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Introduction by the Special Editor

The emerging scholarly interest in the Holocaust in Hungary after 1989 was coincident with the increasingly transnational framing of Holocaust research. Since the fall of communist regimes across Central and Eastern Europe, historians of the Holocaust have not only aimed to situate the genocide of European Jews in its diverse local and national contexts, but also depicted it as a mass crime to which non-German perpetrators made substantial or even decisive contributions. The Holocaust in Hungary has clearly emerged as a case in point when it comes to the multifaceted and profound involvement of the local state and society. Accordingly, in recent years historians and social scientists have been exploring a broad variety of themes and local sources related to this last major chapter of the continent-wide genocide. Applying contemporary methods, they have come to suggest novel and intriguing approaches to contextualization. However, the Holocaust in Hungary arguably has not yet been given adequate attention in the international historiography.

These considerations prompted *The Hungarian Historical Review* to devote its present issue to the findings of current research initiatives which place the Holocaust in Hungary in diverse contexts. András Szécsényi's "Development and Bifurcation of an Institution. The Voluntary Labor Service and the Compulsory National Defense Labor Service of the Horthy Era" provides a thorough examination of the emergence and transformation of the institution of labor service in Hungary, an institution infamously responsible in part for the segregation and mass murder of Hungarian Jews during World War II prior to 1944. Szécsényi's study places the history of this institution into broader geographical and temporal frames, showing in detail how what had been a voluntary system in the second half of the 1930s was made compulsory and how in the context of anti-Semitic radicalization between 1939 and 1941 the labor service system increasingly became two separate systems. Exploring another key form of anti-Jewish discrimination and exclusion prior to 1944, Gábor Szegedi's "Stand by Your Man. Honor and Race Defilement in Hungary, 1941–1944" draws on the growing interest in the history of emotions and analyzes Hungary's 1941 turn to racist sexual politics. Highlighting notable links to the Nuremberg laws while also exploring remarkable differences from them, Szegedi's study of court cases dissects the conceptions and functions of "feminine," "Jewish" and "national honor."

Szécsényi's and Szegedi's in-depth analyses are followed by three case studies on the main phase of the Holocaust in Hungary in the spring and summer of 1944. Regina Fritz's "Inside the Ghetto: Everyday Life in Hungarian Ghettos" starts from the premise that ghettoization in Hungary was not a uniform process and the exact shape ghettos took depended largely on local authorities. In addition to presenting formal differences between these comparatively short-lived ghettos, the study draws on various surviving personal documents to explore the daily lives of persecuted Jews inside them. Attila Gidó's "The Hungarian Bureaucracy and the Administrative Costs of the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania" and Anders Blomqvist's "Local Motives for Deporting Jews. Economic Nationalizing in Szatmárnémeti in 1944" both examine the considerations that motivated perpetrators, offering case studies on the history of 1944 from Northern Transylvania. Drawing on critical theories of modern statehood, Gidó's research meticulously reconstructs the key tasks created by ghettoization and deportation for the Hungarian bureaucracy on a regional level and thereby shows the profound "professional" involvement of state agencies in the administration of genocide. Anders Blomqvist's contribution grapples with the question of the motivations of perpetrators and beneficiaries in the city of Szatmárnémeti (Satu Mare). The author distinguishes various types and levels of material involvement while also clearly underlining how broad segments of local society were implicated in the persecution of the city's Jews through their support of a radical program of "economic re-Hungarianization."

Kinga Frojimovics and Éva Kovács's "Jews in a 'Judenrein' City: Hungarian Jewish Slave Laborers in Vienna (1944–1945)" provides novel insights into the experiences of Hungarian Jewish slave laborers in Vienna, a little known chapter of the Holocaust coinciding with the late stages of World War II. Drawing on an ongoing project to reconstruct, re-localize and commemorate these experiences, the article not only makes creative use of oral history sources but also clarifies key features of what its authors call "the Vienna paradox." Kata Bohus' "Not a Jewish Question? The Holocaust in Hungary in the Press and Propaganda of the Kádár Regime during the Trial of Adolf Eichmann" in turn broadens the chronological scope of the issue to the postwar period. Drawing on its author's in-depth research into the attitudes and policies of communist-ruled Hungary to its Jewish population and the newly created state of Israel, Bohus dissects the ideological framing of Holocaust history and the contested nature of Holocaust remembrance under János Kádár, but also reveals a rather high

degree of simultaneous responses to the Eichmann trial that at times challenged the official framing of 1944–45.

This thematic issue of *The Hungarian Historical Review* thus covers a wide range of topics, including the underexplored origins of the Hungarian labor service in the mid-1930s, the ideologically charged reception of the first major trial focusing on the Holocaust in the early 1960s, the history of human emotions, the "cold" history of a bureaucracy, the economic motivation and involvement of local perpetrators, and the specific experiences of Hungarian Jewish ghetto dwellers in various ghettos and slave laborers in an unfamiliar and inhospitable metropolis. Offering several new perspectives and the findings of an array of research initiatives, the issue ultimately hopes to foster further attempts at broader contextualization of key facets of the prehistory, implementation, and aftermath of the Holocaust in Hungary.

Ferenc Laczó

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András Szécsényi

Development and Bifurcation of an Institution

The University Voluntary Labor Service and the Compulsory National Defense Labor Service of the Horthy Era

Previous studies of the Hungarian labor service have been characterized by an exclusive interest in the years between 1939 and 1945. Accordingly, they have tended to focus on its anti-Jewish impetus. However, the emergence of labor service in Hungary goes back to the mid-1930s, when a voluntary system was established. Placing this Hungarian institution into a transnational perspective, I trace the process of its ideological legitimation, its key practices, and its gradual growth and significant transformation over the years. I demonstrate that Hungary actually had two divergent systems of labor services in the war years, and I analyze the ways in which the infamous labor service of the post-1939 years could be seen as a continuation of its less familiar predecessor. I thus make a contribution to the historicization and broader contextualization of a key Hungarian institution of persecution during World War II.

Keywords: Hungarian labor service, history of state institutions, prehistory of the persecution of Jews, anti-Semitic radicalization, interwar Hungary

Introduction

In recent years, a great deal of scholarship has been published in Hungary on the subject of labor service during World War II, some of which goes well beyond description and the cataloguing of facts and reflects on questions of conceptual importance. However, to the present day the vast majority of the secondary literature on the institution of labor service and therefore also most of public discussion on the subject is still under the strong influence of the scholarship of Elek Karsai, Randolph L. Braham, and other historians which began to emerge in the 1960s (though I concede that there are exceptional works of scholarship on the subject worthy of acknowledgment).[1] Labor service thus

1 Over the past few decades, Hungarian and international historical scholarship and scholars of the Holocaust have published significant source works, monographs, and numerous essays on the subject of Jewish forced labor during World War II. In addition, many memoirs written by people who worked in the forced labor camps and squadrons have been published. One should mention first and foremost the following: Randolph L. Braham, *A népirtás politikája. A Holocaust Magyarországon,* vol. 2 (Budapest: Belvárosi, 1990), 677–1474; Idem, *The Hungarian Labor Service System, 1939–1945* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1997); Idem, *The Wartime System of Labor Service in Hungary. Varieties of Experiences* (Boulder–

continues to be regarded essentially as a system that was established in the course of the war to effectuate the isolation and later murder of the Jews. The study of the fates of the Jews, Christians who were legally defined as Jews, members of Churches and national minorities that were persecuted by the state, people convicted for so-called crimes against public decency, and in 1944 some of the Roma population, in other words all the people who were forced to endure the humiliation and suffering of being members of the labor battalions and squadrons that were created as part of the Hungarian Royal Army and who in some cases were brutally massacred, was unquestionably one of the most important tasks awaiting historians.

At the same time, until very recently the mainstream historical literature in Hungary has made precious little mention of the fact that forced labor as an institution did not begin with the often cited 1939: II (civil defense) act, but rather had been established years earlier. As early as the summer of 1935, there were so-called labor service camps for college and university students, though they functioned on an entirely voluntary basis.[2] I intend to show in this essay that there were significant interconnections between the organization and history of the voluntary labor service for university students in Hungary and the system of compulsory labor that later was to become one of the tools in the virtual annihilation of Hungarian Jewry. The former system served as the basis for the latter during the period that began in the summer of 1939 and ended in the spring of 1944, when the voluntary and compulsory labor service systems existed side by side. The similarities between the two institutions, which

New York: Social Science Monographs–The Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, Graduate Center, CUNY, 1995); Tibor Mózes, ed., *Egy "szerencsés" munkásszázad. Volt munkaszolgálatosok visszaemlékezései, 1942–1945. Galánta, Kápolnásnyék, Győr, Mosonmagyaróvár* (Budapest: a publication of Zoltán Szirtes, 1985); *"Fegyvertelen álltak az aknamezőkön…," Dokumentumok a munkaszolgálat történetéhez Magyarországon,* 2 vols., ed. Elek Karsai (Budapest: Magyar Izraeliták Országos Irodája, 1962); László Karsai, *Holokauszt* (Budapest: Pannonica, 1998); Robert Rozett, *Conscripted Slaves: Hungarian Jewish Forced Laborers on the Eastern Front During the Second World War* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2014); Szabolcs Szita, ed., *Iratok a kisegítő munkaszolgálat, a zsidóüldözés történetéhez,* 3 vols. (Budapest: Magyar Auschwitz Alapítvány–Holocaust Dokumentációs Központ, 2002); Idem, "A munkaszolgálat Magyarországon 1939–1945," *Hadtörténeti Közlemények* 117 (2004): 817–57; Idem, *Halálerőd. A munkaszolgálat és a hadimunka történetéhez, 1944–1945* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1989); Idem, "Történelmi áttekintés a munkaszolgálatról (1941–1945)," *Holocaust Füzetek* 2 (1993): 26–33; Idem, *Munkaszolgálat Magyarország nyugati határán. A Birodalmi Védőállás építése 1944–1945* (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 1990).

2 I recently summarized my opinion on this question and pointed out the lacunae in the scholarship and the misleading interpretations that have been offered: András Szécsényi, "Fogalomtörténeti vázlat a munkaszolgálatról," *Betekintő* 8, no. 3 (2014), accessed May 3, 2015, http://www.betekinto.hu/sites/default/files/2014_3_szecsenyi.pdf.

shared common roots, were so strong that the same Hungarian term was used to designate them, *"munkaszolgálat,"* which is a simple translation of the German term *"Arbeitsdienst."* Thus, the institution itself was hardly a Hungarian peculiarity, notwithstanding the claims of some historians and scholars to the contrary, and in order to arrive at an understanding of its history one must adopt comparative and transnational perspectives.

Given the aforementioned lacunae in the secondary literature, I begin with a brief presentation of the ways in which the interwar labor service functioned in an international context and then offer a brief summary of the distinctive features of the voluntary labor service that came into being in Hungary in 1935. I then turn to the focus of my inquiry, the interconnections between the system of voluntary labor service and the system of compulsory labor service.

Hungarian Labor Service in an International Context

The shock of World War I dramatically changed the relationships between the old and newly created states of Europe and their respective societies. The different countries adopted varying economic strategies in the fight against rampant unemployment. In the democratic countries, alongside state efforts to revitalize the economies with injections of capital, planned employment, and industrial and economic development, a kind of "self-help" program was also launched in the civil sector. The idea of labor camps began to take form during the great calamity of World War I, and it spread relatively rapidly across Europe.[3] For the growing numbers of unemployed who belonged to the middle class, some of the youth groups initiated independently organized enterprises and campaigns that helped put money in the pockets of people who had lost their jobs without taking employment away from people who were seeking work. The participants (women were not allowed to join) worked in labor camps, usually in the countryside, where they took part in projects that were useful to the local communities, such as road construction or repair, regulation of rivers, or logging.[4] In many places, university and (even more frequently) college students

3 By the mid 1930s, the system had spread across Europe. Its deepest roots, however, were found in Switzerland, Germany, Bulgaria, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries. As surprising as it may seem, to this day there is no up-to-date scholarship on the European systems of labor service. The history of the labor service in Germany represents something of an exception to this rule, as research on the subject began to gather momentum in the 1960s.

4 Schweizerische Zentralstelle für Freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst, hrsg., *Arbeitsdienst in 13 Staaten. Probleme-Lösungen* (Zürich–Leipzig: Orell–Füssli, 1938).

formed work details on their own, and they sometimes even received modest payment for their work. With the passing of years, a professional system of university or student labor service emerged in many of the countries of Europe.

One of the most effective systems, the so-called *Schweizerischen Zentralstelle für Freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst* (Swiss Center for Voluntary Labor Service, or SZFA) emerged in Switzerland in 1925. In 1935, the Swiss state even codified it by law and developed it professionally. Federal state, provincial, and student bodies all had representation in the leadership of the SZFA, as did the political parties.[5] The institution had appeared in many other places as well. By 1939, it was found in a total of twenty different countries (in Denmark it appeared in 1917, in Sweden and Bulgaria in 1920, in Norway in 1922, in England, Romania, and Holland in 1931, and in Germany in 1933, growing out of initiatives that had been launched in 1931). As was the case in Hungary, in the mid-1930s similar institutions were created in Estonia and Latvia (1934), Belgium (1935), and Greece and Spain (1937).[6] Movements similar to the labor service institutions cropping up in the interwar period also emerged in several countries outside of Europe. Though they may have varied in their programs, comparable initiatives were found in the United States, New Zealand, Canada, China, Australia, and Japan.[7]

Thus, labor service movements were usually successful in Europe in the interwar period and enjoyed popularity as a means of organizing. In their essential developmental and operational structures the various institutions were similar. College and university students created them for the males among them,[8] and then, with the passing of time, the ministries of labor and education in the various countries professionalized them and passed laws ensuring their continued operation. The labor camps brought no short term economic gain. At most, they helped strengthen the middle class materially and helped narrow the gap between different social groups. It is worth noting that the labor service

5 The voluntary summer labor camps, in which unemployed youths and students between the ages of 16 and 24 were given work, were in operation up until the outbreak of World War II. They were under the authority of a body of the economic cabinet in charge of labor service (the Eidgenößische Zentralstelle für Arbeitsbeschaffung). See Hermann Müller-Brandenburg, *Der Arbeitsdienst fremder Staaten* (Leipzig: Nationale Aufbau, 1938), 62–66.

6 Ibid.

7 Kenneth Holland, *Youth in European Labor Camps* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1939), 279–87.

8 In some countries (Germany, Bulgaria, England, Holland, Poland, and Austria, and as of 1937 also Hungary), separate camps were established for women. However, with the exception of the camps in Germany, these camps only involved providing work for some few hundred unemployed women a year. They were insignificant in comparison to the camps for men. Holland, *Labor Camps,* 242–67.

programs in most of the countries accepted volunteers from abroad at the time. However, in part precisely because of their success, in some countries the tendency was not to maintain the voluntary nature of the institution but rather to nationalize it and make it obligatory. For instance, in the summer of 1939, forced labor service was introduced in Hungary (as I will discuss in greater detail later).

Since the institution of labor service in Hungary was inspired essentially by the German model, it is worth taking a moment to examine a few details of the latter. The work of Kiran Klaus Patel is of particular significance in the secondary literature of the past fifteen years. Patel has written not only shorter essays and articles on the subject, but also an excellent, balanced monograph.[9] While the German cabinets were unreceptive to these kinds of initiatives for a long time, on June 5, 1931, the Brüning government established the *Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst* (Voluntary Labor Service, FAD). By 1932, there were 200,000 young unemployed people working as volunteers in the FAD camps (which were separate for men and women).[10] The work that they did, however, did not have any significant influence on Germany's economy, in part because of the failure of the state to show any common resolve. Following Hitler's rise to power, the Nazis threw themselves into economic planning with an unprecedented zeal. Their initiatives exerted a strong influence on the agrarian sector,[11] and they envisioned a central role for the transformed FAD within this framework.[12] In 1935, the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (Reich Labor Service, RAD), which functioned as a kind of successor to the FAD, came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior, where it remained until 1943, when it became independent. Field Marshal Konstantin Hierl, the director of the RAD, worked together with the specialists in the Ministry of Interior to develop the Nazi model of the labor

9 Kiran Klaus Patel, *Soldiers of Labor. Labor Service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

10 For a summary of the operative mechanisms of FAD see: Peter Dudek, *Erziehung durch Arbeit. Arbeiterlagerbewegung und Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst 1920–1935* (Oplanden: Leske&Budrich, 1988) and Wolfgang Benz, "Vom Freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst zur Arbeitsdienstpflicht," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 16, no. 4 (1968): 317–46; Hartmut Heyck, "Labour Services in Weimar Republic and their Ideological Godparents," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 4 (2003): 221–36.

11 Kiran Klaus Patel, "The Paradox of Planning. German Agricultural Policy in a European Perspective, 1920s to 1970s," *Past & Present* 59, no. 8 (2011): 239–42.

12 Kiran Klaus Patel, *Soldiers of Labor. Labor Service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 64.

service institution, a model based on the notion that participation should be compulsory.

The Nazi leadership saw the practical uses of labor service, which extended beyond the propagation of the notion of a community of the national "Volk" (or *Volksgemeinschaft*) and the creation of a corps that would provide a useful precursor to military training. The labor service helped take young people off the labor market and thereby ensured that there would be more employment opportunities for married men with children. Later, when large state investments were being made to promote development, unemployment dropped and the task of finding a job was no longer as burdensome as it had been, other volunteer workers were accepted into the labor service in the agricultural sector. At the same time, the rigid, pyramid-like hierarchical structure of RAD differed significantly from the considerably more flexible structures of the other labor service systems, and it was very clearly part of the Nazi state organization. Some historians have contended that in its composition and development it most clearly resembled the Nazi party itself.[13]

In the meantime, however, RAD represented a significant cost for the state, no less than 1.4 percent of the state budget annually in the period between 1933 and 1944 and rising at times to as much as 2.1 percent.[14] According to economic historian Timothy W. Mason, it is not really possible to determine whether RAD actually brought in income for the state or not, i.e. whether or not it was actually an economic asset.[15] Even if it did not have any immediate economic use for the state in the years leading up to the war, however, it is quite certain that it at least temporarily led to a clear drop in unemployment. The kinds of projects and endeavors that were undertaken resembled the projects and works done by labor service groups in other European countries, including for instance road construction and repair, swamp draining, flood prevention, and agricultural work. In addition to seasonal work, the tasks performed by labor service groups in cities also had lasting results. Landscaping and the renovation and reparation of public buildings owned by the state or by municipalities, for instance, won the labor service widespread respect and popularity.

13 Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich* (London–New York: Longman, 1981), 155.

14 Patel, *Soldiers of Labor,* 108, 188.

15 Timothy W. Mason, *Social Policy of the Third Reich. The Working Class and the "National Community"* (Providence–Oxford: Berg, 1993), 125–26. In contrast, the contemporary German and Hungarian compilations of statistics emphasized the positive value of the work projects. See for instance Béla Szinay, *Magyar nemzeti munkaszolgálat* (Budapest: n.p., 1939), 8.

As of 1939, participation in work involving the war industry and munitions became increasingly important.[16] In 1941, the range of tasks performed by RAD broadened as it undertook projects that provided assistance to the Wehrmacht all over Europe, including road maintenance, repairs to and oversight of the supply lines between the front and the hinterland, and work involving anti-aircraft defense. RAD battalions were even deployed on the Eastern Front. The labor camp inmates (as participation was compulsory it seems reasonable to use this term), who lived in barracks, were required to do ten hours of work a day. In addition to the physical strain of the work, the compulsory national socialist exercises and singing, which were intended to create a sense of communal experience and fate, were also important factors, as was the military training in the interest of ensuring effective preparation for service as soldiers conscripted into the Wehrmacht. In exchange for their service, they were given very modest pay.[17]

The structure of the women's camps did not undergo comparable changes, and this was closely tied to the notion of the role women were to play in the Nazi state. Women did not work in labor camps. Rather, in a system that represented a transformation and further development of the FAD system of women's camps,[18] after having presented themselves in a RAD center, women were sent in groups of 5 to 30 people to smaller state farms or peasant families. As a work force, until 1939 they were used exclusively in agriculture, which meant, first and foremost, summer harvest work or, in the case of the women who lodged with peasant families, housework and childcare. Since no changes were made in the development of labor service for females after 1935, the involvement of the private sector in the distribution of work served the needs of the government splendidly. At the same time, the leadership of the RAD, together with the Nazi Party, found the participants in female labor service to be of considerable

16 Heinrich Himmler took control of some of the concentration camps from RAD and put them under the authority of the SS, as indeed he said he would do at a meeting of the SS leadership in January, 1937. The network of barracks, which were Spartan in their furnishings, simply continued to be used as concentration camps, the camp at Esterwegen in Emsland, for instance, which later grew into the Sachsenhausen and Oranienburg camps. No changes were made to the task workers were expected to perform, namely draining swamps, but now most of the workers were communist and Jewish prisoners. For more, see: Roderick Stackelberg–Sally A. Winkle, eds., *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook. An Anthology of Texts* (London–New York: Routledge, 2002), 205–06.

17 For an excellent summary of the vast German secondary literature on the subject, I recommend, on the functioning of RAD, Patel, *Soldiers of Labor*.

18 Gertrud Bäumer, *Der freiwillige Arbeitsdienst der Frauen* (Leipzig: R. Boiglanders Verlag, 1933), 8–16.

use from the perspective of the Nazi propaganda, as the institution seemed to symbolize the idea of communal effort in the service of the German nation (or "Volk").

The Introduction of Labor Service in Hungary

Naturally, these international initiatives and models found echoes in Hungary. In 1929, the so-called Turul High Command[19] (the Turul Association was the most significant organization of university youth in the Horthy era) sent János Salló to a work camp in England to persuade him of the potential importance of the institution. In 1930, László Tarnói Kostyál took a similar trip to Switzerland to examine work camps first hand.[20] Between 1931 and 1934, Salló visited three other work camps outside of Hungary (one in Switzerland, one in Wales, and one in England) where roads were under construction to gather further information.[21] In May 1932, the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education had been presented with a detailed and ambitious plan. [22] In 1935, the Turul member associations began requesting financial support from the Dean of the University of Budapest to cover the costs of work camps.[23]

Following long negotiations, in June 1935 the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education ratified the final labor service plan.[24] According to this plan, 50 students and 50 local unemployed construction workers or day-laborers would work for four weeks along the banks of the Maros River

19 Since the foundation of the mass organization in 1919, the High Command was the leading body of Turul. Chief Commanders were elected annually at the camp of delegates but were eligible for reelection. The Chief Commander could appoint members of his High Command who were responsible for specific portfolios such as, for instance, international relations.

20 László Tarnói Kostyál was one of the most agile and radically anti-Semitic student leaders in the 1930s. We know little about his life outside of his activity in the work camps and fraternal societies. He is not even mentioned in the archival documents of the state security forces. His name can be found in a number of different version in the contemporary sources. For the sake of consistency, I have used Tarnói Kostyál throughout this essay. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (MNL OL) K 636 VKM box 705., batch 98. A Turul Szövetség általános ügyei 1932–1936 [General affairs of the Turul Association, 1932–1936]. János Salló's Journey to English, July 14–18, 1934.

21 MNL OL K 636 VKM box 704, batch 98. A Turul Szövetség általános ügyei 1932–1936 batch 98. 8.

22 This was the first and last time that the idea was raised of uniting the large student associations in this way, naturally under the guidance of Turul principles. MNL OL K 636 VKM box 704, batch 98. A Turul Szövetség általános ügyei 1932–1936. batch 98. Correspondence 6–7.

23 ELTE Archives, 7/c. 1935–36/3980.

24 MNL OL K 636 VKM box 704, batch 98. A Turul Szövetség általános ügyei 1932–1936. batch 98. Correspondence, 47.

rebuilding the dams and embankments which had been deliberately sabotaged by Romanians during the floods of 1932. This goal harmonized with the visions of a prominent trend in Hungarian culture and public life in the interwar period that focused on both the traditions and the plight of the peasantry, a trend that was influenced in part by so-called "village researchers," who traveled to rural communities to document the culture of rural Hungary and the circumstances in which people lived. It also served the frequently reiterated propaganda goals of the government. Behind the populist visions, which were unquestionably demagogical to some degree, there was a desire on both sides to address serious social issues. At the same time, the adoption of the German model would not have been possible without the participation of pro-Nazi circles of the coalition. The Turul High Command named Tarnói Kostyál, who was a radical racist, to the position of leader of the Labor Camp Committee and made Mihály Somlai, who was connected to populist writers, his deputy. [25]

At the same time, however, the Turul Coalition would not have been successful in these ventures had it not enjoyed the financial support of and connections provided by the governing party, the extreme right wing, and prominent figures of political, economic, and social life. These individuals were given roles in the leading bodies of the labor service.[26] While I cannot go into great detail on the subject within the scope of this article, it is worth noting that support for the institution of labor service in Hungary was relatively widespread and included a heterogeneous array of segments of Hungarian society.[27] However, despite the support it enjoyed from successive governments and the positive responses from a wide cross-section of society, the system nonetheless was criticized harshly by some circles of the far right-wing and the left-wing of the populists.[28]

25 Ibid., 16.

26 I examine these interconnections in András Szécsényi, "A Turul Szövetség akciói: a Magyar Egészség Hete és a Magyar Nép Hete," in *Vázlatok két évszázad magyar történelméből,* ed. Jenő Gergely (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2010), 191–204; Dr. László Tharnói Kostyál, *Főiskolai önkéntes munkatábor* (Budapest: Turul, 1935).

27 For a more detailed discussion see András Szécsényi, "Egyetemi és főiskolai munkatáborok Magyarországon 1935–1939," in *Visszatekintés a 19–20. századra,* ed. Gábor Erdődy (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2011), 149–65.

28 András Szécsényi, "'Áldásos munkát!' Egyetemisták és főiskolások női munkaszolgálata," *Katonaújság* 3, no. 2 (2012): 38–46. Regarding the critical assessments, see "Munkatábor-ankét az egyetemi Körben," *Hungária,* February 9, 1937, and Péter Veres, "Ankét – A fiatal magyar értelmiség és a falu," *Jelenkor* 2, no. 1–2 (1937): 12. At the same time, in the spring of 1939 the Arrow Cross Party saw it as a potential tool in the creation of a "Jew-free workers' state." MNL OL K 149 BM Jobboldali összesítők [Right-wing Summaries]. Number 11,225. 423–26.

On the basis of the available sources we know that 40 work camps were in operation in Hungary between 1935 and 1939. Until the spring of 1937, the work camps, which were scattered across the country and were active for roughly one month in the summer, were under the supervision of the Work Camp Committee of the Turul Coalition, a committee which was created in 1934. In 1937, in large part because of the enthusiasm that had been created by their successes, the camps came under state oversight, specifically under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education. The Voluntary Work Camp of University and College Students, which was organized by the ministry and which in general copied the goals and the methods of the Turul camps (and which in 1938 was renamed Voluntary Work Service of University and College Students, or EÖM, to use an acronym based on the Hungarian name), was in operation on the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom until the spring of 1944.[29]

There was substantial continuity between the Turul work camps and the Voluntary Work Service of University and College Students, not only in the ideas on which they were based but also in their organization of work, and the system itself was based on the models of work camps outside of Hungary. Sometime between the beginning of early June and late September, the university and college students, who enrolled voluntarily and in every case as a member of some fraternal society, would do three or four weeks of hard physical labor, usually road construction and repair, swamp draining, logging, soil work, the construction of dams and embankments, digging channels to provide proper drainage in villages, and repairs to buildings in public spaces, such as cemeteries and churches. At the same time, in the camps for men, which were overseen by retired officers, the nature of the work depended in part on the geographical conditions. They strove to perform tasks that would be useful for individual communities without, however, taking away the few modest job opportunities that existed for day-laborers and navvies. In some cases, in the name of "protecting the race," a notion that was alloyed with the views of some tendencies of populist thought, they managed to transform the ideal of cooperation between "Christian intellectuals" and the peasantry into a reality.

29 1937 decree number 4.400 of the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education. 1938 decree number 2.500 of the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education. 1939: II civil defense bill of the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education; 1939 decree number 3.100 of the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education. VKM; 1944 decree number 8.830 of the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education. EÖM stood for Egyetemi és Főiskolai Hallgatók Önkéntes Munkaszolgálata.

The Turul camps were not given names, but the camps organized by EÖM were given ancient Hungarian names or names that were regarded as illustrious. They were also given numbers, and by 1944, according to my estimate, they numbered over 100. In 1938, a leadership training course was launched in Tihany, which can be interpreted as a step in the direction of professionalization. The work was done in a remarkably rigid manner, according to some people, with an adherence to a kind of strictness borrowed from RAD. For instance, on the first day, during a ceremonial common pledge the participants also took an oath to the regent, Miklós Horthy. In the camps they lived in wooden barracks that could be easily disassembled or (more frequently) in military tents, depending on the local conditions. By the end of the decade, there were some amenities in the barracks.[30] The various slogans were a mix of ideology and task to be performed: "Labor Service–Country Building," "Our goal is to help, our tool is the sport of work," or "Omnipotent God! Give a task and give bread to every working Hungarian."[31] In the case of women, the salutation "blessed work!" was used, which was expressive of the expectations regarding religious life in the camps. The routines of daily life in the camps over the course of the years took place within essentially similar frameworks.

Interconnections between Voluntary Work and Compulsory Labor Service

Drawing inspiration and energy from the success of EÖM and adopting an old aspiration of university fraternal societies, Béla Imrédy, who was appointed prime minister in May 1938 and who pursued a German orientation by this time, soon saw the potentials of RAD.[32] Given the dearth of sources, we do not know precisely why Imrédy, who initially was known as a pro-British figure, was drawn to the institution, which, though present worldwide, in Hungary bore strong affinities with Nazi models. Whatever the reason, we do know that in

30 For a summary, see András Szécsényi, "Egyetemi munkaszolgálat Magyarországon a Horthy-korszakban," *Történeti Muzeológiai Szemle* 10 (2011): 149–64.

31 MNL OL K 636 VKM box 704, batch 98. A Turul Szövetség általános ügyei 1932–1936. batch 98. Correspondence, 2.

32 Béla Imrédy (1891–1946) was an economist and banker, and he briefly served as prime minister (1938–1939). He is associated with the first Jewish law passed in Hungary. Following his forced resignation, he founded an extreme right wing, anti-Semitic party (the Party of Hungarian Revival), which became part of the government coalition in the spring of 1944, following the occupation of Hungary by the German army. He was sentenced to death and executed in 1946. On Imrédy, see: Péter Sipos, ed., *Imrédy Béla a vádlottak padján* (Budapest: Osiris–Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 1999).

1937, Tarnói Kostyál asked Prime Minister Kálmán Darányi in a memorandum to establish EÖM as quickly as possible and, drawing on the German model, to make it compulsory. Darányi had declined, but the document, which at the time also came into Imrédy's hands, may have been the first such writing that called Imrédy's attention to the issue. [33]

On May 2, 1938, in the last weeks of Darányi's tenure as prime minister, Imrédy, the heir apparent to his position as head of government, held a speech in parliament in which he described his vision for the country. He gave voice in this speech—and he was the first prominent figure in public life to do so—to the alleged necessity of labor service on a compulsory basis. According to Imrédy, the importance of social cohesion and unity, which were part of the ideals of the Turul Coalition and EÖM, clearly explained the need to make labor service obligatory, and he pledged to support and strengthen everything for which Miklós Kozma, who had been Minister of Interior from 1935 to 1937, had taken resolute though ultimately unsuccessful steps.

Kozma had been one of the most important proponents of the development on a large scale of the Turul labor service. He had also held the Nazi labor service institution in high esteem, and in December 1936, at the invitation of Wilhelm Frick, he had had occasion to observe the German labor service structures first hand. As Minister of Interior, Kozma had always endeavored to make the voluntary camps compulsory for university students, on the basis of the model of the RAD camps (even if he later denied this after having resigned from his position as minister).[34] After having been compelled to resign, he made the following remarks regarding his recollections:

> Compulsory labor service is a powerful institution for the nurturing of the nation, and it bears not the slightest affinity with slavery. In the work camps, youths who have completed a college education live alongside the simple children of the people in the most comradely spirit and without regard for social differences, and this means a great deal both from the perspective of ethical rearing and discipline. I spent

33 László Tharnói [Kostyál], *Magyar munkaszolgálat. Munkatáborok a magyar nép és föld szolgálatában* (Budapest: Turul, 1939), 32–33.

34 MNL OL K 429 Kozma Miklós iratai [Papers of Miklós Kozma], microfilm box number 3,931: Kozma Miklós jelentése a RAD munkatáborairól, 1936. december [Miklós Kozma's Report on the RAD Work camps, December 1936], 45–50. For more on Kozma's role and his trip to Germany in a wider context, see András Szécsényi, "Kozma Miklós és a munkaszolgálat," *Modern Magyarország* 3, no. 1 (2014): 104–24, accessed October 13, 2015, http://epa.oszk.hu/02300/02336/00003/pdf/EPA02336_moma_2014_kulonszam_104-124.pdf.

> time in places an hour and a half from Berlin, for instance, that were barren, submerged in water, and boggy. […] The work camps are amazingly simple, but they are similarly clean, healthy, and tasteful. It never occurred to me, I said later, that labor service should be made compulsory in Hungary, instead I will attempt to come into contact with the youth groups and societies that have done voluntary work service, and I want to support them in this very useful and beneficial endeavor. […] Naturally, one of the guiding principles is that this work should in no way create competition with the private economy.[35]

In his speech, Imrédy, alluding to international examples and the ideas of Kozma, made the following proclamation:

> The unity of the Hungarian people means a fusion in thinking and in spirit. We must further this fusion with institutions that lead the individual layers of national society to love one another. For precisely this reason, one of the essential points of our program, a point that requires careful preparation, is the introduction of compulsory labor service… [noise, cries of approval and dissent] …such that, within the framework of compulsory labor, the youthful intelligentsia comes to know the mentality of the youthful working class and agricultural laborers [noise, cries of approval and dissent] so that the handshake can take place that—I believe and I proclaim—will lead to mutual respect and, through this, unusual spiritual enrichment.[36]

On May 19, 1938, Imrédy raised the question at a meeting of the leaders of the Hungarian Telegraph Office with regards to preparations for the International Eucharistic Congress. He may have mentioned it because he had already decided to follow the German model and make labor service compulsory. Miklós Kozma wrote the following in his journal at the time:

> Everyone has read Béla Imrédy's program. […] When you read this program, you see clearly that no government in Hungary has ever dared come forward with such a right-wing program. Who in Hungary would have dared, even as recently as six months ago, to have thought of creating a national labor service? It is an old idea of mine that

35 MNL OL K 429 Kozma Miklós iratai, microfilm box number 3,931. Adatgyűjtemény [Collection of Data] 1936–1940, 101.

36 *Az 1935. évi április hó 27-ére hirdetett Országgyűlés nyomtatványai. Képviselőházi Napló,* vol 18 (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1938), 604–05.

> is dear to my heart. It could help us overcome a host of Hungarian transgressions and mistakes.[37]

In the second half of May 1938, Imrédy informed the Minister of Defense of his plans. The Minister of Defense ordered Béla Szinay, commander-in-chief of EÖM (and also a man who bore the title "vitéz," an honorary title given in the Horthy era), to state his position with regards to the question immediately and to devise a plan for the possible introduction of the program.[38] On June 1, 1938, Szinay made the following report to the Minister of Defense:

> In the near future, labor service in Hungary will become compulsory, and this makes it desirable for the aforementioned Supreme Command to inform itself with regards to the institution of compulsory labor service in Germany and Bulgaria (how many people are involved, how many camps are there, who is obliged to participate and for how long, who are the leaders and permanent commanders and who are the people in temporary leadership or command positions, what pay, provisions, clothing, and equipment is provided for the participants, what are the annual costs and what is the value of the work performed in a year, what kinds of advantages do the participants enjoy when seeking employment or with regards to taxes). I request that undersigned supreme command be provided with the organizational information enumerated above as quickly as possible by the foreign representatives in Germany and Bulgaria. I also note that the supreme command places emphasis on being provided information regarding the reorganization currently underway with regards to labor service in the former German–Austrian territories.[39]

Following this, the office of the prime minister better informed itself. On August 1, a conference was called at which ministerial advisor István Kultsár, the government commissioner for affairs involving the intelligentsia, reported on the things that had been accomplished by the labor service and the plans for the future. He also announced that the camps would gradually be made

37 MNL OL K 429, Kozma Miklós iratai, microfilm box number 3,933, 132.

38 He was also the staff captain of the so-called Vitéz Seat. "Vitéz Szinay Béla altábornagy vitézi törzskapitány: 'nem halnak meg, örökké élnek, akik a hazáért halnak!' [Vitéz Béla Szinay lieutenant general Vitéz staff captain: 'One who fights for the homeland does not die, but lives forever!']," *Hevesvármegye,* June 15, 1938, 2.

39 Hadtörténeti Intézet Levéltára (HIL) A Magyar egyetemi és Főiskolai Munkaszolgálat Főparancsnoksága. 1938 eln. B. osztály, 23269. 1–2. German–Austrian territories (*németosztrák területek*) referred to the territories of the inter-war Austrian state here.

compulsory.[40] In accordance with Szinay's request, the presidential division of the Ministry of Defense instructed the military attaché to Sofia to obtain information about the labor service institution in Bulgaria (the so-called *trudovak*) and prepare a report for the head office of the Ministry of Defense, which indeed he submitted on August 9, 1938. The military attaché in Berlin was also instructed to submit a similar report. The German report was the book (in German) on the subject entitled *Arbeitsdienst*.[41] In the meantime, Dániel Fábry was entrusted with preparing a bill for the transformation of the labor service into a compulsory institution.

According to Fábry, the people who would be obliged to perform the work naturally would be recruited from a different social group, but the goal of promoting the notion of social responsibility would be the same as the fundamental goal of EÖM, namely "to ensure that workers who are performing physical labor and the workers who are engaged in intellectual undertakings be thoroughly mixed together and the blue-collar worker come to know and respect the labors of the white-collar worker, while the white-collar worker comes to respect the physical labor of the blue-collar worker."[42]

Szinay prepared the plans with Kultsár, the ministerial advisor and government commissioner for unemployed white-collar workers. The plans made it quite clear that the same types of work were going to be performed in the new system. And as was the case with EÖM, it was considered important to ensure that the projects not exert a negative influence on the opportunities for the unemployed. Thus, road construction and drainage continued to dominate their thinking. On August 7, Szinay informed the press that the government's labor service program "has been completed." In a few days they were going to present it to the public. He stated that, "[t]he new labor camp system builds on the structure of the existing system."[43]

In what follows, I examine the establishment and evolution of compulsory labor service as an institution of civil defense only from the perspective of its relationship to the voluntary university work service. The 1939: II civil defense

40 "Fokozatosan valósítják meg a kötelező munkaszolgálatot" [Gradually they are making compulsory labor service a reality], *Dunántúli Hírlap,* August 7, 1939, 5.

41 HIL A Magyar egyetemi és Főiskolai Munkaszolgálat Főparancsnoksága. 1938 eln. B. osztály, 23269., 3–10.

42 "Szombaton bevonult ötezer munkaszolgálatos" [On Saturday, 5,000 labor service workers arrived], *Felsőmagyarországi Reggeli Hírlap,* July 14, 1939, 7.

43 "Nagyarányú közmunkákat valósít meg a kormány a munkatábor-rendszer révén" [The government is completing ambitious public works projects with the work camp system], *Zalai Közlöny,* August 7, 1938, 2.

bill established the legal foundation for the creation of the institution of labor service in the public interest within the framework of the Hungarian military.[44] Paragraph 230 a (1–6) of the law addresses the issue of the establishment of the institution of obligatory labor service in the public interest. According to the law, labor service programs had to be organized for men between the ages of 21 and 24 who were not suitable for military service and people whose citizenship was not regarded as clearly established (the first and second paragraphs).[45] The phrasing of the law concerned labor service that was military in nature and compulsory, but to be performed while living in work camps, and it furthermore targeted young people between the ages of 21 and 24, i.e. the average age of college and university students. If one takes into consideration the fact that the Turul labor service programs and the EÖM program had also had a decidedly military character, the connection between them is even more striking. In my view, however, the stipulations in the fifth paragraph were of the most gravity: "With the agreement of her legal guardian, a girl who is at least sixteen years of age and who has completed the fourth year of her secondary schooling or has an educational level of equal value can be enrolled in labor service in the public interest on a voluntary basis. The provisions of paragraphs (1)–(4) with deviations following from this paragraph apply to this case as well." This statement essentially constituted the incorporation (or even the smuggling) of the university labor service program, now with a lower age limit (though admittedly not compulsory), into the civil defense law. This contention finds further support in a decree that was issued by General Fábry, who at the suggestion of the Ministry of Defense had been named by the Regent to serve under the Ministry of Defense of Károly Bartha as National Supervisor of the Public Interest Labor Service (Közérdekű Munkaszolgálat Országos Felügyelője, or KMOF).[46]

44 In the rest of this essay I refer to the institution as compulsory labor service or non-combatant labor service.

45 Originally, the parliamentary committee—again following the German model—wanted to include women in the compulsory labor service as well, but in the end they refrained from doing this. Indeed, initially the committee had not wanted to limit labor service to men between the ages of 21 and 24 and deemed suitable for service, but rather had wanted to broaden this group as well. MNL OL K2 Képviselőház és Nemzetgyűlés általános és elnöki iratai [General and presidential documents of the House of Representatives and the National Assembly]. Bundle 563, 123. A honvédelemről [On civil defense].

46 As of early 1939, the Ministry of Defense created a Labor Service and Labor Issues Group, which dealt with issues involving the public interest labor service and other workers' formations that came under the oversight of the military. It was led by the KMOF. The KMOF had a voice in the restructuring of the university and college student associations, which had been under discussion since 1939. He informed the Ministry of Defense of his ideas. HIL I/116. Az ifjúság honvédelmi nevelésének és testnevelésének

Fábry had served as a spokesman for the Turul Labor Service in the Ministry of Defense,[47] and in 1937–1938 he had accepted a role in EÖM. According to the decree, youths who had taken part in the voluntary university work camps before May 17, 1939 could count the time they had spent there against the obligation to serve in the public interest labor service. Anyone who had done so after this date, however, could not.[48]

As it so happens, in 1937, as part of a continuing studies program in public administration, Fábry had already spoken on the close link between EÖM and a compulsory labor service envisioned for the future.[49] At a similar continuing studies program in public administration in 1938, Szinay built on Fábry's ideas. We have good reason to think that Szinay's plans were essentially identical with the ideas outlined in the report he sent to Prime Minister Béla Imrédy in May 1938. Like Fábry, Szinay emphatically called attention to the similarities between the mechanisms, functioning, and goals of the German RAD, the Turul Labor Service, EÖM, and the compulsory labor service program of the Hungarian military (which essentially was built on EÖM). Furthermore, he linked EÖM and the institution of non-combatant labor service with his contention that the two systems were essentially two branches of the "Hungarian National Labor Service." However, he felt that EÖM would soon cease operations: "With this, I have brought to a close the University and College Student Voluntary Labor Service, because it has been replaced by compulsory labor service."[50] (History, however, did not bear out his words.) Szinay then discussed his plan for compulsory labor service, which would involve an expansion year by year of the EÖM camp system (in 1939, some 4,000 people worked in the labor service programs, but by 1944 this number had grown to 44,000) without, however, any essential change to its structure and operations. The plan did not contain any anti-Semitic discriminatory measures.[51] In summary, the leaders of the two labor

országos vezetője naplója [Journal of the national leader of civil defense training and physical education for youths], August 30, 1941; September 20, 1941.

47 "Munkatáborok Magyarországon" [Labor camps in Hungary], *Bajtárs,* January 14, 1938, 4.

48 Dr. Aurél Bereznai, Tibor Fehér, and ifj. István Kostyál, eds., *Munkaszolgálatos kézikönyv* (Budapest: Magyar Cserkészek Gazdasági és Kiadó Szövetkezet, 1940), 12.

49 Dániel Fábry, *Munkaszolgálat* (Budapest: n.p., 1938), 1–22. This booklet specified six functions of compulsory labor, which overlapped in part with the functions of the volunteer systems: national defense, ethical rearing, and sanitation, economic, social, and military functions.

50 Szinay, *Magyar Nemzeti Munkaszolgálat,* 26.

51 In addition to the expansive presentation mentioned above (the text of which was published), the commander-in-chief of EÖM made two other reports in December 1939 for the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education in which he again examined the relationship between EÖM and the

service systems both gave similar, unambiguous, and persuasive descriptions of the clear relationship between the voluntary and the compulsory institutions of labor service.

The significance of the parallels between the two systems is also illustrated by the comments that were made in the course of a debate in parliament regarding a bill on civil defense. On December 7, 1938, Minister of Defense Károly Bartha introduced a bill which was sent to committee for review. On January 13, 1939, the committee for the armed forces, administration, the economy, transportation and justice submitted its report on the bill to parliament. The bill was modified in accordance with the report and first discussed in parliament on January 17. In the course of the debate, a total of 32 representatives voiced their opinions, only two of whom, the two Social Democrats, were in opposition to the bill. The governing party and the right-wing opposition celebrated the measure and only a few of them actually made observations bearing on the details of its contents. According to Sándor Ember, for instance:

> We have already experimented with labor service in past decades. A small segment of the college youth tried to further the introduction of this institution in Hungary by organizing voluntary work camps, drawing on models from abroad. The attempts that were made in this sphere amply justified the expectations, and I must express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the Minister of Defense for having thought of this institution when preparing this bill.[52]

Ember continued, saying that the bill was in no way an obstacle to the voluntary university labor service programs, which he felt were fully justified given the endless public works projects that had been undertaken, which would have been inconceivable if entrusted simply to the private sector. Others emphasized the groundbreaking role of the Turul and the EÖM work camps, which had provided a kind of prototype for the introduction of compulsory military labor service. The Jewish laws (1938: XIV and the 1939: IV) provided a foundation for making labor service compulsory, and using these laws, the parliamentary majority agreed to allow the leaders and divisions of the Ministry

compulsory labor service and made ascertainments that harmonized with the conclusions he had previously drawn. MNL OL K 636 VKM 898. box, 61. batch. Nemzeti Munkatáborok ügyei [Issues pertaining to the National Work Camps]. 1937–1941. Szinay Béla főparancsnok jelentése [Report of commander-in-chief Béla Szinay], 1939, 5–17.

52 *Képviselőházi Napló,* January 20, 1939, vol. 21, 372–77.

of Defense to begin "the solution of the Jewish question in the army." Thus the first step was taken in the legal prohibition from the armed services of the citizens of Hungary who were defined by the law as Jewish. It seems worth noting, however, that in the initial stages the law was directed against the Jews neither in its provisions nor in its implementation.

This is also indicated by the minutes of a meeting held in March 1939 by the Directorate of the General Staff (the Ministry of Defense, division 1/a). They resolved, in accordance with paragraphs 91 and 230 of the law, to pursue "certain work training" programs. The participants in the meeting saw labor service as a means of addressing the dearth of workers and skilled laborers by drafting people who were not suitable for military service. The proposed plan would have assigned these people, somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 in total, to three-month work projects (road construction, railroad work), while the skilled laborers among them would be given work in factories that required training. In the end, division 1/a called on division 10 to organize the statistics concerning the people regarded as unsuitable for military service by line of occupation and provide this information to the Supreme Civil Defense Council, which was to devise a plan that included precise regulations of the two labor services and send it to division 1/a.[53]

In the course of a meeting of the General Staff on April 24, the participants discussed the concrete steps that were to be taken to achieve the public interest labor service's large scale development on the basis of the proposal of the prime minister's office. People fulfilling their compulsory labor service obligations were required to do three months of "public interest labor service." Following two weeks of preparatory training, males between the ages of 14 and 42 and females between the ages of 16 and 42 could be called up for service. The people responsible for the plans anticipated providing training for 6,000 skilled laborers and 14,000 workers within one year. In the event of war, these numbers could jump to 75,000 and 250,000, in which case one to three weeks of training was to be provided and, as was already the case, males between the ages of 14 and 42 and women between the ages of 16 and 42 could be called up for service. The workers, who lived in camps and were parts of squadrons that functioned under the authority of KMOF (which itself was under the Ministry of Defense), were given uniforms and, like the student workers of EÖM, 200 fillérs per day

53 HIL Vezérkari Főnökség [Directorate of the General Staff], 1939. 1/a. 3415/elnöki o. [presidential division], 519–22, 277/1237–1256. microfilm, the regulation of labor service [no page number given].

as pay. The cost of establishing the system was estimated at 2,200,000 pengő and the first round of conscriptions was planned for July 1 and October 1, 1939.[54]

As a consequence of the council, the Ministry of Defense drew up decree 5070/1939. ME, which established the general principles and organization of the labor service.[55] On July 1, 1939, the Presidential Division of the Ministry of Defense gave instructions according to which a meeting was to be held on July 13 under the chairmanship of General Fábry at which, at the request of the Ministry of Defense, the leaders of the relevant Ministry for Religious Affairs and Public Education divisions would be present. The meeting was held and the representative of the Presidential Division had the impression that the institution was "still fighting with initial difficulties." According to Fábry,

> the people who perform public interest labor service will be those who have accepted this as their task or are pleased to learn that they do not have to do military service. If the equipment, accommodation, provisions, etc. provided for these individuals do not meet the desired standard, then we will have done more to harm the initiative than to promote it, and we will have awoken antagonistic sentiments in these people with regards to the army. The question of equipment, accommodation and provisions leaves a great deal to be desired.[56]

At the meeting that was held on July 13, however, the decision was reached to have the first shift begin on July 1.[57] The presidential division employed retired officers and EÖM officers to do the organizational work.

The contemporary print media reported on the connections between the two labor service systems very much in the spirit of what I have discussed above. This view found expression frequently in the press on the local and

54 HIL Vezérkari Főnökség, 1939. 1/a. 21488/elnöki o. 1–4. Deliberations on compulsory labor service; HIL Vezérkari Főnökség, 1939. 1/a. 3959/elnöki o. 1–18. Deliberations on compulsory labor service [no page number given].

55 Foreign Ministry decree number 5070/1839 on the regulation of labor service in the public interest (May 12, 1939). This decree, the previous plan, and the minutes of the meeting of the council of ministers are cited in Karsai, *"Fegyvertelen,"* 64–71.

56 HIL Vezérkari Főnökség 1939. 1.a. 4038/elnöki o., 277/1305–1328. microfilm. Meeting on the subject of labor service in the public interest, 1–4.

57 Ibid. and HIL Vezérkari Főnökség 1939. 1.a. 4003/elnöki o., 277/1305–1328. microfilm. Meeting on the subject of labor service in the public interest. 1–4.; HIL Vezérkari Főnökség 1939. 1. 4070/elnöki o., 277/1305–1328. microfilm. 1–5. Meeting on the subject of labor service in the public interest; HIL Vezérkari Főnökség 1939. 1. 4109/elnöki o., 277/1305–1328. microfilm. Meeting on the subject of labor service in the public interest, 1–5.

national levels, regardless of the political orientation of the publication. It is also worth noting contentions made by László Tarnói Kostyál in his book *Magyar munkaszolgálat* [Hungarian Labor Service], which was published in the spring of 1939. Tarnói Kostyál, who at the time was already active in the National Socialist movement, regarded the Turul labor service, the EÖM camps, and the compulsory military labor service as essentially the same. He unambiguously asserted that the institution of compulsory labor service had grown out of the other two systems and essentially represented their logical extension through the creation of an institution that could become the site of joyous communal social life. It is true that he did not regard Imrédy's organization as suitable and thought that it should be transformed in its ideology and its structure to correspond more closely to the RAD model. In the book, he presented his detailed and sometimes rather fantastic visions regarding this transformation.[58]

A book entitled *Munkaszolgálatos kézikönyv* [Labor Service Handbook], which was published in 1940, likened both EÖM and the system of compulsory labor service to standard military training, and in doing so elevated the value of the labor service camp. The publication reveals that even in the legally and politically new situation, the work camps were not substantially different from the EÖM camps:

> according to the executive decree regarding the public interest labor service, the work camp is a workers unit that is organized along military lines; the framework of the labor service obligation. The camp (barracks, tents, etc.) is home to the battalion. Everyday life begins and ends here. Reveille at dawn (roughly 5:00 AM). Suddenly rest and peace are transformed into the pulsing circulation of the blood. After the participants have done their morning exercises, washed, cleaned the area, and cleaned their living quarters, they will find a fresh, hot breakfast steaming in a mess tin. The squadron soon lines up and departs for the work site. The Sun has hardly begun to rise and their muscles are already bulging. The road is being built! The work is at a boil! Hours fly by and soon it is noon. The squadrons return to the areas around their barracks one by one. This is followed by reporting to the commander. Soon the sound of the horn can be heard calling everyone to lunch. Then one or two hours of rest, followed by a dip. Following the short work shift in the afternoon, military training or discipline drills, then a presentation on national defense. Orders are issued and the ill or ailing are examined. Then a period of leisure

58 Tharnói*, Magyar munkaszolgálat,* 1–64.

> time begins, which lasts until dinner, or rather until taps. Everyone spends this time as he pleases. You can rest, work, write letters, or have fun. This is how the day is broken up in the work camp. Sundays and holidays, naturally, do not follow the same tempo as weekdays. The piety of the church service in the camps, the great peace and liberating calm, and the songs that rise forth from beside the red flames of the campfire create an unforgettable array of variation. […] The days spent doing difficult, strenuous work are also full of good cheer, joy, and unforgettable experiences. Camp life is the healthiest life for a man.[59]

Until 1941, the year in which Hungary entered the war, EÖM and the system of compulsory labor service essentially satisfied the same demand.[60] This was not changed by the creation of voluntary military labor service for females, in accordance with which, as of December of 1940, females above the age of 16 were given work on a voluntary basis in arms factories.[61] In the initial phases, the two institutions were even sometimes mixed up by the press.[62]

On July 15 and September 20, 1939, the first battalions of people working as part of the compulsory labor service were established in ten settlements (including Zamárdi and Hódmezővásárhely).[63] The operation of the battalions was regulated by decree number 5070/1939 ME, which was issued in accordance with paragraph 230 of the law, and the battalions were placed under the oversight of the authorized army corps headquarters.[64] On June 27, Minister of Defense Bartha reaffirmed his earlier assertions and informed the army commanders of the following: "[i]ts goal in general is to ensure rearing in the national spirit and

59 *Munkaszolgálatos kézikönyv,* 116–17.

60 From then on, every year in the second half of August institutions of higher education had to inform pupils who fell within the age limits set by the Ministry of Defense in its instructions of their obligation to enlist. In other words, in 1939 they had to inform pupils who had been born in 1919 of their obligation to do labor service and in 1944 they had to inform pupils who had been born in 1923 of their obligation. The lists of people who were called on to enroll are usually missing from the university archives or are fragmentary. The most complete lists are found in the Library and Archive of the School of Theology at Péter Pázmány University (PPTE HK HL). Pázmány Péter Tudományegyetem, Hittudományi Kar, Dékáni Hivatal iratai, box 66–67.

61 1940 decree number 6,570. ME on establishment of executive measures connected with the organization of women's volunteer work in civil defense (December 15, 1940); the 1940 decree number 1,080. ME on the organization of women's volunteer work in civil defense.

62 "A Közérdekű Önkéntes Munkaszolgálat ünnepélyesen megkezdte a munkát," *Magyar Újság Képes Melléklete,* August 6, 1939, 2.

63 HIL Vezérkari Főnökség, 1939, 32 487/elnöki osztály. 10., 4. Közérdekű munkaszolgálatra való behívás [Conscription into labor service in the public interest].

64 The structure of a battalion was similar to the model in the German RAD, which had territorial units and battalion units.

also to complete training and work that is in the public interest and is of public use. From the perspective of the army, it ensures the training of Hungarian workers and labor formations."[65] It applied to youths between 21 and 24 years of age who had been declared unfit for military service, some 6,000 people in total.

The first group began work on August 1 in Balatonzamárdi and Makó "amidst celebratory circumstances," with cries of "to work!" These two battalions did public use projects (swamp drainage and the creation of embankments in order to transform the area into fertile land).[66] The other seven did national defense work (they were made into a munitions industry squadron and got training and work at the facilities). It is quite clear that the division of labor was identical to the tasks assigned by EÖM, and indeed this is hardly surprising, since EÖM had organized the first public interest labor service battalions.[67] (Béla Szinay had made the work that was done on the Zamárdi swamp part of his plans for work in 1937, at the urging of the local town clerk).[68]

The fact that Tarnói Kostyál became the editor-in-chief of *Tábori Élet* [Camp Life], the newspaper of the IX. public interest labor service battalion, also indicates the interconnections between EÖM and the public interest labor service. He was clearly given this position so that the Hungarian army would be able to use his four years of experience.[69] The newspaper of the IV. camp battalion of Szigetvár, *Tábori Újság* [Camp News], borrowed its slogan ("Labor Service–Country Building") from EÖM. The views of Lieutenant János Haidekker, found in the pages of *Tábori Újság,* also reveal this continuity:

> The young people do this admittedly hard physical work with enthusiasm, which is even more amazing if one takes into consideration that they were deemed not suitable for military service, thus they have some kind of physical handicap or ailment. But they were not born to

65 HIL Vezérkari Főnökség, 1939, 4167/elnöki osztály, 95 045. sz., 1. Közérdekű munkaszolgálat megindulása [The launch of labor service in the public interest].

66 "Az első kötelező munkaszolgálat a Balatonnál" [The first compulsory labor service on Lake Balaton], *Balatoni Kurír,* July 27, 1939, 2; "Az első kötelező munkaszolgálat Somogyban" [The first compulsory labor service in Somogy], *Somogyi Újság,* July 29, 1939, 1.

67 HIL A M. Kir. Honvédelmi Minisztérium 1939. működése. Jelentés [The functioning of the Hungarian Ministry of Defense in 1939. Report]. HM 1940 elnöki o. I. tétel, 49343, 90–124.

68 [No author given], [no title], *Balatoni Kurír,* June 9, 1937, 6.

69 This publication [OSzK H 62.742] and the other issues of *Tábori Újság* can only be found in the National Széchényi Library, and not in their entirety. In what follows I indicate the issues to which I am referring.

> a Hungarian mother to fear rising early or doing hard work, digging the soil with pick and shovel. […] The labor service program is in good hands, the boys are doing good work, work the fruits of which they too will someday gather, because work done under strict, military conditions will have a beneficial influence on their dispositions and physical development as well.[70]

In 1940, the metaphor of building the country, i.e. the use of the EÖM slogan among people doing compulsory labor service, remained a popular turn of phrase. In the spring of 1940, one finds the following comments of an officer in the pages of *Tábori Újság,* a periodical (copies of which were made using a typewriter) of the V. battalion, which was centered in the city of Técső (today Tyachiv in the Ukraine):

> and you, worker in the labor service program, who imagined yourself to be a person without worth, you see that you are as useful a citizen of your country as anyone. You donned your uniform, took an oath, you live a life of discipline, in a word, you are a soldier. A useful, working soldier of your poor country. Do not think there is a difference between you and your armed comrades! There isn't! One builds a country, the other defends his homeland by armed force. No one can say which is more important.[71]

The similarly entitled periodical of the VII. public interest labor service battalion of Makó, which in 1939 and 1940 was edited and written by army officers and workers in labor service, clearly adopted the goals of EÖM:

> And now the youth of the city and the youth of the village live side by side in a big family. We do service and work in different capacities, but with the same faith and dedication. We strive to understand and respect one another's values, so that when we return to civilian life we can be the workers and the soldiers of the emergence of a social mentality that will be more harmonious than the mentality of today and have a strong sense of the feeling of unity.[72]

70 János Haidekker, "A legújabb magyar honvédsereg" [The newest Hungarian army], *Tábori Újság,* 4–5/1939, 1. [OSzK H 20.673.].

71 József Beinschrott, "Egy év után…!" [One year later…!], *Tábori Újság,* 3/1940, 1. [OSzK H 20.674.].

72 István Schneider, "A munkaszolgálat" [The labor service], *Tábori Újság,* 1939, [no page number given]..

In July 1940, Tarnói Kostyál made one more attempt to become an important figure in the labor service institution. He submitted a request to KMOF for permission to produce a public interest labor service newspaper, and he asked that he be entrusted with the task of editing it. The competent divisions of the Ministry of Defense discussed the question and at first held out the promise of support. Tarnói buttressed his request with the observation that he was working as a newspaper writer and indeed as the editor of the newspaper of one of the battalions and also as a jurist, and furthermore he had made significant contributions to the very emergence of the labor service institution (and with this contention he made explicit the parallel between the Turul labor service and compulsory public interest labor service):

> With this periodical I wish to further the cause of labor service in Hungary with the weapons of the mind so that the thousands of workers, who are performing compulsory labor for the good of the homeland, will not regard their most solemn duty as a cold obligation, but rather will be made aware of the popularity of the work they are doing, and the leaders themselves will be genuinely enthusiastic about labor service.[73]

Tarnói Kostyál was willing to invest 5,000 pengős of his own money in the newspaper. According to his plans, the monthly would have been published by KMOF. However, in October the chairmanship of the Ministry of Defense and KMOF changed its mind, as the idea had come up of using labor service in the future to put people classified legally as Jews (and therefore not permitted to join the armed services) to work. Given this, they felt that reports of the labor service in the press "would not be timely […] under the present circumstances."[74]

The situation worsened as EÖM strove with increasing resolve to distance itself from the system of public interest (and non-combatant) labor service for Jews. According to a report submitted in May 1943 by form master for physical education and sports Román Tárczay-Felicides, "[t]he term labor service is an offense to the dignity of the university youths, because they understand the term to refer to Jewish labor service. A new name must be found [instead of EÖM], because with this name neither the voluntary labor service for university youth nor anything similar will work effectively. With regards to university labor service

73 HIL 1940 elnöki. o. II. tétel, 36531. Munkaszolgálatos folyóirat megindítása [The launch of a labor service periodical], 1–9.

74 Ibid.

for females, a meeting must urgently be held."[75] No new name was ever devised, in all likelihood because by that time EÖM and the leadership of the system of compulsory labor service had already embarked down radically different paths.

Thus I am not contending that the system of voluntary labor for university students and youths of that age was a direct precursor to the system of labor service that was established by the 1939 bill on civil defense (a system which, as of the summer of 1940 and particularly following the active engagement of the country in the war, was used quite directly against the Jewish citizenry of the country, in part as a consequence of the shift to the right in the country's political orientation). I am contending, however, that it provided a clear prototype.

It is worth considering this question in a broader context. As of the mid-1930s, new kinds of extreme right-wing parties and movements began to appear in Hungary, first and foremost under the influence of Nazi Germany. By the end of the decade, they had become a political force to be reckoned with, and in the parliamentary elections of 1939 they were the largest oppositional force. While the parties differed from one another in numerous details regarding their ideals, their ideologies all shared one important feature: they were all anti-Semitic.[76] As early as 1937, Prime Minister Darányi had to face the fact that if he wished his party, the Party of National Unity, to remain in power he had to take measures to appease the increasingly significant body of anti-Semitic voters. As a consequence of the territorial revision that took place in 1938–41, largely under the auspices of Hitler, subsequent governments played the "Jewish card." The first Jewish law, which was drafted by Darányi and accepted by parliament under Imrédy, only exacerbated this, as did the second Jewish law, passed during the tenure of Prime Minister Pál Teleki. This was followed during the war years by more racially motivated measures similar to the Nuremberg laws. These laws put an end to the equality of Hungarian citizens who were defined as Jews by the law and deprived tens of thousands of Hungarian citizens of their livelihoods.[77]

The institution of labor service became one of the sites of the racial war against the Jews of Hungary who had been reduced to the status of second-class citizens. Labor service gradually underwent a transformation from the military

75 HIL I/116. Az ifjúság honvédelmi nevelésének és testnevelésének országos vezetője naplója, May 18, 1943, 3.

76 See Rudolf Paksa, *Magyar nemzetiszocialisták: Az 1930-as évek új szélsőjobboldali mozgalma, pártjai, politikusai, sajtója* (Budapest: MTA BTK TTI–Osiris, 2013).

77 For a recent inquiry, which adopts a critical perspective, see Krisztián Ungváry, *A Horthy-rendszer mérlege: Diszkrimináció, szociálpolitika és antiszemitizmus Magyarországon* (Budapest: Jelenkor, 2013).

policy understanding of the institution as providing peaceful physical work for Christian citizens who had been deemed unsuitable for the armed services to a compulsory form of service. The elites of the Hungarian military leadership were deeply anti-Semitic. A transcript of pro-Nazi chief of staff Henrik Werth from April 18, 1940 contains unambiguously anti-Semitic goals: "independent of the political line, the Jewish question must be resolved administratively within the army, radically and urgently."[78] Werth also said that Jews should be used in the armed services in places where the losses would be the greatest. His statements concern efforts he had soon managed to effectuate: "a person determined to be Jewish cannot be granted any of the advantages given to members of the military, nor can a Jew be a reserve officer, a junior officer, or a non-commissioned officer."[79]

In the autumn of 1940, the institution of labor service began to undergo a permanent change when the Ministry of Defense realized that it could easily use male citizens who had now been defined as Jewish by law as a work force in the labor service for military purposes. A male between the ages of 18 and 42 and defined under law at the time as Jewish was obliged to enlist in the non-combatant labor service instead of doing service in the armed forces. The inmates worked in labor camps. Initially Jewish inmates wore an armband bearing the national colors, but later they were obliged to wear a yellow armband (in the case of Hungarian citizens who had been baptized but were nonetheless regarded as Jewish by law, the armband was white).

There were three types of squadron: 1. Camp squadrons (which were mixed): Jews who were regarded as reliable. 2. Special work squadrons: Jews whose loyalty was suspected and who were regarded as unreliable. 3. Work squadrons consisting of members of national minorities. While the total number of inmates ranged from 10,000 to 20,000 between 1939 and 1943, by 1944 it had risen to 63,000. According to available sources, on July 17, 1940 there were 60 special (Jewish) workers squadrons. The military leadership planned to raise the number of inmates (in a short period of time) to 90,000 or 100,000. As a consequence of the regulations passed on August 1940, Jews who were regarded as capable

78 Braham, *Népirtás,* 297. Henrik Werth (1881–1952) was an officer of the Hungarian General Staff of German descent. From 1938 to September 1941, he was the head of the Hungarian General Staff. He was known for his ties to the National Socialists and for his pronounced anti-communism. He was one of the most prominent supporters of Hungary's entry into the war on Germany's side and against the Soviet Union. He was convicted of war crimes in 1948, and he died in 1952 in Soviet captivity. Lóránd Dombrády, *Werth Henrik: Akiről nem beszélünk* (Budapest: Argumentum, 2005).

79 Ibid.

of working were enlisted in camp worker squadrons, while elderly Jews and Jews in poor health were enlisted in squadrons that did non-combatant work within the borders of country. In both cases, the enlistment was for a period of three months.

The Directorate of the General Staff drew up many different plans the essential goal of which was the "radical de-Jewification" of the Hungarian armed forces. They made statutory provisions for people who were regarded as politically unreliable or not suitable for recruitment into the armed forces for health reasons and for members of national minorities. Following Hungary's entry into the war, a series of discriminatory legal measures were taken that made the everyday lives of the compulsory labor camp inmates increasingly difficult. People did labor service in the hinterland, beyond the borders of the country, in the theater of military operations, and even on the front. The regulation concerning compulsory military service for Jews was announced in July 1942 (statute 1942: XIV). According to the law, Jews could not be members of the so-called Levente (a paramilitary organization roughly comparable with the Hitlerjugend) or join the armed forces, but could only do "non-combatant service," which "is not worthy of a Hungarian man or youths who have grown up in Christian thinking."[80] This phrasing clearly shows that, in comparison with its initial phases, compulsory labor service had undergone a fundamental change, and its ties to EÖM, both with regards to its ideals and its function, had been broken.

Conclusion

The history of voluntary labor service and compulsory labor service split in 1941. The history of public interest and non-combatant labor service is closely intertwined with Hungary's acceptance of an active role in World War II. Tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews served as inmates of the compulsory (or forced) labor camps, and this represents a significant aspect of the Holocaust in Hungary. With regards to the history of labor service in its different forms, as I noted at the beginning of this essay, since the 1960s research on the subject has been underway, but one could hardly claim that it has come close to exhausting

80 On the labor service in Bor, see Tamás Csapody, *Bori munkaszolgálatosok* (Budapest: Vince, 2012). The book also constitutes a fine handbook on the secondary literature on the labor service in Bor. On the labor service in the western part of the country in 1944 and 1945, see Szabolcs Szita, *Holocaust az Alpok előtt* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1983) and Szabolcs Szita, *Birodalmi védőállás*.

the topic. The causes for this include an aversion to the use of new kinds of sources (for instance material sources) and a similar aversion to interdisciplinary methodologies, as well as the frustrating dearth of sources. The central documents of the public interest labor service were incinerated in 1944.[81] It is also slightly problematic that the research projects and the works that have been published tend to narrate the events from the perspective of political history, i.e. the "perspective of the perpetrators." Questions regarding motivations on the micro-historical level or from the perspectives of social history or the history of mentalities have thus been rarely raised.[82]

The history and operations of EÖM after 1941 have been given scant attention at best. The dearth of sources is even more striking and there is virtually no secondary literature on the subject. We do know, however, that during the war the camp system grew, first and foremost in the Székely Land and in the southern parts of the country (a territory overlapping but not entirely congruent with Vojvodina), where the role of men was—in a significant digression from earlier practice—restricted to non-combatant civil defense work (such as digging anti-tank ditches). The roles that were assigned to women who were doing labor service remained essentially unchanged. Labor service camps were established not far from the Székely settlements in Vojvodina in Ófutak (today Futog in Serbia), Hadiknépe (today Sirig in Serbia), Horthyvára (today Stepanovićevo in Serbia), and Hadikföldje (today Temerin-Đurđevo in Serbia) and special camps were set up in Temerin and Szabadka (today Subotica in Serbia). In these special camps "red polka-dotted maidens" collectively took part in the harvest work, together with the female voluntary civil defense labor service and the members of the local Levente.[83]

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81 For instance, since the 1990s not a single scholar has thoroughly and systematically researched and analyzed the interviews that were done by the SHOAH Visual Foundation and compared them with the primary sources.

82 Gábor Gyáni is justified in his criticism of this state of affairs: Gábor Gyáni, "Helyünk a holokauszt történetírásában," *Kommentár* 3, no. 3 (2008): 21. For a good counter example, see Heléna Huhák, "Lapátos hadsereg. Munkaszolgálat Magyarországon a II. világháborúban. Virtuális kiállítás," accessed June 2, 2015, http://musz.hdke.hu/ and Heléna Huhák, "A magyarországi munkaszolgálat múzeumi forrásai és kiállítási reprezentációjuk," *Történeti Muzeológiai Szemle* 14 (2015) (forthcoming).

83 "Az ifjúság az új magyar kenyér szolgálatában" [The youth in the service of the new Hungarian bread], *Délvidék,* July 14, 1942, 4; , "Piros pettyes lányok működnek a székely telepeken" [Red polka-dotted maidens at work in the Székely settlements], *Délvidék,* August 21, 1942, 6.; "Aratnak a leventék. Az ifjúság az új kenyér szolgálatában" [The Levente are harvesting. Youth in the service of the new bread], *Délvidéki Magyarság,* July 11, 1942, 5; "Szabadkán is megszervezik a női önkéntes honvédelmi munkaszolgálatot" [Women's Voluntary Civil Defense Labor Service is being organized in Szabadka as well], *Délvidéki*

Following Hungary's entry into the war, EÖM continued its operations without interruption or shift of direction. No changes took place in the leadership or in the work that was performed. As was the case with regards to the Hungarian army, however, the rules regarding EÖM underwent two changes. First, the internal regulations concerning voluntary labor service became more strict (more military in nature). Second, as of 1941 the rules concerning eligibility changed and the group of youths who could participate grew. Any student 16 years of age or older who had completed grammar school or at least the second year of middle school and who could demonstrate appropriate progress in studies and in religious ethics was allowed to enlist.

The fate of EÖM in Hungary was sealed by the occupation of the country by the German army in 1944. Though we do not know exactly why, the government under Döme Sztójay saw no reason to maintain the system, presumably in part because of the decline in the quantity and quality of the work performed and the drastically diminished number of people actually engaged in the program.[84] At the same time, the Student Civil Defense Labor Service (Diákok Honvédelmi Munkaszolgálata, DHM), which was created in its place in April 1944 (in a building in Klotild Street, which had served as the seat of EÖM), bore some resemblance to EÖM. One might say it was a kind of closing chord, imbued with a simplified and more right-wing rhetoric.

The complex history of the university voluntary labor service is relevant not only to the social history and history of the youth of the Horthy era. While I may have been able, in the modest framework of this essay, to cover only a few of the most important moments in this history, I have placed existing narratives about the evolution of the institution of compulsory labor in Hungary during World War II in a new, larger context. The comparative examination of the two systems offers a foundation for new conclusions and thereby enriches the secondary literature on the history of the Holocaust.

Magyarság, July 8, 1942, 4; "Pirospettyes leány súlyos balesete Temerinben" [Serious accident involving a red polka-dotted maiden in Temerin], *Reggeli Újság,* August 1, 1941, 3.

84 1944 decree number 8,830. VKM az Egyetemi és Főiskolai Hallgatók Önkéntes Nemzeti Munkaszolgálatának megszüntetéséről [On the termination of the University and College Student Voluntary National Labor Service].

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Gábor Szegedi

Stand by Your Man

Honor and "Race Defilement" in Hungary, 1941–44[1]

The practice of race defilement in Hungary began following the passage of the 1941 Marriage Law, a comprehensive law on marriage that introduced mandatory premarital health checks, marriage loans and the prohibition of marriage between Jews and non-Jews. In contrast with Nazi Germany, in Hungary non-Jewish men were exempted from the provisions of the law, so only Jewish men could be convicted and only if they had a liaison with "honorable" women. The vague non-legal term "honorable" provided the authorities with the opportunity to limit sexual and other contact between "Jews" and "non-Jews" and also to exert control over female bodies through policing and surveillance, as female "honor" was in most cases crucial in order to determine the course of the proceedings. This paper uses the theoretical framework of the history of emotions to reconstruct the types of "honor" that come to light from an analysis of the papers of these court cases and their importance for sexual politics in Horthy-era Hungary.

Keywords: Racial defilement, honor, anti-Semitism, prostitution, love

Introduction

In *Emotions in History: Lost and Found* Ute Frevert gives a panoramic history of the concept "honor," her main claim being that this "lost emotion" was intrinsic to upholding social stratification and gender difference in pre-1945 Western cultures. The custom of duels enabled men of the middle and upper classes to save or redeem their honor in case it was under threat, whereas lower class men were not given access to this organized way of taking revenge on people who had allegedly violated their honor. While working class men could still protect their honor, violently, with their bare fists, women's honor tended to be deeply sexualized. It was closely linked to their sexual "purity" and put them in positions of passivity, as they did not possess any means of retaining or recovering their honor themselves, but needed male family members as protectors to do that for them. Moreover, lost premarital virginity was the kind of loss of honor that

1 I would like to thank the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) for the research fellowship that generously supported my research on race defilement in interwar Hungary. Many thanks to Zuzanna Dziuban and to the editor of this issue, Ferenc Laczó, for their insightful comments.

could not be redeemed. Once lost, this dishonor marked a woman forever.[2] This resonates with what Luisa Passerini writes in *New Dangerous Liaisons: Discourses on Europe and Love in the Twentieth Century,* namely that transgressions in love can be "dangerous for the oppressive aspects of the existing social and cultural order."[3] In Europe transgressions in love have been historically varied, but Passerini can point to an important aspect of the idea of romantic love: that transgressions are especially dangerous if they involve non-Europeans. Moreover, "love in inter-racial relationships was considered particularly impossible and therefore doomed to a disastrous end."[4] Both Frevert and Passerini aim to historicize emotions, an aspect of history that, due to its seemingly volatile nature, has long been neglected.

In this paper on honor and race defilement in Hungary of the Horthy era, I am going to use a similar theoretical framework. I will draw on Barbara Rosenwein's definition in particular, according to which emotional communities were "by and large the same as social communities—families, neighborhoods, syndicates, academic institutions, monasteries, factories, platoons, princely courts." Rosenwein suggests that research on these communities should seek for "systems of feeling" to see "the modes of expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate and deplore."[5] Rosenwein's conception of her research subject closely resembles William Reddy's idea of *emotional regimes*, that is "the set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them; a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime."[6] Reddy claims that as emotions are "associated with the dense network of goals that give coherence to the self," it is essential for a community to provide a "coherent set of prescriptions about emotions."[7] Reddy has also introduced further concepts for the study of emotions, such as "emotional refuge" and "emotional liberty," the former referring to the emotional safe spaces or outlets where those who feel oppressed by the dominant emotional regime can properly express their emotions. Reddy

2 Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History: Lost and Found* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2011), 87–149.

3 Luisa Passerini, Liliana Ellena, and Alexander C.T. Geppert, eds., *New Dangerous Liaisons: Discourses on Europe and Love in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 3.

4 Ibid., 1.

5 Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions," *Passions in Context: Journal of the History and Philosophy of the Emotions* 1, no. 1 (2010): 11, accessed June 3, 2015, http://www.passionsincontext.de/uploads/media/01_Rosenwein.pdf.

6 William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129.

7 Ibid., 61.

believes that the scrutiny of emotional regimes can be politicized by bringing in the concept of "emotional liberty." In other words, tyranny can be detected (and critiqued) by examining the pressures that are put on individuals living in a certain emotional regime. If there is strict emotional discipline, then the individuals whose emotional build-up differs from the norm can potentially become subject to physical violence, forced exile, excommunication, etc. or, alternatively, their protests against the norms can take extreme forms.

The author of the most comprehensive monograph on the history of race defilement in Nazi Germany,[8] Alexandra Przyrembel, has recently called for the use of the analytic categories of emotional history in analyses of anti-Semitism and, more specifically, race defilement (*Rassenschande*):

> (…) with racist anti-Semitism, hostile emotions were created towards the Jews, which, even if with the opposite sign, could be pursued in the rulings of the courts of the National Socialist justice system on a discursive level. It is through this emotional coding that racial anti-semitism gets its real strength, and not the contemporary biological concepts of purity.[9]

Przyrembel mentions three tenets of German history-writing that dealt with the National Socialist persecution of Jews from the perspective of collective emotions. One of these, introduced by Michael Wildt,[10] dealt with the concept of "honor," which was given particular significance under National Socialism and which excluded the Jews from "German honor." The second one focused on a regime of "moral emotions" or "anti-Semitic passions" that Germans were supposed to feel, a mixture of "guilt, shame, resentment and indignation," these being enforceable and enforced by the regime. Thirdly, Patricia Szobar presented so-called "sexual stories" and their performative effect in race defilement. While studies on Nazi Germany have already produced a range of inquiries in emotional history, Hungarian historiography has dealt only marginally with race defilement and as of yet no analysis has focused on its emotional aspects.[11]

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8 Alexandra Przyrembel, *'Rassenschande'. Reinheitsmythos und Vernichtungslegitimation im Nationalsozialismus,* Schriftenreihe des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 190 (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2003).

9 Alexandra Przyrembel, "Ambivalente Gefühle: Sexualität und Anti-Semitismus während des Nationalsozialismus," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft: Zeitschrift für Historische Sozialwissenschaft* 39, no. 4 (2013): 533. (My translation, as are all others.)

10 Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermaechtigung: Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007).

11 András Lugosi published an article on a Budapest race defilement case in 2010, and I wrote one for

In this paper, I will discuss, similarly to Szobar, "sexual stories" and their performative effects in Hungarian race defilement court practice. The main questions relate to the concept of honor and how, through the usage of this term, emotional norms were created, reinforced, or challenged by the various actors involved. If we follow Przyrembel's call, what do we learn about the various emotions and the politics revolving around these emotions when looking at the documents of the various Hungarian courts? I will first briefly discuss the background, i.e. sexual politics in interwar Hungary, and then analyze the various connotations of "honor" for various groups (women, Jews) and for the nation in the last years of Horthy-era Hungary.

Sexual Politics, Sex Education: a Background

> In order to improve moral standards on the street and in public spaces in general it is forbidden: (…) to use loud, coarse language or filthy expressions or to make a lewd move or gesture, which may violate the good taste and ethical standards of others. (…) to address an honorable woman (girl or married woman) in a public space with the aim of becoming acquainted against her will or in an inopportune manner. (…) the police are obliged to (…) provide the most comprehensive protection for the public and the woman or adolescent who is in need of protection.
>
> Decree No. 151.000/1927 of the Interior Minister: The protection of public morals[12]

There was a striking "proliferation of discourse" with regards to sexuality in Hungary after World War I. The number of publications on sex education for young people was in the hundreds, most of the authors being Christian (often linked directly to the Catholic or Calvinist Churches) and representing the dominant sexual ethos, an excellent example of which we find in various "decency regulations," one of which is quoted above. The sexual normalcy advocated in these texts is not very different from Catholic sex education elsewhere in Europe: Austrian, Polish or German Catholics had similar conceptions of sexual norms, what could be considered deviant, and what was expected from youths.[13]

socio.hu earlier this year. Both articles are in Hungarian. See: András Lugosi, "'Sztalin főhercege.' Kohn báró vacsorái a Falk Miksa utcában a fajgyalázási törvény idején," *FONS* 17, no. 4 (2010): 527–76 and Gábor Szegedi, "Tisztaság, tisztesség, fajgyalázás: Szexuális és faji normalizáció a Horthy-korban," *Socio.hu* 5, no. 1 (2015), accessed October 2, 2015, http://www.socio.hu/uploads/files/2015_1/szegedi.pdf.

12 "A m. kir. belügyminiszternek 151.000/1927 B.M. számú körrendelete: a közerkölcsiség védelme," *Belügyi Közlöny* 32 (1927): 327–28.

13 For a comparison see: Lutz D.H. Sauerteig and Roger Davidson, eds., *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A*

The works of Hungarian authors Tihamér Tóth, Ferenc Kiss, Péter Olasz and József Koszterszitz all employ a rhetoric of guilt and are all oriented around "purity," which is contrasted with "sin."[14] The practices that were to be avoided were numerous: masturbation, homosexuality, any form of premarital or extramarital sex, and consumption of pornography (which was fairly broadly defined). Béla Bangha[15] and Ottokár Prohászka,[16] two of the most influential Catholic ideologues of the 1920s, had a great deal to say about sexuality, including something they saw as specifically "Jewish sexuality." These two "dedicated warriors, moreover, program setters for the politics labeled as 'Christian national'"[17] became role models for a middle class that "got drunk"[18] on anti-Semitism and also a far right that lauded their racial arguments. Due to their standing within the Catholic Church of Hungary and the respect they enjoyed in Christian national public discourse, their texts importing age-old sexual stereotypes on the lewdness of Jews played a crucial role in setting the scene for Catholic sex education as well.

In addition to emphasizing, often in very abstract and vague terms, that Christian youths needed to remain "pure" (purity being the keyword of Christian sex education) until marriage, it was important to provide them with guidance on how this could be achieved, mostly by listing what and who were to be avoided. Women and adolescent youths (both male and female) were the two groups

Cultural History of Sex Education in 20th Century Europe (London–New York: Routledge, 2009).

14 See for example: Tihamér Tóth, *A tiszta férfiúság* (Budapest: Stephaneum, 1920); Péter Olasz, *A mai férfi életútja* (Satu-Mare: Corvin Nyomda, 1926); József Koszterszitz, "Sátán tőrvetése," in *Tiszta férfiúság az egyetemeken,* ed. József Koszterszitz (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1944).

15 Béla Bangha (1880–1940), Jesuit monk and editor of the most important quality periodical run by Catholics, *Magyar Kultúra* (which was founded in 1912), worked to establish a strong Catholic-Christian press (e.g. by establishing the Central Press Agency, a Catholic publishing house for press and other publications) in order to counterbalance the "liberal-Jewish" press, which in his view was contributing to the "judaization" of the Hungarian middle class.

16 Ottokár Prohászka (1858–1927), bishop of Székesfehérvár and member of the pro-Horthy government party after 1919, was one of the key politicians responsible for the *Numerus Clausus* Law in 1920, which capped the number of Hungarian "Jews" (defined partly racially) to be accepted at universities at 6 percent of the total number of students accepted. It was Prohászka who suggested that the original motion, which concerned limiting the number of women at universities, be amended. For an excellent overview of the Numerus Clausus Law and its adoption see: Mária M. Kovács, *Törvénytől sújtva. A numerus clausus Magyarországon, 1920–1945* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2012).

17 Máté Gárdonyi, "Az antiszemitizmus funkciója Prohászka Ottokár és Bangha Béla társadalomképében," in *A holokauszt Magyarországon európai perspektívában,* ed. Judit Molnár (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2005), 193.

18 To cite Sándor Márai's diary, "the Hungarian middle class became insane and got drunk on the Jewish question." See: Sándor Márai, *Napló, 1943–44* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), 156.

that were to be protected primarily from the degenerative effects of "excessive" sexuality. These two groups appeared in the sex education material as potential victims, who had to have personal willpower, but also needed special, external protection in the form of well-enforced laws and regulations fending off threats. The sexual dangers allegedly lurking around every corner were embodied in many different forms, including those coming from the inside. However, I would argue that the majority of the authors in this Christian-national setting primarily emphasized *external* threats that posed a danger for the in-group and argued in support of *containing* these external threats. Keeping the threat groups on the periphery by segregating them from the majority was recurrently recommended as the primary aim of sexual politics. *Prostitutes* were the first group, while Jews and, more specifically, *Jewish men* were the second. Prostitutes were primarily considered a direct health threat, whose scope of activities had to be limited in order to keep the young men of the nation (and their future wives and children) healthy and free of sexually transmitted diseases. The case with Jews is more complicated. They appeared in much of the sex education either overtly or covertly as the possessors of a specific "Jewish spirit," the representatives of capitalism who also made profit off of sex and thus constituted a more abstract danger. However, Jewish men also represented sexual excess in their bodies; they appeared as bad examples of sexual perversions, as well as bodies that were to be avoided by "honorable" Christian women.

In Christian-national sex education the link between Jews and the exploitative nature of capitalism appears with the concept of *sexual capitalism*. The authors who spoke up firmly in support of "full sexual purity" until marriage for youth were willing to see adolescents as helpless victims endangered by those who profited from the illicit sexual activities in which these youngsters would engage. In most parables Christian boys were too young to know and too alone to resist. They had to be warned not to become easy prey for sex profiteers. In these texts Jews often appear as seducers; their mere presence on the street, in the city, and in intellectual life was cast as a threat to the innocence and purity of young Christian men and women. Jews were linked directly and indirectly to the production of pornography, pro-sex science (sexology and Freudian psychoanalysis being "Jewish sciences"), and excessive and perverse sexuality (including masturbation and homosexuality). They were also characterized as pimps who attracted girls with money.[19]

19 For a detailed analysis of sex education and sexual politics in interwar Hungary, see Szegedi, "Tisztaság, tisztesség, fajgyalázás".

Honor: Three Incarnations

Honor was a constitutive part of the 1935 Nuremberg Law that dealt with marriage and sexuality. It was in fact called the *Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor*.[20] Sections 1 to 3 prohibited intermarriage, sexual relations outside marriage and Jews employing non-Jewish female domestic help. Section 4 forbade Jews to display "national colors." Instead they were limited to "Jewish colors."[21] Thus, on the one hand there is a biological concept based in a racist anthropology according to which contamination would occur if "pure" Germans were to have children with Jews, and this would lead to the degeneration of the next generation of Germans.[22] On the other, we see the idea of a community of German honor, equally powerful, that is meant to exclude Jews symbolically and which requires a more substantial exclusion that goes beyond the formal requirements of anti-miscegenation. Honor was what non-Jewish Germans stood to lose if they were to sleep with Jews, not or not only their biological "purity."

It thus should come as no surprise that Przyrembel found a court that in a 1936 race defilement case extended the understanding of the race defilement clause well beyond closing down avenues for the conception of mixed-blood children. The court referred to the unity of the 1935 Law, which, in addition to putting up an obstacle to insemination (protecting German blood that is), also aimed to protect German honor. For this reason the court's interpretation of the prohibition included any type of intimate physical contact, in addition to intercourse.[23] Przyrembel documented the fact that in Nazi Germany race defilement went way beyond the legal punishment of sexual affairs: it aimed at a segregation of the Jewish population from regular contact with the rest of the German population, and this included friendships, good neighborly relations, or simple gestures of compassion. This became most evident in the denunciations of the population where those who had "previously made purchases in the Jewish

20 The opposite of honor (*Ehre*) was dishonor or disgrace (*Schande*). The Hungarian term "fajgyalázás" referred to "gyalázat", which bears a meaning very similar to *Schande*.

21 Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre. Accessed October 5, 2015, http://www.documentarchiv.de/ns/nbgesetze01.html.

22 One prominent example is Arthur Dinter's bestselling 1920 novel, *Die Sünde wider das Blut* (The Sin against the Blood), which did a great deal to spread the misinterpretations of biological principles that were used to underpin anti-miscegenation.

23 Przyrembel, *Rassenschande,* 169.

shops, lived together with Jews or were in other business contact with Jews"[24] were especially suspicious, and putting these "friendly Germans" under threat served to isolate Jews sexually and socially. People were expected to feel hatred and disgust toward Jews, so individuals who maintained any type of positive contact with them were by default suspicious of race defilement. The Hungarian law of 1941, like its German counterpart from 1935 or for that matter the 1941 Jewish Codex of Slovakia, foreshadowed a mass of denunciations, the isolation of Jews from non-Jewish society and the public humiliation and persecution of mixed couples. There is a substantial difference, however, between the wording of the German and the Hungarian race defilement clause. In Germany, "German honor" had to be protected, in addition to blood, so all extramarital sex was banned. In contrast, in Hungary it was "honorable women" who were made off limits for Jewish men. In practical terms this meant that Jewish women could have sex with non-Jewish men and only Jewish men were threatened with a criminal indictment. Furthermore, in terms of the politics of honor, it allowed for scrutiny of the sex lives of Jewish men and Christian women. It led to a constant defining and redefining of what "female honor" meant, while Christian male honor remained unscrutinized. The anti-Semitic sex education texts by notable intellectuals from interwar Hungary show that sexual anti-Semitism got strong backing from the Hungarian Christian national State and its supporters. It should thus come as no great surprise that by the time Hungary entered World War II on Nazi Germany's side, anti-Semitic legislation was ready to give formal expression to these well-publicized views. Subsequent to the passage of two major laws (the First Anti-Semitic Law and the Second Anti-Semitic Law) that aimed to contain "Jews" in Hungary in an economic-social sense, in 1941 a new marriage law was adopted that introduced sexual bans. It was also known as the "Third Anti-Semitic Law," a law on marriage that replaced the 1894 law, introducing, in addition to the anti-Semitic passages, mandatory premarital health checks and marriage loans for eugenically "fit" couples. It is worth examining the wording of the anti-Semitic clauses in Law No XV of 1941, which introduced the concept of race defilement into Hungarian law:

> 9. § Non-Jews are not allowed to marry Jews (…)
> 15. § A Jew, who has sexual intercourse with a honorable, non-Jewish woman of Hungarian origin or gets or tries to get an honorable, non-

24 Ibid., 210.

> Jewish woman of Hungarian origin to engage in intercourse with him or with another Jew.[25]

The same category of the "honorable woman" appears in Decree No. 151.000/1927 of the Interior Minister (The Protection of Public Morals). It was the honor of the sexually pure woman that needed to be protected, and with Jews constructed as a threatening group, it was not enough to educate teenagers to keep away from Jews and to prohibit Jews from approaching "honorable" women on the streets, Jews also had to be kept away with more punitive measures.

What exactly did the term "honorable" mean in the context of Hungary? How did the courts deal with such a vague, non-legalistic term, and how was this honor constructed and reconstructed by various actors in the race defilement cases? Can we limit the discussion of honor to women, or did the honor discourses apply to other members of society?

Female Honor

"The woman becomes visible in society primarily through her body, and if she does not fit the norms, she is put under strict regulations," wrote Zsuzsa Bokor in her discussion of the Hungarian pre-World-War I and interwar discourse on prostitution and eugenics.[26] This statement, however, is just as true of post-1941 Hungary and the prevailing concept of race defilement during the war. Female bodies were on display, as they had to undergo the test of honor. The "examination" in many cases involved a range of male expert or non-expert opinion: physicians were asked to ascertain virginity or determined whether or not a woman had any sexually transmitted diseases; the defense often tried to prove that a female witness was not a woman of honor in order to get the defendant acquitted and thus alleged that the body of the woman involved was "unruly"; other men (neighbors, family members, other sexual partners, real or potential) were asked to indicate whether they had information concerning the woman's honor. One might conclude, as László Josefovits did, the author of the 1944 legal booklet *Fajgyalázás* [Race Defilement], that the legislator made an

25 1000 év törvényei. 1941. évi XV. tc. a házassági jogról szóló 1894:XXXI. törvénycikk kiegészítéséről és módosításáról, valamint az ezzel kapcsolatban szükséges fajvédelmi rendelkezésekről. Accessed October 5, 2015, http://www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=8168.

26 Zsuzsa Bokor, "Nők a nemzetben, nemzet a nőkben: a Magyar Egyesület a Leánykereskedelem Ellen eugenikai olvasata," *Socio.hu*, 4, no. 2 (2015): 96, Accessed July 21. 2015, http://www.socio.hu/uploads/files/2015_2/bokor.pdf.

omission by not properly defining "honorable woman" when passing the 1941 Marriage Law. This could have been due to the fact that in Hungary prostitution was legal and those who wanted to become prostitutes legally had to register with the authorities. This move, however, had a no-point-of-return moment, as once a woman had registered herself as a prostitute, it was extremely hard for her to return to "honorable" professions or to a marriage partner who would have been able to provide financial security. Most women did not want to risk these, and so the number of registered prostitutes was fairly low. While there were a few thousand registered prostitutes, the authorities believed that many more worked as "clandestine prostitutes."[27] The term "clandestine prostitute" was used by police authorities and was, like the term honor, a very flexible notion used to discipline and assert control over the bodies of females who did not fit the expected norm (e.g. walked alone late at night, had several sexual partners, etc.).[28] This may have been because the moral police had already been struggling with the problem of boundaries when defining "prostitute" that the government could not simply put "registered prostitute" in the race defilement clause, as it would have created injustice (within a system of injustice) and also practical complications. If all Jewish men paying for sex had been forced by the heavy hand of the law to turn to registered prostitutes, these prostitutes would have been too busy to provide for other clients, hence non-Jewish men would have been forced to turn to "clandestine prostitutes" en masse. On the other hand, this would have been an easy solution that would have drastically limited Jewish men's contact with non-Jewish women. However, it was probably too narrow a category for "dishonorable woman," and this would not have left room for the policing and surveillance of women "on the margins." It seems, therefore, that the legislator left the definition of honor open and free-floating. Because they did not have a clear legal concept, the police, the attorneys, the defendants, and, most importantly, the judges were encouraged to ask for additional information on the past emotional and sexual history of the woman involved. This additional knowledge made it possible to exert greater control over these unruly female

27 In a 1917 book the police prostitution expert Emil Schreiber reported 2,600 registered prostitutes in Budapest in 1916. He cited some experts who believed that in Berlin clandestine prostitution was tenfold compared to the number of the women registered. He refused, however, to make any such estimate with regards to the situation in Hungary. Emil Schreiber, *A prostitúció* (Budapest: Pátria, 1917), 151.

28 For more on this practice see: Susan Zimmermann, "Nemiség, tisztesség és szegénység. A nőkkel és a prostitúcióval kapcsolatos vita és politika Bécsben és Budapesten a századfordulón," *Rubicon* 6, no. 8 (1998), accessed October 5, 2015, http://www.rubicon.hu/magyar/oldalak/nemiseg_tisztesseg_es_szegenyseg_a_nokkel_es_a_prostitucioval_kapcsolatos_vita_es_politika_becsben_e/.

bodies and emotions. In his aforementioned booklet, Josefovits dealt separately with the issue of female honor and quoted a number of court cases in which such dishonor was underlined by the fact that the women in question had acquired sexually transmitted diseases in one of their many encounters. Having extramarital sex and being infected with a sexually transmitted disease certainly constituted transgressions of sexual normality. As Sander Gilman has repeatedly shown, for a long time sexually transmitted diseases were the "glue" that connected Jews and prostitutes in the public imagination. In some cases mention is made of the detail that the encounters took place "on the highway" or "at the counter of the cinema," which, based on the 1927 law on public morals, were public spaces and thus not sites where decent women could be addressed.[29] Josefovits quoted a ruling of the Supreme Court (Kúria), which established a definition of dishonor that in various court cases was later used as a standard: "A woman who, without the slightest hesitation or resistance that would indicate female shame and good morals, upon mere prompting is ready to have an intimate encounter, cannot be considered honorable from a race protection point of view."[30]

Since only honorable women could be accused of the crime, the vagueness of the concept of female dishonor also enabled acts of resistance; there were certain cases in which women were able to use their dishonor to their or their lover's advantage. The opposite was possible as well. If a woman had a reason to hold a grudge against a Jewish man, she could try to fight for her honor; going for self-declared dishonor was, however, a much more common strategy. The law, like the Nazi German one, stipulated that only the man could be convicted of an act of "defilement," a detail that exemplifies contemporary ideas about the active and passive roles of men and women, respectively, in sexual contact. Since the forced registration of women as prostitutes was also forbidden, the stakes for a self-claimed dishonor were rather moderate. I found only a single instance in which, subsequent to the affirmation of dishonor, a woman was sent to the moral police (*erkölcsrendészet*) for "administrative measures." It was a case in which the woman and three witnesses, including her own mother and the defendant, all claimed that she had had sexual intercourse with several men for money.[31] Such "administrative measures" amounted to a day or a couple of days

29 "A m. kir. belügyminiszternek 151.000/1927 B.M. számú körrendelete: a közerkölcsiség védelme," *Belügyi Közlöny* 32 (1927): 327–28.

30 László Josefovits, *Fajgyalázás: az 1941: 15.t.c. 15.§-ának büntetőbírósági joggyakorlata* (Budapest: Bethlen, 1944).

31 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, Box No. 3174, Case 11471/1942.

of detention and possibly a medical check-up, a humiliating procedure all in all, even if not comparable to months or years of imprisonment (the maximum one could get for race defilement was 3 years, or 5 years in certain cases).

Thus, one must take into consideration that in many cases women would be motivated to define themselves as dishonorable, for instance a woman who claimed, "it seems I am someone who just goes off with anyone at a whistle,"[32] or another who said "when I am on the street and a man asks me to have intercourse, I go with him to have intercourse for money."[33] In one case the defense attorney in the same case tried to argue that she had already been penalized for abortion. He probably hoped that given the strict moral denouncement of abortion, this would establish dishonor, but it did not. In the same case the woman admitted to having had sex occasionally with men who paid her, but added that she liked them as well, and so the court qualified her conduct as honorable.

Stories of love and despair were the types of narratives that could convince the court of one's high morality if a woman's honor was at stake. In the numerous cases in which it was clear that the woman did not have many lovers or had not accepted money in exchange for sex, the question of honor was cleared up easily. But for women who came from poor families and were likely to have accepted financial compensation for sexual favors, honor could still be saved if they were shown to have been what I have labeled as "in despair" or "in love."

Despair was very often constructed using the stereotypes mentioned in anti-Semitic texts by Bangha, Prohászka and others: the village girl versus the Jewish seducer. According to this narrative, poor girls from rural areas who came to big towns to find work were especially susceptible to the temptation/danger posed by Jewish men. As this danger was external to them, their honor could and had to be saved. Despair was not necessarily measured on the basis of what one did, but focused rather on "character," which was in turn based on assumptions rooted in Christian national popular culture. In fact, when the courts discussed the *character* of the "village girl" and the "seductive Jews," trying to look for a story of personality leading up to the deed, their work resembled what Michel Foucault refers to as the "psychological-ethical double of the offense."[34] This, Foucault claims, went hand in hand with the appearance of the psychological expert opinion, which analyzed the psychological profile of the accused, and from the eighteenth century on, the judiciary gradually started to rely heavily on these

32 Josefovits, *Fajgyalázás,* 15–17.

33 Ibid.

34 Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–75* (London: Verso, 2003), 16.

expert opinions. The "double" is a delegalized version of the deed. It likens the person to his crime. In other words, the commission of a crime is characterized as the natural outcome of the alleged criminal's irregular personality, which also found manifestation in extravagant, noncriminal behavior.[35] In the race defilement cases, this double seems to appear without the need for psychological expert opinion. The judiciary often seemed ready to indulge in the construction of psychological profiles of both criminal and victim, and the "psychological expert knowledge" was found in the works of anti-Semites.

Despair was especially credible if the woman showed signs of hesitation (as opposed to "without slightest hesitation"), since that proved that she was not well-versed in the prostitution business and was possibly simply defenseless.[36] One such case was that of a 24-year-old factory worker girl who initially refused to go with a Jewish man for 5 pengő. When he raised the price to 10 pengő, she agreed. In the appeals court's explanation of their verdict (1 month and 28 days prison) they made the following claim:

> it can be established that accused knew very well that T.J. was not a prostitute, because one does not need to do advance courting of a prostitute. The moral police found nothing on T.J. in its investigation, and as a factory worker she has a normal profession, but the 18–20 pengő she earns is so little that—already excited by the hugs and kisses of the accused—she did not have the fortitude to reject the sum, which was so big compared to her earnings (….) T.J. is a girl who came to Budapest from a village not much before this incident, and these are the people whom, due to their lack of experience, the law primarily wants to protect for the sake of racial purity.[37]

Both the concept of hesitation and the narrative of the village girl have an important place in the Budapest Appeals Court's argumentation. Members of this court, namely Dezső Ottrubay, Ernő Lengyel, and Elek Pálffy, otherwise did not appear markedly anti-Semitic in their decision-making. In dozens of other cases

35 See Ibid., 19.

36 In all likelihood, many of these women had few choices. In my analysis of race defilement court cases I do not wish to express any kind of justification for or approval of the kind of economic coercion that compelled young working class girls to provide sexual services for a couple of pengős. Rather, I wish to emphasize how the metaphor of the defenseless girl was used by men of power to help construct a specifically negative image of "Jewish sexuality."

37 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, Box No. 3234, Case 3859/1943.

they mitigated the sentences of the Budapest District Court, acquitting a large number of men who had been convicted based on insubstantial evidence. There is another case worth mentioning in this context, when the Budapest District Court's ruling, which was quite severe (one year of imprisonment), began with a passage that resembled an excerpt from a sentimental novel: "F.G. factory worker was employed in the Kárpátia sewing factory as a seamstress until September 26, 1941. She then lost her job, and on October 8, 1942, without any income, she bought ¼ kilos of cheap black grapes with the last of her money and was eating this for lunch on a bench in Mária Terézia square, reading a book."[38]

The ruling continued with the story, according to which a 68-year-old man approached her and sat down beside her. Allegedly, they had chatted for one and a half hours, and in the course of their talk the 21-year-old girl had told him about her financial distress. He had offered her 6 pengős to have intercourse with him and, "after lengthy persuasion," she had accepted the offer. In the court hearing the man claimed that the girl had approached him and offered her services, while the girl presented the version that was accepted as the truth by the court. This case shows that "personality" did in fact matter, and in this case of an allegedly sex-hungry old Jewish man versus an innocent, young village girl, the representatives of power sided with her in terms of credibility and honor.

It was, however, not just the courts and the police who determined female honor. Women themselves could also get actively involved in the process. A successful and highly intelligent attempt to manipulate the system was made by Mrs. V., a 25-year-old waitress, who was married but was found during a night police raid in bed with a Jewish colleague of hers. Initially, it looked like relationship based on mutual love. The man and the woman were of the same social class, and they both confessed to the police that they had had a continuing relationship. The man (Mr. M.), even though it would certainly have meant having to spend months in prison if not years, maintained this version of their relationship, but the women retracted on the day of the court hearing:

> Mr. M.: I understand the charge and I plead guilty. I had a relationship with Mrs. V. for 4 years, and on December 12, 1941 in the morning, when the detectives, who were investigating another case, appeared in the rented room in which I live, they found me in bed with Mrs. V. By

38 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, Box No. 3176, Case 11624/1942.

> that time I had been living together with her for two months, and we had a relationship based on love (…)
> Mrs. V.: As far as I know, the defendant was cognizant of the fact that I am not an honorable woman. I had been taken into custody several times after police raids and I had been in a youth detention center as well. This happened because on some occasions I was caught red handed when I received male guests. I am not registered as a prostitute. I only received male guests on occasion, from whom I accepted money. (…)
> Defendant (Mr. M.) in response to the Prosecutor's question: I knew that Mrs. V. was not to be considered a decent woman. If I remember well, I gave her money in exchange for intercourse as well, but I don't remember how much.[39]

Thus, Mr. M. quickly understood Mrs. V.'s intentions and helped her establish her own legal status as a woman of dishonor. However, at the same time she positioned herself quite well in this "system of female dishonor," as she painstakingly explained that she had only had "temporary male guests" (*átmenő férfivendégek*). She limited their number to two and added that for months she had not had sex with them. That is, she presented an image of herself according to which she was not a health or a "public morals" threat, and thus she had a chance of avoiding any kind of administrative measures for clandestine prostitution. Her intervention was successful partly because records on her were found by the moral police and Mr. M. was acquitted a couple of months later.[40] What I call "love"—in court cases one finds phrases like "I love him" (szeretem) and "I liked them" (kedveltem)—could take several forms. In most cases, however, it referred to the fact that the woman might have had motivations that were not purely materialistic or carnal. Giddens contends that in romantic love relationships, which over the course of the twentieth century rose to a place of unprecedented social prominence, "an element of sublime love tends to predominate over that of sexual ardor," adding that "love breaks with sexuality while embracing it."[41] That is, if the usual dishonorable conduct the goal of which was money or sexual satisfaction was to a certain extent elevated to this "sublime" level, this may well have changed the whole story, including the perception of female honor. It is true that if a woman's honor was

39 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, Box No. 3004, Case 12444/1941.

40 Ibid.

41 Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), 40.

satisfactorily established in the eyes of the court, this was usually bad news for a Jewish defendant. In certain cases, women very clearly tried to save their lovers by making up fictional clients (usually in vain). However, taking into account the importance of retaining honor, especially for women in middle-class couples, declarations of love (especially if they were mutual) can be seen not as a way of creating greater problems for the defendant, but as expressions of defiance to the law, which tried to serve by force relationships that were founded upon intimate feelings. Below are some cases from court decisions that touched upon this rather vague issue. In one case, the defense underlined that the Christian woman was in an adulterous, extramarital relationship, but the court dismissed their claim, contending that, "an extramarital liaison conducted with a single man and with no financial implications, purely based on attraction, cannot be termed dishonorable from an implementation point of view, even though it is in conflict with good morals."[42]

This was a ruling the court had some trouble justifying, as in light of contemporary sexual mores an adulterous relationship with a Jewish man was certainly not an honorable deed. In a "Solomon's decision," they scolded her for this relationship, but found a way to distinguish her from the prostitutes whom they believed the makers of the law had sought to target with allegations of "dishonor." Another case was somewhat similar: a woman was categorized as an "ex-clandestine prostitute," and she had had issues with the police for some time for having worked as a clandestine prostitute. However, when she met the Jewish man, she decided to give up her previous life as a prostitute and remain faithful to him. The court, probably motivated by anti-Semitic convictions, acknowledged that he "converted" her into an honorable woman and at the same time gave him a 4-month prison sentence for sleeping with a Christian woman of honor.[43] In another case a woman admitted to having had sexual relations with several men, but she contended that she was honorable, since according to her, "I have not had intercourse for income with anyone ever and I would not be prepared to do this. I only had sex out of love, when I liked the man."[44] The court of first instance accepted her claim and decided that she was indeed honorable.

42 Hungarian National Archives (MNL OL) Papers of the Kúria (Supreme Court), Item 69, batch 183, K583.

43 Ibid., batch 112, K583.

44 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, Box No. 3151, 9246/1942.

Jewish Honor

Unsurprisingly, there was considerable variety in the forms of sexual conduct and sexual proclivity revealed by the race defilement proceedings, and these forms of conduct and desire were not always in line with contemporary stereotypes of Jewish sexuality. The types of relationships, the sexual habits and practices, the confessions and acts of various actors in some cases rather seem to have worked against the schematic stereotypes of the authorities. Like "female honor," Jewish sexuality was a construct molded by various expectations and norms, and it worked more or less as a superimposition of a "Christian national" morality on Jewish men. In other words, the more Jewish men conformed to the ideal of "Christian purity" or "true love," showing devotion to their (honorable) partner, the less likely they were to be subject to harsh treatment. Calling it "Jewish honor" might seem misleading at first glance, but I would argue for retaining the expression with the above meaning, i.e. as an honor "awarded" to some Jews and refused to others.

I will start with a case that could have been written personally by Prohászka or Bangha, as it was so much in line with anti-Semitic stereotypes. Gy. N., a conductor from Budapest, was, like many other people of Jewish origin after 1939, fired from his job. He found refuge in the orchestra of the mining town, Mátranovák, where he pretended to be Roman Catholic (although his religion was "Israelite" according to official documents). He soon met a 17-year-old girl, the daughter of a miner. A court ruling describes the meeting, in which "he started leading the girl on by standing in front of her when she approached with her bicycle." Even though the ruling acknowledges that the meeting "was not against the will of the girl, because she did not go elsewhere to ride her bike," there is a suggestion of force in the phrasing: "in the end, the accused grabbed the girl's bike and made her stop and get off, and then he introduced himself."[45] Gy. N. was a married man, and he spoke about this to the girl, but he did not inform her that he was Jewish. As the ruling notes, "he even went to the church with her and made the sign of the cross there. Moreover, when there was talk about Jews, he too scolded them. Also, even though he did not make a formal promise that he would marry her, he talked about divorcing and making her 'a very happy girl.'"[46] It was in light of this information that, the court notes, the

45 Hungarian National Archives (MNL OL) Papers of the Kúria (Supreme Court), Item 69, batch 112, K583.

46 Ibid.

girl repeatedly agreed to have intercourse with him. There is mention of a trip to Budapest, where he was supposed to introduce her to his (Catholic) parents, but instead he took her to a hotel where he "got the young girl to do perverse things (*fajtalanság,* which literally translates as "contrary to the race")," which probably referred to oral sex, on the basis of the use of the expression in other cases. The liaison turned into a scandal once it became public, and some local men wanted to beat up the conductor. He ended the affair, but then started a new one, again with a Christian woman, once more "hiding his identity." In retrospect, at court he claimed that he wanted to emigrate and marry the woman in question in America. The court's ruling becomes most indignant in its tone when it discusses female honor and how this honor was affected as a result of his conduct:

> If the accused had had honorable intentions with R.Zs., if he had loved her seriously and honestly, he would not have approached her in such a deceitful and conscienceless way, as being a learned and well-read person he must have known that on the one hand his Jewish origins could be revealed very easily, and on the other, if his Jewish identity were revealed, this would bring shame on R.Zs. and dramatically reduce her chances of finding a husband, thus it could completely ruin her future.[47]

As for the 17-year-old girl's honor, they arrived at the following conclusion:

> with this, she started her ride down the slope, and afterward it was easier just to follow the accused than to stop and turn back, and this is how he took the girl with him down the slope to the state of moral debauchery that obviously felt like home for him (perversity (*fajtalanság*) in the Budapest hotel, etc.).[48]

Lastly, the ruling included a general legal consideration on female honor:

> It is a constitutive part of the crime one is charged with that the woman, with whom the accused had sexual intercourse, is honorable, but in addition to this, from the point of view of the gravity of the crime, it is important to determine the moral value that the woman had

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

> before the act of intercourse and the extent of the moral devastation cause by the accused's deed.[49]

Without much effort, one can spot all the negative stereotypes regarding Jewish sexuality and how they were subsequently connected to seduction and to pushing innocent village girls down the slippery slope from which there was no return. No wonder then that the conductor received the most severe of all the sentences that I found in the material of the Supreme Court, 18 months in prison, upheld by both appeals courts. The fact that having had intercourse with a Jewish man would "decrease any woman's value" is notable. Thus, a Jewish man's honor would have entailed stepping away from Christian girls in order to maintain their "market value." There are numerous cases in which having obstructed a girl's access to "normal life" was cited as an aggravating circumstance: "for the sake of a friendship with an honorable Hungarian girl, that is for egoistic reasons, he tried to stop the impending marriage of a young Hungarian couple with all his means, and as part of this he tried to stop a wayward girl from finding the right path again."[50]

Two other rulings scolded Jewish men for having remained intimately associated with a girl for a longer time: "the defendant (...) committed the crime over an extended period of time, and with this deed he seriously impeded the fulfillment of the natural female role of R.T. and her search for a place in non-Jewish society via marriage."[51] And "aggravating circumstances are the extended time period and that the defendant committed the crime with a married woman, inhibiting her from fulfilling her female role based on her origins, either by making up with or legally divorcing her husband."[52] That is, if the woman was unmarried, being with a Jewish man would mean both shame and a cul-de-sac, and if she were to marry him, similarly this would have been a deviation from her "natural role." However, in the above cases the relationships were relatively fresh and the girls clearly had other options (a Christian suitor or husband). Other rulings show that consistency and exclusiveness were mitigating circumstances, as in the case of a couple who had been together since 1930. They could not get married, as the woman already had a husband who had, however, disappeared abroad, thus depriving her of the chance to obtain a divorce. The Budapest District court sentenced him to four

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, Box No. 3161, Case 10226/1942.

52 Ibid., Box No. 3172, Case 11196/1942.

months imprisonment, which was upheld by the appeals court, but the Supreme Court reduced it to one month. The fact that they had sex even after the Marriage Law took effect was evidenced by a witness considered credible by the court, and the medical expert refuted their main argument that she had been ill and unable to have sex. The court of second instance did not accept the contention that "the sexual relationship, with regular intercourse, that was upheld up to now would have transformed into an ideal, spiritual bond," but it did regard the "spiritual connection (*lelki kapcsolat*) that was rooted in long years of a love relationship" as a mitigating circumstance. The Supreme Court added in its ruling that this mitigating circumstance mentioned by the appeals court "carries such great weight in favor of the accused that the original sentence seems disproportionately severe."[53] The appeals court reduced the sentence to two months.

The various ideas concerning Jewish sexuality, female honor and Christian national sexual morality could emerge as factors in one and the same case as well. A Jewish man met a non-Jewish woman in the early 1920s, and they moved in together in the mid-1930s. They planned to marry, but were unable to arrange it; first the man's father opposed it and, after his death, the woman's birth certificate could not be found. After 1941, there were obvious legal obstacles. They both claimed to be in love with each other, but the Budapest District Court refused to take this into account:

> (…) if the accused loved and loves the aggrieved party (the girl – G.Sz.) as much as he says, the objection of accused's father should not have been a serious obstacle to marriage, and if this was the real reason why the wedding did not take place, then the accused's deed confirms the racial overconfidence, according to which a non-Jewish woman is only good for an extramarital relationship, for the satisfaction of sexual instincts, and not for the establishment of a legal, family relationship.[54]

This explanation and the ruling that sentenced the man to one year in prison shows that the judges of this district court did not take into account what in the previous case had been a significant mitigating circumstance. The overt anti-Semitism present in the ruling was topped by the claim that the accused had "irreparably distracted her from fulfilling her female role according to her

53 Hungarian National Archives (MNL OL) Papers of the Kúria (Supreme Court), Item 69, batch 183, K583.

54 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, Box No. 3170, Case 10992/1942.

origin."[55] She was at the time 44 years old, so this referred to the fact that she was already beyond the age at which women are or were commonly held to be capable of bearing children. The man was also scolded for his "decided criminal will, with which he not only repeatedly committed the crime during the proceedings, but explicitly decided to repeat it in the future."[56] The court of second instance dismissed all aggravating circumstances in its ruling (one month in prison), as they believed that the woman had not been prevented from fulfilling her female role, a future violation of the law could only be the basis of another criminal investigation and not the one in question, and as regards the "explicit decision to repeat the deed," they believed that this was "rather a result of internal despair than evil passion (*indulat*)." Furthermore, according to their ruling, the fact that "discontinuing their life together [had] created serious difficulties for the accused" was a mitigating circumstance.[57] This was in fact one of the cases in which both the woman and the man openly confessed their relationship and also their love and did not change their confessions, even though this would unquestionably put him at risk. He said that he "had been and was cognizant of the legal ramifications, but after having known each other for almost a lifetime they have become so used to each other and they loved each other so much that they could not and did not want to live without each other."[58]

She also mentioned the duration of the liaison. According to the police report, she said

> for me he is not a lover but a husband. I am not responsible for the fact that his parents did not give their consent for us to marry as we had planned. I cannot give him up, because I love him and no other man will be born who would respect me as much as he does.[59]

National Honor

One of Father Koszter's post-1941 writings, *Sátán tőrvetése* (The Intrigue of Satan), perfectly encapsulates the stereotypes connecting money, Jewish sexuality and female dishonor:

55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.

> The kept women, maitresses who live off the pockets of their wealthy accomplices, are the victims of wretched voluptuaries; while their lives seem carefree from the outside, actually they are bleak, joyless and hopeless. These women will never become a "wife" and "mother," the holy dream of a real woman. *These are the ones* who, since the passing of the 1941 Marriage Law, have converted to Judaism by the hundreds in order to continue to secure for themselves the money of their "friends."[60]

It logically followed that women who had consciously remained or engaged in sexual or matrimonial relations with Jews were doing it for money: they could only be prostitutes. If they were honorable women, then they did not belong to the Jews. Either they had been deceived or they were not yet fully cognizant of the dangers Jewish men posed and had to be shown a way back to "normality."

But what kind of code of honor needed to be protected here? What was the normality, the "national honor" that was to be saved by these race defilement regulations? Again, the various actors had different ideas of what was at stake, but it is possible to delineate certain recurring patterns. Firstly, there is the idea of winning, of gaining the upper hand. If national honor is maintained and promoted by Christian national men, then public life, including the most respected professions, the media, public administration (all that makes a man proud of himself) must be in the hands of non-Jews. In this respect the 1941 Marriage Law is very much in line with the so-called First and Second Anti-Semitic Laws from 1938 and 1939, which limited the employment of Jews in certain professions and aimed at an "economic changing of the guards." However, by 1941 changing of the guard meant that Jewish men had to give back "their" women (the women who were the prerogative of "Christian" men) as well. One case in which these various anti-Semitic laws for a "changing of the guard" worked together was that of a 53-year-old, rather well-off Budapest lawyer, who was convicted and given the maximum penalty of three years in prison by the court of first instance. The aggravating circumstances of the ruling have a particularly loaded language, even for this kind of court:

> (…) the fact that the accused is married, that it happened repeatedly, that he committed the deed as a lawyer, and that partly in order to

60 József Koszterszitz, "Sátán tőrvetése," in *Tiszta férfiúság az egyetemeken* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1944), 37.

> satisfy his lust, party for his own protection he contaminated spiritually a whole family and D.E., who is nearly still a child whose moral value depreciated to such an extent that she claimed that she was a prostitute without thinking, almost as if she were boasting.[61]

The lawyer was then acquitted by the appeals court, as they regarded the woman as dishonorable, and he was allowed to return home. However, as becomes clear on the basis of his petition for compensation, he lost his job as a lawyer because, subsequent to the first ruling, his name was automatically deleted from the list of chamber-approved lawyers. As a previous anti-Semitic Law had introduced a quota for the admittance of new Jewish lawyers to the Chamber, he did not stand a chance of being readmitted. Thus, in a case of sexual conduct in which he was finally acquitted, he still lost his profession and an accusation of race defilement de facto helped further the economic changing of guard. As for the disappointed Christian lover, race defilement cases provide some similar stories. One was that of a sailor, who traveled a great deal and whose wife had a Jewish lover. As the rulings states, "the married couple had constant fights because of the accused."[62] It was the husband who reported the affair in 1942 to the police in person, saying "I was informed that he has been having an affair with my wife since 1940. My wife has repeatedly said this winter that she would not leave him, she would rather break up with me and moreover, she wanted to convert to Judaism."[63] At the court hearing he said he was on bad terms with the Jewish man because he "nosed himself up (*feltolakodott*)" to his wife, but that he was nevertheless able to give an unbiased statement as a witness.[64] The sentence was then reduced with each appeal, the initial ruling of 18 months first became one year and finally the Supreme Court reduced it to six months, indicating that it was not the Jewish man who initiated the liaison but the woman. He himself claimed that after 1941 he had "begged the woman to go back to her husband," that is, in this case race defilement provided an opportunity for the disappointed husband to "reclaim" his lost wife from a Jewish man who, clearly under the pressure of the law, was willing to give up the

61 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, Box No. 3151, 9246/1942. This is in fact the same case in which the woman was deemed honorable by the first court on the basis of her claim that she had only had sex with men she loved. See 22.

62 Hungarian National Archives (MNL OL) Papers of the Kúria (Supreme Court), Item 69, batch 183, K583.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

affair.[65] We can observe many of the same themes when looking at the ways in which some people reported Jews to the police. One such case was that of M.E., a house-painter, who was reported by another handyman, probably a rival, for living together with a Christian woman:

> The foreign national M.E. defiles the Hungarian race and laughs merrily when there is talk about want of material, as his bottles are full of paint and varnish. If someone goes to him, he is ready to take any job, painting, coating, for less money, because he wants to oust the Christian workers by providing services without paying taxes.[66]

This letter indicates quite clearly that the man in question was much less concerned with sexual-biological purity than he was with getting rid of economic competition. In terms of national honor, I have cited these three examples as illustrations of the connection between the post-1938 anti-Semitic regulations in Hungary and the ways in which they contributed to a system that enabled a "changing of the guard." National honor at the time was to be preserved by replacing the Jewish intelligentsia with non-Jews in all possible spheres of society. This happened with various degrees of success in different walks of life, and there are no numbers to prove that Christian men were able to "get" the women they loved or the women who had had sexual contact with Jews. However, this was certainly part of the game: Hungarian national honor after 1941 implied not only the silencing of Jews in the public arena and the pressuring and expulsion of Jews from their professions and businesses. It also meant that they were to lose contact with the women they loved if these women were regarded as belonging rightfully to the nation.

Conclusion

What do the racist sexual politics of the Horthy-era teach us about the uses of concepts of sexual purity and honor? Firstly, they exemplify the legal codification of what Ute Frevert framed in terms of the gendered nature of emotions. As the race defilement cases exhibit, female honor was irrevocably tied to sexuality, and it was defined by a patriarchal middle class. The suspicion of dishonor arose if

65 Budapest Metropolitan Archives (BFL) VII-5-c-, Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék.
66 Ibid., Box No. 3172, Case 11195/1942.

women had more than one sexual partner, if they were believed to have engaged in sex in exchange for material gain or if they were ready to have sex with men they did not know without showing "proper female shame." Female honor was decided upon by male authorities. In the race defilement cases courts composed of men were entrusted with the authority to determine whether a woman was honorable or not. These decision-makers were ready to grant female honor if the women in question fit a certain profile that made them look vulnerable and in need of protection. This has been demonstrated by some police reports and court rulings and their reliance on certain stereotypes which found confirmation, as it were, in contemporary sex education texts. A stereotype that reappeared consistently was that of the naïve, uneducated and inexperienced poor village girl, who encountered an older, Jewish seducer and was helpless against his tricks. I used the terms *love* and *despair* above to capture other common ideas that could be used to persuade officials that a woman was honorable. Despair was often linked to the village girl stereotype, and it referred mostly to the coercion that supposedly resulted from her dire economic situation. Love, on the other hand, gave a spiritual meaning to an otherwise materialistically motivated sexual encounter, so if a woman made a plausible demonstration of affection, her honor could be saved. I have not discussed Jewish female sexuality in this paper as, in contrast to German race defilement, the Hungarian law did not penalize sexual contact with Jewish women and therefore the archival sources I have consulted did not address Jewish female sexuality. The sex education materials focused more on Jewish male seducers but occasionally the sexuality of Jewish women was mentioned too. A study of how the personal life of female "Jews" changed in the early 1940s is, however, a challenge that will have to be taken up in the future.

Secondly, I tried to see what codes of honor were applied to the Jewish men who were the primary targets of this legal provision. Even though their honor was not as specifically spelled out in the law as that of their female partners, circumstances did matter. If, according to the agents of power, they showed signs of love and were deeply attached to their partner, it was possible for them to receive a relatively mild sentence. There was much more understanding on behalf of the courts for couples who had been living together for years and possibly even had children than for those men who could be made to resemble the stereotype of the "Jewish seducer." I offered an example of one such "seducer," who, to use Foucault's concept of the *psychological-ethical double,* was already living in sin, coming from an urban-bohemian milieu and supposedly having caused his counterpart, the "village girl," to begin to slide down a moral

slope of no return. This "character," so it was believed, was about to commit sexual violations as predetermined by his lifestyle. Jewish honor also included being humble and not standing in the way of a woman's honor and her fulfilment of her alleged role, which implied eventually marrying a Christian man. If a Jewish man were to keep a woman "out of circulation" for too long by being her lover or by threatening her partnership with a Christian man, he would fall into a less honorable category. Naturally, the honor of Jews was not under scrutiny in this manner if they kept away from Christian women.

Thirdly, I linked the race defilement provision with other anti-Semitic legislation in Hungary and argued that the notion that Christian men had the property-rights over the nation was part of an abstract notion of "national honor." National honor implied that they alone should have access to good jobs, to the ownership of capital, to public spaces, and the friendship and love of honorable women. As part of the changing of the guard, their rivals were to be restrained and remain humbled.

If other regulations served to deprive Jewish men of their economic rights, the anti-Semitic sexual provision stripped them of full sexual citizenship. The requirements connected to female honor put a wall around the sexual choices of certain groups in the emotional regime(s) of the Horthy era. One's emotional liberty was seriously limited by the race defilement regulation, which forbade hundreds of thousands of Jewish men from approaching or continuing relationships with non-Jewish women, and in turn all non-Jewish women were closely monitored in order to ensure that they would not to engage in such illicit liaisons.

As with other anti-Semitic laws, what mattered was not just the number of the convicted and acquitted or the severity of their penalties. Stripping them of their honor as men (as part of the social construct of manhood), limiting their range of options, and policing and controlling female honor (i.e. sexuality) were all part and parcel of this regulation. Honorable Hungarian non-Jewish men wanted all honorable women to be their own virgin brides and loyal wives, whereas the love of a Hungarian woman for a "Jew" or any kind of rebellion against the legally buttressed order of things was to be punished with the full force of the law.

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Regina Fritz

Inside the Ghetto: Everyday Life in Hungarian Ghettos[1]

The first ghetto was established in Hungary on April 16, 1944, about one month after the German invasion of the country. Within eight weeks, the Hungarian gendarmerie and police, together with the German Sondereinsatzkommando, had detained more than 400,000 Hungarian Jews in over 170 ghettos. There were significant differences between the individual ghettos in Hungary with regard to housing, provisions, the ability to make contact with the "outside world," the extent of violence, etc. The living conditions depended to a great extent on how the local administrations implemented the measures for ghettoization and how the non-Jewish population reacted to the creation of the ghettos. In addition, ghettoization in the annexed territories differed in many perspectives from ghettoization in the core of Hungary. It was not only more brutal, but also much less structured. The paper investigates the formal differences between the individual Hungarian ghettos and describes the widely differing situations experienced in them. On the basis of personal documents and the preserved estates of ghetto administrations, I offer a portrayal of daily life inside the ghettos in the capital and in cities and smaller towns in rural parts of Hungary.

Keywords: Hungary, Jews, persecution, ghetto, daily life, oral history, diary, DEGOB, 1944–45, Holocaust.

Introduction

On April 18, 1944, Olga and Ilona Iczkovitcs told their brother Elemér about their forced relocation to a ghetto.

> According to official regulations, along with other Jews, we have to leave our homes maybe tomorrow, maybe the day after—we just don't know yet. The tentative destination is Beregszász. We are allowed to bring one package weighing 50 kilos. All three of us are setting out on our way with strong spirits, hopeful and healthy. Should fate have it that we won't meet again, we hope you may be truly happy.[2]

1 I especially thank the J. and O. Winter Fund, City University of New York for supporting my research for this essay. Parts of this essay were published in: Regina Fritz, "Divergierende Ghettoerfahrungen – Alltag in den ungarischen Ghettos," in *Lebenswelt Ghetto. Alltag und soziales Umfeld während der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung,* ed. Imke Hansen et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 346–68.

2 Letter from Olga and Ilona Iczkovitcs to Elemér Iczkovitcs, April 18, 1944, Holocaust Memorial Center (HDKE) 2011.917.2.

Two days earlier, on April 16, 1944, about a month following the German occupation of Hungary and twelve days before the official government ruling on "ghettoization," the first ghetto was established in the annexed region of Carpathian Ruthenia. By early June 1944, more than 400,000 Jews were concentrated in over 170 ghettos,[3] so that, with the exception of Budapest, the ghettoization of Jews in Hungary was practically completed within a matter of weeks. From mid-June 1944 onwards, the Jews of Budapest were required to move into specific "yellow houses" in the vicinity of factories, rail stations, and other possible targets of allied air strikes. Only in November 1944, months after the majority of Hungarian Jews had been deported and murdered, were two closed-in ghettos established in Budapest, the "Large" Ghetto and the "International" Ghetto.[4]

Most ghettos outside the capital existed only briefly, as the ghetto residents were transported to special collection camps in the county capitals within a matter of weeks. After two weeks at most, the vast majority of them had been sent to the concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. In exceptional cases, Hungarian Jews were deported to the Austrian camp Strasshof/Nordbahn.[5]

Concentration and deportation was organized by deportation zones, which corresponded mainly to the gendarmerie districts. With some exceptions, the Jews living in the territories Hungary annexed between 1938 and 1941 were deported first. The Jews living in the core parts of the country (post-Trianon Hungary) followed. The deportations were supposed to be concluded with the Jews of Budapest, however, Regent Miklós Horthy put a stop to the deportations before the Jews of Budapest would have fallen victim to them. He did so in reaction to growing international pressure and also due to his realization that the war had been lost following the landing of Allied troops at Normandy

3 László Csősz talks about 350 ghettos and collection camps. Cf. László Csősz, *Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok. A vészkorszak Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok megyében* (PhD diss., University of Szeged, 2010), 74. Approximately 200 of them were intended as collecting points, such as synagogues or schools, and the Jewish people from smaller villages were meant to stay in them for several days prior to their transport to a larger ghetto.

4 The "Large" ghetto was surrounded by a wooden fence. Up to 70,000 people lived in it. In the "International" ghetto around 15,000 people were housed. Cf. Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary. Condensed Edition* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 189–93. About the ghettoization of Budapest see Tim Cole, *Holocaust City. The Making of a Jewish Ghetto* (London–New York: Routledge, 2003).

5 On the details of the events that followed, see Frojimovics–Kovács in this issue.

and the continuing advances of the Red Army.[6] After Romania switched sides politically and militarily, Horthy installed a new government under Géza Lakatos, which secretly accepted an armistice agreement with the Soviet Union. Following the broadcast of this agreement on Hungarian radio, the German government forced Horthy and the Lakatos government to resign on October 15, 1944. Ferenc Szálasi, the leader of the Hungarian Arrow Cross party, took over the government and restarted the deportation of the Hungarian Jews. Between November 6 and December 1, 1944, over 76,000 Hungarian Jews were handed over to the German Empire. This number included forced laborers from Hungarian factories, labor servicemen from the Hungarian army, and Budapest Jews who had survived the first wave of deportations in the first half of 1944.[7]

Due to the fact that the rural ghettos of Hungary existed only for a matter of weeks, internal ghetto institutions and cultural life could not develop as distinctive aspects of ghetto life, as they had in other ghettos across Europe, especially in Poland.[8] Although there was first evidence of administrative structures, religious life, organization of health and preventive care in the Hungarian case too, only the "Large" Ghetto of Budapest had a somewhat more developed administration.[9] For historians wishing to analyze life and life worlds (*Lebenswelt*)[10] in the Hungarian ghettos, the limited number of sources about the daily life inside them poses a serious challenge. Military operations also led to the destruction or loss of files. Because of this, everyday life in the Hungarian ghettos has rarely been made the subject of scholarly inquiry.[11]

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6 Pope Pius XII, President Roosevelt, and the Swedish king intervened during the Hungarian deportations.

7 Cf. Christian Gerlach and Götz Aly, *Das letzte Kapitel. Der Mord an den ungarischen Juden 1944–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2004), 10 and 366f. Regarding the labor input of Hungarian Jews in the area of current-day Austria, see especially Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, *Ungarisch-jüdische Zwangsarbeiter und Zwangsarbeiterinnen in Österreich 1944/45. Arbeitseinsatz – Todesmärsche – Folgen* (Münster–Hamburg–Berlin–London: LIT, 2010) and Szabolcs Szita, *Verschleppt, verhungert, vernichtet. Die Deportation von ungarischen Juden auf das Gebiet des annektierten Österreich 1944–1945* (Vienna: Werner Eichbauer, 1999).

8 Tim Cole, "Multiple and Changing Experiences of Ghettoization. Budapest, 1944," in *Life in the Ghettos During the Holocaust,* ed. Eric J. Sterling (New York: Syracuse, 2005), 146.

9 The ghetto of Budapest had a postal service, for instance.

10 Cf. *Lebenswelt Ghetto. Alltag und soziales Umfeld während der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung,* ed. Imke Hansen, Katrin Steffen, and Jochen Tauber (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013).

11 The works of Tim Cole represent an exception: Tim Cole, "Building and Breaching the Ghetto Boundary: A Brief History of the Ghetto Fence in Körmend, Hungary, 1944," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 23 (2009): 2, and Tim Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust. Journeying in and out of the Ghettos* (London–New York: Continuum, 2011). The scholarship on the Hungarian ghettos, which has grown considerably since the 1990s, has focused primarily on Hungary's collaboration with the German occupiers. Cf. Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok"; Judit Molnár, *Zsidósors 1944-ben az V. (szegedi) csendőrkerületben* (Budapest:

However, as stressed by historian Saul Friedländer, Jewish perceptions, actions, and reactions to persecution are an integral part of the history of National Socialism.[12] Accordingly, the study of everyday life in the Hungarian ghettos also constitutes a relevant scholarly subject. The following study aligns with the recent series of publications, which have increasingly explored Nazi ghettos from the perspectives of everyday life.[13] The aim of these studies was to supplement historical research, which for a long time had focused on the perpetrator's perspective, with the victim's point of view. The "perceptions, agency, and reactions [...], in addition to the interactions [of the persecuted, note R.F.] with the rest of the population" thus became the central part of the analysis.[14] These researches emphasize efforts made to regain a sense of normality in the chaos of everyday life in the ghetto. Endeavors to maintain friendships and family relationships, celebrate holidays, organize cultural, religious, and social institutions are also at the heart of these inquiries, as are internal conflicts in the ghetto or interactions with the outside world. The intention is not, as was in the past, to analyze ghetto history backwards, proceeding in our attempts to understand it from its outcome, i.e. by focusing on the subsequent annihilation of prisoners in the concentration and death camps, even if the context of persecution cannot be ignored. Instead, the studies consciously address the lives and activities of the persecuted and characterize the communities in the ghettos as heterogeneous societies.[15] As noted by historians Imke Hansen, Katrin Steffen, and Jochen Tauber, "ghettos should not be seen only as places of persecution

Cserépfalvi, 1995); Judit Molnár, *Csendőrök, hivatalnokok, zsidók. Válogatott tanulmányok a magyar holokauszt történetéből* (Szeged: Szegedi Zsidó Hitközség, 2000); Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide: Holocaust in Hungary,* 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981). A good overview is provided in Randolph L. Braham, ed., *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary,* 3 vols. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013).

12 Cf. Saul Friedländer, "An Integrated History of the Holocaust. A Reassessment," in *Konstellationen. Über Geschichte, Erfahrung und Erkenntnis,* ed. Nicolas Berg, Omar Kamil, Markus Kirchhoff, and Susanne Zepp (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2011).

13 Relevant studies are available for Theresienstadt and the Polish ghettos. See, for example, Anna Hájková, "The Prisoner Society in Terezín Ghetto, 1941–1945" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2013). See also Andrea Löw, *Juden im Getto Litzmannstadt. Lebensbedingungen, Selbstwahrnehmung, Verhalten* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006) as well as the anthology *Lebenswelt Ghetto,* ed. Hansen, Steffen, and Tauber.

14 Doris L. Bergen, Anna Hájková, and Andrea Löw, "Warum eine Alltagsgeschichte des Holocaust?," in *Alltag im Holocaust. Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941–1945,* ed. Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen, and Anna Hájková (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013), 3.

15 Cf. Hansen, Steffen, and Tauber, "Fremd- und Selbstbestimmung."

and murder, but also as places of life, albeit restricted, and moreover, as a coming together of different worlds."[16]

The few surviving diaries and pieces of correspondences from the Hungarian ghettos are uniquely valuable sources that help document events and daily life during the period of persecution in the involuntarily ghettoized community.[17] In addition to the documents produced by the organs of local administration, the daily reports from the various ghettos that were published by Hungarian historians Judit Molnár and Kinga Frojimovics[18] and the reports from the "Large" Ghetto in Budapest also provide insights into everyday life in Hungarian ghettos. The small amount of source material from the time period can be supplemented with recollections recorded after 1945. The perspectives of those inside the Hungarian ghettos have been articulated not only in interviews recorded decades after the events,[19] but also immediately after the war. One of the most valuable early postwar collections is that of the *National Relief Committee for Deportees* (DEGOB). Recorded between March 1945 and June 1946, the files in this collection document the personal stories of about 5,000 survivors.[20] Although the project's focus was documentation from the post-deportation

16 Imke Hansen, Katrin Steffen, and Jochen Tauber, "Fremd- und Selbstbestimmung im Kontext von nationalsozialistischer Verfolgung und Ghettoalltag," in *Lebenswelt Ghetto. Alltag und soziales Umfeld während der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung,* ed. Imke Hansen, Katrin Steffen, and Jochen Tauber (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 9.

17 Cf. the diaries of Éva Heyman and Erzsébet Fóti.

18 They were published in: *Gettómagyarország 1944. A Központi Zsidó Tanács iratai,* ed. Judit Molnár, and Kinga Frojimovics (Budapest: Magyar Zsidó Levéltár, 2002).

19 The different interview projects with Hungarian survivors are summarized in Éva Kovács, András Lénárt, and Lujza Anna, "Oral History Collections on the Holocaust in Hungary," *S.I.M.O.N.,* October 14, 2014, accessed October 16, 2015, http://simon.vwi.ac.at/index.php/working-papers/43-kovacs-eva-lenart-andras-szasz-anna-lujza.

20 For the history of DEGOB, see Rita Horváth, "A Magyarországi Zsidó Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság (DEGOB) története," *MAKOR* 1 (1997). See also Rita Horváth, "Jews in Hungary after the Holocaust. The National Relief Committee for Deportees, 1945–1950," *The Journal of Israeli History* 19 (1998): 2; Rita Horváth, "A Jewish Historical Commission in Budapest: The Place of the National Relief Committee for Deportees in Hungary [DEGOB] Among the Other Large-Scale Historical-Memorial Projects of She'erit Hapletah After the Holocaust (1945–1948)," in *Holocaust Historiography in Context. Emergence, Challenges, Polemics & Achievements,* ed. David Bankier and Dan Michmann (Jerusalem: Berghahn, 2008) and Gábor Murányi, "'Hallottam, amikor azt válaszolta: Alles ins Gas!' A Deportáltakat Gondozó Bizottság jegyzőkönyvei 1945-ből," *Phralipe* 11–12 (1990). Cf. also Ferenc Laczó, "'I could hardly wait to get out of this camp even though I knew it would only get worse until liberation came.' On Hungarian Jewish Accounts of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp 1945–46," *Hungarian Historical Review* 3 (2013). The DEGOB protocols are available in the Hungarian Jewish Archive in Budapest. Most of them are available online at www.degob.hu.

period and the experiences in the National Socialist camp system, in almost every protocol survivors also spoke about the ghettoization process and everyday life in the Hungarian ghettos.[21]

Drawing on these sources, in this essay I investigate the diversity of the ghettos and analyze the differences in ghetto experiences. To what extent could the Jewish inhabitants of the ghettos influence and give structure to their daily life? Was it possible to adhere to religious commandments or arrange forms and patterns of cultural life? What influence did internal or "imported" conflicts have on the life of the ghetto inhabitants? How was violence exercised and experienced in the different ghettos, particularly by the Hungarian gendarmerie? How did the living conditions change over the course of the weeks? And, last but not least, how did the ability or the inability to make contact with the "outside world" influence ghetto life?

"It's impossible to get used to this life." On the Diversity of the Ghettos

Edmund Veesenmayer, Hitler's personal plenipotentiary in Hungary, sent a telegram to the German Foreign Office on April 23, 1944:

> The ghettoization work began on April 16 in the Carpathian region. 150,000 Jews have been seized. It's expected that this action will be completed by the end of next week. An estimated 300,000 Jews. Subsequently, similar operations in Transylvania and further border provinces near Romania are being planned. Still a further 250,000 to 300,000 Jews to capture. Then, those counties adjacent to Serbia and Croatia, and, finally, the inland ghettoization, finishing up in Budapest.[22]

Over the course of the following weeks, Veesenmayer regularly reported to the Foreign Office on the gradual ghettoization and the deportations, that followed. In a bureaucratic style, he relayed the number of captured persons and noted "incidents," such as escape attempts or suicides. Because they don't contain any information about daily life or living conditions, these reports shed no light on the many disparities among ghettos established in Hungary during the spring and summer of 1944. However, the ghettoization in the annexed territories differed

21 After all, one of the missions of the DEGOB was to document Jewish life before the destruction of Jewish communities in Hungary.

22 Telegram of Edmund Veesenmayer from April 23, 1944, Political Archive of the Foreign Office, R 29793.

from that in the core of the country because it was carried out in a more ferocious and less organized manner. This becomes apparent when the documents from regional administrations are considered, alongside egodocuments.

In many villages of the annexed territories, the authorities skipped a "multiphase ghettoization" altogether. Instead, the Jewish inhabitants were quickly gathered in collection camps in which, because of their provisional nature, conditions were especially dreadful. On the other hand, in the country's core, where the ghettoization happened at a later time after the authorities had become more familiar with the procedure, the Jews living in the larger cities were moved to designated areas, which were usually isolated from the rest of the city. Jews from the villages and small towns were temporarily housed in synagogues and other Jewish community institutions in their hometowns. Later, the Hungarian and German authorities moved them to ghettos of nearby larger cities. One or two weeks before deportation, the Jews were finally concentrated in collection camps.

In the case of Hungary, the location of ghettoization and the conditions in each ghetto depended mostly on decisions made by regional administrators.[23] Prior to the establishment of the ghettos, there were administrative consultations regarding questions of location, supply, and equipment. The few surviving minutes taken at such meetings document the broad scope of action the local decision-makers had on questions concerning ghettoization. Thus, a note written by the Debrecen Council demonstrates vividly the radicalizing or deradicalizing affect that the local authorities could have on the centrally regulated ghettoization measures.[24] On May 8, 1944, a confrontation between Mayor Sándor Kölcsey and prefect Lajos Bessenyei erupted over the implementation of the individual

23 The process of ghettoization also differed in other countries from place to place. Martin Dean notes: "Since detailed arrangements were left to the local authorities, the process of establishing ghettos was extremely decentralized and drawn out over more than two years." He concludes: "The process of ghetto establishment varied considerably from region to region and was not the result of a series of coordinated orders issued in Berlin." Martin Dean, "Regional Patterns of Ghettoization in the Annexed and Occupied Territories of the Third Reich," in *Lebenswelt Ghetto. Alltag und soziales Umfeld während der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung,* ed. Imke Hansen, Katrin Steffen, and Jochen Tauber (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 37, 49. It is worth mentioning that these ghettos were established in the annexed or occupied territories by the German administration. Hungary, on the other hand, could keep a high level of autonomy even after German occupation, thus the decision-making rested with the Hungarian administration. Cf. Gerlach, Aly, *Das letzte Kapitel,* 13.

24 Hajdú-Bihar County Archives, Debrecen, IV.B. 1406.b., box 365, 21.838/1944. See also László Csősz, and Regina Fritz, "Ein Protokoll," *S.I.M.O.N.*, accessed October 16, 2015, http://simon.vwi.ac.at/images/Documents/Events/Nur1Quelle/Nur1Quelle.pdf.

steps of ghettoization in Debrecen. The former took a more moderate position. Kölcsey was firmly against barricading the ghettos and also insisted that the Jews should be allowed to bring along all necessary items. What's significant here is that Kölcsey substantiated his viewpoint with aesthetic and pragmatic argumentation, and not with any kind of philanthropic reasoning: "We have more practical solutions here and can close off the streets. He [Kölcsey, note R.F.] is averse to using wooden planks, first of all, because they are ugly [...]. Secondly, the planks might be useful for national defense." Finally, the Jewish population in Debrecen ended up being housed in a ghetto located in the city center instead of the barracks built specifically for them outside the city (as first proposed); the lack of building materials was cited as the reason.

While ghettoization in Debrecen was carried out in accordance with the decision of the city authorities, due to protests by the local non-Jewish population, similar plans made for other cities often failed. On the one hand, some protesters laid claims to the homes of Jews, which were often located on projected ghetto premises. On the other, some gentiles complained that they would have to vacate their houses or apartments, which were in the area designated for the ghetto.[25] These grievances often led to implementing more radical ghettoization plans than originally intended. Therefore, the area initially planned for many ghettos was further reduced, or the ghetto was set up on the fringe of residential areas, in warehouse-like conditions located in either abandoned factories or commercial buildings.[26] However, in some places, such as Hódmezővásárhely, the Jews were actually allowed to stay in their own homes until deportation. In Budapest, the authorities at first decided that the Jewish population would be housed in houses marked with a yellow star throughout the entire urban area. The authorities rejected building a closed-in ghetto up until November 1944, as they had come to believe rumors, which had also been spread by the Budapest Jewish Council,[27] that only non-Jewish neighborhoods would be bombed.

Overall, Hungarian historian László Csősz has distinguished five types of ghetto:

1. Complete resettlement. Accommodation outside residential areas in warehouse-like conditions in factories or farm buildings;

2. Separate residential neighborhoods, usually in former Jewish quarters;

25 Cf. Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 42 and 92.

26 Ibid., 79.

27 Cf. statement of the Budapest Jewish Council Chairman Samu Stern, DEGOB 3627.

3. Accommodation in individual buildings, not necessarily joined, marked with a yellow star;

4. Rejection of the establishment of a closed-in ghetto.[28]

Csősz characterizes Model 5, for instance the ghettos in Kassa, Ungvár, and Munkács as a combination of the first and second models. In these cities, local Jews were housed in a closed-off district within the city, while Jewish people from the surrounding region had to move to a collection camp, usually located on the outskirts of the city. However, there were also several other cases in which the Jewish population was divided into various groups. For example, in the Beregszász ghetto, Jews over 60 years of age were housed separately.[29] In Bonyhád, there were separate ghettos for Orthodox Jews and Neolog Jews.[30] Furthermore, in some ghettos the Jews who had converted to Christianity were housed separately, which occasionally also meant that they had somewhat better living conditions.[31]

The filth, lack of toilets and washing facilities, problems with supplies, loss of private space, confinement, harassment by the police, and uncertainty about the future were all deeply imprinted on the memories of most survivors. These factors affected people differently in the different ghettos. In particular, the type of housing seems to have had a key impact on experiences of the ghettos. Survivors from Kassa who were housed in the local brick factory recalled their experiences thus:

> The wind was blowing terribly, it was cold, and the brick factory didn't even have walls. The first days were miserable. There was no toilet. There was no water. There was not even space to unload our baggage or take a moment's pause, so we just got to work. We built walls, but we slept on the ground. Whoever could manage to get hold of some straw did so.[32]

28 Cf. Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 75.

29 See the daily report from the Beregszász ghetto from May 1, 1944, reprinted: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 57. It states: "The people of Beregszász are in the barrel factory near Reisman and Neufeld; the people from the province are in the brickyards of Kont and Vály. The 60 years of age and older are living in a separate street."

30 Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 148.

31 The reason for separation differed from ghetto to ghetto. In some cases the Catholic Church intervened in support of the separation of the converted Jews.

32 Protocol with Ms. V.R., Ms. J.J., Ms. J.E., Ms. K.P. and Ms. K.E., taken on August 2, 1946, DEGOB 2591.

Those forced to move into houses designated for Jews within city perimeters lived under relatively better conditions. Although an average of 6 to 7 people had to share a single room, the survivors from Kassa accentuated the differences: "Life was better here, because they were able to live in apartments and move about more freely. Once in a while, a person might even have a minute alone to himself; he didn't always have to think, eat, drink, or sleep collectively."[33] The dense concentration of people in a paltry space was a common characteristic of ghettos in the annexed territories. The lack of space was the most extreme in these ghettos, with an average of 1m² per person. In a large portion of the heartland (meaning Trianon Hungary) the proposed standard was 4m² per person, although in many ghettos people in the end only had half that space.[34] On May 19, 1944, a Jewish woman wrote a letter to her sister, describing the situation in the Miskolc ghetto:

> As I mentioned, we sleep seven people to a small room. The seven beds take up so much of the space in the room that we are hardly able to move about. You can imagine how much daily life is compromised for my dear Irén, for whom her beloved home was everything. It's impossible to get used to this life. It feels like prison.[35]

The internments were led by the Hungarian police and gendarmerie, representatives of the Sondereinsatzkommando functioned under the leadership of Adolf Eichmann as a "consulting institution."[36] The Jews of the individual counties usually had 3–12 days to relocate to the designated areas. In some places, however, they were only given a mere matter of hours for this purpose. For instance, in Munkács the officials decided on a strict limit of 10 hours. The procedures began in Munkács at 4:30 AM. The gendarmerie chased the local Jews from their beds and beat them up on the way to the ghetto.[37]

Most ghettos had a prescribed limitation on how much luggage could be brought along. In practice there were differences between the individual ghettos, as was true with regards to whether a ghetto was open or completely isolated.

33 Ibid.

34 Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 79.

35 Letter from May 19, 1944, Hungarian Jewish Archives D 6/2.

36 Szita, *Verschleppt, verhungert, vernichtet,* 21. The Sondereinsatzkommando, made up of around 150–200 men, was in charge of deporting Hungarian Jews. Zoltán Vági claims this number also included secretaries and chauffeurs. Cf. Zoltán Vági, "Endre László politikai pályája 1919–1945" (PhD diss., Eötvös Loránd University Budapest, 2003), 150 f.

37 See the protocol with Ms. N.J., recorded on July 16, 1945, DEGOB 1533.

In some ghettos, especially those in the annexed territories, the ghetto residents possessed only the garments they wore on their bodies. In other ghettos, the Jews were allowed to bring along as many belongings as they were able to carry into the ghetto. This was the case in Debrecen,[38] for example, where the county prefect at first rejected such a proposal from the mayor, maintaining that it would amount to "sanatorium accommodation."[39] In some villages Jews were even allowed to bring furniture into the ghetto.[40] In general, however, only 50 kg worth of luggage was permitted.

As a consequence of the hasty creation of the ghettos, many areas of daily life were only provisionally organized. The living conditions were especially atrocious in the ghettos and collection camps in the annexed territories, where the percentage of destitute Jews was higher than in the core parts of the country and the transitional character of the ghettos and camps was the most blatantly obvious. In some cases, the Jews in these ghettos had to live out in the open, and the severe lack of water made the situation arduous. In a letter to Bishop László Ravasz dated May 5, 1944, the notary public in Marosvásárhely bemoaned the conditions in which the Jewish residents were housed next to an abandoned brick factory:

> There were only three or four rooms available, full of shattered windows, and there was little more than a few open sheds. This means the huge group [of Jews, note R.F.] is forced to camp outside, exposed to the elements. They are not even provided with basic sanitary facilities. There is a lack of toilets and drinkable water, and the food supply does not work yet. Infants, small children, and the aged are left out in the windy, cold nights with no roof over their heads (completely unprotected).[41]

In the Munkács ghetto there were no bathing facilities either, and the inhabitants had to wash themselves in a nearby swamp.[42] Moreover, many ghettos had an inadequate supply of food and medication. Although most

38 See the protocol with Ms. L.S. from November 3, 1945, DEGOB 3490.

39 Hajdú-Bihar Country Archives, Debrecen, IV.B. 1406.b., box 365, 21.838/1944.

40 Hence, the Jewish families of Celldömölk were each allowed to take along a wardrobe and a table into the Jánosháza ghetto. Residents of the Keszthely ghetto were allowed to bring beds and chairs. See the daily report from Celldömölk from May 17, 1944 and in Keszthely, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 61 and 87.

41 Ráday Archives, A-1-c Elnöki iratok 1944.

42 See the protocol with Ms. N.J., recorded on July 16, 1945, DEGOB 1533.

ghettos had a communal kitchen, there was very little in the way of food or ingredients on hand. Many people were reliant on the food rations they had brought along. One survivor of the Huszt ghetto concluded that "[t]here was, indeed, a communal kitchen in the ghetto, but whoever relied on that could just go ahead and starve."[43] The Orthodox Jews in the Carpathian-Ukraine and in northeastern Hungary were hit especially hard by the supply problem. The Hungarian authorities began rounding up Jews in this region on April 16, 1944, the final day of Pesach. Because the religious Jews were minding the Jewish laws of not storing any leavened foods at this time, the Orthodox Jews, as a result, had no bread rations to take with them to the ghetto. This had massive consequences for the food situation in these ghettos.

Most ghettos were fenced in and put under outside surveillance by policemen or the gendarmerie.[44] Ghetto life was organized by a local Jewish Council.[45] In addition, numerous ghettos had a ghetto police. Ghetto residents relied not only on the institutional structures provided.[46] They also organized aspects of communal and daily life on their own. In her journal, Éva Heyman described the Nagyvárad ghetto thus:

> We chose Marica's mother, Aunt Klári Kecskeméti, to be in charge of the inhabitants of our room. Everybody has to obey her. In the dark she gave a speech, and even though I was almost asleep, I understood that we all have to take care that everything is kept clean, because that is very important, and that we all have to think of one another, since all the people in the room are relatives and friends.[47]

43 See the protocol with Ms. F.B, w.Y. (most likely in the summer of 1945), DEGOB 2800.

44 The gendarmerie was responsible for maintaining civil order outside the cities, whereas the police was in charge in the cities.

45 About the Hungarian Jewish Council see a.o. Judit Molnár, "The Foundation and Activities of the Hungarian Jewish Council, March 20 – July 7, 1944" *Yad Vashem Studies* 30 (2002), accessed October 15, 2015, http://www1.yadvashem.org/download/about_holocaust/studies/molnar.PDF and *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics.

46 See the camp order in the Kassa collection camp from April 24, 1944, Nógrád Country Archives XV. 24. 9.

47 Diary entry from May 5, 1944 in: Éva Heyman, *The Diary of Éva Heyman* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1974), 89. Please note if using this source that the original diary is not available, so the extent to which Éva's mother intervened editorially in the diary's publication is unclear.

House Commanders, in charge of orderliness, cleanliness, and discipline, were elected in many other ghettos too.[48] Understandably, the internal administrative structure was most developed in the "Large" Ghetto in Budapest, which existed for seven weeks (the longest time among Hungarian ghettos). The ghetto was divided into ten districts, each of which was headed by a district leader who in turn was supported by a deputy. They were appointed by the Jewish Council and they were responsible for providing ghetto residents with food, organizing the fire response unit, leading a registration system, holding judicial powers, and being responsible for children who were living without their parents in the ghetto. Additionally, there was a Postal Service, which, because of organizational challenges, was able to process very few letters. Within each district, every building had a "building commander." Apartments had an "apartment commander." Order in the "Large" Ghetto was upheld by a ghetto police, the most important task of which was to prevent the theft of food and heating material.[49]

In general, the Hungarian ghetto inhabitants were mostly children, adolescents, older people, sick people, and women, because most Jewish men had been called to serve in the Hungarian labor service before and during the process of ghettoization.[50] According to a report from Kisvárda, "55 percent of the people currently in the ghetto are women over 40 years old. The rest are children and elderly people; young men are not to be found at home, or only to a very minor extent."[51]

In the cramped quarters of the ghetto, social and religious tensions flared up between rich and poor, young and old, and religious and secular Jews. Despite numerous difficulties, efforts were still made to follow religious commandments and maintain religious customs. Religious issues were crucial, especially in the ghettos in the annexed territories, where the number of strictly traditional, Orthodox Jews was relatively high. However, even in the core parts of the country conflicts erupted between Orthodox Jews and Neolog Jews, as well as between those who had converted to Christianity but were regarded by the authorities as Jews according to the anti-Jewish laws. A survivor of the Szolnok

48 See the daily report from the Kisvárda ghetto from May 8, 1944, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 91.

49 Cf. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* vol. 2, 856–58.

50 Thus, when deportations commenced, labor service, which had already claimed the lives of many men before the German occupation, in some instances became a lifesaver.

51 Report from Kisvárda on May 8, 1944, MZSL D 8/1.

ghetto recalled an example of such a conflict on his first Shabbat in the ghetto, where attempts were made to organize the event in a former outdoor kitchen, but the required separation of men and women was not feasible. The conservative community argued that people should try to make the best out of the situation and pray together, but the ultra-Orthodox men left the room on the grounds that Jewish commandments were absolute and must be obeyed regardless of the circumstances.[52]

Even cooking together could lead to disagreements. A Debrecen ghetto survivor recalled how the ultra-Orthodox families would not cook in the communal kitchens because they were not kosher.[53] Consequently, some ghettos arranged their own kosher kitchens.[54] The differences were often exacerbated in the ghettos when high-profile Jews (members of the Jewish Council, doctors, or pharmacists) received better accommodations or were housed in a separate ghetto.

"The ghetto became the police's favorite activity." Suffering Violence in the Ghetto

Not only were the general conditions in the ghettos and collection camps in the first ghettoization zones often more disastrous than in parts of post-Trianon Hungary, in many instances, the police also treated the ghettoized population more callously. After the war, a survivor from the Mátészalka ghetto remembered: "They punched one fellow, because his yellow star wasn't sewn on properly, and they beat another, because he had his hands in his pockets. They found mistakes all the time."[55] Often, the men and, eventually, women too were given meaningless work simply to keep them busy. In one instance, they had to dig pits and later fill them back in.

Beatings were a daily routine in the Munkács ghetto, too:

> The ghetto became the police's favorite activity. They entered whenever they felt like it and roughed us up. Sometimes, they would take us to

52 Cited in: Agnes Kadar, "Historical Position of the Hungarian Jewry and Untold Ghetto Accounts," in *Life in the Ghettos during the Holocaust,* ed. Eric J. Sterling (New York: Syracuse, 2005), 50.

53 Cf. Ibid., 55.

54 See, for example, the Szarvas und Tiszafüred ghettos, Daily report from the Szarvas ghetto on May 23, 1944 and from the Tiszafüred ghetto on May 14, 1944, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 128 and 139.

55 See the protocol with Ms. R.N., taken on July 14, 1945, DEGOB 1781.

> the river and force us to get in, to make a header. Obviously, it was no big deal for the young lads, but they made the old and sick people do the same thing.[56]

Orthodox Jews, who notably stood out in the crowd because of their appearance, seem to have suffered an especially high number of acts of violence. For instance, there were countless attacks on strictly religious Jews in the Munkács ghetto. One survivor reported that Orthodox men were repeatedly abused on their way home after evening prayer.[57] Many survivors remembered what was called "Black Saturday" in the Munkács ghetto. As the ghetto's Orthodox men made their way to the synagogue early in the morning, they were intercepted by Germans, who took 200 of them off to work. The men were forced to remove doors from houses, carry out all of the objects that were in the synagogue, and then wash the floor of the synagogue with the tallit. The Germans severely abused them the whole time.[58] A female eyewitness remembered: "On this day, they gathered all the Jewish men and boys, took them to the synagogue, and had them disassemble all the seating and furniture with their bare hands—without any tools. And they were forced to chant Jewish prayers at the same time."[59] The degree of the cruelty of the gendarmes and the police often depended on whether they had had any social relationships with Jews before ghettoization. The local policeman and gendarmes who knew some of the Jews tended to help out or behave more neutrally. Commando units from other localities carried out their tasks with more merciless severity.[60]

Many survivors vividly recalled the vicious interrogations conducted by the gendarmes and the acts of torture that were used in order to gain information about hidden valuables. Jews who were considered wealthy were interrogated with exceptional violence, as noted in a Salgótarján ghetto report received by the Jewish Council in June 1944:

> It has been reported that during the night of May 31 in the Salgótarján community, several affluent Jews were investigated in the main school building. Their inspection began with the most abominable savageries.

56 See the protocol with Mr. M.J., taken on August 7, 1945, DEGOB 2234.

57 See the protocol with Ms. F.T., taken on June 22, 1945, DEGOB 123.

58 See the protocol with Ms. B.B. und Ms. B.J., taken on July 13,1945, DEGOB 1459; as well as the protocol with Ms. N.J., taken on July 16, 1945, DEGOB 1533.

59 Protocol with Ms. N.J., taken on July 16, 1945, DEGOB 1533.

60 Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 101.

> 50 gendarmes from other communities questioned men and women. They broke their bones, forced them to take off their shoes, punched them on their barefoot soles, and pierced them with needles, all to extort confessions whether they'd concealed any assets with certain Christians.[61]

Women were subjected to humiliating strip searches in the course of which midwives probed all bodily cavities in search of cached goods. The procedure was traumatizing for many women: "Personally, I have never felt such panic as I did in those artillery barracks. I was always afraid there before hand and knew it was my turn to be brought into the torture chamber."[62] Several people actually died as a result of the brutal interrogations.[63] The surge in brutal treatment made daily life in the ghettos significantly more burdensome.

There were also raids in the course of which the few possessions of the ghetto residents were looted by gendarmes, police officers, or other non-Jews. In a unique way, the diary of 13-year-old Éva Heyman illustrates the increasing decline of living conditions in the ghetto. The quiet optimism expressed in her first journal entry[64] was soon replaced with fear and despair concerning the situation:

> I have no idea how things are going to be now. Every time I think: This is the end, things couldn't possibly be worse, and then I find out that it's always possible for everything to get worse, and even much much worse. Until now we had food, and now there won't be anything to eat. At least we were able to walk around inside the Ghetto, and now we won't be able to leave our house. Every child could wash up in warm water in the bathtub, and now they've taken the wood from the basement, and we won't be able to heat water to wash in any more. (…) Until now Mariska [the family's gentile housekeeper, note R.F.], was even able to come to us and we always had food, and now I really don't know what we're going to eat.[65]

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61 Report from the Salgótarján ghetto from June 12, 1944, Hungarian Jewish Archives D 8/1.

62 See the protocol with Ms. SZ.E., taken on November 15, 1945, DEGOB 3543.

63 See, for instance, the protocol with Ms. K.M. and Ms. H.J., taken on July 20, 1945, DEGOB 1743: "The wealthier people were summoned daily by the police. They were interrogated by means of beating and torture to confess where they'd hidden any assets. Several died as a result of these interrogations […]."

64 "I cuddled up with Marica and the two of us—believe or not, dear diary—were happy. Strange as it seems, everybody belonging to us was here together with us, everybody in the world whom we loved." Diary entry from May 5, 1944, Heyman, *The Diary of Éva Heyman,* 88 f.

65 Diary entry from May 10, 1944, ibid., 90 f.

As portrayed in this diary, many factors contributed to the worsening of the general situation in the ghetto. In many places, the already difficult living conditions in the ghetto deteriorated further, particularly as a consequence of the ongoing raids by the gendarmes. In the Kassa ghetto, for example, according to a survivor's report she was to bring with her two pieces of clothing, a pair of shoes, two weeks' worth of groceries, two blankets, and two pillows.[66] Most of these items, however, were taken by gendarmes in the course of "house searches," after which only a few articles of clothing were left for the ghetto inhabitants.[67] Even in the Kaposvár ghetto, where the Jews were permitted to bring an unlimited amount of their property with them, there was a rampage that began on June 5, 1944. Over the course of several days, a group of about 25 men captured furniture, carpets, clothing, and other assets.[68]

The rising number of people being sent into the ghetto aggravated the situation further, leading to overcrowding. In some towns, the ghetto area was even reduced after the authorities or individuals laid claim to buildings located in the ghetto areas.[69] Furthermore, permission to leave the ghettos was increasingly restricted in many cases. Reports sent from the Gyöngyös ghetto are, therefore, typical of many ghettos:

> After the first two weeks, the situation in the ghetto has deteriorated drastically. Unless the errand is absolutely justified, exiting the ghetto has been banned completely. They have taken away all money over 50 Pengő from everyone's money supply. They have taken away all extra clothes and underwear. There is undeniably a shortage of food.[70]

The approximately 70,000 residents of the "Large" Ghetto in Budapest, established in November 1944, were not spared violent assaults either. Reports sent to the Budapest Jewish Council describe single acts of repeated violence being carried out. For example, the Council received reports on December 16 from several House Commanders:

66 See the protocol with Ms. F.M. und Ms. F.B., taken on June 22, 1945, DEGOB 84.

67 Ibid.

68 See the protocol with Ms. SZ.E., taken on November 15, 1945, DEGOB 3543.

69 See, for example, the Bajna ghetto, where the hospital and nursing home were reintegrated from the ghetto, as desired by the German military. See the daily report from the Baja ghetto from May 25, 1944, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 51.

70 Daily report from May 31, 1944 from the Gyöngyös ghetto, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 74.

> Several apartments in the building at 10 Rumbach Street were robbed on the night of November 13, and three armed men stole cash (3,500 Pengő), etc. and have taken wedding rings. The same robbers struck again the night of November 15 and stole money and other valuables from other apartments. [...] The night of the 15th, the apartment at 11 Kazinczy Street, first floor, door one, was robbed of money and clothes by two thugs. [...] On the 16th, several members of the Arrow Cross showed up in uniform at 30 Klauzal Street and seized money, medicine, and clothing.[71]

In addition to the numerous raids, there were incidents of sexual assault, abductions, and arbitrary shootings of Jews in Budapest. Thousands were shot while outside the ghetto[72] or massacred in attacks on Jewish hospitals located on the ghetto's periphery by members of the Arrow Cross,[73] many of whom were no more than 15 years of age.[74]

Jews who considered themselves successfully assimilated into Hungarian society experienced the harsh treatment in the ghettos as a profound identity crisis. Many well-assimilated Hungarian Jews lived in post-Trianon Hungary, and they had been confident for a long time that the conservative-aristocratic leadership of Hungary would protect them from expulsion or mistreatment.[75] They were proven wrong by the willing collaboration of the Hungarian authorities, the brutality of the gendarmerie, and the widespread apathy of the population concerning the subsequent deportations: "The local Christian population looked on with laughter at our disparagement, and even today, I cannot forget that," summed up one survivor after the war.[76]

Thus, persecution signified a rupture of national identity for many. Especially affected were members of the middle class, often converts who possessed little to no Jewish identity and believed themselves to have successfully integrated into

71 Report from December 16, 1944, HDKE, 2011.398.10.

72 The Hungarian historian Krisztián Ungváry mentions 2,600-3,600 people shot along the banks of the Danube River. Cf. Krisztián Ungváry, *The Siege of Budapest: One Hundred Days in World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 290.

73 Cf. the massacres in the hospitals in the Maros street and in the Városmajor street. Regina Fritz, "Gewalterfahrung verarbeiten: Kontextbezogene Berichte von Budapester Juden über Pfeilkreuzlermassaker," in *Krieg, Erinnerung, Geschichtswissenschaft,* ed. Siegfried Mattl, Gerhard Botz, Stefan Karner, and Helmut Konrad (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009).

74 See Gerlach and Aly, *Das letzte Kapitel,* 369.

75 Randolph L. Braham, "Rettungsaktionen: Mythos und Realität," in *Ungarn und der Holocaust. Kollaboration, Rettung und Trauma,* ed. Brigitte Mihok (Berlin: Metropol, 2005), 17 f.

76 Protocol with Mr. G.E., taken on June 23, 1945, DEGOB 90.

Hungarian society. Again and again, survivors recalled comrades who assumed that they had somehow been imprisoned by mistake and refused to accept the fact that in the eyes of the state they were Jewish. Ibolya G., who had been raised in the Christian faith, consulted a priest in a desperate letter from May 1944: "Frankly, I could never have imagined that something like this could happen. I still can't comprehend it, but if that's just the way it is, why does it concern me, even though I've never had anything to do with Jews?"[77]

A "Closed Society"? Relations with the "Outside World"

Although the living conditions declined in many ghettos, there were also ghettos in which the situation improved with progressive strides for a certain time. This was the case primarily in ghettos in which the initial situation was especially appalling. In some such cases, the ghetto administration was able to devise institutions which regulated supplies. But other factors could also lead to improvements in some ghettos, especially if there were possibilities to be in contact with the outside world. Although most ghettos were fenced in, not all of them were hermetically sealed. In many ghettos, residents were permitted to leave at certain times. In some ghettos younger men and women were even assigned work, such as in the Tab ghetto:

> Everyone 50 years of age or younger had to work. We were assigned to agricultural or construction work. We even built the Levente Home.[78] [...] We were put up at jobs in the various pastures nearby. We worked from Monday morning until Saturday evening, and on Saturday we returned home by car in the evening. The work was hard, but we were not so badly off. The supplies were generally very good in the farm yards.[79]

The same sentiment was echoed by the notary in the Tab ghetto, Endre Kovács, who made the following observations after the city's liberation by the Soviet army:

77 Letter from Ibolya G. to the priest Dr. Sándor N., from May 10, 1944, Ráday Archive, A-1-b Püspöki iratok 1944.

78 A document from June 22, 1944 also refers to the construction of the Levente Home: "they [the Jews, note R.F.] are employed in small groups, mainly to build the Levente Home in Tab," Somogy County Archive, Tab 8285/1944, cited in Sándor Bősze, "Zsidósors Tabon 1944-ben," in *Tabi Kilátó* (Tab: Tabi Polgármesteri Hivatal, 2000).

79 Protocol with S.R., taken on July 27, 1945, DEGOB 2830.

> After the ghetto's establishment, I asked permission from the county notary Nádasdy if they [the Jewish ghetto inhabitants, note R.F.] might be used in the fieldwork. I received the directive that yes, under observation, this would be okay, because there was a shortage of workers, and manpower was necessary. In response, I assigned the Tab landowner Zénó Welscherscheimb, landowner Gusztáv Götzen, and other landowning Jews, including myself, to agricultural work […].[80]

As demonstrated by this statement, ghetto inhabitants were exploited for labor due to the general scarcity of workers during the war. Many mayors and officials, therefore, believed that closing the ghettos completely was problematic, because the war economy would thereby lose a valuable workforce. Most people in the ghettos were apparently sent to do agricultural work. Some of them worked for the military[81] or were kept busy in mines. The working conditions in the individual workplaces varied greatly. In some places, workers were treated well and taken care of, while in other places, workers were regularly mistreated and beaten. Getting an opportunity to work outside the ghetto thus had its dangers and advantages. For example, it was a means of smuggling food into the ghetto and thereby improving one's own circumstances.[82] Occasionally, survivors could even recall that workers were paid in cash, such as in the Pécs ghetto, where workers were assigned to forestry tasks. They received 4.60 Pengő per day, while the women who worked in the garden nursery got 3.60 Pengő.[83] Money on the other hand could be used to purchase groceries at a public market.

Work could also give some moral support and help people win back a sense of dignity. Many people felt that the hours of idle waiting were especially excruciating because they tended to make a person feel completely useless. A survivor from the Budapest ghetto recounted: "I didn't want just to vegetate there [in the ghetto, remark R.F.] and stare at all the indignity, so I volunteered for kitchen work, because they said young people can join in, as there were

80 Protocol of district notary Endre Kovács from September 6, 1944 regarding the complaint filed against him, Somogy County Archives, Tab 7447/1944, cited by Bősze, "Zsidósors Tabon."

81 This is how the Jewish men of Huszt were put to work building a highway and fortification. In Szécsény, except for those under 14 years of age and the elderly, all others were forced to work in a military depot. See the daily report from the Huszt ghetto on May 3, 1944 and from the Szécsény ghetto from May 19, 1944, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 80 and 134.

82 For instance, opportunities to work outside the ghetto improved the situation in the Kassa ghetto. See the daily report from the Kassa ghetto from May 9, 1944, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 84.

83 See the daily report from the Pécs ghetto from May 26, 1944, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 119.

already enough older folks. I signed myself up right away, and I was so glad to be able to work from morning until afternoon […].”[84] Some people hoped that by working, they would draw attention to their own economic usefulness, and some believed they might, in this way, escape deportation.

It is noteworthy that in some places Jews were allowed to continue practicing their original professions, indicating the urgent need for their expertise. This was most evident in the medical profession. Specifically, city governments consented to allowing many Jewish doctors and pharmacists to continue practicing, as British historian Tim Cole illustrated with an example in the Körmend ghetto.[85] The Jewish doctor there was allowed to leave the ghetto each day to visit his patients, despite the fact that Jews had been officially prohibited from treating non-Jewish patients. Nonetheless, due to the insufficient number of non-Jewish professionals, the latter regulation was often disregarded. After all, Jewish doctors made up the majority of the medical profession in Hungary.

There were other examples of professional continuities too. In Körmend, for instance, a plumber and an electrician were allowed to keep pursuing their professions.[86] In the city of Békéscsaba, even the bank manager left the ghetto on a daily basis to keep doing his work.[87] A letter from the Miskolc ghetto refers to a parallel situation: “I have approval to go to the studio every day as long as I am able to carry out my trade. For my lunch, I send someone to the ghetto, and I only go back home to the ghetto in the evening.”[88]

Leaving the ghetto was a privilege also granted to members of the Jewish Council. Furthermore, in many ghettos people were named who exited the ghetto daily at officially regulated times to purchase food at the public market. Therefore, the conclusion drawn by Christoph Dieckmann and Babette Quinkert applied in the case of Hungary. According to Dieckmann and Quinkert, “a hermeneutical sealing off and sweeping surveillance […] [of the ghetto, note R.F.] were not the rule.”[89] The “openness” of many ghettos resulted in numerous encounters

84 Interview with Lóránt Istvánné, February–March 2004, Interviewer: Anna Földvári, accessed October 16, 2015, http://www.centropa.hu/object.93cd65e0-af5c-4ec1-b641-1141de5fca23.ivy?full=true.

85 In some villages, doctors and pharmacists were even allowed to stay in their own homes and didn’t have to move into the ghetto, like in Kaposvár. See the daily report from the Ghetto Kaposvár from May 14, 1944, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 85.

86 See Cole, “Building and Breaching the Ghetto Boundary.”

87 See the protocol with Ms. E.K., taken on September 14, 1945, DEGOB 3216.

88 Letter from May 19, 1944, Hungarian Jewish Archives D 6/2.

89 Christoph Dieckmann, Babette Quinkert, “Einleitung,” in *Im Ghetto 1939–1945. Neue Forschungen zu Alltag und Umfeld,* ed. Christoph Dieckmann and Babette Quinkert (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), 15.

between Jews and non-Jews which continued to take place even following the establishment of the ghettos. Accordingly, the Jewish involuntary community in the Hungarian ghettos cannot be considered an entirely closed society.

Jews and non-Jews continued to come into contact after the ghettoization of the former also because in some ghettos the local non-Jewish population was permitted to continue living in homes within ghetto boundaries. Furthermore, in many ghettos residents were allowed to receive letters and packages, and non-Jewish workers continued to have access to and come into the ghetto. Such workers included debt collectors, chimney sweeps, plumbers, construction workers, and those responsible for reading gas, water, and electricity meters.[90]

In a few cases, non-Jewish acquaintances were allowed to enter the ghetto, such as in Jászberény and Sepsiszentgyörgy.[91] Thus, many Hungarian ghettos were unusually permeable and offered time and time again possibilities for interactions between Jews and non-Jews, as well as the chance to smuggle food into the ghettos. In many ghettos, non-Jewish sellers offered their wares to ghetto dwellers in front of the ghetto gate up until May and June of 1944, when regulations were tightened to restrict such exchange.[92]

Though there was a chance in many ghettos to maintain contact with the non-Jewish population, it was not always possible to take advantage of these opportunities. Ultimately, the non-Jewish population was not always friendly to the involuntary community of ghettoized Jews, nor were they always willing to help.

In fact, a segment of the Hungarian population benefited from ghettoization, as demonstrated by historians Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági.[93] The economic

90 See the ghetto order from the Szombathely ghetto from May 16, 1944, reprinted in: *Források a szombathelyi gettó történetéhez. 1944. április 15. – 1944. július 30.*, comp. László Mayer (Szombathely: Vas Megyei Levéltár, 1994), 34.

91 For the former, see Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 88. For the latter, see the daily report from the Sepsiszentgyörgy ghetto from May 31, 1944, reprinted in: *Gettómagyarország,* ed. Molnár and Frojimovics, 125.

92 There were, however, counterexamples. In the Szolnok ghetto, the chief of police forbade visits and the sending or receiving of letters. In the Aknaszlatina ghetto, going out into the street or leaving one's courtyard was prohibited. Contact with the "outside world" gradually became restricted over time in most of the ghettos. Also, the number of people allowed to leave or enter the ghetto decreased. E.g. stricter ghetto regulations adopted on June 1, 1944 forbade anyone from leaving the Szombathely ghetto. Even people who previously had been allowed to visit public markets to purchase food were no longer allowed out. Cf. the ghetto regulation for the Szombathely ghetto from June 1, 1944, reprinted in: *Források a szombathelyi gettó történetéhez,* 52.

93 Cf. primarily Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Self-financing Genocide: The Gold Train, the Becher Case and the Wealth of Hungarian Jews* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004) as well as Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Hullarablás. A magyar zsidók gazdasági megsemmisítése* (Budapest: Jaffa, 2005).

marginalization and subsequent deportation of 5 to 6 percent of the population facilitated the division of 20-25 percent of the entire population's assets.[94] The Hungarian government was keen to take advantage (i.e. possession) of "Jewish wealth" to stabilize the Hungarian economy.[95] Meanwhile, by means of break-ins, the occupation of apartments, or other methods, substantial parts of the population grabbed assets. The failure of carefully planned government organization structures led to a chaotic rush by people in local administrations, members of the organs of German occupation, and private individuals to fill their own pockets.[96] As illustrated above, exploitation continued in the ghettos as well. Some individuals even tried using official channels to obtain Jewish assets. On May 30, 1944, the newspaper *Dunántúli Hétfő* reported:

> What an unbelievable commotion at the housing office, and how much they've disturbed the housing department officials in their work with all these personal appointments and telephone queries! Everyone wanted to get their apartment at the same time. They had their eyes on a certain apartment and a few days' delay was already a 'scandal' in one applicant's opinion.[97]

Generally, the "Jewish properties" were first handed over to people whose homes were located within the ghetto boundaries. To appease the complaints regarding evictions, the authorities promised these people bigger and better apartments. Countless apartments were also given to military personnel, police, and administrative officials. Thus, ghettoization and deportation provided material benefits to a segment of the Hungarian gentile population.[98] A survivor commented:

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94 Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, "Theorie und Praxis. Die ökonomische Vernichtung der ungarischen Juden," in *Ungarn und der Holocaust. Kollaboration, Rettung und Trauma,* ed. Brigitte Mihok (Berlin: Metropol, 2005), 56. About the problems regarding the contemporary statistics and the handling of them see the discussion between Dániel Bolgár and Krisztián Ungváry. Cf. also Dániel Bolgár, *Asszimiláció és integráció a modern Magyarországon* (PhD diss., Eötvös Loránd University, 2014).

95 See also Anders Blomqvist in this issue.

96 See Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, "'Racionális' népirtás Magyarországon," *Budapesti Könyvszemle* 2 (2003).

97 *Források a szombathelyi gettó történetéhez,* 51.

98 Cf. Tim Cole, "Ebenen der 'Kollaboration.' Ungarn 1944," in *Kooperation und Verbrechen. Formen der "Kollaboration" im östlichen Europa 1939–1945,* ed. Christoph Dieckmann, Barbette Quinkert, and Tatjana Tönsmeyer (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 73. See also Tim Cole, "Writing 'Bystanders' into Holocaust History in More Active Ways: 'Non-Jewish' Engagement with Ghettoisation, Hungary 1944," *Holocaust Studies* 11 (2005): 1.

> The non-Jewish people responded with glee to every decree passed, because they were getting closer to their goal: appropriating Jewish assets. One example was the master baker named J.B. I had not even walked through the door frame when he showed up immediately and moved into my house right before my very eyes.[99]

Humiliation, theft, and active collaboration were everyday practice. Nevertheless, indifference seems to have been the most widespread reaction to ghettoization. Survivors of the Munkács ghetto reported: "We didn't notice that the Christians behaved especially hostilely towards us. You could even say they were indifferent and couldn't be bothered to notice us."[100]

Individual gentiles sometimes reacted empathetically and offered their help (especially to friends and acquaintances). There were constant reports in the press at the time according to which non-Jewish people were smuggling food into the ghettos. Correspondingly, survivors also testified, for instance in the Ungvár ghetto, about how non-Jews brought bread and milk into the ghetto.[101] Occasionally, there were also efforts to hide Jews, but these attempts were mostly to save friends or relatives, and when discovered by the authorities, such acts were severely punished.

Although the possibility to profit from the deportations increased the general acceptance of the radical anti-Jewish policies, as soon as the predicted economic upswing failed to materialize, there was quick social disappointment. In fact, conditions deteriorated in some sectors, such as in the case of healthcare or the procurement of general supplies, because so many doctors, pharmacists, producers, and consumers had been deported. The ever heavier allied bombing also made it more and more obvious to people that the war had been lost. Thus, many gentiles witnessed the radicalization of persecution with unease.[102] Edmund Veesenmayer reported to the Foreign Office already before ghettoisation:

> Although the Hungarian authorities are diligently trying to be convincing, the people do not completely agree with how the Jews are treated by the Germans, it must be noted on the part of the Einsatzkommando that the action taken against the affluent Jews repeatedly triggers many remarks of approval from the Hungarians. There is, however, no understanding from the population for the sporadically occurring

99 Protocol with Mr. K.A., taken on June 22, 1945, DEGOB 91.

100 Protocol with Ms. S.O., Ms. S.H. and Ms. J.H., taken on June 24, 1945, DEGOB 132.

101 See the protocol with Ms. G.R., taken on August 6, 1945, DEGOB 3313.

102 See Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 127.

> public mistreatment of Jews or the unauthorized clearing out of Jewish shops by members of German military organizations. In these instances, they [the general public] exhibit immediate compassion for the *poor* Jews [italics in original, note R.F.][103]

The Arrow Cross's public acts of violence in the Hungarian capital in October 1944, including the shooting of Jews along the banks of the Danube River, eventually led more people to contribute to relief actions.[104]

Escape, Religious Conversion, Suicide

To avoid deportation, some Jewish men and women decided to flee, convert, or commit suicide. The overall number of people who escaped was quite low, even though every opportunity to leave the ghetto amounted to a chance to escape. Many people mentioned contemplating escape in their recollections, but they eventually decided against it, often out of consideration for their families. There are numerous claims in the DEGOB protocols resembling the following excerpt: "Several people had fled the ghetto, and I, too, wanted to escape, but out of consideration for my parents, I distanced myself from that plan."[105]

Those living along the Romanian–Hungarian border were most likely to attempt to escape, taking advantage of the chance to flee into Romania, but many such attempts failed partially due to lack of support from the non-Jewish population. Many Jews who tried to escape or hide were denounced by gentiles and arrested: "Many tried to hide out in the bunkers in the mountains, and if they were not driven out again by hunger, then they were exposed immediately by the Christians."[106]

When faced with ghettoization, M.L., a 19-year-old mechanic living in Uglya, tried to hide in a nearby forest:

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103 Political Archive of the Foreign Office R 29793.

104 Randolph L. Braham estimates the number of converted Jews in Budapest at 25,000. Cf. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary. Condensed Edition,* 252.

105 See the protocol with Ms. E.K., taken on September 14, 1945, DEGOB 3216. See also Mr. S.Á.'s story: "I don't know of any escape, although there were opportunities, especially for those who worked in the city. I also considered fleeing, but my mother begged me to stay." Recorded on June 25, 1945, DEGOB 139.

106 Protocol with Ms. S.R., Ms. L.S., Ms. L.M., Ms. L.M., Ms. A.L., Ms. A.T., Ms. A.S. and Ms. A.R., taken on June 21, 1945, DEGOB 129.

> I managed to conceal myself for a considerable length of time, but ultimately, the Swabian farmer K.J. discovered and then betrayed me. The police soon came to fetch me and take me to the Nyíregyháza collection camp, where I stayed for 2 1/2 weeks. Afterwards, they loaded me into a train and sent me to Auschwitz.[107]

Some Jews also tried hiding somewhere in the ghetto to avoid deportation. In the ghettos of Nagyvárad, Kassa, and Munkács, authorities discovered people who were still in hiding in the ghetto two weeks after the deportations,[108] as mentioned in a related telegram from Edmund Veesenmayer:

> According to a report from the Cluj/Klausenburg KDS, 28 Polish Jews hiding in burrows in the woods of Tiszabogdany were arrested by the Hungarian gendarmerie. 2 of the Jews had guns with them. Furthermore, 15 Jews were discovered in a basement in the former ghetto of Grosswardein, where they had immured themselves. In the Munkács ghetto, 11 Jews who'd cached securities and gold items totaling a value of 150,000 Pengő were also arrested. Recently, in Kaschau, 30 to 40 Jews who had also tried to hide were arrested and will join the next transport.[109]

Several Jews tried to save their families and themselves by using false papers and making bribes. Many considered traveling to Budapest and going undercover in the big city, but these efforts were complicated by regulations denying Jews an official license to travel.[110]

Convinced it would spare them from being deported, many Jews chose to convert. Hopelessness and disillusionment drove many people to take their own lives. For instance, the Székesfehérvár ghetto announced that there had been several suicides, mostly among people who had converted from Judaism decades earlier.[111] Likewise, the landowner S.G., who had joined the Reformed Church in 1920, shot herself on the day she was ordered into the Tab ghetto.[112]

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107 Protocol with Mr. M.L., taken on July 7, 1945, DEGOB 844.

108 See Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 142.

109 Telegram from Veesenmayer to Karl Ritter from July 20, 1944, Nürnberg State Archives, NG-5613.

110 Some traveled from the capital to their hometowns in the province so as not to be separated from their families by the ghettoization policies.

111 See the protocol with Ms. L.F., w.Y. (probably summer of 1945), taken on June 24, 1945, DEGOB 2788.

112 Report from the Balatonboglár gendarmerie about the suicide of S.G., July 5, 1944, Somogy County Archive, 4002/1944, cited by Bősze, "Zsidósors Tabon."

Inhabitants in some ghettos tried to find a way to delay their deportation or even stop it altogether.[113] People who had survived the Aknaszlatina ghetto reported: "We wanted to trigger a typhus epidemic so they wouldn't be able to take us away. We did this by drinking black coffee with salt, which made us feverish. This is how we managed to defer our deportation for two weeks."[114] The Aknaszlatina ghetto inhabitants were only able to delay their deportation, but in the end could not prevent it. On May 20 and 23, 1944, they were sent to the Birkenau camp.[115]

The Dissolution of the Ghettos

On May 30, 1944 Éva Heyman noted in her diary:

> The people of Block One were taken away yesterday. All of them had to be in their houses in the afternoon. We've been locked up in here a long time, but now even those with special passes aren't allowed to go out any more. We even know already that we can take along one knapsack for every two persons. It is forbidden to put in it more than one change of underwear; no bedding. Rumor has it that food is allowed, but who has any food left? The gendarmes took everybody's food away when they took ours. It is so quiet you can hear a fly buzz. Nobody cries […] Dear diary, everybody says we're going to stay in Hungary; the Jews from all over the country are being brought to the Lake Balaton area and we are going to work there. But I don't believe it. That train-wagon is probably awful, and now nobody says that we're being taken away, but that they are deporting us.[116]

Éva Heyman's diary ends with this entry. On June 3, she was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she was murdered on October 17.

The collections camp, where the Jewish population from the ghettos outside the capital was resettled, was the last stop before deportation from Hungary:

113 See as example the story of survivors from the Munkács ghetto: "In general, there was a confident assumption that the Russians were already in Kőrösmező. We didn't believe that they would be able to take us out of the country." Protocol with Ms. S.O., Ms. S.H. and Ms. J.H., taken on June 24, 1945, DEGOB 132.

114 Protocol with Ms. S.R., Ms. L.S., Ms. L.M., Ms. L.M., Ms. A.L., Ms. A.T., Ms. A.S. and Ms. A.R., taken on June 21, 1945, DEGOB 129.

115 See Braham, ed., *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*.

116 Diary entry from May 30, 1944, in Heyman, *The Diary of Éva Heyman,* 103.

> We had been in the ghetto for four weeks. One morning at 7 o'clock, the police rammed in the doors with the butts of their rifles, stormed in the homes, and chased everyone outside. After forcing the people out and literally tearing adults and children from their beds, they beat them like horses. This was the most horrible part of the whole deportation. The Germans struck the same way, going house to house, and together with the gendarmerie, they drove us all to the marketplace, where we stood in rows of five. Then, we made our way to the brickyard.[117]

The mass deportations in Hungary began on May 14, 1944.[118] By early July 1944, 437,400 people had been deported. The Budapest Rescue Committee bought the freedom of approximately 1,700 prisoners who were subsequently transported to Switzerland. 18,000 Hungarian Jews were sent to the Vienna region to do forced labor. However, the majority of the deportees (about 320,000) were killed in gas chambers shortly after their arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau, for instance Olga and Ilona Iczkovics, whom I cited at the beginning of this essay. Before their departure from the Beregszász ghetto, they had hidden their handwritten letter to their brother Elemér with a request for whoever discovered it to forward it to Elemér. As a gesture of gratitude, they had enclosed an earring and a ring. "Dear Stranger," they wrote in an accompanying note, "I beg you, please do not tear up this letter for my brother Elemér Ickovics (he is now on the Eastern front, and his camp number is K673). Instead, please make sure this letter together with the two notes get to him once he's come back home. Otherwise, please return the letter to its hiding place, keeping the earring and ring for yourself."[119] Elemér probably never received the letter from his sisters. He never returned from the labor service, and a central database of Shoah victims categorizes him as disappeared. 28-year-old Olga and 26-year-old Ilona, together with their 49-year-old mother, Etel, never returned from deportation either. They are considered missing since their arrival in Auschwitz-Birkenau on June 1, 1944. They were most likely selected immediately for murder in one of the gas chambers upon their arrival or died within a few days or months from malnutrition or disease.

After the deportations in the spring and summer of 1944, the only ghetto remaining on Hungarian territory was in Budapest, where the Jewish population

117 Protocol with Ms. B.B. and Ms. B.J., taken on July 13, 1945, DEGOB 1459.

118 The first transports departed on April 29 from the Kistarcsa camp and on April 30 from Topolya to Auschwitz.

119 HDKE 2011.917.1.

lived in yellow houses and later in the "Large" or "International" Ghetto. The "Large" Ghetto was liberated by Soviet troops on January 17 and 18, 1945. The conditions in the ghetto had already deteriorated drastically a few days earlier as a result of Soviet troops having surrounded the city. The journal of Erzsébet Fóti offers a moving description of this. On January 14, 1945, she was transferred from a protected house into the ghetto. Two days later she wrote:

> Today I got a slice of bread and a little jam. We had a horrible night because of the heavy bombing, such as we've never experienced before. The windows in every room were broken, and we were all lying on the ground. My hair is lice-infested. There's no water. We each receive a milk bottle full of water each day, and that is supposed to be enough, and for washing, too!

The next day, she continued: "Today a fight broke out in the street nearby. There are fights again on Wesselényi Street. Many people have been shot. There is nothing to eat. I am going crazy with hunger. Hungry. Hungry. I'm cold. I can't write anymore, nor can I even feel my fingers."[120]

Conclusion

As Tim Cole remarked in one of his essays, "Although the ghettoization of Hungarian Jews in 1944 can be seen as the implementation of policies of 'concentration,' there are significant differences in experiences of ghettoization *between* Hungary and other nations in East Central Europe as well as *within* Hungary and *within* individual cities in Hungary."[121] With particular clarity, the survivors' recollections and contemporary reports portray the divergent situations in the Hungarian ghettos. The situation in each ghetto depended on a variety of factors, such as the type and place of accommodation, the amount of food rations brought along and the behavior of the police. The living conditions not only varied from ghetto to ghetto, but also in one and the same ghetto the situation could deteriorate or improve by and by.

The Hungarian administration not only had a significant impact on the living conditions, but could even prevent ghettoization in some places, such as in Hódmezővásárhely. But instead of trying to deescalate the situation, many mayors

120 HDKE 2011.50.1.

121 Cole, "Multiple and Changing Experiences of Ghettoization," 146.

and prefects endorsed more extreme policies. Officials, gendarmes and police who acted more mildly were repeatedly denounced and often suspended.[122] For instance, prefect Lajos Bessenyei demanded that the more moderate mayor of Debrecen, Sándor Kölcsey, resign after the May 8, 1944 meeting concerning the ghettoization of the local Jewish population. In a confidential letter to Kölcsey, the prefect told him that his resignation would be initiated "for fundamental reasons which must not be ignored," but Kölcsey would be allowed to resign voluntarily. A few days later, the local press reported on Kölcsey's decision to retire.[123]

Overall, in most cases the living conditions in the ghettos in the annexed territories were strikingly worse than the condition in the ghettos in the heartland. In these parts of the country, which were less developed than the territories in Trianon Hungary, the administration and the gendarmerie both carried out policies in a much more extreme manner. Because these ghettos were the first to be established, they were more significantly affected by the chaos and lack of structure.

The opportunity to interact with the "outside world" could significantly improve living conditions. It is worth noting that the establishment of the ghettos did not mean an interruption in economic and social relations between Jews and non-Jews. Interaction with the "outside world" remained very much possible. It is thus necessary to revise the notion of the ghetto as an area of complete isolation. Ghettos did not amount to parallel societies. Moreover, in some cases, professional continuities were apparent even post-ghettoization. Thus, the Hungarian government's intention to exclude Jews from the Hungarian economy was not fully realized until the deportations. Although the Holocaust in Hungary was motivated not only ideologically but also economically, the concept of "work" provides a perfect example of the clash between anti-Semitic ideology and economic pragmatism. It is precisely this contradiction that may have influenced a substantial number of Hungarian Jews to doubt the threat of deportation. There were rumors in many ghettos that ghetto residents would be sent to do agricultural labor. Names of different towns circulated as possible destinations which without exception were within Hungary.

122 See Csősz, "Tettesek, szemtanúk, áldozatok," 97f. and 121f.

123 Cfl. Csősz and Fritz, "Ein Protokoll." See also Zoltán Vági, László Csősz, and Gábor Kádár, *The Holocaust in Hungary. Evolution of a Genocide* (Washington D.C.: AltaMira Press, 2013), 85–87.

Overall, the living conditions people endured in the weeks immediately prior to their deportation sometimes made the difference between life and death when they arrived at the railway platforms of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

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Attila Gidó

The Hungarian Bureaucracy and the Administrative Costs of the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania

In the course of May and June 1944, forty-five trains crammed with Jews from Northern Transylvania were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, making the region *"Judenfrei"* in accordance with the Nazi vision of the "Final Solution." This article explores how the extermination process and its consequences, including the costs incurred, were approached and handled by the central and local authorities of Northern Transylvania as bureaucratic tasks. As I show, in addition to participating directly in the processes of genocide, local authorities also aimed to assure "the reparation of material and financial damages" caused by ghettoization, while the expropriated assets of the deported and their unresolved financial transactions were subject to further administrative action. Drawing on scattered documents held in various provincial branches of the Romanian National Archives and materials from the Cluj-based People's Courts from 1946, in this article I discuss the high-level of continuity among Hungarian administrative personnel in 1944 and demonstrate that practically the entire Hungarian state apparatus participated in the implementation of the Final Solution. I argue that the economic costs incurred by "Christian Hungarians" may have been negligible compared to the overall theft of "Jewish property," but the administrative tasks related to ghettoization and deportation were substantial.

Keywords: World War II, Holocaust, Northern Transylvania, ghettoization, deportation, bureaucracy

The so-called Second Vienna Award, which was issued on August 30, 1940 and which essentially made northern Transylvania part of Hungary while leaving the rest of the province (including most of Bánát and swathes of Partium) in Romania, temporarily brought an end to the territorial dispute between Hungary and Romania. With this legal change (accompanied by the occupation of the region in question by the Hungarian army), according to the results of the 1941 census 151,312 people of the Jewish faith again found themselves under Hungarian rule. The Jewish laws that were brought into effect, however, were based on racial categories, so they applied not only to practicing Jews, but also to Christians who, according to the provisions of the law, were legally regarded as Jewish. Thus the anti-Semitic measures that were taken by the Hungarian government affected 164,052 people living in northern Transylvania, or 6.4

percent of the population. From this point on, the circumstances of the Jewry of northern Transylvania in many ways resembled the circumstances of the Jewry of Trianon Hungary (by which I mean the territory of Hungary following the ratification of the Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1920, which is almost entirely contiguous with the territory of Hungary today), though as I will demonstrate, there were some significant regional differences.[1]

The occupation of Hungary by the German army, which began on March 19, 1944, accelerated the pace of events and proved fatal to the Jewry of the country.[2] By the end of March, German troops had arrived in northern Transylvania. There were several phases to the implementation of the Final Solution in Hungary and northern Transylvania.[3] The occupation of the country did not make ghettoization and deportation inevitable.

In the course of the ghettoization and deportation of the Jewry, the territory was divided into two "deportation zones." The first was the region known as Máramaros (Maramureş in Romanian), which included an area that today lies north of the Romanian border in Ukraine (historically Máramaros is essentially a valley of the Tisza River surrounded by mountains and thick forests). The second zone consisted of Szatmár county (roughly equivalent with what today is Sătmar county in Romania), Bihar county (roughly equivalent with what today is Bihor county in Romania), Inner Transylvania, and the so-called Székely Land, a region in eastern Transylvania which to this day has a large Hungarian-speaking majority.

The plans for the assembly and deportation of the Jewry belonging to the first zone were drawn up during a meeting that was held in the city of Munkács (today Mukacheve in Ukraine) on April 12, 1944. The plans for the deportation of the Jewry of the second zone were completed in the course of meetings that took place on April 26 in Szatmárnémeti (today Satu Mare in Romania) and on April 28 in Marosvásárhely (today Târgu Mureş in Romania). After having returned from the meetings, the leading local civil servants, police, gendarmes, and sub-prefects again conferred on the measures that would be adopted in

1 Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 167.

2 Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 370. Christian Gerlach and Götz Aly, *Az utolsó fejezet. Reálpolitika, ideológia és a magyar zsidók legyilkolása, 1944/1945* (Budapest: Noran, 2005), 114. Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Hullarablás. A magyar zsidók gazdasági megsemmisítése* (Budapest: Hannah Arendt Egyesület–Jaffa Kiadó, 2005), 109.

3 Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *A végső döntés. Berlin, Budapest, Birkenau 1944* (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2013), 234–36.

various settlements to implement ghettoization, including for instance the sites of the ghettoes themselves.[4]

Just before the process of ghettoization was implemented and over the course of the month of May, Undersecretary of State for Internal Affairs László Endre traveled throughout northern Transylvania.[5] He was present for the meeting in Marosvásárhely on April 28, at which some 200 people from the Székely Land took part, including the lord lieutenants, sub-prefects, mayors, chief administrative officers of the districts, and chiefs of police and the gendarmerie.[6] Endre gave precise instructions concerning the process of ghettoization at the meeting, as well as the ways in which to ensure the effective assembly of the Jews, the organization and operation of the ghettos, and the management of "Jewish property," including real estate and moveable assets.[7] He then held a meeting in Kolozsvár (today Cluj in Romania) on the process of ghettoization, and by April 30 he had already reached the city of Nagyvárad (today Oradea in Romania) on the western fringes of Transylvania (actually in the region known as Partium), where he gave oral instructions to the mayor, László Gyapay, regarding ghettoization and the various administrative costs it would involve. Gyapay, referring to these instructions as authorization to act, implemented a series of measures affecting the agricultural properties and moveable belongings of Jews.[8]

The deportations in northern Transylvania began on May 16 in Máramarossziget (today Sighetu Marmației in Romania) and ended on June 7 in Kolozsvár. 131,639 Jews were deported from northern Transylvania to Auschwitz-Birkenau.[9] Lieutenant colonel of the gendarmerie László Ferenczy,

4 Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 538–39 and 566–67.

5 In the course of his travels, Endre observed the process of ghettoization and the conditions in the ghettos not only in northern Transylvania, but in all of provincial Hungary. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 587–588.

6 *Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Cluj* (Cluj Branch of the Romanian National Archive, henceforth SJAN Cluj), Fond no. 1295 (People's Court), dossier 11/1946, file 1.

7 According to materials used in cases tried by the People's Court of Cluj in 1946, two participants in the meeting in Marosvásárhely had raised objections in connection with the rounding up of children under six years of age and the provision of food. However, neither of them was opposed to the social marginalization, ghettoization, deportation or genocide of the Jews. Rather, they merely gave voice to their views on questions of detail. SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 1295, dossier 11/1946, f. 1.

8 Decree number 13392/1944. II of László Gyapay, issued on May 12, 1944. *Yad Vashem Archives,* TR. 16, 28. dossier, f. 18–22.

9 Randolph L. Braham, ed., *Az észak-erdélyi holokauszt földrajzi enciklopédiája* (Budapest, Kolozsvár: Park Könyvkiadó, Koinónia Könyvkiadó, 2008), 33. Randolph L. Braham, ed., *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary* (Evantson, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2013), lxix.

who served as a communications officer between the Hungarian gendarmerie and the German security forces, sent regular reports on and accounts of the state of affairs with regards to the gathering together and deportation of the Jews to Minister of the Interior Andor Jaross.[10] Of the 164,052 people who were defined as Jews under the law, between 35,000 and 40,000 survived the Holocaust. Most of the survivors, some 25,000 to 30,000 people, were among those deported. The others were liberated from forced labor units or managed to survive the upheavals in some other way, for instance simply by going into hiding or fleeing to Romania.[11]

There is, alongside the reading of the history of the virtual annihilation of the Hungarian Jewry as a tale of immeasurable suffering, a cold, dispassionate bureaucratic side to the story as well. The creation and maintenance of the ghettos, the organization of the transportation of the deportees, the assessment of the material demands of the non-Jewish population, and the provision of compensation for costs that arose represented an unusual challenge for the county and municipal authorities. By dealing with these and similar administrative issues, civil servants and officials took important preliminary steps in bringing about the suffering and deaths of masses.

The Hungarian and international historiography has already dealt in detail with the role of state bureaucracies in the Holocaust. In his classic study on the connections between modernity and the Holocaust, Zygmunt Bauman writes that the German bureaucracy was able to organize and implement ghettoization and deportation with such dispassion because it deprived the objects of its measures of their humanity, reducing them to mere numbers.[12] In the Hungarian secondary literature, Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági have provided perhaps the

10 With regards to northern Transylvania, the first report was sent from Kolozsvár on May 3, 1944 and the last was sent from Hatvan on June 8. Judit Molnár, *Csendőrtiszt a Markóban. Ferenczy László csendőr alezredes a népbíróság előtt* (Budapest: Scolar, Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára, 2014), 280–306.

11 We know the names and personal information of people who survived deportation and returned to northern Transylvania following liberation. According to a list from 1946, there were some 20,000 such people. In addition to them, the number of people who survived but did not return following liberation, choosing instead either to travel to countries in the West or even go overseas, was somewhere between 8,000 and 10,000. For a list of the survivors, which includes their personal information, see Attila Gidó, *20 000 names/név/nume. Counted Remnant of Northern Transylvania* (Cluj-Napoca: ISPMN, 2016), forthcoming. See also: Braham, *Az észak-erdélyi holokauszt,* 470.

12 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca–New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 102–04. See also: Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 2001), 73–78, Christopher R. Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 169.

most recent overview of ethnic cleansing and genocide in the Carpathian Basin, the history of modern anti-Semitism, and the path that led to the Holocaust.[13] Kádár and Vági came to the conclusion that the annihilation of the Hungarian Jewry "was caused by a tragic meeting" of Nazi Germany's program of extermination and an attitude of exclusion that had been present in Hungarian society for centuries.[14] According to them, this attitude of exclusion, the "official routine" of anti-Semitism, and the opportunities that arose to make personal profit together were sufficient to prompt the majority of civil servants working in the organs of state administration to perform the tasks that were assigned to them in the course of the slaughter of the Jews of Hungary in an orderly and reliable fashion.[15] In his study of the events that took place in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county, László Csősz also came to the conclusion that most of the civil servants did not actually espouse the principles of National Socialism, nor were they committed supporters of the physical annihilation of the Jewry, but rather agreed "only" that the role of Jews in economic and social life should be restricted. Nonetheless, in 1944 most of them, influenced by varying motivations, participated, whether reluctantly or with enthusiasm, in the implementation of the Final Solution.[16] Drawing on the findings and insights of these authors, in this essay I closely examine the administrative issues and costs that came up in the course of the deportation and extermination of the Jewry of Hungary in order to arrive at a more detailed and precise picture of the ways in which civil servants working in state administration took part in the Final Solution and the extent of this form of collaboration.

In Hungary, as was the case in Germany and every country or territory that was affected by the Holocaust, the implementation of the Final Solution depended not simply on the acts of the political elites, but also on the cooperation and collaboration of everyday people, including civil servants who worked in state administration. Following the occupation of Hungary by the German army in March 1944, many of the high ranking civil servants and government officials were replaced or given positions in different offices. However, most of the people in lower levels of state administration, including the police and the

13 Kádár and Vági, *A végső döntés*.

14 Ibid., 12–13.

15 Ibid., 247.

16 László Csősz, *Konfliktusok és kölcsönhatások. Zsidók Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok megye történetében* (Szolnok: MNL Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Megyei Levéltár, 2014), 192–94 and 207.

gendarmerie, remained in their positions.[17] Very few of the sub-prefects and mayors, who played important roles in county administration, were removed from their posts, in all likelihood because in the first few weeks it already became apparent that most of the influential figures in local administration were loyal to the new political leadership and would implement the anti-Semitic measures as ordered.[18] Some of the people in low ranking offices were replaced or moved to different positions, but this was the exception rather than the rule.[19] The ghettoization of the Jewish population was executed by two organs of power, but the necessary infrastructure was provided by the sub-prefects, lord lieutenants, chief constables, mayors, and deputy mayors, along with other state administrators with local or regional authority. With very few exceptions, they collaborated in the expropriation, ghettoization, and deportation of the Jews.

The situation in northern Transylvania essentially resembled the situation in Hungary. In late April, i.e. before the process of ghettoization had begun, a decision was reached regarding the removal of seven of the ten county lord lieutenants.[20] Also in April 1944, Béla Bethlen, lord lieutenant of Szolnok-Doboka and Beszterce-Naszód counties, asked to be removed from his posts. In the end, he was relieved of his position as lord lieutenant of Beszterce-Naszód county, but he continued to perform the tasks of lord lieutenant in Szolnok-Doboka county. Ödön Inczédy Joksman served as lord lieutenant of Kolozs county and the city of Kolozsvár. At his request, he was relieved of the post of lord lieutenant of Kolozsvár (he was replaced by Lajos Vargha, who earlier had served as deputy prosecutor of the city), but he continued to hold the post of lord lieutenant for the county.[21] Thus only with significant qualifications could

17 See: Judit Molnár, "Csendőrök, rendőrök, hivatalnokok a Soá idején" in *Magyar megfontolások a Soáról,* ed. Hamp Gábor, Horányi Özséb, and Rábai László (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1999), 124–33.

18 Molnár, *Csendőrök, rendőrök, hivatalnokok,* 127.

19 Kádár and Vági, *A végső döntés,* 247.

20 In northern Transylvania, including Máramaros, there were eleven counties, but two of them, Szolnok-Doboka (the center of which was Dés) and Beszterce-Naszód (the seat of which was Beszterce), were under count Béla Bethlen, who served as lord lieutenant of both until April 1944. *Budapesti Közlöny,* April 27, 1944. no. 94, 1. Of the seven county-level lord lieutenants who were relieved of their posts, several also had positions as lord lieutenant of a municipality. In addition to them, on April 26 Endre Hlatky, the lord lieutenant of Nagyvárad, was relieved of his post, as was Ödön Inczédy Joksman, lord lieutenant of Kolozsvár. *Budapesti Közlöny* April 27, 1944, no. 94, 1–2; *Budapesti Közlöny* May 7, 1944, no. 103, 1.

21 Inczédy's signature is found on several documents that were issued in the middle of May 1944. SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 3 (Lord Lieutenancy of Kolozs County), batch number 1319 (Racial problems, 1–2 volumes). Inczédy's removal at the end of April from the position of lord lieutenant of Kolozsvár and the appointment of Lajos Vargha were announced in *Kolozsvár Thj. Sz. Kir. Város Hivatalos Lapja* May 1, 1944. no. 9, 72.

these individuals be included among the civil servants who voluntarily resigned from their positions.[22]

The sub-prefects, who played one of the most important roles in the process of ghettoization, almost without exception remained at their posts.[23] However, in Kolozsvár, Marosvásárhely, Nagyvárad and Szatmárnémeti, which in May and June served as the largest centers for railway transportation, new mayors were appointed.[24] (Tibor Keledy, who had served as mayor of Kolozsvár, was made lord mayor of Budapest on April 8, 1944. He was replaced by László Vásárhelyi, who had served as deputy mayor of Kolozsvár.) Over the course of April and at the beginning of May, many of the chief constables were also replaced, for instance in Székelyhíd (today Săcueni in Romania), Szatmárnémeti, Zilah (today Zalău in Romania), and Felsővisó (today Vişeu de Sus in Romania), or simply given different positions, moved for instance from the district of Nagyszalonta (today Salonta in Romania) to Titel (today in Serbia), from Nagysomkút (today Şomcuta Mare in Romania) to Halmi (today Halmeu in Romania), or from Szilágycseh (today Cehu Silvaniei in Romania) to Nagykálló.[25] The essential purpose of these changes was to ensure that the chief constables, who played a key role in the implementation and enforcement of the various anti-Semitic measures in the rural districts and on the county level, be distant from their familiar environments and social worlds so that in new, unfamiliar contexts, surrounded essentially by strangers, they would carry out the disenfranchisement and expropriation of the Jews and ensure that they were gathered together into the collection centers to expedite the process of deportation.[26]

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22 In his memoirs, which were completed in the 1970s, Béla Bethlen at the same time writes that on many occasions he urged the Ministry of Interior to reach a decision regarding his request to be relieved of his position as lord lieutenant of Szolnok-Doboka county, but his petition was simply buried in paperwork. Béla Bethlen, *Észak-Erdély kormánybiztosa voltam* (Budapest: Zrínyi Katonai Kiadó, 1989), 146.

23 For instance, Kolozs county got a new sub-prefect when, on June 2, 1944, Ferenc Szász died and left the position empty. He was replaced by Gábor Ajtay, who had served as the sub-prefect of Máramaros county and, as of May 30, had been the leader of the "separate unit" that had been created by the XXI/b. subdivision of the Ministry of Interior and had played an important role in ghettoization and deportation. Oliver Lustig, ed., *Procesul ghetourilor din Nordul Transilvaniei,* vol. 1 (Bucureşti: AERVH, 2007), 74.

24 *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára, 1944* (Budapest: M. Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 1944), 79. *Budapesti Közlöny* April 9, 1944, no. 80, 1 and April 21, no. 89, 1.

25 *Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára, 1944* (Budapest: M. Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 1944), 79. Cf. *Budapesti Közlöny* June 3, 1944, no. 124, 1–2.

26 Molnár, *Csendőrök, rendőrök, hivatalnokok,* 128.

Many civil servants moved up on the professional ladder in this period, so for them, these changes meant opportunities to build their careers.[27] The May and June issues of *Budapesti Közlöny* (Budapest Gazette) indicate that in general low level civil servants were advanced in greater proportions in northern Transylvania than in the other areas of provincial Hungary. While in other regions emphasis was placed on transferring civil servants to different settlements, civil servants in northern Transylvania often remained in the communities where they had been employed and were simply promoted. This may have been due in part to the fact that, when the territory had become part of Hungary again in 1940, many civil servants from Trianon Hungary or functionaries who had fled from Transylvania to Hungary in the wake of World War I had been given positions in the newly acquired territory. In 1944, most of these people were still serving in northern Transylvania. Thus in all likelihood, they were not as familiar with the local society or as closely connected to it as their Transylvanian colleagues and were therefore considered more reliable.[28]

Historians have taken note of several high ranking civil servants in northern Transylvania who resigned from their offices for ethical reasons, thereby refusing to take part in the persecution of the Jews. Baron János Jósika, who served as lord lieutenant of Szilágy county, and János Schilling, who was sub-prefect of Szolnok-Doboka county, were among them. Jósika resigned when sub-prefect Endre Gazda informed him of what had taken place at the meeting in Szatmárnémeti on April 26 (Gazda had been present for the meeting).[29] Schilling took part in the implementation of the measures that laid the groundwork for the ghettoization of the Jews of the county, but on May 2, 1944, one day before

27 This was the case for Géza Czanik, the chief constable of Aszód. At the suggestion of the Minister of the Interior, he was named sub-prefect of Szolnok-Doboka county by the Regent of Hungary, Miklós Horthy. Similarly, Dezső Gálffy, a chief constable on the county level, became lord lieutenant of Udvarhely county, today Odorheiu county in Romania, and József Kadicsfalvi, who was magistrate of Felsővisó, was made lord lieutenant. Czanik replaced János Schilling, who had resigned from his position, on May 2, 1944. He was part of László Endre's personal escort, and he guaranteed the efficient implementation of the Final Solution in Szolnok-Doboka county. *Budapesti Közlöny* June 3, 1944, no. 124, 1. Ágnes Hegyi, "Dés zsidó közösségének virágzása és hanyatlása," in *Tanulmányok a holokausztról,* vol. 3, ed. Randolph L. Braham (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2004), 171.

28 25.1 percent of the people working in public administration in northern Transylvania and 16.4 percent of the people working in the judicial branch of government had been sent from the territory of Trianon Hungary in 1940 and 1941. In contrast, all of the people working in the police and gendarmerie units were Transylvanian. See Edit Csilléry, "Közalkalmazottak és köztisztviselők Észak-Erdélyben a második bécsi döntést követően," *Limes* 2 (2006): 79.

29 Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 575.

ghettoization began, he went to the hospital and had his (perfectly healthy) appendix removed and resigned from his post.[30] However, these people were exceptions, and most of the leaders and staff of the state administration in northern Transylvania reliably performed the tasks that were assigned to them in the dispossession, ghettoization, and deportation of the Jews.

Jewish inhabitants of rural settlements were gathered together for deportation by the gendarmerie, which was under the authority of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense. The Hungarian gendarmerie was broken up into ten different districts, each of which was under the command of a gendarmerie colonel. Following the occupation of Hungary by the German army, no changes were made to the leadership of the gendarmerie, so when the ghettoization and deportation of the Jews was taking place, the same people were in command as had been before. In contrast, changes were made to the leading cadres of the police forces, and many commanding officers were removed from their posts. There were even a few who resigned, for instance Antal Örményi, police captain of Gyergyószentmiklós (today Gheorgheni in Romania).[31] Of the ten gendarmerie districts, two (the ninth and the tenth) had their seats in northern Transylvania, one in the city of Kolozsvár and the other in Marosvásárhely. The gendarmerie of the Kolozsvár district was under the command of Tibor Paksi-Kiss and the Marosvásárhely district was under the command of János Papp. Both Paksi-Kiss and Papp had begun serving in their posts before 1944. Officially, it was Paksi-Kiss who supervised the ghettoization and deportation of the Jewry of all of Transylvania, including the areas under the command of Papp.[32]

The search for and rounding up of Jews was done by the gendarmes of the districts. In the collection centers and the ghettos, however, the theft of Jewish belongings, the loading of Jews onto train cars, and the final deportation of the Jews was done by gendarmes who belonged to subunits that had been

30 Zoltán Singer, *Volt egyszer egy Dés. Bethlen, Magyarlápos, Retteg, Nagyilonda és környéke* (Tel Aviv: Dés és Vidékéről Elszármazottak Landsmannschaftja, 1970), 422. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 414.

31 Kádár and Vági, *A végső döntés,* 247. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 414.

32 Refugees from areas that today are part of Ukraine fled into the territory of János Papp's gendarmerie district, thus he had to handle the administrative tasks that arose as a consequence of their presence as well. We know, however, that independent of this, Papp collaborated in the ghettoization of the Jewry of the Székely Land. He took part in the meeting that was held in Marosvásárhely on April 28, and together with sub-prefect Zsigmond Márton, lieutenant colonel János Zalántay and major N. Schröder he supervised the rounding up of the Jews of Maros-Torda county (today a part of Mureş and a part of Cluj county in Romania). Braham, *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust,* 657–59.

created within the individual districts. These gendarmes in general did not come from the given settlements, but rather had been brought to the area from distant regions. This measure was taken in order to prevent Jews from bribing people they might have known personally, as well as to ensure that no mercy would be shown by the people charged with carrying out these measures. This is why gendarmes were sent from Miskolc, Szászrégen (today Reghin in Romania), and Szeged to Máramarossziget, for instance, or from Zilah to Dés (today Dej in Romania).[33]

While these processes were underway, the bureaucracy also dealt with the belongings and real estate that had been taken from the Jews, as well as the costs that arose in the course of their ghettoization and deportation, the assessment of damages, and the provision of compensation. Later, dealing with the economic and social problems that arose as a consequence of the ghettoization among the members of the population who were not defined by the laws as "Jewish" (i.e. the so-called Christian population) became the first priority. The creation of a "judenrein" provincial Hungary (and therefore a "judenrein" Transylvania), the division of stolen properties, and the provision of compensation for claims of damage were done by a stratum of officials and an administrative system the original responsibility of which had been the completion of bureaucratic tasks that were important to the preservation of social cohesion and stability. In the changed domestic political circumstances and as a consequence of the anti-Semitic public sentiment that prevailed at the time, this bureaucracy was capable, without having undergone any major structural changes, of providing the infrastructure, the "administrative foundation," for the annihilation of the Hungarian Jewry.[34]

While several of the administrative and political models in Transylvania were borrowed from Hungary, there were regional peculiarities. The conservative, right-wing Hungarian political elite of Transylvania was quite convinced, as indeed was a significant part of Transylvanian Hungarian society, that in the period between 1918 and 1940, when the entire territory, northern and southern Transylvania, had been part of the Romanian Kingdom, the Jewry had betrayed Hungary and had represented the interests of the Romanian elites in power. This accusation found expression not merely in the period following the outbreak of war, but rather had been a discernible motif of public life in Transylvanian

33 Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 411.

34 See Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust,* 104.

Hungarian communities since 1920.[35] The platform of *Erdélyi Párt* (Transylvanian Party), which was created in 1940–41, was seen as providing political legitimacy for the measures that were taken against Jews. Between 1941 and 1944, this political party represented the political interests of the Hungarian communities of Transylvania in the Hungarian parliament, and it enjoyed widespread social support and influence in the region. According to the eighth point of its platform, the party approved of measures "against the Jewry, which voluntarily broke from the body of the Transylvanian Hungarians when under Romanian rule," and indeed it strongly urged the implementation of measures that would remove Jews from public life and every sphere of economic life "until the question had been settled on a European scale."[36] The right-wing in Transylvania, which grew increasingly influential after 1940, also emphasized its view according to which the path of Transylvanian Hungarians and Transylvanian Jews had forever split, since the Jews were the enemy of Germany, the state which had made territorial revision in 1940 possible.[37] While the process of ghettoization was underway, the Transylvanian Party justified the expropriation of Jews with the claim that the belongings and real estate that had been acquired had to be used to improve the social circumstances of the Hungarian population.[38] Thus the collaboration of the so-called Christian population, including administrators of various ranks and positions, was influenced by a number of factors, but one of them was the branding of the Jews of Transylvania as outsiders and members of a group that had deliberately parted ways with the Hungarians.

35 Ferenc Sz. Horváth, *Elutasítás és alkalmazkodás között. A romániai magyar kisebbségi elit politikai stratégiái (1931–1940)* (Csíkszereda: Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, 2007), 118. Gábor Egry, *Az erdélyiség "színeváltozása". Kísérlet az Erdélyi Párt ideológiájának és identitáspolitikájának elemzésére, 1940–1944* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2008), 157–59.

36 Cited in Egry, *Az erdélyiség "színeváltozása,"* 159.

37 Holly Case, *Between States. The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea during World War II* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 182.

38 The question of fragmentation, in other words the linking of the economic plunder of the Jews and the problems of the ethnically heterogeneous territories of northern Transylvania, can also be observed. See SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 3, batch number 1319, 3. vols., dossier 7336/1944, f. 2. Compare with Franz Sz. Horváth, "Ethnic Policies, Social Compensation, and Economic Reparations: The Holocaust in Northern Transylvania," *East Central Europe* 39 (2012): 112–16.

Administrative Issues before Ghettoization

On April 20, 1944, Antal Kunder, Minister of Trade and Transportation, issued decree number 50.500/1944 KKM on the seizure of the goods, furnishings, and equipment belonging to Jewish businesses.[39] The decree went into effect on April 21, and in accordance with it, the Jewish businesses in the various settlements were stamped as such on that very day, lists of them were made, and these lists were sent within the space of a few days to the Chamber of Trade and Industry to which the given settlement belonged.[40] The surviving sources suggest that at the time the members of the non-Jewish population were most concerned with the fate of possessions of theirs that had been left for repair or for some other reason in the workshops and business now under sequestration. They besieged the authorities with questions and requests, and the rumor spread that they would not be given back the belongings that had been left with the Jewish merchants and tradesmen.[41] On May 5, 1944, the Minister of Trade and Transportation issued decree number 56.912/1944 KKM, with which he sought to address these questions and lay these rumors to rest. According to the decree, between May 8 and May 20, Jewish merchants and tradesmen would have to hand over or return to its (so-called) Christian owner any article that had been ordered before April 21 or left in their places of business for repairs, alterations, or exchange. This was to take place with the shutters to the establishments only half open. The daily press in northern Transylvania published this news on May 7 and 8.[42] With regards to the implementation of the decree, the sub-prefects of the region gave instructions to the district chief constables and the mayors of the cities one or two days after the news had appeared in the papers, i.e. on May 8 and 9.[43]

39 Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 510.

40 Ibid.

41 "Zsidó üzletekben levő tárgyak tulajdonosait idejében értesítik a kiváltás módozatairól" [The owners of articles in Jewish businesses will be informed of the ways of retrieving them in time], *Keleti Újság,* May 6, 1944, 5.

42 On May 7, *Keleti Újság* reported on the issue and content of the decree, followed by a similar report in *Magyar Újság* on May 8. Both dailies were published in Kolozsvár, but they were distributed throughout northern Transylvania. Enikő Orsolya Nagy, "Mit tudhatott az észak-erdélyi magyar lakosság a zsidóellenes intézkedésekről?," in *Tanulmányok a holokausztról,* vol. 6, ed. Randolph L. Braham (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 2014), 52.

43 On May 9, 1944, Kálmán Szent-Királyi, the sub-prefect of Udvarhely county, sent the text of the decree to the chief constables and the mayor of Székelyudvarhely. We also know that the decree was received by the sub-prefect of Háromszék county (today Covasna county in Romania) on May 8. SJAN

People who sought to retrieve items they had left with Jewish tradesmen or take possession of articles they had ordered and already paid for could only do so if they first submitted a request to the authorities responsible for commerce or the office of finance. The ghettoization of the Jews of the region for the most part had been completed by this time. Thus the former owners of the businesses were no longer able to tend to the requests. Instead, "Christian" custodians who were not regarded as Jews (in the case of workshops and smaller factories) performed this task, or in some cases they were done by the municipal authorities. In the case of businesses that were being closed and put out of operation, the return or bestowal of such articles was overseen by committees consisting of three people. These committees were formed under the oversight of the office of the mayor or the office of the chief constable, and one member had to be a civil servant, while the other two had to be merchants.[44] In many cases, this all took place well after the May 20 deadline. On May 19, the mayor of Székelyudvarhely (today Odorheiu Secuiesc in Romania) announced that people who sought to retrieve items from the Jewish-owned businesses that had been closed had 48 hours to present themselves at the city hall.[45] In Nagybánya (today Baia Mare in Romania) the return of such articles to their owners probably took place much later, at the beginning of July, as indicated by notification number 1465/1944, which was issued by the leader of the city's excise office on July 2. In this notification, he informed the mayor that the financial directorship of the city of Szatmárnémeti had given permission for the distribution of articles of property belonging to (so-called) Christians that were being held in Jewish dwellings, factories, and workshops. An announcement to this effect was to be made public on July 3, and on the subsequent days the news was spread far and wide.[46] Sometimes, it took months for these issues to be settled, and sometimes they were never resolved. Before ghettoization had begun, Tibor Gortvay Tihamér, an architect from Budapest, paid 8,000 pengő to Bernát Schöffler, a merchant from Palotailva (today Luncu Bradului in Romania). He never received

Cluj, Fond no. 151 (Northern Transylvanian Hungarian Military Administration), archival number 219, box 3, dossier 4/1944, f. 4–5., SJAN Covasna (Sfântu Gheorghe Office of the Romanian State Archive), Fond no. 9 (Lord Lieutenant's Office of Covasna County), archival number 16, dossier 2/1944, f. 4–5.

44 The instructions that were given by the Székely District Chamber of Industry for the Mayor's Office of Székelyudvarhely and the Office of the Chief Constable. SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 151, archival number 219, box 3, dossier 36/1944, f. 4–5.

45 SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 151, archival number 219, box 3, dossier 36/1944, f. 1–2.

46 SJAN Maramureş (Baia Mare Office of the Romanian National Archive), Fond no. 1 (Mayor's Office), Acte Administrative (Administrative Documents), dossier 1168/1944, vol. 1, f. 141.

the building materials he had ordered, however, since Schöffler in the meantime had been taken to the ghetto in Szászrégen. The last source regarding the case of the Budapest architect is dated August 31, 1944. On that day, a government committee bearing the name "Committee for the Solution of Issues pertaining to Jewish Pecuniary and Property Rights" sent a transcript to the Royal Hungarian Financial Directorship in the city of Marosvásárhely urging them to resolve the case promptly.[47]

On May 3, the transportation of the Jews to the ghetto began. The fate of the businesses that were owned by merchants and tradesmen who had been taken to the ghetto remained uncertain for days. In most of the settlements, there was great uncertainty regarding the future of the workshops, that had been left without owners. According to decree number 50.500/1944 KKM, enterprises that were important to the national economy could continue to be in operation and so-called Christian entrepreneurial leaders were needed to oversee them. In many cases, however, a great deal of time passed before these "custodians" were named to their positions.[48] In many cases, the staff took over the management of the workshops and factories, which meant, for instance, that they took new orders and they used the raw materials that were on hand to continue production. The Craftsmen's Association of Kolozsvár submitted protests against this practice to the trade authorities of the first instance, contending that sloppy, amateurish work was being done and raw materials that were essential to the national economy were being used in a manner that betrayed a dire lack of expertise.[49]

The distribution of the businesses that had been closed took place in accordance with decree number 2.120/1944. ME, which was passed on June 10 and announced on June 14. Across the country (and thus in northern Transylvania as well), the first people to be given places of business that had been stolen from their Jewish owners were merchants and tradesmen whose businesses, workshops, or factories had been damaged or destroyed by bombs

47 Hungarian National Archives, K498 (Government Commissioner Appointed for the Solution to Issues Pertaining to Jewish Pecuniary and Property Rights), batch 3, documents of the IX. department, document 539/1944, f. 1–5. (K498 – 1944 – b – IX – 539, f. 1–5.).

48 Kádár and Vági, *Hullarablás,* 310.

49 "Az Ipartestület tiltakozott az ellen, hogy a zsidó üzemeket az alkalmazottak vezessék" [The Craftsmen's Association objected to the Jewish factories being run by the staff], *Keleti Újság,* May 17, 1944, 7. On May 14, at almost the same time as these objections were being raised, decree number 23.200/1944 Ip.M. was published in *Budapesti Közlöny*. It addressed the question of the delegation of leaders for the businesses. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide,* 510–11.

or whose enterprises happened to be located in areas that had become part of the ghetto.[50] Of the (so-called) Christian merchants and tradesmen whose businesses had been damaged in the bombing of Kolozsvár on June 2, 1944, 96 took part in this legalized form of theft.[51]

In the meantime, people who had been employed by Jews worried about the wages they had not been paid. The general practice was for the municipal trade authorities or the cities themselves to pay lost wages, and these institutions returned articles to their owners as well.[52] In many cases unpaid wages were covered using monies that had been taken from Jews and put in the city treasury. This was the solution adopted by the mayor of Székelyudvarhely, who on June 12, 1944, referring to the second point of the sixth paragraph of decree number 1600/1944 ME, ordered the payment of more than 3,100 pengő to 14 people.[53] This sum covered work that had been done in the period beginning in early April and ending in late May.[54]

The question of the retrieval of various articles and possessions was a matter of concern not only for the civilian population, but also for various institutions. In some case, library books were among the articles that had remained in the dwellings of Jews. For instance, a request that was made by a craftsmen's association in the city of Csíkszereda (today Miercurea Ciuc in Romania) to the office of the mayor indicates that members who were defined as Jewish by the law had regularly borrowed books from the organization. In one abandoned lodging, for instance, there was a copy of a book entitled *Mit ér az ember, ha magyar* (What a man is worth if he is Magyar?) by the well-known

50 Kádár and Vági, *Hullarablás,* 312.

51 On June 2, two cities in northern Transylvania, Nagyvárad and Kolozsvár, were bombed by the allied air forces. These bombings were part of the preparatory military operations for the landing in Normandy and they targeted first and foremost the railway junctions and industrial and military establishments. "Üzlethelyiséghez jutottak a kolozsvári bombakárosult kisiparosok és kiskereskedők" [Tradesmen and shopkeepers who suffered losses in the bombings have received premises for their businesses], *Keleti Újság,* June 17, 1944, 5.

52 "A városi iparhatóság folyósítja a zsidó üzletek alkalmazottainak járandóságát" [The municipal industrial authorities will cover the unpaid wages of employees of Jewish businesses], *Keleti Újság,* May 16, 1944, 8.

53 Decree number 1600/1944. ME., which was adopted on April 14, 1944 and announced on April 16, concerned the obligation of people who were defined as Jews by the law to report their wealth. It also addressed the seizure of this wealth by the organs of state administration. In accordance with the decree, bank accounts, deposits, and securities owned by Jews were seized, as were articles and jewelry made of precious metals. The law made it possible for the state to use the sums of money in the seized bank accounts to pay the wages of "Christian" employees. *Budapesti Közlöny,* April 16, 1944, 2.

54 SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 151, archival number 219, box 3, dossier 25/1944, f. 1.

populist writer of the era, Péter Veres.[55] It is a sad and perverse irony of fate that the pages of this book, in which the author expresses his concern for the fate of the Hungarian peasantry, were being turned by a reader who was defined as an outsider (a non-Hungarian) and condemned to deportation.

The Costs of Ghettoization, Unpaid Assistance, and Food Ration Cards

With regards to the costs that arose in the course of ghettoization and the fulfillment of the individual requests that were made for reimbursement or reparation, these questions were addressed in the confidential deportation decree of April 7, 1944 (Minister of the Interior's Confidential Decree number 6163/1944) and a notice that was issued on April 19, which was a supplement to the decree.[56] Neither document contained concrete instructions, but the document of April 19 specified that costs were to be covered using assets that had been seized from Jewish homes and places of business.[57] An internal decree issued on May 13, 1944 by foreign Minister Andor Jaross provided additional directions. The costs of the transportation of Jews to the ghettos were to be covered with the assets that had been taken from them. People who were not defined under law as Jewish but who nonetheless were compelled to vacate their dwellings because of the ghettoization were only entitled to compensation under extraordinary circumstances and with extraordinary justification. According to the decree, settlements in which ghettos were established had to cover the costs that arose as a consequence of this using money from their own coffers. They were given the promise that in time the state treasury would repay them for these costs. In some cases, the Ministry of Interior provided some settlements with an advance to ensure the completion of the operations. However, in every case the local authorities were expected to be frugal and keep costs to a bare minimum.[58] In principle, the costs of ghettoization were to be covered using funds from the central "Jewish account" (number 157.880), which was created by the state in June 1944 and was under the administration of the Ministry of Finance. Monies from this account were also to be used to cover the taxes and dues, unpaid

55 SJAN Harghita (Miercurea Ciuc Office of the Romanian National Archive), Fond no. 32 (Mayor's Office of Miercurea Ciuc), dossier 72, f. 24.

56 On the text of the decree see: Zoltán Vági, László Csősz, and Gábor Kádár, *The Holocaust in Hungary. Evolution of a Genocide* (Plymouth: AltaMira Press, USHMM, 2013), 76–79.

57 Kádár and Vági, *Hullarablás,* 286.

58 Ibid., 287–93.

public works bills, and private debts of individuals who had been deported.[59] Indeed articles had been published in the press on the issue of unpaid public and private debts at the beginning of the process of ghettoization.[60] The mayors dealt with bills that had been sent to people who had already been deported (electricity bills, for instance). As early as May 12, the mayor of Nagyvárad had given instructions regarding the settlement of debts to the public works.[61]

As I will discuss, private individuals who participated in the ghettoization and deportation of the Jews of northern Transylvania were given payment or compensation in response to their demands only with great difficulty or not at all. One of the reasons for this was that in September and October of 1944, Soviet and Romanian troops began to take control of the territory. From then on, it became almost impossible to receive any compensation from the state authorities for costs incurred in the processes of ghettoization and deportation.

The various jobs and tasks that arose as the ghettos were created, during the process of transporting the Jews to the ghettos, during the period in which the ghettos were in use, and then as they were liquidated either were done by the people of the settlements and the subordinate institutions at their own expense or were performed by private individuals who had been hired to provide their services. These private individuals or the offices that represented their interests turned to the mayors of the settlements for payment of wages for services rendered. The settlements then asked for compensation for these costs from the state treasury. From the perspective of the local authorities, one of the most cost-efficient tools in the creation of the ghettos was the use of forced Jewish labor. In other cases, the Jews who had been moved into the ghettos had to create the conditions necessary for (temporary) survival. In the early days, the authorities, "moved to act by their good faith," gathered the Jews together in the collection centers so rapidly that problems arose concerning the acquisition of the necessary materials.[62] Only with the passing of several days could the ghettos be made more or less habitable. In Dés, the suggestion was made to

59 Ibid., 294–95.

60 "Mi lesz a zsidók köz- és magánjellegű tartozásaival?" [How will the private and public debts of the Jews be handled?], *Ellenzék,* May 5, 1944, 2.

61 Decree number 13392/1944. II, issued by László Gyapay on May 12, 1944. YVA, TR. 16, dossier 28, f. 19.

62 Gendarme lieutenant colonel László Ferenczy used the expression "good faith" in his report of May 5, 1944. He also notes how the authorities in northern Transylvania rounded up the people who had been defined as Jewish by the law "in general with the greatest willingness, expeditiousness, and flexibility." Molnár, *Csendőrtiszt a Markóban,* 285.

move the Jews who had been gathered together, more than 5,000 people, to the ghetto of Szamosújvár (today Gherla in Romania), since the camp which had been established in the Bungur forest lacked any trace of infrastructure. However, count Béla Bethlen, lord lieutenant of Szolnok-Doboka County, quickly intervened, and on May 5 and 6 he had building materials sent for the construction of a camp in Dés. In the end, no one was moved.[63] The construction of a plank fence around the ghetto of Nagyvárad was done by local carpenters and joiners. Twenty inmates from forced labor camps, who represented a free source of labor, were sent to assist them.[64] In Beszterce, on the days leading up to ghettoization, 50 to 80 local Jewish men were forced to help built barracks on the territory of the ghetto.[65] Forced labor units were dispatched to work at sites in the territories of Trianon Hungary as well. In the city of Pécs, for instance, construction on the wattle fence that surrounded the ghetto had been begun by people who had been sent to the ghetto and then was completed by forced labor units.[66]

In general, the representative bodies of municipal government authorized the mayor to pay the various costs that arose. In many cases, this authorization was retroactive, meaning it applied to payments that had already been made. The bureaucratic jargon in the following excerpt from the records of a meeting of the body of representatives of Szilágysomlyó (today Şimleu Silvaniei in Romania) offers a clear impression of how the measures that were taken against members of the local population who were defined as Jewish were reduced to a mere question of administrative procedure:

> The body of representatives of the Hungarian city of Szilágysomlyó approves the declaration of the mayor of the city according to which, with regards to the costs that have arisen in connection with the gathering together of the Jews of Szilágy county and their transport to a camp and the costs of the maintenance of the camp itself, the visit and negotiation of the lord lieutenant of the county that took place on April 29, 1944 in the communities of Szilágysomlyó and Somlyócsehi [today Cehei in Romania] made provisions to the effect that for the moment these costs would be covered with an advance from the

63 Molnár, *Csendőrtiszt a Markóban,* 286.

64 Miklós Dános, "Tanúságtétel," in *A tegnap városa. A nagyváradi zsidóság emlékkönyve,* ed. Dezső Schön (Tel-Aviv: Nagyváradról Elszármazottak Egyesülete, 1981), 336.

65 Braham, *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust,* 199.

66 Judit Molnár, "'Hazafias tisztelettel'. Zsidók és nem zsidók Pécsett a holokauszt idején," in *Tanulmányok a holokausztról,* vol. 2, ed. Randolph L. Braham (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2002), 262.

> coffers of the Hungarian city of Szilágysomlyó and the Ministry of Interior of the Hungarian Kingdom will provide reimbursement and has instructed the mayor of the city to issue the money order.[67]

Some requests for reimbursement and compensation were made in the first days following ghettoization, though most of these requests were made around the time of or after the deportations. The offices of the mayor in the various settlements answered only with considerable delay, and in many cases they rejected the requests. In general, requests made by private individuals involved reimbursement for the costs of transportation or payment for work done by craftsmen (for instance joiner's work and carpentry). In many cases, owners of cars and wagons had been compelled personally to assist with the transportation of Jews to the ghettos or had had to allow the authorities to use their vehicles. On May 13 and 14, 1944, the ghetto command had made use of the car owned by cab-driver Márton Dankó of Kolozsvár. On June 14, the city paid him 384 pengő in compensation.[68]

In the ghettos, for a daily wage midwives were hired to perform body searches, which included searches of body cavities. On May 29 and 30 and June 3, Mrs. György Dumitrán, a midwife under the authority of Borpataktelep performed body searches in the small ghetto of Nagybánya, for which she was paid 16 pengő. There were cases in Hungary in which the midwives were paid even more for these searches. In Szeged midwives were paid 20 pengő per day for their services, and doctors were paid 200 pengő per day.[69] The midwife in Nagybánya was only one of the many "costs" covered by the city. According to statements of account issued on August 8 and September 4, 1944, there were 56 "services" for which payments totaling 38,734 had been made. This of course only represents the sum of the costs for which claims had been made before July 5 and which had been covered between July 5 and 31 from the city coffers.[70] It is

67 YVA TR. 16, dossier 42, f. 204.

68 SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 1 (Mayor's Office of Cluj), box 201–7325/1944, dossier 23079/1944, f. 1–4. On the payments that were made to cover other transportation costs in Kolozsvár see SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 1, box 201–7325/1944, dossier 20220/1944, f. 1–2.

69 Judit Molnár, *Zsidósors 1944-ben az V. (szegedi) csendőrkerületben* (Budapest: Cserépfalvi Kiadó, 1995), 140–41.

70 Other important kinds of costs included: the purchase of lime, building materials and cleaning tools, disinfection, payments to a local printing press for printed material, plumbing, the digging of sewage lines, telephone costs, the costs involved with care provided for the sick who had been taken to the state hospital, the daily wages for guards and midwives, and burials. SJAN Maramureş, Fond no. 1, Acte Administrative, dossier 1168/1944, vol. 2, f. 87 and 280–86.

worth noting that the city covered the costs of transportation for mayor Károly Tamássy to the meeting on the details of deportation process that took place in Munkács on May 12 using monies that had been stolen from Jews.[71] The costs of the burial of the corpses of three deportees that were removed from a train passing through Nagybánya on June 7 were also covered using these monies. The train had probably arrived from Marosvásárhely (it passed through the city of Kassa, today Košice in Slovakia, on June 8). It was carrying elderly people and the sick from various settlements. According to the health officer of the first district in Nagybánya, the station agents in Zilah and Zsibó (today Jibou in Romania) had already refused to allow the train to unload the three cadavers. In Nagybánya they were given a simple burial.[72]

The rejection of a request for the payment of costs was sometimes justified with the claim that the monies that had been expropriated from the Jews had already been transferred in their entirety to the central account. On September 6, 1944, the mayor of Nagybánya used this explanation when rejecting a request that had been submitted significantly earlier, on July 7. In this petition, a city alderman named István Ágoston had requested the daily wages for four contract workers for the services they had performed transporting foodstuffs from the homes of Jews to the ghetto, providing assistance loading Jews onto train cars, and taking care of storerooms. The mayor advised the alderman to turn with his petition to the financial directorship of Szatmárnémeti.[73]

In the process of creating the ghettos, it was not possible to avoid compelling some Christian families to move. In some cases, for instance the ghettos of Szatmárnémeti and Nagyvárad, this meant changes of dwelling on a massive scale. In other places, it affected only a few families. In Kolozsvár, working-class families who were forced to leave their domiciles in the brick factory, which was used as the site of the ghetto, were given new lodgings in homes that had been taken from Jewish families. According to the newspaper *Keleti Újság* (Eastern News), the municipal authorities even took into consideration the size of the family in question. Families with two children were given dwellings with at least two separate rooms and a kitchen. Larger families were given homes with three rooms and a kitchen. By May 5, more than thirty Hungarian working-class

71 Ibid., f. 280, Kádár and Vági, *Hullarablás,* 286–96.

72 The report number 90/1044. v.o. of the medical officer of the first district to the mayor of Nagybánya, June 7, 1944. SJAN Maramureş, Fond no. 1, Acte Administrative, dossier 1168/1944, vol. 1, f. 58.

73 Ibid., dossier 44/1944, vol. 1, f. 467–68.

families had been moved to new lodgings in Kolozsvár.[74] The other properties that had been forcibly vacated by the Jewish families were made available to people whose homes had been damaged in the bombing of the city that had taken place on June 2. According to the financial directorship in Kolozsvár, by the second half of June some 1,300 dwellings that had been expropriated from Jewish families had been allotted to them.[75] These forced changes of dwelling often gave rise to sentiments of dissatisfaction among the people who were moved into the homes that had been vacated. There were two main reasons for this. Some of them did not find the new homes suitable and therefore felt that they had been unfairly treated. Others, having returned to their original homes following the deportations, complained that their domiciles had been seriously damaged and requested compensation.[76] Some were dissatisfied because, following the deportation of the Jews, they were compelled to return to their original homes, which were not as comfortable as the dwellings in which they had been temporarily housed. The people who had been assigned lodging in homes that had been stolen from Jewish families had to leave their temporary domiciles by a given deadline that varied from settlement to settlement. They had to return the keys to the local financial directorship. They were given compensation out of the city coffers for damages that had been done to their original homes, and the costs of the moves were also covered. On July 9, 1944 (i.e. some six weeks after the deportations), the mayor of Máramarossziget ordered the people who had been moved into temporary lodgings to return to their homes, and he gave them sixteen days to do so (the deadline was July 25). Families were only allowed to remain in the lodgings to which they had been temporarily assigned if their original homes were in potentially life-threatening or uninhabitable condition

74 "Eddig hatezerre tehető a táborba telepített kolozsvári zsidók száma" [At the moment, the number of Jews who have been put in the camp has reached 6,000], *Keleti Újság,* May 6, 1944, 5., Compare with: "Harmincegy kolozsvári munkáscsaládot zsidó lakásokban helyeztek el" [Thirty-one Kolozsvár working-class families have been placed in Jewish apartments], *Ellenzék,* May 5, 1944, 3.

75 According to an earlier report in the press, in Kolozsvár slightly fewer families, some 1,200, were left homeless as a consequence of the bombings. "A Kolozsvárt ért terrortámadás szomorú statisztikája" [The sad statistics of the bombing of Kolozsvár], *Ellenzék,* June 15, 1944, 2. "Ezerháromszáz zsidó lakást utaltak ki a bombakárosultaknak" [1,300 Jewish apartments were turned over to people who suffered damages in the bombing], *Keleti Újság,* June 23, 1944, 8.

76 See for instance the complaint of Sándor Kovács to the mayor of Nagybánya, in which he asks for compensation for the damages that were done to his dwelling in the confines of the ghetto. The real estate, he contended, was so damaged that he was unable to move back into it. SJAN Maramureş, Fond no. 1, Acte Administrative, dossier 1168/1944, f. 338.

or they had in the meantime had another child and therefore required a larger home.[77]

From the perspective of the authorities, the complete deprivation of the rights of members of the citizenry who were defined under law as Jews was accompanied by a "fortunate" drop in expenses. Jews who had been isolated in the ghettos were no longer seen as worthy by the civil servants of receiving various subsidies and benefits. Bureaucratic habit inclined Sándor Gyulafalvi Rednik, the mayor of Máramarossziget, to submit a request to the sub-prefect on April 29, 1944 for an adjustment to the war relief payments to be made in the month of May. The sub-prefect's response, which was dated May 12, made it clear that, in accordance with the oral instructions that had been given during a talk with Pál Tomcsányi Vilmos, the military operations commissioner of Ungvár (today Uzhhorod in Ukraine), on May 6, Jews who earlier had received war relief payments but who in the meantime had been removed to the ghetto had lost any and all legal claim to such payments.[78]

There was also no need to provide sugar rations for Jews. On May 31, 1944, the mayor of Szatmárnémeti informed the Ministry of Public Nutrition that the 17,650 "Jewish sugar ration cards" that the county usually received had not yet arrived.[79] However, it would have been quite impossible to have distributed these sugar ration cards, since the deportations were already underway. Food ration cards could not be distributed among the Jews of Kolozsvár for the same reason. According to news that was reported on May 23, 1944, new food ration cards were to be distributed among the Jews of the city, who had been compelled to wear the yellow star to identify them, on May 25, precisely the day on which the first train destined for Auschwitz departed from Kolozsvár. The reports in the press were not really intended for those whom they would, in principle, have affected, but rather served merely as a means of distracting and placating the Christian population.[80]

77 "Felhívás a gettóbeli lakosokkal kapcsolatban" [Appeal in connection with the inhabitants of the ghetto], *Máramaros,* July 9, 1944, 4.

78 YVA, TR. 16, dossier 43, f. 94.

79 Ibid., dossier 29, f. 108.

80 "Május 25-én kezdődik Kolozsváron a zsidók új élelmiszerjegyeinek kiosztása" [In Kolozsvár, the distribution of the new Jewish food ration cards will begin on May 25], *Keleti Újság,* May 23 1944, 5.

Liquidation and Assessment of Damages

As soon as the last transports had departed from the ghettos, the territories began to be emptied. In general, considerable emphasis was placed on disinfection and proper cleaning. In many settlements, the locals complained that the scraps of food, the trash, and the latrines that had been left behind gave off a terrible smell and posed a threat of contamination or contagion.[81] Yet following the deportations, the ghettos were first plundered and only then disinfected. In Nagyvárad the ghetto was left unguarded for a few days. The articles of everyday use that had been left in the buildings became spoils for the taking. Then the forced labor unit of the anti-aircraft defense squadron that was stationed in the city was assigned the task of gathering together and sorting the furniture, clothing, and other items of value that had been left behind and transporting them to the Orthodox synagogue, which had been turned into a repository.[82] If there were forced labor units in or near a settlement, it was general practice, following the deportations, to make use of them in the transportation of valuables and belongings that had been left in the ghettos. Trucks and wagons were used to transport these items in Nagyvárad and the other settlements as well.

In many cases, the procurement of means of transportation presented a considerable problem for local administrators. In Kolozsvár, the belongings that had been left behind in the ghetto or in the forcibly vacated homes were transported using vehicles belonging to the municipal sanitation unit, which so dramatically hindered the transportation of waste that it threatened the public health of the city. For this reason, on August 16 the mayor decided in the future to use only privately owned vehicles for the transportation of items that had once belonged to Jews.[83]

Most of the ghettos were in horrible condition for months following the deportations and even following liberation. Anything of value was looted, but heaps of debris and items of everyday use were left behind. When Ernő (Ernest) Marton, who earlier had been a Zionist leader, came to northern Transylvania in November 1944, he made the following observation: "The sight of these ghettos is heart-rending even today. Broken furniture, household items that are now useless, layers of feathers from torn pillows, the remains of prayer books,

81 See also: Molnár, *Zsidósors 1944-ben,* 152.

82 Tereza Mózes, *Evreii din Oradea* (Bucharest: Editura Hasefer, 1997), 230–32.

83 SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 1, box 24066–109499/1944, dossier 32503/1944. f. 1.

and inch-thick grime all indicate that months ago thousands of innocent people suffered in these houses and awaited their doom."[84]

Damages were done to the buildings in the ghettos and the brick factories that were used as sites for ghettos. The assessment of these damages and the arrangement of compensation constituted new administrative burdens for the authorities and the municipal leadership. The dossier on the assessment of damages done to the Municipal Brick Factory, which was used as the ghetto in Kolozsvár, has survived, and it offers a detailed overview of the process of how these kinds of damages were assessed.[85] According to the ascertainment of the engineers' office, the replacement of items that were missing and the repairs that would be necessary would cost 3,900 pengő in total, which (in line with customary practice) the city would pay for using the assets that had been stolen from the Jews.[86] This sum, however, was significantly less than the estimate that had been given by the Municipal Brick Industry Corporation on May 27. According to the managers of the factory, the damages would cost some 70,880 pengő, and they predicted that this sum would grow.[87] Following the deportations, the factory requested compensation several times for the damages that had been incurred, but no complete settlement was ever made. These questions were decisively influenced by the fact that by the autumn of 1944, the Soviet and Romanian armies had reached the borders of the city. On September 16, the decree to evacuate the city was issued, and on that very day the Hungarian authorities, who were fleeing, closed the city's coffers.[88]

Conclusion

As the cases I have discussed in this essay demonstrate, the implementation of the Final Solution in northern Transylvania, in other words, the expropriation and annihilation of the Jewry of the territory, involved a complex state apparatus consisting of civil servants, units responsible for the maintenance of order and defense, and even intellectuals and technical experts (engineers, physicians, teachers, and economists). The anti-Semitic measures, which were adopted

84 Attila Gidó, "Marton Ernő beszámolója az észak-erdélyi zsidóság helyzetéről 1944 novemberében," *Pro Minoritate* 2 (2015): 49.

85 SJAN Cluj, Fond no. 1, box 201–7325/1944, dossier 23559/1944, f. 7–12.

86 Ibid., f. 13.

87 The trampling and ruining of the gardens given to the workers in the factory were mentioned among the damages. Ibid., f. 14.

88 Ibid., f. 15.

in a period of only a few weeks, created serious administrative challenges for this apparatus and, furthermore, had negative material consequences for some segments of the so-called Christian population. Problems involving production and provisions arose in several branches of the economy, and the lack of trained experts and specialists, which had already been a problem, became worse.[89] Others, however, profited from the situation. They submitted claims for compensation, denounced people to the authorities, plundered, and moved up on the professional ladders. The relocation of some lower ranking and mid-level leaders (some of whom had left Transylvania in the 1920s and were returning to communities from which they had become distant) from Trianon Hungary to the newly acquired territory also increased the "efficiency" with which the Final Solution was implemented. For bureaucrats who often barely knew the people of the communities to which they had been assigned, loyalty to the regime proved stronger than any solidarity with the local Jews.

It would be difficult to produce a balance sheet for the implementation of the Final Solution in northern Transylvania, much as the costs incurred by Hungary and the material losses of the Jewry also rest on rough estimates. For this reason, I have attempted first and foremost to analyze a few kinds of costs.[90] As far as the question of the actual value of the real estate and belongings that were stolen by the Hungarian authorities, the Germans, the locals, and the soldiers who passed through region in the autumn of 1944 is concerned, we cannot know this with any precision, just as we cannot know precisely the value of the things that were destroyed in the course of the war and the pillaging. The 1946 assessment (which survives only in fragments) of the situation in Transylvania by the World

89 There were some 700 doctors in northern Transylvania in 1941, for example. 44.5 percent of them were defined as Jewish under the law. Thus as a consequence of the deportations, the number of doctors in the region, which was already low, was reduced to half. On the negative economic consequences see: Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, "A 'zsidókérdés megoldása' a 'termelés szempontjai' ellen. A magyar holokauszt gazdasági vetületei," in *A holokauszt Magyarországon európai perspektívában,* ed. Judit Molnár (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2005), 514–27, Csősz László, "Őrségváltás? Az 1944-es deportálások közvetlen gazdasági-társadalmi hatásai," in *Küzdelem az igazságért. Tanulmányok Randolph L. Braham 80. születésnapjára,* ed. László Karsai and Judit Molnár (Budapest: MAZSIHISZ, 2002).

90 According to contemporary anti-Semitic statistics, in 1938 the Jewry possessed a fortune amounting to some 7–12 billion pengő. The claim was also made that this sum constituted a significant proportion, between 20 and 25 percent, of the wealth of Hungary. The reliability of these figures was most recently debated by Hungarian historians in 2014. Gábor Kádár, and Zoltán Vági, *Self-Financing Genocide. The Gold Train, the Becher Case and the Wealth of Hungarian Jews* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2004), 35–25, Cf. Dániel Bolgár, "Mese a zsidó jólétről," *Magyar Narancs* 29 (2014), accessed July 27, 2015, http://magyarnarancs.hu/publicisztika/mese-a-zsido-joletrol-90944.

Jewish Congress contains precise information on the material losses of a few hundred Holocaust survivors. According to it, the value of the properties stolen from 316 survivors from Kolozsvár, Nagyvárad, and Nagykároly (today Carei in Romania) came to 219,064,631 pengő and 367,902,000 lei.[91] A memorandum sent to the government commission for Jewish property by the deputy mayor of Nagyvárad in June, 1944 offers a rough idea of the scale of the properties stolen from the Jews of the city. According to the memorandum, 4,700 dwellings were left empty following the ghettoization of the Jews, with some 13,000 rooms and 4,000 kitchens and larders. Furthermore, 600 businesses and 500 workshops and factories were taken from residents who had been defined under the law as Jews.[92]

As is clear, the value of the property, both real estate and belongings, that was taken from the 164,000 former citizens of northern Transylvania must have come to billions of pengő before the Holocaust. A significant share of this property came into the hands of the Hungarian state and the civil servants, gendarmes, and police who took part in the ghettoization and deportation, as well as the civilians who submitted claims for reimbursement or simply looted. In comparison, the costs that arose in connection with the expropriation, ghettoization, and deportation of the Hungarian Jewry of the provinces were slight. Historians have not yet arrived at any precise estimate of how much the ghettoization and deportation of the Jewry of northern Transylvania cost (even disregarding the damages caused to the national economy). In 1945, the National Audit Office estimated that costs of the ghettoization and deportation of the Hungarian Jewry of the provinces came to 60 million pengő.[93] There are also estimates regarding the costs of the transport of the Jewish populations of some individual Hungarian settlements. In the case of the Jews of the city of Mohács and the surrounding area, these costs were estimated at 70,000 pengő. In the case of the ghetto of Szeged, we know the costs of the creation of the

91 The costs of damages listed in questionnaires as part of the assessment that was done in 1946 were rough estimates and were based on the individual assessments of the survivors. They moved on a wide scale of income categories. 316 questionnaires survived only by chance. Basically the things that survived did so in spite of the careless circumstances in which they were stored. Attila Gidó and Zsuzsa Sólyom, *The Surviving Jewish Inhabitants of Cluj, Carei and Oradea. The Survey of the World Jewish Congress in 1946* (Cluj-Napoca: ISPMN Working Papers, Nr. 35, 2010), 41.

92 "Emlékiratban foglalta össze Nagyvárad városa a zsidókérdés rendezésével felvetődött megoldatlan problémákat" [The city of Nagyvárad summarized in a memorandum the unsolved problems involving the settlement of the Jewish Question]. *Ellenzék* June 17, 1944, 12.

93 Kádár and Vági, *Hullarablás,* 287.

camp, the transportation of Jews, and the provision of food, which in total came to more than 32,300 pengő.[94] The creation of the ghetto of Túrkeve, which "housed" some 160 individuals, cost almost 50,000 pengő. This sum includes a plank fence (18,000 pengő) and the sanitation equipment, daily wages, transportation charges, etc.[95] The construction of the three-meter-high plank fence surrounding the ghetto of Zalaegerszeg is estimated to have cost 40,000 pengő. The forcible relocation of the Jews of Sátoraljaújhely to a single part of the city and the resulting relocation of some so-called Christian families cost 90,000 pengő. Transportation (to the ghettos and then deportation to the extermination camps) cost several million pengő.[96]

In the case of northern Transylvania, we only have partial amounts. We cannot assess the total costs, and it is not entirely clear that we would arrive at a useful figure if we were to attempt to determine the "share" of the 60 million pengő (the estimated cost of the ghettoization and deportation of the Hungarian Jewry of the provinces according to the National Audit Office) that was "spent" on the 131,639 people deported from northern Transylvania (it would be roughly 18 million pengő). We have the greatest amount of detailed data on the small and large ghettos of Nagybánya. The cost of the creation and maintenance of the larger ghetto, which "housed" 3,660 people, came to 38,734 pengő, including the daily wages of the "Christians" who "provided services." Following the liquidation of the smaller ghetto, where some 2,000 people were held, the cost of the damages that had been done was estimated at 30,000 pengő. If these sums are applied to all of the 131,639 people who were deported from northern Transylvania, the costs incurred in the process of ghettoization and deportation would come to 1.4 million pengő and the damages would come to roughly 2 million pengő, for a total of 3.4 million pengő. Naturally, this sum is not reliable, since the process by which it has been reached contains numerous possibilities for error. In individual settlements and areas the costs and the damages depended in part on whether or not in the given ghetto or collection camp existing edifices and infrastructure were used, how many people they were intended to "house," the extent to which the local authorities had been frugal, and the length of time during which the ghetto was in use. The transportation

94 Ibid., Molnár Judit, *Zsidósors 1944-ben,* 144.

95 Csősz, *Őrségváltás,* 84.

96 The sums are included in László Karsai, A holokauszt utolsó fejezete, *Beszélő* 10 (2005), accessed June 22, 2015, http://beszelo.c3.hu/cikkek/a-holokauszt-utolso-fejezete.

costs of deportation must also be added, and they may have come to several million pengő in northern Transylvania as well.

However, it is quite clear that, following the liberation of the region, only a small fraction of the wealth that had been stolen was returned to the few survivors. In November 1944, Ernő Marton informed the Romanian government and the international Jewish organizations of the difficulties regarding the recovery of stolen properties. In the course of the trip he took through northern Transylvania, Marton observed that the military and civilian authorities of the region, which had only been liberated a few weeks earlier, were hindering the reacquisition of stolen wealth. He ascertained with considerable concern and consternation that the returning survivors had to confront the people who had persecuted them: "the Hungarian civil servants who did not flee with the retreating Hungarian and German troops continue to serve in their positions, even though many of them displayed fascist conduct and took part in the implementation of the brutal measures of the Hungarian government. Some segments of the civil guard, which was created to replace the gendarmerie and the police, also consist of such fascist elements, which contributes to a great extent to the aggravation of uncertainty and doubt."[97]

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97 Gidó, *Marton Ernő beszámolója,* 45–46.

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Local Motives for Deporting Jews

Economic Nationalizing in Szatmárnémeti in 1944

The article provides a case study of Szatmárnémeti (Satu Mare, today in Romania) during World War II by using the concept of economic nationalizing. I investigate the motifs behind the de-Jewification and re-Hungarianization of the city and show that by 1944 the Hungarian leaders were convinced not only that the seizure of Jewish property would significantly improve their own situation, but also that the gradual implementation of this policy was the key reason for its previous failure. The article also discusses the ways in which the Hungarian elite aroused expectations among the Hungarian public that Jewish property would be redistributed as a "national gift" and the eagerness of members of practically all sectors of Hungarian society to acquire property that had been left behind by the deported Jews. I thereby argue that the relatively strong local support behind the deportation of Jews was driven, above all, by the economic interests of the local Hungarian community. The entire economy of the city was de-Jewified and re-Hungarianized when the Jews were deported in the summer of 1944. However, I also show that, ambitious plans for social redistribution notwithstanding, major redistribution of assets took place primarily within the housing sector. In general, the gains of the beneficiaries were sharply exceeded by the human and material losses for the city as a whole.

Keywords: The Holocaust in Hungary, economic history, economic nationalism, ethnic borderlands

This article addresses the question of responsibility and collaboration in the ethnic borderlands of Hungary in World War II by using the concept of economic nationalizing. The concept is applied to a case study of the city of Szatmárnémeti (Satu Mare, today in Romania, near the Hungarian–Romanian border) by using formerly unexplored sources. I will thus investigate how the "de-Jewification" and "re-Hungarianization" of Szatmárnémeti was implemented in 1944. This means examining why Hungarian leaders, authorities and civilians supported the deportation of Jews. In other words, the account will not provide a comprehensive explanation of the reasons for the murder of the Jews by Nazi Germans (with the active collaboration of Hungarians). Instead, I will concentrate primarily on the economic motives for Hungarian support of the deportation and also on the closely interrelated question of its actual economic impact.

I define economic nationalizing as an institution of a social practice of economic and political principles and processes that influence and are influenced by nationalism and national identities. My approach to the study of economic nationalizing is inspired by Paul Brass. It emphasizes the importance of how ethnic and national identities are instrumentalized, constructed and used by the elite to gain political power and economic advantages. Ethnic identity and nationalism arise out of specific interactions between the leaderships of the nationalizing states and minority elites. Thus, ethnic and national identities are social and political constructs, which are created by elites who draw upon and distort cultural attributes for political and economic reasons.[1] Economic nationalizing is a dynamic process, in which national and economic factors interact. To stress the dynamic aspect and the social force behind this process I use the term "nationalizing" (as well as Romanianizing, Hungarianizing) instead of "nationalization."

The social practice of economic nationalizing is discernible in formal and explicit ways, as in regulations or laws, or implicitly in the form of social rules. One fundamental principle of nationalism is to improve the political and economic positions of the core members of the nation relative to and at the expense of members of other nations and minorities. This definition of economic nationalizing is inspired by Rogers Brubaker's concept of "a nationalizing state," which he defines as a nation-state *of* and *for* a particular ethno-cultural nation—the core nation—whose state promotes and protects their language, culture, demographic position, economic welfare and political hegemony.[2]

Economic nationalism has been a driving force in the region of East-Central Europe since the nineteenth century, as consecutive regimes have striven to create ethno-national economies, including dualist Hungary and interwar Romania. The ruling nation usually used its political power to establish an ethnocracy to maximize economic advantages for itself at the expense of minorities. During the dualist period, the Jews of Hungary were included in the ethnic category of Hungarian speakers (Magyars) with the aim of Magyarizing the economy at the expense of the so-called nationalities. So the economy of Szatmárnémeti city was completely Magyarized during the dualist period. [3]

1 Paul Brass, *Ethnic Groups and the State* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Book, 1985), 88–89.

2 Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 63, 84, 88, 103.

3 Anders E. B. Blomqvist, *Economic Nationalizing in the Ethnic Borderlands of Hungary and Romania. Inclusion, Exclusion and Annihilation in Szatmár/Satu-Mare 1867–1944* (Stockholm: Department of History, Stockholm

In 1920, the city was ceded to Romania and renamed Satu Mare, despite the fact that it had a large Hungarian-speaking majority, and a process of Romanianizing began. Romanianizing was radicalized at the beginning of the 1930s, and the public sector was almost completely Romanianized at the expense of minorities and especially Jews. In the mid-1930s, efforts to Romanianize were focused on the core parts of Romania, while the Jewish share of the economy in the ethnic borderlands, such as Satu Mare, grew. In 1940, Romania underwent a major revision of its borders. It lost Northern Transylvania (including Satu Mare), Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. In the remaining parts of Romania the Antonescu regime continued with Romanianization, with the intention of completely Romanianizing real estate, businesses and jobs, though in the end these efforts largely failed.[4]

When northern Transylvania was ceded to Hungary in 1940, a process of re-Hungarianization of the economy was immediately launched. Re-Hungarianization included redistributing economic assets and resources owned by Jews among so-called Christians, a practice that was referred to as de-Jewification. However, in the Hungarian–Romanian borderland this process was intended also to strengthen the position of Hungarians at the expense of Romanians. Szatmárnémeti had around 13,000 Jews out of a total population of 52,000. The majority of the Jews were Orthodox, and the Rebbe Joel Teitelbaum, the first Grand Rebbe of the Satmar Hasidic dynasty, had turned the city into an important Orthodox center. The generation of Jews that had lived in the city during the Dualist period remained deeply attached to the Hungarian language and Hungarian culture, despite 20 years of Romanian rule. Nonetheless, during World War II the category "Hungarian" excluded Jews on "racial" grounds and other nationalities, mainly Romanians, on linguistic grounds. Hungary imposed anti-Jewish legislation, but the implementation of this legislation proceeded slowly.

The Hungarian elite in the city of Szatmárnémeti aimed to remove Jews from the economy, while at the same time a political economy of exploitation developed in which the Hungarian elite made large profits at the expense of Jews. Officially and legally so-called "straw man" arrangements were banned, but in reality leading Hungarians were profiting from this type of arrangement. The straw man (*stróman* from the German *Strohmann*) or Aladár was typically a

University, 2014), 155–60.

4 Ştefan Christian Ionescu, *Jewish Resistance to "Romanianization", 1940–44* (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 184.

Hungarian Christian who, in an effort to circumvent the anti-Jewish legislation, formally took over Jewish businesses in exchange for a share of their profits.[5]

As a result of the pro-Magyar attitudes of leading Jews in the Dualist period and during the interwar period, some of them were defined as Hungarians and exempted from the anti-Jewish laws. One important example was the Princz family, who were one of the wealthiest Jewish families in the city and owners of the Princz factory. They were exempted because they "had behaved patriotically with regards to the Hungarian cause" during the interwar Romanian period, i.e. they had supported Hungarian irredentism and ethnic Hungarian politics and the ethnic Hungarian economy and culture. Armin Princz, the head of the family, had been a leader of the ethnic Hungarian party in the interwar period. This means that some leading Jews and Hungarians were collaborating on the re-Hungarianization of the economy, which clearly adds to the complexity of the situation.[6] According to the law, these Jews fell under the anti-Jewish legislation, but they were exempted because of their national merits.

On March 19, 1944, Nazi Germany occupied Hungary. The occupation was motivated in part by the fact that the Hungarian government had tried to negotiate an armistice with the Allies. A second reason was that the "Jewish question" in Hungary remained "unresolved" according to the Nazi German criteria. The situation of Jews in Hungary had been deteriorating up to 1944, but the large majority of Jews was still alive despite the fact that tens of thousands had been killed in instances of mass murder. Additionally, Jews possessed a significant share of the Hungarian economy, as they did, for instance, in Szatmárnémeti, despite ever more severe discrimination. The re-Hungarianization process hit primarily the lower and middle class stratum of Jews, while more wealthy Jews were able to maintain their positions.

Nazi Germany's plan for eliminating the Jews in occupied Hungary was to expropriate and deport them with the assistance of Hungarian leaders and authorities. Nazi German leaders' targeting of Hungarian Jews was part of their larger Final Solution, which aimed at a complete de-Jewification and the killing of Jews in territories under Nazi control. Still, leading Nazi Germans took personal advantage of the situation and were occasionally willing to spare the lives of individual Jews in exchange for large bribes.

5 Blomqvist, *Economic Nationalizing in the Ethnic Borderlands of Hungary and Romania,* 355–58.

6 Ibid., 336.

The German occupation and takeover of Hungary went quickly and smoothly. The Hungarian regent Miklós Horthy remained in power and appointed a pro-German Prime Minister, Döme Sztójay. A group of 600 Germans under the leadership of Adolf Eichmann arrived to implement the Final Solution.[7] The area east of the river Tisza, including Szatmárnémeti, was declared a war zone under German command.[8] The declaration of war zone was a way of legitimizing the deportation of the "internal enemies," i.e. one of its functions was to help strengthen the image of the Jews as enemies who supported communism. The plan was first to deport Jews from this eastern territory because the front and the Red Army were advancing westward.

Hungarian and German interests overlapped in their desire to remove the Jews. In a perverse misuse of a term that in principle refers to religious belief, the Hungarian authorities used the word "Christian" to exclude Jews on a racial basis. The inclusion of the Romanians in the privileged category of "Christians" reduced the Hungarian–Romanian tensions, as the Romanians were not discriminated against *de jure*. Still, the Hungarian leaders regarded Hungarian ethno-national interests as paramount. I will therefore use the term "Hungarian" when referring to a person who was defined by the law as non-Jewish, although the Hungarian authorities admittedly employed the term "Christian."

Economic and National Motives of the Holocaust

Research on the Holocaust in general has pointed to the importance of economic and national factors. Martin Dean has argued that the confiscation of Jewish property was linked to the physical process of destruction.[9] Several historians have applied a functional approach to explaining the Holocaust in Hungary, stressing the importance of economic and class factors.[10] Historians

7 Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Self-Financing Genocide: the Gold Train, the Becher Case and the Wealth of Hungarian Jews* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), 85–86.

8 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (MNL OL) [National Archives of Hungary], 150 IV. k.fő 30 tétel Szatmárnémeti, 773–74, 789.

9 Martin Dean, *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscating of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2, 16.

10 Götz Aly and Christian Gerlach, *Das letzte Kapitel: Der Mord an den ungarischen Juden 1944–1945* (Frankfurt: Fischer-Taschenbuch, 2002), 186-ff, 212-ff.; Tatjana Tönsmeyer, "The Robbery of Jewish Property in Eastern European States Allied With Nazi Germany," in *Robbery and Restitution,* ed. M. Dean et al. (New York: Berghahn, 2007), 81–98; Krisztián Ungváry, "Robbing the Dead: The Hungarian Contribution to the Holocaust," in *Facing the Nazi Genocide: non-Jews and Jews in Europe,* ed. B. Kosmala and F. Tych (Berlin:

Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági have described the looting of Jewish property as a "self-financing genocide," since the Hungarian state used the property to pay for the deportations and the mass killing of Jews.[11] Krisztián Ungváry stresses in his latest major study on the Horthy period that "cold and rational economic calculations" lay behind the deportations.[12] Ungváry claimed that Hungarian authorities framed the solution to the so-called Jewish question as a "major social transformation" through the full-scale Hungarianization of Jewish property.[13] Other historians, such as Mária M. Kovács and Victor Karády, have concluded that economic anti-Semitism initially developed during the interwar period, alongside conflicting economic-occupational interests and social class competition between Jews and Christians over material resources.[14]

Michael Mann contended that without Nazi German power, the Jewish genocide would not have been attempted in Hungary, even though almost all local perpetrators were Hungarian. The Hungarian regime saw the ethnic cleansing of the country as desirable primarily for economic reasons, but was divided over the means. Mann argues that the core perpetrators were ideologically motivated by nationalism, defined in ethnic and racial terms, but when the cleansing took the form of violent deportation, this created massive opportunities for profit. Many Hungarians were thereby sucked in by materialistic motives that were legitimized by state agencies.[15]

Regarding the expropriation of Jewish assets during the Second World War, Kádár and Vági have argued that the Hungarian government was successful in looting but almost completely failed to organize the redistribution. Thus, the looting, of the Jews could not alleviate the economic problems faced by the Hungarian "nation," even though this was one of the policy aims.[16] Kádár and Vági believe, moreover, that this re-allocation scheme of Jewish jobs and property, which included about one-fifth of the national wealth, could have

Metropol, 2004), 231–61; Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 298–301.

11 Kádár and Vági, *Self-Financing Genocide*.

12 Krisztián Ungváry, *A Horthy-rendszer mérlege: Diszkrimináció, szociálpolitika és antiszemitizmus Magyországon 1919–1944* (Pécs–Budapest: Jelenkor, 2013), 606.

13 Krisztián Ungváry, "'Nagy jelentőségű szociálpolitikai akció' – adalékok a zsidó vagyon begyűjtéséhez és elosztásához Magyarországon 1944-ben," in *1956-os Intézet Évkönyv,* 10 (Budapest: n.p., 2002), 287–321.

14 Victor Karady, *The Jews of Europe in the Modern Era* (Budapest; Central European University Press, 2004), 321; Mária Kovács, *Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics: Hungary from the Habsburgs to the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

15 Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy,* 302.

16 Kádár and Vági, *Self-Financing Genocide,* 85.

resulted in better living standards and an economic upturn for non-Jewish Hungarians; however, because of the chaotic wartime conditions, the scheme had the opposite effect, further eroding the Hungarian economy and society.[17]

Studies on the factors of economic anti-Semitism and nationalism have focused relatively little on the annexed territories, including Northern Transylvania in 1940–44, despite the fact that the physical destruction of Jews was more thorough there than in the core areas of Hungary.[18] One notable exception is the work of historian Ferenc Sz. Horváth, in which he examined the role of social compensation, economic reparation and the politics of resettlement in Northern Transylvania. He claims that ethnic Hungarians aimed to regain the economic positions that Jews had taken during the period of Romanian rule, i.e. they sought to implement economic re-Hungarianization.[19] Horváth's study included examples from Nagyvárad (today Oradea in Romania) and Kolozsvár (today Cluj in Romania), but not Szatmárnémeti. Apart from Horvath's article on the topic, there is no study using primary sources on the implementation of anti-Jewish legislation in Northern Transylvania for the period 1940–44.[20]

In order to grasp the mechanisms and motivations behind the deportation of Jews, a local case study is warranted that draws on a variety of sources, including official documentation, newspaper articles and oral testimonies. Kádár, Vági and Horváth have made important contributions in this direction, but their inquiries hardly represent detailed investigations of the local scene. Rather, they draw on bits and pieces of information from various places. This article therefore aims to address this lacuna by undertaking a local investigation in order to arrive at a more subtle understanding of the mechanisms of deportation by using the analytical concept of economic nationalizing.

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17 Kádár and Vági, "'Solving the Jewish Question' versus the 'Interests of the Production'," in *The Holocaust in Hungary: A European Perspective,* ed. J. Molnár (Budapest: Balassi, 2005), 518–31 (530).

18 For the Subcarpathian area, see Yeshayahu Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora: The Jews of Subcarpathian Rus' and Mukachevo 1848–1948* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2007).

19 Ferenc Horváth, "Népcsoportpolitika, szociális kompenzáció és gazdasági jóvátétel," *Múltunk* 3 (2006): 102–43.

20 Historical overviews on the history of Jews in Transylvania have only sporadic information about economic issues. See Ladislau Gyémánt, *Jews of Transylvania: A Historical Destiny* (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Cultural Institute, 2004); Attila Gidó, *On Transylvanian Jews: An Outline of a Common History* (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităţilor Naţionale, 2009); T. Friling et al., eds., *International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, Final Report* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2005); Béla Vago, "The Destruction of the Jews of Transylvania", in *Hungarian-Jewish Studies,* ed. R. Braham (New York: World Federation of Hungarian Jews, 1966), 171–221; Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger, *A zsidóság története Erdélyben (1623–1944)* (Budapest: MTA Judaisztikai Kutatócsoport, 1995).

The Final Solution

The German plans for a radical solution of the so-called Jewish question received support among Hungarian leaders and authorities. Hungarian leaders were interested in the possibility of deporting Jews, as this would enable them to fully implement their program of re-Hungarianization. In the context of a war economy plagued by shortages, Hungarian leaders aroused expectations among the Hungarian public that Jewish property would be redistributed as a "national gift." Expectations were high that this would amount to the "salvation of the Hungarian economy."

The majority of Hungarians in Szatmárnémeti were not aware of the plan to annihilate Jewry, but we can assume that the leading Hungarians, including Mayor László Csóka, had been informed and knew of the extermination camps. State secretary László Endre attended the meeting in Szatmárnémeti at the end of April, at which plans were made for the establishment of the ghetto and the deportation of Jews. We can assume that during this meeting Csóka asked Endre about the destination of the Jews. Lower-ranking officials most probably understood that the Jews would face harsh conditions, but we can assume that they were not given specific information about their final destination.[21] They proved willing to support the deportations, as they expected to receive economic returns in the form of "Jewish property."

Until March 1944, the various anti-Jewish measures that had been passed primarily affected poor Jews, as some of the more affluent Jews had succeeded in maintaining their economic positions and wealth. Still, around 1,000 Jews, mainly refugees from Poland, had been deported from Szatmárnémeti because they lacked documentation necessary in order to obtain Hungarian citizenship. Together with around 24,000 other Jews, they had been massacred near Kamianets-Podolskyi, a city that today lies in western Ukraine, in the fall of 1941.[22]

Wealthy Jews were still visible in society at the beginning of 1944, which increased the support for a more radical solution among Hungarian leaders, including the mayor. At the beginning of March, the number of Jewish tradesmen and craftsmen was 980, which represented 41 percent of all active permits. The

21 Randolph L. Braham, *Genocide and Retribution: the Holocaust in Hungarian-ruled Northern Transylvania* (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff, 1983), 77–78.

22 Ágnes Hegyi and Dániel Lőwy, "Szatmárnémeti," in *A magyarországi holokauszt földrajzi enciklopédiája,* vol. 2, ed. R. Braham (Budapest: Park, 2007), 1039–48 (1044).

city's economy relied on Jewish managers and engineers. Furthermore, several larger Jewish industries that produced goods necessary for the war economy were still in operation. The local newspaper concluded on April 6 that in 1940–1943, "we succeeded in convincing the majority to favor the Christian Hungarians," but that "the real reorganization begins now."[23]

Elisabeth Heimfeld, a Jewish survivor, stated that in April 1944 she and members of her community felt that "something was coming for the Jews."[24] Polish Jewish refugees living in the city urged Jews to "run away, everyone will die!"[25] Rivka Handler, a Jewish eyewitness, stated that Polish Jews were telling "unbelievable horror stories," but "we still could not imagine mass killings."[26] Most Jews thought these reports were exaggerated. In any case, even if they were considering leaving the city, it was extremely difficult to find a place where they would be able to take refuge.[27] Many Jews were convinced that "the Hungarians won't let us down" and that atrocities "will not happen to us, because we are Hungarian Jews."[28]

However, at the beginning of April, the Hungarian Ministry of Interior, together with the Nazi German special appointee Adolf Eichmann, worked out the details of relocating the Jews to ghettos.[29] The official arguments for establishing so-called "designated areas" or ghettos were based on economic and security reasoning. The Hungarian Minister of Interior Andor Jaross argued that Jews lived in better lodgings than non-Jews because they were unjustly richer, and therefore should be moved to designated areas with poor housing. Furthermore, for supposed reasons of national security, Jaross required Jews to be transferred from villages and smaller towns to larger cities, where authorities could supervise them in designated areas.[30] According to the plan, during each phase Jews would be subjected to special investigation in order to ensure that they would surrender their valuables.[31]

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23 *Szamos,* April 6, 1944, 6.

24 University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation Institute (SFI), testimony 8680.

25 USC SFI, testimonies 18970, 21264, 24194, 25815, 29247, 31262, 50370, tape 2.

26 Rivka Handler, *We, The Fugitives: The Dramatic Story of a Young Family's Escape from the Holocaust* (New York: Rivka Handler, 1988), 17.

27 USC SFI, testimony 14902.

28 USC SFI, testimonies 13361, 24194.

29 Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 16–17.

30 International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, *Final Report,* 262.

31 Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 17.

The security argument was specious and deluded, as Jews in general were not organizing any armed resistance. In Szatmárnémeti only two guns were found in the possession of Jews, though the city had around 13,000 Jewish inhabitants.[32] Nonetheless, the city's police kept the Jews under surveillance. In early 1944, they caught some Jews operating an illegal printing press used for printing falsified civil and military documents, including ration cards.[33] Most of the Jews of the city were highly religious and did not engage in violence, even to defend themselves. Falsification of documents was the most defiant form of resistance among Jews.

One of the first measures in the plan was the April 11 announcement that all Jews would be dismissed from their jobs between April and September without compensation. This was meant to be part of a gradual process that would "not disturb production."[34] The announcement made no mention of the "designated areas." However, the Hungarian authorities started to round up Jews in the neighboring district of Carpatho-Ruthenia as early as April 16.[35]

The mayor issued a decree on April 17 according to which all Jewish shops, with the exception of food stores, were to be closed.[36] Although the decree was issued on April 17, the authorities started to close shops at six o'clock in the morning of April 16. Within a few days, the Hungarian authorities had taken the first step in the process of expropriation and relocation, by closing the 350 Jewish shops, which represented more than half of all shops in the city.[37] As the second step, the Hungarian state formally seized these shops on April 21.[38] The authorities reported that this was the end of the "straw man system," i.e. the collusive system of circumventing anti-Jewish laws.[39] Thus, this major operation to nationalize Jewish commercial property successfully de-Jewified the commercial sector. However, the process of re-Hungarianization had only started, as most of the shops remained closed and were only gradually reopened under new and exclusively Hungarian-Christian management.

32 "Szatmár zsidótlanitása," *Szamos,* May 15, 1944, 4.

33 MNL OL, K 149 BM PT1 651/2 73 doboz 1941-7-6000 651.f. 2/1944-4-1006 IV.

34 *Szamos,* April 11, 1944, 3.

35 Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 16.

36 Already 48 shops in Avasújváros were closed on 14 April. Direcţia Judeţeană Satu Mare a Arhivelor Naţionale (DJSM) [Local branch of the Romanian National Archives in Satu Mare], Prefectura Judeţului Satu Mare (PJSM) [Prefecture of Satu Mare County] 1944/111, 46.

37 *Szamos,* April 17, 1944, 2.

38 Ibid., April 21, 1944, 6.

39 DJSM PJSM 1944/111, 43.

A special conference was held in Szatmárnémeti on April 26 in order to discuss the organization of the ghetto. During this conference, László Endre, the state secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, explained that he expected "full and honest collaboration from all civil servants and others participating in this action, which, possibly, may not be fully appreciated until history has proven us right."[40] Endre seemed convinced that de-Jewification would bring salvation to the Hungarians.

All top-ranking officials were present at the conference, including the mayor of Szatmárnémeti, who was responsible for executing orders in the city. While precious little is known about what actually happened during the conference, it is likely that future Jewish policy was discussed.[41] After the conference, the majority of the Hungarian leaders decided to remain in their positions. This failure of Hungarian officials and leaders to resign from their posts is persuasive evidence that they supported a more radical "solution of the Jewish question."

One exception was the prefect of Szatmár County, Ferenc Kölcsey, who resigned and was replaced by Barnabás Endrődi on April 25.[42] According to Béla Földvári, a Jewish survivor, Kölcsey had received information about the plans for deportation and had told Földvári's family about them. Kölcsey informed them: "first they [the Germans] will take you [the Jews] and then they will take us [the Hungarians]."[43] The fact that Kölcsey resigned (and this made him an exception) indicates that he understood that something radical was going to be implemented, and that he was not willing to take responsibility for it.[44]

The commission for the apprehension of Jews in Szatmárnémeti and its surroundings held a special meeting after the conference. The mayor chaired the meeting and representatives from the police, the gendarmerie, the financial and tax departments of the city and primary and secondary school teachers attended it.[45] They decided that the location of the Szatmárnémeti ghetto should be established in the Jewish neighborhood in the centre of the city.[46] On April 27, the local newspaper reported that "an important decree is under negotiation

40 Eugene Levai, *Black Book on the Martyrdom of Hungarian Jewry* (Zurich: Central European Times, 1948), 126.

41 Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 77–78.

42 *Szamos,* April 28, 1944, 1.

43 USC SFI, testimony 50370 tape 3.

44 Another possibility is that politics played a role in which the new regime aimed at filling the top positions with new leaders and that Kölcsey was forced to resign.

45 Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 31, 101.

46 Ibid., 21.

by the government regarding Jewish houses and a designated area for Jews," i.e. the ghetto.[47] By this time, the deportation of Jews was already underway in the neighboring district of Carpatho-Ruthenia.

The newspaper explained that a governmental decree made it possible for the authorities to requisition Jewish houses. The justification for this was simply the contention that "Jews live in better houses than non-Jews."[48] The official reason was that the homes of Jewish families were needed by members of Hungarian society, emphasizing the material side of Hungarian "needs." The purpose of the decree was to persuade segments of the Hungarian public that they would soon receive Jewish houses, and thus create public support for the expropriations. This justification was also part of an attempt to legitimize the concentration of Jews in the ghetto with the claim that they generally lived in better conditions than Hungarians.

Furthermore, ghettoization was also intended to prevent Jewish resistance. Security concerns (however deluded) motivated the announcement on April 28 that "Jews are not allowed to buy explosives and all their licenses to use weapons will be withdrawn."[49] This decree served the purpose of constructing Jews as an "inner enemy," even though the local police were fully aware of the lack of violent organized resistance among Jews.

On April 17, 1944, the authorities ordered all Jews to declare their property, including property supervised by non-Jews.[50] However, few Jews had reported their property by the end of April, and on April 28 the order was repeated.[51] The finance office announced that it would be open even on Sundays from eight in the morning until six in the afternoon in order to receive the declarations.[52]

At this point, the intention of the declaration was to create the public impression that everything was in order. However, privately the authorities feared that Jews would leave with their capital or transfer money abroad. The mayor therefore decided to forbid Jews from leaving the city.[53] Additionally, the mayor issued a decree the same day prohibiting Jews from using the telephone, sending telegrams, or transferring money at the post office. However, the director of the

47 *Szamos,* April 27, 1944, 1.
48 Ibid., April 28, 1944, 2.
49 Ibid., 3.
50 Ibid., April 17, 1944, 2.
51 Ibid., April 28, 1944, 2.
52 Ibid., April 29, 1944, 2.
53 Ibid., 2.

post office rejected the order and resigned.[54] He was one of the few known cases of someone in a leading position who protested against the orders given by the mayor during the ghettoization.

On April 28, the "ghetto order" was made. The official name of the decree was "Concerning the regulation of certain questions relating to the determination of the Jews." It stipulated the establishment of "a designated area" and was announced in the local newspaper on May 1.[55] Furthermore, it stipulated that "Christians" living in the area had to move out.[56] On May 3, all Jews wearing the yellow star were ordered to remain inside their homes. As of May 4, all Jews who were not living in the ghetto were only allowed to go outside between 9:00 o'clock and 11:00 o'clock in the morning.[57]

Jews were rounded up and brought to the ghetto between May 3 and 6; Jews from surrounding villages and cities were brought to the ghetto later.[58] The ghettoization proceeded without any major disturbances. The reasons for this were that there was no resistance movement organized by the Jews and no major opposition by the Hungarian public or Hungarian officials.[59]

The rounding up of Jews was carried out by special units composed of civil servants, including local primary and secondary school teachers, gendarmes and policemen, who were under the authority of the mayor and operated under his jurisdiction. Thus a large share of the public sector was involved in this process. Jews were brought to the ghetto and were only allowed to bring a limited amount of personal belongings and food.

Another special unit came afterwards to make an inventory and ascertain whether the Jews had declared all of their property. The Jews received a copy of the declaration as a sign that the whole process was legal. This created the false impression that they would be given back their property once they returned from the ghetto.[60]

The local newspaper reported that "a new episode in the economic life of the city" had begun. Decrees had been announced on April 16 and the Jews had to "declare" their property upon it. After the establishment of the ghetto

54 Hegyi and Lőwy, "Szatmárnémeti," 1044–45.

55 Decree ME 1610/1944 qtd in *Szamos* May 1, 1944, 1; Háráv Náftáli Stern, ed., *Emlékezz Szatmárra: a szatmári zsidóság emlékkönyve* (Bene-Berak: n.p., 1984), 39.

56 *Szamos,* May 1, 1944, 1.

57 Hegyi and Lőwy, "Szatmárnémeti," 1045.

58 Csaba Csirák, ed., *Szatmári zsidó emlékek* (Szatmárnémeti: n.p., 2001), 140.

59 Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 24, 31–32.

60 Ibid., 31.

in the beginning of May, this property was "seized," i.e. it became the national property of the Hungarian state.[61] However, according to one newspaper article, the amount that was seized was "surprisingly little." The same article stated that "economic experts believe that one of the reasons for this is that Jews are keeping money for themselves."[62] Jewish testimonies confirm that they were indeed hiding some of their valuables or had given them to Christians whom they trusted.[63] Thus, Jews realized that the "declaration" was only a pretext for the theft of their property.

Another explanation for the perception that the property that had been seized from the Jews was "little" was that Hungarian officials took advantage of the opportunity to steal items for themselves. Sources confirm that Hungarian officials seized the opportunity and took things that were easy to carry.[64] The newspaper also cited cases of illegal transactions. In one case two detectives had accepted a bribe from a Jew and were sentenced to prison. This reveals that officials used the opportunity for private economic gain.[65] In some cases Jewish houses were looted before the authorities arrived to take inventory.[66] However, according to a police report, already by the end of 1943 and beginning of 1944 some of the more affluent Jews had transferred some of their wealth abroad.[67]

According to eyewitness Livia Kellerman, some Hungarians suggested to their Jewish neighbors that they trust them with their valuables instead of handing them over to the authorities.[68] Another Jewish survivor, Margerete Weinberger, claimed that "Gentiles were waiting to take over," i.e. that as soon as the Jews had been rounded up, Hungarians used the opportunity to steal.[69] This reinforced the economic incentives of Hungarians to de-Jewify the city.

Another explanation for the perception of the allegedly "low" quantity of the Jewish property that had been expropriated could simply be that the expectations concerning the amount of property owned by Jews were exaggerated. The anti-Jewish legislation had been in force for almost four years, and moreover the war

61 *Szamos,* May 6, 1944, 3.
62 Ibid.
63 USC SFI, testimonies 8102, 29247, 41683.
64 Csirák, *Szatmári zsidó emlékek,* 143.
65 *Szamos,* May 12, 1944, 3.
66 USC SFI, testimony 14701.
67 Police Report, Jan 1944, MNL OL PT1 651/2 73 doboz 1941-7-6000, 651.f. 2/1944-4-1006.
68 USC SFI, testimony 21264.
69 USC SFI, testimony 25815.

had created economic difficulties for everyone, but especially for the Jews.[70] This contributed to the false perception among the Hungarian authorities and public that the Jews were much richer than they actually were. This perception was also fed by the existence of a few wealthy Jews.

Around 200 of them, most of them wealthy, were interrogated. Some of them were tortured because they did not cooperate or voluntarily hand over their valuables, according to Jewish sources.[71] Some Jews committed suicide because of the torture, including a noted Jewish grain merchant.[72] According to the eye-witness Magda Moldovan, another wealthy Jew was shot on the spot by SS men.[73] According to the Jewish memorial book of Szatmár, 30 people were killed in the ghetto and 9 people committed suicide, some of them after having been tortured, others because they could not bear the conditions in the ghetto.[74] Thus, one of the main purposes of the ghetto was indeed to rob the Jews of their remaining property and valuables.

On May 12, the mayor announced that all Jewish property seized had become national property.[75] This means that economic re-Hungarianization had been completed before the deportations began. However, the process of redistribution had not yet begun. The purpose seems to have been to raise the expectations among the Hungarian public in order to legitimize the rounding up of Jews. From a Jewish perspective, this was only the beginning of a series of horrors that only a few of them could have anticipated. Many of them still believed that, as Hungarian citizens, they would be exempted from deportations.

The fast reduction of the Jewish workforce created major disturbances in economic and industrial production. For example, efforts were made in several places to make exceptions for Jewish doctors because of the shortage of physicians. This shortage was made severe, since 45 percent of doctors fell under the anti-Jewish legislation. The result was a significant health care problem in Hungary.[76]

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70 Ronald W. Zweig, *The Gold Train: The Destruction of the Jews and the Looting of Hungary* (New York: Morrow, 2002), 218.

71 USC SFI, testimony 50370 tape 3; 13361; Náftáli Stern, ed., *Emlékezz Szatmárra,* 13; Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 104.

72 Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 104.

73 USC SFI, testimony 14701.

74 Náftáli Stern, ed., *Emlékezz Szatmárra,* 14.

75 Decree no. 12.880/1944 12 May 1944.

76 Kádár and Vági, "'Solving the Jewish Question' versus the 'Interests of the Production'," 527–29.

Still, the concentration of Jews in the ghetto made it possible to re-Hungarianize the economy. Hungarian leaders used both alleged security concerns and economic incentives to establish the ghetto, but they were primarily interested in seizing Jewish property. In this way, the Final Solution was promoted by the Hungarian elite and received support (or at least was not met with opposition) from the larger part of the Hungarian public. The expectation among the Hungarian public was that they would receive Jewish houses, properties and companies. The de-Jewification of the city was presented as the salvation of the Hungarians, but the process in fact involved the loss of significant human expertise and experience. The economy was practically brought to a standstill, as a substantial part of it was in the process of being re-Hungarianized. More than half of all shops were closed, and industrial companies lost more than 40 percent of their skilled managers and workers. This caused major disturbances in the production and supply of goods, which had negative consequences for society at large.[77]

Deportations

The Jews were rounded up at the beginning of May, and most Jews lived in the ghetto for roughly 3 weeks before being deported. There were two ghettos in Szatmár County, one in Szatmárnémeti and the other in Nagybánya. Jews were brought from the surrounding smaller cities, villages and districts into the two cities.[78] At its peak at the end of May, the Szatmárnémeti ghetto had around 19,000 Jews.[79]

The Jews from the Szatmárnémeti ghetto were deported in six transports. The first train departed on May 19 and the last on June 1, with around 3,000 Jews in every transport. The expenses for the deportations had to be paid by the city, but were reimbursed by the state.[80] This means that Hungary paid for the cost of deportations to Nazi Germany using seized Jewish property, an arrangement that has been referred to as "self-financing genocide."[81]

Jewish survivors offer different assessments of how the Hungarian public reacted when the Jews were taken to the railway station. One Jewish eye-witness

77 Ibid., 520–21.

78 Csirák, ed., *Szatmári zsidó emlékek,* 139.

79 Braham, *Genocide and Retribution,* 31.

80 Order issued 13 May 1944, DJSM PJSM 1944/56, 24–25.

81 Kádár and Vági, *Self-Financing Genocide.*

claimed that "people were crying,"[82] while two others stated that people were "smiling" and "clapping their hands." Yet another claimed that "the rest of the population did not say anything when we were deported."[83] Regarding responsibility for the deportations, one Jewish survivor claimed that "our neighbors, the Hungarians, were participating, not the Germans."[84] Another summarized the collaboration between the Hungarians and the Germans by saying that "the Hungarians were more interested in valuables and Germans in our lives."[85] Local Jewish testimonies therefore support the notion that the Holocaust in Hungary was the result of a combination of Hungarian material interests and the Nazi German desire to exterminate the Jews.

The final destination of the transports from Szatmárnémeti was Auschwitz-Birkenau, where a majority of the Jews would either be immediately killed or perish because of the harsh conditions of camp life. The fast deportation of the Hungarian Jews to the extermination and concentration camps (4 trains every 24 hours) resulted in a high death rate among them. It is estimated that around 65–75 percent of the Jews who were deported from Northern Transylvania died.[86] Thus around 12,000–14,000 Jews from the Szatmárnémeti ghetto died as a result of the harsh conditions in the ghetto and trains or else were murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Although the Hungarian authorities seized property from the deported Jews, the local newspaper claimed that many valuables were still missing. "Christians" who had received property from Jews were "robbing the Hungarian state," according to the newspaper. The editor, Albert Figus, urged everyone to report all Jewish property to the authorities.[87] The Hungarian authorities suspected that neighbors had taken Jewish property and requested that everyone hand all such property over to the authorities.

While Jews were suffering or being killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the local newspaper claimed that "Hungarian history justified the solution of the Jewish question, because former periods had shown the danger of letting Jews take

82 USC SFI, testimony 50370 tape 3.

83 USC SFI, testimonies 754, 18970; DEGOB protocol 133.

84 USC SFI, testimony 2281.

85 USC SFI, testimony 6837.

86 Zoltán Tibori Szabó, "The Fate of the Transylvanian Jews in the Period Following World War II, 1945–948" in J. Molnár, ed., *The Holocaust in Hungary* (Budapest; Balassi, 2005), 360–81 (362). Tamás Stark, "A magyar zsidóság a vészkorszakban és a második világháború után: Statisztikai áttekintés," *Regio – Kisebbség, politika, társadalom* 3 (1993): 140–50 (149).

87 *Szamos,* May 22, 1944, 3.

over."[88] This referred to the alleged overrepresentation of Jews in the economy from the Dualist period until April 1944.

Hungarians had a significant incentive to seize Jewish property, which they defined as Hungarian property, while Nazi Germany was mainly interested in exterminating the Jews. The result was that the deportations of Jews from Szatmár was among the fastest and most destructive chapters of the Holocaust in Europe, as never had so many Jews been deported and so much property seized in such a short time.[89] The rapid deportations were implemented chiefly by Hungarian authorities in cooperation with Nazi German experts in genocide. Still, a few members of the Jewish elite managed to escape the horror by paying large bribes.

"National Gift"

The seizure of Jewish property, according to the plans of the state, was the first step in a major social welfare program to the benefit of the Hungarian public. Jewish property was stored and protected by the municipal administration. On May 21, the seized property of Jews in the surrounding cities was transferred to Szatmárnémeti.[90] The most valuable things were taken to Budapest by train.[91] All former Jewish houses not intended for immediate public use were sealed.[92]

On May 9, the new prefect announced in the local newspaper that the seized Jewish property would be redistributed as a form of social welfare. He promised to give textiles, clothes, and shoes to poor workers and their families. There was also the possibility that Jewish homes would be reallocated, but before doing this he would have to wait for further instructions. The prefect claimed that this new system was something that people in general had been expecting for a long time.[93] Thus, he aimed to arouse high expectations among the Hungarian public.

On May 12, clothing that had been stolen from Jews was sold at low (symbolic) prices to poor workers with children in order to facilitate a "rapid solution to the social problem," said the mayor.[94] According to the local paper, Jewish property that had been seized created an opportunity to provide support

88 Ibid., May 23, 1944, 7.
89 Kádár and Vági, *Self-Financing Genocide,* xxi-iv.
90 DJSM PJSM 1944/56, 24-5.
91 Ibid., 29.
92 Ibid., 33.
93 *Szamos,* 9 May 1944, 3.
94 Ibid., May 11, 1944, 3.

for the city's "largest family," beneficiaries of the public welfare office, which included 3,599 families with 11,612 individuals. Thus, about 25–30 percent of all inhabitants of the city were entitled to social welfare, which indeed gave the Hungarian public a material interest in seizing "Jewish property."

The ghettoization of Jews enabled the Hungarian authorities to provide more support for non-Jewish families. According to reports, 200 cows and fifty horses were seized and redistributed. Horses were given to families of soldiers. Wagons and tools were distributed to Hungarians in the same way.[95] Agricultural machines seized from Jews were distributed among farmers.[96]

The conclusion is that Jewish property was used as "national gift," i.e. as part of a program for social welfare. In the end, it was not entirely a "gift," as poor Hungarians had to pay a symbolic price in order to obtain clothing that had been stolen from Jews. This justified the robbing and deportation of Jews and gave the Final Solution a political legitimacy among the Hungarian public under the pretext that national property was actually being restored.

Requesting "National Property"

On May 16, 1944, the Hungarian authorities ordered that all valuables be collected, stored and listed in protocols.[97] As a group, civil servants had some of the highest expectations and demanded material compensation for their work. On May 16, twenty civil servants submitted a signed request to the prefect in which they claimed that, "we have read in the newspaper *Szamos* that Jewish property will be redistributed to poor people and workers."[98] However, the civil servants who signed the petition regarded this as an offence, as the "work conducted by the civil servants had not been fully compensated."[99]

At this point, they had not yet received houses or flats, so the civil servants requested that they be given the clothes that Jews had left behind "in the name of the middle class, which is facing more expensive times." The civil servants argued that "the fine clothes owned by the Jews were not suitable for physical work." They meant to imply that the clothing should be given to them, white-collar workers, not to blue-collar workers. Furthermore, they stressed that they

95 *Ibid.,* May 11, 1944, 3.

96 DJSM PJSM 1944/118, 96–110.

97 MNL OL 150 IV. k.fő 30 tétel Szatmárnémeti, 768.

98 PJSM Comisar guvernamentar al aprov. publica 1944/22-2, 31-2.

99 Ibid.

did "not ask for luxurious things."[100] On May 24, a second group of civil servants requested that they should receive clothes, household utensils and furniture left by the Jews because of the "difficult economic situation and the low salaries."[101]

However, strict orders were given on May 25 according to which no "redistribution was allowed except for social welfare."[102] All belongings were to be kept until a full inventory had been conducted, and only then would redistribution begin. Still, the pressure from the general population and the widespread expectation that people would receive properties that had been stolen from the Jews were high, and many private individuals and institutions continued to send requests for their "share" of the "national property."[103] Pressure from the civil servants increased, as on May 26 they were joined by other professionals to make their case stronger. In another letter, 33 civil servants, teachers and policemen (groups that had participated in the rounding up of Jews and the establishment and administration of the ghetto) requested "Jewish clothes," as they regarded themselves as "low paid workers who could not afford these kinds of clothes." The tone of the letter was more demanding than that of the previous request. The petitioners claimed that "the issue is urgent and important," because for two weeks they had "worked from 5:00 o'clock in the morning until 7:00-8:00 o'clock in the evening, performing not only administrative work but also hard physical labor." According to their request, if they were not given new clothes, "they [would] not have proper clothes to work in."[104]

Thus, civil servants expected to receive economic compensation for their help in deporting the Jews. However, the prefect denied their request for clothing and textiles.[105] The formal reason for the denial was that all property had to be inventoried and listed and that the government had to issue an order before the redistribution could begin.[106] In order to indicate his appreciation for the role played by the civil servants, the mayor announced at the end of May that "all

100 Ibid.

101 PJSM Comisar guvernamentar al aprov. publica 1944/22-2, 25.

102 DJSM PJSM 1944/56, 36.

103 Ibid., 1944/56, 91–158.

104 PJSM Comisar guvernamentar al aprov. publica 1944/22-2, 27.

105 In another case the teachers of the city of Nagybánya who had undertaken the inventory of the property that the Jews had left behind requested, "as the nation's humble servants", to be compensated with "textiles, linen, shoes or perhaps furniture." PJSM Comisar guvernamentar al aprov. publica 1944/22-2, 1.

106 Ibid., 1944/22-2, 2, 82.

civil servants are serving on the inner front," i.e. they were serving as soldiers in the local war against the internal enemies.[107]

Other groups that made requests for the confiscated Jewish property included pensioners, disabled veterans, refugees from southern Transylvania, priests, 130 railway workers, and journalists.[108] All of these groups claimed that they had undertaken important tasks related to de-Jewifying and re-Hungarianizing the city. Public institutions such as the civil defense association, military hospital, workers' office, and the local branch of the Red Cross all asked to receive equipment and material from Jewish institutions or private persons.[109]

Some of the textiles had been sold to poor families through the social welfare office, but in June it was reported that the remaining textiles needed to be cleaned and thus no further distribution was authorized.[110] It was clear at this point that "the general principle is that Jewish property should not be given for social purposes."[111] This was a total change in policy in comparison with the actions and promises made in May. The reason was that "all property that remained belonged to the Jewish owners until a new law regarding this would be passed."[112] The issue of Jewish property had not been solved at the legal level, and so the whole process of redistribution was delayed, causing disappointment among those who expected economic compensation for their work and support.

To conclude, Hungarians working for the Hungarian authorities and at other national institutions expected to be compensated for their support and the work they had performed in connection with the deportation of the Jews. They claimed to be the rightful beneficiaries of Jewish property. This shows how a mechanism of exploitation operated in which the enrichment of Christian Hungarians at the expense of Jews was justified by alleged national merits.

107 *Szamos,* May 31, 1944, 3.

108 PJSM Comisar guvernamentar al aprov. publica 1944/22-2, 5, 44, 64, 87, 111, 113, 115, 125–26, 129, 198–99, 210.

109 Ibid., 1944/22-2, 4, 18, 34–35, 67, 83, 105–08.

110 MNL OL 150 IV. k. fő 30 tétel Szatmárnémeti, 778; Jews had been hiding textiles that were found, *Szamos,* June 13, 1944, 3.

111 MNL OL 150 IV. k. fő 30 tétel Szatmárnémeti, 778–79.

112 Ibid.

Houses and Flats

Jews owned a significant share of the houses in the city. On May 10, the local newspaper reported that "the solution of the Jewish question solved the problem of housing in a radical way."[113] On May 9, people in the city had already begun to submit requests to receive Jewish houses and flats. It was decided that public institutions should be given priority in this redistribution. The second priority was "civil servants who did not have any place of their own", because there were several cases in which the families of civil servants rented their dwellings.[114] The third category was civil servants who had flats that were deemed too small.

This announcement clearly shows how civil servants were promised compensation in the form of Jewish homes for their assistance in the process of rounding Jews up. It is likely that many civil servants expected to receive benefits for their work and that this was their primary motivation in helping in (instead of protesting against) the ghettoization and deportation of the city's Jews.

In the course of the following days, the prefect changed the priority regarding the redistribution of houses and emphasized social welfare, meaning that poor families with many children or without houses would be first to receive lodgings that had been stolen from Jews.[115] Social welfare institutions such as kindergartens and retirement homes were also given priority.[116]

The estimated number of Jewish houses in mid-May was around 1,200 out of 6,000 dwellings. Still, this was only an estimate, as Jews from other places owned houses in the city and the final report had not yet been completed. The final outcome of the redistribution was of "great public interest" according to the local newspaper, since Jews had possessed a large share of what was referred to as "national property."[117]

The expectations rose among Hungarians that they would benefit materially from the redistribution of Jewish homes. The newspaper reported that "everyone wants to move to Szatmár[németi]," and by the end of May as many as 2,099 requests to move to the city had indeed arrived. It was announced in the newspaper that "Christian [Hungarian] working families with many children"

113 *Szamos,* May 10, 1944, 3.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid., May 11, 1944, 2.
116 Ibid., May 12, 1944, 7.
117 Ibid., May 16, 1944, 3.

would be the first to be given homes. People who requested houses because they wanted more comfortable and larger accommodations would be denied.[118]

The inventory of the houses was undertaken by a special finance committee consisting of twelve members. They made a list of all items of furniture and appointed a caretaker, who either rented the house to a Hungarian renter or sealed it. The rent was paid to a public account. According to the report, because of the shortage of policemen, some Jewish houses had been entered before the special commission came.[119] However, in my view it is not unlikely that officials also abused their mandate in the interest of their own economic gain. This was the case in other places in Northern Transylvania.[120]

The redistribution of houses started in mid-June when the first families with several children moved in, and another fifty families were about to follow.[121] According to the newspaper, Jews had occupied the best houses in the city, while several thousand Hungarians had been living in poor conditions. By this time, 3,100 requests had been received. "A new happy Hungarian life has started," reported the newspaper on June 23.[122] Rose Markovits claimed that "a Hungarian peasant family took over our house and they loved it," because "for the first time they had a decent home and they had gotten something that they had never had before."[123]

By the beginning of July, 360 Hungarian workers had received one-room and two-room houses and flats, while another 4,000 requests were pending.[124] The constant increase in requests reveals how large a share of the public had an interest in obtaining Jewish property. By the end of July, all "Jewish" real estate and flats had a caretaker appointed and were seized as Hungarian state property.[125]

The newspaper reported that "the building of the new Szatmár[németi] will go smoothly when real estate is in the hands of the state."[126] Flats and houses were rented out and the newspaper announced that "everyone will have a place

118 Ibid., May 22, 1944, 4.

119 MNL OL 150 IV. k. fő 30 tétel Szatmárnémeti, 778–80.

120 MNL OL K523 BM Államvédelmi Központ általános i-1944-2-78, q.f. Karsai, László, "The Last Chapter of the Holocaust", *Yad Vashem Studies,* 34 (2004), 293–329 (321).

121 *Szamos,* June 14, 1944, 3.

122 Ibid., June 22, 1944, 2; 23 June, 3.

123 USC SFI, testimonies 13361.

124 *Szamos,* July 7, 1944, 3.

125 Ibid., July 26, 1944, 5; 31 July, 3.

126 Ibid., July 31, 1944, 3.

to live." This work was undertaken by 40 teachers, who compiled a registry of all of the houses.[127] Schools were waiting to take over the buildings that had been used by Jewish schools and, according to the newspaper, the "whole nation is waiting to get its property back."[128]

In mid-August, it was announced that 3,260 families would receive houses or flats and that 1,800 had already moved in. These dwellings were given first to poor people and civil servants and then were distributed to the rest of the public.[129] In the end, civil servants were compensated for the assistance they had provided in rounding up Jews and seizing their property. Also a large segment of society benefitted materially from the transfer, as around 40 percent of all houses and flats in the city were redistributed.

In conclusion, the deportation of Jews enabled a major redistribution of houses and flats to a large share of the Christian Hungarian public in general and the Hungarian elite in particular, as they received credit and compensation for this major transformation. Houses and flats were distributed as a form of social welfare, but were also given as compensation to civil servants who had participated in the deportation of Jews. The position of civil servants allowed them opportunities to gain economic advantages, both legally and illegally. This shows how a mechanism of ethno-racial exploitation functioned. The large redistribution of Jewish property to the Hungarian public was a way of legitimizing the deportations and currying popular support.

Redistribution Delayed

In June, the principles for the redistribution and re-Hungarianizing of Jewish property were circulated, with the general criterion being to give priority to public projects.[130] According to the local newspaper, former Jewish property became "national property and a national gift," as the property was being restored to its "rightful owners."[131] However, the process of redistribution was delayed and all Jewish valuables were stored in Hotel Pannonia (formerly Hotel Dacia) and in warehouses. According to the local newspaper, the Hungarian authorities

127 Ibid., Aug. 3, 1944, 2.
128 Ibid., Aug. 5, 1944, 3.
129 Ibid., Aug. 12, 1944, 3
130 DJSM PJSM 1944/56, 159.
131 *Szamos,* July 6, 1944, 1.

accumulated one wagonload of gold in total as well as "luxury products of the finest quality."[132]

The Hungarian Government was delayed in the redistribution of Jewish property, and it was only in June, two months after the expropriations had begun, that a Commissioner for Jewish property was appointed.[133] Decrees regarding Jewish property had been contradictory; at first, the Hungarian government had decreed that clothing would be sold as part of a social welfare program, but later this and other decrees were suspended.

On August 10, the criterion for redistribution was finally announced. Jewish property was to be used for the "public and national good." This included redistribution to, first and foremost, military organizations (such as the Levente Associations, which were paramilitary youth organizations), social and religious institutions, cultural houses, churches and educational institutions, all of which, of course, were regarded (and legally defined) as Christian Hungarian.[134] With regards to the redistribution of property to private individuals, the following priorities were established:

1. Surviving members of soldiers' families;
2. World War I veterans;
3. Poor families with several children;
4. Disabled or impoverished people without property;
5. Partisan fighters (fighting for Hungary in non-regular units);
6. Workers earning less than 200 pengő per month;
7. Families who had lost property because of bombing;
8. Pregnant women;
9. Civil servants with eight or more children.[135]

This list of priorities clearly reflects considerations of social welfare. It also recognized and privileged groups that were fighting for the "nation," i.e. soldiers and their families, as well as civil servants.

132 Ibid., July 13, 1944, 3.

133 Zweig, *The Gold Train,* 219.

134 In Nagybánya confiscated Jewish houses were used as kindergartens, hospitals, the Levente Association, the police, the Reformed Church's school, teachers' and clerks' residences, DJSM PJSM 1944/133, 40. The situation was similar in Csenger, Nagysomkút, Avasújváros and Kápolnamonostor. See ibid., 10, 71, 73, 85.

135 DJSM PJSM 1944/56, 201–04.

Even though the criteria for redistribution had been decided, the newspaper announced on August 12 that the huge task of completing the inventory had not been finished.[136] The city was bombed on August 16 and 17 and again on September 19 and 20, and many people left for the countryside. Shops and warehouses were not guarded and there was some looting, according to a police report.[137] Ultimately, only a fraction of the property was redistributed. Following the chaos created by the advancing front and the bombing of the city, confiscated Jewish property remained in warehouses or was stolen.[138]

In conclusion, a significant amount of the property that had been expropriated from Jews was never redistributed because the process was delayed, and during this time a great deal of property was stolen or lost. The redistribution was intended to provide social welfare and to reward "national merits." The delay of redistribution meant that the Hungarian people's expectation that they would be given some part of this "national gift" was frustrated.

Conclusions

The main method of re-Hungarianizing the economy in the city of Szatmárnémeti was the ghettoization and deportation of Jews. This created an opportunity to seize, confiscate, rob, steal and redistribute Jewish assets. However, in the process of property seizure and collective thieving, a significant share of the values that were in principle to be stolen by the state was simply appropriated by individuals and never nationalized. Hungarian politicians, policemen, gendarmes, civil servants and others took part in this collective and private looting, which became a vast operation and occupied major segments of the population for several months during the summer of 1944.

Jewish property was re-Hungarianized in a process consisting of several stages. First, Jews had to declare their property. Second, the Hungarian government and individual Hungarian citizens seized property when the Jews were rounded up. The last and somewhat delayed part of the process was when the Hungarian government redistributed lodgings and real estate by appointing Hungarian caretakers, renting out dwellings, or simply giving property away.

136 *Szamos,* Aug. 12, 1944, 3.

137 MNL OL PT1 651/2 73 doboz 1941-7-6000 651.f. 2/1944-4-1006, 86.

138 According to Zweig, "It is not clear what percentage of the movable assets owned by Jews was actually handed over to the central government, and what remained 'unofficially' in the hands of the local police and Financial Directorate officials." Zweig, *The Gold Train,* 219.

The political aim of de-Jewifying the city, which was to ensure popular support, was accomplished; however, while the properties and belongings had been re-Hungarianized on a formal level through seizure, this did not mean that all "Jewish" jobs, including positions in workshops and manufactories, were taken by Hungarians. The deportation of Jews and the redistribution of Jewish property caused significant disruptions in the economy.

Some of the properties that were seized were used as a form of social welfare. This social welfare functioned as a way of pacifying the Hungarian public and generating political support for the regime. Moreover, it helped legitimize the deportations. The seizure of Jewish property created an expectation among Hungarians that their economic situation would improve, because it was generally believed that Jews were wealthy. However, in the end, some of the property was never redistributed within the frameworks of the social welfare programs because of administrative and legal issues, and also because Hungarian rule in northern Transylvania came to an end when the Romanian army entered the city in late October 1944. One important exception was the redistribution of houses and flats, which were given to Hungarians. This did indeed constitute a huge economic transformation.

Certain sectors of economic life were severely disrupted by the loss of human capital and know-how, which created a general standstill of the economy. The Holocaust not only destroyed the Jewish community of the city, murdering its members, it also destroyed a significant part of the city's economy. Before the German occupation, the Hungarian authorities had been cautious and implemented a gradual re-Hungarianization, but radical forces among the Hungarian elite and the new pro-German regime abandoned this approach. They seemed convinced that the operation would be economically beneficial to the Hungarian community. In reality, they paid a high price for having cleansed the city of Jews.

Hungarian leaders were convinced that a complete seizure of minority property would improve their own situation and that the gradual implementation of this policy (instead of a rapid implementation) had been the reason for the policy's previous failure. In 1944, they therefore supported a radical policy of enacting a large-scale operation as quickly as possible that was meant to prove them right. Eventually, this turned out to be an illusion, as it created major economic disturbances and a political economy of exploitation. The fact that a similar process in Romania, which never involved deportation on the same scale that took place in Hungary, has similar negative economic

consequences suggests that indeed the relationship between the two (ethno-racial nationalizing and economic stagnation) was causal.[139] These two cases of Hungarianization and Romanianization clearly exemplify the economic problems (beyond the obvious human ones) involved in ethnic and racial discrimination and exploitation.

In the interwar period, the Romanian elite in Szatmárnémeti believed that it was possible to Romanianize all sectors of the economy, even though the Romanians were themselves a minority in the city. The Hungarian elite believed in much the same way that they could re-Hungarianize all sectors of society when the city again fell under Hungarian rule in 1940. In both cases, however, the minorities succeeded in maintaining their presence in or control over important parts of the economy. Ironically, this was partly the result of the successful nationalizing in the public sector, which increased economic space for minorities in the private sphere one. Another reason was that minorities found ways to circumvent the legal efforts to nationalize the economy, which they were able to undermine through bribes and political pressure.

The Hungarian elite in particular promoted the elimination of Jews as part of the "Final Solution" with the support of Hungarian society in order to achieve a complete re-Hungarianization of the economy. In my view, support for this policy can be partly explained by the stepwise process by which it was implemented. When one measure did not produce the desired effect, this only heightened expectations and increased pressure to devise more radical measures with which to improve the economic situation in the context of the war. In the case of Szatmárnémeti, wealthy Jews remained in their positions, and some were exempt from legal measures, despite the anti-Jewish legislation. This delay in implementing the most vicious measures reinforced the public demand and support for a more radical solution. This argument and mechanism echoes the ideas put forward by Raul Hilberg, who claims that the decision to annihilate the Jews required "the implementation of systematic administrative measures in successive steps."[140] Hilberg claims that first Jews were racially defined; second, expropriation operations were initiated; third, Jews were concentrated in ghettos; and finally, the decision was made to annihilate them.

The discrimination against Jews and the promotion of Hungarians in the economic sphere led to short-term economic gains for Hungarians, but created

139 Ionescu, *Jewish Resistance to "Romanianization" 1940–44,* 186.

140 Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 5, 49–51.

several detrimental social mechanisms that reinforced a vicious circle. The most important was the mechanism of exploitation, meaning that Hungarians could live off the work of others by looting and robbing their property. The Hungarian state used formal and direct discrimination and seized all Jewish property in the name of an anti-Semitically defined nation. The state redistributed property based on ethno-racial identity, which created a belief among Hungarians that they would be rewarded in economic terms merely because of their alleged ethno-national merits.

The relatively strong local support for and lack of resistance against the deportation of Jews was driven, above all, by the economic ambitions of the local Hungarian community. Local Hungarians had economic incentives, namely the prospect of being given property that the Jews had had to leave behind. Jews in the city trusted their leaders and stayed, despite warnings and rumors about mass murders. The economy was totally re-Hungarianized when the Jews were deported in the summer of 1944. However, the consequence was that the Hungarian economy and society was paralyzed. Hungarian leaders believed that the deportation of Jews and the redistribution of "Jewish property" would amount to "the salvation of the Hungarian economy," but instead the Holocaust became a dead-end of human and material losses for everyone. The Holocaust in Hungary should therefore primarily be explained with local Hungarian economic motives, which overlapped with the Nazi German Final Solution.

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Jews in a 'Judenrein' City: Hungarian Jewish Slave Laborers in Vienna (1944–1945)[1]

In the early summer and autumn of 1944, more than 55,000 Hungarian Jews had been deported to Austria as forced laborers. 17,500 of them arrived in Strasshof from various Hungarian ghettos in the summer of 1944. There, a real "slave market" was opened to meet the demands of Austrian entrepreneurs who urgently needed manpower in their factories and farms. The deported families—mainly mothers, children and grandparents—had to work in Vienna and in Lower Austria on farms, in trade, and in particular in the "war industry" (for example, in construction companies, bread factories, or oil refineries) as forced laborers. The working and living conditions of the forced laborers varied widely depending on the camp in which they were housed, the branch of industry in which they had to work, and the conduct of the local military administration in the camps and the various workplaces. In this essay, we highlight two fundamental aspects of the topic which are connected to two different methodological approaches to socio-historical understanding. On the one hand, we re-localize the history of Hungarian Jewish slave labor in Vienna on the basis of historical sources, documents and testimonies. On the other, using the same testimonies and archival materials, we portray the everyday lives and typical survival strategies of slave laborers.

Keywords: Holocaust, Nazi persecution, Hungarian Jews, Austria, forced labor, oral history, urban spaces, World War II

Introduction

On June 14, 1944, Adolf Eichmann, who was then in Hungary directing the deportation of the Jews of Hungary to Auschwitz, unexpectedly offered Rezső Kasztner the following deal: in exchange for 5 million Swiss francs, he would be willing to ship 30,000 Jews to Austria for forced labor.[2] By then, Kasztner—the vice president of the Budapest Jewish Rescue Committee (*Budapesti Segélyező és Mentőbizottság,* in Hebrew *Vaadat ha'Ezza ve'ha'Hatzalah*), an organization

1 This study is an extended version of the joint paper we presented at the fifth international multidisciplinary conference "Beyond Camps and Forced Labour: Current International Research on Survivors of Nazi Persecution." (Imperial War Museum London, January 7–9, 2015).

2 On the negotiation between Eichmann and Kasztner, see Yehuda Bauer, *Jews for Sale* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1996).

of Jewish self-rescue—had been engaged in negotiations with Eichmann for months. While in the background of this unexpected offer was the fact that SS-Brigadeführer Hanns Blaschke, the Nazi mayor of Vienna, had demanded workers and the decision to send Hungarian Jews to Austria to meet his request had already been made, Eichmann presented the offer to Kasztner as a special favor.[3]

As the Jews from the first, second and third zones had already been deported to Auschwitz, members of the *Budapest Jewish Rescue Committee* and the local Jewish leaders started to select the people to be sent to Vienna and its vicinity from the fourth deportation zone located in southern Hungary.[4] (The last trains from the third deportation zone left for Auschwitz on June 16.) Therefore, people from among the Jewish population of the next zone were selected for deportation to Strasshof, a camp near Vienna. While the deportation of the Jews from this zone took place between June 25 and 28 (in total, 40,505 Jews were taken to Auschwitz from four ghettos), five trainloads of Jews, altogether 15,011 people, were taken to Strasshof between June 27 and 30. 564 deportees arrived in Strasshof from Baja, 6,641 from Debrecen, 5,239 from Szeged, and 2,567 from Szolnok.[5]

The report of the lager physician of Strasshof, which registered the deaths of Jews deported to the camp from Hungary (the first entry is dated July 1, 1944), says a great deal about the circumstances of the Strasshof deportations. In total,

3 Concerning the background of the Strasshof deportation, see Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, *Ungarisch-Jüdische Zwangsarbeiter und Zwangsarbeiterinnen in Österreich 1944/45: Arbeitseinsatz – Todesmärsche – Folgen* (Vienna: Lit, 2010), 45–49; and Irene Suchy, *Strasshof an der Nordbahn: Die NS-Geschichte eines Ortes und ihre Aufarbeitung* (Vienna: Metroverlag, 2011).

4 In April 1944, the Hungarian authorities, together with the members of the Sonderkommando Eichmann, divided Hungary into six deportation zones: I. Karpatoruthenia and Northeastern Hungary, II. Northern Transylvania, III. Northern Hungary, IV. Southeastern Hungary, V. Western Hungary and VI. Budapest and its vicinity. The deportation followed this geographical order. See Randolph R. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

5 The data concerning the number of the deportees are provided by Edith Csillag, who was a deportee herself. She was deported from Mezőtúr to the Szolnok ghetto and, from there, to Strasshof. Thanks to her knowledge of German, she was assigned to office work in the camp. See her testimony in the Hungarian Jewish Archives (Budapest), DEGOB protocols, No. 3628. On Szeged and the Strasshof deportation, see Judit Molnár, "Embermentés vagy árulás? A Kasztner-akció szegedi vonatkozásai," in idem, *Csendőrök, hivatalnokok, zsidók: Válogatott tanulmányok a magyar holokauszt történetéből* (Szeged: Szegedi Zsidó Hitközség, 2000), 191–97. Concerning the process and the stages of the Strasshof deportation, see Szabolcs Szita, *Utak a pokolból: Magyar deportáltak az annektált Ausztriában 1944–1945* (Budapest: Metalon, 1991), 41–45, and Szabolcs Szita, *Verschleppt, Verhungert, Vernichtet: Die Deportation von ungarischen Juden auf das Gebiet des annektierten Österreich 1944–1945* (Vienna: Eichbauer Verlag, 1999).

six mainly elderly people died on July 1, five of them because of heatstroke (*Hitzschlag*), according to the physician's notes.[6]

In Strasshof a veritable "slave market" was opened to satisfy the demands of Austrian entrepreneurs who urgently needed manpower in their factories and on their estates and farms. The deported families, consisting primarily of mothers, children, and grandparents, had to work in Vienna and in Lower Austria as slave laborers in agriculture, trade, and in particular in the war industry, for example, in construction companies, bread factories, oil refineries, etc. Both the official sources and the testimonies indicate that the working and living conditions of slave laborers varied widely depending on the camp in which they were detained, the branch of industry in which they were compelled to work, and the behavior of local organs of the military administration.

In 2014, the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute initiated a remembrance tour concerning this short period in the history of the Holocaust in Hungary.[7] We, the authors of this article, participated in the pilot project of the tour. During the research phase, we collected hundreds of testimonies, original documents, photos, and protocols of the People's Court, etc., in order to construct and contextualize the history of Hungarian Jewish slave labor in Vienna on the micro-historical level. As a result of this research project, we identified more than 100 entrepreneurs and firms (e.g. *Ankerbrotfabrik, Shell Oil Company, Siemens-Werke, Waagner-Biro AG, Städtisches Elektrizitäts- und Gaswerk, Papierfabrik ROJA,* etc.) which had exploited Hungarian Jewish slave labor.[8] In the summer of 2014, an interactive website was developed displaying the sixty most important places in Vienna. It shows the topography of suffering of the Hungarian Jews in Vienna in the last year of World War II.

In this article, we highlight two fundamental aspects of the topic which are connected to two different methodological approaches to socio-historical understanding. On the one hand, in part two, we re-localize the history of Hungarian Jewish slave labor in Vienna on the basis of historical sources, documents and testimonies. Our analysis moves as close as possible to the specific sites of Hungarian slave labor and attempts to 'rewrite' the urban landscape of

6 Totenbeschau Befunden vom Durchgangslager Strasshof (Archiv IKG Wien, Bestand Wien, A/VIE/IKG/II–III/FH/1/1, Box No. 1).

7 See: "Ungarische Zwangsarbeit in Wien," accessed May 6, 2015, http://ungarische-zwangsarbeit-in-wien.at/.

8 For the current list of entrepreneurs, see *Betriebe* menu on the website of the project: "Ungarische Zwangsarbeit in Wien," accessed May 6, 2015, http://ungarische-zwangsarbeit-in-wien.at/.

Vienna. In this part we also discuss typical social spaces of slave labor in Vienna. On the other hand, in part three, our socio-historical analysis unfolds in the opposite direction: using the same testimonies and archival materials, we portray the everyday lives and typical survival strategies of slave laborers.

Methodological Remarks

The historiography of this episode of the Hungarian Holocaust has not yet examined specific urban spaces. Although the books by Szabolcs Szita and Eleonore Lappin-Eppel contain fragments on particular events that can be localized, they tell a concise and coherent (hi)story in which spatial, socio-geographical specificities do not play an important role. Tim Cole's place-based research on the social history of ghettoization and the deportation of Hungarian Jews offers more conceptual similarities and can therefore help us arrive at answers to our questions.[9] As he writes, "my fear was that if I cited these passages within a chapter examining, say, daily life in Hungarian ghettos, I would end up erasing the space-specific uniqueness of this particular trace."[10] In his book, Cole decided to tell 'small stories,' "each of which reflects the possibilities and limitations of a particular material trace of this past."[11] In this chapter we show the typical places and scenes of slave labor using, like Cole, 'small stories,' which function like snapshots rather than narratives.

Before presenting such snapshots, we provide clarification concerning the sources and methods on which our research is based. The typical archival sources, on which we drew before expanding the methodological scope of our research would not have permitted us to provide nuanced descriptions of the sites where the slave laborers were compelled to reside and work and the ways, in which these sites were interpreted by the slave laborers themselves. These sources—primarily lists of firms, hospital documentation, death certificates, commands and orders, and the protocols of the People's Court—lack not only the personal views of the slave laborers themselves but also socio-historical

9 Tim Cole, *Holocaust City: The Making of a Jewish Ghetto* (New York–London: Routledge, 2003), and Tim Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust: Journeying in and out of the Ghettos* (London: Continuum, 2011).

10 Ibid., *Traces of the Holocaust*, 13.

11 Ibid., 14.

information regarding the various places. This gap can be filled with personal diaries, testimonies and oral history interviews.[12]

In recent decades, testimonies and oral history interviews have become 'ordinary' historical sources in the historiography of the Holocaust. One of the first ambitious and successful experiments was the book by Christopher Browning on the Starachowice camp. Browning managed to construct a history of this camp largely on the basis of testimonies, thus helping to change the status of oral history sources in mainstream history-writing.[13] Although we share his reservations concerning the authenticity and factual accuracy of testimonies, we do not follow his 'accumulative' methodology, which is based on the compilation of an allegedly sufficient critical mass of testimonies that "can be tested against one another."[14] We also borrow the anthropological method of extended case study, as discussed by Mario Luis Small, the crux of which is that the generalizable features of individual cases provide chances for deduction. In Small's words, "the approaches call for logical rather than statistical inference, for case- rather than sample-based logic, for saturation rather than representation as the stated aims of research. The approaches produce more logically sensible hypotheses and more transparent types of empirical statements."[15] Hence,

12 Pál Bárdos, *Az első évtized* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1975); Peter Cukor, *Before the Silver Cord is Snapped: Looking Back on My Journey* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2004); Szilvia Czingel, ed. *Szakácskönyv a túlélésért – Lichtenwörth, 1944–45* (Budapest: Corvina, 2013); Mária Ember, *Hajtűkanyar* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1974); Judit Fenákel, *K-vonal* (Budapest: XXI. Század, 2013); András Fischer, *Und die Hauptsache, wir lebten... Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt am Main–Munich–London–Miami–New York: Fouqué Literaturverlag, 2002); István Hargittai, *Our Lives – Encounters of a Scientist* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 2004); Ladislaus Löb and Rezső Kasztner, *The Daring Rescue of Hungarian Jews: A Survivor's Account* (London: Pimlico, 2009); Zvi Nassi, *Haglijah* (Givat Haviva: Moreshet Archive, 1995); Paul Schonberger and Imre Schonberger, *Fortuna's Children* (London–Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003); Helena Schvarcz-Horovitz, *Ein Hering für zwei Zigaretten. Erinnerungen einer Holocaust-Überlebenden an die Deportation der ungarischen Juden nach Strasshof, an die Arbeitslager in Wien und die Todesmärsche durch Österreich* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2006); Szabolcs Szita, ed., *Zwangsarbeit, Todesmärsche, Überleben durch Hilfe: Die österreichische Bevölkerung in der Erinnerung der ungarischen Deportierten und politischen Häftlinge 1944–1945* (Budapest: Velcsov, 2004); József Bihari, "Als ungarisch-jüdischer Zwangsarbeiter in Wien," accessed May 6, 2015, http://www.erinnern.at/bundeslaender/wien/unterrichtsmaterial/arbeitsblaetter-gedaechtnisorte-des-ns-terrors-in-der-israelitischen-abteilung-des-wiener-zentralfriedhofs/Arbeitsblatt%20Jozsef%20Bihari.pdf; Diary of Varga Béla, entitled *Nehéz napok* (Strochlitz Archive, Haifa, Israel).

13 Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), and Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

14 Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 7.

15 Mario Luis Small, "'How Many Cases Do I Need?' On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research," *Ethnography* 10, no. 1 (2009): 5–38, 28.

although the following interview excerpts are uniquely complex, the unfolding life strategies can be considered relevant in other cases of Hungarian Jewish slave labor in Vienna.

An additional remark is due, since these interviews were conducted with child survivors. As children, they not only perceived things differently than adults would have, but their everyday activities were also different from those of their parents and grandparents. Although literary historians and psychotherapists have been studying children's experiences and traumas of the Holocaust for a long time, children testimonies, with a few exceptions,[16] have not been made a basic source of socio-historical research yet.

Re-localisation of the History of Slave Labor in Vienna

Deportations to Austria

The Jewish slave laborers who were deported from Hungary were under the command of the Higher Commander of the SS and the Police in Hungary, *Sondereinsatzkommando Aussenkommando Wien* headed by *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Hermann Krumey. Krumey's office was in the building of the former Jewish high school of Vienna at Castellezgasse 35 in the 2nd district of the city.

On January 10, 1945, Kasztner, who was closely observing the fate of the Strasshof group of deportees, met with Krumey in Vienna. In the course of this meeting, Krumey provided the following information concerning the number of deportees: according to his records, 17,500-18,000 Jews had arrived in Vienna and its vicinity from Hungary.[17] By early 1945, about 1,000 of them had died as a consequence of "natural causes or sickness." In addition, 170 Jews were taken to Bergen-Belsen and some to Auschwitz as "punishment," to quote Krumey. From July 1944 until May 1945, many of the slave laborers died as a result of the bad living and working conditions, because of the almost permanent bombardments in Vienna, or during the evacuation of the camps in

16 See e.g. Boaz Cohen and Rita Horváth, "Young Witnesses in the DP camps: Children's Holocaust Testimony in Context," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 11, no. 1 (2012): 103–25; Boaz Cohen, "The Children's Voice: Post-War Collection of Testimonies from Children Survivors of the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 21, no. 1 (2007): 73–95; and Johannes-Dieter Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit: Polnische und sowjetische Kinder im nationalsozialitischen Deutschland und im besetzten Osteuropa 1939–1945* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2013).

17 László Karsai and Judit Molnár, eds., *The Kasztner Report: The Report of the Budapest Jewish Rescue Committee, 1942–1945* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2013), 284.

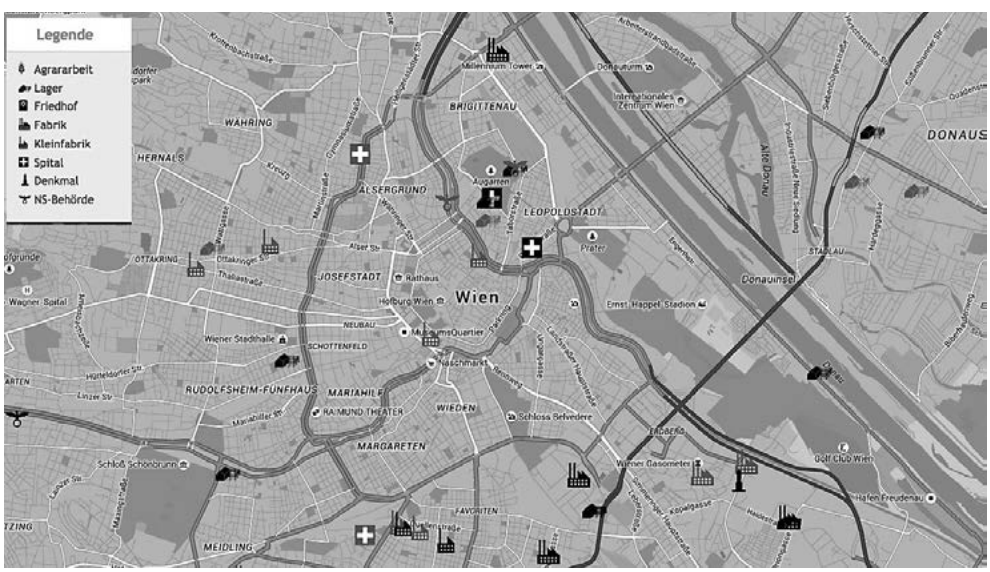
death marches toward Mauthausen and its satellite camps. During these death marches, many Hungarian Jewish slave laborers were massacred.

Krumey did not inform Kasztner that diabetic deportees, for example, did not receive insulin, since the medicine was only distributed to Wehrmacht soldiers. Diabetic Jews were first taken to the so-called Krankenlager Laxenburg. If they were still alive, they were deported to concentration and extermination camps from there. Air raids also took a heavier toll than was expected, since in numerous camps Jews were forbidden to use the bomb shelters.

According to Krumey's records, the age distribution of the 16,600 Jewish slave laborers who had been deported from Hungary and who found themselves in Vienna and its vicinity in January 1945 was the following:

Age	Male	Female
0–2 years of age	200	250
3–6 years of age	500	500
7–12 years of age	900	900
13–14 years of age	400	350
15–20 years of age	800	1300
above 21 years of age	4500	6000

In January of 1945, then, almost one fourth of the Jewish slave laborers deported from Hungary to Vienna and its vicinity, some 4,000 people, were



Map 1: General Map of Hungarian Jewish Slave Labor in Vienna 1944–45
(© Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies 2014–2015)

children under the age of 14. Unfortunately, we do not know more about Krumey's records, because on April 13, during the siege of Vienna, the documents in Krumey's office on Castellezgasse concerning the Strasshof deportees were destroyed.[18]

The Wohnlager

In Vienna, the so-called *Wohnlager* was the most characteristic form of accommodation for the slave laborers. These family camps were set up mainly in school buildings in almost every district of the city.[19] The following five schools housed the largest camps: 283 Jews at Schrankenberggasse 32 in the 10th district, 585 Jews at Bischoffgasse 10 in the 12th district, 450 Jews at Hackengasse 11 in the 15th district, 639 Jews at Mengergasse 33 in the 21st district, and 358 Jews at Konstanziagasse 24 in the 22nd district.[20]

In some of the schools, instruction was still going on in the early summer of 1944, so Viennese civilians must have been aware of the presence of the deportees. However, the entries that we found in the relevant chronicle of the *Wohnlager*-school on Bischoffgasse make no mention whatsoever of the Jewish slave laborers,[21] in spite of the fact that at Bischoffgasse 10 there was a large lager under the control of the city of Vienna and the command of a municipal officer, *Lagerführer* Franz Knoll. Nearly 600 Jews who had been deported from Hungary lived in the camp, including 59 children.[22] The elderly and the sick were left to perish in Lager 12 (they were taken to the attic of the school where no care was provided for them). Sándor Hargittai, who was eleven years old in 1944 and whose grandmother was among those who perished in the attic, remembered the events as follows: "They left food in front of the entrance of

18 Ibid., 309.

19 See Richtlinien über die Behandlung ungarischer Juden, 9. August 1944 (DÖW – Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, E 21.204.).

20 Lappin-Eppel, *Ungarisch-Jüdische Zwangsarbeiter und Zwangsarbeiterinnen in Österreich,* 92. See also "Liste von Lagern ungarischer Juden im Gau Groß-Wien" (DÖW – Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, E 21.053/2).

21 Schul-Chronik, Allg. Öffentl. Volksschule f. Knaben u. Mädchen, Vienna XII., Bischoffgasse 10.

22 Franz Knoll, born in Vienna in 1892, was put on trial after the war. Even though Lagerführer Knoll was sentenced to 18 months in prison in August 1948, he was in effect freed, because the court deducted his 22 month-long period of detention from his sentence. Concerning Knoll and his trial, see Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, "Strukturen der Verantwortung. Volksgerichtsverfahren wegen Verbrechen gegen ungarische Juden in österreichischen Zwangsarbeitslagern des Sondereinsatzkommandos der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in Ungarn, Außenkommando Wien," *Zeitgeschichte* 6 (2007): 351–71.

the attic. Every morning they reported the dead."[23] In contrast, the children who were able to work and even pregnant women who were giving birth were taken to hospitals. For example, in August 1944, nine Jewish children housed in the *Wohnlager* in the school were hospitalized with measles. The oldest among them was eight years old and the youngest was merely two. Katalin Dér, who was born in Szeged in 1914, was also hospitalized and gave birth to her daughter, Zsuzsanna, on December 28, 1944, in the hospital at Malzgasse 16.[24]

In these camps, the oldest and youngest inmates could usually work inside the camps and did not have to leave the camps to perform extremely hard labor in factories or help clear away rubble. There were even places where the elderly managed to provide regular instruction for the children.

The needs of the inmates in the various camps were met to varying degrees. In some places the inmates starved, but in others the camp commander gave permission to the older women who stayed in the camp during the day to cook for the inmates while the younger ones worked outside the camp. In camps in which supplies were scant, children had to leave the camp in secret and try to beg for food or food stamps from the people of Vienna, even if their command of German was weak. If caught, they were regularly severely punished. The memories related to being locked up for these activities have remained painful for many survivor children up to the present day.

> The scary part was that during the bombing only elderly people and young children were at home. The abled-bodied people were working. (…) As a matter of fact one day my mother asked me to go out in the streets of Vienna and beg for food stamps from the Viennese people. (…) One day I went out to do this and the *Lagerführer* of the concentration camp caught me and she took me down to the cellar, to the bomb shelter, and locked me up in a dark room and she said she was going to kill me because I was not allowed to do that. (…) I was in this dark cellar, closed up mainly for two days without any food. (Pearl Zimmerman, Visual History Archive USC Shoah Foundation=VHA 40580)[25]

23 Sándor Hargittai's memoir in István Hargittai, *Our Lives – Encounters of a Scientist* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2004), 56.

24 The card-indexes of the hospitals are in the Archiv IKG Wien, Bestand Wien, II/SOZ/Kartei/Ungarische Zwangsarbeite.

25 Special thanks for Anna Lujza Szász who researched, transcribed and translated the interview excerpts of the VHA.

From November 1944 onward, with the air raids becoming more and more frequent, the situation in the camps deteriorated dramatically. Numerous camps were bombed and many Hungarian Jewish slave laborers died as a consequence.

Plants of the War Industry, Municipal Public Utilities and Small Family Businesses

Those who were able to work had to leave the *Wohnlager* and go to plants of the war industry, such as Vienna's bread factory, the *Ankerbrotfabrik,* facilities used by construction companies like *Arnoldi, Papirfabrik ROJA,* etc.[26] The big factories had built barracks for POWs and forced laborers earlier inside the factories. Oftentimes, small family businesses also used slave laborers from the camps in tinker workshops, factories and workshops used in the food, clothing and shoe industry, etc. Municipal public utilities also exploited many Hungarian Jewish slave laborers: they were made to clear away snow and rubble, assist with the removal of debris and corpses from bombed buildings, clean cemeteries, etc.

> The daily routine started in the camp [Wohnlager, 21. Kuenburggasse 1] and in Vienna in the early morning. At down, they gathered together the groups, [and the] foremen and the German armed guards in uniforms arrived. They took us to the workplaces. That year the daily routine in Vienna had already been disrupted by one thing: every morning, between 10 and 11 o'clock, the American bombers arrived and bombarded the city. There is also a story about this. If you asked what the time was, they answered: ten minutes before the air-raid alarm. (Testimony of Smuel Hoffman, Yad Vashem Archives=YVA, O3.12209)

During this period after November 1944, the very young and very old deportees were also taken out of the camps to clear away rubble. Many of them died in the course of this work as a consequence of collapsing buildings and repeated air raids. For example, eleven-year-old Sándor Hargittai, who was placed together with his mother, three-year-old brother, and three other relatives in the school-building at Bischoffgasse No. 10, became part of a special unit composed of twenty children between ten and fifteen years of age.

> We went to bombed-out buildings right after the air raid. They used us to get into places where adults could not go. We had to carry out the corpses, the injured, and all the valuables. When we found only a

26 See the *Betriebe* menu, accessed October 7, 2015, at http://www.ungarische-zwangsarbeit-in-wien.at/.

> limb or any other human body part, we had to carry those out too. (…) Several of us died when they fell from somewhere. They were replaced with even younger children.[27]

Some of the slave laborers who had to work in the large plants involved in the war-industry were housed in barracks within the factories. In addition to *Flughafen Schwechat* outside of Vienna, these factories included, for example, *Saurer Werke Österreich AG*, *Shell Ölraffinerie, Ostmark Mineralölfabrik,* and *Heinkel Werke* in Lobau. In these camps, the Hungarian Jewish slave laborers often worked together with others, mainly French, Italian, and Russian prisoners of war. In many cases, the guards were also multinational: alongside the Austrian and German SS guards and Wehrmacht officers, there were also Ukrainian and Hungarian *Volksdeutsch* guards. The camps in the factories were usually strictly guarded complexes where the Hungarian Jewish slave laborers would receive help almost exclusively from prisoners of war.

Hospitals

Whereas in the majority of the plants related to the war industry, *Revier* had been set up earlier, after the arrival of the prisoners of war, the sick or injured deportees of the camps and the smaller workshops or factories were treated in Viennese hospitals, meaning the hospitals on Malzgasse (Malzgasse 7 and 16, in the 2nd district), the *Kinderspital* (Ferdinandstrasse 23, in the 2nd district) and the *Kinderheim* (Mohapelgasse 3, in the 2nd district), which were managed by the *Ältestenrat* of Vienna. In addition to these institutions, Jewish slave laborers were also given treatment at municipal hospitals (the *Allgemeines Krankenhaus, Infektionsspital, Koch-Spital, Krankenhaus Korneuburg, Krankenhaus Mödling, Meidling Notspital, Ottakringer Spital, Wilhelminen-Spital*). In these hospitals a large number of Hungarian Jewish slave laborers were treated.[28] We also know that Krumey charged the physicians among the deportees with the task of providing basic medical care in the camps of Vienna. Such physicians from the individual camps regularly sent reports to the Krumey-Commando. They also sent a number of

27 Sándor Hargittai's memoir in Hargittai, *Our Lives,* 55.

28 Lea Waller (born Visi), who was 15 years old in 1944, for example, was hospitalized with pleurisy. She was taken to the hospital from the *Wohnlager* at Hackengasse 11. She remembered her hospitalization as follows: "They called a German physician, who decided that I had to be taken to a hospital immediately, because my state was life-threatening. I did not have any infectious disease, only the complications of a common cold." See Lea Waller's testimony in Mordechai Anielevich Memorial Holocaust Study and Research Center, Moreshet Archives=MA, A.1529.

sick people to hospitals. The Krumey-Commando paid 5 RMs per day per capita to the *Ältestenrat* for the provisions for the sick deportees who were treated in the hospitals belonging to the *Ältestenrat*.[29] The money came from the earnings of the slave laborers, which they never received. The Nazis kept them in a separate bank account.

Rezső Kasztner visited the hospitals on Malzgasse on January 15, 1945, at which time 235 Jews were being given treatment there: 110 of them were Viennese and the rest were deportees from Hungary. The majority of the Hungarian Jewish slave laborers who were treated in the Malzgasse hospitals were hospitalized as a consequence of work-related accidents. However, there were numerous air raid victims among the patients as well. (As far as Kasztner knew, by the middle of January 1945, 64 Hungarian Jewish slave laborers had died and more than 200 had been wounded due to the air raids.)[30]

According to the hospital registers, all in all, more than 1,000 Hungarian Jewish slave laborers were treated in various Viennese hospitals, and about 300 of them died.[31] Testimonies, memoirs and hospital registers indicate that more than 30 babies were born to mothers who had been deported to Vienna in 1944–45, though some of the newborns had died by the time the city was liberated.

Magda Kallós lived in the *Wohnlager* on Bischoffgasse. Her son, Gábor, was born in a hospital on Malzgasse on October 9, 1944. Mária, Kallós's older daughter, born in 1929, who was also deported, remembered this as follows: *"My brother was born in Vienna in October [19]44. – And after that, every weekend, I took down the yellow star [and] ran away from the camp to see my mother and the child."* (Mária Kallós, Voices of the 20th Century Archive=Voices 409_2_14)

The hospitals on Malzgasse also served as centers of religious life for the slave laborers. In the hospitals headed by physician-director Emil Tuchmann,[32] a number of rabbis, cantors and ritual slaughterers who had been deported from Hungary found refuge. Zvi Kohn, the rabbi of Derecske, for example, was able

29 Karsai–Molnár, *The Kasztner Report*, 283.

30 Ibid., 289.

31 The card-indexes of the hospitals are in the Archiv IKG Wien, Bestand Wien, II/SOZ/Kartei/Ungarische Zwangsarbeit.

32 In October 1938, Tuchmann became head of the Jewish relief services in Vienna, and afterwards he was named director of public health services. He started working in the Jewish hospital in the summer of 1942 and became its director. He was also a member of the *Ältestenrat* until the end of the war. On Tuchmann's activity regarding the Hungarian Jews see: Ester Farbstein, "Jews on Ice: A Look Inside the Labor Camps in Austria," http://www.misrachi.at/a%20look%20inside%20the%20labor%20camps%20in%20austria.pdf, accessed January 6, 2015.

to remain in the hospital from October 1944 up until the liberation of the city because Tuchmann had appointed him as camp rabbi. Kohn celebrated Seder in the bomb shelter of the hospital at the end of March 1945:

> I conducted a Seder on two nights of Passover in the basement beit midrash. There were 150 people around the tables, and tears were pouring from everyone's eyes. Tuchmann himself sat with us at the Seder and wept. I expounded and explained the story of the Exodus from Egypt for the entire congregation in order to evoke great mercy. Just as God redeemed our ancestors, may He redeem us quickly in our days. (…) They said there had never been a Seder like this on Passover night in the city of Vienna. No one who took part in it will ever forget this Seder for the rest of his life.[33]

Rezső Kasztner happened to be in Vienna at the time and was also among the participants.[34]

The Hungarian Jewish slave laborers had much for which to thank to Franzi Löw (1916–1997), who was employed by the IKG as a social worker from the 1930s onward. After 1938, she played an important role in rescuing Viennese Jews by providing them with false identity papers. From the summer of 1944, Löw devoted herself to helping Jewish slave laborers who had been deported from Hungary. She regularly gave them food and clothes, and she visited the camps to escort the sick to the hospitals.[35]

Transportation in the City

As the last part of this topographical section of our inquiry, we wish to discuss the fact that Jewish Hungarian slave laborers also had to get around the city and often used public transport. When they were brought to their workplaces and taken back to the camps (e.g. from the *Wohnlager* on Hackengasse to *DEA Nova* in Schwechat) and also on their free days, if they got leave until sundown (e.g. permission to go from the Wohnlager on Bischoffgasse to the *Kinderspital*

33 Zvi Kohn, *Likutei Tsevi,* introduction, 21–22. Cited by Ester Farbstein, "Jews on Ice".

34 Karsai–Molnár, *The Kasztner Report,* 305.

35 See Franzi Löw's short bio in Maria Dorothea Simon, "Franzi Löw (1916–1997)," *Soziale Arbeit* 7 (2013): 296–97; accessed January 6, 2015, http://www.doew.at/erinnern/biographien/erzaehlte-geschichte/ns-judenverfolgung-ungarische-juedinnen-und-juden/franzi-danneberg-loew-einige-haben-wir-tot-aus-den-waggons-gezogen.

to visit new-born children and their mothers), they could travel entirely legally within the city. However, some of them also traveled illegally. For instance, in spite of the odds, slave laborers managed to escape from the Lobau camp to Hackengasse. There were camps from which it proved relatively easy to escape when those who were able to work were in their workplaces. There were also more tightly guarded camps, such as in Lobau and Floridsdorf, but in order to find food, inmates regularly tried to escape from them as well. According to numerous interviews, deportees visited relatives who had been put in other camps. In order to do that, they often needed to travel by tram.

> It was not allowed [to go outside], but we did it anyhow. We hid the yellow star and we started out on foot very early in the morning and we walked 6 kilometres until we reached Favoritenstrasse and there I asked how we could get to the Hackengasse. Somebody said that it was very far and at first, we have to go to the Südbahnhof and *von dort mit Tram weiter*. All right, we thanked him [or her, as it is not possible to know the gender from the Hungarian original] very much, and continued on foot. But he [or she] came with us and boarded the tram, bought the ticket [for us] and showed us where we had to get off. (Ilona Sima Bek, VHA 48943)

Map 2.: The Distance Between the Saurerwerke in Lobau and the Hackengasse Wohnlager (© Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies 2014–2015)

Another example:

> Then I went there every week. So I succeeded in maintaining contact with my mother. My grandparents, they did not dare to leave the lager. Now, we always had to do it illegally, this was obvious. And [for them,] to take off the star and anybody could see that we were lager dwellers. Now, [we were wearing] homemade trousers, pantaloons, made of blankets. In short, we were immensely elegant. But against the cold, it was good. (Mária Kallós, Voices 409_2_14)

Map 3.: The Distance Between the Bischoffgasse-Wohnlager and the Spital in Malzgasse (© Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies 2014–2015)

Although the size of the city made it difficult for many who had been deported from small towns or villages to orient themselves, city life and public transportation enabled them to move about illegally more easily than they would have been able to do in smaller communities. On the other hand, complete escape from the camps was hindered precisely by the distinctive features of the unfamiliar city. With no contacts among the local population and at times a weak command of German, the deportees could have escaped only with great difficulty and immense personal risk. While a large number of people permanently escaped from the sizeable ghetto of Pest established in November 1944, the Hungarian Jewish slave laborers in Vienna and its vicinity tend to emphasize in their testimonies or memoirs that technically speaking they could have fled, but day after day they chose to return to the camp and their family members instead.

Everyday Life in Slave Labor

In the following section, we examine the socio-historical complexity of the phenomenon of Hungarian Jewish labor in Vienna. In the oral history sources on which we draw, there are noticeable repetitions and similarities that allow one to identify certain types of everyday communication and social relationships among the slave laborers and also between the slave laborers and the surrounding society. Presumably, this is not due simply to the monotony of everyday life, especially time spent working. Though we have not yet been able to analyze all of the available sources as thoroughly as we would have liked in order to have been able to provide as nuanced a portrait as possible of everyday life in the various Viennese camps and workplaces, we wish to keep the conceptual framework of historical anthropology in mind.[36] Our investigation follows the clusters below:

1. work
2. living conditions
3. in-group communication
4. out-group communication, namely, with Viennese neighbors, POWs, guards and other Nazi authorities, city institutions (e.g. hospitals), the city itself as a stranger (e.g., problems with orientation, the problems posed by a large urban environment for people from smaller communities), and language gaps.

Work

Narratives of work experience are often difficult to analyze in oral history research. Generally, repetitive experiences are seldom narrated as individual 'stories.' Rather they are told as 'descriptions' in which many individual experiences are compressed in a single picture.[37] Unfortunately, the interviewers

36 See especially the articles by Dorothee Wierling, "The History of Everyday Life and Gender Relations On Historical and Historiographical Relationships," and Wolfgang Kashuba, "Popular Culture and Workers' Culture as Symbolic Orders: Comments on the Debate about the History of Culture and Everyday Life," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life,* ed. Alf Lüdtke (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 149–99.

37 See Gabriele Rosenthal, "Die Auswertung: Hermeneutische Rekonstruktion erzählter Lebensgeschichten," In: Gabriele Rosenthal, ed., *"Als der Krieg kam, hatte ich mit Hitler nichts mehr zu tun": Zur Gegenwärtigkeit des "Dritten Reiches" in erzählten Lebensgeschichten* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1990), 246–51; and Gabriele Rosenthal, "Reconstruction of Life Stories: Principles of Selection in Generating Stories for Narrative Biographical Interviews," *The Narrative Study of Lives* 1 (1993): 59–91.

who participated in the biggest collections of Holocaust testimonies hardly ever asked for detailed descriptions of the work phases of a job. Survivor testimonies and oral history interviews were usually conducted in order to create a narrative of the individual's life, and they tended to focus on the experiences of suffering during periods of persecution. In our very special case, slave work was not the worst facet of everyday life: deportation, hunger, pandemics and bombardments put people's lives and wellbeing at far greater risk.[38]

Last but not least, as mentioned, most of the interviewees were children or teenagers in 1944 who did not have to take part in slave labor and either were able to stay in the *Wohnlager* with their grandparents and the other children or performed their work together with their mothers or grandparents. However, we did find interviews done with children over 12 years of age who had had to work hard during their forced stay in Vienna.

> We were working at the *Ostmarkwerke*. Ground-to-air missiles were produced there. We made four-wing missiles. My grandmother, my mother, my aunt and we, the two children, we all worked in the factory. (…) We, the children, had to carry components from one aircraft to the other with electric trucks. The driver of the truck was a Ukrainian. Two children between the ages of twelve and eighteen were assigned to serve on each truck. They had to put the wings of the missiles upon the truck and carry them to the next machine. (Efrajim Karmi, MA A1527)

Bad working conditions and poor nourishment increased the risk of accidents in the workplace. Mária Ember reported such an accident in her testimonies in the following manner:

38 This does not mean that slave labor in Vienna was an easy job. On the contrary, not young women and even children and grandparents had to do particularly hard and often dangerous work, as e.g. Smuel Hoffman remembers: *"Thus we mainly repaired the houses damaged by bombings. Also, fixed the roofs destroyed by air strikes. If I remember correctly six or seven of us, young people, were there with a Serbian prisoner overseer. He did not live with us in the camp, he only supervised us while we were working. I was among those who fixed the tile roof, thus I was crawling on 4–5 meter high buildings as a ropedancer. The others, approx. 30, were picking the tiles from the various approaching vehicles and gave them to us. They were bringing the tiles upon the stairway and we placed them on the roof. I did this for two months. (…) No one ever counted the hours. The work began when the sun was rising, thus the days were shorter in the winter and longer in the autumn. We were working from sunrise till half an hour before sunset. Since they wanted to avoid any attempt to escape during the dark we were taken back to the camp before the night fell."* (Smuel Hoffman, YVA O3. 12209).

> My mother was always a cleaning lady in the factory, thus she was sweeping the courtyard and I, who was thirteen years old then, was assigned as a worker to the smelting factory. Do not imagine a big factory! It had smaller iron stoves and hot, red iron was swirling out of them, which was then fixed by Austrian skilled workers and hammered while it was still in the state of glowing. It was very interesting and I was extremely interested in the factory. Then I was placed as a worker to the revolver turning-machine and I was very proud of that. In the end I was trained to be able to handle a drilling-machine, and I was standing next to a drilling-machine and working with it. There was no problem with the work as such; the only problem was that they barely gave us food. (…) We experienced a terrible weight loss. It happened with me that despite the fact that I was fond of work and was interested in the factory (…) I accidentally dozed off from time-to-time while I was working. I almost had an accident because the drilling-machine tore the arm of my coat off and I was very lucky that it did not drill into my arm. However, there was an older girl, approximately eighteen years old who was working on the crane and maybe the hunger and also the bad air which goes up, well there is no mountain air in the factory, she fainted on the crane, fell and broke her leg. Everyone erupted in excitement because the *Gestapo* came and checked on the place due to alleged sabotage. She was very close to being taken and executed. (Mária Ember, VHA 50257)[39]

The working conditions largely depended on the behavior of the foremen in the factories. Both the testimonies and the protocols of the Austrian People's Court indicate a wide range of attitudes among the foremen and overseers.[40] In the following passage, Ilona Sima Bek talks about a Czech political prisoner who treated the young women in the factory mercilessly:

> There were wooden-made, board shapes (concrete stones). The longest was 1 meter long and I was working in that one. It was 40 cm wide and 60 cm tall. We measured it because our idea was to make and run exactly the same factory back at home when we return. It was very cheap, coal ash and huge building blocks. There were smaller ones, half as big. Two women were working there. This was 139 kg pure, the four

39 Mária Ember published her novel based on her memories one year earlier than Imre Kertész's *Fatelessness* was published, see Ember, *Hajtűkanyar*.

40 Strafsache gegen Dr. Emil Tuchmann, Landesgericht Wien Dokumentationsarchiv Österreichischen Wiederstandes (DÖW 17142); Strafsache gegen Dr. Siegfried Seidl, Landesgericht Wien (DÖW 21053); Strafsache gegen Franz Knoll. (Landesgericht Wien, Vg 6a Vr 8267/46.).

> pieces. And we had to carry each, the two of us, from one place to another when we took it out from the shape to let it dry. (…) But I was working very hard. If I was not working I was crying. I rather worked and my younger sister was working with the smaller stones, with the two women. And there were ten foremen; I reckon they were Czechs, political prisoners. They must have been Communists. This is why they were locked up there. They were the foremen and I was working with a Czech of this kind. This was such a terrible person. Before me another woman was working with him and he beat her. He beat the woman. Then she was not willing to work and in the end I was sent to him. When I was almost done with the whole thing, he destroyed it. To make me do it again. (Ilona Sima Bek, VHA 48943)

Living Conditions

The living conditions of slave laborers also differed widely. From the very beginning of their deportation, Hungarian Jews suffered from a lack of sufficient clothing because they had been forbidden to take items of clothing to the ghettos, and even if they had managed to smuggle some in, the items were taken from them in Strasshof. They had to work in the clothes and using the tools which they had been left with. The grim living conditions were only partially relieved by Franzi Löw and some decent employers who gave rugs and clothes to some families. Food was similarly scarce, although it made a substantial difference if the slave laborers were allowed to cook in the *Wohnlager*s or if the workplaces had canteens, and also if the slave laborers could reduce the shortage of food in any (usually illegal) way. The oral history interviews reveal that in general every member of a family was busy finding food, no matter how dangerous this was.

> I was a little child and when I saw that everyone was begging for food through the fence once I stood there too. A German lady passed by and I also started begging her to give me a piece of bread. When I wanted to go back the guard caught me and asked: "Where have you been?" Then he noticed the bread in my hands. He took it and told me that he would lock me up for that. And then what happened? He took me to the shelter where there was a tight, small room full of garbage. He locked me in there. It was terrible. He even hit my head with his gun. He had a truncheon and he hit my head with that. Despite the fact that my head was bleeding I was locked in that storage. The door was closed and I was crying and begging the guards to let me out. I was extremely scared of the darkness. There were mice and rats too. Till

> today, although many years have passed, I never sleep at home with the lights off. (…) And when my mother came back from work she heard that I was elsewhere. She approached the guard and begged him to let me free since I was too young. While the guard replied: "Tell her, if she dares to beg for food again something much worse will happen to her." Then my mother came to set me free. (Mirjam Herstik, YVA O3. 12457)[41]

In-Group Communication

The families had to make genuine and determined efforts to organize "normal" everyday life in the *Wohnlager*s. Laundry, cooking, the nursing of infants, and providing care for the elderly, invalids and sick family members required a lot of energy from mothers who had to work outside the *Wohnlager* during the day. The eight-year old Peter Cukor and Gizella Nurnberg described the situation in the following way:

> In the winter some of the people tried to organize a school for us but most of the women were working in the factories, so the ones who were there, were more like babysitters because everybody was worried, because all these boys and girls were together and some of them were like in their early teens and played all kinds of interesting games like doctors and things like that and everybody was worried about us. And this was a giant camp. (Peter Cukor, VHA 24303)

> We were bored, we had no games or anything to do there, so between the second floor up, there was a gate and a huge window and we were curious what is happening behind that gate and behind that window. So we climbed up the stairs, of course not knowing that we were not allowed to do that and we somehow opened the window, we scrawled in and there was a paradise. An intellectual paradise. There were all

41 She told another typical story: *"My mum was especially talented in acquiring food. They were in the forest where people often went to have picnics. My mother addressed them in German without any embarrassment and begged for food. Some of them were good people who took something out of their baskets: a bun or a piece of cookie. My mother always brought something. (…) We ate everything no matter whether it was a pig or --- anything. The main point was to always have food. Later our situation was getting better because the women were not going to the forests of Vienna to work but to the Ankerbrotfabrik in our neighbourhood. That Viennese bread factory was an actual town and the Jewish women were taken there to work. My mother of blessed memories wore a pair of trousers; she tied its legs and filled it with warm buns. When she came back from work it seemed irreverent to ask: 'Mama have you bought something?' Everything she got there, more precisely, everything she took from there was first given to the elderly people. And when we asked she replied: 'Children. You are children, but here are old people and they need food more'."* (Mirjam Herstik, YVA O3. 12457).

> kind of dried animals in bottles. It was like a research place of the high school and all kinds of weeds and flowers preserved in certain liquid and it was like a dream world and we were in quotation happy. You know it gave us time to forget that we were hungry. (Gizella Nurnberg, VHA 33187)

It was almost impossible to lead a normal religious life in the camps. The slave laborers typically had to work on Saturdays (and sometimes also on Sundays), and even if this was not the case, Shabbat was the only day on which they could do all the domestic work. Religious families, despite the difficulties, aimed to adhere to religious prescriptions and practices, if only on a basic level. From time to time, this resulted in strong frictions between religious and non-religious men. As the young girl Ilona Sima Bek observed:

> Well, there were men in the group too, mainly older men who were religious, and only a few of them who weren't. Every morning we had to fence off a corner. This was the church. There was an old men called Altman who got up every morning—he died here—at six o'clock and was strolling among the beds saying: "Good morning my suffering brothers! I ask those gentlemen who wish to pray to get up, the bell will ring soon and the work shall be started." Then those who were not religious started shouting: "Stupid fellow, shout your mouth! He doesn't let us sleep although we could sleep a little bit more." (Ilona Sima Bek, VHA 48943)

Outgroup Activities and Communication with the Outside World

In the testimonies we found a subtle and sometimes puzzling ethnic hierarchy in the slave laborers' perception of the outside world. At the top of this hierarchy were the gallant, handsome and helpful Italian and French prisoners of war. Viennese foremen and the Viennese population in general also tended to be considered cooperative and helpful. The positive attitudes of *Wehrmacht* officers were occasionally also mentioned. Yet, according to the testimonies, Ukrainian overseers and guards were at the bottom of this ethnic hierarchy. In their narratives of arrival in Strasshof, almost everyone mentioned the brutality of the male and female Ukrainian guards, while the picture of ethnic Germans from Hungary was more mixed. First, let us give two examples regarding the French and Italian prisoners of war:

> French prisoners of war also worked there in the demesne, now, they were men—were not they?—and they got together with the Jewish women and, now, the prettier women all had a French man. Well, some went along with the French man to this point, some to that, but they visited us every weekend. My mother had a French man called Rave, [and] I know that they merely showed each other photos: he about his wife and my mother about her husband. And they always said that *ce lager, ce lager*. However, there were nice girls as well, and all sorts of great love affairs also took place. The French men came with mandolins in the weekends [and] they played [the instruments], sang, [and] danced. I remember that we were more than ten children, and one of the boys in the outer part of the cowshed, behind the cow's backsides taught us to *shimli*. Then I remember one New Year's Eve. The French were playing music and men and women were dancing and suddenly the overseer rushed in with a Gestapo officer. There was very loud shouting: "Line up!" They threatened us with all sorts of penalties, [such as] we will be taken away immediately and I do not know what else. Nota bene, not much later, those who looked the strongest among us were really taken away for, so to say, digging trenches, and I remember that way that none of them came back. And then of course we had to stop the New Year's Eve party. (Bárdos Judit, VHA 51638)

And another testimony:

> I was working in the street and it happened you know I was looking around what is there and I was not working very hard because the three Italians were helping me. "Sit down, you don't have to work, we work on behalf of you." Sometimes the SS came and asked "Why are you sitting?" And then the Italian came and asked "What do you want?" They were fighting you know, the Italians, they said "Listen we do the work for this lady!" and the SS disappeared. They felt ashamed sometimes you know when somebody told in their faces what they were doing. (Rose Czeizler-Visontay, VHA 2677)

As mentioned in the first part of this essay, by the time the Hungarian Jews arrived in Vienna the Viennese Jews had already been persecuted and deported from the city. Between 1939 and 1942, of the 181,000 Viennese Jews, 60,000 were murdered in concentration and extermination camps.[42] Only 5,500 Austrian Jews survived the Holocaust in the territory of Austria. We do not wish

42 For the history of the Jews under the Nazi regime in Vienna see e.g. Doron Rabinovici, *Instanzen der Ohnmacht Wien 1938–1945: Der Weg zum Judenrat* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2001).

to hazard any explanation for the huge difference between the attitudes of the non-Jewish citizens of Vienna towards their Jewish neighbors and, some years later, the Hungarian Jews. What is clearly noticeable is that almost all of the survivors refer to some fabulous episode, in which ordinary Viennese people came to their aid, usually by providing them with food.

> In the middle of January, there were heavy snowfalls, and the entire group was taken to the Danube-side to shovel snow. We got shovels and we had to shovel the snow into the Danube. Street sweepers from the municipality supervised us and demanded quick work from us, so they did not have to work. Here, I and my cousin managed to escape and hide in the staircase of a bomb-damaged house, because we were very cold. After a while, one of the residents came home. He [or she] entered the lift and came back with milk and slices of bread with margarine. He [or she] gave us food and drink and asked us to place the milk bottle next to the lift afterwards. His [or her] deed was a life-saving act for us, because we had already been completely drenched and frozen in the cold. Outside it was minus 15 degrees and the wind was cold. (Eva Eisler, MA 1517)

We close this section with one particularly interesting excerpt:

> And one day, it had already been a week I was working there, I went to the corridor to do some kind of little work and some blond lady opened the door and pushed me in. "Come in! Listen darling, we are not Hitlerists, we are Social Democrats. And if you pass this door, you can come in and have a coffee and sit there. We wait for the Allies or the Russians to come! We help you, all of you!" Can you believe it? I was sitting in the flat, in the kitchen and had a hot coffee. (Rose Czeizler-Visontay, VHA 2677)[43]

43 For a comparable recollection, see the following part of Stephen Berger's testimony: *"It was a Sunday. The Austrians were not working in the factory so we were doing cleaning up job on Sunday when nobody was in the factory. And I was sweeping the yard of the factory, and next to the yard there was an apartment house, about 5–6 storeys apartment house. And as I was cleaning, it was a quiet Sunday; I heard something behind me fall. I looked back and I see a brown paper bag. So I went there, picked up the paper bag, I look inside and I see a sandwich. So I looked up where the bag came from and I saw on the 3rd or the 4th floor and elderly woman in the window and she is motioning to me. Then I found a note in the bag saying if I could come upstairs. Well, not in that Sunday but the following Sunday sometimes I sneak out from the camp, went around the corner and went upstairs. There was that old woman, invites me in her apartment she gives me food, freshly cooked food on the table, I eat and she wanted to know who I am, where I come from and then I see on top of a table the photograph of a young German in a German uniform, so I started to be very uncomfortable and she saw me looking at the photograph and she tells me that is her son. She says he disappeared on the Russian front. She says I hope if anybody finds him, hope*

The Last Stages

As we have shown, the beginnings of the relatively short episode of Viennese slave labor for Jews deported from Hungary in 1944 resemble the deportation of the Jews from the Hungarian provinces: the ghettoization and the deportation process of the Jews who ended up in Vienna and its vicinity were not different from the processes involved in the deportation of those who were eventually taken to Auschwitz. Then, however, for almost a year, those who by chance happened to be deported in the cattle cars destined for Strasshof were incomparably more fortunate than those who were deported to Auschwitz where their majority was gassed upon arrival. The 'deconcentrated' concentration camps in the large city provided better chances of survival than other settings. However, even during this late phase of the war, a large number of deportees from among the slave laborers in Vienna and its vicinity perished as a consequence of starvation, inhumane working conditions, and air raids. Furthermore, in the last months, some of the slave laborers were again taken to Strasshof, from where they were deported to Bergen-Belsen or Theresienstadt. Some of them, mainly the able-bodied men, were taken back under the command of *Organisation Todt* to help build the *Südostwall*. If they survived, they ended up being deported to Mauthausen and its satellite camps. Many of them perished during the forced marches or in the aforementioned camps. Moreover, people were taken on death marches not only from Strasshof but also directly from the Viennese camps.[44] 17-year-old Victor Farkas, for instance, lost his grandfather during the death march:

> When the [death] march came we all decided now we have to try to escape. (…) And that time we all left, my mother and I and my grandfather first fell behind trying to do so, because as we went through Vienna more and more Jews had to come and the group was getting larger and larger and much more difficult to control. So as we fell behind we thought we had made it and then we were captured and then again pushed back in. (…) Our problem was my grandfather. And

treats him with the same kindness I am treating you. So I realized the motif of her giving me sandwich because in her mind and conscious figured 'maybe my son needs somebody's kindness somewhere wherever he is'." (Stephen Berger, VHA 3781).

44 Eleonore Lappin, "Das Massaker von Hofamt Priel," in *Ungarisch-jüdische Zwangsarbeiterinnen und Zwangsarbeiter in Niederösterreich 1944/45,* id. Eleonore Lappin, Susanne Uslu-Pauer, and Manfred Wieninger (St. Pölten: 2006), 103–32; and Eleonore Lappin, "Die Opfer von Hofamt Priel. Namen, Tagebücher und autobiographische Berichte," in *Ungarisch-jüdische Zwangsarbeiterinnen*, 133–73.

> one day we fall behind again we couldn't keep up, actually when we were captured we were pushed back into the group and we were forced to march faster and faster to catch up with the group and he couldn't make it. And he was taken away. That was the last time I saw him. So my mother and I we went with the group, we tried again and it didn't work and we were marched all the way to Mauthausen. (Victor Farkas, VHA 5334)

Conclusions: The Vienna Paradox

In developing a map of slave labor in Vienna, we have been confronted with several historical, epistemological and methodological questions, which unfortunately could not be fully explored in this paper because they would need further investigation. For instance, from the historical point of view, we know neither how the entrepreneurs requested manpower nor how these entrepreneurs were selected by the Nazi authorities. It also remains unclear how and why the living conditions differed from place to place. An accurate overview of the division of labor and the power hierarchy among the various authorities would also require further research. From the epistemological point of view, the history of slave labor in Vienna became part of the so-called Strasshof phenomenon in the Holocaust historiography. We know, however, that Strasshof was only the starting point of the story. Over the course of the last decade, the commemoration of Strasshof has developed year by year, whereas a similar process has not even started in Vienna, where the slave laborers actually spent some eight to ten months. This chapter of the Holocaust happened toward the very end of World War II, and the impending defeat caused extreme reactions on the part of both the local Nazi authorities and the Viennese civilians, but we continue to lack an adequate grasp of the impact of timing on the fates of the slave laborers. Last but not least, we have been confronted with methodological problems. How can one construct informative and reliable narratives of the everyday lives of the Hungarian slave laborers in Vienna if virtually the only available sources are fragmented interviews conducted with people who survived the Holocaust as children?

However, while studying the history of Hungarian Jewish slave labor in Vienna, we realized that there are numerous contradictions and unusual moments in the story in comparison with the social history of concentration camps in the Third Reich. This uncommon face of slave labor might be termed

the *Vienna paradox*. The main (and interconnected) components of this paradox are as follows:

1. The Hungarian Jews first arrived in Vienna at a time when Viennese Jews, who had represented one of the biggest European Jewish communities before 1938, had already been deported from the city. However, in 1944, there were approximately 6,000 Jews (mainly "Mischlinge") still living in city. There were some shared places, i.e. the Jewish hospital, *Kinderspital* and the *Altersheim* at Malzgasse 7 and 16, which served as meeting point for them. Furthermore, the Hungarian deportees benefitted from the infrastructure of the *Ältestenrat* with regard to medical services and welfare.

2. The events we were trying to reconstruct took place in the last year of World War II when it was becoming increasingly clear that Nazi Germany would lose the war. This had a significant influence on the attitudes and behavior of the Viennese population toward Hungarian Jews: openness and readiness to engage in help and cooperation seems to have grown day by day.

3. Two or three generations of Hungarian Jews arrived in Strasshof and then in Vienna as members of families, even though most of these families did not include men of working age because they had already been sent to perform slave labor at the frontlines. Nevertheless, children, mothers and grandparents lived and worked together and basic forms of family life could thus be maintained, something that would have been impossible in a concentration camp. The unusual opportunity to maintain family bonds as part of everyday life clearly helped most of them survive the inhumane living conditions.

4. Hungarian Jewish slave labor in Vienna can be understood as a kind of 'decentralised concentration,' which resulted in a wide variety of living conditions and opportunities to survive. When consulting the sources, we were repeatedly reminded that the conceptual apparatus of urban history overlaps with our Holocaust study.

5. Hungarian Jewish slave labor constituted a transnational experience for all its participants. Hungarian slave laborers lived in a German-speaking environment and their language skills affected their abilities to communicate both 'legally' and 'illegally' in the city. Members of families who worked in big military factories often met or worked alongside French, Italian, and Russian prisoners of war, as well as so-called *Ostarbeiter*.

6. The SS guards were sometimes recruited from among Ukrainians or ethnic Germans from Hungary. Perceptions of the relationship between the non-Austrian and non-Reich SS guards and the Hungarian Jews were tinted by

ethnic prejudices in the eyes of the Hungarian Jews: in the testimonies they tend to describe the nature of these encounters in the framework of ethnic stereotypes. This cognitive framework helped them establish a range of behavioral differences, from cooperation all the way to physical violence.

Epilogue

Whereas the chances of survival were better in Vienna than in the death camps, the beginning and end of the story of the Jewish Hungarian slave laborers deported from Hungary to Strasshof (their ghettoization, deportation, and death marches) were both practically identical with key elements of the Holocaust "grand narrative." What happened to Jewish slave laborers in Vienna cannot be detached from the experience of the Holocaust in Europe. The story of the Strasshof deportation is often connected to the Auschwitz-universe, for instance in the following recollection of one of the survivors:

> I didn't have my glasses when I started to work in this machine shop. You know I remember I told you how crowded we were in the cattle car, I couldn't move. Well during those 3,5 days of cattle car somehow my eyeglasses fell off and I just couldn't bend down to retrieve it. Somebody stepped on them and broke them. So I arrived to this factory and I didn't have my eyeglasses. I was near-sighted. After a while I was working in this machine shop I said to the foreman one day, "Maybe you can help me to get eyeglasses." He said, you know, "how can I get new eyeglasses?" (…) He said, "let me talk to the camp commander, let's see maybe he can come up with something." That camp commander was a fairly decent fellow. He was a Czechoslovak. (…) So a few days later he comes back and says "this is what we are going to do. I give you an address in Vienna, you go there and maybe they can help you with the eyeglasses. The only thing is that you have to remove your yellow star, we give you money for the tram, they had the tram going in Vienna, but if you get caught outside we don't know anything about you." It was a risky business to be caught without documents. With no yellow star you are an escapee and the consequences were very grave. But I thought about it and took a chance. I went and it turned out to be the old Jewish *Allgemeine Krankenhaus*, in the old Jewish Centre in Vienna. I went in, there was a short man who came to receive me and said "You want eyeglasses?" I said "yes." He was very surprised to see me and he wanted to know how I got to Vienna and from where. I told them we were Hungarian Jews deported here, working in this factory and it

> turned out that he was an old Viennese Jewish doctor who was put in charge of this section. So he leads me into a room, in a long room and in the room there were tables in neat rows and on the top of the tables in boxes they had eyeglasses. Thousands. As far as I could see, down the rows, I have never seen so many eyeglasses in my life. I go in and said, "My God, where all the eyeglasses are coming from?" "You don't know? They come from Auschwitz." (Stephen Berger, VHA 3781)

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Kata Bohus

Not a Jewish Question?

The Holocaust in Hungary in the Press and Propaganda of the Kádár Regime during the Trial of Adolf Eichmann

In this paper, I examine the trial of Adolf Eichmann, portrayals of the trial in the contemporaneous Hungarian press, and the effects of the trial and the coverage on the formation of Holocaust memory in communist Hungary. The trial presented a problem for communist propaganda because it highlighted the destruction of Jews as the worst crime of the Nazi regime. While communist ideology's anti-fascism defined its stance as "anti-anti-Semitic," the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of World War II as a conflict between two opposing, ideologically defined camps (fascists and anti-fascists) made it difficult to accommodate the idea of non-political victimhood, e.g. the destruction of Jews on the basis of racist ideas and not because of their political commitments. Moreover, because of Eichmann's wartime mission in Hungary, it was clear that the trial would feature a great deal of discussion about his activities there. Therefore, the Hungarian Kádár regime devoted considerable attention to the event, both within the Party and in the press. The analysis concentrates on two aspects: what did the highest echelons of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party intend to emphasize in the Hungarian coverage of the trial and what kinds of interpretations actually appeared in the press. In the end, the party's political goals were only partially achieved. Control over newspapers guaranteed that certain key propaganda themes were included rather than ensuring that other narratives would be excluded. I argue that, while the Kádár regime in Hungary did not intend to emphasize the Jewish catastrophe and certainly did not seek to draw attention to its Hungarian chapter, as a consequence of the Eichmann trial there nevertheless emerged a narrative of the Hungarian Holocaust. Through various organs of the press, this narrative found public expression. Though this Holocaust narrative can be considered ideologically loaded and distorted, some of its elements continue to preoccupy historians who study the period today.

Keywords: Adolf Eichmann, communism in Hungary, Holocaust memory, communist press and propaganda

Adolf Eichmann, a former Nazi *SS-Obersturmbannführer* (Lieutenant Colonel) was captured by Israeli secret agents in Buenos Aires, Argentina on May 11, 1960. He was subsequently transported to Israel, where he would stand trial, indicted on 15 criminal charges, including crimes against humanity, crimes against the Jewish people and membership in a hostile organization (SD, *Sicherheitsdienst des*

Reichsführers SS) during the period of Nazi rule in Germany. His trial began in Jerusalem on April 11, 1961. He was pronounced guilty on December 11 and executed in the spring of 1962.

Many historians have argued that the Eichmann trial signalled a defining moment in (if not the real beginning of) Holocaust memory. David Cesarani noted that "the capture, trial and execution of Adolf Eichmann […] changed forever perceptions of the Nazi persecution and mass murder of the Jews."[1] Michael Rothberg went so far as to state that "the Eichmann trial brought the Nazi genocide of European Jews into the public sphere for the first time as a discrete event on an international scale."[2] In addition to the trial, Hannah Arendt's iconic articles in the *New Yorker* magazine—later turned into the book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*—started the global scholarly debate about the character of Adolf Eichmann, the working logic of the totalitarian state, and individual responsibility in its operation.[3]

At Adolf Eichmann's trial, it was clear that there would be a lot of discussion about his activities in Hungary during World War II. Arriving to Hungary in the footsteps of the invading German troops, *Sondereinsatzkommando Eichmann's* main task was to arrange, with the cooperation of local authorities, the deportation of the largest remaining Jewish population in Eastern Europe. The deportation of over 400,000 people to Auschwitz-Birkenau between mid-May and early July 1944 and the rapid mass extermination of their vast majority there during the last phase of the war helped turn the site into a central symbol of the Holocaust. The military situation in the summer of 1944 compelled Hungary's Regent Miklós Horthy to halt deportations, and despite the large-scale violence instituted by the radically anti-Semitic Arrow Cross (*Nyilaskeresztes*) government of Ferenc Szálasi from October 1944 onwards, plans for the deportation of Budapest's sizeable Jewish community were never implemented. There were close to 200,000 Jewish survivors in post-war Hungarian territories,[4] and despite its steady decline in numbers afterwards, the Hungarian Jewish community remained among the biggest in Central-Eastern Europe. Thus, for the Israeli Court that tried Eichmann, it was almost impossible to find survivor witnesses who had been

1 David Cesarani, ed., *After Eichmann. Collective Memory and the Holocaust after 1961* (London–New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

2 Michael Rothberg, "Beyond Eichmann: Rethinking the emergence of Holocaust memory," in *History and Theory* 46, no. 1 (2007): 74.

3 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

4 Tamás Stark, "A magyar zsidóság a vészkorszakban és a második világháború után," in *Regio. Kisebbség, politika, társadalom* 4, no. 3 (1993): 140–51.

in contact with Eichmann during the war with the possible exception of those from Hungary.[5] For these reasons, the Hungarian Holocaust became the most important chapter of the Eichmann trial.

This paper examines the trial's effects on the formation of Holocaust memory in communist Hungary. While some academics assert that the memory of the Holocaust was completely suppressed in the Soviet Union[6] and its Eastern European communist counterparts,[7] others argue that it was normalized

5 It must be noted that the Israeli court's choice of witnesses was strategic and influenced by politics. For details see: Hanna Yablonka, *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann* (New York: Schocken, 2004), esp. 88–120. Thirteen witnesses of Hungarian origin testified during the trial. Pinhas (previously Fülöp) Freudiger, who had been the head of the Orthodox Jewish community in Budapest from 1939. After the German invasion, he was appointed to the Jewish Council of Budapest. He and his family escaped to Romania in August, 1944 and settled in Israel after the war. Dr. Alexander (previously Sándor) Bródy, a writer who was assigned to labor service during the war and served as the director of the Joint-funded National Hungarian Jewish Aid Action (*Országos Magyar Zsidó Segítő Akció, O.M.Z.S.A.*) from 1944. He left Hungary in 1949 and settled in Brazil. Mrs. Elisheva (Erzsébet) Szenes, a Slovakian-born journalist who escaped to Budapest but was then captured by the SS and sent to Auschwitz. She survived and settled in Israel after the war. Margit Reich whose husband perished in Auschwitz. She lived in Givatayim, Israel at the time of the trial but her children remained in Hungary. Dr. Martin Földi, a lawyer who was taken to Auschwitz. He moved to Israel after the war. Ze'ev Sapir, who was born in the village of Dobradovo, near the town of Munkács. He was deported to Auschwitz and subsequently sent to the Jaworzno labor camp. After surviving the war, he emigrated to Israel and worked with Youth Aliyah as a youth leader and teacher. Avraham Gordon, who was a minor living in Budapest during the war, and was forced to work at Eichmann's villa in Buda. He was living in Israel at the time of the trial and worked at the Timna Copper Works. Dr. Tibor Ferencz, lawyer, who served as Prosecutor with the People's Prosecution Office (*Néphíróság*) after the war and was present at the trials of László Baky and László Endre. He moved to Israel in 1957. Joel Brand, who was born in Naszód, Transylvania but grew up in Germany. During the Second World War, he was a member of the Relief and Rescue Committee which helped Jews escape to Hungary in the initial years of the war. After Hungary's German occupation, the organization's main goal became to save Jewish lives. Brand emigrated to Israel and lived in Tel Aviv at the time of the trial. Hansi Brand, Joel Brand's wife, born in Budapest in 1912. She was also a member of the Relief and Rescue Committee. Moshe (Móse) Rosenberg was born in Hungary and served as the Chairman of the Jewish National Fund and also the member of the Relief and Rescue Committee. He left Hungary on the Kasztner train and consequently moved to Israel. Arye Zvi Breszlauer, lawyer, who was born in Vyšní Ridniczi, Eastern Slovakia, an area that had belonged to Hungary until 1918. During the war, he participated in the rescue operations of the Swiss Consulate in Budapest. Aviva Fleischmann, who was a hairdresser in Budapest during the war. Leslie Gordon, who was deported from Budapest to Kamianets-Podilskyi in 1941 and was living in Canada at the time of the trial.

6 See for example: William Korey, "Down History's Memory Hole: Soviet Treatment of the Holocaust," in *Present Tense* 10, no. 2 (1983): 53.

7 See for example: Randolph L. Braham, "Assault on Historical Memory: Hungarian Nationalists and the Holocaust," in *Hungary and the Holocaust: Confrontation with the Past*. Symposium Proceedings, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, 2001, esp. 51; Shari J. Cohen, *Politics without a Past: The Absence of History in Post-communist Nationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University

through presentations of the events as parts of a larger phenomenon.[8] The idea that the Holocaust in Hungary was a taboo topic in communist Hungary has been a persistent thesis in academia, but some researchers have recently started to reassess this claim.[9]

This paper argues that, while the Kádár regime in Hungary did not intend to emphasize the Jewish catastrophe and certainly not to draw attention to its Hungarian chapter of 1944, there nevertheless emerged, as a consequence of the Eichmann trial, a narrative of the Hungarian Holocaust. Through the various organs of the press, this narrative found public expression. Thus, the thesis according to which the Holocaust was taboo does not hold up to sustained scrutiny. Though this Holocaust narrative can be considered ideologically loaded and distorted, some of its elements—especially the question of Hungarian collaboration with Eichmann's *Sondereinsatzkommando* in the deportation of Hungarian Jews—continue to preoccupy historians who study the period today.

This paper approaches the subject from a comparative perspective, taking into account state policies and the coverage of the Eichmann trial in other bloc countries as well. The comparative perspective helps accentuate systemic (bloc-wide) and country-specific goals of the party, and thus separates the strength of general communist ideological determinants from local policy factors in the presentation of the Eichmann trial. The analysis concentrates on two aspects: what the highest echelons of communist parties *intended* to emphasize in the Hungarian interpretation of the trial, and what kind of interpretation *appeared* in the press. In the end, the party's political goals were only partially achieved. Control over newspapers simply guaranteed that certain key propaganda themes were included, rather than ensuring that other narratives would be excluded.

Press, 1999), esp. 85–118 (on Czechoslovakia); Michael Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

8 Zvi Gitelman, "Politics and Historiography of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union," in *Bitter Legacy. Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR,* ed. idem (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 14–42.

9 A detailed analysis of the period's memory politics can be found in Regina Fritz, *Nach Krieg und Judenmord. Ungarns Geschichtspolitik seit 1944* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 229–78. Dániel Véri has examined, in various publications and exhibitions, the memory of the Holocaust in Hungarian art during the communist period. See for example his *A halottak élén: Major János világa* (Budapest: MKE, 2013). Some of the contributions in Vera Surányi, ed., *Minarik, Sonnenschein és a többiek: zsidó sorsok magyar filmen* (Budapest: MZSKE–Szombat, 2001) show the presentation of the Holocaust in Hungarian movies between 1945 and 1989. Teri Szűcs has focused on the representation of the Holocaust in literature, see especially her book *A felejtés története – A Holokauszt tanúsága irodalmi művekben* (Budapest: Kalligram, 2011).

Owing to a variety of factors, a partial narrative of the Hungarian specificities of the Holocaust did surface in the media.

A Problem for the Bloc

As the communist regimes aimed to offer an interpretation of World War II which would not only fit their contemporary Cold War narrative, but would also correspond to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the Eichmann case presented a challenge to them. Communist doctrine interpreted World War II as the struggle between Fascism and anti-Fascism, but the proceedings of the trial focused first and foremost on Eichmann's (and more broadly Nazi Germany's) atrocities against Jews. That Jews were not targeted because of their political beliefs was hard to fit into the framework of the ideologically defined struggle put forward by the communists. The tension between these historical narratives posed a problem for all countries of the Eastern bloc on a systemic level.

Though there is no single coherent Marxist-Leninist theory of Fascism, it is possible to highlight some of the most important elements that Marxist thinkers and communist propagandists emphasized even well before World War II. Communist regimes were anti-fascist on an ideological basis, thus in their interpretation, World War II was first and foremost a fight between Fascism and anti-Fascism. During the interwar period, a number of Marxist theories described Fascism as a reactionary ideology supported by the petty bourgeoisie which aimed to crush the working class (which was opposed to capitalism).[10] In the 1930s, Bulgarian communist leader George Dimitrov saw Fascism as the terroristic dictatorship of monopoly capitalism,[11] while the official Comintern definition saw it as a tool of "finance capital" which aspired to create an organized mass basis.[12] This strictly materialistic definition remained the official interpretation in communist countries until 1989.

After the war, the maintenance of the anti-fascist narrative had several functions in Eastern Europe. First, it served as a reminder of the successful struggle of communists in general, and the Soviet Union in particular, against

10 David Beetham, ed., *Marxists in Face of Fascism: Writings by Marxists on Fascism from the Interwar Period* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 197–204; Léon Trotsky, *The Struggle against Fascism in Germany* (London: Pathfinder, 1971), 155–56.

11 George Dimitrov, *Against Fascism and War* (New York: International Publishers, 1986), 2.

12 "Theses on Fascism, the War Danger and the Tasks of the Communist Parties," in *The Communist International: 1919–1943. Documents,* vol. 3, ed. Jane Degras (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), esp. 296.

Nazi Germany[13] which was viewed not only as a military victory, but also a moral one.[14] Furthermore, anti-Fascism was used to legitimize post-war communist rule by presenting it as the only guarantee against the resurgence of Fascism.[15] Finally, the theoretical linkage between Fascism and capitalism served as a basis for attacks against Western European countries and the United States in the ideological battles of the Cold War. Communist regimes claimed that social oppression was not limited to Nazi Germany, but was inherent to all socio-economic structures based on capitalism. In the context of a struggle between Fascism and anti-Fascism, the persecution of Jews was never the primary focus of communist interpretations of the war.

The Eichmann trial posed another problem for "real socialist" states, in that Israel claimed the role of the main representative and articulator of Jewish interests. Each of the Eastern European communist countries still had Jewish communities (some larger, some smaller) living within its territory. That the most recent history of these communities would be interpreted through a framework defined by an Israeli court was highly undesirable for communist leaderships from a historical point of view. The editor of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's main newspaper, Pravda, talked candidly with Israeli diplomats at the time of the trial about Soviet unwillingness to cooperate openly on that basis. "We are not interested in strengthening the impression that Israel is the main defender of the Jewish people. The Red Army saved thousands of Jews", he was quoted as having said.[16] Furthermore, the political dimension raised further issues for communist propaganda with regards to the trial. Especially since the Suez Crisis of 1956 and because of the increasingly Western orientation of its foreign policies, Israel was viewed as the "mainstay of Western imperialism" in the Middle East.[17] The country's ever closer relations with West Germany since

13 Nina Tumarkin, "The Great Patriotic War as myth and memory," *European Review* 11, no. 4 (2003): 596.

14 Nati Cantorovich, "Soviet Reactions to the Eichmann Trial: Preliminary Investigations 1960–1965," *Yad Vashem Studies* 35, no. 2 (2007): 106.

15 François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), esp. 396–437; Mark R. Thompson, "Reluctant revolutionaries: Anti-Fascism and the East German opposition" *German Politics* 8, no. 1 (1999): 43; James Mark, "Antifascism, the 1956 Revolution and the Politics of the Communist Autobiographies in Hungary 1944–2000," *Europe–Asia Studies* 58, no. 8 (2006): 1209–40.

16 Avigdor Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem. Twenty years of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union* (London–New York–Toronto: Abelard-Schuman, 1970), 138–39.

17 Yosef Govrin, *Israeli–Soviet Relations 1953–1967. From Confrontation to Disruption* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 45.

the 1950s were described by communist propaganda as evidence of the Jewish state's clear pact with Communism's archenemy in Europe.[18] This situation, therefore, raised important practical questions for the whole bloc with regards to the trial. Communist states had to decide if they would collaborate with the Israeli court (for example, by providing it with documentation), and whether the authority of the Israeli court to pronounce judgment on Eichmann could or should be acknowledged at all, instead of insisting on the trial of Eichmann in Eastern Europe.

There were also certain country-specific problems that the capture of Adolf Eichmann and his trial presented for Eastern European leaders. A generic narrative of communists fighting a war against Fascism was especially inaccurate in the Hungarian context. As opposed to Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria, the home-bred communist movement in Hungary, which, according to this generic narrative, fought domestic "fascists," was weak and received little support from the population. As opposed to Poland, a country "without a Quisling and, in all of Nazi-controlled Europe, the place least likely to assist the German war effort,"[19] Hungary entered the war on the side of Nazi Germany and remained its ally despite the abortive attempt to switch sides in 1944. Thus, unlike Poland and Czechoslovakia, each of which produced considerable resistance movements during World War II, Hungary had only generated a weak and insignificant equivalent.[20] All of these inconvenient details made any narrative of a widespread popular struggle against Fascism during World War II particularly hard to substantiate, and the Eichmann trial threatened to highlight these contradictions.

Other bloc countries were wary of the impending trial for other reasons. The German Democratic Republic (GDR), as the socialist German state and "Victor of History" (*Sieger der Geschichte*), "exempted itself from all political and historical responsibility for the German past."[21] For East Germany, the Eichmann case thus represented an unparalleled opportunity and a very dangerous situation at the same time. It was an opportunity to condemn publicly the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) as the sole ideological and political heir of Nazi Germany, as

18 Ibid., 80.

19 John Connelly, "Why the Poles Collaborated so Little: And Why That is No Reason for Nationalist Hubris," in *Slavic Review* 64, no. 4 (2005): 772.

20 István Deák, "A Fatal Compromise? The Debate Over Collaboration and Resistance in Hungary," *East European Politics and Society* 9, no. 2 (1995): 209–33.

21 Katharina von Ankum, "Victims, Memory, History: Anti-Fascism and the Question of National Identity in East German Narratives after 1990," in *History and Memory* 7, no. 2 (1995): 42.

opposed to the GDR, "the only true anti-fascist state on German soil."[22] It was a danger because of the risk that leading or well-known East German political and intellectual personalities might be implicated at any point in the criminal process against Adolf Eichmann. In early 1960, perhaps as an answer to earlier East German accusations, the FRG government issued a Bulletin about former Nazis who had pursued remarkable careers in the GDR. The list included not only scholars, artists, members of the press and diplomatic services, but also several staff executives of the Communist Party. The bulletin mentioned 56 former NSDAP (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) members in the East German parliament that had been elected in November 1958.[23] Moreover, perhaps to a greater extent than countries of the bloc that had existed before 1945, the propaganda of the GDR especially favored a future-oriented approach to national identity based on the "concept of successful struggle rather than a commemoration of past sacrifices or an acknowledgement of past failures and defeats."[24] The criminal procedure against Adolf Eichmann forced GDR propagandists to turn back towards the past and engage with the politics of history.

In Poland, the socialist regime prioritized a narrative of Polish victimhood at the hands of Nazi occupiers during World War II.[25] The Polish self-image as the "martyr of the nations" went back (at least) to the nineteenth century,[26] and was strengthened by the brutality of the Nazi occupation regime during World War II.[27] The political leadership used this historical imagery to legitimize the country's post-war Western borders and to divert attention from the fact that the Soviet occupation of Poland during the war was also tragic. The emphasis on

22 Jan Herman Brinks, "Political Anti-Fascism in the German Democratic Republic," *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 2 (1997): 210. On attempts of the East German Stasi to stage anti-Semitic incidents in West Germany see Michael Wolffsohn, *Die Deutschland-Akte: Juden und Deutsche in Ost und West: Tatsachen und Legende* (Munich: Ferenczy bei Bruckmann, 1995).

23 Brinks, "Political Anti-Fascism," 212–16. On the politics of the past in the DDR and Nazi war crimes see for example Henry Leide, *NS-Verbrecher und Staatssicherheit: Die geheime Vergangenheitspolitik der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

24 Ankum, "Victims, Memory, History," 42.

25 Barbara Szacka, "Polish Remembrance of WWII," *International Journal of Sociology* 36, no. 4 (2006–07): 12.

26 Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe. A Short History of Poland* (London: Clarendon Press, 1984), 202; Gerhard Wagner, "Nationalism and Cultural Memory in Poland: the European Union Turns East" in *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17, no. 2 (2003): 205.

27 Joanna Wawrzyniak, "On the Making of Second World War Myths. War Veterans, Victims and the Communist State in Poland, 1945–1969," in *Die Weltkriege als symbolische Bezugspunkte: Polen, die Tschechoslowakei und Deutschland nach dem Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg,* ed. Natali Stegmann (Prague: Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2009), 204–05.

Eichmann's crimes against Jews was a competing narrative of what had happened in occupied Poland, and as such particularly challenging from the point of view of this Polish self-image.

Given these bloc-wide and country-specific problems of historical interpretations, the looming Eichmann trial (and the question of the propaganda that should accompany it) was dealt with in the highest echelons of the party.

Propaganda Goals, Hungarian Political Decisions and Bloc-Level Considerations

Even before Eichmann was captured, there had been signals from Moscow and elsewhere in the bloc as to which issues would later become prominent during his trial. The GDR had long been campaigning against West Germany, but starting in 1956, East German propagandists unleashed a full-scale attack. They claimed that former Nazis were in positions of power in the Federal Republic. The Israeli Foreign Ministry reported a secret meeting of the leaders of Jewish communities from Poland, Romania, Hungary and East Germany in Warsaw in early February 1960. According to Israeli information, the goal of the gathering had been to prepare a joint campaign against the Bonn government.[28] Shortly after Eichmann's capture was announced to the world, Soviet propaganda set out to attack West Germany, arguing that the country was trying to put a stop to the trial so as to prevent the exposure of ex-Nazis active in the ranks of the West German establishment.[29]

The targeting of the FRG stemmed from the Cold War power-balance, East Germany's security concerns and its untenable economic and demographic situation at the time. Berlin was the only territory where the military forces of the two superpowers directly confronted each other, which caused increased tension between them. Despite the assertions of communist propaganda regarding the "crisis of capitalism," the number of East German citizens escaping to the FRG was alarming for the political leaderships in both Berlin and Moscow.[30] A recurrent theme of the USSR's propaganda campaign against the FRG was the supposed resurgence of revanchism and militarism, signalling to some degree

28 Letter from the Israeli Foreign Ministry to the Israeli Legations in Budapest, Warsaw and Bucharest, February 12, 1960. Papers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Israeli Missions Abroad, Folder no. 93.10/1–22, Israel State Archives.

29 Cantorovich, "Soviet Reactions to the Eichmann Trial," 111–15.

30 Between 1945 and 1961, about two and a half million people fled the German Democratic Republic for the German Federal Republic, reducing the population of the former by fifteen percent. Frederick Taylor, *The Berlin Wall. A World Divided, 1961–1989* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), XVIII.

existing Soviet anxiety of a rearmed and nuclearized West Germany. In the light of these long-term Soviet strategies, it was predictable that during the Eichmann trial, the main propaganda goal in the bloc would be to attack the FRG.

Another element that was likely to appear in official communist comments on the Eichmann court procedure was a critical stance towards Israel. After a short period of what Uri Bialer described as "knocking on any door," Israel's foreign policies became increasingly oriented towards the West from about the beginning of the 1950s.[31] During the Suez Crisis of 1956, Moscow sided with its Arab allies and after the war, Soviet-Israeli relations quickly deteriorated to an unprecedented low.[32] Israel became the subject of insulting attacks in the Soviet media as an aggressor, alongside France and Britain, who had also participated in the invasion of Egypt. Furthermore, the USSR government was also trying to counter Soviet Jewish aspirations for emigration with an active anti-Israel propaganda campaign.[33] The hostility towards the Jewish State would be sustained during the Eichmann trial.

In all probability, the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (*MSZMP KB Külügyi Osztály*) was well aware of these trends, and it was the first organ of Hungary's bureaucratic apparatus to work out a plan of action to deal with the Eichmann case. Their first proposal to the Politburo on June 24, 1960 suggested that Hungary should ask for the extradition of Eichmann from Israel so that he could be tried by a Hungarian court, with the rationale that he committed a great majority of his crimes against humanity in that country.[34] A trial held in Hungary would have also made it possible to control the ways in which evidence was presented, in other words how Eichmann's activities in Hungary were narrated. The draft also proposed consultations with Czechoslovakia and Poland, two other bloc countries that were major sites of Eichmann's activities during the war.[35]

31 Uri Bialer, *Between East and West: Israel's Foreign Policy Orientation 1948–1956* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

32 Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews 1948–1967. A Documented Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 239.

33 Ibid.

34 Proposal of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party to the Politburo in relation to the Eichmann case, by Imre Hollai and János Péter, June 24, 1960. Papers of the Department of Foreign Affairs, fond no. 288.32, document no. 1960/11, Hungarian National Archives.

35 In March 1939, Nazi Germany occupied Czechoslovakia and established a German Protectorate over Bohemia and Moravia. In the summer of the same year, Eichmann became responsible for promoting the expulsion of Czech Jews from the newly annexed Protectorate. Based on the pattern of

However, after some brief deliberations with the Foreign Ministries of these two states and the Soviet Union, the initial plan to request Eichmann's extradition was dropped because of the potential loss of prestige for the socialist states if Israel refused. Though the Czechoslovaks originally considered supporting the extradition request, Polish authorities ruled it out because the plan would not have "the slightest prospect of success, also because such a procedure would mean taking part in the conflict between Argentina and Israel,[36] and because such a claim might bring about a counter claim by the Federal Republic of Germany, which is undesirable."[37] Instead, it was decided that any explicit recognition of the Israeli court's jurisdiction was to be avoided.[38] Such recognition would have run counter to the general position of socialist states, according to which Israel had no right to speak on behalf of world Jewry.

Given its strained relations with the state of Israel, the Hungarian government was unsure if it should fulfill the Israeli court's request for documentation on Eichmann's activities in the territory of Hungary during the war. Though Czechoslovakia insisted on publishing the materials first, Czechoslovakia and Hungary both provided Israel with the materials indirectly, through two semi-official organizations the names of which clearly mirror the official narratives of World War II. The National Committee of Persons Persecuted by Nazism in Hungary (*Nácizmus Magyarországi Üldözötteinek Országos Bizottsága*) and the Union

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the Viennese Central Office for Jewish Emigration (*Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*), Eichmann created an office in Prague. Eichmann stayed in Prague until October, 1939 before being called back to Berlin. After becoming director of the RSHA section IV B 4 in March 1941, Eichmann played an important role in the deportation of over one million Jews to killing sites mostly in occupied Poland. Eichmann arrived to Budapest years later, in March 1944. By that time, Jewish emigration had been stopped and the decision about the physical extermination of Jews, the so-called "Final Solution", had long been made. By then, Eichmann had considerable experience organizing the transportation of Jews to extermination camps. Nevertheless, *Sondereinsatzkommando Eichmann's* coordination in the deportation of almost half a million Jews to Auschwitz in an extremely short time (less than two months) was unprecedented.

36 In June 1960, Argentina requested a meeting of the UN Security Council, claiming that the Israelis had violated the sovereign rights of the republic when they had abducted Eichmann in Buenos Aires. After months of negotiations and the involvement of the Security Council, Israel and Argentina eventually agreed to end their dispute with a joint statement.

37 Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Antonín Novotný, August 12, 1960. Published in Marie Chrová, "Israel in the foreign and internal politics of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the 1960s and beyond" in *Jewish Studies at the CEU,* vol. 4, ed. András Kovács and Michael Miller (2004–2005) (Budapest: CEU, 2005), 264.

38 Though the Hungarians did acknowledge it with regards to people who had become Israeli citizens by the time of the trial.

of Anti-Fascist Fighters in Czechoslovakia[39] (*Svaz Protifašistických Bojovníků*) were not affiliated with the Jewish communities or any Jewish organization for that matter. In Hungary, a volume entitled *Eichmann in Hungary: Documents* by Jenő Lévai appeared in English, German and French in March, 1961, clearly targeting Western audiences.[40] It signalled an attempt by the Hungarian government to hold its grip over the historical memory of the war, and made clear that the Eichmann case would not be an occasion to emphasize the Jewishness of the majority of the war's Hungarian victims. The resolution of the Hungarian Politburo of June 28, 1960 clearly outlined that the propaganda concerning the Eichmann trial should not focus on the historical narrative but on contemporary political goals. According to the resolution, "in view of neo-fascist symptoms visible in the life of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Zionist nature of the Israeli government's foreign and domestic policy, [the case] must be used to strengthen the antifascist front against fascist efforts."[41]

István Szirmai, the substitute member of the Politburo responsible for culture and ideology, suggested a way to connect Israel's "Zionist policies" with the history of the war. His interest in the topic is unsurprising. Szirmai was born into a Jewish family in 1906 in the small town of Zilah (Zalău) in Transylvania. Although he started his political career in the Socialist-Zionist *Hashomer Hatzair* movement before the war, he later joined the Romanian Communist Party. The early 1940s found him in Budapest, living illegally as the liaison between Transylvanian communists and the Hungarian Communist Party. After spending the second half of the war in prison, Szirmai transferred to the Hungarian communists and acted as the party's functionary unofficially responsible for "Zionist affairs" during the Rákosi period. His position toward Zionism was not in the least bit friendly at that time. He proposed to ban all Zionist organizations on the grounds that they were "spreading bourgeois nationalism, adding to the emigration craze through their organizations, smuggling hard currency, 'rescuing property,' and damaging the forint."[42] In the course of a private meeting with

39 Chrová, "Israel in the foreign and internal politics," 263.

40 Jenő Lévai, ed., *Eichmann in Hungary: Documents* (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1961); idem, ed., *Eichmann en Hongrie: Documents* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1961); idem, ed., *Eichmann in Ungarn: Dokumente* (Budapest: Univ. druck, 1961). These books were printed in Budapest but were not officially published by any publishing house in Hungary. Therefore, it is highly probable that they were not available domestically.

41 "Decision of the Politburo, 28 June 1960," in *Jewish Studies,* ed. Kovács and Miller, 221.

42 András Kovács, "Hungarian Jewish Politics from the End of the Second World War until the Collapse of Communism," in *Jews and the State: Dangerous Alliances and the Perils of Privilege,* ed. Ezra Mendelsohn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 133.

two ultra-left Zionist emissaries from Palestine in the late 1940s, Szirmai also opined that Zionism was "a dangerous ideology based on disregard for realities." He prophesized that in a couple of years' time, "nobody would consider himself Jewish in Hungary."[43] Ironically, Szirmai was imprisoned for his "Zionist activities" by Mátyás Rákosi at the beginning of 1953, when Rákosi was planning a Hungarian Zionist show trial similar to the Doctors' Plot in the USSR and the Slánský trial in Czechoslovakia. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that during the Politburo meeting in 1960, Szirmai highlighted that

> there are certain matters which severely compromise the Israeli government and the Zionist movement. Eichmann knows about these things, and the Israelis don't want them to come to light. Such factors also exist. There was that Kaszner [sic] affair, whom the Israeli government had shot in order to shut him up.[44]

Rezső (Rudolf) Kasztner was a Jewish journalist from Transylvania who was a member of the Hungarian Zionist movement. At an early age, he joined the youth group *Barissia,* the members of which were preparing to become citizens of the envisioned future state of Israel. During the war, Kasztner moved to Budapest, where, as a member of the Jewish Rescue and Aid Committee, he tried to help Jewish refugees obtain exit visas to go to Palestine. In 1944, he successfully negotiated with Eichmann the transport of one train with 1,658 Jews on it to neutral Switzerland.[45]

Szirmai was suggesting at the Politburo session that Kasztner was assassinated because, as a supporter of the Zionist movement during the war, he had cooperated with the Nazis to save wealthy Jews from extermination. He implied that the Israeli government had arranged Kasztner's death to prevent him from revealing this connection between Zionism and Nazism. Contrary to Szirmai's claims, Rezső Kasztner was shot in Tel Aviv by a young supporter of the extreme right wing, Zeev Eckstein, and not on the orders of the Israeli government, of which Kasztner was a member as a spokesman for the Ministry

43 George Garai's interview with A. Yaari, Jewish Agency emissary to the Hashomer Hatzair in Hungary between 1946–1948. Quoted in George Garai, *The Policy towards the Jews, Zionism, and Israel of the Hungarian Communist Party, 1945–1953* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, London School of Economics, 1979), 128.

44 "Minutes of the Politburo of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party 28 June 1960," in vol. 4 of *Jewish Studies at the CEU,* ed. András Kovács and Michael Miller (Budapest: CEU, 2005), 217–18.

45 Anna Porter, *Kasztner's Train* (Vancouver–Toronto: Douglas McIntyre, 2007), esp. 9–50.

of Transportation. Szirmai's version of the story is therefore rather absurd, but nevertheless highlights a possible avenue through which the unfriendliness of communist leaderships towards the state of Israel in the 1960s could influence their official narratives about World War II.

At the same Politburo meeting, General Secretary of the party János Kádár also touched upon the question of historical interpretations of the Hungarian Holocaust that should be brought forward in official propaganda. He emphasized that

> [i]t's not a good idea to turn these awful fascist affairs into an exclusively Jewish question. If we do act in this affair, the decisive thing should be that Eichmann murdered hundreds of thousands of Hungarian citizens... Eichmann did not only murder Jews, there were others there, too. This is not a Jewish question; this is the question of fascism and anti-fascism.[46]

By emphasizing the fascist/anti-fascist struggle, Kádár indicated that he intended to strictly follow the official communist interpretation.

Although it is true that more than half a million Jewish victims of the Holocaust were Hungarians, one problematic part of Kádár's statement was his assertion that they had been *citizens*. The majority of Hungary's Holocaust victims were killed because they were considered Jewish, and not because of their Hungarian nationality (or citizenship), as Kádár's remark implies. The General Secretary also overlooked the fact that by 1944, the elected governments of the Hungarian state had deprived Jews of most of the rights citizens would usually enjoy, restricting their access to employment, education and property, and curbing their right to free movement and marriage.[47]

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46 "Minutes of the Politburo" in *Jewish Studies,* ed. Kovács and Miller, 218.

47 The first Anti-Jewish Law of 1938 ruled that Jews could occupy only up to twenty percent of positions in the free intellectual professions. The second Anti-Jewish Law, which was enacted a year later, capped Jewish presence in intellectual occupations at six percent and forbade their employment in legal and public administrative apparatuses and in secondary school education. Jews could not be employed by theatres or in the press in positions where it was feared they might influence the organs' intellectual focus. The law limited the number of Jews employed at companies and reinstated the Numerus Clausus in education. Jews were completely excluded from trades that were subject to state authorization. The acquisition of agricultural property by Jews was made significantly more difficult. The third Anti-Jewish Law of 1941, which appropriated the racial definition of Jews used by the Nazi Nuremberg Laws, forbade mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews and also criminalized sexual relationships between them. Other anti-Jewish Laws enacted in the following years discriminated against the Jewish religious community,

This illustrates an especially problematic part of the Hungarian communist state's attitudes toward the war. Kádár's regime condemned the Horthy establishment as fascist, but it placed the blame for the alliance with Nazi Germany on "the ruling classes" and their oppression and manipulation of the proletariat and the peasantry. At the same time, it negated official governmental attempts in the course of the war to achieve an armistice[48] and overlooked the general public's acceptance and, in many cases, endorsement of anti-Semitic policies. Kádár's presentation thus deliberately ignored the domestic political roots of and popular support for Hungary's alliance with Nazi Germany, which offered territorial revisions for Hungary's benefit, because these details of history did not fit into the communist narrative of the war and would have undermined the Communist Party's claim for legitimacy in Hungary, built on the myth of widespread anti-fascist resistance.

Successful Attainment of Propaganda Goals: the Implication of the Federal Republic of Germany

Though it has been argued in academic literature that propaganda always reflected the policy goals of the communist leadership,[49] in the post-Stalinist context, the two certainly should not be equated. The following pages present the Hungarian media coverage of the Eichmann trial's court proceedings in four dailies (*Népszabadság, Népszava, Magyar Nemzet* and *Esti Hírlap*), on the national *Radio Kossuth,* and in the official journal of the Jewish community: *Új*

completely forbade the acquisition of agricultural property by Jews, forced Jewish men into labor service and restricted Jewish rights to free movement.

48 There were a few semi-official attempts by the Kállay government to contact the British and the Americans as early as 1942, but as of the spring of 1943 (largely triggered by the catastrophic defeat of the Second Hungarian Army in the Voronezh area in January of that year), more serious efforts were made to contact the Allies to arrange an armistice. With regards to the Kádár regime's attitude to the Kállay government, it must be pointed out that this position was later revised by the Department of Contemporary History (*MTA Történettudományi Intézet Legújabbkori Osztály*) under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences. Under the leadership of György Ránki, the department reevaluated the policies of the Kállay government (in office between March, 1942 and March, 1944), with special emphasis on attempts to abandon the war and break the alliance with Nazi Germany. Ránki, together with other historians such as Iván T. Berend and later Miklós Szabó, attempted to rehabilitate Kállay's policies and show that the attempts to get out of the war were genuine. For more details see: See: Miklós Szabó, "A Ludovikától a Magvetőig," *Beszélő* 3, no. 10 (1998). Accessed October 8, 2015, http://beszelo.c3.hu/98/10/13szab.htm.

49 Baruch Hazan, *Soviet Impregnational Propaganda* (Michigan: Ardis, 1982), 11–12. François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 180–81.

Élet.[50] *Népszabadság* was the national paper of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, while *Esti Hírlap* unofficially belonged to the Party's Budapest unit and the municipal leadership of the capital (*Fővárosi Tanács*) and was more like a tabloid. *Népszava* was the official daily of the trade unions and, thus, its target audience was the workers. *Magyar Nemzet* was the newspaper of the Patriotic Peoples' Front (*Hazafias Népfront*) and essentially addressed the intelligentsia. As mentioned above, *Új Élet* was the official paper of the Jewish religious community, though it operated under strict political supervision. Hungarian media covered the trial very thoroughly, with about seventy articles in the aforementioned papers appearing during the trial and one hundred and thirty-seven articles altogether in the period beginning with the capture of Eichmann and ending with his execution (see Table 1).

Three journalists were allowed by the government to be present at the court in Jerusalem: Tibor Pethő of *Magyar Nemzet,* László Koncsek of the Hungarian Radio and Sándor Barcs from the Hungarian News Agency (*Magyar Távirati Iroda*). Tibor Pethő was the son of Sándor Pethő, the founder of *Magyar Nemzet,* and had worked for the paper as the editor of foreign news reports between 1952 and 1957. He was among those who supported Imre Nagy during the revolutionary events of 1956 and was even a member of the National Alliance of Hungarian Journalists (*Magyar Újságírók Országos Szövetsége*) that negotiated with the Kádár government in 1957, trying to convince them to allow certain banned newspapers to be published again. The negotiations bore no fruit and Pethő was then employed by *Hétfői Hírek,* a newspaper of little significance. He was reinstated to *Magyar Nemzet* in 1960 and thus the coverage of the Eichmann trial was his first major assignment. The politicians responsible for Hungarian cultural policies probably speculated that Pethő would follow the principles set by the regime in his reports on the Eichmann trial. Sándor Barcs, who had been a fellow traveller of the Smallholder's Party before the communist takeover in 1948, was the head of the Hungarian News Agency (*Magyar Távirati Iroda*), as well as a representative in Parliament and, as of 1959, a member of the Presidential Committee (*Elnöki Tanács*). Thus, he was a safe choice to toe the line defined by the Politburo when covering the proceedings of the trial. László Koncsek was an editor of the Hungarian radio and a specialist on the Middle East, though he mostly wrote travel diaries.

50 Based on the Radio Free Europe Press Survey collections available at the Open Society Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe, Hungarian Unit, fond no. 300-40-1, box no. 1606.

However, many others also wrote about the trial: more than twenty other journalists and historians produced articles or reports. Among them were Ilona Benoschofsky, head of the Hungarian Jewish Museum, who wrote five articles for *Új Élet,* and Jenő Lévai, who was considered an authority on the history of Fascism and World War II in Hungary and the author of the aforementioned collection of Hungarian archival documents on the Holocaust published in 1961.[51]

…the trial	Népszava	Nép-szabadság	Magyar Nemzet	Új Élet	Esti Hírlap	Other	Total
Before	17	8	12	10	3	8	58
During	5	14	20	10	4	16	69
After	1	3	1	3	2	0	10
Total	23	25	33	23	9	24	137

Table 1: Coverage of the Eichmann trial in the Hungarian media (no. of articles)

An analysis of the articles that appeared on some aspect or aspects of the Eichmann trial reveals the extent to which the party line described above was followed and the degree to which the Kádár regime successfully controlled the narrative of World War II and the Holocaust.

Hungarian media put great emphasis on the critique of West Germany. That former Nazis were still occupying high positions in West Germany was the most common topic in the Hungarian coverage of the proceedings, appearing in almost half of the articles on the Eichmann case (see Table 2). *Új Élet* noted, for instance, "with regards to Eichmann's case, attention must be drawn to the situation in West Germany and the unchanged activities of the rest of the Nazi criminals."[52] The press also targeted specific individuals in the West German political establishment. It claimed that out of 17 West-German Ministers and Secretaries of State, "12 belonged to the leadership of the Nazi Party" and that "among the admirals and generals of the *Bundeswehr,* 40 had served in Hitler's *Wehrmacht*."[53] The politicians in question were frequently mentioned by name,

51 On Jenő Lévai's role and activities during the Eichmann trial see János Dési, "Lévai Jenő Jeruzsálemben," *Múlt és Jövő* 24, no. 1 (2015): 76–86. I would like to thank Ferenc Laczó for providing me with the manuscript before its publication.

52 "Az Eichmann per ítéletének nemcsak Eichmannt kell sújtania, hanem bele kell világítania a náci barbarizmus mechanizmusába is," *Új Élet,* August 15, 1960.

53 István Merly, "Eichmann volt cinkosai a nyugatnémet államapparátusban," *Esti Hírlap,* April 11, 1961.

among them Hans Globke, one of the closest aides to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and a man who played an important role in drafting anti-Semitic laws at the Ministry of the Interior during the Nazi period, and Gerhard Schröder, Minister of the Interior. Accusations against Schröder were not new, as his Nazi past had been aired years before, even in the West.[54]

…the trial	Before	%[1]	During	%	After	%	Total
Reporting on the trial itself	14	24.1	35	50.7	6	40.0	55
Eichmann's earlier life and career, Eichmann's activities in Hungary, Holocaust	37	63.8	6	8.7	0	0.0	43
Alliance between wealthy Jews and Nazis during World War II	8	13.8	1	1.5	0	0.0	9
Critique of West Germany	25	43.1	33	47.8	6	40.0	64
Critique of other Western countries and organizations (Austria, USA, NATO)	0	0	3	4.35	1	6.7	4
Critique of Israel (alliance with West Germany)	4	6.89	16	23.2	2	13.3	22
Critique of Zionism	0	0	1	1.5	0	0	1

1 Of all the articles that appeared during the period under investigation (i.e. before, during or after the trial), what percentage of the total number of articles dealt with the given issue. The total number of articles is in Table 1.

Table 2: Coverage of the Eichmann trial in the Hungarian media (issues)

The focus on the critique of West Germany was perfectly in line with the interpretation by Soviet media, which held that during the Eichmann trial, "attempts were made to not reveal former Nazis"[55] and that Chancellor Adenauer permitted "yesterday's assistants of Hitler, Himmler and Kaltenbrunner to occupy leading posts"[56] in the Federal Republic. According to the contemporary press analysis of *B'nai B'rith,*

54 For example, *Time Magazine* mentioned it in an editorial entitled "The Case of Otto John" as early as August 23, 1954. Accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,823490,00.html.

55 Govrin, *Israeli–Soviet Relations,* 77.

56 William Korey, "In history's 'memory hole': the Soviet treatment of the Holocaust" in *Contemporary Views of the Holocaust,* ed. Randolph L. Braham (Boston–The Hague–Dordrecht–Lancaster: Kluwer Nijhoff Publishing, 1983), 152.

> the press treatment of the Eichmann case in the Soviet Union prior to the opening of the trial on April 11 was marked by 1) relative paucity; 2) an emphasis upon an alleged relationship between Eichmann's crimes and present-day rulers of West-Germany; and 3) a general minimization of Eichmann's crimes against Jews compared with his crimes against people generally. These features continued after the trial began.[57]

Likewise, in the German Democratic Republic, the trial in Jerusalem served as a pretext to attack the political elite of the Federal Republic: a Jewish-German lawyer, Friedrich Karl Kaul was sent to Jerusalem to present compromising documents on Hans Globke,[58] and many brochures on the issue were published at home.[59] For instance, right after Eichmann's capture, East Berlin propagandists quickly produced two pamphlets entitled "Globke and the Extermination of the Jews" [*Globke und die Ausrottung der Juden*] and "New Proof of Globke's Crimes against the Jews" [*Neue Beweise for Globkes Verbrechen gegen die Juden*]. The Israeli prosecution was approached by the East Germans to allow Kaul to join the team as an adviser, but Attorney General Gideon Hausner rejected the request on the grounds that there were no diplomatic relations between Israel and East Germany.[60]

The Czechoslovak news agency *Ceteka* emphasized on the occasion of Eichmann's execution in 1962 that the trial had not been carried out "to the full" despite the death sentence. According to *Ceteka,* "fascist groups" in the FRG and some other Western countries not only offered financial support to Eichmann's counsel, Dr. Servatius, but also "moral support" in the Western press.[61]

It is thus clear that the denunciation of West Germany was a priority in communist states. The press and the propaganda machinery reacted in unison with well-known accusations that did not present anything new in addition to

57 "B'nai B'rith Report on Media Coverage of the Eichmann Case in Communist Countries, June 1961," in *Jewish Studies,* ed. Kovács and Miller, 242–43.

58 Moshe Hess, Deputy to the Official in Charge of the Information Section, Israel Mission in Cologne to Leo Savir, Deputy Head of the Mission, 20 February, 1960. Paper of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Israeli Missions Abroad, document no. RG 93.43/MFA/584/5, Israel State Archives.

59 Angelika Timm, "Ideology and Realpolitik: East German Attitudes towards Zionism and Israel," *Journal of Israeli History* 25, no. 1 (2006): 206.

60 RFE Special Report, Tel Aviv, March 29, 1961. Fond 300-40-1, box. 1606, Open Society Archives. Also: John P. Teschke, *Hitler's Legacy. West Germany Confronts the Aftermath of the Third Reich* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 197.

61 "Eichmann – Communist reporting on execution." Records of Radio Free Europe, Czechoslovak Unit: Fond 300-30-3, microfilm no. 63, Open Society Archives.

the countries' previous positions towards the FRG. Most of the accusations were not only old, but had already been published in the West as well.

Closely connected to accusations against the Adenauer government for having forgiven and even having been supportive of former Nazis was the presentation of Israel as a collaborator with West Germany. This was a much more complicated issue, as the task of communist propaganda here was to criticize Israel without appearing anti-Semitic. Journalist Tibor Pethő remembered that before they were sent off to Jerusalem to report on the trial, István Szirmai had instructed them to be careful not to incite anti-Semitic feelings among the Hungarian population.[62]

The issue of Israeli–West German collaboration appeared twenty-two times in Hungarian newspapers and radio programs during the period under investigation, making it the fourth most salient issue. The articles claimed that, in order to preserve good relations between Israel and West Germany, Israeli authorities made sure that Eichmann's confessions would not affect certain high-ranking German politicians negatively.[63] According to one article, Ben Gurion "met Adenauer with a secretive smile on his face and he contentedly patted the side pocket of his jacket as he left. If one had looked into it (the pocket), one would have found a check for about 500 million [Deutsche] Marks."[64] According to another report, "[t]he Eichmann-trial, instead of becoming the trial of the general condemnation of Fascism, turned into a West German–Israeli affair. Behind the trial, there are shady economic and political interests that are seldom revealed."[65] Not only did the Hungarian press criticize the Israeli leadership for "collaboration" with West Germany, certain articles also implied that the elites of Hungary's Jewish population had collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. *Magyar Nemzet* elaborated on this issue as follows:

62 Adrienne Molnár, ed., *A "hatvanas évek" emlékezete* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2004), 147.

63 It must be noted that Deborah E. Lipstadt claims that Ben-Gurion asked the prosecutor during the Eichmann trial not to use the word "Germany" but only "Nazi Germany" when referring to the country during World War II to emphasize the discontinuity between the Third Reich and the FRG. See: Deborah E. Lipstadt, *The Eichmann Trial* (New York: Schocken, 2011), 25–26. It must be at least considered plausible that in view of Ben-Gurion's support for the "new Germany" and the reparations paid by the FRG to the Jewish State for material damages during the Holocaust at that time, Israel did not want to jeopardize its good relations with West Germany by highlighting certain sensitive continuities. Therefore, though exaggerated, communist propaganda claims were not completely unfounded regarding this issue.

64 "Az Eichmann-ügy a leláncolt kacsa görbe tükrében," *Magyar Nemzet,* April 15, 1961.

65 Tibor Pethő, "Ami a jeruzsálemi perből kimaradt," in *Magyar Nemzet,* 23 July, 1961.

> Ferenc Chorin,[66] who had been arrested by the *Gestapo,* and his "interrogator" Kurt Becher, SS-lieutenant-colonel, negotiated for weeks. Several arrested members of the Hungarian plutocracy joined the meetings. Rich capitalists who were still free also took part in the negotiations in the prison… The group of rich capitalists arrived in Lisbon on June 25 [1944] on a German private plane. A day before, the removal of everyday Jewish people had been completed in Budapest, and two days later, the first phase of the Eichmann mission ended with the deportation of 420 thousand people to Auschwitz. Hitlerite Fascism, while loudly condemning "plutocratic" capitalists, killed the workers with one hand and saved the capitalists with the other, proving its real class character.[67]

Taken together with depictions of "shady economic and political interests" behind the trial, the Hungarian press coverage not only asserted continuity between Nazi Germany and the FRG, but also implied a similar continuity between the behavior of Jewish leadership in East-Central Europe during World War II and that of the leading Israeli politicians in the 1960s. The relations between Israel and West Germany, as well as a few selected members of the Hungarian Jewish community and Nazi officers during World War II, expressed in such images are reminiscent of older anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews as worldly, greedy and involved in questionable business transactions "behind the scenes." The victims appear first and foremost as members of the working class, and the fact that they were deported on the basis of race is underplayed. At the same time, one gets the impression that all Jewish members of the capitalist higher elites were exempted from persecution as a result of secret negotiations. Even if we accept that the Hungarian Politburo indeed did not want to incite anti-Semitic feelings, such reports, which featured quite prominently among those before the trial (see Table 2), clearly made use of anti-Semitic imagery. In that sense, the bloc-wide use of propaganda to draw links between Nazi Germany, the FRG and Israel (and the determination to frame wartime deaths in

66 Ferenc Chorin was a wealthy Jewish businessman of the Horthy period, the director of Salgótarjáni Kőszénbánya Rt., a coal mine and its adjoining factory. Through his various posts in professional and political organizations, he also belonged to the closest political circles of Regent Miklós Horthy. Chorin was forced to resign from many of his various posts as a result of the anti-Jewish legislation in 1941. After Hungary's occupation, he was among the first to be arrested by the SS. Nevertheless, he managed to negotiate a deal which resulted in the SS taking ownership (officially for 25 years) of the largest industrial empire in Hungary in exchange for the Chorin family's departure to Portugal and Switzerland.

67 János Komlós, "Ami az Eichmann-ügy mögött van," *Magyar Nemzet,* April 6, 1961.

the context of class) had the potential to override the Hungarian state's intention to separate criticisms of Israel from anti-Semitism.

A Less Successful Implementation of Propaganda: Public Memory and the Holocaust Narrative

As Table 2 reveals, before the trial took place, the historical narrative of Eichmann's activities in Hungary and, closely related to that, the ghettoization and deportation of Jews to Auschwitz dominated the discourse in the Hungarian press. More than sixty percent of the articles addressed these issues, making the history of the Holocaust in Hungary the most prominent theme. The articles revealed a lot of information on Eichmann's activities before and during his Hungarian mission, as well as particulars about his relations with the leadership of the Hungarian state administration and the Budapest Jewish Council. Information about these details was available to the journalists due to a remarkable amount of publications that had been produced in the immediate postwar years,[68] material to which some of the press articles explicitly referred.[69]

A dominant narrative in these pre-trial historical accounts in the Hungarian press portrays the behavior of the Hungarian state administration. "At the beginning of April 1944, in a meeting room of the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior," reported *Esti Hírlap,* State Secretaries "László Endre, László Baky, the leaders of the gendarmerie and the German specialists gathered for a meeting to decide about deportations and discuss the details."[70] At that same meeting, an agitated Regent Horthy is quoted in *Népszava* as having said, in reference to the Jews of Hungary, "[o]ut with them from the country!"[71] *Népszabadság* claimed that Eichmann's special commando "counted on the help of the Sztójay

68 See Ferenc Laczó's "From 'European Fascism' to 'the Fate of the Jews.' Early Hungarian Jewish Monographs on the Holocaust" and also his "The Foundational Dilemmas of Jenő Lévai. On the Birth of Hungarian Holocaust Historiography in the 1940s," *Holocaust Studies* 21, no. 1 (2015). I would like to thank Ferenc Laczó for providing me with his manuscripts. Péter Dávidházi and Tamás Kisantal explored similar topics, analyzing Hungarian literary texts about the Holocaust from the early postwar years in their presentations during the conference "Trauma-Holocaust-Literature" (Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, Budapest, November 2014).

69 "A budapesti kollégák," *Népszava,* June 4, 1960 refers Jenő Lévai's *Fekete könyv a magyar zsidóság szenvedéséről* (Budapest: Officina, 1946) and his *Szürke könyv a magyar zsidók megmentéséről* (Budapest: Officina, 1946). "Dokumentumok Eichmann magyarországi rémtetteiről," *Magyar Nemzet,* June 5, 1960 references Ernő Munkácsi, though without providing further details.

70 "A halál minisztere. Tömegirtás és üzlet," *Esti Hírlap,* December 6, 1960.

71 "Horthy és Eichmann," *Népszava,* June 5, 1960.

government [for ghettoization], but it was a welcome surprise for them that the Hungarian government voluntarily provided the services of 20,000 gendarmes."[72] Not only was the Hungarian state administration presented as a willing partner of Eichmann, but on several occasions, as initiator of the deportations of the country's Jews. For example, Eichmann was quoted as having claimed that "he had promised László Endre that not a single Jew would remain alive,"[73] implying that the issue was more important to the Hungarian State Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior than to the *Obersturmbannführer*. As for the period following the takeover of power by the Arrow Cross movement, *Esti Hírlap* reported that Eichmann and his men "found in Szálasi and his men like-minded souls."[74]

The leadership of the Hungarian state administration, members of the national socialist Arrow Cross (*nyilaskeresztes*) movement, and Regent Horthy himself were all referred to as fascists. There appeared to be no distinction between the ideas represented by the Regent, who was still in power when the deportations began (and whose political stance was based on a conservative-Christian set of values that fed on the traditions of the Hungarian nobility), the Sztójay government (which collaborated with the Germans in the implementation of the Holocaust) and Arrow Cross leader Ferenc Szálasi's premiership (which instituted large-scale violence against Jews).

The terminology dated back to the People's Courts (*népbíróság*) of the early postwar years, which were established to prosecute war criminals, but came under strong communist influence.[75] In addition to convicting war criminals, they also aimed to discredit the entire Horthy period, and with that, the political adversaries of the communists, while not addressing the problem that broad segments of the Hungarian population had supported many of the ideas and policies of the Horthy regime.[76] The transformation of the Horthy era into a

72 "Adolf Eichmann elemében," *Népszabadság,* June 3, 1960.

73 "Nyugat-Németországban letartóztatták Haupsturmführer [sic] Hunsche-t, Eichmann magyarországi helyettesét," *Új Élet,* December 1, 1960.

74 "A halál minisztere."

75 László Karsai, "The People's Courts and Revolutionary Justice in Hungary, 1945–1946," in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and its Aftermath,* ed. István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 233–51. Viktor Karády, *Túlélők és újrakezdők* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 2002), 15; Petru Weber, "A háborús bűnök megtorlása a második világháború utáni Romániában és Magyarországon," *Korall* 8, no. 28–29 (2007): 134–45, esp. 141.

76 As early as 1948, eminent Hungarian political thinker István Bibó warned in an essay about the problems concerning the way in which the persecution of Jews in Hungary was addressed during the court procedures. According to Bibó, the conviction of criminals masked the fact that during World War II

"fascist dictatorship" tantamount to that of Hitler and Mussolini continued in Hungarian historiography during the Rákosi period.[77]

During its early years, the Kádár regime maintained this narrative, and its first interpretations of the 1956 "counter-revolution" established continuity between the White Terror that followed the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919, the "fascist" Horthy regime and the events of October 1956. According to official publications that appeared in Hungary between 1957 and 1959, the outbreak of the "counter-revolution" was linked to the infiltration of Hungary by fascist elements from the West and the re-emergence of domestic Hungarian fascists from the Horthy era and the Arrow Cross movement.[78] The masses were tricked by the "nationalist, chauvinist, and anti-Soviet" catchwords used by the clandestine fascists in order to gain support. The February 1957 "Resolution of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party with regards to Current Questions and Tasks" referred to the October events as a "counter-revolution" but attributed the actions of the population to a smaller group of provocateurs.[79] This minority of inimical elements, the party narrative maintained, "using the dissatisfaction of the masses caused by the previous party leadership's mistakes, aimed to confuse the working masses' class consciousness with chauvinist, nationalist, revisionist, anti-Semitic and other bourgeois counterrevolutionary ideas."[80] In order to substantiate the interpretation of the 1956 revolution as having been instigated by (domestic and returning foreign) fascists, Kádár's propaganda exaggerated their presence and influence during the Horthy era. Therefore, even though the Kádár regime did not prioritize the narration of the Hungarian Holocaust in relation to the Eichmann trial, the reiteration of earlier claims about the strong alliance between Horthy's establishment and Nazi Germany, as well as the "fascism" of the former did correspond to other propaganda goals of the time related to the 1956 revolution.

Hungarian society as a whole had abandoned the Jews before it had itself become the victim of Fascism. This, according to Bibó, was nevertheless never addressed and the victimhood of Jews was incorporated into the general group of the victims of Fascism. See: István Bibó, *Zsidókérdés Magyarországon 1944 után* (Budapest: Neuwald, 1948).

77 See for example: Gusztáv Heckenast et al., *A magyar nép története: rövid áttekintés* (Budapest: Művelt Nép, 1951).

78 Heino Nyyssönen, *The Presence of the Past in Politics. '1956' after 1956 in Hungary* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä Printing House, 1999), 92–95.

79 Kalmár Melinda, *Ennivaló és hozomány. A kora kádárizmus ideológiája* (Budapest: Magvető, 1998), 29.

80 Minutes of the meeting of the Temporary Executive Committee, November 23, 1956. Minutes of the Meetings of the Politburo of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, M-KS 288.5/4, Hungarian National Archives.

After the Eichmann trial began in April 1961, however, the historical narrative spectacularly lost its prominence in the Hungarian press. Close to ninety percent of all the articles that presented the historical narrative appeared before the trial. At the same time, Hungarian propaganda was especially unsuccessful at having the Eichmann trial presented not as "a deportation story but an attack on the reviving West-German imperialism and its Nazi cadres,"[81] and the trial's certain details as a series of events that happened to "Hungarian citizens." Such a goal would have been hard to achieve because, during the course of the trial in Jerusalem, the fact that the great majority of the Eichmann's victims were Jews came to the fore.

The proceedings, witnesses and supporting documents of the trial became predominantly focused on the persecution of Jews during World War II. For instance, the trial highlighted the fact that Hungarian authorities had discriminated specifically against Jews with numerous anti-Semitic measures. During one session, a document presented to the Presiding Judge described a debate in the Hungarian Parliament from December 1942 on the question of labor camps for Jews and the ban on Christian women from work in Jewish homes. During the same session, another document revealed that Jewish intellectuals had been made to perform forced labor in Hungary in 1943.[82] Furthermore, some eyewitness accounts mentioned the economic interests of some of the Hungarian population in acquiring Jewish property as a result of deportations. Hansi Brand remembered one of the marches on foot when thousands of Jews had been driven through the streets by the SS.[83] When asked about how the Hungarian public had reacted to the scene, Brand answered that "[s]ome just stared at them dully—they were the better ones; the others were pleased that those who had been bombed out were going to have nice Jewish flats." [84] This kind of narrative ran counter to Kádár's grouping of all victims under the undifferentiated category of "Hungarian citizens." On the contrary, it revealed that Jews were explicit targets of legal discrimination, that different

81 Letter from Ferenc Esztergályos (Deputy Department Head, 2nd Regional Department of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to János Péter with regards to the Eichmann trial, February 9, 1961. Papers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j (Izrael), box no. 13, 30/c, document no. 0081/4/1961, Hungarian National Archives.

82 Session 51, documents 972 and 1341 respectively, in *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann. Record of Proceedings in the District Court of Jerusalem,* vol. 3 (Jerusalem: State of Israel Ministry of Justice, 1993), 929.

83 On Hansi Brandt, see footnote 5 above.

84 Ibid., 1054.

groups within Hungarian society had different interests, and that the persecution of one group could mean potential economic gain for another.

As a result of the thematic focus of the trial in Jerusalem, very few articles *during* the Eichmann trial in the Hungarian press dealt with non-Jewish (or non-specified, general) suffering only. Even if one part of a certain article only mentioned the victimization of citizens in general, some other part of the piece usually revealed that they were indeed Jews. *Népszabadság* reported first on Hungarian issues that were discussed during the trial. One article provides a fine example of how the Party line and the story of the Jewish Holocaust both appeared within one text. When introducing the Hungarian period of Eichmann's activities, the newspaper claimed that the documents of the prosecution had revealed "the bloody and dirty details of Eichmann's reign of terror in Hungary..." including "the tragic history of four hundred thousand Hungarians who were killed in gas chambers and during death marches."[85] This kind of phrasing followed the party line introduced by Kádár. Yet the same report later described negotiations with the leaders of the Jewish religious community in March 1944, just days after the German invasion. The article presented how Eichmann's subordinates had claimed that *"'[n]othing will happen to the Jews,'* they said, *'with the exception of a few restrictive measures. Please calm the Jews down.'* At the end of May... deportations began."[86] Despite the vagueness in the introduction, the most common feature of the Hungarians killed in gas chambers—their Jewishness—was eventually made quite clear.

To determine the level of relativization of Jewish victimhood during the war, I examine newspaper reports that discuss both Jewish and unspecified or general victimhood in the same article. Before the trial, 36 articles dealt with victimhood during the war, out of which 55.6 percent (20) dealt *only* with Jewish victimhood, 13.9 percent (5) dealt *only* with unspecified victimhood and 30.5 percent (11) dealt with *both* issues. During the trial, 33 articles dealt with victimhood during the war, out of which 72.7 percent (24) dealt *only* with Jewish victimhood, 21.2 percent (7) dealt *only* with unspecified victimhood and only 6.1 percent (2) dealt with *both* issues (See Table 3). It is clear that articles and programs that dealt exclusively with Jewish victimhood were much more pronounced *during* the trial than before it. The first reports about the trial's presentation of Eichmann's activities in Hungary during World War II claimed that "Eichmann was the

85 "Jegyzetek a jeruzsálemi tárgyalásról," *Népszabadság,* May 28, 1961.

86 Ibid.

lord of life and death in Budapest and the despot of Hungarian Jews,"[87] and, more specifically, that "Eichmann traveled to Budapest in 1944 personally to supervise the deportation of Jews."[88] Eyewitness accounts were quoted that also concentrated on Jewish persecution. According to an article in *Magyar Nemzet,* "Eyewitness accounts presented last Friday at the Nazi mass murderer's trial revealed that Eichmann beat to death a Jewish boy who stole cherries from his garden in the shed of his Budapest villa in 1944."[89]

Coverage of non-Jewish suffering and combined coverage (i.e. Jewish and non-Jewish suffering in one article or radio program) were much more frequent before the trial. This suggests that, because the information and conclusions resulting from the trial were determined by the Israeli attorneys, the Hungarian regime lost control over the terms of reference, and this in turn led to an increase in the number of reports and stories dealing with Jewish victimhood in the Hungarian press. The trial simply did not provide Hungarian journalists with sufficient material to allow them to focus on general/unspecified victimhood.

…the trial	Before	During	After
Mentions Jewish victimhood during the war	31	26	2
Mentions *only* Jewish victimhood during the war	20	24	2
Mentions unspecified/general victimhood during the war	16	9	2
Mentions *only* unspecified/general victimhood during the war	5	7	2
Mentions Jewish *and* general victimhood during the war	11	2	0

Table 3: Coverage of the Eichmann trial in the Hungarian media (Holocaust)

Using the Kasztner case to imply close links between Zionists and Nazi officers in Hungary was another part of the propaganda strategy that failed. The Israeli court was very cautious not to involve Kasztner's case in the proceedings. The whole Kasztner problem signified a deep ideological split in Israeli society and politics between the nationalist right wing and socialist-Zionist left wing. At any rate, the court was not likely to be particularly sympathetic to Kasztner; Judge Benjamin Halevi had also been the President of the Court at the Grünwald trial, in which the Israeli government had sued Malkiel Grünwald for libel against Rezső (Rudolf) Kasztner. Famously, the trial ended with Halevi

87 "Eichmann magyarországi bűnei a jeruzsálemi bíróság előtt," *Magyar Nemzet,* April 19, 1961.

88 "Tanúvallomás Eichmann budapesti gyilkosságáról," *Népszabadság,* May 27, 1961.

89 "Eichmann további 29 bűntársát említi meg," *Magyar Nemzet,* May 27, 1961. This episode was brought up during the proceedings to prove Eichmann's direct responsibility in the commission of murder.

ruling that three out of the four charges were true, therefore not libellous. These were: collaboration with the Nazis; "indirect murder" or "preparing the ground for the murder" of Hungary's Jews, and saving a war criminal (Kurt Becher) from punishment after the war.[90] The judge was also quoted as having said that Kasztner "sold his soul to the devil."[91] The trial shook the Israeli public and led to the resignation of Prime Minister Moshe Sharett in 1955. The government appealed to the Supreme Court immediately after Halevi had read out the ruling. However, it took another three years for a new verdict, which overturned most of the judgment against Kasztner. On March 3, 1957, well before that judgement was released, Kasztner was shot, and he died two weeks later. To avoid the possibility of a similar scandal, witnesses who would have been too supportive or too inimical to Kasztner were not invited to testify at the Eichmann trial.[92] With the elimination of the Kasztner case, Hungarian propagandists lost their main angle for criticizing the Hungarian Zionist movement.

A comparison with Polish media coverage of the Eichmann trial helps provide a nuanced view of its presentation by the Hungarian press. Like the Hungarian, Polish media attempted to present the Holocaust in a manner that did not contradict the narrative of Polish victimhood by emphasizing the special significance of Poland in the Jewish genocide. *Trybuna Ludu* pointed out that

> Polish territories have a special place in the history of the extermination of Jews. The very first acts of extermination were committed on Polish Jews. In the first phase of the criminal plan the persecutions were directed against both the non-Jewish and Jewish population of Poland.[93]

Yet according to the aforementioned report by B'nai B'rith, "[w]hile criticism of the current West German Government and its alleged links to Eichmann is to be found in the [Polish] press coverage, Jewish martyrdom is the dominant theme."[94] Though the report has to be evaluated with consideration of its

90 Akiva Orr, *Israel: Politics, Myths and Identity Crises* (London–Boulder, CO: Pluto Press, 1994), 83.

91 "ISRAEL: On Trial," *Time Magazine,* July 11, 1955. Accessed July 25, 2011, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,807322-3,00.html.

92 Neither Andreas Bliss nor Moshe Kraus, who both had relevant information with regards to the "Trucks for Blood" deal, was invited to testify, the former because it was believed he would try everything to clear Kasztner's name, the latter for the opposite reason. See: Hanna Yablonka, *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann* (New York: Schocken, 2004), 118–19.

93 "B'nai B'rith Report," 247.

94 Ibid.

biases originating in the Cold War situation, other sources confirm this claim. A journalist named Kazimierz Kąkol covered the Eichmann trial for the paper "Law and Life" (*Prawo i Życie*), and a book based on his dispatches was published in 1962 under the title "Eichmann's Road to Beit Ha'am" (*Adolfa Eichmanna droga do Beit Haam*). The publication sharply criticized the Israeli government's way of conducting the trial and accused it of cooperation with the FRG, but it also pointed out the distinctiveness of the Jewish genocide.[95] Based on a rereading of various Polish literary and academic pieces of the period, social anthropologist Annamaria Orla-Bukowska also argued that, while these texts only reached a limited audience, "the Holocaust actually began to enter public discourse… in the wake of the Eichmann trial."[96] Thus, Hungary was not the only country in the bloc where the Eichmann case opened up possibilities to acknowledge the Holocaust.

Perhaps more so than in Poland, however, the press in Hungary discussed Jewish victimhood without pairing it with a specific national tragedy narrative distinct from communist ideology. In Hungary, non-Jews who might have felt that they had suffered during the war were supposed to fit into one of two the categories: the working class or the communists. Those who did not consider themselves members of either of these two groups could not identify with the story of World War II presented by the Hungarian media.

Conclusions: Hungarian Policies, Propaganda and the Eichmann Case

This paper has examined the trial of Adolf Eichmann and its presentation in the Hungarian press. Communist ideology's anti-Fascism defined its stance as "anti-anti-Semitic," yet the revolutionary commitment of Marxism-Leninism created a framework for an interpretation of World War II which conceptualized the conflict as one between two opposing, ideologically defined camps (fascists and anti-fascists). Consequently, it was difficult to accommodate the idea of non-political victimhood, i.e. the destruction of Jews based on racist ideas and not because of their political commitments. This represented a problem for communist propaganda during the Eichmann trial, a process that highlighted the destruction of Jews as the worst crime of the Nazi regime.

95 Anat Plocker, *Zionists to Dayan: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967–1968* (PhD Thesis, Stanford University, 2009), 106.

96 Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, "Re-presenting the Shoah in Poland and Poland in the Shoah," in *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-First Century,* ed. Ronit Lentin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 184.

Because of the Cold War situation, during which West Germany emerged as Communism's main "enemy" in Europe, bloc-wide attempts to control the interpretation of the trial focused on the perpetrators, whom they hoped to connect with the government of the FRG. The identity of the victims was a secondary question—and this led to the relativization of Jewish victimhood—yet it was not actively suppressed.

Despite János Kádár's speech at the Politburo, in which he warned against emphasizing the Jewish theme, Hungarian press reports *during* the trial repeatedly revealed who the primary victims of Nazi persecution had been. The trial's thematization of Eichmann's activities during World War II and eyewitness accounts about Hungary made such revelations rather difficult for the Hungarian press to avoid. This was all the more so because some elements of the story that emerged in the Jerusalem courtroom did not contradict or hamper the goals of the Hungarian leadership. Eichmann was judged guilty even before his trial had begun, both in Israel[97] and in Hungary. The Hungarian witnesses carefully chosen by the Israeli court described, in great detail, the "cruelty of the Germans,"[98] just as communist propaganda emphasized the brutality of Fascism. Thus, acknowledgement of Jewish victimhood as presented during the trial of Adolf Eichmann, however limited, allowed for the surfacing of at least a partial Holocaust narrative in Hungary: the trial effectively brought knowledge of the Holocaust to the broader Hungarian public through the coverage that was given in numerous major newspapers.

The possible reasons for the emergence of this partial Holocaust narrative could be found in various factors. The lack of a considerable anti-fascist resistance movement and widespread anti-Bolshevik sentiments among the population during the 1940s made the communist anti-fascist narrative completely incongruous with details of Hungarian history that were revealed at the trial. The Israeli court's effective control over what was being said in the courtroom made it nearly impossible for the Hungarian journalists who were present at the trial *not* to present Jews as the primary targets of Nazi extermination policies.

Just as the Polish state instrumentalized Auschwitz as a political site of memory for World War II, the Hungarian regime attempted to use the Eichmann trial to strengthen (indirectly) its narrative of 1956. The Kádár administration, in particular, wanted to focus on the perpetrators to showcase "fascist elements"

97 Hanna Yablonka, *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann* (New York: Schocken, 2004), 121, 141.
98 Ibid., 120.

in society that, according to its narrative, had been responsible both for many wartime deaths and for the 1956 revolution. This propaganda goal was apparent especially during the months *prior* to the trial, when the historical account of World War II in Hungary was a frequently recurring theme in the Hungarian press. The wartime governments' discriminatory actions were frequently depicted as targeting communists and the working class in general. The extensive use of the term "fascist" effectively diluted its meaning (which came to signify anyone opposed to communist policies) and prevented a meaningful discussion of the sources of anti-Semitic policies in Hungary during the Horthy period. As the deportation of Jews was blamed on a few in power, any discussion of the behavior of broader segments of Hungarian society was hindered. These Kádárist policies infantilized the public and suggested that social norms against anti-Semitism were relative or even inconsequential.

Despite its obvious omissions and distortions, the Kádár regime's critique of the Hungarian government's behavior during the last part of the war brought important points to light. Members of the Hungarian state administration were not "fascists," but they bore responsibility for the extermination of the country's Jews. The Kádárist narrative tried to incorporate the Holocaust into Hungarian history (rather than just treating it as part of Jewish or German history), but also tried to frame the anti-Semitism of the period as an element of Fascism and something that the communists had defeated, both in 1945 and 1956. This narrative may be ideologically loaded, but it should not be dismissed as complete fiction, much less as entirely tabooizing the Holocaust.

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Hungarian Historical Review 4, no. 3 (2015): 773–802

BOOK REVIEWS

Jewish Histories of the Holocaust: New Transnational Approaches. Edited by Norman J. W. Goda. Making Sense of History: Studies in Historical Cultures Series 19. New York–Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014. 305 pp.

Jewish Histories of the Holocaust is an eclectic—in the best sense of the word—collection of highly detailed case studies of what is known as the "Jewish Holocaust," the effort to portray and analyze the Holocaust from a Jewish perspective. The volume opens with two theoretical explorations of the framework of Holocaust research. Dan Michman's chapter explores the notion of the "unprecedentedness" of the Shoah from a decidedly Jewish-centered perspective, by integrating Jewish perspectives into a longer history of Jewish life in Europe. The fact that the Jews occupied a special place in Nazi ideology, argues Michman, sets the Shoah apart from other genocides. This calls for the use of a language that emphasizes the boundaries between this mass murder and the many others that took place in Europe during the twentieth century. An overly rigorous application of paradigms such as genocide, borderlands, and regions risks crushing the unique details of which the past is made up. As Michman argues, there was something "essentially different" about the Jewish fate in wartime Europe, and without close attention to this fact and its consequences for Holocaust research, we will never arrive at a genuine grasp of the historical uniqueness of the Holocaust.

Perhaps the one potential meeting point between Michman's framework and that of Timothy Snyder is that both scholars emphasize the centrality of the "victim" by placing him or her in a wider social context and history. Yet where Michman argues for a Jewish-centered perspective on the larger history of the Holocaust, Snyder instead focuses on regional history as a means of understanding and analyzing the broader wartime experience. One cannot, argues Snyder, ignore the millions of other "bodies" that fell victim in the same regions during those same years. Only by developing a micro-historical approach that transcends the national, one that does not shy away from comparisons of the genocide of Jews and the large-scale massacres of people of various ethnicities and nationalities, can the immense scope of World War II be grasped.

Part II tackles the controversial subject of Jewish leadership—the Judenräte—in the wartime ghettos. Gordon J. Horwitz concentrates on Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski and his role in our understanding of the Lódz ghetto. His essay is a foray into the use of the concept of disbelief as a tool with which to forge historical knowledge about the motivations and actions of Jewish leaders, especially the role of disbelief in the realm of people's private thoughts and feelings. It couples a biographical analysis with the ultimate fate of the ghettos, which, needless to say, was not in the hands of the Jewish leadership. Despite this, disbelief as an analytical tool forces historians to return to the timeliness of events as they unfolded, and, also, to withhold judgement. Indeed, as Sara Bender shows in her contribution about the ghettos of Kielce and Białystok, in the study of the personalities of Jewish leaders and their strategies of every-day survival, what seems important in assessing their legacies is their ability to negotiate with the local structures of power. In other words, the ability to change German intentions with regard to the location of the ghetto or the ways in which ransoms were paid, for instance, influenced not so much the outcome of the Nazi policies (although this too was most certainly a goal of Jewish leaders), but rather temporarily improved day-to-day conditions inside the ghettos. Are we then to base our assessments of the role of wartime Jewish leadership on the fates of their communities? As these case studies show, this is a rather futile direction of inquiry, because despite (for instance) marked differences in leadership between Hermann Levy in Kielce and Efraim Barash in Białystok, the fate of the two communities was ultimately guided not by their choices, but by Nazi politics in Berlin and on the ground.

All four essays in Part III present a convincing case for the use of specific types of witness and testimony sources. Alexandra Barbarini pleads for increased specificity in our use of Jewish-centered source material on the Holocaust in regards to time, context, production, and voice. She concentrates on the wartime diary as a source distinct from postwar memoirs and other documents. Diaries, she says, reveal contemporaneous horizons and expectations that are by default restricted by the framework of the events as they unfold. As such, they contain interpretations and feelings that existed before the notion of the Holocaust became solidified in the postwar years; in other words, they reveal the thoughts that transpired in the hearts, minds, and worlds of Jewish individuals, who were writing in an effort to convey what happened to them in real time.

Omer Bartov's contribution demonstrates one of the ways in which historians can get away from the idea and study of the Holocaust as a dehumanized,

industrial killing enterprise perpetrated by the Germans. Instead, Bartov focuses on human interactions of wartime violence by analyzing the violence from a localized perspective, sculpted into the biography of a town, Buczacz, now in western Ukraine, and the story of the Holocaust as it unfolded there at a local level. Rejecting the category of bystander altogether, Bartov argues that historians should instead consider the various levels of engagement between people and populations and the violent events they experienced. Building on this notion of active, personal engagement between individual actors and acts of violence, Bartov writes history as seen through the eyes of its protagonists, a cacophony of irreconcilable voices that speak to posterity in countless forms of documentation scattered in archives in Europe, Israel, and the United States.

Sara R. Horowitz's chapter deals with deferred memory narratives and their relation to gender identity in the telling of one particularly horrific event: infanticide, or the killing of babies and children by their parents. Horowitz brings to light the various aspects of the "unspeakable" nature of these crimes—so horrible that these memories fall outside the boundaries of straightforward narratives—as they are revealed in oral sources. In many cases, it took decades for these experiences to make their way into the spoken language of survivors, and herein lies the particular value of these testimonies: they have the potential not only to reveal the horrors encountered, but also the changing gendered nature of maternal and paternal responses to infanticide. In some cases, parents exhibited a reversal of traditional roles with regards to the care (feminine) and murder (masculine) of infants, showing the disruptive potential of these events in the lives of those who lived through it, as well as the importance of gender categories for a fuller understanding of infanticide.

Finally, Daniel Blatman zooms in on a particularly daunting period of the Holocaust, namely, the death marches that took place from January 1945 to the end of the war. Blatman, who dedicated a monograph to the subject, *The Death Marches: The Final Phase of Nazi Genocide* (2011), argues that this relatively short period stands out in the recollections of survivors for several reasons. Most importantly, the death march experience broke with the routine and boredom of the camps and the strategies of survival and group dynamics that prisoners had developed. The change from a confined space to an open space, in which cruelty was unleashed in unknown patterns, came as a shock. As such, the marches stand out as a particularly barbaric experience in the recollections of survivors. By focusing on the commonalities in survivor testimonies and memoirs, Blatman documents the death march experience as a separate event defined by its own set

of responses. As a cluster, these four essays show the analytical sophistication and depth of new approaches to the Jewish Holocaust.

Part IV offers new insights into the existence and practice of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust. Samuel Kassov presents a long durée reading of Emanuel Ringelblum, creator of the Warsaw ghetto archive. By peeling off the layers of the many roles Ringelblum played in the decades leading up to the Holocaust—historian, activist, private Jew—Kassov shows how his personal visions of history, historical memory and social welfare merged with the larger project of conserving Jewish life in wartime Poland for posterity. Faced with the ongoing destruction of Jewish culture and Jewish lives, Ringelblum and his small group of insiders created the archive as an attempt to write their own history. In Kassov's formulation, they did so to ensure that future generations would write about the catastrophe based not on Nazi documents, but on Jewish sources.

In his contribution, Bob Moore also concentrates on pre-existing structures and connections, in this case between Jews and non-Jews, in his analysis of Jewish self-help during the Holocaust. He argues that contacts on the communal, organizational, religious and underground levels sometimes assisted Jews in their efforts to resist deportation or starvation. By focusing on case studies from France and Belgium, Moore highlights contacts between refugees from Nazi Germany and societal structures in the west, thus presenting another way of overcoming the East-West divide in studies of the Holocaust. Renée Poznanski analyzes the broad phenomenon of Jewish communism by reading it in a specifically national context, namely, wartime and postwar France. She tackles the question of the role of Jewish communists by positioning it on the intersection of three broader subjects: the history of resistance, the history of wartime communism, and Jewish history. This approach widens the scope of possible interpretations of Jewish resistance in wartime France, while admitting that the contradictions and complexities remain unresolved.

Steven Bowman's contribution, finally, is a highly sophisticated account of the entwinement of Jewish and Greek traditions through an analysis of collective suicide in Hellenic Jewish history. Starting from the desire to understand the uprising of the Greek Jewish *Sonderkommando* in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944, Bowman traces the roots of the tradition of collective suicide from Flavius Josephus's account of Masada in 73 C.E., to the *Sepher Yosippon,* a tenth-century treatment of the event, and the Greek tradition of noble death as a way to achieve freedom. Bowman's analysis of this long history actually sharpens, not

dilutes, our understanding of the particularities of the 1944 uprising, which in itself remains an understudied moment in Holocaust research.

Part V, lastly, addresses the aftermath of the Holocaust in memory, politics, and aesthetics. All three essays underline the fact that not one, but a multitude of "aftermaths" exist. Tuvia Friling's chapter on the contested memory of Auschwitz *Kapo* Eliezer Gruenbaum is a good example of how irreconcilable narratives about Communism, Zionism, Orthodoxy and family can converge in the biography of a single person but remain not only in discord with one another, but also disconnected. Arieh Kovachi's contribution about the negotiations between Jewish and non-Jewish pressure groups and the American and British administrations during and after the war highlights the ways in which Holocaust research can bridge the gap between East and West, as well as between Jewish and non-Jewish narratives of war and these groups' interests, motivations, and agendas. Like Moore's chapter on self-help, this topic lends itself well to integrative approaches that place a distinctly Jewish experience in connection with other, simultaneously unfolding narratives. The last chapter, which is by Michael Meng, offers a similarly integrative approach to the role of emotions and space in the transmittance of memory of Jewish life in Central Europe, whether direct memory, in the case of survivors, or indirect memory, in the case of second or third generation American or Israeli Jews. Meng uses a slightly more experimental approach, analyzing travelogues and literary and artistic reflections that confront Central Europe and its history from afar, and he thereby creates a montage of emotive spaces dealing with the responses of Jews to the vanished landscapes of prewar Jewish Europe.

Together, these fifteen chapters present some of the cutting-edge research currently being developed in the field. Apart from breaking new ground in the selection of subject matter (infanticide, collective suicide, Jewish self-help) or approach (the study of motivations, engaged violence, or combined histories), each essay presents an opening for further debate and research. As a whole, the volume brings together a diverse pool of Jewish histories of the Holocaust—some connected, some severed—that speak to the plethora of transnational experiences that together make up the Jewish Holocaust. It is my hope that these insights will be applied to other regions and contexts that could not be addressed in this volume, such as literary studies of the Holocaust or the experiences of Jewries in Hungary and Southeastern Europe.

Ilse Josepha Lazaroms

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A World Without Jews: The Nazi Imagination From Persecution to Genocide. By Alon Confino. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014. 284 pp.

The Nazis burned thousands of copies of the Hebrew Bible on November 9 and 10, 1938, in hundreds of communities across the Reich. Why? The substantial contribution of Alon Confino to the scholarship on the Holocaust rests on this key question, which previous historiography has ignored. According to the interpretation presented in *A World Without Jews,* this "intentional act" was "part of a larger story Germans told themselves during the Third Reich about who they were, where they came from, how they had arrived there, and where they were headed" (p.5). In order for this new national story to be built, the Jews had to be erased from the existing world.

As Confino explains, by burning the Bible, the Nazis aimed to create a new German and anti-Jewish identity, an aim which in turn reveals that an exclusively racial explanation of their beliefs would be reductionist. Germans' choice of this "imaginary enemy" ought rather to be explained with reference to emotions and imagination, the book argues. In other words, Alon Confino seeks to provide an account of "what the Nazis *thought* was happening," rather than what actually happened (p.6), and in doing so, he continues the cultural historical work he started in his previous book, *Foundational Pasts.*[1]

Despite his book's main focus on the Nazi imagination, Confino also offers a detailed summary of the historical events that took place from January 30, 1933, when Hitler was named chancellor, to Germany's defeat in the Second World War in May 1945, making his book accessible even to those without specialist knowledge of the Holocaust. However, Confino's approach to the existing historiography is questionable, in particular his quick, ungenerous dismissal of Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (p.18).[2] While he takes into account Saul Friedländer's idea of a Nazi "redemptive anti-Semitism" (p.20), he neglects Arno Mayer's understanding of Nazi anti-Semitism as a "crusade" inseparable from a broader world view, which included an anti-Enlightenment stance expressed in the form of anti-Marxism as well as racial colonialism—the

1 Alon Confino, *Foundational Pasts: the Holocaust as a Historical Understanding* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

2 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

quest for *Lebensraum*.[3] Ultimately, while critiquing the focus on racism, Confino seems to reduce the Nazi imagination to its anti-Semitic dimension.

Confino's investigation into the Nazi creation of an anti-Jewish imagination centers on public rituals and was carried out through extensive research of a variety of sources: "diaries, letters, eyewitness testimonies, speeches, posters, images, films, travelogues, newspaper accounts, and records of government, military, Nazi Party, and religious organizations" as well as "photographs from the period" (p.16). Discussing these public actions allows him to "follow the way Germans imagined a world without Jews," the "leading metaphor that drives" his story (p.9).

The book is divided into three parts, the first of which (chapters one through three) analyzes the period 1933–1938 and the relationship between Jews and modernity. In the eyes of the Nazis and other Germans, "'the Jew' represented different and often contradictory things" (p.30), but these ideas had a "common denominator": "the Jews were the creators of an evil modernity that soiled present-day Germany" (p.31). The first chapter of the book shows how, in opposition to this "Jewish modernity," the Nazis promoted their own modernity, embedded in "a racial society of pure Aryans based on the idea of a strong leader and a nation poised for European hegemony, an alternative ideology to liberalism in the West and communism in the East" (pp.31-32). The purpose of book burning was to underline the meaning of this new German identity. It was, on the one hand, an act of "national redemption" (p.52) and, on the other, "an act of irreverence, and the total erasure of the opponents" (p.53).

The second chapter analyzes how the Nazi notion of race became a metaphor for the origins of the new national identity. The obsession with origins was rooted in the idea of *Heimat,* or homeland, which by 1933 "was perceived as an essence of Germanness" and was then appropriated by the Nazis (p.67). Ultimately, Confino argues that the Nazi plan to conquer and restructure Europe was not "based on hard, scientific evidence, but on moral beliefs" (p.69). His study maintains that for the Nazis, "storytelling was more important than science": they built such an effective fictional story about the Jews that they did not require hard facts to substantiate it. They were not interested in proving that they had found the truth, but rather in using racial science "as a modern seal of approval to predetermined anti-Jewish views" (p.71). The Nazi new world was

3 Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens not Darken? The "Final Solution" in History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989).

to be built on the ruins of an old authority, represented by the Jews, who had to be publicly humiliated. Such public acts of humiliation aroused emotions that ranged from raw hatred, mockery, fear, and envy to shame and deep unease. In Confino's words, "Germans acted publicly against the Jews to strengthen the self and build an emotional community that defied this inner sense of transgression" (p.80). The brutal violence against the Jews happened on the local level and freed the Germans' imagination, making it possible for them "to envision, however vaguely, new social possibilities, new ways of life, linking an imagined world without Jews with everyday occurrences on the ground" (p.81). The point of these acts of public violence was "not to make everybody agree" but to involve everybody (p.85). The alleged viciousness of the Jews became a "truth that demanded no evidence" (p.86).

Through this extensive persecution, the Germans could see the Jews "everywhere" and could imagine them as "already gone": in the third chapter, Confino analyzes the Jews' omnipresence and anticipated erasure. Burning books excised the Jews from national culture. But the Nazis also demolished synagogues because they "evoked a sense of tradition and history, and by demolishing them, the Nazis insisted that the connection between German and Jewish pasts had to be severed in order to free up German national history" (p.109).

It becomes clear, therefore, what the Nazis wanted to achieve by burning the Bible: to destroy the tradition that the Jews symbolized. Confino devotes the second part of his book (chapters four and five) to the origins of the "moral past" represented by the Jews and the period 1938–41. The fourth chapter shows how Nazism was "about building a racial civilization by extinguishing the authority of the Jews over a moral, ancient past embedded in the Bible" (p.120). Paradoxically, the Nazis destroyed the Bible because it was important to them: "in Kristallnacht the Nazis created at the same time a German national and Christian community that was independent of Jewish roots" (p.121).

After discussing anti-Jewish laws and a number of "phantasmagoric ideas about how to extinguish Jews from German life" (p.144), chapter five reaches the critical date of Monday, January 30, 1939, when "Germany's most important interpreter of the Jewish Question," Hitler, finally made public his proposal for "bringing the Jewish problem to its solution" (p.151). Hitler knew that this was the right moment to talk publicly about the "annihilation" of the Jews to the German audience: by this time, Confino argues, "'annihilation' had already become a shared social practice and part of the cultural imagination" (p.152), and Hitler was therefore describing to his audience "an existing reality." When

the "flood," the war, came, it was made clear, through the immediate genocidal policies against Polish Jews, that there would be no place for the Jews in the Nazi empire, where they "had no right to live as human beings" (p.168). Paradoxically, the same "sense of time—that is, of history and memory—permeated the perception of both Jews and Germans": the Jewish people were "a thing of the past, of memory and commemoration," and the Nazis had appropriated their role of bearers of morality and replaced their narrative of historical origins with a new Nazi civilization (p.176).

The last part of the book (chapter six and the epilogue), "The Jew as the Origins of History," starts with the Final Solution in 1941 and ends with Germany's defeat in 1945. The Final Solution was certainly a "radical rupture," but "not as radical as is commonly portrayed" (p.190): in Confino's view, "the radical element of the Final Solution was not the basic decision to create a world without Jews but the decision to create it immediately" (p.191). In the sixth chapter, Confino "turned to listen to Nazis, other Germans, Jews, and Europeans," all of whom supposedly "imagined the extermination of the Jews as an act of creation, in the sense of genesis, in which the Jewish world would be destroyed to make space for the Nazi one" (p.192). The genesis of a new Nazi time relied on the destruction of Jewish time. The ultimate annihilation of the Jews happened in "a place with no time, past, and history": the extermination camps (p.204).

Confino's study ends with a surprising and rather controversial analogy between the Jews and the Nazis: "Jews and Nazis shared a belief in the power of Jewish history and memory" (p.207). They both supposedly believed in the power of books and stories, with the crucial difference that whereas "the Nazis wanted to destroy the Jewish Bible, history, and memory," the "Jews clung to them" (p.237). The conclusion Confino reaches runs contrary to much received wisdom: "The Nazis perpetrated the Holocaust in the name of culture," and not against it, and the Germans burned the Bible "not in spite of being a nation of high culture," but precisely because they were such a nation. The "new morality of the master race," the Aryan one, relied on the annihilation of the Jews, because they represented the "old morality witnessed in the Book of Books" (p.242).

This book is an original cultural history of Nazism, with a clear focus on the origins of the Holocaust—an approach for which Confino has indeed argued before. Such a cultural history brings new insights to the understanding of the Nazis' motivations and their incredibly effective identity-creation process, which went much further than their racial ideology and the general brutality of

the Second World War. However, the book's excessive focus on the Germans' emotions and imagination as the only key to understanding the Holocaust makes this approach unilateral and monocausal. The "Germans" themselves appear to be a vague presence in Confino's rendition of the events, because he presents us with only the Jewish point of view and provides only Jewish voices and reactions. What about the German audience that (according to his account) was so influenced by the burning of the Bible? One wonders whether there is a way of directly documenting that wider audience's opinion.

Benedetta Carnaghi

Perben és haragban világháborús önmagunkkal. Tanulmányok. [In Trial and in Anger with Our Roles in World War II: A Collection of Essays]. By Judit Pihurik. Pécs–Budapest: Kronosz Kiadó–Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára, 2015. 252 pp.

In her scholarly work, Judit Pihurik has dealt primarily with the history of Hungary in World War II. In her earliest writings, she presented the events of the war and, more specifically, the Eastern Front from a distinctive, subjective perspective by drawing on the diaries and memoirs of Hungarian soldiers. Her book *Naplók és memoárok a Don-kanyarból 1942–1943* [Diaries and Memoirs from the Don River Bend, 1942–1943], which was published in 2007, met with a warm reception among historians. She has continued to focus on historical memory and the fates of Hungarian soldiers, but she has expanded the scope of her study both chronologically and thematically and has also turned to new types of sources. These include, perhaps first and foremost, the documents found in the Historical Archive of the State Security Services, where she has pursued thorough research which ultimately enabled her to present in her writings the soldiers' fates after the war and the history of the so-called "Délvidék," or "Southern Land" (a term that refers essentially to the territories ceded by Hungary to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after World War I), between 1941 and 1944 (a period during which a significant part of these territories had been re-annexed by Hungary).

Perben és haragban világháborús önmagunkkal contains eight essays which have been published before. (It is worth noting that the University of Pécs granted Pihurik a habilitation based on this collection.) As she observes in the preface to the book, "each of the eight articles deals with the period of World War II or the consequences of the war, and each article examines the individual options for action. They are also linked in terms of the research method that has been applied." Pihurik is indeed mainly interested in the conduct and the options of ordinary people who, at the whim of history, found themselves garbed in soldiers' uniforms in a time of war.

Four of the articles deal with the history of the Southern Land after 1941. In the article entitled "Hungarians and Serbs in the Southern Land, 1941–1944," Pihurik draws not only on archival sources that, for the most part, have been familiar to historians, but also relies heavily on the memoirs and recollections of officers who took part in the re-annexation of the territory. The memoir

of Milenko Palić, a Serbian who at one time had served in a forced labor unit and later became an instructor at the University of Novi Sad, deserves special mention because of the uniqueness of the perspective. Pihurik has already had his recollections published.[1]

The next article, which bears the apt title "Pathography as Historical Source," concerns the 1942–1943 trial of lieutenant general Ferenc Bayor, who served as the military governor of Novi Sad following the occupation (or re-annexation) of the Southern Land. Bayor, who had been relieved of duty from the armed forces in 1938, was reinstated at the time of the re-annexation of northern Transylvania in accordance with the Second Vienna Award and again the following year, during the armed conflicts that took place in the Southern Land. He became infamous principally because of the "war reparations" that he imposed on the Jewish inhabitants of Novi Sad, the deportations of Slavs who had settled in the region, and in general because of the atrocities committed against Serbs. Pihurik, however, does not make these issues the focus of her inquiry, but instead examines Bayor's personality and the motives he had for committing these acts. She raises the surprising question as to how Bayor could have acquired such an important role, despite his negligible intellectual abilities and why he, a man who earlier had been deemed unsuitable to serve as a regular soldier, was reinstated and appointed military governor of Novi Sad. Drawing on the surviving documents of the civil trial (it was a civil trial because Bayor resigned from his military position), Pihurik offers a detailed presentation of the proceedings, including an examination of why he was accused of theft, forgery of official documents, embezzlement, misappropriation, and abuse of authority and why he was sentenced to two years in prison for six counts of embezzlement and one count of forgery of official documents. Bayor's story, however, does not come to an end here. After the war, he was turned over to the authorities in Yugoslavia, where he was sentenced to death for the acts he had committed as governor of the city and executed. At the end of her essay, Pihurik concludes that the case of Bayor clearly illustrates the consequences one had to face if he were given a position that exceeded his abilities, and she states that an individual's abilities strongly influence the way he uses or abuses his power. At the same time, Pihurik adds, his case also demonstrates that serious efforts were taken in Hungary even during the war to hold officers responsible for abuses of

1 Milenko Palić, *Visszaemlékezés a világháború éveire (1941–1945)* [Milenko Palić: Recollections of the World War (1941–1945)], Dél-alföldi évszázadok 19 (Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Levéltár, 2003). Published by Judit Pihurik.

authority. Regrettably, she provides only one brief footnote that refers to other such cases.

In my view, of Pihurik's essays on the Southern Land, her article "Vagy ők, vagy mink" ("Either them or us"), which deals with the massacre that took place in the village of Csúrog (today Čurug in Serbia) in 1942, offers the widest scope of new perspectives. This is in part because Pihurik draws on a source which historians have not yet studied. She compiled the documents found in the Archive of the State Security Services on the investigation into the events and the trial, which were drawn up between 1967 and 1973 and come to some 4,000 pages. Pihurik's article also affords new insights because the events which took place in Csúrog, which were part of a larger raid in the Southern Land, have so far remained in obscurity. At the moment there is no monograph on the raid in Novi Sad either, which is otherwise the most thoroughly researched and most widely known of the massacres committed by Hungarian authorities in the Southern Land in early 1942. The massacres in Csúrog took place in the wake of a confrontation that cost the lives of seven Hungarian soldiers and gendarmes. As a justification for their actions, the authorities claimed that there was a plan underfoot for a partisan uprising, though (as Pihurik observes) no historical evidence has been found in support of this claim. For days, the Serbian inhabitants of the village were brought in and questioned. In the end, the authorities, citing an escape attempt by one of the prisoners as their pretext, committed a massacre that claimed some 900 lives (estimates vary, as I note below). This made the events in Csúrog the bloodiest of the series of mass murders that took place in the Southern Land in early 1942. According to Hungarian statistics, 873 Serbs were killed (according to Serbian statistics 893), along with 13 Israelites and one Hungarian. The victims included women, children, and the elderly, who were beaten to death or shot. Thus between January 4 and January 8, 1942, the Serbian population of the village was literally decimated.[2] The article reconstructs the events of the massacre on the basis of the confessions of 33 people, some of whom had been soldiers or village officials at the time and others who were simply inhabitants of the settlement, i.e. for the most part ordinary people who had participated in the massacre. Pihurik's research clearly shows that captain János Károlyfalvy and lieutenant of the gendarmerie László Stépán, the leaders of the armed force that conducted the raid, were given no instructions concerning

2 According to Hungarian sources, the raids that took place in the Southern Land in January 1942 claimed 3,309 victims, and according to other statistics, 3,340 victims. According to these sources, there were 879 victims in the city of Novi Sad.

whom they should regard as a potential partisan. In the end, this was determined by the representatives of the local authorities, primarily the village clerk Gyula Varga and the members of the National Guard, which consisted of recruits from the local Hungarian community. Pihurik cites Varga's instructions to the units that conducted the raids: "Either them or us." Thus every Serbian and, indeed, every Jewish person became a suspect. Pihurik also emphasizes that in the command in which he ordered the raid, the chief of the general staff Ferenc Szombathelyi did not order the authorities to take action against the civilian population. She demonstrates persuasively that a sense of hysteria had come to prevail in the village, in which the leaders of the community and in particular the village clerk and the National Guard came to play important roles. Furthermore, the soldiers and members of the gendarmerie who had been brought to the area had little knowledge of the area and could not speak Serbian. Thus they were unable to assess the reliability of the misleading information provided by the village clerk, information that was instrumental in the creation of a sense of panic among the local Hungarian population. This detail made it significantly easier for the local authorities to instigate the brutal violence that were committed indiscriminately against the Serbian population.

The characters in Pihurik's narrative, however, are not villains but rather ordinary people serving in the armed forces who found themselves, quite unexpectedly, in a situation in which their scope for action was dramatically limited. They implemented measures that looked justifiable, even innocent, as the world of military action, which is based on following orders, demands. Thus they became participants in the murder of several thousand innocent Serbs and Jews. At the close of the article, Pihurik notes that the series of brutalities in Csúrog did not come to an end in 1945. After the war, the Serbs of the area did not forget what had befallen the Serb-speaking inhabitants of Csúrog, and with the change in the power relations they addressed their demand directly to Tito to have all the Hungarians of the village deported, a demand that met with the approval of his government. The number of Hungarians who had collaborated with the authorities in committing the raids and the massacre could not have been more than 50. The new partisan rulers dealt harshly with the Hungarians of Csúrog and the so-called Southern Land in general. As Pihurik observes, thousands of innocent Hungarians were deprived of their lands and belongings and deported or executed.

Pihurik's expertise as a historian, including her balanced manner of narrating historical traumas and her impressive knowledge of the sources, are perhaps

most apparent in this essay. While on the one hand she gives voice, as it were, to her sources, on the other hand she remains clearly aware that, given the nature of these sources, they shed light on the past only from the perspective of the perpetrators, while offering no insights into the perspectives of the victims and survivors. Her article is an admirable example of how to present the traumas that befell the Hungarians and the Serbs of the region so as to allow them to become part of national memories that are forward looking.

The next article in the collection also deals with the Southern Land. Drawing on Hungarian and Serbian archival sources, Pihurik presents the history of the Russian white emigration that took place between 1941 and 1944, which involved somewhere between 4,000 and 10,000 people (depending on the source), as well as the Hungarian and German plans concerning these emigrants. Pihurik offers a detailed analysis of why the various attempts to enlist Russians into armed units under German leadership failed despite the fact that permission was granted to undertake these recruitment efforts. She is no doubt conversant with the relatively slight Hungarian secondary literature on the subject, but she regrettably does not draw on the wealth of sources on the white Russian emigration in Serbian, Russian, and German.

The next three articles present the fates of Hungarian prisoners of war in the Soviet Union, a topic of considerable interest today and often the subject of lively debates. Pihurik draws on the recollections of the soldiers, who were of various ranks and educational backgrounds and who as civilians came from various social strata. She also takes into consideration the circumstances of the formation of the survivors' memories. The liveliness of the debates today concerning the fates of Soviet prisoners of war is due to several factors. One of these is the simple fact that until the fall of socialism in Hungary one was not permitted to speak openly about the subject and the Soviet sources were not accessible. The question was only dealt with in the context of the larger narrative of Hungary's "criminal war" against the Soviet Union or, more recently, through the prism of the unjust occupation of Hungary by the Soviet Union. It was addressed not as a serious issue meriting patient study by historians, but rather as a question of seeing justice done in the name of national memory.

In the article entitled "Hadifoglyok írták" ("Written by Prisoners of War"), for instance, Pihurik challenges the claims and methods of those who, in their efforts to analyze the question of prisoners of war, separate the issue from its context, from the war itself. She notes quite emphatically that she examines

the question "in a broader context, as part of the theme of the war." In her view, the war was the fundamental turning point in the lives of the soldiers and their lives as prisoners of war only began after their involvement in the war. As she observes, however, this fact comes up only rarely in the recollections of the prisoners of war, though she does not endeavor to find any explanation as to why this is the case. Thus her point of departure is not the moment at which a soldier was taken prisoner, but rather Hungary's declaration of war against the Soviet Union. It is worth noting that in this article Pihurik draws on quite different sources, many of which have been forgotten, including not only the actual recollections of prisoners of war, but also the so-called anti-fascist farewell albums of prisoners who left the camps to return home, which were politically manipulated by the Soviet authorities.

The article entitled "Katonadolog 1945–1962" ("Be a Man, 1945–1962") focuses on the fate of the military officers of the Horthy era after the war. As Pihurik notes at the conclusion of the article, she is unable to give a clear-cut answer to the question she raises in her subtitle, namely whether the military officers of the Horthy regime were scapegoats or enemies. On the one hand, they were a bit of both, but on the other, as her historical analysis of the fates of 255 former officers or reservists after the war makes clear, the careers of these individuals in fact took many different directions in the Kádár era. Many of them were indeed psychologically broken, but many had opportunities to pursue their original professions as civilians, even "under the unflagging gaze of the political police." On the basis of an assessment made by the political police in 1962, of the careers of 255 former officers and reservists, Pihurik determined that 36 percent of them had found jobs that corresponded to their level of education, 37.6 percent had jobs involving physical labor, 4.6 percent were in administrative positions for which they were technically overqualified, and the others were either pensioners or dependents.

The next article in the collection, "A 'horthysta katonatiszt' mint potenciális kém a Rákosi-korszakban" ("The 'Horthyist Military Officer' as a Potential Spy in the Rákosi Era"), presents one example of the fate of a former military officer of the Horthy regime and uses his case as a means of analyzing the mechanism of the 1950s to create scapegoats. In her examination of the 1952–53 trial of flight lieutenant Ferenc Skriba, Pihurik shows how, in the course of the investigations and the trial, the goal was not to prove that the accused had actually acted as a spy. Rather, from the outset, the authorities forejudged that given his past as a military officer of the Horthy regime he could not possibly be innocent.

The last article deals with the history of 1956, though it also touches on the period of World War II. Exceptionally, it focuses not on the soldiers involved in the conflict, but the civilians. The story is paradoxical from the outset, since it is about a meeting that took place in a wine cellar in a small city in Transdanubia and allegedly subverted the people's democracy. The characters in the narrative were members of a close circle of friends in Szekszárd, consisting of people of varying professions, such as a doctor, a lawyer, a civil servant, a teacher, an employee, and an architect, both among the observers and among the observed. As in her other inquiries, here too Pihurik devotes considerable attention to critical analysis of the various kinds of documents of internal affairs on which she draws (agents' reports, transcriptions of interrogations, pre-sentence reports, operational plans, documents pertaining to investigations, etc.), and she clearly indicates both the potentials and the limitations of these diverse sources.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the collection is Pihurik's thorough knowledge of the sources and her ability and willingness to consider their uses and limits, as well as her capacity to provide narratives of traumatic events that are unbiased by political motivations. *Perben és haragban világháborús önmagunkkal* strives to explore, learn about, and confront the past, and Pihurik does not content herself with simple black-and-white answers.

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Political Justice in Budapest after World War II. By Ildikó Barna and Andrea Pető. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015. 135 pp.

Ildikó Barna's and Andrea Pető's *Political Justice in Budapest after World War II* is a groundbreaking work for two reasons: first, the authors shift the focus of historical research from the wartime elite to the general Hungarian population and, second, they adopt an applied quantitative methodology. Furthermore, instead of limiting themselves to the political leaders of the Horthy and Szálasi regimes and other prominent war criminals, they expand the scope of their inquiry to the everyday defendants of the so-called People's Courts and bring not only the accused but also the witnesses to the fore. This is a significant step, since the thousands of ordinary Hungarians who were brought before the tribunals to testify were also very much part of the country's wartime history in general and the denazifying processes in particular.

It is worth underlining that, given the immense quantities of available archival materials, the research team understandably was not able to look through them in their entirety, only 500 cases out of approximately 22,000 (p.33). This explains why the authors themselves dub their findings *estimations* rather than exact results (pp.42–43). Moreover, as Pető and Barna note on page 35, due to the diverse nature of the files, the quantitative research method could not be fully applied to the study of these documents. Another limitation of their book is territorial: although people's courts functioned in several Hungarian towns and cities in the immediate post-war years, the authors decided to focus on the best documented and probably most important tribunal of the retribution process, the Budapest People's Court. In addition to the people's court, which are in the focus of *Political Justice in Budapest after World War II,* postwar retribution in Hungary had at least two other pillars. First, shortly after the Nazi Germans left Budapest, thousands of civilians fell victim to Soviet soldiers hunting for people who could be used as forced laborers, including ordinary Hungarian citizens who happened to be ethnic Germans. Second, so-called justificatory committees (*igazolóbizottságok*) were set up by major employers, professional organizations, trade unions, etc. Their task consisted of finding war criminals among their own colleagues. These committees even had the right to propose the internment of those who had not committed actual crimes during the war, but for other, non-specified reasons were considered "a threat to the rebuilding of the country along

democratic lines."[1] And interestingly, it was the political police who made decisions regarding proposed internment on the basis of the 138.000/1945 B.M. decree. The rulings of the justificatory committees could be appealed, however, and the appeal court was the National Council of the People's Court (*Népbíróságok Országos Tanácsa*), the top echelon of the denazification system.

In my view, one of the most important results of Pető's and Barna's inquiry is found in the general description of the files, in which the authors classify the groups of the Budapest People's Court's cases (pp.45–47). According to their results, the vast majority of the files deal with wartime crimes. Thus, in their assessment it would be misleading to define the People's Court as nothing more than a tool in the Communist Party's quest for absolute power. On the contrary, 43 percent of the cases were related to wartime crimes committed against "Jews," a proportion that is significantly larger than the second largest group of files (26 percent), for which the main accusation was being or having been a member of the Arrow Cross Party or another armed far-right organization. The third group (12 percent) consists of the cases that were related to crimes committed against "non-Jews" during World War II. If one sums up the first three groups, they comprise a little more than four-fifth of all of the files (81 percent), and—as is worth reiterating—they involve exclusively acts committed during World War II. The flipside of the coin is that no less than 19 percent of the files deal with post-war cases, which was a unique feature of the Hungarian retribution system: while the obligation of bringing war criminals to trial followed from the armistice agreement with the Allies, the established tribunals could also pass judgment on individuals who had broken the law after the end of World War II. Out of the remaining 19 percent, no more than 12 percent were ideologically led trials with the clear purpose of silencing political opponents of the Communists. By drawing attention to this relatively low number, the authors persuasively undermine the popular claim that the people's courts primarily served the struggle of the Communists leaders against their political competitors (p.46). Finally, the last 7 percent of trials were initiated because of allegations of post-war (mostly verbal) anti-Semitism.

In practice, the members of the research team processed each and every court file by filling out a questionnaire. All data was transformed into numbers, for instance, the number *1* indicated that the defendant was male and the number

1 Tibor Zinner, "Háborús bűnösök perei. Internálások, kitelepítések és igazolóeljárások 1945–1949." [Trials of War Criminals: Internments, Resettlements and Justificatory Processes, 1945–1949]. *Történelmi Szemle* 28, no. 1 (1985): 119–20.

2 indicated that she was female (pp.37–40). 18 percent of the defendants turned out to be female, an unusually high proportion in a society in which, until then, almost all prisoners were men and women were hardly present in public life (p.51 and pp.86–87). According to analysis of the collected questionnaires, the average age of the defendants in the Budapest People's Court was 38. The researchers also examined issues that have not yet been studied. For instance, they analyzed the proportion of women among the People's Judges (pp.93–95).

If there are any shortcomings of the book, they lie in the fact that in certain areas it is too brief on context and leaves some of its data unexplained. For instance, the key section on the accused individuals informs the reader that a substantial proportion of the people who committed their wartime crimes against non-Jews had had completed some form of higher education (p.56) and, in general, "defendants were typically better educated than the average for the general population" (p.55). However, in the case of people who were brought before the courts because of their memberships in right-wing organizations, Pető and Barna find that most of them had had significantly less schooling than the general population (p.55). The authors do not, however, offer any explanation concerning the consequences of these different educational backgrounds for those who had to stand trial for war crimes at the people's courts. As Tibor Zinner has shown, following the end of the war, politicians and higher officials instructed the judges and tribunals to assume that the accused workers and peasants had been bewildered by the elite of the Horthy regime during the war.[2] On the basis of the idea that leaders had misled the uneducated masses, the new political elite wanted to pass more lenient judgments for their potential voters.[3] On the one hand, as the statistics presented by Pető and Barna reveal, the better educated were indeed more likely to face accusations than the less educated. On the other hand (and the statistical analysis presented by the authors does not touch on this), the Budapest People's Court regularly considered a defendant's low level of education an extenuating circumstance,[4] while a higher level of

2 Zinner, "Háborús bűnösök," 121.

3 On this notion see also József Horváth, "Ezer kis-nyilas" [One-thousand Petty Arrow Cross Fighters], *Szabad Szó*, 18 July, 1945, quoted by Éva Standeisky, "Erkölcsök 1945-ben" [Morals in 1945], *Mozgó Világ* 32, no. 2 (2006). On the political motivations for this leniency see Péter György, *Apám helyett* [Instead of my Father] (Budapest: Magvető, 2011), 30–31, and 23–24.

4 See for example: Budapest City Archives, BFL XXV.1.a - 1481/1945, A Budapesti Népbíróság büntetőügyei [Criminal Cases of the Budapest People's Court], the case of Mrs. Gyula Reményi or BFL XXV.1.a - 947/1945, the case of Mrs. János Csibor.

education was clearly regarded as an aggravating circumstance.[5] As this example shows, the results of Pető and Barna's quantitative research at times prove somewhat too narrow and do not provide adequate explanations. Of course, this does not reduce the value of their findings. Furthermore, this feature of the inquiry may indicate that it is intended primarily for a readership already familiar with the wartime and immediate post-war history of Hungary.

Researchers will no doubt cite the data made available in this book with unusual frequency, yet because in some sections the reader finds primarily numbers and inventories of the characteristics of the average victims, defendants, and witnesses, some of the research questions that are raised seem more ambitious than the actual inquiry that follows.[6] The quantitative results can reveal, for instance, the features of an average witness, and the available data provide a general overview of the social background, gender, and education of a person likely to be brought before the People's Court as a defendant. However, drawing the picture of the average accused or the average witness hardly explains the deeper logics of the retribution process. To understand these logics properly, we would need to assess the opportunities of those involved and their different choices of agency, and we would also need to be familiar with the changing political circumstances and the changing motivations of people.

It is worth noting, in praise of the authors, that the chapter on gender aspects of the People's Court activity is excellent, and it clearly reveals how much can be learned from the statistical data in terms of agencies. It is an important result that those found guilty of post-war verbal anti-Semitism were mostly young women whose prime social responsibility was widely considered to be providing meals for their families. This may explain in part why they were more frequently involved in anti-Jewish incidents targeting alleged black marketers. Another excellent section of the book deals with the Jewish victims and witnesses at the tribunals. What may be seen as slightly problematic here is the definition of *Jew* (pp.45–46). The authors first note that "during the Holocaust the authorities determined who was and was not Jewish," and then add to this that "the people's tribunals also followed this logic" (p.46). I certainly agree with the first statement, but not necessarily with the latter claim, especially since in 1948 the Hungarian authorities decided to stop registering the religious

5 A good example of this can be found in BFL XXV.1.a - 779/1945, the case of Mrs. János Burger and Arisztid Stekker.

6 See for example the questions raised on page 45 or in the last paragraph on page 97 and its continuation at the top of page 98.

affiliation of citizens. The expression often used by the people's courts, the so-called "persecuted person," was a broader and vaguer category. Historians need to be more careful when using the word *Jew* in a post-war context, especially when talking about a Jewish community that was as highly assimilated as the one in Budapest. For me, it is crucial that most of these individuals of Jewish origin regarded themselves primarily as Hungarian, even after the horrible trauma of the Shoah, which is why researchers should use terms that at least represent their hyphenated (Jewish-Hungarian) identities.[7] At the end of their book, Pető and Barna try to relate their quantitative findings to changes in what they call a "Jewish identity." The existence of such a relationship, however, is not always clear. They contend that since an unusually high number of cases ended in acquittal (43 percent), these court procedures could not serve as a tool in processing the trauma of the Holocaust. This is why, according to the authors, Hungarian Jewish identity became a hidden identity and the memory of the Shoah became the most important element of this identity. However, we have to remind ourselves that the authors only dealt with cases from the archive of the Budapest People's Court. There were many other retribution forums. Furthermore, the authors do not provide us with any characterization of pre-war or wartime Jewish identity, which is essential if they wish to write about the modification of a Jewish identity. In other words, what was the original version of the Jewish identity that was then allegedly changed by the reluctance of the People's Court to imprison war criminals? This seems all the more important, as many of the people who were considered Jews in this book hardly identified themselves as Jews or nurtured any kind of Jewish identity, even in the pre-war era. Finally, only one paragraph of the book (on page 104) deals with the sentences in cases related to wartime crimes committed against "Jews," which is why the reader might ultimately feel that the large amount of quantitative data presented in the book has not been persuasively connected to the conclusion that this all ended up changing Hungarian Jewish identity.

The authors' rich description of the witnesses merits mention. Accordingly, for example, a significant number of them were born in the Hungarian capital, a much higher number than their average proportion in the society, especially if

7 On this see for example: Tim Cole, "Constructing the 'Jew', Writing the Holocaust: Hungary 1920–1945," *Patterns of Prejudice* 33, no. 3 (1999): 19–27. The so-called Gerő–Romsics debate among Hungarian historians also touched upon on this question. See more on this also in Maté Rigó, "A Hungarian version of the Historikerstreit? A summary of the Romsics–Gerő debate among Hungarian historians (2012)," accessed July 27, 2015, http://www.imre-kertesz-kolleg.uni-jena.de/index.php?id=415&l=1percent27.

we consider where war crimes tended to be committed against Jewish victims during World War II (pp.67–68). At the same time, the authors explain that the percentage of defendants judged by the Budapest People's Court who had been born in villages was high: 53 percent if speaking about crimes against so-called Jews and no less than 70 percent if we are speaking of cases related to membership in the Arrow Cross or other armed far-right organizations. Should we then conclude that during the war the bourgeois Budapest was assaulted by "war criminals" arriving from the provinces? A careful interpretation of the data shows that the picture was indeed far more complex. Yet it seems fair to say that the Budapest People's Court frequently passed judgment on someone who had not been born in Budapest on the basis of the testimony given by witnesses and victims who had been born in the capital city.

I wish to suggest, by citing these examples, that *Political Justice in Budapest after World War II* should be mandatory reading for historians dealing with the Holocaust in Hungary and scholars of transitional justice. Pető and Barna's findings reveal numerous fascinating and until now unknown aspects of the functioning of the court, for instance the fact that it was the *Nemzeti Parasztpárt* (National Peasant Party) that delegated the most women to the Budapest tribunal. Moreover, thanks to the authors' thorough analyses, we now have a clear idea of the background of those summoned to the courtroom of a specific People's Court, which is indeed a huge step towards understanding the Hungarian retribution process and the individuals who were involved in it.

Istvan Pal Adam, PhD

Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung. Edited by Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw. Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 2015. 342 pp.

Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung is the result of an international workshop held in April 2014 in Tutzing, Germany. One of the first publications of the recently established *Zentrum für Holocaust-Studien am Institut für Zeitgeschichte München,* this ambitious volume offers an assessment of the state of Holocaust research after the boom of the last quarter of a century. Individual articles provide overviews of key approaches in Holocaust historiography, assess the new opportunities and challenges brought by the deepening internationalization and specialization of the field, repeatedly address the moot question of appropriate contextualization, and raise some potentially central questions of future research. Written mostly by leading German experts, the volume can also be seen—though this is not explicitly part of its agenda—as an attempt to situate several specifically German contributions to the field in their transnational contexts, and thereby reflect on the roles specific national research traditions continue to play in Holocaust scholarship.

Two of the four sections of the volume are devoted to the question of continuities and various attempts at contextualization, including war and occupation, whereas the other two analyze perpetrator research and newer studies on the perspectives and strategies of Jews under Nazi rule. The introduction "Tendenzen und Probleme der neueren Holocaust-Forschung: Eine Einführung," by Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw, key representatives of the new research center in Munich, highlights the massive transformation Holocaust scholarship has undergone in recent decades. Bajohr and Löw discuss the increased attention researchers currently pay to the multiple roles played by individuals during World War II and the consequently more nuanced social historical contextualization of genocide. Their introduction also addresses the altered image of both the perpetrators, who can no longer be viewed as a marginal criminal gang pathologically different from the rest of society, and their crime, the Holocaust, which is now repeatedly depicted as the sum of a multiplicity of massacres and murderous acts rather than the result of the operation of a few major extermination camps. Last but not least, while emphasizing the intimate connections between the Holocaust and other national socialist crimes, the editors emphasize the pan-European scope of the Holocaust and the ways

in which anti-Jewish radicalization was often produced by interactions between the Nazi center and peripheries.

Ulrich Herbert's elaborate overview of the history and perspectives of Holocaust research in Germany ("Holocaust-Forschung in Deutschland: Geschichte und Perspektiven einer schwierigen Disziplin") comes after the introductory text by Bajohr and Löw. In addition to providing a narrative of the history of what he calls a problematic field of study, Herbert's contribution, like that of Bajohr and Löw, addresses the inadequacies of the image of a cold, industrial, almost clinically executed mass murder. Rejecting easily comprehensible concepts and theories as insufficient, in their stead Herbert suggests a stronger focus on the concrete, everyday facets of the Holocaust—which in their sheer mass may admittedly be unbearably horrific and utterly unmanageable. The author's chronological overview, first and foremost, reminds his readers how "hesitantly and very late" historical Holocaust research started in Germany (41). Herbert notes that German historians lagged decades behind German jurists in amassing detailed information and offering nuanced interpretations. As he observes, only in the 1990s did historical research start to outweigh interpretative polemics. Moreover, he maintains that the massive increase in German historical research was partly a reaction to an almost ceaseless public debate in the country, which took place approximately between 1985 and 2000 and by the end of which "everything was thought possible, even probable, and the *onus probandi* was now squarely on the shoulder of the doubters" (p.60).[1]

As Herbert's "Holocaust-Forschung in Deutschland" highlights, in the last half of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s researchers focused on political, institutional, scholarly, and situational dynamics. They addressed the behavior, motives, worldview, and biographies of perpetrators, as well as the degrees and extent of participation, knowledge, support, or indifference of ordinary Germans. At the same time, there was a marked shift in the focus of research towards Eastern Europe, which placed the Holocaust in the middle of an "inferno of violence" and thus also made it appear somewhat less like a radical rupture in civilization. Another momentous change Herbert sketches is how, in addition to devoting significant attention to material aspects, German researchers finally began to study the perspectives of victims too. Moreover, he argues that the public polemic had visibly declined by the turn of the millennium and the Holocaust would thereby emerge as a preoccupation primarily of historians.

1 All translations from German are my own – FL.

As the article observes, this happened at a time when the emergence of new transnational perspectives on the subject and the increasingly international composition of the researchers themselves meant that German research trends were losing many of their distinguishing features.

In his overview of perpetrator research, entitled "Täterforschung: Ertrag, Probleme und Perspektiven eines Forschungsansatzes," Frank Bajohr asserts that the microanalytical focus on perpetrators and their networks fundamentally changed our understanding of how the Holocaust was implemented (p.170). At the same time, Bajohr reflects on the unclear perspectives of *Täterforschung* now that the task of separating perpetrators from Nazi German society at large no longer appears easy and providing a satisfactory definition of who qualifies as a perpetrator has therefore emerged as a serious problem in its own right. After all, as Bajohr notes, violence was an element in community building in Nazi society, which implies a substantial amount of overlap between a history of perpetrators and a social history of violence. Bajohr also emphasizes, in his valuation of *Täterforschung*, that explorations of the personal motivations of perpetrators have not yielded many valuable insights. Biographical specificities, such as previous experiences of violence, do not seem to provide a sound basis on which to draw conclusions concerning these exceptional radicalization either, even if the political meanings perpetrators assigned to their former experiences of violence—whether endured, witnessed or committed—seem indeed to have played crucial roles. Whereas in recent years situational and social psychological explanations of perpetrators have admittedly grown in importance, in the assessment of Bajohr, they by and large fail to provide adequate historical contextualizations. Bajohr's critical overview of current approaches finishes with a plea not to pursue *Täterforschung* in isolation, but to develop new approaches that combine insights into perpetrators with structural and institutional analyses (p.181).

Mark Roseman's subsequent reflections ("Lebensfälle: Biographische Annäherungen an NS-Täter") relate to several of the concerns raised by Bajohr. Roseman asks whether individual biographies are relevant in a society of perpetrators, and he critically examines the notion that the radicalization of Nazi policy could be explained with reference to personal attitudes. He ultimately appears rather skeptical towards biographical studies, claiming that such projects promise to discover merely "some of the mechanisms within the Nazi party and regime that enabled and motivated action" (p.202). Roseman reminds his readers that moral constraints necessarily hinder an empathic

approach to Nazi perpetrators and thus their biographers ultimately, and perhaps entirely unavoidably, tend to fail in their attempts to grasp their motives and their psychological strategies of self-justification. Moreover, Roseman argues that a marked focus on the options perpetrators had point, admittedly rather paradoxically, to the need to search for structural preconditions. Noting that perpetrators were often characterized by a bewildering mixture of radicalism and flexibility, the study maintains, quite simply, that ambitious young men at the beginnings of their careers in 1933 were prone to becoming perpetrators, largely irrespective of their individual intellectual profiles.

In "Der Holocaust und die anderen NS-Verbrechen: Wechselwirkungen und Zusammenhänge," which represents a thorough attempt at contextualization, Dieter Pohl agrees that anti-Semitism may well have constituted the central element of the Nazi worldview, but it escalated in the context of a new form of continental imperialism. Sharing the perception that "the other half" of National Socialist violence has remained relatively understudied in comparison with the Holocaust, Pohl complains that connections and interplays between various major Nazi crimes (above all those committed against Jews, prisoners of war, and political enemies) have often been neglected. Emphasizing furthermore that the Nazi policy of extermination was closely connected to economic and labor policies, Pohl ultimately pleads for an integrative study of Nazi violence.

In her article "Besatzung als europäische Erfahrungs- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Der Holocaust im Kontext des Zweiten Weltkrieges," Tatjana Tönsmeyer advocates a social historical study of occupational experiences during World War II, which would help researchers develop an integrated history of the Holocaust in a pan-European perspective. Tönsmeyer suggests that occupations ought to be understood as forms of social interaction between occupiers and occupied with special dynamics of their own. She pleads for thick descriptions of the complex, often ambivalent, and highly situation-dependent ways in which some 200 million people living in occupied territories dealt with the norms, rules, and institutions of the Nazi occupiers. She maintains that an encompassing project of this kind would conceptualize Jewish populations as part of local societies without recourse to morally loaded terms like collaboration and bystander.

"Holocaust und Besatzungsgeschichte," Doris L. Bergen's reflections on Tönsmeyer's intriguing proposal, recognizes opportunities inherent in treating the Holocaust as part of a history of occupation, but it also points to several potential pitfalls and unsolved dilemmas of this kind of an approach (p.300).

Bergen raises several crucial concerns, such as the fact that the Holocaust was also implemented in non-occupied and non-German occupied territories, the potential neglect of military history in a research project focused narrowly on civilians, or the simple fact that relevant participants may have experienced the social processes of what Tönsmeyer calls occupation as annexation or even as liberation. She highlights the benefits of focusing on the role that interests and identities (whether ethnic, religious, political, or clan-based) played amidst all the corruption and violence in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe in particular, while also pleading for methodological pluralism.

Ingo Loose's "Massenraubmord? Materielle Aspekte des Holocaust" covers a much debated topic by focusing on four issues in particular: the annihilation of the economic foundations for the existence of German Jewry and its consequences in the 1930s, the subsequent economic annihilation of European Jews during the war and the Holocaust, material components of collaboration, and, last but not least, the relationship between economy and rationality in Nazi policies. Loose argues that while there was a strong though certainly not necessary empirical connection between the economic annihilation of Jews and their subsequent murder, the actual value of stolen Jewish property across Europe should not be overestimated. The author points out that by 1938 the largest segment of property, that of German Jews had largely been confiscated, and the value of Jewish forced labor to the German war economy was probably greater than what was expropriated from Jews across Europe during the war (p.151). At the same time, Loose explains that even if the perception among anti-Semites of the wealth of Jews was a notable factor in the radicalization of the persecution, the Holocaust was not a consequence of economic motivations. His article thus maintains that the contested German concept of *Massenraubmord* (literally: mass robbery murder) has limited value. After all, as Loose notes, Polish Jews were still alive when their properties and belongings were confiscated, but by the time these things had been sold and the profits from their sale were being put to use, the vast majority of these people had already been murdered (p.155).

Turning to the victims, Beate Meyer's study on Jews in the Third Reich and Western Europe ("Nicht nur Objekte staatlichen Handelns: Juden im Deutsche Reich und Westeuropa") reminds her readers that while Jewish reactions, options, and choices were all strongly influenced by Nazi policy, societal attitudes and behavior, they were nonetheless highly diverse. Meyer focuses, more particularly, on how, by the late 1930s and early 1940s, the strategy of cooperation pursued by Jewish representatives with the aim of moderating the impact of persecution

and enabling further emigration came into obvious conflict with the strategies of ordinary members of their communities, who tried to escape the impact of Nazi policies as best they could. In her "Handlungsspielräume und Reaktionen der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Ostmitteleuropa," Andrea Löw uses the example of ghettos in Eastern Europe, primarily in Poland, to discuss newer themes and research perspectives on Jewish behavior. Pleading for social historical analyses and a focus on everyday life in particular, Löw underlines, much as Meyer does, the broad diversity of Jewish behavior within Nazi ghettos, which included impressive cultural activities alongside various forms of resistance, but which also generated notable conflicts within these forcefully created communities. In his essay "Handeln und Erfahren: Bewältigungsstrategien im Kontext der jüdischen Geschichte," Dan Michman explains that Jewish strategies in the face of Nazi persecution cannot be sufficiently understood when conceived of as immediate reactions. Arguing that the broad diversity of Jewish behavior under Nazi rule observable across the continent may be better grasped with reference to previous Jewish experiences and organizational forms, he suggests taking a longer-term view of them.

In "Neue Quellen, neue Fragen? Eine Zwischenbilanz des Editionsprojekts 'Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden'," in which she offers an overview of the largest ongoing German project on the Holocaust, Susanne Heim specifies what the *Editionsprojekt "Judenverfolgung 1933–1945"* has already yielded. Heim begins by emphasizing that, repeated claims to the contrary notwithstanding, the Holocaust has not been thoroughly researched in its pan-European dimensions yet and the *Editionsprojekt* aims to bring historians back from their avid focus on questions of memory and remembrance to more 'directly historical' explorations. More concretely, Heim explains that the project has made advances in three specific ways: it has amassed new materials on Jewish perspectives, it has gathered source materials on the rather under-researched cases of Southeastern Europe and Hungary, and, more generally, it has nurtured broad international comparisons (p.337).

In his essay entitled "Holocaust als angewandter Antisemitismus? Potenzial und Grenzen eines Erklärungsfaktors," Jürgen Matthäus probes the seemingly self-evident but actually rather questionable explanatory value of anti-Semitism. Matthäus offers the intriguing assessment that "the newest research shows that anti-Semitism as an abstract explanatory concept is of limited use. At the same time, we are only at the beginning in terms of probing the actual relevance of anti-Semitism to the Holocaust." (p.118) Explaining that structures of prejudice

have to be contextualized in a nuanced manner in order to grasp how they actually functioned in the context of unleashed violence, Matthäus ultimately pleads for empirical analyses of the relationship between images of an alleged enemy and practices of persecution. Last but not least, in her "Sonderweg, Kolonialismus, Genozide: Der Holocaust in Spannungsfeld von Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten der deutschen Geschichte," Sybille Steinbacher examines the strengths and weaknesses of placing emphasis on the continuities of German history. She pleads for an approach that would incorporate longer-term historical connections, such as the one to colonialism, while placing the novel racist radicalism of the National Socialist regime at the center of attention and focusing on the utopian dimension of its rule (p.95).

In sum, *Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung* not only offers numerous fascinating insights into current trends of Holocaust historiography but also provides overall assessments of several of its major areas. However, as a whole, the volume proves more convincing as an analysis of such trends and a critique of some of their shortcomings than as a set of proposals for new avenues of research. Instead of pointing to still uncharted territories, numerous contributors plead instead for more integrated perspectives, whether in the study of Nazi violence in the case of Pohl, the study of occupations in the case of Tönsmeyer, or the plea for structurally and institutionally grounded research on perpetrators in the case of Bajohr. This in turn suggests that, as a consequence of recent decades of intense research, specialized knowledge on individual aspects of the Holocaust has reached a certain depth that now calls for new synthetic visions. Works by the likes of David Cesarani, Christian Gerlach, and Timothy Snyder, which promise to articulate precisely such visions, are in fact already near completion. *Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung* also makes clear that the internationalization of scholarship on the Holocaust may have proceeded at an impressive rate, but it has not yet brought a reasonable balance to our knowledge of various European regions. Ultimately, in this agenda-setting volume of the *Zentrum für Holocaust-Studien am Institut für Zeitgeschichte München,* Nazi Germany and the occupied Eastern European theaters of war appear as the central objects of Holocaust historiography. Thus detailed explorations of the varied interactions between Germany and other, non-occupied states, which represent another subject of great relevance to histories of the Holocaust, also remain to be conducted as part of future studies.

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