Some days later, on the orders of Bechi and under the supervision of his deputy, Captain Iulian Adamovici, the Orhei Legion was dispatched to the frontier village of Ungheni.

Platoon leader Vasile Eftimie, secretary of the legion and commander of the Security Police Squad, mimeographed and distributed to all section and post heads the orders for "cleansing the land" as they had been elucidated at Roman.[147] The Orhei Legion then crossed Bălţi county on foot, and on July 12 arrived at Cârnova, the first village of Orhei county, where the gendarmes began shooting the local Jews. The route of the Orhei Legion, which can be precisely determined, serves as an example of the way the order was issued and implemented. In rural areas, the gendarmes were the principal executors of the orders for "cleansing the land." The majority had served in the same villages prior to 1940, and their familiarity with the terrain and the Jewish inhabitants facilitated their task. The inspector general of Bukovina, Colonel Ion Mânecuţă, and General Ion Topor in Bessarabia headed the gendarmerie. The territory was apportioned among the legions, each headed by a colonel or lieutenant colonel. The gendarmerie command, aware of the scope of its task – not only the murder of the Jews, but also the identification and arrest of suspects, deserters, stranded Soviet soldiers, partisans and parachutists, among others – reinforced the gendarmes with reserves of young soldiers mobilized to serve for a limited period in the gendarmerie rather than in the regular army. Young local men, aged eighteen to twenty-one, known as the "premilitary," were also placed at the disposal of the gendarmerie after a short training period. A network of informers, which had kept an eye on the population since 1940, also served the gendarmerie, as did local volunteers who helped identify, arrest, and murder Jews.[148]

On their arrival in the villages, the gendarmes first would arrest the Jews. Most of these arrests were carried out with the assistance of the local population and informers. On some occasions, even the local priests came to the aid of the gendarmerie.[149] As a rule, Jews turned over to the gendarmes by the army had no chance of survival and were shot

142. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, nos. 41 and 43, pp. 444-445.
143. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, no. 43, p. 477.
144. Popescu to Voiculescu, July 9, NDM, Fourth Army Collection, file no. 0473, roll 655.
145. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, p. 207.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
147. *Ibid.*, no. 41, p. 445.
148. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, no. 43, pp. 512-513.
149. *Ibid.*, pp. 458, 461.

immediately.[150] Strange as it may seem, the most serious problem for the murdering gendarmes was burying the victims, *not* killing them, which was considered to be "clean" work.[151] A report sent by the chief of the Security Police and SD to Ribbentrop, on October 30, 1941, stated:

> The way in which the Romanians are dealing with the Jews lacks any method. No objections could be raised against the numerous executions of Jews, but the technical preparations and the executions themselves were totally inadequate. The Romanians usually left the victims' bodies where they were shot, without trying to bury them. The *Einsatzkommandos* issued instructions to the Romanian police to proceed somewhat more systematically in this matter.[152]

But despite German protests, the system of forcing Jews to dig their own graves was generally not adopted since the gendarmes used deceit and subterfuge to kill with speed, thus precluding any forewarning by making the victims dig pits. However, they often made use of trenches (antitank and others) left from the Soviet prewar days, making civilians cover the slain bodies with earth before the next batch of victims was brought to the execution site. The Prut and Răut Rivers, and the Dniester in particular, became the execution and burial sites favored by the gendarmes as well as by the Romanian and German armies. The first 300 Jewish victims from Storojineţ were pushed into the water by the gendarmes and shot, while some sixty Jews managed to save their lives by swimming to the opposite bank of the Dniester.[153] On August 6, the gendarmes of the 23rd Police Company shot 200 Jews and threw their bodies into the Dniester.[154] Members of *Einsatzgruppe* D shot 800 Jews on the bank of the Dniester on August 17 because they were unable to return to Bessarabia by crossing the river as they had been ordered.[155] The Jews of Noua Suliţă, who reached the bank of the Dniester on August 6, saw the river covered with the floating bodies of the last victims.[156]

In the summer and fall of 1941, on the roads and in the fields of Bessarabia, Jews walked in rows, accompanied by gendarmes and followed by peasants, who were mobilized by gendarmes, clerks, and village mayors, carrying shovels and spades, all going to the execution fields. They waited patiently until the gendarmes had shot the Jews, then buried them and returned home with the victims' clothes and other personal effects; the valuables and money were taken by the gendarmes. Quite often the gendarmes would get drunk and revel all night after such a day's work. In the village of Grigoriefca, in Lăpuşna county, they so indulged after murdering 60 Jewish men and before liquidating another 140 the next day; a few gendarmes remained in the killing field "to guard the corpses."[157]

Back in Bucharest, after the liberation of Bessarabia and Bukovina and before charging on Odessa, Antonescu outlined his ideas concerning his war against the Jews:

> The fight is bitter. It is a fight to life or death. It is a fight between us and the Germans, on the one hand, and the Jews, on the other… I shall undertake a work of complete cleansing,

150. *Ibid.*, p. 449. See also *ibid.*, no. 42, pp. 470-471.
151. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 211 and 498.
152. Nuremberg Documents, NO-2651; Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, p. 499.
153. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, nos. 20-26, pp. 37, 65-70.
154. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 35, p. 42. See also Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, nos. 23-24, pp. 67-69.
155. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 38.
156. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, nos. 20-26, pp. 37, 65-70.
157. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 6, no. 37, p. 341.

of Jews and of all others who have sneaked up on us… Had we not started this war to *cleanse our race of these people* who sap our economic, national, and physical life, we would be cursed with complete disappearance… Consequently, our policy in this regard is to achieve a *homogenous whole* in Bessarabia, Bukovina, Moldavia, and… in Transylvania.

Do not think that when I decided to *disinfect* the Romanian people of all Jews, I did not realize I would be provoking an economic crisis. But I told myself that this was the war I was leading. And as in any war, there are damages to the nation. But if I win this war, the nation will receive its compensation. We are undergoing a crisis because we are removing the Jews… Should we miss this historical opportunity now, we'll miss it forever. And if the Jews win the war, we'll no longer exist" [emphasis added].[158]

Implementation of the Arrangements

Although Mihai Antonescu had concluded the *Abmachungen* (the understandings regarding field cooperation) with the SS (i.e., *Einsatzgruppe* D, which was active in the Romanian troops' operation area) and with other German bodies, relations between the various units of *Einsatzgruppe* D and the Romanian army, gendarmerie, police, and Special Echelon were far from ideal. The Germans were content only when the Romanians acted according to their directives. Whenever their Romanian comrades deviated from the plan – whenever they failed to remove all traces of the mass executions and instead left corpses unburied, whenever they plundered, raped, or fired shots in the streets or received bribes from Jews – the Nazis fumed. Their letters, protests, and orders in this regard decried the lack of organization and planning, *not* the crimes themselves. On July 11, 1941, for example, the commander of *Einsatzkommando* 10b (a sub-unit of *Einsatzgruppe* D) reported the plunders at Făleşti (where all the Jews were shot) and noted, "the measures taken against the Jews before the arrival of the *Einsatzkommando* lacked any planning."[159] Each time such actions were taken, not only against the Jews but also against the Ukrainians of Bukovina and Bessarabia, the Germans hastened to object.[160] The RSHA went so far as to claim that the solution to the Jewish problem between the Dniester and the Dnieper had been placed in the wrong hands.[161]

The Hasty Deportations

In late July and early August, on the heels of the *Wehrmacht*, German extermination units were advancing rapidly in Ukraine, rounding up and gunning down tens of thousands of Ukrainian Jews. Under these circumstances, lacking coordination with the German army, and based only on the talks between Hitler and Antonescu in Munich on June 12, the Romanian army began to deport tens of thousands of Jews who had been

158. Council of Ministers session, September 5, 1941, in Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniştri* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996), no. 109, pp. 298-299.
159. Nuremberg Documents, NO-2934, 2939.
160. Nuremberg Documents, NO-2651, 2934, 2938, 2949, 2950.
161. Nuremberg Documents, NO-52 (Ereignissmeldung UdSSR) and NO-4540.

arrested in boroughs and on the roads to the other side of the Dniester in that area that would soon become Transnistria. This action commenced the moment the troops reached the Dniester. Toward the end of July, the Romanian army concentrated about 25,000 Jews near the village of Coslav, on the Dniester.[162] Some had been marched from Northern Bukovina and others were caught in northern Bessarabia, particularly in and around Briceni.

On July 24, shortly after the German-Romanian forces had entered Ukraine, these Jews were sent across the river. The Romanian soldiers did not provide the convoys with food or drinking water and imprisoned the Jews in an improvised camp surrounded by barbed wire in the middle of a plowed field. Whoever attempted to escape was shot. The weak died of hunger. At this stage, the German officers ordered the convoys to head for Moghilev. Romanian gendarmes also pushed thousands of Jews through Rezina and Iampol and across the Dniester, although Transnistria was still under German military occupation. The German military authorities started forcing the Jewish columns back to Bessarabia. In response, "General Antonescu ordered that any penetration into our territory be strictly forbidden. The Jews who have crossed and will further attempt to cross the border should be considered spies and executed."[163] The *Conducător*'s representative in Bukovina, Alexandru Rioşanu, reported on July 19 that, "in accordance with the telegraphic order received," the Jews recrossing the Dniester were "executed according to the order I gave upon my arrival."[164] The commander of the Romanian Fourth Army instructed his units and the gendarmerie to force back all Jews identified as returning from Ukraine.[165]

The Romanian soldiers continued to drive convoys of Jews from northern Bessarabia to the Dniester, ordering nightly stopovers used for plunder and rape, and then shooting hundreds to convince the rest to cross makeshift bridges. Hundreds of Jews were pushed into the Dniester; whoever attempted to climb out was shot. Hundreds more were gunned down on the riverbanks and cast into the dark waters, which had started to overflow after the heavy rains. The transfer of the convoys from one place to another created an additional problem, which the Romanian General Staff had not foreseen and which angered the Germans, i.e., thousands of Jewish bodies were strewn everywhere, signaling the routes and attracting Bessarabian peasants, who eagerly stripped the corpses and yanked out gold teeth.

On July 30, the German Eleventh Army Command requested that the Romanian General Staff stop pushing Jews across the Dniester. "At Iampol there are several thousand Jews – including women, children, and old men – whom the Romanian authorities have sent across the Dniester. These masses are not being guarded, and their food supplies have not been ensured. Many have started to die of hunger… the danger of disease is increasing. Accordingly, the German Army Command has taken measures to

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162. Report of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers re: 30,000 Jews in Hotin and Bukovina, August 11, 1941, Bucharest State Archives, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet Collection, file no. 76/1941, p. 86; copy in USHMM, RG 25.002M, roll 17.
163. Antonescu to Orhei police, August 6, 1941, National Archive of the Republic of Moldova, Directorate General of the Police, Security Archive (henceforth: Chişinău Archive), collection 229, subcollection 2, file no. 165 (henceforth: 229-2-165), p. 79.
164. Telegram, Rioşanu to Ion Antonescu, July 19, 1941, Bucharest State Archives, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet Collection, file no. 89/1941, p. 15.
165. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 10, no. 27, p. 83.

prevent [more] Jews from being [sent] across the Dniester."[166] In practical terms, these measures meant shooting thousands of Jews on the riverbanks.

As stated, Antonescu protested to Ambassador Killinger about the German army's return of Jews to Romanian territory, claiming it contravened Hitler's statements in Munich. Foreign Office officials in Berlin dared not ask Hitler what he had told Antonescu, instead insisting that "the official transcript of the talks… contains nothing in this regard."[167] Nevertheless, Ambassador Karl Ritter, a member of Ribbentrop's office admitted the possibility that "the problem of the Eastern Jews had also been discussed," and therefore recommended that "General Antonescu's request that the Jews not be pushed back into Bessarabia should be taken into account."[168] On August 4, most of the huge column of Jews pushed by the gendarmes across the Dniester was concentrated in Moghilev. For three days, the Germans conducted "selections" and shot the old and sick, while the young were forced to dig graves. German and Romanian soldiers murdered some 4,500 Jews. The convoy was driven further along the Ukrainian bank of the Dniester. With each stop, the number of Jews grew smaller from executions, exhaustion, illness, and infant starvation. On August 17 the convoy returned to Bessarabia at Iampol, by crossing a narrow pontoon bridge made by the Romanian army. Of a convoy of up to 32,000 Jews, somewhere between 8,000 and 20,000 were killed on the Ukrainian side of the Dniester, and most of the survivors were imprisoned in the Vertujeni camp.[169]

Transit Camps and Ghettos

War Headquarters concluded that until the status of the Ukrainian territory to be given to Romania was established, the deportations had to stop. Consequently, temporary camps and ghettos were set up in Bessarabia. The special order for this project, given on August 8, regulated the imprisonment regime, delegated responsibilities, and stressed that the Jews would not be maintained at the state's expense. Before leaving for Chişinău, Bessarabia's governor, General Constantin Voiculescu, was summoned by the *Conducător*, who outlined his policy in the two provinces and issued several unwritten orders. The first problem the governor had to solve was the Jewish matter. Voiculescu subsequently reported to Antonescu: "In this order of ideas, upon seeing the Jews swarming all over Bessarabia, particularly in Chişinău, within no more than five days since the arrival of the undersigned in Chişinău, I ordered the setting up of camps and ghettos."[170]

166. Eleventh Army Command to General Headquarters, July 30, 1941, NDM, Fourth Army Collection, file no. 781, p. 136; copy, USHMM, RG 25.003M, roll 12; copies in Jean Ancel, *Transnistria. 1941-1942: The Romanian Mass Murder Campaign* (henceforth: Ancel, *Transnistria*) (Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, 2003), vol. 2, no. 10, and USHMM, RG 25.003M, roll 12.
167. *DGFP*, vol. 13, 1 (1979), no. 207, p. 264.
168. *Ibid.*, no. 332, p. 431.
169. National Police Headquarters report to Central Information Service, August 27, 1941, Bucharest State Archives, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet Collection, file no. 71/1941, p. 91. Regarding this convoy, see also: correspondence between General Headquarters and the army pretor, in Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 104-106.
170. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 10, no. 61, p. 143.

Ghettos were new for Romania. Therefore, Presidency advisor Stănescu traveled to Warsaw "to study the concentration structure in the German quarters and use their experience."[171] Warsaw was an excellent model: its ghetto became the largest in the world, packed with up to 350,000 Jews awaiting extermination. Even before Stănescu's return, the military commander of Chişinău City, Colonel Dumitru Tudose, followed Voiculescu's guidelines. On August 12, Tudose proudly reported: "I have purged the city of Jews and enemy remains, giving it a Romanian and particularly Christian face. I have organized the Jewish ghetto such that these elements no longer pose any present or future danger."[172]

Pending the resumption of deportations, the Romanian authorities set up several dozen camps and ghettos, from which the Jews were evacuated to seven larger camps, and established the ghetto of Chişinău. By late August there were already about 80,000 Jews in these ghettos: 10,356 at Secureni; 11,762 at Edineţi; 2,634 at Limbenii Noi; 3,072 at Răşcani; 3,253 at Răuţel; 22,969 at Vertujeni; 11,000 at Mărculeşti; 11,525 in Chişinău; and 5,000-6,000 in smaller facilities in southern Bessarabia.[173]

At the end of August, Voiculescu informed the press, "The Jewish problem has been solved in Bessarabia. Today, in the Bessarabian villages there are no longer any Jews, while in towns, ghettos have been set up for those remaining."[174] The first phase of extermination was executed in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina under Antonescu's direct command. General C. Niculescu's Committee for the Investigation of Irregularities in the Chişinău ghetto (formed at Antonescu's request to probe the rapid and inexplicable enrichment of certain officers and the "failure" to confiscate deportees' gold) found that between the establishment of the camps – after the "cleansing of the land" – and the beginning of the deportations, "25,000 Jews died of natural causes, escaped, or were shot."[175]

The fate of the survivors of the first wave of extermination in both provinces was decided by Ion Antonescu and announced to the military. This operation, too, lacked written orders, initially leaving no traces and assigning no responsibility. But corruption in the Romanian military and civil government led to occasional investigations at the request of Antonescu and other high-ranking officers responsible for the campaign. The resulting reports disclosed almost all the secret orders, including the verbal ones. Thus, the Antonescu regime failed to conceal its culpability for the imprisonment of the survivors in camps and ghettos, the reign of terror therein, and the eventual deportations. Conditions in these camps – characterized by forced labor, corruption, hunger, plunder, suffering, rapes, executions, and epidemics – accounted for tens of thousands of deaths.[176]

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171. Telegram, M. Antonescu to I. Antonescu, Bucharest State Archives, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet Collection, file no. 167/1941, p. 42.
172. Tudose to administration of Bessarabia, August 12, 1941, NDM, file no. 656, p. 13.
173. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, pp. 52, 99, 131-133, and vol. 10, pp. 100-102, 138.
174. *Curentul*, August 27, 1941.
175. Niculescu Commission, Report 2, December 1941, Chişinău Archive, 706-1-69, pp. 48-49. The report recorded 75,000-80,000 Jews in Bessarabia at the end of August.
176. See chapter 18, "Lagăre şi ghetouri în Basarabia şi în Bucovina de Nord," chapter 19, "Ghetoul Chişinău," and chapter 20, "Cernăuţi," in Ancel, *Contribuţii*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 143-278.

Deportations from Southern Bukovina and Dorohoi County

The deportation of Bukovinan Jews was the outcome of the two Antonescus' decision to carry out ethnic cleansing. Transcripts of the government meetings of June 25, 1941, and October 6, 1941, document this decision.[177] In 1941 and 1942, 21,229 Jews from southern Bukovina were deported.[178] The best researched is the deportation of Jews from the county of Dorohoi. Despite his promise to Filderman on September 8, 1941, that he would treat *Regat* Jews differently than non-*Regat* Jews, Antonescu nevertheless ordered the deportation of Dorohoi Jews soon thereafter, followed by the Jews from Câmpulung, Suceava, and Rădăuţi counties.[179] This sent shockwaves through the Romanian Jewish community. Upon learning of the deportation, the civilian population in Dorohoi promptly pillaged Jewish property and moved into their homes (even so, 244 out of 607 Jewish homes remained empty; there were too few Romanians in the town).[180] Prior to the deportations, county authorities themselves (the prefect and mayor) pleaded with the government to remove the Jews citing "concerns of the citizenry."[181]

Filderman tried hard to reach Antonescu, yet he failed. The chairman of the Romanian Supreme Court, Nicolae Lupu, relayed his memo to the *Conducător* on December 3, 1941. Antonescu hypocritically declared to Lupu that he was "deeply moved" by the deportations, that he had ordered an investigation, and that he would order the return of the deportees.[182] No such investigation was conducted, no Jew returned home by December 1943, the prefect of Dorohoi was promoted, and only the last deportation train was stopped.

Tighina Agreement

On August 30, Transnistria's status was finally resolved: the province was transferred to Romania, in keeping with Hitler's promise to Antonescu. General Nicolae Tătăranu of Romanian War Headquarters and General Arthur Hauffe of the *Wehrmacht* signed the "Agreement for the Security, Administration, and Economic Exploitation of the Territory between the Dniester and the Bug and the Bug-Dnieper." Paragraph 7 referred to the Jews in the camps and ghettos of Bessarabia and Bukovina and the Jewish inhabitants of Transnistria: "The evacuation of the Jews across the Bug is not possible now. They must, therefore, be concentrated in labor camps and used for various work until, once the operations are over, their evacuation to the east will be possible."[183] The

177. Benjamin, *op. cit.*, no. 95, p. 242, and no. 113, p. 326.
178. Archive of the Ministry of Defence, fond central, *Problema evreiască*, vol. 21, p. 131; Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, pp. 196-197.
179. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 74, p. 132.
180. *Ibid.*, vol 5, no. 145, p. 265.
181. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 74, p. 143.
182. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 258, p. 425.
183. Gosudartsveni Archiv Odeskoi Oblasti, Ukraina (State Archive of Odessa County, Ukraine) (henceforth: Odessa Archive), collection 2361, subcollection 1c, pp. 45-46; German version: Nuremberg Documents, PS-3319.

agreement thus confirmed that the final goal was to "cleanse" Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria of Jews.

At the end of August, Antonescu met at Tighina with Governors Voiculescu of Bessarabia, Corneliu Calotescu of Bukovina, and Gheorghe Alexianu of Transnistria. Voiculescu summarized the event: "I was given instructions as to how the operation of driving the Jews across the Bug should be carried out."[184] Antonescu made War Headquarters responsible for the deportation, under Topor. There would be no administrative formalities, no nominal lists of deportees, only "strictly numerical groups." Major Tarlef of the Romanian General Staff relayed an unwritten order that "any document found upon the Jews should be confiscated." Jews indeed arrived in Transnistria with no identity; their papers had been burned at the crossing points over the Dniester. Colonel Ion Palade succinctly told the gendarmerie officers in charge of transferring the convoys from the camps to the Dniester: "By order of War Headquarters, Jews who cannot keep up with the convoys, due to exhaustion or sickness, shall be executed."[185] To this end, a local gendarme was to be sent ahead two days before each convoy set out to ensure (with the assistance of the gendarmerie precincts along the deportation route and the premilitary youth) that "every ten kilometers there would be graves for about 100 people, where those who could not keep pace with the convoy could be gathered, shot, and buried."

Antonescu scheduled the first deportations for September 15, 1941. Beforehand, War Headquarters made an urgent request to Topor for a report on "the exact status of all Jewish camps and ghettos in Bessarabia and Bukovina," including numbers of Jews and guard units.[186] These reports reveal no German military involvement. The Dniester was crossed at five points, listed here from north to south: Atachi-Moghilev, Cosăuţi-Iampol, Rezina-Râbniţa, Tighina-Tiraspol, and Olăneşti-Iasca. Most Jews were deported through the first three points. The deportations commenced September 16, with the Jews in the Vertujeni camp and concluded by the end of December. Palade and his subordinates relayed the verbal order concerning the assassination and plundering. The commander of the 60th Police Company, who supervised the deportation to Atachi, requested a written order. Capt. Titus Popescu replied: "Regarding the Jewish matter we do not work with written documents."[187]

On October 6, Ion Antonescu updated the government on the ethnic cleansing in Bessarabia: "As far as the Jews are concerned, I have taken measures to remove them, completely and for good, from these regions. The measures are under way. I still have about 40,000 Jews in Bessarabia who will be dumped over the Dniester in a few days and, circumstances permitting, dumped further over the Urals."[188] According to the gendarmerie inspector general in Bessarabia, the deportations proceeded "in the most perfect order and quietly."[189] Both before and during the deportation, hundreds of Jews died every day of hunger, thirst, beatings, and torture; women and girls who resisted

184. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 10, no. 61, p. 139.
185. Niculescu Commission, report no. 2, p. 54.
186. Inspectorate General of Transnistria to Topor, September 11, 1941; Carp, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.
187. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 110, p. 170.
188. Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
189. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 44, p. 101.

rape were killed; many Jews were murdered during searches for their valuables. Even before the convoys headed for the Dniester, bodies were everywhere, and additional corpses were left on the roadsides during the deportation. The method of plunder and assassination was such that peasants would approach a gendarme in the escort, indicate a Jew with attractive clothing or footwear, and propose a price, usually 1,000-2,000 lei. After briefly haggling, the gendarme would shoot the Jew, and the peasant would pay the agreed amount and quickly strip the body.

The official plundering of the Jews was ordered by Antonescu and facilitated by the National Bank of Romania. On October 5, the Marshal demanded "the *exchange* of all jewelry and precious metals owned by the Jews *vacating* Bessarabia and Bukovina [emphasis added]."[190] Other orders provided for the "exchange"[191] of Jewish-owned lei into rubles, then German occupation marks (RKKS). On November 17, after the first phase of this plunder, the National Bank hastened to inform the finance minister: "As the seizure of valuables from the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina is over, please dispatch your delegate to witness the opening of the boxes containing these objects in view of taking their inventory."[192]

Antonescu's handling of the Jews did not escape Hitler's attention. Several days before the signing of the Tighina Agreement on August 30, he told Goebbels: "Regarding the Jewish problem, it can be established that a man like Antonescu acts in this field in a more extremist manner than we have done so far."[193] According to reports, 91,845 Jews were deported from Bukovina,[194] 55,867 from Bessarabia, and 9,367 from Dorohoi. In Transnistria, the Germans caught 11,000 Jews who had tried to flee the Romanian and German armies.[195] The rest were slaughtered, mainly by German soldiers.

In the meantime, the Romanian authorities did their best to mislead Western powers about their ethnic cleansing. On November 4, after meeting with Ion Antonescu and Mihai Antonescu and protesting the anti-Jewish atrocities, U.S. Ambassador Franklin Mott Gunther reported to the State Department in Washington:

> I have constantly and persistently drawn the attention of the highest Romanian authorities to the inevitable reaction of my government and of the American people to such an inhuman treatment, including the unlawful killing of innocent and defenseless people, by describing in detail the atrocities perpetrated against the Jews of Romania. My observations triggered expressions of regret from Marshal Antonescu and the ad-interim PM, Mihai Antonescu, for the excesses committed "by mistake" or "by irresponsible elements" and [promises] of future temperance… The systematic extermination program continues, though, and I don't see any hope for Romanian Jews as long as the current regime controlled by the Germans stays in place.[196]

190. Davidescu to Voiculescu and Calotescu, Chişinău Archive, 1607-1-2, p. 171.
191. This "exchange" was, in fact, seizure.
192. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 114, p. 179.
193. Joseph Goebbels, *Tagebücher 1924-1945* (Munich: Piper, 1992), vol. 4, pp. 1059-1060.
194. Calotescu to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, April 9, 1942, Foreign Ministry Archive, Central Collection, vol. 20, pp. 130-131.
195. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, nos. 39, 41, 43, 46, 55, pp. 95-97, 99, 104; *DGFP*, series D, vol. 13, no. 207, pp. 318-319.
196. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 3, no. 221, p. 339.

Transnistria: Ethnic Dumping Ground

The territory between the Dniester and the Bug, with which Hitler rewarded Antonescu for Romania's participation in the war against the Soviet Union, was dubbed "Transnistria." According to the Soviet census of 1939, the area's population exceeded three million people comprised mostly of Ukrainians and Russians, about 300,000 Moldavians (Romanians), 331,000 Jews, and 125,000 Germans. Jewish men, who for the most part did not think of themselves as Soviet citizens, had been drafted into the Soviet army, but not all had reached their units. Part of the Jewish population did not evacuate or run off with the Soviet forces, although doing so would have increased their chances of survival. But, they knew little about the Nazi persecution of the Jews, and the Germans' swift advance from Lvov to the Black Sea prevented a number of them from escaping.

The occupation regime (excluding not-yet-occupied Odessa) was inaugurated at Tiraspol on August 9, 1941. Heading the government was law professor Gheorghe Alexianu, a friend and former colleague of Mihai Antonescu and well-known anti-Semite. Transnistria was divided into thirteen counties, each run by a prefect; all prefects were colonels or lieutenant colonels in the army or gendarmerie. These counties encompassed sixty-four districts, each administered by a pretor. At the beginning of the war, Antonescu believed Transnistria would be occupied indefinitely. In the government session of December 16, 1941, he told Alexianu to "govern there as if Romania had been ruling these territories for two million years. What will happen afterward, we'll see… You are the sovereign there. Force people to work – with a whip if they don't understand otherwise… and if necessary, and there is no other way, prod them with bullets; for that you don't need my authority."[197] Alexianu boasted to Antonescu that the administration followed "the *Fuehrer*'s principle" (*Führerprinzip*): "One man, one guideline, one accountability. The will of the *Conducător*, of the army's commander in chief, transmitted to the farthest bodies."[198] Transnistria's official currency was the RKKS, a worthless bank note used throughout the Soviet territory occupied by the Germans. The exchange rate was initially 60 lei or 20 rubles to the mark. Against this background, the true dimension of the plunder of the Jews – even before deportation – becomes clearer. The National Bank of Romania confiscated Jewish money, replaced it with rubles at an absurd exchange rate, and then confiscated the rubles in exchange (sometimes) for RKKS.

Early in the war, the Romanian Third and Fourth Armies operated in Transnistria. Even more than the gendarmes and police, the army was responsible for retaliation, imprisonment, and persecution of local Jews. Officers initiated direct measures against the Jews, closely supervising implementation by the civil authorities, and even the gendarmes. When such orders were improperly executed, the officers requested the punishment of those at fault. In the early stages of the occupation, between August and late September 1941, Romanian forces cooperated with the German army and the *Einsatzgruppen* – who, in the estimation of Ohlendorf, murdered about 90,000 – in killing Jews.[199]

197. *Procesul marii trădări naţionale* (Bucharest, 1946), pp. 148-149.
198. Alexianu to Antonescu, September 12, 1941, Odessa Archive, 2242-1677, pp. 18-19b.
199. *Nuremberg Military Trials*, vol. 4, case 9, p. 168.

Gendarmerie units that had "cleansed the land" in Bessarabia and Bukovina were attached to Romanian armies and spread across Transnistria. The gendarmerie chose where the deportees crossed the Dniester. They also attended to the "transportation, discipline, and surveillance of the Jewish population, i.e., the removal of the Jews from densely populated areas and their settlement in sparsely populated areas" – in other words, the marching of convoys of both deported and local Jews to the camps on the Bug.[200] The dreaded Ukrainian police – or, more accurately, the Ukrainians armed by the Romanians – also played an important role in the administration's crimes during the winter of 1941/1942 in the concentration camps along the Bug. These men guarded the ghettos and camps throughout Transnistria and entered the ghettos whenever necessary to help carry out the various actions dictated by the Romanian authorities, primarily the mass executions.

Daily Life in Transnistria

As of December 24, 1941, there were 56,000 Romanian Jews in Moghilev county, close to the Dniester. More Jews survived here than in the other counties. German involvement was less frequent, and, especially in the town of Moghilev, the Jewish community was better able to organize itself. Although especially numerous in the counties of Moghilev and Balta, deported Romanian Jews found themselves in 120 localities throughout all the counties in Transnistria ; some of these received one to six deportees, while others ended up with thousands, and living conditions were extremely cruel. For example, a number of the Jews of Moghilev were deported to Şargorod and other nearby localities where their lot was awful. M. Katz, former president of the Jewish Committee of the town, related the following :

> ...[I]n the town of Konotkauti, near Şargorod, [there was] a long and dark stable standing alone in a field. Seventy people were lying all over the place, men, women, children, half-naked and destitute… They all lived on begging… In the ghetto of Halcintz people ate the carcass of a horse which had been buried… The authorities poured carbonic acid on it, yet they continued eating it… The Jews in Grabviţ lived in a cave… They couldn't part from the seven hundred graves of their loved ones… I found similar scenes at Vinoi, Nemerci, Pasinca, Lucineţ, Lucincic, Ozarineţ, Vindiceni : everywhere men exhausted, worn out ; some of them worked on farms, others in the tobacco factory, but the majority lived on begging.[201]

The Jews deported from Bessarabia and Bukovina typically died as a result of typhus, hunger, and cold. Food distribution was erratic. Many lived by begging or by selling their clothes for food, ending up virtually naked. They ate leaves, grass, and potato peels and often slept in stables or pigsties, sometimes not allowed even straw. Except for those in the Peciora and Vapniarka camps and in the Rybnitsa prison, the deported Jews lived in ghettos or in towns, where they were assigned a residence, forced to carry out hard labor, and subjected to the "natural" process of extermination through famine and disease. This

200. Tasks of Transnistrian police, December 1941, Odessa Archive, 2242-4-5c, p. 3.
201. Julius Fisher, *Transnistria : The Forgotten Cemetery* (South Brunswick, NJ : T. Yoselof, 1969), p. 105.

"natural selection" ceased toward the end of 1943, when Romanian officials began changing their approach toward the deported Jews.

In January 1942, the typhus epidemic reached major proportions. In Ţibulovca (Balta county) 1,140 out of 1,200 deportees died during the winter of 1941-1942.[202] On January 20, 1942, of the 1,200 Jews interned since November 1941, only 100 men, 74 women, and 4 children survived, most of these suffering frozen extremities. With money or clothes, some were able to purchase permission to live in the village.

Of the 9,000 Jews in Şargorod (Moghilev county), 2,414 caught typhus and 1,449 died of it. In June 1942, the epidemic ended, but it broke out again in October. By then, however, the community was prepared for it, taking efficient measures to delouse the area. Ninety-two cases of typhoid fever appeared, though with a negligible mortality rate, as well as 1,250 cases of severe malnutrition, of which fifty proved irreversible.[203] Hygienic conditions were very bad in the town of Moghilev, as well. As of April 25, 1942, there were 4,491 recorded cases of typhus, 1,254 of them deadly. The Moghilev Health Department estimated that there were 7,000 cases of typhus at a certain point throughout the city. During the winters the extreme cold made it impossible to bury the corpses, which only continued to spread the epidemics. In addition to disease and the dearth of adequate food, clothing, and shelter, forced labor was often imposed on the deportees in Transnistria. In Ladijin, for example, 1,800 Jews from Dorohoi and Cernăuţi were used for work in a stone quarry under very harsh conditions.[204]

There were two camps in Transnistria, Vapniarka and Peciora. In September 1942 almost 2,000 Jews ("communist sympathizers" or people who had applied to emigrate to the USSR under the population transfer in 1940) were deported to Transnistria. Some of them were killed upon arrival, but about 1,000 went to the Vapniarka camp where they were fed a variety of pea (*Tathyrus savitus*) that is not fit for humans. As a result, 611 inmates became seriously ill, and some were partially paralyzed.[205] The other Transnistrian camp, Peciora, displayed the phrase "death camp" on its signpost above the entrance.[206] General Iliescu, inspector of the Transnistrian gendarmerie, had recommended that the poorest be sent there, since they were going to die anyway, and it was not intended that anyone survive Peciora.[207] Peciora was the most horrific site of Jewish internment in all of Transnistria, as Matatias Carp's research showed:

> Those who managed to escape told incredible stories. On the banks of the Bug, the camp was surrounded by three rows of barbed wire and watched by a powerful military guard. German trucks arrived from the German side of the Bug on several occasions; camp inmates were packed into them to be exterminated on the other side… Unable to get supplies, camp inmates ate human waste, and later [fed] on human corpses. Eighty percent died and only the twenty percent who [fled when the guard became more lax] survived.[208]

Testimonies of the Peciora survivors also report cases of cannibalism in this camp.

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202. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, fond 40012, vol. 1, roll 28.
203. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 325.
204. *Ibid.*, 3, p. 280.
205. *Ibid.*, pp. 201, 376-377.
206. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 285.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
208. *Ibid.*, p. 368.

Local Jews

Following the first wave of executions upon the occupation of the province, the surviving local Jews returned to their destroyed and ransacked houses. According to gendarmerie and government reports, of the 331,000 Ukrainian Jews counted during the census of 1939, at least 150,000 and perhaps over 200,000 were still alive in Transnistria then, including up to more than 90,000 in the district of Odessa. Upon entering the district capitals, the Romanian army – followed by the gendarmerie units and then the prefects – immediately and energetically identified all Jews for purposes of imprisonment in ghettos and camps.[209]

On August 4, 1941, the Fourth Army informed all military units, the gendarmerie, and the police that "the Jews in the towns and villages of Ukraine will be gathered in ghettos."[210] This decision was made by Antonescu, conveyed through War Headquarters, and signed by General Tătăranu: "To prevent any act of sabotage and terrorism by the Jews, we have taken the measure of imprisoning them in ghettos and using them for labor."[211] Upon arrival in the District capitals, the prefects ordered the Jews to register with the new authorities and move into the ghettos, abandoning their homes. On September 3, for instance, Colonel Vasile Nica, prefect of Balta, gave "all kikes" three days to move to the ghetto (composed of four streets). He imposed forced labor on all Jews between the ages of fourteen and sixty and ordered them to wear yellow badges: "Any kike – from the town of Balta, the county, or anywhere else – who is found in Balta is to be sent to the ghetto. Similar ghettos will be set up in other towns of the district. Any insubordination, attempted rebellion, or terrorism by a kike will be punished with his death and that of another twenty kikes."[212]

Deportations and Death Marches

On September 30, 1941, the commander of the Fourth Army posed the question to the General Staff: "What is there to be done with the *civilian* Jews of Transnistria?"[213] Antonescu's answer was clear: "All the Jews in Transnistria will be immediately imprisoned in the camps on the Bug established by the governor of Transnistria… Their estates will be taken over by the local authorities."[214] In early October, Antonescu ordered the deportation – which meant extermination – of the Ukrainian Jews to the Bug and the expropriation of their property. Not only Ukrainian Jews were deported to the Bug. Eichmann's envoy, Richter, announced to his superiors that Antonescu had decided to

209. Military Command of Transnistria, Order no. 1, Odessa Archive, 2730-1-1.
210. Fourth Army, Order no. 209.221, August 4, 1941, Chişinău Archive, 693-2-299, p. 26.
211. Fourth Army to General Headquarters, NDM, Fourth Army Collection, file no. 781, p. 162.
212. Nica, Order no. 4, September 3, 1943, Odessa Archive, 2358-1-2, p. 4. The order was issued in Romanian and Russian.
213. Telegram, Fourth Army to General Headquarters, September 30, 1941, NDM, Fourth Army Collection, file no. 779, p. 164.
214. General Headquarters to Fourth Army, October 6, 1941, NDM, Fourth Army Collection, file no. 779, p. 165.

concentrate near the Bug 110,000 Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina, "in view of exterminating them."[215] Their transfer and eventual execution fell to the Government of Transnistria, which had gendarmerie units and occupation troops at its disposal. Alexianu described the operation to the Fourth Army commander on October 11:

> As to the given instructions, all the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina are being evacuated from these provinces to the region west of the Bug, where they will stay this fall until – in accordance with the agreement concluded with the German state – we are able to dump them east of the Bug. Over 15,000 Jews have entered Transnistria so far... The rest, up to the approximately 150,000 envisaged for this fall, will arrive soon.[216]

The Romanian authorities took no responsibility for the Jews' subsistence, both during the deportation and in the camps and ghettos. "The Jews will live on their own," it was written. Yet, they were to be used for agricultural or any other work, and the gendarmes mercilessly shot dead any laggards.[217]

Each convoy was first plundered by the gendarmes. Young women and girls in each convoy were raped, particularly by the officers, who chose stops where they could organize orgies. Gangs of Ukrainians attacked the Jewish convoys as well – killing, looting, and sometimes even stripping hundreds of Jews bare and leaving them to freeze to death. The convoy commanders were not responsible for Jews' lives, only for their transfer – these Jews had no name or identity. Ukrainian volunteers (later called the Ukrainian police) accompanied the convoys, exhibiting even greater cruelty than the gendarmes. Unfamiliar with the area, the gendarmes relied on these volunteers, assigning them partial escort and guard duties. *Einsatzgruppe* D had armed some Ukrainians, who assisted in murdering tens of thousands of Jews.

The transfer of the Jews toward the Bug in convoys of thousands continued apace throughout October, November, and December 1941 in total disarray. Thousands of Jews were left in towns or villages that had not been slated to house ghettos or temporary camps. Monitoring the deportation as if it were a military operation, Antonescu remarked in a government session that he had enough trouble "with those I took to the Bug. *Only I know how many died on the way* [emphasis added]."[218] On November 9, Vasiliu, the gendarmerie inspector general, reported to the *Conducător* that the first stage of the deportations from Bessarabia and Bukovina was over: 108,002 Jews had been "relocated as in the annexed table." A map accompanying the report indicated that the Jews had been taken to three areas near the Bug: 47,545 to the north, in Mitki, Peceora, and Rogozna; 30,981 to the center, in Obodovka and Balanovka; and 29,476 in Bobric, Krivoi-Ozero, and Bogdanovka.[219] Richter's sources proved accurate: Antonescu had indeed concentrated 110,000 Jews – Romanian citizens – near the Bug, intending to kill them.

Meanwhile, Antonescu ordered the SSI to investigate why "all the Jews had not been evacuated east of the Jmerinka-Odessa railway," near the Bug. The investigation revealed

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215. Richter to RSHA, October 11, 1941, Nuremberg Documents, PS-3319; copy in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 87, p. 110.
216. Alexianu to Fourth Army commander, Odessa Archive, 2242-2-76.
217. "Guidelines Concerning the Organization of the Convoys," September 6, 1941, Odessa Archive, 2242-2-680, p. 50.
218. Benjamin, *op. cit.*, no. 119, p. 337.
219. Vasiliu to Antonescu, December 15, 1941, Ministry of Interior Archive, file no. 18844, vol. 3.

that in December 1941, 79,507 Jews deported west of that line from Romania were still alive.[220] But at the beginning of the Romanian occupation, 150,000 to 200,000 Ukrainian Jews were still alive in Transnistria, too.

Golta County Massacres

The German occupation authorities' refusal to receive and execute the Romanian and Ukrainian Jews deported to the Bug forced the Transnistrian administration to resolve the matter on its own. The murder of Ukrainian and Romanian Jewry took place in Golta county, near the Bug, from the end of December 1941 until May 1942. Under prefect and gendarmerie Lieutenant Colonel Modest Isopescu, Golta became known as the "Kingdom of Death," site of the three largest extermination camps – Bogdanovka, Domanovka, and Akmechetka – and dozens of smaller ones. Imprisoned in these camps were about 10,000 local Jews, 30,000 from Bessarabia (particularly the Chişinău ghetto), and 65,000-70,000 from Odessa and the counties in southern Transnistria. Even before the extermination campaign, so many died every day that Isopescu ordered gendarmes and municipalities "to bury the dead kikes two meters underground. Those buried at half a meter will be reburied deeper. All sick, old, and infant kikes will be sent to Bogdanovka."[221] By mid-November 1941 Bogdanovka had become a human garbage dump.

When taking over the county, Isopescu wrote, he had found several camps of Jews "gathered from the neighboring boroughs" (i.e., Ukrainian Jews), but most were "sent from across the Dniester" (i.e., deported from Bessarabia and Bukovina). In early October, "about 15,000" Jews had "gathered" (i.e., been imprisoned) in the village of Vazdovka, in the Liubashivka subdistrict, and another 3,000 in Krivoi-Ozero and Bogdanovka. "Those in Vazdovka were hit by typhus and about 8,000 died," Isopescu reported. The mayor and the infantry regiment staying in the village requested that the camp be moved, "because it posed a constant danger of infection." Weakened by hunger and contaminated with typhus, the Jews could not bury the corpses, and the soldiers and villagers refused to come near the camp.[222]

Isopescu transferred the roughly 10,000 Jews remaining in Vazdovka and Krivoi-Ozero to "swine stables of the sovkhoz [state agricultural farm]" in Bogdanovka. But even before the "transport of kikes from Vazdovka" had arrived, "about 9,000 kikes were sent from Odessa, so that today, with what was already there and what has arrived now, there are 11,000 kikes in the kolkhoz [collective agricultural farm] stables, which can hold only 7,000 pigs."[223] Isopescu continued, "Today the mayor and the head of the kolkhoz came to me in despair for they have been told that another 40,000 [Jews] are coming from Odessa. Since the sovkhoz can no longer accommodate them all, and those outside the stables are killing those inside to take their place, while the [Ukrainian] police and the gendarmes are overwhelmed by the burials, and as the water of the Bug is being

220. Military Cabinet report, January 4, 1942, Bucharest State Archives, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet Collection, file no. 86/1941, pp. 325-327.
221. Isopescu to Bivolaru, November 4, 1941, Derjavnii Archiv Mikolaisvoi Oblasti, Ukraina (Central Archive of Nikolaev County) (henceforth: Nikolaev Archive), 2178-1-66, p. 90.
222. Isopescu to Government of Transnistria, November 13, 1941, *ibid.*, p. 155.
223. *Ibid.*, p. 151b.

drunk, the epidemic will soon spread throughout the region."[224] More than 67,000 Jews were concentrated at Bogdanovka and partially at Domanovka, together with 29,479 deported from Bessarabia, as stated in a Romanian gendarmerie report.[225]

To understand the details mentioned by Isopescu, it must be recalled that the first frost of 1941 came on November 4, and temperatures continued to drop, plummeting to –35° C in December. Those who were unable to sneak into one of the filthy stables, which were teeming with lice and feces, would freeze to death during the night; hence the fierce competition for a place in the stables. The overcrowding in the camp peaked, and most Jews were sick with typhus. Five hundred Jews died daily at Bogdanovka, while another 200 perished each day at Domanovka. Both Isopescu and Alexianu hoped the Germans would take the Jews and exterminate them on their own side of the territory. As the governor reported to Antonescu on December 11, 1941: "In view of solving the Jewish problem in Transnistria, we are currently holding talks with the German authorities about dumping [the Jews] over the Bug. At certain points, such as Golta, some Jews have already started crossing the Bug. *We shall not have peace in Transnistria until we have enforced the provision of the Hauffe-Tătăranu agreement concerning the dumping of the kikes over the Bug* [emphasis added]."[226]

The military units quartered in the Golta district requested that the Prefecture "move" the local camps, but there was no place available for this purpose.[227] Antonescu's Ukraine ended at the Bug, and by mid-December, immense masses of Jews – alive, dead, and dying – were concentrated in the camps at Bogadanovka and Domanovka: Isopescu's worst nightmare had come true. He estimated 52,000 living Jews in Bogdanovka and about 20,000 in Domanovka. Some crowded into stables (of which there were no more than fifty), pigsties, and barracks, while others stayed outside, spread over three kilometers along the west bank of the Bug. The silos were full of bodies, and both the living and dead were packed into the stables and barracks in the deadly cold of winter.

Antonescu ordered the murder of the more than 70,000 surviving Jews at Bogdanovka and then at Domanovka. In the Cabinet session of December 16, Alexianu informed the Marshal that 85,000 Jews carried typhus "in the villages where the Jews came. I must disinfect them, or they'll infect everybody." Antonescu's recommendation was brief: "Let them die."[228] Another factor in the decision to execute tens of thousands of Jews and burn their bodies was the nature of relations with the German occupation authorities in Ukraine and the *Einsatzgruppe*'s dissatisfaction with Romanian disorganization and, particularly, their failure to bury corpses. Berezovka's Landau subdistrict was home to tens of thousands of local Germans – *Volksdeutsche* – and tens of thousands more lived on the eastern bank of the Bug, in the Nazi-occupied part of the former Soviet county of Nikolaev. On February 5, 1942, Gebietskommissar Schlutter of Nikolaev, Isopescu's German counterpart, warned Alexianu about the immense epidemiological catastrophe created by the Romanian authorities on the banks of the Bug. The Germans did not

224. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-151b.
225. Vasiliu to Antonescu, December 15, 1941, Ministry of Interior Archive, file no. 18844, vol. 3.
226. Alexianu to Antonescu, December 11, 1941, Odessa Archive, 2242-1-677, p. 197.
227. Georgescu to Golta prefecture, Nikolaev Archive, December 4, 1942, 2178-1-12, p. 22.
228. Government session, December 16, 1941, Ministry of Interior, Operative Archive, file no. 40010, vol. 78, p. 358.

request the killing of the Jews, but "possibly the transportation of the Jews so far inside Transnistria that their crossing the Bug would become impossible."[229]

Although the Nazi authorities across the Bug clearly wanted the Romanians to solve their own "Jewish problem," Alexianu countered that the Tighina Agreement obligated the *Germans* to liquidate the Jews concentrated near the Bug: "We shall answer that in keeping with the Tighina Agreement of August 30, 1941, art. 7, until the Jews of Transnistria are evacuated east of the Bug when operations allow, we are keeping them here and cannot return them inland, in view of dumping them over the Bug. Please advise whether the convention can be applied."[230] As the Romanian reply was delayed, Schlutter sent another telegram reiterating his evacuation request: "Every day a number of Jews die and are buried superficially. This absolutely impossible situation poses an imminent danger to the German villages of Transnistria and the neighboring territory of the German commissariat of Ukraine. To save the troops, the German administration, and the population, you are hereby asked to take rigorous measures."[231] "What was our answer?" Alexianu jotted on the translated telegram. His deputy, Secretary General Emanoil Cercavschi, wrote back: "We answered Commissioner General Oppermann that we have taken measures to burn the Jewish corpses."[232]

Assisted by local gendarmes, Ukrainian policemen brought from Golta county shot about 48,000 Jews at Bogdanovka. The massacre began on December 21 and continued until the morning of December 24. After a break for Christmas, the executions resumed on December 28 and continued until December 30, only to start anew on January 3, lasting until January 8, 1942. The Jews were forced to undress and then shot in the back of the neck by killers drunk on Samagoon, a local liquor made from beets.[233] Any gold teeth were removed with rifle blows or tongs, and rings were cut off, together with fingers if necessary. The bodies were immediately burned by a team of 200 young Jews selected for this work, 150 of whom were eventually shot, as well. One survivor described the process in this way: "We would make piles for burning the corpses. One layer of straw, on which we placed people [in a space] about four meters wide, more than one man high, and about ten meters long. On the sides and in the middle we put firewood, and then again one layer of people and a layer of straw with firewood. We would light one pile and prepare another, so it took about two months to turn our brothers to ashes. In terrible frosts we would warm up by the hot ashes."[234]

At Domanovka, a Jewish borough on the road connecting Odessa to Golta, there were about 20,000 Jews from Odessa and the borough environs. Between January 10 and March 18, 1942, local Ukrainian police and the Romanian gendarmes killed 18,000.

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229. Telegram, Schlutter to Alexianu, February 5, 1942 (German version and Romanian translation), Odessa Archive, 2242-1-1486, pp. 180-180b.
230. *Ibid.*
231. Telegram, Schlutter to Alexianu in Tiraspol, February 14, 1941 (German version and and Romanian translation), Odessa Archive, 2242-1-1486, pp. 200-200b.
232. *Ibid.*
233. This mass execution and burning of bodies was detailed during Isopescu's trial in 1945. That description has been confirmed by Romanian documents in the archives at Nikolaev and Odessa. See *Actul de acuzare, Rechizitoriile şi replica acuzării la procesul primului lot de criminali de război* (henceforth: *Actul de acuzare*) (Bucharest: Editura Apărării Patriotice, 1945).
234. Testimony of Haim Kogan, April 24, 1963, YVA, PKR-V, no. 4, p. 70.

Although the corpses were initially buried, they were subsequently unearthed and burned in order to avert the threat of disease. Pretor Teodor Iliescu reported :

> At Domanevka [*sic*] there is a Jewish camp that poses a constant danger to the authorities and the local population… due to the filth the Jews live in and the insects they are full of, which constitute the best environment for the spread of typhus, cholera, and other diseases. Since in this village a significant number of Jews have been shot and buried in graves… no more than half a meter deep, and that will jeopardize public health once the snow melts and the water infiltrates them… kindly order the relocation of the camp to Bogdanovka… They cannot produce anything, and due to lack of hygiene, about thirty to fifty are dying every day… [235]

Isopescu noted his decision on the margin of the report : "Proceed in accordance with Order no. 23. Burn the corpses to prevent the extension of the epidemic."[236]

Akmechetka was located on the Bug, 18 kilometers (11 miles) south of Bogdanovka, 18 kilometers north of Domanovka, and 60 kilometers (37 miles) from the city of Golta. Although documents describe it as a village, Akmechetka was actually a large pig farm. Far from other populated areas and strictly guarded, Isopescu handpicked Akmechetka in early March 1942 to accomodate Jews who could not work or serve any other function, including the the eldery and children.[237] Healthy Jews were also sent there as punishment for disobedience, resisting rape by gendarmes and Romanian government personnel or refusing to surrender valuables, for example. Several hundred orphans joined these prisoners, and Akmechetka soon housed 4,000 Jews.

The camp, occupying only part of the farm, consisted of four pigsties – completely exposed to the wind, snow, and rain – and one long warehouse. Boards divided the sties into sections, and approximately 1,000 people were crowded into each. The warehouse was reserved for the orphans. Akmechetka was surrounded by three rows of barbed wire and deep trenches and was guarded by Ukrainian police subordinated to Romanian gendarmes.[238] The main purpose of the camp was extermination via isolation. Food was extremely scarce, and Jews there "lay for entire days on the ground or on beds and could no [longer] move."[239] After several weeks, most died of starvation, and the rest were utterly exhausted.[240] At first one prisoner was to maintain order in the camp. This task became unnecessary, however, since the Jews were too weak to escape. The external guard was also relaxed, and Ukrainian policemen entered the camp only occasionally to conduct routine inspections. Romanian gendarmes bought Jews' clothing in exchange for a few potatoes and the Ukrainian policemen followed suit, though this "business" was prohibited. Driven by hunger, most inmates were soon nearly naked, covered in rags or thick wrapping paper. The few Jews chosen by policemen in the winter of 1942 to work in the camps and in the area did so barefooted.[241]

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235. Iliescu to Golta Prefecture, March 19, 1942, Nikolaev Archive, 2178-1-58, pp. 358-358b.
236. *Ibid*.
237. Ilia Ehrenburg and Vasili Grossman, *Cartea neagră* (Bucharest : Institutul Român de Documentare, 1946), p. 103.
238. *Actul de acuzare*, p. 30.
239. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
240. Carp, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
241. Testimony of Golda Israel, July 14, 1994, recorded by Ancel.

Starvation was not the only killer in Akmechetka. Most prisoners became infected with typhoid fever and suffered from dysentery and furunculosis. Malaria and tetanus claimed lives, as well. The Jews in Akmechetka received no medical treatment. Of the approximately 4,000 Jews initially sent to the camp, only several hundred were still alive in May. Despite the high death rate, there were usually a few hundred Jews in the camp at any given time since, as of April, Isopescu directed all the "human garbage" – Jews regularly sent by the government – to Akmechetka, the "kingdom of death." There was another typhus outbreak in the area that month, and on May 24 Isopescu sent a telegram to the gendarmerie headquarters in Transnistria: "Instead of the Bogdanovka camp, I have reserved Akmechetka, also located in the Domanovka subdistrict, for the Yids. I therefore request that you send no more Yids to Bogdanovka but [rather] to Domanovka, and from there they will be escorted to the Akmechetka camp."[242]

Akmechetka struck terror in the hearts of all the Jews in Golta – the survivors of the Romanian mass murders as well as the more recently arrived deportees, who trickled into the area until early 1943. The deputy prefect used the name Akmechetka to extort money from the Jews sent directly from Romania to Golta in the summer of 1942. His threat could be summed up in one sentence: "Akmechetka awaits you."[243]

The Odessa Massacres

The ordeal of the 120,000 Odessan Jews rivaled that in the camps on the Bug. Contrary to Romanian propaganda, the Jews – who numbered from 70,000 to 120,000 when Odessa was captured – were no darlings of the Soviet regime. As the siege wore on, anti-Semitism increased, particularly in working-class neighborhoods, peaking on the eve of the evacuation of Odessa. In mid-September, after German planes dropped anti-Semitic leaflets over the city, young hooligans in one such district organized anti-Jewish rallies, chanting the old Czarist slogan: "Strike the Jews and save Russia."[244]

The 10th Infantry Division entering the city October 16, 1941, was ordered to gather "all the Jewish men aged 15-50 and the Jews who had fled from Bessarabia."[245] Some murders took place near the port and included victims who had not managed to board the last boats leaving Odessa. On October 17, the Romanian military authorities called for a census, leading to the establishment of several registration and classification centers around the city. On October 18, Romanian soldiers began taking hostages, especially Jews. Some were dragged from their homes, while others were arrested upon reporting to the checkpoints. The municipal prison was turned into a large camp of Jews. From October 18, 1941, until mid-March 1942, the Romanian military in Odessa, aided by gendarmes and police, murdered up to 25,000 Jews and deported over 35,000.

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242. Cable no. 3572 from Isopescu to Gendarmerie headquarters in Transnistria, May 24, 1942, Nikolaev Archives, 2178-1-4, p. 478.
243. *Actul de acuzare*, p. 71.
244. Alexander Dallin, *Odessa, 1941-1944: A Case Study of Soviet Territory under Foreign Rule* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1957), p. 42.
245. Jipa Rotaru *et al.*, *Mareşalul Ion Antonescu. Am făcut războiul sfânt împotriva bolşevismului* (Oradea: Cogito, 1994), p. 177.

On the evening of October 22, the center and right wings of the Romanian military general headquarters exploded, killing sixteen Romanian officers (including the city's military commander, General Ion Glogojanu), four German naval officers, forty-six other members of the Romanian military, and several civilians.[246] The command of the Tenth Division had formerly served as NKVD (the Soviet secret police) headquarters. Warnings had been issued as early as September that "the fleeing communist units not only mined certain buildings and locations, they installed explosives inside certain objects and even toys."[247] Immediately upon learning of the disaster, Antonescu ordered General Iosif Iacobici, chief of staff and commander of the Fourth Army, to "take drastic punitive measures."[248] That night, Iacobici cabled Antonescu's Military Cabinet, informing them that he had begun to act: "As a retaliatory measure, and as an example for the population, I have taken steps to hang a number of suspected Jews and communists in the town squares."[249] That same night, Iacobici sent General Nicolae Macici, commander of the Fourth Army's Second Army Corps to Odessa. General Tătăranu's deputy, Colonel Stănculescu, delivered Antonescu's Order no. 302.826 to Trestioreanu demanding "immediate retaliatory action, including the liquidation of 18,000 Jews in the ghettos and the hanging in the town squares of at least 100 Jews for every regimental sector…"[250]

At noon, Stănculescu again cabled Tătăranu, reporting about the punitive measures: "Retaliatory action has been taken within the city via shooting [and] hanging, and notices warning against terrorist acts have been posted. The execution of the Jews in the ghettos is well under way…"[251] Jews were rounded up and brought to these sites by the army, the gendarmerie, and the police (who had come from Romania). The major executions were carried out in neighboring Dalnic or enroute to Dalnic; tens of thousands of Jews were brought there for this purpose. Although the Germans had offered to send in an SS battalion to assist in "dismantling mines" and ridding Odessa "of Jews and Bolsheviks," the Romanian authorities chose to act alone.[252] The executed, including hostages and locals who had disobeyed orders, were given no trial and were hanged from balconies overlooking the main streets. After the explosion, long lines of poles were erected along the trolley tracks leading out of town.[253] Some 10,000 Jews who were arrested were jailed, but not immediately executed. General Iacobici hastened to send the Military Cabinet a status report detailing the retaliatory actions taken, which included "executions by shooting and by hanging, and the posting of notices warning anyone who

246. See list of victims and casualty figures (apparently provisional), October 24, 1941, NDM, pp. 673-679.
247. Circular from Transnistrian police headquarters (signed by Alexianu), September 22, 1941, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1067.
248. Cable from the Military Cabinet to Fourth Army headquarters, October 22, 1941, NDM, fond MApN, Fourth Army; copy in USHMM, RG 25.003M, roll 12, Fourth Army Collection, file no. 870, p. 634. From January 27 to September 22, 1941, Iacobici had served as minister of national defense, later doubling as chief of staff and commander of war headquarters. On September 9, Antonescu appointed him commander of the Fourth Army as well, after General Nicolae Ciupercă's unsuccessful storming of Odessa.
249. Cable from Iacobici to the Military Cabinet, October 22, 1941, *ibid.*, p. 633.
250. Cable from Stănculescu to Tătăranu, October 23, 1941, *ibid.*, pp. 654-656.
251. Cable from Stănculescu to Tătăranu, October 23, 1941, *ibid.*, pp. 651-653.
252. *Ibid.*
253. Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

would dare attempt such acts of terrorism."[254] By the next morning, hundreds of Jewish corpses hung in the town squares and at intersections.[255]

The carnage did not end there. At least 25,000 Jews were driven into fields by gendarmes. One of the few survivors of this trek, then a girl of sixteen, reported that her convoy was so huge that she could not see "its beginning or its end."[256] Some 22,000 Jews of all ages were packed into nine warehouses in Dalnic, a suburb of Odessa, an operation that continued past nightfall on October 23. The massacre proceeded as follows:

> One by one, the warehouses were riddled with machine gun and rifle fire, doused with gasoline and ignited, except for the last warehouse, which was blown up. The chaos and the horrifying sights that followed cannot be described: wounded people burning alive, women with their hair aflame coming out through the roof or through openings in the burning storehouses in a crazed search for salvation. But the warehouse[s were] surrounded on all sides by soldiers, their rifles cocked. They had been ordered not to let a single civilian escape. The horror was so great that it deeply shocked everyone there, soldiers and officers alike.[257]

Trucks carrying gasoline and kerosene were parked outside the warehouses. These buildings were ignited quickly, one after the next, since the soldiers had to be protected. The troops then retreated about 50 meters (about 55 yards) and encircled the area to prevent escape. A Romanian officer described what he saw:

> When the fire broke out, some of those in the warehouse who were lightly wounded or still unharmed tried to escape by jumping out the window or exiting through the roof. The soldiers were ordered to immediately shoot at anyone who emerged. In an attempt to escape the agonies of the fire, some appeared at the windows and signaled to the soldiers to shoot them, pointing to their heads and hearts. But when they saw the guns pointed at them, they disappeared from the window for a brief moment, only to reappear a few seconds later and signal to the soldiers once again. Then they turned their backs to the window in order not to see the soldiers shooting at them. The operation continued throughout the night, and the faces visible by the light of the flames were even more terrifying. This time, those who appeared in the windows were naked, having stripped off their burning clothing. Some women threw their children out the window.[258]

One warehouse was selected to fulfill Antonescu's express desire to blow up a building packed with Jews.[259] The explosion occurred on October 25, 1941, at 5:45 p.m., precisely when the Romanian army headquarters in Odessa had exploded three days earlier. The force of the blast scattered body parts all over the area surrounding the warehouse. Officers Deleanu, Niculescu-Coca, Radu Ionescu, and Bălăceanu all shot

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254. Report from Iacobici to the Military Cabinet, October 23, 1941, NDM, Fond Fourth Army, roll 12, file 870, pp. 664-665.
255. Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
256. Testimony of Milea Morduhovici, August 31, 1995, recorded by Jean Ancel, to be submitted to YVA (henceforth: Morduhovici's testimony). Morduhovici contracted typhus at the Bogdanovka camp and fled toward Odessa. She made it home, where she convalesced with the help of a Russian physician. In February 1942, she was deported again by train with her family.
257. Report from Iacobici to the Military Cabinet, October 23, 1941, *ibid.*, pp. 662-663. Cable no. 302.861, from Iacobici to War Headquarters in Tighina, *ibid.*, pp. 664-665.
258. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, no. 122, pp. 210-211.
259. Order no. 563 (302.858), October 24, 1941, NDM, Fourth Army Collection, file no. 870, p. 688; copy in USHMM, RG 25.003M, roll 12.

Jews who attempted to escape and even threw Soviet hand grenades into the warehouses. Some horrified soldiers and even officers did their best not to shoot the human flames. "Many of us, the officers who could not bear these sights, tried to hide, and they threatened us because of this."[260] German sources – an officer in the *Abwehr* visited Odessa in late October and prepared a detailed report on the explosion of the Romanian headquarters there – confirm the scope and nature of the Romanian operation in Odessa. Yet, these sources emphasize that Soviet agents had planted the mines, rather than emphasizing the Romanian reprisals against the Jews.[261]

Toward the end of November, the Romanians brought prisoners of war to Dalnic "to dig pits next to the warehouses, remove the corpses using hooks or various other means, and bury them." After the liberation of Odessa, the Communist Party's district committee, Obkom, reported that in the nine pits there were "more than 22,000 bodies there, among them children who had died of suffocation. Some bodies bore bullet wounds, severed extremities, or shattered skulls."[262] At a Cabinet meeting on November 13, the *Conducător* casually asked the governor of Transnistria if the retaliatory actions against the Jews of Odessa were severe enough, to which Alexianu replied that many were killed and hanged in the streets.[263]

The first Jewish deportee columns originating from Odessa set out on foot from Dalnic toward Bogdanovka in late October 1941, passing through Berezovka in early November.[264] Jewish villagers along the deportation route were forced into these huge convoys as well. They were later split into smaller, more manageable groups and escorted by Romanian gendarmes with the eager assistance of Ukrainian and Russian police who had offered their services just ten days after the Romanians occupied Odessa.

The convoys were marched along the Odessa-Berezovka road for several days. After a day or two in Berezovka, they continued on foot to Mostovoye and from there on to Domanovka by way of Nikolaevka. For two weeks, the convoys trudged some 200 kilometers (124 miles) to Bogdanovka, mostly in pouring rain and freezing cold. They received no food or water, and any stragglers were shot by gendarmes. At night, the Jews were taken into the fields where they were forced to remain on the muddy ground, and the women and girls were raped by the gendarmes and the Ukrainian militia. The gendarmes, seeking mainly jewelry and gold, conducted searches and seized anything of value, including clothing. In the mornings, the convoy would regroup, and the gendarmes would shoot whoever did not or could not get up, leaving the corpses unburied. Despite the trail of bodies marking the deportation route, the convoys actually swelled along the

260. *Actul de acuzare*, p. 53

261. "Bericht über Wahrnehmungen in Odessa," November 4, 1941, U.S. National Archives, RG 242, T 501, roll 278.

262. Communist Party of the Ukraine, Odessa County Committee (Obkom), Final Register and General Data of the Regional Commission to the Extraordinary State Commission on the Damage and Victims of the Fascist Occupation of the Region during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1944), December 31, 1944, Communist Party Archives in Odessa, II-II-52, p. 22.

263. *Actul de acuzare*, pp. 64-65.

264. Until the opening of the former Soviet archives (1993) and the discovery of Milea Morduhovici (see footnote 256), virtually nothing was known about this chapter in the liquidation of the city's Jews. The description of the march from Dalnic to Bogdanovka in October-November 1941 is based on Morduhovici's account.

way by absorbing Jews from the county of Odessa.[265] The grouping of these Jews along the roadside was one of the gendarmes' first assignments upon arrival in the district.[266]

The second stage of the deportations – those carried out by train – began on January 12, 1942, when 856 Jews departed for Berezovka. Gendarmerie headquarters estimated that 40,000 Jews remained in Odessa.[267] Petală, deputy head of the Odessa Evacuation Office, oversaw the operation there, and Ciurea, his civilian counterpart, stationed himself at the Prefecture in Berezovka to direct matters from the field. Colonel Matei Velcescu, head of the Central Bureau for the Evacuation of the Jews from Odessa, coordinated the various authorities in Odessa in order to expedite the deportations. "The heads of [the municipality, police, army, military, court, and railroad] were assigned specific tasks involving the roundup, housing, and transfer of the Jews, for which they were given the necessary manpower in the field."[268]

Each transport began with a random selection of 1,000-2,000 Jews from among those who had reported or been brought to Slobodka as well as from those brought before the deportation committees in Odessa. These Jews were promptly robbed by representatives of the authorities and by an emissary of the Romanian National Bank, who had come from Bucharest for this purpose.[269] The gendarmes then pushed and shoved their charges onto the freight platform in Sortirovka (Sortirovocnia), some 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the ghetto and even farther from the deportation centers in the city. The deportations began in –20° C (–4° F) weather and continued despite blizzards, even when temperatures dropped to –35° C (–31° F).[270] The only interruptions were caused by suspensions in rail service due to the extreme cold, the low-grade coal powering the locomotives, and the huge snowdrifts blocking the tracks. Until late January, the Jews were transported in trains provided by the Germans through the *Wehrmacht* Liaison Headquarters in Tiraspol.[271]

The Jews were transported in boxcars, carrying some 120 people each. "There were so many Jews in the railway car that it was hard to keep your feet on the floor."[272] Hundreds froze to death in the ghetto, on the way to the train station, or waiting on the loading platform for the trains. Hundreds more perished while sleeping in the streets of the ghetto when there was no room in the houses. Fearing a typhus epidemic, the administration's Health Department and the Romanian army's medical personnel ordered all dead bodies to be removed from the city.[273] Thus, the frozen corpses were also loaded onto the trains. With no room to lay them on the floor of the cars, the bodies had to be

265. Commander of Berezovka gendarmerie legion to the prefect, January 31, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2361-1-39, p. 15; Morduhovici's testimony.
266. Commander of Berezovka gendarmerie legion to the prefect, January 31, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2361-1-39, p. 15.
267. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 133a, p. 216.
268. Affidavit of Velcescu, April 1, 1950, in Pantea file, p. 171.
269. Cable from Alexianu to the Civilian-Military Cabinet, January 13, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-11486, p. 36.
270. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, no. 137, pp. 221-222.
271. *Wehrmacht* Liaison Transnistria Headquartes to Alexianu, February, 1, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1084, p. 2.
272. Starodinskii, *Odesskoe Getto*, p. 35; and Ehrenburg and Grossman, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
273. Tătăranu, "Tifosul exantematic in Transnistria," April 1942, Nikolaev Archives, 2178-1-424, pp. 4-5 (henceforth: Tătăranu report).

placed upright – the frozen dead alongside the living and those who perished en route. On February 13, 1942, Colonel Velcescu reported that 31,114 had been evacuated by train to Berezovka[274] These Jews were shot by local German extermination units in cooperation with Romanian gendarmes, and their bodies were burnt by the Germans. In all, 35,000 Jews out of 40,000 were deported, as stated by Dr. Tătăranu in April 1942.[275]

According to Vidraşcu, 20-25 percent of the deportees froze to death before and during the deportations.[276] This figure might have been much less had greedy gendarmes and other officials not stripped the Jews of their property, their clothing, and especially their coats (particularly those made of leather or fine fabrics). The gendarmes and soldiers who brought the Jews to Sortirovka referred to the deportation train as the "hearse." A Romanian officer who rode this train on January 18 (in a special car provided for the military) recorded his impressions:

> It was a terrible winter, the kind one encounters only in Russia… It was twilight. Some 1,200 women, children, and old people from Odessa were brought to the train station under armed German guard. (…) On three sleds, towed by women, lay five old people who had forgotten to die at home… The Jews were allotted ten boxcars; that is, 120 people to a car. On the cars was written: 8 horses or 40 people; nevertheless, 120 were forced in. They were shoved, prodded with metal rods, jammed into the cars, but they got in. (…) During the loading an old man and three women died. Their bodies were still loaded onto the train… That dismal night, a bundle [suddenly] fell from one of the cars… and hit the platform with a sound like a stone shattering. A few bits scattered here and there on impact. They were pieces of a frozen baby [who had fallen] from his mother's arms… The mother lost her mind and stood wailing on the platform, clawing her face… Then the train began moving forward. Toward death. It was a funeral train, a hearse.[277]

Major Apostolescu, a General Staff emissary sent by the Romanian army to oversee the deportation and confiscation, reported on January 18, 1942, that Romanian gendarmes had been in charge of the operation and that "some of the Jews are dying in train cars due to the cold." The officer attested that ten Jews had perished in the first transport and sixty in the second "on account of the bitter cold and harsh blizzards."[278] In addition, having departed without any food, Jews were dying from hunger on the way from the ghetto to the train station. All the Jews, the officer noted, were either old men, children under the age of sixteen, or women: "There are no men younger than 41 years of age and very few between 41 and 50. All are in miserable condition, clearly proving that they are the poorest Jews in Odessa." Among his recommendations: "In light of the [harsh] weather, which is completely unsuitable for transport, and the impression made [on me] by the considerable number of Jews dying in the ghetto, en route [to the loading platform] and on the trains, it would perhaps be better if there were no transports on

274. Velcescu to Alexianu, Odessa Archive, 2242-1-1487, pp. 132-132b.
275. Tătăranu report, p. 4.
276. Affidavit of Vidraşcu, June 17, 1950, copy in USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 30; Bogopolski's testimony. She testified that temperatures dropped to –40° C (–40° F) during the deportations.
277. V. Luduşanu, "Trenul-dric", *Curierul israelit*, 9 (November 12, 1944).
278. Report by Apostolescu with letter to Polichron, January 18, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1486, pp. 10-11.

those days when it is too cold… The Jews must be forbidden to take [with them] family members who have fallen [dead] in the ghetto or on the way."[279]

Despite the cold, German railway workers (until January 31) and gendarmes accompanying the transports picked through the Jews' belongings in search of valuables. The platform was littered with pillows, blankets, coats, and overshoes that the Jews had not been allowed to take with them. The gendarmes shot anyone who tried to run along the platform, usually attempting to rejoin family in another car. All the while, German soldiers photographed the scene. The trip to Berezovka, added the Romanian officer who rode the train, took all night instead of the usual three hours. During the lengthy stopovers, he heard the "desperate cries" of the deportees.[280] Once the car doors closed, absolute darkness prevailed. At Berezovka, according to the officer cited above, the dead brought from Odessa and another fifty who died in transit were removed from the train. "While still at the station, the bodies were arranged in a pyre, sprayed with gasoline, and set alight."[281] It was impossible to dig a mass grave, since the ground was frozen solid, so the bodies instead were burned in another effort by the Hygiene Service to avert a typhus epidemic.

Many Jews who had survived all the horrors of Odessa finally broke down at Berezovka. The sight of the bodies ablaze made it clear for the first time that they themselves were doomed. The fire and stench of the night snuffed out the last of their will to live: "The boxcar door creaked open, and we were blinded by the scarlet flames of the funeral pyres. I saw people writhing in the flames. There was a strong smell of gasoline. They were burning people alive."[282] Most Jews thrown on the pyre were already dead, but some only appeared that way because they were frozen stiff; the heat of the fire revived them briefly before taking their lives.

Not all the transports were deposited at Berezovka. An unknown number were taken farther north to Veselinovo, a relatively large German-Ukrainian borough controlled by special units of the local SS.[283] In both Veselinovo and Berezovka, Romanian gendarmes waited for the deportees, clubbing them to hurry them along. The gendarmes ordered the Jews to remove the bodies from the train and arrange them in piles, though the deportees were half-frozen themselves. The unloading took place in a nearby field. At Berezovka and Veselinovo, the convoys were divided arbitrarily, without regard for family unity, and immediately sent off on foot in different directions. The Jews were allowed no rest.

On January 17, five days into the operation, Transnistrian gendarmerie commander Colonel Emil Broşteanu sent a progress report to the administration in Transnistria and to gendarmerie headquarters in Bucharest. This document sheds light on the technical aspects of the deportation:

> I have the honor of informing you that, on January 12, 1942, the evacuation of the Jews from Odessa began. In accordance with the order issued by the Transnistrian administration, the Jews about to be evacuated have been assembled in the ghettos after each [Jew] has

279. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
280. Luduşanu, *op. cit.*
281. *Ibid.*
282. Ehrenburg and Grossman, *op. cit.*, citing a witness, p. 100.
283. Commander of *Wehrmacht* Liaison Transnistria Headquarters to Headquarters of Romanian Third Army in Tiraspol, March 20, 1942, Special Archives in Moscow, 492-1-5, p. 262.

appeared before the Committee for the Assessment of Property (Jewelry) and surrendered his money in return for RKKS.

Convoys of 1,500-2,000 individuals are put together inside the ghetto and loaded onto German trains. They are transported to the Mostovoye-Veselyevo [Veselinovo] region, in the Berezovka district.

From the Berezovka station, they are escorted to the relocation area. To date, 6,000 have been evacuated, and the transports are continuing daily.

It is very difficult to find shelter for them in the relocation villages, since the Ukrainian population does not accept them; consequently, many end up in the stables of the collective farms.

Because of the freezing temperatures (which sometimes reach –20° C) and the lack of food, and [because of] their age and miserable condition, many die along the way and freeze where they fall.

The Berezovka [gendarmerie] legion has been recruited for this operation, but due to the severe cold, the escort personnel must change off frequently.

Bodies are strewn along the route [and] buried in antitank trenches. We are rarely able to recruit local people to bury the bodies, since [the locals] try as much as possible to avoid such operations. We shall continue reporting on the progress of the operation.[284]

Gendarmerie headquarters repeated the above almost verbatim in its first summary report on the operation, updating only the number of deportees: "As of January 22, 12,234 Jews have been evacuated out of a total of 40,000."[285]

The depleted convoys proceeded to various destinations. An estimated 4,000-5,000 Jews were sent to Bogdanovka, where the liquidation operation had been completed but the body burnings were still at their height. Some of the new arrivals were taken straight to the pit, shot, and burned. Other Jews were brought to Domanovka, where Pădure was conducting selections and separating out the "expert craftsmen." Tens of thousands of Odessa Jews brought to these two camps in November 1941 had already been slaughtered. At Domanovka, the liquidations continued, and the latest convoys met the same fate as those before.

Several transports were directed to the local state farms, which had passed into Romanian hands wherever uninhabited by German villagers. The bulk of the convoys, however, were led to improvised camps in ethnic-German villages in Berezovka. The march to these camps was prolonged in order to thin the ranks along the way, or, as one survivor put it, so as many as possible would die a "natural death."[286] Convoys sent to camps 18 kilometers (11 miles) from the Berezovka train station were walked in circles for three days in the frozen, snow-covered wasteland, with most of the exhausted adults and children expiring in the fields. Each convoy was robbed by the gendarmes, who seized anything that appeared valuable: "They took our last possessions from us. By the time we reached Domanovka, we were paupers."[287]

284. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 129, p. 222.
285. Report: December 15, 1941, to January 15, 1942, by Gendarmerie Headquarters in Transnistria, *ibid.*, no. 133a, p. 216.
286. Ehrenburg and Grossman, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
287. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

The Berezovka Massacres

Transnistria contained the largest concentration of *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) in the Ukraine. A census conducted by the Nazis in early 1943 registered 130,866 Germans living in the region, compared with 169,074 in the entire *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine.[288] Some 100,000 of those in Transnistria were scattered among the villages and towns ringing Odessa. Under the Soviets, Greater Odessa had encompassed almost all of southern Transnistria.[289] The local Germans in the Odessa area constituted some forty percent of the Soviet Germans under Nazi occupation. Based on the Nazis' wartime figures, Transnistria comprised more than thirty German villages whose populations exceeded 1,000 each.[290]

Convoys of Jews from Bessarabia were marched past German villages north of the Dniester estuary, northwest of Odessa and east of Tiraspol. Likewise, convoys deported on foot from southern Transnistria to the county of Golta passed dozens of German communities. One witness described the thirst for Jewish blood among the SS's new German recruits, who shot into crowds of Jews.[291] Another Nazi body operating among the ethnic Germans in and around Odessa was *Einsatzgruppe* D, numbering some 500 men. Secondary units reached the area in late August 1941 after conducting extermination campaigns in Bukovina and Bessarabia.[292] *Einsatzkommando* 12 terrorized the regions of Bergdorf-Glückstahl, east of the town of Dubossary; Hoffnungstal, in the counties of Tiraspol and Ananyev, north of the town of Katarzi; and Speyer-Landau, in the eastern section of Berezovka County, near the Bug.

Einsatzkommando 11b operated in the Seltz region (southeast of Tiraspol, near the Dniester); in the German-populated area known as Kutshurgan, south and southwest of the Ukrainian town of Rasdelnia, on both sides of the railroad tracks leading there; in the Gross-Liebenthal region, southwest of Odessa, near the border with Bessarabia; and around occupied Odessa. As shown above, Odessa itself was left to the Romanians. The *Einsatzgruppen* quickly moved on to Simferopol and the Crimea. While still in the vicinity, though, the *Einsatzgruppen* organized the new administration, handled matters of health and education, and issued certificates attesting to German bloodlines. In October, *Einsatzgruppe* D departed from most of Transnistria and moved on to the

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288. Figures from the 1943 census of ethnic Germans, cited in Meir Buchsweiler, *The Ethnic Germans in the Ukraine toward the Second World War* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, Society for Jewish Historical Research, 1980), pp. 345-348. This research, together with documentation uncovered following the opening of the archives in Russia and the Ukraine, has helped to provide a more complete picture of the extermination of Odessa Jewry in Berezovka.
289. K. Stumpp, "Verzeichnis der deutschen Siedlungen in Gebiet Odessa (mit Karte)" ("Survey of the German settlements in the Odessa county [with map]"), in *Heimatbuch der Deutschen aus Russland* (*Homeland Book of the Germans from Russia*), 1956, pp. 181-193. Identification of the German villages is problematic, since the Soviet regime renamed some as part of Russification, while the Nazis – and, to a certain extent, the Romanian occupation authorities – used the German place names predating the 1917 revolution.
290. See Buchsweiler, *op. cit.*
291. Testimony of Malca Barbălată of Bolgrad, recorded in Nahariya, April 3, 1967, YVA, PKR/V, pp. 1263-1265.
292. Buchsweiler, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

Crimea, but the Dubossary area retained a small secondary unit, known as *Nachkommando* SS, to continue liquidating the Jewish population.[293]

A third Nazi body operating in the region was the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi), which served as a "liaison office for ethnic-German affairs." The VoMi organized the local Germans into cogs in the extermination apparatus. Heinrich Himmler instructed the VoMi to "exercise control over the local Germans in the occupied areas of the USSR."[294] In Transnistria, the VoMi set up the *Sonderkommando Russland* (SkR), an extermination unit composed of local German SS men.[295] SS *Oberführer* (Commander) Horst Hoffmeyer, who was promoted to *Brigadierführer* (SS brigade commander) on November 9, 1943, set up headquarters in the German town of Landau, in Berezovka county. Landau was situated in the middle of a densely German region near the Bug. Secondary units moved into Halberstadt, a German village east of Landau on the Bug, and elsewhere. The original VoMi was comprised of the eighty men who founded the SkR ; but, by late 1942 their ranks had swelled to 160 – all SS agents. The German areas were divided into eighteen sub-regions, each headed by an SS man assisted by at least three SkR members.[296]

The SkR began operating in Transnistria on September 20, 1941.[297] Even before any agreements had been signed with the Romanian authorities, the unit set up a state--within-a-state and recruited the local population for service to the *Reich*. Aside from their patrols, even the Romanian gendarmes had no access to the region under SkR control. This territory was in addition to the German villages and towns, since the Germans had seized – or demanded and received – some of the land that had been theirs prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. For this reason, the German villages (actually a minority within a large Ukrainian area) dominated more than their actual territory and created German "pockets" where Himmler's henchmen reigned. The county of Berezovka was comprised of forty-two such villages – including twelve in the Berezovka subdistrict, thirteen in Mostovoye, and twelve in Landau – that numbered some 16,200 Germans.[298]

The status of the German communities in Transnistria was negotiated in Bucharest and Odessa. Correspondence between German Ambassador Manfred von Killinger and Antonescu in November 1941 made it clear to the Romanians that the VoMi alone would represent the ethnic Germans in Transnistria. Alexianu and his prefects were to cooperate with Hoffmeyer and the sub-regional commanders regarding the Germans.[299] Alexianu and Hoffmeyer met on December 8 in Odessa, and on December 13 in Tiraspol they officially established the state-within-a-state already operating in Transnistria. In the

293. Liaison Headquarters in Tiraspol to Transnistrian government, April 3, 1942, *ibid.*, 2242-1-1086, p. 64.
294. Heinrich Himmler, "Erfassung der deutschen Volkszugehörigen in der Gebieten der europäischen Sowietunion" ("The census of German nationals in the European regions of the Soviet Union"), July 11, 1941, Nuremberg Documents, NO-4274.
295. Buchsweiler, *op. cit.*, p. 274.
296. *Ibid.*
297. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
298. List of German villages in Berezovka, complied by the prefecture, early 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1087, p. 114 ; list of German communities in the county, n.d. [late 1941], Odessa Archives, 2361-1c-2, p. 240.
299. Correspondence between Killinger and M. Antonescu, November 14-15, 1941, Odessa Archives, 2359-1-24, p. 3.

end, the Romanian government recognized the self-defense units "armed and trained by the SS headquarters of the VoMi and subject solely to its orders."[300]

With the opening of the archives of the former Soviet Union, an exchange of letters between the Transnistrian administration and the *Gebietskommissar* (county head) in Nikolaev was revealed. Contrary to what was previously believed, the convoys transported mainly from Odessa to Berezovka and Veselinovo were not directed immediately to the German villages there; rather, these Jews were marched straight to the Bug with the aim of getting them to the other side, come what may. On February 5, Gebietskommissar Schlutter in Nikolaev sent prefect Loghin of Berezovka a telegram warning of the ecological catastrophe wrought by the Romanians:

> Some 70,000 Jews have been concentrated on the [Romanian] side of the Bug, approximately 20 kilometers [12 miles] into [Transnistria], opposite the towns of Nikolaevka and Novaya Odessa, which lie about 60 kilometers [37 miles] north of Nikolaev on the Bug. Rumor has it that the Romanian military guard has been removed, so the Jews are being left to their fate and are dying of starvation and cold. Typhus has spread among the Jews, who are trying in every way to exchange articles of clothing for food. In so doing, they are also endangering the German territory, which can easily be reached by crossing the frozen Bug River. The *Gebietskommissar* of Nikolaev requests that a decision be made as soon as possible regarding the fate of [these] Jews. They can be led so deep into Transnistria that crossing the Bug will become impossible for them. The *Gebietskommissar* asks to be apprised of what is being done by the Romanian side.[301]

The governor's reply, written in the margins of the prefect's letter, asserted that the existing agreement had to be honored:

> Send a cable stating that, in accordance with Article 7 of the Tighina Agreement of August 30, 1941, the Jews of Transnistria shall be deported east of the Bug when [military] operations so permit. We are holding them here in preparation for crossing the Bug and cannot return them further inland [inside Transnistria]. Request that we be informed if implementation of the agreement is possible.[302]

Schlutter indeed received such a telegram from Acting-Governor Emanoil Cercavschi-Jelita.[303] The message, which was worded in accordance with the written instructions of Alexianu, explained that the assembling of the Jews in concentration camps (*Konzentrationslagern*) along the Bug was being done in accordance with the Tighina Agreement (Article 7) signed by General Hauffe: "For technical reasons," the telegram stated, "the transfer of the Jews deeper into Transnistria is not possible at present."[304] On February 16, Alexianu received a translation of a second telegram and inquired: "What

300. Romanian version of the understanding, Tiraspol, December 13, 1941, Odessa Archives, 2359-1-24, pp. 4-8; German version, U.S. National Archives, T 175, roll 194, 233076-2733072.
301. Telegram from Schlutter, February 5, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1486, pp. 180-180b; Romanian translation, presented to Alexianu is found on p. 179.
302. Loghin to Alexianu, February 8, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1486, p. 178
303. Telegram from Cercavschi to Schlutter, February 14, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1486, p. 177.
304. Romanian translation of Oppermann's telegram, Alexianu's comment of February 16, and Cercavschi's response of February 18, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1486, p. 199.

answer was given?" Cercavschi replied: "We responded to Generalkommissar Oppermann that we were taking steps to burn the Jewish bodies."[305]

Alexianu and Hoffmeyer met periodically to make practical arrangements and monitor the killings, burials, and burnings. These "arrangements" were concluded orally, and the Romanians generally avoided mentioning burning the bodies or mass executions in the documents sent to the Germans. However, in the margins of letters, reports, and telegrams, there are comments and instructions referring to the burning, to corpses strewn in fields, to agreements allowing the Romanians to drive convoys of tens of thousands of Jews across the Bug. On the agenda of a March 7 meeting between the two, was a discussion of "Rastadt, in the Berezovka district – Jews shot and left unburied."[306]

Once cooperation became routine with regard to the exterminations in Berezovka – and once most of Odessa Jewry was dead – Eichmann produced a memo-cum-study on the "Deportation of Romanian Jews to the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine."[307] In this document, the foremost Nazi expert on the liquidation of Jews contrasted the German and Romanian methods of genocide. Eichmann praised the Romanians' desire to eliminate their Jews but did not welcome the Romanian operation "at present." He agreed with the deportations "in principle" but criticized the "disorderly and indiscriminate" evacuation of thousands of Jews to the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine, which threatened not only the German forces but also the local residents with epidemics, insufficient food, and other hazards. Eichmann explained: "Among other things, these unplanned and premature evacuations of Romanian Jews to the occupied territories in the east pose a serious threat to the deportation [operation] presently being carried out among the German Jews. For these reasons, I request that the Romanian government be approached to put an immediate end to these illegal transports of Jews."[308]

If the Romanians continued deporting Jews across the Bug, Eichmann proposed that the SD (the Nazi security service) be given a free hand to deal with the situation. However, Eichmann, although a high-ranking RSHA official, had no jurisidiction over the security police in the Ukraine, the *Einsatzgruppen*, or the VoMi; only Himmler did.[309] In Bucharest, Killinger met with Mihai Antonescu, who then summoned Alexianu for an update, promising an early response.[310] The Foreign Office in Berlin replied to Rosenberg on May 12 that it had appealed to the Romanian government. The embassy in Bucharest cabled back that Alexianu would soon report to Mihai Antonescu, after which "the deputy prime minister would clarify the Romanian position." Nevertheless, a German Foreign Office official added, "28,000 Jews have been brought to German

305. *Ibid*. One difficulty in seeking documentation concerning the murder of Jews in the archives of the Transnistrian administration stems from the fact that such documents were not filed separately and are scattered among hundreds of thousands of pages of correspondence related to other matters.
306. Problems discussed at meeting in Odessa, March 7, 1942, between the Governor and *Oberführer* Hoffmeyer, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1085, p. 4. Page 5 of this document is entitled, "The Responses to the Requests of the German Delegation," but mentions no decision about the corpses in Rastadt.
307. Eichmann to the Foreign Office, April 14, 1942, Nuremberg documents, NG-4817.
308. *Ibid*.
309. Transcript of the pre-trial interrogation of Eichmann by the Israeli police, YVA: *Police d'Israel, Adolf Eichmann, Tonbandskription und Maschine*, pp. 1123-1125, 3038.
310. Rademacher to Eichmann, Berlin, May 12, 1942, Nuremberg Documents, NG-4817.

villages in Transnistria. They have since been eliminated."[311] This figure represented the bulk of the Odessa Jews deported by train.

It is now known that 14,500 Jews – one transport of 6,500 and another of 8,000 – all from Bessarabia and Bukovina were taken as close possible to the Bug in the area of Nikolaev and driven across the river into German hands. Once on German territory, they were apparently murdered by the local Germans, who were organized into Nazi bands on both sides of the Bug. The German authorities did not want masses of dying Jews in the vicinity, since there was a sizable German presence on both sides of the river.[312] According to the Nazi census of 1943, the Nikolaev district (under Soviet administration) was home to 27,078 ethnic Germans.[313] After the attempt to foist the Jews of Odessa upon the Germans aroused such strong opposition, the transports to Voznesensk were discontinued. The convoys reaching Berezovka and Veselinovo were marched to another area not far from the Berezovka-Veselinovo line – within a triangle of sorts formed by Berezovka, Mostovoye, and Lichtenfeld and Rastadt.

The convoys trudged for days over the snow-covered plateaus to the Bug during the brutal winter of 1941/1942. Along the way, the gendarmerie sergeants were re-routed, thereby sparing a few fortunate Jews who never reached the German villages. These Jews have testified to the weeks of aimless trudging in circles. The cold was intolerable, yet the deportees had no shelter; convoys were left in the fields to fend for themselves, while the gendarmes hurried off in search of the nearest village.[314] The Jews had nowhere to run in the little German kingdom by the Bug, and most Ukrainians did not want or dare to help them. As Schlutter reported in telegrams, the Jews were left unguarded, and many perished every day. The dead remained in the fields; the problem of burial arose only in the spring.[315]

Most convoys were eventually directed to Ukrainian villages in the Berezovka district, where the Jews were housed in unused stables, storage sheds, and other structures on farms. Others ended up in the ruins of villages emptied by war and by the SkR's evacuation of Ukrainian villagers. The gendarmes moved on, leaving the Ukrainian militia to guard the deportees. News of their fate was not long in coming. The few gendarmes scattered among the hundreds of villages primarily oversaw farming and were too small in number to maintain order. Moreover, as noted by an SS officer at SkR headquarters in Landau, the Romanians "did not wish to get their hands dirty;"[316] even their mass exterminations in the "kingdom of death" relied on the Ukrainian militia. Thus, the convoys were dispersed outside Berezovka's German villages so others would do the dirty work.

The first known extermination of the Jews deported from Odessa took place on January 31, 1942, in the village of Podoleanca, near the German enclave of Novo

311. Rademacher to the Ministry of Eastern Occupied (Soviet) Territories, May 12, 1942, *ibid*.
312. Protocol of conversation between Davidescu and Stelzer, March 13, 1942, Foreign Ministry Archives, roll 6, p. 58; copy in USHMM, RG 25.006M, roll 6. Stelzer asked that the Romanians cease pushing Jews onto the German side of the Bug, since 14,500 had already crossed the river, and another 60,000 in the Berezovka county were to follow.
313. Buchsweiler, *op. cit.*, p. 347. The Soviet census of 1926 found 30,911 Germans there, constituting 6.2 percent of the population (see *ibid.*, map no. 3).
314. See "The Killing Grounds in Berezovka County," in Ancel, *Transnistria*, vol. 1, pp. 313-320.
315. Buchsweiler, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
316. *Ibid.*, p. 322.

America, north of Veselinovo and Rastadt. Ten "German civilian police *Selbstschutz*, took 200 Jews out of [Podoleanca], led them to the outskirts of the village, and shot them dead." The dead were burned, and their belongings taken to Novo America.[317] The Jews of Odessa learned what was to be their fate on February 1 from Major Ion Popescu, the gendarmerie commander in Berezovka: "The Rastadt police shot 130 Jews from the village of Novaya Uman, burned the bodies, and divided the spoils among the inhabitants of the German villages."[318] Two weeks later, Popescu reported:

> The gendarme legion in Mostovoye informs us that the Jews in the work camp at Gradovka, 800 in number, were shot to death by the German police from the village of Rastadt. In addition, [the legion] reports that there is no room for the Jews being exploited [for work] in the villages of Dvoreanka, Kriniski, Cudznea, Maitova, Cotonea, and Ripeaki. [The legion] proposes that approval be granted for the transfer of the 650 Jews located in the villages to the space now available in the village of Gradovka, where they can be housed under good conditions.[319]

Over the next few months, gendarmerie bulletins referred to thousands of Jews slaughtered by the SkR and the *Selbstschutz*. The Romanians transported the Jews and prevented their escape; whereas, the *Selbstschutz*, under SkR orders, carried out the extermination. The gendarmerie assembled Jews wherever the German death squads could operate as quickly and efficiently as possible. The victims' belongings fell to the executioners. Unlike the Romanians, the Germans burned the bodies immediately to avert epidemics. The SkR appealed to the Romanian authorities to block the convoys' passage through or alongside German villages.[320]

On March 9, German death squads from Mostovoye and Zavadovka murdered 772 Jews from the Jewish camp in the village of Cihrin. On March 13, outside the German village of Cartaica, seventeen Germans "from SS units" gunned down 650 Jews from the Julievka camp. "Before the execution, the Jews were stripped down to their shirts, and their valuables, money, and clothing were taken by the German police to the village of Cartaica. The corpses of the victims were burned."[321] On March 16, it was reported that 120 Jews from the Catousea camp had been liquidated by an "SS police unit" consisting of sixteen Germans from the German village of Nova Candeli, east of Berezovka; these Jews, too, were robbed just before their death. This report reveals the degree of Romanian-German cooperation in exterminating Jews: Following the executions, 300 panic-stricken Jews fled the Lisinovka camp, but "[t]he gendarme legion was ordered to capture them and return them to the camp."[322] In short, the gendarmerie held the Jews in place, while the SkR killed them.

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317. Intelligence Report no. 82, from Popescu to Gendarmerie Headquarters in Transnistria and to the prefect of Berezovka, February 11, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2361-1-7, p. 101.
318. Popescu to the Berezovka prefect, February 1, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2361-1-7, p. 96.
319. Popescu to the Berezovka prefect, February 17, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2361-1-7 p. 98.
320. See SkR request not to lead a Jewish convoy through the German village of Cartaica, and a report on the murder and body burning of sixty Jews in the village of Mikhaylovka, Odessa Archives, 2361-1-7, pp. 102-105.
321. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, no. 144, p. 226. Original report reprinted in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 144, p. 263. The reports published in Carp, *op. cit.*, are among the summaries Broşteanu sent his superiors in Bucharest. These dispatches were presented at the trials of the Romanian war criminals in 1945-1946.
322. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 145, pp. 226-227. See original in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 145, p. 264.

On March 18, it was disclosed that 483 Jews "brought to [Bernadovka] from Odessa" had been murdered by a German police unit from that village.[323] This time the SkR did not have to travel, since the gendarmes led the Jews straight to the scene. And in late May, the new gendarmerie commander, Colonel M. Iliescu, reported that SS police from Lichtenfeld had murdered 1,200 Jews brought to the Suha-Verba collective farm.[324]

Since we now have all the gendarmerie reports on the liquidation of Odessa Jewry, we know that the SkR relayed the following to the RSHA in Berlin, almost as an afterthought: "As of early May, the 28,000 Jews transported to the German villages in Transnistria have been exterminated," hence the disappearance of most Odessa Jews deported by train. Not one survivor has been found. The German natives of this region, who escaped to Germany, the United States, and Canada, have never admitted to genocide. The West German State Attorney's Office asserted in 1961 that no Jew in the German settlement areas is known to have survived the VoMi era.[325]

In September 1942, 598 Jewish men, women, and children – mostly Bessarabians – were deported from Bucharest to Mostovoye. And in early October, 150 Jews – allegedly communists – were also transported to Transnistria. Handed over by the gendarmerie there to the German death squad in Rastadt, the first group was immediately shot dead. Only sixteen survived.[326] In May 1942, the Army Headquarters asked the *Conducător* whether the German policemen (SkR) are allowed to shoot thousands of Jews in the Berezovka district and burn their corpses. Antonescu responded: "It is not the army's job to worry about this matter."[327]

During the summer of 1943, the Rastadt death squad executed more than 1,000 Jews assembled in the village. Apparently for the first time, a witness survived to describe the killings. We therefore have the only known testimony – apart from gendarmerie reports – concerning the extermination method used by the *Selbstschutz* under VoMi command. Jews handed over to the SkR were herded by the Romanian gendarmes into the courtyard of the Berezovka Gendarme Legion's headquarters. Told they would be transferred to Mostovoye, the deportees were instead brought to Rastadt. The village, according to the aforementioned witness, stood on a hill near Mostovoye:

> When we arrived there… we found a large convoy. We were ordered to remove our clothes and, at the same time, to hand over anything we had of value… Afterward they told us to line up facing pits, where we saw something black. It was tar. We were on the slope, while the Germans crowded together on the hilltop in their black clothes with the shiny armbands… We stood there, thousands [actually hundreds] of Jews in the open field… Meanwhile the beasts became drunk and began abusing all the pretty girls and women. They created a small wave of panic by shooting several small children, whom they had wrenched from their mothers' bosom. And then, drunk, their consciences no longer functioning, they began mowing down row after row of people, under orders from a commander. The shots were accompanied by

323. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, no. 146, p. 227.
324. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 147, p. 227. See original in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 153, p. 274.
325. Quoted in Buchsweiler, *op. cit.*, p. 317.
326. General Inspectorate of Gendarmerie to Ministry of Interior; list of 598 Jews deported in Transnistria, having requested repatriation in the USSR in 1940; list of 18 Jews of the previous list who were alive as of September 1, 1943, Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, nos. 211-212, pp. 442-454.
327. Note from Military Cabinet and Antonescu's remarks, May 12, 1942, Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 30, p. 193.

> sounds of screeching and wailing that echoed throughout the German settlement. For [the Germans], it was entertainment, a celebration. People fell, one after another or several at a time, into the prepared pits. These filled up [quickly], since they were quite shallow; they were dug to be long rather than deep. At about 6 in the evening, the killing ended. Two [Jews] remained standing. One was tied to a car and dragged across the ground at high speed, and the other was run over by a speeding motorcycle driven by a drunken Nazi officer. All this took place before our eyes. (…) The Germans had set the corpses on fire, and they burned like straw, since [the Germans] had poured kerosene on them, and there was tar at the bottom of the pit. There was great rejoicing in the Nazi camp.[328]

Immediately after the war, Soviet sources estimated that 20,000 Jews were murdered this way in Rastadt and Suhaia (Suha) Balca, a sovkhoz north of Mostovoye.[329] The threat of epidemics prompted the burnings, and the tar was apparently intended to avoid contaminating water sources. The Romanian practice of throwing corpses into the Bug had sparked intense criticism from local German officials, since the river provided drinking water. Evidently, the Germans started torching the bodies in the mass graves in the summer of 1942 or even later. Until then, corpses may have been cremated in specially constructed facilities.

Rumors of body burnings by local Germans reached Alexianu's interrogators in April 1946, prior to his trial in Bucharest. The killing of Jews was not their focus, but they did ask the former governor where these atrocities had occurred. He replied: "[Jews] were burned at Rostov. The Germans buried the corpses in antitank trenches. Afterwards they brought gasoline, and the bodies were burned."[330] Alexianu, a professor of law who corrected every typographical error in his affidavits, "confused" Rostov with Rastadt. Rastadt was a German village in Transnistria to which Jews were brought by the Romanian gendarmes who reported directly to him; Rostov was a Russian city some 750 kilometers (466 miles) to the east. No one noticed this "mistake," though in February 1942 Alexianu and Hoffmeyer had discussed the problem of the Jews shot to death and left unburied in Rastadt.

The Transfer of Jews to SS Units across the Bug

In their haste to liquidate Ukrainian Jewry, by the spring of 1942 the Germans found themselves short of slave labor to construct the *Durchgangstrasse IV*, the strategic highway linking Poland to southern Ukraine. Therefore, the Transnistrian administration began providing deportees from Romania as well as local Jews to the Nazi regime in Ukraine and to SS squads of local Germans. The highway stretched from Lvov to Stalino, north of the Sea of Azov, and east of Rostov (the gateway to the Caucasus Mountains and Stalingrad). It also passed through Bratslav (west of the Bug) and through Nemirov, Gaysin, Ivangorod, and Kirovograd (east of the Bug). Thousands of Romanian Jews perished in the labor camps in these towns. SS squads periodically crossed over to the

328. Testimony of Max Haimovici, n.d. [1961], YVA, 0-33779, pp. 23-25.
329. Ehrenburg and Grossman, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
330. Transcript of Alexianu's interrogation, April 14, 1946, p. 12, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 40010, vol. 45, p. 246.

Romanian side of the Bug and brought back with them thousands of Jews at a time to work on the highway. Ukrainian militia and volunteers from Lithuania helped to guard, and later to liquidate, Jews on the German side of the river. The Jews supplied by the Romanians, and ultimately delivered to their deaths, totaled at least 15,000.[331]

In August 1942, the prefect of Tulcin (and former prefect of Berezovka), Loghin, sought Alexianu's permission to hand over 5,000 Jews to the SS for construction of the Nemirov-Bratslav-Seminki-Gaysin segment of the highway. The prefect asked that the governor accede to this request from "the headquarters of the SS squads," since he himself did not need those Jews for any large-scale project in his district and did not want to continue feeding them.[332] Alexianu approved the transfer.[333] The first "delivery" consisted of some 3,000 Jews, most of whom had been deported from Cernăuţi two months earlier. On August 18, an SS unit headed by SS *Hauptsturmführer* (Captain) Franz Kristoffel transferred them to the German side. The children and elderly were put to death first, and by October 1943 most of the Jews had been killed – even those still able to work.

On August 2, 1942, 200 Jews working on farms in Tulcin were handed over to the Germans and loaded onto trucks for the journey across the Bug. Fifty-two children were saved when their parents threw them off the vehicles : Jews and local farmers brought the youngsters to the Tulcin ghetto. The Romanian authorities overlooked the rescue in exchange for a large sum of money. By the time the children reached the ghetto on foot, they were orphans.[334] Another 100 deportees from Cernăuţi were entrusted to the Germans on March 1, 1943. A survivor described his transfer to the work camp at Seminki, near Bratslav :

> It was known that the Germans in the labor camps across the Bug – and at the… work sites on [the Romanian] side, such as Seminki and Bratslav – used bestial methods to kill many of the Jewish deportees turned over to them. For this reason, the deportees considered their transfer to the Germans a final and irreversible death sentence. On the Romanian side, they tortured us, starved us, and let us freeze to death, but there was always some chance we might survive.[335]

The German work camps across the Bug merit a separate study. Since the opening of the archives in Ukraine, we can examine the role of the Romanian authorities in transferring Jews to the SS units in the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine. The administration in

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331. See "The Transfer of Jews to SS units across the Bug," in Ancel, *Transnistria*, pp. 322-330.
332. Telegram from Loghin to the governor's Cabinet, August 5, 1942, *ibid.,* Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1088, p. 150.
333. Alexianu to Gendarmerie Headquarters in Transnistria, August 11, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1088, p. 151 ; Administration approval to Loghin, August 11, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1088, p. 148.
334. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 300. The prefect of Tulcin, who issued the directive to hand over the 200 Jews, was Col. Constantin Năsturaş, a Romanian poet better known by his pen name, Poiană Volbură.
335. Testimony of Shimon Rosenrauch of Cernăuţi, November 1959, YVA, 03-1536, pp. 7-8. Jewish artist Arnold Dagani, who fled back to Transnistria just prior to the last killing action, faithfully described the interraction between the German-speaking Jews and their killers in the camps across the Bug ; Dagani, *Groapa este în livada de vişini* (Bucharest : n.p., 1947) ; published in German as *Lasst mich leben* (*Let me live*), trans. Siegfried Rosenzweig (Tel Aviv : n.p., 1960).

Transnistria understood the significance of this act, and no Jews were handed over without Romanian approval. Alexianu saw these transfers both as liquidation and a means of threatening the deportees: work or else. On September 20, 1942, in Odessa, the governor told the Eighth Conference of Prefects and senior administration officials: "Prefects who have Jews and Gypsies must put them to work somewhere, in accordance with the directive [Order no. 23] and the orders given. Those who do not wish to work shall be transferred to the other side of the Bug. There, [the Germans] are willing to accept them."[336]

Prefect Isopescu of Golta could not fulfill the German request for Jews, because he – like his neighbors to the east – had "exhausted" his supply in the spring of 1942. In March 1943, he wrote to Alexianu: "The German authorities across the Bug are asking us to provide 2,000-3,000 Jews to work for them in exchange for food. Request approval in principle and permission for the county of Berezovka to give us a certain number of Yids from the camp at Mostovoye, since we do not have enough. We wish to send those who refuse to work, the suspicious, and the useless." Alexianu authorized the transfer of deportees from Mostovoye, Slivina, and Vapniarka. Everyone knew these Jews would never return.[337]

Another project was the construction of a new bridge over the Bug, linking southern Transnistria with the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine. The Romanian segment of the bridge connected Trihaty and the town of Ochakov, and construction was entrusted to German firms from the *Reich*. Work began in spring 1943 and concluded that December. Four thousand Jews, mostly deportees from Romania, were turned over to SS squads and held in three camps on the Romanian side of the Bug (Trihaty, Varvarovka, and Kolosovka) and two on the German side (Kurievka and Matievka). Initially, the Germans requested 1,500 "civilian workers"; Antonescu himself decided to provide Jews.[338] The Romanians dispatched Jewish youth and craftsmen from the counties that still actually had Jews: Moghilev, Tulcin, Balta, Jugastru, and Râbniţa. Balta released more than 800 Jews to the Germans: 700 unskilled workers and 130 professionals.[339] Moghilev sent several "shipments," totaling 829 Jews.[340] Tulcin supplied 1,000-2,000 and others as needed.[341]

Even the county of Golta was asked, in a letter from the governor, to place at the Germans' disposal "all [remaining] Gypsies aged 20-40" along with all able-bodied Jews.[342] In October 1943, approximately 2,000 Jews were still alive in Golta; the administration mobilized only fifty, as "the rest [were] sick and crippled."[343] The Romanian Railway Authority in Transnistria handed over 400 "fit and healthy" Jews recruited

336. Report no. 8 from the Eighth Conference of Administration Heads in Transnistria, September 20, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-22, p. 69.
337. Isopescu to Alexianu, March 24, 1943, Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1496, p. 161. The governor wrote his approval in the margins.
338. Office of the Prime Minister to Alexianu, May 13, 1943, Odessa Archives, 2264-1c-40, p. 157.
339. Administration to German Liaison Headquarters in Transnistria, June 24, 1943, Odessa Archives, *ibid.*, p. 18.
340. Administration to German Liaison Headquarters in Transnistria, June 10, 1943, Odessa Archives, *ibid.*, p. 166.
341. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, no. 215, p. 386.
342. Administration to Isopescu, August 7, 1943, Nikolaev Archives, 2178-1-372, p. 7.
343. Head of the Labor Authority in Golta County to Isopescu, October 27, 1943, *ibid.*, 2178-1-372.

from the ghettos to maintain its Juralevka-Tulcin line. The administration ordered that "these Jews shall be made available to *Einsatzgruppe* Russland/Süd."[344] After a medical exam, they were handed over to the gendarmes. That October, a gendarmerie representative transferred them to the *Sonderkommando* in Varvarovka, and they proceeded to lay railroad tracks between Kolosovka and Trihaty. By early December, about 100 "strong" laborers remained. The Railway Authority engineer who had approved their departure two months earlier now requested that the survivors undergo an immediate physical examination "by a certified Romanian physician, and that all the sick and those unequipped to withstand the winter be returned to whichever ghetto they had come from," with others sent in their place.[345]

Romanian and German Plans to Eliminate the Jews from the *Regat* and Southern Transylvania

From February 1941 to August 23, 1944, the lives of Romanian Jews depended solely on the wishes of Antonescu and his assessment of how the Jewish presence could serve Romanian national interests. With the arrival in April 1941 of the Nazi advisor for Jewish affairs, Gustav Richter, the approach to the "Jewish question" in Romania changed. In his first report, Richter outlined future policy options; but he did so without taking into account the character of the country to which he had been sent, the personality of the Romanian dictator, and the special relationship between Hitler and Antonescu. He also did not realize the extent of German dependence on Romanian oil and wheat.[346]

German Ambassador Killinger informed Berlin at the end of August 1941 that Antonescu had concentrated 60,000 Jewish men from the *Regat* for forced labor and that he intended to send them to the east "to areas just now occupied."[347] This information seriously worried German authorities responsible for the annihilation of the Jews. It was the first hint that Antonescu was determined to immediately solve the Jewish problem in the *Regat*, too. According to an internal memo of the German Foreign Office sent to a director of the *Reichsbank*, it was decided that deporting all Romanian Jews would hurt Romania's economy and the commitments the country had taken on vis-à-vis the *Reich*, since Jews still held key positions in the economy. Moreover, "Aryanization" was still in its early stages, and many Romanians had been drafted. It went on to warn that deporting the Jews would "have a deleterious effect on the exchange of merchandise and on the new German business initiatives."[348]

The German Legation acted immediately, and about a week after Antonescu gave his order to concentrate and deport 60,000 Jews, Mihai Antonescu was asked "to work

344. Constantin Sidorovici to Berezovka Prefecture, October 1, 1943, Odessa Archives, 2361-1-591, p. 92.
345. Maintenance supervisor of Romanian railway in Transnistria, to the inspector-general of the railroad, December 15, 1943, Odessa Archives, 2361-1-592, p. 4.
346. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 129, pp. 401-403.
347. Nuremberg Documents, NG-3989, September 1, 1941; copy, in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 3, no. 51, p. 102.
348. German Foreign Office in Berlin to Inspector Hoppe of the *Reichsbank*, Berlin, August 12, 1941, NG 3106.

toward removing the Jewish elements only in a slow, systematic manner."[349] Unsigned editorials reflecting the official government position appeared in the Romanian press at the end of October 1941. They informed Romanians that "the Jewish question had entered the final stage of solution, and no one in the world nor any miracle could prevent its solution." The government announced that Romania "is counted among the nations prepared to cooperate resolutely in the Final Solution of the Jewish problem – not only the local one, but also the European one."[350] Antonescu pledged to expel every Jew from Romania: "No one and nothing can stop me, as long as I live, from carrying out the task of purifying [ourselves]" from the Jews.[351] Speaking to his ministers, he summarized the war's internal goals: "Gentlemen, as you know, one of the battles that I have promised to wage is that of changing the face of this nation. I will turn this nation into a homogeneous group. Anything foreign must leave slowly… any dubious Jewish element, all the Jewish communists, are destined to go back where they came from. I will push them to the Bug and from there they will move on… "[352]

In mid-1942, Antonescu truly believed that victory would be achieved that very year and that at issue was the final, large-scale effort to bring about the collapse of the USSR. His policy toward the Jews stemmed from this belief. He wanted to succeed in making Romania homogeneous, as he had promised the ministers; this included not only the Jews, but also the Gypsies, though the Jews were his greatest concern. Toward the end of that summer he began to prepare the plan to deport *all* the Jews of southern Transylvania. On July 10, 1942, the head of the *Conducător*'s Military Cabinet presented to the minister of interior Antonescu's decision that in order "to make space, to offer shelter, and to house the Romanian refugees from Northern Transylvania," the government should prepare an estimate of the Jews currently living in southern Transylvania and "to investigate the sending to the Bug of all the Jews of [southern] Transylvania, with the exception of intellectuals essential for our needs (physicians, engineers, and the like) and industrialists required for running various industrial installations."[353]

In summer and autumn 1942, the following groups were on the verge of deportation: most of the remaining Jews in Cernăuţi and southern Transylvania; people who had broken the laws and orders of forced labor; Jewish communists, or whomever the regime defined as such, and their sympathizers; new converts to Christianity; Jews who had requested in autumn/winter 1940 to be repatriated to Bessarabia after the region had be forcibly annexed to the USSR; and the Roma. Thus, some 95,000-100,000 Jews were destined for Transnistria. This plan, however, was not implemented.

Simultaneously, negotiations with Gustav Richter and the German government on the general deportation of Romanian Jewry to the Belzec camp in Poland were nearing their conclusion. These negotiations were held in secret to avoid arousing panic among the

349. *Ibid*.
350. "Rezolvarea problemei evreieşti", *Unirea*, October 10, 1941; copy in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 3, no. 208, p. 318.
351. "Raspunsul d-lui Mareşal Antonescu la scrisoarea profesorului I. Găvănescu," *Curentul*, November 3, 1941; copy in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 3, no. 219, p. 332.
352. Stenogram of government meeting, October 11, 1941, Ministry of Interior Archives, file no. 40010, vol. 11, p. 47; copy in USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 32.
353. Colonel Radu Davidescu to the Minister of Interior, July 10, 1942, State Archives, Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet, file no. 104/1941, p. 61; copy in USHMM, RG 25.002M, roll 18.

Jews and to keep from opposition circles – particularly from the chairman of the Romanian National Peasant Party, Iuliu Maniu, and his colleagues – any hint of the negotiations on the deportation of the Jewish population. When the impending deportation became publicly known, Maniu did indeed intervene to prevent it.[354]

Final destination : Belzec

The Belzec extermination camp in the Lublin district of Poland, in which Jews were killed by means of a diesel engine that issued carbon monoxide, had been selected by the RSHA and the German Foreign Office to serve as a mass grave for Romanian Jewry. In June 1942 the camp was refurbished, and its capacity for extermination was enhanced with the construction of six gas chambers larger than the previous three ; they could now hold 1,000-1,200 victims at a time (half of the daily transport of 2,000 people) and kill them in 20-30 minutes.[355] By September 1942 it was possible to exterminate a daily transport of 2,000 Romanian Jews in about three hours.

Richter was not aware that Ion Antonescu had been told directly by Hitler about the Final Solution, or that he and Mihai Antonescu as well as all Romanian diplomatic missions in the *Reich* and German-occupied countries knew of the extermination camps in Poland. The Romanian concept for deportation to Transnistria disturbed Richter and ruined his plan and that of his superiors, since it agitated the Jews and propelled them to turn for help to Romanian statesmen who had served in previous administrations.[356]

The first notice about the Romanian agreement for deportation to Belzec is dated July 26, 1942. The chief of the Gestapo and head of Section IV of the RSHA, Gustav Müller, informed Undersecretary Martin Luther of the Foreign Office that the deportation of Romanian Jews in special trains "to the East" was about to begin on September 10, 1942. Müller expressed the hope that there would be no opposition from the Foreign Office to this action.[357] During his interrogation in Jerusalem, Eichmann confessed that he had personally worded the letter bearing the signature of his superior, Müller.[358] On August 11, Luther indicated to Müller that the Foreign Office had no opposition to the deportation of the Romanian Jews to the *East* and that the person handling Jewish problems in Bucharest, Radu Lecca, would be coming to Berlin to discuss in person "the conditions for the planned deportation."[359] Luther also noted : "Mihai Antonescu agreed, in accordance with the will of Marshal Antonescu, that the German authorities will carry out the evacuation of the Jews from Romania and immediately begin the transports from the counties of Arad, Timişoara, and Turda."[360]

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354. Regarding Iuliu Maniu's and fellow NPP members' successful intervention against the deportation of the Romanian Jews, see Ancel, *Contribuţii*, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 245-248.
355. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem : Yad Vashem, *Sifriyyat ha-Po'alim*, 1990), pp. 190-93.
356. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 10, no. 99, p. 242.
357. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 41, p. 78.
358. Stenogram of Eichmann's interrogation by the Israel Police, YVA, pp. 1768-1773. Eichmann admitted that the term *Sonderbehandlung* ("special treatment") that appears in the correspondence on the treatment of Jews in Romania meant execution.
359. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 56, pp. 104-105.
360. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 60, p. 111.

This is the first mention of the existence of a written commitment that Mihai Antonescu wrote on behalf of Ion Antonescu. At the same time, Emil von Rintelen of the German Foreign Office wrote a memorandum to his superior, Luther, about the preparations for the deportation of the Romanian Jews. In accordance with RSHA instructions, Mihai Antonescu sent his agreement to the deportations in writing, and Rintelen added a photocopy of the agreement.[361] During Adolf Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem, he stated that Richter had received instructions to obtain such a commitment in writing.[362] On August 23, Eichmann summoned Richter to Berlin to participate in a meeting that would take place on August 29 at RSHA headquarters.[363]

The President of the Council of Ministers prepared a detailed plan regarding the deportation operations, "which should include the entire Jewish population," stipulating very few exceptions.[364] The deportation was ordered by Antonescu and mapped out "in the minutest detail by the Ministry of Interior, based on the indications given by Mr. Mihai Antonescu."[365] Radu Lecca succinctly summarized the Antonescu regime's intention: "to evacuate to Poland all Jews found to be useless in the field of national work."[366] Thus, the Romanianization Ministry eagerly anticipated the lodgings it would obtain following the "decongestion of the capital, i.e., of the Jewish lodgings emptied by expulsions and emigrations."[367]

Except for 17,000 Jews considered "useful" to the national economy or possessing special privileges, the Antonescu regime agreed to the deportation of the entire Jewish minority of Romania – 292,149 people, according to a May 1942 census – to the Belzec death camp. While the Romanian press was completely silent about anything related to the deportation of Jews, the German press was not.[368] It must be noted that local commanders of the police as well as the *Siguranţă* pointed out that the deportation of the Jews would ultimately be harmful to Romanian interests in Transylvania. The *Siguranţă* in Timişoara reported that the city's Jews had been in a panic and had been preparing to sell property from the moment they learned of the possible deportation.[369]

On September 22, Mihai Antonescu left to meet with Hitler, Ribbentrop, and German army commanders in Vinnitsa. These meetings turned out to be decisive for the fate of the Romanian Jews. In September 1942, Mihai Antonescu feared not only for the fate of Northern Transylvania, but for the Antonescu regime in general. He had come to Vinnitsa to ask Hitler for "political guarantees" (the return of Northern Transylvania) and the completion of equipping the Romanian divisions with arms. All of his requests were rejected, except for a personal promise from Hitler guaranteeing the borders of Romania. Ribbentrop asked Mihai Antonescu to honor the commitment he had given in writing to Eichmann's emissary in Romania – to turn over the Jews of Romania to the

361. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 65, p. 120.
362. Eichmann's Interrogation, YVA, p. 2217.
363. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, no. 71, p. 131.
364. *Ibid.*, no. 85, pp. 165-167.
365. *Ibid.*, no. 119, pp. 252-253.
366. *Ibid.*, no. 138, p. 276.
367. *Ibid.*
368. "Rumänien wird judenrein", *Bukarester Tageblatt*, August 8, 1942.
369. Report by the *Siguranţă* in the Timişoara County on the Jewish Problem, n.d. [September 1942], Securitate, file no. 2710, vol. 23, pp. 239-40.

Nazis.[370] At the same time, the Romanian demands were rebuffed one by one, and even the promises by Keitel and Hitler to provide arms remained empty. Moreover, Mihai Antonescu returned without any promise about the future of Northern Transylvania. Romania had given everything and received nothing. Hungary gave only a part of her army and had not yet turned over its Jews.

Mihai Antonescu's meeting with Hitler in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, on September 22-23, approached military issues as well as the deportation of Romanian Jews. Mihai Antonescu felt this meeting was so important that he decided to forgo its protocol. The German minutes of these talks reveal that Ribbentrop requested that Mihai Antonescu continue the work of exterminating the Jews, as he had in the past. Mihai Antonescu met three times with Ribbentrop in Vinnitsa, where the issue of hastening the annihilation came up explicitly, and he did not reject the Final Solution. It was at these same meetings, however, that his faith in Germany's ability to win the war was shaken.[371]

Later, in a government meeting held on October 13, 1942, Mihai Antonescu announced a change in policy regarding the Jews: transports of Jews across the Dniester were to be suspended.[372] On the surface it seemed that Mihai Antonescu – in saying that "one must act systematically" – had adopted Richter's suggestions word for word; in fact, he meant something completely different. Antonescu referred instead to the revocation of authority to deport Jews by the General Staff, Ministry of Interior, and all other offices that had dealt with the Jews, their property, and their labor. Words such as *deportation*, *evacuation*, and *transport* would henceforth disappear from official communiqués.

The link between the cessation of the deportations to Transnistria and the suspension of the deportation to Poland was put in writing by the deputy director-general of Antonescu's Cabinet, Gheorghe Basarabeanu, on November 4, 1942, in a note to the Romanian Railway Administration (CFR). In response to a query from the head of the CFR as to whether or not the Jews of Romania would be deported to the General Gouvernement, Besarabeanu replied: "At the Ministers' Council of October 13, 1942, we decided to stop the deportation of the Jews."[373] The plan's suspension resulted not from some latent humanity but from the realization that German and Romanian interests no longer coincided: the Romanian army was in a difficult position at Stalingrad, and – despite all material (food, oil, natural resources) and human sacrifices – Hitler would never return Northern Transylvania to Romania. Romania, it seemed, had given everything and received nothing, while Hungary had given little, had not yet renounced its Jews, but had retained Transylvania.

370. Protocol of talk between Ribbentrop and Mihai Antonescu on September 23, 1942 (German version, selections), September 28, 1942 (Frankfurt: United Restitution Organization [URO], Sammlung, 1960), vol. IV, no. 13, p. 578.

371. Regarding the rejection of the German plan for the Final Solution in Romania, see Ancel, *Contribuţii*, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 208-274.

372. Stenogram of government meeting on October 13, 1941, State Archives, Collection of the Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet, file no. 473/1942(II), pp. 859-860.

373. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 10, no. 96, p. 236.

The Situation of Jews Living Abroad

The Romanian Foreign Ministry suffered from the legal chaos emerging from the contradictory instructions of the Antonescu administration concerning the legal status of the Romanian Jews living abroad. According to international convention, Romanian consulates were expected to protect Romanian citizens abroad, regardless of their "nationality." In May 1941 this protection was withdrawn from the Jews whose citizenship had been "revised" as well as from Jews born in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (now held by the USSR); in summer 1942 Romania backtracked and once again treated Jews born in Bessarabia and Bukovina as its citizens.[374]

In January 1942, Romanian Jews in Amsterdam had to declare their assets before the upcoming deportations. The Romanian Consulate requested instructions on February 12 and learned that General Vasiliu opposed their repatriation.[375] In March, Romanian citizens of Jewish ancestry in Germany and Austria were forced to wear the yellow star under orders from the Gestapo. This discriminatory measure applied to Croatian and Slovak (not to mention German and Austrian) Jews, but not to Hungarian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Italian, or Swiss. Furthermore, Romanian Jews in Berlin had to hand over furs, wool items, typewriters, bicycles, and cameras. The Romanian consulates in Berlin and Vienna, assured by German officials of the existence of an "agreement" between the Romanian and German governments, requested clarification from the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which in turn requested the same from the German Legation in Bucharest.[376] While this bureaucratic exchange continued, in occupied Bohemia and Moravia the first Jewish families with Romanian passports were interned at Theresienstadt.[377]

In a July 1942 meeting in Berlin with Counselor Văleanu, Kligenfuss, a German Foreign Office official, asserted that Ion Antonescu "had agreed with Ambassador Killinger that Romanian citizens of Jewish ancestry in Germany and the occupied territories should be treated in the same fashion as German Jews."[378] German Legation Counselor Steltzer did the same in Bucharest on August 8, in his meeting with Gheorghe Davidescu from the Romanian Foreign Office. As early as November 1941 Killinger told *Auswärtiges Amt*, that Antonescu had approved the intention of the *Reich* to deport Romanian Jews under German jurisdiction to eastern ghettos together with German Jews; the Romanian government "had stated no interest in bringing Romanian Jews back to Romania."[379]

In the course of a discussion held on August 10, 1942, between Mihai Antonescu, Radu Lecca, and Richter, Richter alluded to the approval Ion Antonescu had originally given to Killinger. Mihai Antonescu concluded:

> We have to realize that Romania has no interest in seeing Romanian Jews who have settled abroad returning. Henceforth the following instructions should be followed:

374. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
375. USHMM, RG 25.006M, fond Germany, vol. 33, roll 18.
376. *Ibid.*, fond Germany, vol. 32, roll 17; Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 10, pp. 792-793; Calafeteanu, "Regimul cetăţenilor români de origine evreiască aflaţi în străinătate în anii dictaturii antonesciene," *Anale de Istorie*, 5 (1986), p. 130.
377. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 10, pp. 182-183; Calafeteanu, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
378. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.
379. *Ibid.*

> As regards German Jews living among us, the expired German passports should be cancelled and replaced with provisional certificates. It should be made obligatory for real property to be declared and [the documents] kept strictly up to date.
>
> With regard to Romanian Jews in Germany, the Protectorate, and in the General Gouvernement, as well as those in the occupied territories, word will be sent to the Berlin Legation and the concerned consular offices that the measures to be undertaken have been agreed upon with the Romanian Government. The issue that interests us is the real estate of Romanian nationals abroad, the administration of this property, and the various means of liquidating it. The Berlin Legation and its subordinate Consulate is asked to draw up a register…[380]

The direct impact of the agreement as well as Mihai Antonescu's exchanges with Richter on August 10 was the deportation of nearly 1,600 Romanian citizens of Jewish ancestry living in Germany and Austria (our last statistics, for 1939, indicated 1,760, of whom 618 were in the former Austria[381]); of an unknown number from occupied Bohemia and Moravia, Poland, and Holland; and of 3,000 more from France. Most perished in concentration camps.[382] According to the September 1942 estimates of the Romanian chargé d'affaires in Berlin, M. Stănescu, most Romanian-Jewish residents of Germany had already been deported.[383] On October 15, 1942, all Romanian Jews in Prague were arrested.[384] The massive deportation of Romanian Jews from France began in late September 1942. (Deportations of Romanian Jews had taken place before that time, as well.)

More than 3,000 Romanian citizens of Jewish ancestry were deported between March 27, 1942, when the first convoy with a Romanian Jew left France, and September 25, 1942, when the thirty-seventh convoy left, this time filled mostly with Romanian Jews. A number of Romanian Jews found themselves among 2,000 of their co-religionists deported from Malines, Belgium.[385] On March 25, 1943, a sweep of Romanian Jews in Vienna began;[386] a round-up of Croatian, Slovakian, and Romanian Jews began in Berlin on April 6; Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Swedish Jews went untouched.[387] With Mihai Antonescu's approval, the Romanian legation in Berlin began granting entry visas and requesting the German authorities to provide Romanian Jews with the same treatment as Hungarian Jews.[388]

Because of the change in the Romanian government policy concerning the protection of the Romanian Jews abroad at the end of spring 1943, the German occupation authorities in France and Belgium stopped arresting Romanian Jews. Twelve of the latter were repatriated from Belgium.[389] In November 1943, the arrests of Romanian Jews in France did resume, but only briefly; on November 8 the Romanian Ambassador in Vichy affirmed that all arrests had ended, and all Romanian Jews were required to return to Romania by December 31.[390] On December 3, the same representative interceded with

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380. USHMM, RG 25.006M, fond Germany, vol. 32, roll 16; Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 9, p. 421.
381. USHMM, RG 25.006M, fond Germany, roll 16.
382. Jean Ancel, "Simpozion ştiinţific româno-israelian, Ierusalim, 12-14 ianuarie 1986" (henceforth: Ancel, "Simpozion"), *Analele de istorie*, 3 (1986), p. 139.
383. Calafeteanu, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
384. USHMM, RG 25.006M, fond Germany, vol. 32, roll 17.
385. *Ibid.*, fond Belgium, vol. 28, roll 15.
386. USHMM, RG 25.006M, fond Germany, vol. 32, roll 17.
387. *Ibid.*, fond Germany, vol. 32, roll 16.
388. *Ibid.*
389. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
390. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

the German police chief in Lyon to cease interfering with repatriation.[391] It is estimated that more than 4,000 Romanian Jews in France survived as a result of such diplomatic interventions, several hundred being repatriated on a train that crossed *Reich* territory.[392] In fact, even though the repatriated Jews were supposed to be deported to Transnistria, Ion Antonescu consented to their remaining in Romania.[393]

Statistical Data on the Holocaust in Romania and the Territories under Its Control

In 1930, 756,930 Jews lived in Greater Romania. They comprised 4.2 percent of the country's eighteen million inhabitants. By 1940 slightly fewer than 800,000 Jews lived in Romania according to the director-general of the Central Institute of Statistics of Romania. This number, from the yearly updates published by the Institute, is based on the results of the 1930 census.[394] Archival materials collected both before and after the opening of archives in the former communist countries have been used to evaluate the number of Jewish victims, deportees, and survivors ; this includes data from Romanian archives as well as from Soviet archives (Chişinău, Odessa, Nikolaev, Moscow-Ossobi). Copies of the original documents can be found in the archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem. In addition to the information these documents provide regarding the fate of Jews under Romanian rule, they also reveal that the Antonescu regime carefully monitored the extermination process.

The Number of Jews in Bessarabia and Bukovina in August 1941

Bessarabia. At the end of August in 1941, after the order to "cleanse the land" had been issued and partially carried out, the Romanian gendarmerie counted 55,887 Jews left in Bessarabia and Bukovina. However, there were other Jews not included in the count. The "disorder" that took place in the Chişinău ghetto – the pillage of Jews for personal rather than state profit – angered Antonescu, who ordered the establishment of an investigative commission led by Colonel Niculescu.[395] The commission's report containing the Antonescu administration's orders to kill the Jews, basically confirms the number of Jews counted in Bessarabia (55,867 Jews, not including the county of Hotin), and also mentions 25,000 other Jews "who died a natural death, escaped or were shot."[396] The total number of Jews found there, then, amounted to roughly 80,000.

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391. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 4, p. 702.
392. Ancel, "Simpozion," pp. 138-139.
393. *Ibid*.
394. Sabin Manuilă, "Consideraţiuni asupra prezentării grafice a etnografiei României," filed with Academia Română, *Memoriile Secţiunii Istorice*, 3rd series, vol. 21, memo 14, annex 3.
395. Niculescu Commission, report no. 2, December 1941, Chişinău Archive, 706-1-69, p. 49.
396. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, no. 19, pp. 62-63 ; copy in Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, no. 124, p. 193. The original document can be found in the Central Archive of the Republic of Moldova, 106-1-69, pp. 48-55.

By the end of July 1941, before the official surrender of Transnistria to the Romanian administration, Romanian soldiers and gendarmes concentrated tens of thousands of Jews in northern Bessarabia and began forcing them to leave Bessarabia by crossing the Dniester River, shooting hundreds of them and throwing their bodies into the river. Up to 32,000 Jews were forced to cross the Dniester by late July/early August 1941. This figure is derived from various reports and orders the gendarmes were given to prevent the return of these Jews to Bessarabia. Of the roughly 32,000, a mere 12,600 escaped; they were subsequently pushed back to Bessarabia from Ukraine via Cosăuţi and interned in the Vertujeni camp.[397] At least 8,000 and up to 20,000 Jews were killed on the Ukrainian side of the Dniester by German and Romanian soldiers.[398] Thus 32,000 Jews must be added to the roughly 80,000 found in Bessarabia by the Romanian army. This amounts to 112,000 Jews living in Bessarabia at the time of its occupation. But this figure is incomplete. In Ukraine, as of August 16, 1941, the German army had captured at least 11,000 Jews trying to flee to Russia.[399] Therefore, at the beginning of the Romanian occupation of Bessarabia, there were at least 122,000 Jews.

Bukovina. According to an April 9, 1942, report by the governor of Bukovina, 103,172 Jews lived there before the deportations, and there were 11,923 Jews living in Dorohoi.[400] In total, there were 170,962 Jews living in Bukovina and Bessarabia at the beginning of deportations and after the implementation of the order to cleanse the land.

The Number of Jews Killed during the "Cleansing of the Land" in the Transit Camps and during the Deportations

The exact number of Jews killed from the beginning of July to the end of August 1941 remains unknown, as does the number of Jews who managed to escape to the Soviet Union. What is known from government documents is that most Jews from villages and

397. Contemporary Romanian documents discuss the 1941 deportation of roughly 30,000 Jews across the Dniester. See, for example: SSI Report: more than 30,000 Jews from Hotin county and Bukovina, National Archives, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Antonescu Administration, file no. 76/1941, p. 86 (copy in USHMM, RG 25.002M, roll 17). This report states, "from among those sent to the other side of the Dniester by the officials, some return, but the officials keep sending over other Jews." It also asks the General Headquarters for urgent clarification on the status of the Jews as of August 18, 1941. On August 19, the SSI reported that the 30,000 Jews were interned in a camp and that "none… returned west of the Dniester" (*ibid.*, p. 91). On August 27, the General Police Headquarters reported that the German Army returned 12,600 Jews to Bessarabia in two convoys and they were then interned in the Vertujeni camp (*ibid.*, p. 91). These were the only survivors of the "hasty deportations." The remaining were shot, mostly by the German army.

398. Raportul Direcţiei Generale a Poliţiei către Serviciul Central de Informaţii, August 27, 1941, Arhivele Naţionale, Preşedenţia Consiliului de Miniştri, Cabinet Antonescu, file no. 71/1941, p. 91. Regarding this convoy, see also the correspondence between General Headquarters and the army pretor, see Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 104-106.

399. Killinger to Foreign Office in Berlin, August 16, 1941, Documents on German Foreign Policy, series D, vol. 13, no. 207, pp. 318-319.

400. Reports to Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 1942, Foreign Ministry Archive, Problem 33, vol. 22, p. 130; copy in USHMM, RG 25.006, roll 11.

towns in southern Bukovina and in Bessarabia were murdered by the Romanian army and local population. Likewise, it is known that *Einsatzgruppe* D killed thousands of Jews in Cernăuţi and Bessarabia. The only figures about the number of Jews murdered are those mentioned in Romanian documents: up to 25,000 in Bessarabia (the Nicolescu report) and up to 20,000 during the "hasty deportations."[401] Additionally, the rescuer Traian Popovici refers to roughly 15,000 Jews murdered by their neighbors and the Romanian army in the villages and towns of Northern Bukovina.[402] More than 45,000 Jews – though probably closer to 60,000 – were killed in Bessarabia and Bukovina.

The Number of Jews Deported

There were 147,712 Jews deported in 1941, according to the reports of the governors of Bukovina and Bessarabia to the Ministry for the Administration of Bukovina, Bessarabia, and Transnistria (CBBT). Out of these, 91,845 were from Bukovina (including the counties of Hotin and Dorohoi) and 55,867 were from Bessarabia.[403]

It is possible that the real number was higher. The December 15, 1941, report of Gen. C.Z. Vasiliu, inspector-general of the gendarmerie, indicated that 108,002 Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina were deported to three counties (*judeţe*) in eastern Transnistria along the Bug River: 47,545 were interned in Tulcin; 30,981 in Balta; and 29,476 in Golta.[404] On December 24, 1941, the SSI reported to Antonescu that in western Transnistria – west of the Jmerinka-Odessa railroad, to be more precise – there were 56,000 Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina and a small number of Jews in other counties.[405] These two reports were drafted around the same time and discuss two different areas of deportation. They suggest that in December 1941 there were at least 164,000 Romanian Jews in Transnistria. To this figure must be added 6,737 Jews deported in 1942 – 4,290 from Bukovina,[406] 231 from Bessarabia, and 2,216 from the *Regat* and southern

401. National Police Headquarters report to Central Information Service, August 27, 1941, Bucharest State Archives, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet Collection, file no. 71/1941, p. 91. Regarding this convoy, see also: correspondence between General Headquarters and the army pretor, in Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 104-106.
402. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 182.
403. Reports to Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 1942, Foreign Ministry Archive, Problem 33, vol. 22; copy in USHMM, RG 25.006, roll 11.
404. Report of Vasiliu, December 9, 1941, Archive of the Ministry of Interior, file no. 18844, vol. 3; copy in USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 64. Gustav Richter, Eichmann's envoy in Romania, reported on October 17, 1941, that Antonescu had sent 110,000 Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina into Transnistria along the Bug River, "in order to exterminate them"; Nuremberg Documents, PS-3313, Der Prozes gegen die Hauptkriegverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof Nürnberg, vol. 31 (Nuremberg: n.p., 1949), pp. 183-184. Germans refused to receive Jews across the river, and these 108,002 Jews subsequently disappeared from all documents and statistics on deportees.
405. Report from the SSI to the Prime Minister's office on the transfer of Jews, December 24, 1941, State Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Military Cabinet Collection, file no. 86/1941, pp. 325-327; copy in USHMM, RG 25.002M, roll 18. These other counties were: Iampol (262 Jews), Râbniţa, (427 Jews), and Tiraspol (70 Jews).
406. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 43, p. 287.

Transylvania.[407] After this deportation, only 17,159 Jews were left in Bukovina (not including the Dorohoi district), of which 16,794 lived in Cernăuţi. Together with the Jews in Dorohoi they formed a Jewish population of 19,475 people.[408] In all, the total number of Jewish deportees from Bessarabia, Bukovina, Dorohoi and the *Regat* was between 154,449 (147,712 plus 6,737) and 170,737 people (164,000 plus 6,737).

The Number of Romanian Jews Who Survived in Transnistria

On November 15, 1943, an official report sent to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Romanian government indicated that 49,927 Jews were alive in Transnistria, of which 6,425 were originally from the *Regat*.[409] The conclusion that can be drawn is that until November 15, 1943, between 104,522 and 120,810 Romanian citizens of Jewish descent died in Transnistria.

The Fate of Local Jews in Transnistria

According to the 1939 Soviet census, 331,000 Jews lived in Transnistria, of whom 200,961 resided in Odessa.[410] The Romanian occupation authorities found between 150,000 and 200,000 Jews in Transnistria. According to Romanian and Soviet sources, up to 25,000 Jews were shot, hanged, or burned alive in Odessa. Soviet authorities reported that they had exhumed 22,000 bodies in Dalnic alone.[411] Additionally, there were Jews shot in the street and elsewhere who could be added to this number. According to the prefect of Golta, Modest Isopescu, approximately 10,000 local Jews were killed in Golta county at the beginning of November 1941 before the establishment of the Bogdanovka camp.[412]

In January and February 1942, between 33,000 and 35,000 Jews were deported by train from Odessa to Berezovka.[413] Of these, 28,000 were executed by the SS. Thousands of Jews (maybe around 30,000) from the city and county of Odessa were marched to

407. Regarding the deportations from Bessarabia, see *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 153-154. Regarding the deportations from Bukovina, see *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 215, 217.
408. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 43, p. 287.
409. Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Number of Jews in Transnistria on November 15, 1943, by areas of origin (Bessarabia, Bukovina, Dorohoi, and the *Regat*), Foreign Ministry Archives, "Jewish Problem," vol. 22, p. 589.
410. Mordechai Altshuler (ed.), *Distribution of the Jewish Population of the USSR, 1939* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1993), pp. 11, 21, 23. Transnistria included the Odessa *oblast* (county) and part of the Vinnitsa *oblast*. There were 233,155 Jews in the Odessa county and 141,825 in all of Vinnitsa county. But at least 43,444 lived on the German side of Vinnitsa, reducing Transnistria's local Jewish population to 331,636 on the eve of the war. The city of Odessa alone numbered 200,961 Jews.
411. Odessa County Committee (Obkom) Report on the Damage and Victims of the Fascist Occupation Regime (1941-1944), December 31, 1944, Communist Party Archives in Odessa, II-II-52, p. 22.
412. Report from Isopescu to the Government of Transnistria regarding the transports of the Jews, with a request that the government stop sending them, November 13, 1941, Nikolaev Archives, 2178-1-2, p. 151.
413. Prefect of Odessa's report to the Government of Transnistria at the conclusion of the deportation operation: 32,643 Jews deported (Odessa Archives, 2242-1-1487, pp. 190-193); Report of Major

Bogdanovka in late 1941.[414] There were 32,433 Jews "evacuated from Transnistria" who were probably deported to Golta and liquidated there. According to German documentation, the testimonies of survivors, and the Romanian trial records, 75,000 Jews (most of them locals) were murdered in Bogdanovka, Domanovka, and Akmechetka in late 1941 and early 1942. In September 1942, the secretary general of the Government of Transnistria acknowledged that 65,000 local Jews had "disappeared" (code for killed) from the county of Odessa.[415] In addition, according to a Romanian report 14,500 local Jews from Transnistria were forced across the Bug River, where they were killed by the Germans.[416]

The Soviet authorities estimated that 150,038 Jews were murdered in the counties of Golta and Berezovka.[417] On November 1, 1943, Third Army Headquarters recorded 70,770 Jews living in Transnistria, of whom 20,029 were local Jews.[418] Based on these numbers, between 115,000 and 180,000 local Jews were murdered or perished in Transnistria. At the end of the Romanian occupation, only 20,000 local Jews were left in Transnistria. At least 15,000 Jews from *Regat* perished during the Holocaust (in the pogrom of Iaşi and the deportations to Transnistria).

Various researchers have calculated different estimates of the death toll of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews under Romanian administration during the Holocaust. Dinu C. Giurescu counts at least 108,710 Romanian Jews who died in Transnistria; but this number does not take into account the Ukrainian Jewish victims or the Jews killed on the spot in Bessarabia and Bukovina. According to Dennis Deletant, between 220,000 and 270,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews perished in Transnistria, while Radu Ioanid asserts that at least 250,000 Jews died under Romanian jurisdiction. Matatias Carp mentions 264,900 Romanian Jews missing, but this does not include Ukrainian Jewish victims. Raul Hilberg cites the destruction of 270,000 Jews under the Romanians, as does Mark Rozen, who counts roughly 155,000 Romanian Jews and 115,000 Ukrainian Jews killed in Transnistria. Finally, Jean Ancel maintains that 310,000 Jews perished in Transnistria alone, and to this must be added another 100,000 Jews killed in Bessarabia and Bukovina during the 1941 campaign in these provinces.[419]

In summary, the total number of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews who perished in territories under Romanian administration is between 280,000 and 380,000.

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doctor Gheorghe Tătăranu, director of Transnistria's Health Department on the typhus epidemic in the region, 35,000 Jews evacuated from Odessa, Nikolaev Archives, 2178-1-424, p. 8.

414. Commander of Berezovka Gendarme Legion to the prefect, January 31, 1942, Odessa Archives, 2361-39, p. 15.
415. Gendarmerie commander in Transnistria to Transnistria Government, September 11, 1942, *ibid.*, p. 161.
416. Minutes of talks between Davidescu and Steltzer, March 13, 1942, Foreign Ministry Archive, Problem 33, vol. 16, p. 58; copy in USHMM, RG 25.006M, roll 6.
417. Note from Odessa section of Soviet Communist Party, December 31, 1944, Odessa CPSU Archive, 2-2-52, p. 25.
418. Special Archives in Moscow, 493-1-6, p. 187; Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 7, no. 393, p. 547.
419. Dinu C. Giurescu, *România în al doilea război mondial* (Bucharest: All Educational, 1999), pp. 70, 91; Dennis Deletant, "Ghetto Experience in Golta, Transnistria, 1942-1944," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1 (2004), p. 2; Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), p. 289; Hilberg, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 1220; Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 19; Marcu Rozen, *The Holocaust under the Antonescu Government: Historical and Statistical Data about Jews in Romania, 1940-1944,* 3rd rev. ed. (Bucharest: ARJVH, 2004), p. 109; Ancel, *Transnistria*, vol. 1, p. 531.

The Exclusion of Jews from Romanian Society during the Antonescu Governments with and without the Iron Guard: Anti-Semitic Legislation, Romanianization and Expropriation

Marshal Antonescu on Romanianization

When he assumed power in September 1940, Ion Antonescu outlined his policy priorities and stressed, "The program I will submit to your collective judgment is rooted entirely in the tenets of integral nationalism."[1] According to the *Conducător*, "integral nationalism" meant intolerance of ethnic pluralism and the elimination of "foreigners," especially Jews, from all facets of Romanian society as part of a project of ethnic homogenization of the Romanian nation. "Integral nationalism" was the foundation of the Romanianization program adopted by Antonescu, and the anti-Jewish measures he signed into law were the main instruments for conducting the process. According to Mihai Antonescu, the enforcement of this legislation "contributed to the shedding of the foreign plague from Romanian ownership structures and cracked down on Jewish domination in Romanian economic life."[2]

Outlined by Antonescu as early as September 1940, Romanianization was presented as a large-scale "national-social reform," and it would outlast Antonescu's removal of the Legion from government. Immediately after the repression of the Legionary rebellion in 1941, Antonescu declared:

> This state shall base its policies on the primacy of Romanianism in all domains of life. I pledge to unhesitatingly enforce all reforms necessary for the elimination of foreign influences and the safeguarding of our national interest. The struggle of the grand German National Socialist revolution and fascist achievements shall serve as guideposts of experience to be adapted to Romanian needs in order to graft on our realities the new world supported by the achievements in organization of these peoples.[3]

Antonescu's Romanianization policies were not the outcome of a decision made in the context of the necessities of war. Rather, they expressed his adherence to the doctrine of extreme right nationalism rooted in the developments in Romania during the second half

1. *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 206, September 6, 1940, p. 5114.
2. Mihai Antonescu, *Doi ani de guvernare, 6 septembrie 1940 – 6 septembrie 1942* (Editura Naţională "Dacia Traiană"), p. 150.
3. Ion Antonescu, *Declaraţiile domnului General Ion Antonescu făcute presei* (Bucharest: Tipografia MAN, 1941), p. 15.

of the nineteenth century. For him, Romanianization was a crucial problem, the cornerstone of the new state he intended to create.

To this end, the *Conducător* announced he would issue laws outlining the main principles of Romanianization and the stages in which this process would unfold.[4] Antonescu never claimed that he would use violent, revolutionary means to achieve the objectives of Romanianization. Rather, in order to avoid an economic collapse, he envisioned Romanianization more as a gradual, staged process, in contrast to the Iron Guard's brutal, corrupt approach.[5] However, it is evident that Antonescu differed from the Legion only with respect to the methods, and not the desirability, of Romanianization. Yet, the legislation and "civilized means" promised by Antonescu were no less abusive in terms of the dispossession of Jewish property and rights.

The Racial Nature of Anti-Jewish Legislation Passed between 1940 and 1944

The first law to frame the new legal status of Jews in Romania and express integral nationalism and Nazi-style political racism was signed on August 8, 1940, by King Carol II, Ion Gigurtu, President of the Council of Ministers, and I.V. Gruia, minister of justice and law professor at the University of Bucharest.[6] This decree-law excluded the Jews from many of the benefits of citizenship granted to them by the 1923 Constitution by legally and politically distinguishing between "Romanians by blood" (*români de sânge*) and "Romanian citizens." Emphasizing the significance of "blood" and "race" to the nation and state was a basic principle of the Nazi worldview.[7]

According to this first law, "the concept of the nation can now be construed less as a legal or political community and more as an organic, cultural community based on the law of blood, from which an entire hierarchy of political rights emerges ; for the law of blood contains all cultural, spiritual and ethical opportunities... The defense of Romanian blood constitutes the moral guarantee for the acknowledgement of supreme political rights."[8] In the Romanian context, the "laws of blood" referred to ethical, spiritual, and cultural characteristics, rather than to physical characteristics. On the basis of these general considerations, the law regulated the legal status of Jews in Romania with regard to their participation in religious, political, and economic life. It did not attempt to deprive the Jews of citizenship, since in the new context Romanian citizenship was irrelevant.

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4. "Stenograma Consiliului de Cabinet din 7 februarie, 1941", in Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944*, vol. 1, *Legislaţia antievreiască* (henceforth : *Legislaţia*) (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1993), no. 92, p. 291.
5. *Ibid*.
6. Decree-law no. 2650, in *ibid.*, no. 3, pp. 37-50.
7. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *Războiul împotriva evreilor. 1933-1945*, trans. Carmen Paţac (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1999), p. 83.
8. See footnote 6.

The Classification of Jews in Romania

The August 8, 1940 law placed Jews into three categories. The first[9] category included Jews who had entered Romania after December 30, 1918; these Jews were subject to major prohibitions. The second category was comprised of those Jews who had been naturalized on individual basis until December 30, 1918, who had served in the army in either the 1877-1878 war of independence or World War I, war orphans, and the descendents of the excepted categories of Jews. But Jews in neither of these categories were considered to be part of the national community, and they were subject to restrictions on owning property in rural areas and in qualifying for public service jobs. Most Jews in Romania fell into the third category.[10] These were the Jews who had become citizens according to decree-laws of 1919. Jews in the first and the third categories were prohibited from taking public service jobs, buying property, pursuing military careers, becoming lawyers or notaries public, being appointed members of a corporate board, owning businesses in rural areas, liquor stores, movie theaters, publishing houses, publications, and Romanian media outlets. All Jews were prohibited from taking Romanian names.[11] Jewish religion and spiritual life were not considered to be integrated into the Romanian religious and spiritual community to which Jews were ordered to pay respect.[12] The law defined Jews by merging – in the spirit of the Nuremberg laws – the dual criteria of ritual and ancestry: a person was considered to be a Jew if he or she practiced Judaism or was born to parents of the Judaic faith, even if the same person had converted to Christianity or was an atheist. One could be considered Christian only if his or her parents had converted prior to the birth of the child.[13]

The Antonescu Regime and the Jews

Although hostile to the Royal Dictatorship, Antonescu's regime did not abrogate this 1940 law. On the contrary, he used its principles as the ideological foundation for its anti-Jewish laws. Moreover, defining the Jew remained an essential problem in the context of the anti-Jewish legislation under Antonescu, too, even though that definition ultimately changed. For example, the new regime decreed that a person with even one Jewish parent, irrespective of whether that parent had converted to Christianity before the child's birth, would be considered a Jew, as "the mystery of baptism could not change the destiny of Jewish blood."[14]

Under Antonescu, every law included a special article on the definition of a Jew, and the criteria varied from one law to the next. The criterion of having at least one Jewish parent (regardless of whether one or both parents were Christians at the time of the

9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. Ioan Cezar Duma, "Criteriul sângelui," *Pandectele românizării*, 1, no. 10 (November 8, 1941), p. 306.

child's birth) was preserved in the law nationalizing urban buildings and Jewish rural property. According to the laws on the situation of the Jews in the educational system and the Romanianization of forced labor in industrial enterprises, persons born to both Jewish parents or only a Jewish father were defined as Jewish, whereas the decree-law on doctors' professional associations defined Jews as an "ethnic group of the Mosaic religion or converts to Christianity." In contrast, the law on military obligations of Jews preserved the definition from the August 8, 1940, law, which held that Jews were those born to Jewish parents or a Jewish father, while the decree-law annulling apprenticeship contracts deemed a person Jewish simply by virtue of having only one Jewish grandparent – either maternal or paternal (i.e., the grandparent practiced Judaism or married into a family that did).

By defining Jewishness in different laws, the Romanian government demonstrated that political racism was at the heart of anti-Jewish legislation. Jews were not punished for what they did, but for what they were. Jewishness itself was the mark of inferiority and having it was criminalized. Accordingly, the government adopted measures to exclude Jews from Romanian society and defend the "Romanian blood." In order to ensure that this "defense" would have a real effect, the Antonescu regimes prohibited marriage between "Romanians by blood" and those whom it defined as "Jews." Also, Jews were prohibited from conversion to the Christian faith. These measures were taken because "the ethnic being of the Romanian nation must be protected against mixing with Jewish blood."[15] The same motivation was used to prohibit Jews from hiring Romanian servants.[16]

On December 16, 1941, Ion Antonescu signed the law mandating a census of ethnic Jews. This law ordered that the Jews be counted in order to provide the government with a complete statistical picture of the Jewish presence in all domains of life and to enable a comprehensive definition of Jewishness – one that would conform to Romania's national interest and racial principles.[17]

But the racial character of the anti-Jewish legislation was not defined only through the laws that expressly provided for the defense of "Romanian blood," but also in regulations on the definition of the Jew and the discrimination of Jews relative to other ethnic groups in Romania. This body of laws adopted by the Antonescu regimes fit the framework of racial laws that entered into force at the beginning of the forties in those European countries that became part of the political system of the continental Holocaust.

Statutory Exclusion of Jews from the Economic, Cultural, and Public Life in Romania

Propaganda supporting the exclusion of Jews from Romanian society increased tremendously during the early thirties. Extremist journals, such as *Sfarmă Piatră* or *Porunca vremii*, continuously denounced the Jewish "invasion" in various domains of life and exposed Jews who adopted Romanian names or pseudonyms. Nevertheless, at the end of

15. Decree-law no. 711, March 7, 1941, in *Legislaţia*, no. 33, p. 120.
16. Decree-law no. 504, March 8, 1944, in *ibid.*, p. 262.
17. Arhiva Naţională Istorică Centrală (ANIC), fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet, file no. 107/1991, p. 161.

1937 anti-Semitic propaganda was not a state endeavor. It would become so only during the Goga government (December 1937 – February 1938)[18]. The Gigurtu government passed the first law that was based on the principles of Nazi-style political racism in August 1940.[19] The proclamation of the National Legionary State in Romania in September 1940 led to the promulgation of Romanianization laws. During the period when Ion Antonescu governed with the Iron Guard (September 1940 – January 1941), acts of terror against the Jewish population and extensive theft of Jewish property by the Legionnaires accompanied the anti-Jewish legislation.

The Expropriation of Jewish Property Located in Rural Areas

Romanianization of the Jewish property through legislation began with the expropriation of rural Jewish property. What distinguished the Antonescu legislation on rural property (the laws of October 4, 1940, November 12, 1940, and May 4, 1941) from the August 8, 1940, Gigurtu law was that the latter allowed Jewish landowners to sell their property to blood Romanians, with the Romanian state having first bid in the case of multiple offers.[20] The laws under Antonescu, on the other hand, ordered the nationalization of rural Jewish property upon the official publication of these laws in *Monitorul Oficial*. Among the types of "rural property" subject to expropriation were arable and infertile land, hay lands, orchards and vineyards, animal farms and animal stock, vegetable gardens, pastures, forests, ponds, lakes, cereals in stock, tools, mansions and all buildings, railways and other means of transportation, and agricultural, food-processing, and lumber-processing equipment. In short, these laws prohibited Jews from acquiring or owning any form of rural property on Romanian territory. Together with the deportation of Jews who lived in the countryside to the cities, the expropriation of rural Jewish property ensured the complete Romanianization of Romanian villages.[21] As a result of their enforcement, the Romanian state became the owner of 40,035 hectares of land worth 5,063,364,350 lei, 47,455 hectares of forests worth 2,585,980,700 lei, and 323 cereal mills and breweries, as well as other industrial equipment important to the rural economy, worth 1,851,341,940 lei.[22]

In terms of Jewish property in the territories liberated by Romanian troops after Romania entered the war (June 22, 1941), a special law was adopted on September 3, 1941, which ordered the nationalization of Jewish possessions in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina "without any notice or any other formalities."[23] By implementing this law, the Romanian state became the new owner of 27,091 hectares of arable land and 141 pieces of agricultural equipment.[24] The property of the Jewish deportees to Transnistria from

18. Decree-law no. 169, January 21, 1938, in *Legislaţia*, no. 1, pp. 21-32.
19. Decree-law no. 2650, August 8, 1940, in *ibid.*, no. 3, pp. 37-50.
20. Decree-law no. 3347, October 4, 1940, in *ibid.*, no. 18, pp. 82-84; Decree-law no. 1120, May 2, 1941; Decree-law no. 3347, *Monitorul Oficial*, October 5, 1940; and no. 3810, *Monitorul Oficial*, November 17, 1940, *apud Legislaţia*, no. 39, pp. 144-147.
21. Radu Ioanid, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1997), p. 34.
22. *Trei ani de guvernare, 6 septembrie 1940 – 6 septembrie 1943* (henceforth: *Trei ani de guvernare*) (Bucharest, 1944), p. 144.
23. Decree-law no. 2507, September 3, 1941, in *Legislaţia*, no. 46, pp. 164-165.
24. *Trei ani de guvernare*, p. 145.

the counties of Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Suceava, Dorohoi, Rădăuţi were legally declared abandoned property and given to the National Center for Romanianization (NCR) for clearance.[25]

The Romanianization of Jewish Capital and the Case of Commercial and Urban Property

Knowing that the Romanianization of trade and industry could not be achieved overnight, the Antonescu regime did not pass a comprehensive law for the expropriation of Jewish industrial and trade enterprises in the Old *Regat* and southern Transylvania. The strategists of Romanianization viewed the process as a gradual one, which required the preparation of the "Romanian element" to occupy the spaces in the economy that would soon be vacated by Jews and also required the accumulation of capital necessary for the takeover. The replacement of the Jews could take place only then.

The first step of the Romanianization process was to take an inventory of Jewish trade and industrial property. The next step was to create a control mechanism over the stock and fixed capital of Jewish companies. Then, by the Decree-law no. 3361 of October 5, 1940, the government established a new position: Romanianization commissioner;[26] this marked the beginning of total government control over Jewish property. Most of the people appointed as Romanianization commissioners were Legionnaires. They were charged with organizing an economic system that would be "subordinated to the national interest and to the primacy of Romanian ethnicity" by formal Romanianization the Jewish companies. Although he prided himself on this institutional control mechanism borrowed from the Nazis, Ion Antonescu cautioned during a government meeting of December 13, 1940, that it could also lead to what he called a "catastrophe."[27]

Indeed, the system did become abusive, with many commissioners blackmailing owners. As a consequence, the Romanianization commissioners were replaced with civil servants from the Ministry of National Economy as of January 18, 1941, according to Decree-law no. 562.[28] The prospect of an economic disaster was avoided by stopping the disorderly transfer of ownership over trade and industrial goods.[29] Government control over Jewish trade and industrial property was further enhanced when Decree-law no. 51 of January 20, 1942, which instituted government control over corporate boards, entered into force. Special controllers supervised the Romanianization of capital, the labor supply, and distribution at the company level. Each Jewish company was thus affected.[30]

Through Decree-law no. 351 of May 2, 1942, the NCR exercised control over company incorporation as well as mergers and acquisitions.[31] The government had

25. *Legislaţia*, no. 73, pp. 227-228.
26. *Ibid.*, no. 13, pp. 68-69.
27. Lya Benjamin, *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniştri, 1940-1944* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996), no. 60, p. 168 (henceforth: Benjamin, *Stenograme*).
28. *Legislaţia*, no. 28, pp. 101-103.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
30. *Ibid.*, no. 28, p. 101.
31. Titus Dragoş, *Românizarea. Înfăptuiri. 6 decembrie 1941 – 6 decembrie 1942* (Bucureşti, 1942), p. 52.

priority in cases of public auction or private sale of the Jewish property that was prohibited from changing ownership without authorization from the Ministry of National Economy. Decree-law no. 196 of March 13, 1942, prohibited Jews from "concealing" their capital and other property under Romanian names. Jews were required to declare all property in enterprises whose Jewish capital was more than twenty-five percent and had been transferred to Romanian individuals or companies or to Romanian institutions within thirty days of the publication of the law.[32] At the same time, the law allowed for commercial partnerships between Jews and Romanians with the expectation that commercial partnerships would create better opportunities than expropriation. The Romanian Ministry of Justice wrote, "A partial or total expropriation at the beginning of the Romanianization process would have provoked a gap in the life of businesses, which would have led to stagnation, and we want to avoid that gap."[33] It was thus possible to identify each share by name and to verify if the transfer of Jewish property to Romanians was based on authorizations required by the laws in force at that time. On the basis of Decree-law no. 196, the government registered 50,000 statements on company ownership, of which 2,902 were for limited liability companies and 42,747 for individual companies.[34]

Registration of Company Stock

The decree-law of March 3, 1941,[35] was aimed at the expropriation of Jewish capital and required the registration of stock in the owner's name, which facilitated the nationalization of stock owned by Jews.[36] On March 25, 1941, the government issued a new law requiring the extension of this government control to limited liability companies. Subsequently, 432,811 shares evaluated at 191 million lei were nationalized.[37] The measure affected 2,639 industrial and trade companies. Dozens of limited liability companies having a capital base estimated at 840 million lei were transferred into Romanian hands.[38]

The aim of this control was to stop and suppress the development of Jewish and foreign capital (with the exception of German and Italian capital) and to enhance the capital endowment of ethnic Romanians. The government subjected those Jews, who due to temporary state economic interests were left in possession of their commercial property, to a continuous state of uncertainty. They were sometimes accused of abusive commercial practices or sabotaging Romanianization, which resulted in serious administrative, non-judiciary punishments for the owner and his family. Typical in this regard

32. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
33. *Legislaţia*, no. 62, pp. 195-198.
34. See footnote 32.
35. Decree-law no. 533 of March 3, 1941, *loc. cit.*, no. 32, pp. 117-119.
36. Jean Ancel, *Contribuţii la istoria României. Problema evreiască*, trans. Carol Bienes (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2001), vol. 1, part 2 (*1933-1944*), p. 68.
37. *Curierul israelit*, Organul Uniunii Evreilor Români, 34, series 2, no. 3 (October 1, 1944), p. 6.
38. A. Simion, *Preliminarii politico-diplomatice ale insurecţiei române din august 1944* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1979), p. 122.

was the following order of the President of the Council of Ministers to the Ministry of Interior :

> By order from the Marshal we have the honor to ask you to order that all Jews who break legal provisions on prices and restrictions on the sale of certain products be deported at the Bug River.
>
> This measure is aimed both at combating disobedience of the law and the elimination of parasitic Judaic elements who live off breaking domestic law from crowded urban areas. Their deportation shall be conducted on the basis of a decree or resolution drafted jointly by the Ministry of the National Economy and the Undersecretary of State for the Supply of Army and Civilian Population. From this point of view, the Ministry of Interior shall only carry out the actual deportation.
>
> Deportation formalities shall be kept to a minimum, and in the case that the above-mentioned type of Judaic element is caught red-handed, his entire family shall be deported with him without trial. The Marshal wishes that the decree or resolution should be applied retroactively and that no mercy shall be shown toward these elements. The required decree or resolution shall be presented to the Marshal no later than July 25, 1942.[39]

Chronology of the Romanianization of Jewish Urban Trade and Industrial Property

1940

October 2 : Jews may not rent pharmacies (Decree-law no. 3294).[40]

November 19 : Jews may not sell merchandise produced under state monopoly (Decree-law no. 3758).[41]

November 19 : The Romanianization of movie production companies, movie theaters and tour operators (Decree-law no. 3850).[42]

December 3 : Nationalization of all ships belonging to Jewish companies and individuals.[43]

1941

March 1 : Beginning of Romanianization of the steel trade and steel production (Decree-law no. 491).[44]

March 14 : Beginning of Romanianization of the leather trade and leather production (Decree-law no. 655).[45]

May 2 : Nationalization of bakeries, pasta factories, and equipment of cereal mills, breweries, drug factories, and mining and oil drilling companies (Decree-law no. 1120).[46]

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39. ANIC, fond Ministry of Justice, Judiciary Direction, file no. 154/1942, pp. 1-2.
40. *Legislaţia*, no. 11, pp. 64-65.
41. *Ibid.*, no. 11, pp. 64-65.
42. *Ibid.*, no. 17, pp. 79-81.
43. *Ibid.*, no. 22, pp. 21-22.
44. See *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 51, March 1, 1941, p. 260.
45. *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 62, March 14, 1941, p. 530.
46. *Legislaţia*, no. 39, pp. 144-147.

October 9 : Nationalization of Jewish mortgage credits as well as Jewish hospitals and Jewish health centers.[47] By August 1, 1943, the NCR had taken over 564 mortgage credits worth 180 million lei.[48]

November 28 : Beginning of Romanianization of Jewish pharmacies, drug warehouses, and pharmacy offices (Decree-law no. 3275).[49]

1942

August 6 : The town of Panciu (a center of the brewing industry) was declared an ethnically pure Romanian city.[50]

1943

November 10 : Nationalization of the *România Mare* mill in Bucharest, along with all its buildings, equipment, tools, merchandise, raw materials, and animals (Resolution no. 969 of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers).[51]

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The government established the Romanian Credit Institute, an institution annexed to the Undersecretary of State for Romanianization, Colonization, and Inventory, to address the perceived urgency of Romanianization, which demanded immediate capitalization of the new owners (April 29, 1941).[52] The Romanian National Bank (*Banca Naţională a României*) helped the effort with a credit of 3 billion lei.[53]

The Legionary Approach

After September 1940 the Legionnaires occupied numerous Jewish factories, workshops, and stores at gunpoint. They forced the owners to sign sale contracts or mere receipts for "transfer of ownership." Official statistical data concerning Romanian territory (except Bucharest) showed that Jewish property worth 1 billion lei was sold for 216 million lei, of which only 52 million was actually paid – and most of this money had been robbed from the Jews.[54] In addition, the Legionnaire robberies caused damages to Jewish property amounting to 380 million lei.[55]

After the removal of Legionnaires from power in January 1941, the property abusively taken from the Jews by the Legionnaires was transferred to the Chamber of Commerce as part of the process of Romanianization instead of being restituted to its

47. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, no. 52, pp. 175-177.
50. *Ibid.*, no. 70, p. 222.
51. *Ibid.*, no. 83, pp. 253-255.
52. *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 100, April 30, 1941.
53. Dragoş, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
54. *Curierul israelit*, *loc. cit.*
55. *Ibid.*

owners. The Legionnaires who could prove that they had acquired Jewish property in accordance with the laws of the time remained the lawful owners of that property.[56]

Romanianization through Company Closure

Because of the many restrictive measures in force, most Jewish companies (15,987 out of 20,140) were shut down by their owners or ex officio by the Chamber of Commerce between September 6, 1940, and June 1, 1943.[57]

Romanianization by Consent

According to data used by Mihai Antonescu, 149 Jewish businesses were sold to Romanian owners between December 1941 and July 1942.[58] In general, the sales were disadvantageous to Jews, who had to sell thriving businesses at ruinous prices.

Romanianization angered the representatives of Romania's "historical parties," the National Peasant Party and the National Liberal Party. In December 1940, C.I.C. Brătianu, head of the National Liberal Party, wrote to Ion Antonescu, "The closing of Jewish businesses (which Romanians cannot afford to buy) and the terror spread by irresponsible youth [i.e., the Legionnaires] force many industrialists and retailers to sell their businesses for little money to minority shareholders subsidized from abroad or by foreign organizations. Instead of nationalization we are witnessing a de-nationalization that makes things worse in the economy. Every day I learn that companies belonging to Jews and other people passed to German or *Siebenburgische* [Transylvanian] Saxon hands."[59]

Romanianization of Jewish Buildings in the Cities

Jewish buildings in cities were nationalized by law on March 28, 1941. The measure was regarded by the Antonescu regime as a "measure to improve national security and make Romania stronger, a way to honor the old traditions of Romanian Christian nationalism and culturally unite the country with the new European celebration of national freedoms."[60] The declared objective of this law was to breathe a nationalist Christian spirit into state policies on private ownership. In more concrete terms, it meant the consolidation of an ethnic Romanian middle class, which the regime saw as "the foundation of an authentic [step toward] national state building."

Article 1 of the March 28 decree-law mandated the nationalization of all immovable property situated in urban areas belonging to Jewish companies and individuals. Article 19 prohibited Jewish individuals and companies from acquiring ownership of such property. Moreover, the decree-law forever prohibited Jews from acquiring property in Romania, except in situations in which the law would provide for their concentration in specific

56. *Stenograme*, pp. 199-200.
57. *Curierul israelit*, *loc. cit*.
58. *Ibid*.
59. Simion, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
60. *Legislaţia*, no. 35, pp. 122-131.

urban centers. However, in contrast to the nationalization of Jewish rural property, which allowed no exceptions, in this case several categories of Jews were exempted from the provisions of the law: Jews naturalized through individual acts of Parliament up to August 15, 1916; decorated Jewish war veterans; war orphans who had been baptized Christians twenty years before, if married to ethnic Romanians; Jews baptized as Christians for over thirty years; and the descendants of the preceding categories. These exemptions were to be granted on an individual basis by the Council of Ministers.

The large majority of the Jews who did not benefit from exemptions were forced to transfer ownership of the property in question, which had to be free of mortgage and any other financial obligations, to the NCR. In return, the NCR was to provide reimbursement with a three percent interest rate; but payment of this reimbursement was postponed until the end of the war. The law was subsequently changed, however, and the requirement to issue notice of property transfer was dropped, as it had been the right of the previous Jewish owner to use the property; he henceforth became a tenant and could be evicted at any moment.[61] As a consequence of the enforcement of this statute, 75,385 apartments assessed at 50 billion lei were nationalized by December 1943,[62] and 38,202 appeals were filed in court by those who thought they belonged to the exempted categories. Only 2,016 of these appeals were resolved.[63] In Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, 9,281 urban properties and 8,973 rural properties (with 16,779 annexes) belonging to Jews were also nationalized.[64]

Romanianization of Property Belonging to the Jewish Communities: Statutory Romanianization

On June 20, 1942, the Antonescu regime issued a law that modified previous statutes on expropriation of Jewish immovable property. This law decreed the nationalization of all immovable property belonging to Jewish communities, with the exception of synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, and temples built to serve as synagogues.[65] Subsequently, on November 9, 1943, a law was issued stipulating that abandoned Jewish cemeteries were to be transferred to the ownership of local municipalities.[66]

On the basis of Decree-law no. 499 of July 3, 1942, the Council of Ministers adopted many resolutions on the expropriation of Jewish property in all counties of Romania between 1942 and 1944.[67] Between July 14, 1942, and August 23, 1944, the Antonescu regime expropriated 1,042 Jewish community buildings, including temples, synagogues, schools, hospitals and clinics, orphanages, cemeteries, ritual bathhouses, administrative buildings, and rabbis' homes.[68] Additionally, even before Decree-law no. 499 went into effect, Legionnaires and then various departments of the government (e.g., Defense and Labor) had already requisitioned numerous buildings of the Jewish community.

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61. Decree-law no. 903, October 9, 1941, *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 240, October 10, 1941, p. 6079.
62. *Legislaţia*, no. 99, p. 344.
63. *Trei ani de guvernare*, p. 146.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Legislaţia*, no. 67, pp. 217-220.
66. *Ibid.*, no. 82, pp. 252-253.
67. *Ibid.*, appendix, pp. 429-485.
68. *Ibid.*, no. 99, p. 345.

The National Center for Romanianization: Its Role in Romanianization and the Administration and Liquidation of Expropriated Jewish Property

Romanianization, a complex process, required an adequate institutional framework, which was based on cooperative efforts by the Ministry of the National Economy, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Interior. The government also established certain special institutions, such as the Division for Romanianization, Colonization and Inventory and the National Center for Romanianization (NCR; established in May 1941).

The NCR was a specialized institution directly subordinated to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and its main function was the expropriation of Jewish property. The establishment of the NCR centralized all Romanianization activities and bureaucratically structured the supervision of expropriation as well as the administration and liquidation of the expropriated property. The NCR was a repressive institution that approached the Jewish population with a police mentality. It used the services of paid informers and projected discretionary power with regard to Jewish properties. The NCR made high profits for the government (about 2 billion lei a year) from renting out the nationalized Jewish property, and it also liquidated nationalized Jewish property through sale.[69]

When Decree-law no. 231 of February 2, 1944, entered into force the NCR appeared ready to assume further functions in the planned colonization of territories newly occupied by the Romanian army.

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However, on September 1, 1944, the NCR was downgraded and became an administrative agency subordinated to the Office for the Liquidation of the NCR and of the Settlement of Migration Problems (Decree-law no. 445).

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The total value of nationalized Jewish property – including extorted property, which was subsequently sanctioned by the judiciary and the executive – was roughly 100 billion lei (in 1941, one U.S. dollar was worth 110 lei, and in 1943 one U.S. dollar was worth 400 lei).[70]

Romanianization of the Labor Force. The Ghettoization of Jewish Independent Professionals

The exclusion of Jews from various types of jobs began in 1937 with the inauguration of the Goga government; however, the process gained a powerful momentum during the Antonescu regimes, when Jews were excluded from all fields of work. Even though some

69. Decree-law no. 231, February 2, 1944, in *ibid.*, no. 86, pp. 259-261.
70. Ancel, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

of the measures taken were sometimes self-contradictory and were temporarily postponed, the active Jewish population experienced a period of sharp professional degradation to an extent that was specific to countries that imposed legal racial discrimination.[71]

Independent artists were the first to be affected by the legalized discrimination. On September 8, 1940, the Ministry of Religion and Culture issued Resolution no. 42181, which stipulated that all state and private theaters and opera houses were obliged to dismiss Jewish actors and singers.[72] A subsequent decision allowed Jewish performers to be hired by private Jewish theaters.[73] The new laws then began to target the professions. For example, Jews were forbidden to practice as pharmacists (through the laws of October 2, 1940, and November 21, 1941).[74] The August 8, 1940, law forbade Jewish attorneys belonging to categories 1 and 3 from practicing law and forced them to liquidate their businesses in six months, while the Antonescu government's October 16, 1940, decree-law went even further, excluding Jewish lawyers from the second category, as well. They had the right to work, but only for Jewish clients. The disabled and war orphans as well as those decorated for military valor were exempted from the law. [75]

One of the most severe laws against Jewish labor was Decree-law no. 3825 of November 15, 1940, on the Romanianization of the business labor force.[76] In the words of Wilhelm Filderman, this law basically "abolished the right of Jews to live,"[77] since all companies were required to fire their Jewish employees by December 31, 1941. The only exceptions were Jewish institutions with a religious or cultural character, Jewish veterans with combat disabilities from the 1916-1918 war, and war orphans.[78] Despite temporary suspensions and deadline extensions, this statute led to the greatest growth of unemployment among active Jews. According to a June 13, 1943, Department of Labor report on the Romanianization of the labor force, the number of Jewish employees dropped from 28,225 on November 16, 1940, to a mere 6,506 on March 1, 1943. Similarly, the number of companies with Jewish employees dropped from 8,126 to 4,301.[79]

Jewish doctors were also subject to discrimination. Unlike the decree-law of August 8, 1940, which excluded Jewish doctors belonging to categories 1 and 3 from the ranks of state physicians, the November 1940 law stipulated that all Jewish workers, including those from category 2, be excluded from the field of healthcare. Doctors' professional associations expelled their Jewish colleagues and prohibited them from caring for Christian patients. According to the law, Jewish physicians' associations were to be created at the county level, but even they could accept only those who had registered in Romania

71. Fondul de fişe individuale completate în cadrul anchetei organizate de Congresul Mondial Evreiesc între anii 1945 şi 1947 în legătură cu pierderile suferite de populaţia evreiască din Romania în anii prigoanei. Unregistered document, Archive of CSIER.
72. Resolution no. 42181, in *ibid.*, no. 6, pp. 57-58.
73. Resolution no. 44400, September 21, 1940, in *ibid.*, no. 10, p. 63.
74. Decree-law no. 3294, October 1940, and Decree-law no. 3275, November 28, 1941, in *ibid.*, no. 11, pp. 64-65, and no. 52, pp. 175-177.
75. Decree-law no. 3487, October 16, 1940, in *ibid.*, no. 15, pp. 71-73. See paragraph entitled "Caracterul rasial al legislaţiei antievreieşti."
76. *Ibid.*, no. 16, pp. 74-82.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 363.
78. *Ibid.*, no. 16, pp. 74-82.
79. *Stenograme*, no. 169, pp. 74-82.

prior to 1919.[80] Jewish physicians were also forbidden to publish research in professional reviews and hold membership in research institutions. All Jewish physicians who could still practice had to wear a badge and carry a stamp identifying them as Jewish. Moreover, doctors with Jewish spouses were also prohibited from practicing. In addition, if sick, Jews could not be received in a Romanian hospital or treated by Romanian physicians. The result of these prohibitions was to deprive Jews of adequate healthcare, though the stated purpose for the adoption of these harsh regulations was to "maintain, develop, and improve the health of ethnic Romanians."[81]

According to the association of Romanian engineers' decision of February 2, 1942, the Jews from the first and third categories and those from the second category registered after August 9, 1940, were expelled from this association (*Colegiul Inginerilor*). There were expelled engineers from the fields of construction, the navy, metallurgy, chemistry, and others. This exclusion from the unions and associations also meant that they were forbidden to practice their profession as independent workers.[82] The same fate later befell Jewish architects as well as Jewish members of unions and other professional associations. Nevertheless, in June 1943 the government issued the guidelines for the "use" of Jews with university degrees for various public services.[83] Craftsmen and apprentices were also excluded from the labor market, and both of these categories were forbidden from doing any other skilled job.[84] A number of restrictions were imposed on the freedom of Jewish merchants.[85] Exclusion from professional associations also affected Jewish painters, sculptors, composers, journalists, and writers. Books written by Jewish authors and records containing music written by Jewish composers were banned in public libraries and bookstores.[86]

It is worth noting, however, that the government took steps to keep several types of Jewish workers working in exchange for high fees established by law (many times the fees were higher than the income).[87] These Jews were exempted from protective labor regulations. As a result, they lost their right to leave pay and were discriminated in terms of their wages; for example, they did not receive raises equivalent with the rate of inflation, as Romanian workers did. Even as late as January 10, 1944, companies with Jewish employees had to take measures to pair these employees with ethnic Romanians (Department of Labor Resolution no. 102064).[88]

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The timing of the twinning system shows that Antonescu never gave up on the complete Romanianization of labor. The only improvement under his government was when he later agreed that the actual replacement of Jewish workers would take longer. In

80. Decree-law no. 3789, November 12, 1940, in *Legislaţia*, no. 19, pp. 85-88.
81. Ioanid, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
82. Resoluţia Consiliului Colegiului Inginerilor, February 3, 1942, in *Legislaţia*, no. 58, pp. 191-192.
83. Presidency of the Council of Ministers Decision no. 17, June 15, 1943, in *ibid.*, no. 76, p. 242.
84. Decree-law no. 1981 of July 10, 1942, in *ibid.*, no. 68, pp. 220-221; Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Protection Decision no. 97484, March 8, 1941, in *ibid.*, no. 34, pp. 121-122.
85. Matatias Carp, in the Archive of CSIER.
86. See footnote 85.
87. Directive no. 38811, January 5, 1942, in *Legislaţia*, no. 55, pp. 181-183.
88. *Ibid.*, no. 85, pp. 256-257.

addition, whenever an employer wanted to hire a new worker, he had to submit papers showing that the new worker was a Christian or an Aryan. These statutory labor provisions literally deprived Jews of the right to work.

Statutory Regulations on the Situation of Jews in the Education System

Decree-law no. 3438 of October 11, 1940, mandated the exclusion of Jews – students and teachers alike – from all levels of the education system. Article 3 of the law unequivocally stipulated, "students born of Jewish parents shall not be admitted to Romanian/Christian primary, secondary, and high schools [or] universities, irrespective of their religion."[89] The same regulation was declared applicable to Jewish teachers, professors, and school administrators.

In this way, the *numerus clausus* of Decree no. 153377 of August 29, 1940, which stipulated that no more than 6 percent of students in a class should be Jewish, transformed into a *numerus nullus* decree: no Jewish student was allowed to attend Romanian schools unless he or she was a either a Christian convert and direct heir of a decorated, disabled, or dead veteran of the war of independence; a disabled or decorated veteran of the 1916-1918 war; or a descendant of a disabled or decorated veteran of the 1916-1918 war and had converted to Christianity by August 9, 1940. The October 11, 1940, law did allow Jewish students to attend Jewish private schools; however, these schools were forbidden to advertise, and the state would not recognize the graduation papers they issued, which basically made them worthless in the labor market. In February 1941, under pressure from the representative of the Holy See in Bucharest, Antonescu allowed Jewish students who had converted to Christianity to attend classes at confessional schools (mostly Catholic). He also allowed Christian students who had only one Jewish parent to attend non-Jewish private schools. At the same time, however, he decreed that ethnic origin would be noted on graduation papers, and Jewish graduates would be subject to the statutory provisions applicable to Jews.[90]

The situation for Jewish university students was the worst since Jews were not allowed to set up their own universities. Still, Jewish leaders managed to obtain permission for Jewish university students to attend non-university-level classes at the College for Jewish University Students and the School of Arts for Jews, and to receive medical and technical training. Jewish professors struggled to make these classes like actual university-level classes. For example, students took regular exams and had official transcripts.[91] However, the parallel Jewish education system was ultimately disrupted by the requisition and subsequent nationalization of some Jewish school buildings and by the legal obligation of all Jewish students over the age of fifteen to join work detachments.[92] Like Jewish students, Jewish teachers were excluded from the public education system, so some joined Jewish private schools.[93] Their salaries were paid exclusively by the Jewish communities, and the Romanian government offered no subsidy.

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89. *Ibid.*, no. 14, pp. 70-71.
90. Decree-law of February 20, 1941; see Carp, list, CSIER Archive.
91. Memorandum, September 22, 1944, in *Legislaţia*, no. 101, pp. 351-358.
92. Eliza Campus, *Viaţa evreilor din Bucureşti. 1940-1944. Monografie, dactilogramă*, Archive of CSIER, file no. 5.
93. See footnote 89.

The Status of Jewish Religion

According to the August 8, 1940, decree-law:

> …the Romanian government guarantees that all faiths have the right to be protected from all injunctions since they do not harm public order, morality and security. By this statute, to be integrated into the Constitution, the spiritual life of Jews is not regarded as integrated into the spiritual life of the Romanian society. Rather, it will be regarded only as owing respect to the Romanian community, on the basis of its guaranteed freedom.[94]

Immediately after Antonescu came to power, the Ministry of Religion and Culture issued Ruling no. 42352 of September 9, 1940, which stipulated that only "historical denominations" enjoyed state protection and were authorized to function on Romanian territory. With regard to Judaism, the resolution did not go further than acknowledging its existence. Its activities were to be regulated by subsequent government regulations issued on September 17, 1940, which severely limited its freedom.[95] As a consequence of Jewish community leaders' protests, the September 9 regulations were later abrogated.[96]

Between late 1941 and early 1942, the government excluded Judaism from the right to claim state subsidies[97] and replaced the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania (FUCE) as an institution of community leadership with the government-controlled Jewish Center (*Centrala Evreilor*).[98] Besides being the object of repressive legislation, Jewish religious institutions were often vandalized or destroyed. Several Jewish cemeteries, including the historical cemeteries in Iaşi and Bucharest, were destroyed, and in Piatra-Neamţ municipal authorities demanded that Jews pay fees to the Chamber of Legionary Aid for the right to bury Jewish dead in the local cemetery. In Bucharest, Jews were made to exhume their dead who were buried in Christian cemeteries, and the police prevented Jews in several towns from praying. After July 15, 1942, Jews could no longer practice the ritual slaughter of animals and birds.[99] The many abuses committed against Judaism went unpunished, thereby proving that the self-proclaimed nationalist, Christian, totalitarian state had withdrawn its protection of this religion.[100]

Exclusion from Political Life

The exclusion of Jews from political life began around the time that Carol II's Front for National Rebirth was renamed the Party of the Nation, a self-proclaimed "single and totalitarian party placed under the supreme leadership of His Majesty, King Carol II." Jews were expressly forbidden to join this party, and since eligibility for public service

94. See footnote 6.
95. Resolution no. 42352, September 9, 1940, in *Legislaţia*, no. 7, pp. 58-59.
96. See Decision no. 43832.
97. Decree-law no. 846; see Carp, list, CSIER.
98. Decree-law no. 3415 on December 16, 1941, in *Legislaţia*, no. 53, p. 178.
99. Carp, list, CSIER.
100. See footnote 6.

was conditional on being a member of the Party of the Nation, Jewish public servants were immediately fired, irrespective of their positions. As a summer 1940 report of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers shows, prior to Antonescu's political takeover, Jews had been "excluded from the habitual application of ordinary laws applicable to all other Romanian citizens" and were the only minority in Romania subject to discrimination.[101] Although Jews could still vote during the Royal Dictatorship, they were deprived of this right under Antonescu. It must be noted here that Antonescu called the people of Romania to cast their votes in two referenda in 1941 (on February 26 and November 9), and each time Jews were expressly forbidden to participate.[102]

The Military Status of Jews

The exclusion of the Jews from the Romanian society also entailed their dismissal from the army. "The military obligations, being obligations of honor," stipulated the Decree-law of August 8, 1940, "are to be converted for Jews in the first and third categories into tax or labor obligations. Those obligations are decided pursuant to every Jew's income and military situation and according to the state's and public institutions' needs. The Jews in the second category are forbidden from pursuing professional careers in the military."[103]

According to the decree-law on the military status of Jews adopted in December 1940, all Jews were excluded from military service and pre-military training obligations and were required instead to pay military fees or perform labor. The duty to pay military fees was imposed by the Ministry of Finance directly, according to tables of names compiled by the military authorities. These obligations were to last as long as the rest of the citizenry was mobilized to fulfill military service. Those who were deemed physically unfit for military service had to pay exemption fees, as well. According to the law, during a lengthy period of mobilization or war, the Jews could be used for the benefit of the army or for community work.

Jewish professionals with university degrees were supposed to be used according to their qualifications and to receive an allowance *per diem*. Jews who already possessed military identification had to have the word "Jew" stamped in red ink on the cover, and the rest were given a special "military booklet for Jews." Jewish doctors, pharmacists, veterinarians, engineers, and architects requisitioned by the army during the prolonged drafts or the war had to wear special uniforms that also showed their ethnic origin.[104] The military status of the Jews was regulated through several laws that specified the obligations, conditions, and circumstances for forced labor and the additional taxes.

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101. *Stenograme*, no. 22, p. 62.
102. *Legislaţia*, no. 49, pp. 170-171.
103. For the military status of the Jews, see *ibid.*, no. 25: Decretul-lege relativ la statutul militar al evreilor (December 4, 1940); *ibid.*, no. 29: Decizia Ministerului Apărării Naţionale nr. 23325, 27 ianuarie 1941, privitoare la medicii, farmaciştii, veterinarii, inginerii şi arhitecţii evrei folosiţi eventual în serviciile Armatei; *ibid.*, no. 43: Regulamentul Ministerului Apărării Naţionale nr. 2030 din 12 iulie 1941 asupra Decretului-lege nr. 3984 din 4 decembrie 1940.
104. See the regulation regarding the decree-law on the military status of the Jews, in *ibid.*, no. 43, p. 159.

These laws stipulated that military service was to be replaced with community work for the Ministry of National Defence or other ministries and institutions. For the duration of these activities, the Jews were under military jurisdiction. According to the regulation referring to the decree-law on the military status of Jews, the community work was mandatory for Jewish men between eighteen and fifty years old.

Work was done in "camps and battalions of mandatory community labor" that fell under the regime of military order and discipline.[105] Decree-law no. 1851 of June 22, 1942, transferred the organization of Jewish forced labor to the Army High Command.[106] The Army High Command assigned work details to all Jews drafted to the work detachments. These workers were subject to the rigors of the military code and wore their own civilian clothes as well as a yellow band marked with the name of their recruiting center on the left sleeve.[107] One month later, in order to distinguish between "community work" (*muncă în folos obştesc*), which Romanian youth had to perform gratis as part of their patriotic education, and the free work done by the Jews, the latter was called "compulsory" or "forced" labor (*muncă obligatorie*).[108] On June 23, 1942, a resolution of the Ministry of National Defense obliged Jews holding a university degree to work ninety days a year for the government.[109] Jewish forced labor was employed for a variety of infrastructure projects, such as laying railway tracks and roads, building fortifications, and providing maintenance services for the military. The skilled men were used in the army and in military factories. Young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty and adults between forty-one and fifty years old worked in their towns of residence. Theoretically, only the Jews between eighteen and fifty years old were supposed to do mandatory work. But, in actuality, people older than fifty or younger than eighteen were used for mandatory labor on numerous occasions. Thus, a communiqué transmitted by the High Command to the Jewish Center on January 10, 1943, stipulated that students older than sixteen were supposed to do mandatory work. These young people were used to shovel snow, for farm work, or for finding the victims of the Anglo-American bombings under the ruins. Additionally, the army could freely use Jewish women, aged eighteen to forty, for clerical work, cleaning, tailoring, and other tasks.

Punishments for disobedience ranged from deportation to Transnistria, along with one's entire family, to the death penalty. The Army High Command's Regulations on Jewish Labor (no. 555000 of July 27, 1942) stipulated specific punishments. In the case of a small transgression, such as being late for roll call or undisciplined behavior, commanders were to physically punish the offender. For repeated offenses as well as cheating, failure to show up for the assignment, abandonment of the work place without permission, and failure to inform the Recruitment Center about changes of address, the offender and his extended family (wife, children, parents) would be deported to Transnistria.[110] Forced labor – with 47,345 Jewish men, women, and teenagers sent to

105. Decree-law published in *Monitorul Oficial*, part 1, no. 155, July, 7, 1942, p. 5538.
106. Decree-law no. 2068, July 20, 1942, *Monitorul Oficial*, part 1, no. 167, July 20, 1942, p. 6027.
107. See Decree-law no. 3205, November 14, 1941 on the establishment and organization of the General Inspectorate of labor camps and corps, *LA*, no. 50, pp. 171-173.
108. *Legislaţia*, no. 25, p. 87, footnote 1.
109. *Ibid.*, no. 29, p. 105, footnote 1.
110. *Stenograme*, no. 142, p. 427.

work detachments – was one of the methods used to marginalize Jewry from the Old *Regat* and southern Transylvania. The wages for this work were either minimal or nothing at all, and the Jewish communities had to provide work clothes, tools, healthcare, and food.[111] In 1943, 44,234 Jewish men performed mandatory work, and 21,078 were drafted for industry and commerce.

The Regulation of the Situation of Romanian Jews

According to Resolution no. 49 of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, issued on October 30, 1941, Radu Lecca, a man close to German intelligence services, was appointed director of the Council of Ministers Division for the Regulation of the Situation of Jews in Romania.[112] Decree-law no. 2461 of September 6, 1943, terminated this agency, creating the General Commissariat for Jewish Problems, also led by Lecca. His mission was to make policy on the economic, social, and cultural aspects of the life of Jewish communities in a way that they would serve government interests.[113]

Wartime Anti-Jewish Legislation

Exceptional Measures

The Antonescu regime considered Jews to be internal enemies or natural allies of the external enemy, and this was particularly the case during the war against the Soviet Union. Antonescu even went as far as calling Jews "worse than our external enemies, because from these external enemies we can expect the occupation of Romanian territory, whereas from the internal enemy we can expect the poisoning and the corruption of the Romanian soul."[114] The Marshal and his aides believed the Jews spied not only for Red Russia, but also for "Anglo-American imperialism"; hence, they were thought to be a tremendous danger to the security of the state.

As a consequence, the regime issued a body of legislative measures that created for the Jews a regulatory environment typical of a state of emergency – an environment that limited their liberties and threatened their lives. Thus, on May 6, 1941, all people having at least one Jewish parent were asked to surrender any radios able to send and receive messages within fifteen days of the publication of the law.[115] Failure to comply was punishable by imprisonment or fines.[116] The motivation behind the law was that Jews were believed to listen to anti-Romanian propaganda and then spread alarmist information, causing the Romanian population to panic.

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111. *Ibid.*, no. 187, p. 558.
112. *Legislaţia*, no. 48, p. 170.
113. *Ibid.*, no. 81, pp. 250-251.
114. *Stenograme*, pp. 499-502.
115. Decree-law no. 1253, May 6, 1941, in *Legislaţia*, no. 40, pp. 147-149.
116. See footnote 113.

On June 21, 1941, the Ministry of Interior issued Circular Order no. 4147, which relayed Antonescu's order that Jews between the ages of eighteen and sixty living in the villages between Siret and Prut, an area close to the border with the Soviet Union, were to be deported to the Târgu-Jiu camp. According to this order, all Jews from the countryside were also to be evacuated to cities.[117] Within a week after the outbreak of the war against the Soviet Union and the publication of the execution of 500 "Judeo-communists" in Iaşi, the Ministry of Interior issued Circular Order no. 4599, of June 30, 1941, which declared:

> The Soviets plan and carry out acts of sabotage, disorder, and attacks behind the frontlines of the Romanian army by parachuting spies and armed terrorists who are often dressed as women. Together with local agents and the Jewish-communist population, they organize acts of sabotage, terrorism, and aggression. In order to put an end to all of these, Marshal Antonescu has ordered the following: (1) Jewish males from your city, if aged between 18 and 60, must be concentrated in Jewish districts or rounded up in schools and other bigger buildings, where they shall be guarded in order to prevent any disorder, (2) Jews shall not be allowed to move freely between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m., (3) Jewish religious or community leaders shall be taken hostage, and in case of any acts of rebellion, they shall be shot, (4) Please post public notices on the fate that awaits these hostages in case the Jews or the communists launch acts of sabotage, terrorism, and aggression.[118]

This order was sent to prefectures in Moldavia, to the Bucharest police department, and to the gendarmerie. Many internments were carried out based on this order. For example, a number of Jews were arrested or interned in Ploieşti, Câmpina, and Sinaia in the Tei-Târgovişte concentration camp.

Immediately after the Iaşi pogrom, Jews in several towns in Moldavia (Bacău, Galaţi, Iaşi, Fălticeni, Huşi) were forced to wear the yellow star.[119] On August 5, 1941, claiming that he was addressing concerns of military commanders, Mihai Antonescu ordered that all Jews in Romania must wear the yellow star. On August 7, 1941, the Ministry of Interior relayed the order to local police stations. On September 3, FUCE announced that all Jews in Bucharest must wear a patch with the Star of David on the left side of the chest.[120] On September 9, as a result of Filderman's plea before Antonescu, the Marshal decided to abrogate the order on the yellow star.[121] Despite Antonescu's reversal on this matter, in some Moldavian cities and in Cernăuţi, the abrogation did not take full effect, and in Transnistria Jews had to wear the star for the rest of the war.

On the basis of Order no. 62 of July 24, 1941 (signed by General C. Voiculescu), Romanian authorities set up the first concentration camp in Chişinău.[122] Next, the Cernăuţi concentration camp was established in October 1941.[123] On September 19, 1942, Antonescu signed a law stipulating that all Jews who returned to Romania from

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117. *Legislaţia*, pp. 339.
118. Ioan Şerbănescu, *Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944*, vol. 3, part 1, "Perioada unei mari restriştii" (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1997), no. 120, p. 330.
119. Ioanid, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
120. Lya Benjamin, *Prigoană şi rezistenţă în istoria evreilor din România. 1940-1944. Studii* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2001), p. 160.
121. *Stenograme*, no. 109, pp. 304-308.
122. Jean Ancel, *Transnistria, 1941-1942* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2003), vol. 2, no. 8, p. 17.
123. Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră. Fapte şi documente. Suferinţele evreilor din România, 1940-1944*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Diogene, 1996), vol. 3, p. 152.

Transnistria "in a fraudulent manner" would be executed.[124] According to Decree-law no. 552 of March 2, 1943, Jews sentenced to at least three months of prison or six months of camp internment were to be deported to Transnistria together with their families.[125] In the case of Jews sentenced for crimes that posed a threat to national security, their punishment was to be doubled.[126] Furthermore, according to a law of May 26, 1944, Jews who entered Romania illegally were to be sentenced to death. This law was aimed at Jews from Hungary and Northern Transylvanian who were fleeing the deportations there, which began on March 19, 1944. This law, however, was not enforced.[127]

Jewish Material Obligations and Contributions: Legislation and Means of Implementation

Using the pretext that Jews did not have to risk their lives in combat, the government asked Jews to make contributions in money and goods that went far beyond their resources. After mass lay-offs, deportations, abusive taxes, and nationalizations, the Jewish minority was severely impoverished. With reference to the exceptional contributions made by Romanian Jews between 1941 and 1944, Matatias Carp drafted the following assessment in his *Cartea neagră*: Jews paid 1,994,209,141 lei before May 20, 1942, for an imposed government bond (*Împrumutul Reîntregirii*) requiring Jews to pay four times more than all other citizens; they paid 500 million lei for hospital equipment and 100 million lei for a disabled veterans' fund (*Palatul Invalizilor*); they paid 1,800,135,600 in forced donations to the government in the form of items such as clothing, footwear, mattresses, and bed linen based on individual economic status (those who did not have the required items had to pay the equivalent value in cash, and failure to donate led to five to ten-year prison sentences; a blanket amnesty was granted to these "debtors" only after the community paid 100 million lei to the government); Jews forfeited 3,034,148,141 lei in fees for exemption from compulsory labor for April 1, 1941, and August 23, 1944, and 144,024,375 lei in fees for exemption from snow shoveling obligations. The extraordinary contribution of 4 billion lei was imposed on the whole Jewish population by Ion Antonescu's personal order in April 1943. This was achieved through pressure or blackmail, the only options being payment or deportation to Transnistria; thus, the Jews paid 738,156,308 for the "exceptional contribution" ordered by Antonescu.[128] On August 26, 1943, the Council of Ministers ordered that fees paid for exemption from forced labor be transferred to the Social Works Council (*Consiliul de Patronaj al Operelor Sociale*).[129] On July 1, 1943, Radu Lecca confirmed that this Council received 410 million lei exclusively from these exemption fees.[130]

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124. *Legislaţia*, no. 71, pp. 229-230.
125. *Ibid.*, no. 74, pp. 229-230.
126. Decree-law no. 3802, November 12, 1940, in *ibid.*, no. 20, p. 89; and Decree-law no. 236, February 5, 1941, in *ibid.*, no. 30, p. 111.
127. Decree-law no. 1069, May 26, 1944, in *ibid.*, no. 89, pp. 278-279.
128. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 68.
129. *Legislaţia*, no. 80, pp. 249-250.
130. CSIER, fond 3, file no. 425, p. 60.

Restrictions on the Freedom of Movement and Access to Food and Supplies

A government order, issued on July 27, 1941, cancelled all travel authorizations granted to Jews.[131] Between June 27, 1941, and December 31, 1943, the government issued over twenty internal orders specifying the conditions in which Jews could obtain travel authorizations from the Ministry of Interior. Students and teachers were allowed to travel to school and return home. A limited number of authorizations were issued in cases of official summons, illness, and in even fewer cases, for business. Jews who traveled without authorization risked deportation. Also, on March 16, 1942, drivers' licenses issued to the Jews were withdrawn.

Basic foodstuffs, such as bread, sugar, oil, and polenta, were rationed. The Jews were submitted to restrictive orders enacted by the central and local state authorities. Jews were allowed to shop in markets and stores only between certain hours, and peasants were forbidden access to Jewish houses. The food ration cards of the Jews with Romanian citizenship were specially marked, and Jews received less sugar and wheat than other Romanians. Jews were paying 15 lei for the bread ration instead of the 7 lei the Romanians paid. Moreover, two weekly rations given to the rest of the population were canceled for the Jews.

In general, documents from the period show a number of discriminatory measures that seriously affected the daily lives of the Jews – not just buying groceries (both in terms of access and money), but other aspects, as well. For example, since the tenants' law did not apply to Jews, they were forced to pay higher rent than the rest of the population. During bombings they were denied access to public shelters, and they were not allowed to leave areas, like Bucharest, that were bombed. The daily lives of Jews took place under the constant threat of abuse and within the boundaries delineated by the discriminatory policies of the totalitarian regime.

Conclusions

The anti-Jewish legislation and administrative measures taken by the Antonescu regimes are characteristic of an extremist, totalitarian policy toward a minority ethnic group – in this case, the Jewish minority. Romanianization policies clearly evinced an ethnic restructuring of Romanian society to the exclusive advantage of ethnic Romanians. The emphasis on "blood" arguments was emblematic of a structurally racist regime, and the emergency laws and portrayal of Jews as internal enemies laid the foundation for the large-scale repression of the Jewish minority and the legitimization of this repression as an actual war.

This legislation, along with the policy that inspired it, reveals the intentions of Antonescu and the state apparatus. Considering the particular weight given to anti-Jewish legislation, it is obvious that the so-called Jewish issue was a principal preoccupation of

131. *Legislaţia*, pp. 331-339.

the Marshal and of his circle, and their means of dealing with this issue imprinted a racial and discriminatory brand on the Antonescu totalitarian regime. Finally, the enforcement of the anti-Jewish legislation led to the legal and political segregation of Jews from the rest of the population. Jews were placed outside of legal provisions that ordinarily guarantee the safety of daily life in a modern state. Jews were exposed to abusive ad-hoc measures adopted by the state's repressive organs and were completely deprived of the right to use the judicial system to defend themselves.

The Life of Jewish Community under Ion Antonescu and the Jewish Community's Response to the Holocaust in Romania

The Federation of Jewish Communities and the Resistance to Anti-Semitism and Terror

The Role of Dr. Wilhelm Filderman (September 1940 – December 1941)

The decisive role in the organization of the Jewish struggle for survival during the Holocaust was devolved to the institutions of the Jewish community.[1] An entire institutional network for religious services, community culture, education, and social assistance was charged with addressing the moral, social, intellectual, and material needs of Jews during the regimes of Ion Antonescu.

Between 1940 and 1941, the Federation of Jewish Communities (*Federaţia Uniunilor de Comunităţi Evreieşti* – FUCE) played the leading role. The president of the Federation, Dr. Wilhelm Filderman, was the initiator and political leader of Jewish life at that historical moment when the Jewish community in Romania was confronted with the most complex problems of its entire history. Although his activity had to be focused on solving everyday problems (as all the anti-Semitic measures had a direct effect at this level), his efforts did not have only an administrative dimension. Solving those many problems required great tact, political vision, flexibility, and the capacity to adapt to a specific historical context. Wilhelm Filderman adopted appropriate tactics in response, such as petitions and audiences with the prominent figures in Romanian political and clerical life who had influence in governmental circles and agreed to intervene on behalf of Jews. He continued this activity even after the dismantling of the Federation.

"The patent of petitions was held by Filderman," wrote Theodor Lavy, a Zionist leader. "The Zionists fought against the system of petitions. However, not only were petitions the sole means for expressing demands or protest, but the fact that they where delivered was a success in itself."[2] Between September 1940 and December 16, 1941, the Federation attempted to address problems arising from anti-Semitic measures, which were affecting the Jews in general, or only some social classes of the Jewish population, via petitions sent to Antonescu and other state authorities. It was Filderman who created a certain style of petition. His responses were always prompt and direct, citing statistical,

1. See doc. no. 163 in vol. *Documente* (henceforth: *Documente*) (Iaşi: Polirom, 2005).
2. Dr. Théodor Lavi, "Petiţiile doctorului Filderman," *Viaţa noastră*, Tel Aviv, November 30, 1979.

historical, and political arguments that reflected the negative effects of the measures on Romania as a whole, and not just on the survival of the Jewish community. He also demonstrated that the anti-Semitic measures in Romania were frequently harsher than in the other Axis countries. Ultimately, the Federation would face the consequences of the Legionary terror (September 1940 to January 1941), the acceleration of the Romanianization process, and the regime of terror imposed after Romania became engaged in the anti-Soviet war (e.g., deportations, the Iaşi pogrom, propaganda based the Judeo-Communist myth, anti-Semitic psychosis, hostage taking, the yellow star, deportations to Transnistria, the right to offer assistance to camp prisoners and people deported to Transnistria, and compulsory labor).

The Struggle against Legionary Terror and Legislation (September 1940 – January 1941)

After the first anti-Semitic measures adopted by the National Legionary State, the Federation's leadership considered the most important threat to the Jewish population – and to Romania, in general – to be from the Legionary movement and the Legionary ministries in the government. The leaders of the Federation, therefore, attempted to make personal contact with the head of the state.

On September 11, 1940, the Federation issued one of the first protest memoranda against the Ministry of Religions' decision to suppress most of the synagogues and forbid cultural-religious activities. According to the memorandum, "newborn Jewish children cannot receive religious blessings ; Jews cannot be religiously married anymore. Also, to bury our dead, we must await the approval of authorization requests to the Prefecture, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and to the Ministry of Religions." The memorandum – signed by Dr. Wilhelm Filderman, Chief Rabbi Dr. Alexandru Şafran (representative of the Mosaic Cult in the former Senate), and Josef M. Pincas (president of the Sephardic communities) – asserted that "public order is thereby being threatened and anarchy provoked, because religion was always public order's guarantee. By suppressing the places of worship, anarchy is instilled in the spirit, and this does not respect one of the most natural human rights, which is to believe in and pray to God."[3] At the same time, by delivering the memorandum, Dr. Wilhelm Filderman obtained and received an audience with the *Conducător* on September 17, 1940, which represented an encouraging success. During the meeting, Filderman presented the consequences of the decisions taken by the minister of religions and the many other problems that plagued the Jewish population during that period. He demonstrated that the adopted measures violated current laws and generated incertitude and mistrust among merchants and industrialists since all of the country's laws compelled them not to stop production and supply. Through his requests, based on law and justice, Filderman tried to avoid social and economic movements on a national level.

The *Conducător* wrote back, asking Filderman "to show understanding and to make the members of the Jewish community from all over the country understand that General Antonescu cannot perform miracles in one week… I assure Mr. Filderman that if his

3. Jean Ancel (ed.), *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 475-476.

colleagues do not undermine the regime directly or indirectly, the Jewish population will not suffer politically or economically. The word of General Antonescu is a pledge."[4] On September 19, a new decision of the Ministry of National Education for Religions and Arts suspended the implementation of the September 9 resolution on places of worship (temples and synagogues) until there was a definitive regulation on the status of associations and religious communities in Romania. This did not mean that the Legionnaires gave up closing the synagogues in some places or stopped terrorizing the Jewish population. To the dismay of the FUCE leadership, the promises of the *Conducător* were not fulfilled. It looked as though neither the enforcement of anti-Semitic measures nor the Legionnaires' terrorism could be stopped. Therefore, the FUCE leadership continued sending memoranda to the government presenting data and facts on the Legionnaires' violence and abuse of the Jewish inhabitants.

On December 9, 1940, after receiving one of the memoranda, the *Conducător* wrote the following resolution : "The Ministry of Internal Affairs together with a Legionnaire from the Legionary forum designed by Mr. Sima will urgently investigate all of these cases [in the memorandum]. The findings will be written in a report and presented to me as soon as possible. If I find that the claims are accurate, I will take measures. I pledge that I will respect the promises made to the citizens of this country, and I think that the partnership with the Legionnaires is real, not just words."[5] During December 1940, some dozens of memoranda were sent.

On January 2, 1941, Dr. Filderman sent a memorandum drawing a parallel between the situation of Jews in Germany, Italy, and Hungary and their situation in Romania. Filderman concluded :

> In three months of government, Romania has issued laws that go further not only than Italian and Hungarian laws, but also than German laws, before and after the issuance of the Nuremberg laws… Then, either Hitler and his Germans, Mussolini and Horthy were wrong, or Romania [will experience] a social and economic disaster, unprecedented and unique, with all the consequences that this disaster could engender… The multitude of laws and decisions adopted in these three months took more rights from Romanian Jews than the National Socialists have taken in eight years from German Jews, including the laws adopted after 1938 aiming to punish them ; to Italian Jews in eighteen years ; and to Hungarian Jews in three years. To this legislative over-performance we could add here instances of torture, confiscation of fortunes worth hundreds of millions… I sent a memorandum to you regarding these issues. You ordered an investigation… But this order was not carried out by the Tribunal, but by the defendants… In different places, Jewish claimants – called in front of a table on which there were revolvers – were obliged to [declare] that nobody had touched them… That investigation is distorted because it was not made objectively and worse, not only did the terror not stop… it grew.

In conclusion, Filderman reviewed all the promises made by the *Conducător* in regard to solving the Jewish problems and showed that these promises were not respected. He wrote, "Though the *Conducător* first promised that only the Jews who came to Romania after 1913 will be eliminated from society, in reality this expulsion is made without any criteria ; if the *Conducător* himself pledged that Jews will be replaced

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 475-476.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 47.

gradually, in reality they are replaced faster than they have been in other countries. Also, Jews cannot benefit from Romania's resources either in the future – as the *Conducător* has declared – or at present, because even today they cannot live, having been condemned to die of hunger, just when their proportion to the Romanian population is reduced by half. Therefore, Romanianization is half-solved."[6]

In his explanations, Filderman did not accuse Ion Antonescu, but he did accuse the Iron Guard. He stressed the difference between Ion Antonescu's approach and the Legion's as well as the fact that the Legionnaires revolted against the *Conducător*'s policy by trying to solve the Jewish problem on their own. At the same time, Filderman believed that as a Romanian and as a Jewish leader he had to make known to Ion Antonescu the gravity of the situation in which the Legionnaires had placed Romania. The documents drafted by the Federation leadership regarding the Legionary terror reflected the drama of the Jewish population's everyday life at that time and also Filderman's belief that to protect Jewish interests was also to protect the Romanian national interest. FUCE's memorandum on Legionary terror also contained an assessment of material damages : damage from the January 1941 pogrom alone amounted to 382,910,800 lei.[7]

FUCE's Response to Romanianization (February 1 – June 22, 1941)

After the exclusion of the Legionnaires from government and the reorganization of Antonescu's Cabinet, the Jewish population was confronted with new forms of anti-Semitic policies. Under these circumstances, the leadership of the Federation asked the government to do the following : restitute assets taken by Legionnaires ; interrupt the illegal closure of Jewish firms ; slow down Romanianization ; modify laws on the expropriation of urban assets ; discontinue ghettoization ; authorize the Jews of Panciu to return to their homes ; stop the evacuation of Sibiu Jews from their homes ; remove offensive language in official documents and end the slandering of Jews as saboteurs ; restore the right to work of Jewish craftsmen and apprentices ; and understand that the policy of dismissing Jews from their jobs would hurt the economy.

FUCE's Response to Terror and Exceptional Measures Declared during the War against the Soviet Union (June 22 – December 16, 1941)

In the context of the wartime regime of terror and at a time when the measures made Jews the object of extermination policies, the Federation focused all its forces and political wisdom on safeguarding Jewish lives. The pogroms of Iaşi, Bessarabia, and Bukovina as well as the deportations to Transnistria were also serious developments that put the FUCE leadership to the test. "In those days," wrote *Curierul israelit* in February 1945,

> …one needed prudence in efforts to safeguard the life of Jewish leaders themselves and to eliminate the possible serious and painful consequences that government measures had for the

6. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
7. Matatias Carp, list, CSIER, fond III, file no 55, f. 16.

> Jewish population. For this reason, Jewish leaders could not protest against the crimes in Bessarabia and Bukovina, because it would have been considered an insult to the army ; also they could not protest against the description of the Iaşi pogrom in the Council of Ministers' communiqué as to the execution of 500 Judeo-Communists. They could not protest and interfere, directly or in writing, against the extremely dangerous and suspicion-laden context of the first [Anglo-American] air raids on Bucharest, when Jews were blamed by police for signaling targets to the bomber pilots.[8]

Still, the FUCE leaders carried on with the same intensity. But they began to employ another type of discourse in their memoranda, one that focused on such points as the patriotic feelings of Jews in the Old Kingdom, Jewish participation in the Romanian wars for independence and territorial unification, the re-enlisting of certain Jews in the army, the accusation of "Judeo-communism" (contesting it by showing that in the Soviet Union the Jewish religion and Jewish bourgeoisie were persecuted as much as the religions and bourgeoisie of other ethnic groups there). They also asked that criminal punishments be meted out on an individual, rather than collective basis and protested against mass evacuations and deportations to camps and to hostage taking, since – they pointed out – all of these measures were illegal.

The Iaşi pogrom (June 29 – July 6, 1941) was a taboo topic with FUCE leaders, who confined their efforts to helping survivors of the death trains, who had been deported to Călăraşi-Ialomiţa and Podu Iloaiei, to return to their homes. After the bloody events in Iaşi, the FUCE leadership released an official announcement to the Jews, signed by Filderman, Rabbi Şafran, and Secretary general Matatias Carp. Jews were asked to show maximum social discipline and obedience to the rule of law. They were told to black out the lights, not to listen to or spread rumors, not to discuss military and political matters, not to dispose of or waste food, and to respect the army, "the country's shield and also our shield, a shield for everyone."

Along with his colleagues, Filderman carried out a steadfast struggle against the mandatory wearing of the yellow star. They drafted the first protest on July 15, 1941, which aimed for the abrogation of the law, claiming that it would "hinder Jews from traveling, from buying supplies, from reporting to the authorities."[9] Filderman sent a memorandum to Marshal Antonescu on September 5, which stated : "I cannot transmit an order to the Jewish community without having a legal basis. I have no other options – if the order is maintained – than to accept the consequences and give up the leadership of Jewish community in the country by offering my resignation."[10] On September 6, in a memorandum to Nicodim, the Patriarch of Romania, Filderman and Şafran requested the protection of the Jews in the name of religion and human rights.[11] On September 8, Filderman obtained an audience with Marshal Antonescu and came accompanied by the Jewish architect H. Clejan. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the yellow star. "After a short conversation, the Marshal said to Mihai Antonescu : 'All right, issue an order to forbid the wearing of the sign throughout the country.'"[12] During a session of the Council of Ministers, the Marshal explained that the measure had "great consequences

8. *Curierul israelit* (henceforth : *C.I.*), 35, series 2, February 23 and 25, 1945.
9. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 428.
10. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 123.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

for the public order and from other points of view. The representatives of Jewish community came to me, and I promised them to strike down this measure." Considering the results of this „battle," Israeli historian Theodor Lavy observed, „it was a battle in which the victims were victorious."[13]

Federation leaders were also prompt in mobilizing Jews for the tasks demanded by the regime. Thus, FUCE mobilized Jews to pay a tax-in-kind for the so-called reunification debt. The Federation's appeal, which led to Jewish compliance, stated: „Our task is to give to the country all we can give and even more, unconditionally, for the country's wealth is our wealth and everyone's wealth. The duty to pay this tax-in-kind is the mark of the highest expression of patriotism." Although they were unable collect the entire requested amount of ten billion lei, the Jewish population did donate four times more than the other nationalities. By May 20, 1942, Jews donated 1,994,209,141 lei.[14] After this date, the duty to pay the remaining amount was transformed into a tax.

Desperate FUCE Attempts to Stop Deportations and Rescue the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina

FUCE mobilized Jews from across the country to show solidarity with the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina, the counties of Dorohoi and Herţa, and those deported to Transnistria from all over Romanian territory. (Most Jews in Romania had relatives among those deported.) In light of the news coming from Bessarabia and Bukovina, Filderman wrote two memoranda. The first was sent on October 9, 1941, to Marshal Antonescu and his wife which stated that deportation was tantamount to death. He then begged that the deportations be stopped.[15] The second memorandum was sent on October 11 to the Marshal. In this memorandum, Filderman repeated, "It is a death sentence, death without any charges except being defined as a Jew. I beg you do not let such a tragedy happen."[16]

On October 14, 1941, at 7 a.m., Filderman announced that, at his request, he was going to meet with Mihai Antonescu, vice president of the Council of Ministers. The meeting lasted forty-five minutes. Mihai Antonescu promised to give the order that Jewish intellectuals, craftsmen, industrialists, merchants, and all urban and rural landowners not be deported. At the end of the meeting, Filderman filed a memorandum in which he beseeched Mihai Antonescu to take measures to bring back the deportees, one of the most important reasons being that among them were Jews from the Old *Regat*, Jewish veterans of Romania's wars, decorated disabled veterans, and war orphans.

On October 19, Filderman sent another letter to Marshal Antonescu informing him of Mihai Antonescu's agreement to spare all the Jewish intellectuals, craftsmen, and industrialists in Cernăuţi – a measure that had not been applied in Chişinău, where all Jews

13. Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniştri, 1940-1944*, (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996), p. 307 (henceforth: Benjamin, *Stenograme*).
14. Carp, *loc. cit*.
15. Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră. Fapte şi documente. Suferinţele evreilor din România, 1940-1944* (Bucharest: Diogene, 1996), vol. 3, p. 96.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

were forced to leave, and their bodies "lay between Orhei and Rezina." Filderman dwelled on the illegal nature of these deportations, which also spread to southern Bukovina and Dorohoi county. Filderman emphasized, "I did not protect and I do not protect the guilty. Those guilty must be punished. I protect only the innocent people and those who are deprived of their human rights, granted by law, as a result of an administrative measure." Filderman asked the Marshal to extend Mihai Antonescu's decision to spare some professional categories to the Jews in Bessarabia, "[b]ecause intellectuals, merchants, industrialists and landowners suffered under the Bolshevik regime, either Christians or Jews, and not only Romanians, but also thousands of Jews in Bukovina and Bessarabia were deported to Siberia."[17]

Despite the pressure, the *Conducător* did not agree to review his decision regarding the deportation of all Jews, especially from Bessarabia. His reaction to Filderman's appeals was quite strong. In response to the October 19 letter, he accused the Jews, especially those from the new provinces, of causing the "terrible suffering of the Romanian people in 1940, when all that happened had the Jewish community as source of inspiration and execution."[18] Several days later, on October 26, almost all newspapers with a wide distribution published Marshal Antonescu's response to Filderman's October 9 and October 11 letters. The *Conducător* reproached Filderman for acting as prosecutor instead of a defendant because he defended Jews who had committed "heinous acts against the tolerant and hospitable Romanian people." The *Conducător* then concluded, "their hatred is the hatred of everyone, it is your hatred."[19] Following the publication of Antonescu's open letter, the authorities launched a domestic and international press campaign. This campaign was used to intensify anti-Semitic policies.

Undaunted, Filderman carried on his struggle. On October 25 he sent a reply to the *Conducător*, in which he reaffirmed his support for the merciless punishment of persons found guilty and his objection to the unfairness of innocents being sent to their deaths.[20] He reinforced his argument that Jews could not be identified with Bolshevism, just as the Romanian people should not be conflated with the Iron Guard.[21] On November 3, after referring to examples of Jewish devotion to Romania, Filderman stressed that Jews had participated in the wars for the retrieval of Romanian territory and that Jews never acted against the state and the Romanian people's interests.[22]

Ovidiu Al. Vlădescu, secretary general to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, answered on behalf of the Marshal. Vlădescu sarcastically dismissed Filderman's pro-Romanian and patriotic statements on behalf of Jews as "lawyer's tricks" and then reaffirmed the Marshal's policies on the Jews: first, all Jews who came to Romania after 1914 and those from the liberated counties had to leave with no exceptions; and second, Jews from the Old Kingdom and those who came to Romania before 1914 could stay if they respected the laws of the state; yet those who were considered communists, were involved in subversive propaganda, were associated with the state's enemies, or finally, those considered saboteurs, were also slated to leave. He then added, "The rest can be

17. *Buletinul Centrului Muzeului şi Arhivei Istorice a Evreilor din România*, no. 6 (2000), pp. 75-77.
18. See footnote 17.
19. Carp, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
20. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 287.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 287, footnote 20.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 330-331.

tolerated as long as they do not steal our rights."[23] FUCE's activities angered Romanian authorities and the German advisor for Jewish Affairs, Gustav Richter. As a consequence, FUCE was dissolved by Decree-law no. 3415 of December 16, 1941.[24]

The Establishment of the Jewish Center and Its Role in Jewish Society (1942-1944)

After the dissolution of FUCE, the Jewish Center (*Centrala Evreilor*) became the only organization authorized to represent the Jewish community's interests and to organize community life by following government policy priorities. Indeed, the Jewish Center was the Romanian version of the German *Judenrat*. Marshal Antonescu approved the political and organizational structures of the Jewish Center as well as the organization of its leadership, which were published by the *Monitorul Oficial* on January 30, 1942. The Jewish Center was led by a president, secretary general, and steering committee, which worked on issues such as professional training, migration, social assistance, schools, culture, media, publishing, finance, and religion.

The government charged the Jewish Center with the following tasks : the representation of Jewish interests in Romania and the administration of the former Federation of Jewish Communities ; the organization of the Jews according to governmental regulations ; the retraining and organization of Jewish labor ; the preparation of Jewish migration ; the organization of Jewish cultural and educational activities ; the organization of Jewish social assistance ; the organization of Jewish professionals ; the publication of a Jewish journal in Romania ; the sharing of information and data demanded by Romanian authorities regarding Romanianization ; the updating and filing of all Jewish graduation papers ; the management of Jewish memoranda sent to government authorities ; and the execution of all government regulations and administrative orders through the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs.[25] Furthermore, in its local activities, the Jewish Center used its county offices and the local communities. H. Streitman was appointed the first president of the Jewish Center. N. Gingold, originally the secretary general, replaced Streitman as president in December 1942.

Despite the dissolution of the Federation, local Jewish communities continued their activities. According to Jewish Center resolution no. 48/1942, "existing Jewish communities organized in accordance with the statutory law on religious denominations shall continue to function."[26] These communities further coordinated the organization of the Jewish faith as well as Jewish schools and cultural institutions. They also coordinated the administration of social assistance and the organization of a statistical service. Yet, on June 25, 1943, Government Resolution no. 189 mandated that the leadership committees of the Jewish communities and evacuees were to be dismantled. They decided instead to establish a number of representative committees, which would be attached to the local

23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
25. Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944*, vol. 1, *Legislaţia antievreiască* (henceforth : *Legislaţia*), no. 53, p. 178.
26. *Activitatea Centralei Evreilor din România* (Bucharest, 1944), p. 40.

committee of the host communities. These representative committees were responsible for the administration of the community's patrimony, registration of the evacuated population, and collaboration with the committee of the host community for introducing and applying measures regarding the interests of evacuees.[27]

The communities, like all the other Jewish institutions, conducted their activities under the control of the Jewish Center. The Center's leadership repeatedly asked for obedience, evoking the specter of harsh punishments. In its attempt to impose authority, the Jewish Center could rely on the support of the state administration through the government representative for Jewish issues. Subsequently, the Jewish Center was placed by law under the strict control of Radu Lecca. By the Ministry of Labor's resolution of September 8, 1943, Lecca's job specifications were: (1) to organize, with the Army High Command, Jewish compulsory labor; (2) to supervise and control the enforcement of regulations on the practice of certain professions by Jews; (3) to replace the government representative for the regulation of the status of Jews; (4) to draft, in agreement with the Ministry of Interior, the policies necessary for the surveillance of the Jews, as required by the protection of public order and safety; (5) to regulate and authorize, under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, temporary travel permits for Jews; (6) to regulate, authorize, and organize Jewish migration; (7) to solve all economic, social, and cultural problems of the Jewish community; and (8) to suggest any other measures concerning Jewish matters.

The president of the Jewish Center appointed its clerks, auxiliary institutions, and representatives in the country, all of whom had to be approved by Lecca. The Jewish Center's leadership also had to submit detailed reports on their activities to Lecca several times a year. Furthermore, Lecca had control over the budget and financial balance sheet of the Jewish Center.[28] Upon its inauguration, the Jewish Center sent the following message to the Jewish community:

> By order of Marshal Ion Antonescu, the Jewish Center in Romania was established and invested with the mission to manage the interests of the Jewish community in Romania. We were called to organize the Jews under the new regime. This regime asks Jews to obey all government legislation, to be disciplined, to support national priorities, to refrain from upsetting Romanians, to lead a life of decency, and to obey the decisions and advice of the Jewish Center.[29]

The Center's demands were indicative of the new policy of the Antonescu regime regarding the Jews. A few days after its establishment, the Center leadership (president Streitman and his secretary-general, Dr. Gingold), were summoned by the prefect of Ilfov, General Emil Palangeanu, who asked them to collaborate on maintaining public order and discipline among the Jews. He also asked the Jewish Center to watch out for Jewish extremists and to prevent them from to stirring up the population. He advised the leadership of the Jewish Center to establish an internal police, which would be able to contribute to the enforcement of official legislation and administrative measures. The Center leadership was given a list of hostages who would be held responsible for Jewish law breaking.

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27. *Legislaţia*, no. 57, pp. 185-190.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
29. *Ibid.*, no. 81, pp. 250-251.

On February 24, 1942, General Vasiliu summoned Streitman and Gingold to the Ministry of Interior and promised them he would refrain from adopting any severe measure against Jews. He also asked that the Jewish population be made to understand that it had been under constant suspicion after the attitude it displayed during the 1940 withdrawal from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, so the government was obliged to take safeguard measures. General Vasiliu also ordered the dismantling of hostage camps, though that did not mean that all hostages were set free. The Jewish Center drafted a new list of Jewish leaders taken hostage in April 1943. Of course, none were members of the Jewish Center's leadership.[30]

The Census of Persons Considered to be of "Jewish Blood"

The first official task assigned to the authorities of the Center was to organize the census of those considered to be "of Jewish blood,"[31] which followed patterns in Germany and German-occupied countries, where the *Judenrat* was typically assigned such tasks. The census was considered necessary in order to give an accurate assessment of the number of Jews – a step necessary for the bureaucratic organization of deportations, forced labor camps, and physical extermination. The results of the census were to be deposited in the Archive of the Jewish Center and put at the disposal of Gustav Richter to help him organize the anticipated deportation of Jews from the Old *Regat* and southern Transylvania.

The Policy of Money Extortion

One of Center's core tasks was the extortion of money from the Jewish population, a process in which Radu Lecca played a decisive role. "The need for extra-budgetary money was continuously rising," Lecca wrote in his memoirs. "Mrs. Antonescu asked for money for her patronage, Mihai Antonescu was always demanding money for the county of Argeş, where he built schools, churches, etc., in order to gain popularity in case elections would be organized. And then Killinger had many needs, too…" According to Lecca's statements, Jews were saved precisely because of the amounts they gave to the above-mentioned persons. "All of these enormous expenditures," he concluded, "were being covered by the fees levied on exemptions from forced labor and on authorizations for professional practice."[32] These funds were transferred to the government via Lecca based on his signed approvals.[33]

30. See *Documente*, no. 231.
31. *Legislaţia*, no. 54, pp. 179-180.
32. Radu Lecca, *Eu i-am salvat pe evreii din România* (Bucharest: Roza Vânturilor, 1994), p. 205.
33. *Ibid*.

Actions against Deportations in 1942

Ample documentary material records Dr. Filderman's activities after the Federation was closed. Although marginalized, Filderman remained at the forefront of rescue efforts. He acted on the belief that he had an obligation "as a Jew and as a Romanian citizen who knows the Jews' problems better than anyone else, to get the attention of the leading organizations on the serious [possibility] that some anti-Semitic measures might have deleterious consequences both for the Jews and for Romania's situation."[34] Thus, he was the Jewish leader who led the fight against the resumption of deportations to Transnistria in 1942. Filderman suggested that deportations should be used only as an extreme measure decided by courts for well defined offenses. He also urged the government to respect the principle of individual responsibility and to make sure that the families of the condemned would not be punished unless they were caught hiding the criminal.[35] Simultaneously, Filderman took steps against the Nazi-requested deportations of the Jews from southern Transylvania and Banat to the Nazi extermination camps, which the Antonescu regime had accepted during this first phase.[36]

In his memoranda to the government, Filderman referred to the long-term presence of the Jews in Transylvania. By comparing the situation of the Jews in Romania to that of other countries, he recommended that Italy and Germany should be left to assume the risk of deportations. He suggested that Romania should solve the "Jewish issue" once there was a common decision on the fate of Jews in all Axis countries and on the fate of the European countries themselves. Filderman drafted several memoranda to be signed by Romanian Transylvanians (intellectuals, traders, factory owners, craftsmen, presidents of the Chambers of Commerce) and sent to Antonescu. The essence of these memoranda was that the deportations should not take place because Transylvanian Jews were useful to local socio-economic life. His efforts were reinforced by the activism of local Jewish leaders from Transylvania and Banat, and the pressure put on the Antonescu regime by the representatives of the Jewish community contributed to the government's decision to postpone the mass deportations of Romanian Jews.

The Tax in Kind, the Ambiguous Position of the Jewish Center, and Filderman's Deportation

In spring 1943 the government decided to impose a new exceptional tax-in-kind worth 4 billion lei on the Jews. Radu Lecca sent the decision to the Jewish Center on May 11, 1943 :

> Please be aware that the government takes into account the fact that Romanian soldiers give their lives in combat, while the majority of the Jewish population continues to enjoy the freedom to trade and live protected from war. The government has therefore decided that the Jewish population should make an effort to pay 4 billion lei as a special tax-in-kind… Please be aware that the government has decided that the Jews who do not want to pay the tax… shall

34. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 551.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Stenograme*, no. 145, p. 442.

> be punished by deportation to Transnistria, and their property shall be nationalized… We would like to draw your attention to the responsibility that the leaders of the Jewish community have… in order to enforce the above-mentioned decision of the government.[37]

Gingold summoned Filderman and other Jewish leaders for an advisory meeting. After reviewing the devastating effects of the 1941-1943 anti-Jewish legislation, Filderman indicated that the Jewish community in Romania was unable to pay the full amount. In contrast to Filderman, Gingold adopted the stance taken by Lecca : Jews were privileged, and so it was natural that they should pay additional taxes. Filderman rebutted this argument by showing that Jews did not ask to be spared from military obligations, that they, too, were serving the country in labor detachments for which, unlike the Romanian soldiers, they received no healthcare, pensions, clothes, or work equipment from the Romanian government.[38]

Gingold asked Filderman to submit his position in writing. Filderman's text was addressed to Gingold. Gingold then gave it to the *Conducător*, who found it impertinent. As a punishment, Filderman was deported to Transnistria at the end of May 1943 and set free after three months, following the personal protests of key Romanian political figures, such as King Michael, Queen Mother Elena, and NPP leader Iuliu Maniu.

Gingold's Resignation and the Intensification of Jewish Efforts

Upon his return from Transnistria, Filderman continued to be in the forefront of actions in defense of the Jews. A chronology of meetings he had with different ministers and other officials in spring and summer 1944 shows some of the critical problems facing the Jewish community in this final stage of confrontation with the anti-Semitic policy of the Antonescu regime. On March 7, Filderman pleaded with the National Center for Romanianization against the decision to evacuate the Jews belonging to "exempted categories" from the Romanianized houses. Then, on March 18, Filderman discussed with the minister of interior the need to take precautions for the safety of Jews in areas where the German forces were retreating. On March 20, he requested that Jews be allowed to leave cities with a high concentration of German troops. Later, on April 25, Filderman filed a memorandum with the Ministry of Interior asking for clarification about the rumor of government plans to make the wearing of the yellow star compulsory and the ghettoization of Jews from the Moldavian cities of Iaşi, Vaslui, Bârlad, Huşi, Tecuci, Galaţi, Focşani, Bacău, Piatra-Neamţ, and Roman. Then, on May 12, he protested against the government decision to form labor battalions in northern Moldavia and to charge Jewish communities with providing equipment, food, transportation, and accommodation for these detachments. Filderman argued that these government measures were illegal since they ignored statutory limits on the ages of those drafted in the battalions (the second measure ordered all Jews between fifteen and fifty-five years old to participate in labor detachments) as well as the fact that it did not exclude those with exemption cards. On May 19, Filderman presented the Presidency of the Council of

37. CSIER, fond III, file no. 405, f. 30.
38. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, pp. 567-571.

Ministers a petition regarding the right of Jews to use the bomb shelters during air raids. He wrote : "After the Jews were forbidden the holy right to life, after being denied resettlement both in villages and towns, now they are being denied the right to protect themselves by using bomb shelters." He sent a note to the Ministry of Interior on August 23, informing the minister that on the night of August 19, on Ştefan Mihăileanu Street at the corner of the Secret Service headquarters, somebody had written on the wall : "The Voice of London = The Voice of Judah." The same message was found written on a building on Carol Boulevard. He argued that both inscriptions incited the population against the Jews.[39]

Given this intense activity and its results, it became obvious that Filderman was the true leader of the Jewish community in Romania. This *de facto* power and the fact that he could rely on some leaders in the Jewish Center itself helped him to influence the decisions taken by the Jewish Center. Filderman advocated continuous resistance, rather than open rebellion. His numerous memoranda were a form of protest and resistance that affirmed the dignity of Romanian Jewry and strongly contributed to survival in times of extreme oppression.

Israeli Historian Bela Vago evaluated the role of the Jewish Center in this way :

> …the Center was imposed on the Jews ; its leaders accepted their roles without a mandate from the Jews, and were seen as representatives of the anti-Semitic regime and of the Nazis, and not of the Jews. They were not considered as representatives of Jewish interests even when subjectively they were acting as such. By serving the interests of the Nazis and Romanian anti-Semitic authorities, they facilitated the task of the rulers in depriving the Jews of their property ; in ejecting tens of thousands of Jews from their dwellings ; in mobilizing and exploiting manpower and material resources ; in humiliating the Jewish population ; and bringing about the rapid impoverishment of the Jewish masses. However, this assessment leaves the arena wide open for accusations ranging from clamors for death sentences to traitors, to brandings as an opportunistic, servile, effacing fringe-group that subjectively tried to help the Jewish community precisely by exploiting its privilege as a sector of the anti-Semitic establishment.
>
> The Center did not become a *Judenrat* and a Nazi tool as was intended…[40]

The former leadership of Romanian Jewry had the possibility to counteract some of the anti-Jewish measures. Their political power and influence increased at the same rate as the international situation moved in favor of the Allies, while the Jewish Center's leaders became increasingly isolated. However, it must be emphasized that the Jewish Center sought assistance from former Jewish leaders – sometimes for tactical reasons, sometimes out of conviction. Whether directly or indirectly, this helped the Jewish population by encouraging cultural life and leading to acts of resistance and rescue in the face of government plans for deportations to Transnistria. Thus, the Jewish Center reflected the general Romanian policy ambivalence during the second part of the war by its subservience to or collaboration with the regime, but also by some rescue efforts.

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39. CSIER, fond III, file Filderman, f. 30-33.
40. Bela Vago, "The Ambiguity of Collaborationism : the Center of the Jews in Romania, 1942-1944," in Yisrael Gutman and Cynthia J. Haft (eds.), *Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Nazi Europe, 1942-1945*, trans. Dinah Cohen, *et al*. (Jerusalem : Yad Vashem, 1979), p. 308.

Social Assistance and Health Care in Times of Oppression

Both FUCE and the Jewish Center provided social assistance during these times of state-organized oppression. An important part was played by the Autonomous Commission of Assistance (Comisia Autonomă de Ajutorare – CAA), which was established in January 1941. The CAA benefited from the beginning from the subvention paid by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which was allowed to continue its work in Romania during the war. During the first months of its activity, the CAA worked to help the victims of the Legionary pogrom. Later, in summer 1941, it focused on assisting those evacuated from the countryside and small towns and the victims of the Iaşi pogrom. In late 1941, through the efforts of the Federation, the CAA began helping Jews deported to Transnistria. The authorization was given on December 17, 1941.

The International Red Cross channeled large sums of aid money through the CAA to Romania. In January 1943, the first delegation of the CAA and the Social Assistance Department of the Jewish Center went to Transnistria. Their mission was to become acquainted with the realities there and to supervise the distribution of aid. The report drafted by F. Şaraga, head of the delegation, indicated that (1) all the help that was sent through the Jewish Center covered only an extremely small part of what was necessary ; (2) the situation of the 5,000 orphans was disastrous ; (3) the whole camp population was underfed, weak, and lacked clothing. The report also indicated that the deportees could be saved only by using them in productive jobs and by providing them with more clothes, medicine, and food.[41] But in spite of all the efforts, the help continued to be insufficient. After his return from Transnistria, Filderman wrote a report to the prime minister, dated August 8, 1943, describing the critical situation of the deportees. Clearly, for the leaders of the Romanian Jewish community the fate of the deportees in Transnistria represented a constant preoccupation. The efforts to save and aid the Jews there were part of the overall struggle for survival.

The Jewish community worked to supply healthcare for Jewish work detachments since no government subsidy was offered at any time. Because Jews were barred from using Romanian hospitals, and because Jewish hospitals and health centers as well as personal and community ownership had been Romanianized, it was crucial for the Jews living under the Antonescu regime to receive the social and medical assistance carried out by the Jewish Center and other community organizations.

The Repatriation of Jews Deported to Transnistria

As the front neared Romanian territory, Jewish leaders and Filderman, in particular, increased their efforts to enable the return of the Transnistria deportees. Thus, on January 2, 1943, Filderman pleaded with the government to save the two- to sixteen-year-old orphans by sending them to Cernăuţi. He argued that these children could not possibly be blamed for any crimes and that given their poor health, emigration was not a viable

41. CSIER, fond III, file no. 300, ff. 200-205.

solution. He also requested of Ion and Mihai Antonescu that Jewish deportees originally from the Old *Regat* and Dorohoi be repatriated, as there was a high risk that most of them would die.

The issue of the repatriation of deportees was high on Filderman's agenda after his return from Transnistria. Thus, on August 4, 1943, he informed General Vasiliu about the plight of the deportees from Dorohoi, Darabani, and Herţa who were interned in the Moghilev camp. On September 23, 1943, he asked Vasiliu for the Jews in Transnistria to be moved away from the German army's paths of retreat. Filderman sent a memorandum to Vasiliu and Mihai Antonescu on October 12, 1943, explaining that many innocents had died in the camps, and on November 17, 1943, he was informed that Antonescu had ordered the concentration of all deportees in Vijniţa, where the Jewish Center was asked to build barracks for them (the decision was unfortunate as the allocated space was too small to accommodate all deportees).[42] On November 24, Filderman submitted a list to the Council of Ministers of localities where the repatriated could be resettled : Jews from the Old *Regat* and southern Transylvania were to return to their homes ; those suspected of dangerous political liaisons were to be interned in an Old *Regat* camp ; Jews from Dorohoi and southern Bukovina were to be resettled in county capitals ; and those from Northern Bukovina were to be resettled in Cernăuţi, Storojineţ, Gura Humorului, and Siret. Finally, the memorandum suggested that Bessarabian Jews be resettled in the towns of Chişinău, Bălţi, and Soroca, while healthy people could be sent to other towns. Special proposals were drafted on family reunification, and the government was asked to pay the transportation costs of repatriation.

On February 25, 1944, Filderman was received at the Ministry of Interior, where he asked once again for the repatriation of all deportees, presenting the issue as a matter of life and death. He argued against the charge that the Romanian population in Bessarabia and Bukovina was hostile to repatriation by explaining that this argument unfairly associated the Jewish population with a group of agitators and speculators and that in Dorohoi the Romanian population welcomed the return of the deportees.

Partial repatriation began in the second half of December 1943. On December 20, the 6,053 Jewish inhabitants of Dorohoi who survived deportation were sent back to their hometown. On March 6, 1944, 1,846 children of the over 5,000 orphans were repatriated. Filderman sent a note to the government on March 11, 1944, offering humanitarian reasons (over half of the deportees had died in two years) and pointing out the economic benefits of repatriation as well as politically positive outcomes (e.g., the Soviets could not use the Romanian Jewish deportees).[43]

Antonescu ordered general repatriation in March 1944, yet the decision came too late to organize the repatriation of the last group of deportees, which happened to be the most numerous. Only the following categories of deportees were repatriated by train : inhabitants of Dorohoi, orphan children, the 500 political prisoners from the Vapniarka camp, and former internees in Grossulovo. Between March 17 and March 30, 1944, the CAA and delegates from the Jewish Center's Department for Assistance, together with the Romanian authorities, also organized the repatriation of 2,538 people from different camps and ghettos in Transnistria. The fate of the remaining tens of thousands of

42. *Stenograme*, no. 176, pp. 525-529.
43. See footnote 39.

deportees left in Transnistria is difficult to know. In a letter to Mihai Antonescu, Filderman expressed his regret for the failure to repatriate all Jews because of the postponement of the general repatriation decision, a "delay that, according to the information received up to today, cost the lives of about 15,000 deportees."

The Parallel Jewish Education System

The October 14, 1940, law on the Jewish educational system had extremely deleterious effects for Romanian Jews, who were consequently forced into a cultural ghetto. In this context, the Jewish community and then the Jewish Center took upon themselves the difficult task of ensuring education at the primary, secondary, even university levels. In fact, the reorganization of the Jewish educational system in the new circumstances was an expression of Jewish resistance and determination not to let the young be victims of moral, intellectual, and professional degradation.

According to S.M. Litman, principal of the Jewish "Cultura" High School in Bucharest, "the way in which the students expelled from the public education system were absorbed [into a parallel system] was a chapter of glory and a miracle of perseverance." But everything happened against the background of oppression, massacres, compulsory work, deportations, and insecurity. All of these developments affected both students and teachers. Moreover, many school buildings were requisitioned and transformed into barracks for Hitler's troops. Classes were held in old houses of worship, former restaurants, and insalubrious basements or attics. Yet, educational activities continued in spite of these many hardships and in spite of the fact that both the students and teachers were recruited for compulsory work.

Cultural and Artistic Life: The Jewish Theater in Bucharest

Many educated Jews, especially those who specialized in humanities, writers, journalists, and artists, were banished from the cultural infrastructure of Romanian society. As a consequence, they continued working in the Jewish community and became involved in cultural, educational, artistic, or publishing work. A reciprocal relationship was established in which both sides benefited: the community and then the Jewish Center understood not just the cultural, but also the social importance of continuing traditional Jewish cultural life; in their turn, Jewish intellectuals understood that involvement in these activities was a chance to survive, economically and morally.

Thus, in the new context of cultural ghettoization, Jewish educational, religious and cultural institutions became, for a certain part of the Jewish population, genuine forms of moral and economic support. Of course, nothing was similar to the times before the war. Instead of dozens of Jewish newspapers, now there was only one, and most of the Jewish cultural activity occurred in Bucharest. But even there, the only Jewish cultural center left was the Barasheum Theater. Nevertheless, given the sheer concentration of Jewish intellectual elites in this city, Jewish cultural life there was exceptionally intense relative to what happened outside Bucharest, where synagogues, schools, and Jewish

intellectuals lost their traditional cultural functions. In these areas, Jewish schools remained the last bulwark against complete cultural ghettoization.

Synagogue and Religious Life

Despite the presence of undercover government agents, synagogues were always full. Former Chief Rabbi Şafran recounted, "On the two Sabbaths I preached [at the Malbim Synagogue], a large number of Jews came especially to hear my sermon. As there was not enough space for them all, they crowded at the windows and doors of the synagogue and filled the surrounding streets."[44] This heavy attendance was an expression of Jewish solidarity, of hope that in the synagogue they could find out the latest news about the events that were to be expected. It was also a means of passive resistance against persecution and discrimination, as for example, when the first commemoration of the victims of the Bucharest pogrom (January 22-23, 1941) was held on March 4, 1941. Rabbi Şafran's sermon was received by those present both as a cry of revolt and as encouragement to face the hardships. The manner in which the entire ceremony was conducted, in a synagogue full to capacity, implicitly represented an act of passive resistance. Even in the days of the Jewish Center and of the harsh control exercised by the Ministry of Religions, the synagogue remained a site for educating the youth, a place for recollection and mutual support. In spite of the uncertainties of everyday life, in spite of severe constraints and threats, Romanian Jews followed their traditions, maybe with even more fervor than in peaceful times.

Conclusion

The Jewish framework of institutions functioned along the lines of civil society organizations and was closely associated with Jewish daily life and the material, moral, and spiritual fate of the discriminated minority. Even the Jewish Center – an institution directly subordinated to the state – was compelled by the circumstances of those times to factor in the interests of formal and informal traditional Jewish institutions.

In more peaceful times, when Jews enjoyed the same rights as all other Romanian citizens and were integrated into Romanian society – at least according to the constitutional and democratic provisions – the Jewish community's institutions were generally confined to ethno-cultural and religious issues. When Jews lost many of the rights of citizenship and became the object of statutory discrimination, when they were deprived of their property and their jobs, the community institutions were there to help manage the crisis and work on behalf of individual and collective survival through self-management, self-administration, self-organization, and most important, mutual assistance in every life.

44. Alexandru Şafran, *Resisting the Storm : Romania, 1940-1947*, ed. Jean Ancel (Jerusalem : Yad Vashem, 1987), p. 74.

The Deportation of the Roma and Their Treatment in Transnistria

The Antonescu Regime and the Emergence of the "Gypsy Problem"

The deportation of Roma to Transnistria, from its conception to its implementation, was altogether the work of the Antonescu government. Before the Antonescu regime, there was no "Gypsy policy" to speak of in Romania. Politicians did not see the Roma as a "problem." Even though they were registered in censuses as a separate ethnic group with their own language, the Roma were treated more as a social category. Consequently, Romanian authorities never actively treated the Roma as a national minority *per se*; therefore, legislation concerning minorities was never applicable to them. Moreover, interwar Romanian nationalism was not accompanied by anti-Roma manifestations, and the Romanization policies of the 1938 Goga government and the Royal Dictatorship did not pertain to the Roma. The General Commissariat for Minorities (*Comisariatul General al Minorităţilor*), established in 1938, never considered the Roma within the scope of its jurisdiction.

If the "Jewish problem" figured largely in Romanian interwar politics, there was no comparable "Gypsy problem." Romanian political parties and politicians even developed collaborative relationships with Roma leaders, some of whom became formal members of Romanian parties. During the 1937 electoral campaign, the *Ţara Noastră* journal of the National Christian Party (Octavian Goga's party) printed a special weekly for the Roma.[1]

The situation of the Roma in the decades preceding World War II is well known, mainly due to sociological and ethnographic research done in those years.[2] The 1930 census recorded 262,501 people who declared themselves to be of Gypsy descent (1.5 percent of Romania's population). Of these, 221,726 (84.5 percent) lived in villages and 40,775 (15.5 percent) in towns. Most of these resided primarily on the outskirts, yet during the economic transformations of the epoch, such as the land reform of 1920, many rose to the same social status as Romanian peasants. This contributed to the integration of these socially mobile Roma into the village community, a process that had begun with their sedentarization. Moreover, the social and economic development of many Roma led to the emergence of a new type of Roma elite (artists, traders, and intellectuals) who became involved in community affairs and even formed Roma associations. The most important

1. Viorel Achim, *Ţiganii în istoria României* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1998), p. 132.
2. On the Roma in the interwar period, including their perception by the Romanian society, *ibid.*, pp. 120-132.

was the General Union of Roma in Romania, established in 1933, which formally continued to function during the war.

Sociological studies from the thirties explored the socio-economic role of Roma in Romanian villages as well as their relations with the ethnic majority. These studies showed that the Roma were part of the community and worked as craftsmen and farmers. Still, prejudices and stereotypes, some of which were inherited from the centuries of Roma slavery, affected them unfavorably ; yet overall, the relations between the Roma and Romanian peasants were good. A significant number of Roma chose to assimilate into the majority culture.

During the same decade, however, the Roma became the target of some Romanian proponents of eugenics.[3] Drawing on the ideas of Robert Ritter, the intellectual mastermind of the Roma tragedy in Nazi Germany, these Romanian researchers considered the Roma to be a plague. In supporting their opinion, they argued that the Roma were socially peripheral paupers with high criminality rates. These self-appointed experts racialized the Roma and warned of the menace that the ongoing assimilation of the Roma presented to the "racial purity" of Romanians. Iordache Făcăoaru, a leading proponent of eugenics and biopolitics, argued the following :

> Assimilation is activated and made more threatening not only by the great number of Gypsies, but also by specific Romanian socio-political elements : the traditional Romanian tolerance, the spread of Gypsies over all Romanian territory, their mixture with the Romanian population in rural and urban areas, unsegregated schools, the fact that Gypsies were given land by the state, sedentarization, the lack of any segregation legislation, and finally, the protection granted to them by the government.[4]

The same author decried the fact that although Romania had the highest number of Roma in Europe – he estimated at least 400,000 – the authorities had not taken any measures against them. Yet, despite praising anti-Roma policies in some countries, especially in Germany, he rejected such solutions as "biological isolation" or "complete ethnical separation" from the majority as being too difficult to operationalize or too economically and/or morally problematic.[5] The extermination of the Roma was, however, proposed by another author, Gheorghe Făcăoaru :

> Nomadic and semi-nomadic Gypsies shall be interned into forced labor camps. There, their clothes shall be changed, their beards and hair cut, their bodies *sterilized* [emphasis in original]. Their living expenses shall be covered from their own labor. After one generation, we can get rid of them. In their place, we can put ethnic Romanians from Romania or from abroad, able to do ordered and creative work. The sedentary Gypsies shall be sterilized at home… In this way, the peripheries of our villages and towns shall no longer be disease-ridden sites, but an ethnic wall useful for our nation.[6]

But such racist opinions were not widespread in Romania. Academia, the press, and public opinion were reluctant to accept them, and not even the extreme right adopted

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-136.
4. Iordache Făcăoaru, "Amestecul rasial şi etnic în România," *Buletinul eugenic şi biopolitic*, 9 (1938), p. 283.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-286.
6. Gheorghe Făcăoaru, *Câteva date în jurul familiei şi statului biopolitic* (Bucharest, 1941), pp. 17-18.

them. This situation changed after 1940, when Romanian democratic values were abandoned and the country entered the sphere of Nazi political and ideological domination.

After coming to power, the Legionary movement was the first to consider adopting a racial policy toward the Roma. The Legion journal *Cuvântul* published an article on January 18, 1941 (a few days before the Iron Guard rebellion), that stressed the "priority of the Gypsy issue" on the government agenda and suggested that appropriate legislation be passed to make marriages between Romanians and Roma illegal and to gradually isolate the Roma into some kind of ghetto.[7] Yet, during the time the Legion was in power, they adopted no specific anti-Roma measures.

Even though the Roma had never before been an issue in the Romanian social sciences, some researchers – some of them from among the best – began to approach what they called the "Gypsy problem" during the war. One such study, published in 1944, proposed either their concentration in an isolated area of Romania, their deportation to Transnistria, or their sterilization.[8] Despite their marginal status, the racist opinions expressed in Romanian society during the thirties and forties did play a certain role in the preparation for Antonescu's policies on the Jews and Roma. Yet, it must be stressed that, unlike in the case of Jews, anti-Roma policies were not rooted in the Romanian past, but rather in new political realities resulting from Marshal Antonescu's entry into the political arena. The best evidence is that the Romanian population, notably peasants, opposed the deportations of Roma to Transnistria.[9]

The deportation of the Roma to Transnistria was Antonescu's personal decision, as he would later admit during his trial in 1946.[10] It is worth noting that none of the orders concerning the Roma bore Antonescu's signature and none were published – not in the *Monitorul Oficial* or anywhere else. All were made verbally by Antonescu to his ministers and carried out by the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie. That Antonescu closely monitored their enforcement suggests that Romania's wartime policy on the Roma was his creation.

The idea of the Roma's deportation to Transnistria did not exist at the beginning of Antonescu's rule. When the discussion on taking measures against the Roma began in February 1941, Transnistria was not considered. At the Council of Ministers meeting on February 7, 1941, Ion Antonescu requested the removal of the Roma from Bucharest and spoke of settling them in compact villages in Bărăgan; he suggested three to four villages to be built for this purpose, each able to accommodate 5,000 to 6,000 families.[11]

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7. L. Stan, "Rasism faţă de ţigani," *Cuvântul*, vol. 18, no. 53, January 18, 1941, pp. 1, 9.
8. Ion Chelcea, *Ţiganii din România. Monografie etnografică* (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Central de Statistică, 1944), pp. 100-101.
9. See the section below, "The Romanian Population and the Deportation of Roma."
10. *Procesul marii trădări naţionale. Stenograma desbaterilor de la Tribunalul Poporului asupra Guvernului Antonescu* (henceforth: *Procesul marii trădări naţionale*) (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1946), p. 66.
11. Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă, Aurelian Teodorescu and Bogdan-Florin Popovici (eds.), *Stenogramele şedinţelor Consiliului de Miniştri. Guvernarea Ion Antonescu* (Bucharest: Arhivele Naţionale ale României, 1998), vol. 2, p. 181. Antonescu stated, "...all Gypsies in Bucharest must be removed. But before removing them, we must consider where to take them and what to do with them. A solution might be to wait until the marshes of the Danube are drained and build some Gypsy villages there and let them fish... Another solution would be to negotiate with the big landowners. There... is a considerable shortage of workers in Bărăgan. We could build these villages there... at least some houses and barracks, a sanitation system, stores, inns, etc. We should set up a census and arrest all of them en masse, and bring them to these villages. We will build

Although this idea was not implemented, it is illustrative of the way in which the solution to the Roma "problem" was seen at that time. Only after Romania obtained Transnistria was there the possibility to deport the Roma to outside of Romania's boundaries. By 1942, when measures against the Roma began, there was already the precedent of the Jews' deportation, which had commenced in fall 1941. Antonescu made the decision to deport the Roma across the Dniester in May 1942. By the time of the census of the Roma considered to be "problems" (May 25, 1942), their fate had already been decided by the *Conducător*. On May 22, 1942, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers informed the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Marshal Antonescu's decision to deport certain categories of Roma to Transnistria.[12]

The May 1942 Census of Roma Considered to be "Problems"

The "census" conducted by the gendarmerie and police all over the country on May 25, 1942 (although it had initially been planned for May 31), was ordered by Marshal Antonescu in order to find the Roma who fit into the category of "problem" Roma. The following were registered, along with their families: nomadic Roma; and from the sedentary Roma, those with criminal records, recidivists, and those with no means of subsistence and without a definite occupation with which to support themselves. A total of 40,909 individuals were registered on these lists: 9,471 nomadic Roma and 31,438 sedentary Roma. The order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of May 17, 1942, stated that the Roma on the list were to be kept under close surveillance by local authorities and prevented from leaving the county until further instruction.[13] The lists – with Roma from both categories recorded by commune, town, and county – were sent to the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie.[14] The subsequent deportations consisted of the citizens registered in this census. With only a few exceptions, the roughly 25,000 Romanian Roma "evacuated" to Transnistria were included on the lists set up by the gendarmerie and police at the end of May.

Reasons for the Deportation of the Roma

The May 1942 census, through its definition of the two categories of Roma, also showed the criteria for "selection" of those to be deported. It was based on nomadism and, in the case of the sedentary Roma, on criminal convictions, theft, and the lack of means to subsist. In some documents authorities also referred to the necessity of ridding villages and towns of the poor Roma population without an occupation or trade and no means of subsistence, without any possibility to earn a living, and those who made a living from

three-four villages, each for 5-6,000 families, and install guards around them so they cannot get out. They will live their life there and find work there too."

12. Viorel Achim (ed.), *Documente privind deportarea ţiganilor în Transnistria*, 2 vols. (henceforth: Achim, *Documente*) (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2004), vol. 1, no. 6, pp. 9-10.
13. *Ibid.*, no. 3, pp. 5-6.
14. ANIC, fond IGJ, file no. 201/1942, file no. 202/1942, file no. 203/1942.

theft and begging. At the 1946 trial of the principal war criminals, Ion Antonescu evoked the murders and thefts Roma had committed in towns during anti-aircraft alarm exercises.[15] Thus, the criteria appear to have been mainly social, relating to public order. Although it is unknown whether the accusations against the Roma were true, the crimes they supposedly committed in towns could not have been the main reason for the deportations, since nearly all Roma lived in villages. Moreover, these deportations could not have been a purely social measure. Otherwise, this process of "cleansing" the country of socially problematic elements would have extended to the entire population, regardless of ethnic origin; yet it applied only to the Roma. Government documents on the Roma did not invoke race as a reason for deportation. They did not refer to racial "inferiority" or to a racial "danger" posed by the Roma, as did some Romanian publications at the time.[16] In short, while such terms as "dangerous" and "undesirable" were used in reference to the Roma, the authorities did not use race to motivate the deportation.

The reason for the Roma's deportation was likely another: it was part of the Antonescu regime's ethnic policy.[17] Achieving ethnic homogeneity in Romania – by "transferring" the minority out of the country and bringing in Romanians from neighboring countries – was a genuine preoccupation of the Romanian government at that time. Effective measures were taken and documents were drafted to deal with this problem. The most important of these documents was the project of Sabin Manuilă, general director of the Central Institute for Statistics, written in the form of a memorandum addressed to Marshal Antonescu on October 15, 1941. This memo took aim at all ethnic minorities in Romania. According to Manuilă, they should be subject to transfer agreements or population exchanges between Romania and different states. For the Jews and the Roma, who did not have a state of their own, the planned solution was the "unilateral transfer," which actually meant sending them across the border.[18] The territory where the Romanian government could do this was Transnistria. Thus, the partial deportation of Jews and Roma to Transnistria in 1941 and 1942 can be understood as elements of this policy of ethnic purification.

The contemporary documents currently available do not elucidate why – if the "transfers" across the border were part of an ethnic policy – the deportations to Transnistria were limited to the Roma categories explained above. However, during those years in which the Roma overnight became a "problem" for the authorities, the government could not stray too far from the opinions held by Romanian society, as reflected in the sociological studies of the thirties. The "selection" and the deportation of Roma aimed at only those who led a very "Gypsy" way of life.

Out of a population of 208,700 Roma in Romania within the borders of 1942, as estimated by the Central Institute for Statistics,[19] almost 41,000 (20 percent) Roma were

15. *Procesul marii trădări naţionale*, p. 66.
16. See footnote 8.
17. On the objectives of the government's deportation of the Roma, see Viorel Achim, "The Antonescu Government's Policy towards the Gypsies," in Mihail E. Ionescu and Liviu Rotman (eds.), *The Holocaust in Romania: History and Contemporary Significance* (Bucharest, 2003), pp. 55-60.
18. For Sabin Manuilă's memorandum, see Viorel Achim, "The Romanian Population Exchange Project Elaborated by Sabin Manuilă in October 1941," *Annali dell'Instituto storico italo-germanico in Trento*, 28 (2001), pp. 593-617.
19. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 1, no. 104, pp. 162-177.

registered in May 1942. Of these, more than 25,000 were deported (12 percent of the total Roma population).

The Deportations of Roma to Transnistria

The Deportation of Nomadic Roma (June-August 1942)

The deportations began on June 1, 1942, with the nomadic Roma. That day, the gendarmes began to gather them in the capital cities of the counties and then to send them to Transnistria. Marshal Antonescu gave the order himself for the deportation "of all nomadic Gypsies' camps from all over the country."[20] The nomadic Roma traveled on foot or with wagons from one precinct to the other, making their trip several weeks long. Officially, the operation ended on August 15, 1942. Those who were at the front or mobilized within the country at the time of the deportation were expelled from the military by order of the Army General Staff, sent back home, and made to follow their families to Transnistria. Until October 2, 1942, a total of 11,441 nomadic Roma were deported to Transnistria (2,352 men, 2,375 women, and 6,714 children).[21]

The Deportation of Sedentary Roma Deemed "Undesirable" (September 1942)

In terms of the sedentary Roma registered in May 1942, the authorities first undertook to sort them. Those selected for the initial deportation were Roma who were considered "dangerous and undesirable" along with their families – a total of 12,497 individuals. The remaining 18,941 were to be deported later. Families of mobilized Roma and Roma eligible for mobilization together with their families were to remain in the country, even if they had been categorized as dangerous. At the time of the deportation of nomadic Roma, the authorities had not yet formed a definite plan of action concerning the sedentary Roma. They were either to be deported to Transnistria or imprisoned in camps within Romania. In the end, the authorities chose deportation. According to the initial plan, the Roma were to be transported by ship to Transnistria in July, first on the Danube and then the Black Sea. This plan was prepared in detail but ultimately abandoned, and they were transported by train instead. Ion Antonescu set the beginning of the operation for August 1, 1942.[22] However, the deportation of sedentary Roma did not take place until September. It lasted from September 12 to September 20, 1942, used nine special trains, and began in different towns in the country. The modification of the plan from water to land explains why the deportations did not begin until September 1942.

During that month, 13,176 sedentary Roma were deported to Transnistria. This number exceeded the number on the lists drafted for deportation and, moreover, the list

20. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 15, pp. 22-23.
21. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 179, pp. 269-271.
22. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 42, pp. 66-67.

of those deported did not coincide with the lists of those selected for deportation. An investigation into this discrepancy concluded that some who had been slated for deportation could not be found, while others, having been misled, volunteered ; a rumor had been circulated among the Roma that once they arrived in Transnistria, they would be granted land. This, in part, explains the desire of some Roma to leave. Because most did not carry identity papers with them, it was easy for these volunteers to mingle among the other Roma. Some Roma traveled by regular trains to Tighina (on the Dniester), where they joined various groups of deportees.

The deportation operation led to many abuses by the gendarmes and policemen who conducted the operation. Some families of mobilized Roma and some Roma likely to be mobilized, along with their families, were deported. There was one case in which a Roma soldier's wife and in-laws were seized by gendarmes and deported to Transnistria while he was on leave.[23] Some Romanian, Turkish, and Hungarian families were also rounded up by mistake. Some of the deported Roma had Romanian wives, and some had an occupation or owned land.

A large number of complaints were filed decrying these occurrences ; the number of requests for repatriation was even larger. Roma serving at the front or mobilized within the country raised their voices against these actions. As a consequence, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the Army General Staff demanded reparation. In an order issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, these actions were described as causing "turmoil among soldiers of Gypsy origin, and rightly so, for while serving their country with great honor, their families were being rounded up and deported to Transnistria."[24] This order went on to recommend that appropriate steps be taken and requested that the families of these people be treated with all possible care ; moreover, "family" was to be understood in the Roma sense of the word ; thus, concubines of the conscripted Roma and Roma who were slated for mobilization as well as their children were to be exempt from deportation.[25] After an investigation, repatriation was granted to 311 heads of families and 950 family members – a total of 1,261 individuals.[26] Not all of them were repatriated, however. Deported Roma who had relatives at the front or had fought in World War I or the anti-Soviet war were guaranteed, at least on paper, better treatment than the rest of the Roma.[27]

At the same time, Roma were forced from their homes without even their most necessary personal and household belongings and were not given time to sell their possessions. So, heads of local gendarmerie and police stations would often buy the Roma's belongings and livestock at extremely low prices. The National Center for Romanianization took possession of the houses and all other goods belonging to the deported Roma.[28]

23. ANIC, fond PCM, file no. 202/1941-1944, pp. 274-277.
24. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 1, no. 203, pp. 302-303.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 306, pp. 107-108.
27. ANIC, fond DGP, file no. 77/1943, p. 47 ; file no. 43/1943, p. 286.
28. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 1, no. 101, pp. 158-160.

Later Deportations

The deportation of the sedentary Roma categorized as dangerous was to be followed by that of the other Roma listed in May 1942. When the selection of the sedentary Roma was made, it was intended that conscripted or soon-to-be conscripted Roma would later be imprisoned in the camps inside Romania. But, the authorities eventually settled on deportation. It never occurred, however. The deportation was postponed at the beginning of October 1942 until the following spring. Then, on October 13, the Council of Ministers decided to call off any future deportations of Jews and Roma.[29] The following day, the Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered that no more Roma were to be sent to Transnistria – neither the nomads still in the country nor those with criminal records ; only those Roma "who by their very presence were a threat to public order" were still to be deported.[30]

It can be argued that problems encountered during the deportations by the Romanian military bureaucracy played an important part in bringing them to an end.[31] The Roma deportations were discussed at the September 29, 1942, Council of Ministers meeting, during which Gen. Constantin Vasiliu, secretary of state at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, stated that he would not send any more Roma to Transnistria.[32] Nevertheless, deportations of Roma to Transnistria continued even after that date – some in fall 1942 and others during the following year. These were of small groups and isolated individuals from among those who had escaped the two major deportation operations, those who had escaped from prison, and some whom the authorities had registered later on the list of the "undesirables." They amounted to several hundred people deported after October 1942. The last deportations took place in December 1943, when a transport arrived in Transnistria with fifty-seven Roma from Piteşti and from the county of Argeş ; thirty-six of them were considered to have been "evacuated" (deported) and the other twenty-one were "re-evacuated" (re-deported).[33]

Number of Roma Deported to Transnistria

The total number of Roma deported to Transnistria from June 1942 to December 1943 reached slightly over 25,000. In early October 1942, after both major deportations, there were 24,686 Roma in Transnistria : 11,441 were nomadic, 13,176 were sedentary, and another 69 had been deported after having been released from prison.[34] This number later increased by a few hundred with the additional deportations of some who had escaped the major operations, been released from prison, or become "undesirable."

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29. *Timpul*, 6, no. 1954, October 16, 1942, p. 3.
30. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 1, no. 189, pp. 286-287.
31. Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania : The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944* (henceforth : Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*) (Chicago : Ivan R. Dee, 2000), p. 227.
32. Radu Ioanid, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu* (henceforth : Ioanid, *Evreii*) (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1997), pp. 312-313.
33. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 2, no. 573 (Report, January 3, 1944), p. 420.
34. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 179, pp. 268-271.

The Treatment of the Roma in Transnistria

"Gypsy Colonies"

The Roma were settled at the border or inside villages located in eastern Transnistria on the bank of the Bug in the counties of Golta, Otchakov, Berezovka, and Balta. Initially, most of the nomadic Roma were settled in Golta county, while sedentary Roma were almost all settled in Otchakov county. Some Roma were accommodated in huts, others in houses. Usually half of the local Ukrainian residents in a village would be evacuated from their houses and then moved into the homes of their non-evacuated neighbors ; the Roma were then placed into the newly-empty houses. A few villages on the Bug were completely evacuated for this purpose, with the Ukrainian population being relocated to the central areas of the county. These were the so-called Gypsy colonies in Transnistria, consisting of several hundred people (in the beginning there were even thousands of people). They were neither camps nor ghettos, even if the documents sometimes use these terms. Certain zones of the village were reserved for the Roma. The deportees were overseen by the local gendarme precinct, but had a certain freedom to move around inside the commune and vicinity in order to go to work to earn their living.

The Status of the Roma Deportees

The Government of Transnistria issued an order on December 18, 1942, establishing the status of Roma deported to Transnistria. It stipulated the following : the Roma would be settled in villages in groups of 150-350 individuals (according to the local need for laborers) with one of their own as a leader ; they would be obligated to perform any kind of work required of them in exchange for wages similar to those earned by local laborers ; skilled laborers would be employed according to their skills in existing workshops and workshops to be built in the future ; the remaining Roma would be organized into teams of laborers under the supervision of a leader they chose, and they would be employed in agriculture, woodcutting, lumbering, and in the collection of such items as hides, hair, metal, old rags, and garbage ; it was mandatory for all Roma, aged twelve to sixty, male and female, to be engaged in an activity, either in workshops or in teams of laborers ; Roma with above-average levels of productivity would be recompensed with 30 percent of the value of their extra work ; the leaders would be responsible for preventing the Roma in their village from leaving and would be required to monitor the work attendance of all members on a daily basis ; and Roma leaving the villages where they were settled without authorization or those absent from work would be imprisoned in reformatory camps to be established in every county.[35]

35. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 268, pp. 54-55.

Living Conditions in the Deportation Sites

These measures were supposed to provide the deported with the necessary means to earn a living under circumstances of compulsory residence. Yet, they would remain on paper only. The situation of the Roma in Transnistria was extremely difficult at first. They were given few possibilities of work or means to live. Only some were used on former state and collective farms (*sovhoz* and *kolkhoz*, respectively), which needed but a small number of workers and usually just for seasonal work, and preferred to use native Ukrainians. Only a few workshops mandated in the above order were organized.

Living conditions in Transnistria were very harsh. The Roma were not provided with enough food and were unable to support themselves. The food rations established by the government were not observed ; sometimes none would be distributed for weeks. The Roma were also not provided with firewood ; so, they could neither prepare their food nor warm themselves. Clothing was another major problem, since they had not been allowed to take any clothes or any personal belongings with them. The deportees lacked the most elementary items, including pots for preparing their food. Medical assistance was almost nonexistent, and they lacked medicine. Those who were fortunate enough to have gold, Romanian currency, or other belongings of value managed to buy food from local people. This desperate situation was clearly described in reports and other documents drafted by the authorities in charge of the deportees, such as gendarme precincts and legions, and district pretures and county prefectures. For example, a December 5, 1942, report signed by an intelligence agent explained the situation in the county of Otchakov and was representative for almost all Roma "colonies" :

> During the time that they have spent in the barracks in Aleksandrodar, the Gypsies have lived in indescribable misery. They weren't sufficiently fed. They were given 400 grams of bread for the ones that were capable of working and 200 grams each for the elderly and the children. They were also given few potatoes and, very rarely, salty fish, and all these in very small quantities.
>
> Due to the malnutrition, some of the Gypsies – and these make up the majority – have lost so much weight that they have turned into living skeletons. On a daily basis – especially in the last period – ten to fifteen Gypsies died. They were full of parasites. They were not paid any medical visits and they did not have any medicine. They were naked… and they didn't have any underwear or clothing. There are women whose bodies… were [completely] naked in the true sense of the word. They had not been given any soap since arriving ; this is why they haven't washed themselves or the single shirt that they own.
>
> In general, the situation of the Gypsies is terrible and almost inconceivable. Due to the misery, they have turned into shadows and are almost savage. This condition is due to the bad accommodations and nutrition as well as the cold. Because of hunger… they have scared the Ukrainians with their thefts. If there had been some Gypsies in the country who were stealing… out of mere habit, here even a Gypsy who used to be honest would begin stealing, because the hunger led him to commit this shameful act.
>
> Due to maltreatment, by November 25, three hundred nine Gypsies had died. Roma bodies were found on the Otchakov-Aleksandrodar road. They died of famine and cold.
>
> But, while the Gypsies in the Aleksandrodar barracks were lodged in a more humane way in the above-mentioned villages, this did not mean that the Gypsy problem in Otchakov was solved. Their situation has somewhat improved ; they were less exposed to the cold and were disinfected. But if they do not receive any wood or other fuel, the Gypsies will be able to do

> to the houses what they did to the barracks, turning them into places impossible to live in. And the cold will lead them to that as well, not thinking that they only make their bad situation worse, and that the danger of dying from cold increases this way. Also, if they will not be given humane nourishment, medical assistance, and medicine as well as clothing for some of them, the mortality of the Gypsies will not decrease, but will simultaneously increase with the increase of the frost. Also, they will increase the thefts from the Russians [i.e., Ukrainians]. As a matter of fact, the local population is outraged, and its state of mind is very low because they have been evicted from their own houses during the winter so these houses could be given to the Gypsies, whom they cannot stand.[36]

Until spring 1943 the situation of the deportees was dramatic from every perspective. Many thousands of Roma died. In fact, almost all deaths among the Romanian Roma deported to Transnistria occurred in winter 1942/1943. A report of the Landau district preture to the prefect of the county of Berezovka regarding the exanthematic typhus epidemic that broke out in the middle of December 1942 in the Roma camps stated that due to typhus, the number of Roma located in Landau had decreased from around 7,500 to approximately 1,800-2,400.[37] The situation in Landau was an exception, but the number of deceased was high everywhere.

The confiscation of their horses and wagons, which served as both "mobile homes" and means to earn an income, affected the nomadic Roma very harshly. Gheorghe Alexianu, governor of Transnistria, issued an order in this respect on July 29, 1942.[38] Lt. Col. Vasile Gorsky, former prefect of Otchakov county, gave one of the most graphic descriptions of the situation of the Roma deported to Transnistria in a memo written in 1945.[39] This memo also represents a detailed account of what was recorded in documents issued by the Transnistrian administration. In addition to Roma suffering, the bad administrative skills of the authorities were depicted in detail.

The situation of the Roma later improved somewhat. Since the concentration in large groups made it extremely difficult to provide work and food as well as supervision, and after the dramatic experience of winter 1942/1943, the authorities dissolved the colonies and distributed the Roma among the villages in the spring and summer of 1943. Thus, the Roma began to live – long-term or short-term – in many of the villages in the counties of Golta, Balta, Berezovka, and Otchakov where they used to work, either on former state farms and *kolkhoz*, or in workshops or other places where they were compensated for their work.[40]

The archives created by the occupation authorities in Transnistria or by the administration of some communes and farms provide great detail about the type of work done by the Roma, including agricultural labor, repairing roads and railroads, chopping down willow trees on the bank of the Bug, chopping wood in forests, and military-related tasks

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36. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 249, pp. 26-28.
37. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 590, p. 437.
38. Ioanid, *Evreii*, p. 315.
39. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 2, no. 641, pp. 495-500. Vasile Gorsky's memorandum is discussed in Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*, pp. 231-235.
40. The situation of the Roma deportees and the changes that occurred over time are best summarized in the monthly reports of the Labor Service within the district prefectures. These documents contain a chapter dealing with "The Gypsies' Labor and Regimen of Life." For example, see Achim, *Documente*, vol. 2, no. 473 (from the county of Golta, August 1943), pp. 303-304.

in the Nikolaev region (on the opposite side of the Bug in German-occupied territory). Through a series of steps taken in summer 1943, the authorities tried to provide the deportees with work. At the time, these measures were referred to as the "organization of labor." There was a positive side, for the work was paid and the deportee and his family could earn somewhat of a living.[41]

Some of the deportees adapted to the unfavorable circumstances in Transnistria. They found niches in the village economy, doing some work and making crafts for the natives, exactly as they had done in their villages in Romania. One group that managed to preserve its occupation and thereby ensure its welfare was the *pieptănari* (comb makers). In February 1944, 1,800 Roma living in the county of Berezovka earned their living by making and selling combs.[42] In a March 11, 1944, request to the prefect of Berezovka county, the "mayor of the Gypsies" of the Suhaja Balka farm wrote:

> We didn't receive anything from the farm or village for four months and lived only by our work and by the income earned selling combs. With the income we have from selling combs, we have managed to dress and eat decently this winter.[43]

Păun Marin, foreman of the Roma comb workshop on the Suhaja Balka farm, wrote in similar manner on the same day, when requesting permission to sell combs.[44]

However, not all deportees could be provided with work. So, efforts were made at the county or district level to provide them with food. The various departments of the Government of Transnistria – particularly the Department of Labor, which dealt with Jews and Roma deported to Transnistria – did not always share a good working relationship. In summer 1943, in the county of Balta, Roma were removed from their houses, moved into huts, and given land to work for food. Other colonies were dissolved, and the Roma were distributed among Ukrainian villages, thus making them easier to feed and use for work. There were even proposals to create Roma agricultural colonies with farmland and agricultural equipment. The gendarmerie appealed to the county prefectures to ensure the Roma's living.[45]

The situation was not the same everywhere. In some places, Roma were confronted with hunger and cold again in 1943. The situation was extremely serious in Golta county. The May 10, 1943, report of the Golta Gendarme Legion to the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie described the extermination regime applied to Jews and Roma:

> I have the honor to report to you that, from the information I have verified in the whole county, the following are the results. The Jews are not given food for months. The same is true of the Gypsies and prisoners in the Golta camp, where 40 individuals are imprisoned. All of them work and are forced to work until they are exhausted from hunger. Please advise.[46]

In another report, dated November 22, 1943, to the Prefecture of the county of Golta, the Gendarmes' Legion stated that the Roma interned in the Golta labor camp (including

41. See footnote 40.
42. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 2, no. 589, p. 436.
43. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 605, p. 455.
44. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 604, pp. 454-455.
45. Documents referring to these efforts: *ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 474, pp. 304-305; no. 481, p. 312; no. 506, pp. 340-341; no. 522, p. 359; no. 528, pp. 365-366; etc.
46. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 375, p. 187.

some who had unsuccessfully tried to flee from Transnistria) were faced with starvation.[47] Likewise, in September that year, Ion Stancu, "mayor of the Gypsies" in Kamina Balka in Golta, denounced the fact that the Roma were not given sufficient food:

> During the day we work at the kolkhoz, but at night we patrol the precinct; they give us very little food: 300 grams of [corn] flour, 500 grams of potatoes and 10 grams of salt per person, without any other kind of food; we haven't been given oil for 8 months.[48]

At the same time, authorities often criticized the fact that Roma tried to avoid work when it was available. According to the documents, the Roma preferred to travel around the villages and beg. In order to procure food, some Roma began to steal; there were Roma gangs of thieves. These deportees terrorized the Ukrainian population with their criminal activity and caused difficulties for the Romanian authorities. At the same time, the Roma had a tendency to flee from the "colonies" on the Bug. Either individually or in groups, they attempted to return to Romania by any means possible. However, the runaways were usually caught and brought back. The authorities in Transnistria discovered that it was impossible to put a stop to this. Punishment camps were planned for such situations, but were never realized. Only in fall 1943, when the exodus of Roma had grown considerably and the number of those who had fled and been caught exceeded 2,000, was the measure taken to create such a camp in Golta, where 475 Roma were interned.[49]

The situation of the Roma varied from county to county, district to district, and even farm to farm. It depended on many factors, including the Romanian official at the head of the administrative unit (county or district). Food provision depended heavily on local communities, but the local Ukrainians considered the Roma to be a burden. County and district authorities often had to force the Ukrainian communes and communities to give the Roma food in conformance with the government regulations. The Roma's situation also depended on the group or sub-group to which they belonged. In some places, Roma communities managed to secure their subsistence and survive almost two years of deportation. Elsewhere, though, only a small number were able to survive.

Number of Victims

Under these circumstances, many deported Roma died in Transnistria of hunger, cold, or disease. There is no document indicating that the Romanian civil or military authorities in Transnistria organized executions of Roma. Nevertheless, there were instances when gendarmes shot Roma, as in Trihaţi (Otchakov county), where, according to a May 1943 report, gendarmes shot the Roma who had come there from neighboring villages in search of work.[50]

The exact number of Roma who died in Transnistria is not known. On March 15, 1944, when Romanian citizens – regardless of origin – were to be evacuated from

47. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 543, pp. 379-380.
48. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 488, p. 319.
49. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 553 (Report of the Gendarmerie Inspectorate Balta, December 9, 1943), pp. 390-394.
50. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 383, pp. 196-198.

Transnistria, the General Gendarmerie Sub-Inspectorate Odessa reported that it had on its territory 12,083 Roma.[51] This number represented the Roma who had survived the deportation. To this number must be added the number of Roma who escaped from Transnistria before the above-mentioned date. These include Roma who were repatriated at different times for various reasons as well as those who had escaped from Transnistria illegally without being caught and returned. There were approximately 2,000 Roma who fit into these categories, which raises the number of the survivors to approximately 14,000. This means that out of the over 25,000 deported Roma, approximately 11,000 died and 14,000 survived.

The 6,439 Roma recorded by the gendarmerie in the second half of July 1944, when it began to register those who returned to Romania, are only part of the survivors.[52] The Roma in urban areas, supervised by the police, were not included in this number. Moreover, a considerable number of Roma were able to escape registration due to the conditions of war. The Soviet army already occupied part of Romania's territory by then or was located in the vicinity of the front line. At that time, some Roma were still traveling home, while others were stranded behind when the army and Romanian authorities retreated. From the latter, some were repatriated at the end of the war, while others scattered about on Soviet territory.

Return of Roma Survivors to Romania (1944)

The Roma who survived deportation returned to Romania in spring 1944 at the same time as the army and Romanian occupation authorities that withdrew because of the Soviet offensive. As early as fall 1943, the unauthorized desertion of the deportation sites had become widespread. Those caught trying to flee were sent back to Transnistria. In March/April 1944, in the absence of any official measures of repatriation, the Roma withdrew to the other side of the Dniester and then back to Romania. In some cases, they received direct assistance from the retreating Romanian and German armies and from the Romanian railway workers. On April 19, 1944, the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie ordered all Roma from Transnistria to be stopped in their flight and put to work where they were caught.[53] The order was repeated on May 17, 1944.[54] These Roma were given a temporary place of residence and were forbidden to move around. They were to be employed in farming activities. Life in Transnistria had made most of them unfit for work, however. Others were placed with various landowners to do agricultural work. But, there were frequent instances of Roma refusing to work on the grounds that they did know how to perform the tasks, which exasperated the local authorities ; and the Roma continued to starve. In such conditions, some groups of Roma obtained permission to return to their native villages.[55]

51. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 608, p. 458.
52. ANIC, fond IGJ, file no. 86/1944, file no. 97/1944.
53. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 2, no. 613, p. 463.
54. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 621, pp. 472-473.
55. Numerous examples can be found in ANIC, fond IGJ, file no. 86/1944, etc.

The End of Anti-Roma Policies

With the ousting of the Antonescu government on August 23, 1944, and the abrogation of fascist legislation, the regime's Roma policy was brought to an end. On September 13, 1944, the State Undersecretariat for the Police issued an order that all Roma who had returned from Transnistria were to be "left to their occupations, while measures are to be taken to entice them into various work."[56]

The Situation of the Other Roma of Romania

More than 25,000 Roma were deported to Transnistria – approximately 12 percent of the Roma population in Romania. But, most were of no interest to the authorities. From a juridical point of view they were unaffected by the measures of persecution instituted by the Antonescu government. Most Roma continued to enjoy full citizenship rights (given the conditions of that time, of course) along with all the other citizens of the country. They did not lose these rights, and their property was not subject to the Romanianization policies applied to the Jewish population. Yet, the Roma still experienced insecurity during these years. Documents reveal that they feared the deportations would extend to other categories of Roma, as well. This fear was sometimes fed by local authorities, who – usually in their own interest – would threaten these citizens with deportation.[57] However, there was no special policy aiming at the entire Roma population in Romania from 1940 to 1944. What is now referred to as the Roma policy of the Antonescu regime actually consisted of measures taken against only part of this population.

In addition to the Roma deported to the Bug, two other groups of Roma were targeted by the Romanian authorities: (1) the several hundred Roma who fled from Northern Transylvania, which was under Hungarian occupation from 1940 to 1944, and settled in the counties of Cluj-Turda and Arad; they crossed the frontier to Romania mainly because they refused to join the Hungarian army (more precisely, to join the work battalions); these Roma were not sent to Transnistria, though some gendarme legions at the border threatened to deport them;[58] (2) another several hundred Roma on the large estates in the south of the country, who had been working there for many years in precarious conditions in terms of both wages and housing. In November 1942, the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie ordered that all landowners provide permanent accommodations for the Roma working their lands. Marshal Antonescu himself issued

56. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 2, no. 639, p. 494.
57. The state of mind of the Roma after the deportations in the summer and fall of 1942 is seen, for example, in the reports of the Regional Police Inspectorate Alba-Iulia from September 30 (Achim, *Documente*, vol. 1, no. 162, p. 247) and December 3, 1942 (*ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 243, pp. 14-15), or in the report of the Regional Police Inspectorate Timişoara from November 27, 1942 (*ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 238, pp. 352-353).
58. Some documents with respect to these Roma: *ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 119, p. 194; vol. 2, no. 568, pp. 413-414; vol. 2, no. 577, pp. 424-425.

the same order in June 1943. Few houses would actually be built for these Roma, though.[59] This measure was part of the government's social policy.

Since the deportation was limited to only part of the Roma, their situation may seem to have been parallel to that of the Jewish population. Only Jews from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and the county of Dorohoi were deported; the other Romanian Jews, with only a few exceptions, were not. Nevertheless, during the war, the Romanian state led a policy that aimed at all Jews; the anti-Semitic legislation, the measures with racial content, and the Romanianization policies affected all segments of the Jewish population, albeit in different ways. From 1940 to 1944, the entire Jewish population was subject to heavy discrimination. It was not so with the Roma population. During those years there was no measure taken in Romania against all Roma – that is, against the entire population registered on the census as "Gypsies" or identified as such by the authorities or the local population. Thus, the Antonescu government's plans for the Roma were not limited to Transnistria. The deportation to the territory between the Dniester and Bug Rivers remains the most important element, though.

The Romanian Population and the Deportation of Roma

The deportation of the Roma did not enjoy the support of the Romanian population, and protests came from all quarters.[60] One category of protests came from the political and cultural elite. Thus, on September 16, 1942, while the deportations were underway, the president of the National Liberal Party, Constantin I.C. Brătianu, sent a letter to Marshal Antonescu that invoked both humanitarian and moral arguments, calling the deportations persecutions "that will make us regress several centuries."[61] This letter was a political move: Brătianu argued that the responsibility of this decision was entirely Antonescu's and that Antonescu's policy toward the Roma had no relation to the policies of previous governments. He went on to argue, "These Romanian citizens have not been subject to a special treatment in our state before now." Brătianu also did not fail to mention "the persecutions and the deportations of the Jews as reprisals against their co-religionists in Bukovina and Bessarabia and under the influence of German policies."[62] The leaders of the National Peasant Party expressed their solidarity with Brătianu's protest.[63] The famous Romanian composer George Enescu pleaded in person with Antonescu against the deportation of Roma musicians and threatened to go with them should that occur.[64] Also, the management of several companies, such as the state-run Romanian Railway

59. Documents referring to this issue: *ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 400, pp. 215-216; no. 622, pp. 473-474; no. 623, pp. 474-475; no. 626, pp. 479-480.
60. See Viorel Achim, "Atitudinea contemporanilor faţă de deportarea ţiganilor în Transnistria," in Constantin Iordachi and Viorel Achim (eds.), *România şi Transnistria: problema Holocaustului. Perspective istorice şi comparative* (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2004), pp. 201-233.
61. Jean Ancel (ed.), *Documents Concerning the Fate of the Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust* (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986), vol. 4, p. 225.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Achim, *Documente*, vol. 1, no. 202, pp. 301-302.
64. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 220, p. 331.

Company, defended their Roma employees out of fear that deportations would extend to new categories of Roma.[65]

Most documents indicate popular opposition to the deportation of Roma from all social classes, whereas few documents show support for the measure.[66] Protest was usually expressed in the form of letters or memoranda sent by individuals or entire communities to such public authorities as the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Ion Antonescu personally, the Queen Mother, the Ministry of Interior, and the Army General Staff. These efforts aimed either to stop deportations from a certain village or town or to secure the return of deportees to their homes. Most of these protests were made in fall 1942 after the deportation of the "dangerous" sedentary Roma, and they most likely were made out of fear that new categories of Roma would be added to the deportation lists. Also, many local municipalities issued "good behavior" papers for the local Roma who felt threatened, or they intervened more directly to shield the local Roma from possible deportations. For example, in an October 1942 memorandum sent to Antonescu, the inhabitants of the village of Popoveni in the Balta Verde commune of Dolj county and from other villages, as well from Craiova, requested that a Craiova blacksmith, Ilie Dincă, not be deported to Transnistria.[67] Before that, in September 1942, a group of citizens from the town of Craiova asked the Council of Ministers that Ştefan Gâdea, the local tin sheet specialist, not to be deported to Transnistria.[68] In addition, in October 1942, 127 Romanians from Zimnicea made the same plea to Marshal Antonescu on behalf of local craftsmen who "only by distant lineage can be considered Gypsies."[69] The arguments invoked in these appeals included the considerable integration of the Roma in the local community and their importance in its economic life (in many cases, the Roma were the only craftsmen available in the village).

However, these objections to the deportation of the Roma never pertained to the nomadic Roma, whose deportation seems to have been considered justifiable by the Romanian majority. In fact, one of the arguments used by the sedentary Roma to defend themselves against actual or possible deportations was that they were not nomadic but had stable homes and performed useful work.[70]

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65. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 190, pp. 287-288.
66. One such case is that of a retired officer (Captain Dogaru) from Târgu-Jiu, who suggested in June 1942 that local Roma either be "colonized" in Transnistria or gathered from around the county and confined in an ethnically pure Roma village (*ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 44, pp. 69-70).
67. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 167, pp. 255-256.
68. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 157, p. 241.
69. ANIC, fond PCM, file no. 202/1942, pp. 234-235.
70. The chairman of the General Union of Roma in Romania, Gheorghe Niculescu, demanded in September 1942 that "the execution of deportation orders must concern only nomadic Roma and exempt sedentary Roma who have a stable abode and are skilled in the practice of various professions" (Achim, *Documente*, vol. 1, no. 169, pp. 258-259).

The Postwar Years and the Treatment of the Roma Deportations in the War Crimes Trials

After the return of the surviving Roma from Transnistria in spring and summer 1944 and the regime change of August 1944, the "Gypsy issue" no longer figured on the political agenda in Romania, and the reinstatement of the Roma's rights went smoothly. For the new government, the Roma became once again what they were before Antonescu came to power: a marginalized social category, rather than an ethnic minority. As a consequence, the policies adopted vis-à-vis the Roma included such measures as the creation of incentives to make the nomadic Roma sedentary and the re-establishment of former restrictions on their freedom of movement. There is no evidence indicating that the deportees received reparations, and the Roma's problems did not reach the agendas of the political parties.[71]

Although the fate of the Roma during the war – the deportations to Transnistria and the killings – were no longer of interest to either the government or the public, the postwar trials of war criminals temporarily brought attention back to these events. Yet, the fate of the Roma was fairly marginal to the topics of interest. When the first group of war criminals was tried in 1945, only one indictment document mentioned the Roma deportations (in the case of Col. Modest Isopescu, prefect of the county of Golta), and even then the offenses concerned only the confiscation of Roma's wagons and horses.[72] The remainder of the indictment was dedicated exclusively to the murder of Jews.

The situation was similar when Ion Antonescu and his main collaborators were tried in 1946. While charges were formally brought against Antonescu for the deportation of the Roma, the prosecutor did not dwell on the details. Thus, during Antonescu's trial, the plight of the Roma was mentioned only four times: in the indictment, in the formal reading of the charges, and in statements taken from Antonescu and General Vasiliu.[73] The indictment noted in passing that "thousands of unfortunate families were taken out of their huts and shanty houses and deported beyond the Dniester; tens of thousands of men, women, and children died due to starvation, cold, and diseases."[74] In addition, it mentioned 26,000 deported Roma, while General Vasiliu acknowledged only 24,000.[75] In the statement he gave during the interrogation, Ion Antonescu argued that the deportations were motivated by considerations of law and order: the Roma had committed many thefts, robberies, and murders in Bucharest and other cities during the wartime curfew.[76] He made the same argument in his May 15, 1946, memorandum to the Peoples'

71. For more information on the Roma in Romania after 1944, see Viorel Achim, "Romanian Memory of the Persecution of the Roma," in *Roma and Sinti: Under-Studied Victims of Nazism*, Symposium proceedings (Washington, D.C.: Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2002), pp. 59-77.
72. *Actul de acuzare, rechizitoriile şi replica acuzării în procesul primului lot de criminali de război* (Bucharest: Editura Apărării Patriotice, 1945), p. 76.
73. *Procesul marii trădări naţionale*, pp. 42, 65-66, 104, 108, 305.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

Court.[77] At the time, press coverage of the fate of the Roma during the war was scant, even as the details of the trials were systematically presented.[78]

In the early postwar years, the fate of the Romanian Roma during the war did not seem to interest anyone. The only initiative to support the ex-deportees came in early 1945 from the General Union of Roma in Romania. Its central committee announced that the organization's main objective was "to give moral and material support to all the Roma, and in particular to all the Roma deported to Transnistria."[79] However, after this organization began to function effectively again on August 15, 1947, its activities no longer concerned the former Roma deportees.[80]

Finally, in 1948 the Roma were close to obtaining the status of ethnic minority ("co-inhabitant nationality"). The December resolution on the issue of ethnic minorities of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party – a key document of communist-era minority policies – denied the Roma this status. The situation remained unchanged until the collapse of the communist regime in 1989. In addition, the issue of the deportation of the Roma was not mentioned in communist Romania except in rare instances.[81]

Conclusions

In 1942, as part of the policy of ethnic cleansing promoted by the Antonescu government, 25,000 Romanian Roma were deported to Transnistria. This number included all nomadic Roma and part of the sedentary Roma – all of whom were considered to be "problems" because of their way of life, criminal convictions, or lack of means to subsist. The deportees represented approximately 12 percent of the total Roma population in the country.

Given the very harsh living conditions at the deportation sites, especially because of hunger, cold, and disease, approximately 11,000 deported Roma died in Transnistria. The survivors returned to the country in spring 1944 at the same time as the Romanian retreat from Transnistria.

77. *Revista istorică*, N.S., vol. 4 (1993), nos. 7-8, p. 763.
78. *Scânteia*, a Communist Party daily, mentioned the topic only in its coverage of the Vasiliu case – and even then, only when it reported the reading of the charges by the prosecutor (*Scânteia*, May 9, 1946, p. 4; May 16, 1946, p. 2).
79. Police report, February 3, 1943, ANIC, fond DGP, file no. 87/1943, p. 318.
80. Secret Police report, April 7, 1948, ANIC, fond DGP, file no. 87/1943, pp. 352-353.
81. The reappearance of the Roma deportation in a Romanian scientific publication dates from 1974: Gheorghe Zaharia, *Pages de la résistance antifasciste en Roumanie* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1974), p. 44.

The Role of Ion Antonescu in the Planning and Implementation of Anti-Semitic and Anti-Roma Policies of the Romanian State

Ion Antonescu's responsibility for the death of the Jews of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria is beyond debate. And yet, the survival of the Jews from Walachia, Moldavia, and southern Transylvania was due to his decision in fall 1942 to postpone indefinitely the deportation of Romanian Jews to Poland. During his trial in 1946, Antonescu asserted that "if the Jews of Romania are still alive, this is due to Ion Antonescu."[1] Additionally, others have cited his contact with Jews as a mitigating factor.[2]

But, in general, Ion Antonescu was dominated by his loathing of Jews and Judaism. He revealed this hatred at a session of the Council of Ministers on April 15, 1941: "I give the mob complete license to massacre [the Jews]. I will withdraw to my fortress, and after the slaughter, I will restore order."[3] This was a rather accurate prediction of what was to take place in Iaşi shortly thereafter. In numerous instances Antonescu personally instigated specific anti-Semitic steps adopted by the Romanian fascist state: on June 19, 1941, Antonescu ordered the closure of all "Jewish communist cafés" and the completion of lists – region by region – of all "*jidani*, communist agents, and [communist] sympathizers"; the Ministry of the Interior was to "prevent them from circulating" and to prepare "to deal with them" when Antonescu gave the order;[4] and as early as June 21, 1941, Ion Antonescu ordered that all able-bodied eighteen- to sixty-year-old Jewish men in the villages between the Siret and Prut Rivers be removed to the Târgu-Jiu camp in Oltenia and to surrounding villages. Their families and all Jews in other Moldavian villages were evacuated to the nearest urban districts.[5] During the Iaşi pogrom, at 11:00 p.m. on

1. *Procesul marii trădări naţionale* (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1946), p. 71.
2. For example, Aureliu Weiss, secretary to NPP leader Iuliu Maniu, wrote after the war, "An anti-Semite to the core… [Ion Antonescu] did, however, nurture relationships with Jews… One day, in my absence, on the veranda of the villa where I stayed in Predeal, forgetting my wife's presence, he launched into an anti-Semitic diatribe against a humble [town] official who came to collect local taxes. At one point, realizing that my wife was present, he said, as if making an excuse: 'Not all Jews are alike.'" Jean Ancel (ed.), *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust* (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986), vol. 8, p. 608.
3. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum/Romanian Information (Intelligence) Service (henceforth: USHMM/SRI), RG 25.004M, roll 31, fond 40010, vol. 1; Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944*, vol. 2, *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniştri* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996), p. 229.
4. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, roll 32, fond 40010, vol. 1; Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră. Fapte şi documente. Suferinţele evreilor din România. 1940-1944* (Bucharest: Atelierele grafice Socec, 1946-1948), vol. 2, p. 39.
5. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 414-415.

June 28, 1941, Ion Antonescu telephoned Colonel Lupu, chief of the Iaşi garrison, who reported to him about the situation in town. The head of state ordered the "evacuation of the Jewish population, group after group," indicating that it was also "necessary" to include the women and children.[6] On July 4, Antonescu asserted that "the Jewish people had embezzled and impoverished, speculated on and impeded the development of the Romanian people for several centuries; the need to free us from this plague is self-evident."[7] In spite of his propensity for pogroms, Antonescu criticized the private instigation of them; and on July 12, 1941, after the Iaşi pogrom, he condemned the soldiers who had taken part.[8] Despite this rebuke, however, he still asserted that the Jews were "the open wound of Romanianism" and "had robbed bread from the poor."

For Ion Antonescu, the main enemy of his country was the Jew. On September 6, 1941, in a letter to Mihai Antonescu, he wrote, "Everybody should understand that this is not a struggle with the Slavs but one with the Jews. It is a fight to the death. Either we will win and the world will purify itself, or they will win and we will become their slaves… The war, in general, and the fight for Odessa, especially, have proven that Satan is the Jew."[9] Such was the justification, perhaps, for less ideologically and more materialistically motivated steps like Order no. 8507 of October 3, 1941 (formally promulgated by Colonel Davidescu, head of Antonescu's military office), in which the Romanian dictator ordered the National Bank of Romania to "exchange" – i.e., confiscate – money and jewelry belonging to Jews about to be deported.[10]

Ion Antonescu was directly involved in his regime's major repressive acts against the Jews. Unlike in Hitler's case, there is a wealth of documentary evidence proving this direct involvement. In early October 1941, for example, Col. Gheorghe Petrescu of the Supreme General Staff and gendarmerie General Topor initiated the deportation of the Jews from Bukovina on Antonescu's personal order. Petrescu declared in 1945 that they had received their orders from Radu Dinulescu of Section Two (*Secţia II*) of the Supreme General Staff;[11] this order – no. 6651 of October 4, 1941 – also cited Marshal Antonescu's decision to deport all Jews in Bukovina to Transnistria within ten days.[12] The governor of Bukovina, General Calotescu, also confirmed that Petrescu and Topor had only been fulfilling Antonescu's instructions.[13] Ion Antonescu did indeed state on October 6, 1941, in a meeting of the Council of Ministers: "I have decided to evacuate all of [the Jews] forever from these regions. I still have about 10,000 Jews in Bessarabia who will be sent beyond the Dniester within several days, and if circumstances permit, beyond the Urals."[14] On November 14 in another meeting of the Council of Ministers, Ion Antonescu stated: "I have enough difficulties with those *jidani* that I sent to the Bug. How many died on

6. USHMM/SRI, RG 25 004M, roll 48, fond 108233, vol. 29.
7. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, roll 32, fond 40010, vol. 1.
8. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 79.
9. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum/Romanian State Archives (henceforth: USHMM/RSA), RG 25.002M, roll 18, fond Presidency of the Council of the Ministers, Cabinet, file no. 167/1941.
10. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, roll 35, fond 40010, vol. 89.
11. *Ibid.*, roll 35, fond 40010, vol. 5.
12. *Ibid.*, roll 31, fond 40010, vol. 1.
13. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum/Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives (henceforth: USHMM/RFMA), RG 25.006M, roll 10, fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, vol. 20.
14. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 143.

their way is known only by me."[15] Participants at the same meeting heard the following situation reports from General Voiculescu, governor of Bessarabia: "The *jidani* don't exist anymore. There are 100 sick Jews in the ghetto at the crossing point for the deportees from Bukovina."[16]

In the November 13, 1941, session of the Council of Ministers, Antonescu ordered that deported Jewish state retirees be denied their pensions. In the same session, Antonescu expressed a deep interest in the campaign against the Jews of Odessa, then underway:

> *Antonescu*: Has the repression been sufficiently severe?
> *Alexianu*: It has been, Marshal.
> *Antonescu*: What do you mean by "sufficiently severe?..."
> *Alexianu*: It was very severe, Marshal.
> *Antonescu*: I said that for every dead Romanian, 200 Jews [should die] and that for every Romanian wounded 100 Jews [should die]. Did you [see to] that?
> *Alexianu*: The Jews of Odessa were executed and hung in the streets...
> *Antonescu*: Do it, because I am the one who answers for the country and to history. [If the Jews of America don't like this] let them come and settle the score with me.[17]

During his trial, Ion Antonescu acknowledged his responsibility in the Odessa executions in the following way:

> *Public Prosecutor Săracu*: Who signed the order to execute 200 people for every officer and 100 for every soldier?
> *Accused Ion Antonescu*: I gave that order, because I also did it in Romania, and I promulgated many more repressive laws, as did all states during that period... We did not execute any Jews, we did not execute any youth; I did give the order for reprisals, but not for massacres.[18]

In fact, on October 24, 1941, General Macici, commander of the Second Army Corps (the Romanian military command in Odessa), received Telegram no. 563 from Colonel Davidescu, chief of the Military Cabinet, which stated that Marshal Antonescu had ordered further reprisals: "(1) Execution of all Jews from Bessarabia who have sought refuge in Odessa; (2) All individuals who fall under the stipulations of [Telegram 562] of October 23, 1941, not yet executed and the others who can be added thereto [*sic*] will be placed inside a building that will be mined and detonated. This action will take place on the day of burial of the victims; (3) This order will be destroyed after being read."[19] On October 27, 1941, Colonel Davidescu asked if this order had been carried out, and the Fourth Army replied that it had indeed been executed (Telegram 3218).[20]

At the December 4, 1941, meeting of the Council of Ministers, Antonescu indicated his frustration that the Jews of Chişinău had been deported before they could be plundered. Because of that oversight, the Jews were robbed by their escorts at the crossing

15. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, fond 40010, vol. 78.
16. *Ibid.*
17. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, fond 40010, vol. 28; USHMM/SRI, roll 35, fond 40010, vol. 78.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
19. USHMM/MStM, RG 25.003M, roll 12(203), fond Fourth Army, vol. 870.
20. *Ibid.*

points on the Dniester rather than by the state bank in the ghetto. This is what underlay Antonescu's demand for a commission of inquiry rather than any outrage at the abuses suffered by the Jews. "Instead of eating the bread of the Romanian country, it is better that they eat the bread of that region."[21] Observing at the December 16, 1941, Council of Ministers' meeting that even Nazi Germany was slow to act, Antonescu urged his lieutenants to hasten Romania's solution to its "Jewish question": "Put them in the catacombs, put them in the Black Sea. I don't want to hear anything. It does not matter if 100 or 1,000 die, [for all I care] they can all die."[22] This order resulted in the deportation of the surviving Jews of Odessa to Berezovka and Golta.

One of the documents most revealing of Ion Antonescu's anti-Semitic convictions is the letter he sent on October 29, 1942, to Liberal Party leader C.I.C. Brătianu shortly after canceling his decision to deport the Jews from southern Transylvania, Moldavia, and Walachia to occupied Poland. The letter is especially noteworthy because it does not actually deal directly with the "Jewish question"; nonetheless it conveys powerful xenophobic undercurrents in its frequent anti-Semitic discursions. Similar to pre-fascist Romanian anti-Semites of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as Legionnaire and Nazi theoreticians, Antonescu was obsessed with the interference of foreign powers in the defense of minorities in Romania and boasted about having put an end to it: "The Romanian people are no longer subject to the servitude imposed by the Congress of Berlin in 1878, by the amendment of Article 7 of the Constitution [granting Jews citizenship], nor the [humiliation] imposed after the last war as concerns the minorities."[23] In particular, Antonescu felt that as a result of Article 7, "the country has been Judaized, the Romanian economy compromised, just like our country's purity."[24]

Like Legionnaire ideologues, Antonescu believed the general corruption of Romanian political life stemmed from "Judaic and Masonic" influences.[25] He cast himself as the savior of the Romanian nation after the proclamation of the National Legionary State.[26] Antonescu accused Iliu Maniu, leader of the National Peasant Party, and other political adversaries of being supported by "Jewish newspapers."[27] He accused his predecessors of having been brought to power by "the occult, Masonic, and Judaic lobby."[28] Antonescu faulted Brătianu, leader of the Liberal Party, for allegedly wavering in his nationalism: "You are a nationalist – at least it would seem so – and yet you side with the Jews and you protest, like Mr. Maniu, against the Romanianization measures I have just introduced."[29] In Antonescu's view, Germany had always been Romania's ally, while "the Jew from London," and "the British, the Americans, and the Jews who had dictated their terms for peace after the previous war," were Romania's outside enemies.[30] Its internal enemies were the "communists… *jidani*, Hungarians, and Saxons," who waited

21. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum/Serviciul de Stat de Arhivă al Republicii Moldova (henceforth: USHMM/SSARM), RG 54.001M, roll 3, fond CBBT, Bir. 3.
22. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, roll 31, fond 40010, vol. 1.
23. *23 August 1944. Documente* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1984), vol. 1, p. 429.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 437.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 433.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 436.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 422.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 424.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 442.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 426, 438.

for the first signs of anarchy "to ignite trouble… to strike the final blow to our nation."[31]

Ion Antonescu's anti-Semitism had an obsessive quality. For example, on February 3, 1942, in a meeting of the Council of Ministers, he explained to members of the Romanian government that the reason a Romanian peasant allowed a large quantity of nuts to rot was that he did not know how to peal them. According to Antonescu, the peasant lacked this knowledge because this "operation was done previously by the Kike. [The peasants] were giving away the nuts 5-6 years in advance and… no longer knew what the Kikes were doing with them. This is the stage our nation is in; here is where the Kikes (*jidănimea*) have brought it."[32] During two meetings of the Council of Ministers – on April 22, 1944, and on May 6, 1944 – Ion Antonescu enounced the cliché of the "kikes with glasses who are spying for the enemy."[33] For him, democracy itself was a pejorative term: "I fight to win the war, but it might be that it will be won by the democracies. And we know what democracy means: it means judeocracy."[34]

The *Conducător*'s attitude toward the Jews alternated between violent hatred and moments of feigned patriarchal generosity. During fall 1941, for example, Antonescu claimed before the Council of Ministers that he was "fighting to cleanse Bessarabia and Bukovina of *jidani* and Slavs."[35] But on September 8, 1941, Antonescu promised Wilhelm Filderman, head of the Federation of Jewish Communities (*Federaţia Uniunilor de Comunităţi Evreieşti* – FUCE), that he would rescind the order forcing Jews in Romania to wear the Star of David, allow Jews to emigrate to Spain or Portugal, and not deport the Jews of Moldavia and Walachia.[36] The next day Antonescu also asked the government to differentiate between "useful" and "useless" Jews, presumably to halt the persecution of at least some.[37] And yet, one month later in response to Filderman's appeal for clemency toward the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina, Antonescu issued a violent reply accusing the Jews in those two regions of having been the enemies of the Romanian people and justifying their deportation to Transnistria.[38] Published in the press, Antonescu's reply provided ammunition for a savage anti-Semitic campaign, which cited his so-called arguments about Jewish "acts of barbarism" in 1940 and 1941. Relevant in this respect is the following excerpt from a reply from the *Conducător* to Filderman, who had begged Antonescu to show the Jews mercy: "In response to the generous reception and treatment granted your Jews among us," the leader wrote, they "have become Soviet commissars," who urged the Soviet troops in the Odessa region into senseless resistance "for the sole purpose of making us suffer losses."[39]

On December 3, 1941, Dr. Nicolae Lupu, a National Peasant Party leader who was sympathetic to the Jews, sent Antonescu three memoranda concerning, respectively, the

31. *Ibid.*, p. 444.
32. Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă, Aurelian Teodorescu şi Bogdan-Florin Popovici (eds.), *Stenogramele Şedinţelor Consiliului de Miniştri. Guvernarea Ion Antonescu* (Bucharest: Arhivele Naţionale ale României, 1998), vol. 6, p. 19.
33. Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 551, 557.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 511.
35. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, fond 40010, vol. 77.
36. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 130-132
37. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, fond 40010, vol. 1.
38. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 258-262, 378-381.
39. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 184, plate VII; Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 286.

judicial inquiry on Filderman, the repatriation of the Dorohoi deportees, and the repatriation of the deportees from Bessarabia and Bukovina. Antonescu refused to intervene on behalf of Filderman, claiming that he could not stop the course of justice. But he promised to issue instructions to repatriate the deportees from Bessarabia and Bukovina, provided that the Federation of Jewish Communities guarantee that the peasants would not kill them.[40]

Ion Antonescu was well aware of the mass murders committed by the SS in Transnistria. According to a report from the Supreme General Staff of the Romanian Army to Antonescu in March 1942, German policemen subjected the Jewish population of the county of Berezovka to mass executions:

I. 1) In the county of Berezovka (Transnistria), German policemen executed 4,067 [*sic*] Jews who had been interned in that county's camps; specifically: 1,725 Jews on March 10; 1,742 Jews on April 20; 550 Jews on April 22; 30 Jews on April 24. 2) Following the executions, the German police burned the corpses, and donated the clothes to the German population without having disinfected them, which caused cases of typhoid in one particular town.
II. The Supreme General Staff wishes to find out if the German policemen can conduct such undertakings under Romanian administration.[41]

Marshal Antonescu wrote in response, "it is not the responsibility of the General Staff of the Army to worry about such things."[42]

Ion Antonescu was also directly responsible for or complicit in even the pettiest decisions on the persecution of the Jews. It was he who signed the April 1942 order (462/CBBT), to deport the remaining 425 Jews of Bessarabia to Transnistria.[43] It was his decision to carry out the second deportation of Jews from Bukovina, formally enacted on May 28, 1942.[44] On August 31, 1942, Antonescu reviewed some late-1941 statistics indicating the presence of 375,422 Jews in Romania – 2.2 percent of the population; on his copy he wrote, "a very large number." Where the text reported a remaining 6,900 Jews (3.4 percent of the 1930 number) in Bessarabia, Antonescu wrote: "Impossible! My order was to have all the Jews deported." When he saw the figure of 60,708 Jews in Bukovina at the time (1941), Antonescu noted: "Impossible. Please verify. My order stated that only 10,000 Jews should remain in Bukovina. Please check. This is fantastic! Judaized cities, simply, purely Judaized."[45] (The figures for Cernăuţi, Dorohoi, Botoşani, Iaşi, and Bacău, had indeed risen by anywhere from 26 percent to 58 percent, but this was because of Antonescu's decision to move the Jews from rural areas to the towns.) Antonescu resolved to publicize this information "to show Romania to what extent its economic life has been compromised, threatened… owing to felonious Judaic and Masonic politicking." The *Conducător* swore, "If my legacy to the heirs of this regime reflects the same situation, I will have made this regime an accomplice to a crime," and

40. *Ibid.*, p. 425.
41. *Ibid.*, vol. 10, p. 193.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 193
43. *Ibid.*, roll 25, fond 20725, vol. 10.
44. *Ibid.*, roll 34, fond 40010, vol. 75.
45. *Ibid.*, vol. 10, pp. 214-215.

promised that "in order to purify the nation… I will flatten all those who [attempt] to prevent me from carrying out the wish of the absolute majority."[46]

On October 12, 1942, Antonescu reassured *Centrala Evreilor* (Jewish Center) of his openness to moderation: "The better the Jews behave, the better they will be treated." He was even big enough to acknowledge the good Jews who had "paid dearly for the mistakes of some of their own, [and that those] bastards [were] comparable only to some of our own bastards." Fully aware of the corruption of the Romanian bureaucracy in charge of the "Jewish question," Antonescu even promised that if Jews helped him to identify Romanians who had blackmailed them, "they can rest assured, I will not spare them." But, he warned, neither would he spare the Jews who were "guilty."[47] During that same autumn in 1942, Ion Antonescu made the crucial decision to postpone the implementation of the Romanian-German plan to deport all the Jews from the *Regat* and southern Transylvania to Belzec. This planned deportation was never carried out, and consequently, at least 290,000 Romanian Jews survived the war.

Nonetheless, Ion Antonescu's vacillations concerning the Jews continued during 1943. On one hand, he still declared that he tolerated the Jews, who might deserve partial protection by the Romanian state; on the other, he demanded that his subordinates display stern behavior toward the Jews. In a letter written on February 6 to his personal architect, Herman Clejan, Antonescu stated that the Jews "displayed only hostility and bad faith toward the Romanian state," which was "only defending and continuing to defend itself against the Jews' perfidy."[48] Antonescu nevertheless decided that Jews who had settled in Romania before 1914 and who had "participated sincerely… in the interests of the Romanian state" should enjoy the opportunities that existed there, though "based on the criteria of proportionality."[49] Antonescu also promised to protect Jews who had "served the country on the battlefield or in other areas of public life."[50] However, according to Antonescu, Jews who had come to Romania after 1914 (those from Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, and beyond the Dniester) were corrupt and had employed criminal methods, such as embezzling from the state treasury, to acquire wealth; he asserted that they were a subversive and negative influence on Romanian society. Thus, these Jews were to be "struck without pity and kicked out of the country. They do not have the right to seek humanitarian sympathy because humanitarianism would mean weakness [on our part]. After having repaid with hostility and crimes the limitless tolerance they have enjoyed in Romania, where their prosperity defied even their own dreams, these Jews no longer have any right to human understanding. They [should] receive only their just deserts for their misdeeds… All those who support them, will suffer the same fate."[51]

But on April 30, 1943, Filderman argued again on behalf of Jews in Romania, contrasting their situation to the tolerance enjoyed by those in Finland. This seems to have made an impression on Antonescu, who told General Vasiliu: "If that is the case in Finland, let's leave [the Jews of the *Regat*] alone…"[52] Six months later, on October 30,

46. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
48. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 522.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 522
50. *Ibid.*, p. 523.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 523
52. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 544.

Ion Antonescu declared that he was "happy" with the results obtained in Romanianizing (i.e., Aryanizing) trade in Moldavia: "All trade in Moldavia, Dorohoi, right up to Focşani must be Romanianized in a civilized fashion."[53]

Documents originating from the military office of Ion Antonescu show that in 1943, high-ranking members of his administration frequently informed him about the fate of Jewish and Roma deportees in Transnistria. For example, a May 20 report emphasized the terrible conditions of the Jews interned in Mostovoi ("dirty, without clothes, very thin") and the fact that the Roma from Berezovka kept their dead in their houses in order to receive their food allowance.[54] Several more such reports moved Antonescu to decide on June 3, 1943, to decrease the number of inmates in the Bersad ghetto (from 8,061 internees), to reorganize the Vapniarka concentration camp, to relocate the Roma outside the villages where they could cultivate land, and to improve the general sanitary conditions in the camps and ghettos.[55]

Ion Antonescu was also directly responsible for both the death and the survival of the Romanian Jews who lived in occupied Europe under German jurisdiction. On August 8, 1942, in Bucharest, Steltzer, the German Legation counselor, informed Gheorghe Davidescu of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Ion Antonescu "had agreed with Ambassador Killinger that Romanian citizens of Jewish ancestry in Germany and the occupied territories should be treated in the same fashion as German Jews."[56] As early as November 1941, Killinger told the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office), that Antonescu had approved the intention of the *Reich* to deport Romanian Jews under German jurisdiction to eastern ghettos together with German Jews; the Romanian government "had stated no interest in bringing Romanian Jews back to Romania."[57] Therefore, on August 21, 1942, Gheorghe Davidescu telegrammed (no. 5120) the Romanian Legation in Berlin to inform them that earlier orders concerning the protection of Romanian Jews abroad were being revoked as a consequence of the agreement between Marshal Antonescu and Ambassador Killinger. Romanian diplomats were henceforth forbidden to protest German measures against Romanian citizens of Jewish ancestry, and their only concern was to be the recovery of Jewish assets.[58] The conversation between Antonescu and Killinger in which Antonescu agreed to hand over Romanian Jews living in Nazi-occupied Europe to the Germans, had actually taken place sometime before July 23, 1942, when a ciphered telegram from the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs first mentioned it; it was not, however, immediately translated into policy.[59]

As a direct result of this decision, 1,600 Romanian Jews from Germany and Austria, 3,000 from France, and an unknown number from Poland, Bohemia-Moravia, and Holland perished in German concentration camps. During spring 1943, the Romanian government reversed its decision, and over roughly 4,000 Romanian Jews living in France survived the war. Ion Antonescu even approved the repatriation of some of these Jews; in

53. *Ibid.*, p. 667.
54. USHMM/RSA, RG 25.002M, fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Military Cabinet, folder 205.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Ion Calafeteanu, "Regimul cetăţenilor români de origine evreiască aflaţi în străinătate în anii dictaturii antonesciene," *Anale de istorie*, 5 (1986), p. 132.
57. *Ibid.*
58. Calafeteanu, *op. cit.*, p. 312; USHMM/RFMA, RG 25.006M, roll 17, fond Germany, vol. 32.
59. USHMM/RFMA, RG 25.006M, roll 17, fond Germany, vol. 32.

fact, although the repatriated Jews were slated for deportation to Transnistria, Ion Antonescu consented to their staying in Romania.[60] He formally committed to this on July 20, 1943.[61]

In a speech to Romanian soldiers on January 1, 1944, Ion Antonescu struck a new tone, basically denying the anti-Semitic atrocities of his regime :

> [Y]our deeds in the occupied lands and wherever you have been, have been marked by humanity… Man to us is a human being regardless of the nation he belongs to and the evil that he may have caused. All those whom we have encountered on our journey, we have helped and protected as no one else would. The children have been cared for like our own ; the old people as if they were our own… We have deported no one, and you have never driven the dagger into the chest of anyone. In our jails there are no innocent people. The religious beliefs of all and everyone's political creeds have been respected. We have not uprooted their communities… or families for our own political or national interests.[62]

But in a private letter to Clejan, dated February 4, 1944, Antonescu demonstrated again how virulent his anti-Semitic tendencies still were. He justified anew the deportations, regretting only that they had not removed all Jews from the regions that had been cleansed. He acknowledged that he had refused to repatriate the surviving Jews of Transnistria – the "enemies" of the Romanian nation – but at the same time, he would not tolerate their abuse :

> Mr. Clejan, concerning your letter about the fate of the Jews in Transnistria and those of the Bug, and the compulsory labor exemption fees, allow me to broach anew some issues that relate to the Jewish question in Romania in terms of reality, the results of war, and the events that preceded it.
>
> As I have told you in person, I was forced to [plan the deportation of] the Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina because of their terrible behavior during the Russian occupation ; the population was so angry at them, that the most horrible pogroms would have otherwise occurred. Even though I decided to evacuate all the Jews… various intercessions and initiatives prevented it. I regret today that I did not do it because… the largest number of this country's enemies is recruited among the Jews who remained there. There is no terrorist or communist organization that does not have Jews in it, and often they are made up exclusively of Jews… Under these circumstances, it is morally and politically inconceivable… to return the Jews from Transnistria… But, I will give the order to allow them to stay away from the front line and to settle them in southern Transnistria where the Jewish community, with help from abroad, can [help] them leave the country. Among those [already] repatriated were those who had been mistakenly deported, 7,000 Jews from Dorohoi, and 4,500 orphaned children… As a man with a European outlook, I have never tolerated… crimes against persons [and] will continue to take measures [so that they] will not happen to the Jews.[63]

On April 22, 1944, during a Council of Ministers session, Antonescu reconsidered repatriation from Transnistria – if, perhaps, returnees were restricted to specific towns or confined to ghettos ; ultimately, however, he rejected any full repatriation to Romania :

> It would be a solution to transfer them… to certain towns, if they return in large numbers. To settle them, as in Buhuşi, in one or two towns, to resettle all the Romanians and allow the

60. *Ibid.*
61. USHMM/RFMA, RG 25.006M, roll 16, fond Germany, vol. 30.
62. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 712.
63. Carp, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 458–459 ; Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, p. 19 ; OSS Report no. 19533, May 22, 1944, National Archives and Records Administration (henceforth : NARA).

> Jews to live together. All we would have to do is to send them supplies… They will work for each other, sew, do carpentry, etc. That is one solution.
>
> Another solution is to bring them together into ghettos inside each city. We tell them : "This is where you will live ; do not leave. We will bring you food, do what you wish ; we will not kill you, we will not harm you."
>
> The third solution is to bring them back to Romania. This is the most dangerous one… for the Romanian people. I cannot order their return… people would stone me to death.[64]

Questioned after the war, Ion Antonescu confessed that the original 1942 decision to deport the Roma had also been his. He sought to justify himself by citing "popular" demand for protection from armed robbers who entered people's homes at night : "After much investigation, we concluded that these were armed Roma, many with military weapons, organizing these attacks. All the Roma were moved out. Since Mr. Alexianu needed manpower in Transnistria, I said : 'Let's move them to Transnistria ; that is my decision.'"[65]

At his trial, Ion Antonescu accepted responsibility for mistakes and distortions of his orders by subordinates, though not for the violent crimes and plundering some had perpetrated.[66] While acknowledging that "bloody repression"[67] had occurred under the aegis of Romania during the war, Ion Antonescu falsely declared that there had been no massacres under his authority : "I passed many repressive laws, [but] we did not execute a single Jew… I gave orders for reprisals, not for perpetrating massacres."[68]

At the beginning of the war, Antonescu – a harsh and often violent anti-Semite – believed that he would be able to resolve once and for all "the Jewish question" and that of the other minorities (Ukrainians, in particular). But a comparison to Hitler, whom he admired and who admired him, shows him in a different light. Until September 1941, Antonescu received Filderman, the leader of the Jewish community, which would have been inconceivable in Germany ; Hitler would have never entertained a direct or indirect dialogue with the leader of the German Jewish community. At the end of 1942 and in close connection with the reversals on the Eastern front, Antonescu tolerated – encouraged, even – contacts with the Allies through neutral countries (in Lisbon, Stockholm, Ankara, and Cairo), which suggests that he had come to a more realistic assessment of the overall chances of winning the war. After the end of 1942, he imagined, like many other Romanian politicians, that the Romanian Jews could be used as bargaining chips to improve Romania's image in the United States and England.

But this does not mean that the decision not to deport the Jews from southern Transylvania, Moldavia, and Walachia to Nazi camps in occupied Poland was strictly opportunistic. In all likelihood, various appeals – including those from Archbishop Bălan, the Romanian royal family, and the diplomatic corps – played a significant role. Nonetheless, after Stalingrad, Antonescu did grow more concerned about Romania's image abroad. Reports from the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which asserted that Romanian Jews under Nazi occupation were treated worse than Hungarian Jews,

64. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 422.
65. *Procesul marii trădări naţionale*, p. 108.
66. Ancel, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, p. 486
67. *Procesul marii trădări naţionale*, p. 51.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 54

annoyed Antonescu. His position of relative equality with Hitler had commanded the respect of Nazi dignitaries and the German Embassy. At a certain point even Himmler – having lost all hope of collaboration in the destruction of Romania's Jews – gave up and intended in 1943 to order the withdrawal of his killer-bureaucrats (e.g., Gustav Richter) from Romania.

Even though he shared many ideas with the Legionnaires, Ion Antonescu was not an adventurer in the economic arena. Politically, he placed himself between Goga and Codreanu: he nurtured an obsession for a Romania purged of the minorities that represented a "danger" to the state, especially in the territories reattached to Romania after the First World War. Antonescu's anti-Semitism was economic, political, social, and sometimes religious, but it did not share the mystical aspects of Legionary anti-Semitism. His hatred was not that of a hoodlum armed with a truncheon, but that of a bureaucrat pretending to resolve a problem in a legal and systematic manner. The fate of the Jews might have been different had the Legionary government lasted longer, if for no other reason than that the Legionnaires would have certainly been more closely aligned with Germany.

Ion Antonescu was responsible not only for the devastation of Romanian Jews and Roma, but also for many of the tragic losses endured by the Romanian nation during World War II. As an Axis state and committed ally of Nazi Germany, Romania closely coordinated military matters with the Germans. For example, in June 1941 Hitler appointed General Eugen von Schobert of the German Eleventh Army to command the southern flank on the Eastern front. However, although Schobert was in command, Hitler recognized Antonescu's importance and mandated that the *Conducător* co-sign all of Schobert's orders.[69]

While Antonescu's war in the East has frequently been construed merely as an attempt to regain Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina or as leverage to persuade Hitler to return Northern Transylvania to Romania, Antonescu had higher aspirations "in which – not feeling at all inferior to Hitler and Mussolini – he imagined a Dacian empire from the Balkans to the Dnieper. [Moreover], his collaboration with the military plans of the Axis was not limited to the offensive against the Soviet Union."[70] Ion Antonescu declared war on the United States on December 16, 1941. He was also at war with Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Nicaragua, and Haiti. Furthermore, he allowed German divisions to pass through Romania in their advance to attack Greece, and he permitted Germany to use Romanian territory as a launching pad for its attacks against Yugoslavia.[71]

As Antonescu himself declared in writing, he was at war with the Jews. By implementing the systematic deportation of the Jewish population from within Romania and occupied Ukraine, Ion Antonescu and his lieutenants became the architects of untold

69. For Romanian-German headquarter's reports, see: Arhivele Naţionale Istorice Centrale, fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Ion Antonescu Military Cabinet, file no. 126/1941, f. 3-5; 319/194, f. 28-29; 42-44; Andreas Hillgruber, *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler Vertrauliche Aufzeichmmgen über die Unterredunger mit Vertreten des Auslandes. 1939-1941* (Deutscher Taschenhuchverlag, 1969), pp. 276-291; *Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, series D, vol. 7, February 1941, June 1941, document no. 644.
70. Andrei Pippidi, *Despre statui şi morminte* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2000), p. 240.
71. *Ibid.*

suffering for hundreds of thousands of innocent victims, and the death of more than a quarter of a million of them. Thus, in addition to waging war against a traditional, military enemy, from 1941 to 1944 Antonescu also targeted civilians – with the persecution ranging from plunder to murder.[72] Ion Antonescu and his accomplices do not bear sole responsibility for this tragedy, however ; in addition to the Nazi regime, "part of the Romanian political class is [also] responsible for his rise to power, due to its weakness or selfishness."[73]

In extreme nationalist circles today, an attempt is underway to restore Antonescu to a place of honor in Romanian history as a great patriot. But whether he loved his country is irrelevant : Antonescu was a war criminal in the purest definition of the phrase. His leadership involved the Romanian government in crimes against humanity unrivaled in Romania's sometimes glorious, sometimes cruel history ; perhaps more ironically, this leader's war against a defenseless and innocent civilian population was only part of the broader folly of involving the country in a conflict that promised only illusory gains, but actually wrought very definite, catastrophic consequences. A modern Romanian patriotism must not only reject the legacy of five decades of communist misrule, but years of fascist tyranny, too, if it is to be able to recount and take honest pride in Romania's history.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.
73. *Ibid*.

The Holocaust in Northern Transylvania

Toward the Second Vienna Award

The Nazis' assumption of power in Germany in January 1933 marked a watershed in modern history. Within a relatively short time after the establishment of the totalitarian regime, the Nazis initiated a series of radical changes in the domestic and foreign policies of Germany. Domestically, they destroyed the democratic institutions of the Weimar Republic and adopted a series of socioeconomic measures calculated to establish a Third *Reich* that was to last a thousand years. Toward this end, they resolved to bring about the "purification" of Germany by expelling all Jews living in their country – a drive that eventually culminated in the physical destruction of European Jewry during the Second World War.

An important foreign policy objective of the Nazi regime was to replace the world order established after World War I by the Allies, under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations, with a "New Order" reflecting the principles of National Socialism. In pursuit of this objective the Nazis violated Germany's obligations under the various treaties ending the First World War. Among other things, they launched a massive rearmament program and re-militarized the Rhineland – aggressive moves that were indirectly encouraged by the failure of the Western democracies and the League of Nations to effectively oppose them, as they were more afraid of the long-range danger of Bolshevism than of the immediate threat posed by the Third *Reich*. In fact, their appeasement merely encouraged the Nazis to pursue their aggressive revisionist policies with greater intensity.

In their drive for supremacy in Europe, the Nazis first aimed to gain a dominant role in East Central Europe. Within a few years they gradually tied the socioeconomic, political, and military interests of the countries of the region to those of the Third *Reich*. They largely achieved this objective by financially and politically supporting these countries' anti-Semitic press organs and right radical parties and movements.

Post World War I Hungary was a natural ally for the Third *Reich*. Following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the Hungarian Kingdom became one of the major losers of the war. After first relying unsuccessfully on the Western democracies and the League of Nations to rectify what it termed the injustices of Trianon, in the mid-thirties Hungary decided to pursue its revisionist objectives in tandem with the Third *Reich*. Although they were not always in harmony, both Hungary and Nazi Germany aimed to undo the European world order created after World War I. Their first target was the Little Entente, whose members – Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia – had been the major beneficiaries of the disintegration of Greater Hungary.

A week before the German annexation of Austria on March 12, 1938, the Hungarian government launched a rearmament program that was intertwined with the adoption of the first major anti-Jewish law. The twin issues of revisionism and the Jewish question came to dominate Hungary's domestic and foreign policies. The alignment of Hungary with the *Reich* paid its first dividend shortly after the Western democracies surrendered in Munich (September 29, 1938) to the Nazis' demands for solving the crisis over the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia. Under the terms of the so-called First Vienna Award of November 2, 1938, brokered by Joachim von Ribbentrop and Galeazzo Ciano, the foreign ministers of Germany and Italy, Hungary acquired from Czechoslovakia the Upper Province (Felvidék) – a strip of land in Southern Slovakia and western Carpatho-Ruthenia. Following the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Hungary also acquired Carpatho-Ruthenia (*Kárpátalja*).

Hungary's revisionist ambitions were indirectly enhanced by the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact of September 1939, under whose terms the USSR was given a free hand in several parts of Eastern Europe, including Romania. The USSR refrained from acting against Romania as long as France, the country's foremost supporter, was still considered Europe's most formidable military power. But on June 26, 1940, three days after a defeated France was compelled to sign an armistice agreement, the Soviet government issued an ultimatum: it demanded that Romania give up Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina within a few days.

The annexation of these territories had been preceded by an orchestrated Soviet press campaign against Romania. The campaign caught the attention of Hungarian governmental officials, who began working out plans for the possible recovery of Transylvania in synchronization with the expected Soviet occupation of the eastern provinces of Romania. The Hungarian state and governmental leaders contacted Hitler early in July 1940 to press their case concerning Transylvania. Since the *Fuehrer* needed both Hungary and Romania as allies in the planned invasion of the Soviet Union, the leaders of the two countries were advised to settle their differences by negotiation.

The Arbitration Award of August 30, 1940

The Hungarian-Romanian negotiations that began on August 16, 1940 in Turnu-Severin, Romania, yielded no results and, after ten days of futile wrangling, both parties appealed to the Germans for help. The deadlock was broken shortly after István Csáky and Mihail Manoilescu, the foreign ministers of Hungary and Romania respectively, were invited to Vienna "for some friendly advice" by their Italian and German counterparts. The arbitration award worked out by Ciano and Ribbentrop and their staffs was signed on August 30. Under the terms of this agreement – usually referred to as the Second Vienna Award – Hungary received an area of 43,591 square kilometers with a population of approximately 2.5 million. The area included the northern half of Transylvania, encompassing Sălaj, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Ciuc, and Someş counties, most of Bihor, most of Trei Scaune and Mureş-Turda counties, and parts of Cluj county.[1] The territorial concessions

1. The county and district names and boundaries referred to in this study are those of Hungary of 1940-1944.

also enabled Hungary to reestablish Maramureş, Satu Mare, and Ugocsa counties within their pre-World War I boundaries. The annexation of Northern Transylvania was completed by September 13, and the territory was formally incorporated into Hungary under a law passed by the Hungarian Parliament on October 2, 1940.

The Jews of Transylvania

The national-ethnic composition of Transylvania varied in the course of the three decades preceding the partition as reflected in the following table relating to Northern Transylvania :

Census of 1910 (Hungarian by mothertongue)		**Census of 1930 (Romanian, by nationality)**		**Census of 1941 (Hungarian)**	
Magyar	1,125,732	Magyar	911,550	Magyar	1,347,012
Romanian	926,268	Romanian	1,176,433	Romanian	1,066,353
German }	90,195	German	68,694	German	47,501
Yiddish }	16,284	Jews	138,885	Yiddish	45,593
Ruthene	12,807	Others	99,585	Ruthene	20,609
Slovak	22,968			Slovak	20,908
Others				Romany	24,729
				Others	4,586
Total	**2,194,254**	**Total**	**2,395,147**	**Total**	**2,577,291**

Source : C.A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth. A History of Modern Hungary, 1929-1945* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 1957), vol. 1, p. 423

The census figures used in this table are dubious. Both the Hungarian and the Romanian census authorities appear to have juggled the figures relating to the ethnic and national minorities in order to advance their particular national interests with reference to their respective claims to the region. This was particularly true of the statistical treatment of the Jewish minority.

Before the partition, the total Jewish population of Transylvania was about 200,000. Of these, 164,052 lived in the territories ceded to Hungary.

The historical and cultural heritage that tied Transylvanian Jews to Hungary and the socioeconomic and political realities that bound them to Romania were the source of many conflicts during the interwar period. It is one of the ironies and tragedies of history that after the division of Transylvania in 1940 the Jews fared far worse in the part allotted to Hungary – the country with which they maintained so many cultural and emotional ties – than in the one left with Romania – the state identified with many anti-Semitic excesses in the course of its history.

The Jews of Transylvania were victims of the historical milieu in which they lived. Romanians resented them because of their proclivity to Hungarian culture and by implication Hungarian revisionism and irredentism. Hungarians, especially Right radicals, accused them of being “renegades” in the service of the Left.

The socioeconomic structure of Transylvanian Jewry was similar to that of the Jews in the neighboring provinces. Many were engaged in business or trade, and their percentage in the professions and white-collar fields outside of government was relatively high. There were, however, only a handful of Jews associated with mining and heavy industry. While no data on income distribution are available, the many studies on Transylvania reveal that there was a considerable proportion of Jews who could barely make a living ; many depended for their survival on the generosity of the community. Most of these impoverished Jews lived in the densely populated Jewish centers of the northwest.

The original reaction of many of the North Transylvanian Jews to the historical changes in the region was to a large extent determined by their experiences during the previous three years, when the various Romanian governments instituted a series of anti-Semitic measures, and the memories they still nurtured about their lives in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The illusions cherished by many among these Jews that the Hungarian annexation of the area would denote a return to the "Golden Era" soon gave way to disbelief and despair. The newly established Hungarian authorities lost no time in implementing the anti-Jewish laws and policies that had already been in effect in Hungary proper. The Jewish newspapers were suppressed, as were all nondenominational clubs and associations. The general democratic and moderate press in the region fared no better : most of the local press organs and periodicals were transformed into mouthpieces of the chauvinistic Right.

The discriminatory measures affected the Jews particularly harshly in their economic and educational pursuits. While those in business and the professions managed to make ends meet by circumventing the laws or taking advantage of loopholes, civil servants, with a few exceptions, were dismissed, and students in secondary and higher education found themselves almost totally excluded from the state educational system.[2]

The heavy hand of the Hungarian military authorities was felt particularly in the four counties of the Szekely area, which the Hungarians considered "sacred." The Jews of the area were subjected to a review of their citizenship status ; as a result many of them found themselves in custody because of their "doubtful" citizenship. Particularly hard hit was the Jewish community of Miercurea-Ciuc, where dozens of families were rounded up and expelled.[3]

But harsh as these many anti-Jewish measures were they were overshadowed by the forced labor service system Hungary introduced in 1939. During the first two years of its operation, the Jewish recruits of military age, though subjected to many discriminatory measures, fared relatively well. After Hungary's involvement in the war against Yugoslavia in April 1941, however, the system acquired a punitive character. The Jewish labor servicemen were compelled to serve in their own civilian clothes : they were supplied with an insignia-free military cap and instead of arms they were equipped with shovels and pickaxes. For identification the Jews were required to wear a yellow armband ; the

2. For a review of the legislative acts enacted against the Jews, see Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary*, 2nd ed. (New York : Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 125-130, 151-160 (henceforth : Braham, *Politics*.)
3. For some details, see Tamás Majsai, "The Deportation of Jews from Csikszereda and Margit Slachta's intervention on Their Behalf", in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *Studies on the Holocaust in Hungary* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 113-163.

converts and the Christians identified as Jews under the racial laws had to wear a white one. Shortly after Hungary joined the Third *Reich* in the war against the Soviet Union (June 27, 1941), the labor service system was also used as a means to "solve" the Jewish question. Many of the Jews recruited for service were called up on an individual basis rather than by age group. By this practice the military-governmental authorities paid special attention to calling up the rich, the prominent professionals, the leading industrialists and businessmen, the well-known Zionist and community leaders, and above all those who had been denounced by the local Christians as "objectionable" elements. Many among these Jewish recruits were totally unfit for labor or any other service, and eventually perished in the Ukraine, Serbia, and elsewhere. No data are available on the Northern Transylvanian Jewish casualties of the labor service system.[4]

The Jewish community of Northern Transylvania also suffered in the wake of the campaign the Hungarian authorities conducted against "alien" Jews in the summer of 1941. Especially hard hit were many of the communities in Maramureş and Satu Mare counties, where an indeterminate number of Jews were rounded up as "aliens." They were among the 16,000 to 18,000 Jews who were deported from all over Hungary to near Kamenets-Podolsk, where most of them were murdered in late August 1941.

Despite the many casualties and discriminatory measures, however, the bulk of the Jews of Northern Transylvania, like those of Hungary as a whole, lived in relative physical safety, convinced that they would continue to enjoy the protection of the conservative-aristocratic government. This conviction was shattered almost immediately after the German occupation of Hungary on March 19, 1944.

The Final Solution

The occupation of Hungary was to a large extent based on German military considerations. Hitler was resolved to prevent Hungary from extricating itself from the Axis Alliance – a goal the Hungarians pursued after the crushing defeat of the Hungarian Second Army at Voronezh in January 1943 and especially after Italy's successful extrication from the alliance in the summer of that year. The occupation itself was preceded by a meeting between Hitler and Horthy at Schloss Klesheim on March 18 during which the Hungarian head of state, confronted with a *fait accompli*, not only yielded to the *Fuehrer*'s ultimatum but also consented to the delivery of a few hundred thousand "Jewish workers for employment in German industrial and agricultural enterprises." It was largely this agreement that the Garman and Hungarian officials exploited as a "legal framework" for the implementation of the Final Solution in Hungary.[5]

Because of the worsening military situation – the Red Army was already approaching the borders of Romania – the Nazis and their Hungarian accomplices decided to implement the "solution" of the Jewish question in Hungary at lightning speed. On the German side, the SS commando that was entrusted with this mission was under the leadership of SS-*Obersturmbannführer* Adolf Eichmann. Although it was rather small –

4. For details on the Hungarian labor service system, see Braham, *Politics*, chapter 10.
5. For details on the background and consequences of the Horthy-Hitler meeting at Schloss Klesheim, see *ibid*., chapter 11.

the commando consisted of only around 100 SS-men – it was successful in carrying out its mission primarily because it had received the wholehearted support of the newly established Hungarian government.

The government of Döme Sztójay, which Horthy constitutionally appointed on March 22, 1944, placed the instruments of state power – the gendarmerie, police, and civil service – at the disposal of the Nazis. In addition, it issued a series of anti-Jewish decrees, which were calculated to bring about the isolation, marking, expropriation, and ghettoization of the Jews prior to their mass deportation. For logistical reasons, the drive against the Jews was based on a territorial basis determined by the ten gendarmerie districts into which the country was divided. These districts, in turn, were divided into six anti-Jewish operational zones. Northern Transylvania encompassed Gendarmerie Districts IX and X, and constituted Operational Zone II.

The details of the anti-Jewish drive as well as some aspects of the deportation process were worked out on April 4 at a joint German-Hungarian meeting held in the Ministry of the Interior under the chairmanship of László Baky, an undersecretary of state in the Ministry of the Interior. Among the participants was Lt. Col. László Ferenczy, the gendarmerie officer in charge of the ghettoization and deportation of the Jews.

The draft document relating to the roundup, ghettoization, concentration, and deportation of the Jews – the basis of the April 4 discussion – was prepared by László Endre, another undersecretary of state in the Ministry of the Interior. It was issued secretly as Decree no. 6163/1944.res. on April 7 over the signature of Baky. This document, addressed to the representatives of the local organs of state power, spelled out the procedures to be followed in the campaign to bring about the Final Solution of the Jewish question in Hungary.[6] Supplementary specific details about the measures to be taken against the Jews were spelled out in several highly confidential directives, emphasizing that the Jews destined for deportation were to be rounded up without regard to sex, age or illness.[7] The minister of the interior issued directives for the implementation of the decree three days *before* the top-secret decree was actually sent out. In a secret order, the minister instructed all the subordinate mayoral, police, and gendarmerie organs to bring about the registration of the Jews by the appropriate local Jewish institutions.[8] These lists, containing all family members, exact addresses, and the mother's name of all those listed, were to be prepared in four copies, with one copy to be handed over to the local police authorities, one to the appropriate gendarmerie command, and a third to be forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior.[9] To make sure that no Jews would escape the net, the minister of supply also issued a registration order, allegedly to regulate the allocation of food for the Jews.

Unaware of the sinister implications of these lists as well as of the wearing of the Yellow Star of David – the two interrelated measures designed to facilitate their isolation and ghettoization – the Jewish masses of Northern Transylvania, like their co-religionists elsewhere in the country, complied with the measures taken by their local Jewish communal leaders. In contrast to the national leaders of Hungarian Jewry, who were fully informed, the local community leaders were as much in the dark about the scope of these

6. For the English version of the decree, see *ibid.,* pp. 573-575.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 575-578.
8. Order no. 6136/1944.VII.res. dated April 4, 1944 (*ibid.*, pp. 578-579).
9. For a sample of a mayoral order addressed to a local Jewish community, see *ibid.*

measures as the masses they led.[10] In the smaller Jewish communities, especially in the villages, it was usually the community secretary or registrar who prepared the lists ; in larger towns, the preparation of the lists was entrusted to young men not yet mobilized in the military labor service system. They usually acted in pairs, conscientiously canvassing the entire community, eager not to leave out a single street or building so as not to "deprive people of their share of provisions."

The Nazis and their Hungarian accomplices set up their headquarters for the anti-Jewish drive in Munkács (now Mukacevo, Ukraine). At a gathering of the top officials in charge of the Final Solution on April 7, Endre spelled out the instructions for the implementation of the anti-Jewish drive in accordance with the provisions of Decree no. 6163/1944. He stipulated, among other things, that the Jews were to be concentrated in empty warehouses, abandoned or non-operational factories, brickyards, Jewish community establishments, Jewish schools and offices, and synagogues.

The Military Operational Zones

Since the anti-Jewish measures could not be camouflaged and the mass evacuation of the Jews was bound to create dislocations in the economic life of the affected communities, the Nazis and their Hungarian accomplices felt compelled to provide a military rationale for the operations. They assumed, it turned out correctly, that the local population, including some of the Jews, would understand the necessity for the removal of the Jews from the approaching frontlines "in order to protect Axis interests from the machinations of Judeo-Bolsheviks." On April 12, the Council of Ministers, *ex post facto*, declared Carpatho-Ruthenia and Northern Transylvania – the first two areas slated for dejewification – to have become military operational zones as of April 1.[11] The government appointed Béla Ricsóy-Uhlarik to serve as Government Commissioner for the military operational zone in Northern Transylvania.

The Ghettoization and Concentration Master Plan

The master plan worked out by the German and Hungarian anti-Jewish experts called for the ghettoization and concentration of the Jews to be effected in a number of distinct phases :

- Jews in the rural communities and the smaller towns were to be rounded up and temporarily transferred to synagogues and/or community buildings.
- Following the first round of investigation in pursuit of valuables at these "local ghettos," the Jews rounded up in the rural communities and smaller towns were to be transferred to the ghettos of the larger cities in their vicinity, usually the county seat.
- In the larger towns and cities Jews were to be rounded up and transferred to a specially designated area that would serve as a ghetto – totally isolated from the other parts of the city. In some cities, the ghetto was to be established in the Jewish

10. *Ibid.*, chapter 29.
11. Decree no. 1.440/1944. M.E.

quarter; in others, in abandoned or non-functional factories, warehouses, brickyards, or under the open sky.
- Jews were to be concentrated in centers with adequate rail facilities to make possible swift entrainment and deportation.

During each phase, the Jews were to be subjected to special searches by teams composed of gendarmerie and police officials, assisted by local *Nyilas* and other accomplices, to compel them to surrender their valuables. The plans for the implementation of the ghettoization and deportation operations called for the launching of six territorially defined "mopping-up operations." For this purpose, the country was divided into six operational zones, with each zone encompassing one or two gendarmerie districts.[12] Northern Transylvania was identified as Zone II, encompassing Gendarmerie District IX, headquartered in Cluj, and Gendarmerie District X, headquartered in Târgu-Mureş.

The order of priority for the deportation of the Jews was established with an eye on a series of military, political, and psychological factors. Time was of the essence because of the fast approach of the Red Army. Politically it was more expedient to start in the eastern and northeastern parts of Hungary because the central and local Hungarian authorities and the local population had less regard for the "Galician," Eastern," "alien," and Yiddish-oriented masses than for the assimilated Jews. Their round-up for "labor" in Germany was accepted in many Hungarian rightist circles as doubly welcome: Hungary would get rid of its "alien" elements and would at the same time make a contribution to the joint war effort, thereby hastening the termination of the German occupation and the reestablishment of full sovereignty.

The Ghettoization Decree

Like the decision identifying Carpatho-Ruthenia and Northern Transylvania as military operational zones, the decree stipulating the establishment of ghettos was adopted on an *ex post facto* basis. The government decree, issued on April 26, went into effect on April 28.[13] Andor Jaross, the Minister of the Interior, outlined the rationale for, and the alleged objectives of, the decree at the Council of Ministers meeting of April 26. He claimed that in view of their better economic status the Jews living in the cities had proportionally much better housing than non-Jews and therefore it was possible to "create a healthier situation" by rearranging the whole housing situation. Jews were to be restricted to smaller apartments and several families could be ordered to move in together. National security, he further argued, required that Jews be removed from the villages and the smaller towns into larger cities, where the chief local officials – the mayors or the police chiefs – would set aside a special section or district for them.[14] The

12. For details on the gendarmerie districts, see Braham, *Politics*, chapter 13.
13. Decree no. 1.610/1944. M.E. The objective of the decree, which was issued ten days *after* the Jews of Carpatho-Ruthenia were being rounded up, was camouflaged under the title *Concerning the Regulation of Certain Questions Relating to the Jews' Apartments and Living Places*.
14. For the minutes of the Council of Ministers meeting on this issue, see Ilona Benoschofsky and Elek Karsai (eds.), *Vádirat a nácizmus ellen* (*Indictment of Nazism*) (Budapest: A Magyar Izraeliták Országos Képviselete, 1958-1967), vol. 1, p. 241-244.

crucial provisions of the decree relating to the concentration of the Jews were included in Articles 8 and 9. The former provided that Jews could no longer live in communities with a population of under 10,000, while the latter stipulated that the mayors of the larger towns and cities could determine the sections, streets, and buildings in which Jews were to be permitted to live. This legal euphemism in fact empowered the local authorities to establish ghettos. The location of, and the conditions within the ghettos consequently depended on the attitudes of the mayors and their aides.

The Ghettoization Conferences

The details relating to the ghettoization of the Jews in Northern Transylvania were discussed and finalized at two conferences chaired by Endre. These were attended by the top Hungarian officials in charge of the Final Solution and representatives of the various counties and municipalities, including the county prefects and/or deputy prefects, mayors, and the police and gendarmerie commanders of the affected counties. The first conference was held in Satu Mare on April 6, 1944, and was devoted to the dejewification operations in the counties of Gendarmerie District IX, namely Bistriţa-Năsăud, Bihor, Cluj, Satu Mare, Sălaj, and Someş. The second was held two days later in Târgu-Mureş, and was devoted to the concentration of the Jews in the so-called Szekely Land, the counties of Gendarmerie District X: Ciuc, Trei Scaune, Mureş-Turda, and Odorheiu.

Endre reviewed the procedures to be followed in the concentration of the Jews as detailed in Decree no. 6163/1944, and Lajos Meggyesi, one of Endre's closest associates, provided additional refinements relating to the confiscation of their wealth. The latter was particularly anxious to secure the Jews' money, gold, silver, jewelry, typewriters, cameras, watches, rugs, furs, paintings, and other valuables. Lt. Col. László Ferenczy revealed the preliminary steps already taken toward the ghettoization of the Jews, identifying the cities of Dej, Cluj, Baia Mare, Gherla, Oradea, Satu Mare, and Şimleul Silvaniei as the planned major concentration centers in Gendarmerie District IX. In the course of the anti-Jewish operations, Bistriţa was added as an additional center, while Gherla was used only as a temporary assembly point, with those assembled there being transferred to the ghetto of Cluj.

In Gendarmerie District X, the cities of Reghin, Sfântul Gheorghe, and Târgu-Mureş were selected as the major concentration centers. The last major item on the conferees' agenda for this district meeting was the composition of the various ghettoization commissions, i.e., of the officers and officials in charge of the anti-Jewish operations, and the specification of the geographic areas from which the Jews would be transferred to the major ghetto centers. Since most of these ghettos were in the county seats, they were designated as the assembly and entrainment centers for the Jews in the various counties.

The Ghettoization Drive

In accordance with the decree and the oral instructions communicated at the two conferences, the chief executive for all the measures relating to the ghettoization of the Jews was the principal administrator of the locality or area. Under Hungarian law then in effect, this meant the mayor for cities, towns, and municipalities, and the deputy prefect of the county for rural areas. The organs of the police and gendarmerie as well as the auxiliary civil service organs of the cities, including the public notary and health units, were to be directly involved in the roundup and transfer of the Jews into ghettos.

The mayors, acting in cooperation with the subordinated agency heads, were empowered not only to direct and supervise the ghettoization operations but also to determine the location of the ghettos and to screen the Jews applying for exemption. They were also responsible for seeing to the maintenance of essential services in the ghettos.

A few days before the scheduled May 3 start of the ghettoization drive in Northern Transylvania, the special commissions for the various cities and towns held meetings to determine the location of the ghettos and settle the logistics relating to the roundup of the Jews. The commissions were normally composed of the mayors, deputy prefects, and heads of the local gendarmerie and police units. While nearly the same procedure was followed almost everywhere, the severity with which the ghettoization was carried out and the location of and the conditions within the ghetto depended upon the attitude of the particular mayors and their subordinates. Thus in cities such as Oradea and Satu Mare, the ghettos were set up in the poorer, mostly Jewish-inhabited sections; in others, such as Bistriţa, Cluj, Reghin, Şimleul Silvaniei, and Târgu-Mureş, the ghettos were set up in brickyards. The ghetto of Dej was situated in the Bungur, a forest, where some of the Jews were put up in makeshift barracks and the others under the open sky.

Late on May 2, on the eve of the ghettoization, the mayors issued special instructions to the Jews and had them posted in all areas under their jurisdiction. The text followed the directives of Decree no. 6163/1944, though it varied in nuances from city to city.[15]

The ghettoization of the close to 160,000 Jews of Northern Transylvania began on May 3 at 5:00 a.m. The roundup of the Jews was carried out under the provisions of Decree no. 6163/1944 as amplified by the oral instructions given by Endre and his associates at the two conferences on ghettoization plans in the region. The Jews were rounded up by squads that were usually set up by the local mayor's office. These were usually composed of civil servants, usually including local primary and high school teachers, gendarmes, and policemen, as well as *Nyilas* volunteers. The units were organized by the mayoral commissions and operated under their jurisdiction.

The ghettoization drive was directed by a field dejewification unit headquartered in Cluj. This unit was headed by Ferenczy and operated under the guidance of several representatives of the Eichmann-*Sonderkommando*. Contact between the dejewification field offices in Northern Transylvania and the central command in Budapest was

15. For a sample, see the text of the announcement issued by mayor László Gyapay in Oradea (Braham, *Politics*, p. 629).

provided by two special gendarmerie courier cars that traveled daily in opposite directions, meeting in Oradea – the midpoint between the capital and Cluj. Immediate operational command over the ghettoization process in Northern Transylvania was exercised by Gendarmerie Col. Tibor Paksy-Kiss, who delegated special powers in Oradea to Lt. Col. Jenő Péterffy, his personal friend and ideological colleague.

The Jews of the rural communities were first assembled in the local synagogues and/or Jewish community buildings. In some cities, the Jews were concentrated at smaller collection points prior to their transfer to the main ghetto. At each stage they were subjected to an expropriation process that assumed an increasingly barbaric character.

The ghettoization of the Jews of Northern Transylvania, as in the other parts of Hungary, was carried out smoothly, without known incidents of resistance on the part of either Jews or Christians. The Jewish masses, unaware of the realities of the Final Solution program, went to the ghettos resigned to a disagreeable but presumably non-lethal fate. Some of them rationalized their "isolation" as a logical step before their territory became a battle zone. Others believed the rumors spread by gendarmerie and police officials as well as some Jewish leaders that they were merely being resettled at Kenyérmező in Transdanubia, where they would be doing agricultural work until the end of the war. Still others sustained the hope that the Red Army was not very far and that their concentration would be relatively short-lived.

The Christians, even those friendly to the Jews, were mostly passive. Many cooperated with the authorities on ideological grounds or in the expectation of quick material rewards in the form of properties confiscated from the Jews. The smoothness with which the anti-Jewish campaign was carried out in Northern Transylvania, as elsewhere, also can be attributed in part to the absence of a meaningful resistance movement, let alone general opposition to the persecution of the Jews. Neutrality and passivity were the characteristic attitudes of the heads of the Christian churches in Northern Transylvania, as reflected in the behavior of János Vásárhelyi, the Calvinist bishop, and Miklós Józan, the Unitarian bishop. The exemplary exception was Aron Márton, the Catholic bishop of Transylvania, whose official residence was in Alba-Iulia, in the Romanian part of Transylvania.[16]

The ghettoization drive in Northern Transylvania was generally completed within one week. During the first day of the campaign close to 8,000 Jews were rounded up. By noon of May 5, their number increased to 16,144, by May 6 to 72,382, and by May 10 to 98,000.[17] The procedures for rounding up, interrogating, and expropriating property of the Jews, as well as the organization and administration of the ghetto, were basically the same in every county in Northern Transylvania. The Jews were rounded up at great speed, given only a few minutes to pack, and driven into the ghettos on foot. The internal

16. For details on the resistance movements and on the attitudes and reactions of the Christian church leaders, see *ibid.*, chapter 10.

17. These figures do not include the Jews of Maramureş county and of some districts in the neighboring counties that were geographically parts of Northern Transylvania but administratively parts of Gendarmerie District VIII. These Jews fell victim to the drive conducted in Carpatho-Ruthenia and northeastern Hungary. See *ibid.*, chapter 17.

administration of each ghetto was entrusted to a Jewish Council, usually consisting of the traditional leaders of the local Jewish community.[18] The living conditions in the North Transylvanian ghettos were similar to those that prevailed elsewhere (see above).

Conditions in the Ghettos

The conditions under which the Jews of Northern Transylvania lived in the ghettos prior to their deportation were fairly typical of conditions in all the ghettos of Hungary. In the assembly centers – the county ghettos – the feeding of all Jews, including those transferred from neighboring communities, became the responsibility of the local Jewish Councils. The main and frequently only meal consisted primarily of a little potato soup. Even with these meager rations, though, the feeding problem became acute after the first few days, when the supplies the rural Jews had brought along were used up. The living conditions in the ghettos were extremely harsh, and often brutally inhumane. The terrible overcrowding in the apartments within the ghettos, with totally inadequate cooking, bathing, and sanitary facilities, created intolerable hardships as well as tension among the inhabitants. But deplorable as conditions were in the city ghettos, they could not compare to the cruel conditions that prevailed in the brickyards and the woods, where many of the Jews were kept for several weeks under the open skies. Inadequate nutrition, lack of sanitary facilities, absence of bathing opportunities, as well as inclement weather led to serious health problems in many places. The water supply for the many thousands of ghetto inhabitants usually consisted of a limited number of faucets, several of which were often out of order for days on end. Ditches dug by the Jews themselves were used as latrines. Minor illnesses and ordinary colds, of course, were practically ubiquitous. Many people also succumbed to serious diseases including dysentery, typhoid, and pneumonia.

The poor health situation was compounded by the generally barbaric behavior of the gendarmes and police officers guarding the ghettos. In each ghetto the authorities set aside a separate building to serve as a "mint" – the place where sadistic gendarmes and detectives would torture Jews into confessing where they hid their valuables. Their technique was basically the same everywhere. Husbands were often tortured in full view of their wives and children; often wives were beaten in front of their husbands or children tortured in front of their parents. The devices used were cruel and unusually barbaric. The victims were beaten on the soles of their feet with canes or rubber truncheons; they were slapped in the face, and kicked until they lost consciousness. Males were often beaten on the testicles; females, sometimes even young girls, were searched vaginally by collaborating female volunteers and midwives who cared little about cleanliness, often in full view of the male interrogators. Some particularly sadistic investigators used electrical devices to compel the victims into confession. They would put one end of such a device in the mouth and the other in the vagina or attached to the

18. For details on the composition of the Jewish Councils and on the German and Hungarian elements involved in the anti-Jewish drive in Northern Transylvania, see *ibid.*, pp. 626-652.

testicles of the victims. These brutal tortures drove many of the victims to insanity or suicide.[19]

Though in some communities there were local officials who endeavored to act as humanely as possible under those extraordinary conditions, their example was the exception rather than the rule.

The Major Ghetto Centers

Cluj. The ghetto of Cluj was one of the largest in Northern Transylvania. As elsewhere in the region, the ghettoization, which began on May 3, 1944, was preceded by an announcement posted all over the city the day before. Issued under the signature of Lajos Hollóssy-Kuthy, the deputy police chief, the text of the announcement was also published in the local press on May 3. The Jews of Cluj and of the communities in Cluj county were concentrated in a ghetto established in the Iris Brickyard, in the northern part of the city. The specifics of the concentration operation were worked out at a meeting held on May 2 under the leadership of László Vásárhelyi, the mayor, László Urbán, the police chief, and Gendarmerie Col. Paksy-Kiss. The meeting, attended by approximately 150 officials of the municipality who were assigned to the roundup operations, was devoted to the details of the ghettoization process as outlined in the decree and during the conference with Endre held at Satu Mare on April 26.

The Hungarian officials of Cluj received expert guidance in the anti-Jewish drive from SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Strohschneider, the local commander of the German security services. The ghettoization was carried out at a rapid pace. By May 10 the ghetto population reached 12,000. At its peak just before the deportation, by then including the Jews transferred from the ghetto of Gherla, it was close to 18,000.

In addition to the officers noted above, the following officials were also heavily involved in the anti-Jewish drive: József Forgács, the secretary general of Cluj county representing the deputy prefect; Lajos Hollóssy-Kuthy, deputy police chief; Géza Papp, a high-ranking police official; and Kázmér Taar, a top official in the mayor's office. Overall command of the ghettoization process in Cluj county, except Cluj, was exercised by Ferenc Szász, the deputy prefect of Cluj county, and by József Székely, the mayor of Huedin. The Jews of the various towns and villages in the county were first concentrated in their localities, usually in the synagogue or a related Jewish institution. After a short while and a first round of expropriations, they were transferred to the ghetto in Cluj.

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19. For testimonies presented by the prosecution in the 1946 trial of officials involved in the implementation of the Final Solution in Northern Transylvania, see Randolph L. Braham, *Genocide and Retribution: The Holocaust in Hungarian-Ruled Northern Transylvania* (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff, 1983) (henceforth: Braham, *Genocide*). The basic source of this work was the judgment (May 31, 1946) in the 1946 trial that took place in Cluj. Ministery of the Interior, file no. 40029. The Case of Josif Abraham and Others (file no. 40029), vol. 1, part II, pp. 891-1068 (see also section "Crime and Punishment"). On the anti-Jewish campaign in Northern Transylvania in general, see also United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., Archives (henceforth: USHMM), RG 25.004M, roll 42, file no. 5, and roll 94, file 23.

Among the Jews transferred to the ghetto of Cluj were those from the many communities in the districts of Borşa, Cluj, Hida, Huedin, and Nadasdia.[20] Next to the Jewish community of Cluj, by far the largest communities brought into the Iris Brickyard were those of Huedin and Gherla. The Jews of Huedin were rounded up under the command and supervision of Székely, Pál Boldizsár, the city's supply official; József Orosz, the police chief; and police officers and detectives Ferenc Menyhért, András Szentkúti, András Lakatos, and Sándor Ojtózi.

The brickyard ghetto of Gherla included close to 1,600 Jews. Of these, nearly 400 were from the town itself; the others were brought in from the neighboring communities in the Gherla district.[21] The transfer of these Jews into the Cluj ghetto was carried out under the command of Lajos Tamási, the mayor of Gherla, and Ernö Berecki and András Iványi, the chief police officers of the town.

The ghetto of Cluj was under the direct command of Urbán. The internal administration of the ghetto was entrusted to a Jewish Council consisting of the traditional leaders of the local Jewish community. It was headed by József Fischer, the head of the city's Neolog community, and included Rabbi Akiba Glasner, József Fenichel, Gyula Klein, Ernö Marton, editor-in-chief of the *Új Kelet* (*New East*), Zsigmond Léb, and Rabbi Mózes Weinberger (later Carmilly-Weinberger). Its secretary general was József Moskovits, and Deszö Hermann the secretary.

Fischer reputedly was one of the few provincial Jewish leaders who were fully informed about the realities of the Nazis' Final Solution program. He and his family were among the 388 Jews who were removed from the ghetto of Cluj and taken to Budapest – and eventually to freedom – on June 10, 1944, as part of Kasztner's controversial deal with the SS.[22]

The ghetto was evacuated in six transports, with the first deportation on May 25 and the last on June 9.[23]

Dej. The ghetto of Dej included most of the Jews in Someş county. Under the administrative leadership of prefect Béla Bethlen, the county was represented at the April 26 conference with Endre in Satu Mare by János Schilling, the deputy prefect; Jenö Veress, the mayor of Dej; Lajos Tamási, the mayor of Gherla; Gyula Sárosi, the police chief of Dej; Ernö Berecki, the police chief of Gherla; and Pál Antalffy, the commander of the gendarmerie in Someş. The objectives and decisions of this conference were communicated to the chief civil service, gendarmerie, and police officers of the county at a special meeting convened and chaired by Schilling on April 30.

As elsewhere, the ghettoization drive began on May 3. The roundup of the Jews in the county was carried out under the command of Antalffy. The ghetto of Dej was among the most miserable in Northern Transylvania. At the insistence of the virulently anti-Semitic local city officials, it was set up in a forest – the so-called Bungur – situated about two

20. Among these were the Jews of Borşa, Ciucea, Gilău, Hida and Panticeu.
21. Among the Jews first assembled in Gherla were those of the villages of Aluniş, Băiţa, Beudiu, Buza, Chiochiş, Dârja, Fizeşu Gherlii, Icloda, Lacu, Livada, Lujerdiu, Manic, Mateiaş, Nasal, Pădureni, Pui, Sic, Sânnicoară şi Sânmartin.
22. For details, see Braham, *Politics*, chapter 29.
23. For further details, see *idem*, *Genocide*, pp. 24-27, 123-141.

miles from the city. At its peak, the ghetto included around 7,800 Jews, including close to 3,700 from the town itself. The others were brought in from the rural communities in Someş County, many of whom were first assembled in the seats of the districts of Beclean, Chiochiş, Dej, Gherla, Ileanda, and Lăpuş.[24] The luckier among the ghetto dwellers lived in makeshift barracks; the others found shelter in homemade tents or lived under the open sky. Before their transfer to the Bungur, the Jews of Dej were concentrated into three centers within the city, where they were subjected to body searches for valuables.

The ghetto, surrounded by barbed wire, was guarded by the local police supplemented by a special unit of 40 gendarmes assigned from Zalău. Supreme command over the ghetto was in the hands of Takáts, a "government commissioner." The internal administration of the ghetto was entrusted to a Jewish Council consisting of the trusted leaders of the local community. The Council included Lázár Albert (chairman), Ferenc Ordentlich, Samu Weinberger, Manó Weinberger, and Andor Agai. Dr. Oszkar Engelberg served as the ghetto's chief physician and Zoltán Singer as its economic representative in charge of supplies.

Sanitary conditions within the ghetto were miserable, as were the essential services and supplies. This was largely due to the malevolence of Veress, the mayor of Dej, and Dr. Zsigmond Lehnár, its chief health officer. The investigative teams for the search for valuables were as cruel in Dej as they were everywhere else. Among those involved in such searches were József Fekete, József Gecse, Maria Fekete, Jenö Takacs, József Lakadár, and police officers Albert (Béla) Garamvolgyi, János Somorlyai, János Kassay and Miklós Désaknai.

The ghetto was liquidated between May 28 and June 8 with the removal of 7,674 Jews in three transports. A few Jews managed to escape from the ghetto. Among these was Rabbi József Paneth of Nagyilonda, who together with nine members of his family was eventually able to get to safety in Romania.[25]

Şimleul Silvaniei. The ghettoization of the Jews of Sălaj county was carried out under the command and supervision of the officials who had participated at the Satu Mare Conference of April 26: András Gazda, deputy county prefect; János Sréter, mayor of Zalău; József Udvari, mayor of Şimleul Silvaniei; Lt. Col. György Mariska, commander of the county's gendarmerie unit; Ferenc Elekes, police chief of Zalău; and István Pethes, police chief of Şimleul Silvaniei Baron János Jósika, the prefect of Sălaj county, resigned immediately when he was informed by Gazda about the decisions taken at the April 26 conference. He was one of the few Hungarian officials who dared to take a public stand against the anti-Jewish actions, deeming them both immoral and illegal. His successor, László Szlávi, an appointee of the Sztójay government, had no such scruples and cooperated fully in the implementation of the anti-Jewish measures.

Soon after their return from Satu Mare, the conferees met at the prefect's office with Béla Sámi, the chief county clerk; Drs. Suchi and Ferenc Molnár, the chief health

24. Among these were the small Jewish communities of Beclean, Beudiu, Bobâlna, Icloda, Ileanda, Lăpuş, Mica, Reteag, Şintereag, Urişor, and Uriu. Those assembled in Gherla were eventually transferred to the ghetto of Cluj.

25. See *ibid.*, pp. 27-29, 178-187. See also USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 52, file no. 2044; roll 72, file no. 40027; rolls 89-90, file no. 40029.b.

officials of Sălaj county and Şimleul Silvaniei, respectively ; László Krasznai, the head of Şimleu district ; and István Kemecsey, the technical services department of Şimleul Silvaniei, in order to select a site for the ghetto.

The roundup of the Jews in Şimleul Silvaniei was carried out under the immediate command of István Pethes ; in Zalău under the leadership of Ferenc Elekes ; and in the other parts of the county under the direction of Gazda and the immediate command of Lt. Col. György Mariska. Among the sizable Jewish communities affected were those of Tăşnad and Crasna.

The Jews of Sălaj County were concentrated in the Klein Brickyard of Cehei, in a marshy and muddy area about three miles from Şimleul Silvaniei. At its peak, the ghetto held about 8,500 Jews.[26] Among these were the Jews from the communities in the districts of Crasna, Cehu Silvaniei, Jibou, Şimleul Silvaniei, Supuru de Jos, Tăşnad, and Zalău.[27] Since the brick-drying sheds were rather limited, many of the ghetto inhabitants were compelled to live under the open sky. The ghetto was guarded by a special unit of gendarmes from Budapest and operated under the command of Krasznai, one of the most cruel ghetto commanders in Hungary.

As a result of tortures, poor feeding, and a totally inadequate water supply in the ghetto, the Jews of Sălaj county arrived at Auschwitz in very poor condition, so that an unusually large percentage were selected for gassing immediately upon arrival. The deportations from Cehei were carried out in three transports between May 31 and June 6.[28]

Satu Mare. Because of the relatively large concentration of Jews in Satu Mare county, the Hungarian authorities set up two ghettos in the county : one in the city of Satu Mare and the other in Baia Mare. At first Carei was also used as a concentration center for its local Jews and those in the neighboring communities. However, after a brief period, the Jews in the ghetto of Carei, which was under the leadership of a Jewish Council composed of István Antal, Jenö Pfeffermann, Ernö Deutsch, and Lajos Jakobovics, were transferred to the ghetto of Satu Mare.[29]

The county representatives at the Satu Mare Conference of April 26 included László Csóka, the mayor of Satu Mare ; Endre Boér, the deputy county prefect ; Zoltán Rogozi Papp, the deputy mayor of Satu Mare ; Ernö Pirkler, the city's secretary general ; and representatives of the local police and gendarmerie.

The commissions for the apprehension of the Jews of Satu Mare and its environs were established at a meeting held shortly after the conference. It was chaired by Csóka and attended by representatives of the police and gendarmerie, including Károly Csegezi, Béla Sárközi, and Jenö Nagy of the police and N. Deményi of the gendarmerie. Members of the financial and educational boards of the city also participated in the work of the commissions. The ghettoization in Satu Mare was carried out with the cooperation of

26. Among these were the Jews from the towns of Crasna, Şimleul Silvaniei, Tăşnad, and Zalău. On Şimleul Silvaniei, see USHMM, RG 25.004M, rolls 90, 92 and 94, file no. 40029. On Tăşnad, roll 50, files no. 1106, no. 30 (502), and no. 422 (666).
27. Among these were the Jews from the towns of Buciumi, Cehei, Cehu Silvaniei, Jibou, Nuşfalău, Pir, Şimleul Silvaniei, Supuru de Jos, Supuru de Sus, Surduc, Tăşnad, and Zalău.
28. For further details, see Braham, *Genocide*, pp. 29-30, 162-178.
29. For documentary sources on Carei, see USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 40, file no. 12 ; roll 50, file no. 446 (678), and roll 51, file no. 1130 (III).

Csóka ; in the rest of the county the Jews were rounded up under the administrative command of Boér.

At its peak the ghetto of Satu Mare held approximately 18,000 Jews. They were rounded up in the following eleven districts of the county : Ardud, Baia Mare, Carei, Copalnic-Mănăştur, Csenger (now in Hungary), Fehérgyarmat (now in Hungary), Mátészalka (now in Hungary), Oraşu Nou, Satu Mare, Şomcuta Mare, and Seini.[30] The commander of the ghetto was Béla Sárközi, the police officer in charge of the local branch of the National Central Alien Control Office (*Külföldieker Ellenörzö Országos Központi Hatóság* – KEOKH). The Jewish Council was headed by Zoltán Schwartz and included Samuel Rosenberg, the head of the Jewish community, Singer, Lajos Vinkler, and József Borgida, all highly respected leaders of the Jewish community of Satu Mare. The searches for valuables were carried out with the customary cruelty by Sarközi, Csegezi, and Deményi. Their effectiveness was enhanced by the presence of a special unit of fifty gendarmes from nearby Mérk.

The ghetto was liquidated through the deportation of the Jews in six transports between May 19 and June 1.[31]

Baia Mare. The ghettoization of the Jews of Baia Mare and of the various communities in the southeastern districts of Satu Mare county was based on guidelines adopted a few days after the Satu Mare Conference. The meeting of the local leaders was held at the headquarters of the Arrow Cross Party in Baia Mare, which was also attended by László Endre. The city was at first represented by Károly Tamás, the deputy mayor, but he was soon replaced by István Rosner, an assistant police chief, who proved more pliable. Among the others present were Jenö Nagy, the police chief ; Sándor Vajai, the former secretary general of the mayor's office ; Tibor Várhelyi, the commander of the gendarmerie unit ; Gyula Gergely, the head of the Arrow Cross Party in Northern Transylvania ; and József Haracsek, the president of the Baross Association (a highly anti-Semitic association of Christian businessmen).

The ghetto for the Jews of the city of Baia Mare was established in the vacant lots of the König Glass Factory ; the Jews from the various communities in Baia Mare, Şomcuta Mare, and Copalnic-Mănăştur districts were quartered in a stable and barn in Valea Borcutului about two miles from the city. The roundup of the Jews and the searches for valuables were carried out under the command of Jenö Nagy and Gyula Gergely with the involvement of SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Franz Abromeit. The ghetto of Baia Mare held approximately 3,500 Jews and that of Valea Borcutului over 2,000. Of the latter, only 200 found space in the stable and the barn ; the others had to be quartered outdoors. The commander in chief of the ghetto was Tibor Várhelyi. The Jews in the ghetto of Baia Mare were subjected to the tortures and investigative methods customary in all ghettos. Among those involved in these investigations, under the leadership of Nagy and Várhelyi,

30. Among the Jews concentrated in the Satu Mare ghetto were those Aleşd, Apa, Batiz, Bixad, Cărăşeu, Carei, Craidorolt, Copalnic-Mănăştur, Lechinţa, Livada Mică, Medieşu Aurit, Micula, Mireşu Mare, Negreşti-Oaş, Oraşu Nou, Seini, Şomcuta Mare, Trip, Vama and Viile Satu Mare. On Bixad, see USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 51, file no. 852 (I). On Negreşti-Oaş, roll 49, file no. 714, and roll 50, file no. 7141.

31. For further details on the ghetto of Satu Mare, see Braham, *Genocide*, pp. 31-32, 101-113. See also USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 51, files no. 854. (I) and no. 920 (I) ; roll 88, file no. 40029, vol. 4.

were Károly Balogh and László Berentes, associates of the Phoenix Factory of Baia Mare, as well as Haracsek, Peter Czeisberger, Zoltán Osváth, and detectives József Orgoványi, Imre Vajai and István Bertalan. Overall responsibility for the administration of the county at the time rested with Barnabás Endrödi, who had been appointed prefect of Satu Mare county by the Sztójay government on April 25, 1944.

The 5,917 Jews in these two ghettos were deported in two transports on May 31 and June 5.[32]

Bistriţa. The approximately 6,000 Jews of Bistriţa and the other communities in Bistriţa-Năsăud county were concentrated at the Stamboli farm, located about two to three miles from the city. Close to 2,500 of the ghetto inhabitants were from Bistriţa itself. The others were brought in from the communities in the districts of Lower Bistriţa and Upper Bistriţa, Năsăud, and Rodna.[33]

The ghettoization of the city's Jews was carried out under the command of the mayor Norbert Kuales and police chief Miklós Debreczeni. In the other communities of the county the roundup was guided by László Smolenszki, the deputy prefect, and Lt. Col. Ernö Pasztai of the gendarmerie. All four had attended the April 28 conference with Endre in Târgu-Mureş.

The ghetto, consisting of a number of barracks and pigsties, was inadequate from every point of view. The very poor water and food supply was in large part due to the vicious behavior of Heinrich Smolka, who was in charge. Among those who cooperated with Smolka in the persecution of the Jews was Gusztáv Órendi, a Gestapo agent in Bistriţa. The local police authorities were assisted in guarding the ghetto by twenty-five gendarmes from Dumitra, who had been ordered to Bistriţa by Col. Paksy-Kiss. After May 10, 1944, the prefect of the county was Kálmán Borbély.

The deportation of the 5,981 Jews in Bistriţa took place on June 2 and 6, 1944.[34]

Oradea. The largest ghetto in Hungary – except for the one in Budapest – was that of Oradea. Actually, Oradea had two ghettos: one for the city's Jews, holding approximately 27,000 people and located in the neighborhood of the large Orthodox synagogue and the adjacent Great Market; the other, for the close to 8,000 Jews brought in from the many rural communities from the following twelve districts: Aleşd, Beretttyóújfalu (now Hungary), Biharkeresztes (now Hungary), Cefa, Derecske (now Hungary), Marghita, Oradea, Săcueni, Sălard, Salonta Mare, Sárrét (now Hungary), and Valea lui Mihai. Many of the Jews from these communities were concentrated in and around the Mezey Lumber Yards.[35]

The ghetto of Oradea was extremely overcrowded. The Jews of the city, who constituted about 30 percent of its population, were crammed into an area sufficient for only

32. For further details on Baia Mare, see *ibid.*, pp. 32-33, 113-123. See also USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 42, file no. 40030; rolls 90 and 94, file no. 40029. On Baia Sprie, see roll 60, file no. 22291.
33. Among the rural Jews transferred to the ghetto in Bistriţa were those of Ilva Mare, Ilva Mică, Lechinţa, Năsăud, Nimigea de Jos, Prundu Bârgăului, Rodna, Romuli, and Şieu.
34. For further details, see Braham, *Genocide*, pp. 33, 187-190.
35. Among the Jewish communities concentrated in the yard were those of Aleşd, Biharia, Borod, Marghita, Săcueni, Sălard, Salonta, and Valea lui Mihai. On Marghita, see USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 88, file no. 40029. On Salonta, see roll 42, file no. 40030, item 43.

one-fifteenth of the city's inhabitants. The density was such that 14 to 15 Jews had to share a room. Like every other ghetto, the ghetto of Oradea suffered from a severe shortage of food ; they also were the victims of the punitive measures of an especially vicious local administration. The anti-Semitic city government often cut off electric service and the flow of water to the ghetto. Moreover, under the command of Lt. Col. Jenő Péterffy, the gendarmes were especially sadistic in operating the local "mint," which was set up at the Dréher Breweries immediately adjacent to the ghetto. Internally, the ghettos were administered by a Jewish Council headed by Sándor Leitner, the head of the Orthodox Jewish community.

The deportation of the Jews began with the "evacuation" of those concentrated in the Mezey Lumber Yard on May 23. This was followed on May 28 with the first transport from the city itself. The last transport left Oradea on June 27.[36]

Ţara Secuilor. In Gendamerie District X, the so-called *Ţara Secuilor* (Szekler Land), which encompassed Mureş-Turda, Ciuc, Odorheiu, and Trei Scaune counties, the Jews were placed in three major ghettos : Târgu-Mureş, Reghin, and Sfântul Gheorghe. The concentration of the Jews of Ţara Secuilor counties was carried out in accordance with the decision of a conference held in Târgu-Mureş on April 28, 1944. It was chaired by Endre and attended by all prefects, deputy prefects, mayors of cities, heads of districts, and top police and gendarmerie officers of the area. As decided at this conference, the ghetto of Târgu-Mureş held not only the local Jews but also those from the communities in Odorheiu county and the western part of Mureş-Turda county. The ghetto of Reghin held the Jews of the communities in the eastern part of Mureş-Turda county and the southern part of Ciuc county. The ghetto of Sfântul Gheorghe was established for the Jews of Trei Scaune county and the southern part of Ciuc county. As was the case everywhere else, the Jews of the various communities were first concentrated in the local synagogues or community buildings before being transferred to the assigned ghettos.[37]

Târgu-Mureş. The ghetto of Târgu-Mureş was located in a dilapidated brickyard at Koronkai Road that had an area of approximately 20,000 square meters. It had one large building with a broken roof and cement floors ; since it had not been in use for several years, it was also extremely dirty. The ghetto population was 7,380 Jews, of whom approximately 5,500 were from the city itself and the others from the communities in the several county districts, including Band, Miercurea Nirajului, Sângeorgiu de Pădure, and Teaca. Among these were the 276 Jews of Sfântul Gheorghe and the Jews of Bezidu Nou, descendants of the Szekler who had converted to Judaism in the early days of the Transylvanian Principality. It was alleged that these Jews were given a chance to escape ghettoization by declaring that that they were Magyar Christians but, according to some sources, refused to do so.[38]

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36. For further details, see Braham, *Genocide*, pp. 33-36, 79-101. For additional documents on the fate of the Jews in Oradea and Bihor County, see also USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 42, file no. 40030 ; roll 73, file no. 40027 ; rolls 87 and 88, file no. 40029.
37. On Ţara Secuilor in general, see USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 51, file no. 1548, item 1160 (I), and fond People's Tribunal – Cluj, 1945-1946, roll 1, item 11.
38. The ghetto of Târgu-Mureş also included the Jews of Band, Miercurea Nirajului, Sângeorgiu de Pădure, and Sovata.

Approximately 2,400 of the 7,380 Jews in the brickyard, the largest ghetto in the area, found accommodation in the brick-drying barns; the rest had to make do in the open. The commander of the ghetto was police chief Géza Bedö; his deputy was Dezsö Liptai. The Jewish Council, which did its best to alleviate the plight of the Jews, included Samu Ábrahám, Mayer Csengeri, Mór Darvas, Ernö Goldstein, József Helmer, Dezsö Léderer, Jenö Schwimmer, Ernö Singer, and Manón Szofer. Conditions in this ghetto were as miserable as they were elsewhere; the water supply was particularly bad. Dr. Ádám Horváth, the city health officer, and his deputy, Dr. Mátyás Talos, were mainly responsible for the failure of the health and sanitary services in the ghetto.

The Târgu-Mureş Jews were concentrated under the overall guidance of mayor Ferenc Májay, who had attended the conference called by Endre. In fact, Májay proceeded with the implementation of Endre's directives just one day after the conference, when he ordered that the main synagogue be turned into a makeshift hospital. The police and gendarmerie units directly involved in the ghettoization process were under the direct command of Col. János Papp, the head of the Gendarmerie Directorate in the four counties of the Ţara Secuilor; Col. János Zalantai, the commander of the Legion of Gendarmes of Mureş-Turda county; and Géza Bedö. Leadership roles were also played by Col. Géza Körmendi, the head of the *Honvéd* units in the city and the county, and Gen. István Kozma, the head of the so-called Szekler Border Guard (*Székely Határör*) paramilitary organization. The involvement of these *Honvéd* (Hungarian armed forces) officials was exceptional, inasmuch as regular military units were not normally involved in the ghettoization process. Kozma claimed that he had gotten involved at the personal request of Endre. Major Schröder, the local representative of the Gestapo, provided the technical assistance required for the anti-Jewish operation.

The harshness and effectiveness of the local military-administrative authorities notwithstanding, Paksy-Kiss found much wanting in their operation and provided a special unit of gendarmes for their assistance. The concentration of the Jews was carried out with the help of the local chapter of the Levente paramilitary youth organization.

Májay's immediate collaborators in the launching and administration of the anti-Jewish measures in Târgu-Mureş were Ferenc Henner, the head notary in the mayor's office, and Ernö Jávor, the head notary of the prefecture. In the county of Mureş-Turda the concentration was carried out under the direction of Andor Joós and Zsigmond Marton, prefect and deputy prefect respectively.

In Odorheiu county and the city of Sfântul Gheorghe, the county seat, the ghettoization was carried out under the general guidance of Dezsö Gálfy, the prefect. Immediate command in the county was exercised by deputy prefect István Bonda and Lt. Col. László Kiss, the commander of the gendarmerie in the county. In Sfântul Gheorghe proper the roundup was directed by Maj. Ferenc Filó and police chief János Zsigmond.

As in all other major ghettos, the Târgu-Mureş ghetto had a "screening commission" whose function it was to evaluate petitions from Jews, including claims for exemption status. The commission, whose attitude towards Jews was utterly negative, consisted of Májay, Bedö, and Col. Loránt Bocskor of the gendarmerie. In Târgu-Mureş there was also a "mint," located in a small building within the ghetto. Among the torturers active in the drive for the acquisition of Jewish valuables were Ferenc Sallós and captains Konya and Pintér of the gendarmerie.

The first transport was entrained for Auschwitz on May 27, 1944. By June 8, when the third and last transport departed, 7,549 Jews had been removed from these local ghettos.[39]

Reghin. The ghetto of Reghin was established in a totally inadequate brickyard selected by mayor Imre Schmidt and police chief János Dudás. Both of them had attended the Târgu-Mureş Conference with Endre on April 28, 1944. They were assisted in the selection of the ghetto site and in the roundup of the Jews by Maj. László Komáromi, the head of the *Honvéd* forces in Reghin; Lt. G. Szentpály Kálmán, the commander of the local gendarmerie unit; and Jenö Csordácsics, a counselor in the mayor's office and the local "expert" on the Jewish question.

Most of the Jews were housed in brick-drying sheds without walls. A number had to live in the open, and a few were allowed to stay in houses right near the ghetto at the edge of the city. At its peak the ghetto population was 4,000 people, of whom approximately 1,400 were from the town itself. The others were brought in from the eastern part of Mureş-Turda county and the northern part of Ciuc county.[40]

The Jews of Gheorgheni in Ciuc county were rounded up under the direction of Mayor Mátyás Tóth and police chief Géza Polánkai. Even exempted Jews were picked up along with rest and held together with the others in a local primary school, where the searches for valuables were conducted by Beéa Ferenczi, a member of the local police department. After three days at the school, where they were given almost no food, the Jews were transferred to the Reghin ghetto.[41]

The Reghin ghetto was guarded by the local police and a special unit of 40 gendarmes from Szeged. Conditions in the ghetto were similar to what they were elsewhere. Searches for valuables were performed by the police and gendarmerie officers guarding the ghetto and assisted by Pál Bányai, Balázs Biró, András Fehér, and István Gösi, members of a special gendarme investigative unit. To help with the "interrogation of the Jews from Gheorgheni, Béla Ferenczi was summoned from that town. In the pursuit of hidden valuables, Irma Lovas was in charge of vaginal searches. The ghetto was under the immediate command of János Dudás.

Sfântul Gheorghe. The ghetto of Sfântul Gheorghe held the town's local Jews as well as those from the small communities in Trei Scaune county and the southern part of Ciuc county. The total ghetto population was 850.[42] The commission for the selection of the ghetto site consisted of Gábor Szentiványi, the prefect of Trei Scaune county, who behaved quite decently toward the rural Jews; Andor Barabás, the deputy prefect; István Vincze, the chief of the Sfântul Gheorghe police; and Lt. Col. Balla, the commander of the gendarmes in Trei Scaune county. All of these had attended the Târgu-Mureş Conference with Endre. The ghettoization of the few hundreds of Jews from the town of Sfântul Gheorghe differed from the procedure followed elsewhere. On May 2, 1944, the Jews were summoned by the police to appear the following morning at 6:00 a.m. at

39. USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 50, files no. 10781, no. 10801, and no. 10861; rolls 88 and 89, file no. 40029.
40. Among these were the Jews of Iernuţei, Lunca Bradului, Răstoliţa, and Topliţa.
41. USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 73, file no. 40027; roll 89, file no. 40029.
42. In addition to the Jews of Sfântul Gheorghe, the ghetto included the Jews of Boroşneu Mare, Covasna, and Târgul Secuiesc.

police headquarters along with all members of their families. One person from each family was then allowed to return home in the company of a policeman to pick up the essential goods allowed by the authorities. After this the Jews were transferred to an unfinished building that had neither doors nor windows.

The Jews of Ciuc county, including those of Miercurea-Ciuc,[43] were rounded up under the general command of Ernö Gaáli, the prefect of Ciuc county; József Abraham, the deputy prefect; Gerö Szász, the mayor of Miercurea-Ciuc; Pál Farkas, the city's chief of police; and Lt. Col. Tivadar Lóhr, the commander of the gendarmes at Miercurea-Ciuc. Like the city and county leaders of Trei Scaune county, these officials too had attended the Târgu-Mureş meeting with Endre.

The conditions in the Sfântul Gheorghe ghetto, which was under the immediate command of an unidentified SS officer, were harsh. The Jews from this ghetto were transferred to the ghetto of Reghin a week later.[44]

Sighetul Marmaţiei. Although geographically Maramureş county was part of Northern Transylvania, for dejewification purposes it was considered part of Carpatho-Ruthenia and Northeastern Hungary. Since it contained one of the largest concentrations of Orthodox and Hasidic Jews in Hungary, the German and Hungarian officials were particularly anxious to clear this area of Jews.

The details of the anti-Jewish measures enacted in Maramureş county, as in Carpatho--Ruthenia as a whole, were adopted at the conference held in Munkács on April 12, 1944. Maramureş county and the municipality of Sighetul Marmaţiei were represented at the Munkács Conference by László Illinyi, the deputy prefect; Sándor Gyulafalvi Rednik, the mayor of Sighetul Marmatiei; Lajos Tóth, the chief of police; Col. Zoltán Agy, the commander of the local legion of gendarmes; and Col. Sárvári, the commander of District IV of the gendarmerie. On the morning of April 15, Illinyi held a meeting in Sighetul Marmaţiei with all the top officials of the county to discuss the details of the ghettoization process, including the selection of ghetto sites. That same afternoon Tóth chaired a meeting of the civilian, police, and gendarmerie officials of Sighetul Marmaţiei at which the details of the operation were reviewed. This meeting also established the twenty commissions in charge of rounding up the Jews. Each commission consisted of a police officer, gendarmes, and one civil servant.

The ghetto of Sighetul Marmaţiei was established in two peripheral sections of the city, inhabited primarily by the poorer strata of Jewry. The ghetto held over 12,000 Jews, of whom a little over 10,000 came from the city itself. The others were brought in from many of the mostly Romanian-inhabited villages in the districts of Dragomireşti, Maramureş, Ocna-Şugatag, Ökörmezö (now Ukraine), Rahó (now Ukraine), Técsö (now Ukraine), and Vişeu de Sus.[45]

The ghetto was extremely crowded, with almost every room in every building, including the cellars and attics, occupied by fifteen to twenty-four people. The windows

43. USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 50, files no. 1106 and no. 1920.

44. *Ibid.*, rolls 89 and 94, file no. 40029. For further details on the fate of the Jews in the counties constituting Ţara Secuilor, see Braham, *Genocide*, pp. 36-40, 141-157.

45. Among these were the Jews of Berbeşti, Bârsana, Budeşti, Giuleşti, Mara, Năneşti, Onceşti, Poienile Izei, Sârbi, Surduc, and Vadu Izei, On Berbeşti, see also USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 61, file no. 7081.

of the buildings at the edges of the ghetto had to be whitewashed to prevent the ghetto inhabitants from communicating with non-Jews. To further assure the isolation of the Jews, the ghetto was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded not only by the local police but also by a special unit of fifty gendarmes, assigned from Miskolc, under the command of Colonel Sárvári. The commander of the ghetto was Tóth ; József Konyuk, the head of the local firefighters, acted as his deputy. The ghetto was administered under the general authority of Sándor Gyulafalvi Rednik, whose expert adviser on Jewish affairs was Ferenc Hullmann. It was Hullmann who rejected practically all of the requests forwarded by the Jewish Council asking for an improvement in the lot of the ghetto inhabitants.

The Jewish Council consisted of Rabbi Samu Danzig, Lipót Joszovits, Jenö Keszner, Ferenc Krausz, Mór Jakobovits, and Ignátz Vogel. Like every other ghetto, Sighetul Marmaţiei's also had a "mint" where Jews were tortured into confessing where they had hidden their valuables by a team composed of Tóth, Sárvári, János Fejér, a police commissioner, and József Konyuk. At the time of the anti-Jewish drive the head of Maramureş county was László Szaplonczai, a leading member of Imrédy's *Magyar Megujulas Partja* (Party of Hungarian Renewal).

The ghetto of Sighetul Marmaţiei was among the first to be liquidated after the beginning of the mass deportations on May 15, 1944. The ghetto was liquidated through the removal of 12,849 Jews in four transports that were dispatched from the city between May 16 and May 22. The local Jewish physicians and the few Jews who were caught after the departure of the transports were deported from the ghetto of Aknaszlatina. The Aknaszlatina ghetto, which held 3,317 Jews from the neighboring villages, was liquidated on May 25.[46]

There were two other ghettos in Maramureş county. The one in Ökörmezö, which held 3,052 Jews, was liquidated on May 17. A much larger ghetto was in operation for a short while in Vişeu de Sus.[47] The Jews held there were entrained at Vişeu de Jos, where they joined the Jews from other neighboring villages.[48] A total of 12,079 people were deported from Vişeu de Jos and Vişeu de Sus, in four transports that left between May 19 and May 25, 1944.[49]

Deportation : The Master Plan

Unlike what happened in Poland, the Jews in Hungary lingered in ghettos for only a relatively short time : the ghettos in the villages lasted for only a day or two, and even those in the major concentration and entrainment ghetto centers, which were usually

46. Among these were the Jews from of Bocicoiu Mare, Câmpulung de Tisa, Coştiui, Crăciunel, Remeţi, Rona de Jos, Rona de Sus, and Săpânţa. On Crăciunel, see also USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 72, file no. 40027. On Rona de Sus, see roll 40, file no. 40030, item 26.
47. Among these were the Jewish communities of Borşa, Leordina, Moisei, Petrova, Poienile de Munte and Ruscova. On Vişeu de Sus, see roll 42, file no. 40030, item 40 ; on Borşa, see roll 49, file no. 710.
48. Among these were those from Bogdan Vodă, Botiza, Glod, Ieud, Rozavlea, Săcel, Şieu, Sajofalva, Sălişte, and Vişeu de Jos.
49. For more details on the anti-Jewish drive in Maramureş county, see Braham, *Genocide*, pp. 40-42, 157-162. See also USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 71, file no. 40027.

located in the county seats, were short-lived. In Northern Transylvania they only lasted a few weeks.

The technical and organizational details of the deportation were worked out under the leadership of László Endre. Early in May, he issued a memo to his immediate subordinates, providing general guidelines relating to the anti-Jewish operation with emphasis on Hungarian-German cooperation in the drive.[50] The details of the memo were discussed at a conference in Munkács on May 8-9 attended by the top administration, police, and gendarmerie officers of the various counties and county seats. The conference, chaired by László Ferenczy, heard an elaboration of the procedures to be used in the entrainment of the Jews and the final schedule for the planned transports from the various ghetto centers. The schedule was in accord with the instructions of the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* – RSHA) as worked out by the Eichmann-*Sonderkommando*, which called for the dejewification of Hungary from east to west. Accordingly, the Jews of Northern Transylvania and those of Carpatho-Ruthenia and northeastern Hungary were to be deported first, between May 15 and June 11. The conference also agreed on the written instructions to be issued for the mayors of the ghetto and entrainment centers, specifying the procedural and technical details relating to the deportation of the Jews[51] .

Transportation Arrangements

The schedule of the deportations and the route plan were reviewed at a conference in Vienna on May 4-6, 1944, attended by the representatives of the railroad, the Hungarian gendarmerie, and the German Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei* – SIPO). The chief representative of the gendarmerie was Leó Lulay, Ferenczy's aide ; the Eichmann-*Sonderkommando* was represented by Franz Novak, the transportation specialist.

The conferees considered three alternative deportation routes. After considering the military, strategic, and psychological factors relating to the various proposals, the conferees decided to begin the deportation of the Hungarian Jews on May 15 with the trains to be routed from Kassa to Auschwitz across eastern Slovakia, via Presov, Muszyna, Tarnow, and Cracow. A compromise was also reached on the number of deportation trains per day. While Endre, who was eager to make Hungary *Judenrein* as quickly as possible, suggested that six trains be dispatched daily, Eichmann, who was better informed about the gassing and cremating facilities in Auschwitz, originally suggested only two. At the end they settled on four trains daily, carrying approximately 12,000 Jews.

The *Wehrmacht* and the German Railways proved highly cooperative about providing the necessary rolling stock, an indication of the Nazis' resolve to pursue the Final Solution even at the expense of the military requirements of the *Reich*. Together with their Hungarian accomplices they attached a greater priority to the deportation of the Jews than to the transportation needs of the Axis forces even when Soviet troops were rapidly approaching the Carpathians.

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50. Braham, *Politics*, pp. 666-668.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 667-669.

The Deportation Process

In accordance with the decisions reached at the Munkács conference of May 8-9, the deportations began on schedule on May 15 in Gendarmerie districts VIII, IX, and X (Carpatho-Ruthenia, northeastern Hungary, and Northern Transylvania), which were identified as Dejewification Operational Zones I and II. Each day four trains, each consisting of 35 to 40 freight cars, were dispatched to the various entrainment ghetto centers to pick up their human cargo in accordance with a well-defined schedule. Each train carried about 3,000 Jews crammed into freight cars with each car, carrying on the average 70 to 80 Jews. Each car was supplied with two buckets : one with water and the other for excrements. One of the first ghettos to be cleared was that of Kassa, the rail hub through which almost all the deportation trains left the country. There, the Hungarian gendarmes who escorted the deportation trains were replaced by Germans.

The Jews were permitted to take along only a limited number of items for the "journey." They were strictly forbidden to take along any currency, jewelry, or valuables. Immediately prior to their removal from the ghettos to the entrainment platforms, they were subjected to still another search for valuables. The brutality with which the searches were conducted varied, but they were uniformly humiliating. In the course of the searches, personal documents, including identification cards, diplomas, and even military-service documents were frequently torn up and their proud owners turned into non-persons. Shortly after the searches were completed, well-armed gendarmes and policemen escorted the Jews to the entrainment points. After the Jews were crammed into the freight cars amidst great brutality, each car was chained and padlocked[52] .

The German and the Hungarian officials in charge of the Final Solution bureaucratically recorded the entrainment and deportation operations on a daily basis. Ferenczy submitted his reports to Section XX of the Ministry of the Interior. The reports of the Eichmann-*Sonderkommando* were sent to Otto Winkelmann, the Higher SS and Police Leader in Hungary, who routinely forwarded them not only to the RSHA but also – via Edmund Veesenmayer, Hitler's Plenipotentiary in Hungary – to the German Foreign Office.

According to these reports, the number of Jews deported within two days of the operation's start was 23,363. By May 18, it reached about 51,000. The number of those deported continued to climb dramatically as the days passed : May 19, 62,644 ; May 23, 110,556 ; May 25, 138,870 ; May 28, 204,312 ; May 31, 217,236 ; June 1, 236,414 ; June 2, 247,856 ; June 3, 253,389 ; and June 8, 289,357.[53] The transport of June 7, which was reported the following day, was the last one from Zones I and II. With it, the German and Hungarian experts on the Final Solution achieved their target : within twenty-four days, they had deported 289,357 Jews in ninety-two trains – a daily average of 12,056 people deported and an average of 3,145 per train. Among these were the

52. The horrors of the entrainment and deportation were described in detail in a great number of memoirs and testimonies after the war. See Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *The Hungarian Jewish Catastrophe : A Selected and Annotated Bibliography*, 2nd ed. (New York : Columbia University Press, 1984), and *idem* (ed.), *The Holocaust in Hungary : A Selected and Annotated Bibliography, 1984-2000* (New York : Columbia University Press, 2001).

53. *Idem* (ed.), *The Destruction of Hungarian Jewry : A Documentary Account* (New York : World Federation of Hungarian Jews, 1963), nos. 267-279.

131,639 Jews deported in forty-five trains from the ghetto entrainment centers in Northern Transylvania.[54]

Crime and Punishment

Many, but certainly not all, the German and Hungarian military and civilian officials who were involved in the Final Solution in Northern Transylvania were tried for war crimes after the war. Most of them managed to escape with the retreating Nazi armies and avoided prosecution by successfully hiding their identity after capture by the Allies. Others managed to settle in the Western world, emerging as useful tools in the struggle against communism and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Nevertheless, a relatively large number of the top Hungarian governmental and military officials responsible for the planning and implementation of the Final Solution were tried in Budapest, having been charged, among other things, with crimes also committed in Northern Transylvania. Many of the Nazi officials and SS officers in charge of the anti-Jewish drive in Hungary were tried in many parts of the world, including Nuremberg, Frankfurt, Bratislava, Vienna, and Jerusalem.[55]

The roundup and prosecution of individuals suspected of war crimes in Northern Transylvania – and elsewhere in postwar Romania – were undertaken under the terms of the Armistice Agreement, which was signed in Moscow on September 12, 1944. With its implementation supervised by an Allied Control Commission operating under the Allied (Soviet) High Command, the Agreement also stipulated, among other things, the annulment of the Second Vienna Award, returning Northern Transylvania to Romania.

The people's tribunals (*tribunalele poporului*) were organized and operated under the provisions of Decree-law no. 312 of the Ministry of Justice, dated April 21, 1945.[56] The crimes committed by the gendarmerie, military, police, and civilian officials in the course of the anti-Jewish drive in Northern Transylvania, including the expropriation, ghettoization, and deportation of the Jews, were detailed in the indictment presented by a prosecution team headed by Andrei Paul (Endre Pollák), the chief prosecutor.[57] The trial of the suspected 185 war criminals was held in Cluj in the spring of 1946 in a People's Tribunal presided over by Justice Nicolae Matei. Of the 185 defendants, only 51 were in custody; the others were tried *in absentia*. The proceedings recorded the gruesome details of the Final Solution in the various counties, districts, and communities of Northern Transylvania.

The trial ended in late May 1946, when the People's Tribunal announced its Judgment.[58] The sentences were harsh. Thirty of the defendants were condemned to death; the others received prison terms totaling 1,204 years. However, all those condemned to

54. See Appendix.
55. See Braham, *Politics*, pp. 1317-1331.
56. For text, see *Monitorul Oficial*, Bucharest, part 1, April 24, 1945, pp. 3362-3364.
57. For the text of the indictment, see USHMM, RG 25.004M, roll 87, file no. 40029.
58. For documents on various trial proceedings and judgments, see *ibid.*, roll 69, file no. 40027; roll 76, file no. 40024, and roll 87, file no. 40029. See also USHMM, fond People's Tribunal – Cluj, 1945-1946, roll 2, item 22. For the English translation of the Judgment, see Braham, *Genocide*.

death were among those tried *in absentia*, having fled with the withdrawing Nazi forces. Among these was Col. Tibor Paksy-Kiss, the gendarmerie officer in charge of the ghettoization in the region. The percentage of absentees was also high among those who were condemned to life imprisonment. Among those under arrest, three were condemned to life imprisonment, six were freed after having been found innocent of the charges brought against them, and the remainder were sentenced to various types of imprisonment, ranging from three to twenty-five years. The harshest penalties were meted out to those who were especially cruel in the ghettos.

Virtually none of the condemned served out their sentences. In Romania, as elsewhere in East Central Europe during the Stalinist period, the regime found it necessary to adopt a new social policy that aimed, among other things, at the strengthening of the Communist Party, which was virtually non-existent during the wartime period. Under a decree adopted early in 1950,[59] those convicted of war crimes who "demonstrated good behavior, performed their tasks conscientiously, and proved that they became fit for social cohabitation during their imprisonment" were made eligible for immediate release irrespective of the severity of the original sentence. Among those who were found "socially rehabilitated" were quite a few who had been condemned to life imprisonment for crimes against the Jews. Guided by political expediency, the communists made a mockery of criminal justice.

Appendix

Deportation trains from Northern Transylvania passing through Kassa (Kosice) in 1944

Dates	Origin of transports	Number of deportees*
May 16	Sighetul Marmaţiei	3,007
May 17	Ökörmezö (now Ukraine)	3,052
May 18	Sighetul Marmaţiei	3,248
May 19	Vişeu de Sus	3,032
May 19	Satu Mare	3,006
May 20	Sighetul Marmaţiei	3,104
May 21	Vişeu de Sus	3,013
May 22	Sighetul Marmaţiei	3,490
May 22	Satu Mare	3,300
May 23	Vişeu de Sus	3,023
May 23	Oradea	3,110
May 25	Oradea	3,148
May 25	Cluj	3,130

59. Decree no. 72 of March 23, 1950, "Freeing of Convicted Individuals Prior to the Completion of Their Term" (Decret nr. 72 privitor la liberarea înainte de termen a celor condamnaţi), *Monitorul Oficial*, March 23, 1950. Also reproduced in *Colecţie de legi, decrete, hotărâri şi deciziuni* (Bucharest : Editura de Stat, 1950), vol. 28, p. 76-79.

Dates	Origin of transports	Number of deportees*
May 25	Aknaszlatina	3,317
May 25	Vişeu de Sus	3,006
May 26	Satu Mare	3,336
May 27	Târgu-Mureş	3,183
May 28	Dej	3,150
May 28	Oradea	3,227
May 29	Cluj	3,417
May 29	Satu Mare	3,306
May 29	Oradea	3,166
May 30	Târgu-Mureş	3,203
May 30	Oradea	3,187
May 30	Satu Mare	3,300
May 31	Cluj	3,270
May 31	Baia Mare	3,073
May 31	Şimleul Silvaniei	3,106
June 1	Oradea	3,059
June 1	Satu Mare	2,615
June 2	Bistriţa	3,106
June 2	Cluj	3,100
June 3	Oradea	2,972
June 3	Şimleul Silvaniei	3,161
June 4	Reghin	3,149
June 5	Oradea	2,527
June 5	Baia Mare	2,844
June 6	Dej	3,160
June 6	Bistriţa	2,875
June 6	Şimleul Silvaniei	1,584
June 8	Dej	1,364
June 8	Cluj	1,784
June 8	Târgu-Mureş	1,163
June 9	Cluj	1,447
June 27	Oradea	2,819

* These data were collected by the Railway Command of Kassa (Kosice). Mikulas (Miklós) Gaskó, "Halálvonatok" ("Death Trains"), *Menóra*, Toronto, June 1, 1984, pp. 4, 12. The figures relating to the number of trains and deportees and the deportation dates do not always coincide with those given in other sources.

Solidarity and Rescue.
Romanian "Righteous among the Nations"

Introduction

In June 2003, by resolution of the Bucharest town hall, a street in the Romanian capital was named "Dr. Traian Popovici," after the former mayor of Cernăuţi during the Second World War, who saved thousands of Jews from deportation to Transnistria. Popovici was the first Romanian awarded the title "Righteous among the Nations" by Yad Vashem to be officially honored by the Romanian government. This happened six decades after the end of the war and thirty-five years after Yad Vashem granted the title to Popovici. This odd delay in celebrating a man who deserves the respect of a national hero was, undoubtedly, the outcome of a process aimed at the rehabilitation of the Antonescu regime for its crimes against the Jews. This process commenced during the Ceauşescu regime and continued after the fall of communism with the more overt attempt to turn Antonescu into a martyr and national hero.[1]

That Romanians who saved Jewish lives by endangering their own were not paid public homage during their lifetime may be explained by the fact that postwar generations in Romania were educated in the spirit of the patriotic myth of a Romania unsullied by the war, despite the glaring truth that it had been an ally of Nazi Germany. Had they been celebrated as rescuers, it would have implied that there had been Romanian murderers and murderous Romanian authorities from whom thousands of Jews needed saving. Certainly, such an acknowledgement would have questioned the official patriotic propaganda on this dark chapter of Romanian history.

The only book written on the role of Romanian rescuers was authored by a Romanian Jew, Marius Mircu, and published in Romanian in Tel Aviv.[2] Commemorations of Jewish victims in the Romanian Jewish community and its publication (*Revista cultului mozaic*) as well as ceremonies dedicated to their rescuers were tolerated, but also closely monitored. The only exceptions were selected if they fit into political and propaganda scenarios, such as rescuers in Hungarian-occupied Northern Transylvania. The actions

1. Michael Shafir, "Marshal Antonescu's Post-Communist Rehabilitation: *Cui Bono*," in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *The Destruction of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews during the Antonescu Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 349-410.
2. *Din nou şapte momente – din istoria evreilor în România. Oameni de omenie în vremuri de neomenie* (Tel Aviv: Glob, 1987), 190 p. Written in a journalistic style, the book does not provide a critical examination of the documentary sources used in the evaluation of the described events.

of this specific category of saviors were highlighted and even exaggerated to the point of mystification in order to bring into relief the otherwise genuine participation of Hungarian authorities in the Nazi "Final Solution" or to publicize the zeal and the cruelty of the Hungarian gendarmes. Relative to other European countries that were parties to the war, to the number of victims and the size of the territory on which deportations and massacres took place, Romania has a relatively small number of people who have been granted the title "Righteous among the Nations": sixty, including those who acted in Northern Transylvania. As argued below, this can be explained by a number of contextual variables.

Public Reaction: Between Hostility, Indifference, and Compassion

Despite the Antonescu regime's anti-Semitic propaganda, Romanian society of those years did not become a fanatical society. The outcome of this propaganda was instead a kind of neutralization of public reaction, a sort of de-sensitization of the majority of the population toward whatever was happening to the Jews. The reactions of compassion and rebellion were accompanied by passive acceptance of killings and even active participation in anti-Semitic policies.

However, the study of interwar Romanian intellectual life shows that Romania did indeed have a democratic tradition and that many public figures, such as democratic intellectuals (with left-wing affiliations or not), writers, and even politicians, opposed the anti-Semitism of the thirties. Highly competent and influential in the intellectual debate at the beginning of the thirties, these people lost ground after 1935 and after 1937. After the suspension of democratic journals, they were effectively silenced. When Jews were excluded from professional associations, and the Goga government passed and enforced anti-Semitic legislation in December 1937, their critical voices were virtually mute.

There were numerous intellectuals who adopted anti-Semitic attitudes, because they passively identified with the most influential representatives of past and contemporary Romanian nationalism. The events of 1940 (the loss of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviets and then of Northern Transylvania to Hungary) made the issue of discrimination against the Jews a topic of secondary importance in Romanian intellectual circles. It remains a fact that when the Antonescu regime and its alliance with Hitler brought hope for the retrieval of the ceded territories, the reestablishment of the Greater Romania of 1918, and the removal of the "Bolshevik danger," many democratic intellectuals chose to support the Antonescu dictatorship.

Historical and political circumstances account for the widely different destinies of Jews from various regions of Romania during the war. Under Antonescu, Romania was a Nazi ally and consequently joined Germany in its attack on the Soviet Union with the stated intent to retrieve the ceded territories. Jewish populations in these territories (200,000 in Bessarabia, 93,000 in Northern Bukovina, almost 200,000 in Transylvania and Banat) were regarded as hostile and foreign, and were slated for extermination in Antonescu's "cleansing of the land." A huge propaganda machine was set up in the army and civil service to portray this population and, by extension, all Jews as an embodiment

of the "Bolshevik danger." This propaganda machine depicted the Jewish population in the ceded territories as the culprits of the maiming, humiliation, and even the killing of many withdrawing Romanian soldiers in the summer of 1940.

The situation of Jews under the Antonescu regime fluctuated by region, usually with proximity to the front as the most important variable. The anti-Semitic atmosphere in Romania was prefigured in 1939 by outbursts of anti-Semitism and was marked in 1940 by various forms of physical violence against the Jews. Antonescu's military dictatorship brought harsh censorship and a near total silence on the fate of Jews in Romanian public life. This was particularly so after the outbreak of the war. The fact that, despite the alliance with Germany, Antonescu was the leader of an independent country that developed its own policy on "the solution to the Jewish problem" had a dramatic impact on the Jews living in Romania and Romanian-occupied territories. The measures taken by Antonescu to deport or massacre the Jews were perceived by a significant part of the Romanian population as necessary to the war of national survival and reunification.

Undoubtedly, there was a somewhat general consensus in Romania on participating in the war against the Soviet Union. This consensus was only slightly diminished by the huge number of Romanian soldiers and officers who became casualties of war. The anti-Semitic rhetorical repertoire now included blaming Romanian military failures on the Eastern front on alleged acts of Jewish espionage committed on behalf of the Red Army. Under these circumstances, to save Jews or express compassion for them became unpatriotic and demanded great courage and strength of character, even when the risk was minimal.

A good indication of the morale of the Romanian citizens, including that of the Jews, can be found in the diaries of Jewish intellectuals during those years.[3] Their human and personal perspectives help to provide a better understanding of the nature and sense of the relationships between Jewish and Romanian intellectuals. They also show individual cases of contradictory and inconsistent conduct of the Romanian authorities, who distinguished between "our" Jews (Jews from the *Regat*) and "foreign" Jews (Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina) as well as the variation of official policies toward the Jews.

What is characteristic for Romania is the fact that unofficial channels of communications between Jewish leaders and intellectuals on one hand, and Romanian government representatives and influential politicians on the other, existed throughout the period, which eased the flow of information on the developments in state policies toward the Jews. This sometimes led to confusion and panic, because the signals sent by Romanian officials sometimes seemed to indicate policy vacillations or the possibility of instant decision making, whether with beneficial or catastrophic consequences.

Jewish intellectuals often recorded their thoughts about the vehemently anti-Semitic official policy as well as the issue of personal responsibility for what was happening to the Jews. On August 5, 1941, for example, Jewish writer Mihail Sebastian noted the reaction of his good friend, Romanian diplomat C. Visoianu, upon learning of the Iaşi massacre in the summer of 1941 :

> Each time I see a Jew, I am tempted to approach him, greet him, and tell him : "Sir, please believe me, I have nothing to do with this." The sad thing is that no one admits having anything

3. Leon Volovici, "The Victim as Eyewitness : Jewish Intellectual Diaries during the Antonescu Period," in Braham (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 195-213 ; Andrei Pippidi, *Dictatorship and Opposition in Wartime Romania*, paper presented at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, May 20, 2004.

> to do with it. Everybody disapproves, everybody is revolted, yet to a no lesser extent everyone is a cog in this huge anti-Semitic factory that is the Romanian state, with its offices, with its press, with its institutions, and with its laws. I don't know if I have to laugh when Vivi [C. Vişoianu – editors's note] or Branişte assure me that General Mazarini or General Nicolescu are "astonished" and "revolted" at what is happening. Yet, beyond astonishment or revolt, they and another ten thousand people like them sign, ratify, and acquiesce to what is going on, not only through passivity, but also through direct participation.

A certain "awakening" of public opinion was evident with respect to the deportation of *Regat* Jews planned in the Romanian-Nazi deal of summer 1942. Many Bucharest intellectuals suspected of leaning toward communism personally protested the implementation of this plan, and beginning in fall 1942 the planned deportation of *Regat* Jews was also faced with the resistance of a number of opposition politicians from Romania's main parties, such as Iuliu Maniu, head of the National Peasant Party (*Partidul Naţional-Ţărănesc* – PNŢ), Nicolae Lupu and Ion Mihalache (also PNŢ leaders), and Constantin I.C. Brătianu (National Liberal Party leader).[4] The Romanian Orthodox Church also protested, although until then the leadership of the Church had been traditionally hostile to the Jewish community ; the intervention of Nicolae Bălan, the bishop of Transylvania, was notable in this respect. Moreover, representatives of the Romanian royal house, particularly Queen Mother Elena, made similar efforts. Also active in condemning the racial discrimination and deportations were Prince Barbu Ştirbey and PNŢ former members of Parliament, Nicusor Graur and Ioan Hudiţă. Graur also lambasted the deportations of the Roma population to Transnistria.[5] Unhappy with the criticism, Antonescu ordered that a list be drafted containing the "statements and protests made in favor of the Jews by various public figures."[6] During the second half of the war, after the change in official policy toward the Jews, however, Romanian diplomats made many more attempts to rescue Jews with Romanian citizenship in the countries under German occupation.[7]

The "Righteous among the Nations"

The title of "Righteous among the Nations" is awarded by the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, which was set up in 1953 through a special law issued by the Knesset. Its function is to preserve the memory of the martyrs and heroes during the Holocaust. One of the objectives of Yad Vashem is to honor the "Righteous among the Nations," those non-Jews who risked their lives in order to save Jews. Up to the summer of 2004, 20,205 people had received this distinction.

Given the circumstances outlined above, the number of Romanian "Righteous among the Nations" is rather small. It is important to point out, however, that in the case of

4. Jean Ancel, *Contribuţii la istoria României. Problema evreiască, 1933-1944* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2002), vol. 2, part 2, pp. 243-254.
5. Nicuşor Graur, *În preajma altei lumi...* (Bucharest, 1946), pp. 158.
6. Jean Ancel (ed.), *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust* (henceforth : Ancel, *Documents*) (Jerusalem, 1986), vol. l0, no. 131, pp. 354-355 ; Lya Benjamin (ed.), *Problema evreiască în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniştri* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1996), no. 179, pp. 535-541.
7. Dumitru Hîncu, *Un licăr în beznă. Acţiuni necunoscute ale diplomaţiei române* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1997).

Romania, as in other countries, there were actually many more people who could meet Yad Vashem's criteria to be granted the title and medal. Their recognition largely depends on the existence of direct testimonies and the perseverance of witnesses in going through the necessary procedures to build a convincing file. In many cases, those rescued were caught up in the vortex of the postwar years or simply emigrated and used private channels to reward the rescuer and his/her family and therefore did not pursue the official and symbolic recognition.

Journalist Marius Mircu described examples of rescues in his book, but they were not investigated after its publication.[8] Also, an eyewitness of the Iaşi pogrom listed the names of several Iaşi Romanians "whose conduct was beyond reproach, who took on risks and kept Jews informed or hid them."[9] During the war, the odds of meeting a rescuer largely depended on the very different circumstances in which Jewish communities found themselves. Paradoxically, the odds increased during pogroms when, due to the state of anarchy, it was much easier to save a Jewish family or a group of Jews. Such were the many cases of rescue during the Bucharest and Iaşi pogroms. Of particular importance were the rescue efforts of Iaşi pharmacist D. Beceanu and Viorica Agarici, chairwoman of the Romanian subsidiary of the Red Cross, who initiated and organized the administration of first aid to the survivors of the infamous "death train." Also exemplary during the Iaşi massacre were the undertakings of cereal mill manager, engineer Grigore Profir, who defied death threats from German soldiers and Romanian gendarmes and maintained his resolution to hide dozens of Iaşi Jews.

These cases demonstrate that individual initiatives were often successful. Many people, however, who may have otherwise been willing to help, were unable to overcome the paralysis stemming from their feelings toward the Jews. Since anti-Semitic propaganda was so intense during the war, compassion for Jewish suffering or questioning their humiliation and persecution were construed as socially inappropriate or perceived as evidence of a lack of patriotism or even treason. Viorica Agarici, for example, was attacked so vehemently by the citizens of Roman that she had to resign from her position and take refuge in Bucharest, even though her son was a famous Romanian air force pilot.[10]

The situation was even more extreme in regions near the front, particularly in Bessarabia and Bukovina, where potential rescuers were under the threat of the Romanian and German military. In general, in these areas gestures of solidarity with the Jews seemed inconceivable.

Still, there were some rescue initiatives undertaken by local people of Bessarabia, peasants, or elementary school teachers from villages. Up to now, eleven people have received the title "Righteous among the Nations" (or it was awarded to their descendants). They were citizens of the former Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova (now the Republic of Moldova). The case of the school principal from Nisporeni, Paramon Lozan, is especially impressive: he, together with his wife, Tamara, released all the Jews confined in the school after discovering that all of them were to be shot. The school principal paid for his brave gesture with his life.

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8. Mircu, *op. cit.*
9. Adrian Radu-Cernea, *Pogromul de la Iaşi. Depoziţie de martor* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2002), p. 66.
10. Mircu, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

Gestures of solidarity and rescue efforts became more numerous in 1942. Around this time, many Romanians began to sense the official attitude becoming more ambiguous and hesitant and to see the forms of official persecution becoming more "humane" or traditional. The decision of the Romanian government not to adopt the Nazi plan of extermination grew increasingly noticeable. Undoubtedly, many Romanian upper army and civilian leaders grew aware of the fact that in the event of an Allied victory and the war crimes tribunal that would follow in its wake, they had to construct a more positive image for themselves.

Unlike the Nazi-controlled areas, where massacres were systematic and the ideological training of the perpetrators ensured a disciplined and merciless enforcement of the Final Solution, in some of the Romanian-controlled areas, notably Bessarabia and Bukovina, there was a general state of disorder. Bestial torture and murder and compassion and rescue were at times equally possible options for local commanders. Contradictory orders led to great confusion and left room for more freedom of action by commanders, with consequences that were equally contradictory. The whimsical disposition of a sadistic officer or NCOs and privates could have catastrophic consequences for thousands of Jews placed under their authority ; or, in rare cases, it could lead to the rescue of some Jews (even by camp commanders).

For example, in a display of great courage and humanity, the commander of the Vapniarka camp, Sabin Motora, rescued dozens of Jews on his own. Lawyer I.D. Popescu, commander of the Tiraspol municipal police, also showed remarkable commitment to saving Transnistria deportees. Although his actions are well documented by the Jews he rescued, the Yad Vashem commission inexplicably did not grant him the title "Righteous among the Nations."[11] Another form of protest was to resign in objection to the continuing atrocities and inhumane living conditions in the camps. Col. Alexandru Constantinescu, the first commander of the Vertujeni camp, left his position over the situation of the detainees under his command.[12]

Rescuers and Their Motivations

The rescuers recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous among the Nations were of different ages and came from widely diverse social and educational backgrounds : peasants, workers, pharmacists, lawyers, teachers, army officers, gendarmes, and diplomats. Yad Vashem recently awarded the title to Orthodox priest Petre Gheorghe for helping Jewish deportees in Transnistria. The names of many other priests have been listed by survivors, but their cases have not yet gotten to compete for the award. With firm moral conviction, Queen Mother Elena condemned the planned deportation of the Jews, and she was granted the title for her efforts.

In most cases, rescues were motivated by the personal relationship between rescuer and survivor – often they were neighbors, friends, or co-workers. There were also a few

11. Dimitrie Olenici, "Un protector al evreilor : ofiţerul român I.D. Popescu," *Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae*, 7 (2002), pp. 353-376.

12. Radu Ioanid, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 1997), p. 183.

cases in which rescues were ideologically motivated, such as those by members of antifascist organizations. When no prior personal relationship existed, rescue was based on a spontaneous manifestation of solidarity and humanitarianism. Anna Pal from Cluj described her motivation to save a Jewish child in this way :

> I simply couldn't shut my eyes to what was happening during that time so I did everything possible and I heartily took the little Andre giving him shelter. My firm belief that I work for a good and true cause gave such strength that fear could not capture me.[13]

Half of the rescuers recognized by Yad Vashem have been women. After the war, two of them married the men they saved and emigrated to Israel. Many of the rescued Jews struggled to keep in touch with their rescuers and show their gratitude in various forms, including submitting the "Righteous among the Nations" paperwork to Yad Vashem. Of those rescuers recognized by Yad Vashem, most (twenty-eight) came from Northern Transylvania, and twelve were ethnic Hungarians. The greater frequency of rescue attempts in this region can be explained by the improving situation of Jews in Romania near the end of the war, which was in sharp contrast to the ever-worsening situation in Northern Transylvania. Once the Antonescu regime changed its policy toward the Jews, Romanian territory became a place of refuge for the Jews of Northern Transylvanian and Hungary who managed to cross over into Romania. For example, Professor Raoul Sorban was awarded the Righteous among the Nations medal in 1987, for rescuing Hungarian and Northern Transylvanian Jews. However, the award was contested by many survivors and historians,[14] despite the backing of Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger, former Chief Rabbi of the Cluj Neolog Jewish community.

An Exemplary Hero : Dr. Traian Popovici

Of the Romanian Righteous among the Nations, the case of Dr. Traian Popovici (1892-1946), the mayor of Cernăuţi, stands out as unique. Popovici defied the orders of Antonescu and fiercely opposed the ghettoization and the subsequent deportation of Cernăuţi Jews, and contributed directly to the rescue of thousands of Jews from deportation and death. His was a case of assuming responsibility for carrying out a moral duty, because to act or to remain passive is ultimately contingent upon making the decision to accept or reject participation in an abominable crime, especially when the crime is "legally" covered.

Immediately after the war, Popovici wrote a book entitled *Confession of Conscience* in which he described the tragedy of Bukovinan Jewry, which he believed to be the consequence of a "barbaric" enterprise. At the same time, he also viewed those events as a Romanian tragedy with deep implications for the moral consciousness of the Romanian nation. Traian Popovici was not an adversary of Antonescu. He confessed, "Like

13. Letter of Anna Pal, Yad Vashem Archives, file no. 6540.
14. Randolph L. Braham, *Romanian Nationalists and the Holocaust : The Political Exploitation of Unfounded Rescue Accounts* (henceforth : Braham, *Romanian Nationalists*) (New York : Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 95-119 ; Zoltán Tibori Szabó, *Élet és halál mezsgyéjén. Zsidók menekülése és mentése a magyar-román határon 1940-1944 között* (*Between life and death : the escape and rescue of Jews across the Hungarian-Romanian border between 1940-1944*) (Cluj-Napoca : Minerva, 2001).

many others in this country I believed in the myth of the strong man, of the honest, energetic, and well-meaning leader who could save a damaged country."

What was the inner mechanism of Popovici's formidable resolution? Popovici posed this question to himself and arrived at the following answer:

> As far as I am concerned, what gave me strength to oppose the current, be master of my own will and oppose the powers that be, finally to be a true human being, was the message of the families of priests that constitute my ancestry, a message about what it means to love mankind. What gave me strength was the education I received in high school in Suceava, where I received the light of classical literature, where my teachers fashioned my spirit with the values of humanity, which tirelessly enlightens man and differentiates him from the brutes.[15]

Yet, many other people received the same education and had the same family tradition. But, unlike most of the people with similar family and educational backgrounds, Popovici was able to turn a moral lesson into a philosophy of life and a set of daily ethical norms. He refused to accept the comfortable "escape clauses" people around him offered: official orders, wartime, the advancing enemy, "national priorities." In decisive moments, Popovici was aware that his intransigence compensated for what he called the "moral disorder" and the "anarchy" of most people. He was confident that he would thus build a basis for asking for forgiveness.

Gestures of Solidarity of Romanian Intellectuals and Artists

Along with the political opposition to the dictatorial regime, there were many acts of solidarity with the Jewish victims of the Antonescu regime's policies. The instances of Romanians' solidarity with the Jews during those years have not been researched and emphasized enough. There is no doubt that there were many more cases of rescue during the Holocaust than are currently known. This is an issue that must be studied thoroughly in order to present a balanced picture, as close to the reality of the 1940-1944 period as possible.

Most gestures of solidarity were made by simple people without any kind of financial or political calculation, who, through their courageous actions, saved Jews from death, without thinking of any reward. Most often, these acts were not recorded in documents, but remained alive in the hearts and minds of those Jews who found themselves in extreme situations and survived only because of the intervention of such Romanians. To them must be added other categories of citizens with positions in various sectors, such as culture and the liberal professions as well as economic, administrative, or even military structures. In addition, high clergymen, leading politicians from the opposition, and Queen Mother Elena were also involved in rescue efforts between 1941 and 1944.

The decree-law of September 8, 1940, stipulated that Jewish employees of Romanian theaters be fired. However, some theater managers opposed this. Thus, Constantin Tănase continued to pay salaries to some Jewish actors (Henrieta Gamberto, Teodora

15. Traian Popovici, "Spovedania unei conştiinţe," in Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră* (Bucharest: Diogene, 1946), vol. 3, pp. 150-181.

Gamberto, N. Stroe). N. Stroe continued to write together with Vasilache, his old friend, but under a pseudonym. When the Jewish community established its own Barasheum Theater,[16] Tănase often ostentatiously attended the Barasheum shows. In addition, Romanian director Sică Alexandrescu, manager of the Theater of Comedy, requested a compulsory labor detachment to be set up in his theater in order to save Jewish actors (Leny Caler, Agnia Begoslova, Tina Radu, Alexandru Finţi, Villy Ronea), stage decorators (W. Siegfried), prompters (Victor and Bebe Godean), and theater clerks from the harsh conditions of the compulsory labor camps. Also, Ion Vasilescu refused to fire Jewish actor Eugen Mirea. Lucia Sturdza-Bulandra, manager of the Regina Maria Theater, maintained her troupe of Jewish actors (Flori Cărbuneanu, Maria Sandu, Alexandru Finţi), her Jewish director (Baum) and her prompter (M. Vladimir).[17] Not only was the Bulandra troupe publicly reprimanded by Radu Gyr, chief of the Theater Division of the Romanian Ministry of Culture, for staging a play with a Jewish actress, but it also lost its government subsidies. Liviu Rebreanu, the manager of the National Theater who refused to fire Jewish actress Leny Caler, was another example. Teodor Muşatescu allowed Jewish scriptwriters Elly Roman and Henri Mălineanu to use his name to sign their compositions.[18] Thanks to similar gestures of solidarity, Jewish director Alexandru Braun directed and created the set and costumes for the drama *Mihai Viteazul*, which was staged in Craiova in September 1942, in a year of full-fledged repression against the Jews.[19]

On July 14, 1942, the decree-law of December 5, 1941, took effect. Its regulations stipulated that the Military High Command could use all Jews, ages eighteen to fifty, in "various kinds of work demanded by the public interest, by the needs of the army and other public institutions" for 60 to 180 days a year.[20] The "work detachments" were organized under military command, though the Jews "recruited" for these departments were allowed to wear civilian clothes. The workday was nine hours long, with breaks on official (non-Jewish) holidays. Highly-educated Jews were pointedly assigned all kinds of jobs that entailed public humiliation – shoveling snow, sweeping, and digging ditches in the city. Some Romanian intellectuals acted to protect Jews and convince authorities to give educated Jews jobs appropriate to their background. Thus, the head of the Romanian Institute of Statistics, Sabin Mănuilă, managed to persuade the military authorities in charge of the work detachments to put at his disposal 2,800 highly-educated Jewish professionals.[21]

Others made symbolic gestures of moral support. Well-known actress Silvia Dumitrescu-Timică, for example, offered tea and invited the Jews forced to shovel snow on her street into her home.[22] Famous Romanian composer George Enescu often took hot tea to the Jews shoveling snow in the center city (Biserica Albă).[23] Gala Galaction, priest and Romanian writer of great renown, once stopped to publicly encourage Jews shoveling

16. Marius Mircu, *Oameni de omenie în vremuri de neomenie* (henceforth: Mircu, *Oameni de omenie*) (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996), p. 210.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
20. *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 164, July 14, 1941.
21. SRI Archives, documentary fond, file no. 3.116, f. 14.
22. Mircu, *Oameni de omenie*, p. 215.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

snow ("Courage ! You are not alone ! " he said) and then took over the work of an elderly Jew. Galaction often hugged his Jewish friends when he saw them in the street, and once he went so far as to help a Jew under surveillance (Emil Feder) to evade the authorities by driving off with him until the police lost their trail.[24]

Some Jews in labor detachments were fortunate enough to be under the authority of humane administrators or to be helped by various state employees. In July 1941, around 1,500 Jews from Botoşani were transported in cattle car trains to Brăila, a forced labor site (a building on a small dam on the banks of the Siret River). On the way, another 500 Jews from Botoşani and Huşi were crowded in the train, too. After they had finished work in late-October, the authorities left them there to fend for themselves ; so, the Jews pleaded to the detachment commander and his deputy for help. Both men were in the army reserve and worked as primary school instructors in civilian life. Upon learning of the Jews' desperate situation – living outdoors with no means of subsistence – Avram Moisi, the stationmaster in Mărăşeşti, used his connections to get the Jews on a "special train" and send them back to their families in Botoşani. Moisi's initiative would not have ended successfully had it not been for the cooperation of the two rail traffic specialists in the Brăila station (Valeriu Tănăsescu and Constantin Luchian).[25] Also noteworthy was Mătăsăreanu, a train driver from Banat who stopped his train in specific places to help the Jews, close to Station 21 – Oraviţa, so that Jews could jump off the train, and near the Lisava labor camp, so that parcels with food and clothes could be thrown to the Jews working there.[26]

Some municipal authorities also showed sympathy for the plight of the Jews during those years. Thus, in May 1941, municipal authorities in the Bucharest satellite village of Băneasa (mayor Mircea Bălteanu, deputy Rădulescu, and Vasile Calmuş, the town hall secretary) received 104 Jews evacuated from other rural areas, just as they would have any citizen in need. Mayor Bălteanu fed them and gave them days off to travel to Bucharest for work, so that they could support their families. He also took them out of the police station and the Bucharest recruiting center whenever the local gendarmerie made round-ups. Once, four Jews were missing from inspection. After finding them in their homes, they were sent to the train station to be deported. Bălteanu, however, persuaded army corps Gen. Constantin Niculescu to cancel the order.[27]

The Antonescu regime established concentration camps for Jews in the *Regat* to isolate them from Romanian society. They suffered many abuses at the hands of the camps' administrators. But in some cases, camp commanders or their subordinates displayed more humanity than the rules allowed. For example, in the 3,000-person work camp at Cotroceni, a suburb of Bucharest, the camp commander, Colonel Agapiescu, illegally reduced the work schedule for the Jews there to nine hours and to only five hours a day for Jews with large families.[28] Agapiescu also used soldiers under his command and Romanian workers on the site to replace Jews missing during the roll call. When General Cepleanu came to inspect the camp in September 1942 and found

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 224-225.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 185-192.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-143.

ninety-six Jews missing, he ordered that they be found and deported to Transnistria. Faced with this situation, Agapiescu persuaded some officers in the Army High Command, such as Colonel Locusteanu, Colonel Chirescu and Major Miclescu, to nullify the order.

Agapiescu also did fundraising with wealthy Jews, such as Max Auschnitt to set up a free food facility for a thousand people and a makeshift healthcare center where Doctors Popper and Rosenthal, both of whom were Jewish, administered counsel and drugs free of charge. He allowed Jews to buy food, clothing, and books brought there from the city and wrote fake medical exemption papers for them. When 300 of "his" Jews were taken to Giurgiu to unload a German train and were then prevented from leaving by the Germans, the commander again used his Army High Command connections to have them freed. Agapiescu then personally went to Giurgiu to make sure the Germans released them. After the war he wrote, "Is there a greater satisfaction than being greeted by unknown people in the street? I know they cannot be but the Jews who worked under my command."

The Romanian gendarmerie can be singled out for abusing Jews and contributing directly to their physical extermination. There were, however, some exceptions. For example, NCO Dumitru Prisăcaru, of the Tutova-Bârlad gendarmerie, made sure that 400 Jews crowded in the Băcani police station were given adequate medical care and housing in local homes; he forged the papers of twelve Jews accused of being communist sympathizers by removing the "suspicion note"; and although he was ordered to make the Jewish column walk on, Prisăcaru disobeyed the command and eventually arranged for Jews to be transported by the wagons of local peasants. NCO Prisăcaru was consequently reprimanded and imprisoned in Petroşani.[29]

Constantin Hrehorciuc, chief of the gendarme station in Stăneştii de Jos, Bukovina, liberated the Jews from several villages taken hostage by Ukrainian gangs that would execute between ten and fifteen of them every day. He then refused to send them to the Storojineţ and Văscăuţi camps.[30] Ştefan C. Rus, lieutenant-colonel of the Bihor gendarme legion (*Legiunea de Jandarmi Bihor*), based in Beiuş between 1942 and 1944, is said to have softened orders instituting harsh work conditions for the Jews in his labor battalions. He also gave them better food and days off and facilitated transportation back to their homes. After the deportations of Jews from Hungarian-occupied Northern Transylvania began, he offered refuge to 100 Jews from there and other areas of Hungary.[31] When some locals in Banila and Ciudei committed robberies and atrocities against the Jews on July 6, 1941, NCO Roşu aided and defended the victims.[32] Between July 4 and July 6, 1941, Romanian officers in Socoliţa and Văscăuţi saved the lives of Jews scheduled for execution.[33]

In November 1941, Lieutenant Colonel Dumitru Vasiliu, head of the Ministry of the Navy's work detachment, was informed by Jews living in his apartment building that 200 of them were to be taken to an unknown location the next day.[34] They asked Vasiliu to set

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-56.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.
31. Mircu, *Oameni de omenie*, pp. 103-104.
32. Ioanid, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 192-194.

up a detachment at the Ministry of the Navy in order to save them. Vasiliu persuaded Col. Aurel Mălinescu of the Army High Command that such a labor detachment was needed, thereby saving the Jews who were to be deported. Furthermore, since many of these Jews were poor, he made sure that they and their families were properly fed. He also had the 200 Jews work in turns – thirty people each day.

Carp Valentin, a courier for the Army High Command, attempted to cross the Dniester River with money and 400 letters for the Jews in the Moghilev camp. The courier was arrested by the Romanian police in the village of Otaci, Soroca county.[35] Similarly, Sergeant T.R. Isprăvnicelu of the Army High Command was arrested for attempting to deliver twenty-six letters from Jews interned in the Golta camp. The sergeant was court-martialed, and the Jews were tried.

Two Romanian army specialists of the elite 3rd Mountain Troops Batallion (*Batalionul 3 Vânători de Munte*) organized a courageous escape for three Jews in Transnistria. During their leave, specialists Constantin Bărăscu and T.R. Laţiu went to the Moghilev camp in Transnitria and gave military uniforms to two Jewish men and forged papers to a Jewish woman. In addition, together with the Bucharest police commissioner, Popescu Gheorghe, Constantin Bărăscu organized the escape of David Edelmann's entire family from Transnistria. Specialists Laţiu and Bărăscu made several other attempts until they were caught in Transnistria and court-martialed.[36]

NCO Constantin Anghel of the Lăpuşna gendarme legion was punished for having allowed Jews on a train bound for Transnistria to get off the train in railway stations to buy food on July 10, 1942. He was also accused of "conversing cordially with them on the train" during the voyage.[37] In Tiraspol, Major Iacobescu, commander of the local gendarmerie, set up workshops for the Jews so that they would not be deported and could earn a living.

Acts of Solidarity from Ordinary Civilians

In a recent book, Adrian Radu-Cernea, a survivor of the Iaşi pogrom, wrote the following about the conduct of the local population: "The overwhelming majority of intellectuals and educated people, upper- and lower-middle-class families as well as the employees of the local town halls and prefectures did not lower themselves to committing atrocities during the pogrom. On the contrary, there were many examples of people who undertook rescue attempts."[38] The author listed several cases of Iaşi inhabitants who warned or hid Jews, such as army physician Colonel Iamandi and his high school friend, Bogdan.[39] Other locals, such as lawyer Dimitriu and university student Scripcă, initiated and carried out similar efforts. Orthodox priest Răzmeriţă and lathe worker Ioan Gheorghiu were killed because they tried to save Jews.[40] With the assistance of several

35. ANIC, fond Gendarmerie Inspectorate, file no. 121/1943, p. 287; file no. 79/1943, p. 347; file no. 78/1943, pp. 42, 191.
36. SRI Archives, documentary fond, file no. 3.118, f. 225; file no. 3.116, f. 14
37. Lya Benjamin, *Realitatea evreiască*, no. 5, May 1995.
38. Adrian Radu-Cernea, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Ioanid, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

other locals, young lawyer Viorica Zosin walked from house to house warning Jews and even hiding some of them.[41] The Romanian police severely beat Vasile Petrescu for hiding a number of Jews in his home.[42] The chief commissioner of the third police precinct, which included several Jewish streets in Iaşi (Socola, Nicolina, and Podu Roş), courageously liberated all the Jews rounded up in the precinct building on June 28, 1941.[43]

Attempts to save Transnistria deportees were severely punished by the regime; therefore, rescue efforts – and they were not few – deserve great respect. Unfortunately, no systematic research has been done on this topic. However, several individual cases are highly relevant. First, Martha Bibescu, a Romanian aristocrat, public intellectual, and well known French-language author, took care of the family of journalist Carol Drimer, who was killed on the Iaşi "death train" of June 1941. She also successfully used her connections to liberate Drimer's daughter and her family from the Cernăuţi camp.[44] The distinguished Romanian doctor, D. Gerota, used his foundation to send 6,000 lei every month to two Jewish children interned in Transnistria. His humanitarian intentions are documented in his correspondence.[45] Şerban Flondor, a doctor of agronomics and renowned specialist in heraldry and geneology and son of Iancu Flondor (who played an important role in uniting Bukovina with Romania), supplied the Jews in the Storojineţ camp with food. Additionally, with the assistance of railway managers, he sent Jews to Bucharest by locking them in unoccupied sleeping car compartments. While serving as councilor for the Chamber of Agriculture, he used his train car to take Jews from Bukovina to Bucharest, where they could hide more easily.[46]

Sonia Palty, a Transnistria deportee, described the humanitarian efforts of agronomist Vasiliu in the book *Evrei, treceţi Nistrul!* Vasiliu was a Romanian farm manager in Alexandrovka, who, despite express prohibitions, gave Jews meat rations for a whole week during the Christmas holidays. He also defended a Jew being beaten by Lieutenant Cepleanu. In retaliation, Lieutenant Cepleanu informed his father, General Cepleanu, and Vasiliu was sent to fight in the advanced lines of the Romanian defenses, where he was killed.

Another farm administrator in Transnistria, Vucol Dornescu, then based in Kazaciovka, saved a group of 120 Jews from being executed by the Germans. Upon learning that these Jews were ordered by the Germans to dig their own graves in the field, Dornescu rushed to the scene on horseback. He asked that the Jews be given to the farm, which he claimed was experiencing labor shortages. The German officer in charge of the execution agreed after he was promised farm products in exchange, and the 120 Jews were saved. Dornescu did the same for many other Jews by visiting camps and persuading commanders that he needed more labor on his farm. Dornescu also used his trips to Bucharest to deliver letters and parcels for the Jews.[47]

Many Romanian guards and camp administrators participated in the effort to deliver letters and parcels, a fact recorded in official documents. Thus, the Gendarmerie

41. Iorgu Iordan, *Memorii* (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1977), vol. 2, p. 328.
42. Mircu, *Oameni de omenie*, p. 27.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
45. Emil Dorian, *Jurnal din vremuri de prigoană. 1937-1944*, ed. Marguerite Dorian (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996).
46. Mircu, *Oameni de omenie*, p. 87.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 157-182.

Inspectorate of Transnistria issued a report on February 5, 1943, which noted that "Marinescu and Captain Petrescu Teodor, commander of field bakery no. 82 of Berezovka, deliver letters and money to the Jews in Mostovoi." In March 1943, the General Police Division reported the following:

> We have been informed that various individuals (soldiers and officers on leave, civil servants or former civil servants, most of them from Bucharest) use expired papers, leave permits, hospital papers, duty orders, and even forged papers to visit villages in Transnistria with Jewish deportees to deliver letters and sometimes money. They would help some of them escape to Romania by giving them military gear and forged or expired papers. On trains, they travel together. At checkpoints, they take the Jews under their protection and do so energetically by using their ranks.[48]

Tudor Teodorescu-Branişte wrote in *Jurnalul de dimineaţă* (January 25, 1945) about engineer Constantin Păunescu, undersecretary of the Romanian Railway Authority, who allotted special train cars for the transportation of parcels for local Jews in Moghilev, Balta, Vapniarka, and Grosulovo. In addition, there are many testimonies that do not record the names of those who helped the Jews. For example, an unknown Romanian army sergeant stopped retreating Germans from killing 370 Jews in the Trihaţi camp on March 14, 1944. Although his name remains a mystery, his deed is well known.[49]

Acts of Solidarity in Northern Transylvania

The situation of Jews in Hungarian-occupied Transylvania was worse than in Romania. According to recent evaluations, 135,000 Jews from Transylvania died during the war.[50] Hungarian authorities made escape from work detachments punishable by death. For those who assisted or sheltered escapees, the punishment was also death or prison. Nevertheless, there were numerous local Romanians and Hungarians who assumed enormous risks to shelter fleeing Jews or help them to cross the border into Romania.[51]

In 1942, soon after Iozsef Szucs was placed in charge of several forced labor battalions, he proceeded to fundamentally improve their situation: he offered shelter, brought a physician, cancelled arrests and physical punishments, improved food, replaced abusive guards, and instituted the right to rest leave. In 1944, he helped dozens of Jewish families to leave the ghetto and take refuge in Romania. Unfortunately, Szucs was unable to save his own Jewish wife and children from deportation.[52]

As a member of the Oradea railway station command, Lt. Kálmán Appán helped Jews forced to work on the tracks by stamping their assignment papers for long-distance travel to repair nonexistent damage from accidents that never happened, thereby allowing them to skip entire workdays. When he was later appointed manager of a soap factory

48. SRI Archives, documentary fond, file no. 3.118, ff. 225-226.
49. Mircu, *Oameni de omenie*, pp. 153-154.
50. Marcu Rozen, *60 de ani de la deportarea evreilor din România în Transnistria* (Bucharest: Matrix Rom, 2001), p. 76.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
52. Mircu, *Oameni de omenie*, pp. 103-105

(Iohanna), he managed to relocate the factory outside of the ghetto. In this way, Appán was able to smuggle the thirty-seven Jews hiding in the attic, whom Appán's wife had been feeding, out of the ghetto. Among these Jews were Rabbi Weiss and his family, Rabbi Fuchs, and the Iacob Schreiber family. Three weeks later, Nicolae Bodoran obtained a truck and smuggled all thirty-seven across the border. The Appan family fled to Budapest after the authorities discovered what had happened, and there they continued their rescue efforts by opening a shelter for several Jewish families.[53]

Rozalia Antal of Satu Mare, was a former employee and friend of a Jewish doctor, Sarkany Lipot. With the help of her husband, Ştefan Antal, she hid Handler Isidor, her shop employee, and four other Jews during police raids. When the situation worsened, they helped the five Jews travel by car to Budapest, where authorities lost their trail. Rozalia Antal was awarded the title Righteous among the Nations.[54] Foldes Dezideriu sheltered several Jews in his home, Zigmund Freund and his brother, Solomon, among them. When danger became imminent, Foldes and his wife assumed the risk of taking them to Budapest by train using their sons' identity papers. The Foldes also rented a house where between eight and ten Jews could be found at any given time and gave them clothes, food, and false identification documents.[55]

Following are several other examples of solidarity and rescue in Northern Transylvania : Ioan Osan from Baia Mare hid a Jew named Izsaak in his home ; [56] Alexandru Vaida, a railway worker from Baia Mare, saved the life of porter Zinger and his family ; [57] Alexandru Ritoc, a peasant from Carei, saved Helena Gün and her young daughter ; [58] Nicoară Pomuţ of Borşa, Maramureş, hid Tobias Yertherger in his home until the town was liberated by the Romanian army.[59] Elisabeta Farcaş from Târgu-Mureş hid Abraham Erno and the Hidegs.[60] Rozalia Grosz from Dej sheltered Olga Hirsch-Schnabel from spring to autumn 1944, when the Romanian and Soviet armies liberated Dej.[61] Ilona Bott from Timiş-Torontal hid twelve children.[62]

Several rescuers were caught and punished. Veronika Déak, a clerk in the Lazuri town hall in Satu Mare county, issued fake identity papers for eighteen Jews, who were consequently saved from deportation. Deak was sentenced to one year in prison.[63] Emil Socor from Cluj was jailed for six months for having helped Jews.[64] Some clergymen also protested the persecution of the Jews and worked to help them. Gheorghe Mangra, manager of a religious school in Oradea (*Seminarul Román Unit*), and teacher Emil Maxim hid several Jewish children in the school building.[65]

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53. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-99.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. Rozen, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

The names of many rescuers remain unknown, as sometimes rescuers would not reveal their identity. For example, Rabbi Iosef Panet of Ileanda Mare and his nine children were rescued from the Dej ghetto by shepherds who gave them peasant clothes so that authorities would lose track of them.[66]

On May 18, 1944, Bishop Aron Marton delivered a sermon in Saint Michael Cathedral in Cluj deploring the persecution of Jews in Northern Transylvania. He was declared *persona non grata* on Hungarian-controlled territory and had to move to Alba-Iulia (in Romanian-controlled territory), where he remained until the end of the war.[67] On April 2, 1944, Bishop Iuliu Hossu issued an appeal to the clergy asking them to help the Jews (*Către preoţi şi mireni. Chemare pentru ajutorarea evreilor*):

> We call on you brothers to help the Jews not only by thoughts of solidarity, but also with deeds, as we know that today there can be no better Christian or Romanian deed of human warmth. Helping the Jews is the most important task ahead of us today.[68]

Acts of Solidarity and Rescue Undertaken by Romanian Politicians

After Wilhelm Filderman's deportation to Transnistria on May 31, 1943, many politicians, including leaders of democratic parties (N. Lupu, I. Maniu, M. Popovici, and C. Angelescu), assailed Antonescu with protests aimed at Filderman's liberation. After two months, Filderman was allowed to return to Bucharest. Dimitrie Lupu, Chairman of the Romanian Supreme Court, helped many Jews through counseling and by bringing together Jewish leaders (such as Filderman or C.S. Cristian, leader of the Iaşi Jewish community) with Romanian officials in order to prevent or stop anti-Semitic measures; Filderman, for example, was given access to Mihai Antonescu and King Michael.[69]

Prince Barbu Ştirbey, former vice president of the 1927 Romanian Council of Ministers, sent large sums of money to Jews in Transnistria. The police discovered this and issued the following statement: "As a result of our investigation, we have learned that Barbu Ştirbey, owner of the Buftea lands, factories, and castle, once sent 200,000 lei in cash to help poor Jewish deportees in Transnistria."[70]

On July 14, 1942, Dori Popovici, a former minister in the Averescu government, leader of the Democratic Union Party of Bukovina, and subsequently leader of the People's Party, sent a letter to Mihai Antonescu vehemently denouncing the deportations of Jews from Bukovina to Transnistria:

> These methods are alien to a civilized country, alien to the spirituality of the Romanian population in this region, a population educated for fifty years to respect the law and public morals. These methods were applied without any reason or motivation, and this population was

66. Rozen, *op. cit.*, p. 112
67. Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), vol. 1, p. 631, and vol. 2, pp. 1191-1192.
68. Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger, *Istoria evreilor din Transilvania (1623-1944)* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), p. 175. The existence of this appeal is disputed by Professor Braham, in *Romanian Nationalists*, pp. 207-208.
69. Mircu, *Oameni de omenie*, pp. 60-61.
70. SRI Archives, documentary fond, file no. 3.116, f. 83.

> condemned to watch convoys of hundreds and thousands of Jews, many of them lifetime acquaintances or neighbors, being escorted by armed guards in the streets of Cernăuţi with only what they could carry on those Sunday mornings when church bells announce the beginning of the mass. This Romanian population had to watch the heartbreaking scene of thousands of Jews crying and yelling with desperation during this pitiful march in the streets of the city.[71]

Aurel Socol, a top-ranking PNŢ member, "carried out dangerous activities to facilitate the passage of Jewish refugees through Romania. Socol, along with twelve Jewish refugees from Poland, was caught by the Hungarian authorities and taken to Budapest to the Gestapo prison at Svabhegy."[72]

The leaders of the historical parties were also involved in saving the Jews. Iuliu Maniu and Constantin I.C. Brătianu repeatedly expressed their hope that Great Britain and the United States would eventually win the war, and the two leaders and their colleagues adopted a critical stance toward the anti-Semitic policies of the Antonescu regime. This position was consistent with the National Peasant Party and the National Liberal Party's hostile rejection of the Antonescu regime. Recently consulted archival sources show that Iuliu Maniu's intervention to Ion Antonescu in September 1942 was decisive in stopping the implementation of the deportation plan to send the Romanian Jews to the death camps in Poland. The Romanian Secret Intelligence Service closely monitored every move made by the leaders of these parties. A January 24, 1944, report of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on the statements and interventions of political figures in favor of the deported Jews noted:

> Two domestic political groups sought to and did act in favor of the deported Jews: the Liberals and the National Peasant Party leaders. The leaders and prominent personalities in these two groups, in concert or individually, intervened by means of memoranda and special hearings to stop completely the deportations of Jews to Transnistria or at least to slow their pace in certain areas or with respect to certain guilty persons.[73]

A May 1943 Secret Intelligence Service report mentioned that on August 14, 1942, Iuliu Maniu was gathering "materials on the manner in which the deportations from Bessarabia and Bukovina had been carried out." Maniu's theory was that "deportations had been ordered by the Germans, agreed to by the Romanian government, and accelerated by a group of government officials with the aim of appropriating Jewish property; the overwhelming majority of Romanians reject such barbaric actions."[74] Unfortunately, Iuliu Maniu did not intervene in 1941 to stop the massacre of the Jews. Along the same lines, PNŢ vice president Ion Mihalache stated on September 14, 1942, that the deportation of Jews was ordered "at the suggestion of foreign circles of power and influence," and they were "alien to the humane traditions of our people." Ghiţă Pop, general secretary of the PNŢ, declared on September 16, 1942, that his party opposed the deportation of the Jews, and other party leaders also protested based on the serious consequences that the deportations could have for Romania. In his turn, Dr. Nicolae

71. Ancel, *Documents*, vol. 5, pp. 278-287.
72. Carmilly-Weinberger, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
73. ANIC, fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet Collection, file no. 163, ff. 89-90.
74. Ion Calafeteanu (ed.), *Iuliu Maniu – Ion Antonescu. Opinii şi comentarii politice. 1940-1944*, (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1994), p. 171.

Lupu, another PNŢ leader, declared on September 28, 1942, that he was deeply disturbed by the news of the deportation of the Jews and that he would protest against them in front of Antonescu.

An extensive report on the activities of the PNŢ and Iuliu Maniu, from September 1, 1940, to May 1943, mentioned that Maniu "was publicly known to have pleaded with Marshal Antonescu to stop the deportations; he demands that he not be told in which way. Only when the ambassadors of Turkey, Switzerland, and Sweden show him photos with the school buildings where Jews were rounded up does he reveal that he tried to convince Marshal Antonescu that such measures may have 'deleterious consequences for our country.'"[75] In fact, new archival sources, which have become available only recently, clearly show that Maniu's September 1942 intervention had a huge impact on Antonescu's decision to cancel the deportation of the Jews from Romania to the extermination camps of Poland.

A comprehensive Secret Intelligence Service report, dated January 24, 1944, noted that on September 23, 1942, while in a board meeting at the Bank of Romania, Brătianu, leader of the National Liberal Party, stated that he had sent the Marshal a memorandum analyzing the situation of the Jews in Romania from humanitarian, economic, social, and foreign policy perspectives.[76]

A note from Richter, written on October 30, 1942, confirms that Dr. Victor Gomoiu had informed the queen mother that a new group of Jews was to be sent to Transnistria:

> The queen mother told the king that what was happening to the people in this country was awful, that she can no longer stand this, all the more so that her name and the king's will be connected with the murders of the Jews and so she can expect to remain in history as the mother of "Michael the Terrible." She threatened the king in earnest that unless deportations stop immediately, she would leave the country. Therefore, the king called prime minister Mihai Antonescu, who called for a Crown Council meeting, during which it was decided that those arrested would be set free; moreover, as a consequence of the same initiative [of the queen mother], the Presidency issued a communiqué that confirmed the Crown Council decision.[77]

Another intelligence report mentions that a group of intellectuals (university professors, high school teachers, writers) sent a memorandum to the royal palace decrying the fact that many Jews deported from Bukovina and Bessarabia died of hunger, violence, and cold and argued that deportation "becomes, in fact, a methodical and steadfast method of extermination."[78] The same memo emphasized, "it was only in occupied countries that could not defend themselves that the Jewish population, in fact only a part of it, was deported." They went on to caution, "a country may also be regarded as an institution based on international treaties issued from the agreement of the Great Powers that decide the fate of the world," and "we have to build a new unity despite the hardships of today." The memo also asserted that for two years Romania had been:

> …at the forefront of those states persecuting the Jews… In the atmosphere of the most savage persecution, of incessant falsification of truth, through the cult of hatred and the exasperation

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75. *Ibid.*
76. ANIC, fond Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Cabinet Collection, file no. 163/1940, f. 91. The report covers the period of September 1940 – May 1943.
77. *Martiriul evreilor din România. 1940–1944. Documente şi mărturii* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1991), p. 224.
78. Ion Şerbănescu (ed.), *Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1997), vol. 3, part 2, p. 461.

of hostilities, we have turned the Jewish problem into the only state problem of Romania. In the internal order we promoted a sort of anarchic fanaticism, which opened the way to kill, rob, and oppress. We were and we are ourselves an oppressed nation. With what right can we complain about oppression by our brothers who remained outside the borders, when we are on our way to exterminating a minority whose rights to life were granted by the same treaties that guaranteed our national frontier? It is a duty inspired by concern for the future [that demands] we stop… the persecution of the Jews who are being led in an organized manner toward a national catastrophe. Long ago, we passed the limit allowed to a state of law and a state of human beings. We can wait until the Jewish problem is solved as a whole at the peace conference, which will decide the fate of all states. There the situation of the Jews from Romania will be decided, and there the fate of the Jews will be decided, as well.

Solidarity and Rescue Efforts of Clergymen and Diplomats

Rabbi Alexandru Şafran wrote that the Orthodox Church leader, Bishop Bălan, had asked Antonescu not to transfer authority over southern Transylvanian Jews to the Nazis.[79] Şafran noted that after he told Bălan about the plight of the Jews imprisoned in a building on Sfântul Ioan Nou Street in Bucharest, the bishop pleaded with Mihai Antonescu. As a result, the prime minister decided that they were to be set free.[80] In addition, according to Şafran's testimony, Patriarch Nicodim appealed to the government to cancel the order forcing Jews to wear the yellow star.[81]

Romanian diplomats also became involved in rescuing the Jews, beginning in 1943. The Romanian Legation in Budapest, headed by Eugen Filotti, issued numerous transit visas.[82] The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent instructions to its embassies in Berlin, Rome, and Athens to protect Jews of Romanian origin.[83] Constantin Tincu, representative of the Romanian Consulate in Budapest, participated in the rescue of "hundreds of persecuted Jews" who would have otherwise been sent to Auschwitz.[84]

Mihai Marina, chief representative of the Romanian Consulate in Oradea, and a number of civil servants (Anghel Lupescu, Ion Romaşcan, Mihai Hotea, Mihai Mihai) actively helped Jews in northeastern Transylvania emigrate to Romania.[85] They would drive to ghettos, pick up Jews, and drive them across the border in the Romanian Consulate's car. Sometimes, they also gave the rescued Jews some money. On the basis of a report received by Dr. Kupfet Miksa of the Oradea ghetto as well as his own findings, Mihai Marina wrote a comprehensive report on what was happening to the Jews sent by train to Auschwitz. This report was transmitted to Vespassian V. Pella, the Romanian Ambassador in Switzerland, upon Pella's visit to Oradea. Pella took the report to the

79. Şafran, *op. cit.*, p. 99. His assertions are not confirmed by official documents.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
82. Ioanid, *op. cit.*, p. 360.
83. Camilly-Weinberger, *op. cit.*, p. 176. For more details, see Ion Calafeteanu, Nicolae Dinu and Teodor Gheorghe (eds.), *Emigrarea populaţiei evreieşti din România în anii 1940-1944,* Document Collection from the Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Bucharest: Silex, 1993).
84. Mincu, *Oameni de omenie*, p. 109.
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

International Red Cross in Vienna. This report supported the mounting evidence on the fate of the Jews in the ghettos and in Auschwitz.

Dumitru Metta of the Romanian embassy in Vichy, France, acted on Mihai Antonescu's request that Romanian Jews in France be spared. Over 4,000 Romanian Jews living in France were saved thanks to various Romanian diplomats, and several hundreds were repatriated via Nazi Germany.[86] Constantin Karadjea, head of the Romanian Consulate in Berlin and, for a short time, head of Consular Services of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made remarkable efforts to rescue Romanian Jews in Germany and German-occupied countries. In his official reports, he often referred to the extermination of the Jews in Germany and German-occupied territories and the need to save the Romanian Jews who lived there.

The "Righteous Among the Nations" in Post-Communist Public Discourse

Heavily ideologized and manipulated by communist rule, Romanian historiography also contributed to the political manipulation of research on Romania's participation in the Holocaust.[87] The consequences of this distortion lasted beyond 1990. The excessive propagandistic concern for "Romania's image abroad," rather than sincere concern for exposing historical truths, also affected how the topic of Romanian rescuers was approached. For example, there was a unilateral focus on cases of ethnic Romanian rescuers, particularly those acting in Hungarian-occupied Northern Transylvania.[88] This approach rendered a twisted image of reality by publicly projecting a deceptive correlation between the number of rescuers in a specific region to the scope of atrocities in that region. This manipulation also obscured the atrocities in Romanian-controlled territory and the responsibility of Romanian perpetrators. More recently, however, a new generation of historians has emerged. It is legitimate to expect from them an adequate approach to the topic of the Holocaust in Romania, in general, and of the topic of the Righteous among the Nations, in particular.

86. Ioanid, *op. cit.*, p. 367
87. Victor Eskenasy, "The Holocaust and Romanian Historiography : Communist and Neo-Communist Revisionism," in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 173-236.
88. Braham, *Romanian Nationalists*, pp. 233-234 ; Michael Shafir, *Between Denial and "Comparative Trivialization" : Holocaust Negationism in Post-Communist East Central Europe* (Jerusalem : ACTA, 2002).

The List of the Romanian Citizens Awarded with Title "Righteous among the Nations" by Yad Vashem

Agarici, Viorica
File no. 2062

Formerly president of the Romanian Red Cross (*Crucea Roşie*) in the city of Roman, Agarici helped Jewish survivors from the death train after the Iaşi pogrom.

Antal, Rozalia
File no. 0593

During World War II, Rozalia Antal lived in the city of Satu Mare in Northern Transylvania. Antal offered to hide her Jewish neighbors, the Handlers, in her home.

Anuţoiu, T. Anghel
File no. 1395

Born in the village of Nistoreşti-Vrancea, Anuţoiu lived in the village of Naruja in the Vrancea district. From 1938-1944, Anuţoiu was the secretary and representative of the Great Prince Michael association of war veterans. He warned the Jews that were going to be arrested in the communities of Bacău, Braşov, Odobeşti, Piatra-Neamţ, and Buzău, so that they were able to flee in time, and he also helped them find places to hide.

Băiaş, Vasil
Băiaş, Maria
File no. 615

Vasil Băiaş and his wife Maria were Romanian peasants who lived in the village of Viile Dejului, about five kilometers from the city of Dej in Transylvania. In April 1944, when the ghetto was established in Dej, Băiaş brought food to his acquaintances, the Steinfeld family, and offered to hide the boys of the family on his farm.

Beceanu, Dumitru
File no. 3515

A doctor of pharmacy, Beceanu owned a pharmacy in Iaşi and was a reserve officer in the Romanian army. On June 29, 1941, when the pogrom began in Iaşi, Beceanu urged his two Jewish employees to hide in his apartment, which was above the pharmacy. About twenty other Jews also found shelter there.

Cojoc, Gheorghe
File no. 731

Cojoc was a forestry engineer in the vicinity of Târgu-Neamţ. In July 1942, he arranged with the authorities in the city of Piatra-Neamţ for 50 Jews to work in the forests around Târgu-Neamţ, thereby rescuing these Jews from deportation to Transnistria.

Cuciubă, Traian
Cuciubă, Traian (son)
File no. 8923

Together with his son, Cuciubă helped his Jewish friend, Rosenthal, to escape deportation from a small town in Northern Transylvania in 1944 by passing illegally on the Romanian side of Transylvania.

Dumitru, Adrian
Strauss-Tiron, Gabriela
Catană, Maria
File no. 6843

Dumitru, Strauss-Tiron, and Catană saved a family from Transnistria.

Elena, Queen Mother of Romania
File no. 5106

After turning to various other people, the queen mother and the patriarch appealed directly to Ion Antonescu, who acquiesced and agreed that those Jews who had not yet been expelled from Cernăuţi could remain there temporarily. The help sent in 1942 saved the lives of thousands of Jews who had been expelled to Transnistria. In 1943 and early 1944, the queen mother helped to return thousands of the surviving expelled Jews, including thousands of Jewish orphans, from Transnistria.

Farkas, Ştefan
Farkas, Rozalia
File no. 5103

In September 1944, Eugen Szabo (formerly Salzberger), a young Jew, was in a forced labor battalion of the Hungarian army stationed near the city of Oradea. Farkas agreed to hide Szabo in the cellar of his home, together with eight of his friends from the labor battalion.

Florescu, Constanţa
File no. 4398

During the war, Constanţa Florescu (b. 1908) lived in Bucharest, and from 1941-1944 she sheltered Roza Hendler, whom she had met before the war, in her home and cared for her devotedly.

Gheorghe, Petre I.
File no. 10060

As an Orthodox priest in Sarovo in the region of Golta, Gheorghe helped and saved many Jews from the Krivoi-Ozero ghetto in Transnistria.

Ghitescu, Alexandru
File no. 5014

On January 21, 1941, during the Bucharest pogrom, when his neighbor, attorney Joseph Morgenstern, knocked on his door asking for help, Ghiţescu hid him in his home until those searching for Jews near the house left.

Grosz, Rozalia
Grosz, Bandi
File no. 1549

In May 1944, Bandi Grosz, from Dej in Transylvania, hid Schnable under the wheel of his truck and smuggled her out of the ghetto.

Hîj, Simion
Hîj, Metzia
File no. 725

Dr. Simion Hîj, a lawyer from Cernăuţi, helped Jewish families. When the evacuation of the ghetto began, Hîj saved the Jewish families from being rounded up by the Romanian gendarmerie.

Lajos, Peter
File no. 3941

In 1944, Peter Lajos lived in Cluj (Kolozsvar). He saved Neumann's life by presenting him under a false identity as Janos Kovacs.

Manoliu, Florian
File no. 9160

Manoliu was a Romanian diplomat in Switzerland involved in saving Hungarian Jews in 1944.

Mărculescu, Emilian
File no. 4779a

In 1942, after several trips to Cernăuţi, Mărculescu succeeded in bribing a Romanian police officer to take five Jews out of jail in the middle of the night on the pretext that he had to transfer them to the Germans, who were going to execute them.

Moldovan, Valeriu
File no. 5999

Owner of a carpentry shop in Bistriţa, in Northern Transylvania, Moldovan saved the Fleischman family in 1944.

Motora, Sabin
File no. 2394

A professional officer in the Romanian gendarmerie, Motora was commander of the Grosulovo and Vapniarka camps. Motora took steps to evacuate the prisoners from Vapniarka to Grosulovo, closer to the Romanian border, contrary to the order he was given to transfer them eastward to the Germans. Motora did all he could to save the lives of Jews, despite the fact that he was risking his military career and his life by doing so.

Muranyi, Rozsi
File no. 534

During the war, Rozsa Muranyi lived in Oradea Mare in Transylvania. After the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944, Muranyi hid eight Jews from April 23, 1944 until October 12, 1944, when the city was liberated.

Nicopoi-Strul, Elisabetha
File no. 3416

Thanks to Nicopoi, Strul's family of seven, including his father, mother, and siblings, were saved during the Iaşi pogrom on June 29, 1941.

Nits, Janos
Nits, Gyula
Nits, Aliz

Janos, Gyula, and Aliz Nits were involved in saving Jews in Northern Transylvania in 1944.

Onişor, Ioana
Demusca, Letitia
Crăciun, Ana
Crăciun, Pavel
File no. 1406

In May, 1944, the Onişor family – widow Ioana and her children, 21-year-old Victor, 18-year-old Lazăr, 16-year-old Letiţia, and Ana, who was married to Pavel Crăciun – were peasants living on their farm in the forest, about four kilometers from the town of Bistriţa in Transylvania. On May 1, two days before the Jews of Bistriţa were interned in the ghetto and then deported to the extermination camps, four local residents, members of the Kandel family, fled to the Onişors' farm, where a hiding place had been prepared for them.

Paelungi, Ştefan
File no. 6999

Paelungi decided to hide the Leitman family during the war in a remote hut that belonged to his father.

Pal (Kudor), Anna
Pal, Jeno
File no. 6540

In April 1944, when it became known that the Nazis were interning the Jews of Transylvania into ghettos, Nissel decided to escape to Romania and hide there, and she asked Pal, whom she knew from when Pal had worked in her parents' home, to hide her small son. Anna and Jeno Pal (later her husband) agreed to give the child shelter despite the risk involved in hiding Jews.

Pântea, Nona
File no. 3455

In 1941, during the Iaşi pogrom, Pântea offered the six Jews who were then living in her neighbors' homes, a hiding place in her room.

Pocorni, Egon
Pocorni, Nicolina
File no. 2855

Egon Pocorni lived in Bucharest during the war, and in 1942 was appointed manager of a sugar factory in the village of Derebcin in the county of Moghilev in Transnistria. After seeing how much the Jews were suffering, he and his wife tried to help them in any way they could.

Pop, Nicolaie
Pop, Maria
Pop (Săileanu), Aristina
File no. 7123

Nicolaie Pop, a wealthy, hardworking farmer, lived in the village of Lăpuşul Românesc in Northern Transylvania. After the Nazis occupied Hungary, Pop offered to hide Hanna Marmor and her children and provided them with all their needs.

Pop, Valer
File no. 2580

Valer Pop was a senior official in the Hungarian and Romanian administration in Transylvania. In 1933 Pop married Ilona Jonas, a Jewish woman of the Farkas family of Cluj, and adopted Katalin-Catherina, Ilona's daughter from her first marriage to Imre-Emerich Jonas, J.D., who was also Jewish. After the German occupation of Hungary, in March 1944, Pop persuaded his adopted daughter not to wear the yellow patch and succeeded in hospitalizing his mother-in-law, Lina Farkas, in a hospital of a friend in Cluj in order to save her from the deportation.

Popovici, Traian
File no. 0499

Dr. Traian Popovici was a well-known attorney from Cernăuţi, who also served as mayor until 1942. He succeeded in preventing the deportation of 19,000 Jews.

Profir, Grigore
File no. 3514

Grigore Profir, an engineer, was the manager of the Dacia flour mill in Iaşi. In June 1941, when Profir learned that they were rounding up Jews and taking them to the police station, he brought new workers, took them to the mill, and assigned them to unload sacks of flour; by doing so he saved them from being murdered.

Puti, Alexa
Puti, Maria
Puti, Todor
File no. 3739

In 1944, Alexa Puti was a Romanian farmer living near the town of Somcuţa Mare in Transylvania. Alexa Puti hid Solomon in a cave at the edge of the forest near his home. Maria and Todor, Puti's children, helped their father deepen the cave and also brought Solomon food three times a week.

Simionescu, Constantin
File no. 4892

Simionescu, a Romanian lawyer from Iaşi, was the dean of the bar association there. During the war, Simionescu helped ten Jews, most of them from the Spiegel, Sapira, and Siegler families who lived in Iaşi. Simionescu took sixteen-year-old Fred Spiegel under his wing, together with his brothers, after their father was deported on one of the "death trains," and their mother was arrested because she was discovered carrying flour.

Sion, Mircea Petru G.
File no. 3384

During the war years, Sion was one of the few who actively helped Jews, at great risk to his own status. After his appointment as a judge of a military court, Sion intervened on behalf of Jews, and for some he obtained release from the labor camps. He did his utmost to save them. Sion hid about 15 Jews in his home in Iaşi and on his family estate outside the city.

Şorban, Raoul
File no. 3499

In May 1944, Prof. Şorban helped Rabbi Carmilly-Weinberger of the Neolog Jewish community in Cluj to escape to Turda and to meet with Iuliu Maniu in Bucharest in order to find routes of rescue. In his later testimony, Dr. Carmily-Weinberger stated that Şorban was the only one who made efforts to help him save the Jews under the Hungarian occupation.

Stoenescu, Ioana
Stoenescu, Pascu
File no. 566

In January 1941, when the Iron Guard rebellion broke out and their members carried out a pogrom against the Jews of Bucharest, Stoenescu invited the Donner family to hide in his home during the three days of the pogrom.

Stroe, Magdalena
Stroe saved a Jewish woman from deportation in 1944 in Northern Transylvania.

Şuta, Ioan
File no. 1827

In September 1944, Ioan Şuta lived in the city of Satu Mare in Northern Transylvania. Nine Jews who had escaped from a labor battalion were saved due to Şuta's help.

Szakadati, Janos
Szakadati, Juliana
File no. 1812

In 1944, Janos Szakadati and his wife Juliana owned a perfumery in Oradea (Nagyvarad) in Northern Transylvania. Their store was near the ghetto in which the Germans and Hungarians had interned the Jews of the city and the surrounding area prior to deporting them to the death camps. The Szakadatis came daily to throw food to the Jews in the ghetto without receiving anything in return and at great risk to their own lives. Moreover, from May 1941 until the end of the war, the Szakadatis hid a Jewish girl in their home.

Toth, Jozsef
File no. 6026

In 1944, Jozsef Toth, a high school teacher, was serving in the Hungarian army and lived in Cluj, Transylvania, in the home of Ludovic Weissberger. When the Germans began making preparations to deport the Jews of Cluj, Toth hid Weissberger, his wife Hermina, their daughter Clara-Luisa, their son Andrei, and the grandmother, Etelca, in the kitchen of his home.

Tubak, Maria
File no. 4860

On January 21, 1941, gangs of Iron Guard members perpetrated a pogrom against the Jews in Bucharest. That evening, Maria Tubak and Ştefan Marin, who worked in the lumberyard, stood next to their gate, and when the gangs came to the house and tried to enter it to remove the Jewish tenants, the two told them there were no longer any Jews in the house and pointed to the sign as proof that the new owner was a Romanian. They continued to guard the house until the rebellion was quashed.

Zaharia, Josif
File no. 6177

Josif Zaharia (Zacharias), who belonged to the German-Swabian minority, was the son of a wealthy farmer who lived in the village of Iecea Marea in the county of Timişoara. In 1941, Zaharia came across a frightened 13-year-old boy who was exhausted from wandering in search of food and shelter. The boy was Benjamin Weiss, from the yeshiva of the Brisk rabbi in the city of Arad. Zaharia guessed that the boy was Jewish and felt sorry for him. He obtained false papers for him, taught him to work on a farm, and employed him on his father's farm.

The List of the Citizens from the Republic of Moldova Awarded with Title "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem

Lozan, Paramon
Lozan, Tamara
File no. 7338

Paramon and Tamara Lozan lived in the town of Nisporeny in Moldova. Paramon was the principal of a local secondary school, where his wife also worked as a teacher. When the area came under Romanian control, Paramon was summoned to open his school, which was going to serve as a temporary collection point for Jews. Five days later, a rumor was heard that the Jews interned in the school building were to be killed. To prevent this disaster, Paramon decided to release the Jews. He was executed a few days later by the local authorities.

Marchenko, Ivan
Marchenko, Feokla
Marchenko, Leontiy
Marchenko, Nina
Marchenko, Nikita
Marchenko, Tatyana
File no. 8207

The brothers Ivan and Nikita Marchenko lived with their families in Râbniţa, Moldova, near the ghetto. In March 1944, when the Romanians were retreating from the area, the members of Galperin family turned to the Marchenkos and asked them for shelter. After the war, the survivors left the homes of their rescuers.

Morozovskiy, Vitaliy
Morozovskiy, Aleksandra
File no. 7135

Vitaliy and Aleksandra Morozovskiy lived in the village of Mokra in the Râbniţa district and worked as teachers in the local school. Before the war, one of their pupils was Grigoriy Farber, a Jewish boy who lived with his parents in the nearby Jewish kolkhoz, *Der Stern*. In December 1941, when the Germans and Romanians had been in control of Moldova for several months, Farber appeared at the Morozovskiy home and asked for shelter. The Morozovskiys hid him in the attic of their home and for two months provided him with all his basic needs.

Nedelyak, Ivan
Nedelyak, Anna
File no. 6990

Ivan and Anna Nedelyak lived with their two children in the Tiraspol suburb called Kirpichnaya Slobodka. In July 1941, the Nedelyak family offered to give shelter to two brothers, Yefim and Semeon Mirochnik, the only Jews of Ochakov who remained alive after the massacre carried out there a week earlier.

Pelin, George
Pelin, Varvara
File no. 6853

George and Varvara Pelin were farmers living in the village of Malayeshty in the Tiraspol district. In March 1944, they sheltered Lev Bruter in their home. Bruter was a young Jewish native of the town of Kaushany in Moldova whom they had never met before the war.

Pereplechinskiy, Vladimir
Pereplechinskiy, Mariya
File no. 8303

One day in September 1941, Mariya brought home a young girl, Klavdiya Vainshtein, who had fled the death pit during the mass murder. Throughout the occupation, Klavdiya lived with the Pereplechinskiys and was like a member of the family.

Pozdnyakova, Yefrosiniya
Starostina (Pozdnyakova), Zinaida
File no. 7558

Yefrosiniya Pozdnyakova was in her forties and lived with her only daughter Zinaida (later Starostina) on the outskirts of the city of Râbniţa. She had quite a few acquaintances and friends among the internees of the ghetto, and throughout the occupation, she and her daughter helped the Jews and supplied them with food. At the beginning of March 1944, the Germans decided to liquidate the inhabitants of the Râbniţa ghetto. Some of Yefrosiniya's acquaintances turned to her for temporary shelter in her home. Yefrosiniya hid these Jewish refugees in her attic. For a whole month, during which German soldiers robbed and killed the Jews of Râbniţa, Yefrosiniya and her 12-year-old daughter Zinaida hid more than ten Jews and provided them with their basic needs.

Serebryanskiy, Isaak
Sparinopta, Samuil
Mazur, Ikim
File no. 7750

Isaak Serebryanskiy, Samuil Sparinopta, and Ikim Mazur were Moldovan farmers who lived in the village of Broşteni in the Râbniţa district. During the war, in various ways, the three helped Naum and Raisa Gomelfarb, whose parents, residents of Broshteny, had been murdered in September 1941. Serebryanskiy prepared a hiding place for Naum and his sister by digging a pit under the stable. The children, together or separately, hid there throughout the time they were in the village. Samuil Sparinopta built a secret hiding place inside the house, behind the Russian stove. Ikim Mazur, who lived at the edge of the village, kept the children in the barn.

Starostina, Yevgeniya
Starostina, Anna
Starostin, Pavel
File no. 6084

Anna Starostina lived with her mother Yevgeniya and her son Pavel in Chişinău. At the end of July 1941, a ghetto for the Jews was established in Chişinău, in which Anna Starostina's good friend, Ida Binder and her eight-year-old daughter Alla, were interned. During the early months, Anna and her son Pavel would slip into the ghetto to bring Binder and her daughter food and clothing. When the Romanians began to deport the Jews to labor camps in Transnistria, Alla Binder ran to the Starostin family. Anna and her family took Alla in, looked after her with devotion, and kept her hidden from their neighbors.

Strashnaya, Mariya
Strashniy, Ivan
Strashnaya, Kseniya
File no. 7347

During the war, Mariya Strashnaya was in her sixties and lived in the village of Balyavintsy, Brichany district, with her son Ivan, her daughter-in-law Kseniya and her two young granddaughters. Before the war, the grocery store in the village was owned by the Gurvits family, and Mariya and her family shopped there. After the Germans occupied the area, Benyamin Gurvits, the owner of the grocery store, appealed to Mariya for temporary shelter. Mariya did not refuse to shelter her neighbors, and at nightfall Benyamin Gurvits, his wife Ita, and their children, Yefim and Manya, arrived at her home and were hidden in the attic.

Tsurkan, Peotr
Tsurkan, Yevgeniya
Savchuk, Makar
Savchuk, Akseniya
File no. 8190

Peotr and Yevgeniya Tsurkan lived in the village of Bulayeshty, Orgeyev district. In December 1941, they took the Jewish Tselnik family from the town of Grigoriopol into their home. For several months, the Tselniks stayed in the cellar or the attic, and at the end of summer 1942, they were moved to the home of Makar and Akseniya Savchuk, relatives of the Tsurkans, who lived in the same village.

Trials of the War Criminals

General Considerations

The Fascist regime that ruled Romania between September 14, 1940, and August 23, 1944, was brought to justice in Bucharest in May 1946, and after a short trial, its principal leaders – Ion and Mihai Antonescu and two of their closest assistants – were executed, while others were sentenced to life imprisonment or long terms of detention. At that time, the trial's verdicts seemed inevitable, as they indeed do today, derived inexorably from the defendants' decisions and actions.

The People's Tribunals functioned for a short time only. They were disbanded on June 28, 1946,[1] although some of the sentences were not pronounced until sometime later. Some 2,700 cases of suspected war criminals were examined by a commission formed of "public prosecutors,"[2] but only in about half of the examined cases did the commission find sufficient evidence to prosecute, and only 668 were sentenced, many *in absentia*.[3] There were two tribunals, one in Bucharest and one in Cluj. It is worth mentioning that the Bucharest tribunal sentenced only 187 people.[4] The rest were

1. Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă, "Introducere", in *Procesul mareşalului Antonescu* (Bucharest : Saeculum and Europa Nova, 1995-98), vol. 1, p. 33.
2. The public prosecutors were named by communist minister of justice Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu and most, if not all of them were loyal party members, some of whom were also Jews. The complete list included lawyers Avram Bunaciu (who would inherit Pătrăşcanu's post in 1948), Ion Raiciu, Vasile Stoican, M. Mayo, Constantin Vicol, Stroe Botez, Ion I. Ioan, Petre Grozdea, Mihail Popilian, Constantin Mocanu and H. Leibovici ; magistrates Ion Pora and Ştefan Ralescu ; civil servant Camil Surdu ; and workers Alexandru Drăghici (who would become interior minister in 1952) and Dumitru Săracu (a former waiter at Bucharest's luxurious Capşa restaurant). See Hary Kuller, *Evreii în România anilor 1944-1949. Evenimente, documente, comentarii* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2002), p. 356.
3. The list of those sentenced by the People's Tribunal in Bucharest and Cluj, with a short and strikingly apologetic introduction, is to be found in Cristina Păuşan, "Justiţia populară şi criminalii de război," *Arhivele totalitarismului*, vol. 7, nos. 1-2, 1999, pp. 150-165. The total provided by Păuşan (657) is apparently slightly incomplete.
4. See Zoltán Tibori Szabó, "The Transylvanian Jewry during the Postwar Period, 1945-1948," *East European Perspectives*, vol. 6, at **www.rferl.org/eepreport/**. See also the highly-interesting document recording the minutes of a March 27, 1947, meeting between Communist Party officials and former public prosecutors who were members of the party. Among participants were justice minister Pătrăşcanu (according to whom "some 200" people had been sentenced for war crimes), interior minister Teohari Georgescu, Alexandru Drăghici and Avram Bunaciu (see footnote 2), alongside prosecutors Alexandra Sidorovici, Dumitru Săracu, Vasile Stoican and Lepădăescu [first name unknown]. See Andreea Andreescu, Lucian Năstase, and Andreea Varga (eds.), *Evreii din România (1945-1965)* (Cluj-Napoca : Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală, 2003), pp. 311-325.

sentenced by the tribunal in Cluj. One must also note that, in general, harsher sentences were pronounced by the Cluj tribunal (set up on June 22, 1945) than those passed by the tribunal in Bucharest. At the latter, Avram Bunaciu (see footnote 2) acted as chief public prosecutor[5] and Justice Nicolae Matei presided over the court. There was an obvious reason for the difference : the Cluj tribunal mostly judged crimes committed by the Hungarian authorities and their local collaborators in Northern Transylvania rather than atrocities perpetrated by Romanians under the rule of Marshal Antonescu.

Out of the 481 cases on which the Cluj People's Tribunal and its successors ruled, it passed the capital sentence on 100 people and 163 sentences of life imprisonment. Of those sentenced, 370 were Hungarian, 83 were German, 26 were Romanian, and two were Jewish.[6] The Cluj People's Tribunal condemned 30 people to death and 52 to hard labor for life in two mass trials, one involving 63 defendants and the other, 185. Prison terms handed down by the Cluj tribunal totaled 1,204 years. It must be remembered, however, that many sentences had at best symbolic value and that the percentage of the absentees was particularly high among those sentenced to death or to life imprisonment. Thus, out of the 185 charged in the first trials, only 51 were in custody while the others were tried *in absentia*.[7]

Turning now to the main trial – the sixteenth in the series of trials held by the People's Tribunal[8] – the court pronounced thirteen death sentences on the twenty-four defendants, but six of these (including Horia Sima, leader of the Legionary movement, and Legionary ministers Mihai Sturdza, Ioan Protopopescu, Corneliu Georgescu, Constantin Papanace, and Victor Iaşinschi) were pronounced *in absentia* and were never carried out. At the recommendation of the government, King Michael I commuted the death sentence to life in prison for the former minister of defense, Constantin Pantazi, as well as Radu Lecca, the government representative in charge of Jewish issues, and the director of the Special Intelligence Service, Eugen Cristescu. Marshal Antonescu and his foreign minister, Mihai Antonescu, as well as Constantin Z. [Piki] Vasiliu, inspector general of the gendarmerie, and Gheorghe Alexianu, the governor of Transnistria, were executed on June 1, 1946.[9]

The first trial at the Bucharest People's Tribunal ended on May 22, 1945. General Nicolae Macici was found guilty of the massacres perpetrated in occupied Odessa and nearby Dalnic on October 21-22, 1941, and was sentenced to death. Twenty-eight other members of the occupying Romanian forces received prison sentences, the harshest of which were for life and the lightest for one year behind bars.[10] On July 1, 1945, King Michael I commuted Macici's sentence to life imprisonment ; Macici would eventually die in Aiud prison in 1950.[11] Altogether, "Old Kingdom" and southern Transylvania-based

5. See document no. 97, in Andreescu, Năstase and Varga, *op. cit.*, p. 293, footnote 14.
6. Szabó, *op. cit*.
7. *Ibid.*, and Randolph L. Braham, "The National Trials Relating to the Holocaust in Hungary," in *idem* (ed.), *Studies on the Holocaust : Selected Writings* (New York : Columbia University Press, 2000), vol. 1, p. 142. See also Braham for the English translation of the Cluj People's Tribunal judgments.
8. *Procesul mareşalului Antonescu*, vol. 2, p. 211.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 432-439.
10. See Lucian Năstase, "Studiu introductiv," in Andreescu, Năstase and Varga, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
11. Andreescu, Năstase and Varga, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-324, footnote 9.

People's Tribunals pronounced forty-eight death sentences ; [12] but only four were actually carried out, the others being either commuted to hard labor for life or being pronounced *in absentia*. None of the sentences pronounced in Northern Transylvania was carried out, and the most important people charged had left the region together with the Hungarian authorities.[13]

Furthermore, based on a decree passed in early 1950, convicted war criminals who had "demonstrated good behavior, performed their tasks conscientiously, and proved that they became fit for social cohabitation during their imprisonment" became eligible for immediate release, irrespective of the severity of the sentence received.[14] Among those found to be "socially rehabilitated" were quite a few who had been condemned to life in prison for crimes committed against the Jews. Many of the liberated would join the Communist Party. Others, however, would have to wait for the amnesties granted between 1962 and 1964, when the regime's national-communist policies took off and the PCR needed the support of nationalistic political prisoners and the intellectuals among them, in particular.

After the fall of the communist regime, the proponents of Marshal Ion Antonescu's rehabilitation (see below) would insist that the trials had been politically motivated and carried out at the orders of the Soviet occupants. There can be no doubt that the Soviet Union heavily influenced the outcome of the judicial process and that some of the indictment counts had little in common with actual facts. Paradoxically enough, however, it is also at Moscow's door that one must lay the blame for the prosecution's inability to charge many of those included on its initial lists of suspected war criminals. Some of the suspects were by now fighting on the Allied side (for example, Gen. Nicolae Stavrescu, one of the masterminds of the Iaşi pogrom in June 1941, would, nonetheless, eventually be tried for the role he played in the pogrom) ; others were turncoats protected by Moscow and even became prosecutors themselves (Major Iorgu Popescu, for example, who had killed a Jewish student while investigating him under the previous regime, was now named public prosecutor in the trial of the Iaşi pogrom perpetrators, and Ana Pauker herself advised against making a case of his past) ; or the Soviet Union simply neglected to deliver documents attesting to the atrocities committed on the territories it had re-annexed, despite repeated promises to do so "with the next plane." Meanwhile, many of the suspects managed to escape abroad.[15] This would not stop Moscow from soon accusing the (at that time still not fully communist) government of not hunting hard enough for war criminals. And, indeed, though the People's Tribunals were disbanded in 1946, trials in connection with "crimes against peace" and other war-linked charges would continue in the following years on the basis of Law no. 291 of 1945, which provided for sanctioning those guilty of war crimes or "crimes against peace" stipulating sentences of fifteen years to life imprisonment.[16]

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12. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, courtesy of Radu Ioanid, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
13. Tibori Szabo, *op. cit.*
14. Decret nr. 72 privitor la liberarea înainte de termen a celor condamnaţi, *Monitorul Oficial*, March 23, 1950.
15. See Andreescu, Năstase and Varga, *op. cit.*
16. Păuşan, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

A final note on the postwar trials and collaboration: Jews were also sent before the People's Tribunal for war crimes and collaboration. The most famous involved the leadership of the Antonescu-era Jewish Center *(Centrala Evreilor)*, established on January 11, 1942, which had acted as a sort of *Judenrat*.[17] Nandor Gingold, chairman of the Center and a converted Jew, received a life sentence to hard labor on February 18, 1946, while his associates Matias Grünberg (alias Willman), A. Grossman-Grozea, and Jack Leon were sentenced to between twelve and twenty years in prison.[18] The country's new communist rulers would eventually turn "Gingoldism" into a proxy for "fascism" when referring to political adversaries within the Jewish community (not yet communized at that stage), although the term "Jewish fascism" was also often used.[19] The remainder of this chapter will focus on the treatment of crimes against Jews in the postwar trials.

The Trial of the Major Figures of the Ion Antonescu Government

The trial took place in Bucharest, not Nuremberg, following the commitment made by the new Romanian government to the Allies in the armistice agreement signed in Moscow on September 12, 1944; namely, to arrest war criminals and to dissolve and prevent the re-emergence of pro-Nazi and fascist organizations.[20] In this context, it should be noted that, unlike other fascist leaders, Antonescu had neither a party nor a fascist organization to support him: he disbanded the Iron Guard, which had backed him, as early as January 1941, following its attempt to seize power.

Generally speaking, steps toward denazification in Romania, such as the abrogation of the racist and anti-Semitic legislation characteristic of fascist-totalitarian states, were implemented very slowly. The earliest legislation on the subject of bringing war criminals and those responsible for the catastrophe in Romania to justice was promulgated as late as January 20, 1945. War criminals were defined as those who treated prisoners of war and hostages in a manner contrary to the dictates of international law; ordered or perpetrated acts of cruelty or liquidations in war zones; ordered or initiated the establishment of ghettoes, internment, and forced labor camps; carried out deportations for political or racial reasons; ordered or carried out collective or individual repression, relocation, and deportation of persons for extermination; perpetuated the use of forced labor for the purpose of extermination.[21]

17. See Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), pp. 34-35, and Hildrun Glass, *Muderheiten zwischen zwei Diktaturen: Zur Geschichte der juden in Rumänien 1944-1949* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 45-46.
18. Kuller, *op. cit.,* p. 365; Năstase, *op. cit.*, p. 21. The same tribunal sentenced Vasile Isăceanu, Radu Lecca's chief of staff at the Office for Jewish Issues, to hard labor for perpetuity.
19. For example, at a meeting on October 15, 1945, Vasile Luca, a member of the PCR's Politburo, told representatives of party-linked mass organizations: "What is needed, above all, is a serious struggle against Jewish Fascist elements." Document reproduced in Kuller, *op. cit.*, p. 436.
20. Article 15 of the Armistice Convention between the Romanian government and the governments of the United Nations, August 23, 1944 (Bucharest, 1984), document 2, p. 709.
21. State law for the punishment of war criminals and law for bringing to justice those guilty for the Holocaust, Laws no. 50 and no. 51, *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 17, January 21, 1945, p. 415.

The laws, as formulated and interpreted, enabled many minor war criminals to evade incarceration or to escape with negligible punishment ; moreover, the actual instigators of war crimes – the journalists, writers, and party functionaries of the two fascist parties, who had poisoned public opinion by disseminating fascist ideology and anti-Semitism in the mass media – were not punishable under these laws. Furthermore, the legal system itself was still infested with people who espoused fascist ideology ; people who had, in fact, initiated, implemented, and shaped anti-democratic racial and anti-Semitic legislation during Romania's six years of dictatorship and fascism (1938-1944).

With the establishment of Petru Groza's communist-dominated government in March 1945, the passage of legislation bringing war criminals to justice was expedited, and the pace of their sentencing accelerated. The trial of the Antonescu group was based on "Law no. 312 of April 21, 1945, for the tracking down and sanctioning of those guilty in the disaster of the country and of war crimes." The April 1945 law established two categories of guilt :

1. Culprits in the country's disaster were those who, "(a) promoted the advance of fascism or Nazism and having an effective political responsibility allowed the advance of the German forces in the country's territory, and (b) after September 6, 1940, acted for the preparation and carrying out of the above deeds by word, written or any other means ; "[22]
2. As culprits of war crimes fifteen possible categories were set, among which : "(a) decided the declaration or the continuation of the war against the USSR and the United Nations ; (b) subjected POWs or hostages to inhumane treatment ; (c) ordered or carried out acts of terror, cruelty or subjugation of the population in areas where war took place ; (d) ordered or carried out collective or individual reprisals with the aim of political or racial persecution of the civilian population ; (e) ordered or organized excessive labor or organized the transportation of persons with the aim of exterminating them ; (f) commanders, directors, supervisors, and guards of camps of either POWs, deportees or political inmates, or forced labor detachments, who treated the persons under their control in an inhumane way ; (g) officers of judicial police or investigators with any claim in political or racial matters, who carried out acts of violence, torture, or other illegal treatment ; (h) prosecutors, civilian or military judges, who intentionally assisted or carried out acts of terror or violence ; (i) left the national territory with the aim of serving Hitlerism and fascism, and have attacked the country verbally or in any other form."[23] Also accused of war crimes were persons who had illegally acquired property in the wake of the war or through racist legislation, those who had enacted racist legislation or legislation having a Hitlerite, Legionary, or racial spirit or had excessively applied such legislation.

The law stated that persons found guilty of the second clause would be punished with death or a life sentence with hard labor. There were three major categories of political, military, and judicial activities that were included in this law : (1) participation in the war against the USSR and the Allies ; (2) inhumane treatment (from compulsory labor to extermination) of POWs, the civilian population in areas of conflict, because of either

22. *Procesul mareşalului Antonescu*, documents, p. 55.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

political or racial motives; (3) Fascist-Legionary propaganda. This last category, which enabled the proceedings against journalists and intellectuals – who by their ideas supported the Antonescu regime, the Iron Guard, and the officials and leading personalities of the propaganda apparatus – cannot be found in the criteria of indictments formulated at the Nuremberg trials.

It should be emphasized that that under the sanctioning of this law, politicians in responsible offices, officers or soldiers of the armed forces, the gendarmerie, and public officials, as well as those who had spread the fascist and Legionary ideas, were included. Thus, anti-Semitic doctrines and anti-Semitic policies were represented in the criteria for indictment. Participants in the Holocaust, starting from racial legislation to the mass extermination of Jews and Roma, regardless of the person's position in the political and institutional hierarchy of the state, could thus be included in the category of "war criminals."

Aside from the trial of Ion Antonescu and his collaborators, there were several other trials with clear political content. Several former ministers and state secretaries in the Antonescu government were arrested in 1946, and some of them testified at his trial. Some of these ministers were freed, only to be rearrested and sentenced in 1949.[24] Others faced the judicial system earlier. This group included Gheorghe Leon, Ion Petrovici, General Grigore Georgescu, General Nicolae Stoenescu, Petre Nemoianu, Geron Netta, Henric Oteteleşanu, Mircea Cancicov, General Gheorghe Jienescu, General Victor Iliescu, Aurelian Pană, General Nicolae Şova, Horia Cosmovici, Ion N. Finţescu, Aurelian Pană, Gheorghe Creţianu, Mircea Vulcănescu, Ion D. Enescu, Neagu Alexandru, Stavri Ghiolu, General Constantin Niculescu, General Ion Sichitiu, Ion C. Petrescu, Alexandru Marcu, General Iosif Iacobici, General Eugen Zwidenek, Petre Niculae Counter-Admiral Nicolae Păiş, Petre Strihan and Admiral Gheorghe Koslinski.[25] Another highly-publicized trial was that of the journalists who had, through their writing, supported the former regime and/or incited racial hatred. They were accused of war crimes and being "responsible for the country's disaster."[26] The trial ended on June 4,

24. The principle of "collective responsibility" was applied in this trial, in which several other dignitaries of the Antonescu regime received harsh sentences. Apart from Petrovici, the group included: Gen. Radu R. Rosetti, who briefly served as minister of education from January 27 to November 11, 1941 (when he resigned from the Cabinet), was sentenced to two years in prison in January 1949 and died in jail in June of the same year; Gen. Gheorghe Potopeanu, who served as minister of the national economy between January and May 1941, was sentenced to 5 years and liberated in 1953 (he was sentenced again to 15 years in 1957 for alleged high treason); Potopopeanu was amnestied in 1963); Aurelian Pană was sentenced in January 1949 to ten years in prison, where he died; Constantin A. (Atta) Constantinescu, who served as minister of public works and communications from October 1943 to August 1944, received a 5-year sentence and was freed in 1953, committing suicide two years later; Gheorghe Docan, who served as minister of justice from January to February 1941 and resigned, also sentenced to 5 years; Toma Petre Ghiţulescu, who was Secretary of State in the Ministry of Economy under Potopeanu and resigned with him, was also sentenced in absentia to 5 years, but managed to escape serving the sentence, living in hiding, although he would later be caught and given a life sentence for "treason against fatherland;" and Petre Nemoianu, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture for only 10 days from September 4-14, 1940, who received a 5-year sentence and died in prison. Every member of the group was investigated in 1946 and proceedings against them were then dropped. For biographies see "Procese '46 – Sentinţe '49 – Recursuri," *22*, no. 48 (December 2-8, 1997).
25. See Ciucă, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 33.
26. Kuller, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

1945, with death sentences pronounced *in absentia* against journalists Pamfil Şeicaru and Grigore Manoilescu and prison terms ranging from twelve years (the case of Radu Gyr, a poet who had been a fervent Iron Guardist) to life for the rest of the defendants.[27] Other famous trials were those of members of the government set up in exile by Horia Sima and of journalists who supported it from abroad (General Platon Chirnoagă, General Ion Gheorghe, who was Antonescu's Ambassador to Berlin, Mayor Sergiu Vladimir Cristi, the former bishop of Odessa, Visarion Puiu, and writer Ion Sângeorgiu, as well as journalists Alexandru Cuzin, Alexandru Gregorian, Horia Stamate and Vintilă Horia Caftangioglu were all sentenced to death *in absentia*);[28] the trial of the former governor of Bessarabia, General Constantin Voiculescu, who received a life sentence of hard labor;[29] and the trial of the main culprits of the 1941 massacres in Iaşi (General Emanoil Leoveanu, General Gheorghe Barozzi, General Stamatiu, former Iaşi prefect Colonel Coculescu and former Iaşi mayor Colonel Captaru), which ended in June 1948, after repeated delays.[30]

However, the punishment of war criminals was never an end in itself. It was partly the result of pressure applied by the Soviet state and Soviet occupation forces, since many of the crimes under consideration were committed in the Romanian territories annexed by the Soviets or on Soviet soil. The trials also revealed the bitter power struggle between the so-called nationalist camp and the communist camp supported by the Soviet army. This explains why so many Romanians saw the trials as an anti-national act, an attempt by foreigners and their local aides to take their revenge against Romanian soldiers who, according to this perception, gave their lives to liberate Bessarabia and Bukovina. In this context, the tragedy of the Jews, whether Romanian or in territories under Romanian control, became secondary and, in most cases, was not the main issue.

The trial of Antonescu and his closest aides was not a purely Romanian affair. The Moscow Declaration of November 1, 1943, the decisions at the Yalta summit on the speedy punishment of war criminals on February 12, 1945, and the second paragraph of the Allies' declaration issued after the collapse of Nazi Germany on June 5, 1945, all combined to transform the punishment of Romanian fascist leaders into an issue of universal justice, into a manifestation of the international community to eradicate the ideology that had led to such horrific results in Europe. Therefore, the criteria by which the trial of the Antonescu regime should be assessed are the same as those used to prepare the Nuremberg indictments, albeit the crimes of the Romanian regime under Antonescu cannot be equated with that of Germany under Himmler, Göring, Ribbentrop, and the other Nazi leaders.

The Nuremberg indictment distinguished between four categories of crimes:

1. *Conspiracy*: The defendants prepared together and pursued a plan aimed at the seizure of absolute power and acted with complete understanding for the perpetration of their future crimes.

27. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, *op. cit.*, and Andreescu, Năstase and Varga, *op. cit.*, p. 324, footnote 14.
28. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, *op. cit.*, and Năstase, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Kuller, *op. cit.*, and Andreescu, Năstase and Varga, *op. cit.*, p. 323, footnote 8.

2. *Crimes against peace* : The defendants violated thirty-four international treaties on sixty-four separate occasions, launched wars of aggression, and caused the outbreak of a world war.
3. *War crimes* : The defendants ordered or tolerated collective assassinations and torture on a massive scale, enslaved millions of workers, and ordered looting.
4. *Crimes against humanity :* The defendants persecuted their political adversaries and racial or religious minorities. They exterminated whole ethnic communities.[31]

Two of the four sections in the indictment as well as other parts of the indictment could not have served as a basis for accusations against Antonescu's regime. The *Conducător* (as Antonescu was called, in imitation of the German term *Fuehrer*) did not reveal any ambitions to seize absolute power before September 1940 and did not challenge the legal authorities ; in fact, he was chosen to serve as prime minister by King Carol II himself after a short, but very sharp, political crisis caused by the collapse of Romania's frontiers. Antonescu did indeed choose his own partners, but only after he had deposed the king and assumed most of his powers.

Antonescu deepened the totalitarian measures of King Carol II ; namely, the first racist and anti-Semitic laws, which were promulgated as early as August 9, 1940, and defined Jews by blood and faith, and laid the foundation for subsequent anti-Semitic legislation.

Romania was not an aggressor in the war, but the victim of the expansionist plans of the Soviet Union and the territorial aspirations of Hungary. From the Romanian point of view, participation in the anti-Soviet campaign until August 1941 represented a justifiable struggle for national liberation for the release of almost four million Romanians and 60,000 square kilometers from foreign occupation. It was a campaign in which the Romanian people enlisted willingly and enthusiastically. The aggressor was the Soviet Union, which, on June 26, 1940, forced Romania to yield Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

However, in the Antonescu trial the indictment and the verdict avoided any reference to the following elements : Soviet imperialism ; the Soviet threat to the very existence of the Romanian state ; the Soviet military build-up at the new frontiers of the Romanian state on the Prut and the Danube in 1940-1941 ; the military incidents provoked by the Soviets ; or the Soviet Union's plans for the further annexation of Romanian soil.[32] On November 13, 1940, Molotov asked Hitler to agree to the Soviet annexation of southern Bukovina, a territory not even mentioned in the secret protocol, thus going far beyond the initial Soviet demands, which Molotov described as "insignificant."[33] Only Hitler's refusal saved the rest of Bukovina from being swallowed up, Russified, and lost to

31. Joe J. Heydecker and Johannes Leeb, *Le Procès de Nuremberg* (Paris : Buchet-Chastel-Correa, 1959).
32. Act de acuzare (Indictment) no. 1, April 29, 1946, Archives of the Ministry of Interior (henceforth : AMI), file no. 40010, vol. 1, pp. 1-185, in the Archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (henceforth : USHMM), Romanian Information Service UC, RG 25.004M, roll 31. All files of Antonescu's trial quoted here are from the USHMM archives.
33. Minutes of a conversation between Hitler and Molotov in Berlin, November 13, 1940, in R.J. Sontag and J.S. Beddie (eds.), *La vérité sur les rapports germano-soviétiques de 1939 à 1941* (Paris : France-Empire, 1948), p. 173.

Romania forever. Only Nazi German threats to Romanian independence were presented and debated at the trial. In other words, the tribunal did not allow an open debate of the alternatives faced by the Romanian government in the fall and winter of 1940, alternatives that Mihai Antonescu clearly defined at the trial: "Romania had the alternative of being occupied like other (neighboring) states or of being politically subjugated to Germany. This latter situation brought about this trial."[34]

The issue of Bessarabia's status as Romanian territory annexed to the Soviet Union[35] was also taboo, as was the fact that the strategic decision to side with the Nazi German camp after the collapse of France was, in fact, made by the last governments of King Carol and by the king himself.[36]

The Holocaust was represented in only 23 percent of the indictment and the whole corpus of evidence,[37] and the fate of the Jews was raised in instances when the documents or events incriminated any of the accused. The references in the indictment focused on the process of Romanianization and its effects on the social and economic conditions of the Jewish population, the Iaşi pogrom, the pogrom of Odessa, the deportation of the Jews to Transnistria, and the extermination camps. During the trial, references were made to documents and speeches by Ion and Mihai Antonescu. In regard to victims, 10,000 victims were mentioned in the Iaşi massacre, in contrast to the so-called "500 Judeo-communists" that the Antonescu government acknowledged immediately after the pogrom. Likewise, documents were presented on the deportation of tens of thousands of Jews to Transnistria, but there were no overall, total figures presented on the number of deportees and their fate. In fact, the trials did not present a clear picture of what the public could find out about Transnistria after 1989.

During his trial, Ion Antonescu acknowledged that between 150,000-170,000 Jews had been deported to Transnistria. However, he claimed that the deportation was actually intended to save the allegedly pro-communist Jews from the population's wrath and that he could "state with certainty that" had he not "dispatched them to Transnistria, none of them would have survived." The claim was part of a memorandum written by the former *Conducător* in refutation of the indictment. In the same document, Antonescu stated, "I deported the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina [to Transnistria] for political *military security reasons* and for *their own safety*." He claimed that in view of the fact that many Jews had been acting as Soviet spies, and due to the fact that Iron Guardists were preparing "a St. Bartholomew's Night" against them in cooperation with the Germans, the deportation was dictated by both military and safety factors and his intention to save

34. Proceedings of the trial, May 13, 1946, AMI, file no. 40010, vol. 28, p. 8.
35. Conversation with Al. Voitin Voitinovici, in Ion Antonescu, *Citiţi, judecaţi, cutremuraţi-vă!*, eds. I. Ardeleanu and V. Arimia (Bucharest, 1991), p. 97.
36. See the memo of Gh. Tătărescu, one of the last premiers of King Carol's regime, May 1, 1943, in Gh. Buzatu, *România cu şi fără Antonescu* (Iaşi: Moldova, 1991), pp. 91-96. Antonescu claimed at his investigation that he knew nothing of the proposals made to Nazi Germany by the last two premiers – which included a military alliance and a friendship pact – because Tătărescu took the documents with him when he left the prime minister's office (AMI, file no. 40010, vol. 36, pp. 60-61). See also Mihai Antonescu's investigation, *ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 52 (USHMM, RG 25.004, roll 34).
37. În *Procesul mareşalului Antonescu*, the general part of the Act of Indictment has 52 pages (pp. 60-112), Jewish topics figure in pp. 85-86 and 103-112. Also, whenever it was the case, in each of the defendents' indictment their role in massacres of Jews was raised.

the Jews from a terrible fate at the hand of the Germans and pro-Nazi sympathizers in Romania. Unfortunately, he claimed, "carrying out" the order of deportation had been "destabilized" by the "then-dominant spirit." By "destabilization" the former state leader was euphemistically referring to the mass executions, death marches, and starvation carried out by the Romanian police and army while implementing his orders. The harsh early winter conditions, "which also made many victims among the belligerent armies," he claimed had added to the number of casualties among the deported, but "this was also the cause due to which the Germans lost the Moscow battle."

At the trial, the dictatorial state established by Antonescu was clearly defined as fascist, and critics of the court's legitimacy focused on the nature of the court, as if this fact changed the nature of the wartime Antonescu regime. The court was, as in other East European states, an ad hoc institution, a "people's court" with judges and prosecutors with no judicial background serving alongside the professional judiciary. The president, Al. Voitin Voitinovici, was just twenty-eight years old, a distant relation of communist leader Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu. The public prosecutors were Vasile Stoian, a completely unknown jurist, Constantin Dobrian, an examining magistrate from Timişoara, and Dumitru Săracu, a "worker" and former cook lacking any judicial training. The panel of judges included six "judges of the people," drawn mainly from the Communist Party or its affiliated organizations: two "workers" and a "peasant" proposed by the communists, a "worker" from the Social Democratic Party, a National Liberal lawyer, and a "housewife from the National Peasant Party."[38] This composition of the court was and is used by those who wish to rehabilitate the fascist ideas, in order to shift attention from the content of the indictments, from the magnitude of crimes committed against Jews and Roma, and to focus on the lack of judicial background of the prosecution and judges.

Behind the jargon in the acts of indictment and the tone used in the courts, when reading the material, sanitized of the postwar political context, it is clear that the Romanian fascists linked the solution of the Jewish question to the rejection of all Western democratic values, which they declared a Jewish innovation and the embodiment of a social order created to serve Jewish interests. Thus, not only did they hate Jews, they also despised the ideas and concepts that had evolved since the French Revolution, which represented the fundamental values of Western society: liberalism, tolerance, democracy, capitalism, freedom of speech, freedom of organization, free elections, civil rights, and even the notion of the citizen.[39] These ideas made Romania ripe for the advent of a fascist regime in September 1940. In this context it is necessary to emphasize that it was not the German threat and German supremacy in Eastern Europe alone that promoted the advent of fascism in Romania: it was also the duplicity of Romanian "democratic" leaders, their interpretation of democracy and democratic values, their silent encouragement and tolerance of young hooligans and their violent actions, and their diversionary anti-Semitic tactics that facilitated the rise of Antonescu's regime.

Antonescu never referred to his regime as fascist, but he was able to portray his rule as springing from the Romanian heritage rather than being an imported formula. He did not redefine the goals of Romanian nationalism, but rather sought to attain the goals that had been outlined by his predecessors using fascist means. The "ethnic Christian state"

38. The verdict, May 17, 1946, AMI, in *ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 364-366.
39. For more on this, see J. Ancel, "Antonescu and the Jews," *Yad Vashem Studies*, 23 (1993), pp. 213-218.

that he established – in his words, "the national totalitarian regime" – opposed the "demo-liberal" regime of the past,[40] and was a genuine Romanian fascist state based on Romanian political and social philosophy that adopted Nazi methods of dealing with real or imaginary ethnic enemies.

The Antonescu regime fashioned its own decisions rather than having them foisted upon it by the exigencies of an international situation beyond its control : the Romanian army was sent far beyond the national borders, even into Stalingrad ; the anti-Soviet war was declared a holy anti-communist, anti-Slav, and anti-Jewish war ; the huge numbers of Jewish and Roma victims are the tragic result of this policy ; the Jewish presence in Bessarabia and Bukovina was utterly expunged ; many thousands of Russians and Ukrainians were robbed, looted, and shot ; the Jewish minority in Romania was plundered, deprived of all civil rights, and forced to work for the benefit of the Romanian state ; the German plan for the wholesale extermination of the Jews was first accepted and then rejected ; and, last but not least, the Romanian National Bank was transformed into a depository for plundered cash and valuables.[41]

The full horror of the Antonescu regime's crimes against the Jews, which were the most wide-ranging and terrible that it committed, were not fully known at the time of the trial. They were, of course, mentioned and included in the indictment, but – given the fact that crucial Romanian matters were taboo, given the way the trial was organized and pursued, given the carefully selected audience and the censored press – they did not touch the hearts of many Romanians. The vast majority of Romanians knew about these crimes (though perhaps not about their full magnitude and results), as the leader of the National Liberal Party stressed in his deposition : "I mean the massacres of Odessa, of Iaşi and Bukovina, which everyone knew about."[42] Another factor that weakened the impact of the revelation of the fascist regime's crimes against the Jews was that between August 23, 1944, the day of Antonescu's arrest, and the date of the trial, the Romanian people experienced Russian occupation and plunder and the emerging rule of a Communist Party that had never expressed Romanian interests and had previously been almost non-existent.

The true extent of the crimes against the Jews and the Roma and Antonescu's plan to cleanse Bukovina and Bessarabia of Slavs are only now being revealed in the wake of the recent opening of the Romanian archives captured by the former Soviet Union. Newly--revealed crimes include the shooting and burning of more than 70,000 Jews in the camps near the Bug River ; the massacre, burning, or deportation of about 80,000 Odessan Jews (from a large area encompassing Odessa, in which the total number could be around 80,000) ; the participation of medical teams in these crimes ; and the degree of Romanian Army High Command involvement and connivance in these atrocities.

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40. As early as November 23, 1940, Antonescu claimed before Hitler that the misfortunes of the Romanians, the collapse of their frontiers, the domestic disorder, and the absence of a moral will to resist was due to the disorganization wrought by Bolshevism and Jewry during the days of the old regime. *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1933-1945*, series D, vol. 11 (London, 1961), nos. 381, 664 ; see also letter dated June 22, 1941, from Antonescu to the leader of the opposition, Maniu, regarding the definition and nature of his regime, AMI, file no. 40001, vol. 34.
41. See *ibid.*, no. 12, pp. 216-280.
42. Deposition of Constantin I.C. Brătianu, May 9, 1946, AMI, file no. 40010, vol. 2, p. 260.

At the time of the trial, the attention and accusations of the prosecution were directed elsewhere. The court tried to judge Antonescu's deeds in light of principles, ideas, and norms completely alien to Romanian interests; thus, the accusation was made against both Antonescu's regime and the opposition that they did not commit Romania to a military struggle against Nazi Germany in the manner of Tito in Yugoslavia, the Slovaks, or the Polish uprising.

One of the objectives of the trial was to discredit those national leaders, parties, and forces that might have opposed the communist takeover of Romania – people such as Maniu, Brătianu, and Mihalache of the National Liberal and National Peasant parties and their close associates. The investigators, the prosecution, and the court sought to link Maniu and Brătianu to the fascist regime, to characterize them as conniving with its criminal deeds, and to present them as tacitly supporting Antonescu's plans and decisions, including participation in the anti-Soviet war (with no distinction being made between captured Romanian territory and the Soviet Union proper). The opposition party leaders were presented as promoters of fascism, defenders of the "capitalists' and boyars' interests" against the interests of the "working class," and so forth. From this point of view, the trial was the opening sortie in the campaign that culminated in the great political show trial of 1947 – that of Maniu, Brătianu, and Michalache, among others. All were to die in prison.[43] In almost all of the acts of indictment in the trials of the war criminals there were references emphasizing the fact that the Antonescu's regime was sustained by the active support of the "landlords, bankers, and factory owners." For example, the indictment documents of the Iaşi pogrom stated, "Fascism subjugated the interests of the Romanian people to the interests of the groups of landowners and bankers, and dragged Romania into the criminal war on the side of Hitler."[44]

The court uncovered an entire network of resistance to Antonescu's regime, consisting of communists, workers, peasants, and so-called democratic forces. In fact, however, such a network did not exist. Since Antonescu's regime enjoyed the tacit support of most Romanians, it did not use terror against Romanian citizens, it had no SS-type organization, and it did not place ethnic Romanian citizens in concentration camps. Moreover, during the period in question, the Communist Party did not exceed more than a few hundred members, most of them of non-Romanian, and the fear of Soviet occupation was always greater than the fear of Nazi Germany.

In conclusion, the Soviet occupation and the communist regime imposed on Romania prevented a real debate on Romanian fascism and Antonescu's regime or the defects of Romanian society and its values. So, any national catharsis was thereby prevented. In retrospect it seems that, with Antonescu's downfall, the Romanians would have been ready and willing to re-adopt the Western democratic values that the Romanian fascists

43. The relationship between Maniu, Brătianu, Mihalache, N. Lupu, and others and Antonescu's regime and their role therein is a complex subject that cannot be addressed here. Maniu clearly opposed attempts to make him co-responsible for the crimes of the regime: "The defendants in the dock are the only ones responsible for their policy" he said at the trial. Deposition of I. Maniu, May 11, 1946, AMI, file no. 40010, vol. 2, p. 293.

44. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum/Romanian Information (Intelligence) Service (henceforth: USHMM/SRI), RG 25.004M, roll 47, fond Anchetă, Trial of the war criminals, The Iaşi massacre, 1947.

had so despised, in the understanding that they suited Romanian interests, preferences, and culture and because Romania was favorably prejudiced toward the West.

Antonescu's regime, like that of Nazi Germany (albeit to a far lesser extent) sacrificed the principles of European civilization and elementary notions of humanity and violated international law. In so doing, it prompted a moral regression in Romania that has been felt in the attitudes that emerged toward the postwar trials after 1989.

The Trials of the War Criminals and the Holocaust

At the end of the forties and early fifties, several years after the cessation of the activities of the Peoples' Courts, a new set of trials of accused war criminals took place. The Penal Code was the legal basis for these trials. For example, in the case of accused Nicolae Caracaş, the legal basis for his indictment is evident:

> In Sentence no. 28 of January 24, 1947, the Military Court of Region 2 sentenced Caracaş to twenty years of hard detention for a crime punished under Article 193/1 and the confiscation of property. The Military Tribunal accused Caracaş of the following:
>
> Between July 21, 1941, and March 1942, Nicolae Caracaş, ex-Colonel of the gendarmerie, served as Commander of the Lăpuşna Gendarme Legion.
>
> 1. In this capacity, before entering Bessarabia with his units, gave orders that Jews and political suspects be shot.
> 2. Ordered by the accused, in the village of Valea Mare, the gendarmes shot a forester by the name of Ion, suspected of spying.
> 3. In Călăraşi (in Bessarabia), the accused gave orders for the execution of Jews and suspects. The executions were carried out by Sgt. Nicolae Şaptebani, the chief of the gendarmerie section in Călăraşi, by Sgt. Constantin Văcaru, by Sgt. Maj. Serghie Mocanu, and other gendarmes of the forces.[45]

To this four more charges were presented against the accused. The ex-Colonel of the gendarmerie denied all the charges against him. Moreover, he claimed that the order to execute the Jews in Bessarabia was given by General Vasiliu, governor of Bessarabia, in Roman, when the gendarmerie forces about to cross the Prut River were given their instructions. The reference is to the well-known order by General Vasiliu to "cleanse the land." The whole trial consisted of the testimonies and counter-statements by witnesses for the prosecution and the defense. The accused rejected accusations of crimes against Jews claiming:

> We are not contesting that there were executions of Jews, but from the administrative evidence it is evident that these executions were not carried out by gendarmes, but by armed forces that occupied the territory, and moreover, not under orders from the defendant.[46]

The tendency of the accused from the gendarmerie was to lay all responsibility of the crimes against the Jewish population on the army. Through the dossiers of the accused from the gendarmerie this pattern is evident; they tried to make the Romanian army

45. USHMM/SRI, RG 25.004M, roll 15, fond Anchetă, file no. 582, vol. 1.
46. *Ibid.*

culpable by claiming that the Jews passing through areas in Bessarabia on the way to Transnistria were guarded and were under the responsibility of the military.

Former Major Brotea Dumitru, the second person charged with leading the gendarme legion in Lăpuşna, revealed a significant detail during his trial ; namely, that Col. Nicolae Caracaş was questioned already in 1941 for crimes against Jews. "Around November 1941, an inhabitant of Călăraşi, named Gavriliţă, filed a charge at the Chişinău military court against Sergeant Major Şaptebani of the Lăpuşna Gendarme Legion, chief of the Călăraşi unit, claiming that this NCO, together with local guards, shot an elderly Jewish woman, robbed her of her two suitcases carrying belongings and jewelry." An inquiry made at the time revealed that Şaptebani recognized the murder of Jewish woman, but claimed it was on the orders of Colonel Caracaş. Furthermore, it was claimed that Ion Antonescu and Constantin Vasiliu were given details of a series of abuses committed by the gendarme forces under the command of Colonel Caracaş, and as a result he was moved from the command in Lăpuşna to Teleorman.[47] It is true that from this "witness testimony" it is not clear whether the complaints presented to Antonescu about Colonel Cararaş's behavior included his attitude toward Jews, but it could be a possibility.

In the archival dossier of the case, there is a memorandum by Nicolae Caracaş, in which he opposed his trial held in 1947, claiming that a 1945 inquiry regarding the same charges had found him not guilty. He wrote that in 1945, without being arrested "even for a moment," the inquiry had found him to be not guilty. However, he was arrested in September 1947.[48]

These aspects are mentioned because they may serve as arguments in favor of those who are promoting the juridical rehabilitation of those convicted of war crimes. Such cases must be clarified, because sooner or later there may occur situations in which persons directly implicated in the Holocaust may be judicially cleared due to misconduct at their trial. Once clearance and rehabilitation is given, they are almost impossible to annul. Prosecutor General Ilie Botoş referred to such cases in July 2004 – cases related to crimes against humanity.[49]

Another important trial was that of Lt. Col. (res.) Iliescu Dumitru, former commander of the Soroca Gendarmerie Legion, held at Criminal Court S in Bucharest, contained in File no. 1939/1948. The charge was that, by his order and with his knowledge, 200 Jews were massacred en masse in Soroca county in 1941.[50] The charges were rejected by the accused with the argument that the Jews passing through Soroca were under the responsibility of the Romanian army. The gendarmerie was responsible for public order and the security of the local inhabitants and had no responsibility for the fate of the Jews. This became a leitmotif in the trials of officers and NCOs of the gendarme legions of Bessarabia.

File no. 218/948 of the Bucharest Court prosecutor's office, War Criminals investigations, deals with the case of a civilian who used the political atmosphere to express his hatred of the Jews. In this context, a citizen could exercise his most primitive mentality

47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*, file no. 582, vol. 3.
49. Declaration on Mediafax.
50. *Ibid.*, roll 15.

and attitude. The acts of indictment prepared by prosecutor Nicolae Vlădescu stated the following:

> Rusu Vladimir, age 33, clerk by profession, last address in Dorohoi… in preventive custody in Văcăreşti penitentiary… The accused Rusu Vladimir, in July 1941 was in the township of Sadagura, Cernăuţi county. Following the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the Cernăuţi area, the accused took control of police activities in the area before the entry of the Romanian troops. On his own initiative he formed a gang of robbers and criminals, which included the Şerbanovici brothers, Sefciuc, Leviţchi, and others. Under his leadership, on the night of July 5-6, 1941, they shot peaceful civilians of Jewish origin in the villages of Rohosna, Jucica Nouă and Sadagora in Cernăuţi county, after which they took over possessions of the massacred persons.[51]

Another case that demonstrates the aggressive anti-Semitism of civilians was that of Gavrilovici Constantin, driver at the Iaşi bus depot next to the Iaşi police station, where on June 29, 1941, a group of Jews tried to find refuge (running from the police station). The accused took the rifle of a soldier, who had fainted when hearing shooting at the police station, and started shooting the Jews who tried to find refuge in the depot yard."[52] He was sentenced to fifteen years for crimes against humanity.

The Penal Code was supplemented by several further legal statutes, which were often used in combination and allowed the prosecution of persons charged with crimes. For example, in the case of the "Orhei Lot," tried at the Bucharest Court, File no. 204/1950, the combination of several legislative clauses was used as the basis of the prosecution's case. From the indictment of the ninety-five persons accused in the "Orhei Lot," it is clear that the new regime used propagandistic political arguments:

> With the instauration of the Antonescu regime, the Berlin style of terror, robbery, and assassination was also introduced in Romania, the same patterns that existed in fascist Europe from 1933, with the rise of Hitler to power by the capitalists.
>
> From September 6, 1940, racial hatred [without mentioning against whom this racial hatred was turned; author's note] was unleashed as Legionary gangs started with killings as in Dorohoi, becoming more and more vicious during the rebellion and culminating with massacres during the war. The massacres in Orhei, prosecuted in this trial, were not isolated. They took place in short intervals or at the same time as other massacres in Iaşi, Stanca Rozveneanu, Taura Nouă, Gura Căinari, Mărculeşti, Sculeni, Bălţi, Rauteni, Alexandrei, Lipscani, Chişinău, etc.

On page four of the sentence, there is a description of the massacres, defined as war crimes, which were carried out against "the Soviet people, communists, and Jews." After graphic details of the bestiality and sadism of the crimes, the sentence returned to the political aims of the perpetrators and the identity of the victims.

> The war of aggression and plunder launched against the peaceful Soviet peoples, imposed on the Romanian people by a totalitarian regime… The communist activists, the best sons of the people and the avant-garde of the working class had to be killed as they represented the danger of death for the bankers and industrialists, the defenders of Hitlerism. Likewise, Jews also had to be exterminated as a diversion aimed at distracting the attention from the huge

51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, roll 17, file no. 504/1955, Tribunalul Capitalei, Colegiul II Penal.

> numbers of victims of the war, victims that fell in sacrifice to the interests of the bankers and industrialists… a sacrifice aimed at giving satisfaction to the bestial instincts of plunder and destruction long fomented in the propaganda of racial hatred.[53]

The massacres against Jews are most frequently depicted in the prosecution documents and evidence presented in the indictments dealing with localities in Bessarabia. The above citation from the trial of the "Orhei Lot" contains 238 pages with detailed descriptions of the events in the villages and towns of Bessarabia under the control of the gendarmerie. However, as seen from those parts of the indictment where the political background of the crimes is presented, the low priority of the fate of Jews is evident ; and while most of the crimes were committed against Jews, they are addressed last, after the Soviets and communists, as if the Antonescu regime had the same policy toward the communists as they did toward the Jews.

The trial against those accused "of crimes against the population of Iaşi" – in fact, the trial of the accused of the Iaşi pogrom of June 1941 – had the same characteristics. The very name of the trial, of people accused of crimes against "the population of Iaşi," does not focus on the real and only victims of the crimes : the Jews. This situation was characteristic of the postwar trials, where the details left no doubt as to the identity and fate of the victims, but the political jargon of the era prevented open discussion about the victims, Jews, killed because they were Jews. The formula of "racial hatred" is never clearly clarified in the documents, as if "Jews" and "racism" had no connection.

Fifty-seven people were tried in the Iaşi trial : 8 from the higher military echelons, the prefect of Iaşi county, and the mayor of Iaşi, 4 military figures, 21 civilians, 22 gendarmes. One hundred sixty-five witnesses, mostly survivors of the pogrom, testified at the trial. The acts of indictment of the Iaşi pogrom and the environs, in which 223 arrested people were charged (File no. 5260/1947), again show the priorities and political messages of the era. Several examples detail the perception of the war and the crimes committed :

> In Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and France, and especially on the territory of the Soviet Union… the fascist hordes killed millions of peaceful inhabitants, children, women, the elderly… intellectuals.
>
> In Romania, fascism turned its murderous face toward the working class…
>
> In Romania, fascism subordinated the people to the interests of the cliques of landowners and bankers…
>
> The best sons of the people were executed…

After long paragraphs presenting the Marxist viewpoint on fascism and Nazism, the indictment turned to the Jewish aspect :

> Especially criminal was fascist barbarism toward the Jewish population wherever the occupying forces passed.
>
> Jews lost more than six million victims to fascism. In Poland more than three million Jews were massacred.
>
> Millions more were exterminated in the other countries occupied by the fascists…
>
> Also in Romania fascism used racism for its criminal purposes, sacrificing thousands and thousands of human lives, in order to distract the attention of the Romanian people from the

53. *Ibid.*, roll 16.

calamity into which it was dragged… The crimes of fascists in Romania cannot be counted, as uncounted are the damages brought to the people and the country.

The most horrific barbarism of fascism in our country was the massacre of tens of thousands of the population of Iaşi for the crime of being Jewish.

It was not by chance that the largest number of victims caused by fascism was from the Jewish population of Iaşi, as Iaşi is the locality where hooligans and paid agents of fascist and German imperialism, like A.C. Cuza and Corneliu Codreanu, poisoned the youth for decades.[54]

The arguments of the indictment were of four major categories: (1) rumors on the cooperation of the Jewish population with the enemy; (2) communiqués published by the authorities, such as in the newspaper *Prutul* of June 27, 1941: "All those in the service of the enemy will meet with capital punishment;" (3) army documents, such as Telegram no. 3313, dated June 29, 1941, from the commander of the 14th Division, which stated that Soviet parachutists were saved by inhabitants of Iaşi and "thus circulated the rumors that were to be found to be untrue;" (4) orders of the local authorities forcing the Jewish population to hand over all headlights, binoculars, and cameras to the authorities.[55]

The authorities collected large amounts of data and evidence for the Iaşi trial. The indictment rejected the allegation of the Antonescu government immediately after the pogrom that some 500 "Judeo-communists" were executed. The indictment stated that more "than 10,000 peaceful inhabitants of Iaşi were massacred." The investigation file reconstructed the events in chronological order as they took place in Iaşi, Stanca Roznovanu, Marculeşti, and Gura Căinari, identifying the accused and placing the charges against them in the relevant laws.[56] In the second volume of his *Cartea neagră*, Matatias Carp published reports, documents, and testimonies of the accused from the Iaşi pogrom.

Sentence. Based on art. 3 of Law no. 291/1947 on the punishment of those guilty of war crimes and crimes against peace, is the following sentencing for crimes committed:

1. Life sentence with hard labor, 100 million lei in damages: Gen. Gheorghe Stavrescu, Col. Captaru Dumitru, Col. Matieş Emil, Lt. Col. Ionescu Constantin Micandru, Lt. Col. Marinescu Danubiu, Maj. Balotescu Gheorghe, Maj. Tulbure Emil, Slt. Mihăilescu Eugen, Triandaf Aurel, Cristescu Gheorghe, Grigore Petrovici, Cimpoieşi Gheorghe, Staff Sgt. Mihailov Vasile, Commissar Ion Botez, Sgt. T.R. Manoliu Mircea, Cercel Dumitru Cudi, Vivoschi Emil, Ghiţă Iosub, Grosu Gheorghe, Lubaş Rudolf, Rusu Dumitru called Gheorghe.
2. Life sentence in harsh conditions and 100 million lei in damages: Col. Lupu Constantin.
3. 25 years hard labor for Andronic Dumitru, Blânduţ Constantin, Cristiniuc Leon, Laur Ion, Bocancea Gheorghe, Scobai Ştefan, Aniţulesei Mihai.
4. 20 years of hard labor, 100 million lei in damages to Ciubotăraşu Dumitru, Lazăr Constantin, Lupu Nicolae, Tănase Gheorghe, Ciornei Filorian, Dumitru Dumitru, Mănăstireanu Ion, Moraru Dumitru, Păsărica Alexandru, Parlafes Gheorghe, Velescu Vasile.
5. 20-year harsh sentence, 100 million lei in damages: Constantinescu Dumitru called Albescu.
6. 15 years of hard labor, 100 million lei in damages: Atudorei Dumitru, Dădărlat Dumitru, Gramatiuc Aurel, Miron Nicolae, Rusu Nicolae, Paraschiva Barlaconschi Moroşanu.
7. 5 years of forced labor: Ciobanu Ion called Bălteanu. Several of the accused were acquitted.[57]

54. *Ibid.*, roll 47.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. Matatias Carp, *Cartea neagră*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Diogene, 1996), vol. 2, pp. 163-164.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that the postwar trials were a product of the legal framework and judicial perceptions of the era, contrary to those attempting to rehabilitate those accused of war crimes. The trials were politicized to an extent, as evidenced from the acts of indictment, which were in line with the ideological framework of the regime. However, the communist analysis of the nature of fascism, the elements of class struggle, and the constant references to the Soviet Union should not obscure the fact that at the time of the trials, when the whole picture was not clear and data was still missing, the various atrocities against the Jews – the killings, the deportations – were there to see. Moreover, the trials of the "small fries," which were less politicized, shed more light on the crimes committed against the Jews.

The trials and their content in relation to the Holocaust did not become a source of knowledge about the past during the communist period. The trials, except those parts that could be used for political purposes by the regime, had the same fate as the overall treatment of the Holocaust. This "black hole" enabled the emergence of those who attempted to whitewash Antonescu and his regime and to de-legitimize the trials. Thus, the trials lost their natural potential to uncover the full extent of the war crimes, of which Jews were the primary but not the only targets. The opening of the archives will enable future generations, through the vast corpus of material that was used for the trials, to learn the extent of the Holocaust in Romania. This is still an almost untapped source, which should be utilized in Romania in order to understand the past.

The postwar trials raise the same questions in Romania as in other European countries where trials took place – were they aimed at seeking justice, revenge, or also, as a top priority, perhaps, to de-legitimize those forces that were challenging the communist takeover? Even if this power struggle was evident in some of the trials, it should not shift attention away from the truths that Romanian society must face.

Aside from certain errors and awkward moments, aside from a certain penchant to politicize the trials (particularly the trial of Ion and Mihai Antonescu), the trials of war criminals had a legal basis. This cannot be denied, as some do in their attempts to rehabilitate some of the accused on the grounds that the trials were ordered and organized by the communists. The trials were part of a coherent postwar context and historical logic and had a similar legal basis to that of the Nuremberg Trials. This legal basis was inspired from international law on war and wartime situations as well as on the stated adherence of the victors to the normative statements of peace and humanism.

One peculiarity of the trials was the fact that they established individual and not collective guilt, which was a form of adherence to a fundamental principle of the rule of law. What was novel about them was the decision that not only would the one who pulled the trigger be found guilty, but also the one who contributed to the political and institutional preparation for mass discrimination and mass murder on the basis of ethnicity, race, or political allegiance. In Romania as well as in other countries, the trials of war criminals contributed to a public awareness that there was no excuse for committing or abetting murder against collectives or individuals on the basis of the aforementioned criteria.

To use today allegations of faulty criminal procedure in order to rehabilitate war criminals who humiliated, deported, murdered, or exterminated people because they were born Jews or Roma, or were Soviet POWs, homosexuals, or communists, or belonged to specific religious sects is to reject the most generous values of democracy. Rehabilitation is a most natural enterprise for those with no memory of recent history. And when state institutions become involved, it is sadly possible that an avenue for extremism in politics and civil society may thereby be open.

Distortion, Negationism, and Minimalization of the Holocaust in Postwar Romania

Introduction

This chapter reviews and analyzes the different forms of Holocaust distortion, denial, and minimalization in post-World War II Romania. It must be emphasized from the start that the analysis is based on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's definition of the Holocaust, which Commission members accepted as authoritative soon after the Commission was established. This definition[1] does not leave room for doubt about the *state-organized* participation of Romania in the genocide against the Jews, since during the Second World War, Romania was among *those allies and collaborators of Nazi Germany* that had a *systematic plan for the persecution and annihilation* of the Jewish population living on territories under their unmitigated control. In Romania's specific case, an additional "target-population" subjected to or destined for genocide was the Romany minority.

This chapter will employ an adequate conceptualization, using both updated recent studies on the Holocaust in general and new interpretations concerning this genocide in particular. Insofar as the employed conceptualization is concerned, two terminological clarifications are in order. First, "distortion" refers to attempts to use historical research on the dimensions and significance of the Holocaust either to diminish its significance or to serve political and propagandistic purposes. Although its use is not strictly confined to the communist era, the term "distortion" is generally employed in reference to that period, during which historical research was completely subjected to controls by the Communist Party's political censorship. It is therefore worth noting that while the definition of the Holocaust refers to a state-sponsored genocide, more recent studies on the ways in which the Holocaust was ignored and/or distorted as a function of political interests under communist regimes refer to "state-organized forgetting."[2]

An additional warranted clarification pertains to the use of the concept of *denial* or *negationism*, rather than the far more widely used term of *revisionism*. The choice stems

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1. "The Holocaust was the state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims – six million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi Germany" (**www.ushmm.org/museum/ council/mission.php**).
2. For example, see Shari J. Cohen, *Politics without a Past : The Absence of History in Postcommunist Nationalism* (Durham : Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 85-118, for the case of Slovakia.

from the fact that most of those who falsify, distort, and relativize the reality of the Holocaust label themselves "revisionists" in order to gain respectability ; after all, historical revisionism is a legitimate act that is always warranted in reexamining what predecessors have produced. Negationism, by contrast, is not a reexamination of established facts or a well-founded critique of prior interpretations ; rather, it is a more-or-less explicit attempt to deny the Holocaust. "Revisionism" is, therefore, only an alibi, a euphemism used to counter charges of negation. Thus, this chapter relies on the critique of "revisionism" developed by such scholars as Deborah Lipstadt, Michael Shermer, and Alex Grobman.[3] These authors believe that while "denial" is a more accurate term than "revisionism," the term "negationism" best reflects the true intentions of a revisionist rewriting of history.

Negationism is defined as the denial that the Holocaust took place and/or the denial of participation of significant numbers of members of one's own nation in its perpetration. The negation may be outright and universal or deflective and particularistic.

The specter of negationism is large, but several categories and sub-categories can be distinguished among its forms. The first category is *integral* or *outright* denial, which rejects the very existence of the Holocaust. In Romania, just as in other former communist countries, integral denial is a wholesale Western "import," with no traces of local originality whatsoever.[4] However, influences of this Western import can be traced not only in their Romanian counterparts, but also in other categories of local negationism. It should be emphasized that the distinctions made between the different forms of negationism are, above all, of heuristic value. In practice, one would find the same type of argumentation employed in several categories used here.

The second conceptual category is *deflective negationism.* Unlike integral negationism, the proponents of deflective denial admit the existence of the Holocaust, but channel the guilt for its perpetration in several possible directions. One may distinguish several subcategories of deflective negationism, based on the target onto which guilt is deflected. The first subcategory is the most predictable : placing blame solely on the Germans. The second subcategory adds to the former groups depicted as being marginal in their own society, alleged insignificant accidental occurrences or unrepresentative aberrations in one's nation – the Legionnaires, for example. Finally, the Jews themselves are the targets of deflection in the third subcategory. Within this third subcategory, further distinctions are possible, depending on the main argument being used : (1) the deicidal argument, according to which the Holocaust was the price paid by the Jews for having killed Jesus Christ ; (2) the conspiratorial argument, according to which Hitler himself was brought to power by the Jews ; (3) the defensive argument, according to which Jews forced Hitler to resort to legitimate measures of self-defense ; (4) the reactive argument, according to which the disloyalty manifested by Jews toward the

3. See Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust : The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York : Plume, 1994) ; Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman, *Denying History : Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It ?* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2000). See also Michael Shafir, "*Ex Occidente Obscuritas* : The Diffusion of Holocaust Denial from West to East," *Studia Hebraica*, 3 (2003), pp. 23-82, particularly pp. 23-63.
4. See Shafir, *op. cit.*, and *idem*, *Între negare şi trivializare prin comparaţie. Negarea Holocaustului în ţările postcomuniste din Europa Centrală şi de Est* (henceforth : Shafir, *Între negare şi trivializare*) (Iaşi : Polirom, 2002), pp. 33-47.

country in which they lived triggered a backlash against them; and finally, (5) the vindictive argument, which charges the Jews with having planned and implemented the Holocaust themselves.

The third conceptual category is *selective negationism*, which is a hybrid of outright and deflective negationism. Its proponents deny the Holocaust, but only *in their own country's specific case*. In other words, selective negationism acknowledges that the Holocaust occurred *elsewhere*, but denies *any* participation of one's compatriots in its perpetration. In this case, one is consequently facing a combination in which selective negationists share denial with outright negationists, insofar as their own nation's involvement, and share particularism with deflective negationists when it comes to members of other nationalities. If one were to look for a specific Romanian note, one is likely to find it in this particular form of selective negationism. Although not singular in postcommunist East Central Europe, this note is so predominant in Romania that it becomes remarkable.

Since the category of *comparative* trivialization, which is a form of Holocaust minimalization, stands apart from the rest, it shall be dealt with in the special section treating this phenomenon.

Distorting and Concealing the Holocaust under Communism

Despite the antifascist rhetoric of the official propaganda, the history of the Holocaust was distorted or simply ignored by East European communist regimes. There are several explanations for this. First, communist ideology was structurally incapable of analyzing the character and evolution of fascist regimes. Almost to their collapse, communist regimes continued to abide by the definition of "fascism" formulated by Georgi Dimitrov in his 1935 report to the Comintern. Fascism, according to this definition, was "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital."[5] As historian István Deák observed, "an ideology that regards ethnic and religious problems as mere cover-ups for class conflict cannot deal adequately with a historical process that had as its goal the extermination of all members of a particular group, whether progressive or reactionary, whether exploiters or part of the exploited."[6]

Second, communist "antifascism" did not construe any precise critique of fascist ideology and its regimes, but, as amply demonstrated by François Furet, it was merely a power-strategy employed in the communization of Eastern Europe.[7] The purpose of Dimitrov's definition was to place fascism at the opposite pole of communism, and the imprint left on the collective imagination by World War II (at least on the continent's

5. Georgi Dimitroff, *The United Front against War and Fascism: Report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International 1935* (New York: Gama, 1974), p. 7.
6. "Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Hungary," in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 99-124. Quotation at p. 118.
7. François Furet, *Trecutul unei iluzii. Eseu despre ideea comunistă în secolul XX* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1993), *passim.* For the case of Romania, see Ovidiu Buruiană, "Antifascism şi naţionalism ca pretexte în strategia de comunizare a României," *Xenopoliana*, 7 (1999), nos. 1-2, pp. 1-16.

eastern part) was a simplistic ideological binary of communist-fascist confrontation. The victory of the Soviet Union consecrated this logic, military victory being interpreted as the victory of communism over fascism; one of the effects of this logic would be that communists would refuse to acknowledge anyone else's right to call themselves either an adversary or a victim of fascism.[8]

Third, in the postwar years it became obvious once more that communism and fascism had been conniving. It is well known today that while in the Soviet Union anti-Semitism was officially outlawed, it was unofficially encouraged and disseminated by the authorities. Those authorities went as far as to prohibit any mention of the massacres of Russian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian Jews on monuments erected in the memory of the crimes committed by the Nazis on Soviet territory. *The Black Book*, a collection of testimonies on the Holocaust compiled by Ilia Ehrenburg and Vasili Grossman with the aid of the Jewish Antifascist Committee, was banned in the Soviet Union shortly after it was finalized in 1946 and (partially) translated into Romanian and English.[9] Indeed, though the Soviets liberated the Auschwitz camp in January 1945, for several months they kept silent about what they had found there. In response to questions by their British allies, they went out of their way to hide the racial dimension of the atrocities, officially replying that four million "citizens" had died at Auschwitz.[10]

For the communists, when Jewish martyrdom was not blended in with the general martyrdom of mankind, it vanished into the martyrdom of specific nations. The Soviets encouraged the forgetting of the Shoah in Eastern Europe, particularly since some of these states had been involved in the perpetration of the genocidal project.[11] Their discourse on the Holocaust avoided charging tones, partly to eschew arousing the hostility of populations about to undergo communization, and partly to channel whatever sentiment of guilt existed in their own direction.

Postwar Romania shared in these attempts to bring about the concealment and/or the distortion of the Holocaust. As early as 1945, the new regime signaled that it was unwilling to acknowledge the role played by state institutions and by the ethnic Romanian majority in the perpetration of anti-Jewish atrocities. In July 1945, the local branch of the Iaşi Communist Party organization unsuccessfully tried to stop the commemoration of the Iaşi pogrom.[12] The communist authorities also opposed the dissemination of Matatias Carp's three-volume book, *Cartea neagră*, on the suffering of Romanian Jews between 1940 and 1944; all the way to the regime's fall in 1989, Carp's would remain the only serious scholarly work on the Jewish genocide to have been printed in communist Romania.[13] The book was published in a small edition and was soon after withdrawn from bookshops, and no subsequent editions were authorized

8. François Furet, *op. cit.*, pp. 377, 389, 417.
9. Bernard Wasserstein, *Dispariţia diasporei. Evreii din Europa începând cu 1945* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2000), p. 92.
10. Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1987), pp. 175-176.
11. François Furet, *op. cit.*, pp. 405, 417.
12. Liviu Rotman, "Memory of the Holocaust in Communist Romania: From Minimization to Oblivion," in Mihail E. Ionescu and Liviu Rotman (eds.), *The Holocaust and Romania: History and Contemporary Significance* (Bucharest, 2003), p. 206.
13. *Cartea neagră. Fapte şi documente. Suferinţele evreilor din România în timpul dictaturii fasciste 1940-1944*, vols. 1-3 (Bucharest: Socec, 1946-1948).

after 1948. Moreover, the communist authorities subsequently kept it in the secret sections of the public libraries.[14]

The trials of Romanian war criminals began in 1945 and continued until the early fifties, yet they benefited from public attention for a brief period of time only. The more consolidated the communist regime became, the fewer the reports on the trials carried by the media. As historian Jean Ancel observes, as early as the end of the "local" trials that followed the "Trial of the Great National Treason" – the trial in which Antonescu and his collaborators were indicted – a tendency to distort the nature of the crimes being prosecuted was already discernable, and Jews began to be eliminated from the role of main victims.[15]

At the end of the war and in its immediate aftermath the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) was internally divided over how to address recent Romanian history. Two main opposing trends could be noted. The first approach was advocated by Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu, who implicitly supported a Romanian acknowledgement of guilt. Pătrăşcanu's study entitled *Fundamental Problems of Romania* (which the author began working on in 1942, was published in 1944, and reprinted several times up to and including the year 1946) had a special chapter on "state anti-Semitism" and "the mass, systematic, and methodical extermination of the Jewish population" in Antonescu's Romania. Proceeding from Marxist perceptions of the "Jewish problem," Pătrăşcanu nonetheless did not hesitate to mention the Romanian state's responsibility for a "long and horribly cruel series of anti-Semitic crimes" :

> Individual and collective assassinations committed by the Legionnaires were followed by the systematic and methodical mass-murder of the Jewish population. Pogroms were officially organized, with soldiers and state organs being charged with carrying them out. Thousands and tens of thousands of people, men, women, children, the elderly, were sent to death by hunger and frost, being deported beyond River Dniester to wastelands under the harsh winter conditions. When all the deeds committed in Moldova and beyond the Prut River after June 1941 would be made public, when the thousands of mass executions without trial and without any other guilt of those thus liquidated but that of being born Jewish would be revealed, when all these crimes would come to justice, then not only the dictatorship's people who ordered them [and] not only those who implemented them would have to answer, but so would the regime in whose name they acted.[16]

According to Pătrăşcanu, while Germany did indeed exert an influence on Romania, "*anti-Semitism nonetheless remains a Romanian phenomenon that must be investigated not only in what it emulates, but also in what is intrinsic to it* [author's emphasis]."[17]

His approach was never heeded. The study sold well (it was printed in three editions), yet it was reviewed unfavorably by Stalinist ideologues.[18] After a power struggle at the

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14. Information provided by the U.S. editor of Carp's book, Andrew L. Simon (Matatias Carp, *Holocaust in Romania : Facts and Documents on the Annihilation of Romania's Jews, 1940-1944*, Florida : Safety Harbor, 2000), pp. 1-2.
15. See Jean Ancel, "Introduction," in *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem : The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986), vol. 11, pp. 13-19 ; see also the chapter on the war criminals' trials in this report.
16. Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu, *Probleme de bază ale României* (Bucharest : Socec, 1944), p. 211.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
18. Lavinia Betea, *Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu. Moartea unui lider comunist. Studiu de caz* (Bucharest : Humanitas, 2001), pp. 37, 62-63.

top of the PCR, Pătrăşcanu was arrested in 1948 and executed in 1954. Although he would be officially rehabilitated in 1968, *Fundamental Problems of Romania* would never be reprinted.[19]

It was the alternative approach of coping with the country's recent past that would be canonized. Its normative model was provided by the famous *History of Romania* (soon to be called *History of the Romanian People's Republic*), an obligatory textbook whose editor-in-chief was Mihail Roller.[20] Roller's textbook embraces Dimitrov's definition of fascism, presenting autochthonous Romanian fascism as little else than embodying "monopoly capital" – a movement allegedly lacking popular support, strictly controlled by Nazi Germany, and intent on plundering the Romanian economy and terrorizing political adversaries. The textbook only rarely mentions the regime's anti-Semitic policies, and the few references to them are ambiguous and lack any explanation. The most blatant distortion emerges whenever reference is made to the victims of fascism, among whom Jews are never mentioned. Instead, for Roller the "advent of the Legionary-Antonescu dictatorship signified the aggravation of terror measures directed against popular masses and their leaders. Concentration camps were set up, in which thousands of democratic citizens were locked." The textbook *does* mention the camps in Transnistria, but nowhere the ethnic identity of its Jewish or Romany inmates. Students can only conclude that the "organized" evacuation to, and assassination in the camps targeted the regime's political adversaries, especially communists. Roller concludes, "[By] these cruel acts, the Legionary-Antonescu dictatorship proved its affinity with the crimes committed by the German Hitlerites in the death camps of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Mauthausen, etc."[21] Elsewhere, the textbook mentions "racial injustices," "racial repressions," and "measures intended to bring about the enslavement of co-inhabiting nationalities."[22]

In contrast to Pătrăşcanu, then, Roller's *History of Romania* replaced Jews and Roma with communists and Romanians, in general, as the main victims of fascism and ignored anti-Semitism as a defining trait of Antonescu's dictatorship. This approach came to prevail in all subsequent history textbooks,[23] even after Roller fell into disgrace in the late fifties, as well as in official communist histories on the interwar period and on the Second World War.[24] The distortion was in no way hindered by the Jewish ethnic origin of many prominent historians in the first two decades of the postwar years. These Jewish historians were first and foremost disciplined party soldiers devoted to communism who viewed their Jewishness as secondary at best.

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19. *Probleme de bază ale României* was often quoted in works about fascism published in the seventies and eighties, but the chapter on the Jewish question was systematically eschewed. See, for example, Gh.I. Ioniţă, "Un strălucit analist al procesului de naştere şi evoluţie a mişcării fasciste în România – intelectualul moldovean Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu," in Gh.I. Ioniţă and A. Kareţchi, *Intelectuali ieşeni în lupta antifascistă* (Iaşi: Institutul de studii istorice şi social-politice de pe lângă CC al PCR – Sectorul din Iaşi, 1971), pp. 58-86.
20. Mihail Roller, *et al.*, *Istoria României. Manual unic pentru clasa a VIII-a secundară* (Bucharest: Editura de Stat, 1947).
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 767-768.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 805-808.
23. Alexandru Florian, "Treatment of the Holocaust in Romanian Textbooks," in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 237-285.
24. Victor Eskenasy, "The Holocaust in Romanian Historiography: Communist and Neo-Communist Revisionism," in Braham (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 173-236.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, a revitalization of socio-political anti-Semitism occurred.[25] Soviet "anti-Zionism" and "anticosmopolitanism" – two catchphrases that concealed an anti-Semitic campaign serving the purpose of political and institutional purges – spread throughout the Eastern bloc during the late forties and fifties and were used in power struggles at the top of communist parties. Massive Jewish migration also triggered political problems.[26] In this context, to which one should add the tension of the Cold War and the problems posed by postwar reconstruction, the issue of the Holocaust was systematically avoided in both academia and politics. Historiography underwent a process of enforced Marxization. Issues such as nationalism and the situation of ethnic minorities were not priorities under Stalinist research guidelines. The marginalization of the Holocaust was also the result of strict censorship, limited access to World War II documents, purges in the community of historians, and the simultaneous promotion of "militant historians" educated at the PCR's Institute of History, established in 1951.[27]

Beginning in the sixties, the official discourse and historiography signaled a renewed focus on nationalist themes. This was made possible by the efforts of PCR leaders to distance Romania from the USSR and to mobilize elite and popular support for the party. In general, as in the case of all East-Central European countries, there was a return to the prewar focus on national history in Romania, with a bias for the ethnic majority. This ethnocentrism dismissed scholarly interest in the history of ethnic minorities as irrelevant even in extreme cases, such as mass deportations and massacres. It also resulted in continual avoidance of the topic of the Holocaust.

While Rollerism was denounced in the late fifties and while the historical discourse was re-nationalized in the sixties, the approach to the Holocaust remained the same, although fascism was re-interpreted. Roller's textbook was criticized for, among other complaints, proclaiming too radical a break with pre-communist historiography. Ideological guidelines issued in the late sixties required the integration of communism into the national history in order to illustrate that communism was the outcome of an organic evolution.[28] As a consequence, the problematic past was no longer entirely dismissed, but was selectively retrieved through discursive strategies that constituted a genuine "grammar of exculpation."[29] These transformations are seen best during the reign of Ceauşescu (1965-1989), when the communist regime fell back on a local version of national communism, which combined extreme nationalism and neostalinism.

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25. Gheorghe Onişoru, *România în anii 1944-1948. Transformări economice şi realităţi sociale* (Bucharest : Fundaţia Academia Civică, 1998), pp. 156-162.
26. Robert Levy, *Gloria şi decăderea Anei Pauker* (Iaşi : Polirom, 2002), pp. 168 ff and *passim*.
27. On the communist distortion of Romanian history in general, see Michael J. Rura, *Reinterpretation of History as a Method of Furthering Communism in Rumania* (Washington, D.C. : Georgetown University Press, 1961) ; Dionisie Ghermani, *Die kommunistische Umdeutung der rumänischen Geschichte unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Mittelalters* (Munich : R. Oldenbourg, 1967) ; Vlad Georgescu, *Politică şi istorie : cazul comuniştilor români 1944-1977* (Munich : Jon Dumitru, 1981) ; Al. Zub, *Orizont închis. Istoriografia română sub dictatură* (Iaşi : Institutul European, 2000).
28. Andi Mihalache, *Istorie şi practici discursive în România "democrat-populară"* (Bucharest : Albatros, 2003), pp. 110-111.
29. The term refers to the means employed in attempts to avoid coping with the difficulty of the past in postwar Germany. See Jeffrey K. Olick and Daniel Levy, "Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint : Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 62, no. 6 (December 1997), pp. 921-936.

In order to examine the main traits of the communist discourse on the recent past, a content analysis on a representative sample of authoritative information in the seventies and eighties has been carried out : two synthetical volumes on Romanian history ; the only books published during the communist regime on the Legion, the Antonescu dictatorship, and the Iaşi pogrom ; and several military histories on Romania's participation to the Second World War.[30]

This analysis shows :

a) Fascism is presented as being primarily an imported product ("alien to the Romanian people" and "organically rejected" by it), as devoid of popular support (fascism was not "the expression of a mass trend"). It is argued that fascism was "imposed from abroad" in spite of the "ever growing opposition of popular masses" to it, in an "unfavorable" international context, that it was "transplanted" into Romania by foreign imperialist circles and transformed at their pressure into an "out-post" supported by a local "retrograde minority."[31]
b) Romania is presented as a victim and found innocent of any wrongdoing or crimes. While highlighting the topic of "Western treason," which "left Romania alone," and "pushed Romania into the arms of Germany," the authors blame Nazi Germany exclusively or predominantly for Romanian political developments (e.g., Germany brought the Iron Guard and Antonescu to power and strictly controlled political, social, and economic life in Romania), for Romanian decisions (e.g., Germany made Romania enter "the adventure of the War" and forced it into implementing "terrorist policies") as well as for atrocities committed by Romanians.[32]
c) The Romanian population is absolved of any guilt. The authors argue that the establishment of the dictatorship, its decisions, and the Romanian atrocities were not the outcome of "mass will," as they stood in "blatant and irreconcilable opposition to the overwhelming majority of the Romanian people." The Romanian population could not formulate its opposition at the beginning, yet it gradually expressed its "unmitigated hatred" and "active opposition" to the dictatorship and its indignation in regard to

30. Miron Constantinescu, Constantin Daicoviciu and Ştefan Pascu, *Istoria României. Compendiu* (Bucharest : Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1969) ; Constantin C. Giurescu and Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri până astăzi* (Bucharest : Albatros, 1971) ; Mihai Fătu and Ion Spălăţelu, *Garda de Fier, organizaţie de tip fascist*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest : Editura Politică, 1980) ; Mihai Fătu, *Contribuţii la studierea regimului politic din România (septembrie 1940 – august 1944)* (Bucharest : Editura Politică, 1984) ; A. Kareţki and M. Covaci, *Zile însângerate la Iaşi (28-30 iunie 1941)*, pref. by Nicolae Minei (Bucharest : Editura Politică, 1978) ; *Marea conflagraţie a secolului XX* (Bucharest : Editura Politică, 1974) (henceforth : *Marea conflagraţie*) ; Gheorghe Zaharia and Ion Cupşa, *Participarea României la înfrângerea Germaniei naziste* (Bucharest : Editura Politică, 1985) ; *România în anii celui de-al doilea război mondial*, vol. I (Bucharest : Editura Militară, 1989) (henceforth : *România în război*) ; *Istoria militară a poporului român*, vol. VI (Bucharest : Editura Militară, 1989) (henceforth : *Istoria militară*).
31. Constantinescu *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 526 ff ; Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 37, *passim* ; Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 11, 14, 19, 27, 38, 86, 91 ; Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 33, 76, *passim* ; *Marea conflagraţie*, pp. 139 ff ; Zaharia and Cupşa, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 ff ; *România în război*, pp. 308 ff ; *Istoria militară*, pp. 367-376.
32. Constantinescu *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 522, 524, 528 ; Giurescu and Giurescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 652 ff ; Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 258, 288, *passim* ; Fătu, *op. cit.*, p. 86, *passim* ; Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, *passim* ; *Marea conflagraţie*, pp. 120, 150 ; Zaharia and Cupşa, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 ff. ; *România în război*, p. 308 and *passim* ; *Istoria militară*, pp. 363 ff.

"excesses" by building an "insurmountable wall of humanitarianism."[33] Even when these positions are difficult to uphold, as in the case of the Iaşi pogrom, where the Romanian army, police, and local population participated in the atrocity,[34] the authors find a means of evasion : the blame is either deflected on the German troops and thus externalized and extra-territorialized ; or, alternatively, the blame is diverted to the "periphery" : Romanian participation is said to have been limited to "a few isolated soldiers," deserters, "degenerate elements in the police force," Legionnaires and "inebriated civilians."[35]

d) Unlike in the fifties and sixties, the seventies and particularly the early eighties mark a qualitative separation of the Legionary and Antonescu regimes respectively, with a severe bias against the former. The Legionnaires are depicted through the usage of adjectives that evoke marginality and unrepresentativeness : "bandits," "hooligans," "robbers," "murderers," "terrorists," "traitors," "fifth column of Hitlerism." The authors insist that for the Legionnaires ideology was nothing but an "excuse" for their reprehensible deeds.[36] By contrast, Antonescu appears less bloodthirsty and irresponsible, although mention is made of some of the crimes committed under his command.[37] While the deeds of Legionnaires are depicted as being committed out of a gratuitous propensity to kill, the crimes committed during Antonescu's dictatorship are placed in the context of the state of emergency, which intimates that the *Conducător* had limited freedom of action and that his decisions were motivated by the war as well as domestic and international circumstances.[38]

e) Anti-Semitism is only seldom presented as an ingredient of fascism. For example, in the book on the Legion, anti-Semitism is mentioned last among a long list of other defining features of fascism ; it is listed only after anticommunism, hostility to democracy, irrationality, mysticism, anti-national character, hostility to the working class, the cult of death, anti-intellectualism, and the apology of war. Even when mention *is* made of anti-Semitism, the trait is depicted as being aimed at "concealing the real causes of the economic, social, and political crises of those years" and at "diverting the attention of the working class from its struggle against exploiters."[39] In

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33. Constantinescu *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 529 ff ; Giurescu and Giurescu, *op. cit.*, p. 658 ; Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 86, 130 ff ; Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 91, 112 ; Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 20, 71, 106 ff ; Zaharia and Cupşa, *op. cit.*, *passim* ; *România în război*, pp. 312, 316 ; *Istoria militară*, pp. 361, 372.
34. Jean Ancel, *Contribuţii la istoria României. Problema evreiască* (henceforth : Ancel, *Contribuţii*) (Bucharest : Hasefer, Yad Vashem, 2003), vol. 2, part 2, *1933-1944*, pp. 83-124.
35. Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 73, 75, 89, *passim*.
36. Constantinescu *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 527 ; Giurescu and Giurescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 650-653 ; Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, *passim* ; Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-57 ; Zaharia and Cupşa, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-50 ; *România în război*, pp. 309-314 ; *Istoria militară*, pp. 372-373.
37. See, for example, Giurescu who makes no mention whatever of the crimes of Antonescu's regims ; Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, pp. 275, 280 ; Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 313 etc. ; Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 73, *passim* ; Zaharia and Cupşa, *op. cit.*, pp. 51 ff ; *România în război*, p. 315 ; *Istoria militară*, p. 374 ff.
38. The following two examples are telling : "The institutional framework whithin which Antonescu exercised his dictatorship between January 1941 – August 1944 had been estabilished by the emergency legislation passed under wartime conditions..." (Zaharia and Cupşa, *op. cit.*, p. 51) ; "General Ion Antonescu took over the helm of power in circumstances of an extremely difficult internal and extrenal situation ; as most of his rule was exercised in a state of war, the legislation made use of was repressive, extremely harsh" (*România în război*, p. 370).
39. Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, p. 85 ; on p. 37, the authors emphasize that anti-Semitism is not an important trait of fascist movements.

the book on the Iaşi pogrom, the two authors claim that it is "simplistic" and "mystifying" to speak of "Romanian anti-Semitism" at all; then, in a sententious note, they conclude that "unlike in many parts of East-Central Europe, the Romanian land did not prove fertile to the poisoned seeds of hate."[40] On most occasions, even when mentioned anti-Semitism is not explained, but only inserted into an enumeration of other traits of fascism. Among the books surveyed, only one analyzes anti-Semitism as a form of racism and lists the anti-Semitic measures of that time. This volume also admits that anti-Semitism "became state policy as early as the times of Carol II."[41]

f) Just as they strive to diminish the importance of anti-Semitism in the fascist credo, the authors minimize Jewish suffering and narrow the scope of Jewish tragedy. For example, the *History of Romanians* mentions only the Legion's "pressures and brutalities against Jews."[42] After first referring to the fate of imprisoned or executed communists and antifascists, *The Compendium* notes: "To the series of murders committed during the Antonescu dictatorship one can add the pogrom organized in Iaşi, in which 2,000 people, most of them Jews, were murdered. Many other citizens of various nationalities, most of them Jews, were interned in labor camps [and threatened with] extermination through various means."[43] In *Iron Guard*, mention is made of a well-known and well-documented incident in January 1941, during which 200 Jews were locked in a Legionary headquarters in Bucharest during the Iron Guard's uprising, and ninety of them were later shot in the nearby Jilava forest. The two authors, historians Mihai Fătu and Ion Spălăţelu, cite Carp's *Black Book*, but in their version the 200 Jews are turned into "200 citizens." A few pages on, however, Fătu and Spălăţelu cite Carp correctly, mentioning the number of the pogrom's victims as 120.[44] The *Contributions* offers the most information about the regime's anti-Semitic policies and mentions the Transnistria deportations, which is rare. Still, the terminology employed for this purpose remains ambiguous and is inaccurate: "One of the forms of repression used against the Jewish population was the internment of the people regarded as 'dangerous to the security of the state,' which usually meant communists or antifascists, in concentration camps in Transnistria (Rybnitsa, Vapniarka, and others)."[45] In *Bloody Days*, the authors cite one of Ceauşescu's well-known references to the Iaşi pogrom: "Immediately after the beginning of the anti-Soviet war, a true pogrom was organized against antifascist forces, during which 2,000 people were killed in Iaşi."[46] The authors conclude that 3,233 Jews died during the pogrom, although the documents cited (to which the authors had privileged access at a time when such access was strictly supervised) indicate much higher figures.[47] In

40. Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.
41. Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 157 ff.
42. Giurescu and Giurescu, *op. cit.*, p. 653.
43. Constantinescu *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 527.
44. Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, pp. 337, 341.
45. Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 145, 157 ff, 161.
46. Nicolae Ceauşescu, *România pe drumul construirii societăţii socialiste multilateral dezvoltate* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975), vol. 11, p. 570; cited in Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 105, *passim*. Some communist party historians go as far as to admit a figure as high as 8,000 victims, albeit they do so only in publications targeting foreign readers. See Ion Popescu-Puţuri *et al.*, *La Roumanie pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale. Etude* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RPR, 1964), pp. 419-450; Gheorghe Zaharia, *Pages de la résistance antifasciste en Roumanie* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1974), p. 45.

the preface to the book, Nicolae Minei inserts a footnote on the Transnistria deportations, yet the purpose of the footnote is to distort reality and deflect guilt.[48] Finally, *The Participation of Romania in the Victory over Nazi Germany* offers information unavailable elsewhere in the volumes examined. First, the involvement of Romanian troops in atrocities committed on "territories where combat occurred" is acknowledged. It is furthermore stated that "Romanian gendarmerie units that participated in combat and some troops from the Second and Fourth Armies joined the acts of cruelty begun by the German Fourth Army, led by Colonel General Ritter von Schobert, as well as by SS troops." The volume also lists several "labor camps in Chişinău, Făleşti, Limbienii Noi and Bălţi, in which about 5,000 Jews were interned in early July 1941."[49] Mention is also made of 115,520 Jews "deported eastward," of which just 50,741 survived; the rest, it is stated, were murdered by the Nazis, by epidemic, by malnutrition, and by harsh work conditions. Finally, the authors acknowledge that nomadic Roma were subjected to the same measures.[50] In brief, although Gheorghe Zaharia and Ion Cupşa underestimate the number of victims and the depiction of events is inaccurate and distorted, this book is an exception to communist-era historiography.

Zaharia and Cupşa's example was not heeded by others. The three-volume study on Romania during the Second World War has only two paragraphs on the victims of the Antonescu regime, and even those provide meager information. The first paragraph argues that the PCR was the main target of repression by Antonescu's regime, that "numerous" communists were executed, and that other communists were "interned in camps, in order to isolate them from society." The other paragraph states only that Jews were subjected to "discriminating policies." When the third volume addresses Nazi concentration and extermination camps, Jews are not identified as their victims.[51] Neither does *The Military History of the Romanian People* do a better job. Readers would never learn from this volume that during the war Jews perished at the hand of the Antonescu regime. Its sixth volume mentions only "the policy of systematic reprisals against the Romanian Communist Party."[52] *The Great Conflagration* exacerbates this type of historic distortion. After enumerating the Nazi labor

48. "The deportations beyond the Dniester carried out by the Antonescu authorities were never motivated, explicitly or secretly, by the intent to exterminate those affected. That some would nevertheless perish was due to three main reasons: abuses committed by some representants of the authorities, who embezzled funds allocated for food purchasing; criminal excesses by degenerate elements belonging to the surveillance and supervision organs; the intervention of the Nazi *Einsatzkommando* assassins who, while withdrawing from the East, forced their way into the camps and exterminated the inmates." See Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, p. 25. It is worth noting that a Jewish historian, Nicolae Minei, was tasked with writing the preface and thereby legitimize the official version on those events.
49. In actual fact, in Chişinău there was a ghetto, while in Făleşti, Limbienii Noi and in Bălţi transit camps were set up ahead of the deportation to Transnistria. See Jean Ancel, *Contribuţii*, vol. 1, part 1, *1933-1944*; pp. 143-229; Radu Ioanid, *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1998), pp. 157-191.
50. Zaharia and Cupşa, *op. cit.*, p. 53 and *passim*. The authors do not source the information provided.
51. *România în război*, pp. 315; see also vol. 3, p. 528; vol. 3 includes two pages dealing with the "danger of revisionism," but the formulations used are ambiguous, and it does not clearly transpire from them that it is the Holocaust as subject of "revisionism" that the authors have in mind; see p. 532 and *passim*.
52. *Istoria militară*, p. 375.

camps, its authors claim that "in these camps there were communists and other antifascists, partisans and [French] Resistance fighters, Polish, French, Yugoslav, Dutch, Belgian and Soviet war prisoners, in all several millions of people. Their fate was sealed : exhausting labor, starvation, misery, filth, followed by the gas chamber and mass graves." Surprisingly, the volume mentions the Odessa massacre, which all other texts reviewed here avoid. Not even now, however, are the Jews depicted as its victims : "The Field Gendarmerie executed civilians. Romanian public opinion was outraged and rejected with disgust and with anger such criminal acts. This was also the mood of a majority among the Romanian military."[53]

g) The books analyzed insist on the differences between Nazi Germany and Antonescu's Romania as well as on the alleged Romanian exceptionalism in the implementation of the Final Solution. A section in *Contribution to the Study of the Romanian Political Regime* reads : "Historical reality has sanctioned the truth that insofar as Romania is concerned, the regime established in September 1940 did not elevate political violence to the same level of intensity as that encountered in Nazi Germany, Horthy's Hungary, or in other countries… After the January 1941 [Iron Guard] rebellion, physical violence and terror did not become the main practice and means of exercising state power ; the regime's primary instruments of rule were the dictatorial and military methods, as well as political, judicial, and economic repression stemming from, and determined by the fascist ideology." Mihai Fătu furthermore claims that "Antonescu was not prepared to follow the Nazi model of repression of the Jewish population" and deems the Marshal's policy toward that population to have been "a lot more moderate" than that of the Nazis.[54]

Herein apparently lies the key for understanding the terminological shift that would occur in the seventies, which turned Antonescu's "fascist dictatorship" (as his rule was designated in the first communist documents) into a "military-fascist" one. The authors here scrutinized strive to argue that the acts of repression by Antonescu's regime were not based on either an anti-Semitic ethos or on ethnocentric policies, which would have associated Romania with Nazi Germany ; instead, preference was given to presenting those acts as politically-motivated repressive measures or as measures imposed by military circumstances.[55] In the late eighties, the linguistic construct "military-fascist dictatorship" was in turn sidelined, as it suggested an involvement of the army in politics and its support of the dictatorship. Antonescu's regime would henceforth be labeled either a "personal dictatorship" or a "totalitarian regime," and military historians would insist on the fact that the Marshal took all decisions himself and responsibility for their outcome rests only on his shoulders.[56] Yet the effort to absolve the army of any responsibility is encountered not only among military historians.[57] As is well known, nationalist

53. *Marea conflagraţie*, p. 140 [in the captions under the photographs of camps reproduced on page 141, the Jews were replaced with "people"] ; for Odessa, see p. 167.
54. Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 18 ff, 42, 73, 157.
55. Constantinescu *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 526 ff ; Giurescu and Giurescu, *op. cit.*, p. 652 ff ; Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, pp. 275, 350, 353 ff ; Fătu, *op. cit.*, *passim* ; Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, p. 35 ; *Marea conflagraţie*, p. 122.
56. *România în război*, pp. 313 ff ; *Istoria militară*, pp. 361, 367, 374.
57. Fătu and Spălăţelu, *op. cit.*, *passim* ; Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 23 ff., 69 ff. ; Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 73, 75, 89 ; *Marea conflagraţie*, *passim*.

ideologies (and Ceauşescu's brand of national communism was one of them) perceive the army as being the epitome of statehood. Deflective and selective negationism are both reflected in the claim that is made to an alleged Romanian exceptionalism. According to the authors of *Romania during World War II* (a collective volume), "Romania was the only country in Nazi Germany's sphere of influence where the so-called Final Solution adopted by Hitler for exterminating the European population of the Mosaic rite was not implemented."[58] Similarly trenchant statements about Romanian exceptionalism can be found in *Bloody Days in Iaşi*, especially in the preface signed by Nicolae Minei, who makes the argument, "The Holocaust did not occur in Romania precisely because – with few and rather insignificant exceptions – the swastika-wearing executioners not only did not enjoy self-volunteered local cooperation, but also encountered outright refusal when they attempted – officially or otherwise – to recruit accomplices in the organization of deportations or other genocidal actions." Minei goes on to argue that "of all countries under Nazi occupation Romania distinguished itself as the only country that had no ghettos or extermination camps and [as the only country that] did not deport [Jews] to the ovens of Auschwitz or Majdanek, the only country that offered asylum to foreign Jews."[59] It is worth noting that Minei was the first in communist Romania to argue that during the war Romania did not exterminate Jews, but massively saved them.[60] Interestingly, this is precisely the argument made by representatives of the Antonescu regime in the postwar trials of criminals of war.

h) The quotations above demonstrate that terms such as "Holocaust," "Final Solution," or "genocide" are systematically avoided when reference is made to the fate of Jews under Romanian administration, but are perfectly in order when used to designate the actions of others. For example, according to *Contributions to the Study of Political Regimes*, "the exacerbation of violence by some fascist regimes, such as those in Germany and Hungary, up to the point of [the perpetration of the] Holocaust was an expression of their aggressive, expansionist and annexationist policies directed at other countries and peoples."[61] Similarly, the contributors to *Romania during the Second World War* write: "From the very outset of the Horthyist occupation [of Northern Transylvania], the measures taken by authorities bore the incontestable mark of a genuine ethnic genocide that had been prepared in detail in order to change the ethnic realities of the area." In the chapter where this quotation appears, the term "genocide" is used to describe the Horthyist policy toward the Romanian population.[62] One notices that Hungary is paid particular attention and is depicted as being associated with Nazi Germany's systematic policy of physical destruction of Jews; one also remarks that Hungary is presented as pursuing the same type of policies toward the ethnic Romanian population in occupied Transylvania. This is a specific trait of Romanian historiography under Ceauşescu: while atrocities perpetrated on Romanian territory or Romanian-administered lands are either ignored or minimized, the anti-Semitic policies of Horthy's Hungary are

58. *România în război*, p. 315.
59. Kareţki and Covaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 24 ff; see also p. 39, *passim.*
60. *Ibid.*, p. 20. "In order to fully comprehend what the salvation of a massive (some 350,000) population from an apparently ineluctable destruction really meant, one must take into consideration the context of the times and the Hitlerites' exterminatory obsessions."
61. Fătu, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
62. *România în război*, pp. 295-306; citation on p. 297.

thoroughly scrutinized. An emblematic example is *The Horthyist-Fascist Terror in North-Western Romania*, edited by Mihai Fătu and Mircea Muşat, which would also benefit from translation into English. The volume places side by side Hungary's participation in the Holocaust and the anti-Romanian policies of the Horthy regime.[63] Blatant as it might seem, this discrepancy in treatment may be explained by the anti-Hungarian nationalist policies practiced by the Ceauşescu regime, particularly during the eighties. A considerable number of history journals from those years[64] as well as the official media were mobilized to take part in the "image war" against the neighboring country. The Chief Rabbi of Romania, Moses Rosen, became involved in the campaign, the more so as his anti-Hungarian resentments were perfectly in line with the regime's policies on this particular issue.[65] The same anti-Hungarian policies of the regime help explain the special status enjoyed at that time by Oliver Lustig, a Holocaust survivor from Hungarian-occupied Transylvania, who is allowed to publish several books on the Nazi extermination policies because they also contain anti-Hungarian undertones.[66] Taking advantage of their special status with the regime, Moses Rosen and Oliver Lustig on several occasions managed to mention publicly or in print atrocities committed against the Jews under the Romanian administration, yet the impact of their gesture was limited.[67]

Several conclusions can be drawn from this content analysis. First, given that the contributions reviewed were made by different authors living in different time periods, it is striking how uniformly distorted were the discussions on the Holocaust, on fascism, and, in general, on the events that occurred during World War II. This is evidence that historiography was, on one hand, strictly controlled and, on the other hand, it respected PCR-issued ideological blueprints.[68] Besides, all the historians authorized to write on such sensitive topics as the Holocaust were well positioned in the PCR as affiliated

63. Mihai Fătu and Mircea Muşat (eds.), *Teroarea horthysto-fascistă în nord-vestul României (septembrie 1940 – octombrie 1944)* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1985), and *Horthyst-Fascist Terror in Northwestern Romania. September 1940 – October 1944* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1986).
64. Remarkable among them is the popularized history journal *Magazin istoric*, launched in 1967 with support from the Institute for Historical and Social and Historical Studies affiliated to the PCR's Central Committee. This institute replaced the former Institute of [Communist] Party History.
65. See, for example, *Remember. 40 de ani de la masacrarea evreilor din Ardealul de Nord sub ocupaţia horthystă* (Bucharest: Federaţia Comunităţilor Evreieşti din România, 1985).
66. For example, Oliver Lustig, *Jurnal însângerat* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1987), translated into English as *Blood-Bespotted Diary* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1988).
67. As of June 1986, Moses Rosen received permission to commemorate the Iaşi pogrom within the Federation of Romanian Jewish Communities (FCER). However, information on the commemorations would be allowed to appear in print only in the FCER publication *Revista cultului mozaic*, whose distribution in Romania itself was very small, but which benefited from a large distribution abroad. The publication had English and Hebrew summaries, thus managing to create outside Romania a cosmeticized image of how the Holocaust was being treated under Ceauşescu's regime. Oliver Lustig managed to slip into an article published in 1986 one of the rare references to Antonescu's responsibility for "the death of between 70,000-80,000 Jews in Transnistria," but the article in which he did that could easily be considered as belonging to the category of selective negationism. See "Excepţie?... Da, a fost o excepţie," *România literară*, November 7, 1986.
68. Compare Nicolae Ceauşescu, *Istoria poporului român. Texte selectate* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1988), pp. 337-608; *Împotriva fascismului. Sesiunea ştiinţifică privind analiza critică şi demascarea fascismului în România, Bucureşti, 4-5 martie, 1971* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1971); *Comitetul antifascist român* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1985) etc.

researchers of the PCR Institute of Historical and Socio-Political Studies or of the Center for Research on Military History and Theory headed by the president's brother, Ilie Ceauşescu.

Second, it is obvious from these texts that the ideological message prevails over science and that the historiography on the Second World War is fully mobilized in the service of Romania's self-victimization, self-lionization, or acquittal of guilt. As a consequence, it is not surprising that the undertones of historical discourse changed with shifts in the regime's profile : as the eighties progressed and official nationalism and the cult of personality became more strident, historiography became even more nationalist and selective.[69]

Third, the way fascism was approached continued to be heavily influenced by Dimitrov's definition of the phenomenon. Romanian historians would distance themselves from Dimitrov only when necessary to embellish Romanian history even further.[70] They did not perceive anti-Semitism as crucial for the characterization of fascism or as relevant to Romanian political culture. Subsequently, the Jews are not perceived as the main victims of Nazi-like murderous policies. The volumes scrutinized reveal a clear intention to distort the specificity of the Holocaust by positing that communists and ethnic Romanians in general were its main victims. This pattern is contemporaneous with the revival of anti-Semitism – a development tolerated by Ceauşescu – in the works of various "court writers" who, after 1989, would become leading figures of postcommunist Romanian negationism.[71] In general, the policy of communist Romania vis-à-vis its Jewish citizens was extremely ambiguous, as communist Romania offered, in the words of B. Wasserstein, "one of the most paradoxical blends of tolerance and repression in Eastern Europe."[72] Unlike all other communist bloc countries, Romania entertained good relations with Israel. This policy was generally motivated by considerations of foreign policy as well as by the economic benefits of Jewish migration to Israel. Ceauşescu's concern for his image abroad meant that anti-Semitism was formally repudiated and the Jewish community was granted a certain degree of autonomy.[73] The same considerations prompted the signing of an agreement on cooperation (involving the exchange of documents and holding joint symposia) between PCR historians and Yad Vashem historians in the eighties. Yet powerful ideological constraints prevented Romanian historians from taking advantage of the agreement, and its impact on Holocaust research in Romania was minimal.[74] Foreign policy considerations again, explain why a few studies admitting in low-voice that Antonescu's regime was responsible for some atrocities against Jews were

69. Vlad Georgescu, "Politics, History and Nationalism : The Origins of Romania's Socialist Personality Cult," in Joseph Held (ed.), *The Cult of Power. Dictatorship in the Twentieth Century* (Boulder : East European Monographs, 1983), pp. 129-142 ; Michael Shafir, *Romania : Politics, Economics and Society. Political Stagnation and Simulated Change* (London : Frances Pinter, 1985).
70. For example, see Fătu, *op. cit.*, pp. 15 ff.
71. Michael Shafir, "The Men of the Archangel Revisited : Anti-Semitic Formations among Communist Romania's Intellectuals," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, vol. 16, no. 3 (Fall 1983), pp. 223-243.
72. B. Wasserstein, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
73. Dennis Deletant, *Ceauşescu şi Securitatea. Constrângere şi disidenţă în România anilor 1965-1989* (Bucharest : Humanitas, 1998), pp. 200-205.
74. Victor Eskenasy, *op. cit.*, pp. 187, 191.

presented by Romanian historians at international colloquia abroad and in languages of international circulation. But it is just as relevant that these studies were never published at home, in Romanian translation.[75]

Fourth, a distinction was gradually introduced between the National Legionary State and the Antonescu dictatorship as part of a quasi-official strategy to discreetly rehabilitate Marshal Antonescu. The marks of this strategy emerged in the seventies and become more obvious in the eighties.[76] There were several identifiable reasons for the emergence of this strategy : the immersion of PCR-affiliated historians in the exoneration of the Romanian state and society of involvement in anti-Semitic atrocities ; the concern of military historians to absolve the Romanian army and its command responsibility for wartime involvement in crimes ; and the romanticizing of Antonescu by some writers who were gravitating around the party leadership.[77] Also important was the role of Iosif Constantin Drăgan, a former Iron Guard sympathizer, who became a millionaire in the West and later a *persona grata* with Romania's dictator. Having metamorphosed into Antonescu's most fierce advocate, Drăgan contributed to the campaign waged abroad by the regime to rehabilitate the Marshal and recruited domestic and foreign historians into the rehabilitation drive. Among them were Mihai Pelin, Gheorghe Buzatu, and Larry Watts. Four volumes of documents portraying Antonescu positively were published in the West under Drăgan's supervision, at a publishing house he owned in Italy.[78] Before 1989 and long after, these documents were inaccessible to the great majority of Romanian researchers, but Drăgan obtained them due to his excellent rapport with the regime in general, and with Mircea Muşat and Ion Ardeleanu, censors of the history department of the PCR's Central Committee in particular.[79] Fifth, it is evident that all the authors discussed in this section strived to minimize the scope of atrocities committed on Romanian territory or in the territories administered by the Romanian government and to deny Romanian participation in the Holocaust. Most postcommunist Romanian negationism has roots in communist-era historiography on the Holocaust. The victimization and lionization of Romanians, their substitution of Jews in the posture of main victims of Nazism, the deflection of responsibility, the minimization of the real scope of atrocities, self-flattering exceptionalism, the rehabilitation of Antonescu as well as many other manifestations were to reproduce themselves in various forms in postcommunist negationism.

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75. *Ibid.*, *passim*.
76. Randolph L. Braham, *Romanian Nationalists and the Holocaust : The Political Exploitation of Unfounded Rescue Accounts* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 49 ff ; Victor Eskenasy, *op. cit.*, pp. 184 ff. ; Dennis Deletant, *op. cit.*, pp. 185 ff. ; Liviu Rotman, *op. cit.*, pp. 209 ff.
77. For example, Marin Preda, *Delirul* (Bucharest : Editura Cartea românească, 1975).
78. Iosif Constantin Drăgan (ed.), *Antonescu. Mareşalul României şi războaiele de reîntregire*, vols. 1-4 (Venice : Nagard, 1986-1990).
79. Victor Eskenasy, "Istoriografii şi istoricii pro şi contra mitului Antonescu" (henceforth : Eskenasky, "Istoriografii şi istoricii"), in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *Exterminarea evreilor români şi ucraineni în perioada antonesciană*, (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2002), pp. 313-346 ; Michael Shafir, "Reabilitarea postcomunistă a mareşalului Ion Antonescu : *Cui bono ?* " (henceforth : Shafir, "Reabilitarea postcomunistă a mareşalului Antonescu"), in Braham (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 400-465.

Holocaust Denial in the Postcommunist Public Discourse: Examples

In postcommunist Romania, Holocaust denial has been a diffuse phenomenon, which has manifested itself in politics, in academia, and in the mass media. The Greater Romania Party (*Partidul România Mare* – PRM) and its affiliated publications have yielded the most consistent "database" of negationist statements and actions during the past 15 years of transition. Yet, Holocaust denial is not the exclusive monopoly of anti-democratic Romanian extremists. Individuals, groups, and organizations with centrist and democratic credentials have also contributed to this phenomenon. It is emblematic that ideological differences among parties suddenly vanish when reference is made to Marshal Ion Antonescu.

In 1991 the Romanian Parliament observed a minute of silence to commemorate forty-five years since the execution of Marshal Antonescu. On the initiative of Petre Ţurlea, a member of the National Salvation Front, the government party of those years, legislators bowed their heads in memory of Antonescu's "service" to his country.[80] Eight years on, when the parliamentary majority in the legislature had changed, National Peasant Party Christian Democratic (*Partidul Naţional-Ţărănesc Creştin şi Democrat* – PNŢCD) Senator Ioan Moisin submitted to the upper house a draft resolution in which Antonescu was described as a "great Romanian patriot who fought for his country until death." According to Moisin, Antonescu did not participate in the Holocaust and, furthermore, he had "saved the lives of millions of Jews when he refused to carry out Hitler's order to deport them to Germany."[81] This time around, the resolution was, however, rejected. Yet, during the 1996-2000 coalition of the CDR (which included the PNŢCD and the PNL) with the USD and the UDMR, Attorney General (*Procurorul General*) Sorin Moisescu filed an extraordinary appeal (*recurs în anulare*), against sentences passed after the Second World War on six members of the Antonescu government found guilty of crimes against peace.[82] Eventually, Moisescu withdrew the appeal and the controversial procedure, which allowed the Attorney General to appeal sentences even after judicial procedure had been exhausted, has been since rescinded.

Nor is this admiration for the Marshal confined to politicians. In the nineties the mainstream daily *România liberă* published an op-ed entitled "Tear for a National Hero;" the authors, Ion Pavelescu and Adrian Pandea, were gratified that, "after forty-four years, history finally allows Romanians to shed a tear and light a candle for Ion Antonescu."[83] In turn, the popular daily *Ziua* launched a campaign in 1995 to name one of Bucharest's main boulevards after Ion Antonescu, claiming that Antonescu was "no Hitler, Mussolini, or Horthy. He did not kill Jews but saved Jews."[84]

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80. *Monitorul Oficial al României*, no. 132, May 31, 1991; Michael Shafir, "Marschall Ion Antonescu: Politik der Rehabilitierung," *Europaische Rundschau*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1994), 55-71, reference at page 59; William Totok, *Der Revisionistische Diskurs* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2000), p. 91.
81. Mediafax, June 14, 1999.
82. Michael Shafir, "Reabilitarea postcomunistă a mareşalului Ion Antonescu," pp. 410-413; Braham, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
83. *România liberă,* June 22, 1990.
84. *Ziua*, August 12, 1995.

The dismantling and/or restructuring of communist-era research institutions – the PCR CC's Institute of Historical and Socio-Political Studies, the Center for Research on Military History and Theory, or the Social and Political Sciences Academy – did not lead to the disappearance of the negationist discourse practiced under their aegis during the dictatorship. On the contrary, former PCR-affiliated historians established new networks based on informal relationships in politics, the press, or civil society that provided new forums for expressing old ideas. Gheorghe Buzatu, for example, became the head of the Iaşi-based Center for History and European Civilization with the Romanian Academy (*Academia Română*), where he and others would publish several pro-Antonescu and anti-Semitic tomes. In 2000, Buzatu was elected senator for the Greater Romania Party, where he joined former PCR colleagues : communist-era military historians, nationalist writers, PCR activists, members of the communist secret police, the *Securitate* and others who shared sympathy for Antonescu and the anti-Semitic imagery. (After 1989, many of these people joined the PRM. For example, the former communist-era censor of historical research, Mircea Muşat, was PRM deputy-chairman until his death in 1994.)

Buzatu also joined the Marshal Ion Antonescu Foundation, set up in 1990 by Corneliu Vadim Tudor and Iosif Constantin Drăgan, as was a Marshal Ion Antonescu League. The two bodies merged in September 2001, but the new organization was eventually renamed League of Marshals ; the change came in the wake of Emergency Ordinance no. 31/2002, which prohibits the cult of personalities found guilty of war crimes and of crimes against mankind. Eventually, Buzatu would take over the league's chair from Drăgan. League members included numerous negationists, such as Radu Theodoru and Ilie Neacşu, who at that time was chief editor of the anti-Semitic review *Europa*. Numerous negationists with roots in the communist past would contribute articles to *Europa* and/or the C.V. Tudor-owned *România Mare*. Among them one found Maria Covaci and Aurel Kareţki, the authors of the book on the Iaşi pogrom discussed earlier in this chapter. Many other examples could be provided, and all lead to the same conclusion : after 1989, historians and nationalist activists educated by the communist regime maintained some degree of solidarity. Above all, they kept alive and even enhanced the pro-Antonescu negationist political discourse.

Paradoxically, one of the side-effects of the year 1989 might be called the "democratization" of negationism. Beyond the hard-core nucleus just discussed, numerous other voices advocate negationism in one way or another, groups are taking positions in defense of its propagation and publications disseminate negationist views. This is a heterogenous world and motivations are just as varied, ranging from nationalism, xenophobia, a penchant for conspiracy theories and authoritarianism, antidemocratic inclinations, ignorance, nostalgia, fascination with interwar intellectuals affiliated with the radical right to the anticommunist version of anti-Semitism. The sociological profiles of Romanian negationists are even more varied and complex. For this reason, this chapter will discuss categories of negationist discourse as an analytical starting point, rather than proceeding from groups or individuals. What follows are but a few examples from among a huge amount of negationist manifestations.

A. *Integral Negationism*

Ten years ahead of his 2004 "conversion to philosemitism," PRM leader Corneliu Vadim Tudor wrote that recently he had "learned that English and American scholars[85] are contesting the Holocaust itself, providing documentation and logical arguments proving that the Germans could not gas six million Jews, this being technically and physically an impossibility." The Holocaust, he added, was nothing but "a Zionist scheme aimed at squeezing out from Germany about 100 billion Deutschmarks and to terrorize for more than 40 years all those who do not acquiesce to the Jewish yoke."[86]

In Romania, no author embraced more eagerly and more fully the negationist argument than Radu Theodoru. A former air force pilot, he became a founding member of the PRM and a deputy chairman of that party, yet after a conflict with Tudor, Theodoru was expelled from the party. In 1995 Theodoru published an article in *Europa*, in which he bluntly stated: "I am a supporter of the revisionist historical school led by the French scientist, R. Faurisson." Faurisson, he added, was "the victim of disgusting moral and physical pressure for the simple fact that he doubted the existence of gas chambers."[87] He went on to list Western negationists, starting with Leuchter and ending with Leon Degrelle, leader of the Belgian fascist movement, on whose infamous "open letter" to Pope John Paul II Theodoru insisted at length.[88] Degrelle, Theodoru wrote, had produced two "comparative columns" that demonstrate that the "real genocide was that committed by the British-American bombings, by the two American A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, by the mass assassinations in Hamburg and Dresden" and not at Auschwitz, "which is used by Zionist propaganda to squeeze out of defeated Germany fabulous amounts of money." It was "Zionist propaganda" that had "imposed on [international] public opinion the fabulous number of six million assassinated Jews." The "revisionist school," however, "demonstrates," according to Theodoru, that the number of victims packed into a gas chamber could not have physically fit to reach the number of gassed victims attributed to the Nazis. This, as is well known, is one of French negationist Robert Faurisson's main claims. The "revisionist school" Theodoru wrote, is nothing short of "an A-bomb thrown by conscientious historians on the propagandistic construct put in place by the craftsmen of the Alliance Israélite Universelle" for, "having demonstrated that at Auschwitz and the other camps no genocide by gassing had occurred, [they implicitly] pose the problem of revising the Nuremberg trials." In turn, that revision calls for "revising the trial of Third *Reich* Germany" as a whole and hence questions "'the tribute' paid by postwar Germany to Israel and world Jewish organizations – from pensions to all sorts of subventions."[89] The article in *Europa* was said to be the first in

85. In order to boost credibility, the negationists often refer to "demonstrations" by "scholars," "scientists" and "authoritative specialists" who either remain anonymous or prove at the end of the day to have acquired notoriety precisely because of their negationist postures. Often enough, the negationists parade scientific rigor by making use of footnotes, bibliographies, documentary annexes, indexes, citations from documents or from the works of established historians.
86. *România Mare*, March 4, 1994.
87. *Europa*, a weekly launched in May 1991 is no longer in print.
88. Lipstadt, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
89. Radu Theodoru, "Lumea, România şi evreii," *Europa*, no. 189, May 3-17, pp. 1, 11.

a serialized new book by Theodoru, whose title was announced as *Romania, the World and the Jews*. The book itself was published in 1997, but under the title *Romania as Booty*, and it apparently sold well enough for a second, enlarged version, to be brought out by a different publisher in 2000, with the article in *Europa* serving as the volume's introduction.[90]

Theordoru's steadfastness in emulating Western negationist models was once again displayed in his 2000 volume, *Nazismul sionist*, whose title is inspired from the work of French negationist Roger Garaudy. In this tome, he claimed that the Holocaust has been turned into "the most lucrative Jewish business ever," becoming a business that has "enriched the so-called witnesses, who fabricated series of aberrant exaggerations and pathological descriptions of life in Nazi camps." The managers of that "business" had "introduced the Holocaust in school curricula, PhDs are being written on the subject, writers engaged in fiction on the topic make a nice profit from it," and "so-called documentary movies such as [Claude Lanzmann's] *Shoah* – in fact nothing but subtle or gross mystification" are constantly produced, alongside the holding of "so-called scientific conferences" and articles in the mass media. The combination managed to "set in place a complex system of misinformation, of brain-washing, of psychological pressure" and "succeeded in imposing forgery as an emotional reality." Theodoru exhorted the reader to display "human dignity" and adopt the ideas of "*historical revisionism*" and the positions of its advocates, who became the "target of Zionist Nazism," a movement that "uses physical and legal terror, press lynching, attacks, social isolation and economic persecution against them." According to Theodoru, the importance of the revisionist approach resides in its capacity to "analyze the entire Nuremberg trial and evidence ; it was a trial of revenge staged by winners against losers." Theodoru's own characterization of the Nuremberg trials was : "a trial organized by Zionist Nazism against German Zionism, more specifically a trial staged by Judaic Nazism against Aryan Nazism. Nothing but a scuffle among racists."[91]

B. *Deflective Negationism*

This category of Holocaust denial is widespread, both in statements made by politicians after the demise of communism and in history books. As early as 1990, former National Liberal Party (Partidul Naţional Liberal – PNL) Chairman Radu Câmpeanu called for Antonescu's rehabilitation, describing the Marshal as "a great Romanian." In support of his appeal, Câmpeanu shifted the blame for the atrocities committed during the Holocaust on Germany and Hungary. He claimed that during the war Romania had been a Nazi-occupied country for all practical purposes. Nonetheless, he said, nowhere else in the Nazi sphere of influence had there been fewer crimes against Jews than in Romania. At most, one could count 60,000 victims, but by no means were there between 300,000-400,000 victims in Romanian--administered territories. The only Romanian province where it would be justified to speak of a Holocaust was Hungarian-occupied Northern Transylvania, from where Jews were

90. *Idem*, *România ca o pradă* (henceforth : Theodoru, *România ca o pradă*) (Oradea : Alma, 1997, and Bucharest : Miracol, 2000).

91. *Idem*, *Nazismul sionist* (henceforth : Theodoru, *Nazismul sionist*) (Bucharest : Miracol, 2000), pp. 23-24. Author's emphasis.

deported by the Horthy authorities. As for Antonescu's role, he tried and was partially successful in defending Romania's Jewish community, he said.[92]

One should note that Antonescu's transmogrification into a defender of Romanian Jewry is also shared by the selective negationists.[93] Magnate Iosif Constantin Drăgan, who is the main financer of Antonescu's selective negationist cult, was claiming in 1993 that a statue in Antonescu's memory had been erected in Haifa to honor the "protector and savior of Romanian Jews, of whom nearly 500,000 live happily in Israel."[94] In his memoirs, Drăgan claimed that forced labor was a means designed by Antonescu:

> …in order for the Jews to be better protected and to place them under the shield of the military code and military legislation." Driven by this noble purpose, "Marshal Antonescu decreed the mobilization of all Jews in Romania for civil duties put *on par with military ones*, in the service of the motherland, which was in war. Thus, over 500,000 Jews were saved (according to official statistics, but in actual fact maybe as many as 700,000) of which 400,000 contributed to the establishment of today's State of Israel and making up a quarter of their country's current population… I am told that in Israel, in Tel Aviv, a street has been called after Marshal Antonescu. However, historical justice is yet to produce the names and the confession of those who wore [Romanian] military uniforms in the firing squad that shot the Marshal [author's emphasis].[95]

Prominent members of the Ceauşescu historians' corps continued to display their deflective interpretations after the change of regime. In 1991, at the time of the commemoration marking fifty years since the Iaşi pogrom, Maria Covaci wrote in *Europa* that the massacre had been "perpetrated by the Hitlerite troops." As for those who perished in the Transnistria camps, the blame for their death should be placed on the war itself, epidemics, and (again) on the Hitlerite troops. One thing was clear for Covaci: the Romanian army had "perpetrated no massacres or pogroms."[96] The pogrom's anniversary was a good opportunity for Aurel Kareţki (joint author with Covaci of the controversial *Bloody Days in Iaşi*) to sing the praise of the solidarity with Jews said to have been displayed by the entire Romanian people.[97] In a volume published in 1992, Mircea Muşat dubbed the Iaşi massacre a "Hitlerite-Legionary pogrom."[98]

Attempts to deflect the guilt for the Holocaust on the Jews are not missing from Romanian negationism. Before his "conversion" to philosemitism, Corneliu Vadim Tudor was unhesitatingly employing deicidal arguments. In 1996, he was convinced that he was chosen to fulfill a messianic task: "Gracious God has a plan with me, namely, to remind them [the Jews] that they cannot infinitely crucify Jesus." One year later, Tudor was confessing to "love Jesus Christ so dearly as to be unable not to think every day of who had mocked Him, who spat on Him, who stoned Him, who placed

92. Interview with William Totok, November 2, 1990. Fragments of the interview were broadcast on Totok's radio show, "Rumäne erwache! Nationalistische Tendenzen im postkommunistischen Rumänien," RIAS-Berlin, February 5, 1991.
93. See Shafir, *Între negare şi trivializare*, pp. 72, 110.
94. *România Mare*, January 7, 1994.
95. Iosif Constantin Drăgan, *Europa Phoenix* (vol. 3 in a 4-volume memoir whose joint title is *Through Europe*) (Bucharest: Europa Nova, 1977), pp. 562-563.
96. Maria Covaci, "Un adevăr restituit istoriei," *Europa*, no. 34, July 1991.
97. A. Kareţki, "A existat un întreg popor solidar cu suferinţa evreilor," *Europa*, no. 26, July 1991.
98. *1940. Drama României Mari* (Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei România Mare, 1992), p. 217.

Him on the cross and who nailed Him. The Jews did it. The Jews of 2000 years ago and the Jews of all times."[99]

Conspiracy theories, which are widespread in Romania,[100] apply to the treatment of the Holocaust, too. In the eyes of Theodoru, Hitler was nothing but a puppet in Jewish hands to scare Jews into running to Palestine,[101] while in the respectable Writers' Union weekly *România literară*, writer Ion Buduca was claiming in April 1998 that anti-Semitism was a Zionist ploy to advance the purpose of Jewish emigration.[102] In a tract published one year later, Buduca switched to the defensive argument, insinuating that the Jews had forced Hitler into self-defense. They were not only "historically guilty" for Germany's defeat in World War I, but also of having started a war on Hitler in 1934, by declaring a boycott of Nazi German goods.[103]

The same defensive argument abounds in negationist literature. As early as 1993, *Europa* editor-in-chief Ilie Neacşu (who would eventually become a PRM parliamentarian), was writing: "Hitler did not butcher Jews from the Valley of Jordan, but from his own courtyard in Berlin, where after World War I Judas's descendants had become masters over German economy, culture, and politics."[104] To this category also belongs the argument developed by journalist Vladimir Alexe. In a 2002 article published (by coincidence or not) on Hitler's birthday – April 20 – in the "Ultra-secret Files" supplement of the daily *Ziua*, Alexe purports to not only bring "evidence" that international Jewry had declared war on Hitler, but also that the famous *Kristallnacht* was nothing but a provocation engineered by world Jewry. Its purposes are alleged to have been twofold: to provoke mass emigration from Germany to Palestine and to obstruct British plans for dividing Palestine between Jews and Arabs.

While some negationists are ready to admit that repressive measures were applied against Jews "of necessity," they go out of the way to emphasize that these were little other than punitive reactions to the lack of loyalty displayed by Jews toward Romania. The main argument rests on the large-scale support allegedly rendered by Jews to the Soviet occupation forces in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in 1940 and on the alleged Jewish participation not only in humiliating or torturing the retreating Romanian army, but in the physical liquidation of Romanian military personnel. Viewed from this perspective, the June 1940 Dorohoi and Galaţi pogroms, the pogrom in Iaşi, the atrocities committed in Transnistria (whenever they are acknowledged, even in minimalist terms) can all be explained in terms of self-defense and/or spontaneous revenge on the Jews for their deeds in 1940.

This reactive argument has several versions. In some, Jewish guilt is total; in others it is only partial, yet amplified by what the argument's proponents call the "complex" and "tense" circumstances specific to the war. This second scenario would have the responsibility for atrocities remain indeterminate by switching the focus from the

99. *România Mare*, no. 302, 1996, and no. 356, 1997, cited in Andrei Oişteanu, *Imaginea evreului în cultura română. Studiu de imagologie în context est-central european*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2004), pp. 366-367.
100. George Voicu, *Zeii cei răi. Cultura conspiraţiei în România postcomunistă* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2000).
101. Theodoru, *România ca o pradă*, p. 9.
102. Ioan Buduca, "Care-i buba?," *România literară*, no. 15, April 22-28, 1998.
103. *Idem*, "Viţelul de aur," *Contemporanul – Ideea europeană*, no. 37, September 30, 1999.
104. Ilie Neacşu, "Rabinul suferă de hemoroizi," *Europa*, April 6-13, 1999.

regime's own criminal project to the unfortunate general context of the war. Typical of this scenario is the work of Alex Mihai Stoenescu, an employee of the Defense Ministry's public relations department. In his book *Armata, mareşalul şi evreii* despite minimizing the scope of the Iaşi massacre, Stoenescu unequivocally deplores the fact that people lost their lives. But instead of pointing out the planned nature of the atrocities, he argues that the deaths of thousands of civilians in the death trains were the outcome of negligence rather than a consequence of deliberate action. He claims that the Jews crammed into cattle cars were suspected of being communists, and the process of selection occurred in a "tense" atmosphere that led to the death of so many innocent people. He concludes that this was not the first time in history that "hundreds or even thousands of innocents" had paid for the deeds of "a handful of [Jewish communist] culprits."[105]

A similar argument was propounded by Adrian Păunescu, one of the authors of the cult of Ceauşescu turned post-communist politician (Păunescu was a senator for the Romanian Labor Party and then for the Romanian Social-Democratic Party). In an article published in 1994, he argued that "none of the Romanians who fought for the restoration of the Nation's unity (starting from Marshal Antonescu down to the last soldier) has acted in the blood-stained manner in which wars force people to act against enemies because they were acting against Jews. The only – and fearsome – rationale for the terrible crimes in Bessarabia was to administer punishment to the Bolsheviks… Romania did not kill Jews [just] because they were Jews."[106]

Jewish guilt for the war and its outcome is prominent in the works of historian Gheorghe Buzatu. His views on the Holocaust and his admiration of Antonescu were on record long before 1995, when Buzatu published a booklet at the Iron Guardist Majadahonda publishing house. In a noticeable performance, Buzatu's booklet reverses the perspective : rather than being a perpetrator of the Holocaust, Romania had been its victim. This time around, the discourse is no longer on Romania as a victim of Nazi Germany, as used to be the case in communist historiography. Romania underwent a Holocaust at the hand of the Jews, and the year 1940 marked its beginning.[107]

The booklet would eventually make it as a separate chapter in a 1996 volume based on research Buzatu conducted in Soviet archives. Although this tome purports to deal with Romanians in the Kremlin's archives, most of its "heroes" were either Jews or had Jewish spouses, and all served Soviet power, becoming prominent leaders in post-World War II Romania.[108] In its book version, the brochure underwent significant changes. For example, it is no longer stated that the Jewish attacks on the Romanian army in summer 1940 "*undoubtedly influenced*" Antonescu's "*ulterior behavior vis-à-vis the Jewish problem*."[109] Implicitly, in 1995 Buzatu was acknowledging that Antonescu had ordered in 1941 that Jews be deported from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to Transnistria. This is now vanishing. But Buzatu keeps in the quotation that shows Antonescu as stating on

105. Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Armata, mareşalul şi evreii* (Bucharest : RAO, 1998), p. 280.
106. Adrian Păunescu, "Nici jidani, nici profitori," *Totuşi iubirea*, no. 184, April 7-14, 1994.
107. See Gheorghe Buzatu, *Aşa a început Holocaustul împotriva poporului român* (henceforth : Buzatu, *Aşa a început Holocaustul*) (Bucharest : Majadahonda, 1995).
108. *Idem*, *Românii în arhivele Kremlinului* (henceforth : Buzatu, *Românii în arhivele Kremlinului*) (Bucharest : Univers Enciclopedic, 1996).
109. *Idem*, *Aşa a început Holocaustul*, p. 40. Author's emphasis.

October 19, 1941, that the crimes perpetrated in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in 1940 against the Romanian army had been "essentially of Jewish inspiration and execution."[110] Buzatu himself referred to those events as "a [Jewish] crime against the Romanian people." More important, in both versions one finds the assertion that July 1940 is the date marking "*the Holocaust [directed] against the Romanian people during the 1939-1945 World War II and later on* [author's emphasis]."[111]

The last form of deflective negation – and by far the most insulting to the memory – casts the Jews in the role of perpetrators of the Holocaust. Ion Coja, a Bucharest University philology professor whose sinuous political career took him from one political party to another, was a candidate for the position of Bucharest mayor in the local elections of 2004. The main point on his electoral platform was the rehabilitation of Marshal Antonescu. In 1996 he was close to being designated a candidate for Romania's presidency. In an "open letter" addressed to the late president of the FCER, the late professor Nicolae Cajal, Coja wrote in February 1997 that the January 1941 Bucharest pogrom had never taken place. Its 120 victims, some of whom were hanged on hooks at the slaughter house with the inscription "Kosher meat" on them were all an invention – the best proof being that when the communists took power nobody had been put on trial, although so many Jews were then in the party leadership. Jews may have died during the January uprising against Antonescu, Coja claimed in another letter to Cajal, but nobody has ever proved that the Iron Guard committed the crimes.[112] The Iron Guard did not commit the assassination of historian Nicolae Iorga either, Coja would claim in a book published in 1999. That assassination was part of a plot ordered by the KGB, which had infiltrated the movement. And – Coja is heavily hinting in the book – it is a well-kept secret that the KGB was in the hands of the "occult." The same "occult" would eventually order the assassination of Nicolae Ceauşescu, as indeed it would commission the liquidation of Romanian-born scholar Ioan Petru Culianu in the United States in May 1991 – knowing that the scholar had discovered the secrets of its world domination.[113] By September 2003, building on another absurdity published by journalist Vladimir Alexe the same month (in the daily *România liberă*[114]) claimed that before the 1941 Bucharest pogrom Antonescu had sealed a secret pact with the underground Communist Party, Coja would conclude that the Jewish victims of the pogrom had been liquidated by their own co-religionists (dressed in the green shirts of the Legionnaires) who were communists serving the Soviet interest: to compromise the Iron Guard and end its partnership with Antonescu.[115] Just a few months later, however, Coja turned the tables once again on his never-ending tales, now claiming to be in the possession of a notarized testimony of a nonagenarian witness to the events, according to whom the bodies hanged at the slaughter house were of Iron Guardists massacred by Jews.[116]

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110. *Ibid.* and Buzatu, *Românii în arhivele Kremlinului*, p. 230.
111. *Ibid.*, pp. 29 and 222, respectively.
112. Ion Coja, *Legionarii noştri* (henceforth: Coja, *Legionarii noştri*) (Bucharest: Kogaion, 1997), pp. 156-169. Citation on p. 167.
113. *Idem*, *Marele manipulator şi asasinarea lui Culianu, Ceauşescu, Iorga* (henceforth: Coja, *Marele manipulator*) (Bucharest: Miracol, 1999).
114. *România liberă*, September 3, 2003.
115. *România Mare*, no. 689, September 26, 2003.
116. *Ibid.*, no. 706, January 23, 2004.

C. *Selective Negationism*

Nowhere in East Central Europe is this type of Holocaust denial (which acknowledges the perpetration of the Shoah provided that it is not extended to compatriots' participation in the genocide) more widespread than in Romania. It rejects any state (Romanian), regime (Antonescu and his governmental team and army) or Legionnaire responsibility for the Holocaust. As deflective negationism does, this discourse stems from a self--exonerating nationalist strategy.

Throughout the nineties Buzatu edited or prefaced a number of volumes presenting the Iron Guard and its leader in a favorable light.[117] Until only recently, Buzatu was still willing to admit that the Guard had indulged in crime, although he exonerated it by depicting the offense as an autochthonous reaction to Bolshevism and its crimes, in which Jews had been allegedly prominently involved. As he formulated it in an article published in *România Mare* on December 22, 1995, "Crime Begets Crime." More recently, however, he fully embraced the postures of selective negationism that Coja has been displaying from the start.

In July 2001, Buzatu and Coja organized in Bucharest a symposium whose title – "Has there been a Holocaust in Romania?" – was telling in itself. The symposium was divided into two panels. The first examined the "questionable" occurrence of the Shoah in Romania, while the second focused on the reasons for the existence of a "powerfully--institutionalized anti-Romanianism." At the conclusion of this conference, Coja established the League for the Struggle against Anti-Romanianism (LICAR) and appointed himself chairman. The symposium's resolution was published, among other places, in the Iron Guardist journal *Permanenţe* in both Romanian and "pigeon English."[118] The document was signed "pro forma" by Coja and emblematically assumed the selective negationist posture. Its authors, it was stated, "want to make clear that we have nothing to do with those people and opinions contesting as a whole the occurrence of the Jewish holocaust [sic!] during World War II." It said that Jews "have suffered almost everywhere in the Europe [sic!] of those years, but not in Romania," and it added that "testimonies of trustworthy Jews" prove that "the Romanian people had in those years a behavior honoring human dignity [sic!]."

In support of their affirmations, the participants raised several "arguments." They started by presenting excerpts from what they claimed was the 1955 testimony of the former leader of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, Wilhelm Filderman, before a Swiss court. The document has never been produced and whether it really exists is doubtful.[119] The alleged testimony had been mentioned for the first time in a 1994 volume in an editor's note written by American historian Kurt Treptow, who was residing

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117. For example, Kurt W. Treptow and Gheorghe Buzatu, *"Procesul" lui Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (mai, 1938)* (Iaşi: n.p., 1994), or Gheorghe Buzatu, Corneliu Ciucaru and Cristian Sandache, *Radiografia dreptei româneşti* (Bucharest: FF Press, 1996). When the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the Legion was marked in Iaşi – the "Movement's Capital" – Buzatu delivered a conference videotaped and marketed by Timişoara Iron Guardist publisher Gordian. See Gordian, *Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail. 70 de minute împreună cu Mişcarea legionară. Iaşi, 24 iunie 1997.*

118. See *Permanenţe*, no. 7, July 2001.

119. See Shafir, *Între negare şi trivializare*, pp. 92-95.

in Romania.[120] Treptow, whose pro-Legion and pro-Antonescu sympathies were well known, had long benefited from support on the part of the Romanian authorities.[121] Coja wrote that it was from this tome that he had first learned about the existence of the Swiss "testimony."[122] According to Treptow, the document could be found in the archives of the Buzatu-managed Iaşi Center for European History and Civilization. However, Buzatu was eventually forced to admit that the alleged "testimony" had been simply lifted from an article published in the tabloid *Baricada*. The tabloid's editors claimed to have received it from Matei Cazacu, a historian of Romanian origins born in France. Upon being contacted by the Theodor Wexler, the vice president of the Filderman Foundation, Cazacu declined any knowledge of the "document."[123]

In his address to the symposium, as well as in an article published in the recently-launched *Revista Mareşal Ion Antonescu*, Coja brought another "witness" to the stand of "Romanian innocence": former Romanian Chief Rabbi Alexandru Şafran.[124] The nonagenarian Jewish leader was said to have offered the son of Gheorghe Alexianu (the Governor of Transnistria executed in 1946 together with Antonescu) a book with a dedication exonerating his father of any crimes.[125] Political scientist Michael Shafir investigated the allegation by contacting Dan Şafran, the grandson of the former Chief Rabbi. From his hospital bed, Şafran directed Shafir to his memoirs, in which Alexianu is mentioned only once and is described as "famous for his cruelty."[126]

The resolution of the Coja-Buzatu symposium also embraces Coja's position on the Iron Guard's non-participation in the Bucharest 1941 pogrom. As Coja had already done in the past, the resolution claims that the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal had investigated "all [wartime] crimes against humanity" and that the Legionary movement has also been investigated. Prosecutors, however, are said to have reached the conclusion that the movement cannot be charged with "any wrong doing, any genocidal crime." The legend about the movement's acquittal of charges has been created and disseminated by exiled Iron Guardists (see below), while Coja has diligently promoted it in Romania.[127] As is well known, the Nuremberg International Tribunal never dealt with crimes other than those committed by Nazi Germany.[128]

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120. The volume is Sabin Manuilă and Wilhelm Filderman, *Populaţia evreiască în timpul celui de-al doilea război mondial* (Iaşi: Editura Fundaţiei Culturale Române, 1994). Treptow cites the "testimony" on pp. 8-12. He would again cite *from* it (while avoiding indicating the source) in Kurt Treptow (ed.), *A History of Romania* (Iaşi: The Center for Romanian Studies, The Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1995), pp. 485, 499-500. This tome was massively disseminated abroad by the Romanian Cultural Foundation, which enlisted the help of Romanian embassies for the purpose.
121. Several Romanian officials and some historians were forced to face an embarrassing situation in 2002, when Treptow was put on trial and sentenced for pedophilia.
122. Coja, *Marele manipulator*, pp. 298-299.
123. See *Baricada*, no. 26, July 1991, and Lya Benjamin, "Consideraţii pe marginea pretinsului testament," *Societate şi cultură*, no. 4, 1995, pp. 39-43.
124. For details, see Shafir, *Între negare şi trivializare*, pp. 95-96.
125. Ion Coja, "Simpozion internaţional: 'Holocaust în România?'" (henceforth: Coja, "Simpozion internaţional") (1-7), *România Mare*, August 13-24, 2001.
126. Alexandru Şafran, *Un tăciune smuls flăcărilor. Memorii* (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996), p. 86.
127. Coja, *Legionarii noştri*, pp. 98-111, as well as his polemic with Zigu Ornea in *Dilema*, August 11-17 and August 25-31, 1997.
128. I. Deák, J.T. Gross and T. Judt (eds.), *Procese în Europa. Al doilea război mondial şi consecinţele lui* (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2003), *passim*.

In 2001, Buzatu endorsed the publication by the Center for History and European Civilization, which he headed, of a foul brochure authored by the young PRM parliamentary deputy Vlad Hogea. Entitled *The Nationalist*, the brochure is a collection of articles previously published in *România Mare* or the PRM weekly *Politica*. It also includes some pamphlets published in the Iaşi tabloid *Atac la Târgu' Ieşilor*, which are called by Hogea "studies." One of these "studies" is titled "What Holocaust?" with the subtitle "Marshal Antonescu protected Romania's Jews." Hogea, too, is citing Filderman's "testimony" alongside historians who, he says, treated the 1940-1944 period with objectivity. Among the names mentioned are Buzatu, Ioan Scurtu, Valeriu-Florin Dobrinescu, Iosif Constantin Drăgan, Mircea Muşat, General Ion Gheorghe, and Colonel Gheorghe Magherescu. These historians, he claims, relied on documents that clearly demonstrate that the Jews in Romania were not subjected to extermination by the Antonescu regime."[129] The brochure's anti-Jewish rhetoric is shrill, and the author does not hesitate to rely on the authority of Julius Streicher, the infamous Nazi Jew-hater executed in Nuremberg as a war criminal. It is hardly surprising, then, to find Hogea writing that "the Jewish-Khazar anti-Christs tried to overcome their complex of spiritual inferiority by fully bestializing their affective experiences;" or that "Both Bolshevik Marxism and savage capitalism were invented by the same bearded rabbis and money-changers who at secret meetings would endlessly bumble words and devise ever and ever newer protocols to enslave the 'goyms' [non-Jews]."[130]

Hogea's book triggered a press scandal, but the politician did not lose his parliamentary seat, although his writings were in clear breach of the Romanian Penal Code. Buzatu submitted a formal resignation from the directorship of the Iaşi Center, yet continued to maintain a *de facto* control over the institution.

As illustrated by the implementation of governmental Emergency Ordinance no. 31 of March 13, 2002, selective negationism is sometimes encountered not only among extremist intellectuals or politicians, but also among state officials. Approved by the Cabinet under international pressure prior to Romania's joining NATO, the ordinance bans the activity of fascist-like organizations and the display of racist and xenophobic symbols, as well as the cult of personalities found guilty in court of "crimes against peace and humanity," as Antonescu had. The ordinance also prohibits the erection in public space (with the exception of museums or research institutions as part of research activities) of statues or memorial plaques commemorating such persons, and the naming of streets and other public places after them. Finally, Ordinance no. 31/2002 prohibits publicly denying the Holocaust and its consequences. Penalties ranging from fines to fifteen years in prison are stipulated for these offences.[131]

Before the decree went into force, between six and eight statues had been erected in Antonescu's memory, and twenty-five streets or squares as well as the Iaşi military cemetery of Leţcani, had been named after him. Other memorials dedicated to the Marshal had an ambiguous status, as it was not clear whether the space where they stood

129. Vlad Hogea, *Naţionalistul* (Iaşi: Academia Română, Centrul de Istorie şi Civilizaţie Europeană, 2001), pp. 60-66.
130. *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 56, *passim*.
131. Mediafax, March 18, 2002, *Monitorul Oficial al României*, March 28, 2002, **www.indaco.ro**.

was public or private.[132] Two years after the decree went into force there were still streets named after Antonescu in major cities such as Cluj-Napoca, Câmpulung-Muscel, or Târgu-Mureş.[133] In Timişoara, it took internal as well as international pressure to convince the municipal council to change the name of the Antonescu Boulevard, and another street was named after Iron Guardist Spiru Blănaru.[134] Soon after the decree was approved, Coja published yet another negationist booklet, yet prosecutors did nothing.[135]

Moreover, the Romanian government was in breach of its own decree soon after its issuance, when Ion Antonescu's portrait was put on display at the government's official seat (Palatul Victoria), as part of an exhibition of portraits of Romania's former heads of government. The U.S. Helsinki Commission promptly denounced the act, and it used the opportunity to criticize delays in the dismantling of Antonescu's statues.[136] In defense, the minister of culture, Răzvan Theodorescu, retorted that all statues had been demolished, with the exception of Antonescu's bust placed in the yard of a church he built in Bucharest. With regard to the portrait, the minister argued that the government headquarters do not qualify as "public space," as access to the building is restricted.[137] This was a weak argument because the government is a public institution par excellence.

The fate of Ordinance no. 31/2002 remains uncertain. After it was submitted for approval to Parliament, MPs proposed various amendments that, if adopted, would dilute its effects. Thus, headed by former party chairman Mircea Ionescu-Quintus, MPs of the center-right PNL in the Senate's Defense Committee were joined by colleagues from the

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132. According to the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, since 1993 six statues have been erected in the memory of the Marshal – in Bucharest, Iaşi, Jilava, Slobozia, Piatra-Neamţ and Târgovişte (Mediafax, March 18, 2003). The memorial in Jilava, on the place of Antonescu's execution, is a large cross (*troiţa*). Two more statues – in Sărmaş and Călăraşi – were mentioned in an U.S. Helsinki Committee protest letter (*idem*, June 28, 2002). The mayor of Călăraşi denied that the statue in his town was displayed on "public space," saying that the bust was on the grounds of the Marshal Ion Antonescu League and therefore on private ground (*Jurnalul naţional*, July 2, 2002). According to the information of this chapter's authors, at the time Emergency Ordinance no. 31/2002 was issued, there were three statues displayed in "public space," namely, in Slobozia, Piatra-Neamţ, and the Iaşi military cemetery of Leţcani. Four monuments were arguably in "public space:" the cross in Jilava, on prison grounds administered by the Justice Ministry, a bust in the courtyard of a Bucharest church built by Antonescu, an additional bust on the grounds of a church in Sărmaş, Mureş county, and the Călăraşi monument. Attempts to erect statues in Antonescu's memory had been filed by either prefects or local administration authorities in Târgu-Mureş, Piteşti and Drobeta-Turnu-Severin. A plan to erect a statue to Antonescu initiated by former Cluj mayor Gheorghe Funar was approved by the town council, foiled by the prefect, and was pending before the courts, with the trial being moved from Cluj to Iaşi. For the number of streets named after the Marshal see Mediafax, March 18, 2002.

133. See Medifax, November 18, 2003 (Târgu-Mureş), and Rompres, February 9, 2004 (Cluj-Napoca). Oradea was also among the Romanian towns that kept a street called after the Marshal long after the ordinance was issued (see William Totok, "Mistificări şi falsificări," *Observator cultural*, no. 156, January 21-27, 2003), but eventually renamed that street.

134. Interview with William Totok in *Divers*, no. 10, March 18, 2004.

135. *Holocaust în România (?). Suită de documente şi mărturii adunate şi comentate de Ion Coja în folosul parlamentarilor şi al autorităţilor implicate în elaborarea, aprobarea şi aplicarea Ordonanţei de Urgenţă nr. 31/2002 a guvernului României* (Bucharest: Kogaion, 2002). The title cited here is that on the interior cover. The outer cover displays no question mark, which made the brochure's marketing possible.

136. *Adevărul*, June 29-30, 2002.

137. *Cotidianul*, May 28, 2002, and Mediafax, June 29, 2002.

extreme-right PRM in proposing several substantial amendments. They claimed that the Holocaust was a diffuse concept that needed clarification; and it was also claimed that the article in the ordinance prohibiting Holocaust denial infringes on human rights in general and on the right to freedom of expression in particular.[138] This position was also embraced by a prominent member of the Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Romania-Helsinki Committee.[139] Subsequently, although the PNL leadership distanced itself from the opinions of its representatives on the Defense Committee,[140] the Judicial Committee of the Senate endorsed the amendments approved by the Defense Committee. More significantly, the Judicial Committee unanimously adopted an amendment proposed by Senator Gheorghe Buzatu.

The amendment defines the Holocaust as the "the systematic massive extermination of the Jewish population in Europe, organized by the Nazi authorities during the Second World War."[141] In other words, by definition there was no Holocaust in Romania, since the extermination of Jews there had not been "organized by the Nazi authorities," but by Romania's authorities themselves.[142] The amendment thus fits hand-in-glove into Buzatu and his supporters' selective negationist conceptual framework, according to which the Holocaust was perpetrated elsewhere. If Parliament approves the ordinance under this formulation, the legislation becomes irrelevant.

Finally, it must be stressed that the Wiesel Commission itself was set up as a consequence of a long controversy with international echoes, stirred up by a governmental communiqué that may itself be viewed as an exemplification of selective negationism. On June 12, 2003, at the end of a brief communiqué concluding a cooperative agreement between the National Archives of Romania and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., a sentence stated that Romania's government "encourages research concerning the Holocaust in Europe – including documents referring to it and found in Romanian archives – but strongly emphasizes that between 1940-1945 no Holocaust took place within Romania's boundaries."[143] The statement triggered numerous domestic and international protests, including an official protest from Israel.[144] President Iliescu commented that the statement "should have never been made."[145]

The government promptly acted to undo the damage. On June 17, 2003, it stated that the Antonescu regime, which at that time "represented the Romanian state" had been "guilty of grave war crimes, pogroms, deportations to Transnistria, mass dislocations of a sizable part of Romania's Jewish population to territories occupied and controlled by the Romanian army, employing discrimination and extermination, which are part of the

138. *Cotidianul*, April 15, 2002.
139. See Gabriel Andreescu, "Contra extremismului, nu împotriva libertăţii," *Observator cultural*, no. 111, April 9-15, 2002, and "Necesitatea amendării Ordonanţei de urgenţă no. 31 privind organizaţiile şi simbolurile cu caracter fascist, rasist sau xenofob," *Revista română de drepturile omului*, no. 23, 2002, pp. 8-19.
140. Mediafax, April 17, 2002.
141. *Ibid.*, June 5, 2002.
142. For a pertinent criticism of this amendment see Andrei Oişteanu, "Holocaust: încercare de definire," *Dilema*, no. 518, February 28, 2003.
143. Rompres, June 12, 2003.
144. For further details, see Michael Shafir, "Negation at the Top: Deconstructing the Holocaust Denial Salad in the Romanian Cucumber Season" (henceforth: Shafir, "Negation at the Top"), *Xenopoliana*, vol. 11, nos. 3-4 (2003), pp. 90-122.
145. *Evenimentul zilei*, June 18, 2003.

sinister mechanism of the Holocaust." Consequently, the statement said, the Romanian government "assumes its share of responsibility" for the crimes initiated by the Antonescu regime.[146]

Influences of Western Negationism

Western negationism made a substantial contribution in the emergence and spreading of a similar trend in Romania by supplying the ensemble of arguments used by integral negationism and also by influencing deflective and selective negationism. Radu Theodoru, the only well-known Romanian advocate of integral negationism, closed one of the chapters of his *Nazismul sionist* by welcoming the publication in Romanian of *The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics*, the "revisionist" book written by "the brilliant philosopher, sociologist, and political scientist Roger Garaudy."[147] Theodoru recommended for further reading the works of other "revisionist" historians such as David Irving, Arthur Butz, Robert Faurisson, Jürgen Graf, Carl O. Nordling, and Carlo Mattogno.[148] Mattogno's *The Myth of the Extermination of Jews* had been already serialized in 1994-1995 by *Mişcarea*, the publication of the Movement for Romania, and Graf's works would soon be printed in far-right publications as well as in volume format (in 2000).[149]

Negationist articles published in the West were translated in numerous Romanian extreme-right publications throughout the transition period. In 1995, the PRM weekly *Politica* published in sequels in eight consecutive issues, various articles from the French review *Annales d'histoire révisionniste*. In 1994, *Mişcarea* published a review signed by Silviu Rareţ on the work of such negationists as David Irving, Maurice Bardèche, Paul Rassinier, Pierre Guillaume, Richard Harwood, Udo Walendy, Ernst Zündel, R. Faurisson, and Arthur Butz. Larry Watts[150] and Mircea Ionniţiu[151] turned Irving into a legitimate and respectable scholarly authority by citing his work in arguments meant to exonerate Antonescu. In 1994 *Mişcarea* also published the text of a lecture Irving gave at the notorious negationist Institute for Historical Review in the winter of 1990/1991. The text was titled "Let the Auschwitz Ship Sink."[152]

It is worth noting that many of the books in translation that popularize negationist literature are published by the Bucharest printing house Samizdat, subsidized by Iosif

146. Mediafax, June 17, 2003.
147. Roger Garaudy, *Miturile fondatoare ale politicii israeliene* (Bucharest: ALMA TP, 1998). For the reception of the book in Romania, see George Voicu, *op. cit*, pp. 160, 166; George Voicu, *Teme anti-Semite în discursul public* (henceforth: Voicu, *Teme antisemite*) (Bucharest: Ars Docendi, 2000), pp. 132-139; and Michael Shafir, "The Man They Love to Hate: Norman Manea's «Snail House» between Holocaust and Gulag," *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 60-81.
148. Theodoru, *Nazismul sionist*, pp. 27-28.
149. Jürgen Graf, *Martori oculari sau legile naturii ?* (Bucharest: Samizdat, n.d. [2000]).
150. See Larry Watts, *O Casandră a României: Ion Antonescu* (Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei Culturale Române, 1993), p. 379.
151. See Mircea Ionniţiu, *Amintiri şi reflecţiuni* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993), pp. 118, 160.
152. See *Mişcarea*, nos. 8-9 and 10, May and June 1994.

Constantin Drăgan.[153] The name of the printing house is identical with the name German-born Canadian negationist Ernst Zündel gave to his Holocaust-denying commercial enterprise (a cynical "borrowing" of a word that became synonymous for intellectual resistance under the totalitarian Soviet regime). Samizdat is only one of the many printing houses that specialize in this kind of topic, with Antet as its fiercest competitor. Among other books, Samizdat published *Hitler's Political Testament* and Garaudy's *Founding Myths of Israeli Politics*. The latter book ended up in a criminal ruling against Garaudy in a French court. Yet the translation of the book was well received in Romania, not only by extreme-right publications, but also by mainstream figures, which defended the book in the name of free speech.

Romanian negationists and anti-Semites in general are very fond of publications dealing with the "international Jewish conspiracy," a category appropriate for the books mentioned in the previous paragraph. Autochthonous or translated literature on the Jewish conspiracy is far too large to be discussed here at length.[154] Yet, it was unusual to witness – aside from the predictable applause with which the publication in Romanian translation of Garaudy's book was met by the Sibiu-based pro-Legionary *Puncte cardinale* – intellectuals of liberal persuasion coming to Garaudy's defense in the name of free speech. Literary critic and university professor Nicolae Manolescu (at that time also a prominent member of the PNL leadership) was joined by journalist Cristian Tudor Popescu, the editor-in-chief of the mainstream daily *Adevărul*. For Popescu, the sentencing of Garaudy was on par with "convicting Descartes."[155] If the book's Romanian defenders could argue, as Manolescu did, that Garaudy did not entirely negate the Holocaust in *The Founding Myths*, having only objected to "some exaggerations," the claim could no longer be made for a 1999-published translation of his volume *The Trial of Israeli Zionism : Unmasking the International Zionist Conspiracy*, where the negationist argument is embraced full-scale.[156] Yet none of his defenders in Romania saw it necessary to distance themselves from the positions they had earlier displayed.

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153. See the anonymously-authored book *Marea conspiraţie mondialistă : Hitler contra Iuda* whose inside cover reveals that the tome was in fact printed by the Drăgan Group Print. Although the name "Drăgan" is not uncommon in Romania, there is no room for mistaken identification – the name of the Drăgan-owned Butan Gas Company appears alongside. The book is said to be a translation from French and the author feared the consequences of revealing his true identity because of the Fabius-Gayssot legislation in France. He therefore uses the cynical nickname of "Sam Izdat," which has a Jewish sound. The volume ends with the words : "Hitler is dead. *Heil Hitler* ! " (p. 344, author's emphasis).
154. See for example : Jan van Helsing, *Organizaţiile secrete şi puterea lor în secolul XX* (Bucharest : Samizdat, 1997), 2 vols. ; Nicolae Trofin, *Strategia diabolică a forţelor oculte pentru instaurarea noii ordini mondiale* (Cluj-Napoca : Risoprint, 1997), vol. 1 ; Serge Monaste, *Protocoalele de la Toronto : Naţiunile Unite contra creştinismului* (Bucharest : Samizdat, n.d.) ; David Duke, *Bazele antisemitismului şi sionismului ca rasism. Trezirea la realitate* (Bucharest : Antet XX, n.d.).
155. See N. Manolescu, "Holocaustul şi Gulagul," *România literară*, no. 9, March 11-17, 1998, and Cristian Tudor Popescu, "Cazul Garaudy : libertatea gândirii taxată drept antisemitism," *Adevărul*, December 12, 1996 ; "Condamnarea lui Descartes," *ibid.*, March 2, 1998 ; see also Totok, *op. cit.*, p. 109, footnote 44, for a full listing of Romanian intellectuals of otherwise democratic persuasion who came to Garaudy's defense on this occasion.
156. Roger Garaudy, *Procesul sionismului israelian. Demascarea conspiraţiei sioniste mondiale* (Bucharest : Samizdat, 1998). See also Voicu, *Teme antisemite*, p. 137.

Western influence is also felt in the case of deflecting negationism. When writer Ion Buduca and journalist Vladimir Alexe cast the blame for the beginning of the Holocaust on the Jews (see above), they in fact reproduce the "revisionist" argument first made by Bardèche and later by Verrall, Harwood, Faurisson, Irving, and Ernst Nolte.[157] The controversial Nolte[158] was last among the "revisionists" to adopt this position, and his influence on Romanian selective negationism is particularly powerful.

Influences of the Romanian Exile

Romanian expatriates played a crucial role in reproducing and spreading negationist arguments both before and after 1989. Before delving into the argument, it is important to note the distinction that should be made between intellectual and political exiles on one hand and the "masses" of refugees on the other hand, i.e., between the active minority and the diaspora caught in processes of assimilation in host countries. Between the two, there is not necessarily a relationship of representativeness. The politically mobilized Romanian exile has had, in general, a "right-wing" orientation, and it is notorious that the extreme Right has been over-represented among its ranks when it came to publishing.[159]

It must be stressed, however, that the "exile" is not a compact and homogenous group whose main distinctive feature, as it were, would be found in negationism. Rather, one deals in this case with a kind of "interface" between the world of those who live in the country and the world of those who live abroad ; hence, what forms of negationism are encountered is largely dependent on the type of links existing between different social environments as well as on the personal history of each expatriate. In addition, it should be mentioned that although "exile" is a historical phenomenon similar to that encountered in the case of other East European "exiles" and is thus doomed to disappearance, the Romanian exile has displayed both before and after the communist period a remarkable capability of self-reproduction. In fact, the demise of the communist regime has acted as a stimulating factor in the dissemination of negationist outlooks. The ascribed symbolic value of the exile and its acknowledged "elite" status make possible for it to exert on the home country an influence far superior to the relatively modest social status of its members in the host counties. Finally, it should also be emphasized that the exile

157. See Lipstadt, *op. cit.*, p. 50 (Bardèche), p. 1l0 (Harwood) and p. 213 (Irving) ; Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins of Memory. Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 38-42 (Harwood and Faurisson) ; Ernst Nolte, "Standing Things on Their Heads : Against Negative Nationalism in Interpreting History," in *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler ? Original Documents of the* Historikerstreit *Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust* (translated by James Knowlton and Truett Cates) (Atlantic Highlands : Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 149-154.

158. Richard E. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow : West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (London : Pantheon, 1989), *passim*.

159. See Vasile Dumitrescu, *O istorie a exilului românesc (1944-1989) în eseuri, articole, scrisori, imagini etc.* (Bucharest : Victor Frunză, 1997) ; Florin Manolescu, *Enciclopedia exilului literar românesc (1945-1989)* (Bucharest : Compania, 2003) ; Silvia Constantinescu, *Exil. Oameni şi idei* (Bucharest : Curierul românesc, 1995), as well as the special issue of the journal *Secolul XX*, 1997/1998 on the Romanian exile.

produced not only negationism-prone personalities, but also intellectuals whose contribution to revealing the true dimension of the crimes of the Legionnaires and Antonescu's regime has been remarkable. Suffice it to mention here the works of Dr. Ion Solacolu and William Totok, both living in Germany.

A. *Integral Negationism*

Although the advocates of integral negationism were peripheral to the Romanian diaspora, they played a crucial role in linking domestic supporters of Romanian national-communism with the networks of the exiled Romanian extreme-right, whose texts they managed to popularize in the country. One such agent of integral negationism was the expatriate group that ran a Romanian bookshop in Paris (*Librairie roumaine du savoir, antitotalitaire*). The owner, George Dănescu-Pişcoci, is also the distributor and editor of Romanian Iron Guard literature as well as French negationist literature (of the *La Vieille Taupe* circle). He is notable for having been the main promoter of Garaudy's *Founding Myth*. As Bernard Camboulives has shown, the group associated with this bookshop is not much of a former "center of anticommunist struggle." Rather, it is more of a "a den for spreading revisionist and negationist outlooks directed against the "dominant Western beliefs." Even just a superficial examination of the library's "anti-totalitarianism" shows that it is nothing short of "a means serving those who question the gas chamber to give vent to their ideas," Camboulives wrote.[160]

Integral negationism was also "imported" from the West with the help of exiled Iron Guard members. For a while, the main publication embracing Legionary positions was the Timişoara-based *Gazeta de vest* whose editor-in-chief was Ovidiu Guleş – a supporter of the Horia Sima wing of the movement.[161] *Gazeta de vest* – as well as the Gordian publishing house, which specialized in Iron Guard literature and its dissemination – was financed by the Iron Guardist Zaharia Marineasa. After the death of Horia Sima in 1993, and until his own death in 1997, Marineasa was a member of the Interior Command Group of Legionary veterans, whose chief was Mircea Nicolau.[162] Marineasa, who spent twenty-one years in jail under both Antonescu and the communists, also financed several other publishing outlets specializing in the dissemination of the movement's propaganda in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Sibiu and Chişinău. He died shortly before the January 1998 launching of the Bucharest-based publication *Permanenţe*. The publication – also a Sima-wing outlet – has Nicolau as editor-in-chief.[163] While *Gazeta de vest* and the rival Codreanu-wing *Mişcarea* have since ceased publication, the Legionary Sibiu-based monthly *Puncte cardinale* continues to appear regularly. In the meantime, one more Iron Guardist monthly, *Obiectiv legionar*, is being printed in Bucharest. Its editor-in-chief is Şerban Suru, to whom the veterans of the movement deny the status of authentic Legionnaire.

160. Bernard Camboulives, "Un scandal : librăria română din Paris," *22*, no. 735, April 6-12, 2004, p. 16.
161. Ovidiu Guleş, *Cum am cunoscut Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail* (Timişoara : Gordian, 1992), pp. 13-22.
162. *Idem*, *Zaharia Marineasa, Prezent ! Garda de Fier după Horia Sima* (Timişoara : Gordian, 1998), pp. 4 and 19.
163. See *ibid.*, pp. 3, 54-55.

The importance of these publications must not be exaggerated, but their local and international influence should not be ignored. When it was still active, *Gazeta de vest* sold 2,000 copies and *Puncte cardinale* was distributed mainly abroad.[164] The neo-Legionary group in Timişoara developed important connections with extreme-right parties abroad or with the extremist International Third Position (ITP). Moreover, Gordian used to publish a Romanian edition of ITP's main publication, *Final Conflict*,[165] and the ITP adopted the Legion's forms of organization (the "nests"),[166] as did the Portuguese National Revolutionary Front.[167] The Timişoara Legionnaires were in contact with the British extreme-right League of Saint George as well as with the youth organization of the German extreme-right National Democratic Party. The German Office for the Protection of the Constitution took note of these meetings.[168] The group went on pilgrimage to Spain several times, to Majadahonda, where the Guard's "martyrs" Ion Moţa and Vasile Marin died fighting in the Spanish civil war.

International links, in particular with extreme-right Western anti-globalization circles and notably with French groups of Alain de Benoist persuasions are also maintained by The New Right (*Noua Dreaptă* – ND), an extremist group set up in 1994 by Bogdan George Rădulescu.[169] (This group must not be confused with the 2000-established *Noua Dreaptă* led by Tudor Ionescu, which publishes a journal with the same name on the Internet,[170] nor with *Partidul Dreapta Naţională* – PDN, led by Radu Sorescu and Cornel Brahaş, which used to publish the journal *Noua dreaptă*).[171] Rădulescu's *Noua dreaptă* publishes the magazine *Măiastra*, and some of its members have published in *Generaţia dreptei* – a publication close to the Union of Right-Wing Forces (*Uniunea Forţelor de Dreapta*), until that party merged with the National Liberal Party. ND follows in the footsteps of the PDN on the issue of the Roma. Even by extreme-right standards, the anti-Roma racism displayed by the *Noua Dreaptă* group is shrill. This attitude is also reflected in the manner in which the group treats the issue of the Romany Porrajmos (Holocaust). A review of historian Viorel Achim's book on the history of the Roma in Romania grossly distorted his findings about the deportation and the extermination of the Roma under the regime of Marshal Antonescu.[172] As for Tudor Ionescu's ND, it is

164. *Ibid.*, p. 26, and interview with Gabriel Constantinescu in *Puncte cardinale*, April 1999.
165. In 1999, *Gazeta de vest* published ITP's "Declaration of Principles," and the ITP in return let the group headed by Guleş use its web site for disseminating Legionary propaganda. See "Declaraţie de principii : Poziţia a Treia Internaţională," *Gazeta de vest*, no. 149, March 1999, pp. 22-27, and the 1999 site **dspace.dial.pipex.com/third-position**.
166. See "Noile structuri ale Poziţiei a Treia engleze," *Gazeta de vest*, no. 36, December 1997, p. 54.
167. See Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London : Routlege, 1994), p. 166.
168. See the photos published in *Gazeta de vest*, no. 125, September 1996, and no. 128, December 1996, as well as **http : //www.verfassungsschutz.de**.
169. On the group's international contacts, see Gerald Pruvost, "Noua dreaptă europeană a fost reprezentată şi de România," *România liberă*, September 23, 1997.
170. See "Cine suntem ? ," **http : //www.nouadreapta.org**.
171. On the PDN and its anti-Semitism, see Michael Shafir, "Marginalization or Mainstream ? The Extreme Right in Post-Communist Romania," in Pal Hainsworth (ed.), *The Politics of the Extreme Right : From the Margins to the Mainstream* (London : Pinter, 2000), pp. 247-267, notes on pp. 255-258.
172. Bogdan-Ioan Matei, review of Viorel Achim, *Ţiganii în istoria României* (Bucharest : Editura Enciclopedică, 1998), in *Măiastra*, vol. 3, no. 4 (2001), pp. 61-63.

revealing that the first Romanian negationist sentenced under Ordinance no. 31/2002 came from the ranks of this organization (He was pardoned shortly after, though.) The man, Gheorghe Opriţa,[173] had started his career as a "historian" of the Iron Guard at the Gordian publishing house and in the pages of *Gazeta de vest*.[174]

B. *Selective and Deflective Negationism*

Defying geographic distance, exiled Iron Guardist Traian Golea, who lived in Florida, USA (he died in September 2004), has had far more influence in his country of origin than Dănescu-Pişcoci. In 1996, Golea published a pamphlet[175] disseminated in Romania, in what may be considered a good illustration of the "circulation of ideas" between the exile and autochthonous selective negationists. Golea's booklet embraces positions which, in the Romanian context, may be traced back to the former regime's nostalgics, such as Pavel Coruţ, a former *Securitate* officer turned best-selling thriller writer. Golea describes President Iliescu's entourage as former communists now serving the "New World Order." Antonescu, he claims, cannot be considered to have been a war criminal "just because he forged an alliance with Hitler's Germany in the war for Bessarabia's recuperation." To do so would be tantamount to "accusing Roosevelt and Churchill of being communists because they allied themselves with the dictator Stalin." Golea proceeds to absolve the Iron Guard of charges of "fascism," claiming – in line with the myth mentioned above – that the Legion of Archangel Michael "was discharged by the International Nuremberg Tribunal." The accusation of participation in the Holocaust laid at Antonescu's door, he writes, is nothing but a malevolent exaggeration invented by late Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen and similar statements by Elie Wiesel can only be attributed to a "sick fantasy." His argument emulates Faurisson's model.[176] Embracing the deflective--reactive argument, Golea goes on to show that the repressive measures taken by Antonescu against the Jews were the result of their philo-communist and anti-Romanian attitudes. He repeatedly cites Buzatu as the main authoritative scholar. Predictably, Golea concludes that there has been no Holocaust in Romania.

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173. See *Evenimentul zilei*, July 17, 2003. Opriţa was sentenced to two years and six months for nationalist-chauvinist propaganda and received a similar 30-month sentence for selling, disseminating, producing, and possession of artifacts carrying fascist, racist, and xenophobic symbols. The tribunal also suspended him from exercising his civic rights for a five-year period. However, Opriţa promptly defied the sentence by publishing an article on the website managed by Tudor Ionescu. See "Neostalinism în România : apariţia infracţiunii de a studia şi reapariţia proceselor politice," **http : //nouadreapta.org**.
174. See Grigore Opriţa, *Garda de Fier : o carte pentru tânărul român* (Timişoara : Gordian, 1994).
175. Traian Golea, "Regizarea unei condamnări a poporului român : personalităţi politice americane şi internaţionale atacă România pe baza unor minciuni şi calomnii," *Romanian Historical Studies* (Florida, 1996). See also the Neo-Legionary Nationalist Romania Page edited by Nicolae Niţă at **http : //pages.prodigy.net/nnita/garda.html**.
176. See, for example, **http : //www.abbc.com/zundel/index.html**.

The Comparative Trivialization of the Holocaust

The category of "comparative trivialization" is complex, but it basically refers to the abusive use of comparisons with the aim of minimizing the Holocaust, of banalizing its atrocities, or conditioning the memory of this tragedy. Here, several additional clarifications must be made. First, the comparative methodology has been, and remains, a basic instrument in historical studies, and is naturally a legitimate methodology in the study of the Holocaust, as well. As early as the fifties, and with increasing frequency over the past twenty years, numerous studies were published comparing the Holocaust with other genocidal phenomena – the communist atrocities in Ukraine and other parts of the former USSR and Asia, the Armenian Genocide perpetrated at the order of the Turkish authorities during World War I, as well as more recent genocides.[177] On the other hand, postwar historiography has paradigmatically treated the Holocaust as an essentially unique phenomenon. There is by-and-large a consensus among important historians on the uniqueness of the Holocaust, although the criteria for this uniqueness are not the same for every scholar. Most of these historians agree that the specific difference between the Holocaust and other genocides rests in the "intended totality"[178] of the Final Solution, which aimed at all Jews wherever they lived, and made no exceptions (e.g., through collaboration or conversion of the "enemy" into a "New Man," which was possible in the case of communist repressions).

During the past two decades, the uniqueness of the Holocaust has been subjected to intense debates.[179] Suffice it to mention that in their proximity, a trend was born that hijacked the legitimate use of comparisons for the purpose of minimizing the Holocaust. A valuable and legitimate cognitive instrument used for improving historical knowledge and for the delimitation of similarities and differences between comparable phenomena has thus been turned into a strategy of denial, of minimalization, and of banalization of the Holocaust.

The negationists and those promoting trivialization by comparison abuse the multi--layered meanings of the term "uniqueness" to accuse Jews of trying to build a "monopoly on suffering" for lucrative purposes.[180] They engage in these allegations despite the fact that experts on the Holocaust have repeatedly shown that its uniqueness is not argued in order to transform the tragedy of the Jews into the only collective suffering that should be paid attention or into a tragedy incomparable to any other, but in order to draw attention to the extreme specificity of the Nazi collective project.[181] The theme of the

177. See, for example, Alan S. Rosenbaum (ed.), *Is the Holocaust Unique ? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (Boulder, Colorado, Oxford : Westview Press, 1996) ; Yves Ternon, *Statul criminal. Genocidurile secolului XX* (Iaşi : Institutul European, 2002).

178. Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven, London : Yale University Press, 2001), p. 49.

179. Wulf Kansteiner, "From Exception to Exemplum : The New Approach to Nazism and the 'Final Solution,'" *History and Theory*, vol. 33, no. 2 (May 1994), pp. 145-171.

180. The theme was recently resurrected in the wake of the publication of Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry : Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London and New York : Verso, 2000).

181. Bauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 ff.

"monopoly on suffering" is sometimes present in academic studies too. In his famous introduction to *The Black Book of Communism* (1998), Stéphane Curtois wrote :

> After 1945 the Jewish genocide became a byword for modern barbarism, the epitome of twentieth-century mass terror… More recently, a single-minded focus on the Jewish genocide in an attempt to characterize the Holocaust as a unique atrocity has also prevented the assessment of other episodes of comparable magnitude in the communist world. After all, it seems scarcely plausible that the victors who had helped bring about the destruction of a genocidal apparatus might themselves have put the very same methods into practice. When faced with this paradox, people generally preferred to bury their heads in sand.[182]

Curtois's final remarks are a charge against the Jews. He further added that "communist regimes have victimized approximately 100 million people in contrast to the approximately 25 million of the Nazis"[183]. The remarks triggered numerous controversies, including among contributors to the *Black Book* – some of whom distanced themselves from Courtois's calculation of victims as well as from some of his presumptions in the "Introduction."[184] This dispute is beyond the focus of this study, but it is important to note that Courtois's controversial propositions have had a great impact in Eastern Europe, where prominent politicians and intellectuals have uncritically embraced them.[185]

The comparison to the *Gulag* has trivialized the Holocaust in three ways. The first was described by Alan S. Rosenbaum and Vladimir Tismăneanu as "competitive martyrology."[186] Based on the number of victims, this argument contests the uniqueness of the Holocaust and the special attention it has benefited from ; second, the argument also attributes the absence of a proper memorialization of the *Gulag* to the alleged "monopoly" exerted over international collective memory by the Holocaust ; finally, the same argument often accuses the Jews of having been instrumental in establishing the communist regimes – a charge aimed at "explaining" and retroactively justifying the Holocaust.

But, as already mentioned, the Holocaust's uniqueness does not rest in the number of victims it produced. Furthermore, if the memorialization of communism in Eastern Europe is on shaky grounds, this is neither due to an alleged "monopoly" exercised by the memorialization of the Holocaust, nor is it so because of some Jewish "complicity" in obstructing its exercise. Rather, the phenomenon is due to the absence of social, political, and academic inclination in these countries to study, assume responsibility for, and properly memorialize communism.[187] Finally, studies undertaken thus far as well as

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182. Stéphane Courtois, "Introduction : The Crimes of Communism," in *The Black Book of Communism : Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 23.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
184. Ronald Aronson, "Communism's Posthumous Trial," *History and Theory*, vol. 42 (May 2003), pp. 222-245.
185. Shafir, *Între negare şi trivializare*, pp. 115 ff. ; for Romania's case, see also below.
186. Alan S. Rosenbaum, "Introduction," in Rosenbaum (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 2 ; Vladimir Tismăneanu, "Martirologie competitivă ? Reflecţii asupra *Cărţii negre a comunismului*," in *Încet spre Europa. Vladimir Tismăneanu în dialog cu Mircea Mihăieş* (Iaşi : Polirom, 2000), pp. 201-211.
187. Helga A. Welsh, "Dealing with the Communist Past : Central and East European Experiences after 1990," *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 48, no. 3 (May 1996), pp. 413-428 ; for Romania's case, see Adrian Cioflâncă, "Politics of Oblivion in Postcommunist Romania," *Xenopoliana*, vol. 9 (2001), nos. 1-4, pp. 107-114.

this report[188] demonstrate that the stereotype that would have the Jews as having played a key role in the process of communist East European takeovers is lacking any empirical basis and is little other than a political myth with anti-Semitic undertones. Fascist political formations and political regimes of fascist type had incessantly fostered the theme of Judeo-Bolshevism in their propaganda, and after 1989, the focus of attention on Jewish PCR members and leaders had been widely used in Eastern Europe in order to obfuscate the contribution of the ethnic majority.[189] It is accurate to assert that Jewish adherence to communist parties has been relatively elevated in the initial phase of communism. Yet the assertion must be amended by several caveats. The anti-fascist, egalitarian, and humanist communist message transformed the communist parties into a refuge for ethnic minorities. Against the background of the political atmosphere of the mid-twentieth century, these parties alone appeared to offer opportunities for salvation and social mobility to the marginalized or those persecuted on ethnic grounds.[190] Jews did not adhere to communism due to their Jewishness ; on the contrary, they did so in the name of internationalism, as a sort of identity-strategy that would, they hoped, reduce the burden of ethnicity.[191] After the communist advent to power, the number of Jews in communist parties as well as in the newly established government institutions mattered less than the "visibility" of Jews in authority positions, which was something difficult to accept by the local masses and elites, imbued as they were with anti-Semitic stereotypes.[192] The situation of the Jews in the communist bloc changed dramatically in the fifties, once Stalinist anti-Semitism became official policy.[193] Finally and most importantly, it must be emphasized that the advent of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe has been a complex process made possible in the first place by the Soviet military occupation and political pressure, by the support or the passivity of majorities in local populations (irrespective of their ethnic background), and by the international context.

This is the background against which the Holocaust-*Gulag* comparison is employed – not for a better understanding of Nazi and communist crimes, but in order to avoid the memorialization of the Holocaust or to condition assuming responsibility for it on the

188. See chapter 1.4.

189. Leon Volovici, "Anti-Semitism in Post-Communist Eastern Europe : A Marginal or a Central Issue ? ," *Acta. Analysis of Current Trends in Anti-Semitism*, no. 5 (1994), pp. 16-17 ; Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation. Democracy, Nationalism and Myths in Post-Communist Europe* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1999), *passim* [*Fantasmele salvării. Democraţie, naţionalism şi mit în Europa postcomunistă*, Iaşi : Polirom, 1999].

190. *Idem*, *Stalinism for All Seasons. A Political History of Romanian Communism* (henceforth : Tismăneanu, *Stalinism*) (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London : University of California Press, 2003), p. 77, *passim* ; Jan T. Gross, "Pânza încâlcită : analiza stereotipurilor legate de relaţiile dintre polonezi, germani, evrei şi comunişti," in Deák, Gross and Judt (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 102-171.

191. Tismăneanu, *Stalinism* ; Robert Levy, *op. cit.*, p. 156, *passim* ; Ianoşi, *Prejudecăţi şi judecăţi* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2002), p. 74, *passim* ; Johnson, *O istorie a evreilor* (Bucharest : Hasefer, 2003), pp. 352 ff.

192. Historian Jan T. Gross notes that the persistence of the "Judeo-Bolshevik" myth after 1945 does not tell much about the role played by Jews in the communist regime, but much about "how unseemly, how jarring, how offensive it was to see a Jew in *any* position of authority" (Gross, *op. cit.*, p. 133, author's emphasis). For a similar interpretation, see Onişoru, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

193. Tismăneanu, *Stalinism*, pp. 127 ff.

(chronological and pathological) primacy of the *Gulag*. Quite frequently, Nazi policies are being justified as a response to communism. This type of argumentation penetrated academic debate during the so-called *Historikerstreit* (Historians' Quarrel) in the second half of the eighties. Several German historians, of whom the most prominent was Ernst Nolte, argued that Nazism both emulated communism and was a reaction to it. Viewed from this perspective, the Holocaust was also deemed to have been inspired by communist criminal practice, whereas Nazi atrocities were said to be explainable by wartime conditions, to have nothing specific about them when compared with other twentieth-century atrocities.[194] The attempt to "normalize" the Holocaust and to lessen the indictment against Nazism was promptly amended at the time by many important historians, who showed that Nolte had no evidence to back up his hypotheses.[195]

As early as the seventies, in response to Nolte's *Germany and the Cold War*, American historian Peter Gay forged the concept of comparative trivialization, which is also used in this chapter, to describe an attempt to bring about the "humanization" and the elaboration of a "sophisticated apology" of Nazism by "pointing, indignantly, at crimes committed by others."[196] Unlike Gay, however, the concept of comparative trivialization as here employed applies also to non-German (including Romanian) wartime and postwar depictions of the Holocaust.

A distinction is made among several categories of comparative trivialization : (1) *the competitive comparison*, which holds that atrocities worse or at least equal to the Holocaust have been committed, and that, consequently, the Holocaust does not merit special status ; in the Romanian case, for example, reference is made to atrocities committed against Romanians by Nazis, Hungarians, and Jews, to atrocities committed against communists by Antonescu, and others ; (2) *the banalizing comparison* which "normalizes" the Holocaust by assimilating it to violent events that regularly occur in the history of the mankind, such as wars ; the Holocaust is presented as a regrettable, yet unsurprising outcome of war ; (3) *the parochial comparison* in which the situation of the Jews in Romania is depicted as having been better than their situation in Nazi Germany or in states subject to similar circumstances ; (4) *the deflective comparison*, which considers fascism and the Holocaust to be the outcomes of communism, with the latter, in turn, often being a synonym for Jews according to negationist logic ; (5) *the transactional comparison* in which acceptance of the past and fascist crimes is predicated on accepting the assumption by Jews of responsibility for communist and other crimes perpetrated in Romania and elsewhere in the world.

The intellectual and political profile of those who engage in comparative trivialization is very diverse. One finds in the same category strange bedfellows : negationists and extremists alongside personalities whose profile is democratic and whose reputation is otherwise excellent. This heterogeneity warrants a separate analysis. For now, suffice it to note that it is an illustration of the exceedingly confused ideological and cultural makeup of postcommunist transitions. This sub-chapter merely attempts to depict the

194. Geoff Eley, "Nazism, Politics and the Image of the Past : Thoughts on the West German *Historikerstreit* 1986-1987," *Past and Present*, no. 121 (November 1988), pp. 171-208.
195. Evans, *op. cit*.
196. Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans : Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. XI-XII.

situation as it stands at the moment of the study's writing; in other words, it is an inventory listing the different forms of comparative trivialization by conceptual categories as well as reviewing as fully as possible the variety of social actors engaged in one form or another of comparative trivialization. This may explain why personalities of high reputation who are on record having deplored the Holocaust, yet at other times have made hazardous and self-contradicting statements are mentioned here. It must be emphasized that their inclusion is not in any way geared at presenting a global evaluation of either their intellectual work or personality; rather it is aimed at drawing attention to the negative impact that risky formulations might have on public opinion and the Romanian cultural and political environment.

Our scrutiny begins with those negationists who also indulge in Holocaust trivialization. Once more, Professor Coja's profile is imminently prominent. He makes use of banalizing and parochial comparisons to claim that the situation of Jews under Antonescu was not as grave as people might believe. In 2002, Coja denounced as "a lie" that Jews were sent to the camps in Transnistria "just because they were Jews." Only two categories of Jews ended up in Transnistria: those who were not "Romanian citizens" and had "illegally crossed the border," which was "normal due to wartime conditions," and "the Bessarabian and Bukovinan Jews, who were suspected of pro-Soviet sympathies or proved to entertain them." But such camps, according to Coja, had also existed in the United States during the war for Japanese suspected of non-loyalty to the nation. Detainment conditions in Transnistria, according to a letter sent by Coja to former U.S. First Lady Hilary Clinton as representative of LICAR and of the *Vatra Românească* (Romanian Hearth) Union, had been "by far superior to those the U.S. and Canadian Japanese had in concentration camps set up by the Roosevelt administration."[197] It might be true, Coja conceded that the "identification" of "traitor-Jews" had been carried out "with a certain amount of approximation." It may have led to the inclusion of Jews who had been loyal to Romania among those deported, while possibly leaving out non-loyal Jews. The explanation, however, ought to be sought in the abnormal wartime conditions: "À la guerre comme à la guerre!"[198] The camps in Transnistria, Coja claimed, "never were extermination camps, since practically any Jew could leave for whatever destination, except Romania proper."[199] Or, as he put it at the 2001 symposium, "those concentration camps (how lugubrious this denunciation sounds!)… were nothing but villages. No barbered wire, no military watch. They only had a few gendarmerie, patrolling only during the night, *in order to defend the Jews* against Ukrainian civilians, who, for various reasons, could have acted violently against the Jews [author's emphasis]."[200]

The parochial comparison is widespread due to the myth that makes Antonescu and his regime into "saviors of Jews." The argument is based on deliberate misinterpretation (dating back to the communist regime and largely popular in the nineties[201]) of the reasons that forced the regime to change its policies towards Jews and Roma as of late 1942. The change, however, was but a tactical and opportunist attempt of adaptation to

197. *România Mare*, July 26, 2002.
198. Coja, "Simpozion internaţional," *loc. cit*.
199. *Idem*, *Marele manipulator*, p. 183.
200. *Idem*, "Simpozion internaţional," *loc. cit*.
201. Michael Shafir, "Reabilitarea postcomunistă a mareşalului Antonescu," *loc. cit*.

the altered conditions on the front line. Yet, the change is depicted as reflecting a humanitarian gesture. The negationists retroactively project policies toward Jews in the second part of the war to the first period of Antonescu's dictatorship, while minimizing or ignoring the pogroms and the deportations. It is even claimed that Jews in Transnistria were protected by Antonescu, who offered them refuge in Romania and allowed them to continue on to Palestine.[202] In fact, Antonescu was apparently unaware of the Hungarian Jews' presence in Romania.[203] As Randolph L. Braham has shown, the explanation for this unusual act of the Romanian authorities lies elsewhere.[204]

The Romanian negationists claim that in Transnistria the Jews benefited from living conditions superior to those Romanians at home had to endure during the war. For example, one of the most terrible camps in Transnistria, Vapniarka, was described by Tudor Voicu in an article published in *România Mare* in August 2002 as having a movie-house. Antonescu, Tudor Voicu wrote, had been the "savior" of Romanian Jewry, only to find himself after the war accused by the ungrateful Jews of anti-Semitism.[205] Radu Theodoru also mentions the alleged Vapniarka cinema, but he does so using a deflective negationist explanation, which is unusual for him – an integral negationist. The blame for atrocities committed at Vapniarka and elsewhere, Theodoru claims, should be laid at the door of "The Jewish inmate Kommisars" and of "communists whom the authorities had failed to identify as such."[206] In 1999, Coja admitted that Jews in Transnistria had died of hunger or illness, because Antonescu rightly saw no reason to spend the country's war-strained budgetary resources on Jews who were not Romanian citizens, at a time when hundreds of thousands of Romanians were "confronting hunger and a lack of medicine on the Eastern front."[207] Păunescu has also contributed to the banalization of the Holocaust. According to the poet-turned-politician, it would have been impossible for Jews not to be among the victims of such a tremendous war ; but Păunescu takes a step further : Antonescu, he claims, deported Bessarabia and Bukovina Jews to Transnistria in order to save them from the starvation that ethnic Romanians were enduring back at home.[208]

Nor have only Romanians embraced the argument. According to Larry L. Watts, a U.S. historian who resides in Bucharest, the Marshal had been the "de facto" protector of Jews against plans to implement the "Final Solution," because he shared the "Western standards… concerning human and fundamental civic rights."[209]

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202. For the first instance in postcommunist times when the claim was made, see "Mareşalul Antonescu i-a salvat pe evreii din România. Un dialog Raoul Şorban – Adrian Păunescu, Bucureşti, 17 ianuarie, 1996," *Totuşi iubirea*, nos. 3, 4, 5 (January-February 1996).
203. According to Radu Lecca, had Antonescu been aware of the presence of Hungarian Jews on Romanian territory, "he would have ordered the law to be implemented and they would have been shot." See Radu Lecca, *Eu i-am salvat pe evreii din România* (Bucharest : Roza Vânturilor, 1994), p. 289.
204. Braham, *Romanian Nationalists*, *passim* ; *idem*, "Naţionaliştii români şi viziunea disculpabilizantă a istoriei. Folosirea Holocaustului în scopuri politice," in *idem* (ed.), *Exterminarea evreilor români şi ucraineni*, pp. 73-88.
205. *România Mare*, August 18, 2000.
206. Radu Theodoru, *Mareşalul* (Bucharest : Miracol, 2001), p. 38.
207. Coja, *Marele manipulator*, p. 184.
208. *Totuşi iubirea*, no. 12, April 2-9, 1992.
209. Watts, *op. cit.*, pp. 392-393.

The transactional comparison is often intertwined with deflection: indulging in semantic abuse, the negationists employ "Holocaust" as a linguistic construct to call for recognizing "the Holocaust against the Romanian people" perpetrated by Jews or the "Red Holocaust" inflicted by them on mankind. In 2001, PRM leader C.V. Tudor stated that Romanians "are awaiting the time when the holocaust (sic!) perpetrated against Romanians, by no means a lesser one than the holocaust (sic!) perpetrated against the Jews, will be officially acknowledged."[210] As early as 1991, Tudor was telling his readers that "the Jews brought Bolshevism and terror to Romania"[211] A full decade on, he had not changed opinion: interviewed on a private television channel, he said that Stalinist Romania had been "led by Jews." In what was purported to be a display of bravery, he continued: "Are people scared of saying this? I shall tell it; let them shoot me, let them lock me up because I dare tell the historical truth."[212] In 1992-1993, PRM Senator Mihai Ungheanu published a long serial in *România Mare* on "The Holocaust of Romanian Culture," which was eventually turned into a volume attributing to Jews and only to Jews the plight of imposing the zhdanovist line and of destroying physically and spiritually the postwar Romanian intelligentsia.

As has been mentioned, the discourse of prominent political personalities entails formulations that raise the suspicion of indulging in comparative trivialization. In an interview with the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, President Iliescu said in 2003 that the Holocaust was not singular to the Jewish people and that "many others, including Poles, perished in the same way." Iliescu asserted that, in the course of the war, Jews and communists were evenly treated by the Nazis and used the example of his own father who died at the age of 44, only one year after liberation from a concentration camp. The interviewing journalist pointed out that only Jews and Roma were targets of Nazi extermination, but the President did not change his statement at that time.[213] However, the President's speech of October 12, 2004, on the occasion of the first commemoration of Holocaust Remembrance Day in Romania, demonstrated that the President has fully grasped and internalized the dimensions of the Holocaust and the role played by Romania in it.

According to our conceptual categories, Iliescu had engaged in a competitive comparison. Predictably, the interview sparked criticism in Israel and the United States.[214] The controversy stirred by the presidential interview had among its consequences the establishment of the Wiesel Commission.

The position of Romania's other post-communist president was also somewhat ambiguous. On one hand, in a 1997 message to the FCER, President Emil Constantinescu emphasized that "the planners of this unforgivable genocide were not Romanians;" on the other hand, he acknowledged that the Romanian authorities had "organized deportations, set up concentration camps and promulgated racial legislation" and that "the death of innocents can be neither forgiven, nor undone, nor forgotten… As president of all

210. *România Mare*, June 22, 2001.
211. *Ibid.*, October 25, 1991.
212. Interview on the OTV channel, July 31, 2002. In the same interview, Tudor questioned the death of six million Jews in the Holocaust.
213. *Ha'aretz* – English edition, July 25, 2003, **www.haaretzdaily.com**. Romanian transcript of the interview in the daily *Evenimentul zilei*, August 26, 2003.
214. Shafir, "Negation the Top," *loc. cit.*

Romanian citizens… it is my duty to keep alive the memory of Jews who fell victim of the genocide."[215]

Constantinescu's statement had only a minor echo in Romania. Except for the FCER's publication *Realitatea evreiască*, no media outlet carried it in full – not even the national radio and television. Among the few who reacted was historian Floricel Marinescu. He published in *Aldine*, a nationalist and fundamentalist weekly supplement of the democratic opposition daily *România liberă*, a highly critical article on Constantinescu's statement, where he indulged in both competitive and deflective comparative trivialization :

> From a strictly quantitative perspective, the crimes perpetrated in the name of communist ideology are far larger than those perpetrated in the name of Nazi or similar ideologically-minded regimes... Yet no prominent Jewish personality [from Romania] has apologized for the role that some Jews have played in undermining Romanian statehood, in the country's Bolshevization, in the crimes and the atrocities committed [by them]… Proportionally speaking, the Romanians and Romania suffered more at the hands of the communist regime, to whose oncoming the Jews had made an important contribution, than the Jews themselves had suffered from the Romanian state during the Antonescu regime….The Red Holocaust was incomparably more grave than Nazism.[216]

Surprisingly enough, shortly thereafter, Marinescu was appointed a presidential councilor. His ideas were shared by many Romanian intellectuals close to the center-right political parties that were at the country's helm during Constantinescu's presidential term (see above).[217]

Influences of the Romanian Exile

Three influential personalities of the Romanian exile display recurrent usage of comparative trivialization formulations in essays and books published in Romania : Paul Goma, Monica Lovinescu, and Dorin Tudoran.

One of the few anti-communist dissidents forced into exile in the late seventies, in recent years Goma has produced several tracts[218] in which he demands that the "Red Holocaust" perpetrated on the Romanian people with a significant Jewish contribution be acknowledged and assumed by them. The leitmotif of his well-publicized latest book, *The Red Week*, is rendered by the following quote : "The Red Holocaust, planned by them too, began for us, Romanians, *one year earlier than theirs :* [it started] *on June 28,*

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215. *Realitatea evreiască*, nos. 49-50, April 16 – May 15, 1977.
216. *România liberă*, March 7, 1998.
217. See Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, "Fascisme et communisme en Roumanie : enjeux et usage d'une comparaison," in Henry Rousso (ed.), *Stalinisme et nazisme : Histoire et mémoire comparées*, (Brussels : Editions Complexe, 1999), pp. 201-246.
218. Paul Goma, "Basarabia şi «problema»," *Vatra*, nos. 3-4 (2002), pp. 43-41, and nos. 5-6 (2002), pp. 32-46, as well as *Jurnalul literar*, nos. 5-10 (March-April-May 2002), pp. 1, 8-9 ; *idem*, "Basarabia", *Jurnalul literar* (Bucharest), 2002 ; *idem*, *Săptămâna roşie 28 iunie – 3 iulie 1940 sau Basarabia şi evreii* (henceforth : Goma, *Săptămâna roşie*) (Chişinău : Museum, 2003, and Bucharest : Vremea XXI, 2004) ; this latter book was also serialized in *România liberă*'s supplement *Aldine*. For a well-informed reply, see Radu Ioanid, "Paul Goma între Belville şi Bucureşti," *Observator cultural*, no. 177, June 15-21, 2003.

1940 – and it is not over even today [author's emphasis]."[219] Goma argues that after the cession of Bessarabia and Bukovina to the Soviet Union, Jews (adults and children) committed many acts of aggression against, and humiliation of the Romanian army. They are said to have acted both on Soviet orders and out of "racial hatred" and "hate of Romanians." "Nearly all Jews" in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, he writes, acted "in that Red Week against all Romanians" (p. 171). Goma unequivocally and repeatedly acknowledges Romanian responsibility and even a "collective guilt" for what he calls "the abominable pogrom in Iaşi," as well as for the deportations to Transnistria (pp. 20, 240, 248, 319),[220] yet he argues that "the truth forbidden for half a century" (p. 256) is that those atrocities were exclusively committed out of an urge to avenge, in circumstances specific to wartime, the earlier murders committed by the Jews. He makes no mention of Antonescu's anti-Semitic policies and denies the existence of Romanian anti-Semitism. Goma vows "everlasting gratitude" toward "the Liberating Marshal" (p. 244). On nearly every page, he dwells on the alleged Jewish culpability for bringing communism to Romania (for several pages he lists names of Jewish communists), for having made money out of monopolizing suffering (pp. 10, 115, 183-199) and for having committed murders that "darkened and drew blood from the entire 20th century." As a consequence, Goma demands that these "unpunished executioners" be tried by a "Nuremberg II" tribunal (pp. 95, 170, 217, 274).

This book illustrates a discursive register typical of trivialization through comparison and constitutes a synthesis of negationism and anti-Semitism that can hardly be found in a Romanian-language publication. On the other hand, if Goma excels through radicalism, he is not very original. Similar ideas in different formulations traveled in the right-wing circles of the Romanian diaspora and were echoed in Romania proper. Thus, on April 27, 1993, columnist Roxana Iordache wondered in the daily *România liberă* when Jews will "kneel down" before Romanians and ask for pardon for what they had done to them. The huge *Red Holocaust* of German-based Romanian author Florin Mătrescu circulated similar ideas. The book received a positive review in January 1996 in the respectable weekly *România literară*.

The "monopoly of suffering" topic became even more prominent in Romania and in the Romanian diaspora after the publication of Stéphane Courtois' *Black Book of Communism*. Thus, in the second half of the nineties, two Romanian exiles, Dorin Tudoran (a courageous anticommunist dissident who lives in the United States) and Monica Lovinescu (who has lived in Paris since the immediate aftermath of the war) apply to Romania the critique that Stéphane Courtois and J.F. Revel aim at the refusal of the Western political and intellectual Left to condemn and critically explore communism with the same energy with which the Left denounces fascism. Thus, in a string of articles he wrote for *România literară*,[221] Tudoran blames "the Jewish lobby" for its "suspect,"

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219. Goma, *Săptămâna roşie*, 2004, p. 20.

220. One can find also deflective accents in Goma's book, the author claiming, like Ion Coja, that the Legionnaires that killed Jews during the Iron Guard rebellion were, in fact, Jews dressed in Iron Guard uniforms. Goma cites, in Antonescu's defence, "normal Jews" such as N. Minei and Al. Şafran. On this occasion, he mentions Filderman's "testimony," which in Goma's version turns into a document legalized in New York in 1956 (p. 22) – thus displaying Coja's influence on him.

221. Dorin Tudoran, "Nepoţii gorniştilor" (I-II), *România literară*, no. 12, April 1-7, 1998, and no. 13, April 8-14, 1998 ; "Mitologii recurente," *ibid.*, no. 16, April 29 – May 5, 1988 ; "Şantajul" (I-II-III), *ibid.*, no. 19, May 20, 1998, no. 20, May 27 – June 2, 1998, and no. 21, May 3-10,

"indecent," "counterproductive monopoly over this century's suffering." He wonders "why the Jews have the right to an international lobby that would spare us from amnesia, while we, the rest, are doomed to remain 'merely' the victims of the *Gulag* and have no right to indict the Red Holocaust" (no. 12/1988). In one of these articles, Tudoran quotes a problematic statement by Courtois (who speaks of "a single-minded focus on the Jewish genocide in an attempt to characterize the Holocaust as a unique atrocity," which, Courtois claims, has "prevented the assessment of other episodes of comparable magnitude in the communist world") to conclude : "This is how it was possible to have this indecent monopoly over tragedy and over pain. This is how it was possible, this arrogant exclusivity over memory, remembrance, and commemoration. This is what made possible the blackmail, this is how debate was repressed, this is how taboos were declared" (no. 29/1998). Like Courtois, Tudoran never charges the Jews directly as accomplices in instituting an amnesia on the "Red Holocaust." Rather, he only hints at it in the rhetorical questions that litter his articles.

The same incriminating inference based on the Courtois model is to be found in articles published by two remarkable intellectuals and friends of Tudoran and Lovinescu – Nicolae Manolescu, editor-in-chief of *România literară*, and Gabriel Liiceanu, philosopher and director of the Humanitas publishing house. After deploring the sentence passed on Garaudy in France, Manolescu writes : "Is anyone afraid of losing the monopoly over unveiling crimes against humanity ? Well, it seems that the loss of such a monopoly is of concern to some people. Yet it is unfair and immoral to gag those who deplore the millions of victims of communism just out of fear that not enough people would be left to deplore the millions of victims of Nazism."[222]

While Manolescu's formulations are closer to those of Tudoran, Liiceanu's are nearer to Courtois's, the Romanian philosopher is more explicit than the French historian is. In a 1997 speech delivered on International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, Liiceanu wondered : "How was it possible for one who, at a certain moment in history had to wear the victim's uniform, to later don the garment of the executioner ? "[223] The concern was not novel with Liiceanu. Back in 1995, in an editor's note to the translation of a book on Romanian anti-Semitism published by Humanitas, he had distanced himself from "those who are ever-ready to speak up as victims, but forget to testify as executioners."[224] Later in his diary, published in 2002, Liiceanu elaborated : "Is it that difficult to understand that one first settles accounts with *the evil one has encountered*, that uprooted one's own life, that highjacked one's own

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1998 ; "Gimnastica de întreţinere sau pretextul Sebastian," *ibid.*, no. 22, 10-16 June 1998 ; "Iubeşti poporu' ? ," *ibid.*, nos. 23-24, June 17-23, 1998 ; "Practica şi doctrina," *ibid.*, no. 26, July 1-7, 1998 ; "Logica genocidară," *ibid.*, no. 27, July 8-14, 1998 ; "Chestiunea epistemologică," *ibid.*, no. 28, July 15-21, 1988 ; "Ocultarea sau Comuniunea Sovietică," *ibid.*, no. 29, July 22-28, 1998 ; "Moscova şi monitorizarlâcul," *ibid.*, no. 30, July 22 – August 4, 1998 ; "Lectura de rasă," *ibid.*, no. 32, August 12-18, 1988.

222. Nicolae Manolescu, *op. cit.* ; "Cum am devenit rinocer", *România liberă*, no. 32, August 12-18, 1998. He adds that the monopoly is "highly comfortable."

223. Gabriel Liiceanu, "Sebastian, mon frère," *22*, April 29 – May 5, 1997, reprinted in *Declaraţie de iubire* (Bucharest : Humanitas, 2001), pp. 5-23.

224. *Idem*, "Nota Editorului," in Leon Volovici, *Ideologia naţionalistă şi "problema evreiască" în România anilor '30* (Bucharest : Humanitas, 1995), p. 7.

history and whose effects one cannot rid oneself of even ten years after its departure from the scene? … Whence the vain refusal of co-habitation in sufferance? Whence this claim, admitting no counterclaim, to being a *unique victim*? [author's emphasis]"[225]

Monica Lovinescu has, in turn, posed questions; yet, she also has several firm answers. In the foreword to *Diagonale*, a volume comprising articles she had published over the years in *România literară*, she wrote the following: "Is it really necessary to wonder if the resurgence of the antifascist obsession is not in fact aimed at hiding the real murders of communism and their perpetrators? The question is, of course, rhetorical, and the answer is yes. Right-wing negationism is now followed by, and even more widespread than, left-wing negationism."[226] The concept of "left-wing negationism" is borrowed from J.-F. Revel. In a laudatory review of Revel's *The Grand Parade*, Lovinescu wrote that he has managed to unmask the mechanism employed for transforming "*the duty to commemorate* the victims of Nazism into an excuse to impose on us *the obligation to forget* the Gulag [author's emphasis]."[227] But Revel, in turn, relies on several academic sources, including Ernst Nolte[228] and Alain Besançon. If Nolte's brand of "revisionism" has been discussed in the first section of this study, it must be pointed out that Revel misquotes Besançon when he writes, "according to the formula suggested by Besançon, the 'hypermnesia of Nazism' diverts attention from the 'amnesia of communism.'"[229] Indeed, Besançon authored the two phrases, yet he never argued in his *Le malheur du siècle* that the "hypermnesia of Nazism" diverts attention from the "amnesia of communism."[230] He just noted with regret that Nazism and communism are being memorialized differently and provided several reasons for the discrepancy, yet none of those reasons may legitimately constitute a basis for Revel's interpretation. Revel's book ensured that Besançon's opus was popularized with Revel's distortion in right-wing intellectual milieux in France[231] (including those of the Romanian diaspora there[232]). It is worth noting that Revel's reading of Besançon is quoted on the Internet sites of extreme-right groups and publications.[233]

It is important to point out at this stage that Besançon, Revel, and Courtois do not share the same opinions. Thus, Besançon correctly pleads for comparing and commemorating Nazism and communism with the same care, whereas Revel and Courtois blame

225. Gabriel Liiceanu, *Uşa interzisă* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2002).
226. Monica Lovinescu, *Diagonale* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2002), p. 6.
227. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
228. Revel, *Marea paradă. Eseu despre supravieţuirea utopiei socialiste* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2002), published in France in 2000. The citation from Nolte is taken from the exchange of letters between the German historian and François Furet, published in Romanian translation as *Fascism şi communism* (Bucharest: Univers, 2000), pp. 127-128.
229. Revel, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
230. Alain Besançon, *Le malheur du siècle. Sur le communisme, le nazisme et l'unicité de la Shoah* (Paris: Fayard, 1998; Romanian edition, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999).
231. For example, Jean-François Revel, "Devoir de mémoire et communisme," *Le Figaro*, February 12, 2001.
232. See, for example, the dialogue between Dan Culcer and Paul Goma in *Asymetria. Revista de cultură, critică şi imaginaţie*, 1, no. 2 (November 2000), **http://www.asymetria.org/culcergomafrench.html**.
233. Besançon is cited *via* Revel on the Internet sites of several radical-right groups and publications.

the problems with the commemoration of communism on the commemoration of the Holocaust. This is the key difference between benign comparison and comparative trivialization. Revel forces the comparison into an over-interpretation serving his anti-communist discourse, while Courtois does the same by inserting an incriminating insinuation directed at the Jews. In Romania, prestigious intellectuals such as Tudoran, Manolescu, and Liiceanu preferred to popularize the opinions of Revel and Courtois rather than that of Besançon, and they did so by using provocative concepts ("Red Holocaust," "monopoly on suffering," "Judeocentrism") that are widely popular in radical-right circles.

Beginning to Come to Terms with the Past

Romania is just beginning to confront its own past and assume responsibility for it. Unavoidably, ambiguities persist at this stage, but there are indications that political and intellectual elites are somewhat more inclined to start coping with the country's darker periods in its past than was the case a few years ago. The setting up of the Commission for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania is proof in itself of a movement in that direction.

While in historiography selective negationism remains an important trait,[234] a number of historians approach the Holocaust with professionalism and honesty. Şerban Papacostea and Andrei Pippidi stand out for having reacted very early against attempts to rehabilitate Antonescu.[235] Lucian Boia undertook a deconstruction of the myths of the Legion and of Antonescu as well as stereotypes about Jews.[236] Dinu C. Giurescu was the first Romanian historian to have dedicated an entire chapter to the fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust in his 1999 published *Romania in the Second World War*.[237]

Institutes specializing in research on the history of the Holocaust have been established. Among these, special mention should be made of the Center for the Study of Jewish History in Romania, which acts under the aegis of the FCER and, as of 1990, has pioneered research on the Holocaust. Thus far, this institute has published five volumes of documents on this topic.

Scientific colloquia were organized at several research institutes that function within the Romanian Academy. Remarkably, the Center for History and Military Theory Research (formerly a bastion of pro-Antonescu negationist historians) has been turned into a respectable research institution.[238] Institutes or research centers specializing in Jewish

234. Illustrative is the position of Dan Berindei, president of the Romanian Academy's History Section, who said: "There was no Holocaust in Romania. There were deportations to Transnistria, an antechamber of the Holocaust, yet there was no Holocaust *per se*" (*Jurnalul naţional*, May 8, 2002).
235. On Papacostea, see Shafir, "Reabilitarea postcomunistă a mareşalului Antonescu," *loc. cit.*, and Eskenasy, "Istoriografii şi istoricii", *loc. cit*. Most of Pippidi's articles on Antonescu are to be found in his *Despre statui şi morminte. Pentru o teorie a istoriei simbolice* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2000).
236. Lucian Boia, *Istorie şi mit în conştiinţa românească* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1997); *idem*, *România: ţară de frontieră a Europei* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2001).
237. Dinu C. Giurescu, *România în al doilea război mondial* (Bucharest: ALL Educational, 1999).
238. For evidence, see Mihail E. Ionescu and Liviu Rotman (eds.), *op. cit*.

history were set up at universities in Cluj, Bucharest, Craiova, and Iaşi, and publications specializing in Jewish history and the Holocaust came into being, as well. Professional journals edited at research institutes with an established scholarly tradition started opening their pages to the publication of articles dealing with the tragedy of Jews and Roma during the Second World War. School textbooks are undergoing a process of revision and improvement, though a great deal remains to be done in this respect, and inaccuracies still abound.[239] Publishing houses are translating a relatively large number of books on Jewish history, though it must be mentioned that the bulk of these volumes are still put out by the FCER publishing house Hasefer. A young generation of historians, not yet very visible and largely concentrating for now on publishing studies on narrow topics, gradually begins to make its presence felt and to demonstrate that it is capable of tackling the Holocaust period from new perspectives.

Unfortunately, for now there is no genuine readiness to perceive the history of Jews in Romania as part of Romania's own history. This artificial division is a major obstacle on the road to a critical assessment of Romania's national past.

239. See Felicia Waldman, "Reflection of the 'Jewish Problem' and the Holocaust in Romanian School Textbooks (1998-2002)," **http : //www.goethe.de/MS/buk/archiv/material/feliciawaldmanengl.doc**.

Findings and Recommendations

Historical Findings

Statement of Fact and Responsibility

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany, its allies, and collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Not only Jews were victimized during this period. Persecution and mass arrests were perpetrated against ethnic groups such as Sinti and Roma, people with disabilities, political opponents, homosexuals, and others.

A significant percentage of the Romanian Jewish community was destroyed during World War II. Systematic killing and deportation were perpetrated against the Jews of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Dorohoi county. Transnistria, the part of occupied Ukraine under Romanian administration, served Romania as a giant killing field for Jews.

The Commission concludes, together with the large majority of bona fide researchers in this field, that the Romanian authorities were the main perpetrators of this Holocaust, in both its planning and implementation. This encompasses the systematic deportation and extermination of nearly all the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina as well some Jews from other parts of Romania to Transnistria, the mass killings of Romanian and local Jews in Transnistria, the massive execution of Jews during the Iaşi pogrom ; the systematic discrimination and degradation applied to Romanian Jews during the Antonescu administration – including the expropriation of assets, dismissal from jobs, the forced evacuation from rural areas and concentration in district capitals and camps, and the massive utilization of Jews as forced laborers under the same administration. Jews were degraded solely on account of their Jewish origin, losing the protection of the state and becoming its victims. A portion of the Roma population of Romania was also subjected to deportation and death in Transnistria.

Determining the Number of Victims

The number of Romanian Jews and of Jews in the territories under Romania's control who were murdered during the Holocaust has not been determined with final precision. However, the Commission concludes that between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews were murdered or died during the Holocaust in Romania and the territories under its control. An additional 135,000 Romanian Jews living under Hungarian

control in Northern Transylvania also perished in the Holocaust, as did some 5,000 Romanian Jews in other countries. Referring to Romania, Raul Hilberg concluded that "no country, besides Germany, was involved in massacres of Jews on such a scale."

Cognizant of the enormous responsibility that has been placed in its hands, the Commission determined not to cite one conclusive statistic as to the number of Jews killed in Romania and the territories under its rule. Instead, the Commission chose to define the range of numbers as they are represented in contemporary research. Further research will hopefully establish the exact number of victims, though there may never be a full statistical picture of the human carnage wrought during the Holocaust in Romania.

Between 45,000 and 60,000 Jews were killed in Bessarabia and Bukovina by Romanian and German troops in 1941. Between 105,000 and 120,000 deported Romanian Jews died as a result of the expulsions to Transnistria. In Transnistria between 115,000 and 180,000 indigenous Jews were killed, especially in Odessa and the counties of Golta and Berezovka. At least 15,000 Jews from the *Regat* were murdered in the Iaşi pogrom and as a result of other anti-Jewish measures. Approximately 132,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz in May-June 1944 from Hungarian-ruled Northern Transylvania. Detailed information about the origin of these statistics, the calculation, and references are provided in the relevant chapters of the report.

A high proportion of those Roma who were deported also died. Of the 25,000 Roma (half of them children) sent to Transnistria, approximately 11,000 perished. Centuries-old nomadic Roma communities disappeared forever.

Evolution of Destruction

The story of the near destruction of Romanian Jewry during the Second World War is filled with paradoxes. Throughout the twenties and thirties, the anti-Semitic propaganda, instigation, and street violence of the Iron Guard poisoned the political atmosphere and stirred up Romanians' animosity toward the country's Jewish population. During the period in which it played a role in government, from mid-1940 through to January 1941, it spearheaded the enactment of anti-Semitic laws and decrees that severely damaged the Jews and prepared the way for their destruction by vilifying them and depriving them of rights, property, dignity, and, for the most part, the organizational and material means of self-defense. The victims of the Legionnaire pogroms of January 1941 were few in number compared to those who perished at the hands of the Romanian government, army, and gendarmerie later on. While the Iron Guard advocated violent action against the Jews and is often blamed for the Holocaust in Romania, and while many former members of the Iron Guard and many Iron Guard sympathizers took part in the systematic forced deportations and murders of Jews that began in 1941, the Iron Guard as an organization had been banned by the time most of the killing took place, and its leadership (most of which had fled to Nazi Germany under SS protection) played no role in the country's government. Direct responsibility for the Holocaust in Romania falls squarely on the Antonescu-led Romanian state.

In Romania, as in Hungary in 1941 and Bulgaria in 1942, anti-Jewish discrimination was compounded by geography. Jews were killed first and foremost in territories that had changed hands and were annexed to these countries. In Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia,

territories once lost to and then regained from the USSR, Jews were being deported and murdered, while in Bucharest, paradoxically, leaders of the Jewish community were engaged in a dialogue with the government aimed at saving them. Branded enemies of the Romanian nation along with the rest of their kinsmen by an ugly official propaganda, those leaders nevertheless proved able to maintain channels of communication with Romanian officials.

Although the Romanian leadership and bureaucracy shared Germany's desire to liquidate the Jews, they coordinated their efforts with the Germans with difficulty and only for limited periods. Differences over matters of style, timing, and methodology triggered negative reactions from the Germans, who were often angered by the Romanians' inefficient pogrom "techniques," the improvised nature of the "death marches," the haste of Romanian officials in pressing huge columns of deportees across the Dniester in 1941 and the Bug in 1942, and the fact that the Romanians often did this with little clear plan for what to do with the Jews once they were there, or even expected the Germans to handle the problem for them. In addition, in early 1943, Romanian policy was influenced by Realpolitik. German pressure to hand over the Jews of Old Romania produced a counter-effect: no foreign power would be allowed to dictate to Romanian nationalists what to do with their Jews.

In the summer of 1942, the Antonescu regime agreed in writing to deport the Jews of the Regat and southern Transylvania to the Nazi death camp in Belzec, Poland, and was planning new deportations to Transnistria. Yet only months later, the same Romanian officials reversed course and resisted German pressure to deport their country's Jews to death camps in Poland. Initially, Romania had also approved the German deportation of Romanian Jews from Germany and German-occupied territories, which resulted in the death of about 5,000 Romanian citizens. But when the shifting tides of war changed minds in Bucharest, thousands of Romanian Jews living abroad were able to survive thanks to renewed Romanian diplomatic protection. And while Romanian Jews may have been deported en masse to Transnistria, thousands were subsequently (if selectively) repatriated. Ironically, as the vast German camp system realized its greatest potential for killing, the number of murders committed by the Romanians decreased, as did the determination with which they enforced their country's anti-Semitic laws. Such contradictions go a long way toward explaining the survival of a large portion Romania's Jews under Romanian authority.

Documents do record some instances of Romanians – both civilian and military – rescuing Jews, and many of these have been recognized by Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among the Nations." But these initiatives were isolated cases in the final analysis – exceptions to the general rule, which was terror, forced labor, plunder, rape, deportation, and murder, with the participation or at least the acquiescence of a significant proportion of the population.

The treatment of the Jews from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria triggered a series of external and internal appeals, which influenced Ion Antonescu's decision to cancel the planned deportations from Moldavia, Walachia, and southern Transylvania. Swiss diplomats tried to intervene. The question of whether the Papal Nuncio appealed on behalf of the Jews is still a matter of debate and merits further research. The American War Refugee Board, established in January 1944, was involved in the rescue of orphans from Transnistria. International Red Cross representatives visited some ghettos in Transnistria in December 1943 and were involved in the rescue of orphans from

this area. The Jewish Agency, the World Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Emergency Committee in the United States appealed to the Romanian government to put a stop to the persecution of the Jews. Within the framework of the negotiations with Radu Lecca at the end of 1942, the Jewish Agency proposed to transfer the Jews who had survived in Transnistria first to Romania and then to enable them to leave. The ransom plan was viewed as a possibility to make the Romanian government change its policy or at least to win time. And, indeed, various liberal, or simply decent, Romanian politicians and public figures occasionally intervened on behalf of the Jews or Roma.

It must be remembered, however, that voices of moderation were not the only ones clamoring for Ion Antonescu's attention. He also received numerous pleas to proceed still more vigorously against Romanian Jewry. In an October 1943 memorandum, the so-called 1922 Generation (former Legionnaires and Cuzists) demanded that "all the assets" of the Jews be "transferred to the state" in order that they might "be placed in the hands of pure-blooded Romanians." (Although by that date the assets of the Jews, with few exceptions, had already been transferred to the state.) These diehards continued to demand "the mandatory wearing of a distinctive insignia by all Jews" and the prohibition of Jews from numerous professions. "The radical and final solution of the Jewish question," they wrote as if the recent course of the war had been completely lost on them, "must be carried out in conjunction with [the plan for] the future Europe." When the repatriation of Jews from Transnistria began, Gheorghe Cuza, son of A.C. Cuza of the National Christian Party, and Colonel Barcan, prefect of Dorohoi, publicly protested.

Romania under Antonescu was a dictatorial regime, and Antonescu's orders could condemn to death the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina, just as they might allow for the survival of most the Jews of Moldavia and Walachia. The entire repressive military, police, and judicial apparatus was mobilized against the Jews during the first half of the war. Official propaganda successfully presented the Jews as the most important domestic enemy, as Moscow's or London's agents, and as the main cause of Romania's economic difficulties. Acceptance of these lies weighed more heavily than fear as an explanation for the lack of protest against the regime's policies.

The Antonescu regime's anti-Jewish policies drew strength from a long history of anti-Semitism among Romanian political and intellectual elites. They also directly borrowed from the ideology of both the fascist Iron Guard and the single-mindedly anti-Semitic National Christian Party. Longstanding propaganda stances of both parties found their way into Antonescu's positions. Many civil servants in mid-level positions were former members of the National Christian Party. Moreover, the regime's anti-Semitic legislation was typically fascist and sometimes overtly inspired by Nazi racial laws, even though Romania's first anti-Semitic legislation was already issued by the National Christian Party government in December 1937 before its alliance with Nazi Germany.

The idea of forced emigration had found widespread support among fascist and non-fascist anti-Semites in many European countries during the interwar period. The Nazis had promoted such a solution before 1939. In Romania, the Legion of the Archangel Michael and the National Christian Party had propounded this doctrine, which Antonescu wholeheartedly assimilated. Some historians have argued that forced emigration was the intent of the regime's program, but the main tools employed by Antonescu and his regime in their plan to eliminate the Jews from Romania were executions, deportations, forced labor, and starvation.

If the anti-Semitic policies and practices of the Antonescu regime were inspired by hatred, the behavior of its bureaucrats was guided for the most part by petty, pragmatic criteria, which sometimes lent its practice a distinct, opportunistic flavor. Perhaps Raul Hilberg described the essence of the situation best when he wrote,

> Opportunism was practiced in Romania not only on a national basis but also in personal relations… The search for personal gain in Romania was so intensive that it must have enabled many Jews to buy relief from persecution… In examining the Romanian bureaucratic apparatus, one is therefore left with the impression of an unreliable machine that did not properly respond to command and that acted in unpredictable ways, sometimes balking, sometimes running away with itself. That spurting action, unplanned and uneven, sporadic and erratic, was the outcome of an opportunism that was mixed with destructiveness, a lethargy periodically interrupted by outbursts of violence. The product of this mixture was a record of anti-Jewish actions that is decidedly unique.

The result was tragedy for innumerable Romanian Jews, while also leaving the door to salvation open for many. For example, when it became evident that "Romanianization" was having a negative effect on the economy, Antonescu curtailed this extra-legal process. Bureaucratic inefficiency and disorganization also helped. The haste to destroy the Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina created a chaotic situation, which provided opportunities for Jews to improvise means of surviving the process. At first it seemed only a matter of time before the government would deport the Jews of Walachia and Moldavia – those deemed less "treasonous," according to the official line, than the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina – but still deserving of dispatch to the German death camps in occupied Poland. But as time passed, the calculation that it would be useful to have some Jews still alive at the end of the war saved the surviving Jews from this fate.

Internal and external appeals, misunderstandings in Romania's relations with Germany, but mostly Mihai Antonescu's early realization that the war on the Eastern front might be lost impeded completion of the extermination plan. By fall 1942, a second phase in Romanian policy had begun. Ion Antonescu remained a violent anti-Semite (in fact, in February 1944, he voiced regret at not having deported all the Jews), but as the war dragged on, pragmatic and opportunistic considerations became more and more dominant in Romanian decision-making.

When Romania joined Nazi Germany in a war against the Jewish people, the Antonescu regime drew on pre-Nazi Romanian anti-Semitic and fascist ideologies to initiate and implement the Holocaust in Romania. The Romanian state utilized the army, gendarmerie, police, civil servants, journalists, writers, students, mayors, public and private institutions, as well as industrial and trade companies to degrade and destroy the Jews under Romanian administration. The orders were issued in Bucharest, not in Berlin.

When the Antonescu government decided to stop the extermination of the Jews, the extermination did stop. The change in policy toward the Jews began in October 1942, before the Axis defeat at Stalingrad, and deportations were definitively terminated in March-April 1943. Discussions regarding the repatriation of deported Jews followed. The result of this change in policy was that at least 290,000 Romanian Jews survived.

Of all the allies of Nazi Germany, Romania bears responsibility for the deaths of more Jews than any country other than Germany itself. The murders committed in Iaşi, Odessa, Bogdanovka, Domanovka, and Peciora, for example, were among the most hideous murders committed against Jews anywhere during the Holocaust. Romania

committed genocide against the Jews. The survival of Jews in some parts of the country does not alter this reality.

In light of the factual record summarized in the Commission's report, efforts to rehabilitate the perpetrators of these crimes are particularly abhorrent and worrisome. Nowhere else in Europe has a mass murderer like Ion Antonescu, Hitler's faithful ally until the very end, been publicly honored as a national hero.

Official communist historiography often tried to dilute or completely deny the responsibility of Romanians in the slaughter of the Jews, placing all blame on the Germans and déclassé elements in Romanian society. In postcommunist Romania, political and cultural elites often chose to ignore and sometimes chose to encourage pro-Antonescu propaganda, which opened the door to explicit Holocaust denial and the rehabilitation of convicted war criminals. There have been few public voices in opposition to this dominant trend.

Contemporary Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on its findings and conclusions, the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania makes the following recommendations.

Public Awareness of the Holocaust

Acceptance of the Report

The government of Romania should issue an official declaration acknowledging the report of the Commission and adopting the entirety of its contents and conclusions.

Publication of the Commission's Report

The full report of the Commission, once accepted and endorsed by the president of Romania, shall be published in Romanian and English and made available in both print and Internet editions. Consideration should also be given to publishing a French language version.

Dissemination of Summary Findings

The full report shall be distributed throughout the country to all libraries, schools, universities, and other educational and research institutions. At the same time, the Commission shall also prepare an abridged summary report of its findings, and all efforts should be undertaken to ensure its widest distribution. The Commission recommends that this could include publication in newspapers or journals as well as the preparation and publication of a paperback book version that would be distributed to each household in Romania, just as the government of Sweden distributed copies of the publication, *Tell Ye Your Children*, to every household in Sweden.

Public Information Efforts

Special consideration should be given to engage the media in order to enhance public interest in the report and the primary sources on which it is based. Efforts should be made to organize conferences and roundtable discussions on radio and television that make use of Commission members and experts to disseminate the report and its findings.

Holocaust Education in Romania

One of the most basic reasons for the creation of the Commission has been the need for correcting and supplementing what is currently known about the Holocaust in Romania. The long-term success of the Commission will, in no small measure, be judged by its impact on the teaching of the Holocaust to present and future Romanian students.

Review and Preparation of Textbooks

Many Romanian textbooks currently in use that do refer to the Holocaust present incomplete or even factually incorrect information. The Commission recommends that the Ministry of Education create a working group, in cooperation with experts of the Commission and appropriate international institutions, with the purpose of reviewing, correcting, revising, and drafting appropriate curricula and textbook material on the Holocaust based on the findings of the Commission's report, with the goal of completing this work as soon as possible but no later than June 2006. In doing so, consideration should also be given to describing the historical experience of Jews and Roma in Romania prior to their persecution during the Holocaust.

Commission Publication of Material Inserts

In order to ensure that the findings of the Commission are quickly integrated into school curricula, the Commission should prepare its own (age-specific) materials as a free-standing insert for primary and secondary school use. Those institutions with experience in teacher training (e.g., Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) should be asked to assist in providing the necessary instruction to Romanian teachers on how to use this new material.

Higher Education

Universities and the Romanian Academy should be called on to organize conferences and symposia on the Holocaust in Romania. Colleges and universities should be encouraged to establish courses on the subject, not only for their students but also for professional, cultural, and public opinion leaders in the country. In so doing, they should address the long tradition of anti-Semitism in intellectual circles, which provided a foundation for the Holocaust and current negationist trends.

Teacher-Training and Resource Sharing

The Ministry of Education should commit itself to the long-term training of teachers qualified to teach about the Holocaust. Several national initiatives in the area of Holocaust education and remembrance are already underway. These include a one-week course offered by the National Defense College, the participation of master teachers in Yad Vashem seminars, and the Romanian application for membership in the International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. These initiatives should be commended and supported. Consideration should be given to the creation of a national network that would aid in the distribution and sharing of materials and resources for teaching the Holocaust.

Commemoration of the Holocaust

Government Observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day

The government of Romania has adopted October 9 as the official date of Holocaust commemoration. The Commission calls on the President and government to mark this date in several appropriate ways, including proclamations by the President and the prime minister, convening a special session of the Parliament, a public display of mourning, such as draping official flags in black and a having a national moment of silence, and organizing seminars and discussions in the media and at universities and other public institutions.

Educational Programs to Mark Remembrance Day

The Ministry of Education and schools throughout Romania should organize special programs and assemblies to mark the commemoration date. Consideration should be given to holding essay contests, inviting Holocaust survivors to speak of their experiences, and other means of engaging students' interest.

Other Commemorative Events

Religious leaders should be encouraged to observe Holocaust Remembrance Day through an interfaith ceremony and service. Additional efforts should be made to engage religious leaders and theological students in the subject, so that they can include the Holocaust in their studies and their sermons.

[Note: When October 9 falls on a weekend, the proposed programs for schools, Parliament, and other institutions should be scheduled on a nearby weekday.]

Holocaust Memorials and Exhibitions

A national memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in Romania should be erected on public property in Bucharest. Additionally, there are several mass graves of Holocaust victims on Romanian territory (most notably victims of the Iaşi pogrom), and they should be properly identified and maintained by the government of Romania.

Furthermore, consideration should be given to the establishment of permanent exhibitions on the Holocaust in Romania at the National Historical Museum in Bucharest and at other regional museums. Likewise, a traveling exhibition on the Holocaust should be produced for use throughout the country.

Local authorities, particularly in former centers of Jewish populations, should be encouraged to find ways to recognize their prewar Jewish communities as well as to commemorate the Holocaust. For example, this could be accomplished with special exhibits in local museums, memorial plaques at historically significant sites, and the restoration of the Jewish names to streets and public squares.

Documentation of Holocaust Victims

Every effort should be made to document the names of Holocaust victims in Romania. The Romanian government and its archival institutions and repositories should assist Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in their work of collecting information and digitizing their findings.

Archival Access

Access to Holocaust-related records in the Romanian government archives is essential for present-day and future historians to do their work. The Commission calls on the Romanian government to remove all impediments to access and further recommends that a central Holocaust-related archive center be established in Bucharest at the Central University Library or the Library of the Academy.

Unfinished Matters

In offering its recommendations for furthering awareness and understanding of the Holocaust in Romania, the Commission draws attention to several contradictory and detrimental matters that require swift and positive resolution:

Reversing the Rehabilitation of War Criminals

Since the fall of communism in Romania, we have witnessed the rehabilitation of various war criminals who were directly responsible for the crimes of the Holocaust. These include, for example, the noted war criminals Radu Dinulescu and Gheorghe Petrescu, whose "rehabilitation" was recently upheld by the Supreme Court. The government of Romania must take every measure available to it to annul their rehabilitation and, in any

case, should forcefully, unequivocally, and publicly condemn these war criminals (and others like them) for their crimes.

Accepting Responsibility for Perpetrators of Crimes during the Holocaust

The government must also demonstrate that Romania accepts responsibility for alleged Romanian war criminals through actions that include, but are not limited to: initiating prosecution actions for war crimes against individuals in cases where this remains a viable possibility; implementing all provisions of international law and all treaty obligations that pertain to the treatment of war criminals; and cooperating fully with other governments in keeping with the highest standard of international practice in such matters.

Correcting and Enforcing Legislation on Holocaust Denial and Public Veneration of Antonescu

Romanian legislation presented in March 2002 bans fascist, racist, and xenophobic organizations and symbols. It prohibits the denial of the Holocaust. It also makes illegal the cult of all persons guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity (for which Antonescu was sentenced to death), including erecting statues, mounting plaques, and naming streets or public places after such people. Although many public monuments dedicated to Antonescu have been dismantled, there are still streets bearing his name. His portrait still hangs in some government buildings, which must be considered public space. Holocaust denial literature continues to be published and sold freely. Furthermore, two commissions of the Romanian Senate proposed amending the law by defining the Holocaust as limited only to actions organized by Nazi authorities, thereby excluding the Romanian experience in which Romanian officials, and not the Nazis, organized the exterminations.

The Commission calls for the formal adoption of the legislation without any changes and urges the government and its agents to enforce all of its provisions and all other existing legal provisions in this area.

Implementation and Follow-Up

The Commission recommends that the government of Romania establish a permanent agency, commission, or foundation that will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the recommendations listed above and fostering the study of the Holocaust in Romania.

Afterword

Both the decision of creating the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania and the publishing of its Report represent an emblematic act in the evolution of how the modern and recent history in Central and East European countries is perceived, of understanding all its stages from the perspective of such tragic and singular episodes in their uniqueness : Holocaust, the Second World War, the communist concentration regime.

The reevaluation of our own past, which coincides, in most cases, with its restructuring according to new data that were occulted till recently, new facts and new responsibilities, is or should be simultaneous to the process of political, academic, educational and – at last but not least – civic assuming of the events.

The impact of the re-arranged facts in their natural order on the public consciousness and political media is stunning and takes all forms : from the speechless acceptance in front of the historic evidence to the denial that is stuck in the matrixes of the past.

Looking back, understanding, accepting and assuming are the more difficult the more post--communist European societies confront themselves – in order to reach the understanding of the core of the tragedy that is the Holocaust – with the temptation of absolving themselves through the difficulties of the transition, or to give up in front of victimizing tendencies, of situating in the confluences of varied written and re-written historiographies. Coming back to the very beginning of the Romanian Holocaust means, today, assuming the fact that this episode was written in varied tones during the last decades of Romanian historiography. Initially, almost all references to Holocaust were removed, not tolerated or even forbidden and, when resurfaced, they mirrored the myths of a new generation, absolved of any responsibility, evolving to new comparative approach, which was minimizing the number of victims and the political decisions of that moment.

We can say that the real democratization of the discourse concerning the Holocaust does not concomitantly begin with the process of catharsis of the Romanian society, but it is triggered under our own eyes through the publishing of the Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania and the assuming of its recommendations by the political elite and civil society on the whole.

The report comprises, as a whole, the attempts from the last decade of the previous century of rewriting the history of the Romanian Holocaust, approaching the study of this tragic episode from the right perspective. Consequently, the Report has a double valence : it ends a period marked by singular voices preoccupied by the writing of the Romanian historiography chapter concerning the Holocaust, by peripheral polemics on the same phenomenon, that were left in shadow in comparison with other fundamental debates that the civil society involved into. Therefore, the Report puts and end to this quite long temporal sequence by approaching difficult and long time avoided subjects : the evolution of the Jewish question, the internal development of anti-Semitism, the territoriality of Holocaust, the real succession of historical events, the sinister balance sheet of victims and political responsibility.

The Report appears as a huge, yet not exhaustive, collecting corpus of varied writings, attempts of publishing documents, depositions on the Romanian Holocaust initiated by historians, along with survivors, writers, artists, representatives of mass-media.

However, one cannot talk about a real debate concerning the implications of Holocaust and this is the fact that gives the incipient character to the Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania. This Report represents a stage in studying and recommending an educational step in order to preserve the memory of cohabitation with the Jewish community in Romania.

At the same time, the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania marks the beginning of an analytical process on the nature of contemporary phenomenon of anti-Semitism and its connections with the new threats towards the global security.

I do consider that, by appropriating the Report, Romania proves political courage by accepting its own past and reconciling with its own national consciousness, skipping all the steps of the recent history I just tackled. The report has an outstanding character in a region where Holocaust remained a subject of political debate. The assimilation of recommendations by the Romanian political class, as a whole, demonstrates the irreversibility of the democratization process, which entitles us to be in a dignified manner an equal member in the family of European nations.

The Report also leads the way to the components of our national identity that have special meanings for the centers of Romanian spirituality, especially in Moldova, which have a long tradition of cohabitation with the Jewish communities. These places gave Romania a large number of Jewish personalities who had a major contribution to the political, economic, social, scientific and cultural life, while the fates of others were tragically affected by the pogroms and deportations of those years.

The professionalism and objectivity of the Report should be noted, as it was conceived on the basis of the existing archives in Romania. The Romanian and foreign experts who accomplished this remarkable scientific work in an extremely short time benefited from the collaboration with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, whom we thank to once more. We also want to thank the American Jewish organizations, especially to B'nai B'rith International and American Jewish Committee, for the constant help they granted for years during Romania's efforts of reconciliation with its own past.

An important role in facilitating the access to the archives for the editing of the Report belonged to the agreements signed in the last decade between the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and varied Romanian institutions which have archives dating from the Second World War. These superb efforts must continue in order to ease the implementation of recommendations contained in the conclusions of the Report. Supporting these efforts and stages has a huge importance, as they are meant to present the errors of the past and to ensure the education of the young generations in the spirit of truth.

They are even more necessary as the Jewish community had a tremendous contribution to the Romanian history, culture, science and economy for centuries.

The tragic experience of the Holocaust constrains us to continue our efforts of the last years and to assume the responsibilities that we have in the wake of this phenomenon. The education on Holocaust and the research of this phenomenon will make impossible the reoccurrence of such tragedies by establishing the spirit of dialogue and tolerance among all members of the Romanian society, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation.

I do believe that the history of Jewish communities, the reenactment of their diverse life before the Second World War, the history of anti-Semitism and Holocaust are all fields of research and of stimulating the educational process, which haven't been explored till now. It is a new way in a new Europe and everything comes at a time when the reform in the Middle East is widely debated. Concepts are changing, they migrate across disciplines at an astonishing speed while we, as an entire civil society, are the architects of this change. The alterity is a trait of our own national consciousness, a point of reference and of permanent self defining.

We are the depositaries of a huge number of documents that are doubled by a relation that can hardly be described in a few words, extremely warm and friendly, with the large community of Israelis of Romanian origin. The cohabitation with the Jewish communities took unexpected forms during the totalitarian period. This is what confers uniqueness to Romanian historiography. The study of the Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania will lead to the appearance of new voices, which will be able to testify not only emotionally, but with all the necessary scientific expertise, about a living world with a complicated and sometimes somber, other times serene past, which continues to influence the modern political direction of Romania.

Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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