

“Jews and the Legacies of Empire”
Scientific Report

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Jews and the Legacies of Empire,” an international workshop funded by the European Science Foundation, Pasts, Inc., and Central European University, took place in Budapest, Hungary, between May 29 and June 1 in the Senate Room of the Central European University. The workshop brought together several generations of scholars from academic institutions across Europe, Israel and the United States, with the purpose of examining the “transformation in the social position and legal status of Jews” in the Habsburg Empire and its successor states. The workshop participants were encouraged to introduce a comparative perspective whenever possible, bringing relevant examples from the Russian and Ottoman Empires and their respective successor states.

The workshop was organized to maximize scholarly discussion and intellectual exchange, bringing together a wide range of scholars focusing on various aspects of inter-war Jewish history in Central and Eastern Europe. With the exception of the keynote address (for which 45 minutes was allotted), papers were limited to 25-30 minutes, thereby allowing a 10-15 minutes after each paper for discussion and debate.

The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. Michael Silber, professor of Jewish history and chair of the History Department at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel, whose keynote address, “Jews and the State in the Two Halves of the Habsburg Empire: A Comparative Perspective,” set the stage for the workshop by framing many of the questions and emphasizing the diverse themes that ran through the papers presented at the workshop. The participants were divided into six panels, which roughly correspond to the issues that were raised by Dr. Silber and then examined in the course of the workshop. These themes were:

1. Jewish Identities
2. Anti-Semitism

3. Cultural Legacies
4. National Minority Rights
5. Politics
6. Central and European Émigrés in Weimar Germany

In addition to the twenty-two invited participants, the workshop was attended by scholars from Hungary, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Switzerland, as well as students from Central European University and members of the public at large. The keynote address attracted 40-50 people, with most of the sessions attracting somewhere around 30-35 people. Many of the lively discussions were continued over lunch and dinner or during the tour of Budapest on May 31.

The feedback regarding the workshop was universally positive, with special attention drawn to the high quality of the papers, the dynamic and interesting discussions and the proper mix of academic rigor and general informality. As an anthropologist from the U.K. wrote, “Congratulations on organizing an excellent conference which was a pleasure to attend. . . . I think its success was due to the mix of both established scholars and Ph.D. students, the quality of whose papers was very high. I think too that it was the right size, conducive to informality.” These sentiments were echoed by a young Israeli scholar, who wrote that “the conference has been perfectly organized in all aspects, and has been a great intellectual experience for me.”

B. SCIENTIFIC CONTENT

The papers examined diverse aspects of the political, cultural, economic, social, religious, educational, linguistic, national and demographic “legacies of empire,” focusing not only on the Jews who remained in the Habsburg successor states, but also on those that were drawn to Weimar Berlin, one of the most dynamic cultural capitals of inter-war Central Europe. Before we examined the legacies *per se*, Michael Silber gave a general overview of the characteristic traits of the Jewish communities in Cisleithenia and Transleithenian (the two parts of the Habsburg Empire, divided by the Leitha River after 1867), raising

issues and themes that repeatedly came up during the rest of the workshop. In Session 1 (“Jewish Identity”), Rebekah Klein-Pejsova, Emil Kerenji and Camelia Craciun examined attempts by the Jewish populations in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania to construct group identities that conformed to the overarching national goals of these three “nationalizing” states. In Session 2 (“Anti-Semitism”), Miklos Konrad, Kati Vörös and Michal Frankl examined the anti-Semitic discourse in Hungary and the Czech Lands, focusing on the continuities and discontinuities after the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire. In Session 3 (“Cultural Legacies”), Lisa Silverman examined the role of assimilated Austrian Jews in establishing the Salzburg Festival; Rachel Manekin sought to explain the preponderance of Galician Jews among historians of Polish Jewry; and Michael Miller looked at identity questions among highly peripatetic Jewish students in inter-war Europe. In Session 4 (“National Minority Rights”), Frank Neemann, Maria Kovacs and Dimitry Shumsky examined international, domestic and intra-Jewish debates about minority protection (particularly under the League of Nations) as well as conflicting conceptions of the Jews as a national minority. In Session 5 (“Politics”), Dieter Hecht, Marie Crhová and Jerzy Tomaszewski examined the political strategies developed (or inherited) by sectors of the Jewish communities in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, with particular focus on the impact of dissolution of the Habsburg Empire (and the Russian and German Empires, in the case of Poland). In Section 6 (“Central-Eastern European Émigrés in Weimar Germany,” Till van Rahden set the overall stage, raising questions about the nature of German civil society, while Tobias Brinkmann and Eszter Gantner focused on specific aspects of the inter-war émigré population. In addition to the presenters, Viktor Karády, András Kovács and Hillel Kieval served as moderators and added their insights during almost all of the panels. This helped facilitate the highly constructive dialogue between established scholars like themselves and the junior scholars and doctoral students who made up much of the workshop.

C. ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

As mentioned above (“Executive Summary”), the participants were extremely pleased with the organization, atmosphere and content of the workshop, a sentiment that is shared by the organizers as well. Due to the original research and the high quality of scholarship

in the papers and the thematically cohesive nature of the workshop, we are now considering various options for publishing the best papers. We have already received an offer from LIT Verlag in Berlin, and the London-based *Eastern European Jewish Affairs* has expressed interest in publishing some of the papers (after an appropriate review process). We are currently considering these options as well as looking into other ones. The publication of selected papers from the “Jews and the Legacies of Empire” workshop will be one of the true, quantifiable legacies of this workshop.

D. FINAL PROGRAMME

Jewish Studies at Central European University

and

Pasts, Inc.

present an international workshop

with support from the European Science Foundation

Jews and the Legacies of Empire

Central European University

Nador utca 9 1051 Budapest

May 29-31, 2005

All sessions will take place in the Senate Room of the Monument Building

Sunday, May 29, 2005

1:00 – 2:00 Registration & Coffee

2:00 – 2:30 Welcoming Remarks

2:30 – 3:30 Keynote Speech:

Michael Silber, *Hebrew University, Jerusalem*

**Jews and the State in the Two Halves of the Habsburg Empire:
A Comparative Perspective**

3:30 – 4:00 Coffee Break

4:00 – 6:00 **Session 1: Jewish Identity**

Moderator: Hillel Kieval, *Washington University in St. Louis*

Rebekah Klein-Pejsova, *Columbia University, New York*

An Irreconcilable Conflict of Interests: The Heroes' Temple Memorial Project in Budapest and the Emergence of Slovak Jewry

Emil Kerenji, *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*

Echoes of Empire(s): Jewish Yugoslavism and the (Dis)continuities of Yugoslav Jewish History

Camelia Craciun, *Central European University*

Constructing Romanian Jewish Identity: Wilhelm Filderman and the U. E. R. (The Romanian Jews' Union)

7:30 Dinner

Monday, May 30, 2005

10:00 – 12:00 **Session 2: Anti-Semitism**

Moderator: Andras Kovacs, *Central European University*

Miklos Konrad, *Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences*
Jewish perception of Anti-Semitism in Hungary before World War I.

Kati Vörös, *University of Chicago*

World War One, The dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the "Jewish Question" in Hungary

Michal Frankl, *Charles University, Prague*

(Dis)Continuities of Czech Antisemitism before and after 1918.

12:00 – 2:00 Lunch

2:00 – 4:00 **Session 3: Cultural Legacies**

Moderator: Michael Silber, *Hebrew University, Jerusalem*

Lisa Silverman, *University of Sussex*

Searching for Redemption: Yiddish Theater, the Salzburg Festival, and Austrian Jewish Identity between the Wars

Rachel Manekin, *Hebrew University, Jerusalem*

The First Historians of Polish Jewry and their Galician Roots

Michael Miller, *Central European University*

Vanishing Capitals, Shifting Allegiances: Jewish Dilemmas in the Habsburg Successor States

4:00 – 4:30 Coffee Break

4:30 – 6:30 **Session 4: National Minority Rights**

Moderator: Michael Miller, *Central European University*

Frank Neseemann, *Simon Dubnow Institute, Leipzig*

Between Zionist Engagement and the Struggle for the Protection of National Minorities: The Political Activity of Leo Motzkin (1867-1933)

Maria Kovacs, *Central European University*

The Ambiguities of External Minority Protection: The Hungarian *Numerus Clausus* Debate

Dimitry Shumsky, *Haifa University*

"Wir sind Arabern gegenüber ebenso blind, wie wir in Böhmen den Tschechen gegenüber blind waren" - The Czecho-German Zionists and the Idea of Arab-Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine

Tuesday, May 31, 2005

10:00 – 12:00 **Session 5: Politics**

Moderator: Viktor Karady, *Central European University*

Dieter Hecht, *Historisches Museum, Vienna*

The Jewish-National Party in Austrian Politics 1918-1938

Marie Crhová, *Central European University*

Jewish Politics and Striving for Unity in the Empire and Nation-State: the Case of Czech Zionists

Jerzy Tomaszewski, *University of Warsaw*

Jews from the Three Empires Enter the Republic of Poland

12:00 – 2:00 Lunch

2:00 – 4:00 **Session 6: Central-Eastern European Emigrés in Weimar Germany**

Moderator: Jerzy Tomaszewski, *University of Warsaw*

Till van Rahden, *University of Cologne*

Jews and the Ambivalences of Civil Society in Germany, 1800-1933

Tobias Brinkmann, *University of Southampton*

Migration and "Metropolis": Jewish Migrants in Berlin in the 1920s

Eszter Gantner, *Humboldt University & Touro College, Berlin*

“Budapest-Berlin”: Left-Wing Hungarian-Jewish Emigrés in Weimar
Berlin

5:00 – 7:00 Tour of Jewish Budapest

7:30 Dinner

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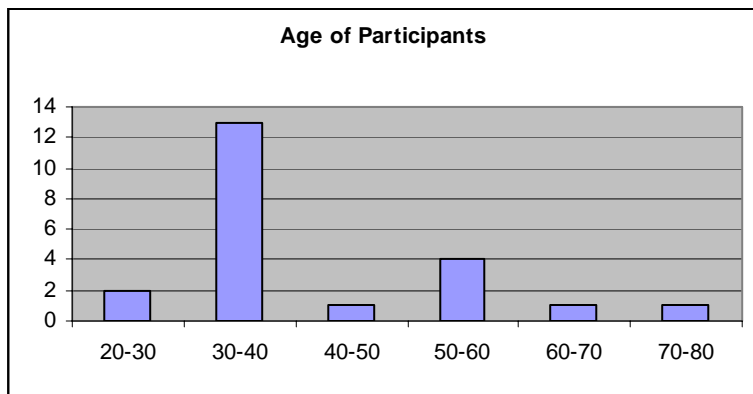
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F. Statistical Information on Participants

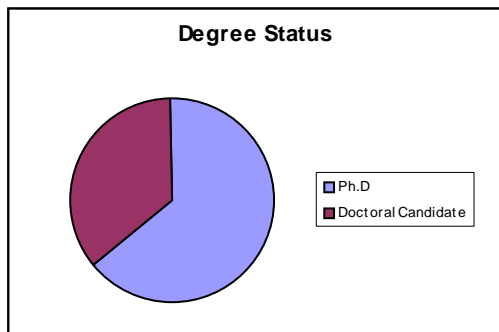
1. Age of Participants

20-30	2
30-40	13
40-50	1
50-60	4
60-70	1
70-80	1



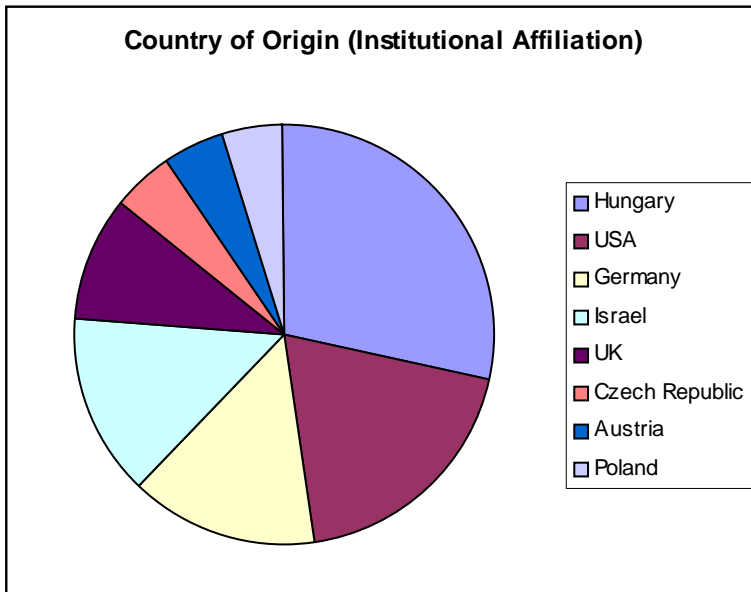
2. Degree Status

Ph.D.	14
Doctoral Candidate	8



3. Country of Origin (Institutional Affiliation)

Hungary	6
USA	4
Germany	3
Israel	3
UK	2
Czech Republic	1
Austria	1
Poland	1



4. Country of Origin (Citizenship)

Hungary	6
USA	4
Germany	3
Israel	3
Czech Republic	2
Austria	1
Serbia & Montenegro	1
Romania	1
Poland	1

