

■ 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

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Documenting Life and Destruction
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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 2-1: City regulation and the attached statement of reasons, issued by the Rimaszombat municipal authorities, June 1941, YVA RG M 48, fascicle 3166, ŠOKA Rimavská Sobota, Documents of the Mayor of Rimaszombat, document 4400/1941.

[. . .]

At the meeting of the body of representatives of the town of Rimaszombat, held on June 30, 1941, the following decision was passed under Public Administration Number 4400-1941 Meeting 112:

“Regulation by the town of Rimaszombat, to secure public supply and public order:

Article 1. Serving lard to Jews is forbidden throughout the area of the town of Rimaszombat.

Article 2. It is forbidden for Jews and for wholesale buyers to make purchases before 10 a.m.—either in person or through an authorized individual, a so-called “strohmann”⁷—at markets and at fairs. [. . .]

Article 4. Assembling in public places is prohibited for Jews. Two or more persons are considered an assembly.⁸ Streets, squares, coffeehouses, restaurants, baths, etc., are considered public places. Theaters, traveling theaters, and social organizations and groups are not considered public places.

[. . .]

Statement of reasons attached to the regulation:

[. . .]

Spreading disturbing rumors and idle gossip are both acts of high treason; nonetheless, many become involved in this inadvertently, or out of selfish motives. Experience has shown that disturbing rumors are primarily started by Jews. Jews enjoy listening to foreign radio station programs in various languages and show great willingness to create disturbances by passing on the news they have heard there—news that had been broadcast with the intent to deceive. It therefore seems necessary to prevent this and where possible, to prevent Jews from discussing and passing on these frightening rumors.

With respect to this regulation, theaters, movie theaters, social organizations, and groups had to be excluded because, given the nature of these

7. See the glossary.

8. Redefining an assembly as the joint presence of two or more people contradicted a well-established legal principle based on Roman law that required at least three individuals for an assembly (*tres faciunt collegium*).

venues, the spreading of frightening rumors, etc., at these venues is difficult and because these venues are under permanent police supervision.”

[. . .]

Article 4 affected the most basic everyday needs of Jews, for it pronounced that they could not stroll on the streets with their families, go to restaurants, or use the town’s only operating public bath, which served as the congregation’s ritual bath. The mayor justified the decision by alluding to the “whispering” and “subversive” propaganda of Jews listening to foreign radio stations. He claimed that the Jews harbored communist sentiments and had “brought about the war and are now hiding away in their nests so they can pounce on the bleeding body of the nation.”⁹ The statement of reasons attached to the regulation was even more specific¹⁰: it accused the Jews of outright treason. The irrational, purely ideological motivation showed in the fact that the regulation accused Jews of listening to radio broadcasts, when they had previously been ordered to turn their radios over to the authorities.¹¹ The regulation proved so contradictory in legal terms that a month later the Ministry of the Interior annulled it.¹²

When it came to taking the initiative in introducing discriminatory measures, the pioneering efforts of László Endre proved extremely influential. The case cited in document 2-2(A, B) is a classic example of the illegal antisemitic methods routinely deployed during World War II. The petition submitted by Gyömrő citizens offered a pretext for the subprefect to issue a regulation running against laws already in effect by appealing to the “public interest.”¹³ With the exception of local residents, he banned all Jews from every single beach and bath in the **county**. Complex motivations lay behind prohibiting Jews from using the baths. Besides “protecting Christian morals,” it reflected the racist aspiration to segregate the “filthy Jews,” along with a desire to secure cultural, recreational activities for non-Jews only.

9. Petition by Mayor Dr. László Éva addressed to the minister of the interior, seeking approval for the regulation, June 30, 1941, YVA M 48, fascicle 3166, ŠOKA Rimavská Sobota, documents of the Mayor of Rimaszombat, document 4400/1941.

10. Cf. chapter 1, note 26.

11. Appeal by Jewish local residents against the regulation, July 11, 1941, YVA, M 48, fascicle 3166, ŠOKA Rimavská Sobota, documents of the Mayor of Rimaszombat, document 4400/1941.

12. *Ibid.*, Decision of the Minister of the Interior, July 28, 1941.

13. This is a municipality east of Budapest.