

Extract of Zoltán Tibori Szabó: The Auschwitz reports: Who got them, and when?

To our knowledge, the reports written by other Auschwitz escapees have yet to be published in Hungary, they are thus completely unknown to the Hungarian public, with the exception of a small number of historians.

The leaders of the state and leading politicians of Hungary, Allied statesmen, military leaders and broadcasting agencies, as well as the leaders of Hungarian and Western Jewry, had received the Auschwitz Reports before the start of the deportations in Hungary. Strategic and tactical considerations, as well as their large-scale ignorance and sinfully dilatory behavior, stopped them from promptly informing the Hungarians, the Hungarian Jewry and the international public about the tragedy in Auschwitz and the other German death-camps. Only a few took action as soon as they became familiar with the reports. Unfortunately, either the reports reached these people far too late or the persons in question lacked the means to take proper measures.

According to the various sources mentioned here, the Vrba-Wetzler Report reached the following people with rank and decision-making power:

1. *Rezső Kasztner*, Vaada deputy head, on April 28, 1944.
2. *Rabbi Michael Beer Dov Weissmandel*, one of the leaders of the "working group" (*Pracovna Skupina*) in Bratislava, on April 28, 1944.
3. *Samu Stern* and the members of the Jewish Council in Budapest, on April 29, 1944.
4. *Adolf Eichmann*, *SS-Obersturmbannführer*, one of the officers in charge of the deportations in Hungary, at the end of April or the beginning of May 1944.
5. *Géza Soós*, counselor of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one of the leaders of the resistance group called the Hungarian Independence Movement, at the end of April or the beginning of May 1944.
6. *Reverend József Éliás*, leader of the Good Shepherd Committee of the Hungarian protestant churches, at the end of April or the beginning of May 1944.
7. *The Istanbul branch of the Jewish Agency*, at the beginning of May 1944.

8. *Giuseppe Burzio*, the representative of the Vatican, delegated to the independent Slovakian state, at the beginning of May 1944.
9. *Fülöp Freudiger*, president of the Budapest Autonomous Orthodox Israelite Community, at the beginning of May 1944.
10. *Carl Lutz*, Swiss vice-consul in Budapest, at the beginning of May 1944.
11. *Carl Ivan Danielsson*, Swedish Minister in Budapest, at the beginning of May 1944.
12. *Per Anger*, secretary of the Swedish legation in Budapest, at the beginning of May 1944.
13. *Ottó Komoly*, president of the Hungarian Zionist Organization, at the beginning of May 1944.
14. *Miklós (Moshe) Krausz*, head of the Palestine Office in Budapest, at the beginning of May 1944.
15. *Mária Székely*, later Mrs. László Küllői-Rhorer, the Hungarian translator of the Vrba–Wetzler Report, at the very beginning of May 1944.
16. *József Cavallier*, the head of the Holy Cross Society, at the beginning of May 1944.
17. *Miklós Esty*, secular papal chamberlain, vice president of the *Actio Catholica*, at the beginning of May 1944.
18. *Lajos Reményi-Schneller*, Hungarian Finance Minister, at the beginning of May 1944.
19. *Jean de Bavier*, the delegate of the International Red Cross in Budapest, no later than May 13, 1944.
20. *Nathan Schwalb*, the head of the Jewish Agency and of the Hehalutz office in Geneva, on May 17, 1944.
21. *Abraham Silberschein*, the delegate of the Jewish World Congress, no later than May 17, 1944.
22. *Zeev (Vanya) Pomerantz*, Jewish Agency emissary in Istanbul, on May 19, 1944.
23. *Angelo Rotta*, Papal Nuncio in Budapest, at the beginning of May 1944.

24. *Gennaro Verolino*, Vatican counselor (*uditore*) in Budapest, at the beginning of May 1944.
25. *Jusztinián Cardinal Serédi*, Prince Primate of Hungary on May 10, 1944, but no later than May 20, at least one copy.
26. *András Zakar*, Cardinal Serédi's secretary, at the end of May 1944.
27. *Reverend Albert Bereczky*, Reformed priest in Budapest, at the beginning of May.
28. *Bishop László Ravasz*, president of the Reformed (Calvinist) Church General Synod, on May 12–14, 1944.
29. *Lajos Kemény*, Lutheran dean from Budapest, at the beginning of May 1944.
30. *Bishop Sándor Raffay*, leader of the Lutheran (Evangelical) Church in Hungary, on May 10–14, 1944.
31. *Judge Géza Kárpáti (Kárpáty)*, at the beginning of May 1944.
32. *Sándor Török*, writer and acting member of the Committee of Christian–Jewish Alliance in Hungary, middle of May 1944.
33. *Rabbi Solomon Schönfeld*, in the second part of May 1944.
34. *Countess Ilona Edelsheim Gyulai*, the widow of István Horthy, at the end of May or the beginning of June 1944.
35. *Mrs. Miklós Horthy*, at the end of May or beginning of June 1944.
36. *Miklós Horthy Jr.*, the son of the Regent, in June 1944.
37. *Regent Miklós Horthy*, a copy sent through Sándor Török at the end of May or the beginning of June; a copy sent by Ernő Pető through Miklós Horthy, Jr., the Regent's son, in June 1944. The Regent also received copies from Cardinal Serédi and Bishop Ravasz, most probably sometime in the middle of May.
38. *Rabbi Fábián Herskovits*, in the first part of June 1944.
39. *Elizabeth Wiskemann*, British representative in Bern, on June 13, 1944.
40. *Leland Harrison*, American Minister in Bern, on June 13, 1944.
41. *Richard Lichtheim*, the head of the Jewish Agency office in Geneva, in the middle of June 1944.

42. *Lea Komoly Fürst*, in the middle of June 1944.
43. *Sára Friedländer*, in the middle of June 1944.
44. *Monsignor Mario Martilotti*, Vatican legate in Switzerland, in the middle of June 1944.
45. *József Reisinger*, a Turkish consulate employee of Jewish origin, in Budapest, in the middle of June 1944.
46. *Florian E. Manoliu*, Romanian diplomat and attaché of the Romanian consulate in Bern, on June 18, 1944.
47. *Jaromír Kopeczký*, Swiss representative of the Czechoslovakian Government in Exile, on June 19 or 20, 1944.
48. *George Mantello (György Mandel)*, businessman from Beszterce, Northern Transylvania, first secretary of the Consulate of El Salvador in Geneva, on June 21, 1944.
49. *Chaim Pozner*, representative of the Palestine Office in Switzerland, in the second part of June 1944.
50. *Saly Mayer*, Swiss representative of the Joint organization, no later than June 1944.
51. *Mihály Bányai*, head of the Swiss Aid for Hungarian Jews (*Schweizerisches Hilfskomitee für die Juden in Ungarn*), on June 24, 1944.
52. *Walter Garrett*, a British Exchange Telegraph–Independent News Agency correspondent in Zürich, on June 24, 1944.
53. *Pope Pius XII* probably found out about the situation of the Hungarian Jews from Angelo Rotta by the beginning of May 1944, but no later than June 25, via Switzerland.
54. *President Franklin D. Roosevelt*, no later than June 25, 1944.
55. *King Gustav V of Sweden*, in the second part of June 1944.
56. *General F. M. West*, British military attaché, in the second part of June 1944.
57. *Allen W. Dulles*, American OSS representative in Switzerland, in the second part of June 1944.
58. *Max Kimche*, Swiss lawyer and businessman, in the second part of June 1944.

59. *Winston Churchill*, British Prime Minister, at the end of June 1944.
60. *Robert Anthony Eden*, British Foreign Minister, at the end of June 1944.
61. *Leaders of Swiss International Red Cross Committee*, no later than the end of June 1944.

The individuals who received the protocol also passed it on in confidence to others. We know from Szenes that some copies, at times, were passed back to their original distributors. It is impossible to identify today all these second-level distributors. The fact is that the report describing the details of the Auschwitz hell reached the Jewish and Hungarian religious and lay leaders and also many high-level Hungarian government officials as early as the beginning of May 1944. The ones with the real power refused to act, and the others were afraid to.¹²⁵

Meanwhile, between May 15, and July 8, 1944, more than 437,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz. Almost ninety percent of them perished in the death-camps.

¹²⁵ Not even the most important religious, military or civil officers wrote in their memoirs about the tragedy of the Hungarian Jews. See, for example: Sándor Orbán–István Vida, eds. *Serédi Jusztinián hercegprímás feljegyzései, 1941–1944* (Budapest: Zrínyi, 1990); Péter Gosztonyi, ed. *Szombathelyi Ferenc visszaemlékezése, 1945* (Budapest: Zrínyi, 1990); Géza Lakatos, *Ahogy én láttam* (Budapest: Európa–História, 1992); Gusztáv Hennyey. *Magyarország sorsa Kelet és Nyugat között. Egy volt magyar királyi külügy-miniszter visszaemlékezései* (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó–História, 1992). János Kőbányai summarized the Auschwitz reports' drafting, spreading and moral lessons in 2005; see János Kőbányai, "Auschwitz evangéliuma." In: Haraszi 2005, pp. 105–117.

Source: The Auschwitz reports and the Holocaust in Hungary. Ed. by Randolph L. Braham/William J. Vanden Heuvel. Columbia 2011.