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Foto credit: Muzeul Memorial al Holocaustului din Statele Unite ale Americii, prin bunăvoința lui Jack Morgenstern

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**HOLOCAUTUL DIN ROMÂNIA**  
**THE HOLOCAUST IN ROMANIA**

# **Jewish Life in Bucharest at the Time of the Holocaust**

## **(A Research Based on the Survivors' Diaries)**

**ADINA BABEȘ**

### **Abstract**

A long list of laws, decisions, and decrees with impact on the Jewish population of Romania has been enacted between 1940 and 1944. Moreover, brutal actions towards the Jews, violent pogroms, and significant isolations, ghettoizations, and deportations took place throughout that period. Their impact made the subject of a considerable number of researches and studies. In this study, I am particularly interested in presenting the results of a research that investigated the impact on the Jewish life in Bucharest and on how the Jewish community responded to all that. I am particularly interested in seeing how that is reflected in the diaries that focused on the period in question. Through their personal and informal approaches, those diaries bring to the public a complementary understanding of the topic. From bringing charity under the form of food or medical assistance to making use of their official positions and approaching the state leaders, the Jewish leaders tried to cover as much as possible from the personal to the professional life of the community members.

**Keywords:** Jewish life, Jewish community, Diaries, antisemitic measures and events, Pogroms, Holocaust.

## **The Camp in Vapniarka: Detention, Survival, Memory**

**LAURA DEGERATU**

### **Abstract**

Under the Romanian administration instituted in Transnistria during the years 1941-1944, most Romanian Jews were deported to ghettos and camps organized in this region. In 1942, the majority of communist Jews were detained in the Târgu-Jiu camp, and during that year they were deported to the camp in Vapniarka, situated in northern Transnistria. The present study gathers information regarding the detention regime instituted in the camp in Vapniarka. I propose a brief analysis of how the Vapniarka case remained in the memory of the surviving prisoners and in the archives.

**Keywords:** Transnistria, Vapniarka camp, Jews, memory, prisoners, testimonies

# **The Assault on the Bucharest Jewish Community During the Legionary Rebellion, as Seen by the Press**

**CARMEN ȚĂGȘOREAN**

## **Abstract**

During World War II, Romania underwent one of its history's most troubling times, leading to a significant decrease in numbers of a minority which had played an important role in the modernization of the country prior to these events. Specifically, I refer to the Jewish community and the Holocaust. It is our duty of honor to preserve the memory of those tragic moments: from 1941 to 1944, some of the Jewish community's most prominent members were killed in pogroms in Bucharest, Bessarabia and Bukovina, Iași, or in concentration camps in Transnistria. In Moldova's counties, the number of those killed or deported represents a large percentage of the population (in places, the entire Jewish population was wiped out), while in Bucharest reprisals were particularly emotional, political, or economic. Here, the authorities' official attitude on the issue triggered a series of atrocities committed against the Jews between 21 and 23 January 1941. Given the involvement of the civilian population in the looting, robberies, and acts of violence against the Jewish population, we can say without hesitation that the manipulation and propaganda conducted by the Romanian authorities and by the most influential intellectuals served their purpose really well. Information about the events in Bucharest was recorded in official documents, in the Jewish writers' volumes, in the eyewitnesses' testimonies, their memoirs, and press articles. The articles, from which a strong antisemitism transpires, should be treated with caution. It is also necessary to take into account the censorship imposed by the authorities, characteristic of periods of military conflict, but also of totalitarian regimes. Regarding the memories, information should be evaluated carefully, because of the emotional involvement of their authors who tend to exaggerate. This study aims at presenting the pogrom in Bucharest and analyzing how it was presented in official documents, in the volumes of the Holocaust historians, in memories and in the central press.

**Keywords:** Pogrom, newspapers, Bucharest, memoirs, WWII

## **HOLOCAUSTUL DIN EUROPA DE SUD-EST**

*În luna mai anul curent, Institutul Național pentru Studierea Holocaustului din România „Elie Wiesel” în colaborare cu Muzeul Memorial al Holocaustului din Washington a organizat conferința internațională „Holocaustul din Europa de Sud-Est”.*

*La conferință au participat specialiști din domeniul științelor socio-umane, cercetători preocupați de studierea Holocaustului din această regiune a Europei care au abordat o gamă largă de subiecte precum: colaborarea populației cu autoritățile responsabile, răspunsurile victimelor la persecuții, procesele criminalilor de după război.*

*O parte dintre comunicările prezentate în cadrul conferinței sunt redate în acest volum.*

## **THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE**

*In May this year, "Elie Wiesel" National Institute for Holocaust Studies in Romania in cooperation with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington organized the international conference "The Holocaust in Southeastern Europe".*

*The conference was attended by specialists in Social Sciences and Humanities, researchers concerned with the study of the Holocaust in this region of Europe. They addressed a range of topics such as collaboration of the population with authorities, victims` responses to persecution, postwar trials..*

*Part of the papers presented at the conference are included in this volume.*

# **The Self-Reflexive Antisemitism of a Young Hungarian Woman During and After World War II (1940-1947)**

**GERGELY KUNT**

## **Abstract**

This paper is an analysis of two unpublished diaries written by young Hungarian Christian women: Éva Kornássy (pseudonym — 1925) and Matild Forgács (pseudonym — 1930). I discuss Éva's worldview, social imaginary, and internalized prejudices, that were uniquely self-reflexive compared to the views of her contemporary peers, as my comparative analysis of the diaries of Éva and Matild aims to show. As early as at age fifteen, Éva supported certain tenets of conservative feminism and her views on issues such as the oppression of women and inequality were remarkably progressive compared to those of other adolescent diary-writers. However, her internalized antisemitic prejudices greatly affected her political views and the development of her relationships until her early twenties, when Éva fell in love with a Jew and entered into a romantic relationship with him. The relationship forced Éva to reflect on her own antisemitism and recognize her internalized negative views as prejudices, that resulted in a long struggle to overcome it. Although Éva ultimately failed to overcome her antisemitic prejudices, the fact that she acknowledged them and struggled to change her views makes her case atypical among other Christian adolescent diary-writers, including Roman-Catholic Matild Forgács. Both diarists were courted by Jewish men, but Matild's entries show a typical, unreflexive antisemitism which differs from Éva's account.

**Keywords:** Hungary, antisemitism, life writing, conservative feminism, World War II



## **Paths to Fatelessness**

**GYORGY CSEPELI and GERGO PRAZSAK**

### **Abstract**

In the year 1944, the Hungarian Jewry became the target of the German intent of annihilation. More than 400,000 Jews living in the countryside were deported to Auschwitz and to other camps throughout Germany. 60,000 Hungarian male Jews served in the Hungarian Army as subjects of “labor service”. Most of the Jews living in Budapest survived. Right after the collapse of the Third Reich, tens of thousands of former deportees returned to Hungary. Many Jews had returned from the “labor service”. More than 100,000 survived living in Budapest. After the liberation, 6,000 survivors were interviewed orally by the interviewers recruited by the Deportáltakat Gondozó Bizottság (DEGOB). The texts of the interviews were immediately written down and archived. The texts, however, disappeared for decades. After 1989, the texts unexpectedly resurfaced and have been made available for research. Now the database formed by the digitalized texts in both Hungarian and English can be assessed on the website [degob.hu](http://degob.hu). Three paths were identified during the Holocaust. One was the path leading to Auschwitz. The second path was the so-called “labor service”, that was established for Jewish males serving in the Hungarian Army. Most Jews living and hiding in Budapest were not deported. They survived in one of the two Budapest ghettos at the end of 1944 and in early 1945. In the presentation we will demonstrate the different strategies of survival of those who were deported to Auschwitz, with a special emphasis on the internal and external factors hindering or facilitating the escape from annihilation.

**Keywords:** discrimination, ghettoization, deportation, eyewitness report, psychological space of persecution.

# **The Local Administration in Transnistria and the Holocaust: Two Case Studies**

**SVETLANA SUVEICĂ**

## **Abstract**

The paper deals with an under-researched topic: the behavior of the local civil administration in Transnistria in the Holocaust, during the Romanian military occupation, from 1941 to 1944. Although not directly responsible for “cleansing the terrain” of Jews, the institutions of the local administration, subordinated to the Civil Governorate of Transnistria, were expected to express loyalty and cooperated with central as well as regional civil and military authorities. The primary sources show cases of a conflictual cooperation between the local institutions themselves, which were often shaped by personal conflicts between the public servants. These conflicts subsequently influenced the decisions related to the Jews. The moral and professional conduct of the public servants was often judged by the expected behavior related to the status of the Jews; the charges of having intimate relationships with Jewish women added significantly to the vulnerability of the public servants, on the one hand. On the other hand, the documents reveal the vulnerability and fragility of the life of Jewish women, who were exposed to continuous moral and physical humiliation, being often turned by public servants into tools for sexual pleasure and personal revenge.

**Key words:** Transnistria, Holocaust, local administration, professional conduct, personal conflicts, Jewish women.

# **Economic Aryanization in Northern Transylvania, 1940-1944: Intentions, Considerations, and Realities**

**LINDA MARGITTAI**

## **Abstract**

This article discusses the shaping and implementation of the economic Aryanization policies of the Hungarian governments with regard to Northern Transylvania, a region that was re-annexed from Romania to Hungary in 1940 and remained so until the end of the Second World War. In the anti-Jewish regulations introduced from 1938 on, the Hungarian governments' fundamental aim was to treat the symptoms of the country's economic and social problems rather than introduce hard solutions. Thus, the goal was to reduce the "excessive" social and economic influence of the Jews by transferring properties and positions held by Jews to ethnic Hungarians. Decision-makers, however, understood that a poorly thought total Aryanization process would entail serious economic disruption. Until Nazi Germany's occupation of Hungary in March 1944, the authorities across the country generally insisted on a relatively careful implementation of the economic Aryanization plans. In Northern Transylvania, like the other multi-ethnic borderlands Hungary re-annexed with Axis support, antisemitic Aryanization efforts took place in the context of a wholesale re-Magyarization of society and economy, that targeted both Jews, and members of other ethnic minorities. In these re-annexed regions, the special administrative, political, and social conditions also allowed for harsher antisemitic initiatives than those implemented in the mother-country. This article focuses on the Hungarian governments' plans to carry out, based on a comprehensive procedure, the so-called "vetting of business licenses", a large-scale Aryanization/ nationalization of Northern Transylvania's commerce and industry and discusses the economic and social constraints decision-makers faced in implementing this program. Its scope of reducing the economic share of the Jews in Northern Transylvania carried beyond the usual course of economic Aryanization in the mother-country. In these plans, the Hungarian government also targeted ethnic Romanians initially, but eventually refrained from introducing an openly anti-Romanian procedure, in order to avoid aggravating political tensions with Romania. At the same time, the government also knew that wholesale efforts to eliminate the role of the Jews would undermine the region's economy. Decision-makers, for instance, drew lessons from the "unsuccessful" radical Aryanization experiments that had been initiated in regions re-annexed before Northern Transylvania. The liquidation of Jewish businesses in Northern Transylvania was also often stymied by a lack of competent ethnic Hungarian replacements and by the fact that the authorities did not want to strengthen the economic positions of the members of other non-Hungarian minorities.

**Keywords:** Hungary, Northern Transylvania, Aryanization, economic nationalization, ethnic policy.

# **The Holocaust in South-Eastern Europe: The Case of the Ukrainian Kharkiv Region**

**VIKTORIYA SUKOVATAYA**

## **Abstract**

This paper is devoted to the specifics of the Holocaust in the Ukrainian Kharkiv region (Eastern Ukraine) in comparison with the other Nazi-occupied regions of Europe. The history of the Holocaust in Kharkiv is being considered against the background of many factors which defined its particularities. They are: the pre-war Jewish life in Kharkiv; the ideological status of Kharkiv in the German propaganda, as being the first capital of Soviet Ukraine; the attitude of the Nazis towards the non-Jewish ethnic and social groups of the Kharkiv population as motivation for the Holocaust in Kharkiv; the specifics of the Nazi occupation in the large Soviet cities of Eastern Ukraine. A discussion is being made on the fact that the genocide against the Jews took extremely brutal forms in Ukraine. Specific to the Holocaust in Ukraine was an interweaving of racial and ideological reasons for genocide. Soviet Jews were considered to be the racial-political enemy. The Holocaust in Eastern Europe cannot be considered as a phenomenon of Jewish history only, but at the background of the relationships between the Jews and the Slavs whose were victims of the Nazis, too; many non-Jewish people who tried to save the Ukrainian Jews shared the “Jewish fate”.

**Key words:** Holocaust, Ukrainian Jews, genocide, non-Jewish victims.

# **The Politics of Memory and Representation: Film and the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe**

**RALUCA MOLDOVAN**

## **Abstract**

Artistic representations of the Holocaust (be they literary, visual, or cinematic) have, more often than not, stirred up controversies and provoked heated debates in the academic and non-academic circles alike. Of these kinds of representations, the cinematic ones — by virtue of the medium’s undeniable popularity — have often been at the forefront of such discussions, in which their content and mode of representation have been analyzed and scrutinized for authenticity, appropriateness, and historical accuracy. The aim of my paper is not so much that of doing a content analysis of films about the Holocaust, but rather to investigate the social and historical context in which they were made, by looking at three case studies of Central- and East-European countries: Poland, Hungary, and Romania. All three countries share similarities (the fact that they were all part of the Soviet bloc until 1989), but also notable differences: while in Poland and Hungary, popular dissent with the communist regime was more vocal and visible in the latter half of the ninth decade, the national-communist

Romanian regime tried to stifle completely any form of political opposition. The legacy of the Holocaust was also dealt with differently in all three cases, a factor that undoubtedly influenced both the number, and the content of films directly or indirectly representing it. My intention, therefore, is to make a comparative analysis of Holocaust representations in Polish, Hungarian, and Romanian cinema by focus - ing on films made both before, and after 1989, from Andrzej's Wajda's *Samson* to István Szabó's *Sunshine* and from Péter Forgács' *Free Fall* to Radu Gabrea's *Gruber's Journey*, with the aim of discovering whether the social and political context in which these films were made had any impact on their representation of the Holocaust and, if so, to what extent.

**Keywords:** Holocaust, film, Central and Eastern Europe, communism

**Parallel Worlds of the Holocaust in Romania:  
Legitimizing, Witnessing, and Avoiding Death  
ANA BĂRBULESCU**

**Abstract**

Seventy-four years ago, Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria, territories under Romanian authority at the time, became the scene of mass-murders, tens of thousands of men, women, and children being killed for being Jewish. The events are well-documented by historians today, so my interest was in the reconstruction not of the historical facts, but of the social and symbolic worlds and, consequently, the parallel realms built up by the three categories of actors (perpetrators, bystanders, and victims). The approach I propose is a structuralist one, while the explanatory model I construct uses Agamben's and Goffman's theorizations.

**Keywords:** *homo sacer*, sovereign ban, total institution, ritual disobedience.

# **Witness in the Hungarian Literature of the Romani Holocaust**

**TERÉZIA SZŰCS**

## **Abstract**

The paper seeks to explore how the memory of the Romani Holocaust is represented in two novels about the twentieth-century fate of the Roma in Hungary — *The Color of Smoke* (1975), by Menyhért Lakatos, and *Nobody Will Pay for Jóska Átyin* (1997), by Béla Osztójkán. Both novels perceive the event of the Holocaust as part of the long, grim history of the Hungarian Roma, a cataclysm embedded in the ongoing process of traumatizing violence and humiliation. Shifting from the event-based understanding of trauma, both narratives present the continuous state of exclusion from society. They establish a link between the

Holocaust and other events of twentieth-century Hungarian history and represent the connection between the Roma and the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. Thus, these novels bear multiple witness: they give a testimony of racial and historical traumatization, and they speak not only for the community they chose to represent, but for the Hungarian Jewry, too, and the whole of the Hungarian society. These narratives impose a challenge as they inspire us to apply a cross-cultural, extended model of trauma.

**Keywords:** Roma, Holocaust, Hungarian literature, trauma.

# **The Children's Experience of the Holocaust: Memory and Identity in Post-War Greece**

**POTHITI HANTZAROULA**

## **Abstract**

The current study approaches the children's experiences of the Holocaust through the use of oral testimonies of child-survivors. It explores the strategies of families confined by the extremely limited choices that existed during the introduction of anti-Jewish legislation and the implementation of the "Final Solution" in Greece and investigates the aid networks and the relationships that developed and enabled survival. The imprint of the Holocaust in memory is mediated by age and by the specific circumstances in which Jewish communities and families were caught during the war. To investigate the ways in which the experience of the Holocaust shaped post-war subjectivities, the study focuses on three age groups of child-survivors. The first age group consists of children who were born during the war. The second age group consists of children who belong to 1.5 generation, a term improvised by Susan Rubin Suleiman to designate child-survivors who were too young to have an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to remember the Nazi persecution of Jews. The third age group concerns adolescents. The article analyzes the distinct biographical histories of the above-

mentioned age groups and illuminates the ways in which historical consciousness is formulated through the complex interrelationship between memory, family, and history. The transmission of family history to subsequent generations becomes a duty and a political issue, as well as a form of historical consciousness.

**Keywords:** child-survivors, testimony, hidden children, Bergen-Belsen, postmemory.

**ISTORIE ȘI MEMORIE**  
**HISTORY AND MEMORY**



# **The “Second Nürnberg”: Legend vs. Myth in Postcommunism (II)**

**MICHAEL SHAFIR**

## **Abstract**

In the first part, this article shows that “denazification” is a legend transformed into a myth (in the Sorelian sense of this term) and reflects a clash of memories rather than a dispute among historians. The “myth as legend” undergoes a transmogrification into “myth-asaction” and is employed for the purpose of justifying calls for a “symmetric” treatment of the Gulag based on the precedent of the Holocaust, in order to bring to justice those perceived as culpable of the crimes of the former regime, as well as for lustration. The second part shows that the clash is also part and parcel of the postcommunist search for a “usable past”, entailing a pronounced subjective dimension; it also insists on the “social frameworks” of memory (Halbwachs) and on the role of “myth-providers”. The extent and, above all, the limits of denazification in postwar Germany are analyzed in the third part, while the fourth does the same for the Austrian case. The fifth part refers to the extent and the limits of the French and Italian postwar retribution of former officials of the Vichy and Mussolini regimes, the punishment of collaborators and the “mis-memory” of their actions. In a counterfactual section, the sixth part again refers to subjectivity, presenting an imaginary postwar trial of Benito Mussolini. The concluding remarks attempt to bring some novel analytical angles based on some sociologists’ treatment of collective memory and its subjectivity.

**Key words:** history, memory, denazification, Nürnberg.

# **Post-Communist Romania’s Leading Public Intellectuals and the Holocaust**

**GEORGE VOICU**

## **Abstract**

Starting from the premise that the leading Romanian public intellectuals, widely perceived as representing the very intellectual elite of the country, have a major impact on the public opinion, the present study analyzes the positions and attitudes expressed by the latter — in books, articles, interviews, statements, etc. — with regards to the Holocaust. The study finds that there is a strong connection between the many distortions in the public image over the tragedy experienced by Jews during World War II and the opinions expressed by the aforementioned intellectuals.

**Keywords:** leading public intellectuals, communism, fascism, Gulag, Holocaust.

# **The Holocaust on Trial. Memory and Amnesia in the Case of Romanian War Criminals**

**ALEXANDRU CLIMESCU**

## **Abstract**

This study addresses the cases of persons convicted for war crimes after 1945 and acquitted after 1989 by the Romanian judiciary. It will explore the judges' and prosecutors' depiction of criminal responsibility, their use of evidence, and their knowledge about the Holocaust. The final aim of the article is to explain the factors which made possible these acquittals and to assess their meaning for the relationships between justice, history, and memory.

**Keywords:** Holocaust, war criminals, post-communism, memory, trial, Romania.

**STUDII DESPRE ANTISEMITISM**

**STUDIES ON ANTISEMITISM**

**Naționalism, xenofobie, etnocentrism —  
trăsături definitorii ale antisemitismului antonescian  
(O retrospectivă după 75 de ani)  
LYA BENJAMIN**

**Abstract**

Studiul de față prezintă particularitățile politicii antisemite a mareșalului Antonescu, politica sa de românizare și de purificare etnică, de demonizare a populației evreiești, considerată mai periculoasă decât dușmanul extern. Această politică nu a fost impusă de al Treilea Reich, ea avea rădăcini istorice autohtone.

**Cuvinte cheie:** antisemitism, invazie evreiască, evreul parazit, iudeo-bolșevism, purificare etnică, omogenizare rasială.

**Paradigma culturală a antisemitismului românesc:  
Evreii între neasimilare și refuzul integrării**

**LIVIU NEAGOE**

**Abstract**

The radicalism of the antisemitic interwar discourse originated in the cultural paradigm of the antisemitism later nineteenth century. The ideologues of interwar antisemitism took and quoted selectively from the political and literary texts of the intellectual elite from the latter half of the nineteenth century, to justify their own radicalism and the exclusion of the Jews from Romanian culture. This paper analyzes the cultural paradigm of nineteenth-century antisemitism, focusing on a few case studies: two precursors of cultural antisemitism: historian B.P. Hasdeu and poet Vasile Alecsandri, and the cultural exclusion of philologist Lazăr Șăineanu. The three cases illustrate the relationship between Jews and Romanians as a form of adequation to a certain ethnic background. Consequently, Romanian culture was considered an identity matrix and a patrimony exclusively dedicated to the Romanians.

**Keywords:** cultural antisemitism, B.P. Hasdeu, V. Alecsandri, L. Șăineanu.

# **Cultural Communication Through Images about the Self and the Others — The Romanian Jewish Community**

**ANDREEA-IULIA OLARU**

## **Abstract**

The subject of mental formation of an image about the Other brings together and creates a relationship between areas seemingly not in an obvious connection, such as Cultural Anthropology, Imagology, Sociology, and the area of Communication Studies. In other words, the essence of intercultural communication and research is understanding how cultures, subcultures, or, better said, groups generally communicate to others and among themselves. Because any communication is fundamentally intercultural, it means accepting the Other, understanding the cultural game differences and different ways of thinking. Having the central focus of analysis on imagology and ethno-psychology, the theme of the research is to show how the Jewish community of Romania has built their auto-image and hetero-image in recent years. This contributes to observing the construction of identity through multiple attributions that make a differentiating picture. The study aims to show how the identity and alterity are built through images about the Self and images about the Other. This type of analysis has been applied in various ways to different ethnic or cultural communities, as members issued their own perceptions of the world and of alterity, conceptualized through images and symbols. Images about ourselves and about the others have an important role in social construction and they result of, and depend on, how we relate and communicate with the Other. If the socio-mythical-economic portrait of the “Jew” has been so far widely discussed in Andrei Oișteanu’s work (2004), which is based on the stereotypical image of the Jews in European culture until the early 1970s – 1980s, this paper tries to illustrate how the image of the Romanian Jewish community is being perceived today. This research is part of a larger study dealing with life stories as means of intercultural communication and has as a central point the stories of the Shoah survivors.

**Keywords:** intercultural communication, identity, auto-image, hetero-image, Romanian Jewish community.