Across Borders
Women in the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe: History, Arts, and Memory

International Conference – Holocaust Memorial Center Budapest – November 11–12, 2026

ABSTRACT BOOK



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HOLOKAUSZT EMLÉKKÖZPONT BUDAPEST

TÁRSADALMI KAPCSOLATOKÉRT ÉS KULTÚRÁÉRT FELELŐS MINISZTÉRIUM

BETHLEN GÁBOR Alapkezelő Zrt.

WHISC Women in the Holocaust International Study Center

KEYNOTE

09:30 – 10:10 *- Lily Zamir*

Silenced and Selected: A Gendered Analysis of Hungarian Testimonies in the Eichman Trail

The Eichmann trial is widely regarded as the event that brought survivors' testimonies to the center of Holocaust discourse and memory in Israel. Yet the 110 witnesses who testified in Jerusalem in 1961 were not a neutral sample of survivors. Although the destruction of Hungarian Jewry in 1944 was the culmination of Eichmann's career, only fourteen witnesses came from Hungary, and only five of them were women. This article argues that the exclusion of Hungarian survivors operated in layers and reached its extreme in the case of Hungarian women.

The first stage of this exclusion occurred at the threshold of the courtroom, where a preference for witnesses with institutional standing, most of them men, combined with political caution about reopening the Kastner affair. Both factors disproportionately affected women from provincial Hungarian Jewish communities, who held no official positions and whose experiences pointed directly to a question the prosecution was reluctant to address: why they had not been warned.

The second stage took place inside the courtroom itself. Drawing on the trial transcripts, the author introduces the concept of the testimonial channel, referring to the time, language, sequence, assigned function, and credibility through which testimony was heard. The analysis shows that even the few Hungarian women who were allowed to testify were selected and given only a limited space in which to speak. As a result, they were silenced twice: first as Hungarians, because so few were chosen as witnesses, and second as women, because their voices were further constrained even among those selected.

Affiliation and short CV:

Prof. Dr. Lily Halpert Zamir is the Co-Founder and the Academic Director of WHISC. She is a professor of Holocaust and Gender studies and a member of the academic council, as well as the head of its Center for Women's and Gender Studies, at the David Yellin Ac-ademic College of Education in Jerusalem, Israel. Prof. Zamir serves as the Presidential Advisor on Gender Equality, as well as Sexual Harassment Treatment and Prevention Commissioner of the college.

She has published several books, seven of which deal with the Holocaust, as well as dozens of articles in Hebrew and English that focus on Holocaust and gender studies,

and one monograph on Danilo Kiš in Serbo-Croatian. Her last book *„Lili Kasticher – the Woman Who Wrote in Auschwitz"* was published by Moreshet, in 2022, is nowadays being translated into English.

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I. SECTION – INDIVIDUAL STORIES

11:20– 11:40 - Asja Drača Muntean

Female Experience and Memorial Language in Vida Jocić's Work

Vida Jocić (1921–2002), a sculptor and partisan fighter, was one of the few women artists who survived the Banjica, Auschwitz, and Ravensbrück camps. Her artistic practice was deeply influenced by her experiences of war and imprisonment. Joining the Valjevo Partisan Detachment in 1941 shaped her ethical outlook and her view of art as a form of testimony and responsibility to the community of survivors. Her first solo exhibition, *Auschwitz 49865* (1958), held shortly after she finished her studies, laid the groundwork for her memorial style: a sculptural series rooted in personal experience and dedicated to making suffering visible through simple, expressive forms.

A central place in her oeuvre is occupied by *Female Camp Inmate*, in which the artist uses self-portraiture to reclaim dignity that was violated during the camp experience. In works such as *Roll Call* and in later ambient installations, Jocić explores the tension between stillness and the rigid formations of camp life, creating a universal symbol of human endurance and vulnerability. Unlike dominant postwar memorial practices that favored heroic male figures, Jocić emphasizes representing the surviving female body – altered, scarred, yet resilient – as a symbol of traumatic memory.

Despite the positive reception of her work in the late 1950s, Jocić's contribution has remained marginal in art-historical narratives, even though her practice provides a unique visual approach to commemorating suffering and expressing women's wartime experiences. Her body of work, therefore, plays a vital role in shaping a morally and emotionally meaningful culture of remembrance for both the suffering and the antifascist resistance.

Affiliation and short CV:

Asja Drača Muntean is an art historian and cultural practitioner with over two decades of experience in the public heritage sector, specializing in history, art, and memory culture. Her research focuses on Holocaust and genocide studies, women's experiences in concentration and detention camps, memory culture, museology, and transnational approaches to remembrance. Her curatorial and scholarly work consistently addresses civilian suffering during the Second World War, with particular emphasis on women inmates and gendered experiences of violence and survival.

In recent years, her research has expanded to include the impact of artificial intelligence on memory culture, testimony, and ethical practices of Holocaust remembrance across borders. Since 2022, she has served as Executive Director and Curator of the Memorial Center "Staro Sajmište" in Belgrade.

11:40 – 12:00 - Keren Fite

Gendered Witnesses: The Case of Zuzanna Ginczanka's „Non Omnis Moriar" and Władysław Szlengel's „Things"

Zuzanna Ginczanka wrote the poem „*Non Omnis Moriar*" circa 1942, while she was hiding under false identity in Lviv. The poem depicts her persecution and the looting of Jewish possessions by their Polish neighbors. Though she managed to escape Lviv, her capture and execution in Krakow circa 1944 turned the poem into her last will and testament. In 1946 the poem served as evidence in a trial against Zofia Chomin, the landlady who turned her in.

Władysław Szlengel wrote the poem *„Things"* (Rzeczy) between late 1942 and early 1943. The poem documents the abandoned possessions of Jews deported to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto. In both poems the Jewish possessions serve as a metonymy representing lost Jewish lives.

The lecture will discuss poetry as testimony, and as historical source, focusing on the gender differences between the two poems: the choice of the possessions that are named, the subtle narrative created by the lyrical 'I', and the different 'spaces' on which the poems focus. Touching upon the interrelation between poetic narrative, memory, trauma, and historical evidence, the lecture will discuss the various layers of narrative embedded in the two poems, and the way the poetic form serves as the basis of a gendered witness' voice.

Affiliation and short CV:

Keren Fite holds a PhD in English Literature, and an MSW in social work. She is an independent scholar, researching life stories, and narratives of womanhood. She has publications on the image of the Artist Woman in the works of Louisa May Alcott. She is currently researching Zuzanna Ginczanka's poetry.

12:00 – 12:20 - Kinga Júlia Király

Across Registers: Gendered Record-Making and the Archival Ghosts of the Holocaust

How does an individual become invisible to memory while being obsessively documented by the state? This paper proposes a new research paradigm for transnational Holocaust historiography through the forensic reconstruction of an "administrative life trajectory", tracing the fragmented paper trail left by Gabriella Kazar. Born into a Jewish family in Budapest, imprisoned in the internment camp of San Donato Val di Comino in 1940, she was deported in April 1944, and murdered in Auschwitz together with her two children.

By juxtaposing the Italian fascist kartoteka system, databases (Fossoli, CDEC, Arolsen), and parish records with the holdings of the Hungarian National Archives, press sources, and a cross-referenced database of family vital records, the paper explores the concrete mechanics of gendered institutional erasure. The central argument is that the fascist files did not merely record, they actively produced manufacturing Gabriella into an "archival ghost".

While she persistently navigated bureaucratic space – submitting petitions, registrations, appeals – her identity was progressively absorbed into her husband's legal status under the formula apolide di origine polacca, ebrea, internata: rendered stateless, of Polish origins, Jewish, interned. Her husband, meanwhile, often appealing to his PNF membership, moved through the same system with a fluid, visible identity.

This archival fragmentation was mirrored by layered silences within her own family. Those silences reach back to the traumas of the 1919 White Terror. Gabriella's absolute erasure stands in sharp contrast to the family's selective public narratives of success, which deliberately obscured internal tragedies: suicide, addiction, criminal prosecution. Ultimately, this case study functions as a heuristic model. It demonstrates how micro-historical reconstruction can challenge established narratives, and how the very documents designed to categorize and eliminate a human being can be turned against their own logic to partially restore the person they were built to erase.

Affiliation and short CV:

Kinga Júlia Király is a PhD candidate and fellow researcher jointly at the Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies (OR-ZSE) in Budapest. For nine years, she worked as a researcher and oral history interviewer for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), conducting fieldwork with survivors and bystanders in Italy, Romania, and Hungary. In Italy, her research specifically addresses collective memory and the histories embedded in Fascist internment sites.

Beyond her archival work, she specializes in Jewish food memory and culture as sources for understanding identity, trauma, and the fragmentation of communities. She is the author of *Recipes for a New Beginning: Transylvanian Jewish Stories of Life, Hunger, and Hope* (published in Hungarian by Mentor Books, 2018, 2023 and English by CEEOL-Press, 2020). She is also co-authoring an upcoming book with András Koerner on historical Hungarian Jewish dishes, tracing culinary traditions across space and time..

II. SECTION – SPECIAL PLACES

14:00 – 14:20 *- Daria Starikashkina*

Between Universal Suffering and Ethnic Vulnerability: Jewish Women in the Siege of Leningrad

The presentation analyzes the experience of Jewish women in the Siege of Leningrad (1941–1944) as a form of ethnically marked vulnerability emerging within the wartime discourse of collective suffering, later consolidated in Soviet memory as the narrative of a "nationwide feat." Drawing on diaries, memoirs, and oral testimonies, the study examines how Jewish identity shaped the interpretation of threat as well as social, affective, and symbolic strategies of survival.

The siege, which constituted a humanitarian catastrophe claiming approximately one million lives, is approached as a borderline case significant for Holocaust studies. Although Leningrad was not occupied, its Jewish population – then the second largest ethnic group in the city – lived in a context where the destruction of Jews was already underway in nearby occupied territories, including the Leningrad region. Combined with the constant threat of the city's fall and manifestations of antisemitism within it, this produced a specific wartime experience in which possible future developments were understood as inclusion into an already functioning mechanism of genocide. In

this sense, the siege appears not only as a struggle for physical survival but also as a situation of continuous interpretation of threat shaped by ethnic belonging.

The gender dimension of the lecture is linked to the structure of everyday life under siege. Due to a significant demographic imbalance, women – who by the spring of 1942 outnumbered men by roughly three to one – occupied central roles in resource distribution, everyday communication, and social and labor practices. These were precisely the contexts in which conflicts emerged and boundaries between "insiders" and "outsiders" were negotiated, making Jewish identity a matter of reflection and situational management.

The lecture thus proposes to include in Holocaust studies forms of experience in which genocide is not directly realized but exists as a historically grounded scenario shaping the interpretation of events and strategies of behavior, including within gendered structures of everyday life. This approach contributes to a broader understanding of Jewish wartime experience beyond the zones of immediate destruction.

Affiliation and short CV:

Daria Starikashkina is a PhD candidate at Justus Liebig University Giessen, where she is completing a dissertation titled *Between Holocaust and Siege: Jewish Experience in Blockaded Leningrad*. Her academic background combines Holocaust studies, Jewish studies, cultural studies, and critical psychoanalytic theory. She holds an MA in Holocaust Studies from the University of Haifa, an MA in Jewish Cultural Studies from Saint Petersburg State University, and a degree in psychology education from the East European Institute of Psychoanalysis. Her research focuses on the Jewish experience during the Siege of Leningrad, with particular attention to ego-documents, memory, trauma, and survival strategies. Her work has been supported by several fellowships, including a doctoral scholarship from Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, a Doctoral Fellowship in Jewish Studies from the Posen Foundation, and the International Doctoral Fellowship Program at Bar-Ilan University. She also has experience in Holocaust education, archival research, and civic education.

14:20 – 14:40 *- Ekaterina Vikulina*

Women in the Riga Ghetto: Gendered Strategies of Survival and Resistance

This presentation examines the various survival and resistance strategies employed by Jewish women in the Riga Ghetto, emphasizing the crucial role of gender in shaping daily life under Nazi occupation. Existing literature on the Holocaust in Latvia has until recently largely overlooked the gender aspect, although it played a decisive role in the organization of labor, the structuring of segregated spaces and was ultimately fatal for Latvian Jewish women in the ghetto, who were killed not only on the basis of their ethnicity, but also of their sex during the Rumbula massacres in 1941. The focus of this presentation is on everyday practices, which have often been overlooked in historiography centered on predominantly male experiences of armed resistance.
Unlike the traditional understanding of resistance as participation in underground or armed actions – although it is known that women in the Riga Ghetto did take part to the extent they were able – the analysis also covers cultural and religious activities, work in medical and educational spheres, as well as everyday forms of defiance against imposed norms in private and public life. The presentation investigates the interplay between survival and resistance, showing how gender shaped specific strategies. Drawing

on the memoirs of Valentina Freimane, Ella Medalye, Frida Michelson, Gertrude Schneider, and others, the study demonstrates how women adapted to ghetto conditions and developed their own strategies under systemic violence. Additionally, it examines the spatial organization of the ghetto as gendered, including separate areas for the approximately 300 surviving Latvian women, the Latvian male section, and distinct execution zones for men and women.

Affiliation and short CV:

Ekaterina Vikulina is a Research Fellow at the University of Potsdam and Head of Culture and Research at the Museum of the Riga Ghetto and Holocaust in Latvia. Holding a PhD in Cultural Studies and an MA in Art History, she specializes in visual and cultural research. For many years, she worked as an assistant professor teaching media theory and practice. She is the author of a book on photography of the Khrushchev Thaw and has published articles in international academic journals, also contributing as a critic to specialized publications. In recent years, her work has focused on Holocaust scholarship, with a particular emphasis on the topography of the Riga Ghetto. Over the past two years, she has led a research project examining the spatial history of the ghetto and its related sites. In addition to her academic work, Ekaterina has curatorial experience, including projects related to the Holocaust.

14:40 – 15:00 *- Bantiou Marina*

Gendered Vulnerability: Survival and Memory in Corfiot Jewish Women's Holocaust Testimonies (1943–1950)

This presentation examines the Holocaust of the Jewish community of Corfu in northwest Greece through the experiences of women, advancing a conceptualization of gendered vulnerability as a relational and situational condition produced within shared structures of persecution. Drawing on survivor testimonies from the USC Shoah Foundation, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, the study reconstructs Corfiot Jewish women's trajectories across German occupation, deportation, imprisonment in Auschwitz-Birkenau and other camps, and the precarious aftermath of survival.

The presentation argues that women's vulnerability emerged through shifting constellations of care, coercion, and bodily exposure. Under German occupation (1943–1944), antisemitic ordinances imposed immobilization through curfews, compulsory residence, and public assembly, transforming everyday spaces into sites of surveillance, fear, and deprivation. During deportation, women's testimonies highlight the cumulative effects of hunger, exhaustion, and public exposure across a series of transit spaces, fortresses, ports, ships, trains, and camps, where violence and terror functioned to foreclose escape and autonomy. In Auschwitz-Birkenau, gendered vulnerability intensified through forced labor, disease and humiliation embedded in the camp economy. At the same time, care obligations toward children, parents, and fellow prisoners shaped women's moral worlds, constraining action and redefining survival as endurance. Testimonies further reveal how vulnerability persisted after liberation through bodily injury, displacement, restitution struggles, and prolonged silence surrounding loss.

Methodologically, the presentation treats survivor testimony as both historical evidence and moral narration, attentive to how women retrospectively articulate vulnerability, survival, and ethical ambiguity across time. By centering Corfiot Jewish women, a peripheral yet late-targeted community, the lecture contributes to interdisciplinary de-

bates on gender, vulnerability, and survival in the Holocaust, offering insights relevant to women's experiences across Central and Eastern Europe.

Affiliation and short CV:

Dr. Bantiou Marina is Adjunct Lecturer of Greek and European Institutional and Intellectual History at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Patras (Greece). She is also teaching Oral History at the Master's Program "Military History and the History of War" jointly offered by the Department of History of the Ionian University and the Department of Military Sciences of the Hellenic Military Academy (Evelpidon). Additionally, she is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki focusing on the Holocaust of the Jewish Community of Corfu (1943–1944), with an emphasis on oral history and public history.

Dr. Bantiou has presented and published extensively in international conferences and peer-reviewed academic journals. Her research interests focus on Modern and Contemporary Greek and European history, the history of war and occupation, press and media history, censorship and propaganda, public history, and oral history, with particular emphasis on memory, education, and digital public history. She has also served as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of the Peloponnese.

III. SECTION – RESISTANTS

15:45 – 16:05 *- Ágnes Kelemen*

Exiles of Misogyny and Antisemitism in the Antifascist Resistance

Jewish women in Hungarian academia during the era of the numerus clausus (1920–1945) faced multiple, overlapping forms of discrimination: as Jews, as women, and in some cases as politically undesirable applicants (particularly Communists). As historian Katalin Fenyves has put it, "*the Numerus Clausus was the symbolic moment when anti-Semitism and sexism converged.*" At the same time, the exclusion of politically subversive students was also an explicit objective of the law. These factors, combined with gender norms that imposed different expectations on women than on men, resulted in women constituting only slightly more than ten percent of the Hungarian "numerus clausus exiles"—that is, Jewish students who emigrated due to these restrictions.

The proposed paper first examines the specific characteristics of female student migration as a response to marginalization in Hungary. It then highlights several women who participated in antifascist resistance during the Shoah, either in their countries of emigration or within Hungary, such as Lívia Fleischmann in Italy and Piroska Döme in Hungary.

The first part of the presentation draws on my historical-sociological research on numerus clausus exiles in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, and Weimar Germany, utilizing documents of university archives. The second part relies on both published and unpublished ego-documents produced by these women, as well as interviews conducted with their descendants.

Affiliation and short CV:

Ágnes Katalin Kelemen is Assistant Professor of History at the Jewish Theological Seminary–University of Jewish Studies (OR-ZSE) in Budapest. She is the author of the forthcoming monograph *Hungarian Students in Exile: Jews, Leftists, Women, 1920–1938* (Indiana University Press). She also edited and annotated *Feljegyzések Gyuri fiam részére. Napló 1944-ből* [*Notes for My Son, Gyuri: A Diary from 1944*] by Ármin Bálint, published in 2014 by Múlt és Jövő.

16:05 – 16:25 - Kinga Frojimovics, Éva Kovács

Bözsi's Story: Jewish Women in the Hungarian Resistance 1944/45

In spring 2026, we published László Szamosi's memoir (*Remembering Resistance: A Jewish Memoir from Nazi-Occupied Budapest, 1944–45*). He worked alongside Ottó Komoly during the final months of the Arrow Cross regime in Budapest. His memoir sheds new light on the intertwined rescue activities of the neutral states and the Jewish resistance. Until now, historical research has rarely considered the role of family members in these activities. Szamosi's memoir showcases how a family worked together day by day to rescue children. Szamosi's wife, Bözsi, was responsible for typing the false Schutzpasses and other illegal documents, and she also cared for children living in Zionist orphanages. After the war, László and Bözsi took responsibility for finding surviving family members; therefore, Bözsi had already compiled a list of the 'real' names of those children during the war. Meanwhile, she had to save her own young children: a six-month-old baby and a two-year-old toddler. In our presentation, we will reconstruct her role and trajectory based on surviving documents from family archives, memoirs, and testimony given to the USHMM in the late 1980s.

Affiliation and short CV:

Kinga Frojimovics, PhD, is a historian and senior archivist at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI). Her research focuses on the history of the Holocaust in Hungary, Jewish religious life in Hungary, and the cataloguing of Jewish and Holocaust-related archival collections. She has authored six monographs, edited eight volumes, and published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Éva Kovács, Prof. Dr., sociologist, acting director of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) and a Research Professor at Eötvös Lóránt University, Centre for Social Sciences (ELTE-TK) in Budapest. Kovács studied sociology and economics at the Corvinus University in Budapest, PhD 1994, Habilitation 2009. Her research fields are the history of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, research on memory politics and social remembrance, and Jewish identity in Hungary and Slovakia. She has been teaching qualitative research methodology for decades, with a particular focus on interview methods. She has authored six monographs, edited twelve volumes, published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, co-curated exhibitions in Budapest, Berlin, Bratislava, Krems, Prague, Vienna, and Warsaw. She is the founder of the audio-visual archive "Voices of the Twentieth Century" in Budapest and between 2012 and 2025, she led various European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) projects at the VWI.

16:25 – 16:45 - Karolina Jakoweńko

Hidden Female Resistance

The presentation examines the often-overlooked grassroots contributions of Jewish women involved in resistance networks in the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie region – POLAND, with a particular focus on Będzin and the activities centered around the Będzin House of Ghetto Fighters. It highlights the roles of young women affiliated with Zionist youth movements such as Haszomer Hacair, Dror and Gordonia, emphasizing their multifaceted engagement in courier operations, underground communication, and later rescue efforts.
Drawing on primary sources – including memoirs, wartime diaries, and postwar testimonies of survivors such as Chajka Klinger, Renia Kukiełka, and Chawa Lenczner – this presentation reconstructs the lived experiences and agency of these women. It argues that their work constituted a form of "invisible resistance," grounded in daily acts of care, coordination, and survival.

These women operated as couriers and liaisons both before and within the ghettos, maintaining communication between cells and facilitating the movement of information, people, and resources. Their responsibilities also included caring for vulnerable groups, particularly children, thereby sustaining communal structures under extreme conditions. Central to their activity was the dual principle associated with *hagana*: the tension between armed resistance and the imperative to survive - *hacala*.

By foregrounding gendered dimensions of resistance, this presentation challenges dominant narratives that privilege armed struggle, instead proposing a broader understanding of resistance that includes relational, organizational, and affective labor. It seeks to restore visibility to these women's contributions and to reassess their place within Holocaust historiography and memory.

Affiliation and short CV:

Karolina Jakoweńko is a cultural studies scholar and graduate of postgraduate studies in Jewish culture at the Jagiellonian University. Since 2009, she has served as the president and founder of the Brama Cukermana Foundation, where she develops projects at the intersection of history, culture, and memory, focusing on the Jewish heritage of her hometown, Będzin.
In 2016–2025, she was the head of the House of Remembrance of the Jews of Upper Silesia at the Museum in Gliwice. She is a co-author of books and academic and popular articles on Jewish history and memory, and a recipient of several prestigious awards for her work in preserving Jewish heritage in Poland. She is a certified educator of Yad Vashem and a member of the activist network of Forum of Dialogue. She collaborates with the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Currently, her work focuses on the House of Ghetto Fighters, the second branch of the foundation.

NOVEMBER 12., THURSDAY

IV. SECTION – WOMEN'S MEMORY

09:15 – 09:35 - Adél Nagy

From Budapest to Ravensbrück: The Experiences of Hungarian Women Survivors

Approximately 10,000 women were sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in 1944, also known as "women's hell", either directly or indirectly from Hungary. Starting in the fall of 1944, following the Arrow Cross takeover, people were deported from Budapest. The majority were forced to march – in so-called "death marches" – to the border at Hegyeshalom, where they were loaded onto trains and then sent to various concentration camps, women mostly to Ravensbrück. In late November and early December, a few transports of women "escaped" these death marches; they were loaded onto trains at the Józsefváros railway station and sent from there to Ravensbrück.
The Hungarian women who arrived here in late 1944 were met with horrific conditions in the overcrowded camp. The camp's capacity struggled increasingly to accommodate the influx of people, and the number of prisoners in the barracks quadrupled in some cases. Most of the Hungarian women were housed in a military tent set up in the center of the camp, where they initially had to survive on the bare ground in the cold. In my presentation, I would like to describe the experiences of a Hungarian woman deported from Budapest to Ravensbrück, primarily through early memoirs: what they went through during the deportation, then upon arriving at the camp, and how they spent that brief time in the camp before being deported further.

Affiliation and short CV:

Adél Nagy is a historian-museologist at Holocaust Memorial Center in Budapest since 2016. She is also currently a PhD candidate at Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest), where her research focuses on the history of the experiences of Hungarian women deported to Ravensbrück. At the Memorial Center, she participates in the work of the Name Research group and the Collection, she has served as co-curator for several exhibitions. Furthermore she contributes as an editor to the online journal *MOMA – Modern Magyarország*.

09:35 – 09:55 - Tímea Jablonczay

Archived memories and forgotten voices: Hungarian Women's Holocaust Testimonies

In my presentation, my aim is to demonstrate how Hungarian female survivors attempted to share their painful memories based on extreme violence and trauma, including both published and unpublished materials preserved in archives. While reviewing several memoirs, I give special attention to Tereza Rudnóy's literary testimonial novel (*Szabaduló asszonyok / Liberating Women, 1947*); Erzsébet Rab's published memoir (*És nem verik félre a harangot / And they're not raising the alarm, 1948*); and Irén Krausz's unpublished memoirs (1966), preserved by Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives. These individual traumatic stories recount various experiences in the ghettos, under Hungarian Arrow Cross terror, and in the death camps; they describe what these women went through, but they also reveal the difficulties involved in communicating and representing the physical pain, the facts of mass murder, the circumstances of losing

children, and these horrors.

The lecture also draws on theoretical insights regarding testimonies, memory and female holocaust narratives (from Meg Jensen, Zoë Waxman to Aleida Assmann), and explores different ways of remembrance: how the events were experienced and recalled on an individual level (episodic memory), how broader historical knowledge and shared cultural frameworks are constructed (semantic memory), as well as how memory can be embodied and expressed through the body (bodily memory), what differences exist across genres, and how individual testimonies enable collective voices to be heard. The examination of testimonies from the women's Holocaust is part of the broader narrative of the compulsion to remember and societal forgetting; confronting these testimonies is always a challenge for the reader, and thus the lecture also highlights the importance of the ethical dimension of their portrayal and interpretation.

Affiliation and short CV:

Tímea Jablonczay, PhD, is currently a lecturer at the Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies (OR-ZSE), Budapest (from 2025). She holds a PhD in Literary History and Cultural Studies from the University of Pécs and the University of Jyväskylä, Finland (2009). She was an associate professor at Milton Friedman University, Budapest (2010–2024), a research fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies (iASK), Kőszeg (2022), and taught at Metropolitan University, Budapest (2025).

Her works covers literary studies (*Narratives 6. Narrative embedding and reflexivity*, with Adrián Bene, 2007; other editions: Helikon *2015/2 Transnational perspectives in literary studies*, Helikon 2022/3 *Transcultural memory studies*) and social sciences (*Territorial identity strategies I: Local Identity Politics and the Image of Dabas*). An important area of her research is related to the minor literature and cultural field, the memory and forgetting of the traumatic past, and the memory of the Holocaust in Hungary. She is currently working on three major projects: the career of Erzsi Szenes, Holocaust Memory and Discourses during the 1960s, and Hungarian Female Holocaust Memory (1945–1989).

09:55 – 10:15 *- Dragana Stojanović*

Survival as Identity: Gender Under Persecution in the Testimonies of Yugoslav Jewish Women

This research focuses on the processes through which survival became a central determinant of women's gender identities under Holocaust persecution. As one of the primary axes of identification, gender identity is deeply affected under extreme conditions of survival, where it becomes influenced, triggered, and even weaponized. This presentation examines shifts, reconfigurations, preservations, and transformations of gendered selves among Yugoslav Jewish women during the Holocaust.

The survival conditions of the Holocaust placed Yugoslav Jewish women under severe and evolving pressures, including familial and personal loss, hiding, captivity, and suffering. Faced with constant threats to their own lives and the lives of their families, women often endured uncertainty, and their gender roles shifted alongside the erosion of traditional masculine roles within their families. Many women actively participated in hiding, through which they experienced acts of gender suppression or strategic gender performance. A number of Yugoslav Jewish women survived by joining partisan resistance and underwent experiences that transformed how they understood and lived their fem-

ininity in contrast to prewar gender roles. In captivity and concentration camps, women experienced ongoing processes of forced desexualization and resexualization that left lasting marks on their sense of self.

Drawing on the testimonies of Yugoslav Jewish women, this presentation aims to trace the connections between survival, gender, and lived experience, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the position of women in the Holocaust, as well as of the Holocaust as a profoundly gendered experience.

Affiliation and short CV:

Dragana Stojanović is an interdisciplinary scholar and researcher in the field of the Holocaust Studies, with a strong focus on topics involving memory, media, gender, and education. She is a Research Fellow at ShoahLab – the Laboratory for Holocaust Research at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade, where she is involved in academic projects focused on the Holocaust studies and the prevention of antisemitism. She is also a Board and Academic Steering Committee Member of WHISC – Women in the Holocaust International Study Center, dedicated to researching the memory, history, and experiences of women in the Holocaust. As an informal Jewish educator and project coordinator, she works in the organization Haver Serbia. Actively engaged in both academic and informal education, she is deeply committed to building bridges between formal and informal educational spaces, initiatives, and professionals, fostering collaboration and mutual learning across disciplines.

10:15 – 10:35 - Michelle Damm

Roma Women in German Holocaust Literature: An Unheard Memory of the Holocaust

In Germany, the genocide of the Roma people wasn't acknowledged until more than 30 years after the end of World War II. In 1982, it was stated by the former chancellor Helmut Schmidt that the killing of the Roma people has been a genocide. Consequently, it took Roma a lot of time to write and publish their experiences and memories: In Germany, the first literary accounts were published in the 1980s.

Ceija Stojka and Philomena Franz were the first to speak up publicly about their experiences during the Holocaust. In their literary accounts, they present the life of young Roma women during the World War II. Those two personal narratives do not only show individual life stories but contain various aspects about the life of Roma women during the Holocaust – beginning with childhood memories, forced labour, (sexual) violence, group identity, sacrifices and surviving. Therefore, their literary accounts also state a collective memory of Roma women. Still, their memories are rarely seen as Holocaust testimonies.

In this presentation, *'Zwischen Liebe und Haß' (Between Love and Hate)* written by Philomena Franz and *'Wir leben im Verborgenen' (We live in Hiding)* by Ceija Stojka will be investigated in terms of their daily life and the experiences they made in different concentration camps and how these experiences are handled with in literature. By additionally including paintings and some more literary accounts by different Roma women, a mosaic of Roma women and their testimonies will be formed. Remaining key questions will be explored.

Affiliation and short CV:

From 2017 to 2023, Michelle Damm pursued a state examination degree in secondary school teaching, with Mathematics and German as her subjects, at the University of Giessen. Following her graduation in 2023, she started a Master's degree in German, specializing in Comparative Literature and Holocaust Literature, which she finished in March 2026. Her master's thesis was on '*First Literary Accounts of Sinti and Roma about the National Socialism*'. Since 2024, she has been working as a research assistant at the Arbeitsstelle Holocaustliteratur. Her previous publications and presentations have dealt with the following topics: women in the National Socialist era, local history of the National Socialist era, biographies of women in the NS, and antigypsyism.

V. SECTION – DIFFERENT PATHS TO SURVIVAL

11:00 – 11:20 *- Dóra Pataricza*

Beyond the "Train of the Privileged": Women's fates among the passengers of Kasztner's rescue operation

This presentation examines women's lives among the female passengers of the Kasztner train, drawing on newly uncovered and previously unpublished primary sources from Hungarian and Israeli archives. While the Kasztner rescue operation has long been framed through the contested label of a "train of the privileged," the passenger list itself has never been analysed in detail. Focusing on the female passengers of the list, this presentation aims to present a wide spectrum of their fates.

The presentation analyses diverse life trajectories, including the group of eighteen orphaned young girls who travelled with Elza Jungreisz; elderly women such as Mrs Vilmos Mandler; rebbetzins and observant women; mothers with small children; and young women whose wartime roles and postwar paths diverged sharply. Methodologically, the research combines close reading of passenger lists with tools of digital humanities, correspondence, institutional files, survivor testimonies, and fieldwork with child survivors and descendants. It contrasts two competing narratives: Kasztner's own "Noah's Ark" model of rescue under extreme limitation and the later accusation of selective privilege. The presentation also traces postwar trajectories, asking where these women settled, how they rebuilt lives after displacement, and whether ideological or religious backgrounds influenced later choices.

The project is a new Hungarian–Israeli collaboration between JTS-UJS (Budapest) and Bar-Ilan University (Israel) and contributes to Holocaust history, women's history, and memory studies.

Affiliation and short CV:

Dóra Pataricza is a historian at the Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies (OR-ZSE) in Budapest. Her research focuses on the intellectual and cultural legacy of the Szeged Jewish Community. Dóra is currently the initiator and director of a collaborative project on the Löw legacy, carried out in partnership with the National Library of Israel, the Szeged Jewish Community, OR-ZSE, and the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives. Since January 2026, she is leading a three-year project on the passengers

of the Kasztner train, funded by Claims Conference. She is the editor of Immánuel Löw's essay, *The Kiss*, forthcoming in 2026 by Hebrew Union College Press.

11:20 – 11:40 - Marta Frączkiewicz

Herstories of Survival: Three Case Studies of the Heroines of the POLIN Collection

A significant portion of POLIN's collection consists of personal memorabilia documenting the individual stories of Polish Jews. Many of these items are associated with survivors of the Holocaust – serving as „memory capsules" of sorts, carrying information about who their owners were and what they endured.
The set of chess carved by Pola Najder is connected to the period when she hid in a 6-square-meter dugout with her husband and eight other people. Halina Olszewicka's monthly ticket under a false name allowed her to function on the so-called Aryan side during the occupation. A photograph of her parents, taken from home in a hurry, accompanied Paulina Włodawer as she fled the war to the east.
The stories of the women mentioned above represent three distinct strategies for surviving the Holocaust by Polish Jewish women: hiding, living under false documents, and escape to the east. In this presentation, I would like to explore the circumstances, that chosen protagonists faced in connection with the survival strategy they adopted as a case study.
I also want to present how these stories are represented in the Museum of the History of Polish Jews' collection (including both the material collection, the archival collection, and oral history). I will attempt to systematize the narrative of the collection, and demonstrate how these narratives are constructed by the Museum and how they function within its framework (in publications, exhibitions, and educational activities), as well as the opportunities for narrative construction offered by the museum space as a medium.

Affiliation and short CV:

Marta Frączkiewicz is the Curator of the collections at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Her work primarily focuses on anthropology of things (personal and historical memorabilia), as well as herstory. A graduate of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, she holds a doctorate in historical studies and a master's degree in ethnology and cultural anthropology, and archaeology. She also completed postgraduate studies in gender studies in Torun and Polish-Jewish studies at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

11:40 – 12:00 - Juliane Streit

Emancipation or Participation in Nazi Germany: The Glider Pilot and Physical Education Teacher Vera von Pirscher

Women under the National Socialist regime often faced a paradox: constrained by ideology and social norms, yet sometimes able to pursue professional and personal advancement, they navigated a delicate balance between opportunity and complicity within the structures of an authoritarian state. This presentation explores one such case through a biographical study of Vera von Pirscher, a physical education teacher and glider pilot who taught at several higher education institutions during the National Socialist period in Germany.

The presentation focuses on her time at the then so-called "Sports University of Marburg",

which functioned as the central training site for all prospective female physical education teachers in the Reich. Drawing on archival marterial, the study reconstructs von Pirscher's life and professional trajectory through the Nazi period and into the post-war years.

The analysis examines sport and physical education under National Socialism as gendered spaces of action shaped by ideological, racial and political imperatives. Sport functioned both as a mechanism of exclusion and as an instrument for shaping the "Volkskörper" ("national body"). Particular attention is paid to women's gliding, which appeard to open up modern and unconventional spaces of action for women, while simultaneously serving as a propaganda tool and facilitating women's integration into civilian and military aviation structures.

Tracing von Pirscher's life highlights the ambivalence of gendered spaces under National Socialism, where professional opportunity and personal agency coexisted with complicity in the regime. It highlights the value of biographical case studies for understanding women's participation, gendered agency, and the politicization of sport.

Affiliation and short CV:

Juliane Streit is a MA student of Art History at Philipps University Marburg, specialising in art and cultural policy under National Socialism, with History as a minor subject. She holds a certificate in Gender Studies and is currently researching art and cultural policy in Nazi-era Marburg. Her work employs biographical approaches and archival research, with a particular focus on local history and the lived experiences of women under National Socialism. Her research on Vera von Pirscher was published in the Yearbook of the German Society for the History of Sport Science, representing her first academic publication.