

## Antonescu, Ion

(1882–1946), Leader of Romania from 1940–1944. In 1937 Antonescu served as defense minister in the short-lived Goga-Cuza government. When Germany forced Romania to give large parts of its territory to the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Bulgaria in 1940, Antonescu was made prime minister. Along with Horia Sima, the head of the antisemitic fascist Iron Guard movement, Antonescu instituted the pro-German National Legionary Government. In January 1941 the Iron Guard revolted against Antonescu, who crushed the rebellion with Hitler's help. From then on, Antonescu ruled Romania as a dictator.

Regarding his Jewish policy, Antonescu differentiated between the Jews living in pre-World War I Romania and southern Transylvania, whom he considered to be real Romanians, and those living in Bessarabia and southern Bukovina. He ordered the rural Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina exterminated, and the urban Jews imprisoned in ghettos and concentration camps. In the summer of 1941 he exiled 150,000 Bessarabian and Bukovinan Jews to Transnistria, where many died or were murdered. In the rest of Romania, the Jews were concentrated in urban centers and their property was confiscated. However, Antonescu refused to surrender them to the Nazis.

Antonescu's government toppled in August 1944 when Romania broke its ties with Germany. He was executed as a war criminal in June 1946.