

■ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies

**Documenting Life  
and Destruction**  
Holocaust Sources  
in Context

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# DOCUMENTING LIFE AND DESTRUCTION

## HOLOCAUST SOURCES IN CONTEXT

This groundbreaking series provides a new perspective on history using first-hand accounts of the lives of those who suffered through the Holocaust, those who perpetrated it, and those who witnessed it as bystanders. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies presents a wide range of documents from different archival holdings, expanding knowledge about the lives and fates of Holocaust victims and making these resources broadly available to the general public and scholarly communities for the first time.

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# THE HOLOCAUST IN HUNGARY

## Evolution of a Genocide

Zoltán Vági, László Csősz, and Gábor Kádár

Foreword by Randolph L. Braham

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DOCUMENT 4-17. Draft of a government decree regarding a German-Hungarian agreement on the deportation of the remaining Jews, August 23, 1944, in Elek Karsai, ed., *Vádirat a nácizmus ellen. Dokumentumok a magyarországi zsidóüldözés történetéhez (1944 június 26–1944 október 15. A budapesti zsidóság deportálásának felfüggesztése)* (Budapest: Magyar Izraeliták Országos Képviselőlete, 1967), 3:451–52 (translated from German).

The Hungarian royal government—after obtaining the approval of His Highness, the Regent—is ready, as of August 28, to put at the disposal of the government of the German Reich

a) all Jews drafted for labor service whose families are already in Germany (ca. 55,000–60,000)

b) Jews with criminal records or Jews representing a danger to the public (this will be established by the Hungarian government),<sup>118</sup> whose presence endangers public order, the general food supply, and the domestic safety of the country,

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115. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide*, 2:913.

116. Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Ministers, August 10, 1944, HNA K27, box 262.

117. Horst Grell's telegram to the Reich Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 19, 1944, in Juhász et al., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország*, 897.

118. Karsai notes that this phrase originally read, "The Hungarian government will establish whether a previous conviction exists."

to be deployed in the German war industry—beginning August 28, 1944.

[. . .]

The Jews to be placed at the disposal of the German Reich will be handed over to a Hungarian-German joint commission in collection camps located in Hungary, and their deportation and trip to the Hungarian border will be conducted under the supervision of the same.

[. . .]

## II.

The Jews remaining in Hungary will be placed under protective custody outside Budapest, housed in camps, and utilized in the Hungarian war industry.

## III.

The Hungarian government asks [the German government] to be entrusted with the further solution and implementation of the Jewish question in Hungarian lands. The Hungarian government would therefore welcome if

1. in order to sustain friendly Hungarian-German relations, the German secret police operating in Hungary—but especially the unit operating under the leadership of SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann—was ordered to leave Hungary

2. *a)* Jews in German custody in Hungary were handed over to the Hungarian authorities. *b)* the camps and prisons set up by the Germans in Hungary and still operating were disbanded, and *c)* the so-called hostages held in them were also handed over to the Hungarian authorities.<sup>119</sup>

The draft suggested deportation of “dangerous” Jews and also specified that the Hungarian authorities would determine who fell into this category. This simply would have enabled the deportation of all remaining Jews. The document, drafted by the Regent’s Cabinet Office and sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was signed by Gyula Ambrózy, the head of the office, one of Horthy’s most important confidants.<sup>120</sup> This clearly indicates that the regent approved the draft agreement.

According to the recollections of Budapest Jewish Council leaders, all this was part of a plan they had allegedly worked out with László Ferenczy, who had switched sides and started to act for the benefit of the Jews. Horthy was also

119. Point 2/c refers to those non-Jewish politicians, high-ranking officials, and officers who were arrested in the days following the German occupation.

120. See Benoschofsky and Karsai, *Vádirat a náciizmus ellen*, 3:451–53.