

Jewish Center, Romania

(*Centrala Evreilor*), Jewish institution similar to a *Judenrat*, set up in Romania in February 1942 by Romanian leader Ion Antonescu, in response to German pressure. The *Centrala* replaced the Union of Jewish Communities, which had long represented the Jews of Romania.

The *Centrala*, run by Nandor Ghingold, was forced to carry out all orders issued by the Romanian and German authorities regarding Jewish affairs. It was charged with carrying out two contradictory tasks: helping the German authorities organize the deportation of Jews to extermination camps in Poland; and serving the Romanian authorities, who wanted to use the council to steal money and property from the Jews and provide forced labor. The *Centrala* aided the Germans by making a list of all the Jews in their domain. The group did not participate in Jewish leader Wilhelm Filderman's struggle to stop the deportation of Romanian Jews to Poland. However, as the Romanian policy shifted in 1943--1944 and the government sought a way out of its alliance with Hitler, the *Centrala* took over the organization of welfare activities and provided spiritual and material care for Romania's Jews. The *Centrala* was dissolved in December 1944 after Romania's liberation, and its leaders, including Ghingold, were given long prison sentences.