

Editorial

Dear readers,

Allow me to present you with a new issue of our journal, which I hope will provide you with plenty of food for thought this summer. This time, we open with three studies, dealing with burning issues in various forms of conflicting politics of memory, primarily touching on nostalgia, that treacherous affect of an unspeakable loss in the past. The first item on this list, a remarkable study “Nostalgic Nation Branding: Philo-Sephardism and the Reimagining of Spanish Identity in the 2015 Citizenship Law” by Alicia Vergara, deals with the gradual ideological transformation of Spanish conservatism and what she calls “strategic deployment of Jewish history in nation branding.” Bohumil Melichar is the author of a text analysing similar problems within the Czech or Czechoslovak context, critically assessing a “memory war” that recently erupted on Czech social media over positive or rather negative memories of the later phase of the pre-1989 communist dictatorship. His study, “Evil Communists or Times when the World Was Better?: Social Networks as an Arena for Conflicting Memories of So-called Normalisation and Democratic Transformation,” represents a meticulous case study, which comes to an important conclusion: that positive memories of the period represent a multitude of “disconnected dialogues,” only vaguely connected by an effort to face the “retrotopia” situation, which generates a profound misunderstanding contrasted with those who, on the other hand, view the 1968–1989 history of Czech lands in decisively negative light.

The last piece in our opening trio of studies is a highly innovative text by Hana Knollová, who, for the first time in the Czech academic milieu, dealt from the perspective of post-positivist oral history and historical anthropology with the problem of fee-based hunting in the pre-1989 period. Her study, named “Good Hunting, Comrades! Fee-Based Hunting in the Depopulated Borderlands of Eastern Bohemia under the Socialist Dictatorship,” offers valuable insights into this neglected problem. The system of fee-based hunting, which had been used dominantly by “Western” visitors to communist Czechoslovakia, was only legitimised

by authorities on both an ideological and legislative level with considerable difficulties. The system, managed by the state company Čedok, was admired by many tourists and played an important role in contemporary history of many post-displacement regions, which suffered depopulation shortly after the WWII ending. After that we offer you the last, but most certainly not least, of our studies, the text by Anna Caroline West, representing an intriguing inroad into an often-overlooked issue in oral history. The study, called “Methodological and Theoretical Reflections on Code-switching in Oral History,” is built upon a rich trove of recordings the author made during her research among Czechs in California, immigrant women, who emigrated from Czechoslovakia to the US in the 1960s. In her reflection, Anna West demonstrates how code-switching, a concept theorised in linguistic anthropology, is connected to important oral history concepts like intersubjectivity and shared (or sharing) authority.

“We cannot time-travel on our emotions,” declares Professor Ute Frevert in yet another interview with a seminal scholar in the field of historical sciences that we have been consistently trying to offer our readers. Professor Frevert has, since 2023, served as President of the Max Weber Foundation and is also a founder of the Centre for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. Emotions, which are “much historically contingent as any other human phenomenon,” are a complicated subject of study and Professor Frevert not only outlines the main points of this field of study, but touches on the equally important problem of making the research into the history of emotions relevant in the current institutional academic setting.

As usual, we close the issue by reviewing recently published relevant scholarly literature. We start with a review by Professor Martin Čapský of Nora Berend’s monograph which analyses the construction of the legend of Stephen I., the first Christian king of Hungary. Then we offer you two reviews of current Polish academic titles, on works by Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska and Krzysztof Brzechczyn. Finally, we close our issue with a review of a work by Tomáš Pánek, which addresses a contentious issue in Czech historiography during the Nazi occupation, 1939–1945.

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DOI: 10.14712/24645370.5640



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