

## SUMMARY

2016/5777, Budapest. On the eve of Simchat Torah six torah scrolls caught fire in suburban synagogue in Zugl6. The investigation of the police ruled out the possibility of arson. If this was an "accident," its message and timing is even more terrible, because it is impossible to discount the threatening symbolism of the message. (Even in its everyday implication, the event reflects badly on official Jewish leaders, who allowed the condition of the synagogue to deteriorate and its rotted electrical outlets to cause such irreparable damage. But precisely on this day?)

The funeral speech of Chief Rabbi Péter Kardos (the fire was in his synagogue) and the article and photo report of György Erdei-Brüll discuss the meaning of this exceptional event, which unfortunately failed to provoke noticeable catharsis either in the ranks of Hungarians or Hungarian Jews.

One of the great literary discoveries of recent years has been Sándor Márai's book, *I Wanted to Remain Silent*, which represents an exceptionally honest stock taking of Hungary's history between 1938 and 1948. Géza D. Hegedűs presents an abridged version of this book in the form of a monodrama. (In our view, every Hungarian citizen, especially students, should attend this performance.) Ágnes Heller writes about the exceptionally suggestive performance. (She has already reviewed Márai's outstanding work in her *Reader's Diary*.) Katalin Dorogi's interview with the actor interpreting the work provides insights into the background of the performance, as well as into the impact of Jews in general, and Jewish colleagues and literature in particular, on the life of the actor since childhood. (His other show presents a selection from *Two Centuries of Hungarian Jewish Poetry*.)

Our year-end number continues to memorialize the sad losses of this terrible year. We remember Simon Perez, the last of the founders of Israel, with a chapter from his book, *Ben Gurion* and two interviews, which János Kőbányai made with him in 1995 and 1999. The memorial for György Márkus is presented by the two remaining members of the Budapest School, Ágnes Heller and Mihály Vajda, and by the younger Lukács scholar, János Weiss, who provides an overview of Márkus's life work. Our Hollywood reporter Tom Teicholz summarizes the career of the singer-poet Leonard Cohen, who closed his life with a remarkable album, "You Want it Darker," completed immediately before his death.

The dedication of the new MTK stadium (Hidegkuti Nándor) may be a novelty, but it is also a source of memories. For this old-new place brings back memories mostly of those who have not lived to see this day; all of those who once cheered at the Hungaria Street stadium. What would they say about this new, twenty-first century stadium? These are the questions of Ferenc Molát, spoken at the memorial for György Hidvégi, the founding member of the Circle of MTK Fans and Friends, who died just a few days before the opening match in the new stadium. Tamás Deutsch, the president of the club, evokes the history of the club and also his father's memory, as does his generational counterpart, Viktor Orbán. In his speech, the Hungarian Prime Minister emphasized the contribution of Hungarian Jewry to Hungarian culture, which includes the world of sport as well. At the same time, he also made reference to the tragic fate of Hungarian Jewry. (The text of this speech is only available in our journal. Its references to Jewry only appeared in the right-wing press. The left-wing media only considered worthy of mention the whistles provoked by the speech. It is not our job to pronounce judgment; we consider our readers grown-up people. But we do intend to record the traces of Hungarian and Hungarian-Jewish relations on the hard disc of history.) János Kőbányai's short story and his article about the role of Gábor Várszegi, are both republications from 1979 and 1999. They shed light on the emotional and sociological background of the MTK phenomenon. The essay by Judit Frigyesi is significantly more than a book review of András Forgách's novel, *No Living Book Remains*. The novel comes to term with the informer past of the author's beloved mother. With empathy and pain, Frigyesi provides a panorama of the Budapest Jewish intelligentsia of the Kádár era.

Zoltán Rockenbauer analyzes the work of László Valkó, the outstanding painter from Pécs, providing in the process a fleeing insight into the history of *Múlt és Jövő* as well. On the occasion of the December opening of Lili Ország's exhibition at the National Gallery, Mária Árvai presents a pragmatic exposure of the painter's Tel-Aviv exhibition, which took place in the midst of the break in diplomatic relations between Israel and the Kádár regime. The trip to Israel had an inspiring impact on the aesthetic development of the painter.

Based on photographic records, Orsolya Péntek's recounts the work of Karl Lutz, the Swiss diplomat, who, similar to Raoul Wallenberg, saved the lives of many Budapest Jews. More specifically, she uses images to analyze the terrible year of 1944, whose aesthetic beauty and cheer adds a new dimension to the face of Evil. As was the case with our previous number, so now we close with an important scholarly study, a tradition we would like to introduce for the future. This time, we publish Louise O. Vasvári's, "Gender and Memory in Memoirs about Nutrition during and after the Holocaust". This is an analysis of the Holocaust from an entirely different perspective, which records the apocalypse of these events from a woman's point of view, in this instance, through the medium of stories, dreams and even cookbooks about food, recounted in the concentration camps.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the year 1956, we publish at the head of our number the poems of Imre Goldstein, written in 1956 in the immediate aftermath of his emigration. (Goldstein's novel, titled, *Spring in November*, which we published in 2000, is one of the first of the '56 novels.)