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# Jewish Students from Transylvania at the Ludovika Military Academy



The Ludovika Military Academy  
(postcard, 1913)

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**T**HE LUDOVIKA Military Academy opened its doors in 1872 in order to train officers for the Honved Army, newly established after the compromise signed in 1867 between Emperor Franz Joseph and the Hungarian political elite. Among the Transylvanian students of the academy, we find representatives of the main ethnic and religious groups in the provinces that make up today's Transylvania, their number strongly varying according to the political and socio-economic status of each ethnic group. In the following paper, we propose a prosopographic study of Jewish students from Transylvania. The analysis of their geographic and social origin, of previous studies, and of the military careers pursued by the graduates make it possible to identify the specific characteristics of this group, its comparison with the whole Honved officer corps, and establish the position of Jewish officers from Transylvania within the framework of the Jewish career officers of the Austro-Hungarian army.

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## Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Army

**T**HE HABSBURG army began to receive Jews after the Edict of Toleration issued by Joseph II in 1788. At first, their access was allowed only in the transport and artillery units, and one year later in the infantry as well. The first Jewish officers were appointed during the Napoleonic Wars, and in 1848 the Jews were present both in the revolutionary camp and in the imperial army. The number of Jewish soldiers increased with the introduction of the compulsory military service in 1868. If in 1872 their number represented 1.5% of the military personnel, in 1902 the percentage grew to 3.9%, at a time when Jews represented about 4.5% of the population of the dual monarchy. After this period, and until the First World War, there is a decline in the number of Jews in the army, a phenomenon that is explained not only by socio-demographic factors, but also by anti-Semitism (individual and local, not institutional).<sup>1</sup>

At the grassroots level, ethnicity and religion did not impede access to officers' training courses or to promotion in military rank. The presence of Jews in the officer corps is often invoked as an argument for the much more liberal character of the Austro-Hungarian army compared to other European armies of the time (in the Prussian army, for example, there were no Jewish officers during peacetime,<sup>2</sup> but they existed in the Italian, French or English armies, the previous statement being possibly valid in relation to the Prussian and Russian armies, which were more or less openly anti-Semitic<sup>3</sup>). Statistical analyses should be done with caution, to highlight regularity rather than exceptions.<sup>4</sup> Official statistics record the nationality and religion of officers only since 1897, but nationality statistics do not treat Jews as a particular ethnicity, their presence being reflected only by religion.<sup>5</sup> In 1898, the percentage of Jewish career officers in the joint army was 1%, and in 1911 it stood at 0.6%.<sup>6</sup>

TABLE 1. RELIGIOUS CONFIGURATION OF THE 1911 AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ARMY (%)

Religion	Population	Troop	Reserve officers	Career officers
Roman Catholics	65.9	66.2	68.2	86
Greek Catholics and Armenian Catholics	10.6	10.9	1.2	1
Greek Orientals and Armenian Orientals	8.7	9.1	1.7	2.7
Lutherans	3.5	4.3	8.6	7.8
Calvinists	5.4	5.5	3	1.8
Unitarians	?	0.2	0.1	–
Other Christians	?	–	0.1	–
Jews	4.4	3	17	0.6
Mohammedans	1.2	0.8	–	–
Without religious confession	?	–	0.1	–

SOURCE: Deák, *Mai presus de naționalism*, 205.

While the percentage of Jewish career officers is below 1% in 1911, we notice the large number of Jews in the reserve officer corps, almost four times bigger than their percentage in the total population. Among the career officers born in Hungary, Tibor Hajdu appreciated the percentage of Jews before 1890 to 2.80% and after 1890 to 0.75% (including here those converted along the way).<sup>7</sup> The same specialist estimated the percentage of career officers of Jewish origin in the Honved corps throughout the dualist period at 1.2% (as no new Honved Jewish officers were appointed in the years prior to World War I), and among the reserve officers born in Hungary the Jews accounted for 26%.<sup>8</sup> The decline in the percentage of Jewish career officers over the two centuries cannot be attributed to the institutional anti-Semitism of the army, since in the auxiliary departments the percentage of Jews among military officers is 12% at the end of the nineteenth century (mostly doctors, veterinarians and fiscal officers).<sup>9</sup> The large number of Jews as reserve officers and among the auxiliary military staff is explained by the high level of schooling of the men from the Jewish community, their percentage being by far the highest in the distribution of denominations among those with higher education.<sup>10</sup>

The dualist period is one of intense social transformations generated by modernization and progress. We witness the consolidation of a strong and dynamic middle class, eager to associate and engage in public life in order to influence the political decision-makers and serve some group interests, its efforts leading to the crystallization of modern civil society.<sup>11</sup> These transformations are also noticeable in the social composition of the officer corps, which slowly but surely loses its noble character, as it visibly starts to include more and more elements of the middle class. The disinterest of the aristocracy and the great nobility in a military career (caused to a great extent by the successive reforms by which the status as an officer was conditioned by the graduation of specialized studies, conducted within rigid military conditions), the numerical increase of the educated class, but also the strict regulation of promotions in rank helped to imprint a “bourgeois” character on the officer corps. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the officer becomes the representative and the yardstick of the middle class, which is self-defined through education, way of life, posture and behavior, through a specific honor code, all of which grant him social prestige. For those with a more modest social background, access to the officer corps equals the access to the “gentleman” category.<sup>12</sup> For the Jews who, through their education and income, belonged mostly to the middle class, but who—because of prejudice—did not enjoy the social prestige they deserved according to their economic position, the accession to the officer status represented a great path towards social integration. That is why the institution of reserve officers, organized in 1868 after a Prussian model, was highly attractive to them.

After 1869, young middle school graduates could become reserve officers after (at least) a year of volunteering in the army and after passing an exam. Then, they could be appointed officers in the reserve corps (the exam itself was not enough, only those who had a job or a social position likely to provide enough income for living an officer-worthy life and those who did not do physical work and were married to a woman who met the same requirements became officers).<sup>13</sup> The one-year volunteering system was introduced to the Honveds only in 1883.

## The Honved Army and the Ludovika Military Academy

**A**FTER THE dualist pact of 1867, the Austro-Hungarian army consisted of three branches: the imperial-royal joint army and the two “national” armies—the Austrian Landwehr and the Hungarian Honvédség. The creation of the Honved corps was an important victory for the Hungarian negotiators of the pact, even if Franz Joseph wanted to make it more a militia than a genuine army, refusing to equip it with artillery and a technical department. The fears expressed by the Austrian side about allowing the establishment of a “national” Hungarian army proved inadequate in the years to come, as the Honveds demonstrated their loyalty and competence in the campaign for Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>14</sup>

An important point of the military reforms of the '60s was the introduction of compulsory military service in 1868. Of all the Hungarian recruits in the monarchy, one fifth was enlisted in the Honved army, but half of the officers in Hungary were still assigned to the joint army. In the first decades of existence, the Honved Army faced a shortage of officers. At first, the Honved officer corps was composed of officers that were former forty-eighters (now commissioned, but only up to the rank of colonel), and of transferred or reactivated officers belonging to the joint army. To deal with the lack of officers, in the '70s, many of the capable Honveds were appointed lieutenants after a course of just three to four months with the Honved Division Commands. In the early years, even at Ludovika, promising recruits sent by their commanders from the regiments were accepted (as is the case of the Jewish Samuel Kohn, sent to Ludovika in 1873, who then became a Christian, changed his name to the Hungarian Hazai, and had an exceptional military career; after the outbreak of the Great War he became minister of defense).<sup>15</sup>

Over time, the Honved officers' instruction reached standards similar to those in the joint army, the admission conditions at the academy and cadet schools were tightened, an age limit was set that prevented talented recruits from gaining access to these institutions, previous military education became a mandatory

condition, etc. During 1881–1884, the gendarmerie was restored within the Honved army, which in terms of organization and personnel training belonged to the Ministry of War, and in terms of use, to the Ministry of the Interior. War Minister Géza Fejérváry turned the Honved battalions into regiments, and extended the training period to two years, from only a few months, thus turning the Honveds into a real army. By the end of the nineteenth century, the training and prestige of the Honved officers had reached the level of their comrades in the joint army, and in 1912 the last major difference between the two armies was canceled by the endowment of the Honveds with their own artillery.<sup>16</sup>

In the continuous training of new officers for the Honved corps, a very important role was given to the Ludovika Military Academy. The idea of setting up a Hungarian upper military school emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century; in the 1808 diet there were numerous donations for this cause, and among the supporters were Emperor Francis I and the Empress Maria Ludovika. In gratitude for the donation of 50,000 forints, it was decided that the future institution would bear her name. After a series of difficulties encountered with the purchase and outfitting of a proper building, the project materialized only in 1872, when Law XVI established the Honved military academy.<sup>17</sup> In the first decade of its operation, Ludovika held training courses for young cadets who chose to become Honved officers (but also for talented recruits sent here by regimental commanders) and training courses for active officers. By Law XXXIV/1882, the training of officers was split into two courses: one for career officers and one for reserve officers. The career officers' course was intended for young people aged 14–16, graduates of at least 4 middle classes, who after 4 years of study were appointed non-commissioned cadet officers and only exceptionally lieutenants. After 1889, the Ludovika graduates were appointed directly to the Honved corps; they were not first enlisted in the joint army and then transferred. In 1890, the course for reserve officers was suspended because it became useless after paragraph 25 of Law XXIII/1890 established that 15% of all volunteers regularly enlisted in one year should be transferred to the Honveds.<sup>18</sup>

Ludovika became a true academy following its reorganization in 1897, when it was decided to accept only students who graduated all the middle school classes. After three years of training, the graduates were appointed lieutenants (those with modest results in the exams became non-commissioned officers). Sopron, the real Honved school, was presently set up, designed as a preparatory institution for the academy (it provided half of those admitted at Ludovika), alongside the cadets schools in Pécs and Oradea (Nagyvárad). Henceforth, some graduates would be assigned to the joint army, especially to the cavalry. The superior preparatory training for officers who wished to be admitted to the Kriegsschule continued to operate.<sup>19</sup>

By law, there were 100 places for new admissions to Ludovika, but after the reduction of the officer corps only 70–80 new students were received.<sup>20</sup> There were state-funded places (25 in number in 1900), places funded by private foundations created for this purpose, and tuition-paying places.<sup>21</sup>

Through the activity of the military academy and the two cadets' schools in Oradea and Pécs, the Honved officer corps continuously increased. In 1910, the number of Honved career officers was 2,800, plus 300 gendarmerie officers. The auxiliary departments included 731 doctors, veterinarians, pharmacists, judges, accountants and other military officials. The number of reserve officers was 5,157 in 1911, 80% of them being lieutenants. Between 1891 and 1914, already 34% of the active Honved officers and 18% of the non-commissioned cadet officers were graduates of the military academy. The percentage of enabled reserves stood at 15%. The analysis of the social composition shows that the Honved officer corps was, like the one in the joint army, an exponent of the middle class. The number of those of aristocratic and noble origin was below 10%, and those coming from the inferior class of peasants and workers barely exceeded 10%. The vast majority of Honved officers were sons of civil servants (notaries, tax inspectors, priests, teachers, railway officials, postmen etc.), military men, merchants, financial workers, people in the liberal professions, etc.<sup>22</sup>

Official statistics do not record the national composition of the Honved corps, except for the nationality data of the Ludovika students, from the two cadets' schools and the Sopron Superior Real School, published in *Statisztikai évkönyv* since 1907. These statistics are, however, unreliable, as they show an overwhelming majority of Hungarians and a very small number of German students, and do not even converge with the statistics on religions. Based on the analysis of the evaluation sheets of 248 randomly selected Honved officers, Tibor Hajdu estimated the percentage of Hungarians at 81.5% and that of Germans at 11.7%, the rest being of Croatian, Serbian, Romanian, Slovak origin, etc. The same sample analyzed from the religious point of view shows that the Roman Catholics were 62.1%, Calvinists 19.4%, Lutherans 13.7%, Unitarians 0.4%, Greek Catholics 1.6%, Orthodox 1.6%, and Jews 1.2%.<sup>23</sup>

In 1906–1909 there is only one Jew listed in the Ludovika students' statistics on religion, and none after this period. This statistic does not indicate those already converted, but if we corroborate it with cadet schools statistics, we can see, with the assumption of the exceptions that strengthen the rule, that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there are no new Jewish career officers in the Honved Army.<sup>24</sup>

## Jewish Students from Transylvania at Ludovika

**B**ETWEEN 1883 and 1918, about 580 students from Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș (from the territories that we now call Transylvania and which, after the First World War, returned to Romania) studied at the Ludovika Military Academy.<sup>25</sup> The institution's records indicate the place of birth, the father's occupation, religion and previous studies, the nationality of the students being deducted on the basis of this information, corroborated with the name. Jews can be easily identified, being 17 in number, which represents 2.93% of all Transylvanian students.

TABLE 2. THE RELIGIOUS CONFIGURATION OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN STUDENTS AT THE LUDOVIKA ACADEMY BETWEEN 1883 AND 1918

Religion	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Roman Catholic	290	50
Reformed (Calvinist)	166	28.62
Evangelical (Lutheran)	37	6.37
Unitarian	18	3.10
Orthodox	18	3.10
Greek Catholic	14	2.41
Jewish	17	2.93
Unknown	20	3.44
TOTAL	580	100

As far as the place of birth is concerned, the students come from all Transylvanian counties, the highest percentage being held by those from the counties of Bihor (Bihar), Arad, Caraș-Severin (Krassó-Szörény) and Timiș (Temes), that is, Banat and Crișana.<sup>26</sup> If we analyze the geographic origin of the 17 Jewish students, we can see that 4 come from Arad County, 4 from Caraș-Severin, 2 from Timiș, 2 from Satu Mare (Szatmár), 2 from Cojocna (Kolozs), and one from Alba de Jos (Alsó-Fehér), Hunedoara (Hunyad), and Turda-Arieș (Torda-Aranyos). Most of them also come from the western parts, the counties of Caraș-Severin and Arad being the place of origin of almost half of them, and only 5 come from historical Transylvania.

By comparing the proportion of Transylvanian Jewish students at the military academy in Budapest with the percentage of Jews in this area, we observe similar values. In 1870 in the provinces that today compose Transylvania the number of Jews was 105,000, representing 2.48% of the population, most of them (58.98% in 1880) being located in Crișana-Maramureș.<sup>27</sup> The Jewish population of Transylvania experienced a spectacular numerical growth between 1870 and 1930, in 1910 it already reached 184,508 (3.49% of the total popula-

tion), a growth that is due, in addition to demographic growth, to the massive immigration before 1914 from Galicia, Bukovina, and the Tsarist Empire. The Jews living there were persecuted, so they continuously emigrated to the “liberal” Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.<sup>28</sup> This demographic growth was not reflected in the Honved officer corps, since in 1910 the military academy and the two cadets schools no longer had any Jewish students.

The social origin of the Transylvanian students shows the general characteristics identified in the case of the Honved officers as a whole, since most of them came from the middle class: civil servants, people in the professions, estate holders, traders, officers.<sup>29</sup> Of the 17 Jewish students, 10 were the sons of merchants and industrialists, 3 the sons of estate holders, and the remaining four were the sons of an entrepreneur, a cashier, a jeweler, and a school principal.

The analysis of pre-admission studies shows that 3 of the 17 students only had a minimum of 4 middle school classes, the others had more advanced studies, as three had attended the law academy, 3 had attended commercial academies, and 3 the polytechnics, while one of them was the graduate of 5 years of medical school. These data seem natural considering the requirements for participation in the one-year volunteering system, but they are also in line with the level of schooling of the Jewish community. In 1910, 11.9% of the Jewish men in Transylvania graduated at least 8 grades (the highest percentage in the statistics by religion on male education level, followed by Roman Catholics and Lutherans, with 6.9 and 6.1 %), and in 1900, 62% of Jews were trained in private-sector jobs recently developed as a result of the modernization process and the free economic market (industry, commerce, banks).<sup>30</sup>

TABLE 3. THE MILITARY CAREER OF THE JEWISH GRADUATES FROM TRANSYLVANIA OF THE LUDOVIKA ACADEMY<sup>a</sup>

Name and surname	Year of birth	Year of graduation	Type of service	Last identified rank	Did he change his name into Hungarian?	Year of retirement
Jakab Liblich [Libick, Liblich, Lieblich]	1862	1885	Reserve	Lieutenant	Yes “Lengyel” <sup>b</sup>	1897
József Tyrman [Tyrmann] <sup>c</sup>	1850	1885	Auxiliary service	1 <sup>st</sup> Class General Staff doctor (equivalent to the rank of colonel)	No	1916
Károly Tyrman [Tyrmann]	1861	1886	Reserve	Lieutenant	No	1896
József Assael	1865	1889	Reserve	Lieutenant	No	1899
Zsigmond Naményi	1866	1891	Active service	Lieutenant-colonel	No	(rank confirmed in 1919)
József Breit	1863	1886	Active service (active reserve)	Lieutenant-general	Yes “Bánlaky”	1919



Name and surname	Year of birth	Year of graduation	Type of service	Last identified rank	Did he change his name into Hungarian?	Year of retirement
Lázár Löbli	1864	1887	Reserve	Lieutenant	No	–
Armin Rosne	1862	1886	Reserve	Lieutenant	No	1909
Albert Klein	1865	1890	Reserve	Lieutenant	Yes "Krassó"	1901
Lázár Weisz	1864	1889	Reserve	Lieutenant	Yes "Verő"	1899
Miksa Rosenwald (Rosenwald)	1865	1889	Reserve	Lieutenant	Yes "Róna"	1904
Ignác Schwarcz (Schwartz, Schwarz)	1861	1889	Reserve	Lieutenant	No	1894
Mór Weisz	1865	1889	Reserve	Lieutenant	No	–
Ignác Kohn	1866	1890	–	–	–	–
Izsák Herkovics Ignác (Herskovics, Herskovits)	1864	1887	Auxiliary service	Administrative first lieutenant	–	1903
Henrik Krausz (Krauss)	1865	1888	–	–	–	–
Miksa Gyula Weil	1866	1890	Reserve	First lieutenant	Yes "Délmár"	–

a. The data on the military career of the Transylvanian Jewish graduates from Ludovika are mainly collected from *Rendeleti Közlöny a Magyar Királyi Honvédség számára*, the official Ministry of Defense newspaper, published weekly since 1874, in order to communicate the changes made to the Honved army personnel and the ordinances and decisions of the ministry. Given the continuous development of the Honved corps and the numerous changes in personnel and regulations, the sheet became too bulky, and at the end of 1893 it was decided to divide it into two publications while retaining the same main title. One had the subtitle *Szabályrendeletek* (Regulation provisions) and contained circulars, decisions, basic rules, notices etc. issued by the ministry. The other had the subtitle *Személyes ügyek* (personnel issues) and contained data on appointments and promotions, transfers, retirements, decorations, redundancies etc. The sheet appeared in this form until 31 October 1918, after which it had successive names, and in 1924 it received the new name of *Honvédségi Közlöny*. See <https://dt.ogyk.hu/hu/gyujtemenyismertetok/jogforrasok/agazati-kozlonyok/item/285-honvedsegi-kozlony>.

b. This name change is mentioned in *Magyar Ujság* 7, 43 (1898): 12.

c. The military doctor József Tyrmann, born in Carei, in 1850, is mentioned among the Ludovika students in 1885, when he was 35. He worked in the joint army, and the details related to his career were found in the newspapers *Budapesti Közlöny* and *Pesti Hírlap*, which regularly published information about the changes in the military personnel.

Analyzing the type of courses followed by the Jewish Transylvanian students from Ludovika, we notice that the vast majority of them attended courses for reserve officers (11 reservists, only two career officers, one of whom was an active reservist), many benefiting from the one-year volunteering system. All 17 began their studies at Ludovika in the 1880s, a period during which the training courses of the future officers at the academy were suspended and the one-year volunteering system was introduced for the Honveds as well. The last

Jewish student graduated in 1891—the only one to follow the four-year course for career officers (between 1887 and 1891). After this date, we no longer find any Transylvanian Jewish student in Ludovika. As we have already seen, between 1907 and 1909 there was only one Jewish student, and after that there were none. We note, however, that between 1884 and 1891, which covered the study years of the 17, only one of them followed courses for career officers, the percentage of 2.93% of the total number of Transylvanian students was due to the young scholars who opted for the status of a reserve officer. The abolition in 1889 of Ludovika's training for reserve officers is one explanation for the disappearance of the Jews from the military academy.

Zsigmond Naményi, born in Arad on 10 October 1866, was admitted to career officers' training courses in 1887, when he was 21, after graduating from 4 gymnasium classes, and was registered as a Honved corporal. He came from a middle class family, as his father was a school principal. In accordance with the regulations in force at Ludovika between 1883 and 1897, after completing the four years of study for career officers, he was appointed in 1891 as a non-commissioned cadet with the 8<sup>th</sup> Honved Infantry Regiment in Lugoj, becoming an officer by advancing to the rank of lieutenant a year later, in 1892, at 26 years of age. Successively transferred to the Honved infantry regiments in Székesfehérvár, Oradea and Nyitra, the beginning of the war found him with the Honved Infantry Regiment in Cluj, having the rank of captain first class. In August 1914 he was promoted to major, and on 1 February 1916, to lieutenant-colonel, being confirmed in this rank in 1919. In Horthy's army we lost track of him.<sup>31</sup>

Of the 17 Jews from Transylvania, graduates of the Ludovika Military Academy, the one who reached the highest rank in the military hierarchy was József Breit. He was born in Lugoj in 1863, and his father was an estate holder. He attended law courses at the University of Sciences in Budapest, then graduated the one-year voluntary course of Ludovika in 1884–1885, receiving the rank of lieutenant in the reserve corps. After a short trial period and after passing the examination for career officers, in 1888 he was appointed lieutenant in the active service. After successfully attending the superior school for officers in Budapest, in 1888–1889, and the Kriegsschule in Vienna between 1889 and 1891, he worked for a while at the Ministry of Defense, from where he was assigned in 1893 to the main headquarters of the 77<sup>th</sup> Honved Infantry Brigade, and the following year he was transferred to the headquarters of the Honved district no. 1 in Budapest, as first lieutenant. In the following years, he worked as a professor in the senior officers' course. Alongside his career as an officer, József Breit built a career as a military historian, and in 1899 his first book was published: *Az egyetemes hadtörténelem vázolata* (Brief military history of the world). In 1902 he received the rank of major, and in 1904 he was appointed commander at the

headquarters of the Honved command district no. 3 of Kassa (Košice). A professor of the training course for Honved officers who sought staff rank, József Breit became a lieutenant-colonel in 1906 and a colonel in 1910. Shortly after the outbreak of World War I, he was promoted to the rank of major-general, being repeatedly decorated and receiving the title of nobility in 1906, with the particle “Doberdói.” In August 1917 he was appointed lieutenant-general, a rank with which he retired on 1 January 1919. In the interwar period, he changed his name to the Hungarian Bánlaky and he devoted all his resources to military history, his most important work being the monumental book in 24 volumes entitled *A magyar nemzet hadtörténelme* (The military history of the Hungarian nation).<sup>32</sup>

Most of the 17 students held the rank of reserve lieutenant,<sup>33</sup> a rank which was undoubtedly desired primarily for the social prestige that came with it, which in the case of Jews was translated into a desire to be assimilated, to confirm the economic position by being accepted in “the good society.” The phenomenon of changing the name into Hungarian, largely present among Jewish officers from Transylvania, graduates of the Ludovika Military Academy (6 out of 17), is explained by the same search for social integration. The name change, coupled with conversion to Catholicism or one of the Reformed religions, mixed marriages,<sup>34</sup> renunciation of the mother tongue, and the adoption of the Hungarian language, were methods widely used by the Jews in Hungary, even though the cost of integration was often the increased sense of alienation and identity crisis. Changing the name into Hungarian as a form of assimilation was a process that began in the 1820s and spread mostly during 1880–1890, reaching the climax in the decades before the First World War. It is estimated that 2,000–3,000 such name changes took place annually and that between 1848 and 1917 about 60,000 Jews opted for Hungarian names.<sup>35</sup>

József Breit changed his name to Hungarian during the interwar period, when anti-Semitism practically became state policy, but the best-known high-ranking officer who chose to demonstrate the adoption of Hungarian identity by changing his name to one with patriotic resonances was Samu Hazai, who became a general and minister of defense during the World War. The example of an officer of Jewish descent who reached the highest positions of a military career cannot counterbalance the small number of Jews accepted in the corps of career officers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jews disappeared from the military academy and from the two Honved cadets schools.<sup>36</sup> In order to explain this phenomenon, it is necessary to consider the ideological climate of the period, without completely eliminating the possibility of a low interest in the Jewish community for a career as an active officer.

**T**HE DUALIST period was an economically prosperous one for the Jews in Hungary, when they effectively contributed to the modernization of Hungarian society, following their civil and political emancipation through Law XVII of 1867. The state considered Jews as Hungarian citizens with full civil and political rights, their only specific identity marker being the Mosaic religion. In 1868–1869 the Jewish community split into two main groups: the Orthodox Jews, devoted to tradition and opposed to any religious modernization, and Jewish neologists, reformists, representatives of the Jewish middle and upper class, open to assimilation in the sense of liberal politics.<sup>37</sup> Emancipation opened the possibility of the active participation of Jews in political life, and in 1869 the first deputies of Jewish origin were elected. Converting or remaining faithful to the Jewish religion, they had to cope with the increasing presence of anti-Semitism on the political stage. The birth of political anti-Semitism in Hungary was symbolically marked by the speech held in the Chamber of Deputies in 1875 by Győző Istóczy, known for his openly anti-Jewish views. However, liberal governments took action to combat anti-Semitism, and the anti-Jewish discourse did not have a significant echo until the Tiszaeszlár affair of 1882.<sup>38</sup> The accusation of ritual murder, the trial that resounded throughout Europe and the acquittal of the defendants generated a strong wave of anti-Semitism. In the summer of 1883 there were anti-Jewish revolts in 83 localities in 31 counties, including the capital, undoubtedly planned and supported by anti-Semitic politicians. In the 1880s, numerous anti-Semitic petitions were discussed in the Chamber of Deputies, submitted by various civil organizations. The “Jewish question” was raised in almost all meetings, and in 1883 the Anti-Semitic Party (Országos Antiszemita Párt) was created, led by the same Győző Istóczy.<sup>39</sup> After this virulent demonstration, political anti-Semitism was held in check until the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but the Tiszaeszlár case brought to light the mentality of the Hungarian society, demonstrating the survival of prejudices and stereotypes in the collective mentality of the common people, justice officials, but also among parliamentarians.

With the dualist compromise, the Jews in Transylvania opted for a unitary institutional organization alongside those in the entire Hungarian part of the monarchy. Emancipation opened for them the possibility of affirmation in all fields (economic, social, cultural etc.), many Jews trying to combat the social stigma by adopting the dominant Hungarian culture and nationality (by 1910, 74% of the Jews in Transylvania spoke Hungarian<sup>40</sup>), but they also had to face the manifestations of modern anti-Semitism. Even though the state policy was a liberal one, and this vision was in theory behind the organization of all its institutions, the Jews’ access to the local county administration was restricted (as they were not accepted in the nobles’ clubs), and the restrictions gradually extended to other areas where society felt threatened by the “Jewish competition.”<sup>41</sup>

The Austro-Hungarian army and the Honved corps as a part of it declared their liberal attitude concerning the nationality and religion of the officers, setting previous education (especially knowledge of the official language of the army) and social origin (as a guarantee of the possibility of maintaining a living standard proper for an officer) as admission requirements. These conditions were particularly valid for the corps of career officers, an elite institution that placed great emphasis on social prestige. Although in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this body gradually lost its aristocratic character and became associated with the middle class, the presence of officers of Jewish origin is modest, despite the examples of Jewish officers holding the highest military ranks. Initially accepted in the corps of Honved career officers in a larger number (in the early decades, when the Honved army faced a lack of officers), and then in smaller numbers, the Jews were present in a proportion that exceeded their share of the total population among the reserve officers and in the auxiliary branches of the army (which did not enjoy the same prestige, neither in the army, nor in society). Their consistent presence in these positions is justified by the high educational level of the Jewish community, alongside their desire to be assimilated.

The Jewish students from Transylvania at the Ludovika Academy can be generally integrated into the profile of the Jewish officers of the Honved army. Their disappearance from this institution after 1891 is explained by the abolition of the course for reserve officers, possibly in light of the limited appeal of a military career among the middle and upper class Jews, but also by the manifestations of modern anti-Semitism in Hungarian society.



## Notes

1. István Deák, *Mai presus de naționalism: O istorie politică și socială a corpului de ofițeri habsburgici, 1848–1918*, transl. Eugenia Bîrlea, rev. by Ela Cosma, afterword by Liviu Maior (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2009), 207–209.
2. *Ibid.*, 110.
3. Tibor Hajdu, *Tisztikar és középosztály 1850–1914: Ferenc József magyar tisztjei* (Budapest: História. MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1999), 183.
4. Tibor Hajdu, “A tisztikar helye a polgárosuló Magyarország társadalmában (1867–1944),” in *Zsidóság—tradicionalitás és modernitás: Tisztelgő kötet Karády Viktor 75. születésnapja alkalmából*, eds. Zsuzsanna Hanna Biró and Péter Tibor Nagy (Budapest: Wesley János Lelkészképző Főiskola, 2012), 163–174.
5. Statistics according to religion are safer than those according to nationality, as nationality is based on the language that the subject claims to use most frequently or

speaks best, and in the joint army non-German officers tended to designate German, while for the Honveds, non-Hungarian officers often designated Hungarian.

6. Hajdu, *Tisztikar*, 180–181.
7. Hajdu, “A tisztikar helye,” 167.
8. *Ibid.*, 168.
9. *Ibid.*
10. See Viktor Karády, *Allogén elitek a modern magyar nemzetállamban: Történelmi-szociológiai tanulmányok* (Budapest: Wesley János Lelkészképző Főiskola, 2012), 132–144.
11. See Gary B. Cohen, “Nationalist Politics and the Dynamic of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914,” *Central European History* 40, 2 (2007): 241–278.
12. Hajdu, *Tisztikar*, 227–254.
13. Hajdu, “A tisztikar helye,” 169–170.
14. Hajdu, *Tisztikar*, 255–288.
15. Tibor Hajdu, “Transformations of the Officer Corps in Hungary (1900–1940),” *Historical Social Research* 33, 2 (124) (2008): 214–220.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *A M. Kir. Honvéd Ludovika Akadémia* (Budapest, 1900), 4–5.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Hajdu, *Tisztikar*, 255–288.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *A M. Kir. Honvéd Ludovika Akadémia*, 34–37. Here is a list of the private foundations offering study scholarships to the military academy.
22. Hajdu, *Tisztikar*, 255–288.
23. *Ibid.*, 278–279.
24. *Ibid.*, 277.
25. These Transylvanian students were identified by Cornel Sigmirean on the basis of the academy’s records, and their list was published in Cornel Sigmirean, *Elevii din Transilvania la Academia Militară de Honvezi “Ludovika” din Budapesta* (Sibiu: Astra Museum, 2013). The records for the period 1872–1882 were not preserved.
26. *Ibid.*, 28–29.
27. Ioan Bolovan, “Evreii din Transilvania între 1870–1930: Contribuții demografice,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie G. Bariț din Cluj-Napoca: Series Historica* 44 (2005): 539–550.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Sigmirean, 30–31.
30. Victor Karády, “Denominational Inequalities of Elite Training in Transylvania during the Dual Monarchy,” in *Cultural Dimensions of Elite Formation in Transylvania (1770–1950)*, eds. Victor Karády and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală, 2008), 65–94.
31. Biographical data collected from *Rendeleiti Közlöny* and *Magyar Királyi Honvédség számára*. For the transformations that took place in the Honved officer corps in the interwar period, see Hajdu, “Transformation of the Officer Corps.”
32. Besides *Rendeleiti Közlöny a Magyar Királyi Honvédség számára*, for József Breit’s military career we also used *Révai nagy lexikona: Az ismeretek enciklopédiája* (Budapest:

- Révai, 1911–1935), 717 and *Magyarország az első világháborúban: Lexikon A–Zs*, eds. Jolán Szijj and István Ravasz (Budapest: Petit Real, 2000), 86.
33. Two of the students were not ranked when they graduated; it is possible that they did not pass the exam at the end of the course.
  34. Mixed marriages between Christians and Jews were allowed by law starting only from 1895.
  35. Tibor Frank, “Asszimiláció és konverzió a 19. század végi Közép-Európában,” in *Zsidóság—tradicionalitás és modernitás*, 21–30.
  36. Statistics do not show the number of converted students of Jewish origin, but it is known for certain that these schools no longer had students who assumed their Jewish origin.
  37. Miklós Konrád, “Jews and politics in Hungary in the Dualist Era, 1867–1914,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 39, 2 (August 2009): 167–186.
  38. See György Kövér, *A tiszaezslári dráma: társadalomtörténeti látószögek* (Budapest: Osiris, 2011).
  39. Árpád Welker, “Between emancipation and anti-Semitism: Jewish presence in parliamentary politics in Hungary 1867–1884,” *Jewish Studies at the Central European University: Public Lectures 2, 1999–2001*, eds. András Kovács and Eszter Andor (Budapest: Central European University, 2002), [http://web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies/pdf/02\\_welker.pdf](http://web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies/pdf/02_welker.pdf).
  40. Karady, “Denominational Inequalities,” 68.
  41. Ladislau Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania: Destin istoric/The Jews of Transylvania: A Historical Destiny*, transl. Simona Fărcașan (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul Cultural Român, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2004), 102–104.

## Abstract

### Jewish Students from Transylvania at the Ludovika Military Academy

Starting with 1872, Ludovika Military Academy (Magyar Királyi Honvéd Ludovika Akadémia, Ludoviceum, Ludovika-Akademie) was one of the most prestigious institutions that was dedicated to the preparation of officers for the Honved army. In the dualist period, its courses were followed by students coming from historical Transylvania and from the Western provinces, which belonged to Romania after the treaties signed after World War I. Among these students, who in the period 1883–1918 numbered about 580, 17 belonged to the Mosaic religion. Prosopographic studies show that they fit into the socio-economic profile of the Honved officer corps, but they also show the general characteristics of the military career chosen by the Jewish officers in the Austro-Hungarian army, given the small number of career officers and the large number of the reserve contingent. After 1891, no Jewish student from Transylvania was registered at Ludovika, among the causes of this disappearance being the abolition of the courses for reserve officers, but also the manifestation of modern anti-Semitism in Hungarian society.

## Keywords

Habsburg army, Honved army, Jewish officers, Transylvania, career officers, reserve officers, Ludovika Military Academy