

Iron Guard

(*Garda de Fier*; also called *Totul Pentru Tara*, meaning "All for the Fatherland"), fascist and antisemitic movement in Romania, whose members were known as "Legionnaires."

Originally established in 1927 under the name "Legion of the Archangel Michael" and organized into paramilitary units, the Iron Guard soon became a mass political movement. It was officially dissolved in 1933, but continued to function, even receiving the third-largest number of votes in Romania's 1937 election. During the mid-1930s the Iron Guard also established ties with the Nazi regime in Germany.

In 1938, Romania's King Carol II again outlawed the Guard. Nonetheless, in September 1940 he made a deal with the movement and invited its leaders into the government. The Guard immediately launched a wave of terror against Romania's Jews in hopes of removing them from Romanian life. They passed racist laws and revitalized their ties with the Nazis and the fascist government in Italy.

In January 1941 the Guard unsuccessfully attempted to take over the government completely. The failed coup was accompanied by pogroms, in which 123 Jews were killed. Most of the Iron Guard leaders then fled to Germany. After the war, many of the Guard's members escaped to Spain and Portugal, where they avoided trial as war criminals.