



Soul rescuers

Ottó Komoly and the Hungarian Zionist movement's activities to rescue people during the Shoah



The Portrait of Ottó Komoly
Source: Oded Fürst

Both the personality and the public activity of Ottó Komoly represent the modern Jew, with an emphasis on modernity. Not only was he a modern person, but the times and circumstances in which he was active were part of a radically new epoch as well. It was a new mentality brought by the Enlightenment that made it possible for his family to gain a higher social status in the changing social stratification of Central Europe. This new mentality, and particularly the recognition of the significance of an individual's political choices was what motivated both him and his father when they became supporters of the new Jewish national idea. It was also this modern civic ethos that brought the ideas of philanthropy and nationalism, and both of these concepts greatly contributed to Komoly's rescue activity during the Holocaust. Zionism is a form of this modern mentality, which is based on references to the ancient roots, to the Biblical Jewish state, yet, it also encapsulates and envisions a progressive, renewed Jewish statehood. Modernity, nevertheless, showed its flip sides as well through racial laws, through world wars, and finally, through the horrors of the genocide. But this was exactly what inspired Komoly and his associates when they risked their own lives in order to be able to rescue others.

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The Life of Ottó Komoly



Ottó Kohn at the end of the war, he was discharged from the army as a reserve captain with awards, which later exempted him from the discriminatory anti-Jewish Laws.
Source: Oded Fürst



Ottó Komoly in military uniform at home in 1940
Source: Oded Fürst



Three generations: Ignác, Dávid and Ottó Kohn
Source: Tomi Komoly

What is Zionism? Zionism is a Jewish national movement, which started at the very end of the 19th century with the aim of establishing a modern Jewish state in the Holy Land, and of defending Jewish interest in other countries of the world.

What is Eretz Yisrael? Eretz Yisrael is a Hebrew expression, which stands for: "the Land of Israel" or the "country of Israel". This name refers to the territory of the Jewish State before the Diaspora, as well as to the modern State of Israel.

Ottó Kohn was born in Budapest in 1892 into a middle-class merchant family. After his father, David Kohn became acquainted with Theodor Herzl's ideas on building a Jewish nation state; he became one of the first representatives of the Zionist movement in Hungary. He raised all six of his children in this spirit; enrolling them in Talmud-Torah classes and encouraging them to join various Zionist youth movements.

In accordance with his father's guidelines, Ottó Kohn took an active role in the Zionist movement at a young age. He excelled primarily with his publications and translations. He translated Herzl's work "Altneuland" into Hungarian, which was published by his father in 1916, during Ottó's war service. Having learnt from the experience of the turbulent years following World War I, he wrote the pamphlet "The Future of the Jewish People". In it, due to the Hungarian political changes, mainly during the lib-



Ottó Kohn with his wife
Source: Oded Fürst



Ottó Kohn as a soldier with his comrades. Hungarian Zionists identified with the military aims of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and they demonstrated their loyalty in the form of military service. During World War I, 300,000 Jews fought in the army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; they constituted six percent of the Hungarian army.
Source: Oded Fürst

eral democratic period, and the favourable events in international politics (e.g. the Balfour-declaration supporting the establishment of the Jewish State), he expected a political breakthrough for Zionism. He naively envisioned the Jewish masses would awaken to self-awareness in the Diaspora, and who, after emigrating to the new Jewish homeland, would fulfil their new Messianic role: "perhaps the rebirth of mankind will start from the land of the Jewish People, from Palestine". The expectations of the Hungarian Zionists were not realised, after the revolutions, the Jewish national movement could not achieve the long-awaited breakthrough. After the war, Ottó Kohn graduated in statics engineering at the Technical University in Budapest, in 1920 he married Ljerka (Lilla), a girl from a Croatian-Jewish family. Following the birth of their daughter, Lea, he settled with his family in the small village of Voćin (Athyn) in the Kingdom of Serbia-Croatia-Slovenia and worked as a railway engineer.

The Life of Ottó Komoly



Ottó Kohn with his wife and their daughter
Source: Oded Fürst



Ottó longed for professional challenges and an intellectual development, therefore he returned with his wife and daughter to Budapest in 1924. They invested their savings in the purchase of half of a machine factory. Ottó Kohn did not manage to overcome the numerous difficulties arising from running a company; therefore, he ended up giving up his business and with it the family's assets. Following this misfortune, he found a job as an engineer at a design office, where shared his knowledge in publications on architecture, and professional journals. He became a specialist in reinforced concrete design and worked together with Lajos Kozma and Béla Enyedi as a structural engineer in the design work of the Bauhaus style Átrium apartment building in Margit boulevard.

Ottó Kohn's request to change his surname to the Hungarian Komoly was approved by the Interior Ministry in 1931. The widespread practice of Magyarizing family names was intended to promote the Hungarian character of the country and the numerical growth of Hungarians within the framework of a cultural assimilative national idea. Ottó Kohn's motivation was not a romantic or utilitarian national identification, i.e., he did not wish to strengthen the Hungarian presence, but to replace a surname deemed to endanger the success of Zionist submissions with a Hungarian-sounding family name in the anti-Jewish public atmosphere of the bureaucracy during the Horthy era.

"This move was the result of a long deliberation. I remember him often saying that it would have been much easier for him to make a decision if his name had sounded German instead of Jewish. The practical reason for changing his surname was that in administrative procedures, the name Kohn, as the name of the author of the referral, immediately caused a backlash and often harmed the case in which he acted. During this time, when he was a member of the Administrative Committee of the Zionist Alliance, he took part in many similar administrative procedures. That fact that his choice for this particular surname reflected his personality, was certainly not a coincidence." [the word 'komoly' in Hungarian means serious] Lilla Komoly, Ottó Komoly's widow



Átrium-building (Budapest, 55 Margit street), 1936
Source: FSZEK Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, Budapest Collection



This certificate was supposed to testify that Ottó Kohn, engineer was a journalist working for the "Zsidó Szemle" (Jewish Review). The document was issued before Ottó Komoly Magyarized his surname in 1925.
Source: Oded Fürst



The Zionist Movement in Hungary until 1943



Lunch organised on Éva Kahán's and Miklós Speter's wedding in Gábor Munk's home in 1935. Munk was a member of the Pro-Palestine Association. The bride's father, Niszson Kahán was a leading official at the Hungarian Zionist Alliance.
Source: Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest

Following World War I, the Zionist ideology attracted a significant number of Jewish people in Central Europe. This was partly due to the undeniable success of political Zionism in Palestine, and partly to the change in national consciousness, which was completely transformed in Central Europe, including Hungary, as well. The earlier mainstream assimilative concept of nation, which was largely based on linguistic and cultural foundations, was replaced by the tribal idea, emphasising common origin, often targeting the local Jews. This change, which was introduced in 1920, can best be illustrated through a legal article of Act XXV. The numerus clausus law regulated admission to higher education according to the proportion of the given national-

ity or ethnic group. The legislator intended to apply the law to the Jews, as well, contrary to the earlier concept of the Hungarian nation, which regarded the Jews of Hungary as part of the Hungarian nation. In the 1928 amendment, the section referring to ethnic groups and race was deleted, but this essentially no longer influenced the public thinking about Jews. The majority of the Hungarian society did not consider the Israelites as integral part of the Hungarian nation.

Instead of adopting a Neolog identity, the Zionist elite promoted understanding and highlighted the similarity between the Jewish and the Hungarian fates. The Zionist chronology puts the end of the Jewish nation State and the beginning of the Exodus at the destruction of the Second Temple (in 70 CE).

With the shift in the Hungarian nation-strategy, the Zionists pointed to the failure of the concept of the "assimilated" Jew, i.e. the Neolog strategy, by declaring it a self-surrender and called for a fight against it. They blamed the congressional elite for rigidly and even hostilely rejecting the existence of the Jews as an ethnic group. Besides their most far-reaching loyalty to host state, they rejected their identification with the majority nation, and the assimilation into it.

Zionist ideology was vehemently opposed by both the Jewish reform movement (Neolog tradition), and by the group working hard to preserve the traditions (Orthodox tradition). The Neolog movement rejected it on both national and religious grounds. According to them, the Jewish national movement is not compatible with the patriotism of the Hungarian Jews and the Hungarian identity, what is more, in agreement with the orthodox group, they claimed that Zionism goes against the religious belief, which connects the reinstatement of the Jewish State to the coming of the Messiah. This rejection was maintained during the post-war period as well. This was the reason why the Hungarian Zionist Association could only be legalised in 1927, after several unsuccessful attempts. The number of the Hungarian Jews in 1930 was about 440 000,

while the number of Zionists did not exceed 4-5 thousand until 1938.

Following the international trend, the movement was characterised by party struggles. The different parties had different visions on the establishment of the Jewish State. The party palette included a wide range between Hashomer Hatzair, who professed radical leftist views, and the right-wing Betar group. In the case of Hungary, the strongest parties were the following: the liberal Zionists (Klal-Zionists), who adhered to the views of Herzl, the Hashomer Hatzair, who held Marxist-socialist views, and the religious Zionist block (Mizrachi).



Zionist leaflet of the Hungarian Jewish Pro-Palestine Association from 1943, which encourages listening to the Palestinian "living newspaper". Among the speakers was Dr. Rezső Kasztner. Notices on leaflets often include the words "brother" and "chaver". The term "haver", also used in Hungarian, is a Hebrew loanword. Source: OSZK - National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Prints



Invitation of the Hungarian Zionist Association to the lectures entitled "A miracle in Israel" on 6 March 1943 at the hall of the Pest Israelite Congregation given by Ottó Komoly and Dr. Ernő Marton, editor of the weekly newspaper, Új Kelet. Source: OSZK - National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Prints

The emigration organised by the Palestine Office had very few participants. The Palestine Office in Budapest distributed the immigration permits, so-called certifikats. Between World War I and 1938, 2-3 hundred people emigrated from Hungary every year, mostly legally. After 1935, illegal Aliyah of a similar magnitude was added to this number.

What is Aliyah? Hebrew word meaning "ascent" or "going up". It is one of the basic tenets of Zionism; it means emigration to Eretz Yisrael, then to the State of Israel. It is also used colloquially as a verb: alijázni - "to make Aliyah".



The National Hungarian Jewish Aid Organization (OMZSA) collected donations for stateless Jews who were forced to leave their homes. Source: OSZK - National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Prints



The Zionist Movement in Hungary until 1943



A brochure promoting Aliyah with István Irsai's graphics. They expected strong young people to build Eretz Yisrael. Source: OSZK - National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Prints

What is a kibbutz? The kibbutz is a collective type of settlement found in Israel. The basic principle is egalitarianism, common ownership and shared work. Members farm together; they share their resources and live communal lives. Income and expenses are shared; everybody takes part in decision-making and in the management of the communities' affairs. Nowadays, in most of the kibbutzim, members can have their own property and market competition plays a greater role in farming.

Emigration permits were primarily given to young Zionists (halutz), who were prepared by the youth organisations of the leftist and liberal Zionist parties to establish kibbutzim on the land of Palestine. The young people were prepared for the challenges in camps called haksaras in Hungary. Building a country, especially in a desert, rocky, arid place like Palestine, required hard physical labour and devotion. The Zionists were ready to give up their jobs in intellectual professions. They considered physical work to be more useful, be it industry or farming.

Ottó Komoly's return to the Hungarian capital and his business failure influenced him not only in his professional development, but also helped him take an active role in the Zionist movement again. He published some important articles in the weekly magazine Zsidó Szemle (Jewish Review), and from the mid-1930s he took part in the management board of the Budapest Zionists' office, later in the national central organisation, as well. Komoly always emphasised cooperation and compromise concerning the different nation-building and country building visions of the various Zionist parties. He believed that in the Jewish Nation State "orthodox, and neolog, the rich and the poor, the worker and the employer can live together". His moderate views on Zionist politics, his integrative personality, and his individuality, which always strives for agreement, made him an acceptable candidate for the presidency of the Hungarian Zionist Association in 1940.



Ottó Komoly giving his presidential opening speech at the general meeting of the Hungarian Zionist Association in 1941. Source: Yad Vashem Institute Archive (Photo No: 103153)

Shortly after the beginning of Komoly's presidency, the Interior Minister dissolved the local groups of the Hungarian Zionist Association (MCSz); only the Budapest central office could work legally. This also affected the communities operating in the territories annexed after the First and Second Vienna Award. The Zionists operating in the annexed territories were much stronger than those in the motherland, therefore the political struggle for the dominant leadership role began. With Ottó Komoly's intervention, the rural organisations of the MCSz groups were re-legalised for a short period in 1943.



Source: OSZK- National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Prints



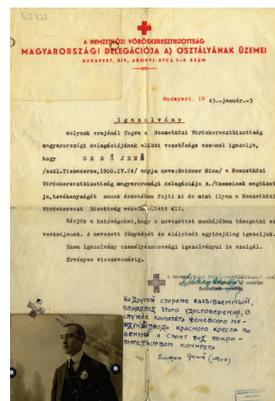
Ottó Komoly, the rescuer

The Relief and Rescue Committee of Budapest (Váádát háezra véhácáláh) was established in January 1943 with the aim of helping Jews looking for a way out of the neighbouring countries, organising their escape, and helping Hungarian Jews defend themselves. These activities required breaking the law and using conspiratorial methods, with which they did not want to compromise the Hungarian Zionist Association. Nevertheless, the Rescue Committee comprised only Zionists. The leader of the organisation was Ottó Komoly, his deputy Rezső Kasztner, other members included Hansi Brand, Joel Brand, Sámuel Springmann and Ernő Szilágyi.



Members of Relief and Rescue Committee of Budapest. From left: Ottó Komoly, Hansi Brand, Rezső Kasztner, Perez Révész, Zwi Goldfarb
Source: Oded Fürst

After the German occupation, the Rescue Committee and the leaders of related institutions contacted everybody, who could have had a positive impact on the fate of the Hungarian Jews. The "Hungarian line" led by Ottó Komoly tried to prevent the deportations with the Hungarian political leaders, and later tried to stop them. Rezső Kasztner and Joel Brand negotiated on the "German line", especially with Adolf Eichmann, which resulted in the rescue operation known as the Kasztner-train. Miklós Krausz, the President of the Palestine Office, issued thousands of protective passports (Schutzpass) to the Jews in Budapest with the help of the embassies of neutral countries. Finally, the halutz group, members of the youth par-



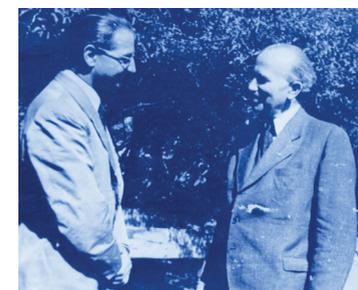
The "A" Office of the Hungarian Delegation of the International Red Cross issued a certificate to Jenő Gerő (Goldberger), which also served as an ID card. The document certifies that the given person was a representative of the organization's delegation. Source: Holocaust Memorial Center, Hungary

ties of the Zionist movement, smuggled people across the border, or escaped people from the ghettos, and produced false documents. Although conflicts often occurred among the participants, they still had to cooperate, so in most cases they helped each other's work. Ottó Komoly, for instance, assisted in compiling the names of passengers for the Kasztner-train, and the Rescue Committee provided financial support for the rescue operations carried out by the halutzim.

"Be anyone! God's blessing cannot be upon you if you do not treat everything you find here with love, which has grown close to my heart as a result of my honest work for nearly a lifetime." from Ottó Komoly's letter, which he left on his desk on 29 July 1944, the day he had to leave his apartment



Drawings depicting a daycare center. István Zádor made a series of lithographs about the work of the National Jewish Aid Committee (JOINT) in Hungary. Source: Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest

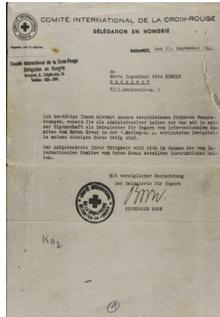


Rezső Kasztner and Ottó Komoly
Source: Oded Fürst



Ottó Komoly, the rescuer

Ottó Komoly, who was also a member of the Central Council of Hungarian Jews from August 1944, wanted to convince the leaders of the Party of Hungarian Renewal (Magyar Megújulás Pártja) that the Jewish question would not be solved by ghettoization and ultimately extermination, but by facilitating emigration to Palestine. Neither his efforts to get into contact Béla Imrédy, the leader of the party via Miklós Mester, nor his submitted memoranda brought any success. The government did not wish to negotiate a solution to the issue with the Jews. Deportations started in May despite the protests of Komoly and the Hungarian Jewish leaders. Ottó was given the opportunity to leave the country "on the Kasztner-train", but as he explained in his last letter to his friend, Ernő Marton, his moral concerns proved stronger: *"For my part, I could not make the decision to go with them. I would feel morally dead if I left my post now."*



The Letter from Friedrich Born on Ottó Komoly's appointment
Source: Yad Vashem Institute Archive (Photo No.: 3696060)

In September 1944 Friedrich Born, the representative of the International Red Cross in Hungary appointed Ottó Komoly to be the director of the so-called "A" Office, which was known to be the "Children's Department of the International Red Cross". With the help of the halutzim and the Rescue Committee, Komoly created 52 children's homes, where he rescued about 6000 children and 600 employees. The headquarters of the organisation was in Budapest, in Mérleg street. The children were collected from the streets, in abandoned buildings, or they were brought to the home by their family members, where they were educated in a Zionist spirit. Every week Komoly gave the addresses of the new children's homes and the names of the children to Born, who issued protective passports for them. The Arrow Cross Party, which came to power in October 1944, generally respected the buildings under protection, it only happened in a few instances that they broke in by force, where they looted and ransacked.



The Orphanage of the Pest Israelite Congregation in Városligeti fasor in 1929
Source: FSZEK Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, Budapest Collection



Carl Lutz (on the left) in front of the Hotel Ritz - Dunapalota in 1943. Ottó Komoly was dragged from this hostel by the Arrow Cross on 1 January 1945.
Source: Fortepan / Agnes Hirschi

Risking his own life, during the Arrow Cross period, Ottó Komoly tried to negotiate with everyone from whom he could expect any improvement in the situation of the Hungarian Jews. Besides talking with the delegates of international organisations and diplomats, he did not shy away from sitting down with the leaders of the Arrow Cross Party, members of the Hungarian resistance, and even with Miklós Horthy Jr. He moved into the Ritz Hotel on the Pest embankment on 28 December 1944, where Hans Weyermann, a delegate from the International Red Cross stayed as well. It was from there that the Arrow Cross people took him for "interrogation" on 1 January 1945. He was probably shot into the Danube.



A certification of employment for Sándor Rigó at the Children's home issued by the Committee of the International Red Cross
Source: Holocaust Memorial Center, Hungary



Children's home in Budapest under the protection of the International Red Cross in 1944
Source: Memorial Museum of Hungarian Speaking Jewry



Zionism after World War II

About 70% of Hungary's Jews perished during the Holocaust. Their network of religious and social institutions became seriously weakened. Due to their traumatic experience, Zionism gained a dominant position in Jewish society. Jewish communities had given up undermining the movement by then; what is more, Zionists obtained considerable influence in these communities. Each organization regarded their primary task to collect orphaned children. In the established children's homes, besides social care, the children also received a Zionist education to prepare them for emigration to Palestine. With this strategy, they managed to attract masses of young Jewish people. By the autumn of 1946, 2,500 children left the country and made illegal Aliyah.



Invitation to the opening of a Children's home in 1946
Source: OSZK - National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Prints

After the war, left-wing Zionists gained a significant power in the Hungarian Zionist organisation. Their aim was to bring Jewish society closer to the Palestinian reality. For this reason, they wanted to change the Jewish occupational structure of the Diaspora by training masses of agricultural and industrial workers. They called this process a re-stratification, and it was funded by the International Jewish Humanitarian organisation, the Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee).



A group of Jewish children ready to leave for Palestine in 1945. In the back row Kálmán Schwartz (second on the right) and his twin sister, Éva. Source: USHMM, Yehuda Schwartz

The remaining Jewish population in Hungary supported the idea of the establishment of the State of Israel. Their organisations proudly promoted the Hungarians roots of the Jewish national movement, primarily the work of Theodor Herzl. During the coalition period (1945-1948), the Zionist parties enjoyed relative political independence; however, with the strengthening of the Communist Party and its subsequent takeover, they were labelled nationalist. In 1949, the Hungarian Zionist Association was banned; their leaders were arrested and prosecuted.



A celebration of the Zionist Youth Association in City Park, Budapest on 11 May 1947. Photo: MTI – László Ráth



Zionism after World War II

After the Holocaust, the number of Hungarian Jews emigrating to Palestine reached an unprecedented number. Between 1945 and 1953, approximately 20-25 thousand people emigrated from Hungary, in addition to those 50-60 thousand Hungarian speaking Jews who arrived to Palestine from the countries neighboring Hungary. In Palestine (from 1948, in Israel), the great majority of the Hungarian Jews settled in bigger cities. Here they tried to work in their former intellectual occupations, while others made good use of that knowledge that they had learnt in Hungary during their preparatory training programs in manual labour.



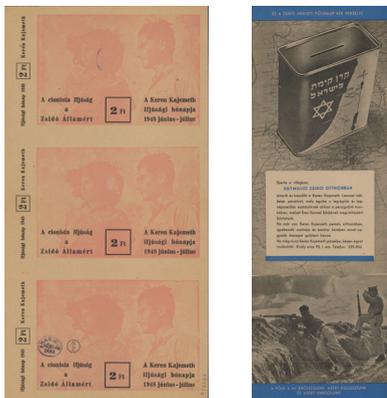
A commemoration to Theodor Herzl, a writer, politician, the father of the state of Israel, the founder of the Zionist World Organisation, which was organised by the Hungarian Zionist Association on 27 July 1948 in Budapest. Photo: MTI – Sándor Bauer



A group of displaced, stateless Jews after World War II. After the horrors of the Holocaust, a significant number of Jews expelled from their homeland did not want to return to the country where they were persecuted and plundered. Aliyah meant hope for a new life for them. Source: USHMM, Yehuda Schwartz



Swearing-in ceremony in the Shomria in Szilvásszárd, in the Hashomer Hatzair Zionist summer camp in 1946. Source: USHMM, Ephraim Teichman



Supporter's ticket of the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemeth) worth 2 forints and a fundraising call from 1948. Source: OSZK - National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Print



Zionist poster from 1948. Source: OSZK - National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Prints



The poster for an exhibition of Hashomer Hatzair to show the kibbutz movement to support the K.K.L. (Jewish National Fund) from 1946. Source: OSZK - National Széchényi Library, Collection of Posters and Small Prints

„They came with us and said, this is the land where you have to create a kibbutz. Now you cannot imagine it, there was nothing there. When I say nothing, it does not mean that there was something, there was nothing at all on earth. It was January, we took tents with us, and we lived in them, but we didn't care, we knew it would be like this. We came to build a country; we didn't want to live in such petty bourgeois houses. And there we started. A few years later, a mother of one of us arrived from Pest, and said outraged: you had said there was nothing here, but it is full of trees and flowers and green. She couldn't believe that we had done all that.” Chava Lustig

10 The legacy of Ottó Komoly

A small cult was built around Ottó Komoly after the war. The Zionists regarded him as their greatest martyr and hero, while he was also respected in Neolog and Orthodox circles. The Hungarian Zionist Association commemorated him in the form of a mourning ceremony at the Dohány synagogue on 4 March 1946; and a library named after him was inaugurated at the Budapest Jewish Community in Síp street.



At the memorial plaque of Ottó Komoly, his daughter, Lea with her husband, Haim Fürst and their children, Oded and Orna in 1956 on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem
Source: Oded Fürst



“The Aliyah group, which left in the summer of 1944, which finally arrived in Eretz Yisrael through Switzerland after a lot of hardships. Their successful journey was made possible largely by the heroic work of Komoly.” Új Élet, 10 March 1946.
Source: Jewish Theological Seminary- University of Jewish Studies Library



Ottó Komoly's descendants at his memorial plaque on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem in 2013
Source: Oded Fürst



On the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the birth of Ottó Komoly, on 26 March 2022, a memorial plaque was placed in his honour at his former residence, at 3 Scheiber Sándor street in Budapest. The photo shows his descendants at the inauguration. From the left: Emília Madarász, Dr. Judit Komoly, Tomi Komoly, Oded Fürst.
Source: Oded Fürst

In the summer of 1948 Zoltán Tildy, President of the Republic "in recognition of his excellent merits in the field of Hungarian freedom and in the service of the ideals of democracy" posthumously awarded the silver degree of the Hungarian Freedom Order to Ottó Komoly, which was received by his daughter in Tel-Aviv. In the era of State Socialism, just as the history of the Zionist resistance, the memory of Ottó Komoly also became a taboo.

Following the political transition, several memorials were erected to Ottó Komoly throughout the capital. His name is also mentioned in the memorial erected in honour of the Hungarian victims of the Holocaust and the former members of the Relief and Rescue Committee of

Budapest in the cemetery of the Synagogue in Dohány Street. The plaque at the entrance of the Jewish Museum and Archives draws attention to his life-saving activities and martyrdom.

From the list of Hungarian Jewish martyrs of World War II, Israeli public memory commemorates primarily Hanna Szenes, while Ottó Komoly is less of interest at the state level. Instead, he is portrayed as the embodiment of Zionist heroism, who saved the lives of thousands of persecuted Jews with his courageous stand and self-sacrifice. His memory is preserved, among other things, by the grove planted in 1951 on Mount Herzl, the symbolic tombstone raised among the trees, and the streets named after him in Haifa and Netanya.



Sign of a street named after Ottó Komoly in Haifa
Source: Oded Fürst

What is moshav? The name of a cooperative village in Israel, where the members jointly own and use the land and the various tools of the settlement. Farming and economic activities in moshavs are usually individual based, in contrast to the collective division of labor in kibbutzim. Individual property and market competition play a more prominent role in moshavs, while community cohesion and the protection of common interests remain also important.



Signpost leading to Yad Natan in 1951 and one of the buildings of the settlement
Source: Oded Fürst, Tomi Komoly



The Hungarian Jewish Immigrant Organization named the first agricultural settlement they established in 1953 after Ottó Komoly, where they also opened a memorial house in his honour. 50 Hungarian Jews participated in the founding of the Yad Natan moshav.