

# The Silent Holocaust: Romania and Its Jews (Contributions to the Study of World History)

Rene Spodheim

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We commonly associate the term Holocaust with Nuremberg and Kristallnacht, the Warsaw and Vilna ghettos, Auschwitz and Treblinka. Appearing as they do in countless books and films, these symbols of hatred penetrate our consciousness, memory, and history. But, unfortunately, our memory is selective, and, in the case of Romania, our knowledge is scant. In 1939 the Jewish population of Romania exceeded 750,000: the third largest concentration of Jews in Europe. By 1944, some 400,000 had disappeared. Another 150,000 Ukrainian Jews died at the hands of Romanian soldiers. In the quest for a final solution Romania proved to be Hitler's most enthusiastic ally.

In *The Silent Holocaust*, Butnaru, himself a survivor of the Romanian labor camps, provides a full account and demonstrates that anti-Semitism was a central force in Romania's history. He begins by examining the precarious status of Romanian Jewry in the years prior to World War I. He then reviews the period to the establishment in September, 1940, of the National Legionary State, a period when anti-Semitism became the unifying force in politics. The remainder of the book covers the Holocaust years, and reveals that Romania's premeditated mass murder of Jews was well underway before the Reich's gas chambers became operational. The Silent Holocaust has been called a work of epic and historical worth and it is invaluable for students of World War II, the Holocaust, and Jewish and Eastern European studies.

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