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Holocaust Research and Infrastructure in Hungary

László Csósz^a and Ádám Gellért ^b

^aHungarian National Archives, Budapest, Hungary; ^bDepartment of Historical Studies, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

A historiographical overview

The birth of Holocaust scholarship in Hungary dates back to the immediate postwar years. Between 1945 and 1948, a sizable number of memoirs and literary pieces, and even a few early scholarly works, were published.¹ The latter category consists predominantly of the works of journalist and ‘amateur’ scholar Jenő Lévai, who survived the Holocaust in Budapest.² Like everywhere else in the Eastern bloc, during the era of the high Stalinist dictatorship in Hungary, the official memory of the persecution of the Jews was pushed into oblivion. However, with the relative political consolidation following the suppression of the 1956 revolution, more and more scholars embarked upon publishing about the persecutions during the ‘Era of Emergency’ (*vészorszak*), as it was termed. Authorities permitted Holocaust-related scholarly research selectively,³ as they thought that talking and writing about the ‘Jewish question’, let alone Hungarian involvement in the destruction of the Jews, could stir up emotions in an undesirable way and would go against the all-encompassing antifascist narrative and interpretation of the events of World War II.

It is therefore no surprise that the first comprehensive account on the Holocaust in Hungary was published in the United States in 1981. The author, Randolph L. Braham, a political scientist by training, is a Holocaust survivor himself from Transylvania.⁴ ‘After all, this book should have been written in Hungary. It is to be regretted that we have not done it yet’, concluded the Hungarian historian György Ránki in his review article on Braham’s monograph.⁵ Few at the time believed that his words would ring just as true in 2017. As a matter of fact, Ránki and other leading Hungarian historians of his time, including Elek Karsai, made considerable efforts to close the gap between developing international Holocaust scholarship and Hungarian academia, especially in the late 1970s and 1980s. The first scholarly conference on the subject took place at the Academy of Sciences in 1984. Ránki published the only comprehensive account on the

¹Works published in this period filled a sizeable bibliography by Arthur Geyer, *A magyarországi fasizmus zsidóüldözésének bibliográfiája, 1945–1958* (Budapest: MIOK, 1958). Tellingly, the Communist state banned the volume.

²Ferenc Laczó, “The Foundational Dilemmas of Jenő Lévai: On the Birth of Hungarian Holocaust Historiography in the 1940s,” *Holocaust Studies* 1 (2015), pp. 1–27.

³Elek Karsai and Ilona Benoschofsky, *Vádirat a náciizmus ellen. Dokumentumok a magyarországi zsidóüldözés történetéhez 1–3* (Budapest: MIOK, 1958, 1960, 1967); Elek Karsai, *Fegyvertelen álltak az aknamezőkön. Dokumentumok a munkaszolgálat történetéhez Magyarországon 1–2* (Budapest: MIOK, 1962).

⁴Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 2 vols. Columbia University Press published the second revised US edition in 1994. The Hungarian editions, entitled *A népiártás politikája*, followed in 1988 (Budapest: Gondolat), in 1997 (Budapest: Belvárosi), and most recently in 2015 (Budapest: Park).

⁵György Ránki, “A magyar Holocaust,” *Élet és Irodalom* 25 (1982), pp. 7–8.

German occupation and other key articles on the topic.⁶ The untimely deaths of both Karsai and Ránki left their research projects unfinished, but inspired a generation of younger scholars to pursue research on the Holocaust and modern Jewish history.

The fall of communism in 1989 and 1990 and the birth of parliamentary democracy brought about freedom of research and publication.⁷ The traumatic events of the twentieth century, including the Holocaust, increasingly became the subject of scholarly and public interest. Since then, a series of heated public debates began about the ‘Jewish question’ and Hungarian responsibility, often with strong political overtones.⁸ Works published about modern Jewish history and the Holocaust in the last 25 years could fill a small library, as exemplified by Braham’s nearly 1000-page bibliography.⁹ Braham, now in his 90s, has remained, until quite recently, the leading authority on the topic, as witnessed by several of his new volumes in the last decade, including the National Jewish Book Award-winning *Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary*.¹⁰ These facts are revealing – not only about the genius of Braham, but also about Hungarian Holocaust scholarship in general.

Several original publications notwithstanding, the findings of Hungarian historians have gone largely unacknowledged in the international scholarly community. One would be mistaken to attribute this insularity solely to the language barriers. In 2008, Gábor Gyáni, a professor of nineteenth- and twentieth-century social history, published an article about the near absence of Hungarian Holocaust scholars in international Holocaust discourse. He based his argument on his dissection of an edited volume devoted to the historiography of the Holocaust and opined that the lack of citation of Hungarian scholars by these authors points to the (self-imposed) isolation of Hungarian Holocaust scholars. His essay provoked an explosive debate among historians. The replies contained a long enumeration of past accomplishments (books, research agendas and groups, conferences) and sought to refute Gyáni’s basic assumption, but failed to diminish the core of his pointed argument.¹¹

Holocaust scholarship emerging in Hungary after the transition in 1989 and 1990 heavily focused on the publication of annotated primary sources, ranging from Holocaust-era documents¹² to records of postwar criminal cases,¹³ which provide

⁶Randolph L. Braham and Bela Vago, (eds.), *The Holocaust in Hungary: Forty Years Later* (New York: Social Science Monographs, 1985); György Ránki, *1944. március 19. Magyarország német megszállása* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1978), rev. ed.

⁷For more, see: Balázs Trencsényi and Péter Apor, “Fine-Tuning the Polyphonic Past: Hungarian Historical Writing in the 1990s,” in Sorin Antohi, Balázs Trencsényi, and Péter Apor, (eds.), *Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (Budapest: Central European Press, 2007), pp. 1–100; Gábor Gyáni, “Trends in Contemporary Hungarian Historical Scholarship,” *Social History* 2 (2009), pp. 250–260.

⁸For a general overview on the history of memory politics of the Holocaust in Hungary, see Regina Fritz, *Nach Krieg und Judenmord. Ungarns Geschichtspolitik seit 1944* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012).

⁹Randolph L. Braham, (comp., ed.), *Bibliography of the Holocaust in Hungary* (New York: Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, Graduate Center/City University of New York, 2011).

¹⁰However, it must be mentioned that the entries were authored by a dozen Holocaust experts; Randolph L. Braham, (ed.), *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013).

¹¹Gábor Gyáni, “Helyünk a holokauszt történetírásában,” *Kommentár* 3 (2008), pp. 13–23. For the articles of the debate, see *Kommentár*, vols. 5–6 (2008).

¹²László Karsai and Judit Molnár, (eds.), *The Kasztner Report: The Report of the Budapest Jewish Rescue Committee 1942–1945* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2014); László Karsai, (ed.), *Vádirat a náciizmus ellen. Dokumentumok a magyarországi zsidóüldözés történetéhez, 1944. október 15–1945. január 18* (Budapest: Balassi, 2014).

¹³László Karsai and Judit Molnár, (eds.), *A magyar Quisling-kormány. Sztójay Döme és társai a népbírósg előtt* (Budapest: 1956-os KHT, 2004); Judit Molnár, (ed.), *Csendőrtiszt a Markóban: Ferenczy László csendőr alezredes a népbírósg előtt* (Budapest: Scolar, 2014); Péter Sipos, *Imrédy Béla a vádlottak padján* (Budapest: Osiris-BFL, 1999); László Karsai and Judit Molnár, (eds.), *Az Endre-Baky-Jaross per* (Budapest: Cserépfalvi, 1994).

indispensable source material and annotations to work with. However, due to this marked preoccupation with the publication of archival records, there has been little effort to deal with theoretical problems or to author monographic studies, or, most importantly, a new comprehensive account on the Holocaust in Hungary.¹⁴ In fact, Hungarian historians have not even attempted to write an up-to-date monograph of Hungary's history in the war, either.¹⁵ During the 1990s, very limited efforts were made to keep abreast with the tectonic changes that were playing out in the international scientific field. Debates remained chiefly on a descriptive level and rarely seeped into the fabric of Hungarian Holocaust research.¹⁶ At the same time, scholars from Hungary have rarely been involved in any major international debates. The relative scarcity of publications in English and other major European languages on the Holocaust in Hungary and related topics has led to underrepresentation in the international scholarly literature as well as other forums, such as exhibitions and conferences.

However, the early 2000s brought about noteworthy changes. Foreign experts produced cutting-edge monographs that inspired Hungarian scholars and ultimately placed this peculiar national chapter of the Holocaust on the radar of contemporary scholarship. Following the debate between Brahm and other survivor historians, including István Deák and György Ránki in the mid-1980s about the German occupation and collaboration,¹⁷ two German scholars, Christian Gerlach and Götz Aly, sought to fundamentally reinterpret the events in Hungary in 1944 and 1945. Based on Aly's groundbreaking works, they suggested that the German drive against the Hungarian Jews was an 'interactive process' fueled not only by ideological, but also by sociopolitical considerations.¹⁸ Reviewing his German colleagues' book, leading Hungarian Holocaust scholar László Karsai pointed out several factual and interpretative mistakes.¹⁹ In spite of this, Gerlach and Aly's theory of the multiphase decision-making process and the concept of intertwined social policy and racial discrimination have proven seminal to the development of the scholarship on the Holocaust in Hungary.

Relating to the fundamental question of the 'Germanness' or 'Hungarianness' of the Holocaust in Hungary, a new generation of scholars began to refocus their attention on Hungarian responsibility and initiative. Studying the economic annihilation of the Hungarian Jews, Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági focused on pragmatic motives of the anti-Jewish drive in Hungarian politics. In their most recent monograph, they developed Gerlach and Aly's theory and presented a hypothesis of a four-phase decision-making process, basing their key findings mostly on the private records of

¹⁴For a thorough overview on the Holocaust, see László Karsai, *Holokauszt* (Budapest: Pannonica, 2001).

¹⁵It was a scholar from abroad who recently attempted such an undertaking, resulting in a controversial monograph that downplays the Holocaust and complicity of Hungarian politics in it, with selective use of primary sources. Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II: Caught in the Cauldron* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011). For a critical review, see Peter Pastor, "Inventing Historical Myths," *AHEA: E-journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association* 5 (2012). <http://ahea.net/e-journal/volume-5-2012>.

¹⁶László Karsai, "Történészek, gyilkosok, áldozatok – Viták a Holocaust-szaktudományban," *Beszélő* 6 (1997), pp. 34–59; János Pelle, "A Holocaust lezárhatatlan dossziéja – Daniel Goldhagen könyvéről," *Beszélő* 12 (1997), pp. 52–59.

¹⁷György Ránki, *Unternehmen Margarethe. Die deutsche Besetzung Ungarns* (Vienna, Böhlau, 1984); István Deák, "Could the Hungarian Jews Have Survived?," *New York Review of Books*, February 4, 1982.

¹⁸Christian Gerlach and Götz Aly, *Das letzte Kapitel: Realpolitik, Ideologie und der Mord an den Ungarischen Juden* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2002); Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volkstaat* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer S. Verlag, 2005). These books are among the few international scholarly works on the Holocaust that appeared in Hungarian.

¹⁹László Karsai, "The Last Chapter of the Holocaust," *Yad Vashem Studies* 34 (2006), pp. 293–329.

László Endre, one of the architects of the deportations. For Kádár and Vági, the Nazi genocidal program and the long tradition of ethnic hatred and extreme nationalism in Hungary were the two formative factors that sealed the fate of one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe.²⁰ In his research parallel to that of Kádár and Vági, Krisztián Ungváry followed roughly the same pattern and focused on the radicalization of Hungarian nationalism and antisemitism. Ungváry also attempted to situate the Holocaust within internal Hungarian policies and explored in detail how state-level discrimination of the Horthy regime resulted in a step-by-step plunder of Jewish property from parallel acts of various ideologically motivated agencies. Additionally, he provided a detailed overview of how society at large welcomed the ‘new social balance’.²¹

In 2003, Tim Cole published another path-breaking study, which was the first major undertaking to employ a multidisciplinary approach, offering a spatial history of the Budapest ghetto.²² Cole’s other notable contribution was to introduce the problem of ‘bystanders’ as a separate topic of scholarly analysis.²³ During these years, other international scholars also embarked upon the reinterpretation of the modern history of Hungary from the perspectives of nationalism or genocide studies, which contributed greatly to our understanding of the origins of the Holocaust. Paul Hanebrink analyzed the role Christian churches and religious ideologies played in the development of extreme nationalist and antisemitic policies that culminated in the Holocaust.²⁴ Holly Case and Anders Blomqvist employed microhistorical and transnational approaches, focusing on the Hungarian–Romanian borderlands and presenting the connections between nationalist state building (and territorial disputes) and the Holocaust.²⁵ Raz Segal placed the Holocaust in Hungary in the global context of interethnic conflicts and state violence in Central and Eastern Europe, providing an account of ‘intertwined genocide’ in another borderland with a troubled history, Subcarpathia.²⁶ Kinga Frojimovics devoted a well-researched study to Hungarian refugee policy and the politics of ethnic cleansing, which led to the first mass murder of Jews initiated by Hungarian authorities in 1941.²⁷

²⁰Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Self-Financing Genocide* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004); Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Hullarablás. A magyar zsidók gazdasági megsemmisítése* (Budapest: Jaffa, 2005); Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *A végső döntés* (Budapest: Jaffa, 2013).

²¹Ungváry Krisztián, *A Horthy-rendszer mérlege* (Budapest: Jelenkor, 2012). On the recent trends of Hungarian Holocaust scholarship, see András Kovács, “Hungarian Intentionalism: New Directions in the Historiography of the Hungarian Holocaust,” in Randolph L. Braham and András Kovács, (eds.), *The Holocaust in Hungary Seventy Years Later* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2016), pp. 3–24.

²²Tim Cole, *Holocaust City: The Making of a Jewish Ghetto* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

²³Tim Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust: Journeying in and out of the Ghettos* (London: Continuum, 2011). Following this path, one of Cole’s PhD students set his sights on an iconic and specific subtopic: the participation of building managers in the Holocaust. See István Pál Ádám, *Budapest Building Managers and the Holocaust in Hungary* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

²⁴Paul A. Hanebrink, *In Defense of Christian Hungary: Religion, Nationalism, and Antisemitism, 1890–1944* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

²⁵Holly Case, *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea during World War II* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); Anders Blomqvist, *Economic Nationalizing in the Ethnic Borderlands of Hungary and Romania: Inclusion, Exclusion and Annihilation in Szatmár/Satu-Mare 1867–1944* (Stockholm, Stockholm University, 2014).

²⁶Raz Segal, *Genocide in the Carpathians: War, Social Breakdown, and Mass Violence, 1914–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

²⁷Kinga Frojimovics, *I Have Been a Stranger in a Strange Land: The Hungarian State and Jewish Refugees in Hungary, 1933–1945* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007).

The first attempt to provide a comprehensive documentary account in English of the 'last chapter' of the Holocaust since the publication of Randolph L. Braham's source volume in 1963²⁸ came from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 50 years after Braham's groundbreaking work. In addition to compiling some 150 documents that capture a range of materials in Hungarian archives, the volume in question, which was co-authored by one of the authors of this paper, also provided a detailed explanatory narrative.²⁹

Intensified attention in the international arena also boosted domestic scholarly efforts, especially in the commemorative year 2014, which witnessed two international conferences and three major events in Hungary, special issues of leading scholarly journals, memorial and educational projects and programs,³⁰ as well as the publication of numerous scholarly and literary works on or related to Holocaust studies.³¹

History and memory

Theoretical developments and historians' debates are affected and contextualized by the ongoing and intense political and public discourse on memory politics in Hungary. The last two decades witnessed several attempts in Eastern Europe to rewrite history and exercise various forms of state control over the interpretations of major historical events. These disturbing phenomena underline the importance of independent scholarship and international networking. Hungary underwent a general paradigm shift in the interpretation of its modern history following the landslide victory of the right-wing government in 2010. Like its predecessors, the new cabinet declared its commitment to Holocaust remembrance and historical scholarship. However, it approached the topic in a controversial way. The government established a generous fund of nearly five million euros to subsidize cultural programs and numerous publications during the memorial year commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary. Despite that, other government decisions – the establishment of an 'alternative' Holocaust Memorial Center; a new institute of modern history under the telling name 'Veritas'; and a memorial erected to commemorate all victims of the German occupation in 1944, which depicted Hungary as a mere victim of Nazism, rather than a willing accomplice – stirred emotions and ignited fierce debates.

Another pressing issue is the integration of Holocaust history into national historiography. Instead of being the privilege of a handful of specialists, Holocaust-related sources should and could be used by historians writing the general social and political history of the country. In 2012, for example, a heated intellectual debate – unfortunately short

²⁸Randolph L. Braham, *The Destruction of Hungarian Jewry: A Documentary Account* (New York: Pro Arte for the World Federation of Hungarian Jews, 1963).

²⁹Zoltán Vági, László Csósz, and Gábor Kádár, *The Holocaust in Hungary: The Evolution of a Genocide* (Washington, DC: Alta-Mira Press-USHMM, 2013).

³⁰Ferenc Laczó, "Integrating Victims, Externalizing Guilt? Commemorating the Holocaust in Hungary in 2014," *Cultures of History Forum*. <http://www.cultures-of-history.uni-jena.de/debating-20th-century-history/hungary/integrating-victims-externalizing-guilt-commemorating-the-holocaust-in-hungary-in-2014/>.

³¹To name a few: Ildikó Barna and Andrea Pető, *Political Justice in Budapest after World War II*. (Budapest: CEU Press, 2015); Linda Margittai, *Changing of the Guard Within and Beyond the Trianon Border: Two Case Studies: Hódmezővásárhely and Szabadka, 1938–1944* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2014); Attila Gidó, *Két évtized. A kolozsvári zsidóság a két világháború között* (Cluj-Napoca: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2016); Ferenc Laczó, *Hungarian Jews in the Age of Genocide: An Intellectual History, 1929–1948* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

of a proper Hungarian *Historikerstreit*³² – stirred emotions among the scholarly and general publics. Ignác Romsics, the leading expert on the modern history of Hungary was accused of ‘academic antisemitism’ because of how he referred to the Jewish origin of certain historians of the Communist era.³³ The authors of this paper find such an allegation overstated and unfair. However, it is indeed striking that these topics played a marginal role in Romsics’ publications, including his comprehensive *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (published in Hungarian), an essential resource for students of Hungarian history.³⁴

In the context of and as an integral part of national history, the study of the Holocaust should involve more intensive regional and transnational research projects as well as scholarly cooperation. It would be conducive to better understand parallel national histories and produce relevant comparative studies on Central, Eastern and Southeastern European countries based on multilingual sources. For example, Hungarian historians recently produced several original publications on the history of the extreme right-wing movements and parties in Hungary before and during World War II, a topic that is fundamental to understanding the national chapter of the Holocaust.³⁵ Despite the wide international dimensions, scholars studying this topic as a whole have overlooked the parallels and interrelations of extreme-right movements in Central and Southeastern Europe³⁶ and have not attempted to offer in-depth analysis of Hungarian–German relations in the Nazi era, including the reception and cultural–social impacts of National Socialist ideologies and practices.

Despite the large number of publications, there are several understudied aspects and problematic areas thus far, which require more attention and monographic studies. These include, but are not limited to: the fate of Hungarian Jews in the Nazi camp system; survival and return and its many ramifications; the history of forced labor and the military labor service system; the problem of collaboration, including the question of ‘bystanders’; the Holocaust and Hungarian foreign policy considerations; and the Holocaust in the context of ethnic conflicts, nationalism and state violence in Central and Eastern Europe. Despite certain noteworthy peculiarities, the Holocaust in Hungary was embedded in and heavily influenced by international trends. Still, there have been only scarce attempts to compare the Hungarian case with the policies of other countries vis-à-vis Germany or other genocidal campaigns.³⁷

³²Attila Pók, *The Politics of Hatred in the Middle of Europe: Scapegoating in Twentieth Century Hungary History and Historiography* (Szombathely: Savaria University Press, 2009), pp. 140–157; Éva Kovács, “Overcoming History through Trauma: The Hungarian Historikerstreit,” *European Review* 4 (2016), pp. 523–534.

³³András Gerő, “Akadémikus antiszemitizmus,” *Galamus*, June 30, 2012. http://www.galamus.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147459:akademikus-antiszemitizmus-146505&catid=9:vendegek&Itemid=134. Máté Rigó, “A Hungarian version of the Historikerstreit? A summary of the Romsics–Gerő debate among Hungarian historians (2012),” *Forum Geschichtskulturen, Hungary*. <http://www.imre-kertesz-kolleg.uni-jena.de/index.php?id=415>.

³⁴Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században* (Budapest: Osiris, 2010).

³⁵Rudolf Paksa, *A magyar szélsőjobboldal története* (Budapest: Jaffa, 2012); Rudolf Paksa, *Szálasi Ferenc és a hungarizmus* (Budapest: Jaffa, 2013); Zoltán Paksy, *Nyilas mozgalom Magyarországon 1932–1939* (Budapest: Gondolat, 2013). The most recent addition to the field is a meticulously detailed political biography of Arrow Cross Party leader Ferenc Szálasi: László Karsai, *Szálasi Ferenc. Politikai életrajz* (Budapest, Balassi, 2016).

³⁶A fine early example of such a work is Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1970).

³⁷See, for example, Christian Gerlach, “Nationsbildung im Krieg. Wirtschaftliche Faktoren bei der Vernichtung der Armenier und beim Mord an den ungarischen Juden,” in Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, (eds.), *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah – The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah* (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2002), pp. 347–422.

Research infrastructure

As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, Hungarian Holocaust scholarship is still to a large extent ‘outsourced’ – that is, the major hubs of research are in the United States, Israel and Western Europe, and many experts, projects and research products are based at institutions there. In Hungary, the field continues to suffer from a number of infrastructural shortcomings. First, there is no single academic institution, university department or scholarly journal dedicated specifically to Holocaust (and genocide) studies in Hungary. The Holocaust Memorial Center, entrusted by its founding document with the research of the Hungarian Holocaust, has not fulfilled this task. The center has mainly devoted its resources to maintaining its permanent exhibition, collection and education program about the Holocaust.³⁸ Besides, it has been plagued with structural anomalies and repeated internal conflicts bordering on the scandalous. As a result, non-specialized institutions have taken the lead in this field.

The Central European University, a Budapest-based private American university has served as the focal point for the exchange of knowledge in comparative Central and Eastern European Jewish studies, as exemplified by its several publications, courses, conferences, and original master’s theses and doctoral dissertations.³⁹ The National Archives of Hungary also devoted various publications, lectures, workshops and other events to the history of the Holocaust during the memorial year of 2014–2015. Furthermore, one should not overlook a number of original studies, source volumes and translations published on Jewish history related to Holocaust studies within the Jewish studies programs of the ELTE University and the Rabbinical Seminary, the multidisciplinary Holocaust and social conflicts program of the ELTE and other universities.⁴⁰

Second, there is no sizeable library available in Hungary that specializes in Holocaust and genocide studies. Therefore, sometimes even basic access to recent scholarly literature and academic journals poses a problem for scholars based in Hungary. Emerging experts in this field lack rudimentary infrastructure and quite often have limited funding to finance research, study trips or participation in conferences and thus have to rely on international institutions and funds. Only a handful of the main scholarly works related to the Holocaust has been translated into Hungarian, and prominent foreign scholars are rarely invited to Hungary to lecture on their findings.

Third, archival collections related to the Holocaust in Hungary, which constitute one of the largest sets of files in any European language from this era, numbering several million pages, are largely inaccessible to the English-speaking public. The research groups of Yad Vashem and the USHMM have collected an enormous amount of Hungarian material over the previous three decades. Despite the importance and magnitude of this undertaking, Holocaust scholarship in Hungary as a whole has benefited little from the results. Only a portion of these files has been processed, and the microfilms are accessible only at these institutions. Moreover, neither the Hungarian government nor any archival

³⁸Heléna Huhák and András Szécsényi, (eds.), *A Holokauszt Emlékközpont gyűjteményi katalógusa* (Budapest: Holocaust Közalapítvány, 2015).

³⁹Most recently: Randolph L. Braham and András Kovács, (eds.), *The Holocaust in Hungary Seventy Years Later* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016).

⁴⁰For details on the recent achievements of Judaic Studies in Hungary, see András Kovács and Michael L. Miller, “Jewish Studies in Contemporary Hungary,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 10:1 (2011), pp. 85–92.

entity has facilitated keeping sets of collated copies either.⁴¹ Thus, despite positive developments in the last few years, especially at the USHMM, which recently published hundreds of pages of finding aids online, there are very few historians who have had the chance to research these files.

Still, the recent years have also brought about positive international developments with a variety of opportunities for Hungarian Holocaust scholarship as well. Probably the most important initiative has been the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI, 2010–2019). With the creation of unparalleled data integration and accessibility, EHRI has the potential of enhancing the interest of colleagues abroad regarding topics related to Hungary as well as facilitating digitization projects. The launch of the EHRI Portal in 2015 made English descriptions of the key collections of the six major institutions in Budapest available.⁴² The infrastructure and intellectual community created by EHRI opens up new perspectives for a new generation of scholars. EHRI fellowships provide an outstanding opportunity to gain access to previously unexplored sources and to the rich collection of library sources, strengthening connections and developing projects with foreign scholars. Furthermore, the project also features new experimental projects to facilitate digital tools in the presentation and reinterpretation of Holocaust-era archival records.⁴³

We believe this positive trend will give a new impetus to research and assist to overcome the ‘outsourcing’ of national history writing. With the growing number of scholars extending their approach and interpretative horizon, Hungarian Holocaust history may be represented more intensively in the international scholarly discourse, and the findings of Hungarian scholars may also contribute to the country’s better understanding of its own convoluted past.

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ORCID

Ádám Gellért  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3262-2851>

Notes on contributors

László Csósz, PhD (University of Szeged, 2011), is historian and senior archivist at the Hungarian National Archives in Budapest. His main fields of research interest are Jewish social history, the

⁴¹Regina Fritz, “Der Umgang mit dem Holocaust in Ungarn zwischen internationalen Erwartungen und nationalen Diskursen. Das Holocaust Gedenkzentrum in Budapest,” in Birgit Hofmann, Katja Wezel, Katrin Hammerstein, Regina Fritz, and Julie Trappe, (eds.), *Diktaturüberwindung in Europa: Neue nationale und transnationale Perspektiven* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2010), pp. 167–179.

⁴²See <http://www.ehri-project.eu/>.

⁴³See <https://blog.ehri-project.eu/>.

history of antisemitic social and economic policies, and the Holocaust in Hungary. He has been a national expert delegate at the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance since 2011, and a contributor to the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project since 2010. His latest major publications include *The Holocaust in Hungary: Evolution of a Genocide* (Lanham-Washington, DC: AltaMira Press-USHMM, 2013, with Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági). csosz.laszlo@mnlgov.hu

Ádám Gellért (1982, Budapest), LL.B., LL.M. (University of Amsterdam, Public International Law), PhD candidate (University of Bristol, Department of History, supervisor: Tim Cole). Doctoral thesis: *Eichmann in Hungary: The German-Hungarian Collaboration in Solving the Jewish Question in Hungary (1944–1945)*. Previous research fellow of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte (IfZ, Munich), the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture (New York). Author of Chapter 1 of Act CCX of 2011 on the Prosecution of Communist Crimes and the Non-Application of Statute of Limitations to Crimes Against Humanity in Hungary. Independent trial observer and public advocate in the László Csatári and Béla Biszku war crimes cases. He specializes in the domestic application of international criminal law and the history of the Holocaust in Hungary. adam.gellert@bristol.ac.uk