

Regarding the fate of the Jews of Timișoara, the deportation and extermination, the situation was special. On August 30, 1940, submitting to the Vienna Dictate, Romania ceded almost half of the territory of Transylvania to Hungary, an act imposed by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. The southern part of Banat remained in Romania, which saved the Jews of Timișoara from deportation to extermination camps. In the fall of 1942, dozens of Jews were arrested in Timișoara. All of them were loaded into freight cars destined for Transnistria. The first were massacred as soon as they arrived in Transnistria, the others were deported to the Vapnyarka camp, then to Olgopol, and almost all of them survived. The names of the 28 Timișoara victims of the fascist regime are inscribed on a commemorative plaque in the Jewish cemetery.

In September 1942, the deportation of the Jews of Timișoara to Auschwitz was canceled at the last minute. Ion Antonescu canceled the deportation order. The interventions made by Queen Mother Elena, Chief Rabbi Alexandru Safran, the president of the Jewish communities Wilhelm Fildermann, Metropolitan Bălan, Baron Ferdinand von Neumann of Arad, politician Iuliu Maniu and other personalities were important factors that influenced the decision, amid the dissatisfaction of the Antonescu government with the Vienna Dictate and the situation on the front. Compared to the Jews in the rest of Romania and even in Europe, those of Timișoara had a special destiny due to the spirit of tolerance and openness of the city's inhabitants. Jewish testimonies about this period always mention "good people" who were helpful to them in various situations.

1. Ezra Fleischer (1928–2006)



Born in Timișoara, Ezra Fleischer was a symbol of intellectual resistance and post-war anti-Semitic political persecution, surviving the horrors of the 1940s to become a world-class scholar.

Background to the persecution: During World War II, his family was targeted by racial laws. His father, Leopold Fleischer (a renowned philologist), was marginalized, and young Ezra lived under the constant threat of deportation.

Post-war: Arrested by the communist regime in 1950 for his activities in the (banned) Zionist movement. He spent difficult years in communist prisons, an experience that left a deep mark on him.

Legacy: After emigrating to Israel in 1960, he became a renowned literary historian and poet, receiving the Israel Prize. His work kept alive the connection between Banat culture and Jewish identity.

2. Annie Hammer (1918–2014)



Annie Hammer was a survivor whose life summed up the “dark decade” of Jewish history in Banat, moving from social exclusion in the 1940s to political persecution after the war.

Persecution under the Antonescu regime (1940–1944): Although the Jews of Timișoara escaped deportation to death camps in Poland, they were subjected to a “civil death.” Annie Hammer witnessed the process of Romanianization, through which her family lost their businesses and properties in the Fabric neighborhood. The young people around her were sent to forced labor detachments, and she herself lived in constant fear of trains leaving for Transnistria.

Professional marginalization:

Even after the fall of the fascist regime, Annie continued to be a victim of discrimination under the new communist regime. In 1957, she was expelled from the teaching staff of the Timișoara Medical Institute under the pretext of “improving social composition” (in fact, a wave of anti-Semitic purges after 1956).

Legacy and memory:

Annie Hammer later became a vital source of information for historians. She helped map the vanished Jewish shops and businesses in the Fabric district, providing precious details about a world that was almost erased by totalitarian regimes.

3. Francisc Neuman



Francisc Neuman (1910 - 1997)

We were surprised to find a character from Arad, Francisc Neuman, who saved Jews from Arad and Timisoara, employing them in his factory in Arad. That is why we included in our map the Neuman Palace in Arad, the Spirit and Yeast Factory and the Francisc von Neuman Football Stadium in Arad. In 1947, after the communists took power, Baron Neumann was arrested and spent eight months in prison, his wealth being confiscated. After his release, he was advised to leave the country. Without any money, he emigrated to Switzerland, where his sister, Maria, was, then moved to Salzburg, Austria, where he met his wife with whom he emigrated to the United States, where he died.

4. Jewish Families in the “Labor Detachments”

A shocking collective case is that of the young Jews from Timișoara sent to the Forced Labor Detachments. Among them were thousands of men who were torn from their families.

The fate of the victims: These people were sent to dig ditches, build roads or railways in inhumane conditions, with starvation rations and under the beatings of the guards. Many died of exhaustion or disease.

Specific example: Many families of industrialists and merchants from the Cetate and Fabric neighborhoods lost their fortunes through the process of “Romanianization”, being left without any means of subsistence before being sent to compulsory labor.

5. Landmarks of memory in Timișoara

Today, the memory of these victims is preserved through monuments and commemorative plaques, such as:

The Holocaust Victims Monument (located near the Synagogue in the Citadel).



Stumbling Stones (Stolpersteine): Recently, in Timișoara, such brass plaques were installed in front of the houses where Holocaust victims lived, to symbolically restore their names in the public space.

