



THE HUNGARIAN HOLOCAUST

SEVENTY YEARS LATER

CONFERENCE AT CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

APRIL 6, 2014 | AUDITORIUM



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Conference Program

9:00 / Registration

9:30 / Greeting by JOHN SHATTUCK | *President and Rector of CEU*

9:45 / Introductory remarks by ANDRÁS KOVÁCS | *Professor of Nationalism Studies/Jewish Studies*

I. The Road to the Holocaust | *Chair: VICTOR KARÁDY*

/ 10:00 – 10:30 / IGNÁC ROMSICS: István Bethlen's Anti-Semitism and the Jewish Policy of the Horthy Regime

/ 10:30 – 11:00 / MÁRIA M. KOVÁCS: The Numerus Clausus and the Anti-Jewish Legislation of the 1930s

/ 11:00 – 11:30 / CLAUDIA FARKAS K.: "Struggle Under the Weight of Anti-Jewish Laws" - Jewish Reactions to the Deprivation of Rights

/ 11:30 – 12:00 / Coffee break

II. The Hungarian Holocaust: Causes, Actors, Responsibility | *Chair: MÁRIA M. KOVÁCS*

/ 12:00 – 12:30 / KRISZTIÁN UNGVÁRY: Mechanism of Decision-making About the Deportations

/ 12:30 – 13:00 / ÁDÁM GELLÉRT: Antonescu, Tiso and Horthy on Trial – Eastern European Leaders and the Holocaust

/ 13:00 – 14:00 / Lunch break

III. The Dimensions of the Destruction: Hungarian Jewish Society After the Holocaust

Chair: ANDREA PETŐ

/ 14:00 – 14:30 / VICTOR KARÁDY: Sociological Dimensions of the Genocide: The Medical Profession After the Shoah

/ 14:30 – 15:00 / PÉTER TIBOR NAGY: The Generation of High School Students and the Holocaust

/ 15:00 – 15:30 / Coffee break

IV. Remembrance of the Holocaust | *Chair: PÉTER TIBOR NAGY*

/ 15:30 – 16:00 / GÁBOR GYÁNI: Hungarian Remembrance of the Holocaust

/ 16:00 – 16:30 / MÓNICA KOVÁCS: Facing the Past: Normative Expectations and Group-based Emotions

/ 16:30 – 17:00 / ANDREA PETŐ: Digitalized Memories of the Holocaust in the VHA Collection



Contributors

JOHN SHATTUCK | *Greeting*

ANDRÁS KOVÁCS | *Introduction*

Lecturers

IGNÁC ROMSICS | historian, is a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and a professor at both ELTE University and Esterházy Károly College. The focus of his research interest is the 19-20th century history of Hungary, especially political and intellectual history, including the history of historiography. He is the author of the most well-known book on István Bethlen (*"István Bethlen: A Political Biography"*) and among others he has published *"History of Hungary in the 20th century"* and *"Crucial Turning Points in Hungarian History 1920-1989."* He edited a volume of studies on the Hungarian right wing in the first half of the 20th century (*"The Hungarian Right-Wing Tradition 1900-1948"*).

MÁRIA M. KOVÁCS | historian, is head of the Nationalism Studies Program at Central European University. Her major research fields are Anti-Semitism and intellectual professional associations in the interwar period, and the problems of minority protection systems in international law. Her book *"Liberal Professions, Illiberal Politics"* has been published both in English and in Hungarian. Her most recent book, *"Down by Law: The Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 1920-1945,"* was published in 2012.

CLAUDIA FARKAS K. | is a professor in the Department of Pedagogy at the University of Pécs. Besides pedagogy, she is an expert of the history of education, and of the history of anti-Jewish discrimination in interwar Hungary and Italy. Her book *"Without rights: Jewish Existence in Hungary, 1920-1944"* was published in 2010. She defended her dissertation for habilitation, titled *"The Jewish School: Trail of Light. Directions and Hostility Towards Jews in the Educational Politics of Fascist Italy,"* at the Jewish Theological Seminar of Budapest in 2013.

KRISZTIÁN UNGVÁRY | historian, is a research fellow at the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. The political and military history of the 20th century is at the center of his research interest. His doctoral dissertation, elaborating on the siege of Budapest in 1944-1945, was published as a book in numerous Hungarian, German, British, and American editions. His book on the Horthy regime (*"Evaluating the Horthy Regime: Discrimination, Social Politics and anti-Semitism in Hungary, 1919-1944"*) was published in 2012.

ÁDÁM GELLÉRT | Holocaust researcher and expert in international criminal law, is a 2013 fellow of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure and grantee of the Yad Vashem, International Institute for Holocaust Research. His major field of expertise is the history of the Hungarian Holocaust, especially the 1941 Kamenets-Podolsk deportations. Among other

studies, he is the co-author of *"Miklós Horthy in Nuremberg – How the Regent Evaded Justice."* His forthcoming book is titled the *"The 1942 raids in South-Bácska."*

VICTOR KARÁDY | sociologist, is director of research, emeritus of CNRS (Paris) and professor emeritus of Central European University's Department of History. He has been an external member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences since 1993. His central research interest is social history, including European Jewish social history. His book *"European Jewry in the Modern Age: A Sociological and Historical Study"* (2004), has been published in Hungarian, English, and German. He edited, together with Péter Tibor Nagy, a volume of studies on the numerus clausus, *"The Numerus Clausus in Hungary: Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe,"* which was published in 2012.

PÉTER TIBOR NAGY | is a doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, professor at John Wesley Theological College in Budapest and head of the Wesley Research Center for Sociology of Church and Religion. His central fields of expertise are the history of education and educational politics. The topics of his publications include national schooling policies in a comparative perspective, secularization, elite selection and training, and social inequalities in education. He published the database of the Hungarian Jewish Lexicon (originally published in 1929) in 2011. He edited, together with Victor Karády, a volume of studies on the numerus clausus, *"The Numerus Clausus in Hungary: Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe"* in 2012.

GÁBOR GYÁNI | historian, is a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a professor at ELTE University and a visiting professor in Central European University's Department of History. His research fields cover 19-20th century social and urban history, the historiography of social history, and collective memory. Among others, he authored social historical books such as *"Women as Domestic Servants: The Case of Budapest, 1890-1940"* and *"Tenement House and Slum: The Past of Budapest Worker's Housing."* He co-authored *"Hungary's Social History from the Age of Reform until WW II"* with György Kövér and *"History of Budapest from the Beginning until 1945"* with Vera Bácskai and András Kubinyi.

MÓNICA KOVÁCS | is a psychologist and professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Pedagogy at ELTE University, where she is the head of the multidisciplinary program "Holocaust and Social Conflicts." Her major research field is the remembrance and education of the Holocaust. She is the author of *"The Treatment of Jewish Themes in Hungarian Schools"* and editor of *"Holocaust and Education to Autonomy"* and *"Holocaust: History and Remembrance."* She has also written numerous academic articles on Hungarian Holocaust education and also an article on the German treatment of the past.

ANDREA PETŐ | is an associate professor in Central European University's Department of Gender Studies. Her fields of expertise are comparative social and gender history, gender and politics, women's movements, the Holocaust, and oral history. She has authored numerous studies on 20th century Hungarian history from a gender perspective and on the

post-WW II trials. Among others, she co-authored *"The Role of Political Jurisdiction in Budapest after 1945,"* she authored *"Historicizing Hate: Testimonies and Photos about the Holocaust Trauma During Hungarian post-WWII Trials"* and *"Death and the Picture: Representation of War Criminals and Construction of a Divided Memory about WW II in Hungary."* She was also a co-editor of *"Jewish Intellectual Women in Central Europe 1860-2000."*

Abstracts

1. THE ROAD TO THE HOLOCAUST

IGNÁC ROMSICS

István Bethlen's Anti-Semitism and the Jewish Policy of the Horthy Regime

István Bethlen's political career falls into three periods. Before 1918 he was a known exponent for Transylvanian landowners. Defending their agrarian interests he often accused Jewish businessmen of being too competitive and not patriotic enough. However, his resentment was never coupled with religious or racial arguments. As prime minister (1921-1931) he stated that Jews were overrepresented in the Hungarian economy and aimed at changing this inequality in favor of the Christian middle class. However, he wanted to reach this goal in the long term, without violating the rules of the market economy and the principle of equality before the law. In 1938-1939 he turned against the anti-Jewish laws that he considered too radical and inhuman. He would have agreed, however, with a more gradual and more limited decrease of Jewish influence in the economy. In 1944 he was one of the few Hungarian personalities who objected to Jewish deportations and urged the regent Horthy to stop them. Consequently, the main feature of István Bethlen's anti-Semitism was his ambition to decrease the economic influence of Jewry.

MÁRIA M. KOVÁCS:

The Numerus Clausus and the Anti-Jewish Legislation of the 1930s

Historians face a challenge in trying to determine the precise impact of the numerus clausus on the anti-Jewish legislation of the 1930s, or to reflect on the extent to which these policies were continuous throughout the Horthy era. Obviously, the numerus clausus was not an ephemeral episode. It was in 1920 that the model of anti-Jewish legislation, based on the concept of restrictive quotas, was introduced to the Hungarian legal system. The model was based on the idea that the so-called "Jewish question" should be "solved" by extraordinary legislation concerning solely the Jews and not the rest of the Hungarian citizenry. At the same time, not all countries in which racist discriminatory legislation was in force in the interwar period ended up staging mass pogroms. The lecture will focus on the question of whether or not we can discover, at any point throughout the Horthy regime, a genuine effort to turn away from the tradition of state anti-Semitism established by the numerus clausus.



CLAUDIA FARKAS K.

“Struggle under the Weight of Anti-Jewish laws” – Jewish Reactions to the Deprivation of Rights

Seven decades ago, in the late 1930s, the Hungarian Parliament was busy with issuing anti-Jewish laws, ignoring the seven-decades-long period of the emancipation of Jews in Hungary since 1867. The anti-Jewish laws, mirroring the interest of the legislators, became more and more restrictive, affecting every facet of Jewish life. These anti-Jewish laws marginalized Jews and removed them from the previous framework of their lives. The aim of the presentation is to analyze the reactions of Jewish organizations and the Jewish public sphere to the introduction of the so-called first and second anti-Jewish laws (1938:XV. and 1939:IV.). The lecture will examine the differences between the responses given to the first and to the second anti-Jewish law and the issue what Hungarian Jewry knew about the Jewish politics of the neighboring countries.

2. THE HUNGARIAN HOLOCAUST: CAUSES, ACTORS, RESPONSIBILITY

KRISZTIÁN UNGVÁRY

Mechanism of Decision-making About the Deportations

Some basic questions regarding German and Hungarian decisions for deporting 437,000 Hungarian Jews are highly debated both in journalism and in scholarly literature even in our day. Why was it possible to accomplish the deportation of Hungarian Jews so quickly and then how was it possible to suddenly stop it? Why exactly was that group of Hungarian Jews spared from deportation, whose labor force could have been extremely useful for Nazi Germany? What were the primary aims of the deportations for Germans and how much did the Hungarian government know about these? The presentation will analyze the intentions and plans of German decision-makers between February and April 1944, their expectations towards Hungarian authorities, and the possibilities and limits of action of the Hungarian government. The paper will discuss the question to what extent was the deportation of Hungarian Jews a coordinated action of the German and Hungarian executors. Finally it will explain why it was possible to discontinue the deportations in July 1944.

ÁDÁM GELLÉRT

Antonescu, Tiso and Horthy on Trial – Eastern European Leaders and the Holocaust

The destruction of the Jewish population occurred in different ways in wartime Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. Each country threaded its own twisted road towards its *own* “final solution,” due to varying degrees of constant German pressure. How did Eastern European leaders relate to the unfolding genocide? What did they know and how did they respond to it? Did their actions influence each other? And finally, how did they try to evade or shift responsibility? These are the major topics the presentation seeks to address.

3. THE DIMENSIONS OF THE DESTRUCTION: HUNGARIAN JEWISH SOCIETY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST.

VICTOR KARÁDY

Sociological Dimensions of the Genocide: The Medical Profession after the Shoah

This paper focuses on the comparison of prosopographical survey results of medical practitioners in 1938 as well as the early 1940s and in 1946-47. The emphasis is on the composition of the medical staff by a number of socio-historical parameters like religion (and various categories of Jews as defined in the 1939 anti-Jewish law), professional standing (in hospital or as private practitioner), specialization, educational background (place of medical studies), regional, and social origins, underscoring as exemplified by the location of the practice in different districts of the capital or in different residential settings in the provinces. The question will be raised whether the social and professional profile of those who survived the war differ significantly from that of others, the latter having presumably become victims of persecutions. This will help to estimate the logic of possibly unequal victimization in various social circles targeted by the Shoah.

PÉTER TIBOR NAGY

The Generation of High School Students and the Holocaust

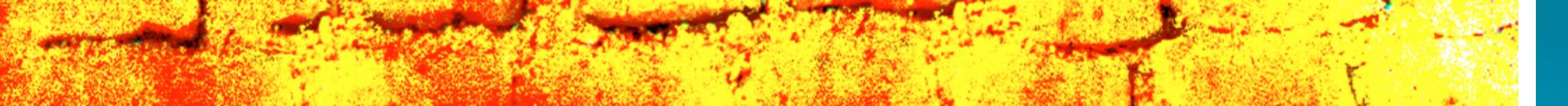
This presentation demonstrates the group-specific nature of the destruction with historical sociological methodology based on the results of a most recent social historical research. Using a recently accomplished database (containing the data of hundreds of thousands of high school students), the lecture will examine the statistical probability of the appearance of Jewish pupils who studied in the first four grades of elementary school between 1940 and 1944 in the student body of high school students between 1945 and 1948. The discrepancy between the actual data and the statistically expected data documents the social-group-specific destruction of the Holocaust among teenagers. The presentation will also discuss the phenomenon of geographic mobility of Jewish student survivors and the phenomenon of “passing” as a non-Jew in the same group between 1945 and 1948.

4. REMEMBRANCE OF THE HOLOCAUST

GÁBOR GYÁNI

Hungarian Remembrance of the Holocaust

It is widely known that self-critical embracing of the memory of the genocides committed during WW II and the role of the state during the genocide has hitherto failed to materialize in Hungary and Eastern Europe. Truly coming to terms with the past requires honest acknowledgement of state involvement. The lecture is going to outline a more nuanced image of the problem by showing several neglected aspects of this memory. Furthermore, it



will give some explanation for the specificity (maybe the lack) of the memorializing practice by revealing the contexts into which the whole issue has - in the past and in the present - been embedded. The two kinds of memorializing practices, represented by historical scholarship and collective memory, will be handled simultaneously.

MÓNIKA KOVÁCS:

Facing the Past: Normative Expectations and Group-based Emotions

According to a representative survey in Germany – the country regarded as the model of how to face the Holocaust – the knowledge about the Holocaust and internalization of its moral lessons does not necessarily mean “facing the past” of one’s own family. Through practices of memory culture in politics, media and education the “confronted past” can become part of the collective memory, without costing too much psychologically for individuals. There is a prevailing opinion in Hungary that confronting the legacy of the Holocaust has not happened, and this is the reason for the popularity of the extreme right as well as of anti-Semitism. The paper - using the German example – will reflect on the notion of “facing the past” and explore what is the reason of this perception. It will analyze group-based emotions – collective guilt, shame and anxiety rooted in social identity threats – which might block the process of facing the past as well as social psychological conditions in which common knowledge about the past allows reconciliation to evolve.

ANDREA PETŐ:

Digitalized Memories of Holocaust in the VHA Collection

This paper explores the ways in which Hungarian survivors and participants of the post-World War II trials remember the post-World War II legal process. It is based on video testimonies collected by the Visual History Archive (VHA). Special emphasis will be paid to methodological problems of using video testimonies for historical research. In a wider context, the paper summarizes the tendencies that inform the construction of World War II memory in the legalist framework based on documents produced by the people’s courts.