

# **MOLDOVA Jewish community protests at rehabilitation of fascist dictator**

## **From Natasha Pankowska for Antifa-Net in Chisinau**

THE MOLDOVAN JEWISH COMMUNITY has protested at the publication of articles justifying the crimes of Ion Antonescu, Romania's wartime fascist dictator. On 27 June, Shabs Roif, president of the Association of Former Ghetto and Concentration Camp Prisoners, told Moldovan television that "Ion Antonescu's policies were directed against the Jews of Bessarabia".

Roif's singled out an article that appeared in *Capitala*, the official newspaper of Chisinau city council, on 24 June and presented Antonescu, a convicted war criminal, in a favourable light and positively emphasised his wartime policy of unifying Romania and Moldova. Bessarabia is now mostly in Moldova but was part of "Greater Romania" from 1918 to 1940.

*Capitala*, which is publicly funded, is controlled by Chisinau's mayor Dorin Chirtoaca, who is the vice-president of the right-wing Liberal Party. The Jewish News Agency has alleged that he has links with the Moldovan branch of the Romanian fascist New Right organisation and has taken part in its events.

Roif said that his organisation "will now appeal to European institutions with the protest against the repeated heroisation of wartime dictator Antonescu" in the media and by some politicians. Other members of the Jewish community have enthusiastically supported Roif's statement, in which he also reminded the media that "eyewitnesses who remember the atrocities committed by Romanian fascists on the orders of Antonescu are still alive".

According to the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews were murdered or died as a result of the policies of the pro-Nazi Romanian army during the Second World War.

The attempt to treat Antonescu as a hero is now being actively used as a tool to promote the idea of a new unification of Moldova and Romania on the basis of close ethnic ties.