

Jean Ancel

**Transnistria, 1941–1942**  
**The Romanian Mass Murder Campaigns**

Volume 1

History and Document Summaries

The Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center  
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## Foreword

This study, the product of lengthy research in numerous archives around the world, underwent a major turnaround with the collapse of the Communist regimes in 1991. In 1986, at the initiative of Serge and Beate Klarsfeld, and with their generous assistance and support, I published a collection of documents — a project in which I invested some ten years of my life. The documents relating to the deportation of Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina, and the extermination in Transnistria, were published in Volume V of the aforementioned collection. The discoveries that later emerged from newly available archives, however, altered my perspective on the dimensions of the slaughter in the region.

For six months, I visited archives in the former Soviet Union — in Moscow, Kiev, Kishinev, Odessa, Nikolayev, and Kherson. I subsequently traveled twice to Odessa and Nikolayev in order to complete my examination of the archives of the Romanian occupation regime in Transnistria. Yet these repositories are so vast that even after a fourth visit, I cannot say the work has been completed. All documentation photocopied from these archives has been transferred to those of Yad Vashem — The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, under whose auspices this project was initially conducted.

In 1995 and again in 1996, I was invited to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in Washington, D.C., to study the extensive documentation obtained by the museum from the State Archives in Romania — documentation of tremendous importance to the study not only of the Holocaust but of Romanian history, fascism, and World War II. The collection draws on the archives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Civilian-Military Cabinet, the Foreign and Interior Ministries and other government ministries, the war-crimes courts, the Special Intelligence Service (SSI), the Siguranza (security police), the army and General Staff, the police, etc. This enormous body of material was amassed primarily thanks to the efforts and vision of Dr. Radu Ioanid, director of the museum's International Archives Project. The museum enabled me to complete my research on Transnistria, making

available to me not just its documents but all the latest devices for reading and photocopying them. I am grateful to the museum and its staff, who assisted in every possible way in the success of this project and others.

This study and its two accompanying volumes of documents are based on material I discovered in the following archives:

- **GOSUDARTSVENI ARCHIV ODESKOI OBLASTI, UKRAINA** (Odessa District Archives). The Odessa municipal archives contain, *inter alia*, the archives of the Romanian occupation regime in Transnistria from 1941 to 1944, which include dozens of collections comprising thousands of files. I concentrated on the central collection of the Governor's Office, no. 2242, in addition to the collections of the various districts (prefectures); the Labor, Health, Transportation, Agriculture, and Industry Departments; the delegation of the Romanian Orthodox Church; and the Liaison Offices (located in Odessa) that coordinated with the Wehrmacht and the Nazis' Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, or VoMi (situated in Landau, in the Berezovka district), which organized, trained, and mobilized local ethnic Germans to serve the Reich and its goals. In addition, I examined the files of the military courts, the prisons and camps, the Odessa police and municipality, etc.

- **PARTINII ARCHIV, ODESKOVO OBKOMA KOMPARTII UKRAINI** (Party Archives, Odessa). The Communist Party Archives for the Odessa district currently belong, administratively, to the State Archives in Odessa. The former's vast documentation relates in part to the fate of the Jews in the Holocaust. Regretfully, I was unable even to conduct a serious examination of the list of collections and files, due partly to the archives' uncooperative directors. Only the intervention of Malchenko Viktor Mikhailovich, director of the Odessa District Archives, enabled me to photocopy highly significant documents offering Soviet confirmation of the extermination of the Jewish people in Transnistria.

- **DERJAVNII ARCHIV MIKOLAIIVSOI OBLASTI, UKRAINA** (Nikolayev District Archives). These archives contain the files of the Golta district, where the Romanian administration established its "kingdom of death" — the huge extermination camps at Bogdanovka, Domanevka, and Akmechetka, and the smaller camps, where 70,000–100,000 or more Jews were annihilated or perished from hunger, typhus, and cold. The archives also house the files of the German-occupied Nikolayev district, east of the Bug River, since all documentation relating to Nikolayev was concentrated there in accordance with the boundaries of the Soviet administrative unit straddling the Bug.

My finds in the Nikolayev District Archives altered my basic assumptions about the number of Jews exterminated; the burning of bodies; the scale of the typhus epidemic; the attempts to cover up all traces of criminal actions; the handing over of Jews to the German occupation regime, knowing they would be executed; etc.

- ARHIVA NAȚIONALĂ A REPUBLICII MOLDOVA, SERVICIUL DE STAT DE ARHIVĂ AL REPUBLICII MOLDOVA, CHIȘINĂU (Kishinev Archives). The archives of the new Republic of Moldova in Kishinev contain, among other documentation, the files of the following: the Civilian-Military Cabinet for the Administration of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria, in the Prime Minister's Office; the Bessarabian administration from 1941 to 1944; Bessarabia's prefectures; and gendarmerie and police headquarters in Kishinev. These documents were seized by the Soviet army in Romania and transferred to Moscow, then Kishinev. The archives also include files belonging to the Prime Minister's Office that were arbitrarily separated from the Central Archives in Bucharest and taken to Kishinev. This study incorporates only those documents relevant to the ethnic cleansing carried out by the Bucharest government in Bessarabia, the concentrating of Jews in camps, and the Jewish convoys brought to Transnistria by rail and on foot. In the Kishinev Archives, I uncovered crucial documents regarding Romanian government policy vis-à-vis the Jews in Romania itself, documents difficult to locate in the archives in Bucharest.

- TSELTRANII GOSUDARTSVENI ARCHIV NO. 1, GAU MOSKVA (Ossobi Archives). The Central State Archives No. 1 in Moscow, known as the Special Archives, were previously off-limits to Soviet historians and researchers as well. These archives contain important documents seized by the Soviet army from Nazi Germany and from all countries occupied or liberated by the Soviet Union during the Second World War, including collections originally confiscated by Nazi Germany in countries it occupied. Here I located sections of the archives of Romania's Office of the Prime Minister, Civilian-Military Cabinet, and Second Bureau of the Military Cabinet, and of the Romanian army corps operating in Soviet territory. Evidently, the Soviets also transferred files from the Prime Minister's Office to an unknown location. Another significant collection is that of the Archives of the Foreign Division of the German Nazi Party — Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeitspartei, Die Leitung der Ausland Organisation, Auslandorganisation Bukarest (collection 1491). Owing to the huge number of documents,



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time constraints, and unsuitable living and working conditions, I could not thoroughly inspect the collection or even its files on Romania. Clearly, however, the Nazi influence on the formulation of Romanian extermination policy was greater than I had imagined. Even a cursory review produced numerous documents supporting this conclusion. The photocopies made upon my recommendation are now in the Yad Vashem Central Archives.

- ARCHIVES OF THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM (USHMM). Regarding non-Jewish sources, the museum — thanks to its dynamic involvement in collecting and photocopying Holocaust sources — has become the major archive for the study of the Romanian Holocaust. In writing this book, I examined the following USHMM collections:

RG 25004M (117 microfilm reels). Selected records of the Romanian Information Service, 1941–1944. Contains reports, orders, correspondence, court documents, and testimonies relating to the monitoring of Romanian Jews and Jewish organizations by the police, gendarmerie, army, SSI, and local and central authorities; the establishment of camps; the Odessa ghetto; massacres and pogroms; trials of war criminals; etc.

RG 25006M (17 microfilm reels). Selected records of the Foreign Ministry Archives. Contains documents relating to German-Romanian relations, efforts to solve the “Jewish problem,” etc.

RG 25002M (29 microfilm reels). Selected records of the Romanian State Archives. Contains reports, memoranda, lists, and other documents relating to the monitoring of Jewish communities in the Romanian provinces.

RG 25003M. Selected records of the Romanian Ministry of National Defense — Archives of the General Staff. I examined only five of the 306 microfilm reels available to researchers.

- YAD VASHEM CENTRAL ARCHIVES, JERUSALEM. Yad Vashem constitutes the most important repository of documentation from both Jewish sources (primarily survivors’ testimonies) and some non-Jewish ones — documents gathered over decades and found nowhere else. Without these records, one cannot comprehend the extensive documentation in archives around the world. The following collections have been utilized in this work:

RECORD GROUP 03. Collection of Testimonies Department of the Yad Vashem Archives.

RECORD GROUP 033. Collection of Testimonies, Memoirs, and Diaries.

RECORD GROUP 011. Collection of Documents on the Holocaust of Romanian Jewry.

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RECORD GROUP P6. The Dr. Filderman Archives.

Published collections of documents contributed to this book as well:

- Matatias Carp, *Cartea Neagră, Suferințele evreilor din România 1940–1944* (The black book, the suffering of the Jews in Romania), vol. III (Bucharest: Dacia Traiana, 1947).

- *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof Nürnberg* (Trial of the major war criminals before the Nuremberg international military tribunal), 42 vols. (Nuremberg, 1947–1949).\*

- Nuremberg Military Tribunals, *Trials of War Criminals*, 15 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1947–1949).\*

- A. Hillgruber, ed., *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler* (Statesmen and diplomats meet Hitler), 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard und Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1970).

- *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945*, Series D, *The War Years*, vols. XII, XIII (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office).

- V. Arimia, I. Ardeleanu, and S. Lache, eds., *Antonescu-Hitler, Corespondență și întâlniri inedite (1940–1944)* (Antonescu-Hitler, correspondence and unpublicized meetings [1940–1944]), 2 vols. (Bucharest: Gozia Ed., 1991).

- J. Ancel, ed., *Documents concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust*, 12 vols. (Jerusalem: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1986).

- C. J. Drăgan, ed., *Antonescu Mareșalul României și Războaiele de reîntregire* (Marshal Antonescu of Romania and the reunification wars), 4 vols. (Venice: Nagard, 1986–1989).

The principles guiding the spelling of names in this book were not entirely uniform. As a rule, for any locality within Romania's 1939 borders (including Bessarabia and Bukovina), I utilized the Romanian spelling customary at the time, excepting the cities of Czernowitz and Kishinev. As for locales within Transnistria, Russian spellings were preferred over Ukrainian, and I attempted to cite places as they appear in the major atlases published in Great Britain and the United States. Nonetheless, dozens of villages and towns proved very difficult to locate even in Soviet atlases. In transliterating Russian names, I endeavored to preserve their original sound,

\* Copies of the Nuremberg documents cited in this study can be found in these collections in both German- and English-language versions (files NOKW, NG, NO, etc.), filed by serial number.

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largely ignoring the Romanian spellings used during the brief Romanian occupation of Transnistria.

\* \* \*

I wish to thank several individuals and institutions that assisted me over the long years of gathering the documents that appear in this study: the director of the Odessa Archives Mr. Malchenko Victor Mikhailovich, archivists Aliona and Katerina, and the entire staff of the Odessa District Archives; the director of the Nikolayev District Archives and her assistant; and the professional women at the Special Archives in Moscow.

In addition, the assistance I received from the staff of the archives and library of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington — particularly Dr. Michael Berenbaum, then director of the Research Institute — was most helpful in preparing the volumes of documents accompanying this study. Special thanks to Dr. Brewster Chamberlin, associate director of the International Archives Project; Henry Mayer, chief archivist; Aaron Kornblum, reference archivist; Dr. Wesley A. Fisher, director of External Affairs; Jaime Monllor, program coordinator; and, last but not least, my friend Radu Ioanid, the “engine” behind the operation of identifying and copying the Romanian documents.

I respectfully acknowledge the contribution of the late Rachel Garfinkel, who translated the first three chapters of this work before her tragic and untimely death. I am grateful as well to Karen Gold for the exemplary faithfulness and professionalism of her translation of the remainder of the book. I also thank the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center of Tel Aviv University, particularly its former director, Professor Minna Rozen; my friend and colleague Dr. Liviu Rotman, chairman of the Project for the History of the Jews in Romania; Ora Azta, secretary of the Center and Sirette Daniel prepared the text for printing.

Unfortunately, the documentation herein covers only 1941–1942. I hope funding will be found to publish the documents I have assembled for 1943–1944. These records will enable students, historians, and Romanian scholars to grasp the essential truth that the Antonescu regime committed genocide.

Jean Ancel