The Romanian Holocaust in Memory and Commemoration

The Jewish fate during World War II in postwar commemoration
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Introduction

We are gratified that so many people come here. The trouble is, most of them come for the wrong reason! They regard the house as a shrine to a martyred Jewish girl. That is the least of its meanings… All of these people are thinking in terms of the past. But the object of the Anne Frank Foundation is to use the past only to illuminate the present and the future. What we try to do is to make visible the effects of any kind of persecution on any group.

This quote is taken from the Anne Frank Foundation: “To use the past only to illuminate the present and the future,” touches upon a concept that is at the center of this thesis. The concept of illumination here means clarification and explanation. In order to understand the present and the future, illumination of the past is necessary. Illumination lights up the past, and the memory thereof.

The memories of World War II at the end of 1945 had to find its way into European societies. Throughout Europe the memories of the war were ‘woven’ into the traditional national, political and religious discourse. Simply put: in the 1960s most monuments, popular novels, films, commemorative rituals and scientific studies connected easily with historical and political ideas, nationalism, progression, and the traditional religious and political ideologies. According to Frank van Vree, these patterns can be easily retrieved in the early Dutch culture of memory. The first decades after the war, memories of the war fit seemingly without resistance into the traditional political and religious culture, which emphasized the continuity of the memory process. The manner in which memories in the public realm fitted into the traditional political, religious and nationalistic views during that period, is exemplary for the developments in other Western European countries. These developments in Western Europe were in contrast with the developments in Eastern Europe. From 1948, the culture of memory was dominated by nationalist and Communist ideas. In the first three decades after World War II, Communist representation of history imposed sentiments and beliefs with a competitive nature, and frictions and contradictions.

In the case of Romania the same situation occurred. In 1940, Romania lost about 30 percent of its territory and population. The Soviet Union demanded and received Bessarabia and northern Bukovina from Romania on June 28, 1940. On August 30, 1940, under German

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1 Alvin H. Rosenfeld, The End of the Holocaust, (Bloomington, Indianapolis 2011), 152.
and Italian pressure, Romania was forced to cede northern Transylvania to Hungary. In September, Romania ceded southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. These, for Romania, humiliating territorial losses tightened the relationship between Romania and Germany. A hard anti-Semitism policy and the emergence of right-wing social revolutionary movements, such as the fascist Iron Guard, found popular support together with official sympathy for the Romanian demand that the Romanian Jews were to be removed from places of power and then expelled from the country. Then, in September 1940, a government coalition of radical right-wing military officers, led by General Ion Antonescu and the Iron Guard, came to power. In November 1940, Romania formally joined the Axis alliance. Restrictive measures against the Jews of Romania were taken and Jewish-owned businesses were robbed. The thorough but also corrupted organization of the Iron Guard threatened to disrupt the Romanian economy, which led to tension between Antonescu and the army. The Iron Guard rose against the regime in 1941. Antonescu won the battle with support from the German army.

Romania then pursued to undertake the Soviet Union in June 1941. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union, Romania regained Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. After the conquest of the Ukraine by German and Romanian troops in July and August 1941, Romania received the territory between the Dniester and Bug Rivers. A military administration was established in that region under the name “Transnistria”. Romania then began to organize their own solution to the “Jewish problem” and from October 1941, many Jews living in the newly gained territories were deported to camps and ghettos in Transnistria. A significant percentage of the Romanian Jewish population was destroyed during World War II. During World War II, the Jews of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Dorohoi County faced systematic killing and deportation. The part of occupied Ukraine under Romanian administration, Transnistria, served as a “giant killing field” for Jews. At least 270,000 Romanian Jews were killed or died from mistreatment during the Holocaust in Romania. In 1944, the Soviet army overran Romania. Antonescu was overthrown and signed an armistice with the Soviet Union on August 23, 1944. From 1945 Romania became a Soviet-aligned Communist state, but followed its own Communist path from the 1950s on, led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej.

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Returning to the subject of memory, after World War II, as stated before, Romania went from a fascist regime to a Communist regime. This meant that unlike in Western Europe, where war archives were compiled and researchers wrote analyses of the available archival material, archives in Romania were closed off. The new Communist regime silently tolerated anti-Semitism, which indicated that it was not considered to be a punishable crime. Without the culpability of the leading politicians during World War II, the Communist regime hid the crimes of its predecessor. This had consequences for the process of memory development in Romania from World War II and the commemoration thereof. Memory is a sensitive subject. In certain European countries there exist legal structures that ascertain the way the Holocaust should be remembered, such is the case when someone denies or minimizes the Holocaust. The acknowledgement of the Holocaust in postwar Europe became the core of contemporary political and cultural identity; it became proof of displaying civilized behavior and having morally and politically correct opinions. In other words, for a country to acknowledge that the Holocaust took place was a means to display on a global level it accepted its past and it focused on moving forward. Thus, a country could demonstrate it was coming to terms with its past.

This thesis is about Romania coming to terms with its Holocaust past, with the following central question: What place holds the Jewish fate during World War II in postwar Romania commemoration?

The first chapter will focus on the history of the Jews in Romania and more importantly, their position in Romanian society during different periods of time. I begin with the Jewish community in Greater Romania, as Romania was called after the unity of territories Walachia and Moldavia in 1859. This is because the new territory of Greater Romania had a large community of Jews. Many Romanian politicians had anti-Semitic views, resulting in difficult situations for the Jews of that time. I then proceed to look at the life and dealings of the Jewish community in Romania during World War II. As previously mentioned, at the end of the war, the Jews faced difficult times with consequences felt under a new regime. Consequently, the years 1944-1948 had many changes in store for Romania. Especially on a political level, the end of the war did not mean the end of suffering for the

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Jews. Life did not become easier, for example, the Zionists in the country faced difficulties in following their beliefs. From 1946 until the 1960s many Romanian Jews emigrated, or at least attempted to, to Israel. Although Jews were allowed to leave, these were troubling times with the Communist Party still deciding on what to do with the Jews, while permission to immigrate to Israel was still subject to uncertainty. I end the chapter with the role of the Jewish community while Nicolae Ceausescu was controlling Romania. Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen as head of the Jewish community played his own interesting part in the history of Romanian Jews. Some historians called him the ‘Red Rabbi’, for his collaboration with the Communist regime. Others refer to him as having achieved a lot of good for the Jewish community. This account of the history of Romanian Jews provides a clear understanding of the position of Jews in Romanian society. Thus, it provides an image of the effect of the war, the Holocaust and its aftermath on the Jewish community.

The second chapter focuses on memory and memorialization, and explores how these have developed in Romania after the fall of Communism in 1989. Setting out the historiography of postwar literature on World War II and the Holocaust, I show the manner in which Romanian historians and politicians have treated these histories in their field of expertise. Less attention is focused on the role of Romanian Jews; for the line of thought in this thesis, it is important to set a framework for both the Romanian Jewish history as for the development of memory and thus commemoration. The chapter also includes various authors explaining their views on what memory and memorialization means for Romania. While Lucian Boia focuses more on what the fascist and Communist period have meant for Romanian consciousness and memory of the Second World War, Ruth Ellen Gruber sets out what the Holocaust and the loss of Jews meant for a country with a previous rich Jewish cultural life, which she connects to the role of commemoration in a country.

The genocide of the Jews will not soon be forgotten, but how it is remembered by and transmitted to future generations, depends on what a country chooses to recover from its past, on what a country chooses to ignore or suppress, and what a country chooses to remodel. Alvin H. Rosenfeld remarks that the historical character of the crimes that is now known as the Holocaust, is open to alteration under the pressures of a broad range of cultural forces, such as political expediency, commercial gain, and popular tastes and preferences. Rosenfeld says: “While some live under the obligation to remember, for others remembrance is not a primary duty.”9 This leads to the final chapter, in which ‘coming to terms with the past’ is

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9 Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *The End of the Holocaust*, 31, 32.
central. Developments of memory and commemoration are discussed here. This chapter starts at World War I, and although this is not the period of time researched in this thesis, it is important in the development of commemoration in Romania. Before World War I, burial rituals were taking place only in the immediate communities. These rituals stayed unchanged for a large period of time until World War I, when Romania changes its political geography. Furthermore, the experience of World War I, its magnitude in violence and death, forced rural communities to reconsider their relationship with the state in terms of the burial of their dead.

My research ends in contemporary Romania, with a focus on the various efforts by the Jewish community in Romania and others that are put into the ‘illuminating of the past’ in order to understand and explain it to future generations. All of these chapters lead to a conclusion, in which the following central question is answered: What place holds the Jewish fate during World War II in postwar Romania commemoration?
Chapter One The Jewish Community In Romania 1859-1989

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will outline the history of the Jews in Romania and more importantly, their position in Romanian society during different periods of time. The history of Jews in Romania goes back to the unity of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859, thus creating Romania. By examining certain periods of time of Romanian Jewish history, the situation of the Jews in those periods of time and what their position in society was, a picture is formed that will help in understanding the events of World War II and the terms in which it is remembered today. This will create a better context for understanding what happened in Romania during World War II and the Romanian Holocaust, and for understanding this particular part of Romanian Jewish history.

1.2 The Jewish community in Greater Romania

In the late fifteenth century, the Ottoman Empire ruled the Romanian provinces of Moldavia, Wallachia and Dobruja, while Austria and Hungary controlled Banat, Bihor, Maramures, Satu Mare and Transylvania. In 1774 Austria took over Bukovina, (north-western Moldavia), while Russia obtained Bessarabia, (eastern Moldavia), in 1812. An unsuccessful Balkan revolt against the Turks led to the occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia by the Russians from 1829-1834. The two principalities Wallachia and Moldavia eventually merged in 1859 to form Romania, which remained subservient to the Turks until in 1878 the European powers recognized Romania as formally independent.10

Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza had ruled Romania since the union, but in 1866 he was deposed of and replaced by Prince Carol I of the German Hohenzollern dynasty. In 1881, the United Principalities became a kingdom. This new kingdom would come to be known as “Greater Romania”. The concept of Greater Romania consisted of the idea of uniting all ethnic Romanians and all the adjacent areas where they lived into one ethnically pure state.11 This history demonstrates that the territories, all of which were part of Romania at one point or another, have been under different rules at different times: from Ottoman suzerainty to the

modern Romanian nation state in 1859, to the Old Kingdom, (as Romania has been called in
the late nineteenth and early twentieth century). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth
century, the territories surrounding Romania had populations consisting mainly of ethnic
Romanians. Some of those provinces, namely Bessarabia and Bukovina, belonged, in the
earlier periods of their history, to Moldavia. Here, Romanian historian Vladimir Solonari
makes the statement that more ethnic Romanians lived outside of Romania then within it,
which is an important observation in a time where nationalism began to play a bigger role.12

The Romanian Jews especially have had to deal with this. The roots of anti-Semitism
go deep, in the sixteenth-century princes of what would later become Romanian territory were
already decreeing restrictions on the Jews as a non-Christian people. However, in the
sixteenth century most of the territories were still under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, who
has a history of being rather tolerant toward Jews. The Jewish community had acquired a
great deal of cultural autonomy and its Jewish members were allowed to maintain their
livelihoods with a minimum of official interference. This changed however, in mid-nineteenth
century. The aforementioned prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza had always expressed goodwill
toward the Jews, but despite his efforts, state policy changed on the emancipation of
Romanian Jews. One example is in 1864, when Jews obtained the right to vote but solely in
district elections and only for those who had served or were serving as officers in the army,
held a university diploma, or owned an industrial plant.13

In February 1866 the Romanian prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza was forced to abdicate
and in May 1866 Carol de Hohenzollern-Siegmaringen (later King Carol I, 1866-1914)
assumed the throne. Carol adopted a new constitution; Article 7 of this document denied
Romanian Jews their political emancipation, this would prevail until World War I. This was a
setback in the emancipation of the Jews, since the new Article meant becoming stateless,
which only increased their vulnerability to economic and political discrimination. At the end
of the nineteenth century the gentry, or boyars, had begun to play a political role in the
nation’s affairs. The Jews were discriminated above all others by this new bourgeoisie and
were legally only allowed a certain measure of rights when they restricted themselves to
certain jobs, such as tax collectors, distributors of manufactured goods and salesmen of
spirits, for the production of which the boyars held a monopoly. When the Jews showed some

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12 Vladimir Solonari, Purifying the Nation: population exchange and ethnic cleansing in Nazi-allied Romania,
(Washington, D.C. 2010), 7.
13 Radu Ioanid, The Holocaust in Romania, 4-6.
inclination to integrate, to gain civil and political rights, they were deemed a “social peril” and the “plague of the countryside”.¹⁴

The 1878 Congress of Berlin noticed the manner in which the Jews were treated in Romania and urged Romania to consider all its residents, including Jews, equal under the law. Only then, could the country gain its independence that would be recognized by the western powers. A revision of Article 7 of the 1866 constitution was made, which meant that for the Jews it was no longer impossible to become a Romanian. An individual petition and parliamentary vote were required for naturalization. Even though the Constitution of Romania was modified, members of Parliament still maintained their anti-Semitic views on Jews.

Life was not easy for Jews in Romania in the nineteenth century. Anti-Semitic discrimination barred Jews from certain jobs, like working in railroads, the custom service, the state salt and tobacco monopolies and the stock market. A series of expulsions were meant to dislocate Jewish families in rural areas. The Romanian army also had a tradition of anti-Semitism, which took root in the nineteenth century. In 1868, the Romanian government decided that military service should become compulsory for all males in Romania, with the exception of foreigners. Jews were generally treated as foreigners; thus, this would mean that the army might lose a supply of manpower. Then in 1878, a law on recruitment was formulated that required all male residents must serve, therefore including all Jews: although they were regarded as foreigners, they were residents and thus could serve in the army. Also in the fields of medicine and health care there was discrimination. The health law of 1886 dictated that Jews were only allowed to open a pharmacy when no other Romanian was competing for a license. Only when a Romanian student or assistance was employed, could “foreign” pharmacy students or pharmacists’ students be hired.

In 1913, the Jews had to fight in the Second Balkan War. But even the army was not free of anti-Semitism. Although fighting for the country, the Jews suffered from anti-Semitic campaigns and were not allowed to talk in the Yiddish language. The end of World War I stopped anti-Semitism, at least temporarily, for the Western powers strongly urged for more democratic governments. In 1918 and more so in 1919, a law reaffirmed that Jews from Moldavia and Wallachia were entitled to Romanian citizenship through a simplified procedure, however the Jews from Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina were not. In 1923 this was finally changed, a new law was made that granted Jews and other minorities full citizenship, and extended it to inhabitants to those territories where this had not been possible.

¹⁴ Ibidem, xvii.
at first. Up until the mid-1930s, human rights were not changed and Jews remained full citizens. However, the 1930s also saw the coming of a radical anti-Semitic right wing party in Romania.15

Economic problems contributed to the rise of anti-Semitism after 1929. These economic problems had agrarian roots, and the nationalistic mentality of Christian craftspeople and merchants made them react to the economic competition by the Jews with violent opposition.16 The tolerance of Western governments towards the openly anti-Semitic joint regime of Octavian Goga, (a government official in various positions through 1938), and Alexandru C. Cuza, (head of the National Christian Party), also contributed to the rise of anti-Semitism in Romania in the 1930s.17

Romania’s relationship with the Jews is a complex one. The first reason for this is due to the territories that were acquired and lost again over the decades. The Romanian people’s response to these ‘new’ communities is different, but also an explanation for the growth of Romanian anti-Semitism in the decades leading up to World War I. In their struggle for citizenship, the Jews could count on foreign support, which in turn led to a widespread sentiment that Jews, with the help of outside powers, were in fact seeking to limit the sovereignty of the Romanian state. The majority of Jews of Transylvania and the area Crisana-Maramures spoke either Hungarian or Yiddish, and were thus viewed as “foreign”. Not only because they were not Christian, but because the Jewish cultural identity and political loyalty in post-1867 Austria-Hungary had been cast clearly with the Magyar majority in Hungary. These Jews from Transylvania had been counted as Hungarians in Hungary’s pre-war cultural identity census, so the Hungarians could claim majority status in their state.

The Jews of Bukovina were culturally aligned with the Germans in the Habsburg monarchy or spoke Yiddish, but Romanian viewed them as “foreigners” as well, since they had only returned to Romania in 1918. The Jews of Bessarabia spoke mainly Yiddish or Russian and were numerous in the countryside. These Jews served as the model of the stereotypical foreign Jews against which anti-Semites in the Regat, (Wallachia and Moldavia), had been agitating for decades.18

16 Ibid, xviii.
17 Ibid, xix.
Jewish life before World War II was organized into local communities that oversaw religious life, education and philanthropy. Romanian law countenanced the existence of Jewish federations. Every sizable Jewish community had a synagogue, some sort of cultural and administrative center, a communal school and a home for the elderly. On December 1930, according to the national census, Greater Romania’s Jewish population was 756,930. The urban population in Bessarabia and Moldavia was 40 to 50 per cent Jewish. Half the population of Iasi, the original capital of Moldavia, was Jewish. The Goga-Cuza government’s anti-Semitic laws of 1938, deprived at least 200,000 Jews of their civil rights, something they had worked for generations to acquire.

**Total Population of Jews as part of the Romanian Population from the Middle of the Nineteenth Century until the End of World War II:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>4,500,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>216,304</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>5,500,000</td>
<td>243,233</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>5,956,690</td>
<td>269,015</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>7,234,919</td>
<td>239,967</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>18,057,028</td>
<td>756,930</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>16,795,900</td>
<td>375,422</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>16,805,388</td>
<td>295,084</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>17,000,000</td>
<td>355,972</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figure above shows two interesting figures: the increase of the total number of Jews from 1912 to 1930. This could be due to new regulations on civil rights for Jews. It was no longer required to get parliamentary confirmation for a Jews to become a citizen; proof of birth and no official citizenship to another country would suffice. In 1923 and 1924 laws passed that granted Jews of Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania, Banat, Crisana, Maramures and Satu Mare extended Romanian citizenship. Ion Antonescu’s government abolished the rights of

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22 Ibidem, 12.
the remaining Jews in 1940-41. The war and Nazi Germany policy of anti-Semitism gave Antonescu the opportunity for a “resolution” of the Jewish question in Romania. This explains the dramatic decline in the number of Jews in 1941 and 1942.\textsuperscript{23}

In the 1930s all of these fragmented Jewish communities became one Jewish community in Romania. Due to the situation of many groups making one whole, the Jewish political scene became very complex. What connected them however was a danger than confronted them all, anti-Semitism.\textsuperscript{24}

\subsection*{1.3 The Jewish community during World War II}

Before the start of World War II in Romania, the Jews of Romania were reasonably well organized in communities that oversaw their religious, cultural and political life. The interests of the Jewish population of that time were represented by two major organizations: the Union of Romanian Jews, (Uniunea Evreilor Romani, or UER), and the Jewish Party, (Partidul Evreiesc).\textsuperscript{25} Wilhelm Filderman, (1882-1963), was head of the Union of Romanian Jews. In 1913 he joined the central committee of the Union of Romanian Jews. During World War I Filderman had served as an officer in the Romanian army, after World War I he became the acting leader of the Union of Romanian Jews. In 1920 Filderman became the representative of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, (JDC), in Romania and in 1923 he was elected president of the Union of Romanian Jews. He fought for equal rights and total emancipation of the Jews. In the 1930s, Filderman became president of the Jewish community of Bucharest and president of the Federation of Jewish Communities.\textsuperscript{26} In the 1930s Romania also had another party promoting Jewish rights, the Zionist organization the Jewish Party, led by Theodor Fisher, Josef Fisher, Sami Singer and Misu Weissman.\textsuperscript{27}

After the end of World War I, the Jewish politicians in Romania employed a strategy of forming alliances with the major Romanian political parties that showed some willingness to fight anti-Semitism. The UER first supported the National Liberal Party, then the People’s Party, and later the National Peasant Party. The Zionists contested this and created a Jewish national club, with four members from the Romanian Parliament, (two from Transylvania,

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, xxi.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 16.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, xix, xx.
\textsuperscript{27} Radu Ioanid, The Holocaust in Romania, xix, xx.
one from Bessarabia and one from Bukovina), and became a Jewish national party in 1931. That same year the Jewish party received up to 65,000 votes, in effect it could send four deputies to Parliament. Two years later, in 1933, the new party’s vote declined by half and failed to send a single representative to Parliament. With World War II in sight, Wilhelm Filderman remained the undisputed leader of the Romanian Jewish community. He would play a major role in the battle to save the Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust in Romania.

One of the imposed measures for Jews in Romania from the beginning of the Second World War was wearing the yellow David star. This measure was never systematically imposed on the Jews of Old Romania but only on those living in Transnistria and certain areas of Moldavia, Bessarabia and Bukovina. But from 1941 it seemed that no Jew would be able to avoid wearing the star. Filderman, head of the UER, demanded that this “illegal” measure be removed. Radu Ioanid notes that Filderman and Ion Antonescu were former schoolmates, which gave Filderman a line of communication to the government of Romania during the war. In a meeting with the then Deputy Minister of the Interior Gheorghe Popescu on August 2, 1941, Filderman was promised flexibility in the interpretation of the law that stipulated that the Jewish population was required to wear a six-pointed star, regardless of sex or age. Nonetheless, the measure remained in force. Filderman persisted in demanding elimination of the yellow star. What followed was more meetings between Filderman and General Popescu, where Filderman urged to put a stop to obligation of Jews wearing the yellow star and where the officials told him they would, but in fact did not. A meeting on August 27, Filderman learned from Popescu that the yellow star would probably be extended to the entire country. On September 3 a statement was made by the National General Inspectorate of the Police that the entire Romanian Jewish population would be required to wear a 6-centimeter black star on a white background contained within an 8.5-centimeter square. Two days later, September 5, 1941, Filderman sent two memoranda, one to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the other to Antonescu himself, and urgently requesting cancellation of the obligation of Jewish citizens to wear the star. A few days later, September 8, Filderman had obtained a meeting with Antonescu himself; a meeting where the leader agreed to order Mihai Antonescu “to cancel the wearing of the badge throughout the country.” And following this meeting a message was

28 Ibid, 15, 16.
29 Ibid, 32.
30 No information is found on the meaning of the change of the color of the Star of David from black to yellow.
sent to the president of the Sephardic Jewish Community stating that following a decision of
Marshal Antonescu; Jews would not be required to wear any distinguishing badge. If other
Jewish communities received this same message remains unknown, but in general the wearing
of the star was not imposed outside certain localities in Moldavia, Bukovina, Bessarabia and
Transnistria. Although Filderman’s efforts seemed to stop the wearing of the star on Jews, in
areas where persecution of the Jews was stronger, the yellow star was indeed enforced.

Filderman played an important role as head of the Union of Jewish Communities. As
stated before, Filderman intervened with Ion Antonescu at many occasions during the war as
a representative of the Federation. As a result, serious measures were revoked, such as the
wearing of the yellow badge and the deportation of Romanian Jews to Nazi camps in
Poland. In December 1941, the government dissolved the Federation of Jewish
Communities. This institution was replaced at the beginning of 1942 with the Central Bureau
of Jews designated to be the sole body authorized to represent the interest of the Jewish
community in Romania. The function of this Bureau was primarily to enforce the
governmental demands of the Jewish community. It was also in charge of the funding of the
still existing network of Jewish elementary and high schools and aiding the needy, including
the deportees in Transnistria. The Romanians perceived the Bureau as a vehicle for the
economic and financial plundering of the Jewish population and as a means to exploit free
human labor for the benefit of the Romanian regime. And although Filderman from 1942 no
longer held an official position, he remained an active representative of the Jews in
Romania.

Filderman’s relationship with Ion Antonescu can be explained as a paradox. On the
one hand there is Ion Antonescu’s own attitude towards Jews: he came up with the ideal of a
“Romanianized” Romania where ethnic Romanians would live in harmony without the Jews.
This violent hatred was one side of Antonescu. On the other hand there was Ion Antonescu’s
willingness to make things easier for Jews, or at least listen to their demands through their
president Wilhelm Filderman. The fact that he received Filderman as president of Union of
Romanian Jews is something Hitler never did. Antonescu’s changing paradoxical behavior
towards the Romanian Jews did not really change. In the fall of 1941, there is the moment
where Antonescu claimed before the Council of Ministers to rid Bessarabia and Bukovina of

Wilhelm Filderman, Romanian Jewish leader. Consulted on 01-06-2012,
33 Felicia Steigman Carmelly, Shattered! 50 Years of Silence. History and Voices of the Tragedy in Romania and
Transnistria, (Canada 1997), 12, 13.
its Jews; however in September of that same year, Filderman received Antonescu’s promise to withdraw the order for Jews to wear the Star of David and a commitment to exempt from deportation the Jews of Moldavia and Wallachia. A month later, Antonescu wrote a response to a memorandum from Filderman in which the Jewish leader again protested the deportation of Bessarabian and Bukovinian Jews. Antonescu justified his orders for deportation by referencing the Jews’ alleged misdeeds against Romanian troops in 1940 and Soviet atrocities against the Romanian prisoners of war, which he once again blamed on the Jews and in this way justified the deportation of Bessarabian and Bukovinian Jews to Transnistria. This response was widely publicized in the press, with the result that many people in Romania felt that the day of the “solution of the Jewish problem,” as one important anti-Semitic newspaper put it, was approaching.

Time went on and the worst did not happen. Growing difficulties at the front, increasing perception that the war might go on longer than expected and unexpected strong protests from different angles of society over the unforeseen negative economic consequences of the abrupt “removal” of Jews from Moldovan villages and towns. Among the “removed” Jews were many specialists with indispensable skills; these actions brought many factories and other businesses to the edge of collapse. The Interior Ministry received many requests from owners of these businesses and managers to return their Jewish employees citing the impossibility of replacing them with ethnic Romanian specialists. But releasing Jews from the camps in Transnistria outraged Antonescu and this was just not an option. To compromise this problem, Antonescu declared that the state had to distinguish between “economically useful” and “useless” Jews. In addition, only those Jews who were really useful would be exempt, while the rest would be “evacuated” or “used” in forced labor detachments. The meaning of this strategy was then explained to the ministers, that the Jews could not be removed overnight without paralyzing the economy. The solution for this was to proceed slowly and select ethnic Romanians who would learn various useful skills from the Jews and thus create the preconditions for the latter’s eventual “removal”, since the end result of this process still was to be a Jew-free Romania in a Jew-free and Nazi-dominated Europe.

The deporting of Romanian Jews to Transnistria can be viewed as a paradox as well. In January 1942, the Wannsee conference of Nazi officials explicitly included the Jews of Romania in their murder in the death camps. By this time, the Nazis were already putting

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34 Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania*, 275.
pressure on the Romanian government to persuade it to actively participate in this plan.\textsuperscript{36} But by this time Ion Antonescu had already started to doubt the outcome of the war. Antonescu did not believe in the complete downfall of Nazi Germany, but rather, in a state of diminished power. And even though Antonescu still wanted to rid the country of all minorities, especially the Jews, he believed it was in Romania’s best interest to regain some confidence on the part of the allies. And as soon as he started to believe in the power of the allies, the Jews of Moldavia and Wallachia and southern Transylvania were not to be deported to Nazi concentration camps in the fall of 1942. It seemed as if the Jews were saved from sudden death in concentration camps. But the idea of cleansing Romania was still alive. Emigration, (to Palestine), became the only way to “solve the Jewish problem.” And in early 1943, Wilhelm Filderman requested the government’s permission to organize the emigration of 5,000-orphaned Jewish children from Transnistria, to which the government gave its permission. Due to German pressure on Bulgaria to deny transit visas and the Romanian government’s unwillingness to commit state-owned ships for transporting emigrants, the transports started as late as March 24, 1944 and by May 15 only about 1,000 Jewish orphans left Romania in small ships. All in all, only about 5,000 Jews managed to emigrate from Romania to Palestine during the war.\textsuperscript{37}

On March 14, 1944 Marshal Antonescu decided to order the return of the remaining deportees from Transnistria. However, the Soviet offensive advanced speedily, occupying northern Transnistria on March 20. A few days later, all territories in Transnistria were freed. At the end of March, the Soviets closed the border to Romania. For several thousand deportees this meant they were left stranded in Bessarabia. Only after a series of lengthy negotiation between the Commander of the Russian army in Romania and the Romanian authorities, did the Soviets agree to re-open the border. Approximately 7,000 survivors re-entered Romania. In April, Bukovina and Bessarabia were recaptured by the Soviet Union. Young Jewish survivors were recruited into the army of the Soviet Union. In order to help with the war effort, on the side of the Soviets, many Jews were taken to the interior of the Soviet Union and forced to work in the coalmines there.\textsuperscript{38}

The number of Romanian Jews and Jews in the territories under Romania’s control who were murdered during the Holocaust has not been determined with final precision. However, multiple historians and scholars have concluded that between 280,000 and 380,000

\textsuperscript{36} Ibidem, 292.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 299-301.
\textsuperscript{38} Felicia Steigman Carmelly, \textit{Shattered!}, 164.
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.\textsuperscript{39}

In conclusion, Marshall Ion Antonescu’s attitude towards the Romanian Jews was a paradox. On the one hand he tolerated those Jews who might deserve partial protection by the Romanian state; on the other hand he demanded that his subjects show stern behavior towards the Jews.\textsuperscript{40} The leaders of the fascist regime were brought to trial in May 1946, and this resulted in the execution of Ion Antonescu, Mihai Antonescu and two of their closest associates, as well as several life sentences or long-term imprisonments. The trial of the Antonescu regime leaders was the beginning and at the same time the end of the major post-war Romanian trials; trials that were initiated by the armistice agreement signed in Moscow on September 12, 1944, whereby the Romanian government actually committed themselves to such trials. Romania was obliged to arrest war criminals, bring them to justice, and to dissolve pro-Nazi and fascist organizations as well as committing to preventing their re-emergence.\textsuperscript{41} It was not only more than half of Romanian Jewry that was destroyed during World War II, but also their institutions, their vibrant religious and their rich cultural life. And this did not stop with the end of the war. The Romanian Jews faced new difficulties after 1944.

\textbf{1.4 The Jewish community after the war, 1944-1948.}

In February 1944 king Michael I declared to the opposition led by Iliu Maniu, leader of the National Peasant Party and Constantin Bratianu, leader of the National Liberal Party, that he had been ready to take Romania out of the war against the Allies, but that ‘whenever plans appeared to be maturing he was prevented from taking action by objections raised by the opposition.’ The king’s impatience could have been a sign of his youth, (he was only 22), and Maniu advised against a \textit{coup} at that time on the grounds that there were too many German troops in the country.\textsuperscript{42} However, in June 1944 the Allied representatives in Cairo received a plan drawn up by the king and the NDB, (National Democratic Bloc – the joining of opposition parties, the National Peasant, National Liberal and Social Democratic), for the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39} International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, \textit{Executive Summary}, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Radu Ioanid, \textit{The Holocaust in Romania}, 277.
\item \textsuperscript{41} International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, \textit{Executive Summary}, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Dennis Deletant, \textit{Hitler’s Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and his regime, Romania, 1940-1944}, (Basingstoke 2006), 236.
\end{itemize}
coup. Maniu argued, that in order for the coup to be successful, it had to be accompanied by
tree Allied actions. First, there should be a major Soviet offensive on the Romanian front
within 24 hours of the coup; second, three airborne brigades, either Anglo-American or
Soviet, with an additional 2,000 parachute troops, should be dropped at the same time of the
coup; and third, there should be a heavy bombardment of communications with Hungary and
Bulgaria. This plan was well received by both the British and American representatives.43

On 7 July, the king and his advisers, including the opposition leaders, fixed 15 August
as the date for action, hoping to synchronize their action plan with a Soviet offensive. The
longer the coup was delayed, the greater the chance that the Red Army would push forward,
occupying more Romanian territory and giving Moscow a reason for preferring a
straightforward military conquest of the country without any help from the king and the
opposition. Finally, on 20 August, the long-awaited Soviet offensive came, prompting Maniu
to inform Cairo that the king and his group of advisers had decided to take action.

Early in the morning of 23 August, Mihai Antonescu and Madame Antonescu tried to
persuade Marshal Ion Antonescu to see the king and agree to an armistice. Although the
Marshal refused to commit himself, Mihai telephoned the king’s office to make an
appointment. King Michael agreed to see them both that afternoon. The king called his
advisors and opposition parties together and decided the coup was to take place at his
audience with Antonescu that same afternoon. During that audience, the king told Antonescu
that, in accordance with the wishes of the Romanian people as expressed through the four
democratic parties, he was taking the country out of the war to save it from disaster. If the
Marshal refused to implement the king’s wishes that an armistice be declared, then he should
consider himself dismissed. Colonel Emilian Ionescu’s men then arrested both Mihai and Ion
Antonescu.44 The King made a proclamation to the country announcing the coup and the
instant discontinuation of hostilities with the Allies. The two Antonescus were driven to a safe
house in the Bucharest district. Other affiliates of the Antonescu regime were also taken into
custody. The Soviets made it clear that they would prefer it if Antonescu and company were
held in their custody. Although the Romanian government did not want Antonescu to end up
in Moscow, on 31 August, Antonescu and the others were taken to the headquarters of the
Soviet 53rd army.45

43 Ibidem, 239.
45 Ibid, 244.
After the coup of 1944, Romania’s external position became that of an independent state “waging war against its former allies on the side of its former enemies”. On 30 August, the Soviet troops that entered Bucharest found an interim Romanian government ready to negotiate an armistice and hold free elections. The Armistice Agreement covered the relationship between the Allies and Romania signed in Moscow on 12th September 1944. The Soviets checked to make sure that the terms of the agreement were implemented; in effect Stalin used the Armistice Agreement to subvert the effects of the 23 August coup, which had threatened to weaken his influence on Romanian affairs. In reality, the Armistice Agreement became a mechanism for Stalin to take over Romania. Articles in the agreement provided for the arrest of war criminals and the dissolution of ‘Fascist-type’ organizations. The articles of the Armistice Agreement stood as the basis for the transformation of Romania into a Communist state.

The Soviets set out to increase their sphere of influence, and put enormous pressure on Romania to install a pro-Soviet government. Anti-Soviet feeling was quickly disbanded, such as what happened to, for example, General N. Radescu. In February 1945, General Radescu gave an official speech in which he openly stated his anti-Soviet and anti-Communist convictions. Following this speech, arrangements were quickly made to dismiss Radescu from his post as general and replace him with the leader of a left wing agrarian party Petru Groza. Groza, more willing to align himself with the Soviets, became the Prime Minister of Romania on March 6, 1945. Groza was the principal facilitator in the rise to power of the Communist Party and the establishment of the new Romanian dictatorship under Soviet control.

With the imposition of Communist rule, Romania was forced to turn its back on the West and face eastwards. Since 1942 Wilhelm Filderman no longer held an official position in the organization of Jewish communities, but in 1945 he became president again of the Federation of Jewish Communities and representative of the JDC. He did not stay out of trouble for long; soon after his nomination as president he came into conflict with the Jewish Communists, who wanted the Jewish institutions to affiliate with their party’s policy. As a result of their instigations, Filderman was arrested in that same year but was then liberated.

46 Ibid, 245.
48 Ibidem, 245.
49 Felicia Steigman Carmelly, Shattered!, 165.
after he went on hunger strike. The Communist press continued to attack him, and in 1948, after he had found out he was to be arrested again, he secretly left Romania.50

During the postwar trial Ion Antonescu stated, “If the Jews of Romania are still alive, it is on account of Ion Antonescu.” This statement bears some truth. The survival of the Jews from Wallachia, Moldavia, and southern Transylvania are linked to Antonescu’s decision in the fall of 1942 to indefinitely postpone the deportation of Romanian Jews to Poland. However, as Radu Ioanid states, Antonescu’s responsibility is overwhelming with respect to the death of the Jews in Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transnistria. The Jews of Romania and Transnistria thus owe both their lives and deaths to Antonescu.51 This paradox described by Radu Ioanid is still alive in Romania today. It is this that caused them to attempt to place the blame of the Second World War and the many Jewish and Roma casualties onto someone else, this is evident in the historiography of the period.

Stephen Fischer-Galati also mentions this ‘paradox’ in his essay on the Jewish Question in Romania. He starts his focus on the decision of Antonescu not to send Jews to Auschwitz anymore. Hence, Antonescu saved at least half of the Jewish population of Romania. But this was not done out of care for the well being of the Jews. Stephen-Galati reasons as follows: In Antonescu’s view, the Jews of Bessarabia and Transnistria were accomplices of Stalin; they were Communists and Jews opposed to Romania’s interests and cause. In the context of Antonescu’s political philosophy and ethics it is difficult to argue that the pro-Jewish policies he displayed during the last two years of World War II were born out of a politically opportunistic motivation. Rather, the decision to save the Jews was in line with his definition of Romania’s goals and the function and place of the Romanian Jews in the Romanian body politic. Fischer-Galati notes here that to Antonescu, the Jews were aliens in Romania and as such subject to the limitations of the rules of hospitality. Emigration of the Jews was something he feared, but they were only not sent to Auschwitz and other destinations on the condition that they accepted the hardships of the status of unwanted guests.

Thus, the Jews of Romania fared infinitely better than those of other countries in Nazi-occupied Europe. In light of Fischer-Galati’s research on the Jewish Question in Romania, he concludes that compared to other Jewish communities in Europe, the Jewish community in

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Romania enjoyed relative stability during World War II. Dr. Felicia Steigman-Carmelly agrees with the view that Antonescu’s decision to stop the deportation of Romanian Jews to Poland on Nazi orders actually saved half of the Romanian population. However, she points out that one must not lose sight of the fact that Antonescu never resigned himself to giving up his dream of ridding the country of its Jews. Unlike the Nazis, he was not interested in murdering the Jews, as far as he was concerned, it would be best to let them leave Romania, providing that they left all their property behind. Fischer-Galati and Steigman-Carmelly both seem to agree that Antonescu’s decision-making did save many Romanian Jews, and that these decisions provided the Jewish community with some stability during the war, but that this does not discount the horrors that the other half of the Romanian Jewish community still faced.

While there may or may not have been some stability for the Jewish community during World War II, the end of the war offered a brighter future. And although the majority of Romanian Jews did not necessarily look forward to “the liberation” of Romania by the Soviet Union, some did. A relatively large percentage of the Jewish youth, who had been denied educational opportunities and who were more politically conscious than their elders, supported the new order in which they could participate. The Jewish youth believed that Communism was the best solution to their problems and aspirations. However, only a few knew the realities of Soviet politics, and even fewer were pro-Russian. Although these youngsters were in favor of a Communist takeover in their country, it was not the Jewish youth that came into power. The real power rested with members of the “Romanian” contingent of the Russian Communist Party, who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union. It was at this point, when the Communist takeover in Romania was executed, that an unprecedented wave of anti-Semitism arose in Romania. The government placed restrictions on Jewish activities, and began to take control with anti-Semitic policies. This government control over Jewish life was prevalent during the period from August 23rd, 1944, (the coup), until the abolition of the monarchy on December 30th, 1947. It was on this date that King Michael abdicated in response to Communist pressures, and Parliament proclaimed the People’s Republic of Romania.

53 Felicia Steigman-Carmelly, Shattered!, 162.
Ten years after the war, the institute of Jewish affairs of the World Jewish Congress, New York, wrote an account of the development and status of the decimated Jewish communities of European Jewry. Its aim was to demonstrate what happened to the Jews in those countries that had been under Nazi rule between 1933 and 1945. In its account on Romania it states that despite their shattering experiences during the war, Romanian Jews worked with perseverance toward their rehabilitation, both culturally and economically. Religious institutions were re-established, 114 larger congregations resumed their activities. Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Party and the Union of Romanian Jews renewed their activities. A network of schools comprising of over 200 institutions was re-established. Sixteen Jewish weeklies and other periodicals were launched; libraries and reading rooms were established. The Institute of Jewish Affairs notes that the Restitution Law in Romania had helped restore to the Jews much of the property they had lost in the war; it also restored property rights and positions for Romanian Jews.

A great economic boom marked the years after liberation. After the war Romania needed goods and, in addition, inflation created a circulation of all kinds of merchandise within the country. The Jews participated greatly in the economic rehabilitation of Romania. This was reflected, so states the Institute for Jewish Affairs, in the fact that in a single year, 1946, 2,017 new business firms were founded; more than during the twenty year period of 1931 to 1940. Despite this however, many Jews had still been uprooted from their former economic positions, particularly the former residents of the villages, who were unable to return. About one-third of the Jewish population was able to re-establish itself economically, while the rest of the Jews struggled to make ends meet. One example includes a large group of Jews who had been incapacitated for life in the concentration camps, upon their return they found it very difficult to reintegrate into society.

The end of the 1940s is characterized by a continuing struggle between the dominant political factor in Romania; the Communist Party, and Romanian Jews, in particular the Zionists. The Communist Party took out its opponents; the disbandment of the Peasant Party and the imprisonment of its leaders was the first step. Then, the Liberals were liquidated and its representatives in the cabinet were thrown out. The Communists disbanded the Union of Romanian Jews and instead appointed the Jewish Democratic Committee (CDE). The CDE proved to be a useful instrument in eliminating the Zionists groups in Romania. In June 1948

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57 Julius Fisher, Nehemiah Robinson, European Jewry: Ten Years After the War, 45-48.
the central committee of the Communist Party made the decision to take a stand on every question concerning the Jews of Romania and to “fight vigorously against reactionary nationalist Jewish currents.” At the end of 1948 Zionism was branded as a regressive movement. According to the Communists, the Zionists “blocked the efforts at the integration of the Jewish masses into productive activities.” Accordingly several of the offices of the Zionist Federation were raided, furniture and equipment was smashed, and Zionists were seen fleeing the scene. The raids continued for a whole week. Then, on December 12, 1948, the Party publicized a decision which included a clear denunciation of Zionism, “which, in all its manifestations, is a reactionary nationalist movement of the Jewish bourgeoisie, supported by American imperialism, that attempts to isolate the masses of Jewish workers from the people among whom they live.” On December 23rd, 1948, the Zionist organizations suspended their activities.

1.5 Jewish emigration, 1947-1960s

The destruction of the Zionist organizations did not end the movement. On the contrary, the economic factors of the new “era” and their political consequences intensified the desire for emigration to Israel. Parallel with the tightening of Communist control over the country, economic measures became even harsher. In the summer of 1947, the regime stabilized its currency and launched a drive for the mass expropriation of business and industrial enterprises. Through ceaseless deceptions by the authorities, jailing owners on trumped-up charges, and interference with normal business activities, a situation was created where the only productive thing to do was to forsake the enterprise of the State. It is in this way that many Jews lost their livelihood and the economic existence they had rebuilt after the war. The Romanian population made a scapegoat out of the Jews, and blamed them for all of their misfortunes. The Jewish masses, deprived of the means of making a living, found themselves in an atmosphere of virulent hatred. Rumors of pogroms circulated, and a mass cross-border emigration began. Tragic incidents occurred: Jews were misled at the borders, abused, robbed by villains; statistics from the Institute of Jewish Affairs show that nineteen persons, mostly

59 Julius Fisher, Nehemiah Robinson, European Jewry: Ten Years After the War, 47, 48.
61 Julius Fisher, Nehemiah Robinson, European Jewry: Ten Years After the War, 47, 48.
Jews, were killed. It took months of counter-propaganda on the part of the CDE and strong
government measures to put an end to the flight.\textsuperscript{62} A census of the Jewish population was
carried out on the initiative of the World Jewish Congress in 1947 and according to this
census, there were 428,312 Jews in Romania at that time. This number was a calculation of
the areas with Jews after the Holocaust, the annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina
by the Soviet Union and the migration to Palestine during the war. Especially during the years
1944-47 there was a mass emigration of Jews.\textsuperscript{63} The number of those who had left the country
by the end of 1947 was estimated at 37,000.\textsuperscript{64}

With the establishment of the Jewish State, hope arose among the Jews. The Jews of
Romania saw emigration to Israel as their last hope for a life without difficulties, and without
anti-Semitism. False rumors of impending large-scale emigration circulated and caused, on
occasion, many thousands to travel to Bucharest for visas, only to end in disappointment. In
the first postwar years, the 20,000 Jewish refugees from abroad who had found refuge in
Romania during the war had left the country without difficulty. The mass flight of 1947-48
took tens of thousands of Romanian Jews across the borders. From then on, emigration took
an irregular course.\textsuperscript{65}

The first change in Romanian emigration policy occurred at the end of 1947, when the
Communist Party, which between 1948 and 1965 had been called ‘The Romanian Worker’s
Party’, became the main political power in the country and froze emigration to Israel, later
they also began to repress the Zionist movement in Romania. They did so, well before the
Soviets openly stated their own abrupt policy change on Israel in September 1948.\textsuperscript{66} So
instead of tackling the problem at its core, the regime sought to suppress the symptoms of it,
and blamed the Zionist leaders for the emigration boom, even though it was the rulers
themselves who had actually created it. A violent anti-Zionist campaign was launched. Bercu
Feldman, head of CDE, charged his “activists” with the task of unmasking the Zionist
“agitators” and thus reporting them to the authorities.\textsuperscript{67} In the autumn of 1948 an anti-Zionist
campaign was launched in the Soviet Union, and immediately followed in Romania. Police
repression against the Zionist movement began in November. By the end of the year, security

\textsuperscript{62} Ibidem, 48, 49.
\textsuperscript{63} Dumitru, Anda, (2004). Jewish virtual library. A division of the American-Israeli cooperative enterprise. The
virtual Jewish history tour Romania. Contemporary period through the 1960s: on population and Jewish
\textsuperscript{64} Julius Fisher, Nehemiah Robinson, \textit{European Jewry: Ten Years After the War}, 49.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibidem, 48-50.
Jewish Affairs} 28, no.1 (1998), pp. 69-86, there 69, 70.
\textsuperscript{67} Julius Fisher, Nehemiah Robinson, \textit{European Jewry: Ten Years After the War}, 51-53.
forces had shut down the offices of Zionist organizations and clubs across the country. Moreover, propaganda attacks on Zionism and Jewish nationalism were intensified and culminated in a Politburo resolution in December condemning ‘Zionism in all its forms [as] a nationalist, reactionary political movement of the Jewish bourgeoisie’. Pauker unsuccessfully argued against publishing the resolution at a Politburo meeting on 15th November, suggesting that publicly ‘lumping all Zionists together in the same pot’ would only result in the Party losing its support from the workers in Israel, while consolidating the forces opposing Romania. At the same time, she continued to promote Jewish emigration, albeit one now limited to building up Israeli communism.

The Romanian Workers Party’s emigration policy was based entirely on internal considerations. Emigration to Israel from Romania increased gradually in 1946 and 1947 and was initially made up of mostly unassimilated, impoverished small traders, but this began to change as the numbers rapidly escalated in 1947. Their already dire economic situation deteriorated further with the regime’s currency reform of 15th August 1947, and with the apparition of impending nationalization, (which, in fact, began in the spring of 1948), Jews began opting for emigration to an unprecedented degree. This resulted in what Robert Levy calls a ‘brain drain’. And finally this led to a reconsideration of the ‘open gate’ policy, which was rescinded at the end of 1947. The western border was closed at the end of that year, thus precluding all illegal emigration. No legal emigration was allowed, and throughout the first half of 1948 there were no negotiations held on the matter. Repressive measures against Zionist organizations began to take place in June.

From that moment on, an anti-Zionist campaign was launched; this campaign was to run until the early 1950s. On August 18, 1951, a large number of Zionist leaders were arrested. For two years no information on their whereabouts was given to their relatives. In August 1953, they were brought to trial before a Bucharest military court, with Alexander Petrescu, a former fascist, as prosecutor. The charges included sabotage, espionage, and high treason. The defendants, leading Revisionist Zionists, were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 10 to 16 years.

The trials of the Zionist leaders were troubling news for Romanian Jews. The charges were based on Zionist activities, which had been branded as subversive and treasonable. This meant that any Jew, who had attended Zionist meetings or contributed money to the cause,
became a potential defendant. Parallel with these procedures, deportations further darkened the situation. Members of the former bourgeoisie were turned out of their homes and resettled in rural communities without any of their possessions. True to the policy of concealment, no information about their whereabouts was given. A considerable segment of the Jewish population was effected, although exact figures are not available. Having already been deprived of their businesses and property, they were now robbed of their household goods.  

Scholars have speculated on Romania’s emigration policy and why it was implemented in such an irregular way. The country was ruled by the Romanian Worker’s Party, which was renamed the Romanian Communist Party and led by General Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, (1945-1965). The conventional idea among scholars is that the ‘interior group’ led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej promoted mass Jewish emigration as a means of ridding Romania of unassimilated and ‘unproductive’ Jews, who presumably would not have had easily integrated into Romanian society. Therefore, badly needed jobs and housing could be provided to ethnic Romanians. This was also connected with the Party’s ‘Romanianization’ policies.

There was however some opposition to Jewish emigration, this mainly came from Communist opponents to emigration to Israel. These opponents were often members of the Jewish Democratic Committee and the Federation of Jewish Communities, and high-ranking Jews in the ‘exterior’ faction headed by foreign minister Ana Pauker presumably backed them. They believed assimilation was the answer to the ‘Jewish question’, and considered the notion of Jews being ‘not assimilable’ as a threat to their own personal prospects within the Party apparat. Conversely, by uncovering newly received Party and Securitate documents, Robert Levy has concluded that precisely the opposite was true. There was indeed divergence within the Party leadership over Jewish emigration; however, the issue of contention was not that of ‘unassimilated’ or ‘unproductive’ Jews, but instead the mounting emigration of modern, assimilated Jews practicing vitally important professions within the Romanian economy. Furthermore Levy uncovered that it was Gheorghiu-Dej’s faction who pushed for denying exit visas to these Jewish professionals, while Ana Pauker and her allies opposed these restrictions on Jewish emigration.

To add to the confusing state of Jewish emigration from Romania to Israel, and Israel’s anxiety to rescue as many Jews as possible, a “gentleman’s agreement” was made. In the late 1950s a deal was negotiated between Romania and Israel. An arrangement that was

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equivalent to Romania actually selling its Jews to Israel. Israel was willing to pay for exit visas to secure the emigration of Romania’s Jewish population. These transactions obviously were not part of the ‘normal’ diplomatic relations. The name of a Jewish businessman who was based in London, Henry Jacober, comes forward here. In the 1950s and early 1960s, he acted as a middleman between the relatives of Romanian Jews, who had to pay for exit visas, and Gheorghe Marcu, a Romanian Communist. Marcu would make a list of names of people with exit visas. The payment was not in cash, but in livestock through the set up of, (at first), chicken farms near Bucharest. Later other livestock like pigs and turkeys were added. These farms would turn out tens of thousands of animals every year, all in exchange for Jewish families. And the money flow did not stop here, the export of the meat products produced $8 to $10 million annually for Romania. The exchange of Jews for farm building was kept strictly secret, not even Nicolae Ceausescu was aware of this exchange system, not until he ascended to power in 1965. When learning about this secret deal he was outraged. It was also around this time that hostile feelings toward Israel began to grow due to the Six Day War. However by 1969, Ceausescu ordered that necessary arrangements had to be made to resume the deal with Israel. Ceausescu was only willing to exchange exit visas for Romanian Jews for hard currency. Ceausescu realized how valuable the Romanian Jews really were and decided he would not let them leave all at once, but instead he would allow 1,500 to leave a year. Between 1968 and 1989, roughly 40,577 Jews were sold to Israel, at a price of $2,500 to $3,300 per head.

A review of Radu Ioanid’s book *The Ransom of the Jews: The Story of the Extraordinary Secret Bargain Between Romania and Israel*, gives some explanations for this at first glance strange deal between Romania and Israel, and why Ceausescu decided to stick with it. First, the deal resulted in the obtaining of a positive trading status with the United States. In addition, the money was obviously very welcome. The fact that Romania was allowing so many of its Jews to leave was also viewed in a positive way by the west, regardless if they were only allowing it for capital gain. Ideology also plays a part, for example, the Soviet Union did not want to abandon its ideal of the Soviet Union as workers’
paradise, and it was therefore reluctant to let its Jews leave. Ceausescu however, was more concerned with achieving a racially pure Romania. The “gentleman’s agreement” seemed to have it all: Jews found a secretive way to leave on aliya; and Ceausescu received payments, a better status in the West and a racially pure Romania.

Although more and more Jewish Romanians were leaving to Israel, the Jewish community still somehow remained in place. Here I will paraphrase the Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress, who stated that in Romania the rabbinate was held in high esteem, and congregational life blossomed. Therefore the Communist regime did seek to both undermine the congregations, and to deprive the members of spiritual leadership. They achieved this by destroying the financial basis of the congregations. The Law on Religious Cults separated Church and State. This meant that congregations were deprived of their right to levy taxes on its members. The following year, a Statute for the Organization of the Mosaic Faith decreed the centralization of the Jewish congregations on a local as well as on national level. Only one congregation could exist in each city or town. If more than one existed, even if they were of a different orthodoxy, they would have to merge. The individual congregations of the country had to be organized into one national federation. Thus a strict unity was created, in contrast to the multiple warring factions of previous years. However, this unity exclusively served the interests of the regime, and it was only the Communists on whom the government had an iron grip that headed local and national organizations.

By around 1956, the congregations were in ruins. As said before, their finances were based on the prerogative of levying taxes on the members and on the obligation of every Jew to join the local congregation as a member. The abolition of these rights by the Law on Religious Cults was a shock to those who lived in countries with a different historical evolution. A considerable percentage of Jews were pauperized, the wage earners struggling to meet the bare necessities, to make matters worse there was no financial capability to maintain a congregation. In this anti-religious atmosphere, willingness to join a religious organization was ebbing away. The Institute of Jewish Affairs made the conclusion that the congregations had to; if they had not already done so, disband.

This accounts for the disastrously small number of rabbis during this period. The restrictions placed on congregations meant that their number was bound to decrease. In such

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76 Julius Fisher, Nehemiah Robinson, European Jewry: Ten Years After the War, 54.
conditions, young people could not and did not choose the rabbinical calling. Religious life was heading for extinction, despite official statements to the contrary: Bercu Feldman told Maitre Andre Blumel, (President of the French Zionist Federation), in July 1955, that Romania still had 500 synagogues in use, with 70 religious communities. It is worth noting that, according to information released in July 1954, by the Romanian Legation in London, there were 126 Jewish communities, 32 Talmud Torahs, and 69 mikvot, (ritual baths). Religious services were held daily in temples and synagogues of which Bucharest was said to have 50, Iasi 75, and Butosani 45.

With the liquidation of all cultural, Zionist, and charitable organizations, two Communist-led organizations survived: The Federation of the Jewish Congregations, presided over by Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen, the significance of which is decreasing with the decline of the congregations, and the second one the Jewish Democratic Committee (CDE). Even in its early years many of the branches of CDE were not active, as attested to by the endless “criticisms and self-criticisms” published in then newspaper *Unirea*. In the 1950s, the Institute for Jewish Affairs received the message that according to reports by recent arrivals from Romania, the CDE was disbanded, and that the Association of Religious Communities replaced the CDE. Bercu Feldman was transferred to the office of the Prime Minister. The leader of the Jewish scene was reportedly Yoshka Chischinewsky, who was described in Romanian papers as the “vice-president of the Ministry” and Communist Party big shot.

Schools were nationalized, while the Jewish youth learned about the Communist spirit, so much so that they ignored their Jewish heritage. This led to hostility not only towards Judaism, but also towards their parents. According to Bercu Feldman, some 5,000 children were taught Yiddish, either in all-Jewish schools or in general schools where Yiddish was added to the curriculum. A state publishing house printed Yiddish books, and a new Yiddish quarterly was about to make an appearance.

Although no reliable statistics are available, it is safe to say that about 150,000 Romanian Jews emigrated during the postwar decade. Romania did not permit indiscriminate emigration to Israel, (as did Bulgaria or Czechoslovakia). For the most part, only selected groups were permitted to emigrate. Nonetheless, up to 1,000 persons per shipload were permitted for a time, so that, according to official Israeli statistics, the total number of immigrants of Romanian origin in Israel since the establishment of the Jewish State was 121,818. The numbers per year can be viewed in the table below, and up to 1951 there was considerable emigration. Since comparatively few Romanian Jews were in Displaced Persons camps, the bulk must have come directly from Romania. After October 1951, the number of
exit permits steadily diminished, and after February 1952, emigration had stopped for all practical purposes. Still, in 1953 and 1954 a few Romanian Jews could emigrate to Israel, in May 1955 the authorities began to accept applications again, and on July 5, exit permits, for the first in a long time, were granted, resulting in a small number of subsequent arrivals in Israel.\textsuperscript{77}

\textit{Statistics on the Jewish Emigration from Romania to Israel 1948-1954.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 May-31 December</td>
<td>17,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>13,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>46,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until September</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>40,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>3,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Jews wanting to emigrate from Romania, applying for the necessary travelling documents was not an easy decision to make. The Communist system labeled everybody who applied for emigration as an enemy of the country, and many were immediately fired from their jobs. Finding another job was next to impossible. The professional status of Romanian citizens was marked on their identity cards. Therefore, when professionals were forced to look for work as unskilled workers, (cashiers, cleaners, etc.); they were immediately identified as “politically” problematic. This political stigmatization had other negative consequences too. Furthermore, it seemed that there was no logical system applied to the processing of emigration applications. A person had to take the risk of being ostracized, without knowing how long the waiting period would be, or if the documents would be granted at all. There were some who obtained their travel visas within a year, while others had to wait ten years or more. Once someone applied for emigration, the entire family became tainted as well.

Corresponding with family from abroad was also very risky, as it was interpreted as having contact with “capitalist” countries. Receiving a letter from abroad carried the danger of being accused of spying for a capitalist power. Such an accusation could result in unending

\textsuperscript{77} Ibidem, 56-58.
reprimands, humiliation, and loss of employment and in some cases, imprisonment. A simple joke told amongst friends could be interpreted as having political overtones and could lead to similar sanctions. An unexpected knock on the door immediately created a state of panic.

People lived in constant emotional torment. While Communism trapped most citizens, regardless of religion and nationality, the Jewish population was exposed to an even greater extent to the wrath of this oppressive regime. Under these circumstances, the horrors of the experiences during the Holocaust were buried deeper in the back of the survivors’ minds and a veil of emotional numbness covered the pain. At present, there are only 12,000 Jews left in Romania. Seventy per cent are over 66 years old and fifty per cent have intermarried.\textsuperscript{78}

\textbf{1.6 Nicolae Ceausescu, Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen and the Jewish community}

Gheorghiu-Dej was succeeded in 1965 by Nicolae Ceausescu as head of the Communist Party and thus of Romania. Under Ceausescu there was no place for human rights, individual freedom and democracy. Ceausescu maintained his position until 1989, when he and his wife Elena were executed in a political \textit{coup}. This event officially ended the Communist dictatorship.\textsuperscript{79}

Ceausescu’s relationship with his Jewish citizens is an interesting one. Michael Riff states that under Ceausescu, Romania’s relationship with its Jews had “arguably the best record on its treatment of Jews”. Ceausescu maintained a benevolent policy towards Jews and maintained a relationship with Israel that was to play an integral role in Ceausescu’s plans of going on a course of independence from Moscow in foreign affairs. Riff continues to explain Ceausescu’s relationship with the Jews. The treatment of Romania’s Jewish population was part of a plan to keep diplomatic relations with the State of Israel close while still maintaining good connections with the United States.

As mentioned before in this chapter, Jewish emigration to Israel after the Second World War was not without its difficulties. Up to the point of Ceausescu’s reign, 380,000 Romanian Jews had already left to Israel. The Jews remaining in Romania was estimated at being between 26,000 and 70,000, as compared to about 800,000 before the war. According to Michael Riff the remaining Jewish population enjoyed the best status of any Jewish population under a Communist government.

\textsuperscript{78} Felicia Steigman Carmelly, \textit{Shattered!}, 168, 169, 174.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibidem, 166.
However, this status was undermined by concerns of the American Jewish leaders. Romania was given the trade status of “Most Favored Nation” by the US Congress and it was threatened to release Romania of this title because of Romania’s maltreatment of ethnic minorities, especially Hungarians. The American Jewish leaders lobbied Congress not to do so, in fear of causing the Romanian Jewry to suffer the consequences. These fears came from the appearance of anti-Semitic literary works and newspaper articles in Romania. The main writer of these articles was Corneliu Vadim Tudor, a public figure that remained active in political life in Romania after the fall of Communism. The articles were an attack against Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen, the leader of the Jewish community in Romania during the Communist reign. The complete works of anti-Semitic national poet Eminescu were being published around this time and Moses Rosen protested against this publication. Vadim Tudor’s anti-Semitic articles were attacking Rosen personally, making remarks about Rosen’s nineteenth-century clothing that smelt and that Jews in general were to stay out of Romanian culture. Riff mentions that the attack of Rosen could be a way to divert public attention away from the country’s deteriorating economic situation. It needs to be said that anti-Semitism continued to play a big part in Romania’s nationalism and was not about to disappear.

Although anti-Semitism was more out in the open, the Jews remained fairly protected within Romanian society. Communities such as the orthodox Moldavians could continue their religious life in the same manner in communities of Dorohoi, Botosani and Iasi. Synagogues were repaired and the Talmud Torahs still educated the young. For the older Jews the welfare programs remained intact, or for example, a nursing home with hospital facilities was opened in Bucharest. Riff gives much of the credit for this state of affairs to Moses Rosen, who was not only Chief Rabbi of Romania but also the head of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania. 80

Rabbi Rosen undoubtedly collaborated with the Communist regime, states author and historian Michael Shafir. The reason behind both the collaboration with the Ceausescu government and Rosen’s agreement to act abroad as a supporter of the regime, was that the Rabbi could then get permission for the emigration to Israel of a large proportion of the Jewish population; in addition a network of Jewish aid with the assistance of other international Jewish organizations could be set up, and Jewish religious schools were established. These are achievements that no other leader of Central and East European Jewry could claim to have achieved, and all this in a Communist country known for its strictness in

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its supervision of activities taking place outside of party control. Shafir therefore notes that the heads of other religious communities in Romania collaborated at least as much as Rabbi Rosen but failed to achieve on behalf of their community what he had achieved for his.\textsuperscript{81} 

Author Michael Riff shares this view of Rabbi Rosen. Riff mentions that some even called Rosen the “Red Rabbi” for his good relations with the Ceausescu Communist regime, but at the same time, Rosen managed to be a relentless defender of Jewish interests in his country. It was due to Rabbi Rosen’s influence that Communist Party members were prevented from holding leadership posts in the Jewish community. And Rabbi Rosen always worked hard to maintain the traditional Jewish life at home.\textsuperscript{82} 

In May 1994 Rabbi Moses Rosen passed away, which for the man who for over forty years had served as chief rabbi and head of the Federation of Romanian Jewish Communities, signified the end of an era. It had its effect upon the Romanian Jewish community as well. Representatives in Romania of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee shared the feeling of stagnation and were prompted to find a new chief rabbi quickly. In May 1995 Romanian-born professor Yehezkel Mark was chosen, a lecturer in literature in Bar-Ilan University, Israel, who had never been a rabbi before. Rabbi Mark stepped into the role of rabbi and lobbied for Jewish interests, such as more individuals to assist in Jewish education and more adult training in Jewish religious functions such as gabbai, a person who assists in the running of the synagogue. Rabbi Rosen’s death also affected the centrality of the Federation of Jewish Communities, but at the same time created more freedom to the individual communities. Also, emigration to Israel continued. Especially within the population of elderly Romanian Jews, who expressed the desire to immigrate to Israel. The number of Jews living in Romania remained up for discussion at this point; a census was taken after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989, which indicated that 9,000 Romanian Jews remained, while the Federation of Jewish Communities spoke of 14,000 Romanian Jews. Despite the declining number of Jews living in Romania in the 1990s, the communities continued to run smoothly and took up the freedom they received from Rabbi Mark and the Federation of Jewish Communities.

Although the Jews maintained a fairly protected life in their communities, there was still anti-Semitism in Romania. The head of the Federation of Jewish Communities, no longer a rabbi but this time a professor, Nicolae Cajal took up the lead and expressed that the Jewish

\textsuperscript{81} Michael Shafir, “Jews and anti-Semites in Romania Since the Death of Rabbi Rosen”, in: East European Jewish Affairs vol. 24, no. 2 (1994), 147. 
\textsuperscript{82} Michael Riff, The Face of Survival, 202.
community’s attitude towards anti-Semitism was different than Rabbi Rosen’s attitude towards anti-Semitism. Cajal did not declare a general war on anti-Semitism, but instead focused on providing information to convince the Romanians of the great contribution the Jews made to the Romanian people and Romania itself.\(^8^3\) If this approach has been successful, remains to be seen. It could be possible that the number of Jews still living in Romania is so small, that there is no need to convince the non-Jewish Romanians about the Jewish contribution to Romania. In the next chapter I will elaborate on Romania in its post-Communist period and the impact that this had on the Jews in Romania.

Chapter Two       Memory And Memorialization

2.1 Introduction

With the imposition of Communist rule, Romania was forced to turn its back on the west and face eastwards. The Paris Peace Treaty of February 1947 was the cover that was needed to justify the new course for Romania. According to the conditions of this treaty, Romania was required to outlaw all Fascist organizations on Romanian territory and all other bodies engaged in anti-Soviet propaganda. One of the outcomes of this condition was the ban of all publications that propagated Fascist ideas. In complying with the Peace Treaty the Romanian government went one step further, and sought to ban all literature, which did not suit its ideological mission of communizing Romanian society. The Minister of Interior therefore issued a circular to all libraries and bookshops in 1948 forbidding them to provide or sell fifteen categories of works, among them all school textbooks published before 1947, all books relating to Russia, France, Britain, the British Empire and the United States before 1944, all books favorable to a regime or government other than the Soviet one, and all books showing western cultural influence in general.\(^8^4\) Thus, the Communist regime effectively banned all literature, and paved an efficient way for Romania to erase and forget its fascist past.

Author Lavinia Stan is a comparative politics specialist, who has worked mainly on democracy, democratization and transitional justice. On the latter subject Stan explains why some newly created democracies are willing to deal with their recent past of human rights abuses, and why other states are not.\(^8^5\) To paraphrase Stan’s vision here on coming to terms with a traumatic past, she is of the opinion it is one of the most inflicting, politically charged and morally challenging experiences associated with the post-Communist transitions. Boundaries between victims, bystanders and perpetrators seem to fade; efforts to bring perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice have resulted in frustrating settlings of accounts. Stan argues here, that transitional justice can help rebuild a democratic community on trust, individual rights, rule of law and respect for truth. She argues further that for a newly formed democracy to deal with the wrongs of its past, after decades of organized forgetfulness or of state-sponsored, ideologically defined falsification of history, transitional justice can help to right these wrongs.

\(^8^4\) Dennis Deletant, *Hitler’s Forgotten Ally*, 262, 263.
Author Vladimir Tismaneanu, (chair of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania), points out that: This making amends for the past cannot take place via decrees from above. Society needs to play an important role here and needs to participate in the national discourse on how to come to terms with the past. Tismaneanu warns against the making of new mythologies, (redemptive, self-glorifying narratives), and in order to avoid this, one needs to take into account the institutional and human elements involved in the totalitarian and post-totalitarian stages of Communist dictatorships. Author Tismaneanu points out here that there exists an urgent need to see through the long held official stories and identify the main institutional and human instruments of the dictatorships. Tismaneanu argues further, that if crimes did take place, then they can be documented and the guilty individuals can be brought to trial.

In this context, trust is the key for a society or country to move on from its past. The new democratic arrangements need to be of a certain quality and it is important that former perpetrators are punished, and cannot continue to benefit from impunity. Without it, the population can feel that the revolutionary changes of their regime into a newly formed democracy were nothing but a façade, only meant to protect and preserve the interests of the old leaders of the regime. Tismaneanu states here: “Reconciliation in the absence of repentance is nothing but a mockery of national dialogue”. Reconciliation needs political, (and moral), justice.

Lavinia Stan continues that confronting the past responds to authentic needs for justice, truth and atonement, but it can also easily lend itself to political manipulation. Confronting the past can also lead to new injustices if the rule of law is ignored in favor of political expediency. George Orwell wrote: “Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present, controls the past.” This remains relevant in post-Communist Eastern Europe and Romania in particular, where the memory of the past is like a prize that everyone is after. In this way, it seems that he who controls history, actually controls the political culture of the new post-Communist states. Stan points out here the terms in which history plays an important role in this reconciliation process and the way that it forms an important method for Eastern Europeans to compete for control of the present. Stan gives the example of the mock trial and execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu on Christmas Day 1989, a

small minority of Romanians only, objected to this execution. The Ceausescus were singled out as solely responsible for Communist abuses, ironically, by their one time right-hand collaborator Ion Iliescu, (Iliescu became President of Romania in 1990-1996 and 2000-2004).88

The part of Romania’s past that I am concerned with is the Romanian Holocaust and what came after, the Communist regimes. The Holocaust, as it took place in Romania, is generally not well known in Romania. This was because the unfolding of the events in different geographic areas in the country varied considerably. Romanian Jewry faced different fates in different areas of the country, this was a factor that kept changing, and thus their history presents a complex picture. Due to the fact that Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia were ceded to the Soviet Union in 1940-41, the fate of the Jews from these areas could occasionally be found in Holocaust literature pertaining to the Jews of the Soviet Union. In the territory of Transnistria, the fate of local Ukrainian Jews may be found under the history of Soviet Jewry, in this way obscuring the truth about the Romanian perpetrators and their responsibility in the mass murders. Likewise, the fate of the Jews from Northern Transylvania, ceded to Hungary in 1940, may be found under the subject of Hungarian Jewry. All these shifts in territories and recorded history result in a complex matter, which is unfamiliar to many survivors of the Holocaust in Romania and Transnistria.89

This complicated history is reflected in the following decades. Survivors of the Holocaust who lived under the Communist dictatorship were silent. A different form of anti-Semitism continued to oppress the Romanian Jews, and many felt unsafe to talk about what happened in the Holocaust since many Communists took part in the Holocaust as perpetrators. Jews who decided to stay in the country after the war were harassed anyway, because their families and friends had left the country and settled in western countries after the war. The Communist regime imposed blame and shame on them for their “unsuitable family background” and their supposed connections with “decadent, capitalistic enemies in capitalist countries”. Due to this most Jews felt unwanted, insecure, unsafe and were afraid for their well-being. The Jews were rendered ‘unfit’ for the new Communist society, and again lived in constant terror, after the traumatizing experiences in the camps.90

For many countries the end of Communism meant the beginning of memory. For these countries, this often started with the glorification of a pre-Communist age but is also opened

89 Felicia Steigman Carmelly, *Shattered!*, 493.
90 Ibidem, 495.
the way to more discussion on politically sensitive topics from the national past, subjects on which Communists had been silent. The most painful subject has been the experience of World War II and the Holocaust, especially the collaboration with the Germans. Open debate about this past in Romania has hardly begun. Tony Judt is of the opinion that if Romania has hardly begun to think about its role in the Holocaust, then this is not simply because the country is a few years behind the rest of Europe in confronting the past. According to Judt, it is also due to the fact that Romania is a little bit different than the majority of post-Communist countries. The project to get rid of the Jews was linked to the Romanian urge to “Romanianize” the country in a way that was not true of anti-Semitism anywhere else in the region. For many Romanians, the Jews were the key to the country’s problems; for which history and geography were equally to blame.\footnote{Tony Judt, \textit{Reappraisals. Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century}, (New York 2008), 254, 255.} Lavinia Stan also emphasized that for many post-Communist countries it is hard to disentangle the Communist from the pre-Communist authoritarian, often fascist experiences. It is common that in countries who allied with the Axis during World War II, de-Communization and de-fascization are often intertwined and mutually conditioned. Stan mentions here the example of the Ceausescu dictatorship, where the ideology, motifs and obsessions of both the far left and far right were often combined.\footnote{Lavinia Stan, \textit{Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe}, xii.}

This chapter is set out to explore how memory and memorialization have developed in Romania after the fall of Communism in 1989. The historiography of World War II and the Holocaust from 1945 up until the present day show how Romanian historians and politicians have treated history in Romania. And in turn, how memory and memorialization could develop in a country that for decades has seen its history revised by the state. Furthermore, this chapter includes various authors explaining their views on what it means to come to terms with the past for Romania. Through these different but also complimentary views, I argue that memory itself is a term with complications. As explained previously, Romania comes with a difficult history and geography, leading to an even more difficult approach to memory in relation to World War II and the Holocaust. This chapter sets out different issues of ‘memory’ in general and those that are linked to the Holocaust in Romania.

\section*{2.2 Historiography}

Historians who research the historiography of World War II in Romania begin with the most important book that was published in 1946, just after the Second World War. Matatias Carp
was Secretary general of the Association of Romanian Jews. Carp wrote a black book about the suffering of the Jews in Romania during the Antonescu dictatorship. The first volume was published in 1946, and before 1948 two more volumes followed. Carp collected various sources for his book in a very systematic fashion from 1940 onwards. He had access to the archives of various Jewish organizations in Bucharest. Press releases and other publications at the time were evaluated and Carp also used the material that was a result of the war crime trials of Ion and Mihai Antonescu and others. Hildrun Glass states that key facts about the fate of the Jews on Romanian territory during the Second World War were published in Romania in the first postwar years, with Carp being the main provider of this data.

Carp’s aim of writing his black book is clear: “I wrote this book of blood and tears with blood and tears to help my brethren find new incentives and objectives in life by remembering the pains experienced, and blows received, in the hope that they will discover means of self-defense in the future, and so that the anger and disgust created by the events presented herewith should make others acknowledge that they committed a great number of crimes against the members of our community. They must provide comfort for the pain and go a long way towards easing their conscience by accepting responsibility in the eyes of history.” Carp goes on: “From its suppressed depths, I want to bring the pain of Jews to the surface; the pain which has so far been covered by trivialization. I want everyone to learn the truth, only the truth, and the whole truth.” Carp’s expectations took a long time to come true. His work seemed to have no immediate effect. After publication, it was circulated only within Jewish circles in Romania. In the years following the consolidation of Communist rule, the few copies that were available disappeared into secret funds of the libraries.

Under Communist rule the image of the past was manipulated to suit the regime’s ends. Ion Antonescu’s name was, for the early part of the period, largely taboo. Romanian historians were encouraged to adopt various ‘coping strategies’ to deal with Romania’s war record. Dennis Deletant speaks of three strategies that the Romanian government employed in order to try and deal with the past of war and destruction. First there is ‘justification’, which was used to explain the conquest and occupation of Transnistria between 1941 and 1944. He states that this occupation was justified by contrasting the Romanian regime in Transnistria with more draconian German rule of other former Soviet territories. A second strategy,

93 Matatias Carp, *Holocaust in Romania*, 12, 13.
according to Deletant, was ‘evasion’. Specifically, this involved inflating the role of the Romanian Communist Party in the coup of 23 August, and also emphasizing Romania’s contribution to the war against Germany. Romania’s quest for finding scapegoats is the final strategy: Romania was a victim of Nazi Germany, which imposed its political and military will upon the country. The Soviet Union, Hungary and Bulgaria shared their part of the ‘guilt’ as revisionist states who had pounced upon a politically isolated Romania. Britain and France were blamed in this strategy for failing to provide a counterweight to the Soviet Union and Germany. Antonescu’s fault was to lead Romania single-handedly into a calamitous war.95

As stated before, in May 1948, the Ministry of Information published a list of 8000 titles, which were to be withdrawn from circulation. Names like Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle were outlawed. Books on Antonescu, the Iron Guard, the Romanian royal family, Bessarabia and the Romanian occupation of Transnistria were removed from libraries. There was a purge of politically incorrect titles, and the activities of journalists, writers, artists and musicians were brought under the Agitation and Propaganda section of the Central Committee of the Party. Nothing could be published or performed without approval. Education was treated in a similar way. Foreign schools were closed down, the teaching profession was purged, and professors were removed from the faculties of history and philosophy, with Stalinist indoctrinators taking their place.96

The coup of 23 August 1944, where, as mentioned in chapter one, King Michael arrested Ion and Mihai Antonescu, takes a unique position in the historiography of the 1950s and 1960s. Even before Gheorghiu-Dej achieved supremacy within the Party, and was able to control historiography, his Communist colleagues sought to deny the credit gained by the King and the major democratic parties for the coup by assuming it exclusively for themselves, and thereby claiming legitimacy for their rule. It was, after all, Gheorghiu-Dej who first emerged as the leader of the Party, the group most closely involved with the coup. Gheorghiu-Dej then went on to secure his domination of the entire Party, and it is for this reason that the coup was accorded such a sacred place in Party history.97

Under Nicolae Ceaucescu the 23 August coup became the major event of Romania’s war. Deletant gives three reasons for this: First, it was presented as the culmination of the allegedly Communist-led anti-Fascist resistance to Antonescu. Second, it marked the strong resistance against Germany and the beginning of Romania’s part in the defeat of Hitler.

95 Dennis Deletant, Hitler’s Forgotten Ally, 262.
96 Ibidem, 264.
97 Ibid, 265, 266.
Thirdly, it provided legitimacy for the autonomous course initiated by Gheorghiu-Dej and then continued by Ceausescu. Military historians were also putting extra emphasis on Romania’s contribution to the defeat of Germany.  

The overall experience of Communism for Romanians was traumatic. In the economy, it replaced central control for the entrepreneurial spirit; in political and social life, it submerged civil society in institutions lacking integrity; and in intellectual life, free expression was subjected, and laws were both proliferated and discarded. Communism interacted with historiography in a largely negative way. History had rarely been practiced as a pure science independent from patriotism and ideology before World War II. However during this period it seems that historians at least seemed to be freer to seek the truth and confront their ideas in open debates. By contrast, during the Communist period, this was subordinated to party interests and intellectuals were expected to exclusively follow the will of the Party. This meant that historiography did not follow the path of truth but instead followed the path that was set out by the Communist Party.

Keith Hitchins points out however, that the controls that historians and others had to endure during the Communist period were still far from uniform than in other periods. Hitchins is of the opinion that history and social thought between 1947 and 1989 evolved in three broad stages. The first was the period of mobilization, lasting until about 1960, and this was characterized by a more or less strict compliance with the principles of Marxism-Leninism, as interpreted by the Party. This is also what Dennis Deletant notices, according to him the 1950s and early 1960s are a time where the interpretation of the Second World War by Romanian historians was straightforward and dictated by the precepts of Marxism-Leninism. The 1950s praised Russia as the chief contributor to the formation of modern Romania and earlier controversy around Bessarabia were shrouded in silence. The role of Russian revolutionaries in creating the Romanian socialist movement was emphasized, and the Bolshevik Revolution was proclaimed a turning point in Romanian history. Hildrun Glass remarks about this period that Jews were looked upon as victims of atrocities and persecution.

Historical research was done on the right-wing parties and the pogroms in Bucharest, (January 1941), and Iasi, (June 1941). A manipulative selection was made. Some spectacular

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98 Ibid, 265, 266.
100 Ibidem, 1081.
101 Dennis Deletant, Hitler’s Forgotten Ally, 264.
102 Keith Hitchins, “Historiography”, 1081, 1082.
anti-Jewish excesses were singled out; responsibility was externalized by directly or indirectly attributing the situation to German influence. The mass murder in Transnistria remained unspoken of. Actual research of the fate of the Jews in Romania took place outside of the country. There certainly were individual researchers with their own blind spots, but in this case at least the entire discourse could not be monopolized.\textsuperscript{103} In summary, this stage of ‘mobilization’ is characterized by the relative freedom for research on the Holocaust, with the main focus being the Soviet Union. In the 1960s the attitude towards the Soviet Union changed: The existence of a Bessarabian problem was recognized and where the USSR first was a contributor to the Romanian state, it changed in that the modern Romanian state felt threatened by the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{104} The leader of Romania’s Communist Party made efforts to distance Romania from the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{105}

The second stage in historiography, as Hitchins has pointed out, was between the early 1960s and 1971. There was a slight liberalization of cultural life and a small softening of political and economic rigidity. The third stage that Hitchins mentions starts in 1971, it was at this point that the situation changed dramatically. Nicolae Ceausescu demanded a return to strict ideological conformity in the humanities and social sciences. This was the beginning of party-sponsored nationalism in historiography and the start of an oppressive personality cult unique in modern Romanian history. This trend in historiography continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as anti-Russian and anti-Soviet sentiments mounted.\textsuperscript{106}

From the 1970s onwards attitudes towards Ion Antonescu changed. The fascist dictatorship consisted of two phases: The Legionary Movement, (1940-41), and Ion Antonescu, (1941-44). While the Legionnaires’ crimes are depicted as if committed out of an unnecessary will to kill, Antonescu appears as less bloodthirsty and irresponsible. The crimes of the Antonescu regime are placed in the context of a state of emergency, which suggests that his decisions were motivated by the war. During this period anti-Semitism is not presented as an ingredient of fascism and the dimensions of the Jewish tragedy are minimized. Ethnic Romanians and Communists are depicted as the main victims of Nazi-type policies and authors stress the “radical” qualitative differences between Nazi Germany and Antonescu’s Romania.

All of this explains the significant terminological shift that occurred in the 1970s, which turned Antonescu’s “fascist dictatorship” into a “military-fascist” regime. In the late

\textsuperscript{103}Hildrun Glass, “Historiographie und Politik”, 282, 283.
\textsuperscript{104}Keith Hitchins, “Historiography”, 1082.
\textsuperscript{105}International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, \textit{Executive Summary}, 57.
\textsuperscript{106}Keith Hitchins, “Historiography”, 1081, 1082.
1980s the linguistic construct “military-fascist dictatorship” was in turn sidelined, as the term suggested an involvement of the army in politics. Antonescu’s regime would from then on be labeled as either a “totalitarian regime” or a “personal dictatorship”. Carefully avoided in the historiography of that era are ideologically associated concepts of, as we know, the factual terms such as the “Holocaust”, “Final Solution” or “genocide.” As a consequence, in the late 1970s, and far more pronounced in the 1980s, efforts to rehabilitate Marshal Antonescu as a patriot began. Romanian historiography, for different reasons and at different times, strove to minimize the scope of atrocities committed against Jews on Romanian territory or in territories administered by the Romanian government and to deny Romanian participation in the Holocaust.

While in the 1980s the “Holocaust” and “Final Solution” were still mostly avoided both as terms and as facts, effort was put into research with a stronger emphasis on the Romanian initiative in the mass murder of the Jews. One of these researchers who devoted his life’s work to this issue was Israeli historian Jean Ancel. In 1986 Ancel created a 12-volume work with documentation on the fate of the Romanian Jews. This source material consisted of documentation of the Romanian state apparatus and estimated the participation of Romania higher than the research before him. Ancel’s archival work led him to see the representation of Romania in a conceptually new way, particularly with regard to the degree and regularity of the Romanian action against the Jews in the occupied territories. The second major new finding relates to the extent of the action in the entire Romanian area of influence. Under the Antonescu regime, all Jews were affected by anti-Semitic measures, even those who had escaped deportation and mass murder, but it lacked the regime of possibilities to implement all plans fully.

Until 1989, the subject of the fate of the Jews under the rule of dictatorships was largely taboo. Incorporated into a strict framework of patterns of interpretation by the state, historical research in Romania could not make international connections, and, for example, compare their work to Western European views. However, it could make Eastern European connections, which meant it stayed within the same sphere of influence as before. Even in the latter case, the regime forced researchers to make their individual results about research on World War II within the context of the ideological guidelines provided.

107 International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, Executive Summary, 58.
110 Ibidem, 281.
During the 1990s Romania, and some of the countries of the former Soviet Union, new archive material was accessible. This material showed that the Antonescu regime was not merely reacting to German pressure, and neither was it acting from opportunism. The regime had, in fact, been actively pursuing an anti-Semitic agenda.\footnote{Ibid, 286.} Vladimir Solonari states that all hitherto published scholarly literature on Romanian policy towards Jews during World War II can be broadly divided into two groups. The first group contains the works of those historians, essentially of Romanian nationalistic orientation, who are apologetic of the Romanian wartime dictator Ion Antonescu and who tend to deny or minimize Romania’s responsibility for the fate of the Jews. This group of historians almost seem to make the suggestion that Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina somehow deserved their fate: “They paid by their suffering for their own supposedly treacherous behavior towards Romanians troops at the latter’s withdrawal from the provinces and the provinces’ takeover by the Soviets in the summer of 1940.” Furthermore Solonari states about this kind of approach that it was very popular in Romania in the 1990s, but its pre-eminence has visibly diminished, though it has by no means disappeared completely.\footnote{Vladimir Solonari, “Model Province: Explaining the Holocaust of Bessarabian and Bukovinian Jewry”, in: \textit{Nationalities Papers} 34, no. 4 (2006), pp. 471-500, there 471.} The second group of scholarly literature constitutes those publications that address the same problem from the opposed position. In other words, these authors tend to prove that Ion Antonescu and his government pursued a murderous anti-Semitic policy akin to the one pursued by Hitler’s Germany and that they were responsible for the murder and death from hunger, exhaustion and inhuman treatment of hundreds of thousands of Jews, (men, women and children). An important achievement of this group is multi-volume publications of primary sources pertaining to the anti-Semitic policy of Ion Antonescu’s government.\footnote{Ibidem, 472.}

It is Solonari’s view that only two types of literature on the Holocaust in Romania are published, it can be argued therefore that Romanians did not get a wide variety of views on what happened during World War II in Romania. It could be because of this that a lot of Romanian people still feel that the casualties done by the Antonescu regime to the Jews were not because of anti-Semitism in Romania, but because of pressure from Germany. The Romanian government had no responsibility to the events, and the Romanian people “as good as none”. Hildrun Glass found in her research that in Romanian scholarly literature the total number of Jews killed was sometimes mentioned as “under 10,000”. Glass spots the reason for this number; the authors used the territory of Romania after the war, so without the extra
territory that was under Romania’s jurisdiction during the war, such as Transnistria and Moldavia. She further notes that until 1989 this was a ruling history dictate. And in the early 1990s this dictate had as a consequence the problem that certain facts about the mass murders of the Jews in Romanian territory and in Romania itself stayed mainly unknown.\textsuperscript{114}

The beginning of the new century showed no improvement in the official discourse of Romania, with a new wave of anti-Semitism in newspapers, right-wing publications and anti-Semitic magazines available in every bookstore. The historic professional discourse was also subjected to popular revisionist tendencies. The rehabilitation of Ion Antonescu was once again taking place, together with lots of new publications about his persona. Ion Iliescu, the first president after the fall of Communism in Romania, was brought up in Communist times with the same ideals and ideas about the Jewish fate as the Communists.\textsuperscript{115} His first presidential period was from 1990-1996. In his second period as president, from 1996 to 2004, there was a long controversy with international echoes. In June 2003, at the end of a brief communique concluding a cooperative agreement between the National Archives of Romania and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, 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.” As pointed out before, again a dispute over the boundaries within the Holocaust supposedly took place and one which Romania used as evidence no Holocaust had taken place on Romanian territory. The statement triggered numerous national and international protests. President Iliescu commented that the statement “should have never been made”.\textsuperscript{116} What followed was increasing pressure from the United States on the Romanian government to combat the radical right and anti-Semitic currents in the country and take a position against the crimes of the Antonescu era. Romania had hopes to be admitted into NATO, in order to be eligible the country had to accept the values for which NATO stands and thus accept the pressure from within the USA to come to terms with its past. There was no doubt that NATO maintains a culture of remembrance for the victims of war and that the same was expected of Romania.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{114} Hildrun Glass, “Historiographie und Politik”, 286 - 289.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibidem, 290, 291.
\textsuperscript{117} Hildrun Glass, “Historiographie und Politik”, 292.
On October 22, 2003, on the initiative of Ion Iliescu, but with added pressure from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem in Israel, the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania was established. This Commission was set up from the beginning as an independent research body, free of any influence and political consideration. Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and honorary member of the Romanian Academy, accepted the invitation form Ion Iliescu to be chairman 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 this research were presented in a final report.

The Commission concluded that the Romanian authorities were the main perpetrators in the Holocaust, in both its planning and implementation. This included the systematic deportation and extermination of nearly all the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina to Transnistria, the mass killing fields of Romanian and local Jews in Transnistria, as well as the massive execution of Jews during the Iasi pogrom. It also included the systematic deportation and degradation applied to Romanian Jews during the Antonescu regime. The expropriation of assets, dismissal from jobs, 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 were also considered. The Commission concluded that Jews were degraded solely on account of their Jewish origin, losing the protection of the state and becoming its victims. 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.

The commission on the Holocaust in Romania recognizes three ways in which postwar Romania dealt with its past: Distortion, negation and minimization. It states that the concept of ‘distortion’ applies to attempts to alter historical reality for political and propagandistic purposes. The commission defines ‘Negationism’ as the denial that the Holocaust took place and/or the denial of the participation of significant numbers of members of one’s own nation in its perpetration. Negation has several forms in which it can occur, like integral negationism, which means rejecting the very existence of the Holocaust. In Romania, just as in other former Communist regimes, integral denial is a Western “import” with no traces of local originality whatsoever. Deflective negationism channels guilt for perpetration in several directions: It blames the Germans, marginal elements in society, and even the Jews.

119 “Postwar Romania” here means from the fall of Communism in 1989 up until the publishing of the Commission’s final report in 2004.
themselves for the perpetration of the crimes. Selective negationism acknowledges that the Holocaust occurred elsewhere, but denies any participation of one’s compatriots in its perpetration.\textsuperscript{120}

In post-Communist Romania, Holocaust denial has been a diffuse phenomenon, which has manifested itself in politics, academia and the mass media. Historians and nationalist activists educated by the Communist regime maintained solidarity and preserved or developed the negationist and pro-Antonescu discourse. In addition, numerous other individuals, groups, and publications make use of negationist themes for different reasons.\textsuperscript{121} One consequence of the Communist regime that did the most damage was the perverted image of the past that it left. Yet, the manipulation of the past for political ends did not end with the collapse of Communism. Since the overthrow of Ceausescu, the case of Antonescu has become in the first instance a political matter, and only at a secondary level a historical one. Those who use patriotism in an ultra-nationalist way against the Romanian monarchy and democratic forces in general have used the glorification of Antonescu and the exaggeration of his political merits, in combination with the minimization of his responsibility for the death of more than 250,000 Jews, as a weapon of propaganda. Ultra-nationalist politicians such as Corneliu Vadim Tudor have striven to exploit sympathy for Antonescu as a weapon against King Michael, who was accused of having ordered the Marshal’s arrest and handover to the Soviets, thereby becoming the moral perpetrator of Antonescu’s conviction and execution.\textsuperscript{122}

2.3 Post-Communist Romania

Mariana Hausleitner, author and historian on Romanian history, starts her article with a quotation from Tony Judt, where he describes the memory of Europe’s dead Jews as having become “the very definition of” as well as “the guarantee for restored humanity on the European continent.” Hausleitner then argues that this conflict underscores the sensitivity of the memory of the Holocaust in today’s political culture. For one to deny the Holocaust is to deny the postwar political order and rules of international law, and at the same time, to affirm the Holocaust is to accept the postwar political order and international law. It also shows that ‘history’ is more than just dealing with the past. Our memory, as Hausleitner states, is nowadays guided by the external world rather than involving a spontaneous process.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibidem, 58.
\item Dennis Deletant, \textit{Hitler’s Forgotten Ally}, 269, 270.
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\end{footnotesize}
“Memory is always a mirror of the time in which the memory comes into being”; a quote taken from Hausleitner herself points out here that memory plays a much bigger role than just remembering. It also shows the steps that a country can take to move on from a regime with a history that is not something to be proud of, and to look towards the future.

The denial of the Holocaust evokes fierce reactions. In Western Europe Holocaust denial has been around for several decades, but only since the late 1980s have political institutions taken action. In the countries of Eastern Europe this same phenomenon appeared with the dismantling of communism. Before the Romanian public can come to terms with their memory of the holocaust, the effects of the forty-year rule of a dominant ideology will first have to be erased. Hausleitner notes that for the Romanian people, coming to terms with the Holocaust and the Second World War has to compete with the traumas of Communist rule. The Holocaust and the terms in which it is perceived in Eastern Europe differ from the West. In the East it functions much less as an exclusive memory and ‘warning for the future’. Hausleitner notes here the importance of the way a specific country remembers the Holocaust and responds to those who deny it tells us much about that country’s particular historical culture.123

The situation in Romania after the fall of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu in December 1989 was one in which looking at the past was still dominated by rehabilitation and false history. Mariana Hausleitner describes the following picture: First, there was the group of veterans from the war against the Soviet Union that demanded the rehabilitation of Ion Antonescu. Through this rehabilitation the veterans tried to get their years spent in war in their retirement benefits. These retirement claims were settled in 1993, and then a new group that advocated the rehabilitation of Antonescu came to surface. Former member of Ceausescu’s party and leader of the Greater Romania Party, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, headed this group. They encouraged the cult around Antonescu as a means of distracting from the calls of civil rights groups for an opening of the Securitate archives. Vadim Tudor was not the only sound to be heard when it comes to the admiring of Antonescu, the Romanian senate held a one minute of silence on 1st June 1991, the forty-fifth anniversary of Antonescu’s execution. Only senators of the Hungarian minority walked out in protest. Soon after this, streets began to be renamed after Antonescu.124

124 Ibidem, 238.
The situation in Romania around 1991 was not unnoticed by the rest of the world. The American media intensively covered the Iasi pogrom commemoration of that year and it criticized the passivity of the Romanian government and anti-Semitic heckling of Elie Wiesel at this commemoration. President Iliescu condemned Romanian anti-Semitic newspaper *Romania Mare*, and reacted in a mild manner, trying to be impartial: “The mistake came from the other side as well. I talked to Moses Rosen and I reproached him for his attempt to promote the idea that the Holocaust started in Romania. It is not the historical truth. What he stated was taken advantage of by the anti-Semites, so *Romania Mare* appeared as the people’s defender”. On November 21, 1991, the Parliament and the Senate adopted a new constitution. It included an article that prohibits the provocation of ethnic, racial, class, or religious hatred and the incitement of discrimination. The campaigns of *Romania Mare* continued unabated however. After the commemoration of Iasi, where Elie Wiesel was heckled, Wiesel returned to the United States worried and wrote: “Zhidan (Kike) was not limited to the fanatic mobs; it was shouted in the street, whispered in the train, heard in the street, in city parks, in government offices and in school courtyards too… Romania’s position today in the international community is visibly not the best… Unless its leaders put an immediate end to this vicious, ugly and perilous anti-Semitic press-campaign, unless they place the fanatic hatemongers outside the accepted norms of society, Romania runs the risk of being isolated and condemned by the international community as few others have been.”

Other difficulties with coming to terms with the (fascist) past were shown by the newly created ‘National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism’ in 1993 and headed by none other than former Communist, Corneliu Vadim Tudor. Other former functionaries of the Ceausescu regime tried to acquire a new status through this institute by means of Hungarian- and Jew-bashing. The promoting of Antonescu also occurred. The actual ‘study of totalitarianism’ did not happen, the institute produced no research on the Holocaust in the first few years of its creation. Research was centered on the war against the Soviet Union and on giving it a new and positive point of view. Instead of focusing on regaining Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, the war against the Soviet Union was now portrayed as a defensive campaign. Hausleitner points to the relevance of this interpretation, some of the Romanians who lived in these territories were actually advocating a union with Romania. Hausleitner also notes here that other former Communist functionaries formed various Romanian governments.

until 1996 – under the name of ‘Social Democrats’. Of course, they participated in some of the activities to rehabilitate Antonescu, and especially in election years, where they had to rely on votes of the Greater Romania Party in order to have a governing majority in parliament.\textsuperscript{126}

While there was ongoing anti-Semitism and a campaign to rehabilitate Antonescu and other war criminals, some steps were made in the opposite direction. In order for Romania to be selected for NATO and EU membership, it had to make a change. Minorities in Romania had complained for a long time about experiencing discrimination. The Hungarian and German minority groups presented drafts of a minority protection law, but this was not seriously debated in parliament. Parliamentarians saw these drafts as a first step of self-government that would only lead to secession. In the end, decree 137/2000 was issued, which prohibited all kinds of discrimination. However, this decree failed to have much effect.

The struggle for power in parliament went on and in the 2000 presidential elections the battle was between Corneliu Vadim Tudor and Ion Iliescu. Only by a slim margin could Iliescu beat Vadim Tudor.\textsuperscript{127} The scholarly discourse on the Holocaust was being popularized in the press and on television, while revisionist tendencies still dominated the scholarly research. It was the same situation with the schoolbooks, and the rehabilitation of war criminals went on as well.

In November 2001, the Romanian prime minister Ion Iliescu visited the USA, and on his visit he announced a law against the commemoration of war criminals. Emergency decree 31/2002 made the establishment of fascist, racist or xenophobic organizations, as well as the cult of people who committed acts against the peace and against humanity, punishable by five years in prison. Although this seemed to be a new direction, the law itself was still debatable. It was vague on what exactly a punishable deed was and the debates were still mostly focusing on what the term ‘Holocaust’ includes. The Greater Romania Party succeeded in pushing through a definition of the Holocaust that did not put an end to the debates: “The systematic extermination of European Jews in Nazi camps during World War II”. This definition ensured that facts like the mass murder of Jews and Roma could still be called into question and the name of the initiator of these mass murders, Antonescu, could still be restored.

At the beginning of Iliescu’s second term as President, Romania approached NATO and the EU for membership and in doing so put pressure on the government to vigorously

\textsuperscript{126} Georgi Verbeeck, Mariana Hausleitner, “Cultural Memory and Legal Responses”, 238, 239.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibidem, 247, 248.
combat the radical right and anti-Semitism in the country and to take up a clear position against the crimes of the Antonescu regime. Pressure also came from the USA, at a meeting in Washington with the Romanian Prime-Minister Adrian Nastase. It was made clear that Romania would not enter NATO “with Antonescu by his side”, meaning there will be no membership without a clear review of Romania’s fascist past and the role of Marshal Antonescu. As has been discussed in the “Historiography” subchapter, an International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania was set up to investigate the fate of the Romanian Jews.\textsuperscript{128}

The International Commission consisted of domestic and foreign historians, as well as representatives of Jewish and Roma organizations from Romania.\textsuperscript{129} The Commission was set up as an independent research body, free of any influence and political consideration. The results of the research by the Commission were represented in a final report. Romania in collaboration with the Commission, hoped that the conclusions and recommendations by the Commission would promote the education on and understanding of the Holocaust among all citizens, and particularly the youth in Romania, as well as to contribute to further research on the subject. Besides Elie Wiesel, other experts in history, in humanities and 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 were all in the Commission: Delegates Radu Ioanid and Paul Shapiro from The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, from the Institute for Political Defense and Military History in Bucharest Mihail E. Ionescu, from Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Jean Ancel, from the Center for the Study of Jewish History in Bucharest Lya Benjamin, Liviu Beris represented the Association of the Survivors of the Holocaust in Romania, Randolph Braham from the City University of New York, Hildrun Glass as German historian from Ludwig—Maximilians-Universitaet in Munich, the Chief Rabbi of Romania Menachem Hacohen, historian Michael Shafir from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and historian Leon Volovici from Hebrew University of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{130}

Ion Iliescu gave a speech at a meeting dedicated to the Holocaust Remembrance Day in Romania, on 12 October 2004. In this speech Iliescu speaks, and I paraphrase, about how now that Romania has emerged from the darkness of totalitarianism, the country has

\textsuperscript{128} Hildrun Glass, “Historiographie und Politik in Rumanien”, 290-296.
\textsuperscript{129} Georgi Verbeeck, Mariana Hausleitner, “Cultural Memory and Legal Responses”, 249.
embarked on a 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, in Iliescu’s words “a dignified member of the Euro-Atlantic community.” In his speech Iliescu spoke about the discrimination, anti-Semitism and racist policies that the Romanian state had promoted, he calls this a “dark chapter in our recent past”. The past he mentions is the one in which the Romanian Jews became victims of the tragedy of the Holocaust, which Iliescu thinks should not be forgotten or minimized. He refers in his speech to the start of a national “Holocaust Remembrance Day” for Romania: “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.”

Iliescu also mentions what had happened, and has to be put a stop to the practice of twisting the history of the Second World War and the anti-Semitic government of Ion Antonescu. He puts the blame on Romania, whereas before the Germans were to blame: “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 organization of the repressive actions and 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 commission’s final report not only showed their research on the Second World War and the Holocaust in Romania, but it also gave conclusions and recommendations. Recommendations about what Romania still has to do, and still has to undertake in order for the country to give the past a place in their national history and consequently, a place in the hearts of the Romanians. The commission makes the following recommendations: When it comes to public awareness of the Holocaust in Romania, the commission is of the opinion that the final report and an official declaration from the government that it acknowledges the report and what it states, (content and conclusions), will help with public awareness. The next

131 Ibidem.
132 Ibid.
step would be to publish the final report and make it available in both print and Internet editions, and then distribute it to libraries, schools, universities and other educational institutions. It states in the report that one of the reasons for the creation of the Commission has been the need for correcting and supplementing what is currently known about the Holocaust in Romania. This is the next recommendation the Commission makes; to set up a working group that in cooperation with the researchers in the Commission and other international institutions, reviews, corrects and drafts appropriate curricula and textbook material on the Holocaust based on the findings of the Commission’s report. The training of teachers is necessary, so that they are qualified to teach about the Holocaust and familiar with the findings of the report.\textsuperscript{133}

On the topic of commemoration of the Holocaust in Romania, the Commission also had its recommendations. The government has adopted the 9\textsuperscript{th} of October as the official date of Holocaust commemoration. Here, it is important that the commemoration of the Holocaust is brought into the educational system. It is essential to educate younger generations in Romania not only about the past, so that history does not repeat itself, but that to have a commemorative moment of that past helps in understanding it. The Commission recommends here the building of a national memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in Romania, to be erected on public property in Bucharest. Additionally, the Commission adds, there are several mass graves of Holocaust victims on Romanian territory, (most notably victims of the Iasi pogrom), and that they should be properly identified and maintained by the government of Romania. Other recommendations cover the establishment of permanent exhibitions on the Holocaust at, for example, the National Historical Museum in Bucharest. Romania should also encourage its local authorities to recognize their pre-war Jewish communities and to commemorate them.

Since the fall of Communism, there has been a rehabilitation of various war criminals, who were directly responsible for the crimes of the Holocaust. The Commission has decreed that this must be reversed, and that every measure to annul this rehabilitation must be implemented. For a country where war criminals were brought to trial and executed for their crimes, there is no clear path out of this. In effect, the denial of the Holocaust and the cult of persons guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity have to become illegal. This means no more erecting of statues, mounting plaques, and naming of streets or public places after such people. The law mentioned earlier, that defines the Holocaust, as limited

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
only to actions organized by Nazi authorities, thereby excluding the Romanian organization of the exterminations and deportations, should be amended. The Commission ends its recommendations by stating that the government of Romania should establish a permanent agency, commission, or foundation that will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the recommendations made by the Commission and fostering the study of the Holocaust in Romania.  

Secretary of State Mircea Geoana spoke in 2004 about the work of the Commission. Romania no longer softened the “dark moments” of their history. Geoana’s acknowledging of Romania’s wrongdoings was a gesture of moral reparation for the victims of the Holocaust in Romania and worldwide. It was also a message to the younger generation in Romania, so they would learn from these ‘dramatic moments of national history’, so one can learn from mistakes made and prevent a repetition of such events. Geoana also mentioned in his speech the way his country handled the history of the Holocaust could provide an example for other nations. They should have the courage and responsibility to follow Romania’s example.

The next President of Romania Traian Basescu attested in a speech held in 2005, to trying to implement the recommendations of the Wiesel Commission into action. The Prime Minister and Secretary of State confirmed this as well. Furthermore, Basescu used the Wiesel Commission as a model for the later appointed commission to investigate the crimes of the communist regime. Hildrun Glass, a member of the Commission, sets out how, given the circumstances in which this Commission was created, not all observers believed in the sincerity of such explanations, but instead dismissed them as tactical. This is true, but one should also look at the effects on the political and social climate. Romania’s membership of NATO has allowed the opportunism of the political classes of Romania to be a driving force for Romania’s repositioning of the past. A direct result can also be seen in the fundamental alteration of the political discourse on this issue.

Glass further states how other recommendations of the Commission have been met. Since 2005 100 teachers took seminars at the Yad Vashem institute about Holocaust education, about 400 more teachers have also been trained in Romania for this purpose. The curriculum at schools has been altered too; the topic of the Holocaust has been made available at schools as a course choice. More institutions on Jewish studies have been added: In Bucharest, (Centrul de Studii Ebraice Golstein Goren), in Craiova, (Centrul de Cercetare si

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134 Ibid.
A National Institute for Research on the Holocaust in Romania was set up in 2005, with the task of the collecting and issuing of documents and eyewitness statements. This institute further researches the Holocaust and presents their results to the public. At the head of this institute are two members of the Commission: Mihai E. Ionescu and Alexandru Florian. Glass notices that younger generations are showing more interest, with more available university courses on the Holocaust and more available scholarships. According to Glass, there is hope to overcome the ethnic segmentation of research in the coming years and that finally a norm is made.\(^\text{135}\)

The work of the Commission created a more open debate about the persecution of Jews and Roma in the country. In Communist times debates about the subject of the Holocaust only happened in, and between, organizations, which exclusively worked on this topic. It is difficult to establish the precise impact of the Commission’s findings and recommendations, Mariana Hausleitner elaborates on this, with the example of President Ion Iliescu honoring Elie Wiesel as well as historian Randolph L. Braham for their work on the Commission, but on the other hand, also decorating speakers of the Greater Romania Party, who, Hausleitner notes, had been attacked in the Commission’s report as frequent inciters of anti-Semitic slander. Because of this, Wiesel and Braham would not accept their honoring.\(^\text{136}\)

The Commission made a more open debate about the Holocaust possible and showed Romania where changes on debate, memory and commemoration could be made.

In conclusion, some positive developments are happening in Romania. Various research projects and new institutions dedicated to researching not only the Holocaust, but also the anti-Semitic feelings that are still present in Romanian society, have been set up. In contrast, there are still Romanian politicians that speak in public in anti-Semitic ways about Romania’s troubled past. However much of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania tries to change this and to point Romania towards a future with an honest look on the past. An example by Hausleitner illustrates this: In 2006 historian Adrian Cioroianu\(^\text{137}\) took part in a televised poll to determine the ‘greatest Romanians’. The public selected Antonescu as one of the top ten candidates. Cioroianu as a historian spoke not only about Antonescu’s merits but also about his war crimes against the Jews and the Roma. This led the

\(^{135}\) Hildrun Glass, “Histroriatie und Politik in Rumanien”, 298 - 300.
\(^{136}\) Georgi Verbeeck, Mariana Hausleitner, “Cultural Memory and Legal Responses”, 253.
\(^{137}\) Foreign minister of Romania between April 2007 and April 2008.
National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, (headed by Vadim Tudor), to accuse Cioroianu of attacking Antonescu’s memory. At the end of the debate, Antonescu came in as the sixth most important Romanian of all time. This example illustrates that old habits die-hard. Both politicians and the public are still not cooperating in finding a shared past. Although improvement is shown, Romania still has a long way to go.

2.4 History and mythology

The transition from a fascist to a Communist era brought about more than ‘just’ a change of regime. It not only changed the everyday lives, work and wages, but also the conscious of the Romanian people. This is what Romanian historian Lucian Boia explains in his book *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*. In this book he points out that history is constantly reconstructed, adapted and sometimes mythicized from the perspectives of the present day, present states of mind and ideologies. He examines historical culture and conscience in nineteenth and twentieth century Romania, particularly concentrating on the impact of the national ideology on history. Boia’s analysis identifies several key mythical configurations and shows how Romanians have constituted their own highly ideologized history over the last two centuries. Boia further mentions that the years between the two world wars continue to be discussed endlessly. He asks himself: Was this the golden age of Romania, of Romanian culture, of Romanian democracy? Or was it a society, which, behind the façade, concealed a serious backwardness and all sorts of deviations from democratic principles? Boia answers these questions by stating that Romania as it existed then is in the past. Interwar Romania, with all that was good and bad in it, can no longer be a useful model in the eyes of Boia. But, ‘over-severe critiques’ are also out of order. They define present options and have a lack of historical sense. He sees democracy, nationalism, and anti-Semitism as characteristics of the period in general, not of Romania in particular.

According to Boia, it is not fair to judge such attitudes exclusively in relation to norms of today. Interwar Romania was a contradictory society, one the one hand it had an elite of European characters and a modern cultural and institutional framework, and on the other, “there was an indisputable historical time lag in the deeper reaches of the country, in spite of a relatively sustained rhythm of modernization”, (Boia mentions here the following factors: A proportionately large rural population, a low literacy level, and traditional demographic

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138 Georgi Verbeeck, Mariana Hausleitner, “Cultural Memory and Legal Responses”, 255.
patterns: A high birth rate, a high mortality rate, and the highest rate of infant mortality in Europe). This primitivism, as Boia calls it, of deeper Romania is what justified and permitted the authoritarian deviations. It was thus the base upon which Romanian Communism was constructed and also the source of many errors of the regime: The almost complete disappearance of a too small elite, of cultural and political traditions, and of a whole way of the life and error of the uprooting and manipulation of disoriented masses. Out of all these contradictions of the time, only multiple and contradictory images can be given.

It is an illusion to imagine all Romanians rose up in 1989 against the Communist system. They rose up against the consequences of Communism, refusing to go on accepting the total degradation of their conditions of life. But some people, as with many other regimes, only condemned Communism, while others made attempts at rehabilitation. Boia mentions here opinion polls with the outcome that at least half the Romanian population consider that they had a better life before 1989. This reflects the feelings of the Romanian people, but it also gives a clue as to where this comes from: Not just from poverty but also from a lack of adaptability to an open society. The author continues to state that a correct intellectual approach ought to disassociate the historical and moral judgment of Communism from an assessment of people’s attitudes to Communism. The conclusion that Communism was an immoral and harmful system is different than considering that all Romanians would have made the same judgment in condemning Communism. There was indeed an anti-Communist resistance, whereas some would minimize its importance or even dispute its existence; others would give it a greater significance than it really had.

Boia connects resistance, or “Romanian resistance”, with mythology: “Resistances” are amplified in the imagination. In any society those who resist are in the minority compared with those who submit, or even profit. “Resistance through culture” also has a mythological temptation. Writers in Romania during communism have acquired the stigma that they were no more than ‘docile servants’ of the authorities, but that would be unfair to say. They did, however, go on to publish their texts in conditions of censorship. Boia states that there was no clandestine publishing in Romania. The writer tried to push the limits of tolerance when it came to writing and publishing. The reader was urged to read between the lines, to imagine the unspoken but suggested message. Boia sees it as a game played between the writer and the authorities, where each party made certain concessions to the other; this resulted in a confused message. This is not to say who outwitted whom.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{139} Lucian Boia, \textit{History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness}, (Budapest, New York 2001), 6, 7.
A lot still needs to be done to create a full picture of the entire mechanism of Communist repressions and terror, and to sort the myth from truth regarding the identity and role of victims and victimizers. According to Lavinia Stan, it is now necessary to come to terms with these atrocities, while continuing to establish the truth and strengthen the rule of law. Although Boia’s opinion corresponds with Stan’s, it can be said that neither the interwar years nor the Communist period can be represented in a single, coherent image. The problem of history in general is that there is not one truth. Trying to get as close as possible to the truth is one thing, but the judgment of that truth will never be a singular one.

Aforementioned Vladimir Tismaneanu takes this further by including the myth of de-Communization among what he has called his “fantasies of salvation,” which he describes as a process of many mental, political, economic and legal dimensions. He warns against the dangers of reconciling legitimacy and legality through authoritarian methods in countries where the line between right and wrong remains blurred. It is unfair to ignore the Eastern Europeans’ need to know the truth about their Communist regime, to confront their own personal history and to obtain justice and absolution. To know this truth, one should know how to distinguish myth from history and history from myth.

Romanian historian Sorin Antohi received his diploma at the University of Iasi, and in 2006 he published an open letter wherein he admitted to having collaborated with the Securitate, the secret police in Communist Romania during the 1970s and 80s. He worked as an informant, and claimed to have offered innocuous information on the political views of many of his close friends. He has reviewed Boia’s book and is of the opinion that his work is not only interesting for its content, but also for the reactions it provoked in other Romanian historians. Because Antohi himself admitted to having played a part in Romania under Communism, thus he himself has sorted truth from myth, and realizes that by admitting this; the path to a conscious clear Romania is free. Criticism of Boia’s work was mainly focused on Boia’s commentary on both the national Communist historical narrative and the “national” tradition of historical writing to which many Romanian historians wanted to return after 1989. Antohi describes the “national” tradition of historical writing as follows: “In a historiographical milieu still lacking in systematic and concerted methodological input from the West, in early post-Communist, the “national” tradition was generally perceived as the

only potential basis for the renewal of historical writing.” The so-called “critical” school of interwar historians in Romania was never able to completely overcome the legacy of nineteenth century national romanticism, which continued to promote the glorious perspective on the national past, characteristic of the thinking of the previous generations. Antohi sees one of Boia’s first and foremost merits; the introduction of a more critical approach into the entirety of national history, and not only of its flamboyant version promoted under national Communism. These ideas are expressed in Boia’s History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness, and have been received with great enthusiasm by new generations of students, glad to be acquainted with a new message when it comes to the historical writing of the past.

Boia’s work was also important on the grounds of changing the entire “national” tradition of historical writings. His way of writing created a new fashion that quickly deconstructed national Communist historiography. Although this was positive, many of his readers misunderstood his message. Antohi notes those of Boia’s readers who criticized him often failed to note the crucial difference between the historical interpretations that need to be amended or refined and the conscious distortion of history under Communism. Boia’s work thus stirred up a lot of emotions, mainly in the field of historical writings and Romanian historiography. His work remained the target of fierce criticism, years after the launch of his work History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness.

2.5 Reinventing Jewish culture

Ruth Ellen Gruber is an American writer who concentrates her work on Jewish and East-Central European affairs. In her book Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe Gruber illustrates Jewish life in the countries where the Holocaust took place. She mentions the book The City Without Jews, a novel written by Viennese journalist Hugo Bettauer in the early 1920s. The book describes what happens to Vienna, and to Austria as a whole, when the Austrian parliament passes a law expelling all Jews from the country. What is striking about this novel is that, years later this comes true. In the novel, laws are demanding that Austria be cleared of its Jews; it also includes ‘Jew’ classifications, (which corresponds with the Nuremberg laws of the 1930s). Bettauer did not, however, have anti-Semitic reasons for this subject of a country without Jews. The novel is not a work of propaganda but a sincere comic

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fantasy. It satirizes anti-Semitism as ridiculous. Unfortunately, under Austrian anti-Semitism the Austrians quickly embraced Nazism and before anyone knew it the country became an owned subsidiary of Hitler’s Germany.\textsuperscript{145} The novel goes on illustrating what happened to society without its Jews: Culture has dried up, empty coffeehouses and intellectual life stands still. Political and economical debates are no longer held, restaurants are empty and even fashion wear is affected by the situation. Gruber points out here that Bettauer paints a picture of a Vienna that becomes bleak, a boring wasteland without its Jewish citizens.

Gruber sets out what happened after the Holocaust, what this loss of Jews meant. She spots a new trend that occurred in the 1980s and after the fall of Communism 1989-90, the trend of ‘longing for lost Jews’, but at the same time the memory of Jewish history and heritage was often marginalized, repressed or forgotten. This also occurred in countries where the Holocaust was less noticeable. Gruber uses the term ‘virtually Jewish’ to describe the way non-Jews often filled the ‘Jewish space’ in Europe. Although there was a renewed interest in Jews after Communist times, Jews and their culture and traditions were looked upon as something distinctly apart.

Another term that is used by Gruber is the ‘Jewish phenomenon’, or anything to do with Judaism, Jews, the Holocaust and Israel, that she connects as being part of the broad national experience, both on a personal level and as part of official policy. This ‘Jewish phenomenon’ is a trend that has become visible and sometimes it even has become a highly visible component of the popular public domain in countries where Jews themselves are now practically invisible. Gruber illustrates this by stating that from Milan to Munich, from Krakow to Cluj and beyond, Jewish exhibitions, festivals and workshops are abundant. It is the same with conferences and academic study programs on Jewish aspects.\textsuperscript{146} Historian Diana Pinto used the term ‘Jewish space’ to describe the place occupied by the Jewish phenomenon within mainstream European society today. In her eyes, Jewish space is not so much something that involves the physical presence of Jews, but more it is about the ways in which European countries now integrate Jewish history and memory and the Holocaust, into an understanding of their national history, without the current size or activity of the local Jewish population playing a role in this. Pinto stated: “There is a Jewish space in Europe that will exist even in the absence of Jews”.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{146} Ruth Ellen Gruber, \textit{Virtually Jewish: reinventing Jewish culture in Europe}, (California 2002), 5, 6.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibidem, 10.
The trends described above may make it seem as if things are improving for the Jews; people are interested in their heritage, their culture and traditions, especially when the ‘lost Jews’ can be felt in society after the Holocaust. But in most European countries today, particularly in areas where most of the Jews were killed in the Holocaust, being a Jew is still not perceived as ‘normal’. Although there has been a revival of Jewish communal life in former Communist countries, and although there have been new efforts to promote a pan-European Jewish identity, the Jewish population in most European countries is very small and it is decreasing.\(^\text{148}\)

Gruber connects the Jewish phenomenon to Holocaust commemoration, and sees it as ‘only being part of the equation’. She notices a “third generation” syndrome, which is about a strong desire to discover and seize hold of withheld knowledge, denied or ignored by older generations. If this is connected to memory as such, then it becomes a vehicle of self-discovery and self-exploration. Gruber explains this as follows: The recovery of Jewish history and culture as well as Holocaust memory is used, consciously or not, as a means of rethinking and redefining personal identity and national histories. This process can be linked to what Germans label “memory work”, which means to bring to light that which the wartime generation sought to bury. It could also be linked to an Eastern Europe approach of “filling in the blank spaces”. Gruber explains further that memory of Jews is used for many symbols: Symbols of survival, of self-irony, and of identity maintained in exile; symbols of the Holocaust, of what was suppressed under communism, symbols of democratic ideals and even simply symbols of the “good old days”.\(^\text{149}\) Gruber here touches upon an interesting analysis; that the Holocaust has become more and more a memory, since not many Jews are around anymore who lived through it. This left the younger generations with nothing but attempts to discover for themselves what was being withheld or ignored. These younger generations use Jewish history to redefine their personal identity. To Jews, there may be an attraction to their lost world described through these symbols above. All these symbols have to find their way in, in those personal identities and personal histories.

Gruber in her book *Virtually Jewish* looks into the many ways non-Jews embrace and enact Jewish culture, and their motives. She concludes that for some, as non-Jews, it is a way

\(^{148}\) Ibid, 6.
\(^{149}\) Ibid, 8, 9.
to fill in the blanks that were left behind by the fall of Communism. For others, it is a means of coming to terms with the Nazi legacy.\textsuperscript{150}

Chapter Three  
Coming To Terms With The Past

3.1 Introduction

In post-Communist countries the Holocaust is still a subject that is continually avoided in both political and cultural discourse. In countries with a large Jewish community, such as Romania, the disappearance of Jews within society has not led to the disappearance of anti-Semitism. In post-Communist Romania this seems to hold true. As mentioned in earlier chapters, there are still ex-Communist politicians within the Romanian parliament, and they are still expressing their anti-Semitic views. Exact numbers are difficult to indicate but there are around 6000-12000 Jews still left in Romania. Anti-Semitic views are focused on an invisible danger from a Jewish conspiracy, where the concrete presence of Jews is no longer relevant or necessary. Having lived through half a century of dictatorship, deceptions and moral entrapments, there are groups in Romania that have a vested interest in creating a fictitious perception of the past in order to restore a sense of national pride. This is clearly seen in the whitewashing of the Holocaust and the rehabilitation of Antonescu in Romania. The distortion of history is worsened by the support it is given by some political parties, intellectuals and journalists, and, to a certain extent, by the public at large.

This chapter addresses the terms in which Romania has commemorated its Holocaust past, from Communist times up until the present. Various authors are covered here, along with their views on the way Romania dealt with the past and tried to come to terms with it. This chapter includes articles from magazines and newspapers found on the Internet, and my research is complimented here by news from within Romania itself. Thus, I will show how the Jewish community is still trying to survive by means of commemorating the Holocaust, and how the non-Jewish Romanian community is responding.

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151 According to a census held in 2002, the Jewish community has been reduced to 6,000, out of a total population of 21.5 million. The report specifies that it is probable that several thousand more did not declare themselves as Jews. Author unknown, (2007). The Stephen Roth Institute of Anti-Semitism and Racism. 2007/08/09 Anti-semitism report, “The Jewish community”. Consulted on 26-06-2012, http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2008/romania.html.

152 Felicia Steigman Carmelly, Shattered!, 175, 176.
3.2 Developments in Memory and Commemoration from World War I – 1989

During the last ten to fifteen years, references to the past have increasingly been made in terms of memory, rather than history. German historian Heiko Haumann, asks: Is the use of the word ‘memory’ necessary and irreplaceable in today’s historiography?¹⁵³

People have different experiences of past events, the memory thereof and what this experience means in relation to memory. In general, one can say that the memory of the two world wars in Eastern Europe is remembered differently than in Western Europe. In the West, World War I is often illustrated as a tragic end to a long period of growth, whereas people in Eastern Europe often see 1918 as the moment of promise and beginning. This still lingers on in Romania and in the rest of Eastern Europe. The narrative that emphasized the triumph of democracy in Europe after 1945 erases the history of half a century of Communist oppression in Eastern Europe. This often means that the west is too blinkered to listen to the testimonials of the intellectuals and politicians who might provide them with a proper understanding of what it means to have lived under Communism. This counter-memory of suffering and oppression still has a grip on the emotions of people living in the post-Communist states. Here, the term ‘counter-memories’ is derived from Romanian historian Maria Bucur. Counter-memories are memorializing narratives, that were articulated sometimes in sharp opposition to the official narratives of the wars and often separate from them, even when these two discourses actually share some elements, such as nationalist or victimist sensibilities.¹⁵⁴ Bucur’s book Heroes and Victims. Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania is a thorough book detailing commemorative practices from the early modern period to the dilemmas of post-memory in post-Communist Romania. I paraphrase her work here, since it is one of the latest works on memory, commemoration and Romania.

For her research, Bucur looked into traces of local communal and individual voices, where use of official government sources had to be used creatively. Communal voices are at the center of her argument, and for people who did not write about their suffering or their pain at losing love ones in the world wars, Bucur used localized efforts at memorializing the war’s victims and in understanding the choices local communities made about remembering their war dead.¹⁵⁵ Before World War I, burial, mourning and death rituals were subjected to constant cultural production and reproduction in the mostly rural societies of Eastern Europe

¹⁵⁴ Maria Bucur, Heroes and Victims. Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania, (Bloomington, Indianapolis 2009), 14 – 16.
¹⁵⁵ Ibidem, xiv.
before the twentieth century. Newly emerged nationalist and imperial societies contrasted and competed with the rural societies, and attempted to construct new bonds of loyalty and legitimacy between rulers and their subjects. These two realms of commemorative practices coexisted, with the state pursuing certain symbols and practices, while local communities followed their own traditional practices.\textsuperscript{156}

Also, before World War I, it was common for minorities to adhere to their own specific religious practices, such as burial rituals, as this was a form of preserving one’s self-identification with the immediate community. In the countryside, burial and mourning practices thus remained largely unchanged for the early modern to modern period until World War I, when abrupt and vast changes in the political geography of Romania, as well as the mass experience of violence and death, forced important changes in the ways that rural communities related to the state in terms of the cult of the dead.\textsuperscript{157} The experience of total war between 1914 and 1918 was life altering for the populations of Eastern Europe. The unprecedented magnitude of the front, the duration of the war, and the political outcomes confronted both average people and the elite with finding new ways to make sense of death.\textsuperscript{158}

At the end of World War I, the dead had to be put to rest. Preferably they were laid to rest with other dead ancestors in the communities they originally came from. Over time local communities decided these war deaths should be marked through separate funerary monuments. Bucur notes in her research about remembering war in twentieth century Romania, that a monument mania was developing: The more monuments that were built, the more people felt inspired to build them. Commemorations were taking place everywhere, from Bulgaria to France. In Romania, state authorities were not entirely absent from local processes of commemoration, though they were not the driving force behind these local initiatives. Often, the military itself served as propaganda activists in the commemoration of Romanian soldiers.

Thus, the end of World War I saw a rise in monument building in Romania; thousands of monuments were erected on the initiative of local communities, projects were funded locally and were independent from state institutions. These World War I monuments were erected in villages and small towns and those being remembered were local boys and men, their names often prominently displayed alongside standard lines about the patriotic fight they had been part of. In Romania, the displaying of names of dead soldiers has to be viewed in the

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 19, 20.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, 23.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid, 49.
context of long-term burial rituals and the politics of the communities who built the monuments. For Orthodox Christians, the concept of keeping alive the memory of dead ancestors was closely tied to expressing their names out loud and making them publicly known. The entire community had to play a part in the process both of building the monument and of having it frequently viewed as part of a public space.

Commemoration and remembering the war dead developed in a special way in Romania. People not only cared for a place where they could commemorate their dead family members and friends, but the monuments that were erected in local communities became a part of the public life of these communities. The Jewish communities in Romania during that period of time also built monuments that prominently listed all the dead who were commemorated by that monument. The monuments of Jewish communities were often located in their own religious cemeteries or close to places of worship, but did not mark actual graves and the names stood as markers for bodies that were not recovered. These names also helped Jewish communities on a political level, as after World War I they were still struggling to gain full citizen rights; they hoped to change this by virtue of having fought on the side of the Romanian state. ¹⁵⁹

In World War I the Romanian state was unprepared to deal with the massive deaths and their damaging psychological impact for the multitudes of families and communities directly affected by these losses. The regime of Ion Antonescu in World War II began combat fully prepared to control the process of burying, mourning, and commemorating the soldiers who died in the war. King Charles II passed legislation in 1938 that was slightly revised in 1941 by the Antonescu government, which placed responsibility for war commemoration with the state, at the expense of native activities. This was because of the legislation and nature of the fighting – the Romanian troops moving swiftly through large territory, while the fighting was mainly done on foreign soil. This meant that most of those who perished fighting in the Romanian army, whether on the side of the Nazis, (21 June 1941-23 August 1944), or on the side of the Soviets, (23 August 1944-8 May 1945), were buried on foreign ground (for example, in Ukraine or Transnistria). These fighting conditions throughout World War II forced families and communities with war dead onto the sidelines, and it was difficult for them to construct commemorative discourses. ¹⁶⁰ Even with communities expressing the need to commemorate their war dead, not much awareness for this was created on a broader scale. Limited information was being published on war commemorations in general.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 62-64.
¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 145.
In her analysis of official and other public and personal discourses on the memory of the two world wars, Maria Bucur concludes that a picture is shown of selective remembering and forgetting. This picture exclusively puts victimhood to the fore during both world wars, combined with a self-image of heroism through sacrifice and death. This is in line with her analysis of commemoration of the war dead. Commemorations of World War II focused on Romania’s participation in that war as protecting its legitimate claims over territories and people. Romanian soldiers who died in the war were seen as heroes, even when most of them fell outside of Romania’s borders. Civilians remember the war as a period of suffering, occupation, and sacrifice. Who the perpetrators were, shifted according to which the community was remembering wartime violence, sometimes discourses about guilt and responsibility were even self-contradictory. Thus, it can be concluded that overall, there has been little self-reflection about responsibility for wartime violence in Romania. This is in clear contrast to the commemorative practices of the West. In postwar Western Europe more self-examination took place than had ever happened in Romania or more broadly in Eastern Europe.161

The 1940s are characterized by the change from a fascist regime to a Communist regime. The Communists systematically attempted to depict the horrors of World War II as actions by foreign agents or people with foreign loyalties. On the one hand, there was the fascist side, under “Hitlerist” influences and on the other hand there was, what Maria Bucur names, ‘the friendly brotherhood of the Soviet people’, who had liberated Romania from corrupt and foreign influences. Thus, a new definition of heroism was created that opened the door for revising the silence that had fallen over the Holocaust. In 1946 a ceremony took place commemorating Heroes Day, Romania’s national holiday. Then chief Rabbi of the Bucharest Jewish community, Alexandru Safran, (1910-2006), defined heroism to include “anyone who left his or her life in this war, not only those who fell fighting against the Hitlerist army, but also those who fell during the first campaigns of this war, those killed in concentration camps.” To express this during that period in Romania was a bold move. The silencing reference refers to the Eastern campaigns requested by Soviet advisors in Romania that were used to silence commemorations of the Holocaust. Chief Rabbi Safran attempted to bring the commemorations back into broad commemorative discourses. Unfortunately, Safran, as well as successive leaders of the Jewish community in Romania, had to remain satisfied with the low-key, strict Jewish future commemorations of the horrors of World War

161 Ibid, 15.
II and the Holocaust. For example, the commemoration of the Iasi pogrom, (1941), was widely publicized only once during 1945 and 1948. At the same time, commemorations of this pogrom by the Jewish community took place every year in the Jewish cemetery in Iasi, and it was reported by the Jewish press. Awareness of these events and the opportunity to participate was limited to the Jewish community and in some cases low-ranking Party officials. ¹⁶²

The post-World War II period is more complicated when it comes to commemoration. The Communist state controlled war commemorations in a strict manner. However, subterranean counter-memories developed, these became very effective in circumventing the narratives about commemoration imposed by the government. Bucur also states about the Communist period and commemoration that: “One can speak about the Communist regime as effective in limiting the imagination of the postwar generation to think of wartime violence outside the officially defined discourse.”¹⁶³

The 1970s are characterized by, on the one hand a continuing existence of a Jewish community, and on the other the mass exodus as discussed in the previous chapter. The postwar government of Nicolae Ceausescu was the only Communist regime in Europe to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, with the help of Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen, who maintained a good relationship with Ceausescu. The most striking was the instance where Israel paid Romania a fee for each Jew allowed to migrate; the hard currency that Ceausescu received was needed.¹⁶⁴ Moses Rosen had praised the authorities attitude towards the Jewish minority during the Ceausescu period, as they had allowed the Jews to develop their culture as a national minority. With the help of Israel, the United States and various Jewish organizations in the West, Moses Rosen was able to ensure national rights for the Jews who stayed in Romania. And at the same time, Romania was not threatened by granting the Jews their national rights to the same extent that it felt threatened by granting rights to the Hungarian minority, which was widely feared due to its implications for its political separation.¹⁶⁵ Ceausescu further allowed the Jewish Federation under Rosen to keep all Jewish property that survived from the war. It is estimated by the current leader of the

¹⁶² Ibid, 157-159.
¹⁶³ Ibid, 14, 15.
Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania (FJCR) Aurel Vainer that 802 cemeteries and 98 synagogues are currently controlled by FJCR. While it is true that the Jewish community had freedom of movement under Ceausescu’s reign, mainly thanks to Moses Rosen, when it came to remembering the Holocaust and World War II in Romania, the dominant opinion was that the Jews of Romania had been saved. And thus, the tragic fact that during the Holocaust, Antonescu had ordered the Romanian army to carry out the mass murder of Jews living in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina immediately after Antonescu and his army had invaded those districts was ignored. While developments were being made and Romanian Jews experienced more freedom of movement, the Jewish community was still getting smaller in numbers due to the great emigration to Israel. Commemoration of the Holocaust was still only taking place in Jewish circles.

Yosef Govrin, Israel’s ambassador to Romania during the Communist period writes in his book *Israeli-Romanian Relations at the End of the Ceausescu Era* about his experience at the Holocaust commemoration in the Bucharest Coral Synagogue. In the absence of Rabbi Rosen, the secretary of FJCR, Emil Schechter, took over the eulogy. In his speech, Schechter commemorated victims of the pogroms of Bucharest, Dorohoi, Iasi, and North Transylvania, but he avoided mentioning the Jewish victims in Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transnistria, probably, as Govrin notes, from fear of the authorities. Rabbi Rosen explicitly mentioned on Holocaust Day 1986 the Jewish Holocaust victims who suffered under the regime of fascist Romania. This was done for the first time without asking permission from the Communist authorities. This example shows that commemoration of the Holocaust in Romania was taking place in the 1980s. Although this commemoration was limited, there was to be no mention of the deceased Jews in the Holocaust, it was a big step for Rabbi Rosen to be making a statement on the Holocaust where the Jewish victims that fell under Antonescu’s regime are mentioned, and effectively ignoring the authorities.

Minority-related problems, such as the relationship with the Hungarian community and the suffering of the Jews during World War II and the Holocaust, were constantly obscured by the Communist regime. These problems only reached the surface once Communism had fallen in 1989. The recognition of the existing borders required determined responses not only from politicians, but from historians as well. Debates on political issues in

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167 Yosef Govrin, *Israeli-Romanian Relations At The End of The Ceausescu Era*, 264

168 Ibidem, 292.
which historical arguments had a central place, polarized many historians. Often these historians had to choose between the nationalistic Greater Romania Party, headed by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, or the types of politics represented by President Ion Iliescu and his party. Until 1996 there was a democratic opposition, which also forced historians to choose a position. Thus, besides expressing certain political convictions by choosing a side, whether a historian opted for one camp or another also implied different answers to problems like the ones mentioned above. The historians who oriented themselves to the Greater Romania Party or the Social Democratic Party, (headed by Ion Iliescu), proved to be the most nostalgic for national Communist values and the least internationally competitive. Those who supported the democratic opposition were often specialists, whose aim was not only to secure a democratic future for Romania, but also to reform their discipline. The situation in post-Communist Romania created a clash between historians who specialized in the history of the twentieth century, (the most ideologically distorted period under Communism), and those who studied remote periods from the past in order to avoid the Party’s involvement in their scholarship. After the fall of Communism, the general population alike started to look for a fresh and more plausible interpretation of Romania’s past, all the while rejecting the Party-contrived version they had been forced to learn at school. In short, the imperative was to provide an ideology-free synthesis of Romania history, which could constitute a starting point for further, more in-depth research. Since domestic historians could not propose a new synthesis of Romanian history immediately after the revolution of 1989, exiled authors, who had had the chance of writing free of ideological control, were revived.169

Historiography shows how historians approved by the Communist regime wrote schoolbooks and textbooks according to official Communist history of the interwar period and World War II. For example, those schoolbooks replaced ‘Jews’ with ‘Communists’, and Romanians were not perpetrators but victims of fascism. Bucur observes that aforementioned counter-memories often developed all over the Communist bloc and were passed down from the wartime generation to younger ones. Communist regimes did play a central part in polarizing the notion on what could be considered as “truthful” memories of the war. This does not mean, however, that local communities and individuals did not remember what had happened, or that they continued to develop their own narratives about the war. Bucur therefore rejects the notion that the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe succeeded, on the whole, in indoctrinating their citizens with a Communist remembrance of World War II.170

169 Sorin Antohi, Balazs Trencsenyi, Peter Apor (ed.), Narratives Unbound, 319, 320.
170 Maria Bucur, Heroes and Victims, 14, 15.
Matgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth note in their book *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, how the overthrow of Communism in Eastern Europe around 1990 provoked a search for the historical roots as an interpretative framework. The revision of the past in order to understand better both present developments and future prospects has resulted in what the authors Pakier and Stråth call a “memory boom”. At the time of this memory boom, when the past has been recognized not only as a subject of scholarly research but also has been widely employed and represented in politics and mass media, it is more useful to speak of different discourses about the past, rather than recalling the distinction between history and memory, according to Pakier and Stråth.¹⁷¹

The relationship between memory and commemoration is different for Jews. For Jews in general, “the desire to forget prolongs exile; the secret of redemption is memory.”¹⁷² Heiko Haumann did research on the Jews in Eastern Europe and he is of the opinion that the quotation may also reflect the secular realm. If a Jewish person rejects his own history and culture, he loses his Jewish identity and with it the solidarity and strength to assert himself as a Jew in society. Thus, memory, recollection and history are part of the essence of the Jews. According to Haumann, this means the Jews continually renew themselves, by stating “the past does not lie behind us, but in front of us; we experience it in memory.” Haumann means to say that memory is significant in that it follows the particular history of the Jews. Jews are scattered all over the whole world, and often they have been without a homeland; they were not permitted to have one. Therefore their history, states Haumann, and the history of Jews, (individual or collective), is a homeland in memory. And taking a closer look on the Jewish communities, it can be seen that a record is made of the names of its members, particularly of those members who were persecuted or murdered, to stop them from being forgotten. To remember is more than a list with names, it also means to become conscious of history and to take a critical look at it, and henceforth, the past.¹⁷³


¹⁷² Quote taken from Rabbi Baal Shem Tov who lived during the eighteenth century and which stands above the exit gate of the Place of Remembrance Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel.

3.3 Developments in Memory and Commemoration 1990s-2000s

In the previous chapter I set out how the political situation changed in Romania after the fall of Ceausescu’s Communist regime in 1989, with all of its consequences for society and the Jewish community. In this subchapter I will expand on this issue by focusing on how memory and commemoration gained a new significance in Romanian society from the 1990s. Again, Bucur’s line of thought is followed for the beginning of this subchapter, since her research on memory and commemoration in Romania is of great importance to the literature on this subject.

One of the first noticeable changes in Romania was openness. People, who had been kept silent during the Communist period, from the veterans of World War II to the victims of the Holocaust, made their stories and memoirs public. Writers and their public alike wanted to read about misery, victimization and the heroism of living on with dignity through the Communist years of oppression. Bucur notes here that the Romanians were more interested in speaking about their pain or reading about suffering as a confirmation of the evil nature of the Communist regime, and less interested in finding out who the perpetrators were of the suffering that had taken place over the past half century. One example of this is Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu’s rushed execution in December 1989, which turned out to be a preview of how questions of guilt were addressed in courts of law, only signifying wider problems in Romanian society in the next decade. These problems are expressed in the previous chapter.

These questions of guilt have led to the creation of two presidential commissions, the aforementioned commission on inquiring the state’s culpability for events of the Holocaust, (2004), and a second commission dealing with the “crimes of Communism”, (2006), paving the way and introducing into public discussion questions of collaborationism, state and individual responsibilities for war crimes, and crimes against humanity and genocide. Bucur’s research shows that although the remembering of World War II and the Holocaust has manifested itself more prominently in Romanian political and cultural discourse, it did not have an important impact on how the Romanian population at large, both individually and collectively, commemorates the wartime violence of the twentieth century. Remembrances of World War II, the Holocaust and the Communist period have remained both isolated from each other or in competition for media attention and other cultural resources.

Although the Romanian government is trying to get the people to be more involved in the commemorations, they are still turning away from the state and insisting on their own forms of remembering. There is still a selective focus on the suffering and oppression of those
who perished in the 1940-1953 period, which means people are unable to look globally and
with empathy towards all the victims and perpetrators of violence during that time. Another
problem Romania is confronted with is that a western-centric narrative of World War II, the
Holocaust and the post-Cold War period is not yet possible. And although it is easy to
construct a post-Cold War victorious narrative officially in Bucharest, to enact this
successfully through locally based commemorations in communities is more difficult, these
communities are only just finding their own voice.  

A specific community that is still trying to find its voice is the Jewish community in
Romania. Knowledge of the history of the Jewish community in Romania is still an issue for
non-Jewish Romanians. And among Jews, the generation that witnessed the atrocities of the
Holocaust is slowly disappearing. Those who are alive are either too tired or afraid to stir up
debates, or they simply want to forget what they went through. Most Jews of Romanian origin
left the country in the years after the war and during the Communist period. The leaders of the
small Jewish community now face the challenges raised by the harsh task of defending the
memory of what once was the Romanian Jewish Community. It is mentioned via the website
of the Romanian Jewish Community that the younger Jewish generation are not interested in
carrying this on, or in making the effort to efficiently monitor and combat the anti-Semitism
in Romania.

In an anti-Semitism report on Romania in 2002, Ozy Lazar, the President of the
Bucharest Jewish Community, states that the situation of the Romanian Jews corresponds to
general developments in the country. In official discourse, the Jewish minority is respected
and defended when attempts are made to discredit the Jews, (by words or deeds). Incidents in
which Jewish institutions are involved in Romania are the ones with an overt anti-Semitic
character, such as threats against Jews written on the walls of a building in Cluj-Napoca.
There are also incidents of an anti-religious nature, in which synagogues or Jewish cemeteries
are desecrated along with the religious sites of other faiths.

In 2002 the Romanian government issued the Emergency Ordinance in an attempt to
end the use of symbols with a fascist, racial and xenophobic character and to end the
veneration of persons guilty of crimes against humanity. This ordinance was significantly
echoed in public debate, echoes with a connection to the past and present of the Jews from
Romania. Members of the National Liberal Party attacked the ordinance in the Senate, asking
for a “definition of the Holocaust”, and stating that the ordinance attacked the right to free

174 Maria Bucur, Heroes and Victims, 224, 225.
opinion. This debate continued on a private television channel, OTV, where the arguments were reiterated that Ion Antonescu actually saved the Jews from Romania, Transnistria had been some kind of holiday colony and that the Jews brought communism to Romania and contributed to the physical elimination of the political and cultural elite of Romania. Elie Wiesel was also slandered while visiting Romania, because he accused the Antonescu regime of a policy of discrimination and extermination of the Jews of Romania. Although their community is small, The Romanian Jews fight for a better understanding of their past. The reactions to the ordinance, mostly in political circles, resulted in the Jewish community’s wish to maintain the debate by intervening and addressing the competent authorities in order to solve certain very real situations. Furthermore, the community expressed the wish to contribute to the printing and spreading of documents that can give realistic grounds to this debate.

The report also mentions that there will always be people who cannot be convinced by any argument to change their minds. The Jewish community rather focuses on those who do not know very much about the past, as they can still be influenced by knowledge. In order for this to happen, it must be ensured that true information is taught to children about the presence of the Jews on Romanian territory and about their experiences during World War II and the Holocaust in schools.¹⁷⁵

In her research the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania found out that many Romanian textbooks currently in use that do refer to the Holocaust present incomplete or even factually incorrect information.¹⁷⁶ Speranta Dumitru Nalin speaks about the debate that occurred in post-Communist Romania about education, specifically Holocaust education. After Communism had fallen, the textbooks used in schools were still full with Communist ideology and historical revisionism. Nalin states that the reform of post-Communist historiography faced two problems: The exclusion of certain events, and the single, generally imposed perspective of so-called ‘historical materialism’. Nalin explains this in her hypothesis that the larger the ‘blank spots’ in history as imposed from above, the more impossible any radicalism of innovation becomes in the philosophy of history. What can be seen in post-Communist countries, such as Romania, is a social demand for the truth from the

Romanian population. In this context, ‘truth’ is simply filling in the ‘blank spots’. Nalin spots that the lack of a consensus among historians is being experienced in society as a manifestation of conflicting interests. Nalin then goes further by explaining that in this way the framework of a single history persists in the collective mind – a mind torn between two hostile forms of conservatism: One looking back to pre-Communist Romania for all its reference points, while the other takes refuge in the recent, and still familiar, socialist past.\textsuperscript{177}

In 2003 a seminar was held in Bucharest with the subject “Remembering the past and preventing crimes against humanity”. The seminar stressed the importance of keeping memory alive so that such a tragedy as the Holocaust should never happen again. There was a concern that the time of witness will come to an end. And here the seminar pointed out the importance of keeping memory alive through teaching history, testimony, remembrance and memory. Especially when everybody is free to browse revisionist or “denial” websites on the Internet or when political leaders in Europe still believe in revisionist history.\textsuperscript{178} The Ministry of Education and Research of Romania and the Council of Europe commissioned the seminar. Teacher trainers, history teachers, textbook and authors from Europe were participating in this seminar, as were observers from the embassies of Israel and the USA in Bucharest. Professor Liviu Rotman underlined that silence on the Holocaust is very dangerous, and in particular for younger people who will never really know what happened during the Holocaust. It was stressed that the students of Romania “are the future citizens of a new and united Europe and they have to be prepared to act against intolerance and racism so that such a tragedy is never possible again”.\textsuperscript{179}

This seminar touched upon a subject that was becoming a ‘hot topic’ in the 2000s in Romania. In a country where conservatism had people looking back upon its Communist past and wanting to go back to that time, educational reform was a very important step towards a future where children can look back on Romania’s past with a non-biased view. The International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania has been an important step towards this future. In their recommendations the various members advise on how to achieve this. Firstly, the Ministry of Education must create a working group that reviews, corrects, revises

and drafts appropriate curricula and textbook material on the Holocaust based on the findings of the International Commission’s report. These findings by the International Commission must get into school curricula as quickly as possible, in addition teachers need to be properly trained on how to use this new material. Universities and the Romanian Academy have an important role to play as well in organizing conferences and symposia on the subject matter of the Holocaust in Romania. Courses need to be established on the subject, not just available to students but also for professional, cultural and public opinion leaders in the country. In this way, the International Commission believes people in all circles of society can be made aware of Romania’s long tradition of anti-Semitism, which proved to be a strong foundation for the Holocaust and current negationist trends. Education can also be helpful in the problem of remembering and commemorating the Holocaust. When people know more about what has happened, they are more inclined to commemorate this.

These recommendations made by the International Commission blended classroom education for younger generations and historical research with commemorative elements to bring events, such as the Iasi pogrom and the Holocaust back into memory. However, this attempt has not been successful, ministers were still condoning events in parliament and at the graves of pogrom victims, instead of making heartfelt statements at participatory community events. These are not events widely publicized about or attended. While the Jewish community participates broadly, the rest of the population in Romania does not share in these remembrances. The recommendations have also led to workshops for training teachers, and while a broad majority of teachers have opted out, some have taken the opportunity seriously and have begun to offer such courses. With educational reform is still developing, the government is exhibiting confusing behavior: They continue to try and rehabilitate controversial figures in the name of patriotism and this is an obstacle to the renewal of education, and thus the education of younger generations that one day will lead the country.

And yet there exist cases such as professor of history Ion Coja, who in his lectures and books denies a Holocaust took place in Romania. He maintains an Internet website, where he emphasizes that although Holocaust research has produced a vast body of documents, there is insufficient evidence of a planned, systematic Nazi policy of exterminating the Jewish nation.

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180 International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, Findings and Recommendations, 465, 466.
181 Maria Bucur, Heroes and Victims, 244, 245.
The Federation of Jewish Communities filed a criminal complaint against him in January 2007, but this attempt failed to have him prosecuted.182

Adrian Bucur, a 29-year-old teacher from western Romania, stated that many of his students are shocked by what they are finding out about the Holocaust, and did not know, for example, that it was Romanian soldiers who forced people into freight cars. Another teacher, who also helped to organize the seminars I mentioned previously to help teachers deal with the subject in the classroom, Maria Radosav, said: “During Communism, nobody said anything about the Holocaust, especially in Romania.” Radosav, a teacher of Hebrew and Jewish culture and civilization at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, also notes: “There weren’t mass deportations to Auschwitz from the territory of Romania, but that doesn’t mean that there was no Holocaust in Romania”, and she continues: “We had the pogroms, we had Transnistria, we had the death trains.”

According to the International Commission’s recommendations every year teachers and educators in Romania, although still a small number, gather for a Holocaust-education seminar. About 100 educators from all of Romania’s 42 counties have participated. It is envisaged that each year, the preceding year’s group must return to tell what they have done in the classroom. Some teachers who went to the seminar come back the following year to make Web pages. Many have taken their students to Sabbath services and have invited Holocaust survivors to speak in their classrooms. Others have translated books on the subject. All in all it seems that more effort is being put into the education reform. But some teachers claim to only have had mixed success in getting their co-workers on board. Secondary school teacher Alexandre Copala said that her students knew nothing about the Holocaust before she organized after-school discussions. She also noticed how other teachers asked her questions about this, seemingly since they did not agree or at least did not understand why she organized these discussions. It seems that in Romania this kind of educational reform is hard to sell, especially to an older generation of educators. They are not as willing as younger teachers to open up their past and discuss it in the classroom. It is helpful to know that there are some teachers who are willing, like high school teacher Alexandru David: “I want to educate. I want to raise a normal generation. I want to show them there is another way.”183

While education helps younger generations to understand history better and thus improving their memory thereof, a stage was set when the government of Romania adopted October 9 as the official date of Holocaust commemoration, as mentioned in the previous chapter. This particular day was chosen because on October 9th, 1941, Romania started to deport the Jewish people out of Bessarabia and Bukovina to Transnistria. This should be marked in the appropriate manner, with proclamations by the President and Prime Minister, a special session of Parliament, a public display of mourning and a national moment of silence. A national memorial to the victims of the Holocaust was recommended by the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania to be erected on public property in Bucharest.\footnote{International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, \textit{Findings and Recommendations}, 466.}

The first stone to commemorate the Holocaust in Romania was laid on October 9th, 2006, by Romanian president Traian Basescu. Artist Peter Jacobi designed this monumental piece. President Basescu stated on this occasion that the making of this monument had again showed the willingness of the Romanian government to “set out the truth about the history of the country”.\footnote{Hildrun Glass, “Historiographie und Politik”, 276, 277.} Also, Basescu emphasized that this history cannot be forgotten or minimized, because “the memory of Holocaust victims and survivors brings about the responsibility of knowing, assuming and passing forth historical truth.” Basescu furthermore spoke about the duty Romania has in keeping the memory of Jewish and Roma victims alive. The monument shows a Jewish prayer which says “let us remember”, which was highlighted in the President’s speech: “Let us remember so that it never happens again.” Jewish community representatives were also at the ceremony, such as Liviu Beris, a Holocaust survivor and the president of the Association of Romanian Jews Victims of the Holocaust.\footnote{Slavescu Ion, (October 2009). “Holocaust victims’ Memorial unveiled in Bucharest”. In: Nine O’Clock.ro, an Romanian-English online newspaper. The article is about President Traian Basescu reaffirmation of Romania’s commitment to accepting its past and passing forth the true history of the Holocaust on its territory. Consulted on 05-04-2012, \url{http://www.nineoclock.ro/holocaust-victims8217-memorial-unveiled-in-bucharest/#hide}.}

Although progress has been made on the subject of memory, and in attempting to involve the population of Romania in commemorations, there are still reports of anti-Semitism. The Stephen Roth Institute for Anti-Semitism and Racism published a report in 2007 stating that the overall number of anti-Semitic events was no higher than the average for recent years, and that the Romanian authorities are showing more openness, publicizing anti-Semitic incidents and responding more rapidly. According to the Center for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism in Romania, (MCA), anti-Semitic incidents are still being minimized. An example is that there is a high number of court acquittals for vandalism cases, with the authorities attributing acts of vandalism to children, drunkards or the mentally.
unstable. In 2007-08 there were several cases of desecration of Jewish cemeteries and tombs. For example, there is the case of the desecration of 131 gravestones in the Jewish cemetery in Bucharest, in October 2008. This incident was widely reported by the Romanian media, with leading officials, among them the Prime Minister, condemning the act and all manifestations of anti-Semitism. The Federation of Jewish Communities called for an urgent inquiry. The police then identified a group of school children between the ages of 13–15 who admitted to having vandalized the cemetery.187

Even though more effort is being put into re-educating the Romanian population and into teaching the youth of Romania about what happened in World War II, and although anti-Semitism is more contested than in previous years, it still lingers in Romanian society. This is difficult to counteract when, in Parliament, it seems anti-Semitism has not vanished completely yet. In the 2008 parliamentary elections, the aforementioned Greater Romania Party led by Corneliu Vadium Tudor, received only 3.15 percent of the vote, the smallest number since 1990. Since the party was left out of both houses of Parliament, it intensified its anti-Semitic campaign, linking all the Greater Romania Party’s misfortunes to the “Jewish mafia”, attacking Israeli business interests that were allegedly corrupting the Romanian system, while in 2004 the party used the services of one of Israel’s best known public relations firms. While it is true that this extreme right party does not receive as many votes as it did in the 1990s, this does not mean the extreme right is fading in Romania. Local branches of extreme right parties with xenophobic and anti-Semitic views still exist in several localities. Pro-Iron Guard, anti-Semitic and Holocaust denial works are published and openly displayed at bookstalls in the major cities.188

The Federation of Jewish Communities is still very active in publishing documents on the history of Jewish life in Romania, and these historical studies are of great importance in the study of the Holocaust and the past of Romanian Jewry. The universities of Napoca-Cluj, Bucharest, and Iasi have academic centers for Jewish studies and hold conferences and seminars on Jewish topics and Romania’s Jewish past. The universities also publish studies on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. The aforementioned organization MCA Romania in cooperation with the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania monitors anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic manifestations and initiates activities to combat anti-Semitism and Holocaust

188 Ibidem.
denial. The Jewish community in Romania, although small in numbers, is still very active in dealing with the anti-Semitism in Romania and attempting to combat it. The emphasis on the importance of education in the report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania is even more important now. Even though the democratization of education and the attempt to move past memories of victimization have not necessarily led to a change of perception in how older and younger generations see themselves in connection to the events of World War II. It is still true that many ethnic Romanians continue to view Jews as ‘other’ than Romanians. Another struggle that Romania has had to overcome is the fact that many Romanians refer to the Communist period when it comes to the meaning of survival, oppression and the fear of losing a life. This is despite the fact that the Holocaust is better known nowadays than it was 20 years ago.

The reports on anti-Semitism also cause reactions from the opposite side, it creates publications and statements against anti-Semitic and Holocaust denial. There is more media coverage to be noticed and the report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania generated much public discussion on “the Holocaust in Romania”, a concept, as the report on anti-Semitism states, that has now entered Romanian terminology after years of debate as to whether there was a Holocaust in the first place.

For most Western Europeans, the end of the war meant freedom and democracy and de-Nazification was not a controversial issue. For people in Romania, as in other Eastern European post-Communist countries, things were more complicated. Politicians have followed their own interests in trying to secure greater benefits for their post-Communist countries, all the while painting themselves as good patriots. The post-Communist states have not successfully become institutions that combine moral leadership in commemorating the wars of the twentieth century with representing the complex memories of their citizens. In the meantime, many parents and grandparents are continuing to present counter-memories to younger generations that contradict the official narratives presented on TV, in politicized commemoration and in history courses. These counter-narratives are a more integral part of public discourse than had been the case under the Communist period, as they are now receiving media attention. And while people look to their government for representing their emotional part in the memory-narratives, more and more people start to look away from

189 Ibid.
190 Maria Bucur, Heroes and Victims, 246, 247.
official commemorations of World War II and the Holocaust. Bucur states here: “The contradictory, unreconciled counter-memories of victimization continue in the post-Communist generation, as fresh now as they were forty years ago.”

Historical insight is the place where reconciliation of the past begins. Everyone has a history, and this history is formed by our upbringing. That is why it is important that at schools and in educational institutes a clear, comprehensive image of one history is given. For Romania this is even more relevant, since the shadow of the Communist period is still present in remembrances and commemorations of the war. When questions of responsibility for wartime atrocities are still avoided, democratic principles of citizenship, of responsibility and of tolerance cannot be embraced.192

192 Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims*, 251, 252.
Conclusion

The quote: “To use the past only to illuminate the present and the future” used in the introduction of this thesis, is one that could apply for Romania. Or rather, should apply. “Thinking in terms of the past” is something that happens in Romania. Since World War II many things have happened in the field of memory, remembrance and commemoration. For Western Europe this meant looking into the administration and archives of the Nazis, setting out piece by piece what happened, how it could have happened, lists of victims, missing persons, who are the heroes and who are the perpetrators and so on. However, this does not apply for Eastern Europe. Where in Western Europe countries picked up the pieces of the Nazi regime that ruled their countries during the war, in most Eastern European countries a new Communist regime appeared, with implications for the future.

Since this is a study into the commemoration of the Holocaust in Romania by Romanian Jews, developments in historiography of the Holocaust and World War II plays an important role. The historiography shows various trends on how Romania instead of researching what truly happened, set out to make its own version of history. It also lines out how politics in Romania influenced the line of history that was told and thus the line of memory and commemorating of World War II and the Holocaust. The Holocaust in Romania sets it aside from other countries, because Romania and its Marshal Ion Antonescu were on the side of Hitler and Nazi Germany. Antonescu’s own xenophobic views and Romania’s anti-Semitic relationship with its Romanian Jews resulted in a Holocaust where Romanian gendarmes and soldiers carried out much of the killing of Jews. Where the Nazis sent the Jews from the occupied countries to Poland to the concentration camps, the Romanians sent their Jews on death marches, death trains and to a territory that was to be a giant killing field, Transnistria. There, many Jews found death, by either exhaustion and starvation or murder. Approximately 280,000-380,000 Romanian Jews died during World War II. The number of victims is paradoxical, since the survival of the Jews from Walachia, Moldavia and southern Transylvania are linked to Antonescu’s decision in the fall of 1942 to postpone indefinitely the deportation of Romanian Jews to Poland. On the other hand, the death of the Jews in Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transnistria is overwhelmingly Antonescu’s responsibility. The Jews of Romania and Transnistria thus owe both life and death to Antonescu. And this paradox is still alive in Romania. It is what caused them to try to put the blame of the Second World War and the many Jewish and Roma casualties on someone else, this is evident in the historiography of the period.
This paradox of Jews owning both life and death to Antonescu, was covered up after World War II. Historiography of the 1940s in Romania shows how the government began to interfere with the image of the past and produced a list with 8000 titles of books that were to be withdrawn from circulation. All books concerning Antonescu, the Iron Guard, the Romanian royal family, Bessarabia and the Romanian occupation of Transnistria were removed from libraries. The Communist Party purged politically incorrect titles and education was treated in a similar way. Foreign schools were closed down, the teaching professing was purged and professors were removed from faculties of history and philosophy, while Stalinist indoctrinators took their place. In the 1950s and early 1960s the interpretation of World War II by Romanian historians was straightforward and dictated by precepts of Marxism-Leninism. It can be stated, that if one looks at the dealing of Romania with its war and Holocaust past in the 1940s, a trend was set that continued the same path until the fall of Communism in 1989: Under Communist rule the image of the past was manipulated to suit the regime’s ends.

All the changes in government and policy after World War II also left their mark on Jewish community life. The Romanian Jewish community was characterized by its decreasing size during the war. A census was carried out on the initiative of the World Jewish Congress in 1947, and according to this, there were 428,312 Jews in Romania at the time. This number was a calculation of the areas with Jews after the Holocaust, the annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina by the USSR and the migration to Palestine during the war. Another census taking on 21 February 1956 stated there were 144,236 Jews in Romania. This drastic reduction of the Romanian Jewish community was largely a result of mass emigration, especially during the years 1944-47 when the country was still ‘open’ for emigration to Israel. 200,000 Romanian Jews settled in the newly established State of Israel (1948) until the end of the 1960s. Meanwhile, the political regime that reigned Romania after World War II exercised its authority over the community life of Romanian Jewry. The government placed restrictions on Jewish activities. This government control on Jewish life was prevalent during the period from August 23, 1944 until the abolition of the monarchy on December 30, 1947. After the abolition of the monarchy, Romania’s political life was dictated from Moscow. This situation continued until the end of the 1950s, when an independent Romanian policy began to appear. The Romanian Jewry faced difficulties when the tools and institutions of national Jewish identity were destroyed and expression of Jewish aspirations were repressed, the Romanian Jewry still found a way to not be completely alienated from its national and religious identity as happened to Jews in the Soviet Union.
The 1960s began with a new leader at the head of the Communist Party; in 1965 Nicolae Ceausescu succeeded Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. Attempts to dissociate from the influence of the Soviet Union resulted in the return of nationalist themes in official discourse and historiography. Overall, Jews were looked upon as victims of atrocities and persecution. This is striking, since the 1940s and 50s are mostly marked as decades of not much interest into the Jewish suffering of the Holocaust in Romania. Since Romania was gradually turning its back on the Soviet Union, research was done on right-wing parties and the pogroms of Bucharest (January 1941) and Iasi (June 1941). This research was selective nonetheless. Some anti-Jewish excesses were singled out and responsibility of these atrocities against Jews was attributed to the German occupation. The mass murders in Transnistria remained unspoken of. On top of that, the largest shortcoming of historiography in communist times in Romania is the fact that archives were limited to not available. The available source materials of this time thus, again, show a one-sided picture.

The Jewish community in the 1960s was characterized, like the 1950s, by emigration of Jews. In the 1960s Ceausescu set up an agreement with Israel to exchange exit visas for Romanian Jews for hard currency only. Realizing how valuable the Romanian Jews could be, he decided not to let the Jews leave all at once, but about 1,500 a year. Between 1968 and 1989 roughly 40,577 Jews were sold to Israel, at a price of $2,500 to $3,300 per head.

Historiography of the 1970s and early 1980s shows Romanian historians introducing a separation of the two phases in the fascist dictatorship, the first dominated by the Legionary Movement (1940-41) and the second by Ion Antonescu (1941-44), with a severe bias against the former. The Legionnaires are depicted as “terrorists” and “traitors”, while Antonescu appears as less bloodthirsty and irresponsible. Also, anti-Semitism in this period is hardly presented as the outcome of fascism and the Jewish tragedy of the Holocaust is minimized. Ethnic Romanians and Communists are depicted as the main victims and Romanian authors stress the qualitative differences between Nazi Germany and Antonescu’s Romania. The 1970s and 80s are also characterized by a terminological shift. In the 1970s Antonescu’s regime turned from “fascist dictatorship” into a “military-fascist” one. In the 1980s the latter terminological term turned into either a “totalitarian regime” or “personal dictatorship”. This was because “military-fascist dictatorship” suggested the involvement of the army in politics. The 1970s and 80s also see efforts to rehabilitate Ion Antonescu as a patriot. This was in part due to the terminological shift of his regime at the beginning of the decade.

While Romania was making efforts at rehabilitating a convicted war criminal, other voices could be heard as well. Jean Ancel worked from the outside of Romania and created a
12-volume work with documentation on the fate of Romanian Jews. His archival work revealed the degree and regularity of Romanian action against the Jews in occupied territories during World War II. His second revelation was the entire Romanian area of influence, such as how all the Romanian Jews were affected by anti-Semitic measures under Antonescu’s regime.

The Romanian Jewish community in the 1970s and 1980s on the one hand continues life as it is; on the other hand emigration to Israel continued. Controversial chief rabbi Moses Rosen praised the authorities for their attitude towards the Jewish community, as they allowed the Jews to develop their life as a national minority. Furthermore, the Jews could keep all Jewish property that survived the war under its own management. Even though, the authorities kept the Jewish community life in place, when it came to remembering the Holocaust and World War II in Romania, the line of thought remained that the Jews of Romania during the war had been saved. The truth that Antonescu ordered the deaths of many Jews was ignored, but nonetheless commemoration of the Holocaust in Romania was taking place. Moses Rosen spoke in a speech explicitly about Jewish Holocaust victims, without asking permission from the authorities, which was a first in Romania. Thus, it can be stated that limited commemoration was taking place.

This research to the historiography of World War II and the Holocaust in Romania and how Jewish community life was affected by it shows that Romania has manipulated its past over and over again, under different authorities and for different reasons. After the fall of Communism, when it became clear how the situation in Romania was, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem from Israel took action. An International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania was set up, headed by Elie Wiesel. The final report stated that it was Romania who was responsible for the suffering and death of Romanian Jews and warned Romania for the effects of decades of denial, distortion and minimization on Romanian society today. What can be said about the report and their findings and recommendations is that on commemoration Romania did make an effort. A monument was set up in Bucharest in 2009, and every year politicians and Jewish survivors come together to commemorate the Holocaust. But for many ethnic Romanians life goes on and they seem less involved in the commemorating of the Holocaust. **What place holds the Jewish fate during World War II in postwar Romania commemoration?**

Romania is still facing the problems that find their origin in the past as describe here, especially when it comes to the commemoration of that particular one, the Holocaust. With
many Jewish citizens in the 1950s and 60s leaving the country, the Jewish community in Romania nowadays is small in numbers. The generation that witnessed the atrocities of the Holocaust is slowly disappearing. Those witnesses still alive are either too tired or afraid to stir up debate, or they simply want to forget about it. The leaders of the small Jewish community are facing the challenge of keeping that memory alive. The younger Jewish generation seems not eager to carry on the work of the older generations, such as the monitoring and combatting of anti-Semitism. The non-Jewish Romanian older generations grew up with distorted history lessons and their government denying Romania had been involved in the Holocaust. These generations still show the belief that ‘life’ was better under Communism and still regard Jews as ‘the other’. Younger non-Jewish Romanian generations grow up with an education that is concerned with stating the facts. And this is the way for Romania to continue towards a future illuminated from its past. While anti-Semitic reports never seem to fade and Romania is still facing older generations’ actions in rehabilitating old war criminals and revising history, Romania is slowly making a difference. Many Romanians may view the Jewish fate during World War II in an inconsiderate manner, as Diana Pinto stated: “There is a Jewish space in Europe that will exist even in the absence of Jews”. A lot has been done in Romania: On an international level the Holocaust has been properly researched in the Romanian archives, this has been accepted by the Romanian government and education on the subject has been altered, so that future younger generations in Romania are educated properly on the history of the Holocaust in Romania. Even when anti-Semitism reports are still present; certain Romanians still tend to distort history and the Jews are, by some, still considered as ‘other’, this history will not fade and will be remembered. Through the history of the Romanian Jewish communities, the experience of World War II and the Holocaust, the memory thereof and finally, commemoration, the past can only illuminate the future.
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- Distortion, Negationism, and Minimization of the Holocaust in postwar Romania
- Findings and Recommendations
- Executive Summary

Appendix I

Map of Greater Romania (gray) with historical provinces. Oltenia and Muntenia together comprise Wallachia.\textsuperscript{193}

Appendix II

Map of Romania 1941-1942

Appendix III

Map of Romania in 1942

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Appendix IV

Map of Camps, ghettos and massacre sites in Romania, 1941-1942.196