

ROȘU, Constantin  
Romania Documentation Project  
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Box 1, Tape 1

In this interview, Roșu Constantin, born on July 25, 1930, in Bucharest discusses witnessing the events of the Legionary Rebellion and the Bucharest Pogrom on June 21–23, 1941. He focuses mostly on the first day of the rebellion, January 21, 1941, when he and the other children were all sent home from school and how they walked around Bucharest thus witnessing the horrors of the rebellion and pogrom. He also mentions two political events, the meeting of the Legionnaires, also known as the Iron Guard, before the rebellion in **Piața Victoriei** and Prime Minister and “Conducător” (leader) Marshal Antonescu’s decision to allow Jews to flee to Palestine.

**[01:] 00:20:00 – [01:] 04:41:59**

He remembers, during the Legionnaires’ period, that some of his neighbors were members of the Legion and used to beat his father for taking a Bolshevik’s name [*his last name translates as Red; he points to the shinbone showing where his father was hit*]; adds that the Legionnaires asked his father to change his name and join the Legion; explains that his father, a tram conductor, was the only one working in the family because his mother was sick; recalls an episode when the traffic had been stopped and he got out of the tram and witnessed a meeting of the Legionnaires in **Piața Victoriei** where **Iuliu Maniu**, **Ion Mihalache**, and **Horia Sima** were present; explains that he is not sure whether **Corneliu Zelea Codreanu** was present or not; describes seeing some priests sitting on their knees, reciting a prayer; explains that when the service was over he heard those present chanting “To the death!, To the death!;” remembers seeing a Romanian Railroad Company “Căile Ferate Române” (C.F.R.) worker, who was there with his son, being beaten because he did not chant loud enough “long live the Legion and its Captain” [*he has tears in his eyes and points towards them*]; says that this is what he remembers from the period before World War II.

**[01:] 04:42:00 – [01:] 11:29:59**

He recalls that while in the Carol II number. 47 Elementary School, the class groups were multi-ethnic, including Jews, Gypsies, and Romanians; says that the priest, **Ciosu**, made everyone sing Christian prayers; remembers the priest beating the Jews for not wanting to sing; says he did not see any Jews in his class after 1941; says that they disappeared; remembers that one morning in January 1941, when he went to school, the children were told that they should go back home and stay in, because ‘events’ were taking place; remembers he walked on **Brânduși** street toward **Calea Vitan** and saw a Jewish merchant he had known and another woman being beaten to death; explains how he further walked towards Dudești (a Jewish neighborhood) and saw a well-

dressed Jew being killed; explains that after he was killed, Gypsies were pick-pocketing him; remembers that in Dudești all the Jewish stores were looted; remembers a building that was on fire and dead people in front of it; recalls that the Legionnaires exclusively targeted Jewish properties, knowing exactly where to go; remembers seeing the rampaged stores on **Văcărești** street; remembers seeing more dead people on “podul Șerban Vodă”(Șerban Vodă bridge); remembers a nearby synagogue burning, adding that all the dead had been brutally murdered; recalls how the Legionnaires looked: they had big handguns, green shirts and saluted each other by saying “Long live the Legion and its Captain;” recollects how he heard them giving each other directions to their next target; repeats that he witnessed these events during the Legionnaire’s Rebellion.

**[01:] 11:30:00 – [01:] 18:49:59**

He briefly describes the grotesque scene at a slaughterhouse nearby his home, where Jews were hung on animal hooks; recalls there were other children with him; recalls a few of their names: **Șerb, Ciocănar, Măinea [Mîinea]**; says he does not recall the other names; insists that he saw lots of bodies of women, men, and children piled up at **Sala Polivalentă** and that people were robbing the corpses; narrates what his father heard from some war veterans, who were stationed in Transnistria, that they were told by the Germans to guard an execution place where the Germans then gunned down Jews with machine guns; says that he does not know what happened to these war veterans; responds to the interviewer’s question about how he knew that the bodies in the slaughterhouse were Jews and whether he could recognize any of them; explains that he knew the dead in the slaughterhouse were Jews because things like that did not happen to Romanians; says that the Legionnaires marked his house with green paint because his father refused to join and that they were interested in recruiting the Romanians [*the recording is paused here for a minute because the interviewee is emotional about the events he witnessed*].

**[01:] 18:50:00 – [01:] 27:22:59**

He remembers the scene at **Baia Melțer [Baia Melțăr, Baia Meltzer]** (a Jewish bath house) where he was repulsed by the image of the dead; explains that heard people screaming inside the bath house, as some were still alive; describes the rampaged bath house and explains that it was burnt to the ground; remembers that also during the rebellion, bodies were brought by the truckload and dumped in a place called **Valea Plângerii** close to **Sala Polivalentă**; points out how he did not know exactly who was in charge because the street policemen did not allow them to get too close; adds that the whole time he was with other children; continues trying to recollect places, mentioning a Jewish hospital, **Iubirea de Oameni** on Mircea Vodă Street, that had been occupied by the Germans; remembers well-dressed Jews, with big Jewish hats, who were obliged to wear yellow armbands with the Jewish star on them and sweep the streets; insists that this happened during the time of the 1941 rebellion; explains that he saw Jews being picked up by their side whiskers and heard them screaming with pain.

**[01:] 27:23:00 – [01:] 29:10:59**

He remembers that Marshal Antonescu allowed Jews to leave for Palestine; recalls that newspapers revealed that ships headed for Palestine were being sunk by the Germans; he

mentions *Universul*, which was the paper his father used to read; remembers seeing Jews leaving on buses towards Constanța to board these ships; says he never saw them again.