Chapter 14
Conclusions

> *Where there is great power there is great responsibility, where there is less power there is less responsibility, and where there is no power there can, I think, be no responsibility*.[472] – Winston Churchill

I

The rapid annihilation of Hungarian Jews during the closing stages of World War II raises a critical question: why was such a catastrophic event not prevented? This book addresses that question by delving into the historical events and introducing a new dimension of analysis that examines the convergence of risk factors, immediate triggers, and other key concepts used in genocide studies. In doing so, it reveals the underlying dynamics that enabled genocide on such a scale. This analysis not only deepens our understanding of the Holocaust in Hungary but also contributes to the broader field of genocide studies—particularly in an area where, as Scott Straus has noted, scholarly attention to risk and trigger dynamics has remained limited.[473] The study further engages with Straus's forest metaphor, combining a macro-level analysis of risk factors with a detailed examination of triggers and subsequent events in Hungary. Eichmann is presented as the central micro-level driver, symbolizing the spark that ignites and spreads fire throughout the forest. This enhances our comprehension of how triggers operate and their complex interplay with risk factors in historical events, as well as how they rapidly escalate violence and give rise to early patterns of such atrocities.

472 This statement was made by Winston Churchill while serving as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonial Office during a 1906 discussion on indigenous peoples in the Union of South Africa. See https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1906/feb/28/south-african-native-races#S4V0152P0_19060228_HOC_307. On a different occasion, on September 6, 1943, as Prime Minister, Churchill addressed Harvard University, urging the United States to strengthen its commitment to the Allies against the Axis Powers in World War II, stating, "The price of greatness is responsibility". See https://winstonchurchill.org/old-site/learn/speeches-learn/the-price-of-greatness/.
473 See Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*., p. 75.

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II

The study thoroughly addressed and expanded upon the four initial questions, examining various issues and events from that period. In tackling one of these inquiries—exploring the motivations driving the Nazis' implementation of the Holocaust in Hungary during that period—the study evaluated numerous hypotheses posited by scholars. These possibilities for Nazi motivations in the final stages of the Holocaust are generally relevant, and the study supports them. As noted by Doris Bergen, one of these possibilities recognizes that some last-minute brutalities were driven by a shared instinct for self-preservation. Numerous German units and officials involved in these persecutions against the Jews worked tirelessly to underscore the crucial nature of their roles. Opting for a safer alternative over the front lines became a priority, especially during the stage when they were experiencing setbacks in the war.

However, with regard to Hungary, this study offers a novel explanation for the Nazis' relentless pursuit of the Holocaust, arguing that the rapid annihilation of over half of Hungarian Jewry in just two months was driven largely by the actions and decisions of one man: Adolf Eichmann. The analysis explores his motivations, incorporating Scott Straus's forest metaphor to delve deeper into Eichmann's reasoning.

The study dedicates a section to discussing Adolf Eichmann, emphasizing his significant power and decision-making authority, while refuting views from scholars like Hannah Arendt or Yeshayahu Leibowitz, who portrayed him as playing a minor role, merely following orders in the Nazi chain of command. However, the study acknowledges that this phenomenon of people just following orders occurred in other instances during the Holocaust and different genocides, which essentially aligns with Stanely Milgram's experiments on obedience. Additionally, the study adopts Arendt's perspective on the banality of evil, recognizing the possibility that individuals might act in such a way by simply following orders. Yet, concerning Hungary, the study argues that it was primarily Eichmann who orchestrated these actions, considering himself an expert in the execution of such decisions.

The study initially identifies several genocide risk factors, such as instability, ideology, and discrimination, and discusses their analysis, beginning with scholars like Scott Strauss and subsequently exploring the perspectives of other researchers.[474] It then applies these factors to Nazi ideology and their rise to power, identifying them as macro-level distal risk factors that, over time and as the situation

474 This topic is discussed in Chapter 3, along with Scott Straus's work: "Chapter 2: Risk Factors", in *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, pp. 53–55.

deteriorated, became increasingly proximal. Additionally, the study delves into Hungarian antisemitism, emphasizing the work of Raz Segal and distinguishing between their motives and approaches compared to the Nazis. While Nazi propaganda and ideology were notably extreme, targeting Jews worldwide with a premeditated plan for their annihilation, Hungarian authorities focused more on discrimination and the desire to remove Jews from their land. Furthermore, as demonstrated by Raz Segal, Hungarian anti-Jewish actions were part of a broader effort to eliminate other minorities as well, as part of a nation-state-building project. This distinction is significant. The study maintains the assertion that Eichmann was the main initiator of the Holocaust in Hungary, which occurred in two phases. In the first phase, from May to July 1944, he orchestrated the transport of Jews to Auschwitz with the assistance of Hungarians, leading to the annihilation of approximately 437,000 individuals. In the subsequent phase, the Hungarian Arrow Cross, appointed by the Nazis, persecuted the remaining Jews in Budapest, leading to the deaths of many more. During this stage, the killing rate was lower than the 12,000 per day during transportation. Overall, around 565,000 out of 825,000 Jews were annihilated. For the second phase, it appears that the Hungarian role was more than just collaboration, as they actively conducted persecutions.[475] However, it was the Nazis who appointed the government under Ferenc Szalasi's rule, with Eichmann playing a role in pushing for further killings upon his arrival. Eichmann attempted to resume the transport to Auschwitz but was unsuccessful.[476] The study did not delve into Eichmann's specific involvement in appointing that government, which marked the initiation of the second phase. However, during the first phase, when most Hungarian Jews were annihilated, the study identifies Eichmann as a pivotal figure.

The German invasion in March 1944 is viewed as the trigger, and the study analyzes the subsequent events and the role of Eichmann, who, based on Strauss's analysis, became the micro-level driver following the trigger. The study delves into four primary factors that influenced Eichmann's decision-making and facilitated the execution of his diabolical plan. First, he leveraged the deep-seated antisemitism among the Hungarians, tapping into their history of persecuting Jews. As Yehudah Bauer writes, antisemitism was built into the regime.[477] Therefore, the

475 The study does not reach a conclusion regarding that question for the second phase, and it refrains from making assertions about Eichmann's role in appointing the government during that period.

476 As noted earlier, Anna Porter credits Kasztner with negotiating further with the Nazis and ultimately saving an additional 200,000 Jews. However, this view is contested; some attribute this achievement instead to Moshe Kraus.

477 Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, pp. 341–342.

Hungarians laid the groundwork for the annihilation of the Jews. Drawing from Milgram's theory of obedience, Eichmann initially utilized them at a distance, enlisting their help in gathering Jews and sending them on trains to Auschwitz. This phase occurred from May 15 to July 9, 1944, resulting in the elimination of around 437,000 Hungarian Jews, most of the Jewish population. The second factor involved the Jewish council, where Eichmann, with previous experience, strategically selected leaders who would collaborate with him. These leaders did not inform the Jews about the true destinations of the trains, but gave the impression that compliance was in the best interest of the Jews involved. The study delves into the general role of Jewish councils and, more specifically, their actions in Hungary. It argues that figures like Rudolf Kasztner and other council members primarily acted out of fear for their lives. In these circumstances, they aimed to comply with the Nazis to save more lives, convincing themselves it was the best option. This explanation sheds light on several questions, including why Kasztner continued negotiating with Eichmann despite Eichmann's failure to honor Kasztner's prior agreement with Wisliceny and the ransom that had already been paid.

There were two additional factors that influenced Eichmann's pursuit of the Holocaust in Hungary. One was Eichmann's deeply ingrained antisemitism and his belief in the dual mission of the Nazis – to establish a 1000-year Reich and to annihilate the Jews. Eichmann's view was that if they failed to achieve one goal, they would focus more on the other. The study delved into Nazi ideology and antisemitism, examining their influence on the public and illustrating their alignment with various risk factors. It explored concepts like social distancing and the "us vs them" theory, as discussed by scholars such as James Waller and David Moshman. The Nazis also propagated a fabricated theory suggesting that Jews posed a threat, a notion that resonates with James Waller's concept of the survival element, as outlined in the study.[478] The Nazis asserted that the Jews were attempting to destroy their racial hierarchy and dominate the world, thus preventing German dominance. They believed that a struggle for survival existed between the strong and the weak in the relationships between nations, with natural selection occurring within human society. They also claimed that the German people were chosen by a "divine" desire to create a racial hierarchy in the world.[479]

478 See Waller, "What is the Nature of Human Nature? Our Ancestral Shadow", in *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*, pp. 136–168, and Moshman, "Us and Them: Identity and Genocide," *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* 7, no. 2 (2007), pp. 115–135.

479 Hayes, *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, pp. 15–16. Solomon, *History, Vol. 2*, Israeli Open University, p. 15. Hayes writes (p. 30) that in nineteenth-century Europe the more liberalism triumphed, the more visible and successful Jews became and more groups felt endangered by them.

The other factor influencing Eichmann was the impression that Americans, along with other world leaders and individuals in positions of power, did not genuinely care about the plight of the Jews, and thus would not intervene to save them. This indifference was evident in the actions of America, FDR and his Jewish advisors, Britain, and the Jewish agency, as they did not take more decisive actions to intervene and save Hungarian Jews. The study finds poignant expression in the response of the Romanian ambassador in Turkey to the American representative of the War Refugee Board, who, nearing the war's end, questioned why Romanian Jews were left vulnerable to Nazi persecution. The ambassador's respond, "We did not know you cared about it," resonates profoundly, encapsulating a disturbing disregard for the plight of those targeted by the Nazis. As a result of this intervention, 40,000 Romanian Jews were relocated to a different area and saved.[480] The study dedicates an entire chapter to discussing the roles of bystanders, exploring their motivations and the impact of their actions. It highlights that not only did they fail to save Jews, but their influence also affected Eichmann's decisions.

III

In this context, it's evident that greater efforts could have been made by various world powers or Jewish groups to save the Hungarian Jews. The study focused on exploring how this lack of intervention influenced the decision-making of the perpetrators, using Scott Straus' metaphor of a forest. The profound lack of intervention had such severe consequences that it significantly influenced the decision-making of Eichmann, the perpetrator.[481] Consequently, the study recognizes the necessity to acknowledge this severity and aims to introduce new terminology. This new terminology seeks to underscore the gravity of these circumstances, raise awareness, and contribute to the prevention of future genocides. Initially considering the term 'indirect genocide,' there arose a challenge as it conflicted with the concept of genocide previously discussed, particularly in relation to the necessity of intent as per the UN definition. The term 'indirect' implies a lack of intent, which doesn't align with the established criteria. Nevertheless, the study proposes introducing a term—potentially defined as *Indirect Complicity in Genocide* (*ICG*)—to describe scenarios where influential entities, despite having the capability to prevent a genocide orchestrated by others with intent, choose not to act. In the case of the

480 As discussed in Chapters 12 and 13 of this study.

481 Another example is found in Hitler's famous speech, where he referenced the world's silence regarding the Armenian genocide, as previously discussed in this study.

Holocaust in Hungary, labeling the actions of those with the power to intervene as 'Indirect Complicity in Genocide' places greater responsibility on them. This perspective becomes particularly significant given the study's demonstration of how such inaction influenced the decision-making of the perpetrators. This will further emphasize the moral and ethical responsibility of those in power to prevent such tragedies and underscore their impact on the decision-making processes of those directly involved in perpetrating such heinous acts.

The study further examined various reasons why bystanders chose not to intervene in saving Hungarian Jews and other Jews during the Holocaust. It demonstrated that, in some instances, it could have been relatively feasible to rescue them, such as in the case of saving the 40,000 Romanian Jews, which serves as just one example. Bystanders often acted based on their own biases and interests, sometimes driven by the fear of losing what they had under democratic government or the desire to gain it. Scott Straus brings an example mentioning Samantha Power who argued that democratic governments might not engage in genocide prevention unless voters exert pressure. The insight holds more generally for the non-state sector. Public pressure and awareness often precede government and international organizations' involvement in atrocity prevention. Straus notes that the involvement of non-state actors is complex and that prominent voices are not always coherent.[482] He adds that to understand atrocity prevention, one must recognize the diverse actors in the international policy arena, with configurations varying by situation. In the case of violence in Darfur, Christian organizations, despite the conflict primarily affecting Muslims, were actively involved due to their longstanding engagement in predominantly Christian and animist southern Sudan.[483] In the case of Hungary, we observed various actors, and it was intriguing that some individuals, despite being Jews with power, acted as bystanders for reasons previously discussed. On the other hand, certain Jews, such as orthodox rabbis and Hillel Kook, took action to save lives. Kook's efforts were instrumental in the creation of the War Refugee Board, ultimately leading to the rescue of Romanian Jews and others. However, there is recognition that much more could have been accomplished. This underscores the need to raise awareness about the paramount importance of saving lives in times of catastrophe, prioritizing it over other interests.

Yehuda Bauer writes that once the deportation of Hungarian Jews began on May 14, 1944, and given the circumstances, it's difficult to see how anything could have been done in such a brief span to save them. He adds that Horthy, the key

482 See Straus, "Chapter 8: The Atrocity Prevention Community: States and Beyond," in *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, pp. 171–184; and Semantha Power, *A Problem from Hell*, Basic Books, 2002.
483 Ibid.

figure, with the army loyal to him as long as he was in power, chose to be silent. Bauer notes that the Vrba-Wetzler report reached Horthy, and two weeks later, on June 26, he held a cabinet meeting. Bauer claims that while the warnings from FDR, the intervention of the Swedish king, the Pope, and others, influenced him, it was also the Vrba-Wetzler report – transmitted to him by the *Judenrat* – that played a role. Thus, contrary to Vrba's claims that the *Judenrat* did not expose the protocol to the Jews, Bauer argues that sending the report to Horthy proved more impactful.[484] It's also important to note that Horthy was under pressure from the Nazis, who later removed him and threatened to kill his son. However, the threats from FDR were a significant factor, and the question remains why this did not come earlier.

This chapter began with Churchill's quote, emphasizing the correlation between power and responsibility. However, this responsibility was often overlooked by powerful entities like Great Britain or America regarding the Holocaust in Hungary. Conversely, the Hungarian narrative underscores that determination and the desire to help, exemplified by individuals like Hillel Kook, can have a significant impact. Raul Wallenberg serves as another example, showcasing how someone in a position of power, when aware and resourceful, can effectively save many lives. It's a valuable lesson. This also illustrates how what seems like simple actions could have been taken to save Jews, whether by Wallenberg, the 40,000 Romanian Jews, or FDR's halt of deportation via pressure on July 7.

IV

The study scrutinizes the scholarly debate between Yehuda Bauer and the perspectives of Randolph Braham and Hannah Arendt, focusing on how much responsibility is placed on Kasztner and the Jewish Council for withholding information about the death camps from the Jewish population. While the study aligns with one of Bauer's standpoint—arguing that there was no guarantee the information would be believed or that resistance would have occurred—and refutes the idea that escaping through alternate routes was a viable option, it does not condone or justify the actions of the Jewish Council, particularly in light of their potential influence on the decisions of perpetrators like Eichmann. The study explores the crucial role played by the Jewish Council's compliance in Eichmann's ability to carry out the annihilation of Jews in Hungary. It emphasizes this by analyzing Eichmann's perspective (as described in the interview) and highlights how the Council's actions

484 Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, pp. 238–240.

facilitated the execution of atrocities, including their influence on Eichmann's reliance on Hungarian assistance to gather the Jews.

Yehuda Bauer argues in support of Kasztner, claiming that the Hungarian Jewish community was already aware Jews were being killed in Poland and that there was nothing further Kasztner could have done to warn them.[485] Bauer analyzes the situation and shows that the Hungarian Jews did not have any chance to succeed by resisting or escaping to Romania (as was written in *Perfidy* by Ben Hecht), and that they were told the truth by various people who escaped a previous Nazi persecution, but refused to accept that reality.[486] However, the study asserts that, despite the various factors at play, the behavior of the Jewish council was one of the main reasons for Eichmann to persist with his genocidal plan.[487]

Furthermore, the study argues that despite the low likelihood of organizing resistance or escaping, and uncertainties about convincing victims of the death camp information, disrupting the smooth process of boarding the trains could have hindered Eichmann's ability to achieve such high killing rates. This involved leveraging Milgram's obedience experiments with Hungarians facilitating the gathering. It seems that Rabbi Weissmandl shared this perspective, believing that if Hungarian Jews resisted, only a small number would be deported, considering the Germans' limited capacity to handle both the front and Jews simultaneously in 1944.[488] The study suggests that even non-armed resistance or disruptions could have made a significant difference under these conditions, which were not all known to the victims or the Jewish council at the time.

The study also agrees with Randolph Braham on the responsibility of the Jewish Council to provide information, despite the daunting reality that, even with this

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485 Bauer, *Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations 1933–1945*, pp. 150–155, 159–160, 197–200.

486 Ibid., pp. 159–161. Going to Palestine by sailing on a ship was also difficult, as was entering Palestine against all the British restrictions.

487 Ernő Munkácsi, the secretary of the Hungarian Judenrat and a member of Budapest's Jewish elite, wrote a memoir after the war that was translated into English (see bibliography). He describes the Judenrat's desperation and fear as it attempted to prevent the looming catastrophe, agonized over decisions not made, and struggled to grasp the immensity of a tragedy that would take the lives of over half the Hungarian Jews in the very last year of the Second World War. This aligns with the study, and it appears he speaks the truth, even while acknowledging his own responsibility. His descendant, Nina Munk, writes in the preface that "to read How It Happened is to understand that the Budapest-based Judenrat, an administrative body established by the SS immediately after the invasion of Hungary in March 1944, inadvertently facilitated the Nazis' 'wholesale extermination of Hungarian Jews' (Ernő's words)". For more information see https://www.mqup.ca/how-it-happened-products-9780773555129.php?page_id=46& and this article https://www.thestar.com/news/world/a-first-hand-look-at-atrocity-by-a-privileged-witness/article_df3bfc0b-a485-5076-8144-30ff8520e21e.html.

488 See Lichtenstein, *Witness to History*, pp. 279–282.

information, the likelihood of resistance was minimal and difficult to comprehend. However, it avoids placing blame on the Jewish council or calling them traitors, recognizing the complexity of their situation and the fear they faced for their lives. It acknowledges the challenging circumstances they faced and the life-threatening risks that compelled their actions.

The debate regarding Kasztner remains open. In situations of such uncertainty, it may be more prudent to consider the court's judgment. Notably, the issue was first addressed by a Haganah court, which refrained from judging his actions. The court stated that those who had not faced such circumstances themselves were in no position to pass judgment.[489] However, when the issue was later heard in an Israeli court, Judge Benjamin Halevi wrote in his ruling that "Kasztner sold his soul to the devil". Following the trial, Kasztner was murdered in Tel Aviv. The state appealed, and the Supreme Court ruling, delivered after Kasztner's assassination, concluded by a majority that Kasztner did not collaborate with the Nazis, nor was he involved in the indirect murder of Hungarian Jews or in any partnership with the Nazis. However, the court unanimously agreed that "Kasztner had knowingly and criminally saved Nazi war criminal Kurt Becher from the death penalty that awaited him in Nuremberg".[490] Judge Shimon Agranat, in his ruling, stated, "History will judge Kasztner, not the court", which reflects the broader view that Kasztner's actions should be evaluated beyond the legal context. The court's final judgment aligns with the study's assessment, suggesting that Kasztner should not be labeled a traitor, as some critics have claimed. However, it held him accountable for knowingly and criminally saving Nazi war criminal Kurt Becher. While the ruling does not position Kasztner as a hero, it leaves room for continued debate, as Agranat's statement underscores that only history can ultimately judge his legacy.

V

Through this analysis, the study sheds light on why risk factors for genocide, perceived then as signs of impending danger,[491] were not recognized or effectively addressed. The study dedicates a chapter to exploring the victims' perspectives, which are further analyzed in the subsequent chapters. These discussions delve

489 Palgi, *Into the Inferno*, pp. 258–260. Hecht, *Perfidy*, pp. 118–130. The Haganah was the main Zionist paramilitary organization that operated for the Yishuv in the British Mandate for Palestine

490 Similarly, this study cannot view Kasztner as a hero. It does not condemn him unequivocally, but it discusses the severity of the actions taken by him and other members of the Jewish Council, offering critical analysis of their decisions.

491 Refer to the clarification provided in the first chapter.

into the challenges the victims faced, including disbelief regarding information about death camps, resistance, and other related issues. Other groups were also examined, such as the approach of the Jewish council and the role of bystanders, further elucidating why these risk factors were not addressed more effectively. Additionally, perhaps the fact that the decision for annihilation in Hungary, primarily sending victims by train to Auschwitz, rested largely with one individual—Eichmann, as the study claims—made it even more complicated to identify the danger.[492] The study further analyzes how the anticipated behavior of victims, the Jewish council, and bystanders influenced his decisions. This should raise awareness to prevent such atrocities from occurring again. The study delved into the challenges faced by the victims, highlighting the difficulty in identifying the true intentions of the Nazis and the resistance they encountered. It refrains from criticizing the victims for not detecting the impending danger early on. The study suggests the use of innovative concepts aimed at preventing future genocides and highlighting individuals like Aba Kovner, who displayed keen insight by grasping Nazi ideology and anticipating the impending annihilation. Despite the challenges, they valiantly resisted.

Through this innovative analysis of the Holocaust in Hungary, the study suggests that, despite the dire circumstances encapsulated by the concept of "choiceless choices," more could have been achieved had the Jewish Council not withheld critical information.[493] While there was limited potential for organized resistance or belief in information about death camps among Jews, Eichmann's methods suggest that revealing such information might have delayed deportations, as discussed further in the study. Despite doubts about whether people would believe the information or resist collectively, leading to an inability to completely halt compliance with deportations, it seems that it was still possible to slow the annihilation process. This was because Eichmann's rapid deportation strategy required seamless operation, and any disruption to full compliance could have impeded this. In such a case, utilizing Hungarian assistance in alternative ways could have posed

492 Given the unlikely nature of such a maneuver, which resulted in the elimination of most Hungarian Jews in less than two months, it seems only a shrewd individual could have conceived and executed the unthinkable – Eichmann was such an individual.

493 This concept was previously discussed in Chapter 5. The term "choiceless choices" was coined by Lawrence L. Langer to describe the impossible, no-win situations faced by Jews during the Holocaust. Hays (p. 198) comments on Langer's initial use of the term in 1980. See Lawrence L. Langer, "The Dilemma of Choice in the Death Camps," *Centerpoint: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1980): 53–59; reprinted in John K. Roth and Michael Berenbaum (eds.), *Holocaust: Religious and Philosophical Implications* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), pp. 222–232. It was also discussed in Langer's book, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit* (State University of New York Press, 1982).

greater challenges to Eichmann, although this possibility was unknown to the Jewish council at the time.[494]

The study seeks to highlight another pivotal factor influencing survival during that era: luck, or what some may perceive as divine providence. Even for those who sought to evade capture and understood the true intentions of the Nazis, circumstantial factors played a crucial role. For instance, in the case of Abba Kovner in the Vilna Ghetto, the resistance group managed to escape to the forest through a sewer pipe system that had been constructed, providing them with an opportunity for survival. In Warsaw, however, such options were not available, and the Jews who resisted fought valiantly until the end. This pattern was observed in Hungary as well, where the chance of escape depended greatly on individual circumstances. Examining the two parachutists, Yoel Palgi and Pretz Goldstein, both were aware of the Nazis' intentions to annihilate the Jews. However, Goldstein, when transported by train to Auschwitz, tragically perished, while Palgi successfully escaped and found a way to survive thereafter. This underscores how, amidst the horrors of the Holocaust, the interplay of luck and circumstances often determined one's fate, even in the face of shared knowledge and resistance.

VI

Discussions on atrocity prevention tend to focus on understanding the causes and prevention of violence. However, Scott Strauss writes that the unfortunate reality is that atrocities do occur.[495] Then, in the aftermath of atrocities, attention shifts to how societies can be reconstructed to prevent future violence, and how peace-building efforts can ensure a stable and sustainable transition, allowing external actors to withdraw their personnel without triggering a return to violence. Building societies involves fostering consciousness. delving into Arendt's concept of "the banality of evil" is something I believe should be universally applied to condemn both evil and terrorist acts.[496] This condemnation should be detached from specific narra-

494 Refer to the preceding discussion of this content within this study, and Hayes, pp. 197–198. Hayes provided an example involving Samu Stern, the head of the Jewish council in Hungary, and other Jewish leaders who, upon learning about Auschwitz and the gas chambers when Germany occupied Hungary in March 1944, chose to withhold this information with the intention to preserve at least some Jewish lives by complying with the Germans.

495 Straus, "Chapter 9: Rebuilding States and Societies after Atrocity" and "Chapter 10: Justice and Accountability after Genocide and Mass Atrocities," in *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, pp. 187–228, at p. 187.

496 Just a note, as mentioned, the study disagrees with Arendt's perspective on Eichmann's role but accepts the phrase "the banality of evil".

tives, situations, or biases. Maintaining objectivity and a universal perspective is crucial, and attempting to accept justifications for such acts contributes to the banality of evil.[497]

In this context, this study raises awareness about two key issues. Firstly, it highlights how individuals like Eichmann were influenced by the anticipated response of nations, as well as historical precedents such as Hitler's mention of the lack of intervention in the Armenian genocide.[498] This suggests that other perpetrators may similarly take into account international reactions or world opinions, as portrayed in the media, when making decisions. The second issue concerns the concept of "the banality of evil", as raised by Hannah Arendt. When the media fails to portray such evil acts as terrorist acts, it exemplifies this effect. Combatting terrorism or preventing genocide under such circumstances becomes increasingly challenging. This raises another issue, as there are terrorists who justify their actions based on their interpretation of religion. *While democracy grants us freedom of religion, religion itself may not always support democracy.* Balancing between them presents a challenge, as ensuring that religion does not exploit democracy to gain control and undermine it is crucial. There must be an objective, universal way to identify moral and ethical standards, with no justification for barbaric acts based on religion or any other reasons. Media outlets, leaders, and society as a whole, should unite in understanding what constitutes an act of terror and work together to combat it, rather than engaging in debates about it.

Scott Straus further discussed the priorities that arise in post-conflict situations, particularly focusing on the variables that significantly impact countries recovering from atrocities. Two notable variables are political power dynamics and security considerations.[499] From this perspective, a dilemma often emerges between the pursuit of stability and accountability, commonly known as the *peace versus justice dilemma*. In this regard, I believe that the decision between peace and other considerations can be complex and situational. A notable example of the peace-versus-justice dilemma is the 1938 Munich Agreement, followed by British Prime Min-

497 For instance, the Hamas attack on an Israeli settlement on October 7, 2023, should be recognized globally as a terrorist act, with media outlets refraining from engaging in debates about it. Accepting justifications for such acts contributes to the banality of evil and shows a lack of moral clarity, making it crucial to maintain objectivity and uphold morals and ethics.

498 See https://genocideeducation.org/background/hitler-and-the-armenian-genocide/.

499 Straus, "Chapter 9: Rebuilding States and Societies after Atrocity" and "Chapter 10: Justice and Accountability after Genocide and Mass Atrocities," in *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, pp. 191–192, 195–196.

ister Neville Chamberlain's "Peace for Our Time" declaration on September 30, 1938, in London. In the Anglo-German Declaration, Chamberlain, having signed a treaty with Hitler, conceded to some of Hitler's demands, allowing Germany to annex the Sudetenland—a region of Czechoslovakia with over three million ethnic Germans. In hindsight, this concession proved a serious miscalculation: Hitler soon made additional demands, gained time to further build his military strength, and ultimately broke the agreements, leading to the escalation toward war.[500] However, it is important to note that each situation is unique, and the outcome of pursuing peace versus other considerations may differ.

The peace versus justice dilemma is profoundly significant, seems to be extending beyond nations to encompass individuals such as the Jews during the Holocaust. This study delved into and elaborated upon the predicament faced by victims in Hungary. It explored the difficulty of confronting the harsh reality, the belief that the trains would lead them to be gassed and perish, and the resistance or escape, which appeared to offer only a slim chance. Additionally, the study examined the Jewish council's dilemma in deciding whether to comply. All these aspects fall under the same category – the peace versus justice dilemma – where the rational choice for each individual may be to resist the Nazis, but compliance offers a brief period of peace that one might wish to prolong.

Straus concludes that Rebuilding states and societies after atrocities is crucial for atrocity prevention. The end goals are clear: establishing a peaceful and secure country with functional infrastructure, a growing economy, social reconciliation, and effective governance. However, the process to achieve these goals is complex and varies in each post-atrocity situation. Factors such as domestic constraints, the interests of those in power, the nature of the preceding conflict, societal and economic conditions, security environment, and external actor involvement all shape the approach. There is no one-size-fits-all formula. Restoring confidence and transforming institutions are important, but the methods will require creativity, leadership, and commitment. To develop an effective reconstruction and stabilization

500 Another example is the case of Israel and Hezbollah, where, in pursuit of peace, Israel allowed Hezbollah to stockpile a significant number of missiles. Furthermore, when a dispute over oil drilling in the water arose in 2022, Israel gave up their claim in favor of Hezbollah's ownership over the territorial waters. In retrospect, it can be argued that Israel should not have allowed Hezbollah to accumulate such a substantial missile arsenal, and perhaps a different approach could have been taken in negotiating the deal. This particular case illustrates that the eventual eruption of war was a likely outcome, and in 2022, Israel chose to avoid it at that cost.

program, both domestic and external actors need to analyze the unique characteristics of each situation. Prioritizing investment in thorough analysis and understanding before allocating extensive resources is crucial. essential.[501] Additionally, tackling the challenge of eliminating or mitigating racial, religious, and other prejudices between different groups must also be addressed.

Overall, the study sheds light on the complexities of historical events, demonstrating the importance of considering multiple factors and actors when examining the Holocaust and the potential for humanitarian actions that could have made a difference. Concluding, I'd like to share a quote from Yehuda Bauer: "The Holocaust can be a precedent, or it can become a warning".[502] It is our responsibility to ensure that it serves as a warning, fostering a collective commitment to justice, empathy, and education, and to do all that we can to prevent such atrocities from happening again.

Figure 23: Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson). Courtesy of The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies – http://www.WymanInstitute.org.

Figure 24: Rudolf Vrba. Credit: The Archive of The State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim.

501 Ibid., p. 204.
502 Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, p. 3.