

Mozes, André E. ed. *New Philosemitism Paradigm*. Budapest: L'Harmattan. 2023. 446 pp.

Reviewed by Mária Réthelyi¹, Louisiana State University

The book delineates two primary objectives: firstly, to contribute novel and significant insights into the millennia-old subject of Gentile-Jewish relations and, secondly, to propose practical measures aimed at fostering harmony between these two groups to mutual advantage. The editor posits that, while Holocaust remembrance has held a crucial position in framing perceptions of Gentile-Jewish relations, this emphasis has led to a notable disparity between the attention given to negative versus positive instances, thus necessitating a more even-handed approach. The proposed approach, described as a "three-legged" framework, consists of Holocaust remembrance, the study of anti-Semitism and, crucially, the exploration of positive aspects of historical and contemporary coexistence between Gentiles and Jews, referred to as the third leg of "Philosemitism," a term broadly defined by the editor to encompass any benevolent contractual cooperation or friendship, stressing the importance of acknowledging realities without distortion.

The editor claims that Hungary is an exemplary setting for the philosemitism paradigm and is particularly suited for investigating Jewish–non-Jewish coexistence. This assertion is grounded in the fact that Hungary has had a substantial emancipated Jewish population, largely patriotic Hungarian Jews, who participated across all facets of national life. This participation facilitated a generally prosperous and close coexistence with non-Jewish compatriots, prevailing to some extent until the shifts of 1918 and 1939. Notably, overtly anti-Semitic legal and practical discrimination against Jews commenced subsequently, although without physical violence until 1944. Second, the impetus behind the initiation of the *New Philosemitism Paradigm* is to contemplate the future of Jewish–non-Jewish coexistence and to draw lessons from positive examples to counteract anti-Semitism. The editor further argues that philosemitism serves as a non-aggressive tool in the combat against anti-Semitism, although it does not entail overlooking the inherent dangers of anti-Semitic sentiments. What could have been helpful to the reader is a short history and evaluation of the term "philosemitism" as it is not a neutral term and has had quite a history, especially in the American context. Pointing out its dangers could have been helpful to see the effectiveness of the word choice and understand the intent of the editor better.

The present study emerges from the 2014 Hungarian publication "*Who Likes the Jews? Hungarian Philosemitism*," which encapsulated a multifaceted exploration of positive Jewish-Gentile coexistence. This book aims to redirect public discourse away from conflict-centric narratives towards a more nuanced awareness of coexistence. It seeks to provide an option for

¹ mrethelyi@lsu.edu



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the ordinary reader. This publication does not adhere strictly to any single genre; rather, it embodies a combination of historical facts, scholarly analysis, poetry and emotional encounters within intermarriages and cohabitations contributed by contemporary writers, scientists, artists and private individuals. The book strives for maximal diversity of viewpoints by incorporating various styles and genres, ranging from scholarly essays to personal accounts, reflecting the eclectic nature of coexistence between Jews and non-Jews.

The editor addresses possible criticism regarding the book's agenda, though these objections are not discussed in detail. Critics question the sincerity of philosemitism in Hungary, to which the editor responds by highlighting numerous stories that have gradually amassed into a substantial body of evidence, countering previous negative generalizations. Another objection challenges the principle of philosemitism as inherently racist. The editor argues that fostering philosemitism to combat anti-Semitism does not neglect other forms of racism; rather, it effectively addresses all forms of discriminatory ideologies. Philosemitism might diverge from the primary goals of Zionism, yet the editor emphasizes the importance of discussing Jewish–non-Jewish coexistence within the context of diaspora Judaism, acknowledging that not every Jew necessarily desires to reside in Israel.

The initial section of the book lays out definitions and explores the theoretical and historical underpinnings supporting the argument that Hungary represents the birthplace of the New philosemitism paradigm and serves as a microcosm of universal philosemitism. The subsequent second section delves into the historical coexistence of philosemitism in Hungary across three parts: firstly, through essays detailing positive historical episodes spanning over a century; secondly, by examining examples from classic Hungarian literature over the past century across various genres; and finally, by recounting efforts to save Jewish lives during the scholarly discussions and analyses, including listings of the Righteous Among the Nations in Hungary. The third section of the book presents a diverse collection of contemporary viewpoints across different genres concerning the present and future of coexistence from a Philosemitic viewpoint. A concluding chapter may be perceived as lacking, given the book's extensive groundwork in the introduction and initial chapters regarding views, definitions and content. A concluding voice from the editor could effectively tie together the diverse genres and voices within the book, allowing readers—both scholars and non-scholars—to easily grasp the book's message, shortcomings and benefits and assess the proposed philosemitism paradigm. This guidance would be particularly beneficial for readers perusing select chapters rather than approaching the book linearly, as the editor suggests doing. Overall, a concise summary and review of the book's agenda and content would aid readers in distilling the book's message and significance and help evaluate the usefulness of the term and idea of philosemitism.

It is essential to note that this book is not primarily targeted at a scholarly audience, although it includes some scholarly articles. Instead, its primary audience comprises general international readers seeking a deeper understanding of Jews in Hungary over the past century and their contemporary situation from a positive standpoint, conveyed through diverse genres. The book does not intend to present a scholarly argument on the broader concept of philosemitism beyond its existence; rather, it emphasizes communal reconciliation with the past and present to foster future coexistence, delivering a positive message that resonates with its readership.

The book's perspective is distinctly European, reflecting European views and historical contexts rather than those of North America or other regions. Therefore, a familiarity with European Jewish history or residing in Europe may facilitate a deeper understanding of its content. Given this European orientation, the English language used in the book serves a more informative purpose for European audiences than American readers. Nevertheless, American readers might find value in the European perspective presented despite the book not strictly adhering to scholarly conventions and drawing its views and conclusions from European realities and histories.

For the general reader, it is essential to develop a balanced understanding of Jewish life and relations, not solely for emotional resonance but also historical accuracy and a nuanced grasp of contemporary realities. Over recent decades, several publications have explored Jewish–non-Jewish relations, including works focused on the Holocaust, particularly within the Hungarian context. Some of these publications are available in English as well, although their number is still small. This book aims to address a notable gap in everyday readers' comprehension. Internationally, publications exploring Hungarian and Hungarian-Jewish relations are invaluable due to the relatively limited understanding of Hungarian-Jewish history compared to Western and Eastern European Jewish narratives. Hungary's unique historical context often results in it being overlooked in broader European Jewish historiography. Finally, the book provides insights into Hungary's vibrant contemporary Jewish community, characterized by cultural, ethnic and religious diversity for the general reader. The continuous presence of Jews in Budapest, most surviving the Second World War, and the substantial size of the community relative to other European nations underscore the significance of understanding their experiences and perspectives.