

Summary

Our Trianon issue is published with a delay, and hence amidst an outburst of intense emotion. For Hungarian Jews, Trianon has represented and continues to represent a two-fold twist of the knife in the heart. A one-fold twist—shared with any other Hungarian—would even be in order, seeing that coming to terms with the collapse of a world order is akin to being the victim of an earthquake or of other natural disasters. Suddenly finding themselves the very cause of this disaster—as the Horthy regime, heading towards the disaster of the (Hungarian) Holocaust, fabricated this suicidal consciousness and mythology—is, however, an essentially distorted grimace-cum-injustice of history that had eventually given rise to the process whereby Hungarian Jews were meant to wither away from this ‘landscape’.

This doubly sad centenary happened to fall in the midst (?) of the Corona virus pandemic, which not only paralysed our traditional intellectual progress but also recalibrated the meaning of tragedies such as Trianon. In this context, it is not only the fate of individual countries and regions that is at stake, but also that of the entire globe. (Besides, this crisis has been heightened by this year’s excessive temperatures and floods, contributing to an amplified stereo ‘experience’.)

All being well, we can publish this issue on the brink of the fourth wave and will be able to share it with you during the book fair held between 2–5 September, with the aim to celebrate such a face-to-face occasion rather than routinely tick off yet another virtual Zoom event.

János Kőbányai’s ‘Sentimental Journey to Trianon’ is a fusion between autobiographical memoir spanning well over a century and literary essay, weaved along the narrative thread that the writer speaks and writes in Hungarian and is called Kőbányai, as a result of a Southern Hungarian merchant’s decision over a hundred years ago not to tolerate his grandchildren missing out on Hungarian education. This contribution analyses the consequences of this decision from a family perspective, before moving on to its broader impact upon the Hungarian Jewry as a whole.

In this issue we are also aiming to evoke, once more, a major figure in Hungarian Jewish literature, Avigdor Hameiri, whose life and work was impacted by Trianon and the prophetic anticipation of its consequences. Last year, we would have marked 130 years from his birth and 50 years from his death. By the end of this year, Múlt és Jövő publishing house will bring out his captivity novel entitled *A Pokol legmélyén (Hell on Earth)*, a sequel to *A nagy őrület (The Great Madness)*. The book’s informative essay-style afterword was penned by Hebrew translator Zsombor Hunyadi, and by publishing it, we are hoping to generate added interest in Hameiri’s work, which is not only a first-hand experience of the First World War but also a portrayal of the kind of ‘hell’ that led to the apocalypse of the Second World War. In this sense, we recommend the book’s last chapter included in this issue, dedicated to the aftermath of the First World War and outlining the subsequent realignment of great powers.

János Gyurgyák’s study examines the deepest and most sensitive aspects of the relationship between Hungarian Jews and majority Hungarians via the figure, career and views of Endre Ady and his Jewish companions, be they friends, lovers, aids or managers, together with the prophetic conclusions drawn from these connections. Erzsébet Schiller is offering a commentary on the Siberian prison-related correspondence of Hugó Gellért (the lesser-known brother of *Nyugat* editor Oszkár Gellért, himself a contributor to the modernist magazine). These letters shed light on the hopes, plans and ideals of those returning to a changed Hungary in the wake of the agonies of war and captivity. Imre Goldstein writes his poetry in Hungarian and his fiction in English, and in his historical novel translated from the English we encounter Avigdor Hameiri (and the painter Dávid Jándi) as actual protagonists. The study ‘The Jewish National Movement in the Life of the West-Transdanubian Jewry, 1904–1919’ by Levente Olosz provides an introduction to the Transdanubian Zionist movement, based on thorough archival research. Olosz traces a historical trajectory up until the emergence of a possibility for genuine choice as a result of the Balfour Declaration, and draws attention to the fact that the anti-Semitic tendencies surfacing in the wake of Trianon were instrumental in stimulating not only voting fervour but also avid debates among Hungarian Jews. Endre Bakó’s study offers a literary portrait of forgotten Jewish poet András Arató—a Transylvanian author who opted for Hungarianness through his entire body of work, despite the lack of reciprocation. Lujza O. Vasvári situates Kinga Király’s cookery book, based on recipes collected

from internationally famous Jewish survivors, in a fresh transnational context.

Károly Bárd's study examines the Auschwitz trials in a legal perspective doubled by insight into the role of these events in former West German memory politics, and into the impact of these legal procedures on 'collective memory' and trauma therapy. Balázs Györe's poems evoke our contemporary Covid era and, conversely, address his generation's mournful sliding into another realm of remembrance. Lastly, our regular 'Observer' column moves under the editorship of Ágnes Huszár, after a decade of dedicated work by Eszter Dallos (thank you Eszter!).