



DEVELOPMENTS IN HUNGARY

Panelist Biographies

Ms. Susan Corke

Susan Corke is a senior fellow and director of the bipartisan Transatlantic Democracy Working Group (TDWG) with The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). Susan has been a skilled expert and practitioner for 15 years in protecting human rights, promoting tolerance, and supporting democratic reform on the ground in Europe and Eurasia. Prior to joining GMF, she was director of Countering Antisemitism and Extremism at Human Rights First, and director of programs for Europe, Eurasia, and Southeast Asia at Freedom House. Before joining Freedom House, Susan was the deputy director for European Affairs in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) at the U.S. Department of State. She also served in stints at U.S. Embassy Moscow, U.S. Embassy Prague, the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and in the Bureau of Public Affairs as a Presidential Management Fellow. She holds a M.A. in International Affairs from George Washington University, and a B.A. from the College of William & Mary.

Ms. Melissa Hooper

Melissa Hooper is a lawyer, rule of law expert, and the Director of Human Rights and Civil Society at Human Rights First. She is also a Steering Member of the Transatlantic Democracy Working Group of the German Marshall Fund. Before joining Human Rights First, she was Regional Director for the American Bar Association Rule of Law initiative overseeing programming in Russia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan. For the last three years, her work has focused on documenting the trend of authoritarian-style policies in Hungary and Poland affecting free media, independent judiciaries, and a strong civil society, analyzing Russian influence and interference in Central and Eastern Europe, and identifying leverage points for United States policymakers in combatting these trends. She holds a Juris Doctor from University of California at Berkeley.

Mr. Dalibor Rohac

Dalibor Rohac is a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he studies political economy of the European Union. He is also a visiting fellow at the University of Buckingham, Institute of Economic Affairs in London, and a research associate at the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies in Brussels. Before joining AEI, Rohac was affiliated with the Cato Institute and served as deputy director at the London-based Legatum Institute. Rohac has written about European affairs for The Washington Post, The NYTimes, Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal, Foreign Affairs, and many other outlets. His book, *Towards an Imperfect Union: A Conservative Case for the EU*, was included on Foreign Affairs magazine's list of best books of 2016. Rohac holds a Ph.D. in political economy from King's College London, a M.Phil. in economics from the University of Oxford, a M.A. in economics from George Mason University, and a B.A. in economics from Charles University in Prague.

Department of State Materials

Secretary Pompeo's Meeting with Hungarian Foreign Minister Szijjarto

April 4, 2019

The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:

Secretary Michael Pompeo met with Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto in Washington on Wednesday. The two discussed areas of mutual interest and opportunities for our countries to increase cooperation. The Secretary underscored the importance of maintaining a vibrant civil society. The Secretary also emphasized the urgent need to help Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression, including the importance of facilitating and supporting Ukraine's engagement with NATO, and the need to counter Russian malign influence in Central Europe. Both sides agreed that Europe should diversify its sources of energy and discussed increasing U.S. investment in Hungary. The Secretary and Foreign Minister committed to concluding a Defense Cooperation Agreement in the days ahead.¹

Statement from Ambassador David B. Cornstein on the Signing of the Defense Cooperation Agreement between the United States and Hungary

*April 4, 2019
Washington D.C.*

“I commend Foreign Minister Szijjártó and the Hungarian government for signing the Defense Cooperation Agreement today on the margins of the Meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in Washington, DC. This agreement will modernize our previous status of forces agreement to reflect new realities in defense, and represents another positive step forward in the journey that the Hungarian people began 30 years ago when they chose to end Communism and embrace liberty. We look forward to an even stronger security relationship with Hungary, and we hope the Hungarian Parliament will complete its approval of the agreement as soon as possible.”²

¹ <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/05/282832.htm>

² <https://hu.usembassy.gov/signing-of-the-defense-cooperation-agreement/>

Remarks by Ambassador David B. Cornstein to Commemorate the 20th Anniversary of Hungary's Accession to NATO

March 13, 2019

National Assembly of Hungary

Thank you Speaker Kővér and to all of the distinguished guests and panelists.

I am honored to join you today for this commemoration, and on behalf of the American people, I thank the Hungarian people for your friendship and partnership as Allies over the last 20 years. I am committed to making this partnership even stronger, and I am confident that it will grow as we move forward together.

One of the many things I admire about the Hungarian people is your deep awareness of your history and your commitment to remembering the formative events of your past. I know that later this week you will celebrate the memory of your brave ancestors who heeded the call for freedom and liberty in 1848.

Our presence here today is also about remembering some important events for Hungary—events that are again rooted in your enduring desire for freedom and liberty.

30 years ago, the Hungarian people—and many of your neighbors across Central and Eastern Europe— chose to end the darkness of communism and pursue a path of liberty, free from government control over what you say, how you worship, the way you make a living, and where you travel.

20 years ago, Hungary chose to defend and solidify the choice for liberty by joining NATO, after 85% of Hungarians who participated in a national referendum said yes to joining the alliance.

We recognize that the last 30 years have not been without hardship and challenge, but there is no doubt that these events were “wins” for Hungary. Hungarians are safer, freer, more prosperous, and have more opportunities because of these choices.

And the United States and other NATO members are better and stronger because we have Hungary as an ally.

The Hungarian government has clearly honored the will of its people by taking an active and committed role in NATO over the last 20 years. To cite just a few examples:

At the moment, close to 1000 Hungarian soldiers are serving side-by-side with allied troops in NATO, EU, and multi-lateral peacekeeping missions that make our countries safer;

To make the alliance stronger, Hungary is actively modernizing its military and purchasing NATO-compatible equipment, and is on track to meet its NATO commitment to spend 2% of its GDP on defense;

Hungary is hosting the Heavy Airlift Wing at Papa Air Base, which provides critical support to NATO operations;

Hungary is also home to NATO's Center of Excellence for Military Medicine and the NATO Force Integration Unit;

And we welcome Hungary's initiative to host a NATO Regional Special Operations Command Center and establish a NATO Multi-National Division Central that will further facilitate NATO coordination and operations in the future.

Hungary is also strengthening its bilateral security relationships with NATO members. I am pleased that we've been able to conclude negotiations for a new Defense Cooperation Agreement between the United States and Hungary, which will bring our security cooperation into the 21st century and prepare us for the challenges that we face together as allies. I look forward to signing the final agreement soon.

These contributions demonstrate Hungary's commitment to the NATO alliance, and the Hungarian people are rightly proud of this work and remain highly supportive of NATO, based on the public opinion research that we see.

However, the story isn't over. The world is full of new and complex challenges to our alliance—challenges to our values, to our liberty, to our sovereignty.

We cannot take for granted the benefits that flow from the important choices that Hungarians made which led to the pivotal changes in 1989 and 1999.

There are more choices ahead.

I've heard some remark that Russia is not a military threat to Hungary, because the two countries don't share a border. However, in today's world, it's a mistake to think only in terms of tanks crossing a border. All NATO members face aggressive cyber security threats and misinformation campaigns from Russia designed to destabilize us, weaken our unity, and disrupt our democratic processes.

Moreover, Hungary does share a border with Ukraine, a country that faces the full brunt of Russian aggression on a daily basis, from cyber-attacks and rampant misinformation campaigns to violent provocations and outright conventional warfare. Already more than 10,000 Ukrainians have lost their lives and 1.6 million Ukrainians have been driven from their homes. A close and high-level NATO relationship with Kyiv is in every ally's interest.

As Secretary of State Pompeo said during his historic visit here last month,

“Central Europeans should be under no illusions about Putin's intentions. An authoritarian Russia is not interested in the freedom and sovereignty of smaller nations.”

We must resist the Kremlin’s cynical attempts sow discord in our alliance, whether it is through disinformation campaigns or attempts to mimic Western institutions to buy influence in the region. Even the best of allies will occasionally have disagreements, but we cannot lose sight of what makes us strong—our unity as NATO allies.

China does not share a border with anyone in NATO, and yet it also threatens freedom in the region. Like Russia, it is an authoritarian power that does not share the aspirations of freedom embodied in NATO, and it will use its economic power to subvert the rule of law and achieve political power. The United States has made no secret about its concerns over the role certain suppliers may play in our growing telecom networks. It is absolutely vital that every NATO member ensure that the networks we use to share sensitive security and defense information are secure.

And we’ve all witnessed the threat from terrorism, in the United States, in Europe, and in many other places. Following the devastating terrorist attacks of September 11, NATO invoked its Article 5 collective defense provision for the first time. We will never forget that Hungary, as one of NATO’s newest members, voted to stand with the United States in that decision. Terrorism remains a threat, and as allies we must stay unified and vigilant.

NATO as a whole is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, and it is without a doubt the most powerful and successful military alliance in world history. No other institution or country or geopolitical power can offer the security and respect for sovereignty and personal liberty that NATO offers. Just as the United States was surrounded by allies in the difficult and painful aftermath of September 11, Hungary can also rest assured that, as a NATO member, it too will never stand alone in its defense.

NATO is a win for all of us, and we are honored to stand with you and work with you as we continue to strengthen it for the future.

Thank you.³

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo visited Budapest

February 11-12, 2019

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo visited Budapest on February 11-12, 2019.

The Secretary was greeted upon arrival at the Liszt Ferenc International Airport by Chargé d’Affaires David Kostelancik, Hungarian Minister of State Levente Magyar, and Head of Protocol of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Edina Pasztor.

³ <https://hu.usembassy.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-david-b-cornstein-to-commemorate-the-20th-anniversary-of-hungarys-accession-to-nato/>

On the way to the Embassy, Secretary Pompeo visited the Statue of President Ronald Reagan on Szabadság tér. The statue was unveiled by former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2011, 100 years after the birth of President Reagan, who is remembered for the encouragement he gave Hungary and other former Central and Eastern Europe Soviet satellite states to end communism and regain their freedom. On the 30th anniversary of the fall of Communism, it was even more important for the secretary to pay his tribute.

After visiting the Reagan statue, Secretary Pompeo was welcomed in our building by our Embassy staff, who were all very eager and excited to meet the State Department’s “big boss”. Secretary Pompeo thanked us for our dedicated work and emphasized the importance of working together as a team. Secretary Pompeo also opened the floor to questions, and even spent time for some photos and selfies.

During his visit at the Embassy, Secretary Pompeo also learned about the history of our building. Chargé d’Affaires David Kostelancik showed him the former office of Swiss Consul Carl Lutz, who helped save as many as 50,000 Hungarian Jews from deportation during World War II, and the living quarters of Cardinal József Mindszenty, who took refuge in our building during the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. For its unique architectural design and historical significance, the Chancery has been included in the U.S. Secretary of State’s Register for Culturally Significant Property in 2016.

During his busy day, the Secretary also met with representatives from Hungarian civil society organizations. During discussions with representatives of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, and K-monitor, topics included our shared values, transparency, rule of law, and media freedom.

Later in the afternoon Secretary Pompeo met with Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto and discussed many issues, including energy diversification, defense cooperation, NATO, Ukraine, trade relations, and democratic values. Afterwards they held a joint press conference in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Defense Minister Benko also hosted Secretary Pompeo for a productive meeting where they agreed to deepen our defense cooperation. The secretary thanked Hungary for its ongoing efforts to support our alliance and shared commitment to NATO.

And to close out the evening, Secretary Pompeo met with Prime Minister Orbán and discussed strengthening the U.S.–Hungarian relationship, regional issues, Western Balkans, energy security and the transatlantic relationship.⁴

⁴ <https://hu.usembassy.gov/secretary-pompeos-visit-in-budapest/>

Hungary: Central European University (CEU)

*December 3, 2018
Washington, DC*

The United States Government is disappointed that the Hungarian government and CEU have not concluded an agreement that would allow the university to continue its U.S.-accredited programs in Hungary.

Since the Hungarian government amended its law on higher education in April 2017, we have worked diligently with both parties to find a solution that would allow CEU to preserve these programs in Hungary.

The United States values the role that CEU and other American educational institutions play in building connections between the Hungarian and American people and strengthening the transatlantic bond. The departure of these U.S.-accredited programs from Hungary will be a loss for the CEU community, for the United States, and for Hungary.⁵

Hungary: Lyubishin Extradition

STATEMENT BY HEATHER NAUERT, SPOKESPERSON

November 27, 2018

The United States requested the extradition of two suspected Russian arms dealers, Vladimir Lyubishin Sr. and Vladimir Lyubishin Jr., pursuant to the U.S.-Hungary Extradition Treaty. Hungary denied the U.S. request and instead extradited the suspects to Russia, where it is unclear whether they will face trial.

The United States is disappointed in the Hungarian government's decision to extradite the Lyubishins to Russia. The United States had a strong case, built in cooperation with members of Hungarian law enforcement. Hungary is a partner and friend of the United States, but this decision raises questions about Hungary's commitment to law enforcement cooperation. This decision is not consistent with our law enforcement partnership, undercuts the work that our agencies had done together to build this case, and will make citizens in the United States, Hungary, and the world less safe.⁶

⁵ <https://hu.usembassy.gov/press-statement-central-european-university-ceu/>

⁶ <https://hu.usembassy.gov/hungary-lyubishin-extradition/>

U.S. Embassy Statement on Central European University

#IstandwithCEU



October 25, 2018

Ambassador David B. Cornstein stated that “CEU remains a priority for the U.S. Government and has overwhelming bipartisan support in the United States. I understand CEU’s position—prolonged uncertainty is not sustainable for an academic institution. However, a solution is still possible. There is a small window to resolve this, but it needs to happen fast. I am working with both parties to continue the negotiations and find an acceptable resolution before December 1.”⁷

Secretary Pompeo's Meeting with Hungarian Foreign Minister Szijjarto

May 30, 2018

Secretary Michael Pompeo met with Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto in Washington on Wednesday. The two discussed areas of mutual interest and opportunities for our countries to increase cooperation. The Secretary underscored the importance of maintaining a vibrant civil society. The Secretary also emphasized the urgent need to help Ukraine in the face of Russian

⁷ <https://hu.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-statement-on-central-european-university/>

aggression, including the importance of facilitating and supporting Ukraine's engagement with NATO, and the need to counter Russian malign influence in Central Europe. Both sides agreed that Europe should diversify its sources of energy and discussed increasing U.S. investment in Hungary. The Secretary and Foreign Minister committed to concluding a Defense Cooperation Agreement in the days ahead.⁸

U.S. Embassy Statement

May 23, 2018

Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Dr. Wess Mitchell, visited Hungary today and met with top Hungarian government officials as well as members of civil society. This visit continues a series of recent high-level engagements between American and Hungarian officials, and reflects our deep and longstanding bilateral ties.

Dr. Mitchell had productive discussions with Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó and Defense Minister Tibor Benkő on a range of shared interests, including deepening security cooperation, increasing energy diversity, and demonstrating the importance of NATO's unified support for Ukraine as a victim of Russia's aggression. Dr. Mitchell stated that the United States and Hungary are bound together as allies in NATO and are jointly committed to a shared set of democratic values and freedoms.

In addition, Dr. Mitchell met with representatives from civil society, who play an important role in Hungary's civic life and care deeply about the future of their country.⁹

⁸ <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/05/282832.htm>

⁹ <https://hu.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-statement/>



HELSINKI COMMISSION

Recent Helsinki Commission Materials Related to Hungary

[Helsinki Commission Leaders Regret Closure of Central European University in Budapest](#) – November 2018

Sen. Roger Wicker (MS) and Sen. Ben Cardin (MD) issued a statement regarding the closing of Central European University in Hungary because of restrictions placed by the Government of Hungary.

[Viewing Security Comprehensively](#) – September 2018

Helsinki Commissioners consistently emphasize the linkages between the various dimensions of security in all aspects of their work, including efforts to condemn torture; defend the rights of a free press; protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in the fight against terrorism; or underline the importance of individual liberty and the rule of law as the foundations of the NATO alliance.

[Chairman Wicker Introduces Resolution Emphasizing Importance of NATO to Regional Security](#) – June 2018

Helsinki Commission Chairman Sen. Roger Wicker (MS) introduced a bipartisan resolution (S.Res.557) emphasizing the importance of NATO to the collective security of the transatlantic region and urging its member states to work together to strengthen the alliance at the July 11-12 NATO summit in Brussels.

[How to Get Human Rights Abusers and Kleptocrats Sanctioned Under the Global Magnitsky Act](#) – March 2018

The workshop provided human rights organizations, transparency advocates, and congressional staff with the tools they need to effectively petition the U.S. government to review and potentially designate individuals and organizations for sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act.

[Democracy in Central & Eastern Europe](#) – July 2017

Speakers examined the current state of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and analyze efforts to address the region's challenges. They will also discuss the declaration adopted on June 1 by civil society representatives, members of business communities, and others, which seeks to reinvigorate the region's democratic trajectory, support democratic and economic reform, and strengthen the transatlantic partnership.

[Minority Faiths Under the Hungarian Religion Law](#) – June 2017

On April 25, 2017, the European Court on Human Rights announced a judgment in the case of the Hungarian Evangelical Fellowship v. Hungary. This decision followed a 2014 finding by the Court that Hungary's 2011 law on religion violated the rights to freedom of association and freedom of religion. In light of the failure of Hungary to end continuing violations, the April judgment awarded the Evangelical Fellowship €3 million in damages.

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

The Holocaust in Hungary: Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers do not provide an exhaustive history of the Holocaust in Hungary. Rather, they address several salient issues often presented as “controversial.” In fact, the answers are fully supported by ample contemporary documentation from the period.

The Museum has also published two leading publications that speak to these and other issues: *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary*, edited by Randolph L. Braham, and *The Holocaust in Hungary*, by Zoltán Vági, László Csósz, and Gábor Kádár.

1. What were the major events and turning points of 19th and 20th century Hungarian history that provide the context for understanding what happened in Hungary during the Holocaust?
2. Was antisemitism present in Hungary before the German occupation of the country in March 1944?
3. Did Hungary implement any official antisemitic policies before German forces occupied the country in March 1944?
4. Were Hungarian authorities involved in the mass murder of Jews before the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944?
5. Did Nazi Germany play a role in Hungary’s antisemitic policies before the German occupation?
6. What was the Hungarian labor service? What was the fate of Jewish labor servicemen?
7. What role did Hungarian authorities play in the ghettoization and deportation of the Jews?
8. How aware was Hungary’s leadership of German extermination policies toward the Jews?
9. What responsibility did Miklós Horthy bear in the deportation of Hungarian Jews? What decisions did he make?
10. What degree of continuity of cadres existed between Hungary’s pre- and post-German occupation governments and public administration?

1. What were the major events and turning points of 19th and 20th century Hungarian history that provide the context for understanding what happened in Hungary during the Holocaust?

- **1848–49 Anti-Habsburg Revolution:** Hungary failed to gain its independence from the Habsburg Empire despite a year-and-a-half-long armed conflict against the empire's Austrian rulers and against Russian forces brought in to put down the rebellion.
- **1867 Creation of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy:** The Habsburgs, weakened after the military was defeated by the Prussians in 1866, were forced to reach a compromise with the Hungarian political elite, providing broad autonomy, with the exception of foreign and military affairs, to the Hungarian half of the country.
- **1918–1920 Collapse of Austria-Hungary:** Following defeat in World War I, Habsburg rule ended and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy disintegrated. Through the Trianon Peace Treaty, Hungary lost two-thirds of its prewar territory and more than half of its population to neighboring successor states, principally to Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. After a short-lived communist dictatorship in 1919, an autocratic, right-wing political regime was established by Miklós Horthy, who maintained the position of head of state (regent) until October 1944.
- **1938–1941 Territorial Expansion of Hungary:** Aligning itself with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, Hungary regained portions of the territories lost after World War I, participating in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia (1938 and 1939), Romania (1940), and Yugoslavia (1941).
- **1939–1945 World War II:** Hungary joined the Nazi-led Anti-Comintern Pact (1939) and Tripartite Pact (alliance) of Germany, Italy, and Japan (1940). In June 1941, the Hungarian army participated in the Axis invasion of the USSR. With the assent of Hungarian chief of state Regent Miklós Horthy, German forces occupied Hungary unopposed in March 1944. Despite massive military losses, Hungary continued to fight as part of the Axis, leading to total military defeat and occupation of the country by the Red Army.
- **1945–49 Communist Takeover:** The communist takeover of Hungary and suppression of all opposition forces was completed.
- **1956 Revolution:** An anti-communist uprising and attempt to remove Hungary from the Warsaw Pact was crushed by Soviet troops.
- **1989–1990 End of Communist Dictatorship:** After the fall of communism, a multiparty parliamentary democracy was established.

2. Was antisemitism present in Hungary before the German occupation of the country in March 1944?

Yes. Like many of the countries in Eastern and Central Europe, Hungary had a long tradition of antisemitism, which was present not only in public discourse and political life but also among cultural elites and on the street. Hundreds of antisemitic pogroms, massacres, atrocities, and assaults occurred in Hungary during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Tens of thousands of civilians participated in antisemitic actions in at least 30 cities during the 1848–49 Hungarian revolution against the Habsburgs and Russia. Although the era of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867–1918) was a time of major change, as the country's post-feudal system was transformed—with significant involvement from the Jewish population—into a modern, capitalist economy, the process produced many beneficiaries and many losers, resulting in increased social tensions. Large groups directed their frustration and anxiety toward the Jews. Antisemitic violence erupted in the early 1880s and flooded the country in the wake of the 1882–83 Tiszaeszlár “blood libel” case, in which Jews were falsely accused of the ritual murder of a Christian girl. Jews and their property were attacked by mobs in over 200 cities and villages. The riots were beyond the capacity of some counties' police forces to control, and martial law had to be introduced, bringing in the army to stop the violence. The surge of anti-Jewish passion led to the establishment of the National Antisemitic Party in 1883, which succeeded in gaining 17 seats in Parliament during the 1884 elections. This party was soon marginalized, however, and lost its place in the legislature.

Political antisemitism increased further at the beginning of the 20th century, stimulated by the integrated impact of anti-capitalist frustration, xenophobic hatred, religious anti-Judaism, and superstition. By 1918, the “Jewish question” had become one of the most hotly debated issues in the country. Due to wartime shortages and famine, riots erupted and turned into antisemitic pogroms. Law and order evaporated with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in the fall of 1918, and locals again attacked their Jewish neighbors in the countryside. During the short-lived communist dictatorship in 1919, Hungary's new Bolshevik authorities—including many functionaries of Jewish origin—persecuted people they considered capitalists, Jews and non-Jews alike. The fall of the communist regime after a few months and the foundation of Miklós Horthy's right-wing autocratic regime resulted in a new wave of violence under the pretext of avenging the period of “Jewish” Bolshevik rule. Horthy's paramilitary units killed Jews by the hundreds. Murders, lynchings, pogroms, and torture occurred at dozens of locations and were in many cases initiated by the local population.

Many influential, far-right, antisemitic organizations and paramilitary formations were formed, with the elite of the new regime among their ranks. One of them, the Association of Awakening Hungarians, demanded the expulsion of all European Jews from the continent as early as November 1919, 13 years before the Nazi rise to power in Germany. Antisemitism became the ideological cornerstone of the Horthy system. At the same time, the consolidation of the regime's power required an end to the violence, and steps were taken to dissolve paramilitary units. Anti-Jewish aggression did not vanish completely, however. Beating up Jewish students remained a ritual of university fraternities throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

3. Did Hungary implement any official antisemitic policies before German forces occupied the country in March 1944?

Yes, Hungary passed one of the first antisemitic laws in Europe in 1920 and issued nearly 300 anti-Jewish laws and decrees before the March 1944 German occupation.

“Concerning the Jewish question, for all my life, I have been an antisemite, I have never made any contact with Jews. I have found it intolerable that here, in Hungary, every single factory, bank, asset, shop, theater, newspaper, trade, etc., is in Jewish hands.” With these words, Regent Miklós Horthy described his own prejudice in 1940 in a letter to then-Prime Minister Pál Teleki. It is not surprising, therefore, that shortly after Horthy came to power, Hungary enacted the so-called Numerus Clausus Act of 1920, which restricted the number of Jews who could be admitted to higher education and effectively ended legal equality of Jews in Hungary. As a result of the act, the number of Jewish students in Hungarian institutions fell from over 30 percent to under 8 percent. This discriminatory measure was modified somewhat in 1928 due to international pressure, but it was never revoked.

The increasingly antisemitic international political environment and the gradual radicalization of Hungarian internal politics in the 1930s resulted in the enactment of a systematic series of anti-Jewish laws. The Hungarian Parliament passed 22 antisemitic laws between May 1938 and the German occupation in early 1944. Some of these laws were explicitly discriminatory against Jews, while others did not specifically mention Jews but had the greatest discriminatory impact on the Jewish community. An additional 267 anti-Jewish ministerial and governmental decrees were issued during the same period. These decrees severely restricted the number of Jews permitted to occupy intellectual posts, serve in various free professions, and hold state-sponsored jobs. Jews were excluded from municipal bodies, and many were deprived of the right to vote. Marriages and sexual relationships between Jews and Gentiles were banned. Jewish agricultural real estate was targeted for confiscation. Jews were excluded from service in the army but were forced to perform unarmed military labor

service instead. The number of jobs lost by Jews by 1943 is estimated to have been between 40,000 and 90,000.

The so-called “Second Jewish Law,” passed by Parliament in 1939, placed law-making power concerning Jewish emigration in the hands of the government instead of Parliament and declared an official policy of forced Jewish emigration. During a meeting between Hungarian Prime Minister Pál Teleki (1939–1941) and Adolf Hitler in November 1940, Teleki was the one who actually advocated for the necessity of expulsion of all Jews from Europe.

In implementing the anti-Jewish laws, there were many instances in which overzealous local authorities took measures that exceeded even the harsh provisions of the laws themselves, exceeding the government’s expectations. Jews were banned from local spas, markets, or the centralized food distribution system in many localities. While some decrees were annulled by the government, the local authorities’ enthusiasm and antisemitic activism foreshadowed the efficiency of the deportation campaign of 1944.

4. Were Hungarian authorities involved in the mass murder of Jews before the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944?

Yes, Hungarian authorities murdered Jews on several occasions before the German occupation. More than 20,000 Jews were deported to German-occupied Ukraine by Hungarian authorities in the summer of 1941, with full knowledge of the fate that awaited them. In January 1942, nearly 1,000 Jews were murdered by the Hungarian military and gendarmerie in Újvidék (currently Novi Sad, Serbia) and its vicinity. Many Jews were also killed in the labor service by Hungarian army personnel.

In June 1941, Hungary joined Nazi Germany’s military attack against the Soviet Union. Leaders of the army and public administration in Subcarpathia, which Hungary had annexed in 1939 when Germany dismantled Czechoslovakia, recommended that Jews of “unsettled citizenship” (mainly Jewish refugees from Poland and the Soviet Union) be pushed across the border into Ukraine. The Hungarian government approved the plan in early July. There is no documentary evidence of Regent Horthy’s direct involvement in this decision, but it is highly unlikely that an action of this magnitude would have been launched without his approval. About 22,000 Jews were rounded up by Hungarian authorities and deported in July–August 1941. Most of the Jews were refugees, but many Hungarian citizens were also dragged from their homes and sent off. Approximately 100–120 Jewish communities were impacted by these draconian measures; in some villages on the eastern border, every single member of the local Jewish community was rounded up.

The deportees were transported across the border and simply abandoned there. Many were killed by local Ukrainians. Most of the deportees ended up in Kamenets-Podolski, where German and Ukrainian units massacred them, along with local Jews, on August 27–30. More than 23,000 people were murdered in total in this single action, making the Kamenets-Podolski execution the first mass killing operation of over 10,000 victims in the Holocaust. Jews who managed to avoid the Kamenets-Podolski massacre were herded into ghettos in Nadvorna, Kolomea, and Stanislavov, where they shared the fate of local Jews: mass execution or deportation by the Germans to the Belzec death camp. The Hungarian government halted these early mass transports in mid-August, due to objections by opposition voices in Parliament and in response to pressure by the Germans who saw the uncontrolled influx of Jews from Hungary into a recently occupied military zone as a security threat. Small-scale deportations actually continued until October 1942. Just 2,000–3,000 Jews managed to escape these early deportations and return to Hungary, many of them smuggled into the country by local non-Jews or individual members of the Hungarian army.

In the southern region of Hungary annexed after the Axis attack on and dismantlement of Yugoslavia, Hungarian military and gendarmerie units, under the pretext of anti-partisan warfare, massacred more than 3,000 men, women, and children on January 21–23, 1942, in the city of Újvidék (today: Novi Sad, Serbia). The victims were predominantly Serbs, but approximately 700 Jews were also murdered. The Hungarian government did not investigate the bloodbath until Horthy and his circle initiated preliminary peace feelers with the western Allies without the knowledge of Nazi Germany. Striving to improve Hungary's international reputation, Regent Horthy, after having stopped the investigation, allowed it to go forward in October 1943, following a series of decisive military losses by the Axis on the Eastern Front. Guilty verdicts were delivered in January 1944, but the four main perpetrators had fled to Germany to escape responsibility. They returned to Hungary as high-ranking SS officers following the German occupation. Defendants who remained in Hungary after the war were sentenced to 10–15 years of prison.

5. Did Nazi Germany play a role in Hungary's antisemitic policies before the German occupation?

The direct role of Germany in Hungarian antisemitic policy was insignificant. For a long time, Nazi Germany did not exert any sort of pressure on Hungary to enact anti-Jewish laws. Hungarian antisemitic legislation was an organic, essentially Hungarian development. Nazi officials even opposed Hungarian deportation plans until 1943. The situation changed in 1943, however. As Germany increased its pressure on Hungary to deport its Jewish population to Auschwitz, Horthy and his circle were seeking ways to enter into negotiations for a separate peace with the western Allies and leave their alliance with Germany. Horthy tried to avoid deporting Hungary's remaining Jewish

population because he was well aware that doing so would hinder his chances of achieving a separate peace.

Hungary's anti-Jewish laws and decrees were deeply rooted in the antisemitic traditions of Hungary and the Christian nationalist, authoritarian ideology of the Horthy system. The Numerus Clausus Act of 1920 was introduced many years before the National Socialist rise to power in Germany. Hungary's antisemitic legislation was an expression of the political elite's own social and political agenda, albeit influenced by the rise of Hitler's Germany and, eventually, by rivalry among Hitler's allied states. German officials actually refused Hungarian deportation initiatives until 1943. High-ranking Hungarian military officials proposed deporting 100,000 Jews in 1942, but the Germans backed away from the plan for logistical reasons.

By 1943, however, Germany was applying increasing pressure on the Hungarian government to ghettoize and then deport its Jewish population. Prime Minister Miklós Kállay (1942–44), supported by the Regent, consistently resisted these German efforts. With Hitler's military defeat seeming ever more likely, and growing awareness that deportation was the equivalent of a death sentence, Horthy and his advisors realized that the deportation of Hungarian Jewry could stymie their effort to contact the Western powers. As a result, Hungary's Jews found themselves in a unique situation. While millions of Jews across Europe were being shot to death or gassed, most Hungarian Jews, though living under harsh daily conditions, did not feel that their lives were in danger. The situation of the labor servicemen, of course, was different, and the atrocities committed by Hungarian authorities in July–August 1941 and January 1942 had already claimed a significant number of Jewish victims.

Although Horthy and his government refused to deport the country's Jews in 1943, the Horthy regime's official propaganda assumed an even harsher antisemitic tone, and the Parliament enacted additional anti-Jewish laws. These developments were rooted in the political elite's own anti-Jewish sentiments and agenda but were also intended to demonstrate to Berlin that the Hungarian government's antisemitic fervor was not subsiding. While the government did not hand over the Hungarian Jews resident in Hungary before the German occupation, it did abandon Hungarian Jews living abroad, blocking their return to the safety of Hungary and leaving them at the mercy of German authorities in Nazi-occupied territories. Return from abroad was permitted only to a narrow group of artists, professionals, businessmen, and their relatives. The government did its best to keep Hungarian Jews living abroad out of the country, which in essence constituted a death sentence for a significant number of men, women and children, and it made every effort to confiscate their property.

6. What was the Hungarian labor service? What was the fate of Jewish labor servicemen?

The labor service was a specific form of Hungarian military duty during World War II. The right-wing nationalist Hungarian state led by Miklós Horthy considered certain minority groups politically unreliable. As war grew more imminent, Hungary, which had already aligned itself with Hitler's Germany and participated in the dismantlement of the territorial settlements reached at the end of World War I, eliminated Jews and other "unreliable elements" from armed military units but forced them to perform unarmed service for the army. The majority of the labor servicemen were Jewish, with conscription for other targeted groups only selectively implemented. Before Germany's occupation of Hungary in March 1944, at least 25,000 Jewish labor servicemen had been killed on the Eastern Front, many by the Hungarian military. At the end of 1944 and early 1945, thousands of surviving Jewish labor servicemen were deported to Germany, where many met their deaths.

The labor service system was introduced in 1939. By law, all Hungarian citizens over the age of 21 deemed unfit for armed service were susceptible to recruitment for labor service. As a result of the political radicalization that took place following Hungary's re-annexations of territories lost in World War I and early Axis military victories, the labor service became an expressly antisemitic institution by 1941, based on collective stigmatization and racial discrimination.

Tens of thousands of labor servicemen were forced to accompany the Hungarian army to the front following the Axis attack on the Soviet Union, and approximately 100,000 men, mostly Jews, had been drafted into labor service units by 1942. Between 25,000 and 40,000 Jewish labor servicemen perished before the German occupation of Hungary—during military action at the front, in Soviet captivity, due to harsh living conditions, and as a result of the brutality with which they were treated by Hungarian guards and officers. Jewish labor servicemen in many units were deprived of food and proper clothing during extraordinarily harsh winters and were the targets of blackmail, robbery, torture, and murder. The Hungarian military occasionally cleared minefields by herding labor servicemen through the danger zones. In April 1943, near the Ukrainian village of Doroshich, Hungarian soldiers set fire to the barracks of labor servicemen ill with typhoid fever and machine-gunned anyone who tried to escape. Approximately 400 people were killed in this single incident.

Paradoxically, labor service offered an avenue for survival between July and October 1944. Despite the otherwise enthusiastic collaboration of the Hungarian state apparatus in the mass deportation of Hungarian Jewry in mid-1944, the Ministry of Defense protected the labor servicemen during this period mainly because of their need for manpower to perform war-related tasks. Following this relatively safe period, however, the lives of the labor servicemen were again at risk. After the German-supported coup of the Arrow Cross (Nyilas) movement that toppled Miklós Horthy from power on

October 15, 1944, Ferenc Szálasi's government handed over 70 labor service companies to the German authorities, along with roughly 35,000 Jewish civilian forced laborers from Budapest, including 10,000 women. A total of 50,000 to 60,000 Jews were forcibly evacuated to Nazi Germany in November and December 1944, through forced marches and deportations by rail. The prisoners who survived the extreme circumstances of slave labor building fortifications along the Hungarian-German border were sent on further death marches in the early spring of 1945 to Mauthausen and other concentration camps, where they also died en masse.

7. What role did Hungarian authorities play in the ghettoization and deportation of the Jews?

Nazi Germany's chief deportation expert SS Lieutenant-Colonel Adolf Eichmann arrived in Budapest on March 19, 1944, together with the German troops who occupied Hungary unopposed. Although his mission was to deport nearly 800,000 Jews, from a territory of some 66,000 square miles, the staff that he brought with him consisted of only 20 officers and adjutants. The assistance of the Hungarian civil administration and law enforcement authorities was thus essential. Eichmann was surprised at how actively and enthusiastically Hungarian authorities collaborated to achieve what was clearly a common purpose, initiating many anti-Jewish measures on their own. As a result, Hungarian Jews were identified, plundered, ghettoized, deported, and murdered with a speed and efficiency virtually unparalleled in the history of the Holocaust.

Regent Miklós Horthy ordered the Hungarian army not to resist the German occupation and appointed a new government consisting of well-known pro-Nazi political figures. The overwhelming majority of Hungarian public servants and law enforcement personnel accepted the situation following the arrival of the Germans as normal and fully cooperated with the Nazis. For many of them, new antisemitic measures were merely a continuation of former anti-Jewish policies, albeit by different means. Only a few administrative officials resigned in protest against the occupation.

The disenfranchisement, plunder, and ghettoization of the Jewish community were carried out by the Hungarian public administration authorities. Law enforcement agencies, including the police and gendarmerie, rounded up the victims, guarded the ghettos and camps, and assisted in organizing and implementing the deportations. The gendarmes, in particular, were notorious for being merciless perpetrators, beating and torturing their victims. The assault on the Jews also required the active assistance of a wide range of ordinary citizens, from medical doctors and midwives, to railroad personnel, to teachers and many others.

State Secretary (the equivalent of a modern deputy minister) László Endre at the Hungarian Ministry of Interior was the key figure orchestrating the ghettoization and deportation process. Formerly a sub-

prefect of Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun county and a renowned administrative expert, he had been an advocate of more radical anti-Jewish practices since the 1920s. Along with many other Hungarian perpetrators, Endre was not simply a collaborator but an active agent taking the initiative to eliminate the country's Jews.

Hungarian authorities acted with an efficiency that surprised even the Germans. Hungary implemented the wearing of the yellow star on April 5, 1944. The Hungarian government decided on the ghettoization on April 7 and began implementing the edict just nine days later, on April 16. By the end of May, ghettos and camps had been created in more than 200 localities. Deportations took place at a torrid pace. In a sordidly cynical rivalry, Eichmann wanted to beat the "record" set by SS-Sturmbannführer Hermann Höfle, who had deported the 275,000 residents of the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka—a distance of the 100 kilometers—over a span of 53 days between July 22 and September 12, 1942. Despite the approaching front lines, the deteriorating infrastructure, and the fact that deportation trains from Hungary to Auschwitz had to travel an average of 400–500 kilometers, Eichmann was successful thanks to the work of his Hungarian accomplices. Hungarian authorities deported 437,402 Hungarian Jews on 147 trains in just 56 days between May 15 and July 9, 1944. Apart from 15,000, all of these deportees were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

8. How aware was Hungary's leadership of German extermination policies toward the Jews?

Hungarian leaders, including the Regent, had been aware of the Nazi "Final Solution" well before the March 1944 German occupation of the country. While the details became even clearer in the following months, the Hungarian elite knew that deported Jews were being murdered.

The first news about the mass murder of Jews was brought to the country by Hungarian soldiers and labor servicemen who witnessed executions of Jews on the Eastern Front. Reports on the massacre of the Jews deported from Hungary in July-August 1941 also reached government circles. Minister of the Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer told one of his underlings in October 1942 that he had stopped the deportations to the east because the Jews were being murdered there.

The network of Hungarian diplomats stationed across Europe also reported back to Budapest on the anti-Jewish policies of the Nazis and their collaborators. Trying to trace the whereabouts of deported Hungarian Jews, they noted that none of them had ever been heard from again. The documents of the Foreign Ministry show that Auschwitz and its subcamps were known locations to the government. In August 1942, an influential Hungarian journalist reported to the Ministry about his confidential

conversations with the Hungarian ambassador to Berlin, Döme Sztójay. Sztójay, who would become Prime Minister after the German occupation, had told the journalist that Hungary should follow the German example and “resettle” the Jews to the east, making “no secret of the fact that this move would not mean resettlement but murder.”

Hitler’s intentions were also communicated directly to Regent Horthy by the Führer himself. According to the minutes of their meeting on April 16–17, 1943, Hitler reprimanded his ally for being too lenient on the Jews. Horthy asked, “What shall he do with them after having almost completely deprived them of their livelihoods—we can’t beat them to death, after all.” German Minister of Foreign Affairs Joachim von Ribbentrop, who was also present, answered, “The Jews must be exterminated or taken to concentration camps.” Hitler raised the situation in Poland as an example to follow: “If the Jews do not want to work there, they are shot to death. If they are incapable of working, they have to perish. They have to be treated like the bacillus of tuberculosis that can infect the healthy body.” Horthy had the Foreign Ministry write up a draft letter to Hitler a few weeks later about the meeting. One sentence reads, “Your Excellency further reproached me because the [Hungarian] government did not implement the extermination of the Jews as thoroughly as it happened in Germany and as it is desirable in other countries as well.” Horthy eventually deleted the sentence, but the original document clearly shows that he understood precisely what Hitler and Ribbentrop told him.

If anyone in the higher circles of Hungarian government had any doubt about the fate of Jews, eyewitness accounts of prisoners who escaped from Auschwitz (the so-called “Auschwitz Protocols”) provided additional proof that the rumors of mass murder were true. The documents reached prominent Hungarian cultural figures and politicians in May–June 1944. Even though Horthy claimed in his postwar memoirs that it was not until early July that he was informed that the deported Jews were being murdered—which would mean that his order on July 6 to stop the deportations had been issued as soon as he learned the terrible reality—there can be no doubt that the Regent was well aware of Nazi extermination policies long before the German occupation of Hungary. Moreover, Horthy personally approved the re-initiation of deportations in August 1944. Horthy himself conceded that at this time he was aware of what was happening to the Jews at their destination.

9. What responsibility did Miklós Horthy bear in the deportation of Hungarian Jews? What decisions did he make?

By maintaining his position after the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944, Horthy legitimized the invasion and its consequences in the eyes of government officials and the public. He clearly knew the brutal details of the ghettoizations and deportations orchestrated by his own government, and he was well aware of the fate of the deportees. He did momentarily suspend the deportations in early July 1944—after the Jews from all regions except the capital city had all been deported, the overwhelming majority to Auschwitz—but he agreed to restart the deportations a few weeks later. The Jews of Budapest were given a temporary reprieve because of national and international political and military considerations, not because of any sense of compassion or responsibility toward the Jewish community.

Despite some hesitation, Regent Miklós Horthy accepted the German occupation of his country. Military resistance was not a realistic option, and the presence of German military forces was welcomed by many as the Red Army drew closer to Hungary's eastern borders. While Horthy could have resigned, he did not, and he ordered Hungary's military not to resist the occupation. He thus remained in his position and appointed the members of the new government, while convincing himself that Germany would remove their troops, restoring Hungary's full sovereignty and freedom of action, as soon as the Jewish community had been eradicated. This price was one he was willing to accept. Horthy withdrew from directly handling Jewish affairs, but he was well aware of what was happening and condoned it.

By early July 1944, Jews had been eliminated from the provinces. The final action would have been the deportation of the Jews of Budapest. However, deterioration of the military situation, increasing international protests, pressure from some individuals around Horthy, and the widely circulated documents describing the mass murder taking place at Auschwitz all combined to influence the Regent to call a halt to the deportations. But he acted half-heartedly and ineffectively. In an early June memorandum to Prime Minister Döme Sztójay, Horthy indicated his desire that certain groups of Jews be spared. Three weeks later, at a meeting of the government on June 26, he repeated this wish, but nothing happened. He finally ordered a halt to the deportations on July 6, and by July 9 they had stopped. His delay in taking firm action cost the lives of several tens of thousands of Hungarian Jewish citizens. He only acted firmly, in fact, when he felt that his authority was being threatened. Convinced that thousands of gendarmes had been concentrated in and around Budapest not to organize the deportation of Jews but to overthrow him, Horthy ordered military troops in from neighboring areas to force the gendarmes out of Budapest. Horthy's actions reveal two things clearly. First, the Nazis

could not proceed with the deportations without Hungarian assistance. Second, Horthy retained significant power and authority even after the German occupation took place. Had he truly opposed the deportation and murder of Hungary's Jewish citizens and acted a few weeks earlier, he could have saved tens of thousands of lives.

The Germans pressured Horthy to restart the deportations. He yielded and promised to give permission for the continuation to begin in late August. On August 19, the Ministry of the Interior informed the Germans that deportations could start again on August 25. With Horthy's approval, the government even drafted a written agreement with the Germans regarding the resumption of deportations. Changes in the military situation redrew the picture, however. Romania withdrew from the Axis and switched over to the Allied side on August 23. With Germany's position in the region radically weakened, Horthy responded in an unusually swift and resolute manner: he informed the Germans that he would not resume the deportations.

After a failed attempt to break away from his alliance with Germany in October 1944, the Nazis forced Horthy to resign and turn power over to the far right Arrow Cross (Nyilas) Party and its leader, Ferenc Szálasi.

10. What degree of continuity of cadres existed between Hungary's pre- and post-German occupation governments and public administration?

The continuity was significant. Although a number of key positions were filled by antisemitic extremists, the majority of the personnel involved in public administration—from the Regent down to village notaries—remained unchanged after the German occupation. The disenfranchisement, plunder, and ghettoization of the Jews and the deportation of close to 440,000 of them was orchestrated and implemented by the country's traditional elite and its rank and file bureaucrats.

The new government led by the former Hungarian ambassador to Berlin, Döme Sztójay, consisted mainly of well-known politicians who had significant experience in government. This enhanced the appearance of legal continuity between the pre- and post-occupation eras. In a cabinet that consisted of ten members, eight had held ministerial posts before. At the demand of the Germans, a "purging" of the upper echelons of the public administration was initiated, and by the time deportations began, 41 of the 61 government-appointed county and town prefects had been changed. Some of them resigned in protest against the policies of the new government. Many local officials were also discharged. By the end of July, 58 new chief constables had been appointed, and 25 cities and towns had installed new mayors. Nonetheless, the majority of high-ranking officials—60 percent of the mayors, 80 percent of the subprefects, and 75 percent of the chief constables at the district level—

remained in place. In fact, the majority of “removals” were really *transfers* from one locality to another or one post to another, which meant that there were significantly fewer actual new appointees than the number of posts affected by new appointments. Furthermore, new appointees generally assumed their positions only during July–August, or even later—after the massive deportations of May through the first week of July had already been carried out. The ghettoization and deportation of Hungarian Jewry was thus not the work of the newcomers but of the rank and file bureaucrats, police, and gendarmerie of the Horthy regime.