

Magyar Self-Victimization: Historical Revisionism Regarding Nationalism and Hungarian

Jews in World War II

by

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## Introduction

History does not flow as one single narrative due to innumerable perspectives, and within those, biases and controversies. Traditionally, it is the victors who write history, and within recent years this has been challenged by historians and educators by researching and teaching a more holistic history. This shift occurring in academia is valuable; however it is not accessible. This is not referring to the ongoing argument between academic history and popular history, but regarding history presented in museums, memorials, and the classroom. The broader population will have been in the public school classroom and encountered a public monument compared to affording to attend a university that provides login credentials to online databases and a well-stocked library.

The matter of accessibility comes into question when it comes to historical revisionism. With time, historical revisionism occurs naturally; in recent years, revisionism has encouraged historians to undertake research efforts into overlooked populations such as the indigenous people in the Americas. History as it is recorded is always tinged with bias, and the same rings true for revision of history, as it reflects the time in which the past events are currently being evaluated. Changes in historical perception are slow to take in academia, and even more so in the public. Museums and memorials require careful planning due to potential revisionism as well as providing many people with information they would not have access to otherwise. Organizers of these establishments are responsible to acknowledge bias in what they present, and to be accurate in their history without leaving out or erasing vital and relevant information to push a view or agenda.

The Hungarian government is guilty of historical revisionism of World War II and their treatment of Hungarian Jews, using public sites such as the Memorial to the Victims of German

Occupation to conceal their true involvement, as it does not fit with the narrative of painting Hungarians as victims of the Treaty of Trianon, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union. My argument is that Hungary is able to get away with their revision of history regarding their complicity with Nazi Germany prior to 1944 due to their self-victimization reflected in the memorial as well as their history with nationalism and the threats to Hungarian identity, a pattern being repeated today with Hungary's views towards immigrants.

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### **Historiography**

In this era in which controversies within history are more openly discussed, the way history is remembered and presented is being scrutinized for bias and perspective, through which there is danger of rewriting history to push a particular narrative. The memorial that acts as a catalyst for this research endeavor is relevant to this idea of rewriting history, with Hungary representing itself as a victim while excluding the victims of genocide. The Holocaust Remembrance Project was originally conducted in the summer of 2018 and released on January 25, 2019 by researchers from Yale and Grinnell. The purpose of this project is to examine different European countries through how they accept responsibility and educate the public regarding the Holocaust. In regards to revisionism of this history, Hungary is one of the worst countries identified in this study. This database notes that "Under the government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Hungary has gained the dubious distinction of rewriting history to rehabilitate war criminals and diminish its own guilt."<sup>1</sup> Orban represents the Fidesz Party, a strongly conservative political party.

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<sup>1</sup> Caderyn Owen-Jones, "Hungary," The Holocaust Remembrance Project, <https://www.holocaustremembranceproject.com/Countries/Hungary>

Hungary's rating in this project is worse than Germany, who were the main perpetrators in the Holocaust. As of the 2020 update to this project, Germany's rating dropped due to a recent increase of anti-Semitic attacks unrelated to official government actions; regardless, the researchers state that "Germany has been the undisputed leader in Holocaust remembrance. Although the rise of a new nationalist right threatens to undermine much hard work, the majority of Germans remain ready to take responsibility for remembering the genocide."<sup>2</sup>Germany today has addressed this history honestly and properly while Hungary has not. This begs the question: what was Hungary's role in this history, as being complicit with Nazi Germany or even perpetrators themselves?

Germany's work in educating the public about the Holocaust and memorializing the victims has been notable; Hungary's most recent public history project the House of Fates, a museum about the Holocaust in Budapest, is being met with concern and fear of misrepresentation due to several factors, including ongoing nationalist sentiments as well as the controversial memorial recently erected in 2014. The final stage of genocide according to Dr. Stanton's "The Ten Stages of Genocide" is denial, which encompasses perpetrators getting rid of evidence of the genocide having taken place. An important facet of my research and argument is the consideration that revising history related to a genocidal event such as the Holocaust is a part of denial.

While the argument presented in this thesis did not require fluency of the Hungarian language, it required a comprehensive understanding of Hungary's history. The major timeline of this research is focused on both World War II and the modern day. The origin of nationalism and

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<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Epstein and Nicholas Haeg, "Germany,": The Holocaust Remembrance Project, <https://www.holocaustremembranceproject.com/Countries/Germany>

Hungary's history prior to becoming its own nation precede this and are vital to the argument. Bryan Cartledge is a British academic and was formerly the British Ambassador to Hungary from 1980-1983. His work, *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary*, was published in 2011 and provides a comprehensive coverage of Hungary from 400 BCE to 2000 CE. Cartledge's work provides an in-depth history of how this country has been repeatedly victimized, as well as how they have victimized those they considered "other" for protection of the Hungarian identity.

As my research was inspired by a memorial and consequent protest in Budapest, Hungary, at first I struggled over if it was a relevant or important question to pursue. If it were not for this educational opportunity abroad, I assume I would know nothing about this revisionism of history in Hungary. The work produced by Joanna Kakissis proved this wrong and further motivated me to pursue this. Kakissis is a NPR reporter based in Athens, Greece, and has written for other news sources such as TIME and The New York Times. Her work with NPR focuses on current political and cultural issues in Europe, and her articles related to Hungary were resourceful in this research endeavor as well as keeping up with what is happening in Hungarian politics today.

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### **Memorials, Politics, and Revision in Budapest Today**

For sites of memorialization and education in the public sphere, attention to detail and a lot of critical thinking is required. Even the most nuanced detail can be interpreted in vastly different ways among viewers. This research undertaking was inspired by encountering a particular memorial in Budapest, the controversy and protest that surrounds it, and connection of it to the right-leaning government as well as radical alt-right groups in Hungary. The memorial and physical protest will be described in great detail, only after it is placed in context of other

public sites relevant to the time period located in Budapest. Included in this overview of public history sites is also a prime example of what Hungary has previously done with outdated and perhaps controversial statues in the capital city. Parts of the past still live on in Budapest, such as the House of Terror.

The House of Terror museum, opened in 2002, is located in the building that was the former headquarters of both the Arrow Cross Party under Nazi Germany, and the Communist organizations AVO and their successor group AVH while Hungary was a part of the Soviet Bloc. On the first page of the pamphlet given out by the museum, the intention of the museum is stated as follows, “This museum commemorates



“Outside The House of Terror”  
Photo by Kara Old

the victims of terror, but it is also a memento, reminding us of the dreadful acts of terrorist dictatorships.” A quote from Hungarian poet Attila Jozsef is also included: “The past must be acknowledged.” While the focus is mainly on the reign of Soviet Russia over Hungary, the timeline the museum follows starts in 1944, once Nazi Germany took over. 1944-1945 is covered in three of the total rooms of this museum; in terms of the presentation of public history this structurally makes sense, as the AVO and the AVH organizations have a longer history than the Arrow Cross Party in Budapest, and there is a separate memorial within the city that focuses on the victims of this Nazi affiliated terror group; however the context of the time this site was opened is problematic. This museum was funded by the government under Viktor Orbán during

an election against the Socialist Party, which would account for the museum's heavier focus on Communism.<sup>3</sup>



“Bronze Shoes on the Danube”  
Photo by Kara Old

Overlooking the Danube river near the Parliament building, there are statues of sixty pairs of iron shoes of all sizes and styles lined up in disarray. This is in remembrance of Hungarian Jews who were killed by the Arrow Cross Party, which came to power in 1944. The memorial was installed in 2005, and it is specifically located by the river as some victims of the Arrow Cross were shot

and their bodies were disposed of into the river. There are signs nearby that read “To the memory of victims shot into the Danube by

Arrow Cross militiamen in 1944-45.” These victims were forced to remove their shoes before they were killed; the bronze shoes that overlook the river ensures that they are not forgotten.

With outdated statues that recall controversial figures or ideas, such as those that were erected in honor of significant war heroes from the Confederate side of the U.S. Civil War, there is a current debate on the best course of action to address this, whether it is to leave it or tear it down. Hungary's solution for the Communist statues and memorials in Budapest after the end of Soviet rule was to move them out of the city and place them where they can be learned about contextually without the significance of staying in the city center where they were originally erected. Memento Park first opened in 1993, and since its conception has received more removed statues. Akos Eleod, architect of Memento Park, described that it is both about dictatorship through the nature of the statues and about democracy in the actual creation of the park and

<sup>3</sup>Amy Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence* (Rutgers University Press, 2018) 58.

being able to openly discuss what happened.<sup>4</sup> This park represents a painful and difficult history for many, and it does not erase what happened in Communist Hungary nor glorify the Communist leaders.

The physical subject of controversy regarding memorials in Budapest was constructed in 2014.

Known as the Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation, it depicts the Archangel Gabriel on a pillar with his arms and wings out spread, which is meant to represent Hungary in 1944, as a hawk with its talons out is suspended above him, representing Nazi Germany taking over Hungary, is seemingly prepared to attack. There are pillars behind them holding up the name of the memorial in Hungarian, "*A német megszállás áldozatainak emlékműve.*" The



“Memorial for the Victims of German Occupation ”  
Photo by Kara Old

issue perceived with the statue is how it overlooks Hungary’s collaboration and participation with Nazi Germany prior to the invasion in 1944, as well as a blatant disregard for the Hungarian Jewish victims.

In front of the memorial lays an ongoing protest made of photos, personal artifacts such as glasses, and personal notes from people who lost family in the Holocaust. One note reads, “My mother was killed in Auschwitz. Thank you ‘Archangel Gabriel.’” Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban is accused by the public of supporting revisionist history through his

<sup>4</sup> John Mason, “Hungary’s Battle for Memory.” *History Today* 50, no. 3 (March 2000): 34.



“Protest of Memorial”  
Photo by Kara Old

approval of this memorial, as well as his removal of a statue of Imre Nagy, the leader of the Hungarian uprising against the Communist government in the 1950s.<sup>5</sup> Both creating a memorial that perpetuates a false narrative and removing rather than relocating a memorial are actions of revisionism, and invites more on the horizon in public history sites and eventually in the classroom. The perception and controversy of having a memorial dedicated to “victims of the German occupation”, which appears to disregard both Hungary’s cooperation with Nazi Germany and the Hungarian Jewish lives lost, remains relevant as Hungary anticipates the opening of a new museum: the House of Fates.

Similar in name to the House of Terror, the House of Fates is a Holocaust museum several years in the making. Currently present is the fear of this new site giving an incomplete history regarding Hungary’s complicity and anti-Semitism before Nazi Germany occupied them, presenting Hungary as a victim in order to push a current political agenda much like how the House of Terror did against the Socialist Party. Sheena McKenzie wrote an article for CNN on the House of Fates in 2018 regarding public concerns, and references the previously mentioned controversial memorial through the following, “Then there’s the German Occupation Memorial erected in 2014, which features the Archangel Gabriel being attacked by an eagle — something critics have said falsely depicts Hungary as the passive victim of Nazi occupation.”<sup>6</sup> More recently in February of 2019, Joanna Kakissis wrote about the controversy of the House of Fates for NPR, and the statue came up once again. Regarding leadership and response to it, Kakissis

<sup>5</sup> “Hungary removes statue of anti-Soviet hero Imre Nagy,” *BBC News*, December 28, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46704111>

<sup>6</sup> Sheena McKenzie, “This Holocaust Museum Cost Millions and Still Hasn’t Opened. But That’s Not What Worries Historians,” *CNN*, <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2018/11/world/holocaust-museum-hungary-cnnphotos/>

writes, “Hungarian leaders denounced the statue, but the nationalist government of Viktor Orban defended it.”<sup>7</sup> A trend among Eastern European countries, Hungary included, is becoming a conservative, right-leaning government. A public space to address the effect of the Holocaust in Hungary is necessary, however if it is done incorrectly it will be harmful to the present Jewish community as well as in shifting how this time period is remembered, and revisionism in history is commonplace with more nationalist governments. As of April 2020, the House of Fates museum has not been opened to the public, which could be both due to the controversy as well as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

During the time I was in Budapest, I was unaware of the creation of the House of Fates museum and not much time was dedicated to discussing current controversies surrounding the German Occupation memorial, as most of our curriculum focus was on the Communist regime that was present in Hungary post-World War II. On one of the nights we had free, some of my colleagues and I came across what appeared to be a sigil or memorial. Candles were laid about in an outline, which we found out was in the shape of Hungary before land was taken away from the country after World War I, otherwise referred to as “Greater Hungary.” It was a memorial to the land Hungary had lost in the Treaty of Trianon, which is a bizarre thing to mourn in comparison to mourning the lives lost in World War I. There were people by this display giving out pamphlets of information; one of my colleagues approached a person to figure out what the candles were for, and learned that they aligned with some nationalistic ideas in Hungary, mainly being strongly anti-immigrant. Further research and confirmation from a fellow colleague who

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<sup>7</sup> Joana Kakissis, “Hungary's New Holocaust Museum Isn't Open Yet, But It's Already Causing Concern,” *NPR*, February 8, 2019 <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/08/690647054/hungarys-new-holocaust-museum-isn-t-open-yet-but-it-s-already-causing-worry>

witnessed this as well confirmed that this act of “remembrance” was put together by the Hungarian nationalist Jobbik party.

Also known as The Movement for a Better Hungary, Jobbik is a political party first founded in the early 2000s and surrounded with negative perception and controversy. Jobbik started as a student organization based out of the Eötvös Loránd University history department.<sup>8</sup> The Counter Extremism Project describes them as “radical Christian” and “neo-Nazi”, as well as emphasizing their support of Miklós Horthy, a controversial figure as he was the leader of Hungary during the turbulent time from 1920 until the German occupation in 1944.<sup>9</sup> On the party’s official website, they posted an interview from 2010 with Jobbik party president Gabor Vona; one of the questions was regarding the loss of land and therefore the separation of Hungarian population by the Treaty of Trianon, which is referred to as a tragedy. Vona goes on to glorify Horthy through saying, “Under Horthy Hungary had a strong and impressive national elite that aimed at the revision of the unjust Trianon peace dictate and was ready to defend ethnic Hungarians across its borders by strong diplomatic or even military means if necessary.”<sup>10</sup> While the Jobbik Party is not the group PM Orban is associated with in his leadership, their similarities goes beyond the glorification of Horthy to the issue of immigration.

The Jobbik party denies that they are anti-Semitic, however their xenophobia is undeniable. Also on their website under their “About Jobbik” section is a thirty-two page

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<sup>8</sup> Phillip Karl, “Network Analysis of Right-Wing Extremism in Hungary,” in *Minorities under Attack.: Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies*, ed. Sebastian Goll, Martin Mlinariæ, and Johannes Gold (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016): 224. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvc770t5.14>

<sup>9</sup>“Movement For A Better Hungary (Jobbik),” *Counter Extremism Project*, accessed September 3, 2019. <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/jobbik#keyleaders>

<sup>10</sup> “Gabor Vona: Europe kept silent- Interview,” *Jobbik*, accessed September 3, 2019. [https://www.jobbik.com/gabor\\_vona\\_europe\\_kept\\_silent\\_-\\_interview](https://www.jobbik.com/gabor_vona_europe_kept_silent_-_interview)

document entitled “Safe Europe, Free Hungary!” The following passage is included in this digital work:

Today it’s more and more obvious that Europe has difficulties meeting the challenge of illegal migration. Although more and more countries realize the threat and even such traditionally “pro-immigration” states as Germany, Sweden, Italy, or Austria tend to restrict their immigration policies, we cannot achieve long-term success without a united European response. Illegal immigration is a global problem which requires a joint action because even the greatest individual effort is unable to permanently stop a process of such magnitude.<sup>11</sup>

The Jobbik party is strongly against immigration from countries in the Middle East, such as Syria, and critiques countries who were open towards it, such as Germany. The group is less kind to the immigrants themselves in this program, insinuating that they have a purpose involving “human trafficking”, and goes on to state that, “Migration is not the means for labour recruitment or humanitarian aid but a tragic process which criminals profiteer from.”<sup>12</sup> Branding these immigrants as criminals is a step towards the dehumanization of them, which is part of the pattern of genocidal events described by Dr. Stanton in ten stages. Dehumanization is the fourth stage of genocide, and Dr. Stanton elaborates that the persecuted group is “equated with filth, impurity, and immorality.”<sup>13</sup>

This is not a prediction for a new genocide that will occur in Hungary; while dehumanization is dangerous, more factors are required for a greater threat of such an event. Hungary was complicit with and a collaborator with Nazi Germany, and the creation of the German Occupation Memorial stands as evidence that the country has not only failed to address

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<sup>11</sup> “Safe Europe, Free Hungary!” *Jobbik*, page 11, accessed September 3, 2019 [https://www.jobbik.com/safe\\_europe\\_free\\_hungary](https://www.jobbik.com/safe_europe_free_hungary)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid 12.

<sup>13</sup> Gregory H. Stanton, “10 Stages of Genocide,” *Genocide Watch* (2016) <http://genocidewatch.net/genocide-2/8-stages-of-genocide/>

their role in this history but have whitewashed it, only presenting themselves as a victim of Nazi Germany and nothing more. The final stage of a genocide is denial. Germany has done much to acknowledge their crimes within the 1930s and 1940s, and has thoughtfully publicly memorialized the different victim groups persecuted in the Holocaust. Their stance on immigration attests to the growth Germany has made from the blind and potent nationalism that allowed the Third Reich to come to power; Hungary's current state of nationalism with alt-right groups in power results in revisionism in their history, particularly related to Hungary's role in World War II, in order to better promote their current agenda.

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### **What Is Nationalism for Hungary?**

Before delving into Hungary's actions towards Hungarian Jews in the twentieth century and how that history is covered in the modern day, the context of where Hungarian nationalism stems from needs to be reviewed from the late seventeenth century ending with the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 as well as how Hungarian Jews were addressed in this society. In this section, an understanding of what nationalism is will be established, after which the role of the Enlightenment, language, and existing in a multinational empire had in the 1848 Revolution and its consequences will be covered.

Nationalism is not easily defined as there are a plethora of complexities within not only the historian's perception of it but also within how it is presented to the general public. Because of this, there is great value in considering multiple theories and definitions of nationalism. Benedict Anderson describes three paradoxes related to nationalism in *Imagined Communities*, "(1) The objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists. (2) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept... vs.

the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations... (3) The ‘political power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence.’<sup>14</sup> The concept of nationalism and even nations is a relatively new idea within the last couple of centuries, despite the seemingly long-established pride in this created identity and the idea of “reclaiming” a specific history.

In *Nations and Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner first differentiates nationalism as a principle or idea as well as nationalism as a sentiment and as a movement. The nationalist sentiment is the anger and violent actions that is associated with nationalism, which is invoked when the principle is disregarded. Gellner clarifies the ways in which the nationalist principle can be breached, “The political boundary of a given state can fail to include all members of the appropriate nation; or it can include them all but also include some foreigners; or it can fail in both these ways at once...”<sup>15</sup> Within a multinational empire under the Habsburgs and the eventual the Austro-Hungarian Empire, all of these aforementioned issues will be present, particularly in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the traditional World History classroom, the concept of nationalism is introduced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, emphasized before and during the World Wars, as well as within the interwar period, alluding to the negative ramifications of such strong, blind ideals. An AP World History student of mine gauged his understanding of nationalism in the context of leading up to World War I as “amped up patriotism.” The way I defined nationalism for my students is that it is the inventing and invoking of pride in the national identity of a country, including the creation of a homogenous idea of what this supposed identity is through language, culture, and ethnicity.

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<sup>14</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016): 5.

<sup>15</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983): 1.

Nationalism in this context is commonly associated with the unification of European nations for the first time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the smaller kingdoms that would make up Germany and the city-states that would create Italy in the nineteenth century. One unifying identity was necessary for the formation of countries such as Germany and Italy, and this would be imperative for a nation that lacked sovereignty for as long as Hungary had under the Habsburg Empire. It is important to recognize why nationalist sentiments thrived in Hungary as well as where it can be traced back to, which for countries in Europe came with the new waves of philosophy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The arrival of the Enlightenment from western Europe through reforms created by Habsburg rulers that affected Hungary as well as philosophical texts in the eighteenth century act as a catalyst for the forthcoming creation of Hungarian identity. Language, specifically written script, was the first and arguably foundational part of this process for Hungary. Latin was long established to be the language of education in Europe, with more than three-fourths of books printed prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> century were in Latin.<sup>16</sup> Despite being the language of education and of the Catholic Church, Latin will lose prominence in Europe. Latin was mainly a second-language, and the majority of the population is only fluent in their first language.<sup>17</sup> The eventual fallout of the use of Latin and the rise of print-capitalism which allowed for the spread of literature were central to the creation of a national consciousness. Other prominent languages of the time in Europe were German and French, representing the elite and educated populations.<sup>18</sup>

The common tongue of an area, in this circumstance being Hungarian, had little to no presence in written material, religious or academic. Prior to the Enlightenment era, the

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<sup>16</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 18.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid* 38.

<sup>18</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011): 152.

Hungarian language was inherently worthless in terms of politics and education. Compared to other European countries, Hungary held onto Latin as their prominent language in politics for a longer period of time, even though the majority of the population could not understand it.<sup>19</sup> According to philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, common languages and identities such as Hungarian could be swallowed and erased by a larger group, such as the Habsburg Empire, therefore the language must be protected to preserve their “Hungarian-ness.”<sup>20</sup> With this there is the connection of language to a particular identity. The emperor’s approval of the use of Magyar (Hungarian) in 1805 led to its widespread use, being taught in schools, as well as “the daily press and numerous pamphlets poured scorn on the claims of non-Magyar-speaking groups to a separate identity.”<sup>21</sup> Nearly forty years later, Hungarian was made the official language of administration in the Diet of 1843-1844.<sup>22</sup> The idea of a national language already began the process of separating Hungarians from those who were other, and perhaps lesser, based on their tongue.

Due to prior immigration as well as being a part of the larger multinational Habsburg Empire in Europe, Hungarians were not the only ethnic group living within Hungary. The Enlightenment brought forth ideas of united identity to other groups in the area such as Croats, Serbians, and Romanians, each of which facing their own obstacles in surviving within the larger empire.<sup>23</sup> Even though these people lived in what was Royal Hungary, they were certainly not Hungarian; they did not speak the language. The birth of nationalism in Hungary was fueled by the fear of their identity being lost and separated amongst other

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid 178.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid 153.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid 153.

<sup>22</sup> Gábor Gángó, “1848-1849 in Hungary”, (Vienna: Vienna University): 40.

<http://epa.niif.hu/01400/01462/00025/pdf/039-047.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid 154.

identities, and ultimately led to an attempt at revolution for independence to protect themselves from this destruction.

Ideas from the Enlightenment and the sparks of nationalism helped to trigger a series of revolutions that occurred throughout Europe in 1848 starting in France, acting almost with a domino effect throughout different countries. While none of these revolutions were enduringly successful, they would have a lasting impact in European politics. The common goal throughout these different revolutions was representative government and civil rights, not necessarily including universal enfranchisement.<sup>24</sup> In Hungary's 1848 Revolution, the people wanted more autonomy from the Austrian Empire in order to protect the Hungarian identity.

Hungarian revolutionaries had their demands, known as the "Twelve Points", which included the following, "the abolition of censorship and freedom of the press, government by an independent Hungarian ministry, residing in Pest-Buda and responsible to parliament, a parliament elected by universal suffrage, to meet annually, civil and religious equality, equality of taxation, the abolition of feudal burdens, the formation of a National Guard, trial by jury, the foundation of a national bank, the formation of a national army and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Hungary, the freeing of political prisoners, and the reunion of Hungary and Transylvania."<sup>25</sup> Many of these demands were brought into fruition with the April Laws, transforming the Hungarian kingdom into a constitutional monarchy while retaining King Ferdinand V and ties to the Habsburg Empire, abolishing feudalism, and granting more civil rights than before.

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<sup>24</sup>Mike Rapport, "1848: European Revolutions" in *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy: From Pre-history to Future Possibilities*, ed. Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015): 283. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g0b6rb.28>

<sup>25</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 191.

In light of the revolution, relations were tense not only between Hungary and Austria but also the other ethnic groups within Hungarian territory: Romanians, Serbs, and Slovaks, all of which had their national consciousnesses awakened. These groups were denied autonomy within the Empire, having similar demands to Hungary in their revolution. Cartledge phrases the reasoning as follows, “It would have certainly been unreasonable to expect a ministry that had just succeeded in winning autonomy for the Hungarian kingdom willingly to preside over the fragmentation of that kingdom into a number of self-administering provinces, each using a different language for official and educational purposes...”<sup>26</sup> Originally the Austrian Empire recognized the new Hungarian government, however this view shifted with the statements in the Austrian Ministry Paper in August 1848 that “the independent Hungarian ministries of finance and war were illegitimate.”<sup>27</sup> In the same vein Emperor Francis Joseph, despite the Austrian Empire previously allowing for the April Laws, revoked them after it served the purpose of pacifying Hungary. The autonomy that the April Laws allowed Hungary became threatening to the welfare of the Empire, and this action would lead to Hungary’s War for Independence, which ultimately failed in part due to Russia speeding the war up by aiding the Austrians. Emperor Franz Josef punished Hungary harshly, wanting retribution through executions, dividing the country into fifteen military districts, and replacing Magyar with German as the language of government, a direct attack to the Hungarian identity.<sup>28</sup> With the Compromise happening less than two decades after the War of Independence, restoration of the Austro-Hungarian connection came from necessity.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid 199.

<sup>27</sup> Gábor Gángó, “1848-1849 in Hungary,” 43.

<sup>28</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 219-220.

The Ausgleich, otherwise known as the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, established the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. Hungary became autonomous in their own laws, except for those that concern both parties such as foreign policy, and in exchange for this Hungary “accepted the unity of the Empire and invested him [Franz Josef] as King in Hungary...”<sup>29</sup> Austria required this compromise to restore their alliance with Hungary in fear of neighboring empires, and Hungary was in fear of being isolated surrounded by empires and eventually being swallowed up. The Austro-Hungarian Empire benefits both parties, and the circumstances of its eventual disintegration are devastating particularly to Hungary.

The Enlightenment and the creation of nationalism in Hungary were valuable events to Hungarian Jews, although it did not quell strong anti-Semitic sentiments in the population. Equal rights were granted to Jews throughout Europe during the 1848 Revolutions, although European History author Mike Rapport states that it was more difficult in Hungary due to anti-Semitic pushback.<sup>30</sup> Hungarian Jews were advocated for in the Twelve Points through religious equality and as well as in the latter part of the revolution. Under the national government temporarily established by the April Laws in the 1848 Revolution, a law that would have emancipated all Jewish individuals as well as the right to vote if they held property was rejected with strong anti-Semitic hatred. They were temporarily emancipated during the war for independence against Austria, however this was retracted upon Hungary’s loss and they did not receive true legal emancipation until 1867 with the Ausgleich.<sup>31</sup> Law XVII grants the Hungarian Jews emancipation, stating that “1. It is hereby proclaimed that the Israelite inhabitants of the country

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<sup>29</sup> Leslie C. Tihany, “The Austro-Hungarian Compromise, 1867-1918: A Half Century of Diagnosis; Fifty Years of Post-Mortem,” *Central European History* 2, no. 2 (1969): 114.

<sup>30</sup> Mike Rapport, “1848: European Revolutions,” 287.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid 195.

are entitled to exercise all civil and political rights equally with the Christian inhabitants.”<sup>32</sup> This granted Jewish populations fully equal rights.

Post-Ausgleich to World War I is viewed as a Golden Age for Hungarian Jews. They fully embraced the culture and identity of Hungary; this is indicated by their “linguistic assimilation”, connecting back to the importance of the Magyar language brought with the Enlightenment.<sup>33</sup> Assimilated Jews did not present a threat to Hungarian identity, as they were coming in without a homeland and willingly absorbed the culture and identity; Jewish immigrants in the latter part of the 19th century were less likely to assimilate, such as the Galician Jews. Anti-Semitism simmered in the Hungarian gentry, and despite this being the Golden Age violence towards Hungarian Jews still occurred. There are several reasons behind the growth of anti-Semitic feelings in Hungary: reasons were numerous:

the conspicuous strangeness of the Jews, especially those belonging to the Orthodoxy, in their appearance; the dynamic competition of the Jewish professionals and the bourgeoisie; the takeover of bankrupt gentry estates by the Jews; the anti-capitalism of the nobility, the traditional burghers and peasants which in fact served as a force of cohesion among them; the political anti-Semitism imported from the neighbouring countries and finding a fertile soil in Hungary; the frictions of the traditional value system of the nobility with that of the bourgeoisie.<sup>34</sup>

In the town of Tiszaeszlár there was an infamous blood libel trial, which is an accusation that Jews were performing ritualistic murders using Christian children, against fifteen Hungarian Jews in 1882 with the disappearance of a young girl; they were acquitted of the crime once the witness confessed to being bribed and the girl’s body was recovered from the river in a condition that disproved ritual murder as her cause of death. This exoneration resulted in anti-Semitic

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid 258.

<sup>33</sup> András Koerner, *How They Lived: The Everyday Lives of Hungarian Jews, 1867-1940* (Central European University Press, 2015): 33.

<sup>34</sup> László Váradi, “The Hungarian Jewry in the Twentieth Century,” *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 31, no. ¾ (1985): 41. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42555497>

attacks on Jewish individuals and businesses throughout Hungary to the point the government intervened.<sup>35</sup>

Hungary's fight to preserve their identity, motivated through Enlightenment ideals, ultimately leads to compromise with Austria and the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In this process, Hungarian Jews were granted equal rights and protections, starting their Golden Age despite existing anti-Semitism, not uncommon in Europe due to being a religious minority and historically successful through better health and wealth.

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### **Hungary and Jewish Life under Horthy**

This section will investigate the treatment of Hungarian Jews prior to Nazi Germany taking control of Hungary in 1944, beginning with the impact the Treaty of Trianon had breaking up the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Post-Trianon Hungary would establish relations with fascist nations in the 1930s, particularly Italy, and would pass anti-Semitic legislature in 1920 and 1938. Hungary's response to the "Jewish Question" was economically motivated and inspired by Nazi Germany. Essentially this is the history that Hungary does not address today.

History saw the fall of several empires after the Great War: Russia, the Ottomans, and Austria-Hungary. Hungary would face numerous changes throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, post-dualism; Cartledge describes the experience as surviving the following events: "a crippling and unjust treaty, occupation by Nazi Germany and the imposition of a brutal Stalinist regime."<sup>36</sup>The treaty and the occupation are both relevant to this portion of research, as the starting and ending point. The first item Cartledge mentioned refers to the Treaty of Trianon, the peace negotiation

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<sup>35</sup> "Encyclopedia Judaica: Tiszaezlar," *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed February 9, 2020. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/tiszaezlar>

<sup>36</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 319.

between the Entente Powers and Hungary after World War I. While the Paris Conference most heavily affected Germany with wartime reparations, Hungarians found the Treaty of Trianon to be unfair as it would take away much of the country's land, and with it ethnically Hungarian people. The exact loss is described as follows:

the reduction of Hungary's area by two-thirds, from 282,000 to 93,000 sq. km; the reduction of Hungary's population by over half, from 18.2 to 7.9 million; the confiscation from Hungary of two-thirds of her railway, road, and canal networks, together with approximately 80 per cent of her forests and mines; and- perhaps more importantly than all these losses- the transfer of over three million ethnic Magyars to Czechoslovak, Romanian, Yugoslav or Austrian rule. The rationale behind this breakup of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire was to protect the independence of different nation groups that were swallowed up by this larger group, such as the Czech and Croatsians.<sup>37</sup>

This is the loss of land that was being mourned in the nationalist sigil in Budapest in June 2018, nearly a century later. In addition to the resources mentioned Hungary was now landlocked, having lost access to the Adriatic Sea. The breakup of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire was done in a way to protect the identities of smaller groups within their borders, and through this Hungarians felt damage to their identity.

The loss of land also meant the loss of Hungarian people, separated by borders of the new countries of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Hungary felt even more vulnerable to being swallowed by Pan-Slavism as the only non-Slavic ethnic group and the growing nationalism of ethnic minorities, perceived as being strongly anti-Magyar. Despite this separation of ethnically Hungarian peoples, within the new Hungarian borders the country was nearly homogenous in population.<sup>38</sup> The Treaty of Trianon has two sections dedicated to the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid 326-327.

<sup>38</sup> Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II: Caught in the Cauldron* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011): 32.

protection of minorities (Section VI) and nationality (Section VII). Two key articles of Section VI present violations of the nationalist principle according to Gellner's definition:

Article 57. All persons born in Hungarian territory who are not born nationals of another State shall *ipso facto* become Hungarian nationals; Article 58. All Hungarian nationals shall be equal before the law and shall enjoy the same civil and political rights without distinction as to race, language or religion... No restriction shall be imposed on the free use by any Hungarian national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, in religion, in the press or in publications of any kind, or at public meetings.<sup>39</sup>

Even with individuals becoming Hungarian because of where they are and the treaty decrees it, they still will be considered as "others" and will not fit in with the idea of who a Hungarian is, presenting a threat to Hungarian identity. Hungary's loss of land, resources, and people are similar to Germany's consequences post-World War I, which may contribute to Hungary's complicity with Nazi Germany prior to invasion in 1944.

Naval Admiral Miklos Horthy, who was born to lesser nobility in 1868 and served in World War I, became Regent of Hungary in 1920 and established a conservative government after the overthrow of Bela Kun and the Communist Government briefly established in 1919. Horthy's reign was the reactionary response to this Communist takeover, with Horthy being described as being "conservative, rabidly anti-Bolshevik, and over confident in the abilities of his military leaders."<sup>40</sup> Horthy remains in power until Nazi Germany takes over Hungary in 1944, although the length of his rule was unanticipated as the position of regent was meant to be replaced by a more permanent ruler, a Habsburg king. Coming into power not only after suffering massive land and population loss as a consequence of the Great War but also after an overturned Communist revolution, Horthy was tasked with helping Hungary move forward as a nation and recover from the Treaty of Trianon; what would this mean for Jewish populations?

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<sup>39</sup> *Treaty of Trianon*, accessed from [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty\\_of\\_Trianon](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Trianon)

<sup>40</sup> Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II*, 35.

Horthy had his charms, strong nationalistic leanings, and the common anti-Communist as well as anti-Semitic views, although according to Cartledge he “enjoyed the society of rich, assimilated Jews whom he regarded as honorary Magyar gentry.”<sup>41</sup>

As established, anti-Semitism had precedence in Hungary, but in the 1910s and 1920s it was fueled both by the loss of the Great War and the 1919 Communist revolution; respectively, Jews were viewed as spectators in the devastating war and “the leaders and close to three-quarters of the Commissars of the Hungarian Communist Republic were of Jewish origins.”<sup>42</sup> Before discussing Hungary’s connection with Nazi Germany, looking into how politics addressed Hungarian Jews through different legislature passed in the 1920s and 1930s will reflect the anti-Semitic sentiments of the country and how they impacted this population prior to 1944.

In 1920, the National Assembly passed the *Numerus Clausus* law, which made it that university populations should be representative of the nation’s population overall. Ville Häkkinen from the University of Jyväskylä researched this legislation as a way of rebuilding the nation and Hungarian identity by excluding specific populations, summarizing that “In rhetoric, the law was just a measure to defend the ailing Hungarian race and return it to its former glory.”<sup>43</sup> Hungary is supposedly at risk of losing its national identity, and controlling education as a means to protect themselves by promoting the higher education of desired populations, those who fit into the national identity. Although this law does not specifically mention them, the purpose of the *Numerus Clausus* was geared towards limiting Jewish people’s access to

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<sup>41</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will To Survive*, 335.

<sup>42</sup> András Koerner, *How They Lived: The Everyday Lives of Hungarian Jews*, 37

<sup>43</sup> Ville Häkkinen, “Redescribing the Nation: Anti-Semitism as a tool of nation-building in the Hungarian Numerus Clausus debates, 1920-1928,” *Journal of Language and Politics* 17, no. 5 (2018): 661.

education and opportunities related to university.<sup>44</sup> This is supported by the following percentages, “Jewish students who constituted only 6 percent of the population but composed 30 percent of law students and 50 percent of medical students.”<sup>45</sup> Hungarians were threatened by the higher numbers of Jewish individuals heading into the more lucrative and advantageous fields.

The idea for the *Numerus Clausus* predates the end of World War I; the demand for preventing Jewish populations from attaining higher education was popularized by upper class anti-Semitism in the 1870s along with banning mixed marriages and Jewish immigration into Hungary.<sup>46</sup> Hostility towards Jews is a recurring trend throughout European History, and Hungary is the first to resurface this pattern with this law in the 1920s. Professor Peter Nagy described the *Numerus Clausus* as “the first piece of antisemitic legislation put in place by a post-World War I European state.”<sup>47</sup> This legislation impacted gentile Hungarians more than Hungarian Jews, as the latter left to different countries in order to attend university without being limited by the quota. The *Numerus Clausus* was revised in the late 1920s to remove the race and nationality quotas; Häkkinen notes that “national fidelity” was used as a requirement in the updated law, meaning “to leave persons of suspicious background (ethnic or class-based) without place,” which still allowed room for discrimination.<sup>48</sup> The changes made to the *Numerus Clausus* were not made for the benefit of being inclusive towards the Hungarian Jewish community, but for Hungary’s potential gain.

Protection of the Hungarian nation and identity was of the utmost importance, and regaining the territory lost through the Treaty of Trianon would have been the most beneficial

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid 338.

<sup>45</sup> Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II: Caught in the Cauldron*, 31.

<sup>46</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 260

<sup>47</sup> Peter Tibor Nagy, “The Numerus Clausus in Inter-War Hungary: Pioneering European Antisemitism,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 35, no. 1 (2005): 13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501670500191488>

<sup>48</sup> Ville Häkkinen, “Redescribing the Nation,” 665.

way to restore the nation and recover from the humiliation of World War I. Hungary joined the League of Nations in September of 1922, and hoped for a chance of Trianon being revised. The *Numerus Clausus*, with its obvious target of limiting the number of Jewish students attending university in Hungary, would be perceived as violating Sections VI and VII on minorities and nationality from the Treaty of Trianon. Modifications to the *Numerus Clausus* law were done to avoid reproach from the League of Nations and to better their chances of revision to the Treaty of Trianon.<sup>49</sup> Hungary also had to be wary of the Little Entente Pact, comprising their bordering countries of Yugoslavia, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. One of the statements within the pact states that all parties involved are “Being concerned for the safeguarding of peace in all circumstances, and to assure the evolution toward a real stabilization of conditions in Central Europe and to insure that the common interests of their three countries are respected.”<sup>50</sup> The Little Entente wanted to prevent revision to the Treaty of Trianon, which would impact their borders if Hungary were able to appeal to the countries involved in the treaty and reclaim their territory, even if it destroys other identities. Dr. Stefan Osuský writes that, “The Little Entente was essentially a defensive construction, because its members knew from what they had escaped and what might again befall them... Hungary since the War had continued at an increased rate the policy of Magyarization of the minorities in what was left of its former territory.”<sup>51</sup>

Following the *Numerus Clausus* between the years 1938 and 1941, Hungary passed several anti-Jewish and racial laws, some of which targeted the Jewish presence and success in the economy. These laws were the undoing of the Jewish Emancipation in 1867, preventing Jews

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<sup>49</sup> Ville Häkkinen, “Redescribing the Nation,” 664.

<sup>50</sup> “The Little Entente Pact” *The American Journal of International Law* 27, no. 3 (1933): 117. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2213488>

<sup>51</sup> Stefan Osuský, “The Little Entente and the League of Nations,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939)* 13, no. 3 (1934): 390. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2602635>

from entering different professions and intermarriage between a Jew and a non-Jew.<sup>52</sup> The Jewish Law that constricted Jewish involvement in the economy, the First Jewish Law, required that Jews could not work in the public sector; this was never fully implemented due to what it would cost the national economy in terms of growth.<sup>53</sup> The racial law, Act IV 1939, was also a major change in legislation and is a part of the Second Jewish law.

Hungary adopted this racial law followed the model of Nazi Germany's Nuremberg Laws, in which "Jewish" became a race rather than a religion. Even the Hungarian Jews who fully assimilated in all aspects of society including converting to Christianity were classified in race as Jewish. Professor Yehuda Don, specialist in Economic History of Jewish Communities, states that through Act IV "Jewishness became an unavoidable destiny irrespective of religious affiliation."<sup>54</sup> The Second Jewish Law also made it so no Jew could gain citizenship in Hungary.<sup>55</sup> The Third Jewish Law would be enacted in 1941, banning mixed marriages as well as punishing sexual relations between a Jewish man and gentile woman with prison sentences.<sup>56</sup> With similar anti-Semitic laws to Nazi Germany in the late 1930s, there needs to be an established understanding of the connection between Hungary and Nazi Germany leading up to German occupation, with the knowledge that revision of Trianon and anti-Semitism were rooted deep in Hungarian politics during this time. László Váradi shares three phases in which the German-Hungarian relationship can be divided into: economic trade, expansion and annexation of land, and German pressure.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> "Timeline of Events: Anti-Jewish Laws in Hungary," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <https://www.ushmm.org/learn/timeline-of-events/1933-1938/anti-jewish-laws-in-hungary>

<sup>53</sup> Yehuda Don, "The Economic Effect of Antisemitic Discrimination: Hungarian Anti-Jewish Legislation, 1938-1994," *Jewish Social Studies* 48, no. 1 (1986): 74.

<sup>54</sup> Yehuda Don, "The Economic Effect of Antisemitic Discrimination," 66.

<sup>55</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 375.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid* 383.

<sup>57</sup> László Váradi, "The Hungarian Jewry in the Twentieth Century," 417.

Under Prime Minister Count István Bethlen in the late 1920s, Hungary established friendly relations with Italy under fascist dictator Mussolini. Both countries were scorned by the Paris Peace Conference: Italy wanted the land they were promised for switching to the side of the Entente Powers, and Hungary wanted the Treaty of Trianon to be revised to grant them their lost territory back.<sup>58</sup> Because of this, Hungary and Italy had a mutual understanding and support for each other. Prime Minister Bethlen was in power when the *Numerus Clausus* law was amended, and he “encouraged Jewish participation in public life.”<sup>59</sup> While he held anti-Semitic views, Bethlen understood the importance of Jewish populations to the economy of Hungary.<sup>60</sup> Bethlen was succeeded briefly by Gyula Károlyi from 1931 to 1932, followed by a considerably more radical figure who had connections to the German extreme right.

Miklos Horthy appointed Gyula Gömbös as Prime Minister in 1932. The new Prime Minister was a strong Magyar nationalist, to the point of being anti-Habsburg, and was more strongly influenced by his anti-Semitic views compared to Bethlen. Gömbös, with his pro-German rhetoric, was the leader of the Race Defenders Party in the early 1920s to go against Bethlen’s foreign policy, however his actions unintentionally strengthened Horthy’s confidence in Bethlen at the time.<sup>61</sup> Priorities of Gömbös included protecting Austria from annexation and rebuilding the Hungarian military. Similar to Bethlen, Gömbös limited his anti-Semitism in his public platform as he understood the important role Hungarian Jews had in the economy, and introduced no anti-Jewish laws during his time in office. Cartledge includes the following quote from Gömbös’ inaugural speech as Prime Minister, “I say openly and sincerely to the Jews that I have revised my point of view. Those Jews who acknowledge a common fate with the nation I

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<sup>58</sup> Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II*, 49.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid 49.

<sup>60</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 338.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid 340.

regard as my brothers, just like my Magyar brothers.”<sup>62</sup> This appealed supporters of Bethlen who were still embedded in the government and had certain requirements of Gömbös, and it attests to the Prime Minister’s willingness to take slow and steady movement towards becoming a strong fascist state similar to Italy. Gömbös idolized Mussolini’s Italy, and was the first European leader to meet with Hitler.<sup>63</sup> Hungary had a stronger connection with Italy, as Hungarian relations with Nazi Germany started as a trade agreement. By 1936, Germany was Hungary's main trading partner.<sup>64</sup>

An issue of contention between Hungary and Nazi Germany was the independence of Austria; Horthy refused to assist Hitler with the takeover of Austria or Czechoslovakia, for which in return Hungary would recover territory.<sup>65</sup> Italy originally supported Austrian independence as well, but dropped it in their alliance with Germany. The Anschluss made Nazi Germany a neighbor to Hungary, and the Nazi influence took hold through propaganda and acceptance of being a part of the German orbit.<sup>66</sup> Hungary wanted to recover their lost land while refusing to aid expansion efforts without being taken over by Nazi Germany. Through the First Vienna Award in November of 1938, Nazi Germany and Italy forced Czechoslovakia to cede land to Hungary, nearly 12,000 kilometers.<sup>67</sup> This shows the formation of Hungarian dependence on Germany this time, both politically in order to regain land within the continent and economically, as Hungary had struggled severely in the Great Depression, and how Hungary owed Germany for this land. This dependence is emphasized as there being no choice; Katona

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid 346.

<sup>63</sup> Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II*, 53.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid 54.

<sup>65</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 370.

<sup>66</sup> George M. Katona, “Hungary in the German Orbit,” *Foreign Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1939): 599  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20028944>

<sup>67</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 374.

writes that, “privately almost everybody regrets that there is no alternative to German ‘friendship,’” and that the best method to appease Nazi Germany was through the execution of anti-Semitic laws.<sup>68</sup> While Hungary may have been stuck in Nazi Germany’s web in the late 1930s, this does not account for their previous acts of anti-Semitism such as the *Numerus Clausus*, driven by their nationalist ideals of the Hungarian identity and the supposed constant threats to it.

Upon Germany’s invasion of Poland and declarations of war, Hungary at first remained neutral in action. This neutrality began Germany’s pressure on Hungary for resources, war aid, and to enter through Hungary to invade other countries; there was promise of reward for Hungary’s abandonment of neutrality with the Second Vienna Award, through which Hitler helped Hungary regain land in Transylvania once again.<sup>69</sup> Nazi Germany could help Hungary regain land, but it would only be permanent with German success in the war, and Hungary owed the Nazis for recovery of 53 percent of their lost land.<sup>70</sup> Hungary ultimately joins the Axis Powers.

The Third Jewish law marked the start of deportations, targeting non-Hungarian Jews. Germany increased their demands that Hungary address the Jewish question through truly executing the Jewish Laws, and deportations, which Hungary was not prepared to do; Horthy rejected the German demands.<sup>71</sup> This contributed to worsening relations in addition to the economic demands Nazi Germany made of Hungary. Hungarian Jews and other Jewish groups who escaped deportation in surrounding countries were temporarily safe in Hungary due to Horthy’s lenience and view of them being useful to the economy. This reluctance to deal with

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<sup>68</sup> George M. Katona, “Hungary in the German Orbit,” 610.

<sup>69</sup> Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II*, 130.

<sup>70</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 382.

<sup>71</sup> Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II*, 245-246.

Jewish populations along with Hungary's attempts to exit the war led to Hitler forcing Horthy to allow the Nazi German occupation of Hungary to happen at risk of force if not permitted.<sup>72</sup> The Nazis arrived in Budapest in March of 1944, and quickly began to address the Jewish problem. Nearly half a million Hungarian Jews were deported to concentration camps that year, and this is overlooked in favor of the country being victim to German takeover.

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### **Conclusion**

Post-Trianon Hungary's goal of regaining territory to restore Greater Hungary fell in line with Nazi Germany expansion over the European continent, and both shared a history of anti-Semitism. While Horthy's Hungary resisted deporting Hungarian Jews until German Occupation, they still corroborated with Nazi Germany before, implementing anti-Jewish laws to a significant extent; Hungarian Jews were temporarily saved for being viewed as tools of economic growth. That is a truth Hungary struggles with today, and it is too easy to place the blame and anti-Semitism entirely on Germany.

Different groups rose to prominence throughout the interwar period, some of which align with radical groups in Hungary today. The extreme right in Hungary is associated with racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and revisionism; in the case of the Jobbik party, they are more implicit with their views, using nativist rhetoric.<sup>73</sup> With the proper address of Hungarian History rather than painting themselves as victims, groups like the Jobbik Party would not have such a stronghold in the government.

The toxicity of Hungarian Nationalism has constantly had a new target: surrounding ethnic minorities, Hungarian Jews and Jewish people who did not assimilate, socialists' post-

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<sup>72</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 396.

<sup>73</sup> Phillip Karl, "Network Analysis of Right-Wing Extremism in Hungary," 225.

Communist rule, and now immigrants from the Middle East. This ongoing problem coupled with controversy in recent public memorials is bringing attention to Hungary as leaning alt-right, and potentially presenting danger towards minorities. Referring back to the German Occupation Memorial, Orban supported its creation in 2014, depicting Hungary as a victim of takeover without addressing their role as a perpetrator and to further consolidate strong pride in their country for surviving not only Nazi Germany but potential waves of immigrants to come, who would disturb the Hungarian identity. With eyes on Hungary, the country cannot get away with revision any longer.

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