

## Chapter 12

# Analysis of Risk Assessments and Triggers for the Holocaust in Hungary

*At Auschwitz, not only man died, but also the idea of man. To live in a world where nothing remained – where the executioner acted as both god and judge – was a reality many could not bear. In truth, it was the world's own heart that was incinerated at Auschwitz.*<sup>422</sup> – Elie Wiesel

In this section, the study further examines the risk factors and triggers behind the Holocaust in Hungary, utilizing Scott Strauss' forest metaphor to provide deeper insights into the trajectory of these events. The discussion delves into Eichmann's pivotal role, Hungarian antisemitism, the Jewish Council's involvement, and their underlying motivations. In Chapter 3, the study analyzes risk factors for genocide, including Nazi ideology and systemic discrimination. Following the March 19, 1944, Nazi invasion of Hungary, perceived as a trigger, the risk of genocide escalated. Notably, specific actions were taken during this period, which the study further analyzes through the frameworks of Scott Straus and James Waller, examining the events in relation to risk factors and triggers for genocide. Waller, in particular, refers to these actions as “accelerators,” highlighting their role as driving forces behind the unfolding events.<sup>423</sup>

This study argues that the planning and execution of the Holocaust in Hungary, in the manner it unfolded, was predominantly the result of Eichmann's personal initiative, strategic oversight, and ruthless efficiency. Eichmann was seizing an opportunity, while the primary concern for Kasztner and the Jewish Council stemmed from fear for their lives, as previously highlighted in the study. To substantiate the claim regarding Eichmann's pivotal role, the study examined his life, aspirations, and position within Nazi leadership, along with other elements outlined in Chapter 10. It highlights his rise to a position resembling what Charles Wighton characterized as a “mini-dictator” in the aftermath of Heydrich's assassination.<sup>424</sup> It further explores specific actions and instances, including Eichmann's early summons of Jewish

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<sup>422</sup> Wiesel, Elie. *Legends of Our Time*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, p. 190. This version has been slightly changed to make it flow more smoothly. The original reads: “At Auschwitz, not only did man die, but the very idea of man. To live in a world where there is nothing left, where the executioner acts as both god and judge – many wanted no part of it. It was the world's own heart that was incinerated at Auschwitz”.

<sup>423</sup> Refer to Chapter 3, and James Waller, “Chapter 4: Upstream Prevention Strategies”, in *Confronting Evil: Engaging Our Responsibility to Prevent Genocide*, pp. 162–166.

<sup>424</sup> Wighton, *Heydrich*, pp. 233–234.

leaders, his reneging on Kasztner's initial deal with Wisleczeni, his involvement in the Wannsee Conference, and the contrast between Heydrich's expectations for challenges and Eichmann's understanding, among other aspects. As previously noted, Eichmann's absence from Hitler's inner circle suggests he wielded greater autonomy in Jewish affairs, particularly after Heydrich's demise. It is also possible that Eichmann sought to demonstrate his significance to his superiors by rationalizing his actions and highlighting his potential contributions to the war effort. This aligns with Doris Bergen's theory that the Nazis' pursuit of the Final Solution in Hungary was, in part, a means of self-preservation during the later stages of the war.<sup>425</sup>

Eichmann anticipated the possibility of finding a compliant Jewish representative and leveraged the prevailing antisemitic tendencies among the Hungarians. In the initial phase of the annihilation process, he successfully deported over half of Hungary's Jewish population to Auschwitz. Drawing on the principles of obedience, similar to those seen in Milgram's experiment, Eichmann effectively selected antisemitic Hungarian leaders and enlisted Hungarian collaborators to carry out the work for him from a distance. As a result, they helped gather and transport Jews by train, while the actual killings were carried out by the Germans in Auschwitz.<sup>426</sup>

Despite the significant role played by Hungarian leaders in the Holocaust of Hungarian Jews,<sup>427</sup> and the mass executions carried out by Hungarians during the second phase after the deportations ceased, this study identifies Eichmann as the primary orchestrator of the Holocaust in Hungary. This is primarily due to the rapid extermination of over half of the Jewish population during the first phase, facilitated through mass deportations to Auschwitz. Figure 20 (page 147) depicts Hungarian Jews arriving there before the selection process, where the majority were sent to the gas chambers. Eichmann designed this process, enlisted antisemitic leaders to assist him, and relied on Hungarian police and others to gather Jews for transport. In the second phase, the Nazis also played a role by preventing Horthy from joining the Allies and installing a Hungarian leadership that continued persecuting Jews independently.

Scott Strauss employed the metaphor of a forest fire in his examination of genocide and mass atrocities, dissecting the dynamics between risk factors – comparable to vulnerable areas within a forest prone to ignition – and triggers

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<sup>425</sup> For more details refer to the end of Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

<sup>426</sup> When the study refers to Milgram's experiment, it does not imply that Eichmann or the people at that time were aware of it. Rather, Eichmann understood how to identify and utilize methods that would facilitate obedience among the Hungarians. These methods were later explored by Stanley Milgram, and contemporary studies have developed new concepts based on that experiment.

<sup>427</sup> See Appendix E for a list of Hungarian leaders who committed crimes against the Jews and were later executed.

for genocide, akin to the ignition of a fire that often originates from seemingly insignificant sparks.<sup>428</sup> Applying this analytical framework to the study of the Holocaust in Hungary, the study suggests distinguishing between two categories of factors: *causal factors* (reasons) and *executable factors* (actions). Eichmann's decisions were shaped by two distinct sets of factors—those that were directly implementable and those that were more ideological. The first set consisted of two key elements: Hungarian antisemitism, which led to active collaboration in the deportation of Jews, and the role of the Jewish council, which also played an active part in the process. These are considered *executable factors*. However, two additional factors warrant consideration: Eichmann's personal adherence to Nazi ideology (antisemitism) and his belief that President Franklin D. Roosevelt, along with other global leaders and influential figures, lacked concern and would not intervene. These factors, rather than directly facilitating his actions, fall into the category of *causal* influences that shaped his decisions.

The study proposes a significant component connected to triggers, which is the concept of *opportunity*. Similar to one man starting a fire in a forest, Eichmann's decisions served as the trigger for the events that followed. However, he needed the opportunity to act, which involved overcoming various fears, one of which was the possibility that others might intervene before his plans could unfold. In the forest metaphor, this is similar to individuals attempting to extinguish a fire before it spreads extensively. In this context, FDR's perceived lack of concern served as one such opportunity. Eichmann's perception of the assistance provided by the Jewish Council represented another opportunity for him. This assistance helped prevent resistance or disruption in the smooth gathering of Jews with the help of the Hungarians (drawing on Milgram's experiment on obedience), as will be further discussed in this chapter. Other factors playing a role in the forest metaphor include Hungarian antisemitism and Eichmann's own antisemitic beliefs, or adherence to Nazi ideology, which served as intrinsic elements of the forest, representing inherent factors in the unfolding tragedy.

Thus, by examining four distinct factors—two categorized as *executable factors* (the use of the Hungarians and the Jewish Council) and two as *causal factors* (Nazi ideology and the perception of bystanders)—we can gain valuable insights into the dynamics that shaped the events of the Holocaust in Hungary. The pivotal question remains whether the 'one man'—Eichmann—acting as the trigger, would ignite the fire, and if so, how it would spread. Would others step in to stop its spread, or would they fight alongside him? This exploration of triggers and their mechanisms

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<sup>428</sup> Scott Straus, "Chapter 3: Triggers and Escalation" and "Chapter 6: Tools and Approaches," in *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, pp. 73–74, 131–148.

deepens our understanding of human behavior and its complexities, enriching our comprehension of the Holocaust and other genocidal events.<sup>429</sup>

These factors relate to the influences on Eichmann's decision-making process, which, in genocide studies, are associated with triggers. In the following pages, the study will further explore Scott Straus' analysis of *triggers* and how they can evolve into *micro-level drivers*, as seen in Eichmann's case.<sup>430</sup> The study examines the factors that influenced Eichmann and the interplay between them, with some, like Nazi antisemitism, being considered genocide risk factors due to their ideological nature. This analysis enhances our understanding of the interplay between risk factors and triggers, focusing primarily on how triggers lead to unfolding events, as further elucidated by James Waller's work.

Chapter 4 of this book examines Nazi antisemitism and its critical role in the analysis of genocide risk factors. It begins by exploring distal factors, gradually tracing how these risks became more immediate as events unfolded. The chapter then centers on the historical developments in Hungary, underscoring the transition from underlying risk factors to a pivotal triggering event: the Nazi invasion of Hungary in March 1944. This invasion, along with the arrival of Adolf Eichmann and his team, marked a pivotal moment that intensified the potential for genocide. Eichmann evaluated the situation and, taking these factors into account, saw an opportunity to act.

This study asserts and substantiates the claim that Eichmann was the primary decision-maker and planner behind the rapid annihilation of over half of Hungary's Jewish population during the first phase, which took place from May 15 to July 7, 1944. This phase involved the transportation of Jews by train to Auschwitz. The study identifies four key factors influencing Eichmann's decisions. The first factor was the exploitation of Hungary's collaboration, which was rooted in longstanding antisemitism. The second factor involved Eichmann's use of the Jewish Council to facilitate the roundup and transportation of Jews. The third factor was Eichmann's adherence to Nazi ideology and antisemitism. The fourth factor was his perception that the American and other global leaders did not genuinely care about the plight of the Jews and would refrain from intervening to prevent their deportation.

There is much more to discuss and analyze regarding each of these factors, and so far, the study has addressed the majority of them. In this paragraph, the final two factors are further elaborated upon, with an emphasis on their critical importance

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<sup>429</sup> See Appendix B, for a deeper examination of the interplay between these factors and triggers, and their potential impact – particularly on Eichmann's decision to proceed with the Holocaust in Hungary.

<sup>430</sup> See Straus, "Chapter 2: Risk Factors," in *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, pp. 53–55. This will be further discussed in this chapter.

in understanding the broader context of Eichmann's actions. Regarding his deeply ingrained antisemitism and adherence to Nazi ideology, it is essential to recognize that Eichmann harbored two primary ambitions: the global dominance of the Third Reich and the annihilation of the Jewish population. When it became apparent that one of these objectives was slipping beyond reach, Eichmann may have chosen to pursue the other with increased intensity, redirecting focus towards the remaining goal with greater fervor. This view aligns with Emil Fackenheim's assertion that German glory was inextricably tied to the annihilation of the Jews, rather than the annihilation of the Jews being a means to achieving German glory.<sup>431</sup> Regarding the final factor suggested by the study as influencing Eichmann—the perception that the American and other Allied powers did not genuinely care about the plight of the Jews—this indifference was evident in the actions of the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, his Jewish advisors, Britain, and the Jewish Agency. None of these entities took decisive steps to intervene or prevent the mass deportation and murder of Hungarian Jews. The next chapter will delve into instances where more could have been done to rescue Hungarian Jews, such as the example of FDR's pressure on Horthy in July, which halted deportations but could have been exerted earlier to prevent further tragedy.

An example from the case of Romanian Jews illustrates how interventions can make a significant difference. Around 40,000 Jews faced annihilation towards the end of the war, but due to pressure from Hillel Kook, the War Refugee Board intervened. The Board's representative in Turkey questioned the Romanian ambassador's stance, which led to the relocation of the Jews to safety after the ambassador responded that they were unaware of the Americans' concern about the Jews.<sup>432</sup> These factors collectively shed light on the intricate circumstances surrounding the Holocaust in Hungary and underscore the missed opportunities for intervention that might have saved more lives. These factors further highlight the role and responsibility of Jewish leaders, such as Stephen Wise and Samuel Rosenman, who served as close advisors to FDR. It seems that these leaders could have taken more proactive measures to rescue Jews. The perceived indifference exhibited by them and FDR, might have influenced

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<sup>431</sup> Joseph Davis, discussion in "Week 6 Lecture," *Modern Jewish Thought* course, Gratz College, Summer 2023, JST532. While one might assume the Nazis sought German glory – national greatness, dominance, power, etc. – and that the annihilation of the Jews was merely a means to that end, Fackenheim rejects this idea. Instead, he argues that German glory itself was defined by the destruction of the Jews. Fackenheim (1916–2003) was a German-Jewish philosopher and theologian, known for his response to the Holocaust. He argued that Jews must preserve their identity and resist despair, formulating the "614th commandment" to reject hopelessness and the denial of God's existence after the Holocaust.

<sup>432</sup> For further discussion, refer to Chapter 13.

Eichmann's decision-making. Conversely, credit is given to activists like Hillel Kook, who pressured the American government to establish the War Refugee Board, which ultimately contributed to the rescue of Jews, including approximately 40,000 in Romania.<sup>433</sup> This underscores the possibility that more could have been achieved in Hungary as well. It seems that the British, FDR, and Jewish Agency were driven by their own self-interests. However, the study argues that their inaction during the Holocaust not only prevented them from helping to save more Jews, but ultimately also contributed to Eichmann's decision to carry out more killings.

As previously noted, this analysis argues that Eichmann possessed both the authority and intent to initiate the logistical method by which Hungarian Jews were rapidly annihilated, while also examining the factors that may have influenced his decision-making. Although assessing someone's thoughts and the influences on their decisions is inherently challenging, the study makes a compelling case that these factors significantly shaped Eichmann's actions. In this context, the exposure of Eichmann's 1957 interview in *Life* magazine, along with the recent release of additional tapes, gains greater significance. The study does not base its findings solely on these tapes or Eichmann's statements, recognizing the limitations of relying on perpetrators' testimonies. However, it maintains that Eichmann's comments in the interviews were credible. This, in turn, offers a better perspective for assessing the four factors identified, as Eichmann himself addressed them. For instance, in the book's introduction, a quote is provided where Eichmann discusses his reliance on the Jewish Council. Chapter 15 will further illustrate this with additional examples, while other sources, such as the quote in Chapter 9, indicate that Eichmann believed the fate of Hungarian Jews was sealed after his meeting with Hungarian leaders upon his arrival.<sup>434</sup>

Contextualizing this analysis through Scott Straus's metaphor of the forest provides a unique understanding of how this atrocity unfolded. This imagery

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**433** The War Refugee Board, established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in January 1944, was a U.S. executive agency created to aid civilian victims of the Axis powers. Growing publicity around the plight of abandoned Jews in Europe led to significant pressure on the Roosevelt administration. This campaign, spearheaded by Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) and the Bergson Group, garnered support from key senators and congressmen, Eleanor Roosevelt, and various Hollywood and Broadway figures. Historian Rebecca Erbelding notes (*Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe*, p. 273) that it was the only time in American history that the U.S. government founded a non-military agency to save the lives of civilians being murdered by a wartime enemy.

**434** Refer to the end of Chapter 9, and Porter, *Kastner's Train*, pp. 96–97. A week after his arrival, Eichmann had a friendly meeting with the Hungarian state secretaries, Laszlo Endre and Laszlo Baky, where wine and pretzels were shared. In his interview with Sassen, Eichmann recalled, "That evening, the fate of the Jews of Hungary was sealed".

highlights a specific part of the forest, symbolizing Eichmann's potential to initiate the annihilation of Hungarian Jewry. One key factor was his manipulation of the Jewish council, where Eichmann, seeing himself as an expert, exploited their role for his own purposes. The study, however, highlights scholars such as Yehudah Bauer, who argue that the Jewish Council faced constrained options. Even if they offered accurate information to the Jews, skepticism regarding belief or resistance prevailed, as discussed by this study. While this perspective is acknowledged as valid by the study, it argues that had the *Judenrat* not complied, it could have had a different impact on Eichmann's strategy. Despite the potential for victims to disbelieve or refrain from rebelling, there was a chance that they might not have complied as they did. Such non-compliance could have disrupted the efficiency of the process of gathering individuals for transportation, potentially reducing Eichmann's dependence on the Milgram effect in manipulating Hungarians.

Indeed, after the transport of trains to Auschwitz ceased on July 7, 1944, the Hungarians persisted in further persecutions, albeit this time at a closer range rather than sending victims by trains. The rate of killing was considerably smaller, possibly due to fewer individuals willing to participate in close-range acts and the slower nature of the killing process compared to the thousands gassed in trains.<sup>435</sup> The study places more responsibility on the Jewish Council, understanding the challenging circumstances without assigning blame due to their life-threatening risks. Additionally, they were unaware of this analysis and had no means of knowing that Eichmann could employ only a small number of SS personnel, primarily relying on the assistance of Hungarians. As previously mentioned, Randolph Brahm also holds them accountable, focusing on their failure to fulfill their responsibility of providing information, which could have given Jews a chance to resist. However, the study introduces another dimension by highlighting the impact on the main trigger, Eichmann.

This study makes a significant contribution to both history and Holocaust studies. By integrating modern concepts from genocide studies and applying them to the events in Hungary, it also offers a valuable contribution to the field of genocide studies, particularly in enhancing our understanding of the risk factors and triggers for genocide in an area that, as Scott Straus notes, has been underexplored. Moving forward, the chapter will further elaborate on these concepts, starting with

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<sup>435</sup> The study previously addressed the overwhelming sense of no escape faced by many. For more details, refer to Heberer, *Children During the Holocaust*, pp. 102–109, where this sense is vividly described, even in situations where death seemed inevitable. However, following the halt of transports to Auschwitz in July 1944 and the onset of persecution of Budapest's Jews by the Hungarians, the dynamics shifted. Even without Jewish resistance, the rate of killings decreased noticeably. For example, Hungarians shot 70 people in one day, compared to the thousands transported daily by train.



a comparison of the triggers for genocide in Hungary and Rwanda, exploring how these triggers may reveal two distinct pathways leading to genocide and the subsequent events. On April 6, 1994, the airplane carrying Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana and Hutu President of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was shot down as it prepared to land in Kigali, killing everyone on board. The assassination of President Habyarimana in the plane crash acted as the trigger for the genocide. In the immediate aftermath, soldiers, police, and militia swiftly executed key Tutsi and moderate Hutu military and political figures who might have taken control in the resulting power vacuum. Although Rwanda still had a government headed by Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, Madame Agathe and her husband were murdered by members of the Presidential Guard and the army. Hutu civilians were pressured and recruited to arm themselves with machetes, clubs, and other blunt weapons, while being incited to rape, maim, and kill their Tutsi neighbors, as well as to loot and destroy their property. With Habyarimana's death, the crisis committee, led by Théoneste Bagosora, took over the country and became the central authority directing the genocide. During this period, many Hutus went door to door, systematically killing Tutsis. The Hutu population, having been armed and prepared in the preceding months, adhered to the Rwandan tradition of obedience to authority and executed the orders without hesitation.<sup>436</sup> Some scholars view that genocide as a sudden, irresistible, and uniformly orchestrated event. However, the case of the Holocaust in Hungary suggests a different narrative. In this instance, a single individual, Eichmann, orchestrated the genocide by enlisting Hungarians to deport Jews to Auschwitz. He initially coordinated the system through the Hungarian authorities and the Jewish council, before accelerating the deportations via train over the span of roughly two months. In contrast, the Rwandan genocide involved a large number of individuals participating in widespread killings, seemingly driven by the coordination of the crisis committee under collective leadership.

In contributing to the study of risk factors and triggers for genocide, this study provides a compelling example that illustrates both Straus's forest theory and his analysis of the three main questions of genocide: macro-level risk factors, short-term dynamics and triggers, and micro-level drivers.<sup>437</sup> In the case of the Holocaust of Hungarian Jews, there were *distal macro-level risk factors*, as discussed in the study. The unfolding events were propelled by the *trigger* of the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944, followed by a *micro-level driver*, Eichmann, in this case, as the study

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<sup>436</sup> Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, 2nd ed., Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1999, pp. 244–45.

<sup>437</sup> See Straus, "Chapter 2: Risk Factors," in *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, as well as Chapter 3 of this book.



showed.<sup>438</sup> The study explored the *opportunities* he exploited and the steps leading to annihilation. This scenario underscores the pivotal role of Eichmann and offers insights for genocide prevention. Identifying individuals as potential micro-level drivers capable of igniting the fire after the trigger, can aid in preventing genocide.<sup>439</sup> Micro-level drivers can plan genocide, and although it may take time to materialize, the moment they gain control should be viewed as a trigger. In the discussed case of Rwanda, it also appears that a driving force emerged after the initial trigger, likely led by individuals heading the crisis committee. In all these cases, this driving force (driver) is the one navigating the unfolding events, culminating in genocide.

James Waller utilizes a similar analogy as the forest fire, suggesting that risk assessment helps identify countries where the ‘wood is stacked’ for potential violence or genocidal conflicts. The ‘matches’ capable of igniting this wood require an analysis of accelerating factors leading to a rapid crisis escalation, as well as triggering factors sparking conflict onset. Waller emphasizes that understanding accelerants and triggers assists in transitioning possibilities into probabilities. He distinguishes between accelerants and triggers, quoting Bulgarian scholar Atanas Gotchev’s description of accelerating factors as identifiable and monitorable elements linked to broader background conditions of specific tension or crisis situations. Gotchev argues that without these background conditions, accelerators are merely events. Triggers, on the other hand, are single events, such as the assassination of a political leader, which, when combined with background conditions and accelerators, precipitate the transition from a tense situation to a crisis. Waller suggests thinking of ‘accelerants’ as changes in the strategic situation that increase incentives or feasibility for perpetrators or enablers to mobilize people or resources for atrocities.<sup>440</sup> Applying this analysis to the events unfolding in Hungary will provide us with a unique perspective and a deeper understanding of the interplay between triggers and accelerators in Waller’s analysis, as well as how they intersect with the concepts used by Straus. The trigger could be the event of the German occupation of Hungary. Then, employing Straus’s terminology, we observe a micro-level driver—Eichmann—who orchestrated subsequent acceler-

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<sup>438</sup> For his pivotal role, Eichmann’s appointment in Hungary can be viewed as a trigger for genocide, marking a key moment in the unfolding events. Similarly, as discussed earlier, the Nazi invasion of Hungary served as an initial trigger, setting the stage for subsequent actions. This sequence reveals a progression, illustrating how events escalated over time. Following Straus’s analysis, we can interpret the invasion of Hungary as a broad-scale trigger, with Eichmann operating at a micro level as a driving force behind the implementation of genocidal policies.

<sup>439</sup> Another example might be the 2011 release of Yahya Sinwar from prison in Israel, who is now believed to be the main figure orchestrating the attack on October 7, 2023.

<sup>440</sup> Waller, *Confronting Evil*, p. 215.

ations, following Waller's framework, in a step-by-step process. Waller discussed events that followed and precipitated the transformation leading to the final stage, with a driver leading the way, in this case, an individual. In Waller's terminology, the matches represent the accelerating events. The case of Hungary teaches us that there is a possibility that these events are orchestrated by a single driver or individual, who can be seen as the one igniting the wood, as depicted by Straus's metaphor.

Holly Nyseth succinctly outlines the conceptualization of triggers as events or processes leading to macro-level violence against civilians, drawing from the work of Straus and other scholars. According to their framework, a trigger must possess certain defining characteristics: (1) it predates the escalation of violence, (2) it signifies a significant deviation from the prevailing state of affairs within the affected country or countries, (3) it is distinct from the violence itself, and (4) it exhibits a direct, proximate causal link to the escalation.<sup>441</sup> These criteria are applied to the events unfolding in Hungary. For instance, the Nazi invasion of Hungary in March 1944 serves as a prime example of such a trigger. It preceded the escalation of violence and marked a pivotal shift in the country's status quo. The subsequent phases of annihilation, notably the orchestrated two-month train transports by the Germans and the subsequent installment of a new government led by Ferenc Szálasi and his arrow cross party, which aggressively pursued the annihilation of Jews, vividly demonstrate the tangible impact of this trigger. While the invasion itself was not part of that violence, it directly facilitated the subsequent waves of violence. This nuanced understanding of triggers provides valuable insight into the complexities of conflict dynamics and their evolution in specific contexts like Hungary.

Nyseth's research on triggers focused on non-state actors' escalation of violence against civilians, particularly examining cases in Africa. Employing an innovative approach, Nyseth identified 24 such escalations in Africa committed by various non-state groups between 1989 and 2015.<sup>442</sup> Nyseth then classified triggers into three main groups: decreases in relative power, increases in relative power, and opponent attacks on civilians. Decreases in relative power, such as opponent military advances and reduced capabilities, were the most frequent. Increases in relative power involved external support and weakening of opponent groups. Opponent violence against civilians constituted the third major trigger group.<sup>443</sup> Nyseth's study demonstrates that the escalation of violence against civilians was often triggered

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**441** Hollie Nyseth Brehm, Amanda Lea Robinson, and Mini Saraswati, "Triggers of Escalations in Violence against Civilians by Non-State Actors in Africa," *Terrorism and Political Violence* [Volume #, Issue #] (Year): 666.

**442** *Ibid.*, p. 654.

**443** *Ibid.*, pp. 666–667, 672.

by fluctuations in relative power. Examining the situation in Hungary after the Nazi invasion of March 1944, we observe that the original Hungarian government became a target for the Germans, with whom they were allied, and with whom they had different motives at the time. In this scenario, the original government was replaced in the two phases described, and Jews (some other civilians as well) were targeted by the opponents of the original regime, who gained power and pursued an antisemitic agenda. From this perspective, the situation was even more dire than the scenarios analyzed in Africa by Nyseth, with atrocities and genocide ensuing. This certainly provides a better perspective on how both Straus and Nyseth's analyses of triggers and events evolve.

In Straus's metaphorical depiction of Hungary, the spark was ignited in the forest and began spreading, yet there were people present who could discern it but chose not to intervene. This brings attention to the roles of figures like FDR, the British, Jewish agency, and others, which will be explored in more detail in the upcoming section. Bystanders who maintained their positions also played a significant role. The study aims to further highlight that it wasn't solely the failure to save the lives of thousands who met their demise; rather, the actions of these observers, who held power, influenced perpetrators as they factored them into their decision-making processes.



**Figure 19:** At the Jozsefvarosi train station in Budapest, Raoul Wallenberg (at right, with hands clasped behind his back) rescues Hungarian Jews from deportation by providing them with protective passes. Budapest, Hungary, 1944. Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Photo by Thomas Veres.



**Figure 20:** Hungarian Jews arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau before the selection process. Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://newspapers.ushmm.org/images/hungarian-jews.jpeg>.