

Komoly, Otto

(also known as Nathan Kahn; 1892--1945), A Zionist leader and one of the heads of the Relief and Rescue Committee of Budapest.

In late 1941 Komoly joined the activities of Rezso (Rudolf) Kasztner, who was providing assistance for Jewish refugees in Hungary. In early 1943 Komoly and Kasztner officially established the Relief and Rescue Committee of Budapest. One of the committee's early achievements was the smuggling of over 1,000 Polish Jews into Hungary. In the spring of 1943 the committee began sending emissaries to Poland to search for any surviving Jews. Those that were found were smuggled into Hungary.

Germany invaded Hungary in March 1944. At that point, Komoly concentrated on trying to convince the more liberal Hungarian authorities to protect Hungary's Jews from the Nazis. He also participated in various negotiations with the Germans regarding the exchange of Jewish lives for money or goods. In late summer 1944 Komoly became the head of an International Red Cross department in charge of helping Jewish children (see also red cross, international). He began organizing safe houses for children, accelerating his efforts after the brutal and anti-Semitic Arrow Cross Party took over the government in October. In retaliation for these rescue activities, Komoly was executed by the Arrow Cross right before the Soviet army arrived in Budapest.