LIVIU BERIS
THE HOLOCAUST IN ROMANIA
Questions and Answers

English Translation by Alexandra Beris
About a time when BEASTS ruled...
and yet about MAN...
Romania, a country located in the South-East of Europe, was one of the allies of Nazi Germany during World War II.
The extermination of European Jews undertaken by Germany during World War II, a phenomenon known as the Holocaust, afflicted not only the Jews of Germany and countries under German occupation, but also those from countries such as Romania, which maintained its sovereignty as a state all through these events.
Given that more than 70 years have passed since the events in question, and considering the remote geographic location and the particularities of the Romanian Holocaust, a brief overview of the historical benchmarks of the epoch may prove useful to the reader.

In August 1939 Germany signed a pact of non-aggression with the Soviet Union, whereby it ensured the neutrality of the latter in the eventuality that war broke out. After only one week, (on Septembrie 1, 1939), Germany attacked Poland. In response, France and Great Britain declared war against Germany, honoring the commitment of mutual support from prior treaties with Poland. With this, World War II broke out. Within a few weeks, Poland was defeated and Germany occupied the Western half of Poland. Sixteen days after Germany's attack, the Soviet troops entered Poland and occupied the Eastern half of this country, advancing up to a preestablished demarcation line, on the opposite side of which the German army had stopped. It had become clear that the non-aggression pact contained secret clauses as well, which are known today. Among these, in addition to the annexation by the Soviet Union of the 3 Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), was Germany's accord to the claims raised by the Soviet Union to certain Romanian territories.
In fact, the non-aggression pact represented a conjugated action of the two participating states, aimed at destroying the European interbelic political order.

In June 1940, as Germany was on the verge of defeating France on the West front, the Soviet Union addressed an ultimatum to Romania regarding the surrender of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina (Romanian provinces located in the North-Eastern part of the country), which were subsequently occupied by the Soviet Union on June 28 – 29, 1940.
In order to satisfy the revanchist ambitions of other neighboring states, Romania was forced by Germany and Italy (through the dictate of Vienna from August 30, 1940), to surrender the Northen part of Transylvania to Hungary. One week later, Romania surrendered to Bulgaria part of the Southern territory of another province, Dobrogea (see map).
The political and military isolation occasioned by the politics of King Carol II of
Romania, and in particular the internal socio-economical consequences thereof, created a tense atmosphere wherein General Ion Antonescu (a former collaborator of the extreme right wing formation called the Legionnary Movement), was called upon in early September 1940 to establish the government. General Antonescu availed himself of this opportunity and proceeded to depose the king, replacing him with his son Mihai I. At the same time, the General himself become the Leader of the State (Führer), possessing dictatorial powers.

On June 22, 1941, notwithstanding the non-aggression pact negotiated previously, Nazi Germany launched its invasion of the Soviet Union. Romania, under the leadership of General Ion Antonescu, joined forces with Germany in this war. The German and Romanian armies reoccupied the territories of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina, which had been annexed by the Soviet Union one year previously. This marked the onset of a veritable extermination campaign of the Jews in the territories controlled by the German and Romanian armies. Actual manhunts and mass executions were carried out, without any trial or judgment. During this first stage of the war, referred to by some as “Holocaust by the bullet”, over 55,000 Jews were killed in Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina.

The German and Romanian armies continued to advance toward the East, deep into the territory of the Soviet Union. The former frontier between the Soviet Union and Romania, situated along the river Dniester, was surpassed by a large margin, as the troops of the Axis reached the Caucasus mountains and the river Volga toward the end of the year 1942. A Romanian jurisdiction was established on the territory situated between the rivers Dniester and Bug, a region which became known as “Transnistria” (the land beyond the Dniester).

Shortly after the first phase of summary executions, a systematic action commenced aimed at concentrating the surviving Jews of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina in ghettos and transition camps, followed by their deportation to Transnistria. Both during transport and thereafter, in the 117 ghettos, camps and forced labor colonies established in Transnistria, there was no food provided to the deportees, although they had the statute of prisoners (being caught outside the camp or ghetto was cause for execution). The second phase began, during which starvation, frost, and misery leading to widespread epidemics (typhus and typhoid fever) constituted the main means of extermination.

The deportations were extended geographically, encompassing the entire territory of Southern Bucovina and the district of Dorohoi (situated in the Northern part of the province Moldova), areas which were not under Soviet occupation during 1940 – 1941. The Romanian Holocaust did not employ gas chambers and crematories. However, the “old technologies” and the zeal of the executors proved extremely efficient. The number of Jews exterminated during World War II in the territories under the administration (authority) of the Romanian government led by Ion Antonescu was in excess of 270,000. And the orders for all these acts came from Bucharest, and not from Berlin.

As long as the war unfolded favorably to Germany and its allies, Romania allotted full military and economical support for these measures, engaging in the process of ethnic purification with utmost enthusiasm. Regarding the number of troops participating in the European war, Romania ranked third (575,000 combatants), after the Soviet Union and Germany.
When the course of the war changed, especially after the heavy losses suffered by the Romanian army in the battle of Stalingrad (along the river Volga), the concern of the Romanian leaders regarding a possible defeat became increasingly apparent, and had certain repercussions in their politics toward the Jews as well. This included the refusal of the German proposal, initially sanctioned by the Romanian leaders, to deport all Jews from the rest of Romania to the extermination camps of Poland. As a result, more than 290,000 Romanian Jews survived the end of World War II.

In April 1944, the Soviet troops entered Romanian territory, reoccupying Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina.

On August 23, 1944, King Mihai I arrested General Ion Antonescu, demanded armistice and switched sides, joining the Allied Forces.

Shortly after the end of World War II, the Cold War began. Romania, along with other countries in Eastern Europe, was locked into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, designated at the time as the socialist camp. The former right wing totalitarianism was replaced by left wing totalitarianism. All throughout these years, an attempt was made to erase the memory of the above-mentioned historical events, and discussions about the Holocaust were forbidden.

The disintegration of the communist system in 1989 enabled the commencement of research on the topic, including interviews with Holocaust survivors that were still alive in the early 1990s.

Decades have elapsed since those events. Along came those who claimed the Holocaust existed only elsewhere, but never affected the Romanian Jews. There were still others who attempted to turn the former leader Ion Antonescu into a hero for the role he played in World War II.

Such affirmations fed to the young generation are apt to influence their judgment, and possibly motivated some of the questions they raised, which this booklet is trying to address. The answers are represented mainly by extracts from documents signed by those who ordered the execution of the crimes or reported that the missions had been carried out.

Through contents and approach to the issue, the author offers an efficient model that can be used to neutralize any noxious attempts at negating the Romanian Holocaust.
Foreword

I am a survivor of the deportations to Transnistria.

From a total of over 1,800 Jews deported in August 1941 from Hertza, the village I was born and grew up in, only 25% survived the deportation. The others died of starvation, frostbite, typhus and typhoid fever, gunshot wounds, and the ill-will of their fellow humans.

The totalitarianism of the Antonescu government in Romania was followed shortly after the end of World War II by the totalitarianism of the communist regime. The deportations, Transnistria, the pogroms – events that were an integral part of history – were not even mentioned in the history books. “Whatever is not known didn’t exist”, was the all-encompassing principle applied time and time again.

The implosion of the communist system enabled the onset of research in this regard, the access to archives, the discovery of pertinent documents and the gradual rehabilitation of the historic truth. The testimony of holocaust survivors and of non-Jews who bore witness to the events came to complete the picture. Such testimonies continue to provide information about the atmosphere of the epoch, about interpersonal relations, about the reactions of the various parties involved in the events – situations of life and struggle in the face of death, which couldn’t have been depicted by mere dispassionate documents.

As a Holocaust survivor, I am myself one of those who bear a double burden: To keep alive the memory of innocent people – thrown along the side of the roads in shallow common graves, or burned to ashes that were scattered in the wind – and to convey to the generations to come the true facts, such that tragedies of this sort can be avoided in the future. This is the reason why I honored, to the best of my abilities, all invitations to lecture about the Holocaust in the territories under Romanian authority during WWII, be it lectures addressed to students, graduate students, professors of history and social sciences, or certain civic organizations.

In order to facilitate the understanding of various aspects, I have requested my audience to submit their questions to me in writing, without having to sign them. This made it possible to overcome certain reservations or uneasiness on the part to the public, and to circumvent the formalism of a live debate on this complex and sensitive topic.

The remainder of this volume presents some of the questions posed by my audiences, and the answers I provided in return.
QUESTIONS:

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To me, Marshall Ion Antonescu is a hero who fought for the liberation of the Romanian lands occupied in the East, a great patriot who fought for the good of Romania. The attitude he had toward the Jews cannot erase his merits, cannot erase him from history. Why do you oppose the recognition of these merits? ................................................................. 34
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What is your opinion about the so-called Holocaust in Romania?

That it was a real, not a so-called Holocaust of the Jews in the territories under the authority of the Antonescu government during the second World War, which resulted in over 270,000 dead. And this is not my “opinion”, this is the reality. For the first time in history, the Nazi Reich and its allies conceived, organized and implemented systematically, at state level, an extermination action targeting an entire nation. And one of the 10 commandments – thou shalt not kill – was transformed in its opposite, by orders of participation to a “public criminal service”. It was sufficient to have been born a Jew in order to be practically condemned to death. The documents found in the archives attest to my statements above. Here are several extracts which highlight the “purification program” and certain actions of the Antonescu government.

The organization of the purification action:

1941, June 17 - The Assembly of the Council of Ministers

Prof. Mihai Antonescu, minister of state:

[...] We have to undertake the purification of the population. Therefore Bessarabia and Bucovina will be reminiscent of the politics of Titus as far as the ethnic population is concerned – and I can assure you this does not only regard the Jews – [...] we will aim to practice a politic of utter and violent rejection of the foreign elements. [...]  

Governmental instructions regarding the extermination action:

The “purification” starts out with the massacre and death train of Iasi

64. 1941, June 29, Iași. The Report of the prefect of the Iasi district, colonel Dumitru Captaru, to the Minister of Internal Affairs, in reference to the order issued by Mihai

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Antonescu, vice-president of the Council of Ministers, regarding the evacuation of the Jews from Iasi.

The prefect of the Iasi district reports:

In accordance with the order of the vice-president of the Council of Ministers,

– The Jewish population of the Iasi township is supposed to be evacuated, including men, women and children.
– The evacuation will proceed in batches, and the necessary number of trains will be provided.
– His Highness has indicated that the Minister of Internal Affairs will decide the destinations to where the evacuation will proceed.
– The number of Jews in Iasi is approximately 45,000 (men, women and children).

I respectfully request directions regarding the implementation of this operation.

Prefect, ss. Col. Captaru

Nr. 1052
29.VI.1941
23:55 hours

Received:
Cpt. E. Nicolescu

65. 1941, June 30, Podu Iloaiei. Written Statement regarding the arrival of the „transport of Jews evacuated from Iasi” via the „death train”.

STATEMENT
Today, June 30, 1941

The undersigned Virgil A. Popovici, praetor of Bahlui, Iasi district, dr. Ștefan Ionescu, mayor of the village P. Iloaiei and chief-surgeon of the Hospital Podu Iloaiei, and captain Theodor Popa, commander of the gendarme sector Podu Iloaiei, based on the telephone order of the prefect of the Iasi district to receive at the railway station P.

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Iloaiei a transport of Jews evacuated from Iasi to the destination P. Iloaiei, arrived at the scene at 12:00 hours, after being notified of the arrival of the train at the station Podu Iloaiei and receiving the report of the rail station chief that the train carrying the evacuated Jews from Iasi had been directed onto the rail line Hârlău, in order to allow for proper disembarking and not to hinder train traffic, proceeded to the respective location, where we found the train in question, which had pulled over shortly beforehand.

We then ordered for the train cars to be unlocked. All in all, there were 19 train cars, each one containing 80-150 individuals, in total 1,974 Jews.

Due to the significant overcrowding of the train cars, part of the Jews were found asphyxiated, part were in a state of coma and succumbed shortly after being disembarked, and the rest who survived were sent to the Jewish quarters and synagogues in the village Podu Iloaiei.

The cadavers were laid alongside the rail tracks, and then released to the local Jewish Community, in order to transport them to the graveyard and bury them in mass-graves dug 3 meters deep, with the provision that a layer of lye at least 1 meter thick be poured over the cadavers.

From the total of 1,974 Jews registered on this transport by the representative of the prefect of Iasi, 1,198 expired and 776 survived. Among the survivors was Marcu Traian – who is Romanan and Christian, as proved by his marriage certificate nr. 47/940 released by the parish priest in Podul Iloaiei […]

1941, July 8 – Session of the Council of Ministers ⁴

**Prof. Mihai Antonescu, vice-president of the Council of Ministers:**

[...] At the risk of being misunderstood by some traditionalists that may still be among you, I am in favor of the forced migration of the entire Jewish element from Bessarabia and Bucovina, which must be hurled across the border. [...] 
I do not care if history will regard us as barbarians. [...] 
[...] So please be relentless. This is not the time for philosophic humanitarianism. [...] 
If necessary, fire the machine guns. [...] 
I formally assume responsibility and declare that there is no law. [...] 
No law whatsoever. [...] So proceed without formalities, with complete freedom. [...]  

1941, October 6 – Session of the Resource Council ⁵

[...] **Marshall Ion Antonescu, leader of the state:** [...] 

As far as the Jews are concerned, I have taken measures to definitively remove them from these regions. These measures are presently being implemented. I still have

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⁴ A.S.B. P.C.M. – Cabinet Fund, dossier 475/1941, pages 103-128 from L.B. – Minutes.  
⁵ A.S.B. P.C.M. – Cabinet Fund, dossier 484/1941, pages 9, 16 from L.B. – Minutes
approximately 40,000 Jews in Bessarabia, which in a few days will be driven across the Dniester river and if circumstances permit, will be taken beyond the Ural mountains. [...] So the Jewish problem in Bessarabia will be solved within a few weeks, and it will be solved in Bucovina as well. Therefore, governor of Bucovina, you must be ready for this measure. [...]  

1941, November 13 – Session of the Council of Ministers  

[...] Marshall Ion Antonescu, leader of the state:  
The city of Iasi is very congested.

Eng. C. Buşilă, minister of public works:  
The Jews have departed.

Marshall Ion Antonescu, leader of the state:  
The Jews have not departed from Iasi as yet. I am encountering more than enough difficulties with the ones we have deported beyond the Bug river. Many of them have died underway. [...]  

Regarding the “reprisals” in Odessa

1941, November 13 – Session of the Council of Ministers with the governors of Bessarabia, Bucovina and Transnistria  

Marshall Ion Antonescu, leader of the state:  [...]  
I have ordered to shoot 200 Jews for each one of our dead, and 100 Jews for each wounded. Was this carried out?

Prof. Gh. Alexianu, governor of Transnistria:  
They were shot and hanged on the streets of Odessa. [...]  

Marshall Antonescu, leader of the state:  
You shall proceed with these measures, as I assume responsibility before the country and before history. [...]  

1941, December 16 – Session of the Council of Ministers with the governors of the liberated provinces  

[...] Marshall Ion Antonescu, leader of the state:  

6 A.S.B. P.C.M. – Cabinet Fund, dossier 477/1941, pages 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 120, 122, 135 from L.B. – Minutes.  
7 A.S.B. P.C.M. – Cabinet Fund, dossier 477/1941, pages 10, 11, 52, 53 from L.B. – Minutes.  
Please get the Jews from Odessa out of the city immediately. [...] 

Marshall Ion Antonescu [...]:

The Germans want to take all European Jews to Russia and resettle them in a certain region. But the implementation of the above will take some time. What are we to do with them in the meantime? Shall we wait for Berlin to decide? [...] 

Stick them in catacombs, push them into the Black Sea, but get them out of Odessa. I don’t want to hear anything. I don’t care if a hundred may die, or a thousand may die, or all of them may die. [...] 

Regarding the instigation of the population to anti-Jewish pogroms

Lt. col. Al. Ionescu, chief of Dept. II (section II) of the General Headquarters, reports:⁹

Regarding the implementation of your order received via telephone on July 8, 1941:

I have the honor of submitting the following plan [...].
The implementation has already started as of July 9.
The mission of these teams is to create in the villages an atmosphere of hatred to the Jewish people, so that the population itself is motivated to eliminate them by whatever means they see fit in their present circumstances. By the time the Romanian troops arrive, the atmosphere should already have been created and the plan already set in action. [...].

And here is a report¹⁰ demonstrating the efficiency of one of the extermination methods practiced by the Romanian authorities.

1941, November 13, Golta

To the Government of Transnistria

Tiraspol

I have the honor to report:
Upon taking charge of the district, I found several Jewish colonies consisting of the ones gathered from the nearby villages, and the great majority of those sent from across the Dniester.
In the village of Gvozdavca from the Liubașevca district, a Romanian village, some 15,000 had gathered, and in Krivoje Ozero and Bogdanovka about 1,500 at each site.
The ones in Gvozdavca were hit by the typhus epidemic and about 8,000 died, including the ones who starved to death.

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[...] The ones from Krivoje Ozero were also dispatched to Bogdanovka, where they were housed in the pig stables of the “Sovhoz” (state owned farm).

However, prior to the arrival of the transport of Jews from Gvozdavca, some 9,000 Jews were sent from the direction of Odessa, so that today, the total of the ones already present on the premises and of the new arrivals equals 11,000 Jews, who occupy the stables of the Sovhoz (state owned farm) designated for only 7,000 pigs.

Today we received the visit of the Mayor and the Chief of the Sovhoz, who were desperate since they had been informed that another 40,000 Jews were en route from the direction of Odessa.

Since the Sovhoz can no longer house them all, and the ones on the outside are murdering the ones in the stables to take their place, and the Police and gendarmes are working nonstop to direct the burials, and the water from the Bug river is being used as drinking water, we expect a veritable epidemic to afflict the region in the very near future.

Workforce is nonexistent, since of the 300 brought Jews from Golta who were brought for municipal chores almost 200 have died and other 50 are moribund, despite the relatively better care they received.

Most suffer from tuberculosis, dysentery or typhus.

In order to avoid contaminating the region, we insistently request that urgent orders be given to stop the transports of Jews into this region.

As far as the existing ones, I hope to be able to send them soon across the Bug River, so that we can enjoy clean air in the near future. I do request, however, that we not be infested by new convoys of Jews again.

Prefect
Lt. Col. Isopescu

To keep things straight, I will now present extracts from the testimony of a survivor of the “death kingdom” run by prefect Isopescu. Skipping over the details of how she got from one concentration camp to another, I will present just a few aspects from the experience of Liebe Havas Burihovici in the ghetto of Ismail and in the camps of Domanovka and Bogdanovka from the Golta district, Transnistria.

Extracts from the testimony of Mrs. Liebe Havas Burihovici, a survivor of the deportations to Transnistria

[...] On June 21 [...], over the course of a few hours, the Soviet army and administrative personnel withdrew from Ismail (a town in the south of Bessarabia).

[...] At the break of dawn, wild beasts clad in uniforms broke our door, and ordered us to pack our bare necessities within in a few minutes. They lined us up in a convoy and marched us to the antechamber of death: THE GHETTO!

[...] We were tortured by the soldiers starting the very first night, we were woken up countless times, pushed around, hit, and trampled by their boots. Then they started looking for the newborn children. They would place us in a circle (throughout the years
of my deportation, the significance of this circle has become well-known to me), while they played football in the middle with the tiny baby. Parts of their “toy” would splatter all over this murder, and over us; but the blood stains on their faces and uniforms didn’t bother them. At various times they would come in drunk, grab one of the younger women in the group and rape her in front of us and her family.

[...] One morning at dawn, with the usual brutality which had become reflex, they beat us and kicked us around [...], then ordered us to gather our “belongings” which wouldn’t even fill up a backpack, and started marching us out of town.

[...] We marched in a convoy. The road we walked toward an unknown destination was littered with corpses, these guided us along. [...] Whoever faltered was shot.

[...] We walked almost incessantly; rarely did we stop to take shelter inside the ruins of former stables, bereft of roofs, just remnants of walls surrounding decaying corpses. The stench was asphyxiating.

[...] I cannot appreciate how long it took for us to reach the mass extermination camp named Domanovka. The camp consisted of burned houses, destroyed by the Russians before they evacuated. [...].

In reality, we lived under the open sky, in the midst of the Russian winter, at minus 40 degrees Celsius. Piles of corpses were scattered all over, people were dying of typhus, lice were crawling around, mange was a common occurrence, open festering wounds, full of worms, typhoid fever. The typhus epidemic spared no one. [...] When the one next to you died, the lice that covered him would instantly invade the one that was still warm. I myself had lice the size of bed bugs in every pore. Nothing would stop them; they would gnaw on you down to the raw flesh. I contracted typhus, as nourishment I had an abundance of frozen excrement (the statement isn’t fiction). [...]

I arrived in this camp at the height period of mass executions. Incessantly, day and night, carts rolled in to pick up people, sometimes stacking them on top of each other to fit in as many as possible, and took them to places where they were required for labor. Their feeble bodies were used to prepare their own graves. Then they were ordered to strip naked and face the grave, after which the machine guns would start firing and kill them or just wound them; and thus, dead or still alive, they were thrown into the grave. The next step consisted of sprinkling small amounts of gas over the site and setting it on fire, after which everything was covered with just a few shovels of dirt. The smell of fried meat exacerbated our hunger. When the commotion ceased, dogs came around and tore chunks from the bodies that just minutes earlier had been living humans, not food. It’s hard to believe, but the few of us still capable of crawling up to the grave sites would do exactly the same. A sort of cannibalism was being practiced. It was too great of a challenge to resist the smell of fried meat, even if it was HUMAN.

[...] the transport of people by cart to the mass graves was inefficient [...]. So the executioners started coming to us, and they put us out of our misery by shooting us in batches, as many as they could.

I remember it was in the month of January when my mother, sick with typhus, and lying down next to me, was shot to death. I never saw any of us mourning their dead, each one awaited his turn. We didn’t even dream that some of us would survive. [...]
I was young and eager to live [...]. Subconsciously, I started sensing the moment danger was near, when they returned to shoot us. Driven by fear, I would start to crawl [...] and I would hide among the stacks of corpses to save myself.

[...] Isopescu Modest was the prefect of Golta, and his adjunct was Aristide Pădure. Both were to be feared, but even crueler was the Chief of State Security, whose name unfortunately eludes me. [...].

As a result of a triage performed by Pădure and the Chief of Security [...] I was assigned to a lot destined for the famous extermination camp Bogdanovka

[...] The Bogdanovka camp which situated on a hill had been used by the former Soviet regime as a pig breeding farm that was spread on a vast area. I think that none of the deportees had been able to walk through it, from one end to the other: the camp was not guarded, as just the effort of reaching the top of the hill was more than enough. [...] When the deportees arrived at that place, they fell down on what happened to be there, what else than corpses? - stiff corpses in different positions and other piles of corpses that had recently given their last breath. They were absolutely naked; each morsel of rag that previously covered them has been used by the living. Same as in Domanovka camp, the typhus epidemic was ravaging this camp as well. It became, an active collaborator of our exterminators. Huge rats were another aggressive enemy of ours, they were the size of adult cats. Most of the deportees were helpless and could not defend against them, so the rats would leisurely gnaw at various parts of their bodies, which had became food for those beasts. Throughout my forced wandering to many of the stables where I was stationed, I saw rats feasting on bodies that were still alive and would just moan, being too weak to even scream. In the camp at Bogdanovka, not even the slightest food ration was supplied, and starvation harvested its victims continuously. Bogdanovka was surrounded by mass graves, filled with victims shot to death and also the ones that were not dead as yet, but would soon find their ghastly death down there in the graves.[...].

The witness proceeds to describe the hardship she endured and the twists of fate by which she managed to count herself among the few hundred survivors from the tens of thousands who died in the “kingdom” of the prefect Isopescu.

The dead have no voice; they cannot tell us how hell was brought onto earth by “humans themselves”. But the survivors have this duty. Especially now, as the number of Holocaust deniers is increasing and their demeanor is becoming more aggressive as they attempt, through their denial, to murder the victims for a second time.

I have quoted just a few of the numerous records which document the decisions of the political leaders that generated the Romanian Holocaust.

To avoid any confusion, I must clarify that the term “Romanian Holocaust” refers to the extermination of the Jews in the territories under the authority of the Antonescu government at the time, regardless whether these presently belong to other states (as in the case of Northern Bucovina, Bessarabia, Transnistria), or are located within the borders of the present Romanian state. As a term of comparison, the Holocaust is German, even though the mass extermination camps (Auschwitz-Birkenau, etcetera) were located on Polish territory.
Naturally, the Romanian Holocaust had certain characteristics of its own:

- **a.** the extermination was conceived, organized and implemented by a sovereign country;
- **b.** the extermination did not consist only of systematic killing actions, but mostly of deportations under conditions that led to extermination;
- **c.** Romania’s politics with regards to the “Jewish problem” was independent of Germany’s politics, in the sense that Ion Antonescu acted of his own accord, in the context of the Nazi domination and influence across Europe;
- **d.** Antonescu’s independence of action is further demonstrated by the fact that once he realized that the war was almost lost, he decided to end the politics of extermination, cease the deportations in Southern Transylvania and the Old Kingdom, and even start some repatriation actions in Transnistria.
- **e.** In other words, the Holocaust in the territories under Romanian authority started when ordered and it unfolded until Antonescu ordered to stop it.
What is worse?
THE CAUSE (the red week - summer of 1940)
or the EFFECT?
The Truth about June 28 – July 3, 1940!
(Please, do not avoid the answer)

As you can see, I did not avoid it.

You are referring to the essay published by Paul Goma in 2002 („The Red Week, June 28 - July 3, 1940, or Bessarabia and the Jews“), where he tries to justify the crime of genocide committed against the Jews upon the liberation of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina in July 1941, by claiming that it was an act of retaliation on the part of the military in response to the supposedly hostile attitude of the Jews toward the Romanian army during its withdrawal from Bessarabia in the summer of 1940 (June 28 - July 3, 1940), as well as to certain actions of the Jews during the year of Soviet occupation (July 1940 - July 1941). Between 2002 and 2005, this essay went through several iterations, which hardly affected the essence of the author's arguments, however.

The essay references certain situations pertaining to the disorganized withdrawal of the army, the administration and part of the civilian population during the above-mentioned period; it depicts the noxious actions specific to communist totalitarianism during the year of Soviet occupation (the consequences of which impacted the entire population, including the Jews); it cites name after name, most of them Jewish and seldom others (belonging to other minorities), such that finally one is tempted to believe the Jews are to blame for the mutilation of the country and for the entire disaster.

As far as the deportations to Siberia, the author is magnanimous enough to mention: „Jews were deported as well – mostly the ones that were very wealthy“. In reality, a great many Jews were deported, not only based because they were wealthy, but also due to their political orientation (Zionists, leaders of the Jewish communities from the so-called bourgeois epoch).

Toward the end, carried away by his own arguments, he writes:

„Upon the retreat of the Soviets from Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina in July 1941, the Rozenbergs and Goldenbergs [...] fled along to Kazakhstan in the vans of the Red Army, to avoid being held accountable for their deeds; some innocents paid for the spilled milk (doctors, professors, businessmen, bankers, Zionists), who were themselves victims of the Bolsheviks.“\(^{11}\)

Indeed, they paid for the spilled milk, they were exterminated just for the fault of being born Jewish. The Antonescu government knew this as it planned its “ethnic

\(^{11}\) Paul Goma: „The Red Week, June 28- July 3, 1940, or Bessarabia and the Jews“; Supplement nr. 200 „Aldine“ of the newspaper „România liberă“.
purification”, and as we can see, Paul Goma knows it as well. And it is this very fact that constitutes the crime of genocide, for which there is no statute of limitations according to current international law. In any case, the problem of the Cause and Effect deserves a deeper analysis than the approach employed by Paul Goma.

For those who didn't live through those events, some clarification is required:

On July 26, 1940, the Soviet Union gave Romania an ultimatum regarding its occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina.

We present below a few pointers regarding the general situation at the time:

- On August 23, 1939 Nazi Germany signed a treaty of nonaggression with the Soviet Union, known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact (named after the ministers of foreign affairs of the two countries), by which they defined their spheres of influence in Europe;
- On September 1, 1939 - just one week after signing the nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union - Germany invades Poland. France and England declare war on Germany. World War II began;
- Within a few weeks, the Polish army was defeated. Warsaw and the greater part of Poland were occupied by German troops. The Soviet troops entered and occupied the eastern part of Poland, up to a pre-established boundary. It was clear and transparent, especially to politicians, that these actions were mutually agreed upon and based on secret provisions from the treaty signed by the two countries.
- Then, “mutual assistance” treaties were imposed between the Soviet Union on the one hand, and Estonia (September 28, 1939), Latvia (October 5, 1939) and Lithuania (October 11, 1939), followed by the occupation of these countries by the Soviet Union;
- On March 29, 1940 Molotov raised the issue of Bessarabia, since „the annexation by Romania was never recognized by the Soviet Union.”

The aforementioned goes to prove that the Soviet threat to Romania was quite evident, even to the politically naïve.

The secret provisions of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact have been since unveiled. They contain agreements regarding the distribution of geographical areas of interest between Germany and the Soviet Union, among which is the surrender of certain Romanian territories to the Soviet Union. This was the real CAUSE which led to the ultimatum of June 26. All the events that followed were the EFFECTS of this CAUSE.

Could the “Jews of Bessarabia” influence this chain of events in any way? It is obvious they couldn’t. (However, all those who led Romania during the preceding years could have planned for an adequate endowment and preparedness of the army. Or at least in the 12th hour, when Molotov raised the problem of Bessarabia on March 29, they could have taken measures to prepare an armed resistance or an organized retreat.)

The Romanian government at the time, headed by King Carol II, considering that a war with the well armed Soviet Union was unwinnable, finally accepted (after much hesitations and protraction which decisively influenced the events to follow) the surrender of the respective territories. The size of these territories was 50,762 kilometer
square (out of which Bessarabia accounted for 44,500 kilometer square, and Northern; Bucovina for 6,262 kilometer square). The population of these territories was around 3,776,000 inhabitants, among which: 53.49% Romanians, 15.30% Ukrainians, 10.34% Russians, 7.27% Jewish, 4.91% Bulgarians, 3.31% Germans, and 5.12% others.

The indecisiveness of the country’s leaders from the time the ultimatum was received and the time it was acted on, the acute Soviet pressure during the withdrawal (materialized in evacuation terms that were impossible to abide by), the fact that the retreating Romanian troops were overtaken by the Soviet tanks, the installation by the Soviets of “check points” along the retreat routes lead to grave consequences. There were incidents and clashes resulting in dead and wounded soldiers, the arrests of Romanian officers who were humiliated in front of the troops, confiscations of military material, the desertion from the ranks of certain Romanian military personnel - natives of the surrendered territories – either by order of the Russians or of their own free will, and many other deficiencies in the organization of the retreat.

In addition, there was the hostile attitude of certain elements among the local population. All of these caused the retreat from Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina to be a major failure, which was experienced as such by the army and by the entire country. As usual,” the Jews became the scapegoat for everything that occurred.

When the retreat was over, the losses reported by the 3rd and 4th armies numbered 233 officers, 26 non-commissioned officers and 48,629 soldiers (from which 5 officers, 6 non-commissioned officers and 42 soldiers dead.

The testimonials of refugees conveying horrifying scenes from the retreat, as well as documents transmitted by military units (such as telegrams and reports), kept mentioning the word “Jews”. Collective accusations kept flowing. The press of the time presented and amplified them, real facts melded with invented facts, distortions of reality and rumors were being spread at the speed of lightning.

We present just a few extracts from the archived documents:

„In the locality of Ungheni, Iaşi, twenty Soviet tanks have arrived. Upon their entry, the communists in the city, most of them Jewish, manifested in a hostile manner against Romania, committing acts of violence against the army. Gunshots were fired, and there were dead and wounded."

„The Jewish population from Târgu Ungheni was very hostile, attacking even soldiers, who in turn used their firearms.”

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13 Idem
”Part of the Soviet tanks – the majority of which did not respect the occupation order – overtook our troops as these were retreating, using the tanks as a means of transporting weapons to arm the Ukrainian population. Thus armed, these proceeded to attack our convoys, killing and robbing lone soldiers.”

”All villages were flying red flags, especially the Jews.”

”The Jewish-communist gangs in Chișinău robbed the refugees, who were unable to defend themselves”

”In Chișinău, a gang of Jewish communists tried to lynch the theology students, who escaped thanks to the intervention of a gendarme detachment which used firearms.”

”The lawyer Michael Flexor of Soroca, leading the Jewish gangs, occupied the police station and the city hall and searched the premises. It was him who assassinated the lawyer Murafa and Eustație Gabriel in front of the statue of General Poetaș. At the prefecture of the district, the school teacher Gh. Lupașcu, deputy and former prefect, gave a speech in favor of the Soviet troops. [...] Likewise, Petre Sfecla, president of the F.R.N.(National Renaissance Front, a nationalist party created by King Carol II – author’s note) of Soroca, along with the school teachers Snop Alexandru and Cutubar Ion, marched with the red flag to welcome the red troops. [...] The rail workers at the Lipnic railway station welcomed the Soviet troops with red flags.”

”In Cernăuți, such elements shot the priest of the Catholic Church and several guards at the penitentiary.”

”Spurred on by the Soviets, some Romanian militaries belonging to ethnic minorities deserted from the 3rd and 4th armies with their weaponry and ammunition. Subsequently, organized in gangs they turned against their former army units.”

”In Bolgrad, the communists circulated around town wearing as a distinctive sign the Jewish cross with 6 corners along with a red ribbon.”

Regarding the above-mentioned, it may be of interest to reference the data presented by Dinu Giurescu about the composition of the Romanian Communist Party:

”In 1933, The Romanian Communist Party counted 1,655 members, among which 22% were Jewish”

It follows that in all of Romania there were 364 communist Jews. And indeed, the communists in Romania represented a negligible political force. Even if all these few hundred Jews had been located in Bessarabia, how could they have caused the losses reported by the army, could they have turned an entire country upside down?

A clear mind may have some difficulty accepting such hypothesis.

16 Idem, pg. 82
17 Idem, pg. 92
18 Idem, pg. 93.
19 Idem, pg. 93-94.
20 Idem, p. 96.
21 INSH „Elie Wiesel”, in the magazine “Lumea” 06/2013, pag. 52.
From the experience of Hertza's inhabitants

I have previously pointed out that I am a native of Hertza. As such, at the age of 12 years and a half, I lived through these events. The village of Hertza was part of the former Dorohoi district, and was situated about 15 kilometers South of the old border to Austria-Hungary, respectively Bucovina. Its population consisted of Romanians and Jews.

On the morning of June 29, 1940 we saw the Soviet tanks rolling down the main street of the village, although Hertza was never part of Bucovina. Everyone thought this was merely an error, and expected the Soviets to retreat. A rumor about a military incident occasioned by the entry of the Soviets in Hertza, during which 3 Romanian soldiers supposedly lost their lives, quickly spread through the village. There was no other fighting or loss of lives during the occupation of Hertza. And there was no other disarray.

I found a clear description of the events surrounding Hertza's occupation in the book of Paul Lăzărescu, a refugee from this village. I quote several paragraphs from this book below:

“[...] The story of our refuge was just one of many similar cases that took place in Hertza that day.

For five decades, since June 29, 1940, many versions and presumptions have circulated – some of which have become legends – about the way the Soviets got into Hertza. It could have been a simple error, or the ridiculous story about a demarcation line sketched on the map with a blunt red pencil, or maybe the version that the Jewish elements brought the Soviet tanks into Hertza.

Now, after so many years, when the publication of a series of documents from that time became possible, we can finally start to understand the truth regarding the occupation of Hertza. To this end, I present a transcript from the Operations Journal of the 16th Regiment of Artillery, which included the 1st Battery commanded by captain Boroș:

«June 29, 1940. The hour is 4:45. A deafening noise of battle cars can be heard all around. [...]»

[...] The cars stopped in front of the gun battery and armed Russians (meaning „Soviets”) descended right away, shouting at us to surrender. The commander of the battery, captain Boroș Ioan, was immediately summoned. Being unable to communicate with the Russians, captain Boroș asked a Bessarabian soldier to translate. This one said: “They are requesting that we drop our weapons”; to which captain Boroș replied through the same interpreter that he had to obtain telephonic confirmation of this order. During this time, the commander of section 2, sub-lieutenant in the reserves Dragomir Alexandru, waved his hand negatively to captain Boroș, to dissuade him from surrendering the gun battery. In response to this gesture the Russians opened fire, shooting at first into the air. Then, as sub-lieutenant Dragomir Alexandru reached for his
revolver, the Russians started firing directly at the Romanian officers, even though at that moment captain Boroş had his hands up into the air.

The gunfire was now targeting the servicemen as well. Everyone looked for an escape, throwing themselves to the ground or hiding behind various pieces of equipment. As a result of this gunfire, the following victims were shot to death: captain Boroş Ion, sub-lieutenant Dragomir Alexandru and private Solomon Iancu.

[...] June 30, 1940. Unofficial discussions begin between the Russian and Romanian armies. These discussions were centered on the incidents that occurred in Hertza, the material losses of the 1st Battery and the delineation of the frontiers, since the Russians had advanced beyond the established limit.

The bodies of those killed in Hertza were transported to Dorohoi via Pomârla, as were the wounded. The entire evening and all night, up to the break of dawn, the Russian tanks keep rolling. [...] (Vitalie Văratic, op. cit., pp. 329-331)

Petre Andrei, the minister of National Education, noted in his diary on June 28, 1940:

“In the afternoon at 18:00 hours, the Council of Ministers convenes its session, with the participation of the sub-secretaries of state.

The president of the Council (Gh. Tatarascu) stands up gravely and announces that at this moment the Russian troops have entered the territory of Bucovina and Bessarabia. It is a painful moment. All the ministers have tears in their eyes.

Thereafter the new minister of External Affairs, Mr. Argetoianu, presents an overview of the facts. [...]’

We are also being shown the situation on the map. With irrepressible pain, we realize that a corner of Moldova is included as well, specifically a part of the Dorohoi district, which also includes Hertza. Unforgivable and yet true; cruel reality!”


If at that particular moment, in addition to the tears of frustration shed by the Council of Ministers, the government had acted promptly on the realization that Hertza was going to be occupied, and had disseminated this information rapidly and efficiently to the Romanian military units and civilian population in the region, the tragic events in Hertza on June 29 could undoubtedly have been avoided.23

[...] Sixty years after the incidents in Hertza, we discover that a Jewish soldier was among the victims at the time. [...]’

I myself lived through the events at the cemetery in Dorohoi, which took place at the burial of those killed in Hertza. As a refugee, I had been housed on the upper floor of

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23 Idem, pag 55, 56
a school in Dorohoi, while the lower floor was being occupied by a military unit in retreat. I still recall the moments of terror and panic I experienced during those hours of chaos and violence in the town of Dorohoi. [...] 

[...] In a confidential report, the prosecutor Filaret Săhleanu – delegated by the Attorney General by order nr. 93, 1940 – declares the following regarding the events on July 1, 1940:

«Based on my personal investigations, as well as the information received from the Garrison and the District Records, it results that 52 Jews were shot on July 1, 1940. 

The events unfolded as follows: 

On July 1, while the burial of captain Boroș took place in the Christian cemetery, the Jews were burying a Jewish soldier in their own cemetery. 

All of a sudden, a gunshot was heard, followed by several more. The public initially thought this was in honor of the officer fallen in the line of duty; but as the gunshots continued, they realized this was not the case, and then indescribable panic set in, since everyone thought the Russians had arrived. [...] 

[...] Later, it became clear that the ones firing were soldiers from Detachment 3 Frontier Guards and 8 Artillery, who were retreating from the region. 

They felt humiliated and mocked by the Jews of Hertza, and started firing out of spite at the Jews in the Jewish cemetery. They might have been some communication among the soldiers, since the gunfire immediately extended to involve the Northwestern part of the town, with soldiers raiding Jewish households and shooting everyone present.» (‘The Martyrdom of the Jews in Romania, 1940-1944. Documents and Testimonies’, The Center for the Study of the History of the Romanian Jews; Hasefer, Bucharest, 1991, pg. 25.)

The lack of coordination between the government and Romanian military and civil institutions, the systematic avoidance of communicating the truth, the deliberate propagation of rumors devoid of any reality, contributed to the creation of a noxious atmosphere among the humiliated and demoralized Romanian military The sentiment of abandonment and the weakness of the military leaders after the incidents in Hertza culminated in the primitive manifestations and crimes of Dorohoi. 

Unfortunately, this opened the door for the pogroms and lawlessness to follow: the installation of fascism, and the war. At the end of it all, this culminated in our defeat and the installation of communism in Romania.” 24

And here is how the above events were depicted in a “scientific communiqué” in the year 2000.

“Indeed, at the Hertza point, Dorohoi district, numerous incidents took place due to the fact that the Soviet troops crossed beyond the established demarcation line. A Romanian lieutenant and corporal were shot by Jews from the village of Hertza, and the

commander of the cavalry unit in town ordered to open fire. This resulted in dead and wounded on both sides, including the Jews.” 25

The statement that “Jews from the village of Hertza shot a Romanian lieutenant and corporal” (the Romanian corporal being quite likely Iancu Solomon) does not necessitate further commentary. Had there been other victims among the military, their names would have been mentioned in official documents. As an eye witness to these events, I can attest there were no other victims among the Jews in the village of Hertza at the time.

The above-mentioned “scientific communiqué”, which was probably based on the report of a frustrated officer, without corroborating it with other documents (such as the journal of the regiment involved in the events in Hertza), erroneously transmits the facts that took place in the respective locality, and does nothing but instigate to hatred.

But inaccuracies have filtered in other “reports” as well.

Vladimir Murafa, shot at Soroca in front of the statue of General Poetaș, reappears alive and well, being listed among the participants of an official requiem conducted at the Antim monastery, in the fall of the year 1940.26

The catholic priest (Georg Goebel) reappears in a monograph edited by the Association of the Bucovinian Germans, repatriated in the fall of the year 1940 to the Reich, where he expired in 1955. 27

The arch-priest from Nisiporeni, Ion Drajinschi, and the priest Gheorghe Fotescu from Tighina, were not killed by Jews, being listed in the press as participating in various polemics and religious ceremonies in Bucharest, in the fall of the year 1940.

In regards to the star with 6 corners on the red armbands, it is necessary to point out the adversity of the communists toward Zionist Jews (who aimed to establish a Jewish State), so it’s quite likely the respective statement refers to the star with 5 corners instead.

And still, the question persists: Did the Jews of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina participate to anti-Romanian actions during the retreat in the summer of 1940?

Straight from the start, we need to point out that the generalization at population level of certain actions committed by individual perpetrators transforms an individually valid truth into a lie, inasmuch as it references the entire population.

Nevertheless, what could be the explanation for the unfriendly or even hostile attitude toward the Romanian authorities of an important contingent of the population in these provinces?

With regards to this topic, here is an extract from the letter of Iuliu Maniu to Marshall Antonescu, written on July 18, 1941:

27 Idem, pg. 109
“[...] The two provinces have been flooded with various clerks from the kingdom, unfamiliar with the local inhabitants; these have turned into veritable satraps of the population and have generated much discontentment. Of course, there were good people as well among the newcomers, but the bad ones compromised the good ones. It is because of them that natives of the kingdom became ill-famed in the region, and over two decades the provinces grew estranged from the country, instead of spiritually unifying with it. [...]”

And Alex Mihai Stoenescu states: “The desire for objectivity obliges me to point out that among the «disappeared» (mentioned as the great losses incurred during the retreat of 1940 – author's note), a great many were discovered in 1941 to have deserted.”

Is there a common thread between the analysis of Maniu and the findings of Alex Mihai Stoenescu? I would think there is.

As far as the Jews are concerned, the situation was compounded by the anti-Semitic policies of the Goga-Cuza government (December 29, 1937 – February 10, 1938), which were continued under the royal dictatorship of king Carol the 2nd. This is the very reason why some Jewish youths, in fact very few in report to the total Jewish population, fell under the influence of communist ideology. The dream of living as equals with all others, as heralded by “communist internationalism”, came at a high price for many of them. Unfortunately, the majority of the Jews had to pay for this dream as well, without ever having dreamed it.

Based on the evacuation plans from May 1940, titled in code-language “Tudor” and “Mircea” – secret plans, but well-known to everyone – the Jews were forbidden to leave these territories. Few of the provisions contained by these plans could be implemented in reality. The interdiction however was implemented.

And here is a document in this regard:

**TELEFONIC NOTE**

from 21263 40, June 28

*MILITARY STATISTICS OFFICE, IASI*

Measures are to be taken to triage the population coming from Bessarabia at the crossing points over the river Prut.

The crossing of the following segments is allowed: Firstly, the Romanian population from the Old Kingdom; secondly, the Romanian population from Bessarabia; thirdly, the minorities.

No Jew is allowed to cross.

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Special attention is required at the crossing points, to prevent any alien from filtering in.

MILITARY STATISTICS OFFICE CHIEF
Lt Colonel Palade                                   June 28, 1940

What were the Jews supposed to do? Applaud the fact that they were forbidden to choose? In any case, this explains why there were so few Jews among the refugees.

The rumors turned into news reports, the induction of hostility and even hatred toward the entire Jewish population were instrumental in diverting attention from the lack of training and equipment of the army and the errors of the political body that led to the situation in the summer of 1940, demonstrating all the while how efficient the manipulation of the masses can be.

The continuing attempts to present these “actions” as acts of revenge, despite clear evidence they were based on orders aimed at “ethnic purification” and “cleansing of the terrain”, are in fact attempts to justify war crimes committed by an army in full offensive against an unarmed civilian population.

And here are a few extracts presented by Alex Mihai Stoenescu, regarding the “actions” of a military unit.  

From the report of Regiment 6 Hunters – July 20, 1941:

a. “At Sculeni, when the regiment was in position, there was constant signaling from the Sculeni village to the Russians, and as a result all our operative measures were hindered by the Russian artillery. Moreover, we had officers who, instead of dying in the line of duty, were shot cowardly from the back by Jews hiding in houses or stables. Aiming to prevent such occurrences, I ordered captain Stihi Ioan, the informing officer, to arrest and execute all Jews in Sculeni.”

b. “When Battalion 1 of this regiment arrived to Gura Căinari, they captured a group of 50-60 Jews at the western border of the village. Guided by the inhabitants of the village, arms and grenades were discovered on this group of Jews for which reason I ordered their immediate execution.”

c. “In the village of Mârcelești, as the detachment of captain Oțel was advancing, it was surrounded by the Russian army and about 300 civilian Jews, who inflicted heavy losses upon this detachment, including the loss of captain Oțel Vasile, who was wounded and captured by the Jews, and whose situation is currently unknown to us. When we took the village of Mârcelești, we captured a group of 400 Jews, men and women, among which about 80 were wounded, a fact that goes to prove they fought against us out of uniform. On this occasion, as well, I ordered their mass execution.”

As a child, I myself lived through such events.

Upon the entry of the Romanian troops in Hertza, 132 Jews were also executed without any justifying criteria. I have not read the report of the regiment that occupied Hertza, but reading the extracts from A. M. Stoenescu, I was stupefied. To accuse civilians of arming themselves and attacking a victorious army, as the enemy army is engaged in precipitous retreat, and to report each time the successful extermination of civilians by “order of mass execution”, constitutes a new performance in the art of communicating to the superior echelons: “Mission accomplished”. The “revenge action”, the “cleansing of the terrain” has been implemented.

This was followed by the deportation of the Jews from Southern Bucovina and the district of Dorohoi, territories which were never under Soviet occupation.

Amidst the euphoria of the early successes, the ethnic purification started to extend. And as the documents attest, had the course of the war not changed, the “purification” would have continued to be applied.

THE REAL CAUSE for the surrender of the Eastern Romanian territories was the pact forged by Nazi Germany with the Soviet Union. A part of this pact (the Nazi Germany), then became the great German ally of Romania. The EFFECT is well-known: the mass extermination of the Jews. And it is sad that in this day and age, so-called “opinion-builders” such as Paul Goma transmit a false image of the situation at the time.
What do you know about the “Red Year”?
Why were the Jews its main executioners?

I know quite a lot about the “red year”, especially since I lived through it in Hertza, under Soviet occupation. I think the information you have is erroneous.

“The Jews” – a generalization which goes to prove how vigorously prejudice and stereotypes are upheld – neither were nor became “the main executioners of the Soviet regime” during the “red year”. They suffered along with everyone else the terrible consequences of communist totalitarianism.

Their main means of subsistence, small workshops and private commerce, were abolished by the state. Instead, several state-run shops were set up, with merchandise and staff brought in from elsewhere, and a novel phenomenon emerged: waiting in line. The small Jewish craft shops were replaced by a few “crafts cooperatives”. The lands of the landowners were “nationalized” and turned into the so-called “sovhoz” (state-owned agricultural farm), and the peasants were forced to become members of the “colhoz” (collectively owned farm).

The few business in the village (among which my father’s bakery) were nationalized and the former owners received a special Soviet ID number (39), which branded them, as later discovered, for deportation to Siberia. The whole population was faced with the problem of acquiring the bare minimum necessary for daily subsistence.

As far as the local governing it was brought in its entirety from the other side of the Dniester. During the night of June 13, 1941, the deportations began. The first ones to be deported from Hertza were 39 families, among which 38 were families of well-to-do Jews. Also deported were the so-called “kulaks”, wealthy peasants from the rural surroundings of Hertza.

The few radios in the village were confiscated.

All in all, there were 4-5 Jewish communists in Hertza. But these were not representative of the approximately 1,800 Jews living in Hertza, who suffered alongside the Romanian population the ill effects of communist totalitarianism. These communists fled with the retreating Soviet troops, and their deeds were paid for by innocent people.

The above mentioned changes in Hertza can be extrapolated to the majority of localities under Soviet occupation between July 1940 and July 1941.

But the overall influence of a population can be better expressed by the number of its representatives in charge of public matters. In his work, Alex Mihai Stoenescu points out that “[...] among the communist leaders in Bessarabia in 1940-1941, 505 were Romanian and only 69 were Jewish. In the first Soviet (Parliament) of the Moldavian Republic, formerly Bessarabia after its separation from Romania, there were 443 Romanians, 212 Russians, 96 Ukrainians and only 14 Jews.”

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As far as the number of deportees to Siberia during the “red year”, according to the “Book of Memory” (Chişinău, 2006), “11,277 persons were deported from Bessarabia, among which 1,178 Jews (10.4% from the total of deportees). The Jews formed 7.2% of the population of Bessarabia, but the percent of Jewish deportees was greater.” 33

As you can see, the Soviets did not treat the Jews, as an ethnic group, better than the others ethnic groups. On the contrary.

But the most clear rebuttal to the collective accusation that singles out the Jews as “the main executioners of the Communist regime” (inferred by the essay “The Red Week”), is the declaration of Marshall Antonescu himself, in the session of the Council of Ministers from November 16, 1943: “When we arrived there, we were faced with endless complaints, which showed that during the Russian occupation over 40,000 scoundrels from this province Bessarabia (author’s note) had become more communist oriented than the Russians themselves in persecuting the Romanian population. The Romanian population demanded these be punished. Pondering the problem, I realized that capital punishment would only create an additional 50,000 to 100,000 disasters. So I refrained from punishing them and applied clemency, as in the case of the legionaries.” 34

Furthermore, this statement invites to a bitter reflection regarding the kind of justice applied. On the one hand, we see innocent people condemned to death for crimes committed by a handful of others belonging to the same ethnicity, on the other hand people who were guilty of crimes but were “pardoned” based similarly on criteria of ethnicity.

By his behavior, Marshall Antonescu did nothing but confirm the affirmation of Spinoza: “You are right inasmuch as you are powerful”.

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What is your opinion about the Red Holocaust?

My opinion is that there was no such thing as the red Holocaust. One can speak of the “communist crimes” or the “communist Gulag”, but not the “Holocaust” – red or communist – simply because the Holocaust (without any adjectives attached), is defined as the extermination of Jews, conceived and applied by Nazi Germany and its allies, representing the height of “achievement” of the extreme right totalitarian movements.

It was sufficient to be born of Jewish parents, or to have Jews among your ancestors, to have your death warrant signed.

Communist totalitarianism can pride itself with similar “achievements”, which caused the death of millions.

However, the criteria considered were different, consisting mainly of “social class” (exploiters, bourgeois, kulaks, etc.), or political criteria (counter-revolutionary, enemy of the people). Communist totalitarianism achieved the performance of excluding from “humanity” whomever it wanted, whenever and however it wanted, regardless of ethnicity. The party-state reigned by terror. It eliminated all those it considered to be a “peril” to the institution of the “new order”. The jails and labor camps filled up, and torture along with terrible detention and labor conditions caused many never to return to their families. Once in power, the communist utopia, became a deadly utopia.

As a survivor of the Holocaust, as one who knows what it means to be condemned by a totalitarian state, I have the deepest respect for the memory of those who were innocent victims of the communist crimes, as well as for the survivors of this nightmare.

Are there differences between the two great homicides of the 20th century? Of course there are. If only the fact that at least theoretically, the potential victim of communism could avoid the tragic fate it was destined to, by accepting or pretending to accept the politics of the party-state, while the Jews – as victims of Nazism – did not have such option.

But neither of these homicides, of these crimes against humanity, is “in competition” with the other. They must both be studied in order to understand what different types of totalitarianism can lead to. And their designations can only be specific, considering the type of evil actions they committed, each one terrifying in its own specific way.
Could it be that Marshall Ion Antonescu, contributed to avoiding a Holocaust in Romania with the measures he ordered?

a. With regards to his “contribution”: Marshall Antonescu did not “contribute”, he decided, ordered, and his orders were carried out. Once in power, he assumed the function of “Leader of the State” (equivalent to the German word “Führer”) and along with this, assumed plenary powers. His word became the law.

b. Considering the Holocaust and territories it occurred in: The Nazi mass extermination camps were not situated in Germany, but on Polish territory. Despite this fact, the Holocaust of the European Jews exterminated in these concentration camps is known as the “German Holocaust”, because it was enacted by the German authorities. Similarly, the extermination of the Jews in the territories under Romanian authority represents the “Romanian Holocaust”, regardless if it refers to territories which were and remained Romanian (Southern Bucovina and the former Dorohoi district), or which were but no longer are under Romanian authority (Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina) or were not Romanian to begin with, but were under Romanian administration during the war (Transnistria, the territory situated between the rivers Dniester and Bug).

c. The responsibility of Marshall Antonescu and his government in the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Jews living under Romanian authority is clear and was discussed in my former answer regarding the Holocaust.

d. In regards to avoiding a Holocaust on the territory of Romania: Marshall Antonescu initially sanctioned the deportation of the Jews from Banat, Southern Transylvania and the Old Kingdom to the Nazi camps of Poland. Later he revisited his decision and refused to implement this measure. Thereby, he spared the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Old Kingdom.

e. How can these two conflicting decisions, one of extermination and the other one normal, be reconciled? These decisions were taken at different times in the course of the war. The decision to exterminate was taken during the first phase of the war, when Marshall Antonescu firmly believed in the invincibility of the Nazi Reich, as well as his own invincibility as an ally of the “Great Reich”. The decision to end the Holocaust was taken at a time when the defeat of Nazism/Fascism was looming on the horizon. In support of this affirmation, here are quotes from the documents of the time:

1943, April 20 – Session of the Council for Credit Regulation 35

[...] Marshall Ion Antonescu, leader of the state: [...] I fight to win the war, but it could be that the democracies will win. And we know what democracy means: Judeocracy. [...] 

1943, November 17 – Session of the Council of Ministers with the governors⁶ (on the agenda, the repatriation of the Jews deported to Transnistria)

[...]

**Marshall Ion Antonescu, leader of the state:**

[...] Therefore, regarding the ones who are at risk of being killed by the Germans (the Jews from Transnistria – author's note), you must take every precaution to advise the Germans that I will not tolerate such action, because ultimately I will be the one to bear the brunt of these horrible assassinations. And rather than have this happen, it's better to get them out of there and bring them to this region (Bucovina – author's note). [...]

Even though these documents do not directly reference the decision to disallow the German requests for continuing deportations, they indicate a change in Marshall Antonescu's position and attitude toward the Jews.

The facts (and documents) confirm a high degree of independence of the Romanian politics on the Jewish matter, supporting the fact that Ion Antonescu acted of his own free will, of course in the context of Nazi dominance across Europe.

In other words, the killings or measures that led to death were based on orders, and the cessation of such measures was likewise based on orders.

The same man, at two different moments in time, acted entirely different. How can we define him? Is he a criminal or a savior?

Here is the answer I propose:

– A crime cannot be justified by the fact that it's author abstained from committing another crime.

– The fact that these peoples’ lives were spared reflected a measure of adaptation to a new political and military situation.

What do you think?

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To me, Marshall Ion Antonescu is a hero who fought for the liberation of the Romanian lands occupied in the East, a great patriot who fought for the good of Romania. The attitude he had toward the Jews cannot erase his merits, cannot erase him from history. Why do you oppose the recognition of these merits?

To oppose the recognition of merits – especially historic merits – is indeed absurd. The question is whether the merits you mention are indeed real, or whether they are a myth. And here I am referring to Antonescu's “merits” toward Romania and the Romanian people.

In a reply letter from March 1941 addressed to the leader of the National Liberal Party, C.I.C. Brătianu, Marshall Ion Antonescu 37 combats the “categorical recommendation” of the former “not to engage the Romanian army in military operations alongside the Axis forces, regardless of the promises made.” In the same letter, Marshall Antonescu affirms: “Whether good or bad, a politics can only be judged by its results.”

In this regard, I have to agree with Ion Antonescu. The results of his politics spelled out disaster for Romania. The engagement of the country in war (contrary to Brătianu's advice), the advancing of the Romanian troops beyond the Dniester (contrary to the advice of Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the National Agrarian Party38), the extremely heavy losses on the Eastern front, the oil and other raw materials delivered to Germany at very low prices, many of which remained unpaid, followed by the Soviet “occupation” and the imposition of war damages on the country – this was the huge price that Romania had to pay for the “merits” of Ion Antonescu's politics.

Here is an extract from a memorandum addressed by the same Ion Antonescu to Adolf Hitler, regarding “Romania's contribution to the war up to the beginning of the year 1943”, which further confirms these “merits”.

Memorandum addressed by Marshall Ion Antonescu to Adolf Hitler, during the visit from January 10-11, 1943

[...] Confident in the loyal word of his Excellency the Führer Adolf Hitler, in the diplomatic action and explanations given by Minister von Ribbentrop, the Romanian people have kept their promise.

The losses suffered by the Romanian people in this war are great: 286,000 (dead, disappeared, invalid and improper for the front).

The number of those removed from the front: (wounded, etc.) is of 370,206, among which:

- 12,750 officers removed from the front, out of which 9,718 lost definitively (dead, disappeared, unusable);
- 8,093 non-commissioned officers removed from the front, out of which, 6,365 lost definitively (dead, disappeared, unusable);
- 349,363 troops, out of which 270,249 lost definitively (dead, disappeared, unusable). Romania has permanently deployed to the front, from 1941 to this day, approximately 32 divisions, which represents its entire military potential.

Also, Romania has deployed arms and materials worth the equivalent of 35-40 divisions, and has definitively lost arms and materials worth the equivalent of 25 divisions.

The graphs attached to this memorandum depict the Romanian losses and the grave situation of the Romanian army.

At the same time, Romania has respected its economic engagements.

Romania gave the Axis, between 1940 and 1942, an export of 8,285.185 tons of oil, out of which 6,135.252 tons went to Germany alone.

Its exterior commerce today is almost exclusively with the Axis, and in its majority with Germany.

The graphs containing synoptic tables and a note regarding the economic contribution – along with the notes remitted previously and those filed with the Grand Head Quarters by the vice-president of the Council of Ministers on September 22, 1942 – indicate that Romania:

- not only risked to exhaust its oil reserves due to intensive production;
- not only financed for Germany this export leading to inflation;
- but also suffered losses in excess of 35 billion lei due to these oil deliveries at pre-war prices, not even the prices recommended by Oil-Pakt.

The Royal Romanian Government requests a detailed analysis of this situation and the appreciation of its economic sacrifice.

Also, despite the fact that Romania initially only had the obligation to give 100 million lei per month toward the military mission, it was nevertheless obliged, due to successive requests predating the onset of the war with Russia, to finance with an additional 35 billion lei the needs of the German army stationed on its territory. And this in the absence of any convention or warranty – which has been a topic of discussion for the past two years.

The above has caused a grave state of inflation in Romania.

Lastly, Romania has thoroughly respected its commitments to export animals, cereals and other articles, such that at present the German-Romanian clearing account is showing a credit balance of over 500 million RM (over 30 billion lei) for Romania.

At the same time, Germany’s exports toward Romania have decreased – and have been transacted at high prices – although 87% of the exterior commerce of Romania toward Germany consists of oil that has remained fixed at prices predating the year 1940, with insignificant increases according to the Oil-Pakt.

Romania has only received raw materials, most of which were used to fabricate military equipment that was dispatched to the battle front and thus lost.
In addition to the above losses caused by the war, which exceed 250 billion lei, Romania has lost over 35 billion lei linked to the execution of the Oil-Pakt, given Germany's failure to respect the provisions thereof regarding the price of military equipment and volume of deliveries.

Although it had been established that the military equipment delivered to Romania after January 1, 1942 and destined exclusively to the war with Russia would be logged into a separate account, which would be liquidated at the end of the war at no cost to Romania, Romania was still required to put up treasury bills as warranty, which were then converted to negotiable items, and the commerce re-balancing plan proposes the introduction of annuities to pay off these loans, a fact which contravenes the previously established principles regarding these military credits.

Romania,

- continuing to intensify its oil production in the sole interest of Germany and the war;
- to sell oil at reduced prices;
- to finance Germany's military needs of approximately 6 billion per year, in addition to about 1.5 billion lei recently requested for aviation units;
- and continuing, at the same time, to receive only weaponry and very little merchandise, reduced amounts of gold, bonds and stock shares and, instead of goods that would increase the velocity of its currency, only iron-based raw material, is decidedly headed toward a grave economic production crisis, while the inflation occurring as a result of financing the German needs threatens to upset the entire state apparatus and its social order.

The graphs and economic memorandum attached demonstrate this peril.

Marshall Antonescu and the Royal Romanian government are firmly convinced that this situation can be duly appreciated; that Romania must be assisted and that the loyalty of its contribution and its honored commitments must be met with the understanding of the Führer and the support of the Great German Reich, based on a serious examination of its economic and financial situation.  

The question arises whether the Marshall had any maneuvering room during the respective time-frame, any alternative to the politics he adopted. The documents of the time prove he did have such an alternative, having been promised the restitution of the lost territories in the East without the need for any Romanian bloodshed, based solely on providing the oil and other raw materials necessary to the German war machine. And these same documents also show the lack of enthusiasm of the German Army Command, specifically Göring and Hitler, to associate with the Romanian army in the war against the USSR. All that was required was to take advantage of this lack of enthusiasm. But to do so, one had to be a true politician.

Here are several extracts in support of the above:

**a.** The war memoirs of General Franz Halder, Military Headquarters Commander, mention the following in reference to the Council Meeting from March 17, held at the General Headquarters in the presence of Hitler:

[...] We cannot expect anything from the Romanians [...] Antonescu expanded his ground forces, rather than reducing and improving them. We cannot let the fate of the large German operative units hinge on the firmness of the large Romanian units.40

**b.**

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NOTE REGARDING THE DISCUSSION
From August 28, 1942
between M. Antonescu, vice-President of the Council,
assisted by Governor Alexeanu,
with. General Rottkirchen
at the Headquarters of the Council of Ministers

 [...] during the meeting with Reichs-Marshall Göring, in January 1941, we were categorically told that the participation of the Romanian army in the war was undesirable, being deemed to be somewhat unprepared, and that the Romanian soldier would be better off staying home and ensuring the economic needs of the army.

We categorically replied to Reichs-Marshall Göring that Romania would refuse to receive any of its provinces back, be it Bucovina or Bessarabia, if we were not allowed to take them back in the fire of battle and if Romanian blood were not shed to vindicate the honor of the Nation and eternally cement our right over Bucovina and Bessarabia. [...] 

[...] When our troops reached the Dniester, and after fierce battles, Bucovina and Bessarabia were reincorporated in our national patrimony:

Marshall Antonescu communicated to the Führer of Germany that Romania understood its loyalties and planned to continue the war to eliminate the dangerous enemy in the East.

There was no agreement forged at that time regarding the participation of Romania in the war beyond the Dniester. No commitment was made by either party; rather, trusting in the word of the Führer, we engaged in a war of honor [...].

[...] Also, Romania has recently made extraordinary sacrifices for the war, especially for its continuation.

It provided a huge amount of oil; just over the last months, this amounted to 560,000 tons.

At Germany’s request, it surrendered the fuel reserves of our aviation.

As far as supplies are concerned, all surplus available in the country was given to Germany.

Germany owes Romania today 22 billion lei. […] 41

c. Chronicle of the discussion between the Führer and General Antonescu in Munich,
on June 12, 1941.
(Chronicled by Paul Schmidt, Hitler's interpreter)

[...] As he (Antonescu) has already declared during previous visits, the Romanian people would be ready to march all the way unto death beside the Axis, having complete faith in the sense of justice of the Führer. The Romanian people have linked their history to that of Germany. [...] He is aware that the most urgent task is to end the war and that in order to end the war, a very serious step would be necessary in the East. He is here to put at the Führer’s disposal all ancillary military, political and social forces of Romania, in view of realizing this step.

In expectation of the great event which is near, he (Antonescu) has reorganized his armed forces and has developed his economic and financial resources.[...]

Contrary to the practice of the British, he (the Führer) had not asked for Antonescu's support.

[...] In response to a remark of the Führer, who was questioning whether Romania should collaborate right away to the action against Russia, or whether an initial Romanian neutrality wouldn't in fact determine some reticence on the Russians' part toward the Romanian territory, Antonescu replied that he himself wished to fight from the very first day. The Russians would bomb the oil producing regions regardless of an initial nonaggression on the part of Romania, and “Romania would never forgive Antonescu if he kept the Romanian army uninvolved, while the German troops were marching through Romania against the Russians.” […] 42

Convinced of the invincibility of Hitler’s Reich, Ion Antonescu involved Romania in the world conflagration, despite the advice he received from experienced political people.

Even from a military point of view, the lucid analysis of the power balance was replaced with suppositions, and the real possibilities with wishes and dreams.

Here is an extract from the Minutes of the Council of Ministers from September 5, 1941:

1941, September 5 Session of the Council of Ministers with the governors43

[...] Marshall Ion Antonescu, leader of the state:

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41 Jean Ancel: “Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust”, vol. IX, The Beat Klarsfeld Foundation.
Ministers, due to reasons you already know, my absence was rather long. The war lasted longer than we all expected, as far as our participation to this battle is concerned. And this due to the fact that the Russians were much better prepared than we gave them credit for [...].

It follows that 2.5 months after the onset of the conflict, the strategist recognizes his error. But it was already too late. From this point forward, the Romanian troops would reach the bend of the Don, Stalingrad, the Caucasus, and after the disaster of Stalingrad would be accused by the Germans of allowing the breach of the front through their sector, which led to the besetment by the Red Army. The humiliating treatment endured by the Romanian military is depicted in a letter addressed by Ion Antonescu to Field-Marshall von Manstein.

**Letter from Marshall Ion Antonescu to Field-Marshall von Manstein (from Bucharest, December 9, 1942)**

*Field-Marshall,*

[...]

1. Romania has offered its armed forces almost in their entirety. [...]. Nobody can demand more than we consent to give, since to this date there is no convention, be it political or military, between Germany and Romania.

[...]

3. The Romanian forces and echelon II were promised to the German Supreme Commandment during the severe crisis that afflicted the German army last winter on the Eastern front. All we requested in return was that the Romanian units be equipped similar to the German ones and be transported via railway to the vicinity of front. Promises were made in this regard, but they were not respected.

– the Romanian troops of the 3rd army walked 500-600 km to get to the front, while the German troops were dropped off via rail. [...];

– the food supplies, fortification materials, fuel, ammunition, materials necessary for defense installations etc., never even reached the promised figure, not to mention the real needs. [...].

[...]

5. The success of the Russian offensive is therefore not due to lack of efficiency on the part of the 3rd and 4th armies, but rather to lack of planning on the part of the Commandment of Group B Armies, as well as a masterful choice of attack points by the Russians and the massive concentration of forces in strict secrecy.

[...]

7. [...] I am being informed, at the last moment, that my soldiers who fought heroically are now being shot by your soldiers at Stalingrad.

[...] Also, I am receiving reports that the Romanian troops under German command are being treated inhumanely. [...].
8. [...] I am also being notified that the German units, without any scruples whatsoever, [...] take horses from our services and transfer them to theirs, simply leaving our services behind [...] finally, I am being notified, Marshall, that Mr. Holdt treats our commandments with inadmissible brutality. [...].

This is why to us (and probably to many of those who survived the trials and humiliations of the Eastern front), Marshall Ion Antonescu is a dictator who had a nefarious influence over Romania's destinies. As any human being, he was made up of good and bad parts, and his actions reflect the complexity of his character. He endures in history, if only by the dramatic consequences of his acts, which were paid for by an entire country over successive generations.

But those who fight to transform him into a “model” are attributing him qualities which alas he never had, and forget (or want to forget) that by fighting for the acceptance of such myth, they are expressing (consciously or not), their nostalgia for dictatorship.

By the above presented facts, I have attempted to offer a synthesis of Marshall Antonescu's real “merits”. Not only do we not oppose the recognition of these “merits”, but we consider it our duty to the memory of the hundreds of thousands of victims – Romanians, Jews, Roma – to fight for the recognition of the same. The true merits, of course, not the myths or legends.

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Is the Romanian people at fault for the fate of the Jews during the Holocaust?

Over the course of their history spanning thousands of years, the Jewish people faced many collective accusations, such as god-killing, ritual slaughters, well-poisoning and spreading of epidemics (to mention just a few), up to the point of being accused in the first half of the 20th century of merely “existing”.

The collective memory of the Jewish people, although marked by the above events, rejects the tendency to collective accusations. The introduction of title “Righteous among the nations” by the Institute Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, a title bestowed on non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust, proves and emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility for one's deeds, be they good or evil.

An example in this regard is Traian Popovici, former mayor of the town of Cernăuți, who saved thousands of Jewish lives. We reproduce below a fragment from the work “Confession” (by Traian Popovici):

"As far as I'm concerned, if I mustered the strength of not yielding to the current, of standing firm against it, of being the master of my own will, of standing up to the powerful, of being truly human, this is not my merit. It is the merit of all the generations of priests, my ancestors, who taught me what it means to love people; it is the merit of all the professors at the Suceava high-school, who raised me in the beautiful virtues of classicism and nurtured my soul with the warmth of humanness, which tirelessly chisels man and sets him apart from beast."

Or “A Call to Save the Jews”, launched by the Greek-Catholic Archbishop Iuliu Hossu, on April 2, 1944 – referring to the situation of the Jews in Northern Transylvania.:

"Our call goes out to all of you, venerated brothers and beloved sons, to help the Jews. Not only in thought, but also with your sacrifice, fully cognizant there is not better deed we can do today than this Christian and Romanian offering of help, rooted in warm human love. This mission of assistance should be your first and foremost concern at this time."

This is why “collectively” blaming the Romanian people for the events of the Holocaust would be nonsensical.

Responsibility in this case is direct and rests with Marshall Antonescu, the government he headed, the civil and military authorities, and certain individuals who answered the “call” and participated first-hand in the implementation of the extermination politics targeting the Jews during the 2nd World War.

Moreover, collective blame is nonsensical not only from a juridical standpoint, but also from a scientific one. The variability among each population is perceptible to anyone of us. And the fact we are different does not preclude us from communicating with each other, or using our differences for reciprocal completion during various acts.
We live, love, contribute to raising the next generation, which in turn presents a certain degree of variability itself. We represent, each population in part and humanity as a whole, a live image of unity in diversity.

And this is because biological laws are statistical laws, by which successive generations represent a continuous chain of sample selections, while the emergence of an individual is equivalent to a single random sample selection. In other words, each one of us is the product of a “choice” (which involves the parent partners) and of countless “random combinations” (involving hereditary factors, i.e., the genes transmitted by the parents).

This explains why, from the billions of people inhabiting earth, none – not even brothers, except for monozygotic twins – are entirely alike.

Each population contains taller or shorter people, handsome or less handsome people, intelligent or less intelligent people, and the population average doesn't tell us much about the individual. So therefore, a man or woman from a certain population should be considered as an individual (with his own qualities and/or defects), and not judged by “labels” based on representations or prejudice linked to the respective population.

With each human being born into the world, the universe is conducting a trial. We are each “unique”. Inside each one of us, we can find that complex of power and weakness, impulses and goals, interests and ideals, vanity and humility, light and darkness – so we emerge as the result of this battle of opposing forces which constantly unfolds within us, we are a living representation of the unity of opposites. What matters in the end is what becomes manifest on the surface, as a result of this internal battle.

Man is not driven solely by his destiny, he also has free arbiter. In other words, all along the course of what we call life, man has the ability to choose.

The above presented goes to prove that even from a scientific standpoint, there can be no such thing as collective blame. Instead, there is individual responsibility for one's actions.
Why do people (and not only Romanians) hate the Jews? Where did this hatred originate, and how did it propagate over time, to finally lead to the extermination politics?

The question refers to an extremely complex phenomenon, so my response will have to address several issues.

a. I will start with a quote from Ion Antonescu:

1941, April 6, Session of the Council of Ministers⁴⁵

[...]

General Ion Antonescu, leader of the state:

[...] we must inspire to the Romanian people hatred against the enemies of the nation. This is how I was raised, with hatred against Turks, Jews and Hungarians. This feeling of hatred against the enemies of our fatherland must be pushed to its utmost limits. I am assuming this responsibility. [...]

Who raised him, educated him, and implanted him with the seed of this hatred, which caught on and bore such rich fruit in the future Marshall? Certainly, his parents, grandparents, teachers and other “educators” had their role. But so did the society in which he was formed. The collective mentality of society constitutes an important formative factor, often fundamental, inasmuch as it contributed to the “formation of one’s mentors”, to their “growth”, to the education of all preceding generations. And following this thread, we reach the remote past, when the ancestors of all ethnicities were at the tribal stage. The tribe and the people who formed it saw the world as a battle ground; they fought to maintain their own territory in order to survive. This is how the fear of the unknown was born, the fear of strangers, the tendency to mark one’s territory and the tendency to aggression, all deeply rooted in tribal mentality.

b. Various feelings – hatred, love – are linked to social life, to the reports between people inside the social network. And this is simply because from a genetic standpoint, society is the cause, while the individual is the effect. In order for “one” to emerge (the offspring), “two” are necessary (the parents). This is also how human populations took shape, and due to various degrees of reproductive isolation and socioeconomic organization, differentiated from each other over time.

Thus, different nations emerged on the historic scene, with different collective memories and different mentalities, giving rise to specific cultures. And, just as inside each population the differences and complementarities among individuals permit a normal evolution and the survival of the population, the differences among populations and people, leading to complementarities and healthy exchange, are the norm that enables evolution and survival of mankind as a whole.

c. Among the nations formed in ancient times, we can find the Jews, who today emerge as an identity that survived the pre-Christian era. Bereft of their land as a result of the rebellions against the Roman empire, scattered among other nations and evolving from the slave system to feudalism, from feudalism to capitalism, from capitalism to socialism (good or bad as it may have been), the Jews traversed the space of Christianity, as well as that of Islam, staying true to their identity in each new environment.

d. But, as popular wisdom has it, there is no such thing as a touch without a scratch. As part of the interactions within a social network, each human is confronted by his fellow humans, each “I” confronts “the other”. This becomes the source of potential conflicts, which in turn generates feelings of frustrations, envy and hatred among individuals. At the same time, society provides the framework by which man finds amidst his peers what he himself is lacking, and thus has a chance to fully realize himself.

The need for the “other”, in order to ensure the harmonious evolution of each individual, becomes readily apparent. A society, a population is viable only to the degree it comprises a diversity of distinct, original and creative individuals. Differences are (or should be) a contribution to society, not a reason for enmity.

Problems of this type occur at the level of populations as well. However, if on an individual basis, each one knows (or thinks he knows) who hurt him and his reaction (be it feelings or actions) are geared toward the respective target, the crowd doesn't know who hurt it. And the ones leading the group (or exerting an influence), will always attempt to redirect discontentment and frustration toward “others”. This was the case in disastrous situations caused by errors of the leaders, or natural calamities such as epidemics (pest, cholera), or the freezing of the crops. In some of these cases, as history goes, the “witches” were at work; but oftentimes, it was the fault of “the Jews”.

e. And why the Jews? Because they came in handy and fulfilled all necessary “conditions”. Anywhere they were present, they constituted a minority group, differing from the majority of the population by religion, garb, customs and tradition, generally practicing their trades in little “nooks” that had remained open, unoccupied by the natives – in a word, they were “the strangers”, they were “the unknown”.

As we can see, the factors leading to prejudice (judgment prior to judging) were definitely in place.

And there was plenty of prejudice created and transmitted about this nation over the course of its history spanning thousands of years. Along with prejudice, we must not
forget the inherent tensions, the implicit conflict involved in each trading relationship (be it commerce itself, or relationships involving the work-force or product of work).

Overwhelmingly, the contact between Jew and non-Jew was limited to exactly this: the meeting at the market place, on the fairground, in the small store or workshop. Otherwise, there was just disregard for everything that was “different”. This was especially tempting for people who failed to succeed in society and used prejudice as a comfort: “I may be a nobody, but I am not a Jew.” Add to this the defenselessness of the minority group, and we can see why the Jews, to the extent they refused to give up their identity, became the “principal scapegoat” for all evils, a handy target for any type of frustration on the part of the native populations amidst which they lived throughout history.

f. The 10 Commandments offered during the Mt. Sinai Revelation were meant to tame not the nature around, but the nature of man himself. At the same time, they provided the covenant by which MAN could distinguish all that is permitted from all that is not permitted, good from evil, kindness from heinousness, from lie, theft, murder and turpitude.

Concisely phrased, the Commandments put forth a good behavioral foundation for people everywhere: Do not steal, do not kill, respect your parents, and believe in the one and only God. Or, if we were to synthesize the essence of the Mosaic religion in one phrase: “Don't do onto others what you don't want done onto yourself.”

The novel concept that all people are born equal – created in the image of God – can be found in the Bible. And it is also the Bible that teaches people to steer by moral rules, not by instinct, regardless if the “heart” tells them otherwise.

The reaction to the above? Hostility, initially manifested by the Egyptian society, then by the Greek-Roman one. The idolatry of the ancient cultures – the symbol of man's enslavement by his own creation – was in categorical opposition to “monotheism”, this “Jewish invention”, the belief in one God, transcendent and immanent, omnipresent and nowhere materialized. To this, we must add the hostility evoked by various simplistic, caricatured and false representations of “the other”, some of which endure up to the present time.46

As a consequence of the irreconcilable opposition between monotheism and idolatry, pagan anti-Judaism created a series of myths, among which the “infamous origin” (according to which the Jews were descendants of lepers), or the “ritual killings” (when in fact the Jewish religion strictly forbids the consumption of animal blood).

The emergence of Christianity from within Judaism and the ensuing doctrine conflicts transformed pagan anti-Judaism into the Christian anti-Judaic discourse of the ancient era, promoting representations such as: “the Jews, refractory to the message of Gospel”; “guilty of murdering the Christ”; “scattered throughout the world as divine punishment for the crucifixion of Jesus” – myths that spread as Christianity gained momentum, especially when it became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

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From a historic standpoint, we need to point out that in the times of Jesus, when Israel was a part of the Roman Empire, about 70% of Jews lived outside Israel (forming the DIASPORA) and therefore couldn't have had any contact with Jesus. And regarding the ones in Israel, who was it that welcomed Jesus with hosannas at the entry in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday? Weren't they all Jews?

And who were the first Christians, who were the first apostles that spread the word of Jesus? Weren't they Jews? The collective incrimination of an entire people as “God-killers”, when in fact 70% of its members didn't even live in Israel at the time, and the rest of 30% certainly didn't all live in Jerusalem, and the propagation of these accusations over a time span of 2,000 years represents a veritable performance, which goes to prove the ability of myths to transgress the epochs.

During the middle ages, a number of different calumnies emerged – such as “Eucharist defilers”, “fountains’ poisoners”, “pest spreaders” – eventually causing Erasmus of Rotterdam to affirm: “If the characteristic of a good Christian is to detest Jews, then we are all good Christians.”

In modern times, some of these myths persisted and new ones were invented, pseudo-scientific theories regarding the superiority of one race and inferiority of others (with the Jews ranking of course last), Judaic plutocracy, Judaic Bolshevism, the Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world and harm others. How did all these emerge, and above all, how did they propagate with such ease?

g. The emergence of certain layers among the native populations (oftentimes coached by the Jews themselves, as apprentices or collaborators), who started practicing the trades that constituted the open “niches” found and occupied by the Jews (such as banking and cash-flow, the circulation of merchandise, various crafts and “liberal professions”) led to competitions in which no means were spared (honest or dishonest) to drive the Jews out of the market. Capitalizing on the age-old foundation of religious anti-Judaism, theories propagating hatred against the Jews found a fertile ground amidst this competition.

The racial concept, developed at the end of the 19th century, eventually postulates the existence of various human races based on linguistic research. Using this theory as a starting point, the myth of a superior Aryan race emerges. And who declares themselves Aryan? Naturally, the Germans, who are tall, blond, fair-skinned and blue-eyed. (Were they really all like that? A look at the photos of certain Nazi leaders, such as Hitler, Himmler, Goebels, may make us doubt that fact.) The same theory postulates the existence of a Semite race, which is inferior and which includes the Jews, who speak a Semitic language and have all conceivable flaws. It would suffice to contemplate the diversity of the Jewish faces from across the world, in order to realize that Jews are not a “race”. In reference to the “Semite race”, Wilhelm Marr used for the first time the term “anti-Semitic” in 1879, to express the hatred against the Jews as a “race”. And if “Judaism” still offered a way out through baptism, the “Semite race” offered no such escape routes. This paved the way to racism, and from there on, to extermination based on racial criteria.
Under the pressure of social-economic crises, more and more members of society would experience feelings of insecurity. As they would express their fears evoked by the capitalist system, the “Jew” would be presented to them as the capitalist exploiter (overlooking the fact that for each capitalist Jew, there were hundreds and hundreds of poverty stricken Jews), and when they would express their fears evoked by communism, the Jew would be presented to them as the communist conspirator (overlooking the fact that for each communist Jew, there were thousands of non-communist Jews).

This is the fertile ground that gave birth to the myth of the “Jewish world conspiracy” and to the popular fake known as “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, a work that contributed to the propagation of this myth.

h. The myth of the “Jewish world conspiracy” is presented in this book (elaborated by agents of the secrete tsarist police) as an international conference, during which an occult government of the Jews would orchestrate a diabolic plan for world domination. Published in Russia as early as 1905, the work registered no success whatsoever at the time.

Right after the victory of the Bolshevist revolution from October 1917, as the leading class of various countries felt threatened by such perspective, the book was translated and published in nearly all European countries, as well as in the United States of America, and this time registered a fulminating success.

Used as a tool in the propaganda against Bolshevism, the accusation that this movement would be of Jewish origin proved quite successful. Even though the majority of Jews didn't partake in this revolution and suffered the same hardship as the rest of the nations in the former tsarist empire, the handful of Jews in the Bolshevist command were sufficient to incriminate all others. The myth of “world domination” by “Judeo-Bolshevism” did its duty.

And whenever necessary, even to this day, the other myth would be pulled out of the sleeve – the myth about “Judeo-capitalism”, the attempt of the “great Jewish finance” to dominate the world.

Even though the falsehood of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” was proven as early as 1921 by the newspaper “Times”, which revealed it to be double plagiarism (after a pamphlet written by a reporter – Maurice Joly – in 1864, against Napoleon the 3rd, and after a German adventure novel from 1868, authored by Herman Goedsche), this discovery was unable to curtail the success of the myth regarding the “Jewish world conspiracy”. Next to racial anti-Semitism, this myth contributed to the success of Nazism and to the extermination of millions of people for the mere reason of being born Jewish.

i. The data presented above referred to anti-Semitism in parts of the world (especially Europe) dominated by various denominations of the Christian religion. The preachings of Mohamed (firstly in Mecca, between 612 and 622), followed by the vertiginous spread of the third monotheistic religion through the world, led to the emergence of Islamic anti-Semitism as well (a term frequently used but utterly improper, since the Arabs themselves are Semitic).
Only this time, the anti-Semitic movement was accompanied by an anti-Christian movement as well. Recognized and designated initially as the people of the “Book” (Bible), the Jews, as well as the Christians, were later considered the “infidels” who rejected God's last revelation.

According to Muslim tradition, the “revelation” was transmitted by God (Allah) to his Chosen One through the voice of the Archangel Gabriel, and is presented in the Koran under the form of verses grouped in suras (chapters).

We present below several verses that refer to the “infidels”:

*S5:12* “Allah made a covenant of old with the Children of Israel [...]”

*S5:13* “And because of their breaking of their covenant, We have cursed them and made hard their hearts. They change words from their context and forget a part of that whereof they were admonished. Thou wilt not cease to discover treachery from all save a few of them. But bear with them and pardon them. Lo! Allah loveth the kindly.”

*S5:14* “And with those who say: 'Lo! we are Christians', We made a covenant, but they forget a part of that whereof they were admonished. Therefore We have stirred up enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection, when Allah will inform them of their handiwork.”

And in *S9:29* we find:

*S9:29* “Fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture as believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, and forbid not that which Allah hath forbidden by His messenger, and follow not the religion of the truth, until they pay the tribute readily, being brought low.”

The above and many others constituted the basis of the juridical statute of inferiority known as “*dhimma*” (the price of protection), instituted and applied throughout the immense territory conquered by Islam, from the Atlantic Ocean all the way to Asia.

Granted in exchange for protection bestowed after “humiliation”, juridical inferiority translated into discriminative taxation (*jizya* = capitation or tax per person; *kharaj* = land tax), as well as a long series of prohibitions, such as for instance children being precluded from studying in Muslim schools, or the “protégées” being barred from holding public office (in order to prevent them from gaining authority over the Muslims), or being obliged to live in certain quarters (*mellah* = ghetto) and to wear a special kind of garb.

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Dhimma was applied more or less rigorously, varying from fierce persecutions (and sometimes even massacres) to periods of relaxation, dependent on the country and the leaders from the respective epoch.

The proclamation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948 (as a result of UN resolution 181 from 11/29/1947, which split Western Palestine into two states: Jewish and Arabic) and the Israeli-Arabic conflict that ensued, led to the outbreak of multiple pogroms and persecutions in the Arabic countries. Around 900,000 Jews from these countries were forced to seek refuge, immigrating mostly to Israel, but also to other countries and integrating into the respective societies.

From the regions belonging to the state of Israel, around 700,000 Arabs sought refuge. They followed the calls of the Arabic states (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq), which on May 15, 1948 attacked Israel and which, confident in their victory, launched manifests with the following contents: “Come to us, all of you, however many you are! The homes of your Arabic brothers are open to you, they will become your homes until we drive out the Jews from your lands, down to the very last one.”

The Arabic states did not vanquish Israel, and did not succeed in their quest to drive the Jews into the sea. As far as the refugees, they were not welcomed by their “Arabic brothers” and were not integrated into the respective countries up to the present day.

As a result of the 1949 armistice, the old part of Jerusalem and Cisjordania were occupied by Jordan, Gaza was occupied by Egypt, and the rest of the territory was integrated into the state of Israel until June 1967. And during all this time, no one heard anything about a “Palestinian people”, or about any requests to create a “Palestinian state” in the territories occupied by Jordan and Egypt.

However, in response to an initiative launched by Egypt, the Arab League created in 1964 the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization), with the mission of “liberating” a portion of “Arab territory”, respectively the territory upon which the State of Israel was founded. This was the objective of the PLO at the time. The issue is whether this objective still endures to this day.

j. At the end of 19th century, in response to the numerous anti-Semitic persecutions, a national rebirth movement emerged among the Jews, the goal of which was the return to the land of Zion and the foundation of a Jewish state on this land.

This movement, known as Zionism, was joined by Jews of various political and religious persuasions, ranging from the socialist left to the nationalist right, and from strict orthodoxy to militant atheism.

Organizing fundraisers, buying terrains, draining swamps, fertilizing and irrigating dilapidated lands, the Zionist Jews started a new exodus (after the ones in Egypt and Babylon), in order to reclaim their country, which had been destroyed by the uprisings from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (during the Roman emperors Titus and Adrian).

The fact that the Jewish nation was the victim of persecution and discrimination, up to the point of becoming a minority, does not negate its rights to the ancestral lands.
As a matter of fact, the rights of the Jews to the Holy Land are mentioned not only in biblical accounts, but also in the Koran. We quote in this regard:

*S5:20* “And (remember) when Moses said unto his people: Oh, my people! Remember Allah’s favor unto you, how He placed among you Prophets, and He made you kings, and gave you that (which) He gave not to any (other) of (His) creatures.”

*S5:21* “Oh, my people! Go into the holy land which Allah hath ordained for you. Turn not in flight, for surely ye turn back as losers.”

*S10:93*: “And We verily did allot unto the Children of Israel a fixed abode, and did provide them with good things; and they differed not until the knowledge came unto them. Lo! thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection, concerning that wherein they used to differ.” 48

The materialization of the Zionist project, respectively the proclamation of the state of Israel, put an end to the alienation endured by the Jew for 2,000 years. He once more became a human among humans, regaining a right denied to him by “the others” for millennia. But this achievement also led to the emergence of anti-Zionism, or, as it has been called, the “new anti-Semitism”. We present below a synthetic definition of this phenomenon:

“Classic anti-Semitism denies Jews their rights as citizens of society. Anti-Zionism denies the equal rights of the Jewish people to legal sovereignty among the community of nations. [...]. It’s as if the principle of discrimination has been transferred from the individual level to the collective identity.” 49

In other words, the “new anti-Semitism” attempts to transform the State of Israel into “the Jew of the states”. To this end, it recycles the old myths used to demonize Jews, it invents or adapts others, it uses the most advanced techniques to transmit disinformation as information, it even uses veritable televised “montages” meant to discredit the Jewish state. Boycott, double standard and calumny are being reinvented, gaining new dimensions.

The blockade of the Tiran straights by Egypt at the beginning of June 1967, which denied access of the Israeli ships to the Red Sea, led to the war between Israel and the Arabic countries (Egypt, Jordan and Syria).

The defeat suffered by the Arabs and especially Egypt (whose army was equipped with Soviet weaponry and military counselors), triggered a furious reaction from the press and from the Soviet “special services”. Accusations such as “imperialism”,

“expansionism”, “colonialism” started flowing, and a veritable anti-Zionist offensive began.

Together with the “stigmatization” of Zionism, an attempt was made to delegitimize the state of Israel. To this end, the European concept of “nation” (nonexistent in Islam) was adopted, and a new people was invented: the Palestinian people.

This “initiative” was associated with the redefinition of the role of the OLP (Organization for the Liberation of Palestine), from “the armed hand” fighting to liberate a portion of the Arabic world (by annihilating Israel) to a „movement of national liberation of the Palestinian people” (with the same goal of annihilating Israel).

The left and extreme left movements in the West, which had been plunged into “unemployment” after supporting certain “progressive” movements (such as the ones led by Stalin, Mao or Pol Pot, with their harvest of tens of millions of victims), found new grounds for their rhetoric: an “oppressed” people and a “liberation movement” in need of support.

Soviet anti-Semitism, converted into anti-Zionism and rapidly assimilated by the leftist movements, proved extremely compatible with the European media. This gigantic mechanism started disseminating messages which incriminate Israel for everything it does and doesn’t do, using methods more or less subtle, consistently, at length, and without neglecting any possible intoxication technique.

We present below a suggestive description of the phenomenon:

“For decades, the universal television spectator is feeding on pain and mourning [...] Vengeful children, green and black caskets carried by exalted crowds, cars that explode, blood covered bodies waved around like trophies, suicidal attempts, justified with posthumous titles of various “martyrs” already fully registered in advance, costumed and prepped [...]. Mothers, sisters, wives are tearing their veils and lifting their arms toward the sky [...]. Palestine is being offered as a T.V. series.”

The assassins are being presented as veritable victims. How can one call “suicide” the joy of those who blow themselves up in order to spread death among the civil population around? The human bomb is not suicide, it is plain terrorism. And when fences were built and control procedures were instituted at passing points in an attempt to prevent such actions, the media hurled their most offensive epithets at Israel, the mildest being that of apartheid. The fences, however, proved useful.

But the media was silent about one thing: The fact that Israeli Arabs enjoy the same rights as all other citizens of Israel. They are present in the economy, in education, commerce, healthcare and the juridical system. Hebrew and Arab physicians collaborate, the access to clinics and hospitals is free, and longevity in Israel is among the highest in the world. Where is the apartheid?

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50 André Gluckman, “The Discourse of Hatred”, Humanitas Publishing House, pag. 66
In politics, Israeli Arabs have parties and deputies in the parliament, who usually oppose the government and have full freedom to do so.

In summary, Israeli Arabs have more rights than any of the other Arabs living in their own countries.

And yet, it's not all milk and honey. Problems do exist: Around 50% of Israeli Arabs have incomes that place them below the poverty index. But so do over 60% of ultra-orthodox Jews. In both cases, families with numerous children are the norm.

Among the Arabs, the ones belonging to the Christian faith (where women have access to education and employment) have higher income than those belonging to the Muslim faith.

There are reports about discrimination against Arabs with regard to employment. Unfortunately, this situation occurs in other European countries as well, and should be firmly opposed.

The press in Israel enjoys complete freedom. This benefits among others the Israeli Arabs, the anti-Zionist Jews, and all of Israel’s enemies.

Can we say the same about the press in Arabic countries?

Once the terrorist organization Hamas seized power in the Gaza strip, there were incidents where rockets were launched from regions densely populated with Arabic civilians, onto civilian-inhabited regions in Southern Israel. The Arabic civilians served as a shield, while the Israeli civilians served as the target. When rockets were hitting Israel, the international press didn’t even bother to mention it; however, when Israel retorted, one could see bold titles in the papers about the “Israeli aggression”, and T.V. montages featuring real or “make-believe” victims – in short, the entire machinery was set in motion to portray Israel as the villain. Is all of this not proof of obvious discrimination against Israel, a demonstration of the new anti-Semitism in action?

Would the same media perhaps care to present a comparison between the “persecuted” Israeli Arabs and their brothers who sought refuge in Arabic countries and are currently undergoing a veritable apartheid regime, deprived of the most basic human rights, living at the periphery of society, educated in the spirit of hatred against Israel and not integrated into the respective societies up to this day?

[We must point out that after the end of World War II, the ensuing changes in frontiers caused massive displacements of population: 13 million Germans expelled from Eastern Prussia and Sudeten of German ethnicity expelled from Czechoslovakia were integrated into German society; millions of Muslims crossing over to Pakistan and Hindi crossing over to India upon the proclamation of independence of the two countries were integrated into the respective societies; the Jews driven away from Arabic countries after the State of Israel was proclaimed were integrated into Israeli society or into the society of other countries who accepted them. None of the above is still a refugee, and no one is still thinking of “returning”. The only ones still under refugee status are the Palestinian Arabs who sought refuge in Arabic countries.]

But it seems that the media has a different point of view.

Numerous conflicts existed and continue to exist throughout the world. Some resulted in human losses far greater than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
During the 65 years since the proclamation of the state of Israel, this conflict resulted in 85,000 deaths, among which 50,000 Arabs and 35,000 Jews. At the same time, due to the living conditions offered by Israeli society, the number of Arabic citizens of Israel increased tenfold (from 140,000 to 1,400,000).

Over only 8 years (1992-2000), the civil war in Algiers has claimed the lives of over 200,000 victims, all of them Arabic.

In Darfur (Sudan), Arabic Muslims killed over 300,000 Africans (Muslim and non-Muslim).

The internal conflict in Syria caused huge losses (all of them Arabic, from the two camps). Despite all of the above, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained at the center of attention.

So therefore, it isn’t love for the Arabic people that motivates the special attention toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

If Muslim anti-Semitism is explicable by the “inconceivable” defeat they suffered from the part of some „dhimi” (infidels, second grade citizens), compounded by the added insult of the economic and technologic achievements of Israel, the new European anti-Semitism can only be explained by the reactivation of certain remnants of classic anti-Semitism, transferred onto a “collective identity”. However, one cannot exclude reasons linked to billions of dollars cashed in by the Arabic countries in exchange for oil, a part of which may have been used for the “just cause” of attempting to destroy a democratic nation recognized by the UN.

At present, we are at the point where a multi-faceted propaganda is being enacted incessantly over the 5 continents, in order to represent Israel in the most negative light possible.

Clearly, the attempt to delegitimize Israel continues.

k. As can be seen from the above-presented data, anti-Semitism is again on the rise, being used especially for political purposes.

One of the reasons why anti-Semitism catches on so easily is the fact that it is an “ideology” which “explains everything” in a manner easily accessible to everyone. Starting from the premise that Jews are the source of all evil, everything becomes explicable. The solution offered by anti-Semites was (and is) simplistic, as is their ideology. By eliminating the Jews, all problems would be solved. Was this really the case…? Let us consider the case of Poland, where practically all Jews were eliminated as a result of the Holocaust. (with only several thousand left, from initially over 3 million). Even today, after the fall of the communist regime, after its debt of billions of dollars was forgiven by the Western European countries, was poverty eradicated in Poland? Did corruption and theft disappear? Did alcoholism and drunkards disappear? Did all the eternally human vices, such as hatred, envy, aggression, opportunism, indifference, greed, lust for power, and so many others simply vanish with the disappearance of the Jews? A review of the situation in Poland demonstrates that Polish society is confronted with the same problems that occur in every society (with or without Jews). Now let us consider the case of Japan, a country which never had any Jews. There as well, we can find the
same problems. They, too, have their share of corruption and their mafia, and this time one cannot blame it on the Jews. Even in Romania – with only 7,000 Jews remaining today, from over 750,000 present before the war – did the departure of the Jews make Romanians wealthier, does justice function better, did all evil simply disappear, as preached by the anti-Semites?

Life has disproved the simplistic approach of anti-Semitism to the complex problems of society. And do you think that anti-Semites became less anti-Semitic? Did political anti-Semitism reach the conclusion that problems should be approached in an entirely different manner? No luck in this regard.

And even though the peril of communism is no longer on the horizon, there are always reasons for frustration. The hot topic nowadays is “globalization”. Few words have fueled so many controversies and spawned so much hatred during recent times as “globalization”. Communications – ever faster and of all kinds – connect all spheres of the world, turning us all into “neighbors” (even if not “contemporaries”). Together with this, there is a massive flux of goods, services, people, ideas, infractions and offenders, pollution and infectious diseases, good and evil across national frontiers. Eroding the traditional conception of sovereignty, this situation has escalated to create difficulties for public institutions designed exclusively for local and national purposes. And, as often is the case, one may be tempted to look for a scapegoat prior to analyzing the causes.

For many “anti-globalists”, the U.S. represent the “central headquarters” of the globalization movement. And what else do they discover? That the U.S. features a “great Jewish finance”, which supposedly rules the country, and is thereby trying to rule the entire world. So there you have it, the “World Jewish Conspiracy” once again in action. Once again, the guilty have been found. A simple solution to an extremely complex problem. And above all, a solution easily accessible to the masses.

Even though among the democratically elected political leaders of the U.S. there may be some who are Jews, the U.S. government is not all Jewish. And furthermore, do the Jews in various leadership positions represent the Jewish community or the American electorate who voted for them? But since “collective blame” directed in particular against “the Jews” proved to be so productive throughout history, it is now being reenacted at a different level.

“Nostalgic brigades”, who envision the future in the past, are glorifying yesterday as opposed to the future – by its very definition uncertain and unpredictable. Of course there will be instances of disturbances in the world, and our attempts to resynchronize may lead to further disturbances; there will be rapid fluctuations in the level of our knowledge (so rapid, that “knowledge” may be almost obsolete by the time of its “delivery”), there will be changes in education, in the inter-human relationships, in the workplace environments, and in general in the way humans integrate into society. Altogether, this determines a sentiment of “insecurity”, which can be easily exploited by the “nostalgic”. And this is precisely what they do. And in doing so, they forget to mention that in a world where “knowledge” has become one of the most valuable items, despite the fact that population has doubled across the globe, life expectancy at birth has increased over a 50-year time span (from 1955 to 2005) by 42%, including the
underdeveloped parts of the world. At the same time UN reports, which highlight the horrors of poverty in the contemporary world, still reveal that the increase in longevity did not lead to an increase in poverty, and that the percent of people living in poverty has decreased more rapidly over the last 50 years than over the preceding 500 years.

Many things are changing in the world, and Jews have no special merit in this regard. But on the flipside, Jews have no special liability for the disturbances that occur. In fact, anti-Semitism is a “malady” affecting non-Jews, the pains of which are endured by the Jews. Therefore, it is conceivable that “non-Jewish doctors” may be better suited to treat this “malady”. And they could use the most dangerous weapon at their disposal – they could simply use the truth. Out of pure self-interest, democrats should fight against anti-Semitism. All too often, we forget that discrimination directed toward an individual target – such as the Jews – is bound to evolve over time into detestation of all that which is different: faith, origin, judgment, lifestyle. It’s true that throughout history, man has scored many victories over nature, but significantly fewer victories over his own nature. This is a “niche” that has remained almost untouched so far. And much depends upon it in the future.

i. Should we watch a ball game on T.V., we can observe in the stands, beside neutral spectators, groups of fans from the two sides. As a rule, these stick together and support their team, but on occasion they will throw invectives and foul language at each other; and from verbal aggression, the situation sometimes escalates to skirmishes and physical aggression between the groups. Inter-group hostility, once instituted, is maintained even beyond the duration of the game; it generates prejudice and aggressive behavior, which indicates this is no fleeting reaction. This also goes to prove that negative stereotypes can be formed even in the absence of any real differences between groups of people.

The conflict is partially resolved when a common goal superseding group interests is introduced into the equation – in our case, lets say a game between the national team and the representative of another country. In other words, a partial resolution becomes possible only when the scenario shifts from “us” and “them” to a situation where both groups have become a “common super-group” that includes “US ALL”. And please note we are dealing with prejudice and discrimination only recently instituted, and motivated only by the desire for the victory of one's sports team. Nevertheless, the consequence is ongoing hostility toward one or multiple other sport teams.

The issues become far more complex when we are dealing with prejudice and discrimination evolving over millenniums, as is the case of anti-Semitism, which we have been referencing in this presentation. It is precisely such prejudice, rooted in the collective mentality of various populations, which explains (without justifying the phenomenon) why political anti-Semitism caught on so easily.

Innate behavioral differences exist between various population or groups of people. To this day, conflicts and inter-group discrimination constitute some of the most important social problems of humanity. Knowledge, on the other hand, represents one of
the principal possible cures. It can play the role of a veritable vaccine in preventing a contagious illness. And it can enable the enactment of the Helvetic spirit, building upon differences that unite us, rather than autonomy that is exclusionary.

In order to turn this dream into reality, we as individuals and members of various populations must overcome the fear of scrutinizing our dark side – our frustrations, envy, inhibited desires, susceptibilities, aggression, and other negative aspects stigmatized by ourselves that we divert onto the outside world. For in the end, we are creating our own enemies; our aversion for ourselves is diverted toward them; they become our victims.

The above presupposes the identification, understanding, acceptance and reconciliation of the contradictory aspects of ourselves. Whoever accepts himself as a whole (good and bad included), does not cast shadows upon the world. Having reached this stage, perhaps we shall be able, when conversing with each other, to see the person standing before us, and not the “label” glued onto their forehead by preexisting prejudice against their social or ethnic group of origin.

Is an approach of this sort to problems of such complexity even possible? In the end, why not? Pessimism never won any battles throughout history. And, as popular wisdom has it, as soon as you stop dreaming, you start aging. And I am barely 85 years old.
AUTHOR’S CLOSING STATEMENT

This work is dedicated to the Jews who were exterminated in the territories under the administration of the Antonescu government, between the years 1940 and 1944, for the sole fault of being born Jews.

Their memory should constitute a source of new responsibilities for us all. In this regard, the understanding of evil can contribute to its elimination.

The society we live in today, resembles in many regards the one that allowed the germination and eventually the implementation of the Holocaust.

At that time, there existed no means to halt these processes. Unfortunately, such means are not much better represented today. On the flip side, we have ample tolerance for intolerance.

There are plenty of signals advertising us about the ever active potential of evil. Words, not machines, were the ones that determined the appearance of concentration camps and extermination zones.

The freedom ensured by democracy is oftentimes used for the installation of anarchy – a condition that favors the emergence of various types of totalitarianism.

Today we can see how once again, the ones “responsible” for all evil in the world are the Jews, or – as of lately – the Jewish state. As it seems, anti-Semitism (old and new) can affect even memory. Moreover, it is known that throughout history, Jews oftentimes played the role of a herald. Whatever affected the Jews would usually progress to affect all those who thought differently or had different origins. This is why all those who acknowledge the benefits of freedom should fight, while there is still a chance to do so, for the rejection of anarchy and intolerance.

Let us not forget that during the WW II, not only were 6 million Jews exterminated, but over 50 million people were killed. Therefore, it seems logical that the most insistent proponents of anti-Semitism should be the non-Jews.

And let us acknowledge, all of us who cherish our freedom regained at such high cost, that DEMOCRACY is a privilege that should NEVER BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.
There are certain books that do not aspire to any literary valences, but are nevertheless a must-read for any Romanian man of letters, since they tackle issues that should not remain unknown to the intellectual public.

One such book is “The Holocaust under the Antonescu Government, Questions and Answers”51 by Liviu Beris.

It is a tiny book, written in a straightforward manner, with a simple idea at its core. A premiere in the literature dedicated to the Holocaust, and a heart-wrenching text in its raw authenticity. It tackles directly, since ira et studio, the most delicate problem of contemporary Romanian history: the extermination of a large part of the Jewish population in the territories under Romanian authority during the period 1940-1944, in the broader context of racial discrimination practiced by successive governments between 1938 and 1944. A moral, rather than literary subject. One of those tragic topics, which invite the reflection that life sometimes beats literature.

The author of the book is a survivor of the deportations and concentration camps of Transnistria, and in his current role of president of the ARJVH (Association of Romanian Jews Victims of the Holocaust), has dedicated himself to the unveiling of the truth and preservation of the memory of this tragedy, which was buried and ignored for over 4 decades by the communist regime.

I stated above that “The Holocaust under the Antonescu Government” is a premiere in the literature on this topic. This is because the book is not a treaty or a compilation of historical studies. The author starts out with 8 sets of questions, which were addressed to him by students and professors during public lectures, conferences and debates. Liviu Beris doesn't dodge any of the fundamental questions regarding the fate of the Jews between 1940 and 1944, including questions that demonstrated a negationist substrate.

As stated in the foreword of the book, the author believes that covering up the truth carries the same culpability as the crime itself, and that negationism should not be allowed to go unchecked.

The answers provided by Liviu Beris do not rely solely on his memories as a Holocaust survivor. Evidently, a single human being cannot convey the extent of the disaster that

51 Liviu Beris – Holocaust under the Antonescu Government, Questions and Answers, Hasefer Publishing House, Bucharest 2013
afflicted the Jews of Romania and resulted in 280,000 victims. This is why the author makes ample use of documents. Each statement he puts forth is supported by an authentic historical document, generated by the Romanian authorities of the epoch. These documents attest that amidst the rapidly rising racial discrimination after 1938 (the year when the Goga-Cuza government was established), the Romanian authorities planned and executed the extermination of a large part of the Jewish population under their jurisdiction. Furthermore, the author proceeds to document the specifics of the Romanian Holocaust, starting with the (relative) differences between the treatment applied to the Jews from the Old Kingdom versus those from the provinces incorporated after 1918, and ending with the “specific traits” of the local administration: disorganization, theft, and corruption.

“The Holocaust under the Antonescu Government” is also a premiere with regards to the parallels it draws to worrisome phenomena occurring in our contemporary society: the resurgence of antisemitism and the anti-Israel movements (which represent nothing else than a new facet of antisemitism). In this context, preserving the memory of the Holocaust is not only a goal in itself, but also a barrier against future recurrences of similar events. Liviu Beris' book has an undeniable moral beauty: that of the survivor who dedicates himself to spreading the truth.

RAZVAN VONCU