

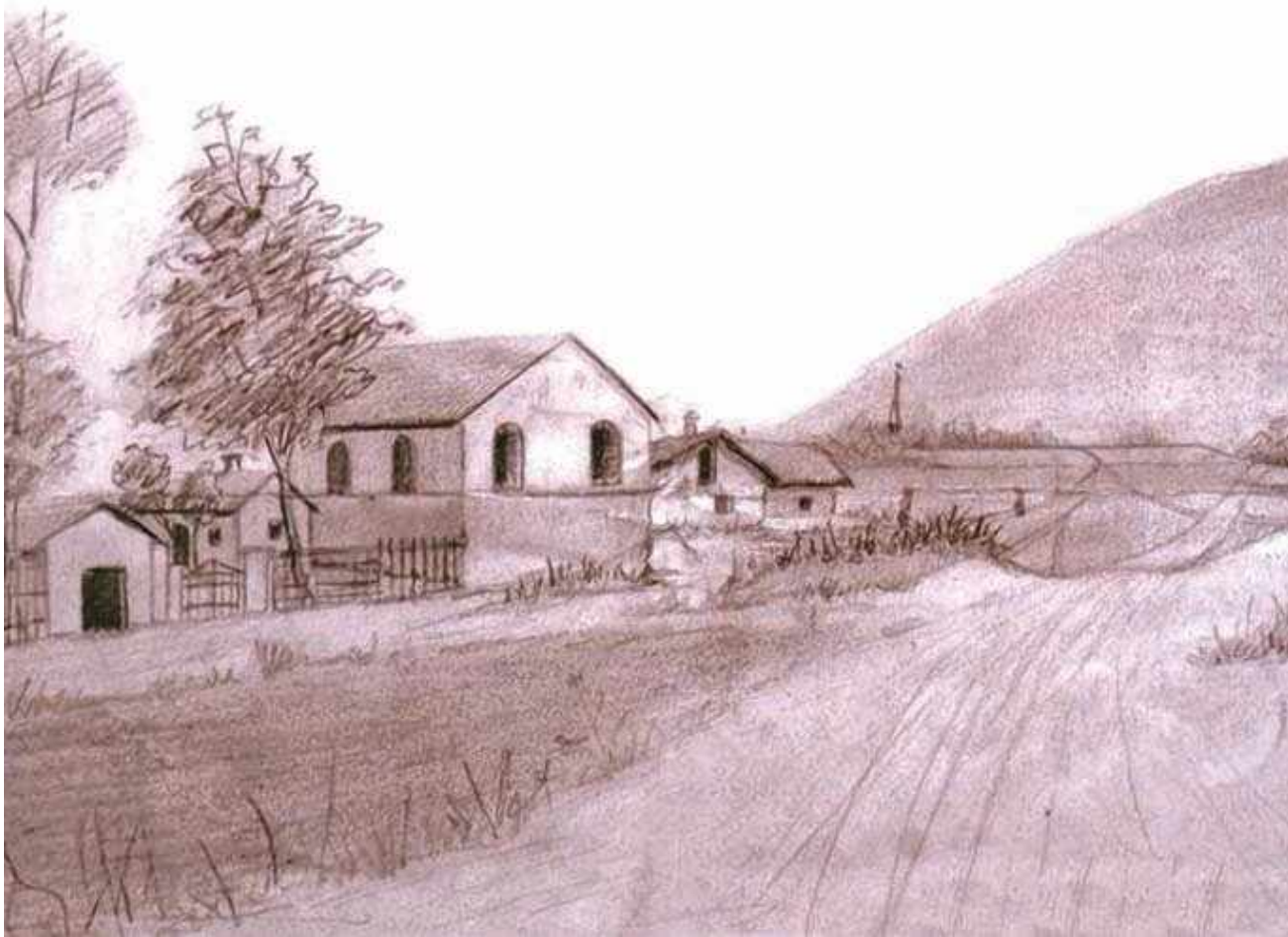
Resurfacing of the Past: Modern Blood libel

Austro-Hungary



- Conglomerate of countries under Habsburg rule
- East-West slope of backwardness
- Political anti-Semitism in Austria
- Hungarians and Jews (alliance)
- Ressentiment of the traditional classes
- 1882 Blood libel case
- Modern propaganda and medieval superstitions

Tiszaeszlár



Synagogue



Eszter Solymosy



Witnesses



Legacy



Eszter Solymosi disappears

- On April 1, 1882, Eszter Solymosi, a 14-year-old Christian peasant girl who was a servant in the home of András Huri in Tiszaeszlár a Hungarian village situated on the Tisza river, was sent on an errand from which she did not return. After a fruitless search, a rumor was circulated that the girl had become a victim of Jewish religious fanaticism. Hungarian agitators, whose leaders, Géza Ónody, representative of Tiszaeszlár in the Hungarian Parliament, and Győző Istóczy, MP, proposed the expulsion of the Jews in the House of Deputies, excited the public against the local Jews, resulting in a number of violent acts and pogroms.
- They spread the charge that the Jews killed the girl in order to use her blood at the approaching Passover (April 4).
- On May 4 her mother accused the Jews before the local judge of having murdered her daughter, and urged him to make an investigation.

Examiner József Bary

- On May 19 the county court of Nyíregyháza sent the notary József Bary to act as examining judge at Tiszaeszlár. After having placed the suspected Jews under police surveillance, Bary met the five-year-old son of the synagogue sexton József Scharf, Samuel, to begin an inquiry. Earlier, by means of monetary presents and pieces of sugar, some women and girls got Samuel to say that József Scharf called Eszter into his house, and the slaughterer ("shoḥeṭ") cut off her head.
- In Bary's interview, the boy stated that in the presence of his father and other men the slaughterer had made an incision in the girl's neck, and he and his brother Móric had received the blood in a plate. The father and Móric (who was nearly 14 years old) and the other suspected persons denied any knowledge of the disappearance of the girl and of her conjectured murder.
- On May 19 Scharf and his wife were arrested; Móric repeated his statement and said in addition he had not known anything about the missing girl, not even from hearsay. On the evening of that day Móric was given to Recsky, the commissar of safety, who took him to his country house in Tiszanagyfalu, where the court clerk, Péczely, received orders to watch over the boy's safety. Péczely, a large man who had served twelve years in jail for murder, apparently connived with Recsky to make Móric the instrument of a classic blood accusation.

Forced confession

- Intimidated, Moricz confessed that after the Sabbath morning service his father called Eszter to his house under the pretext of requiring her to remove some candlesticks (an act forbidden to Jews on Saturdays); that a Jewish beggar, **Hermann Wollner**, who lodged with them, had led the girl to the vestibule of the synagogue and attacked her; and, after having undressed her, two slaughterers, **Ábrahám Buxbaum** and **Leopold Braun**, had held her while another slaughterer, **Salamon Schwarz**, incised her neck with a large knife and emptied the blood into a pot. These three men, applicants for the vacant position of preceptor and shoḥet, came to Tiszaeszlár to officiate on that particular Sabbath, and had, as the boy said, remained in the synagogue after morning service.
- According to his confession, Móric observed through the keyhole of the synagogue door. During the 45 minutes he stood on watch, he saw after the operation a rag was tied around the neck of the girl and her body dressed again, in the presence of **Sámuel Lustig**, **Ábrahám Braun**, **Lázár Weisstein**, and **Adolf Jünger**.
- Twelve Jews were arrested on suspicion, and Móric Scharf was given in charge of the jailer.

The corpse

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- On June 18 a body of a 14-year-old girl was drawn out of the river Tisza near the village of Dada, and many recognized it as Eszter Solymosi. Her mother, however, emphatically denied it was Eszter's corpse, although she afterward identified the clothes in which the body was found as those of her daughter.
- A committee of experts, two physicians and one surgeon, declared the corpse was of a girl 18 to 20 years of age who had met with her death eight or ten days before. It was then buried in the Catholic cemetery of Tiszaeszlár.
- The anti-Semitic agitators, among whom was the Catholic priest of the town, insinuated the body was smuggled in by the Jews and clothed in the garments of Eszter Solymosi in order to conceal the crime of ritual murder. Several of the craftsmen who found the body were induced by promises, threats, and cruel treatment to revoke their former testimony and to declare they brought the body to the river and an unknown Jewess had furnished them with the clothes in which they dressed it. **New arrests** were made; the affair, which had now become a *cause célèbre*, was considerably protracted.

The trial

- On July 29 1882 formal accusations were made against fifteen persons
- The accused were defended by Károly Eötvös, journalist and member of the House of Deputies,
- On June 17, 1883, the last act in this affair began before the court of Nyíregyháza. Although the testimony of Móric Scharf was the only basis of the accusation, the court held thirty sessions to examine the case in all its details, and many witnesses were heard. The glaring contradictions of the boy despite the careful training he received, and the falsity of his accusation as exposed by a local inspection of the alleged scene of the murder made by the court in Tiszaeszlár on July 16, resulted in the unanimous acquittal of the accused (August 3).

Móricz

- The youthful accuser whom the maneuvers of the accusers had alienated from his faith and his coreligionists, and whose filial feelings they had suppressed, returned to his parents, who gladly received him.
- Móricz fully redeemed his past and supported his father until his father's death in 1905.

Dissatisfaction

- The verdict of acquittal and the deliverance of the prisoners, most of whom languished in prison for 15 months, were the signal for uprisings in [Pozsony](#), [Budapest](#), and other parts of [Hungary](#). The spectators who thronged the court-house during the sessions, and among whom Onody, the representative of Tiszaeszlár in the House of Deputies, was most conspicuous, conducted themselves scandalously during the proceedings: they insulted the prisoners, threatened the witnesses and lawyers for the defense.

Right-wing legacy



- The Right Wing Party uses the case in contemporary Hungary to incite antisemitism.
- Eszter's grave has become the site of antisemitic pilgrimage.
- In 2012 a Right Wing MP commemorated in the Parliament the centenary of the case