

Iasi

(in German, Jassy), city in northeastern Romania. In 1941, 51,000 Jews lived in Iasi, including many refugees.

Ion Antonescu came to power in Romania in 1940, supported by the fascist, anti-Semitic Iron Guard movement. During his reign, Jews were subjected to persecutions such as random arrests, blackmail, torture, and confiscation of property and businesses. In November two synagogues were destroyed. Jewish community leaders bribed the Iron Guard to stop the persecutions, and for a few months the Jews were left alone.

Things changed when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. Iasi was a gathering point for German and Romanian troops heading for the front lines. After accusing the Jews of signaling to Soviet planes, Romanian and German government agencies instigated pogroms that began on June 28, 1941. Thousands of Jews were killed on the streets and in their homes, and thousands more were arrested. On June 29, called "Black Sunday" by the Jews, thousands of Jews were gathered in the courtyard of police headquarters. Most were shot by Romanian troops; 4,330 of the survivors, together with Jews from other parts of Iasi, were herded onto sealed cattle cars. Of those, 2,650 died of thirst or suffocation. Altogether, over 10,000 Jews were murdered in Iasi.