Interview

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EEHS editors: Tamás, thank you very much for meeting us and giving us this interview. I am Norli Lappin-Eppel from Vienna, I am a Holocaust researcher and I'm on the editorial board of Eastern European Holocaust Studies where this interview is going to be published. My partner is Marie Moutier-Bitan, a professor at the University of Caen and the Chair of Holocaust and Genocide Studies. So maybe, Tamás, could you start by introducing yourself to our readers?

Tamás Stark: Thank you for the opportunity to speak about my research.

I am a scientific advisor at the Research Center for the Humanities and the Institute of History, which belongs to this research center. I have been working here since the early 1980s. So, this is my first workplace and obviously the last one.

My main field of research is the Second World War: I am particularly interested in the different kinds of forced migrations which happened in East Central Europe or which were implemented in East Central Europe during the Second World War and in the post-war period. I am also interested in the history of the Holocaust, as well as the history and the fate of Hungarian prisoners of war and civilian internees in Soviet custody.

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EEHS editors: What brought you to investigate the massacre of Kamianets-Podilskyi – a highly under-researched topic?

Tamás Stark: Well, my first work on the Holocaust was published in 1995. At that time, the focus of my research was the demography of the Holocaust [in Hungary], i.e., what happened to the Jewish communities in the different parts of the country? I wanted to give a statistical account of the fate of the Hungarian Jewish community during the Holocaust. Another important subject was the number and the fate of the remnants [the survivors] of the Jewish community. Finally, I began to deal with the history and with the prehistory of the communist post-war deportations.

A Hungarian-American colleague, George Eisen, who at that time worked at Nazareth College in Rochester in the United States, invited me to do this research [at his university]. So, we started to work together. In 2013, we published an article entitled "The 1941 Galician deportation and the Kamenyec-Podolsk massacre: a prologue to the Hungarian Holocaust" in the journal *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. Later the collaboration ceased and we worked separately.

When I began to work on the Kamianets-Podilskyi massacre, I thought that it would be an easy subject because the story began in July [1941], actually in mid-July, and the Kamianets-Podilskyi massacre took place in late August [1941]. So, we are speaking about a two-month period of time.

However, once I started to work on the subject, I realized how important it is. First of all, in order to understand what happened in 1941, you have to go back to the First World War and to the early 1920s, because it was at this time that this story began. So, I studied intensively the prehistory of the first Hungarian deportation [from Hungary to Galizia in July 1941]. And as I investigated what actually happened during the summer of 1941, I became more and more interested. In the end, I wrote a book on the history and on the prehistory of the first Hungarian deportation. This book came out one and a half years ago in Hungarian.

EEHS editors: How did European Jewry, especially Jews living in Eastern Europe, come into the focus of international and also Hungarian domestic politics during the Great War and its aftermath?

Tamás Stark: It is interesting that in Hungarian newspapers or literature which were published before the First World War, Jews were not mentioned. The fate of the Hungarian Jewish community was not a political issue in Hungary. Of course, we are speaking about the liberal era. Liberalism represented Hungarian political life during the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Anti-Semitism existed, but it was a marginal phenomenon, despite the fact that the number of Jews who lived in Hungary, had increased six times during the 19th century. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism was a marginal phenomenon. The situation was different, for example, in

Romania or in Russia. Romania had the reputation of being one of the most anti-Semitic countries in Europe. Therefore, it became an international phenomenon when the situation changed completely during the First World War.

For me, it was very interesting that after the outbreak of the First World War, the Hungarian Jewish community wrote that the war was a good opportunity for Hungarian Jews to prove their loyalty to the Hungarian nation. Furthermore, the Hungarian Jewish papers wrote – and I think that many Hungarian Jews shared this idea – that the war would liberate the Jews of Russia from oppression. For the Hungarian Jews, the war against Russia was a war of liberation [of the Russian Jews]. And to my best knowledge, that was also the attitude of the Jews who lived in Austria or in Germany. Martin Buber, a famous Austrian Jewish philosopher, compared the campaign against Russia to the war of the Maccabees, who fought against the enemies of Jews, as the Bible says. So that was the attitude of the Jewish community and of many Jews.

However, during the second half of the First World War, the mood of the non-Jewish majority changed. People had become exhausted by the burden of the war, by the food shortages, and by the huge number of human losses in the various theaters of war. And gradually Jews became the scapegoats for almost all burdens of the Great War. For example, they were accused of profiteering from the war and they were accused of shirking military service. At the same time, tens of thousands of Jews from Galicia, from territories which were occupied by the Russian army, fled to the inner part of the monarchy, to Austria and also to Hungary. These Jewish immigrants from Galicia were accused of "conquering the country". So, the good relationship between Jews and non-Jews slowly changed for the worse.

The period after the First World War, when Hungary became an independent state, was really a dramatic era. On the 31 October [1918], the Hungarian republic was proclaimed in the context of a so-called revolution. During the post-war period, this revolution and a second one, the so-called communist revolution, were labelled a Jewish plot. This was especially the case with the first communist dictatorship, because the majority of the leaders of the communist movement had a Jewish background. So, the Jews were scapegoats not only for the suffering during the First World War, but also for the defeat, for the first communist dictatorship, and for the Trianon Peace Treaty which resulted in the loss of two-thirds of Hungary's territory. When Miklós Horthy marched into Budapest on the 16 November 1919 at the head of the "National Army", a new era began. This new era started with a tumultuous anti-Semitic campaign, of a kind that had never been seen before in the country's history. Horthy was officially elected regent on the 1 March 1920 and held the post until the 15 October 1944.

However, anti-Semitism was not only the common attitude of the Hungarian elite, which also shaped their policies, but also of the Romanian and Polish elites. In

these countries, the Jewish question became the main issue following the First World War. And in all three countries, the political elites recommended very similar solutions to reduce the so-called Jewish influence on cultural life and to reduce the activity of Jews in industry. Another promoted solution was the reduction of the number of Jews by removing the "aliens", the "foreign Jews".

It is at this point that the prehistory of the deportation begins. It begins with the question: How many Jews in Hungary were "aliens"? This is a very difficult question because there was no official decision as to which groups of people were aliens in Hungary. Nevertheless, in late 1919, a campaign to remove the alien Jews started. In general, the public equated the term "alien Jews" with Jews from Galicia. However, the proponents of the campaign never clearly defined which Jews were alien. They only spoke about removing or resettling the "alien Jews" to neighboring countries, or to Palestine, for example. One of the founding fathers of the new political regime, a Christian nationalist regime, was Ottokar (Otto) Prohaszka, a Catholic theologian, philosopher, and Bishop of Székesfehérvár who was close to the head of state, Miklós Horthy. Ottokar Prohaszka was obsessed with the removal of the "alien Jews", and recommended resettling them in Palestine. In the early 1920s, various Hungarian governments released a total of six decrees on the removal of alien Jews. According to these decrees, "alien Jews" were those who had come to Hungary during the war. However, deportable persons included not only these Jews but also earlier arrivals and their Hungarian-born family members if they were politically undesirable or their economic activities were deemed destructive by the local authorities. For example, Jews who were born in Hungary, but had supported the communist dictatorship or had profited from the Great War, or others who were declared "an unwanted person" or "an unsuitable person" should be removed. I have only one figure for the number of Jews who were supposed to be removed. In the fall of 1920, a Hungarian Minister of Interior, Gyula Ferdinandy, mentioned at a meeting of the council of ministers that all Jews who have no Hungarian citizenship should be expelled. He estimated that 80,000 Jews would be affected.

However, in the early 1920s, this plan could not be implemented for various reasons. One of the main obstacles was that the Polish government did not accept Jews from Hungary. At this time, the western powers also vehemently opposed any kind of removal or any kind of forced migration of stateless Jews because they wanted to keep the status quo.

There was yet another problem: at the time, nobody in Hungary knew whether they had Hungarian citizenship or not. In the 1920s or 1930s, or in the period before the First World War, the question of citizenship was never an issue So, nobody had any documentation proving their citizenship. If somebody applied for a passport, the state officials did not ask for proof of citizenship, or if somebody was recruited into the army during the First World War, nobody was interested whether that person

had Hungarian citizenship or not. If somebody wanted to start a business, it was never an issue whether they had Hungarian citizenship or not. If somebody wanted an official Hungarian citizenship paper, they had to apply to the Hungarian Ministry of Interior to recognize their Hungarian citizenship. Here is where the problem began. According to the Hungarian citizenship law of 1879, a person was a Hungarian citizen if their parents were Hungarian citizens. Therefore, applicants were asked to prove the Hungarian citizenship of their ancestors going back three generations. However, many Jews could not prove that their grandparents had lived in Hungary and had paid taxes. In many cases, they did not even have the marriage certificates or birth certificates of their ancestors. This caused many problems. In the end, it was up to the officials of the Hungarian Ministry of Interior to decide whether to officially recognize Hungarian citizenship or not.

EEHS editors: I understand that you are now talking about Trianon Hungary.

Tamás Stark: Yes, we're speaking about Trianon Hungary, but the situation was about the same in Romania and in Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovak and Romanian authorities demanded proof that the applicant's ancestors had lived in their territory three generations back. So, there too applicants had to submit these marriage certificates and birth certificates of fathers and mothers and grandparents.

What made things worse in Hungary was that the Ministry of Interior did not accept a *ketubah*, a religious marriage certificate issued by the Orthodox community. So for Jews who had only a *ketubah* and no civil marriage certificate, there was no chance of having their Hungarian citizenship officially recognized. At the beginning of the Second World War in 1939 and 1940, when the Northern part of Transylvania and Carpatho-Ruthenia became [once again] parts of Hungary, Jews who lived in that territory and had no Czech or Romanian citizenship did not receive Hungarian citizenship either. They were stateless. So, these Jews returned to [their former home country] Hungary and became officially stateless. To make a complex story short, it's probably not a big exaggeration to say that the Hungarian Ministry of Interior could produce almost as many "alien Jews" as they wanted.

Therefore, when we are speaking about the deportation of "alien Jews", it doesn't mean that they were really foreigners. They were undocumented. They could not prove that their ancestors had lived continuously in Hungary for three generations, or they were unable to apply to the Ministry of Interior for a certificate of Hungarian citizenship because of a lack of money or they did not apply because they did not know that it could be a matter of life and death for them. It is also important to point out that among the deported Jews, there were many who had certificates of citizenship but the authorities simply ignored them.

EEHS editors: Could you please tell us which Jews were targeted by the 1941 deportation policy?

Tamás Stark: As I explained, it was a demand of the Hungarian political elite to remove – to deport – the "alien Jews". For the reasons explained above, it had not been possible to implement this demand. However, both the political situation and the geopolitical situation changed dramatically when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union. Hungary joined this campaign and the Hungarian army occupied a western part of the Soviet Union. Now there was land to deport these "unwanted, unsuitable Jews" to. The initiative for this deportation came from Miklós Kozma, who was appointed state commissioner of Carpatho-Ruthenia. However, there were also others including military leaders and the general staff, particularly Henrik Werth who was the head of the general staff. I also have to mention the prime minister, László Bárdossy, who accepted this idea to remove foreign Jews. And on the 1 July 1941, the Hungarian Council of Ministers decided to deport alien Jews. The deportation decree was released on the 12 July by the National Central Authority for the Control of Foreigners (KEOKH). The process began the following day, when more than 20,000 Jews were rounded up and deported to Körösmező [today Jassinya in the Ukraine] in Carpatho-Ruthenia, which is close to the eastern border of the country.

EEHS editors: Were there any agreements with the Germans regarding the deportation of "alien Jews"?

Tamás Stark: That's an important question because there were no agreements. There were no agreements at all. The deportation was initiated without any consultation with the German occupation forces. It was implemented by the Hungarian gendarmerie, the Hungarian police, and also the Hungarian army.

This question is also important because when on the 9 August the Hungarian government finally decided to stop – or actually to suspend – the deportation, it did so because the Germans opposed the influx of tens of thousands of foreign Jews into the occupied territories which they considered a security risk. Therefore, they demanded a stop to the deportation. Under the pressure from the German high command, the Hungarian government decided to suspend the deportation, and it finally stopped in mid-August. By that time, about 20–22,000 Jews had been deported to territories of the Soviet Union that had been occupied by the German and the Hungarian armies.

EEHS editors: What exactly was the aim of the deportation?

Tamás Stark: According to the official narrative, which was circulated even in the media, these so-called foreign Jews were not deported but resettled, or – as was also

claimed – repatriated. The argument was that they and their ancestors had come from Galicia. Therefore, they were now repatriated to their original homeland, to the home of their ancestors.

When this territory was occupied by the Hungarian and German armies, a significant part of the local population fled with the Soviet army leaving behind many empty houses. According to the Hungarian narrative, the Jews would be settled in these empty homes and empty villages where they could continue their lives in their new homeland. So that was the narrative, but what actually happened was the opposite. These "alien Jews" were concentrated in the camp at Körösmező, which was close to the Hungarian eastern border. From Körösmező they were deported to the occupied territories by military vans. After they had crossed the river Dniester, they were ordered to leave the trucks and were abandoned. Sometimes, they were robbed by Hungarian military personnel before they were abandoned. The abandoned Jews had to find their way in these areas of no-man's land. The locals received them usually with hostility so that they had to move from one village to another, from one town to another. However, they received some kind of assistance, for example food and shelter, from the local Jewish communities. Most of the Jews who were abandoned in late July or in early August were concentrated in the Kamianets-Podilskyi region, probably because it had been conquered and occupied by the Hungarian army. About 10,000 or probably 12,000–13,000 Jews gathered there and were forced into these ghettos. I have to mention that there were also many Romanian Jews in Kamianets-Podilskyi who had been deported from Bessarabia and from Bukovina. That's very interesting.

The local Jewish population was quite numerous. So, there was a strong local Jewish population, the Hungarian Jews and the Romanian Jews. That was the situation when the German high command met on the 25 August in Vinnitsa. There they decided to introduce a civil or public administration in the occupied Ukraine and other occupied Soviet territories. According to the minutes taken at this meeting, Friedrich Jeckeln, the Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer (HSSPF) Russland-Süd [Higher SS and Police Leader Russia-South] promised to eliminate the Jews residing in Kamianets-Podilskyi by the 1 September 1941. So, this decision and this promise of SS Obergruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln led to the massacre of Kamianets-Podilskyi, which began on the 27 August and lasted for three days. It resulted in the death of 23,000 Jews, local Jews, Romanian Jews, and Hungarian Jews. Among the 23,000 victims there were about 11,000–12,000 Hungarian Jews.

EEHS editors: That means that the Hungarian government did not know that these people were doomed when they deported them?

Tamás Stark: The Hungarian government did not deport these alien Jews with the aim that the Germans would kill them. However, the Hungarian government had information on what happened at Kamianets-Podilskyi, and they also had information on the process of the massacre, on the process that Patrick Dubois called "Holocaust by bullets". So, the Hungarian government was aware of this situation. It was also responsible because it had abandoned these Jews. Furthermore, although the Hungarian government knew about the massacre, the Hungarian border police, with the assistance of the military, blocked the return of deported Jews. The border was strengthened and new units were deployed there. This caused new tragedies. Jews who were unable to return to Hungary later became the victims of other massacres that took place in other cities, for example in Nádvorná, or in Stanislau [today: Ivano-Frankivsk]. I have a list of these villages and towns where Hungarian Jews settled, and later became the victims of massacres which were implemented by the German police battalions in early October and in early November 1941. So, this is also the responsibility of the Hungarian government for not allowing these Jews to return to Hungary.

EEHS editors: You mentioned the presence of Romanian Jews in Kamianets-Podilskyi. Was there an agreement between the Romanian government and the Hungarian government? You said that the Jews were abandoned beyond the Dniester. Does this mean that the Romanian government had the same policy towards the Jews from Bessarabia and Bucovina as the Hungarian?

Tamás Stark: Yes, the Romanian government followed exactly the same policy, because as I mentioned, the Romanian political elite wanted to remove the foreign Jews, even as far back as the early 1920s. First of all, Jews who came to Romania during the First World War were considered alien. In addition, Jews who lived in territories which Romania received after the First World War were labeled foreigners. Those were, for example, the Jews in Bessarabia or in the northern part of Bucovina, or the Jews in Transylvania. These Jews were called foreigners because they represented different cultures. According to the anti-Semites, the Jews in Transylvania represented Hungarian culture, the Jews in Bucovina represented Austro-German culture, and the Jews in Bessarabia represented Russian culture. When the Romanian army quickly regained Bessarabia in 1941 during the first weeks of the campaign against the Soviet Union, the policy of the Romanian government was the same as that of the Hungarian government. They decided to remove tens of thousands of local Jews from Bessarabia to Transnistria, the area between the Dniester and South Bug rivers which was occupied and administered by the Romanian army, or to territories which were occupied by the Germans, namely to the region of Kamianets-Podilskyi, where they became victims of the massacre. The Jews were taken sometimes on foot, to areas near

the border, including Kamianets-Podilskyi. However, there was no agreement between the Hungarians and the Romanians, and there was no agreement between the Romanian government and German government. Therefore, the German occupation forces also asked the Romanians to suspend "unorganized deportation" of foreign Jews. In the Tighina Agreement between Germany and Romania that came into force on 30 August 1941, it was agreed that until military operations ended, Romania could not evacuate its Jews east of the Southern Bug.

Some months later, the Romanians resumed the deportations. However, they deported Jews from Bessarabia to Transnistria, which the Romanian army had occupied and which was considered a part of Romania that was a suitable dumping place for unwanted Jews, as well as for Roma and other unwanted groups.

EEHS editors: What sources are available that documented these deportations and the fate of the Jews in Galicia? Do you have any names of the victims?

Tamás Stark: We have a detailed list compiled by the Government Commission of Transcarpathia of about 300 wealthy Jews who lived in Transcarpathia. Their names were collected and put on a list because the local government wanted to deport them, therefore I am sure that they were deported although there is no proof. There are no lists of the others.

As to other documents, we only have very segmental material about the deportation. Of course, we have some eyewitness accounts. We have eyewitness accounts of Hungarian Jews who successfully returned to Hungary. Another important source are the accounts of Hungarian soldiers who were present. There were also members of the forced labor battalions of the Hungarian army who were Jewish. They wrote their accounts and informed the Hungarian government as well as Jewish organizations. These Jewish organizations informed the international media about what had happened at Kamianets-Podilskyi. We also have some accounts that were collected by Soviet authorities and the Soviet army when they regained and liberated these territories in 1943–1944.

EEHS editors: Did Kamianets-Podilskyi mark a turning point in Hungary's genocidal policy?

Tamás Stark: I think that it was a turning point because the Hungarian state administration "learned" how to round up Jews and how to deport them. From this point of view, one can say that it was an introduction to the so-called Great Deportation that was implemented three years later, in the summer of 1944, when the Jews from the Hungarian countryside were rounded up and deported. So, I think that from an administrative perspective, yes, it was a turning point. However, the government of Miklós Kállay, which followed the government of László Bárdossy in 1942, pursued

a different policy towards the Hungarian Jewish community. During Kállay's rule, Hungary became something like a safe haven for many Jews, mainly from Slovakia and also from Romania. Of course, it is also a fact that in the period 1942–43, tens of thousands of Jewish members of forced labor battalions lost their lives in the eastern theatre of war. Kállay stayed in power until the German invasion of March 1944. Following the German occupation, the deportation restarted, and at that time it was a total deportation, since all the Jews from the countryside were deported.

Although this deportation process was coordinated by the Eichmann Special Command, it was carried out by the Hungarian authorities. The Hungarian police and gendarmerie rounded up the Jews and forced them into ghettos. The Jews were escorted to the stations by police or members of the gendarmerie, who pushed them onto the trains to Auschwitz. Miklós Horthy, Hungary's regent, knew about the ghettoization and deportation. He only intervened and stopped the deportations in early July 1944, mainly due to the deteriorating military situation and the intercession of the Pope and the King of Sweden. But at least the Jews of Budapest were saved.

EEHS editors: Do we know if some Hungarian soldiers were also involved in the massacre in Kamianets-Podilskyi, and if some of them were put on trial after the war?

Tamás Stark: Yes, this is a crucial question. However, we did not find any documents which could prove that Hungarian soldiers were involved in this Kamianets-Podilskyi massacre. So, we know that the Hungarian soldiers were aware of the deportation, and that they heard the cries of the deportees and the sound of bullets, the gunshots. But there is no proof of their direct involvement. And to my best knowledge, nobody was brought to trial after the Second World War.

However, the leaders and key personalities of the Hungarian National Authority for Controlling Aliens faced trials in the late 1940s. The head of this authority, Ámon Pásztoly, was sentenced to death and executed. Sándor Siménfalvi, who was his successor, was, to my best knowledge, sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Other leaders of this authority were also sentenced to 5 years, 6 years, and 7 years imprisonment, and they really had to serve their sentences in prison.

I also want to mention Henrik Werth who was the head of the general staff and one of the people who initiated the deportation of the foreign Jews. He was arrested by the Soviet authorities and deported to the Gulag. We have the minutes of his interrogation, but the Soviets were not really interested in his role in the first deportation. They rather investigated his actions as one of the leaders of the Hungarian army. They wanted to know the relationship between the Hungarian high command and the German high command and the structure of the Hungarian army. Henrik Werth died in a Soviet Gulag camp in 1952. As I mentioned above, another instigator of the deportation was Miklós Kozma. He died in December 1941.

László Bárdossy, who was the prime minister at the time of the deportation, was also sentenced to death as a major war criminal in 1946. He was executed, again not because of the deportation, but because he was in charge when the Hungarian government joined the German campaign against the Soviet Union in 1941. So, he was responsible for various other war crimes.

EEHS editors: Were other perpetrators tried and punished for their deeds in Kamianets-Podilskyi?

Tamás Stark: There were investigations against German perpetrators in the 1960s. The members of police battalion 320 of the Ordnungspolizei were indicted by the public prosecutor's office in Dortmund in 1961. Of 390 members, 131 were interrogated. Only three admitted to pulling the trigger and the others denied direct involvement in the murders. The prosecution closed the case against all but 30 suspects in February 1962. No case was ever brought to trial. An investigation against members of the Jeckeln cadre began in 1969 but was closed in 1972 without any charges.

Jeckeln was the only perpetrator of the mass murder to be brought to trial. He was hanged in Riga, Latvia, after a one-day trial in February 1946. He was sentenced to death not because of the massacre in Kamianets-Podilskyi, but for his crimes against the Jews of Riga.

EEHS editors: Our journal is the journal of the Babin Yar Memorial. Therefore I would like to know if you see any connection between the massacres of Kamianets-Podilskyi and Babin Yar?

Tamás Stark: Yes, yes, there is a direct connection, I think. Although it was obvious even at the beginning of the campaign against the Soviet Union that one of its targets would be the elimination of the local Jewish population, there was no master plan and it was rather a gradual process. I think that the Kamianets-Podilskyi massacre was a turning point in this gradual process, because this was the first time that the number of deportees was a number with five digits. It was the first massacre where a huge multitude of Jews were collected and shot. As a consequence, this policy of mass killing was continued in subsequent massacres and reached its climax at Babyn Yar. Therefore, I think that Kamianets-Podilskyi was a turning point in the process of extermination, but the climax of this process was Babyn Yar.

EEHS editors: What kind of commemoration is there in Hungary of this very first deportation of Jews?

Tamás Stark: There are some Jewish and non-Jewish, Christian, organizations which organize pilgrimages to Kamianets-Podilskyi. For example, last summer a group of Hungarians and German Slovaks visited Kamianets-Podilskyi. They visited the

monument which was erected a couple of years ago. Year by year there are these pilgrimages. On the other hand, there are some debates among historians about the responsibility for the tragedy of the Hungarian deportees. There still is a debate as to who was deported? Were they Hungarian Jews or not? How can we evaluate this process? However, I consider it an important subject as it was the first stage of the Holocaust in Hungary.

EEHS editors: Who put up the memorial in Kamianets-Podilskyi?

Tamás Stark: I do not know exactly. There is a Hungarian Christian community under the leadership of Gábor Iványi. This community initiated the erection of the monument. It also began the pilgrimages to Kamianets-Podilskyi in the early 1990's and the commemoration of Hungarian and the other Jews who were killed there. Unfortunately, I do not know any details. However, I have been invited to a conference in Kamianets-Podilskyi at the end of April. That means I will see the killing site and this monument then.

EEHS editors: Thank you very much for these interesting insights. We are so sorry that we do not know Hungarian and cannot read you book.

Tamás Stark: I hope that it will be published in English.

EEHS editors: We are keeping our fingers crossed.

Tamás Stark, Supplement on my trip to Kamianets-Podilskyi

This April, I was in Kamianets-Podilskyi for the first time in my life. I participated in the international conference on the history of East-European Jewish communities before the Holocaust which took place there.

Reasonably, reports on the massacre do not mention that the city is probably the most spectacular place in Ukraine. This historical city is located on top of a long flat cliff. It is surrounded by the deep Smotrich Canyon. However, the deportees hardly cared about the city's spectacular location. In the city it is striking to see that although only one synagogue survived the German occupation and houses where Jews lived were demolished, the greater part of the city has preserved its historical face. The old streets are lined with 150-year-old cobblestones, and as I walked along them, I had thought that these stones had seen the Jews being herded to the scene of the killings.

The former site of the massacre is now a built-up area. Huge buildings were constructed on the killingsite in the sixties and early seventies. When you are there,

you cannot imagine what kind of tragedy happened here 84 years ago. The big "socialist type" buildings surround a larger area. Part of it is fenced off and this is the memorial site. It is a good example of the change in memorial politics. There are four memorial columns there which were erected at different times. As I was informed, the first one was erected in the late seventies.

This is a typical Soviet style memorial, which was erected in the memory of those "mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters who were killed by the barbarian German fascists." As with other memorials for the victims of the massacres, there is no mention that these "mothers, fathers and brothers" were Jews. There is also a plaque at the memorial with Yiddish text, which I was unable to read. This memorial was commissioned by Jewish survivors of the massacre.

The Ukrainian state has also erected a monument. The plaque in Ukrainian and English reads: *23,600 thousand men, women and children were executed here by the fascists on August 26, 27, 28 in 1941. They were Jews – citizens of Kamianets-Podilskyi and Jews – deportees from Hungary. Murdered innocents rest in peace. Your memory will always live.*

In addition to those mentioned, there are two more memorials, both were erected by Hungarians.

The Hungarian Evangelical Brotherhood community, led by pastor Gábor Iványi, made efforts to eternalize the memory of the victims of the first Hungarian deportation, even at the time when it was not an officially accepted practice. A leading member of that community, Tamas Majsai, was the first scholar who carefully studied and wrote the history of the first deportation in the mid-eighties. This community erected a memorial pillar in 2009. The plaque says in English: *In memory of our Jewish brothers and sisters who were Hungarian or sought refuge in Hungary in 1941. They were ostracized and persecuted to death by the Hungarian state and the inhuman Nazi hatred of the time. May their memory be blessed.* This text is repeated in Hungarian and also in Ukrainian.

Gábor Iványi's community did not remain silent either when the current Hungarian government curtailed basic civil rights. In response, the government withheld state subsidies to Iványi's community. I believe that it was the government's rivalry with Iványi's community that led to the Hungarian government erecting a memorial column in 2015 to commemorate the Jews murdered in Kamianets-Podilskyi. The memorial plaque reads in Hungarian, Ukrainian, Hebrew, and English: *To the memory to the thousands of Jewish victims deported from Hungary in 1941 to the territories under German occupation and murdered on this place. Erected by the Hungarian government*.

Leaving the memorial site, I wondered if those who live in this part of the city are aware that they live in an area that was the site of a massacre 84 years ago.