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

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DOCUMENTING LIFE AND DESTRUCTION

HOLOCAUST SOURCES IN CONTEXT

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This publication has been made possible by
support from

The Gerald M. and Mary L. Fisch Fund
for Study of the Holocaust in Hungary



Claims Conference ועידת התביעות
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany


The William S. and Ina Levine Foundation

The Blum Family Foundation

and

Dr. Alfred Munzer and Mr. Joel Wind

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Documenting Life and Destruction
Holocaust Sources in Context

THE HOLOCAUST IN HUNGARY

Evolution of a Genocide

Zoltán Vági, László Csősz, and Gábor Kádár

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AltaMira Press
in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
2013

Event report no. I/1.
Kolozsvár, May 3, 1944

In the following, I report on the measures I have implemented in connection with the Jewish campaigns carried out in gendarmerie districts IX and X based on order 6163/1944 VII. of April 7, 1944,¹¹ along with the events of the first day of the gendarme operations:

1.) Within the two districts, collection camps were designated in 10 towns by Mr. State Secretary. [. .]

The tasks associated with the collection of Jews in these locations and the regions assigned to them are managed by the committees comprised of gendarme commanders and designated field officers, together with the leaders of public administration officials and police authorities, in cooperation with the German advisory agencies assigned to them.

The campaign began at 5 a.m. today—in every location, with the greatest degree of support from the authorities everywhere.

[. .]

8.) The mood of the population is generally calm and the execution of the campaign was greeted with joy in several places. Here and there residents felt sorry for [the Jews], but this sentiment came mostly from members of the Romanian ethnic minority.¹²

[. .]

Event report no. 2
Kolozsvár, May 5, 1944.

[. .]

10. The document was first published in Karsai and Molnár, *Az Endre-Baky-Jaross per*, 497–522.

11. See document 3-3.

12. Jews sometimes received help or sympathy from members of ethnic minorities. While antisemitism was a long-standing tradition among minorities as well, Serbs, Romanians, and Ruthenians also felt threatened by extremist forms of Hungarian nationalism.

14.) The authorities are generally carrying out the tasks associated with the collection of the Jews and their valuables with the greatest degree of cooperation, taking the initiative and demonstrating flexibility. Where mistakes initially arose, they were due to the fact that within some towns, authorities acting in good faith implemented the measures according to their own conceptions and departed from the instructions attached to the orders: they collected all the Jews within a single day and without taking into account that—due to difficulties with material purchases—furnishing of camps and organizing camp life can happen only gradually, as the population of the camps increases daily.¹³ Where the authorities implemented the order in this way, difficulties persisted during the first three days.

[. . .]

Event report no. 3

Kolozsvár, May 6, 1944.

[. . .]

14.) In Szatmárnémeti, on May 2, Dr. Oszkár György, a Jewish doctor, used morphine to poison himself and his mother, Mrs. Oszkár György. Mrs. Oszkár György survived, while Dr. Oszkár György stuffed his pajama jacket into his mouth when he regained consciousness and suffocated.

Albert Weisz and his wife, Jews from Szatmárnémeti, hanged themselves and died.

[. . .]

16.) In general, strikingly few valuables were found on the Jews, which suggests that the Jews have hidden their valuables.

When a notice was issued, several Christian families surrendered the valuables they were hiding, but investigation into this matter continues in many places.

[. . .]

Event report no. I/6.

Kolozsvár, May 10, 1944.

[. . .]

2.) Based on an order received from above, the auxiliary commanding headquarters of the army has issued orders for mass call-ups, and the

13. Here Ferenczy refers to the events of Marosvásárhely, where within a day or two eight thousand people were herded into the grounds of a factory without any furnishings whatsoever.

call-up notices were addressed so that they could be delivered in collection camps as well.

The local head of the German security police, citing his agreement with the Ministry of Defense, today received an order by telephone from his superiors in Budapest that in areas in which the collection of the Jews is underway, Jews may not be called up for labor service at all.

Given that two contradictory orders concerning the Jewish labor servicemen exist, I have stopped the delivery of call-up notices in the camps until receiving further instructions from above.¹⁴

3.) In Kolozsvár, a member of the committee in charge of rounding up the Jews and their valuables, Lajos Nagy, a resident of Kolozsvár, a tax bureau official who was supposed to impound items from a Jew, was caught—by the gendarme investigator assigned to work with him—as he took a gold fountain pen, some leather, some money, and various jewelry items that filled a briefcase with the intent to appropriate them for himself.

[. . .]

Event report no. II/1.

Munkács, May 21, 1944

[. . .]

1.) In the aforementioned gendarmerie districts, the transportation of the Jews is carried out from 21 loading stations. Up until midnight of May 21 of this year, 94,667 Jews were deported in 29 trains. The empty trains arriving from the German Reich are brought into the loading stations as early as one day before departure. As a result, the loading of the shipments, their timely departure, and their journey to the border stations have thus far been carried out in a highly ordered fashion, without any interruptions whatsoever. In Nyíregyháza and Munkács, successful use of firearms occurred in two cases during attempted escapes, one in each location.¹⁵

2.) The accommodation and food provided to the law enforcement units accompanying the shipment are excellent.

14. The Ministry of the Interior did everything it could to deport as many Jews as possible. Since the labor servicemen were not deported, Ferenczy (and Endre, of course) tried to block the call-ups completely.

15. “Successful use of firearms” means that the escapee was shot and killed. No accurate data is available on this, but far more deaths occurred than indicated here.

3.) Based on reports coming in from individual loading stations, 13 trains have become superfluous, while Mátészalka, Kisvárdá, and Nyíregyháza requested that four additional trains be brought in. By deploying the superfluous trains, the German security police arranged to have the transportation timetable—which had been planned through June 11—condensed.¹⁶ Accordingly, the transports will be modified from now on so that the trains brought in for dates after June 6 will have their departure times adjusted to earlier times in such a way that the transports from gendarmerie districts VIII, IX, and X will be fully completed by June 6.¹⁷

[. . .]

5.) I caught detective trainee József Kocsis, who was serving at the Munkács police headquarters, as he was about to assist a Jewish girl to escape from the Jewish camp. At the same time, he also wanted to smuggle official documents and valuables out that he had received from Jews in the camp. I had him taken into custody and proceedings were initiated against him.¹⁸

[. . .]

Event report no. II/2.

Munkács, May 29, 1944

I report the following concerning the deportation of the Jews collected in gendarmerie districts VIII, IX, and X:

[. . .]

2.) [. . .] The German security police's suggestion and express wish has been that the Jews take along at least five days' worth of food per person, for the duration of the journey; this is all the more important, given that upon their arrival in Auswitz [*sic*], they will go through the selection process and will be transferred immediately from there to various jobs, via trains. [. . .]

16. The number of deportees nationwide was eventually less than the preliminary calculations. The refugees from abroad added to the total number (especially in the northeastern part of the country and in Budapest), but not nearly to the extent the authorities assumed based on their own antisemitic paranoia. Officials in charge at the Ministry of the Interior estimated a Jewish population of over 1 million people.

17. Eventually this occurred on June 7.

18. On the rescue operations and the motivations behind them, see chapter 9.

Cleansing campaign no. II/3.

Event report no. 3

Hatvan, June 8, 1944

[. . .]

7.) Dr. Lajos Tóth, a legal clerk in Munkács, had to be interned along with his family, on the one hand, for dishonoring the nation, on the other, because of his public statements concerning the relocation of the Jews and his condemnation of this campaign.

[. . .]

11.) Economic, political, security-related, and ethnic factors arise with the complete removal of the Jews; today in Munkács, for example, they manifest themselves in the following way and bring overall transformations to the city:

a) The black market disappeared—practically overnight. [. . .]

Entrepreneurial initiative is rather lively, despite the shortage of capital. Industry and commerce anticipate with keen interest that the seized Jewish plants, workshops, and store merchandise will be brought into circulation in the Hungarian economy as soon as possible. Healthy and resourceful ideas are in circulation, plans are being made, the culmination of [a new] self-confidence and confident, uninhibited initiative. The oppressive sense of fear stemming from occupying the formerly disadvantaged minority position that Hungarian industrial and commercial enterprise had experienced is absent. The workers are calm and exhibit increased work capacity.¹⁹

b) One can no longer see Jewish heads bending together in small groups on the streets, as they whisper among themselves, glancing shiftily at the non-Jewish individuals approaching them, concocting yet another poison-filled portion of frightening rumors and propaganda material.

[. . .]

19. The board of directors of the Financial Institutional Center, whose members were clearly much better educated in economics than Ferenczy, saw the situation differently. At its meeting on April 26, it was said that ghettoization had resulted in “economic activity being brought to a standstill” in the Kassa gendarmerie district (which included Munkács). See notes from the meeting of the board of directors of the Financial Institutional Center, April 26, 1944, HNA, reel 24,463. For more on the economic impacts of the deportations, see chapter 6.

Cleansing campaign VI

Event report no. 2

Budapest, July 9, 1944

In my last report, I noted the following concerning the deportation of the Jews collected in 2 collection camps in gendarmerie district I of Budapest:

1.) The deportation of the Jews from the areas above began on July 6 and was already concluded by July 8. A total of 24,128 persons of the Jewish race were transported away in 8 trains.

2.) Since the deportation shipments began, from May 14, 1944, until today, a total of 434,351 persons of the Jewish race have left the country in 147 trains.²⁰

3.) With the exception of the capital, Budapest, Jewry has been moved out of all areas of the country. At this time, those still in the country include only the labor servicemen, Budapest Jewry, individuals working in military production, and individuals who are hiding, have converted to Christianity, or are living in a mixed marriage.

4.) During the collection and transportation in the area described above, no reports have come in about abuses, assaults, or excesses by the Hungarian law enforcement agencies.

I submit my report to the Gendarmerie Inspector,²¹ State Secretaries vitéz László Endre and László Baký, to the head of Department VII of the Ministry of the Interior,²² and to the central investigation headquarters of the Gendarmerie.

[. . .]

Contrary to Ferenczy's claim about the absence of "abuses, assaults, or excesses," the concentration and deportation in this zone was carried out with the usual brutality. A woman from Pestszenterzsébet remembered the deportation from the Monor collection camp as follows: "They brought decrepit old people in their 70s and 80s out of the pensioners' home. They grabbed one old engineer who had been crippled in the other war, took him out of his wheelchair, and tossed him into the wagon. They called a doctor out to attend to a woman who had gone into labor, but he never showed up. So they just

20. German Plenipotentiary Veessenmayer reported 437,402 Jews deported. See Veessenmayer's report to the Reich Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 11, 1944, in Gyula Juhász et al., eds., *A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország. Német diplomáciai iratok Magyarországról 1933–1944* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1968), 881.

21. Army General **Gábor Faragho**.

22. The Public Safety Department, headed by Gendarme Lieutenant Colonel Gyula Király.