

Most of the orphans defied what had been the then prevailing perspective of some leading social workers. While they encouraged adoptions, they also warned adoptive families that many of the children would suffer emotional breakdowns from the trauma they had experienced. Thankfully, most did not, and used the opportunity of being cared for in a new country to build creative and successful lives. Early memories of the love they had experienced in their families and the acceptance they felt by their new families, caused most to overcome and to build new lives. Examples are provided based on interviews with orphans and their adoptive families.

Martz provides the reader with a compelling book. It is well written and is a useful addition to the history of Jewish war orphans in the aftermath of the Shoah, Jewish communal services, and Canadian child welfare.

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Naves, Elaine Kalman. *Journey to Vaja*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996. 269pp.

The tenacity of Jews and the persistence of Judaism to survive extraordinary millennial vicissitudes is always astonishing. Undoubtedly one factor in this survival is the unique role of memory which in the Jewish scheme of things is much more than remembrance or memorial. Rather it is recall, recollection, recovery and reconstruction. It is also fulfilment of commandments. For Jews and Judaism memory is ever an existential affective fact and protean life force.

Genealogy, the chronicle of familial descent, the life, deeds, and frustrations of ancestors is an important element of this special kind and special purpose of memory. Quite a bit of the first book of Moses is devoted to Toldot—the history of generations chronicling the genealogy of Abraham, his predecessors and descendants. Moreover, the Bible constantly enjoins, and a ubiquitous part of the entire Jewish liturgy is

remembering and recalling, whether the creation, the Sabbath, Exodus or the evils of Amalek.

On the obvious level, Elaine Kalman Naves' *Journey to Vaja* may seem to be merely the discharge of an abiding, sentimental, filial duty to provide a written memorial, and erect a literary gravestone to a family and its past irretrievably erased by the ultimate crime, the Holocaust. In fact, for Naves, writing the book was also a journey of self-discovery and reaffirmation. On a deeper level, the book readily reveals the quest of Naves to recover the past so she can use it to form and reinforce her Jewish identity and construct upon it a reassuring self-acceptance in the present, and a comforting, prideful, and even hopeful future. Naves makes the journey, after years of being goaded into it, by the stories and enigmatic silences of her father Gusti. Her father fascinates and inspires her with his stories about his many-branched family and its bicentennial history in and around Vaja. An obscure but not atypical village of north-eastern Hungary, its achievements, failures, foibles and habits, congealed into a legendary family tradition.

Naves embarks on her extended journey to her father's homestead in search of an external aim only to reach an inner goal. At the start of the journey Naves thinks that the soil of Vaja would be "sacred to me." She travels for many hours from Budapest crammed in a small car, in the company of the only other survivor of the large Weinberger clan, her father's cousin Aggie and her daughter Zusizsika. When she finally arrives at that "tiny spot on the map of Hungary I came from" the reality of Vaja, bereft of the family, its small but vibrant Jewish community, and the homestead she calls the Rakoczi Estate in ruins, the reality annihilates the dream. There is nothing left for Naves of the external aim of her journey but to concur with Zusizsika's declaration that she felt nothing for Vaja. "Nothing. I could have been anywhere in the world and feel more." On the other hand—thanks to her father's stories of the orthodox older and the assimilating younger members of the Weinberger and Schwarcz families, their celebrations of the holidays, life cycle

events, the ravages of Hungarian antisemitism culminating in their destruction in the Holocaust—the inner goal of discovering her sources, recovering, and crystallizing her Jewish identity, after years of its somnambulance, is well accomplished.

Occasionally if all too briefly, Naves exhibits something of her training in historiography and locates the family history in the larger context of Hungarian Jewish history. She even employs the apparatus of the historian by providing her book with some footnotes, a basic bibliography and a glossary. Indeed, elements of the family's history do reflect aspects of Hungary and the history of its Jews. Naves singles out their dogged patriotism, born of their post-Emancipation successes and gratitude. She also notes their invincibly naive belief that Magyarization will bring with it integration and even acceptance, their relentless disbelief in the racist tendencies of the Magyars, and in the ingrained, durable character, and lethal nature of Hungarian antisemitism. It is such misguided sentiments that lead Naves' lionized grandfather Kalman to declare amid the undeniably obvious, and dangerous anti-Jewish hostility, that "this country has been good to us for a long time. And will prove so again." Naves also mentions the anomaly of the paucity of Zionism in the 'homeland' of Herzl and Nordau, founders of the movement that could have given a surer grasp of its role and fate to inter-bellum Hungarian Jewry. Surprisingly, because of the family's connection with Munkacs, she does not mention its renowned Rabbi Chayim Eluzer Shapiro, arch-foe of the Jewish national movement, who commanded a massive following in northeastern Hungary. Probably not under the influence of the Munkacer Rebbe but rather prompted by his own imperturbable Magyardom, Kalman—who as Naves states was "deeply suspicious of the Zionist movement"—could affirm in his last conversation with his son Gusti in February 1944, "I am a Magyar and a Jew in absolutely equal measures."

Not surprisingly, when the author of belle-lettres and historian are conjoined, the result sometimes is better reading

than history. And so quite naturally there are some historical and linguistic glitches in Vaja. The communal division in 1869, included not only the Orthodox and Neolog but the so called Statu Quo, a small but significant group. There could also be some questions about Naves' observations on what she calls the "secular" attire of the Jews of Vaja, which (as this reviewer can attest – he stems from Kisvarda, only a few kilometres from Vaja) if not quite "Hasidic gabardine" was very largely black, not very Magyar, quite Jewish and certainly not very worldly. Nor did Count Istvan Tisza speak of the defeat of the Axis powers when on 17 October 1918 he admitted the defeat of the Central Powers. Even assimilated Jews in Nagykallo, if indeed there were any, would have used kvitlech not kvitlis for the plural of the intercessory notes presented to the Rebbe. For a frankly sentimental book with admittedly imagined events and conjured conversations these are but quibbles which do not mar its warmth or lessen its pleasure

Back in 1990, Charles Fenyvesi, the well known writer at *US News & World Report*, a collateral descendent of Naves' grandmother Ilona, published his chronicle of the Schwarcz branch of the family entitled *When the World Was Whole*. Naves' *Journey to Vaja* shares more than consanguinity with Fenyvesi's deeply evocative book written with a well-practiced pen. They are companion volumes, complementing each other and should be read together to gain a more rounded picture of the Jewish experience in Hungary, so brilliant at it's height, so tragic at its fall, and now seemingly so determined in its attempt at renewal.

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Robin, Martin. *Shades of Right: Nativist and Fascist Politics in Canada, 1920-1940*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. 367pp.