

Summary

In our current issue, the trauma of the Holocaust is once again brought to the forefront, along with its doubts, from various new perspectives. This discussion is not prompted by the approaching 80th anniversary but rather by the passage of historical time and the departure of survivors, imposing a heavier burden on the second and third generations. The question is not so much about responsibility but rather about whether Hungarian Jewish history can continue to exist. The scandals of the so-called “Jewish churches” and the strong demand for Horthy’s rehabilitation on the other side raise the question loudly: Does our presence here have a purpose, meaning, and a future?

Leslie Morris, a Germanist professor at an American university, discovered her Jewish, specifically Hungarian Jewish, roots after her mother’s death. Her autobiographical essay demonstrates that the trauma of the Holocaust cannot be eradicated even in a new homeland with a new identity, even when denying the past. Laura Cwiertnia’s investigative essay presents the life of a Nazi young girl from the perspective of the perpetrator, showing the traces left by her past actions. (A special thanks goes to János Weiss for discovering and translating the essay.) Louise O. Vasvári’s study titled “Frank Erzsébet, who wrote a camp diary in the style of Arany János” once again explores the female aspect of the Holocaust and analyzes it within a family history that meticulously depicts the prelude to the Holocaust and the subsequent planetary homelessness.

Recently, László Bernát Veszprémy’s book, “Tanácstalanság, A zsidó vezetés Magyarországon és a Holokauszt, 1944–1945” (Bereft of Council. The Jewish Leadership in Hungary and the Holocaust, 1944–1945) was published. The author thoroughly examines the previously unexplored activities of the Jewish Councils in Budapest and the countryside, shedding light on the aftermath of their controversial role. He elaborates on the application of the German know-how in Hungary, where Jews, victims themselves, were employed in the destruction of the Jews. As Kőbányai János states in his introductory essay titled “Key Figures and/or Dramatic Heroes of the ‘Great Tilling’ Tragedy,” this role illuminates entirely new, deeper, and more multifaceted origins of the Hungarian Holocaust. Therefore, Veszprémy’s book is of exceptional importance and is recommended not only to scholars of historiography.

Originally, our late editor and friend, György Haraszti, was supposed to write a review of this exceptional book for *Múlt és Jövő*. Only an email remained of this plan, which, however, speaks volumes in itself. Instead, two historians, representing different generations and viewpoints, took up the task. Géza Jeszenszky wrote about Veszprémy’s book with the title “A méltatlanul elmarasztalt intézmény” (An Unjustly Condemned Institution of the Hungarian Holocaust), while Levente Olosz titled his piece „Tanácstalanság vagy határozottság” (Bereft of Certainty or Bereft of Doubt?) both discussing the book within the context of their own research. The chief editor added an introduction to emphasize that *Múlt és Jövő* doesn’t necessarily align with the opinions expressed but is open to discourse, which has been lacking in the public sphere so far.

László Bernát Veszprémy’s portrait of “A Modern Orthodox Human Rights Champion” („Egy modern ortodox jogvédő, Reiner Imre (1885–1963)”) and Reiner’s diligently researched confession in the Eichmann trial, left unused there, enrich the ongoing discourse with new perspectives and hopefully stimulates further discussion.

Béla Bodó reviews extensively the autobiography of István Deák (who passed away recently) in which the Holocaust plays a significant role. Ágnes Huszár provides reviews of books by female Holocaust survivors in her reading diary. György Csepeli analyzes two exhibitions commemorating Jewish communities during the Holocaust, in Vác and Újpest.

Ambrus Miskolczy’s study, “Kérdések és válaszok a romániai zsidóság két világháború között történetéből,” (Questions and Answers About the Interwar Life of Romanian Jews presents the pre-Holocaust times in neighboring Romania. Miklós Konrád’s study, “A magyarországi zsidó helytörténet írás,” (Hungarian Jewish Local History. An Overview and a Wish List) examines the service provided by local history written mainly by rabbis of individual communities in summarizing the grand narratives. János Weiss’s essay recommends Franz Rosenzweig’s philosophical work “A megváltás csillaga” (The Star of Redemption), which has recently been published in Hungarian. Gergely Bikácsy reviews the diaries of the great Hungarian novelist, Sándor Márai’s wife. Studies, essays, reviews.... One can hardly find any literary pieces in this issue. This is also so typical of the current state of Hungarian Jewry. (A journal can only publish what its authors write – which is their affair, their identity.) Alongside the poems of Ákos Szilágyi who has been our author right from the beginnings, the poems of a new young poet, Károly Schön, are introduced. Prior to going to press, Tamás Féner’s revelatory photo exhibition was opened, enriching our issue for the year 5784 of the Jewish calendar with his photos that resemble paintings.