

British Strategy in Hungary in 1944 and the Hungarian Jewish Commandos of the Special Operations Executive

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Introduction

This article concerns British political and military strategy in Hungary in the autumn of 1944. This broad framework is discussed through the prism of the relationship between war strategy and post-war politics, and throws light upon their often-differing requirements. The focus is on the strategic planning of the SOE (Special Operations Executive)¹ regarding operations in Hungary in August-September 1944. The analysis considers the ways the Foreign Office and the British military interacted with these SOE efforts, and the extent the SOE was able to shape British strategy in East Central Europe at the crucial juncture of its history, when the region became the battleground of Nazi Germany and Soviet-Russia.

First, the article evaluates the joint SOE – Jewish Agency² plan to drop hundreds of Jewish volunteers into occupied Hungary, and identifies this scheme as a key element tying political and military strategy in Hungary together. Second, it uses the perspective of Allied bombing of Hungary, as well as two still mostly unknown SOE operations (the Csíky and the Szombathelyi missions), which, with the aid of Jewish volunteers both aimed to foment a pro-British military coup in Budapest in September 1944. These seemingly unrelated SOE schemes worked towards the same end; they aspired to expand British political and military influence in Hungary at the end of war, and to ensure a more favorable position for Britain in postwar Europe. Analysing and contextualizing this array of interplaying perspectives adds to the understanding of the neglected subject of British strategy in East Central Europe, as well as provides much-needed insights into SOE activities in Hungary.

Since SOE operations forms the focus of this analysis, the institution and its relationship to Hungary and the Jewish Agency needs a longer than usual introduction. Amongst the steadily expanding historiography of the SOE one could only encounter passing references to missions seeking to penetrate into German dominated Hungary. General surveys treated SOE's history mostly from a British national standpoint and isolated theatres in the war effort, such as Hungary, were overlooked based on Hungary's lesser strategic value for Britain in the war, as well as SOE's inability to effectively penetrate the country.³ The historiography of the SOE engages many issues of strategic and military controversy in World War II, but this reduced approach in turn produced interpretations that failed to understand the clandestine and subversive opportunities Hungary offered against Nazi Germany (at the crossroads of substantial German economic and military transit).⁴ Thus, SOE bids for increased attention to Hungary (which we find plenty in SOE documents) were left unexplained. From a broader perspective, the existing historical accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between London's decreased political attention to Hungary (as a minor enemy state), and the SOE's constant pressure to expand Hungarian operations. Resolving this controversy would finally achieve equality between the military and non-military dimensions of British war strategy, would also help explaining the relationship between war strategy and postwar-planning, as well as would direct closer attention to the immediate and long-term political ramifications of SOE exploits for British strategy in Hungary and the region.

Since early 1943 (when reliable news about the Final Solution were received), SOE and MI9 (a War Office department tasked with organizing the escape of British prisoners of war (POWs) from the continent) separately sponsored and dropped small groups of Yishuv (Jewish residents of Palestine, mostly of European origin) volunteers into occupied East Central and South East Europe. The task of these limited missions was to facilitate the escape and evacuation of POWs, but at the same time they strove to help European Jewry on the ground by participating in the Jewish underground, providing training in resistance and committing acts of sabotage against enemy targets. Although arrangements for this British – Yishuv cooperation were on a seemingly mutually beneficial basis, it was clear from the outset that the SOE exploited Palestinian Jewish enthusiasm to fight the Nazis for their own ends in the war. Until mid-1944 these small-scale operations characterised British – Yishuv collaboration in Hungary, and we have to clearly distinguish them from the large-scale commando missions later proposed in July 1944 by the Yishuv.

Research investigating the contribution of these limited operations to the war effort, and their role in SOE strategy, exist exclusively in Jewish studies, and thus follows the historiographical convention that placed any military perspective of the Holocaust almost entirely outside the purview of World War II studies.⁵ Linguistic barriers have also been a key issue hampering the emergence of international scholarly debate on the topic of Jewish SOE agents and synthesizing Holocaust and World War II studies under the umbrella of this topic. Recent decades spurred a river of Hebrew language scholarship on SOE's Jewish parachutist (and their efforts to rescue Jews and organize Jewish resistance), but these rarely went beyond the limited confines of Hebrew sources or were mainly dominated by attention to how Jewish agents (as war heroes) helped forming modern Israeli identity. More troubling is that the scholarship is guilty of serious neglect of British archival documents, as well as the inability to discriminate among sources (they relies far too often on Yishuv memoirs and oral history).⁶ Given these constraints, Tuvia Friling produced a noteworthy history of the British-Yishuv relationship, but in the absence of a conceptual framework (one that uses methodologies of both World War II and Jewish studies) it drowned readers in detail.⁷

This article examines the evolution of SOE policy towards the lesser known second phase of SOE – Yishuv collaboration in the war, the so-called Shertok-Zazlanyi plan in 1944. Responding to the mass deportation of Hungarian Jews (starting in May 1944), Moshe Shertok (later Moshe Sharett, leader of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, and later Prime Minister of Israel, 1954-55) and Reuven Zazlanyi (head of the Yishuv intelligence)⁸ energetically lobbied all political and military specters of the Allies (among them the British and the SOE) for the creation of larger-scale volunteer Hungarian Jewish Palestinian commandos. The aim was to abandon the use of small-scale missions, as these were ineffective and proved unable to actively help and organize Jews in Hungary. Until now, historiography has ignored this second phase in view of the eventual British rejection to support it in September 1944.

This article argues that regardless of this British disapproval this phase of British – Yishuv cooperation, the subject merits close scrutiny. The analysis of British reactions to the Shertok-Zazlanyi plan provides a useful frame in which to understand an evolving British war strategy in East Central and South East Europe (and not least towards Soviet-Russia), and Britain's post war political aims in Hungary, as well as contributes to the understanding of British policy in Palestine. Also, investigating the

factors that determined the rejection of this plan (regardless of Churchill's and the SOE's wholehearted approval) helps understanding the dynamics of official British policy-making, and particularly the maze of civil – military – SOE relationship. Moreover, it is also becoming increasingly important to consider the broader political and cultural implications of SOE activities in Hungary, as well as the details the British rejection of a large-scale Anglo – Yishuv collaboration tells us about the sensitive question of British anti-Semitism during the war.⁹

This article draws upon more than the well-mined general records of British policy-making, and, perhaps a first for works of this kind, also uses material related to Hungary from the SOE and British Military archives.¹⁰ Within this broad framework the argument employs a thematically organized approach, as far as possible, and explores first the subversive, then the military and finally the political aspect of the topic. Occasional overlaps will be necessary to enable the complete consideration of the issue at hand.

Hungary in the SOE – Jewish Agency Relationship in 1942-1944

After the fall of France in June 1940, SOE was founded on the strategic assumption that subversive operations in continental Europe would direct the enemy's attention away from the British Isles, and by severely affecting the enemy's war effort would help winning the war. It was against this backdrop that France (as the largest and most populous country under German occupation), and neutral capitals such as Lisbon, Stockholm and Istanbul (as they offered the least German countermeasures) became the centers of SOE attention in Europe. Although taking a close interest in subversive opportunities in Hungary in the early years of the war, the SOE remained inefficient in that country. Among the difficulties the SOE encountered in Hungary were a government deliberately refraining from angering Berlin with any pro-Allied measures, and a highly authoritarian and policed environment, which in turn resulted in popular dispassion towards resistance and a general sense of disconnection from the Allied cause. Lack of cooperation on the part of the British embassy only made matters worse. For example, in mid-1940, British Minister Owen O'Malley averted the SOE scheme to blow up the Budapest bridges arguing that such an act would compromise Britain's good image in Hungary.¹¹ On account of these difficulties, planning further operations in Hungary was halted in late 1940, and after Hungary joined Hitler's Balkan campaign in April 1941,¹² the SOE effectively abandoned Hungarian operations.¹³

After the Balkan campaign, Hungary also joined the invasion of the Soviet Union, for which Britain declared war on her in December 1941. However, overwhelming Allied victories in North Africa in late 1942 prompted the Hungarian regime to make tentative contacts with the Allies and to initiate secret peace talks from early 1943.¹⁴ The SOE played a key role in these negotiations, which at the same time rekindled its interest in Hungary. Yishuv volunteers would spearhead these renewed clandestine efforts. For Britain and the SOE, Hungarian peace overtures offered rare opportunities of badly needed triumph on the continent, and an easy access to sabotaging vital German communicational lines to-and-from the Balkans and Soviet-Russia, especially as the Horthy regime expressed its willingness to receive, shelter and support an SOE mission in the country.

Before analysing the significance of the Shertok-Zazlanyi plan in British planning, it is essential to recapture some of the background of the British – Yishuv relationship. During the Arab Revolt (1936-39) in the Palestine, both Britain and the Jewish Agency were seeking mutual cooperation against the common enemy (the Arabs), but after the British severely restricted Palestinian Jewish immigration in 1939, the relationship reverted to strong reciprocal suspicion. However, after the victories of the German Africa Korps in early 1942 in Libya and Egypt, the threat of Axis occupation of Palestine convinced both sides to put aside their differences and unite against the enemy. While preparations were made for the defense of Palestine, the so-called ‘European option’ (engaging the enemy in occupied Europe) soon sparked off an intense political debate in the Jewish Agency. The best method to help European Jews became the main political fault line with one side led by David Ben-Gurion (chairman of the executive committee of the Jewish Agency, and later Prime Minister of Israel 1948-54, 1955-63) argued for limited engagement, while others favoured broad collaboration with the British, and active participation in European Jewish resistance.

In the latter group, in an apparent clash with Ben-Gurion, Shertok and Zazlanyi vigorously lobbied the British to lend support for the dropping of large numbers of Jewish volunteers over occupied Europe, who would energize and organize Jews for resistance.¹⁵ In 1942, the SOE and the British Army agreed to facilitate these missions, but Whitehall made every effort to limit Yishuv influence in Europe and thus insisted to control them by an umbrella organisation, and to limit their size as far as possible. Other frictions also immediately emerged between London and the

Yishuv. For example, the national/political character of the whole enterprise (British vs. Jewish/Zionist), the Palmach's (Yishuv underground army in Palestine) continued underground resistance and agitation against Britain in Palestine (regardless of providing most of the Jewish volunteers for the SOE) were complications that burdened the relationship. These, coupled with the diminishing German threat to the Middle East after the Allied victory at the Second Battle of El Alamein (October-November 1942), eventually caused a further one-year delay to the scheme.

However, military developments again proved decisive in a new shift in British attitude towards the Jewish parachutists. After the Axis defeat in North Africa in May 1943, Britain refocused its attention back onto the Balkans. In this phase, Palestinian Jews (among other European refugees) with local contact and background, and with knowledge of the language and local customs became indispensable both for the Army and the SOE for intelligence and subversive purposes. Accordingly, small-scale missions of Palestinian Jewish volunteers (usually comprising only two parachutists: one agent and one wireless operator) were again given a green light. The various near-suicide missions of Hannah Szenes and her companions, who were dropped into Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Austria as part of this scheme, are well-documented deeds in Jewish World War II resistance.¹⁶

During 1943, deeply dissatisfied with the continued official British indifference towards the plight of European Jews, as well as seething with frustration about British vetoes on anything but small-scale operations, the Yishuv aimed for a new purpose. This involved the ambition to remodel its European project, and to even more energetically organize, aid and participate in European Jewish resistance, large-scale rescue and clandestine missions. This proposal did not only represent a dramatic shift in policy, but added distinct political and national ambitions to the moral character of earlier small-scale operations. This shift in Yishuv attitude towards the Allies received little prominence in the historiography. Previously, Hannah Szenes and her comrades had one ambition: to help the persecuted in Europe in any way possible. In contrast to them, Shertok and Zazlanyi went beyond the sole purpose of morality when proposing sizeable Jewish military participation with a distinct Zionist character. Thus, in this way, for the Jewish Agency this second phase attempted to move towards some sort of a co-belligerent status with the Allies, and as such aimed to bring Palestine to the international theatre.

Starting with early 1943, the Yishuv had already lobbied the British for large scale, commando style operations, and both MI6 (military

intelligence service) and Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean General Alexander granted their approvals to a scheme presented by Zazlanyi in early 1943 to deploy approx. 300 Jews by parachute to occupied Europe (Zazlanyi presented a revised but very similar plan in January 1944 also). The plan only aimed to secure British logistical help (transport, equipment and arms), and aimed for a purely Jewish character to the operation. However, the War Office swiftly intervened, and killed these propositions in their infancy by labelling them unrealistic and impractical.¹⁷ In reality for the British, although Jewish commandoes promised certain tactical advantages against Nazi Germany, underlying political reasons seemed to outweigh the military ones, and became responsible for the quick disapproval. Namely, by 1943 Britain was already deeply involved in postwar planning, and was careful to limit meddling in East Central European affairs, which (since as early as late 1940) was considered in the corridors of power to become a Soviet sphere of influence after the war.¹⁸ This train of thought remained a key element in British strategy in the region, and, as we would see, continued to characterize attitudes towards Jewish clandestine operations in East Central Europe.

The mass deportation of Hungarian Jews from May 1944 on again shifted Yishuv policy, and moral arguments increasingly became as important as the Zionist ones in justifications for parachutist actions (at least in Hungary). In July 1944, taken courage from the earlier positive attitude of the British military Shertok and Zazlanyi again started lobbying SACMED (Supreme Allied Command in the Mediterranean) to secure British (and/or American) help and approval for commando raids into Hungary. Their new scheme again envisaged the drop of approx. 300 Hungarian and Romanian Jewish volunteers trained by the Palmach into Ruthenia and the Szatmárnémeti [Satu Mare] area in North East Hungary. The Palmach claimed to have built up close contacts with the local Jewish underground, and promised widespread support for the operation and hinted at the potential of recruiting local Jews and industrial workers for clandestine operations.

With the dual aim to help rescuing Jews, and “turn victims into fighters [...] and to instil a fighting spirit into the remnants of Hungarian Jewry and rouse them to resistance, sabotage activities and guerilla warfare” the mission would have initially dropped several small groups into Northern Hungary (Kökényes [Ternovo] and Szatmárnémeti [Satu Mare] regions) who would have assumed command and recruited more people locally from the masses of Jewish industrial workers drafted for forced

labour. These groups then planned sabotaging the war industry, German military transports, railway lines and bridges. Only a second phase of drops would have brought in the bulk of the mission. They would have parachuted into the Western Bánát in Northern Yugoslavia (under German military administration) for the reason that the nearby intersection of the Hungarian, Yugoslav and Romanian border area, and the close vicinity of Tito's partisans promised a suitable geographical location for operations and retreat. From this base they planned seeking out contact with the North Hungary Jewish parachutist group, as well as Tito's partisans.¹⁹

Compared to the earlier 1943 Jewish Agency proposals, which argued for a purely Jewish mission, now in July 1944, reacting to the apparent British distaste for such arrangement, Shertok and Zazlanyi agreed to British command and the recruitment of volunteers both from the British Army as well as from Palestine, but did not give up insisting on a Jewish character. This shift in attitude can be explained by the deep anxiety felt towards the ongoing plight of Jews in Hungary. Shertok's proposal is dotted with outcries for utmost urgency:

The worst apprehensions underlying our proposals have been justified and events are now moving [in Hungary] with catastrophic rapidity. According to our latest information, over 400, 000 Hungarian Jews have already been sent to their doom [...] and the deportation of the remaining 300, 000 is about to start. Much has thus been already missed, and if anything at all is to be done, it must be done with the greatest possible speed. [...] I would like once more to stress the extreme urgency of the whole thing. I think I need not go here into the reasons morally compelling the Allies to assist the Jews [...].²⁰

First, SACMED advised the Yishuv leaders to refer the case to the SOE arguing that all military means were stretched to the maximum since the recent landing in Normandy. Skilful in his tactics (and making good use of his connections), Shertok got in touch with SOE Major Randolph Churchill (son of the Prime Minister), and through him the Prime Minister's Office, in order to secure political backing, something he lacked in his earlier bids. Shertok quickly managed to obtain the approval of both Randolph and Winston, although the Prime Minister expressed his concerns about the potential political implications of the mission.²¹ At this point, with political approval in their pocket, all circumstances seemed to favour the Shertok-Zazlanyi scheme.

British Strategy and the Question of Jewish SOE Commandos in Hungary

Regardless of the Prime Minister's close interest in the mission, the SOE soon raised concerns. Initially it expected the mission to evolve into the "monster scheme" of arranging the escape of masses of Hungarian Jews out of Europe, and raised doubts about the feasibility of such operation.²² However, concrete Yishuv information about the existence of widespread Hungarian popular support both for the Allies and Jewish parachutists soon put Shertok's proposal in a different light.²³ Although unable to verify the credibility of Yishuv intelligence about Hungary, as well as knowing very little about the military capabilities of the parachutists, the promise of inflicting damage in Hungary convinced the SOE to support the mission. Here, one might immediately suspect deeper underlying reasons behind the approval. Later, the SOE was repeatedly accused of being prepared to sacrifice foreign agents for its own ends, and the often debated question of British anti-Semitism during World War II can also be brought up here. Backing the quasi blind-drop of dozens of Jewish parachutists deep into virtually unknown enemy territory on suicide missions certainly gives room to such claims.²⁴ While we will have reason to return to these claims, here we aim to highlight a different explanation first.

For the SOE, Hungary was a tough nut to crack in World War II. Basil Davidson, head of operations in Hungary (until April 1941), could only claim putting together a fragile network of Anglophiles in the high society, but failed to energize Hungarians for acts of sabotage and partisan operations against the Axis. After Britain declared war on Hungary in December 1941, and to an even greater extent following the German occupation (19 March 1944), intelligence virtually ceased from the country, which significantly reduced SOE capabilities to plan and carry out operations. Subsequently, regardless of several attempts to penetrate the country in 1943, SOE was able to rely on only about a dozen agents and a handful of Hungarian sympathizers in the country.²⁵ Thus, the attractive clandestine

and subversive opportunities Hungary offered as a transit hub of German economic and military traffic remained largely untapped.²⁶ In the eyes of the SOE, the horrors of the Final Solution in Hungary made Shertok's claims about an active and blossoming Hungarian Jewish underground very credible, and exploiting the skills of Jewish volunteers (in the face of past SOE failure) made perfect sense in London in a country that earlier seemed impenetrable.²⁷

The Shertok-Zazlanyi proposal received official SOE approval in early August, but with considerable changes to the original Jewish Agency aims. In order to deprive the Yishuv of leadership experience, and to limit the spread of Zionism with European Jewry (which threatened with an increase of unwanted Jewish immigration to Palestine), the SOE demanded stripping the mission of its Jewish character completely, and provisioned a British Liaison Officer for each drop effectively putting the parachutists under British command. The volunteers were offered SOE training, and would have infiltrated as SOE agents in a standard SOE operation. This, in effect, blocked the Jewish Agency from gaining political credit at home for fighting for a moral purpose, as well as prevented the Palmach (the Jewish underground army in the Palestine) to freely train its own agents who, after the war could have been used against the British. These, coupled with cynically worded memos from a senior British official ("the plan would remove a number of active and resourceful Jews from Palestine"), vividly demonstrate that in the absence of moral considerations, preventing Jewish independence in Palestine was also a key element in British contemplations.²⁸

We must place great stress on the fact that in the summer of 1944 SOE Mediterranean Command [SO(M)] was very keen to undertake this mission. Obviously, the successful infiltration of Jewish commandoes promised ample opportunities for sabotage, and the ambition to weaken the Jewish movement in Palestine by engaging its agents was also a crucial factor behind the SOE interest, but broader strategic motives also lay behind the urgency. In the autumn of 1944, intelligence developments in the murky world of neutral Portugal and Turkey promised to achieve even more in Hungary in the autumn of 1944. Working through multiple channels of collaborators and sympathizers in Lisbon, Madrid, Istanbul and Budapest,

the SOE was plotting a coup d'état in the Hungarian capital in August-September 1944, with the ultimate aim to shorten the war by forcing a military surrender on the pro-British regime that SOE aimed to impose.

Encouraged by the emergence of a new phase of Hungarian peace-feelers in August 1944, whom all frantically endeavoured to avert Hungary's Soviet occupation in the eleventh hour, the SOE saw the moment ripe for regime change in Hungary.²⁹ Veteran SOE agent György Pállóczy-Horváth (left-wing Hungarian publicist, who left Hungary after it joined the war in 1941, he was also chief British negotiator with the Kállay peacefeeler in Turkey in 1943) managed to convince the British about the existence of an active, confident and well-organized Hungarian democratic left-wing underground, which would be able to grab power at the appropriate moment with the right assistance.³⁰ With his help, the SOE recruited the Hungarian commercial attaché in Istanbul Csíky for a special mission to Budapest in order to make use of his valuable contacts in Hungarian political and military circles for the planned change of government. On the 19 August, Csíky, traveling on a Wehrmacht military train which transported hundreds of German troops north from the Balkans, departed to Hungary carrying plenty of cash, an SOE wireless transmitter, and with full SOE briefing on how to organize the coup. For this scheme the SOE aspired to win over General Lajos Csátay (whom the British trusted since he had been Minister of Defense in Kállay's government, 1943-44) and Horthy himself, whose cooperation were vital in relation to ensure control over the Hungarian Army, as well as to accommodate the SOE commandoes in the country, which were the British prerequisite for any cooperation.³¹ As to the next steps of the conspiracy, the survived SOE documents remain very vague. It only mentions that the Hungarian army (as one would expect) will turn against Germany (presumably in collaboration with these SOE commandoes), and this way would ensure "the shortening of the war so that far fewer Allied and Hungarian lives should be lost."³²

In return for the collaboration, the SOE advised Csíky to inform Budapest that Hungary's Soviet occupation had not been

decided between the Allies, and that Hungarian military cooperation now would most likely ensure an Anglo-Americans occupation.³³ Of course, this only aimed to strike a chord with Hungarian wishful thinking. In truth, Hungary's Soviet occupation was a done deal, just like the Allies consensus that Nazi satellites should surrender to all three Allies and not only to the British. Furthermore, playing on deeply entrenched Hungarian animosities felt towards Romania, the memorandum explicitly highlighted that with an immediate military commitment Hungary „can avoid Romania doing a similar step sooner”, and thus could guarantee for itself a favourable position in Allied perceptions. There is no trace of the Hungarian reaction to all this either in the files of the SOE or the Foreign Office, or among the papers of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. However, the fact that both Csatay and Horthy were leading figures in the ill-fated attempt to leave the German alliance less than two months after the Csíky-mission on 15 October, suggest some level of British involvement in that event also.³⁴

However, the SOE did not rely only on Shertok, Zazlanyi, or the Csíky mission, and in order to bring about a Hungarian coup kept several irons in the fire. Using Lisbon as an additional channel, it made further attempts to ensure the Hungarian Army was controlled by Anglophiles. The evidence strongly suggest that simultaneously with the Csíky mission, prolonged discussions had taken place between Hungarian Minister in Lisbon Elemér Újpestery, Liaison officer between the Hungarian General Staff and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lieutenant Marjai, Hungarian Military attaché in Lisbon and Madrid Colonel Szántai on the one hand, and the SOE on the other about bringing about the re-appointment of Ferenc Szombathelyi as Chief of General Staff.³⁵ Szombathelyi, as a key figure in the Kállay peace negotiations in 1943 was a well-known critic of the German (and Hungarian) war effort, and as such enjoyed the trust of the SOE. The documents suggest the existance of an extensive pro-British conspiratorial circle around Szombathelyi in Hungary, which made him the right candidate to steer Hungary out of the war. According to the plan, Újpestery, Szántai and Marjai conspired with the SOE to pressure Horthy to reappoint Szombathelyi, who would direct a military coup and then initiate

immediate peace talks with the Allies through intermediaries in Lisbon.³⁶

Although the afterlife of these missions are unknown, for all intents and purposes they failed. Crucially for our perspective, it was not a coincidence that the SOE simultaneously worked towards the Csíky and Szombathelyi missions, as well as the Shertok-Zazlanyi plan. Hence, although the survived documents do not explicitly refer to this, one might suggest that since both the Csíky and Szombathelyi missions called for the need of airdrop commandoes, the SOE had taken the Jewish offer on board, and included the Shertok-Zazlanyi volunteers in its strategy. The steps the SOE had taken towards this coup enriches our understanding of British policy in Hungary in 1944. Historiography so far has been governed by the perspective of the uniformity of reduced British attention in East Central Europe in the face of Soviet expansion.³⁷ For the SOE, the questionable information Pállóczy-Horváth provided about an effective and capable Hungarian resistance clearly confirmed the similar claims coming from Shertok earlier, and subsequently it looked at this constellation as a golden opportunity in Hungary, and thus strived to link the benefits of the Csíky, Szombathelyi and Shertok-Zazlanyi missions in the hope that they would foster a pro-Allied Hungarian *volte-face*.

Hungary in British Military and Post-War Planning in September 1944

So far we have concentrated mainly on SOE actions, and considered only to a lesser extent Whitehall countercurrents and the inter-departmental dynamics in the British government. In order to understand SOE's strategy as part of British policy-making, two additional perspectives need closer attention. First, we need to determine the reasons for SOE's assiduity towards Hungary in 1944 (in contrast to the limited attention from the political sphere), and have to carefully measure the role SOE played in determining official British policy.

SOE planned meddling in Hungarian affairs came at a critical time in the war. The Wehrmacht's collapse in France in July-August 1944, its

simultaneous catastrophic defeats in the Eastern Front, and the Red Army's push to the frontiers of Hungary and Romania suggested the premature end of the war, and East Central and South East Europe's Soviet occupation. Soviet penetration into the region raised the problem of British – Soviet rivalry.³⁸ Since the Bolshevik Coup in 1917, Soviet influence in the region had troubled British policy-makers. However, in the war, as early as late 1939, London had already reckoned with East Central and South East Europe becoming a Soviet sphere, but did not give up trying to bring its influence to bear on certain political and strategic developments there. Most importantly, it aimed to prevent the region from falling under the political or military domination of one potentially hostile power, since that would challenge the security of Middle Eastern and North African imperial assets and communications. To avert such scenario, the British periodically toyed with the idea of opening a Balkan front during the war to thwart the region's complete German and/or Russian subordination.³⁹ The Balkans was even suggested to become the Allied second front, but American veto and British military weakness (and the decision to land in Normandy instead) finally removed the military option from British Balkan strategy. Consequently, the inability to influence events in South East Europe militarily presented an almost insoluble strategic dilemma, especially after the Red Army almost destroyed the Wehrmacht in the Eastern Front in the 1944 summer offensives. In July-August 1944, anticipation of an immediate Russian advance towards the Straits thus presented a direct strategic threat, and London had to urgently devise ways to limit Russian expansion.⁴⁰

It was for this reason that, in conjunction with the SOE, British military commanders at the Allied Balkan Air Force (BAF) (the section of Allied Air Force responsible for bombing raids in Hungary and South East Europe) also paid careful attention to Hungarian affairs. The persistent lobbying of Shertok and Zazlanyi, who simultaneously lobbied the SOE and the British armed services, triggered this unusual attentiveness. The Zazlanyi proposal coincided with a major Hungary policy review at Balkan Air Force. Since the German occupation of Hungary, the Allies initiated a massive bombing campaign mainly against Hungarian oil installations, oil supply transportation, armament factories and major communicational and logistical hubs. In August 1944, in the wake of the sweeping Allied victories in France, the British military planners at the BAF were looking for ways to end the war in the near future.

For this reason, plans to knock Hungary out of the war with a massive bombing campaign against civilian targets and with the complete dev-

astation of Budapest were seriously considered. However, after some hesitation, the decision was made that the mass bombing of the Hungarian capital should be avoided for political reasons. It was believed that large numbers of civilian casualties would alienate the Hungarian population from the Allies (and would make postwar cooperation difficult), and, reflecting on the military perspective, it was concluded that while such campaign “might knock Hungary out of the war, the effort would not equal its results” (i. e. it would not significantly accelerate German defeat). As an alternative, the BAF recommended the replacement of the mass bombing campaign with limited engagement. Hence, the targeted bombing of Hungarian communications and war industry was recommended in conjunction with the deployment of Zazlanyi’s Jewish volunteers. This way, SOE’s Yishuv agents were integrated into British military strategy, as targeted bombing and their deployment was interpreted as the most viable solution to inflict war damage and cause widespread havoc in Hungary.⁴¹ Eventually, this military proposal got bogged down in the bureaucracy of the British government, and was soon outpaced by events on the Eastern front. By late September 1944, while SACMED was still waiting for political approval for its new strategy, the Red Army overrun the proposed drop zones in Northern Hungary, and the plan was dropped.

But, while the SOE was allowed to roam freely in occupied Europe during the war, there was a point when considerations about the political and post war implications of its actions prevailed over their tactical benefit. While it was a general British interest to salvage as much of the interwar political influence (and trade and economic interests) in East Central and South East Europe as possible, openly deranging Soviet actions in the region with subversive operations was unthinkable, since Britain relied on Moscow’s cooperation in retaining influence over the Mediterranean after the war. Thus, while subversive operations in the war were useful tools to substitute for military weakness, the evidence shows that by the autumn of 1944 (when winning the war began to appear only a matter of time), the SOE could not assert as much influence on British strategy as it wanted to, and played only a limited role in determining British official post-war priorities in Hungary.

The juxtaposition of Foreign Office and SOE documents reveal the eruption of a simmering dispute between the two departments about the ways Hungary should be handled at this time, and reveal the fault lines within the government. The Foreign Office decision that Hungary should surrender through a political process (by sending a plenipotentiary to offer

unconditional surrender to all three major allies) was in stark contrast to the two-pronged attack on Hungary envisioned by the SOE comprising a high-level military coup complemented by the subversive operations of British and Jewish commandoes.⁴² The Foreign Office – SOE quarrel essentially ran along geopolitical considerations, in which a dispute with Moscow was out of the question. Besides, the decision was an illustrative example of the policy-making process about regional issues. While one would expect the indisputable influence of the Prime Minister (who, as we remember, was fully behind Hungarian SOE operations) this was not the case. While Churchill was famous for closely following the war, he dedicated only intermittent attention to relatively unimportant problems such as Hungary, particularly if it threatened a major collision with Moscow. Thus, the issue was dealt with by a small number of senior officials already conducting the day-to-day business with Hungary. Among them, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden valued the cooperation of Moscow, and interpreted an SOE military coup as the continuation of the Horthy regime, which he despised for its attitude towards Yugoslavia in 1941. Hence, he favoured a less lenient treatment of Hungary and would only consider unconditional surrender from Budapest to all three major allies.⁴³

More importantly from our perspective, the Foreign Office linked the question of Hungarian Jewish parachutists to talks with Hungarian peace negotiators (both in 1943 and now in 1944). There were two focal points around which peace talks with Hungary clustered: bringing about Hungarian surrender, and securing its efficient implementation as soon as possible. In this context, exactly because of the weakness of Hungarian resistance movements, and due to the authoritarian character of the Horthy regime, the venture promised the highest degree of success if done in collaboration with Horthy. The apparent reluctance of the British government to complicate talks by giving support to Jewish (or Zionist) resistance in Hungary might seem to confirm arguments about the existence of elitist British anti-Semitism, but, in this case, as we have seen, such British viewpoints had instead crude military considerations. Consequently, back in 1943, Whitehall only gave green light for small-scale Jewish missions (such as the one of Hannah Szenes) once negotiations with the Hungarians reached a standstill in September 1943.⁴⁴ And now in 1944, it was military developments in the war (Soviet breakthrough at Jassy-Kishinev and the consequent Romanian *volte-face*) that forced London to abandon supporting the Shertok-Zazlanyi scheme.⁴⁵

Conclusion

This article has shown that analysing SOE actions and ambitions in Hungary in 1944 is an effective instrument for illustrating the interplays between British war strategy and policy towards Mandate Palestine on the one hand and postwar great power politics in Hungary and East Central Europe on the other. British governmental reaction to SOE's planned meddling in Hungarian affairs, with particular reference to their potential long-term implications, opens a window to the complexity of British foreign political thought towards East Central Europe. A broad range of previously unresearched British primary sources reveals the noticeable disagreements that existed between the SOE, the Foreign Office and the British military about the ways Hungary and the region should be handled. By analysing these dynamics, this article went beyond traditional works about British regional strategy and diplomatic history, which are based mostly only on Foreign Office correspondence. It demonstrated just how pragmatic policy-makers in the Foreign Office could be in the interest of *realpolitik*, referring here particularly to the expected post-war great power dynamics in the region, and relationship with Moscow. This way, it concluded that the Jewish Agency's propositions for the deployment of Yishuv commandos to occupied Europe came at a strategic juncture when broader and long-term post-war imperial interests began to overwrite tactical advantages in the war. Hence, regardless of the subversive benefit they offered, the plan was rejected due to the potential complications it posed to Anglo-Soviet relations.

The analysis of the British reactions to the Shertok-Zazlanyi proposal also provided additional explanations to the British – Yishuv relationship in the war. In its nature, the partnership in the war (either small or large scale in its extent) was a temporary arrangement, and lacked any long-term strategic foundation. Primarily, the Yishuv fought for self-government in Palestine, and aimed for an open-door immigration policy (for European Jews), something the British were keen to prevent. During the war, these fundamental differences manifested themselves in the diverging strategic aims in Europe. The British primary concern was the Shertok-Zazlanyi plan's contribution to the war (and how it helped sabotage efforts, and the rescue of POWs), as well as the ways these would affect the Yishuv's post-war positions in Palestine. For the Jewish Agency, the scheme promised some obvious political benefits (spreading Zionism among European Jews), but an element, which put the cooperation under evident strain, was the clear moral impetus (rescue and aid) behind Yishuv

actions.⁴⁶ Thus, besides political considerations, mutual suspicion between London and Palestine also prevented the development of small-scale Anglo – Yishuv cooperation into a fully-fledged alliance in the war against the Nazis.

British archival sources also reveal that SOE had a multilayered strategy in Hungary, and apart from contemplating the use of Palestinian Jewish commandoes, it also attempted bringing about a coup d'état in Budapest in the autumn of 1944. Until now, historians have maintained that in the face of Soviet expansion in the region Britain had no option but to desist. But, the historiography have been unaware of SOE's quick realization of the emergence of a pacifist current in the high circles of Hungarian politics, and its swift actions (especially in contrast to the reluctance of the Foreign Office) to take advantage of these with the ultimate aim to create a more favourable position for Britain in the region. The Csíky and Szombathelyi missions (initiated and sponsored by the SOE) also reveal the existence of a more advanced pro-British conspiratorial circle in Hungary than we have previously understood, and points to the necessity to further explore these links in order to better understand Hungary's history in these turbulent months.

Notes

¹ SOE was a British organisation conducting espionage, sabotage and reconnaissance worldwide in World War II.

² The Jewish Agency for Palestine was the representative of the Jews in Mandate Palestine. At the same time, this institution also strived to represent the interests of Jewish diasporas worldwide. In this form it was recognised by the British in 1930.

³ See for example: Michael R. D. Foot, *SOE: An Outline History of the Special Operations Executive* (London: Pimlico, 1999); William Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE: Special Operations Executive, 1940-1945* (London: St. Emins, 2002).

⁴ Historian Neville Wylie identified the 'no bangs' (not confrontational) SOE policy in neutral countries, and a conspiratorial (rather than action) focus of neutral SOE stations as the crux of the historiographical oversight that confined states such Hungary to the periphery of historiographical interest: Neville Wylie, "SOE and the Neutrals" in *Special Operations Executive. A New Instrument of War* ed. Mark Seaman (London: Routledge, 2006), 157-178 (157).

⁵ An exception is the so-called Auschwitz bombing debate. This explores the military and moral backgrounds to the absence of large scale Allied bombing campaigns against Nazi extermination camps; see particularly: Michael J. Neufeld and Michael Berendaum, *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It?* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

⁶ Two English language monographs deal with SOE Jewish parachutist and the British – Yishuv relationship, but neither use British official sources or SOE archives: Tuvia Friling, *Arrows in the Dark: David Ben-Gurion, the Yishuv Leadership, and Rescue Attempts during the Holocaust*, 2 vols., vol. 1., (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwartz, *Perfect Heroes: the World War II Parachutists and the Making of Israeli Collective Memory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010). See also: Yehuda Bauer: *From Diplomacy to Resistance: the History of Jewish Palestine, 1939-1945* (Atheneum: London, 1973).

⁷ Friling, *Arrows in the Dark*, 261-355.

⁸ In the historiography, his name also appears as: Zaslanyi, Zazlani or Zaslani. As head of Yishuv intelligence, it seems he intentionally used several variations of his name for conspiratorial reasons. Here, we have adopted the spelling ‘Zazlanyi’ which was used in British official and SOE sources.

⁹ For the topic of British anti-Semitism; see particularly: Tony Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in British Society During the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989); Tony Kushner, “Different Worlds: British perceptions of the Final Solution During the Second World War” in *The Final Solution* ed. David Cesarani (London: Routledge, 1994), 246-67; Meier Sompolinsky, *The British Government and the Holocaust* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 1999).

¹⁰ Here, it is vital to add a brief note on the availability of SOE sources on Hungary. After the war, the SOE archive was the subject of several so-called ‘bonfires’, when large proportions of original documents were incinerated due to their sensitivity. Dossiers on country-specific strategy and high-level policy-making were particularly hard hit. In relation to the Shertok-Zazlanyi proposal the documents containing SOE – Whitehall – military correspondence, and SOE decision-making mechanisms are mostly missing, which significantly hampered the reconstruction of these vital elements in the pages below.

¹¹ Basil Davidson, *Special Operations Europe. Scenes from the Anti-Nazi War* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1980), 54-60.

¹² For allowing the Wehrmacht to attack Yugoslavia from Hungarian territory Britain broke off diplomatic relations with Budapest on 3 April 1941.

¹³ SOE officer Basil Davidson was sent to Hungary in late 1939 with the vague instruction to ‘organise resistance’. His accounts about the intransigent atti-

tude of O'Malley, and the difficulties he found in bribing Hungarians and organizing them into an active resistance convinced the Foreign Office to halt Hungarian operations: minute by Cadogan, 7 June 1940, Foreign Office (FO) 371/24984, R 6415/195/37, The National Archives, Kew, UK (TNA).

¹⁴ Secret talks with the British have been studied extensively in the following works: Gyula Juhász, *Magyar-Brit titkos tárgyalások 1943-ban* (Kossuth: Budapest, 1978); Laura-Louise Veress, *Clear the Line: Hungary's Struggle to Leave the Axis During the Second World War* (London: Professional Pr., 1996). However, the SOE archives still house important and largely untapped sources relating to Hungarian peace talks in 1943 and 1944.

¹⁵ Friling, *Arrows in the Dark*, 284-287. Ben-Gurion was convinced that individual emissaries (instead of commandoes) were more suitable for helping European Jewry and spreading the idea of Zionism. Moreover, there was significant disagreement in the Jewish Agency about the extent to which parachutists should be involved in resistance in Hungary. In this initial phase the Jewish Agency concentrated on forming Jewish sabotage units recruited from the British Army (Baumel-Schwartz, *Perfect Heroes*, 8).

¹⁶ Most of these attempts ended in swift failure (7 parachutists were imprisoned and killed by the Nazis) primarily, because through an intelligence leak, the Nazis were waiting for them when they landed: Friling, *Arrows in the Dark*, 283. Hannah Szenes and the other Jewish heroes sparked a plethora of literature, both scholarly and fictional; see for example: Anthony Masters, *The Summer That Bled; The Biography of Hannah Senesh* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972); Hannah Senesh and Marge Piercy (foreword), *Hannah Senesh: Her Life and Diary* (Nashville, TN: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004).

¹⁷ Force 133 (Bari) to SOE HQ London, 8 August 1944, Records of Special Operations Executive: Eastern Europe (HS) 4/108; see also: Friling, *Arrows in the Dark*, 290.

¹⁸ Keith Sword, "British Reactions to the Soviet Occupation of Eastern Poland in September 1939", *Slavonic and East European Review* 69, 1 (1991), 81-101.

¹⁹ Shertok to Randolph Churchill, 2 July 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

²⁰ Shertok to Randolph Churchill, 2 July 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

²¹ SOE documents referring to Churchill's viewpoint are predictably fragmentary. The second page of the Prime Minister's Office memo detailing Churchill's political reservations did not survive: Note from PM's office to C.D., 6 July 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

²² MP to MPH2, Record of conversations with Shertok of Jewish Agency, 21 July 1944, HS 4/108, TNA. Later, to the SOE's great satisfaction, the Yishuv dropped any references to mass rescue from the proposal. Again, the ques-

tion of rescue was abandoned for tactical reasons, sensing British disapproval of a mayor Hungarian rescue operation.

²³ MP/HU/6183, 21 July 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

²⁴ Hannah Szenes, and early parachutists were painfully aware of the bleak and hopeless prospects of their mission, and that in all probability they would not return. Baumel-Schwartz quotes the emotive episode of a parachutist who said goodbye to his loved one knowing perfectly well they would never see each other again (and indeed, that volunteer was captured and killed by the Gestapo): Baumel-Schwartz, *Perfect Heroes*, 15-20.

²⁵ In 1943 and early 1944 SOE concentrated on infiltrating Southern Hungary (the Mecsek Mountains and the city of Pécs), as well as Budapest and other industrial centers with the aim of targeting the Hungarian war industry. It also attempted to infiltrate Hungary from the north from Slovakia. Alan Ogden has recently offered a summary of SOE operations in Hungary and other countries in the region. His work is strong on the chronological narrative, but weaker on analysis to the extent that general patterns are lost: Alan Ogden, *Through Hitler's Back Door: SOE Operations in Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria 1939-1945* (London: Pen and sword, 2010), 38-58. For SOE's own summary of its Hungarian missions; see: Force 399 to Istanbul, 11 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

²⁶ In September 1944, the SOE had 8 agents in Hungary (4 British and 4 Hungarian) actively engaged in subversive operations. Another group of 8 (also 4 British and 4 Hungarian) were in Northern Yugoslavia en route to Hungary: HS 4/114, Hungarian Operations, 28 September 1944. The number of Hungarian collaborators actively helping these groups with providing safe houses, transport, or other means of survival is unknown. Estimations can be made from SOE documents listing reliable Hungarian collaborators. According to these documents their numbers were not more than a few dozen. It is important to distinguish these collaborators from the Jewish underground helping Jewish parachutists.

²⁷ SOE London HQ to Force 399 and Force 133, 9 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

²⁸ Minute by Frank Roberts [Central Department, Foreign Office], 6 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

²⁹ There are profound reasons for the SOE's involvement in secret talks with Hungarians. The SOE, taking advantage of its intelligence potential, effectively dominated talks with Hungarian peacefeelers during the war. Also, since there were no diplomatic relations between London and Budapest, and neutral embassies seemed reluctant to accommodate secret talks, these Hungarians in 1944 (similarly to the Kállay group in 1943) was only able to initiate contacts with the SOE in neutral capitals.

³⁰ Pállóczy-Horváth to Basil Davidson, 7 August 1943, HS 4/115, TNA; Translation of extracts of Foreign Office circular addressed to Departments abroad, dated 22nd July, regarding the political situation in Hungary, HS 4/115, TNA.

³¹ It is important to note here that the entire Csiky mission was made to look like a British response to the Hungarian initiative to resume peacefeelers talks, and the SOE wanted it to appear as an action coming from anti-German Hungarians from abroad. In fact, the evidence clearly attests that the initiative came from the SOE; see: Istanbul SOE to London SOE, 28 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

³² A/H 6 (Palóczy-Horváth), detailed note on the Csiky mission, 19 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA; Istanbul SOE to London SOE HQ, 22 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

³³ The memorandum mentioned the possibility of an Allied landing on the Istria (Croatia) in the near future. From there, it suggested the rapid advance of Anglo-American troops into Hungary through the Ljubljana-gap. The river valleys of Slovenia had been the subject of British military planning in relation to a potential Balkan front, as they provided relatively easy access from the Adriatic Sea to the Hungarian plains through the mountainous regions of Yugoslavia. In reality, the Ljubljana-gap plan was more interested in a northward attack towards the heart of Austria, and in any case was dropped by September 1944; see: War Office (WO) 204/7821, TNA.

³⁴ On 15 October 1944, Horthy announced an armistice in a nationwide radio broadcast. However, because the Hungarian Army received contradictory commands, the surrender was unsuccessful. In response, the SS swiftly occupied Budapest Castle and kidnapped Horthy's son, and forced the Regent to resign and appoint Arrow-Cross leader Ferenc Szálasi as Prime Minister.

³⁵ L.H. Mortimor to H.B.M.'s Minister, Hungarian Matters, note nr.3, 25 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA; Újpestery's memoir does not mention this SOE link: Elemér Újpestery, *Végállomás Lisszabon* (Budapest: Magvető, 1987).

³⁶ After the Szálasi takeover, Szombathelyi, as a well-known critic of the war, was arrested and deported to Germany. Later the Americans turned him over to Hungary and then to Yugoslavia, where he was executed for his alleged role in the controversial anti-partisan operations in Hungarian occupied Yugoslavia in early 1942.

³⁷ Recently, researchers considered mostly untapped military, political and SOE documents in a unique volume and aimed to provide a bird's eye viewpoint of British regional strategy, and this way to penetrate beyond standard diplomatic and political approaches: *British Political and Military Strategy in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe in 1944* eds. William Deakin, Elisabeth Barker and Jonathan Chadwick (London: St. Martin's Press, 1988). While this

significantly contributed to our knowledge, its focus on Hungary remained limited to internal affairs, and did not explore British sources; see: Gyula Juhász, "Problems of the Hungarian Resistance after the German Occupation, 1944", in *British Political and Military Strategy* eds. Deakin et al., 180-189.

³⁸ This question has been the subject of continued scholarly inquiry. For a perspective that explores British policy in the Balkans in relation to the Soviet Union; see: Christopher Catherwood, *The Balkans in World War II: Britain's Balkan Dilemma* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Keith Neilson, *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

³⁹ Grand strategy of the Allies, 23 March 1940, Cabinet Papers (CAB) /66/6/33, TNA.

⁴⁰ In the Jassy-Kishinev operation (20-29 August 1944) the Soviets defeated the Axis in East Romania, and achieved a major military breakthrough. The victory opened the way for the Red Army to Romania, Hungary and the Balkans, knocked Romania out of the war, and created the opportunity to bypass the Carpathians, a major geographical obstacle. This military success made Soviet occupation of East Central and South East Europe inevitable.

⁴¹ Headquarters Balkan Air Force, Policy Committee Meeting, 13 August 1944 (report date 17 August 1944), Air Ministry, Balkan Air Force (AIR) 23/8119, TNA; Balkan Air Force to AFHQ (Allied Force Headquarters – Allied operational forces in the Mediterranean), 14 August 1944, AIR 23/8119, TNA; Force 133 (SOE Bari under Cairo) to London SOE (?), 8 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

⁴² From MP (SOE) to CD (through AD/H), 29 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA; Foreign Office to Moscow, 1 September 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

⁴³ It is not the goal of this article to analyse the numerous Hungarian peacefeeler's attempts from September 1944. While the British showed openness to receive such Hungarian bids, official British attitude in the end was determined by this Eden decision. For a good summary of British policy to Hungarian peacefeeler's in the autumn of 1944; see: MP/HU/6241 to CD, 29 August 1944, HS 4/108, TNA.

⁴⁴ Secret peace talks with Hungary produced mixed results. In September 1943 Hungary provisionally surrendered to the Allies, but the British agreed the act to be postponed until the 'right moment'. In Hungary, surrender was deferred pending arrival of the British – American military to the frontiers of the country, which never materialized. As a result, Hungary kept fighting on Germany's side.

⁴⁵ The remaining political option to retain some form of influence in the region was to negotiate with the Soviets about the delineation of spheres of influence, or about some form of shared post-war control. Historians saw the so-called

Churchill-Stalin 'Percentage Agreement' in October 1944 as a last minute British attempt to achieve this. From the British imperial perspective this was a success since it provisioned British dominance in Greece; see: András D. Bán, "A Százalékegyezmény: Európa megmentése vagy Kelet-Európa elárulása?" *Európai Utas* 25, 1 (2000), 12-25.

⁴⁶ Baumel-Schwartz, *Perfect Heroes*, 3-44; compare this to Ben Hecht, who portrayed these as purely rescue operations: Ben Hecht, *Perfidy* (London: Milah Press, 1997), 118-133.