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## Call for Papers: Camps - A Global Phenomenon from a European Perspective

Conference in Budapest, October 2027

Conference Call for The European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of the Secret Police Files

The Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security is organizing a two-day international conference in Budapest in October 2027. The working title of the conference is 'Camps: A Global Phenomenon from a European Perspective.'

The conference aims to present key aspects of the history and operation of various camps and camp systems that existed between the end of World War I and the systemic changes in Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union in a comparative manner. These camps were mainly isolated, circumscribed sites with fixed structures designed to incarcerate civilians. The (mass) isolation and confinement of states' and regimes' enemies, as well as groups deemed dangerous for political reasons, is not a modern European phenomenon. However, it became standard practice under various power systems across the continent and beyond during the 20th century. Similar in certain respects and in their operation yet established for different purposes and of varying types, the camps took their most drastic form in totalitarian dictatorships. The camp systems that emerged from these dictatorships had a decisive impact on the 20th century—politically, socially, and psychologically. Zygmunt Bauman calls the 20th century 'the century of camps', while certain camp systems have become the defining symbols of humankind's lowest point and basest act. This conference aims to provide an overview of the most important subtypes of camps and camp systems (e.g., concentration camps, internment camps, and forced labor camps) through presentations by leading experts in the field and to facilitate global discourse.

The conference consists of five thematic panels featuring a total of 20 presenters and a keynote speaker. Presenters are selected by the ÁBTL on an invitation-only basis, without an open call. The first panel focuses on internment camps between the two world wars. The second panel examines the system and operation of Nazi concentration camps. The third session will examine the operation of displaced persons (DP) camps after World War II. The fourth panel discusses the GULAG camp system and its operation in the Soviet Union. The fifth, largers panel will examine internment and forced labor camps established in communist Eastern Europe after

WWII. For this last session, eight invited speakers will give academic presentations providing an overview on the main issues and characteristics regarding internment and forced labor camps in each communist countries. These countries are: the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania.

We hereby ask each of the eight member institutions of the European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of Secret Police Files to delegate one presenter, who is an academically recognized expert on the topic, to the fifth panel of the conference. If this poses a problem, we ask our partner institutions to leverage their academic networks to identify a suitable speaker.

The official language of the conference is English.

The ÁBTL plans to publish an edited volume based on the conference presentations in 2028.

Thank you for your partnership and support.

The conference is organized by András Szécsényi PhD, a research fellow at ÁBTL, who also serves as ÁBTL's official delegate to the Network. Please contact him regarding any matters related to the conference. Contact: [szecsényi.andras@abtl.hu](mailto:szecsényi.andras@abtl.hu)

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