

SUMMARY

The biggest challenge for *Múlt és Jövő*, maybe paradoxically, is the wish to be at the same time a pure cultural forum, but at the same time, in keeping with tradition, also a forum for Jewish culture – and that specifically in Hungary, in a Hungarian intellectual context. That is a place where the very word and notion Jew/Jewish, and accordingly Jewish-Hungarian relations have become so fraught with politics that it is hard to measure up to the original goals without those efforts turning ridiculous or pathetic.

When Miklós Radnóti's books are burned and Admiral Miklós [Nicholas] Horthy (whose person and regime, in our view, ought to be developed into an academic discipline and public creed) is wielded as a weapon legitimizing anti-Semitism, then the footing for legitimizing peaceful cultural refinement is lost.

These frightful phenomena are not specifically dependant on government or party – that would make it easier to deal with. The current renaissance of the cure of hatred is a vehicle of deeper tenor – one that no generation of Hungarian Jews has confronted, despite the lessons of the Holocaust. That is the task for us Hungarian Jews nearly quarter of a century after the country moved to a more democratic system of government. It is uncertain that we are up to the task – after all, generations who numbered many more, were stronger and incomparably more highly talented than us also failed.

The failure of that confrontation was on display at the event *Jewish Life and Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Europe* organized by the Tom Lantos Institute in the Hungarian Parliament building in Budapest on 1-2 October, 2013. In this issue we communicate the dramatic and historical dialogue of Yair Lapid and Tibor Navracsics which define the political stances of the Israeli and Hungarian governments, and that of János Martonyi, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Those texts for the first time acknowledge on behalf of the Hungarian government (it is unclear whether they speak for the populace or society at large) that it was responsible for the horrors committed Jewish fellow nationals at the time of the Holocaust, and not throwing the blame onto others, whether a nation or specific political faction.

János Kőbányai's essay "The Weight of Apology" analyses why that striking gesture did not bring liberating catharsis and therefore did nothing to alter the current state of Hungarian society. Either the apology came too late, or the country is too divided, too pressed, to pay attention to that apology on its own merits and incorporate into its culture, as Imre Kertész puts it so well.

Again this year Philip Roth was not receive a long-merited Nobel Prize in Literature. Not that we are in a position to fight for the author to be awarded that Prize, but from now on he will feature more often in the columns of *Múlt és Jövő*. The translated extract from his novel *The Counterlife* portrays one of the main sources of conflict in Israel nowadays: the drive behind the settlement program.

Zoltán Tibori Szabó takes an uncustomary stance, with collegial affection, in outlining the publication in the USA of Randolph L. Braham's editorship of the *Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary* (Northwestern University Press). János Pelle reviews the theatrical productions of János Mohácsi's *The Sheriff of Dobány Street* and András Jele's *Auschwitz is Operating* – both of them staging, constructed with minimal devices, based on Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* and the texts, jokes and folklore of Hungarian survivors. These performances are given a strange refraction by the reawakening of anti-Semitism today. Andrea Dunai, in her study "The Connection of the Deployment of the Rosenberg Cadre with Hungary in 1944," uncovers a curious chapter in the German Reich's plundering of Hungary.

Hilda Horváth in her study about the Wolfner collection makes a circuit of the collecting of objects of art – a major tradition of Hungary's grand bourgeoisie. Béla Pomogáts's portrait of Benő Karácsony revives memories of that marvellous Transylvanian writer who perished in the Holocaust. An extract from a novel by György Berkovits exhibits the author's sociographic virtues. In his review of new books by Róbert Turán and János Pelle, Miklós Hernádi searches for the voice of a new generation of Jewish writers.

A hundred years have passed since the death of Ármin Vámbéry, a scholar and Orientalist, who was one of the first figures to carve out a distinctive place for himself in the Hungarian Jewish intelligentsia in terms of his identity and his fate. In this issue a passage is communicated from a doctoral dissertation about Vámbéry by Dávid Mandler that we are planning to publish in full in book form in the near future.

This issue opens with poetry by Béla Pásztor, who died in the Ukraine in 1943. A young writer extraordinary enough for Sándor Weöres to found a prize in his memory, he had barely got going when he was slaughtered (in a volume entitled Poetry of the Hungarian Holocaust which will soon appear under the *Múlt és Jövő* imprint is aimed as a memorial to him and countless similar poets of that generation).