

»Ničesar nimamo razen imena.«

Israel Isserlein ben Petahija (ok. 1390–1460)

Ta razstava je posvečena vsem Judom, ki so skozi stoletja živeli na ozemlju današnje Slovenije – tistim, katerih imena poznamo, in tistim, katerih imena so se izgubila. Naj njihova dediščina ostane del skupnega zgodovinskega spomina.

“We have Nothing But A Name.”

Israel Isserlein ben Petahiah (c. 1390–1460)

This exhibition is dedicated to all the Jews who lived in the territory of present-day Slovenia throughout the centuries—to those whose names we know and to those whose names have been lost. May their heritage remain part of our shared historical memory.



Predgovor

Judovska zgodovina na ozemlju današnje Slovenije ni zgodovina odsotnosti, temveč zgodovina dolge, ustvarjalne in pogosto prekinjene navzočnosti. Judje so skozi stoletja živeli v mestih in pokrajinah tega prostora, sodelovali pri razvoju trgovine, gospodarstva, kulture, znanosti in umetnosti, gradili domove, skupnosti in sinagoge ter tukaj vzgajali svoje otroke in pokopavali svoje mrtve. Bili so del tega prostora in njegove zgodovine.

Kljub temu je bila njihova dediščina dolgo razpršena med arheološke najdbe, arhivske dokumente, družinske spomine, znanstvene raziskave in posamezne muzejske zbirke. Za številnimi ljudmi niso ostali niti grobovi niti potomci. Ostala so njihova imena, predmeti, fotografije, pisma in drobci zgodb, ki jih moramo ponovno povezati, če želimo razumeti preteklost tega prostora.

Stalna razstava »Ničesar nimamo razen imena« je nastala iz želje, da bi te razpršene sledi prvič povezali v celovito pripoved o več kot sedemnajstih stoletjih judovske navzočnosti na ozemlju današnje Slovenije. Z arheološkimi najdbami, zgodovinskimi dokumenti, obrednimi predmeti, umetniškimi deli, fotografijami in osebnimi zgodbami razstava ne predstavlja le preteklih dogodkov, temveč predvsem ljudi, ki so jih živeli.

Naslov razstave izhaja iz misli Israela Isserleina ben Petahije, velikega mariborskega rabina in talmudskega učenjaka 15. stoletja. Njegove besede »Ničesar nimamo razen imena« danes zvenijo kot simbol usode številnih Judov, katerih skupnosti, domovi in družine so bili uničeni. Hkrati pa govorijo tudi o moči spomina: dokler poznamo ime, človek ni popolnoma izbrisan.

Razstava se zato ne konča s holokavstom. Judovska zgodovina se ni končala leta 1945. Preživeli so nadaljevali svoja življenja, njihovi potomci danes živijo po svetu, v Sloveniji pa se judovsko versko, kulturno in družbeno življenje ponovno razvija. Judovski kulturni center Ljubljana je nastal prav iz prepričanja, da judovstvo v Sloveniji ne sme obstajati le kot predmet zgodovinskega spomina, temveč kot živa navzočnost – kot prostor molitve, kulture, raziskovanja, ustvarjalnosti, izobraževanja in srečevanja ljudi.

Od ustanovitve leta 2013 si Center prizadeva raziskovati, ohranjati in predstavljati judovsko dediščino Slovenije ter jo povezovati s sodobnim judovskim življenjem. V njegovih prostorih delujejo muzej, knjižnica, razstavni prostori in edina delujoča sinagoga v Sloveniji, ki jo upravlja Liberalna judovska skupnost Slovenije. Razstava, ki jo spremlja ta katalog, je vrhunec dolgoletnega raziskovalnega, zbirateljskega in muzejskega dela ter sodelovanja številnih posameznikov, družin in ustanov.

Ta publikacija je zasnovana kot pot od osebne spomina k zgodovinskemu razumevanju. Dušan Šarotar v literarnem eseu skozi izgubljeno fotografijo dečka z violino spregovori o spominu, pripovedovanju in odgovornosti do mrtvih. Lev Kreft razmišlja o judovski identiteti, pripadnosti in večplastnosti osebnega izročila. Matevž Košir predstavi širši zgodovinski lok judovske navzočnosti na Slovenskem, Marjan Toš pa se osredotoča na uničenje skupnosti med šoo in na dolgotrajne posledice poveljnega molka.

Razstava in katalog nista namenjena samo predstavitvi zgodovine. Sta tudi poziv k razmisleku o sedanjosti. Antisemitizem, rasizem, teorije zarote, sovražni govor in izključevanje niso ostanki preteklosti, temveč nevarnosti, ki se lahko vedno znova vrnejo. Zgodovina nas uči, kako hitro lahko besede postanejo dejanja, predsodki diskriminacija, molk pa sotorilstvo.

Spomin zato ni namenjen le ohranjanju tega, kar je bilo. Njegov namen je oblikovati prihodnost. Družba, ki pozna svojo zgodovino, lažje prepozna nevarnosti razčlovečenja in lažje varuje dostojanstvo vsakega človeka.

Naj bo ta razstava poklon vsem Judom, ki so skozi stoletja živeli na ozemlju današnje Slovenije, soustvarjali njeno zgodovino in kulturo ter s svojo dediščino trajno obogatili slovenski in evropski prostor. Tistim, katerih imena poznamo, in tistim, katerih imena so se izgubila.



Robert Baruh Waltl





Robert B. Waltl, Foto/ Photo: Igor Husbašić

Foreword

The history of the Jews in the territory of present-day Slovenia is not a history of absence, but a history of a long, creative, and often interrupted presence. For centuries, Jews lived in the towns and regions of this land, contributing to the development of trade, the economy, culture, scholarship, and the arts. They built homes, communities, and synagogues, raised their children here, and buried their dead. They were part of this land and of its history.

Yet their heritage long remained scattered among archaeological finds, archival documents, family memories, scholarly research, and individual museum collections. For many, neither graves nor descendants survived. What remained were names, objects, photographs, letters, and fragments of stories that must be brought together again if we are to understand the past of this region.

The permanent exhibition *We Have Nothing but a Name* was created out of the desire to connect these dispersed traces for the first time into a comprehensive narrative spanning more than seventeen centuries of Jewish presence in the territory of present-day Slovenia. Through archaeological finds, historical documents, ritual objects, works of art, photographs, and personal stories, the exhibition presents not only historical events, but above all the people who lived through them.

The title of the exhibition is drawn from a statement by Israel Isserlein ben Petachia, the great fifteenth-century rabbi and Talmudic scholar associated with Maribor. His words, "We have nothing but a name," resonate today as a symbol of the fate of countless Jews whose communities, homes, and families were destroyed. At the same time, they also speak of the power of memory: as long as a name is remembered, a person has not been entirely erased.

The exhibition does not end with the Holocaust. Jewish history did not end in 1945. Survivors rebuilt their lives, their descendants now live throughout the world, and Jewish religious, cultural, and communal life is once again developing in Slovenia. The Jewish Cultural Center Ljubljana was founded on the conviction that Jewish life in

Slovenia should not exist solely as an object of historical memory, but as a living presence—a place of prayer, culture, research, creativity, education, and human encounter.

Since its establishment in 2013, the Center has worked to research, preserve, and present the Jewish heritage of Slovenia, while connecting it with contemporary Jewish life. Its premises house a museum, a library, exhibition spaces, and the only functioning synagogue in Slovenia, administered by the Liberal Jewish Community of Slovenia. The exhibition accompanied by this catalogue is the culmination of many years of research, collecting, museum work, and collaboration among numerous individuals, families, and institutions.

This publication is conceived as a journey from personal memory to historical understanding. In his literary essay, Dušan Šarotar reflects on memory, storytelling, and responsibility toward the dead through the image of a lost photograph of a boy with a violin. Lev Kreft considers Jewish identity, belonging, and the complexity of personal heritage. Matevž Košir presents the broader historical arc of Jewish presence in the Slovenian lands, while Marjan Toš focuses on the destruction of the community during the Shoah and on the lasting consequences of post-war silence.

The exhibition and the catalogue are not intended merely to present history. They are also an invitation to reflect on the present. Antisemitism, racism, conspiracy theories, hate speech, and exclusion are not relics of the past, but dangers that can return at any time. History teaches us how quickly words can become actions, prejudice can become discrimination, and silence can become complicity.

Memory is therefore not intended only to preserve what once was. Its purpose is to shape the future. A society that knows its own history is better able to recognise the dangers of dehumanisation and better equipped to defend the dignity of every human being.

May this exhibition serve as a tribute to all the Jews who, over the centuries, lived in the territory of present-day Slovenia, helped shape its history and culture, and enriched the Slovenian and European cultural space through their enduring legacy—to those whose names we know, and to those whose names have been lost.



Robert Baruch Waltl

AVSTRIJA / AUSTRIA
אוסטריה

Celovec / Klagenfurt
קלגנפורט

ITALIJA / ITALY
איטליה

Benetke/Venice/ונציה

Ljubljana
לובליאנה

Lesno Brdo pri Horjulu
לסנו ברדו תחת מועצת חורג'ול

Gorica / Gorizia
גוריצייה

Škocjan pri Divači
שקוציאן פרי דיבאצ'י

Trst / Trieste
טריאסטה

Zemljevid najpomembnejših
krajev judovske prisotnosti na
zgodovinskem slovenskem
prostoru.

Map of the Principal Sites
of Jewish Presence in the
Historic Slovenian Lands.





Židovska ulica, Ljubljana, Foto/Photo Miha Fras

doc. dr. Matevž Košir

Judje na Slovenskem: med zgodovino in spominom

Zgodovina prostora, kot tudi slovenska nacionalna zgodovina, je prepletena s sobivanjem različnih kultur. Ko govorimo o srednjeveških mestih na slovenskem, trgovini in bančništvu ne moremo mimo judovskih trgovcev in bankirjev, ki so sooblikovali ta prostor. Številčnost judovske populacije v slovenskih mestih je bila majhna. Zato ni predstavljala skupine z vidnejšim vplivom. Vseeno pa njenega vpliva ne gospodarsko, kulturno ali politično življenje ne moremo zanemariti. Tudi kasneje, v 19. in 20. stoletju in dalje, so nekateri judovski trgovci in industrialci vtisnili svoj pečat takratnemu družbenemu razvoju v naših krajih. Pomen judovske skupnosti pa je s svojo drugačnostjo prispeval dragocen kamenček k dimenziji multikulturalnosti slovenskega prostora, ki v zgodovini nikoli ni bil tako homogen, kot si včasih predstavljamo oziroma, kot so si nekateri želeli, da bi bil. Judovski skupnosti pa gre v zgodovini še posebno mesto, saj je bila mnogo bolj izpostavljena zaradi številnih predsodkov, ki so jih o njej imeli drugi.

Čeprav judovska skupnost na ozemlju današnje Slovenije nikoli ni predstavljala številčno velikega deleža prebivalstva, je njen zgodovinski pomen večji, kot bi lahko sklepali iz demografskih podatkov. Njihova prisotnost je v različnih zgodovinskih obdobjih vplivala na razvoj mest, trgovine in kulturnih stikov, hkrati pa odraža širše evropske procese. V srednjeveških mestih na Slovenskem so se judovske skupnosti uveljavile kot trgovci, posebno pa še kot posojilodajalci, ne le meščanom, ampak tudi plemičem in celo kmetom. S kreditiranjem, zlasti obrtnikov in trgovcev, so sodelovali pri razvoju mestnega gospodarstva pa tudi širše. Judovske skupnosti so postale del mest, kot so Maribor, Ljubljana, Ptuj, Celje, Koper, Izola, Piran, Gorica pa tudi drugod. Med njimi je bila najpomembnejša gotovo Mariborska judovska skupnost na katero spominja ohranjena sinagoga, v kateri je deloval rabin Israel Isserlein ben Petachia. Največje skupnosti pa so bile na zahodnem robu slovenskega ozemlja v Trstu in Čedadu. Jude so ščitili vladarji oziroma deželni knezi, tudi zato ker so imeli od njih finančno korist. V mestih so praviloma živeli ločeno od drugih, na

njihovo prisotnost pa spominjajo še ohranjena imena ulic in drugih krajev. Od izгона Judov s Koroške, Štajerske in Kranjske ob koncu srednjega veka so morda imeli korist nekateri posamezniki, škodoval pa je razvoju splošnega gospodarskega življenja. Do izгона pa je prihajalo v obdobju, ko so se uveljavili deželni davki in je dejansko prišlo do davčne obveznosti plemstva, ko židovski davek deželnim knezom ni bil več nepogrešljiv. Izgon Judov pa sovpada tudi z obdobjem gospodarske krize, vojaških vpadov Osmanskega cesarstva, beneške vojne in velikih kmečkih uporov. Obenem je to tudi obdobje ob koncu srednjega veka, povezano s številnimi predsodki, strahovi, teorijami zarot, ko so po epidemiji kuge Jude krivili za številne nesreče. Po izgonu pa se vse do 19. stoletja v slovenskih celinskih mestih (z izjemo Goriške) Judje ne pojavljajo več kot stalno prebivalstvo. Glavni judovski center ostaja Trst. V prej omenjenih deželah so bili Judje predvsem mestni prebivalci. Kljub izgonu so Judje pustili svoj pečat zlasti v razvoju srednjeveških mest na Slovenskem.

Od 70. let 18. stoletja je zakonodaja znova dopuščala trgovsko dejavnost Judov. Krajše obdobje, in sicer od nastanka Ilirskih provinc leta 1809, tudi z možnostjo naselitve, pa je trajalo le do njihovega konca leta 1813. Večina Judov, ki se je naselila v tem obdobju, se je izselila ali pokristjanila. Znan pa je vztrajen boj Juda Mojzesa Heimanna, ki mu je uspelo, da je leta 1817 državna oblast njegovi družini dovolila ohraniti pravico do naselitve, ki jo je pridobil za časa Ilirskih provinc. Šele leta 1867 je bila uvedena enakopravnost naseljevanja za vse državljane. Judje pa so se že pred tem naseljevali v Prekmurju, kjer pa je njihovo število izrazito poraslo s priseljevanjem v drugi polovici 19. stoletja. Prav tako na Kranjskem in Spodnjem Štajerskem je leta 1900 živelo več kot 300 Judov, ki pa so se naselili predvsem v največjih mestih. Največje število Judov na Slovenskem je živelo ob koncu Avstro-Ogrske monarhije leta 1910, in sicer prek 1300. Nato je njihovo število še blago naraščalo predvsem v večjih mestih, medtem ko se je skupno število zmanjševalo zaradi izseljevanja prekmurskih Judov.

Posebno v obdobju med obema vojnama se je pomen Judov povečeval zlasti na področju mednarodne trgovine in industrije. Po svoji vsestranski angažiranosti je izstopal industrijalec in filantrop Marko Rosner. A bogati Judje so bili vendarle v manjšini. Večina jih je pripadala srednjemu meščanskemu sloju.

Obdobje vzpona antisemitizma je prinesla krepitev prisotnosti Judov v takratni dravski banovini. Na ljubljanski univerzi je študiralo več deset poljskih judov, judovsko sionistično mladinsko gibanje Brit Bilu je organizirali taborjenje v Kranjski gori (1933), judovsko mladinsko gibanje Akiva pa v Gozdu Martuljku (1936) in Žirovnici (1939). Tako je poletje 1933 v Kranjski gori preživel tudi britanski častnik Reuven Dafni (1913-2005), eden od ustanviteljev kibucev. Leta 1940 je radovljiški pravnik Uroš Žun s tem, ko jim je omogočil prehod meje, rešil 16 judovskih deklet.

Neskončno in neulovljivo veliko je število medosebnih interakcij in vplivov. Tudi spominov, ki se ohranjajo le še posredno. Generacija, ki je bila rojena v monarhiji, mi je v 80. letih preteklega stoletja vedela še marsikaj povedati. To so bili spomini, ki se takrat niso zdeli posebno družbeno relevantni a so odkrivali tančico nekega sveta,

ki ga takrat že ni bilo več: dedkovi spomini na Maksa Horowitza in Katarino von Künsberg ..., povezave, ki jih je usodno prekinila druga svetovna vojna. S Katarino sta si izmenjala še nekaj pisem v časih, ko se je že skrivala in selila, da bi se izognila taborišču. Do vojne judovstvo pravzaprav ni bilo nekaj, kar bi jih močno zaznamovalo, saj so bili samoumeven del takratnega poslovnega in intelektualnega sveta. Tu so bili še spomini na sorodnika Alojzija iz Trsta, ki je po prvi svetovni vojni skrbel za vzdrževanje judovskih nepremičnin v Trstu. Pravzaprav je bil to svet, ki je bil del človekovega spomina. Če pa bi še nekoliko pobrskal po njem, pa bi se gotovo našlo še marsikaj ... Zgodba o judovskem dekletu, npr., ki je vojno preživel pod zaščito dvojnega agenta Gestapa in Ozne v Beljaku, takoj po koncu vojne pa je pred njim pobegnila preko Italije v Palestino ... Konkretna življenjske zgodbe so pogosto bogatejše, globlje in bolj presunljive od zgodb v romanih. Kar je nosilo posebno skrivnostnost, pa je bilo to, da to ni bil svet, o katerem bi prebral iz knjig, ampak je bil to svet, ki ga je doživela generacija starih staršev in sem ga spoznaval iz njihovega pripovedovanja, svet, ki je kar izginil. Spomini, ki so danes le še obledeli odsev besed generacije, ki je ni več. Ostaja pa idovska ulica in morda se kdo ob tem kdaj vpraša, čemu nosi tako ime ...

Poznavanje zgodovine judovske skupnosti prispeva k razumevanju širših evropskih procesov razvoja človekovih pravic, verske svobode in zaščite manjšin. Njihova zgodovina razkriva tudi procese izključevanja, verske nestrpnosti in nasilja, ki so dosegli vrhunec s holokavstom. Pomena judovske skupnosti v zgodovini vse do danes zato ne moremo gledati le z vidika njenega gospodarskega vpliva, ampak gre za njen pomemben prispevek pri sobivanju različnosti, v bogatenju vsečloveških vrednot, v razumevanju našega bivanja, razumevanju nas samih, n... Razumevanju vsake od kultur in tradicij, ki kje sobivajo, ki so lahko ogledalo druga drugi, so test naše odprtosti do bogastva občečloveškega. Tako kot mora biti dragocen vsak posameznik z vso svojo najrazličnejšo dediščino, ki jo nosi s seboj.

Poleg materialnih ostankov judovske kulture je pomembna tudi nematerialna dediščina. Ta vključuje zgodovinski spomin, raziskovalno dejavnost, muzejske razstave, znanstvene publikacije, izobraževalne programe ter spominske slovesnosti, posvečene holokavstu in zgodovini Judov na Slovenskem. V zadnjih tridesetih letih je bilo na tem področju narejenega veliko. Zato gre priznanje številnim posameznikom in organizacijam za njihov prispevek pri tem: od simpozijev Centra judovske kulturne dediščine Maribor pa vse do tlakovcev spomina, festivala strpnosti, številnih monografij in razprav. Stalna razstava v spomin in opomin na zgodovino Judov, ki bo postavljena v Ljubljani, pa je nujnost, saj bo tako zapolnila vrzeli našega spomina. Postala bo prostor, ki bo omogočil zgodovinsko in spominsko refleksijo in samorefleksijo prav vsem, ki jo bodo obiskovali.



Sinagoga v Mariboru, Foto/Photo Toni Soprano

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matevž Košir

Jews in Slovenia: Between History and Memory

The history of this region, like the history of Slovenia itself, has been shaped by the coexistence of diverse cultures. Any discussion of medieval towns, commerce, and banking in the Slovenian lands would be incomplete without acknowledging the contribution of Jewish merchants and financiers, whose activities helped shape the region's economic development. Although the Jewish population in the Slovenian lands was always relatively small and never constituted a community of major political influence, its contribution to the economic, cultural, and civic life of the region was far greater than its numbers might suggest. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Jewish merchants, entrepreneurs, industrialists, and intellectuals continued to leave a lasting mark on Slovenian society. By preserving their distinct identity while participating fully in public life, they enriched the multicultural character of a region that has historically been far more diverse than it is often imagined—or, at times, portrayed—to have been. At the same time, the Jewish community occupied a unique place in history, remaining especially vulnerable to prejudice, discrimination, and persecution.

Although the Jewish community in what is now Slovenia never represented a large proportion of the population, its historical significance exceeds what demographic figures alone might suggest. Its presence influenced the development of towns, commerce, and cultural exchange throughout different historical periods, while reflecting broader European developments. During the Middle Ages, Jewish communities established themselves primarily as merchants and moneylenders, providing credit not only to townspeople but also to members of the nobility and even to peasants. By financing artisans, merchants, and commercial activity, they contributed significantly to the development of the urban economy. Jewish communities became an integral part of urban life in Maribor, Ljubljana, Ptuj, Celje, Koper, Izola, Piran, Gorica, and elsewhere. Among these, the medieval Jewish community of Maribor was undoubtedly the most prominent, commemorated today by its preserved synagogue, where Rabbi Israel Isserlein ben Petachia served. The largest Jewish communities associated with the Slovenian lands, however, were located in Trieste and Cividale, on the western edge of the region.

Jewish communities enjoyed the protection of rulers and provincial princes, partly because they represented an important source of fiscal revenue. Within towns they generally lived in separate quarters, whose memory survives today in street names and other place names. Although the expulsion of the Jews from Carinthia, Styria, and Carniola at the end of the Middle Ages may have benefited certain individuals, it ultimately hampered broader economic development. By that time, however, provincial taxation had become firmly established, and the revenues generated through Jewish taxation were no longer indispensable to the provincial rulers. The expulsions also coincided with a period of economic crisis, Ottoman incursions, the Venetian Wars, and major peasant uprisings. Moreover, they took place during an era marked by widespread prejudice, fear, and conspiracy theories, when Jews were blamed for the plague and many other misfortunes that befell society.

Following the expulsions, Jews ceased to constitute a permanent presence in the inland Slovenian lands—with the exception of the Gorizia region—until the nineteenth century. Trieste remained the principal Jewish centre in the wider region. In the areas where they lived, Jews were predominantly an urban population. Yet despite their expulsion, they left an enduring legacy, particularly in the development of the medieval towns of the Slovenian lands.

From the 1770s onwards, legislation once again permitted Jews to engage in commercial activities. A brief period of greater freedom followed with the establishment of the Illyrian Provinces in 1809, when Jewish settlement was officially permitted. This opportunity, however, lasted only until the dissolution of the Illyrian Provinces in 1813. Most Jews who settled during this period either emigrated or converted to Christianity. One notable exception was Moses Heilmann, whose remarkable perseverance is well documented. In 1817, he successfully petitioned the authorities to preserve the settlement rights his family had acquired during the Illyrian period. Full equality of settlement rights for all citizens was introduced only in 1867.

Jewish settlement had already begun to develop in Prekmurje before then, but immigration increased substantially during the second half of the nineteenth century. Likewise, by 1900 more than three hundred Jews lived in Carniola and Lower Styria, although they were concentrated primarily in the largest urban centres. The Jewish population reached its historical peak in 1910, when more than 1,300 Jews lived within the territory of present-day Slovenia at the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their numbers continued to increase modestly during the following years, particularly in the larger towns, even as the overall Jewish population gradually declined due to emigration from Prekmurje.

The interwar period witnessed a further strengthening of the Jewish community's role, particularly in international trade and industry. Among its most distinguished representatives was the industrialist and philanthropist Marko Rosner, whose entrepreneurial success was matched by his extensive civic engagement. Nevertheless, affluent Jewish families remained the exception rather than the rule. The overwhelming majority belonged to the educated and entrepre-

neurial middle class, participating actively in the economic, professional, and cultural life of Slovenian society.

At the same time, the growing visibility of Jewish life in the Drava Banovina coincided with the rise of modern antisemitism. Several dozen Polish Jewish students attended the University of Ljubljana, enriching its intellectual environment. In 1933, the Zionist youth movement Brit Bilu organised a summer camp in Kranjska Gora, while the Akiva youth movement held camps in Gozd Martuljek in 1936 and in Žirovnica in 1939. Among the participants who spent the summer of 1933 in Kranjska Gora was Reuven Dafni (1913–2005), who would later become one of the founders of the Israeli kibbutz movement and an important figure in the history of the State of Israel.

Acts of humanity also emerged during these increasingly difficult years. In 1940, the lawyer Uroš Žun from Radovljica saved sixteen Jewish girls by helping them cross the border to safety. His courageous actions stand among the many individual stories that remind us that moral responsibility and personal courage remained possible even in a time of growing persecution and intolerance.

The web of personal encounters and mutual influences is impossible to measure. The same is true of memories, many of which now survive only indirectly. During the 1980s, members of the generation born under the Habsburg monarchy still shared with me recollections that, at the time, seemed of little historical importance. Yet today they offer a rare glimpse into a vanished world. Through them, the past acquired a human face.

My grandfather often spoke of Max Horowitz and Katharina von Künsberg—relationships that were tragically severed by the Second World War. He recalled that he and Katharina exchanged a few final letters while she was already in hiding, moving from one refuge to another in an attempt to escape deportation to the concentration camps. Before the war, Judaism had not been the defining element of their identity. They were simply part of the commercial, cultural, and intellectual world of their time, participating naturally in the society in which they lived.

I also remember stories about a relative from Trieste, Alojzij, who, after the First World War, was entrusted with the care of Jewish property in the city. These were fragments of a world preserved only in memory. Had one chosen to explore further, countless other stories would undoubtedly have emerged. Among them was the story of a young Jewish girl who survived the war under the protection of a double agent working simultaneously for the Gestapo and the Yugoslav OZNA in Villach, only to escape from him immediately after the war by fleeing through Italy to Palestine.

Real lives are often more complex, profound, and moving than fiction. What made these memories especially compelling was that they did not come from books or archives, but from the lived experience of my grandparents' generation. Through their stories, I came to know a world that had once existed naturally and almost unnoticed—a world that disappeared within the span of a few tragic years.

Today, those memories survive only as faint echoes in the words of people who are no longer with us. Yet traces of that world remain. Židovska Street still bears its name, and perhaps one day someone will pause to ask why. Such questions remind us that history does not disappear entirely; it continues to speak quietly through places, names, memories, and the lives of those who came before us.

An understanding of the history of the Jewish community provides valuable insight into broader European developments in the evolution of human rights, religious freedom, and the protection of minorities. At the same time, it reveals the mechanisms of exclusion, religious intolerance, discrimination, and violence that ultimately culminated in the Holocaust. The history of the Jews in Slovenia is therefore not merely the history of a single minority, but an integral part of the wider European historical experience.

The significance of the Jewish community cannot be measured solely in terms of its economic achievements or demographic presence. Its enduring importance lies equally in its contribution to the coexistence of diverse cultures, the enrichment of Europe's intellectual and moral heritage, and the development of the universal values upon which modern democratic societies are founded. Through its history, we gain a deeper understanding not only of the past, but also of ourselves.

To understand the cultures and traditions that have coexisted throughout history—and which continually illuminate and enrich one another—is to acknowledge the richness and complexity of the human experience. Every individual, likewise, deserves to be valued for the diverse cultural, religious, and historical heritage they carry. Diversity is not a weakness but one of the fundamental strengths of every open and democratic society.

Alongside the surviving material remains of Jewish culture, its intangible heritage is of equal importance. This includes historical memory, scholarly research, museum collections and exhibitions, academic publications, educational programmes, and commemorative events dedicated to the Holocaust and to the history of the Jews in Slovenia. Over the past three decades, remarkable progress has been made in preserving and presenting this heritage. Such achievements have been made possible through the dedication of numerous scholars, institutions, and organisations—from the symposia organised by the Maribor Centre for Jewish Cultural Heritage to the Stolpersteine project, the Festival of Tolerance, and a growing body of scholarly publications and historical research.

The establishment of a permanent exhibition devoted to the history of the Jews in Slovenia is therefore of particular importance. It will help restore a chapter of history that has too often remained fragmented or overlooked within our collective memory. More than a museum display, it will become a place of remembrance, learning, dialogue, and reflection—a space in which visitors will be invited not only to discover the history of the Jewish community, but also to reflect upon the values of tolerance, responsibility, and human dignity that continue to shape our common future.





dr. Marjan Toš

ŠOA v Sloveniji: uničenje skupnosti

Beseda šoa, ki v hebrejščini pomeni katastrofo ali uničenje, je danes uveljavljeni izraz za genocid nad evropskimi Judi med drugo svetovno vojno. V nasprotju z izrazom holokavst, ki izhaja iz grške besede za žgalno daritev, šoa ne vsebuje povezave z žrtvovanjem. Zato jo večina Judov iz teoloških razlogov uporablja kot primernejše poimenovanje. Izraz se je uveljavil v Izraelu, Evropi in sodobnem zgodovinopisju, vse pogosteje pa ga uporabljajo tudi slovenske znanstvene in raziskovalne ustanove.

Šoa predstavlja najhujšo obliko kršenja temeljnih človekovih pravic, svoboščin in človeškega dostojanstva v moderni zgodovini ter skrajni vrh nacistične rasne politike. Čeprav se je sistematično preganjanje Judov začelo takoj po nacističnem prevzemu oblasti v Nemčiji leta 1933, je bilo izvajanje »dokončne rešitve judovskega vprašanja« uradno usklajeno 20. januarja 1942 na Wannseejski konferenci pri Berlinu.

Konferenco je vodil Reinhard Heydrich, eden glavnih organizatorjev in arhitektov genocida. Na sestanku so predstavniki nacističnega varnostnega aparata, SS in državnih ustanov uskladili organizacijska izhodišča za množične deportacije in sistematično uničenje evropskih Judov. Adolf Eichmann je bil odgovoren predvsem za praktično in logistično izvajanje deportacij, medtem ko je glavno politično in ideološko odgovornost nosilo nacistično vodstvo z Adolfom Hitlerjem in Heinrichom Himmlerjem na čelu.

Wannseejska konferenca je trajala le okoli devetdeset minut, vendar je vzpostavila upravni okvir za enega največjih zločinov v zgodovini človeštva: sistematično uničenje judovskega prebivalstva okupirane Evrope.

Danes, ko generacija neposrednih prič šoe hitro izginja, postaja ohranjanje spomina vse večja odgovornost. Po podatkih organizacije Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany živi po svetu manj kot dvesto tisoč preživelih judovskih žrtev holokavsta, njihova povprečna starost pa je že blizu devetdesetim letom. Z njihovim odhajanjem ne izginjajo le neposredna pričevanja, temveč tudi nenadomestljivi živi spomin na eno najtemnejših poglavij moderne zgodovine.

Judovska skupnost na predvečer ŠOE

Pred napadom sil osi na Kraljevino Jugoslavijo aprila 1941 je na ozemlju današnje Slovenije živelo manj kot tisoč Judov. Največje skupnosti so bile v Prekmurju, zlasti v Murski Soboti in Lendavi, manjše pa so obstajale tudi v Ljubljani, Mariboru, na Ptuju in v Celju.

Čeprav so Judje predstavljali zelo majhen delež prebivalstva, je bil njihov pomen v gospodarskem in družbenem življenju nesorazmerno večji od njihovega števila. Med njimi so bili ugledni trgovci, industrialci, podjetniki in finančniki, ki so slovenski prostor povezovali s širšimi gospodarskimi tokovi srednje Evrope.

V tridesetih letih 20. stoletja je naraščanje antisemitizma vse bolj vplivalo tudi na življenje Judov v Jugoslaviji. Po priključitvi Avstrije nacistični Nemčiji leta 1938 je čez jugoslovansko ozemlje potovalo vse več judovskih beguncev, ki so iskali pot proti Jadranu in izhod iz Evrope. Nekateri slovenski Judje so pravočasno prepoznali nevarnost in se izselili.

Leta 1940 je Kraljevina Jugoslavija, predvsem pod vplivom slovenskega politika in katoliškega duhovnika Antona Korošca, sprejela lastne protijudovske predpise. Ti so Judom omejevali dostop do izobraževanja, državljanskih pravic in gospodarskih dejavnosti. Čeprav ukrepi niso dosegali radikalnosti nacistične rasne zakonodaje, so pomenili pomemben prelom: antisemitizem je postal del uradne državne politike še pred okupacijo Jugoslavije.

Okupacija in uničenje judovske skupnosti

Napad sil osi na Kraljevino Jugoslavijo 6. aprila 1941 je pomenil začetek konca organiziranega judovskega življenja na Slovenskem. Slovensko ozemlje so si razdelile Nemčija, Italija in Madžarska, vsaka okupacijska oblast pa je uvedla svojo upravo in lastne protijudovske ukrepe. Čeprav so se njihove metode razlikovale, je bil končni izid enak: uničenje judovske navzočnosti na zasedenih območjih.

Na nemškem okupacijskem območju je bila nacistična rasna zakonodaja uvedena takoj. Judom so odvzeli državljanske pravice, zasegali so njihovo premoženje, arizirali podjetja, mnoge pa aretirali ali prisilili v beg. Italijansko okupacijsko območje z Ljubljano je sprva pomenilo relativno zatočišče. Do kapitulacije Italije septembra 1943 je tam začasno varnost našlo več sto judovskih beguncev z nemških okupacijskih območij, iz Nemčije, Avstrije in Neodvisne države Hrvaške.

Pomembno pomoč jim je zagotavljal DELASEM, italijanska judovska humanitarna organizacija, ki je beguncem nudila oskrbo, pravno pomoč in podporo pri nadaljnjem izseljevanju. Med pomembnimi posredniki med judovskimi begunci in italijanskimi oblastmi je bil ljubljanski vinski veletrgovec Evgen Bolaffio. Kljub temu popolne varnosti tudi pod italijansko oblastjo ni bilo, saj so se dogajale posamezne aretacije in deportacije.

Med Judi, ki so se pravočasno umaknili, je bil tudi mariborski tekstilni industrialec in dobrotnik Marko Rosner, ustanovni donator Sloven-

ske akademije znanosti in umetnosti. Pomembno vlogo je imel tudi pri reševanju judovskih begunskih otrok, pozneje znanih kot otroci Vile Emma. Njegovo delovanje ostaja eden pomembnejših primerov solidarnosti in pomoči v času naraščajočega preganjanja.

Razmere so se korenito spremenile po kapitulaciji Italije septembra 1943. Nemške sile so zasedle nekdanje italijansko okupacijsko območje in nanj nemudoma razširile nacistično rasno politiko. Začasnega zatočišča, ki ga je ponujala Ljubljana, je bilo konec. Nemške okupacijske oblasti so ob pomoči kolaborantske uprave in policije septembra 1944 aretirale še preostale Jude v Ljubljani ter jih odpeljale v delovna in koncentracijska taborišča.

Usodne posledice je imelo tudi preganjanje Judov na Tržaškem in Goriškem. V šoi je bilo umorjenih 764 Judov s Tržaškega in 45 z Goriškega, s čimer sta bili tamkajšnji zgodovinski skupnosti skoraj povsem uničeni.

Najhujša katastrofa pa je prizadela Prekmurje. Po nemški okupaciji Madžarske marca 1944 so madžarske oblasti hitro začele izvajati »dokončno rešitev«. Dne 26. aprila 1944 so aretirale Jude iz Murske Sobote in Lendave. Zbrane so odpeljali prek Čakovca v začasni geto v Nagykanizsi in nato v Auschwitz-Birkenau. V naslednjih mesecih so sledile še manjše deportacije. V nekaj dneh so skoraj povsem izginile skupnosti, ki so v pokrajini živele več generacij.

Leto 1944 je bilo tako za večino slovenskih Judov usodno. Med aprilom in oktobrom je bila deportirana skoraj celotna judovska skupnost Prekmurja, v istem obdobju pa je judovsko prebivalstvo izginilo tudi iz osrednje Slovenije. Do jeseni 1944 je bilo organizirano judovsko življenje na Slovenskem skoraj povsem uničeno.

Po ocenah je bilo v šoi umorjenih 86,6 odstotka slovenskih Judov, verjetno pa je bil dejanski delež še bližje devetdesetim odstotkom. Natančnega števila žrtev ne bomo nikoli poznali; sedanje ocene govorijo o 575 do 587 umorjenih Judih z območja današnje Slovenije.

Za temi številkami niso bili le statistični podatki, temveč posamezna življenja, družine, poklici, verske in kulturne tradicije ter skupnosti, ki so bile stoletja vpete v slovenski prostor. Šoa ni uničila le ljudi, temveč celotno kulturno pokrajino: sinagoge so utihnile, šole se zaprle, podjetja izginila, pokopališča ostala zapuščena, stoletja skupnostnega življenja pa so bila izbrisana v nekaj mesecih.

Po ŠOI: skupnost, ki si ni nikoli opomogla

Po koncu druge svetovne vojne se judovska skupnost na Slovenskem ni nikoli več vrnila v stanje, kakršno je poznala pred aprilom 1941. V demografskem, verskem in kulturnem smislu je bila katastrofa nepopravljiva. Iz koncentracijskih taborišč se je vrnila le peščica preživelih, ki so našli povsem spremenjen svet: družine so bile uničene, domovi in podjetja zaplenjeni, sinagoge opustele, stoletja skupnostnega življenja pa prekinjena.

Mnogi preživeli so se po vojni izselili, predvsem v Izrael in Združene države Amerike. Tisti, ki so ostali, so se znašli v družbi, ki je le redko

prepoznavala posebno usodo Judov med vojno. Povojna Judovska skupnost Slovenije ni več mogla obnoviti verskega in skupnostnega življenja v obsegu, kakršnega je poznala pred vojno. Versko življenje je bilo skrčeno na minimum, javno izražanje judovske identitete pa pogosto nezaželeno ali pa so se mu zaradi travmatičnih izkušenj ogibali tudi Judje sami.

V socialistični Jugoslaviji je bil spomin na šoo večinoma podrejen širši pripovedi o narodnoosvobodilnem boju in splošnem trpljenju pod okupacijo. Judovske žrtve so bile le redko obravnavane kot posebna skupina žrtev genocida. O uničenju judovskih skupnosti se je govorilo malo, njihova zgodovinska vloga pa je ostajala na robu javnega spomina.

Izginjale so tudi materialne sledi judovske navzočnosti. Leta 1954 je bila porušena sinagoga v Murski Soboti, ena najpomembnejših judovskih sakralnih stavb na Slovenskem. Njeno rušenje je pomenilo veliko kulturno izgubo in simbolično prekinitve zgodovinskega spomina. Lendavska sinagoga se je sicer ohranila, vendar je bila po nacionalizaciji spremenjena v skladišče in izgubila svojo prvotno versko funkcijo. Uničeno je bilo tudi judovsko pokopališče v Murski Soboti, medtem ko se je pokopališče v Dolgi vasi ohranilo kot najpomembnejši preostanek judovske pokopališke dediščine v Sloveniji, čeprav je desetletja ostajalo brez ustrezne zaščite.

Nova komunistična oblast ni posvečala posebne pozornosti preživelim Judom niti ni njihovega prispevka k razvoju Prekmurja in Slovenije ustrezno ovrednotila. Pozabljalo se je, da so prav judovski podjetniki, trgovci, industrialci in izobraženci pomembno prispevali h gospodarskemu in družbenemu razvoju Murske Sobote, Lendave ter številnih drugih krajev. Njihova dediščina je postopoma izginjala iz javnega spomina.

Šele po osamosvojitvi Slovenije se je začelo sistematično raziskovanje zgodovine slovenskih Judov in njihovega uničenja med šoo. Pomembno vlogo pri tem imajo zgodovinarji, muzeji, raziskovalne ustanove ter Judovska skupnost Slovenije in Judovski kulturni center Ljubljana. Raziskave, razstave, publikacije, spominski projekti in izobraževalni programi so omogočili, da se je zgodovina Judov začela vračati v slovenski kulturni in zgodovinski spomin.

Danes je Judovska skupnost Slovenije ena najmanjših v Evropi. Po zadnjem popisu se je za Jude opredelilo 99 prebivalcev, dejansko število ljudi judovskega rodu ali porekla pa je nekoliko večje, saj mnogi svojo identiteto živijo predvsem znotraj družine in kulturne tradicije. Njihov pomen pa ni nikoli temeljil na številčnosti. Prispevek Judov h gospodarskemu, kulturnemu, znanstvenemu in družbenemu razvoju slovenskega prostora je bil mnogo večji, kot bi lahko sklepali iz njihovega deleža med prebivalstvom.

Epilog: spomin kot odgovornost

Vprašanje šoe ni le zgodovinsko vprašanje, temveč predvsem moralno vprašanje sedanjosti. Z izginjanjem zadnjih preživelih postaja odgovornost za ohranjanje spomina vse večja. Njihova pričevanja so desetletja predstavljala najmočnejši dokaz o razsežnostih nacističnega genocida. Danes ostajajo predvsem dokumenti, fotografije, muzejske zbirke, spomeniki, raziskave in zgodovinski spomin.

Posebno mesto med slovenskimi preživelimi ima Erika Fürst (1931–2024), zadnja prekmurska judovska priča šoe. S svojimi pričevanji je desetletja opozarjala mlade generacije na nevarnosti sovraštva, rasizma in antisemitizma. Njeno sporočilo »Nikoli več« ni bilo le osebni spomin na Auschwitz, temveč poziv prihodnjim generacijam, naj nikoli ne dopustijo ponovitve podobnega zla. Podpirala je ohranjanje judovske dediščine v Sloveniji, postavljanje Tlakovcev spomina ter obeleževanje krajev, kjer so nekoč živeli slovenski Judje.

Prav zaradi izginjanja živih prič postajajo materialni dokazi še pomembnejši. V muzeju Auschwitz-Birkenau obiskovalci ne poslušajo predvsem zgodovinskih razlag, temveč vidijo predmete ljudi, ki jih ni več: čevlje, kovčke, očala, otroške igrače, molitvenike, fotografije in lase umorjenih. Prav ti predmeti najbolj neposredno pričajo o razsežnostih razčlovečenja. Kot je zapisal Primo Levi, eden najpomembnejših pričevalcev Auschwitza: »Resnico o nacistični končni rešitvi poznajo samo tisti, ki so bili umorjeni v plinskih celicah.« Njegove besede ostajajo eno najmočnejših opozoril o mejah človeškega razumevanja tega zločina.

Šoa je bila mogoča tudi zato, ker je preveč ljudi molčalo. Danes zgodovinarji soglašajo, da večina prebivalcev nacistične Nemčije sicer ni poznala vseh podrobnosti industrijskega uničevanja, vendar je vedela dovolj, da je slutila, da se dogajajo množični zločini. Mnogi so gledali stran zaradi strahu, propagande, antisemitizma ali preprosto zato, ker niso želeli vedeti. Prav zato šoa ostaja trajno opozorilo, da množični zločini niso mogoči samo zaradi fanatičnih storilcev, temveč tudi zaradi brezbrčnosti in molka večine.

V sodobni Evropi se ponovno srečujemo z naraščanjem antisemitizma, zgodovinskega revizionizma, zanikanja holokavsta in različnih oblik sovražnega govora. Relativizacija nacističnih zločinov ter enačenje storilcev in žrtev pomenita nevarno potvarjanje zgodovine. Naloga zgodovinske stroke je, da na podlagi preverljivih virov jasno razlikuje med agresorjem in žrtvijo ter varuje zgodovinsko resnico pred političnimi manipulacijami.

Zgodovina Judov v Sloveniji ni le zgodovina majhne verske skupnosti. Je sestavni del slovenske in evropske zgodovine. Ohraniti spomin nanjo pomeni ohraniti spomin na ljudi, ki so pomembno prispevali h gospodarskemu, kulturnemu in družbenemu razvoju slovenskega prostora, hkrati pa opozarjati, kam lahko pripeljejo sovraštvo, izključevanje in razčlovečenje.

Spomin na šoo zato ni pogled nazaj, temveč odgovornost do prihodnosti. Njegovo sporočilo ostaja preprosto in univerzalno: človekovo dostojanstvo, človekove pravice in spoštovanje različnosti niso samo-umevni. Vsaka generacija jih mora znova varovati.

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Ogledalo judovske družine iz Prekmurja / Mirror of a Jewish Family from Prekmurje

Dr. Marjan Toš

The Shoah in Slovenia: The Destruction of a Community

The Hebrew word Shoah, meaning catastrophe or destruction, is today the preferred term for the genocide of European Jewry during the Second World War. Unlike the word Holocaust, derived from the Greek term for a burnt sacrificial offering, Shoah carries no association with sacrifice and has become the standard designation in Israel as well as in much of contemporary historical scholarship. The Shoah represents the most radical assault on human dignity and fundamental human rights in modern history. Although anti-Jewish persecution began immediately after the Nazi seizure of power in Germany in 1933, the systematic extermination of European Jewry was formally coordinated at the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942 under the leadership of Reinhard Heydrich. The conference, which lasted little more than ninety minutes, established the administrative framework for what the Nazi regime called the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." Today, as the last generation of Holocaust survivors rapidly disappears, remembrance has become an ever greater responsibility. According to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, fewer than 200,000 Holocaust survivors remain alive worldwide. Their passing reminds us that the preservation of memory now depends increasingly on historians, educators, museums, and future generations.

On the eve of the Second World War, fewer than one thousand Jews lived within the territory of present-day Slovenia. The largest communities were concentrated in Prekmurje, particularly in Murska Sobota and Lendava, while smaller communities flourished in Ljubljana, Maribor, Ptuj, and Celje. Although few in number, Slovenian Jews played a disproportionately important role in commerce, finance, industry, and urban economic development. During the 1930s, the spread of antisemitism across Europe increasingly affected Jewish life in Yugoslavia. Following the Anschluss of Austria in 1938, growing numbers of Jewish refugees crossed Slovenian territory in search of safety, while many Slovenian Jews recognised the mounting danger and chose to emigrate. In 1940, under the political influence of

Anton Korošec, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia introduced anti-Jewish legislation that restricted Jewish participation in education, public life, and the economy. Although far less radical than the Nuremberg Laws, these measures marked a profound shift, demonstrating that antisemitism had become part of official state policy even before the German invasion.

Occupation and the Destruction of the Jewish Community

The Axis invasion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941 marked the beginning of the end for Jewish life in Slovenia. The country was divided between Germany, Italy, and Hungary, each occupying power imposing its own administration and anti-Jewish policies. While their methods differed, their objective was ultimately the same: the elimination of Jewish presence from the territories under their control.

In the German occupation zone, Nazi racial legislation was introduced immediately. Jews were stripped of their civil rights, their property was confiscated, businesses were Aryanised, and many were arrested or forced to flee. The Italian occupation zone, centred on Ljubljana, initially offered relative safety. Until Italy's capitulation in September 1943, several hundred Jewish refugees from German-occupied territories found temporary refuge there. Many survived thanks to the humanitarian work of DELASEM, the Italian Jewish relief organisation, and to the courage of individuals who provided assistance despite the growing danger.

Among those who managed to escape was Marko Rosner, the Maribor industrialist and philanthropist who had previously helped rescue the Jewish refugee children later known as the Villa Emma children. His actions remain one of the most remarkable examples of humanity and solidarity shown by Slovenian Jews during the darkest years of persecution.

Everything changed after Italy's surrender in September 1943. German forces occupied the former Italian zone and immediately extended Nazi racial policy throughout the territory. The temporary refuge that Ljubljana had offered came to an abrupt end. Assisted by the collaborationist authorities, the German occupation administration arrested the remaining Jewish residents and deported them to concentration and extermination camps.

The final catastrophe unfolded in Prekmurje. After Germany occupied Hungary in March 1944, the Hungarian authorities swiftly implemented the Final Solution. On 26 April 1944, the Jews of Murska Sobota and Lendava were rounded up and deported. Within days, communities that had existed for generations disappeared almost entirely. Most deportees were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they were murdered immediately upon arrival.

The same fate soon befell the Jewish communities of Ljubljana, Maribor, Ptuj, Gorizia, and Trieste. By the autumn of 1944, Jewish communal life in Slovenia had been almost completely extinguished. Historians estimate that between 575 and 587 Slovenian Jews were

murdered during the Shoah, representing nearly ninety percent of the country's pre-war Jewish population. Behind these figures were not merely statistics but individual lives, families, professions, traditions, and communities whose history had been woven into the Slovenian lands for centuries.

The Shoah destroyed far more than people. It brought to an end an entire cultural landscape. Synagogues fell silent, schools closed, businesses disappeared, cemeteries were abandoned, and communities that had contributed to the economic, cultural, and intellectual life of Slovenia for generations vanished within only a few months.

After the Shoah: Silence and Survival

The end of the Second World War did not bring an end to loss. Although a small number of Slovenian Jews survived the Holocaust and returned home, they found communities that no longer existed. Families had been murdered, homes and businesses confiscated, synagogues abandoned, and centuries of communal life erased. In demographic, religious, and cultural terms, the Jewish community in Slovenia never recovered.

Many survivors chose to emigrate, while those who remained faced the difficult task of rebuilding their lives in a society that rarely recognised the specifically Jewish experience of wartime persecution. During the socialist period, the Holocaust was largely subsumed within the broader narrative of the anti-fascist struggle. Jewish victims were seldom commemorated as a distinct community, and public awareness of Jewish history remained limited.

The material traces of Jewish life also continued to disappear. In 1954, the synagogue in Murska Sobota, one of the most important symbols of Jewish life in Prekmurje, was demolished. The synagogue in Lendava survived, but after nationalisation it was converted into a warehouse, stripped of its religious and historical function. The Jewish cemetery in Murska Sobota was destroyed, while the cemetery at Dolga Vas, today the largest preserved Jewish cemetery in Slovenia, remained neglected for decades before systematic conservation efforts finally began after Slovenian independence.

Even after 1991, the rediscovery of Jewish heritage was gradual. Much had already been lost: archives dispersed, buildings demolished, cemeteries damaged, and family histories forgotten. Yet during the past three decades, historians, museums, local communities, and the renewed Jewish community have undertaken significant efforts to recover this neglected chapter of Slovenian history. Research, publications, memorial projects, educational programmes, and the restoration of surviving heritage sites have gradually restored the Jewish presence to Slovenia's historical memory.

Today, the Jewish Community of Slovenia remains one of the smallest in Europe. Yet its significance cannot be measured by numbers alone. The contribution of Slovenian Jews to the country's economic, cultural, intellectual, and civic development far exceeded the size of the community itself. Their history remains an inseparable part of Slovenia's own historical and cultural heritage.

Memory and Responsibility

The Shoah did not destroy only individual lives. It brought to an end an entire world of faith, language, traditions, professions, family histories, and everyday existence. Within a remarkably short period, centuries of Jewish life in the Slovenian lands were almost entirely erased. The destruction was not only physical but also cultural and spiritual, leaving behind a silence that endured long after the war itself had ended.

For decades, that silence was reinforced by neglect. Synagogues disappeared, cemeteries fell into disrepair, family archives were scattered, and countless names faded from public memory. The destruction of the Jewish community was followed by the gradual disappearance of the memory of that community itself.

Yet memory survives in many forms. It lives not only in monuments and historic buildings, but also in scholarship, literature, museums, education, family stories, and personal testimony. Every restored cemetery, every preserved photograph, every recovered document, every survivor's testimony, and every name rescued from oblivion helps reconstruct fragments of the world that the Shoah sought to erase forever.

Remembering the Shoah therefore means more than commemorating those who were murdered. It means restoring the history of the communities that existed before the catastrophe—their lives, achievements, traditions, and contributions to Slovenian society. The history of the Jews in Slovenia is not a marginal chapter of the nation's past but an integral part of its cultural and historical heritage.

As the last eyewitnesses disappear, the responsibility for preserving memory passes to historians, educators, museums, and future generations. Remembering is not only an act of mourning; it is a commitment to defending human dignity, rejecting antisemitism and all forms of hatred, and safeguarding the democratic values upon which free societies depend.

This exhibition is part of that commitment. It seeks not only to commemorate those who perished, but also to restore the presence of a community whose history profoundly shaped the Slovenian lands for centuries. Every recovered name, every family story, and every surviving object returned to public memory represents a small victory over oblivion.

The Shoah remains one of humanity's greatest moral failures. Remembering it is not only an obligation to the past—it is a responsibility toward the future.



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Dušan Šarotar:

Spominjanje in pripovedovanje

Na začetku je bila fotografija, pravzaprav tišina, zgolj sanjska, krhka, ampak neuničljiva podoba brez zgodbe, nekaj, kar stoji pred jezikom. Zdaj, ko z vsakim zapisanim stavkom še vedno prihajam k jeziku, tako kot pesnik s prvim verzom vsake pesmi obnovi ali na novo ustvari jezik, vem, da se zares šele učim pisati, saj pisanje v sebi skriva sanje, morebiti tisto prvotno fotografijo, ki je že dolgo izgubljena. O podobi, vedno bolj zabrisani, megleni in zbledeli, da na porumenelem papirju ne moremo več zares prepoznati vseh nasmejanih, resnih ali žalobnih obrazov, že skorajda zlitih s presvetljeno pokrajino v ozadju, ki nemo pričajo iz globlin na videz pozabljenega časa; pa vendar, dokler bodo na svetu navdahnjeni pesniki in melanholični pripovedovalci, ki s svojo večščino spominjanja, z jezikom narejenim iz spomina in domišljije, obnavljajo prvotno podobo, do takrat se bo v nas ohranjala tudi senca, sled večnega in tihega prostora, trajnejšega od časa.

Spominjam se, da sem ob neki priložnosti, morebiti med brezskrbno otroško igro na prostranem notranjem dvorišču, pred hišo, ki je stala na najlepši soboški ulici, Lendavski ulici 8, samo za hip, kot sij bliskavic na fotografskem aparatu, ki presvetli prostor in v trenutku spet stemni, torej v tistem drobnem trenutku, ko se je za vedno vtisnil vame, je neznana in skrivnostna svetloba izrisala sliko otroka, nasmejanega dečka brez imena, odetega v svečano obleko iz težkega blaga in nedoločljive barve, na posiveli fotografiji je videti temnejša od neostrega ozadja; vedno znova ugibam, ko jo poskušam priklicati v spomin ali opisati z besedami, ki jih je vse več, a nikoli zares dovolj, da bi ujel odtenek sive, rjave, morebiti modre, kajšele fino teksturo in volumen tkanine, ki jo je fantu ukrožil izkušen krojaški mojster. Na najsvetlejšem izrezu fotografije izstopa gladko zlikana srajca iz belega platna s širokim ovratnikom in dolgimi rokavi, ki molijo, silijo izpod suknjiča in segajo segajo skorajda do dolgih in mehkih prstov, ki ponosno držijo zloščeno violino ob njegovem zravnem telesu. Prav tako ugibam, ko opazujem izgubljeno fotografijo, saj je nikoli nisem več zares videl, čeprav sem jo mnogo let pozneje iskal, kakšne

barve oči je imel deček na sliki, ki jo čuvam v minljivem in nepopolnem spominu, so videti črne, se sprašujem, zagotovo temnejše od vseh oči, ki sem jih kadarkoli videl, toda ko se jim približam, ali ko jih vidim v daljavi, so nenavadno živahne, velike in svetle; vedno, ko se zagledam v globoko nočno nebo, bodisi nad otokom ali nad ravnico, vidim zvezde, ki se vžigajo kot sveče, se spomnim tistih oči, saj je v njih, čeprav jih več ni, še vedno svetloba, ki potuje skozi spomin, kot sij že davno uglaslih zvezd, ki potuje milijarde let do nas skozi vesolje, da bi ponovno za hip zasijale v tistem, ki stoji sam na svetu, da se nikoli ne pozabi. Ne vem, zdi se, da so nekje še oči, kot ugasle zvezde, ki so videle že vse, čeprav so samo oči otroka. Deček z violino je vedel, pomislim zdaj, osemdeset let pozneje, da smrti ni, čeprav je bil kmalu, kar je že slutil, po tem, ko je bila fotografija narejena, ki sem jo videl, ko sem bi še otrok, takorekoč podobnih let kot portretiranec, deportiran s svojo mamo in takorekoč z vso prekmursko judovsko skupnostjo v koncentracijsko taborišče Auschwitz, od koder se ne bo nikoli več vrnil. Zdaj se samo nenehoma vrača, prihaja kot spomin, pripoveduje iz tišine, kot podoba iz izgubljene fotografije.

Umetnost, pesništvo še posebej, pripovedovanje in spominjanje, je oblika žalovanja. Vsak posameznik in še posebej skupnost kot celota potrebujejo zgodbo o ljubezni in smrti. Dokler temeljna zgodba ni povedana ali se njeno nasledstvo v generacijah pripovedovalcev in ustvarjalcev prekine, pozabi ali izgubi, dotlej v dušah ni pomiritve ali osvoboditve, zato pravim, da je poezija dialog z mrtvimi; kot sem zapisal na drugem mestu: "Prepričan sem, da ni družine, če nima svoje zgodbe. Družina je zavetje zgodb. To je neviden in neotipljiv material, ki se prenaša z jezikom iz roda v rod. Danes temu popularno rečemo travma, preprosto rečeno zgodba, ki je bila prisilno zamolčana, a se s svojo močjo in bolečino oglašajo kot mrtve duše, ki blodijo v sanjah otrok in odraslih še dve, tri ali sto generacij pozneje. Travmo danes prepoznamo in zdravimo na klinikah in med seansami. Toda, vprašajmo, kako je človeštvo zdravilo in obvladovalo hude travme pred odkritjem klinike, recimo v predmoderni dobi, v antiki, v praskupnosti? Mislim, da je to bila naloga in skrivna moč zgodb, večšina njihovih pripovedovalcev, ki so s pomočjo pripovedi prenašali kolektivne spomine in lajšali travmatične bolečine ob smrti, bolezni, vojni, zmrzali, suši, neplodnosti, nenazadnje v ljubezni. Rojstvo pesništva iz duha bolečine."

Zdaj vem, da je bilo tistemu dečku na izgubljeni fotografiji ime Evgen, njegova mama je bila Rozalija, dekleško Hahn, njenemu očetu in možu je bilo ime Franz, bil je trgovec iz Čakovca, ki se je po poroki priselil v Prekmurje; pisali so se Schwartz, živeli so značilno življenje judovske podeželske družine. V najemu so imeli občinsko trgovino na železniški postaji v Šalovcih. Otrok se je zakoncema Schwartz rodil kmalu po poroki leta 1933. Ob skrbni in predani vzgoji se je otrok zgodaj naučil brati in pisati v več jezikih, imel izražen talent za glasbo, predano je vadal violino, zanimal se je za takrat popularno tehniko, predvsem letalstvo, železnico in z velikim interesom proučeval astronomijo, domišljijo in vedenje si je bogatil iz številnih časopisov, knjig in ilustriranih revij, ki mu jih je naročil ali kupoval oče na svojih številnih trgovskih poteh, bodisi v Soboti, Trstu, Zagrebu, Budimpešti, Gradcu ali Dunaju. Skratka, Franz je sedel na vlak in se odpeljal po

»Prepričan sem, da ni družine, če nima svoje zgodbe. Družina je zavetje zgodb. To je neviden in neotipljiv material, ki se prenaša z jezikom iz roda v rod.«

svojih poteh, medtem pa ga je njegov sin, če že ni zares potoval z očetom do bližnjega mesta, čakal doma s knjigo v rokah ali pa ga je spremljal v domišljiji, s prstom po zemljevidu.

Vse se je nepovratno spremenilo ob začetku druge svetovne vojne. Madžarska je znova okupirala Prekmurje, Franz je bil kmalu prisilno mobiliziran v madžarsko vojsko, Evgen, Rozalija in hišna pomočnica Helena, so gospodarili sami v hiši. Katastrofa jih je dokončno dosegla maja 1944, ko sta bila Evgen in Rozalija deportirana v Auschwitz, od koder se nista vrnila nikoli več, v samo nekaj dneh je izginila tako rekoč celotna prekmurska judovska skupnost. Preživela je le peščica, ki se je po vojni vrnila v svoje upostošene, izropane ali odvzete družinske hiše. Med redkimi preživeli Judi je bil tudi Franz, ki se je kmalu po vojni znova poročil, z ženo Klaro sta imela tri hčerke, Nado, Drago in Gito, jaz sem Nadin sin. V družino se je vrnila tudi hišna pomočnica Helena.

Kljub temu, da je bila prekmurska judovska skupnost izjemno vitalna, tako gospodarsko, kulturno in versko, o čemer pričajo razvejani poslovni stiki, bogato kulturno življenje in nenazadnje sinagoge v Soboti, Beltincih in Lendavi. Vendar po katastrofi druge svetovne vojne, ko je bila večina Judov pobitih, sledi njihovih življenj in prisotnosti v prostoru pa uničene, je šlo vse samo še navzdol. Po holokavstu se je nadaljeval še proces skorajda popolne kulturne in socialne amnezije; molka in pozabe.

Vsaka zgodba bi morala najti svojega pripovedovalca, vsaka ostalina, svojega varuha. Ljudje smo varuhi spomina. Vsi poznamo znameniti izrek, če rešiš enega človeka, rešiš vse človeštvo; jaz sem pisatelj, dovolite, da parafraziram to lepo in globoko misel, torej: če rešiš enega pripovedovalca, rešiš vse zgodbe.





Evgen Schwartz, Foto/ Photo: Julij Schönauer

Dušan Šarotar:

Remembering and Telling

In the beginning there was a photograph—or rather, silence: a dreamlike, fragile, yet indestructible image without a story, something that exists beyond language. Even now, as I return to language with every sentence I write—as every poet, with the opening line of a poem, renews or recreates language—I know that I am still only learning how to write. Writing conceals within itself the dream of that original photograph, long since lost: an image that grows ever more blurred, hazy, and faded, until the yellowing paper no longer reveals the smiling, solemn, or mournful faces that have almost dissolved into the overexposed landscape behind them. Yet they continue to bear silent witness from the depths of what seems like a forgotten time. And as long as there are inspired poets and melancholic storytellers who weave memory and imagination into language, the original image can be restored. Then the shadow remains—the trace of an eternal silence more enduring than time itself.

Art—and poetry above all—together with storytelling and remembrance, is a form of mourning. Every individual, and every community, needs a story through which love and death can be understood. Until that essential story has been told—or until its thread is broken, forgotten, or lost somewhere between generations of storytellers—there can be neither peace nor liberation of the soul.

This is why I have often said that poetry is a dialogue with the dead. Elsewhere I wrote:

“I am convinced that there is no family without its own story. Every family is a sanctuary of stories. These stories form an invisible and intangible inheritance, passed from one generation to the next through language. Today we call this inheritance trauma: a story violently silenced, yet one that continues to speak through its pain and its power, like the souls of the dead wandering through the dreams of children and adults, two, three, or even a hundred generations later.”

Today trauma is recognised, studied, and treated in clinics and

psychotherapy. Yet one cannot help wondering: how did humanity endure profound trauma before such institutions existed? How did people survive unbearable grief in antiquity, in the Middle Ages, or even in prehistory?

I believe that this was the purpose—and the hidden power—of stories. Storytellers carried collective memory from one generation to the next. Through narrative they gave meaning to suffering and soothed the wounds left by death, disease, war, famine, frost, drought, infertility, and, perhaps above all, by love itself. In this sense, poetry is born from the spirit of pain.

Today I know that the boy in the lost photograph was called Evgen. His mother was Rozalija, née Hahn; his father, Franz Schwartz, was a merchant from Čakovec who settled in Prekmurje after his marriage. Like so many Jewish families in the region, they lived an ordinary life that, only in retrospect, appears extraordinary. They rented the municipal shop beside the railway station in Šalovci.

Evgen was born shortly after his parents married, in 1933. He learned to read and write unusually early, mastering several languages while still a child. He displayed an exceptional gift for music and practised the violin with remarkable dedication. He was fascinated by the modern technologies of his time—especially trains and aeroplanes—and developed an early passion for astronomy. His father subscribed to newspapers, magazines, and books, bringing them home from his business trips to Murska Sobota, Trieste, Zagreb, Budapest, Graz, and Vienna. Through those journeys, and through those books, the child discovered a world far larger than the village in which he lived.

Whenever Franz boarded a train and disappeared toward one of those distant cities, his son remained behind with a book in his hands. And when he was not travelling beside his father, he travelled in imagination, following the railway lines across maps with the tip of his finger, as though every destination were already waiting for him somewhere beyond the horizon.

Everything changed irrevocably with the outbreak of the Second World War. Hungary once again occupied Prekmurje, and Franz was soon conscripted into the Hungarian Army. Evgen, his mother Rozalija, and the family's housekeeper Helena were left to care for the household alone.

The catastrophe reached them in May 1944. Evgen and Rozalija were deported to Auschwitz, from which neither of them returned. Within the space of only a few days, almost the entire Jewish community of Prekmurje disappeared. Only a handful survived the war and returned to homes that had been looted, confiscated, or abandoned.

Franz was among the few who survived. After the war he remarried. Together with his second wife, Klara, he had three daughters—Nada, Draga, and Gita. I am Nada's son. Helena, the family's devoted housekeeper, also returned and remained with them.

Before the war, the Jewish community of Prekmurje had been remarkably vibrant. It flourished economically, culturally, and religiously, sustained by extensive commercial networks, an active intellectu-

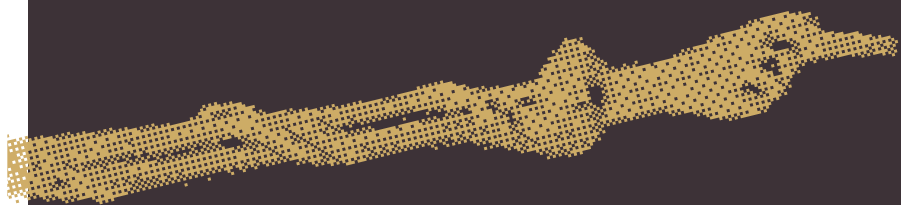
al life, and the synagogues of Murska Sobota, Beltinci, and Lendava. The Holocaust brought that world to an abrupt end. Most of its members were murdered, while the physical traces of their lives were systematically erased. What followed was not only the destruction of a community but the gradual disappearance of its memory. The silence that began during the war was followed by decades of forgetting—an almost complete cultural and social amnesia.

Every story must eventually find its storyteller, just as every relic must find its guardian. We human beings are, above all, the guardians of memory.

We all know the ancient teaching that whoever saves a single human life saves all humanity. As a writer, allow me to offer a small variation on that profound thought:

Whoever saves a single storyteller saves every story.

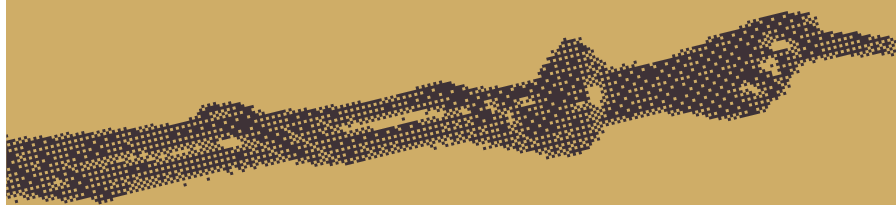
**Whoever saves a single
storyteller saves every
story.**



dr. Lev Kreft

Moje judovstvo?

Neskončno razpravljanje o judovski identiteti in identifikaciji je srž pripadnost za razliko od tistih verskih in drugih pripadnosti, ki niso razcepljene in se počutijo dobro, kadar je vse jasno in ni o čem razpravljati. Jud, ki ne razpravlja o tem? Tega sploh ni. Za začetek: jaz se nikoli nisem imel za Juda, vedno za Žida. Z veliko začetnico, ki podčrtuje, da ne gre za »narojeno«, ampak za narejeno identiteto. Kako je narejena moja? Po očetu sem Slovenec, po mami Žid – slovenski Žid po rodu iz Prekmurja in židovski Slovenec po rodu iz Prlekije. To bi vodilo v hibridnost, ampak meni ni bilo nikoli všeč, da bi se predstavljal kot pōla-pōla, tako kot porcija z roštilja. Slovenska rodovna računica je patrilinearna, židovska pa matrilinearna. Torej sem 100-odstotni Slovenec in 100-odstotni Žid. Židovstvu in slovenstvu pripadam po kulturi, po obeh kulturah, ne po religiji in ne po nacionalističnem navdušenju. Ko sem bil pred 55 leti na kongresu svetovne judovske študentarije v Jeruzalemu v jugoslovanski delegaciji, nas niso razumeli in so nas vsi ostali popljuvali, ko smo izrazili to kulturno židovstvo, češ, da obstaja le židovstvo sinagoge in nič drugega. Po njihovem Židje nismo narod in bi nas bilo treba pisati z malo začetnico. Jaz pa mislim, da vsi Židje nismo židje, in da je dragoceno ohraniti v židovski skupnosti tako žide kot Žide. Identiteto mojih potomcev sem medtem še bolj zapletel. Poročil sem se z Vesno, ki je bila po materi Slovenka in po očetu Židinja, tako da sva se lahko hecala, da po trdih pravilih ona ni zares ne eno ne drugo. Hkrati je njena rodovna linija povsem sefardska, moja pa aškenaška, kar je menda bolj konfliktno od vseh ostalih že navedenih identitet. Sem torej Žid? Gotovo, saj sem o tem vedno pripravljen razpravljati, tudi sam s seboj.



Translator's note: The Slovenian original deliberately distinguishes between Jud and Žid, both conventionally translated into English as "Jew"; and between the capitalized Žid and lowercase žid. Kreft uses these linguistic distinctions to explore different conceptions of Jewish identity and belonging. The Slovenian forms are therefore retained where the distinction is essential to the text.

Dr. Lev Kreft

My Jewishness?

The endless discussion of Jewish identity and identification lies at the very heart of belonging, unlike those religious and other forms of belonging that are not divided within themselves and feel perfectly at ease when everything is clear and there is nothing to discuss. A Jew who does not discuss being a Jew? There is no such thing.

To begin with: I have never thought of myself as a Jud, always as a Žid.* With a capital letter, to underline that this is not an identity one is born into, but one that is made.

How was mine made? On my father's side I am Slovenian, on my mother's a Žid – a Slovenian Žid with roots in Prekmurje, and a Jewish Slovenian with roots in Prlekija. This might seem to lead to hybridity, but I have never liked presenting myself as half-and-half, like a mixed-grill platter.

Slovenian genealogical reckoning is patrilineal, whereas Jewish descent is matrilineal. So I am one hundred percent Slovenian and one hundred percent Žid.

I belong to Jewishness and Slovenianness through culture – through both cultures – not through religion and not through nationalist enthusiasm.

Fifty-five years ago, when I attended the World Congress of Jewish Students in Jerusalem as part of the Yugoslav delegation, the others did not understand us and roundly attacked us when we expressed this idea of cultural Jewishness, insisting that there was only the Jewishness of the synagogue and nothing else. According to them, Jews were not a nation, and the word žid should therefore be written with a lowercase letter.

I, however, believe that not all of us Židje are židje, and that it is valuable for a Jewish community to preserve a place for both židje and Židje.

In the meantime, I have made the identity of my descendants even more complicated. I married Vesna, whose mother was Slovenian and whose father was Jewish, so we could joke that, according to the strict rules, she was not really one or the other. At the same time, her family line is entirely Sephardic, while mine is Ashkenazi – which is supposedly more conflict-ridden than all the other identities already mentioned.

So, am I a Žid? Certainly – after all, I am always ready to discuss it, even with myself.



Križevniška ulica/Križevniška Street, Ljubljana, Foto/Photo: Marjeta Marincič



Zahvale

Stalna razstava »Ničesar nimamo razen imena« je rezultat dolgoletnega raziskovalnega, muzejskega, zbirateljskega in ustvarjalnega dela številnih posameznikov in ustanov.

Iskreno se zahvaljujemo zgodovinarjem, raziskovalcem, kustosom, arhivistom, knjižničarjem, muzejem, univerzam, kulturnim ustanovam, zasebnim zbirateljem, donatorjem ter potomcem judovskih družin, povezanih z ozemljem današnje Slovenije. S svojim znanjem, raziskavami, dokumenti, predmeti, fotografijami, družinskimi zapuščinami in pričevanji so omogočili, da so bile številne razpršene in skoraj pozabljene zgodbe ponovno povezane v skupno zgodovinsko pripoved.

Posebna zahvala velja preživelim žrtvam šoe in njihovim družinam. Njihova pričevanja, osebni spomini in pripravljenost spregovoriti o najbolj bolečih izkušnjah predstavljajo nenadomestljiv del zgodovinskega spomina ter temelj našega razumevanja preteklosti. Z njihovim odhajanjem postaja naša odgovornost, da njihove besede, obraze in imena ohranimo za prihodnje generacije, še toliko večja.

Zahvaljujemo se vsem domačim in mednarodnim partnerjem, ki že vrsto let podpirajo del Judovskega kulturnega centra Ljubljana ter sodelujejo pri raziskovanju, ohranjanju in predstavljanju judovske kulturne dediščine v Sloveniji.

Posebej se zahvaljujemo:

- Ministrstvu za zunanje in evropske zadeve Republike Slovenije,
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Direktor

Robert Baruh Waltl

Urednik

Robert Baruh Waltl

Avtorji besedil

Robert Baruh Waltl, doc. dr. Matevž Košir, dr. Lev Kreft,
dr. Marjan Toš, Dušan Šarotar

Kustos in avtor koncepta stalne razstave

Robert Baruh Waltl

Strokovni sodelavci in svetovalci

dr. Irena Šumi, doc. dr. Matevž Košir, dr. Marjan Toš,
dr. Renato Podberšič, doc. dr. Samo Skralovnik,
dr. Klemen Jelinčič

Jezikovni pregled slovenskega besedila

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Judovski kulturni center Ljubljana

Križevniška ulica 3, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija

T: +386 (0)1 425 60 60 / E: info@jkc.si

www.jkc.si / www.jewishcenterljubljana.com

Facebook: Ljubljana Jewish Cultural Centre

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WE HAVE NOTHING BUT A NAME

**Jews in the Territory of Slovenia from the Roman
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Robert Baruch Waltl

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Robert Baruch Waltl

Authors

Robert Baruch Waltl, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matevž Košir,
Dr. Lev Kreft, Dr. Marjan Toš, Dušan Šarotar

Curator and Author of the Permanent Exhibition Concept

Robert Baruch Waltl

Academic Advisers and Contributors

Dr. Irena Šumi, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matevž Košir, Dr. Marjan Toš,
Dr. Renato Podberšič, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Samo Skralovnik,
Dr. Klemen Jelinčič

Slovenian Language Editor

Jože Faganel, Prof.

English Language Editor

Dr. Rebecca Rose

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Jewish Cultural Center Ljubljana

Križevniška ulica 3, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

T: +386 (0)1 425 60 60 / E: info@jkc.si

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