

THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

HISTORIOGRAPHY, ARCHIVES RESOURCES
AND REMEMBRANCE

EDITED BY

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ELIE WIESEL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE HOLOCAUST IN ROMANIA

SERIES IN WORLD HISTORY



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABMJ	Chosen People Ministries (former American Board of Mission to the Jews)
AMR	Romanian Military Archives
ANIC	Central Historic Division
ANR	National Agency for Roma
ANRM	Moldova National Archive
BOR	Romanian Orthodox Church
BWA	Baptist World Alliance
CER	Central (Jewish) Office Romania
CNCD	National Centre for Combating Discrimination
CNCR	The National Centre for Roma Culture
CNSAS	Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives
CWI	Christian Witness to Israel
CWI	Christian Witness to Israel
DAOO	State Archive for the Odessa Region
DGP	General Directorate of the Police
DIM	Danish Israel Mission
EHRI	European Holocaust Research Infrastructure
EP	European Parliament
ERTF	European Roma and Travellers Forum
EU	European Union
EVZ	The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future
FCER	Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania
HETI	Holocaust Education Trust Ireland
HU OSA	Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGJ	Inspectorate General of the Gendarmerie
IHCA	International Hebrew Christian Alliance
IHRA	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance
IJS	International Society for Evangelisation of the Jews

IMJA	International Messianic Jewish Alliance
INSHR-EW	Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania
JA	Jewish Agency
JDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
MCA	Ministry of Religious Denominations and Arts
MCNC	Ministry of National Culture and of Religious Denominations
MEN	Ministry of National Education
NAR	National Archives of Romania
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCMI	Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel
NIM	Norwegian Israel Mission
NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OUN	Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
PCM	Presidency of the Council of Ministers
PCM-CM	Presidency of the Council of Ministers Military Cabinet
PCRA	University of Southern California's Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Archive
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy
PRPE	Pro Europe Roma Party
UCER	Union of Jewish Communities of Romania
UINR	Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance
UN	United Nations
UPA	Ukrainian Insurgent Army
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UVO	Ukrainian Military Organization
WIZO	Women's International Zionist Organization
WJC	World Jewish Congress
WRB	War Refugee Board
WZO	World Zionist Organisation
YV	Yad Vashem

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

ALEXANDRU FLORIAN

*ELIE WIESEL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE HOLOCAUST
IN ROMANIA, ROMANIA*

The second stage of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI 2) project began in 2015. Financed by the European Commission, EHRI 2 was designed to facilitate access to archival resources, consolidate Holocaust knowledge, and strengthen research networks among scholars from Europe, USA, Israel, and the rest of the world.

Within this framework, one of the project's critical objectives was to further Holocaust studies in Central and South-Eastern Europe, where most of the Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust lived, and where Holocaust research has been underrepresented for decades. The EHRI project accomplished this mission by integrating descriptions of hundreds of archival institutions and tens of thousands of archival collections into its online portal (EHRI Portal); organizing thematic conferences, workshops and seminars; and offering study fellowships to numerous Central and South-Eastern European researchers, archivists, curators, early career researchers, and PhD candidates.

In March 2018, the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania (INSHR-EW), the Romanian partner within the EHRI consortium, organised a workshop dedicated to Holocaust research in borderland countries in Bucharest. Entitled "Borderlands: Archives, Research and Education," this workshop was designed as an occasion to encourage the exchange of ideas by bringing together researchers from South-Eastern Europe countries. In many of the countries represented at the workshop, Holocaust memory and education shares common aspects and faces similar difficulties in the post-communist era. The mutual need for knowledge and the acknowledgement of common historical and memorial spaces underpinned discussions at the workshop, as did the belief that cooperative efforts are more efficient when promoting the historical lessons of the Holocaust and overcoming cognitive or educational obstacles.

The studies in the present volume are the result of this workshop. The topic was a rich one and the organizers aimed to evaluate the documentary and archival perspectives of the domain as well as generate an exchange of opinions regarding different aspects of the Holocaust, explore new research methodologies and examine the efficiency of micro-historical approaches based on archival documents and testimonies. As can be seen from the studies in this volume, the

topics covered during the workshop were diverse: from archives, to public memory and contemporary commemoration activities. The common element and one of the workshop's main conclusions was that the contemporary realities regarding the history of the Holocaust – its historiography, memorialization, education and related public policies – are all conditioned by archival access; political support; and the wider public's interest in the dissemination of an objective representation of the past and refusal to listen to denialist voices that minimise a human tragedy.

The present volume does not aim to recount historical events. It does not offer a traditional historical approach to the Holocaust in South-Eastern Europe, but attempts to make visible the diverse archival tools available to Holocaust researchers that will both enable them to engage with the multiple facets of the Holocaust in this region and the richness of the archival collections that have been become accessible in the post-communist period.

Moreover, the volume makes visible the dialectic relation between resources, historiography and memory. This dialectic relation is even more evident when we talk about South-Eastern Europe. Holocaust research is, of course, conditioned by the access to archival collections, but for South-Eastern Europe this recent past was silenced throughout to the Communist period due to political reasons. The archives existed but they were not accessible so the fate of local Jews during the war was relegated to the backstage of history. In the editors' opinion, in order to understand the evolution of Holocaust research in South-Eastern Europe, one needs to consider the issues of archival accessibility, political freedom, and mnemonic tradition. After the fall of the Communist governments, the archives began to open and all these countries turned to democracy, but confronting certain aspects of the past remained taboo as the rhetoric of memory takes time to be reframed.

Considering this dialectical relationship between resources, historiography, and memory, the editors' goal was threefold: 1) to make visible the road taken by South-Eastern European countries from a historiographical paradigm that obliterated the Holocaust to a gradual development of Holocaust studies; 2) to unveil the richness of the archival collections regarding South-Eastern Europe and the multiplicity of Holocaust research topics still underrepresented within historiography; and 3) to pinpoint the mnemonic difficulties that this part of Europe has in confronting its recent past.

The first section of the volume brings together studies focused on the historical archives and the development of Holocaust historiography in different areas. Adina Babeş-Fruchter and Ana Bărbulescu's contribution, *The Holocaust under Romanian authority: archival resources and historiography*, focuses on Romania and discusses the route taken by the National State Archives from a position of completely restricted access to the situation we have today, where researchers

from all over the world can freely access documents related to the Holocaust perpetrated under Romanian authority. The second topic addressed by the authors concerns the development of Holocaust historiography dedicated to the Romanian case. Regarding the latter, the authors not only point to developments determined by the regime change in 1989, but also investigate the thematic development of Holocaust research dedicated to the Romanian case.

In *Archival sources on the Northern Transylvanian Holocaust*, Attila Gidó examines the nine Northern Transylvanian county branches of the Bucharest-headquartered National Archives of Romania. The author's purpose is to offer detailed information on the possibilities, limitations, and perspectives of archival research in Romania/Transylvania on the antecedents and the course of the Holocaust perpetrated under Hungarian authority within this region. In order to offer a complete description of the analyzed archives, the author discusses the document creator institutions and the source types relevant for Holocaust research as well as discussing the extent to which the documents in the National State Archives in Transylvania are sufficient to reconstruct certain events and processes. As Gido diligently argues, the nine archives examined offer information not only about the physical destruction of the Transylvanian Jews, but also their deprivation of rights and property as well as their social exclusion.

The third study of this section, *Archival curation of Holocaust sources and Holocaust research – findings of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure* signed by Giles Bennett, Charlotte Hauwaert, Dorien Styven and Veerle Vanden Daelen shifts the focus to Western countries thereby providing a comparative perspective. The authors explore the interconnectedness between Holocaust historiography and access to archival resources and how this is reflected in the EHRI Portal. Furthermore, the authors elaborate on the cases of three different countries – Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands – describing the access to sources and Holocaust historiography for each one of them. The political situation in the respective countries is considered the explicative variable with the highest impact on access to resources and Holocaust historiography. The comparative perspective offered by this co-authored study makes it possible to identify important similarities and differences with the South-Eastern European countries that are the focus of the other studies included in this present volume.

The second section, *Recording discrimination, destruction and rescue efforts*, brings together studies that analyse the diversity of archival collections available for Holocaust researchers and their relevancy for the development of research topics still underrepresented in the historiography: victims' perceptions recuperated from personal documents, the heterogeneous status of the victims, and rescue operations and efforts undertaken by Jewish and Zionist organizations during the war.

Opening this section, Daniela Ozacky-Stern in *Surviving and commemorating: original Jewish documents preserved in the Moreshet Archives*, describes the richness of archival collections held by the Moreshet Archives as well as the difficulties and challenges that arise from offering daily services to researchers and the general public from around the world. Ozacky-Stern also considers the processes and dilemmas faced by the archivist when trying to make these valuable treasures more accessible to the public through the internet. As this contribution makes clear, the Moreshet Archives hold a large quantity of documents, testimonies, photographs, letters and other archival material related to the Holocaust in Romania, Hungary and Slovakia, as well as materials related to the experience of the Jewish survivors in the aftermath of the War in these areas.

Iemima Daniela Ploscariu's *Neo-Protestants and the Holocaust: reconstructing the history of interethnic religious communities targeted by Antonescu* outlines several aspects of the persecution of neo-Protestant groups by Ion Antonescu's regime. According to the official definition used by the Romanian authorities of the time, neo-Protestants were included among the elements threatening the national security. The following denominations were included on this list: Seventh-day Adventists, Baptists, Brethren, and Pentecostals. It is worthwhile noting that the neo-Protestants the regime targeted were ethnic Romanians. In other words, their persecution was exclusively determined by their religious affiliation. As the vast majority of ethnic Romanians were Christian-Orthodox, Antonescu decided to pressure the neo-Protestants for fear that through proselytism they will diminish the dominant role of the Orthodox Church. In this chapter, Ploscariu approaches the topic of mixed identities, which were the consequence of an increasing number of Jews and Roma becoming adherents of these churches. This social process created new communities and identities, with the church members suffering both for their ethnic and religious affiliations. The author demonstrates that the history of the Roma and Jewish neo-Protestants during the Holocaust is almost entirely absent from historiography. Moreover, while the Antonescu period remains distinct in the collective memory of Romanian neo-Protestants, little is still known about the fate of those who were deported to Transnistria and their experiences there. In order to fill this vacuum, Ploscariu emphasizes the importance of consulting state archival resources along with the archival collections of the neo-Protestant churches.

Iryna Radchenko's study, *International charities' aid and rescue operations in Romania and Transnistria during the Holocaust*, also focuses on a lesser-known topic: the assistance and rescue of the Jewish population by international organizations. In this regard, the Romanian governed territory Transnistria is of special interest as a region where charitable organizations were particularly active. Radchenko aims to review the available archival sources and her analysis of charitable organizations' activities in Romania and Transnistria

draws on the archives of two institutions – United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Elie Wiesel Institute. As Radchenko's survey of the materials held in both archives on the activities of philanthropic organizations during the Holocaust demonstrates, the source description in the respective research databases of these institutions is insufficient. The author considers that, in order to facilitate research on this topic, archival research would be more accurate if descriptions included documentary comments with name-based and geographical indices and if source criticism of documents were to be included.

Authored by László Bernát Veszprémy, the last study of this section, "*Zionist rescue was definitely an inter-organizational project.*" *New aspects of the Kasztner-train*, proposes an analysis of the roles played by the Zionist organizations during the Second World War, with an emphasis on their attempts to rescue the Jews from destruction. The author refuses to take a pro- or anti-Zionist stance in his analysis of three case studies: Rabbi Béla Berend, Dénes Szilágyi and Rezső Kasztner. Each case is analysed in the light of new historical evidence uncovered from various private collections and public archives. The author presents the tenets of the Jewish national movement when dealing with antisemitism and considers that the conduct of these three Zionists were part and parcel of the Zionist philosophy. The case of Rabbi Berend shows that his particular rescue and resistance tactics saved the lives of many. New documents on the actions of Szilágyi show that his achievements in his rescue endeavours and his efforts to raise awareness of the ongoing of the Holocaust were greater than previously thought. The most important part of the study, however, is dedicated to the "Kasztner-train". Through an analysis of new sources, László Bernát Veszprémy demonstrates that Kasztner cooperated with members of the Hungarian right-wing Zionist movement. One of the charges later raised against Kasztner was that he did not try to save right-wing Zionists. The author argues that Kasztner not only tried to do so, but also cooperated with right-wing Zionists in his rescue efforts.

The last section of the volume, *Holocaust aftermath: remembrance initiatives*, shifts the discussion from resources and historiography to memorialisation and mnemonic narratives. The section gathers three studies that capture the way the memory of the Holocaust is acknowledged today as an element of public memorialization. Irrespective if one is discussing memorial policies or the manner in which institutions responsible for the Holocaust are now open toward recognizing and assuming responsibility for the victims and conserving their memory, the subject is a difficult one not in the least because is a good indicator of the capacity of contemporary societies to accept the fact that democracy is for all. Today, solidarity and the right to identity are two main components of a democracy consolidated in the civic space. The right to Holocaust memory is one of the expressions of these democratic values.

In *Politics and Holocaust remembrance: the pursuit of Ukrainian national identity*, Alona Bidenko considers the case of Ukraine. The author links Holocaust memorialization to the nationalist paradigm and emphasizes the fact that the actions of political actors are twofold. On one hand, the Ukrainian government has banned any symbols of Nazi and communist regimes while, on the other, it has shifted focus towards the commemoration of the Ukrainian national liberation movement in the 20th century. However, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, which is the official agency in charge of implementing the program, has faced public criticism for framing its memory policy within the history of a Ukrainian nationalism embodied by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. As Bidenko demonstrates, this new policy whitewashes, fictionalizes, and mythologizes national history, rather than contributing to the creation of effective commemoration and reconciliation practices. Following on from this argument, the author examines the direction and the controversies surrounding memory policy in Ukraine with an emphasis on Holocaust remembrance activities. For this purpose, her analysis is divided in two parts. Firstly, she outlines the government policy of remembrance in Ukraine. Secondly, using a content analysis research method, the author examines major public education campaigns implemented by the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance during 2015–2017, including projects dedicated to the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, the Second World War, the Ukrainian anti-Soviet insurgent movement, and Holodomor.

In *Perceptions on the Roma Genocide in post-communist Romania: patterns of memory and identity*, Petre Matei investigates how the perceptions about Roma and the Holocaust evolved in Romania after the fall of the communist regime. The chapter is divided into several sub-sections: while the first part briefly discusses why the Roma deportations received little attention before 1989, the second part focuses on how the deportations were perceived after 1989, especially by the Roma themselves. This period of 30 years is further divided into three segments, each with its own specificities: a) the early 1990s; b) 1997–2003; c) 2003–present, capturing the growing interest of Roma in the Holocaust.

The volume closes with Ionuț Biliuță's study, *Taking the archives out of Holocaust research: The case of the Orthodox perpetrators in contemporary Romania*, Biliuță's work addresses some of the challenges researchers encounter when dealing with the study of the ecclesiastical archives depicting the active role of Orthodox clergymen in the Transnistrian Holocaust. Moreover, the author aims to examine the apparent "conspiracy of silence" surrounding the archival collections of the Romanian Orthodox Church and the obstacles which confront researchers interested in accessing these archival collections. By comparatively analysing the various behaviours of the different ecclesiastical authorities which guard the ecclesiastical archives, he paints a compelling picture of how the participation of

Orthodox clergymen in the Holocaust has been dissimulated both at local (diocese) and central (Patriarchal) level. The author argues that the denial of access to the ecclesiastical archives was the result of a mutual conspiracy between church and state officials. If state officials, especially those working for Securitate (the Romanian Secret Police during the Communist period), kept the archival materials for blackmail, the subsequent closing of the Orthodox Church's archival collections also fell in line with the Communist Party's efforts to erase the history of the Romanian Army's involvement in the massacres on the Eastern front. After 1989, the same conspiracy of silence orchestrated by state officials and top bureaucrats from the Church led to the complete sealing of the Church's archives.

With its focus on the often-neglected region of South-Eastern Europe, this volume is a breath of fresh air in the domain of Holocaust history and research. As this volume demonstrates that in this part of Europe, there are young scholars willing to delve into subjects that, until very recently, were swept under the rug by political regimes indifferent to the persecution of Jews, Roma and neo-Protestants during the Second World War.

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