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7 PM, Sunday, April 14, Palace

Hungary



The Package Tour

(Tarsasutazas)

1984. Color. 75 min.

In Hungarian, with English subtitles

Director, Gyula Gazdag; Photography, Elemer Ragalyi; Print Source: Hungarofilm, Budapest, V., Bathori utca 10

The Package Tour, a documentary by director Gyula Gazdag (whose updated version of Balzac's "Lost Illusions" was included in the SFIFF's "New Hungarian Cinema" Series in November 1983) follows a group of mainly elderly Hungarian Jews on a pilgrimage to the concentration camp (now a tourist attraction) to which they were deported in 1944. Made with evident tenderness and respect, *The Package Tour* is filled with unsettling incidents: As the travelers re-enter Auschwitz, the expressions on their faces impossible to describe, a Polish guide insists on addressing them in German, and for a second they're turned into obedient tourists or worse. Later, as if in a nightmare, an elderly woman falls into a trench, seriously injuring herself. The film includes the revelation that there were gas chambers in Hungary ("By the time we got to Auschwitz we were prepared for everything," one survivor says), as well as intimations of lingering anti-Semitism. Its haunting final revelation concerns the child of two survivors who takes the trip but refuses to let herself be photographed; she's afraid her schoolmates will see the finished film and reject her as a Jew.

—J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*

(Additional screening 3:30 PM, Sunday, April 21, Archive)

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