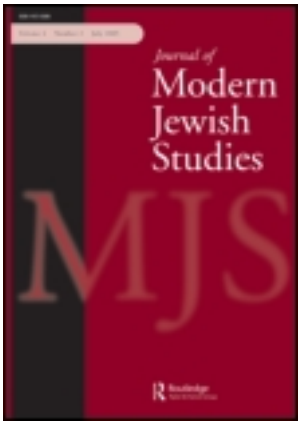

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YOUNG WITNESSES IN THE DP CAMPS: CHILDREN'S HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY IN CONTEXT

Thousands of testimonies were collected in the immediate post-war period from child survivors of the Holocaust. These testimonies tell us much about the children's Holocaust experience and about society's attitude to child survivors. This paper presents an in-depth analysis of two such testimonies on the backdrop of historical research of their setting and context. Through our analysis of two children's testimonies given in the Aschau DP Children's Camp, we demonstrate that it is crucial to explore the immediate context in which testimonies were given, because of its strong influence upon their content and structure. In fact, our research shows that the contemporary context enters into the very fabric of the testimonies. No analysis, therefore, is complete without an inquiry into this crucial aspect. The two testimonies were chosen because they make up a distinct subgroup within a larger collection of testimonies that were given concurrently and, therefore, they constitute each other's immediate context. This paper also demonstrates the indispensability of a multidisciplinary analysis that draws upon elements from the fields of historical, literary and linguistic scholarship.

Introduction

Holocaust testimonies were not given in a vacuum. Besides being shaped by the traumatic events that they relate, the testimonies are also strongly affected by the contemporaneous social, historical, and cultural contexts in which they were given. The act of testifying is especially sensitive to its immediate environment. Testimonies collected from young Holocaust survivors when they were still children or teenagers, usually display more readily discernible signs of being responsive to the immediate surroundings during which they were given than do the majority of adult testimonies.[1]

Thousands of children's testimonies have been collected, mainly by large-scale projects initiated and carried out by survivors in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust. In fact, many of the Jewish testimony-collection projects of the post-war era specifically sought out children in order to record their experiences.[2]

The immediate context of children's testimonies rendered soon after the war is an amalgam of numerous elements, prominent among which are the place where the testimony was taken, the social dynamics of the peer group of child survivors, the influence of educators, the post-war experience of being unwelcome in their birthplaces, and the absence of family. We have inferred these elements by pre-analysing a large number of the testimonies included in the framework of the "Voices of Child Survivors" project.

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In this paper, through an analysis of children's testimonies given in the Aschau DP Children's Camp,[3] we demonstrate that it is crucial to explore the immediate context in which testimonies were given whenever possible, because of its strong influence upon their content and structure. Our research shows that the contemporary context, in fact, enters into the very fabric of the testimonies. This paper also demonstrates the indispensability of a multidisciplinary analysis that draws upon elements from the fields of historical, literary and linguistic scholarship. It shows that such a multifaceted approach reveals a wealth of information about the Holocaust itself, as well as the children's experience of it, that would have otherwise remained hidden. It is precisely the combination of the "tools of the trade" from different disciplines that enables us to unravel the multiple stories encoded in each individual testimony. Historical research traditionally focuses on information conveyed forthrightly. When it is coupled with literary and linguistic research centring on encoded sub- and meta-texts, the result is a rich tapestry of meanings.

Since the aim here is to reconstruct the setting in which the testimonies were given, based both on extra-textual historical research and upon textual information, we begin by describing the children's camp in Aschau. The depiction focuses on the establishment of DP children's centres as well as upon the complex problems of rehabilitation, education, identity, and ideology. Against this background, the article then offers an analysis of testimonies given in Aschau by two Jewish child survivors from Hungary.[4]

1. Aschau Children's Camp

Aschau is located in southern Bavaria in the American Zone of occupied Germany. We begin by investigating the origins of the unique establishment known as the children's camp.

In post-war Europe there were millions of displaced persons (commonly known as DPs) who had to be repatriated to their countries of origin. Their welfare, rehabilitation, and repatriation were the responsibility of the UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, established in 1943. The hundreds of thousands of Jewish DPs who were coming out of hiding, liberated from camps, or returning from the inner reaches of the USSR, constituted a special problem for the post-war powers. Many Jewish survivors made their way back to their former homes only to find that they had no family, home, or community to which to return. Moreover, the rampant anti-Semitism that manifested itself even in pogroms in post-war Eastern Europe, clearly demonstrated that there was no going back. These refugees, then, crossing borders and occupation zones and termed "infiltrees" by the authorities, streamed into the American Zone of Occupation. Camps, hospitals, and transit stations were established as a response to the influx of DPs. What, however, was to be done with the thousands of Jewish child survivors, most of whom arrived in groups brought together by Jewish organizations and ideological youth movements?

The initial UNRRA policy was not "to establish Jewish orphanages in Germany, but rather to send these children to England, Switzerland, France or other countries which have offered asylum to them".[5] However, the UNRRA's strategy changed quickly due to the massive influx of Jewish children arriving in groups. "For some weeks the problem of Jewish unaccompanied[6] infiltree children has been gaining unprecedented proportions",

wrote Eileen Blackey of UNRRA headquarters on 10 August 1946. "The children are coming in at such a rate and moving around so frequently once they have entered the Zone that registration and documentation is almost out of the question."[7]

The overwhelming majority of "unaccompanied" children were organized into groups, "kibbutzim", most of them under the flag of a Zionist or other Jewish ideological movement. Their education was geared towards making *aliyah* to Palestine; Germany was only a way station. It was obvious to the American authorities that either something should be done to "stem the tide", that is, to prevent the entry of the groups of children, or that they should work with the organizers of these groups on "planning jointly for the reception of these children into Germany".[8] UNRRA opted for the second alternative, deciding to work with the children in their already existent groups led by their own youth leaders—the *madrikhim* (counsellors, youth leaders).

UNRRA officials justified the new approach by explaining that

> the group pattern was adopted before the children came to Germany and will probably continue in Palestine. By breaking it up during the interim stay there is a danger of tearing down some emotional security that the children have been able to acquire.[9]

It was further decided that "each of these [DP] centres be occupied by different kibbutz[im]" from the same movement, thus eliminating ideological competition and proselytizing.[10]

The decision to work with the children in their original groups arose from an acknowledgment of several key aspects of Eastern European Jewish post-Holocaust society. Jewish society was split before, during, and after the Holocaust along ideological and religious fault lines. Politically the basic divide was between Zionists and non-Zionists and between socialists, communists, and liberals. There were, for example, socialist and non-socialist religious Zionists who differed from each other and together differed from the ultra-religious on the Zionist issue. The socialist-oriented Zionists had different ways of balancing Zionism and socialism, but were united in opposing non-Zionist socialists, communists, and Zionist rightists. All the political movements had their own schools, cultural institutions, presses, and, most importantly, youth movements, educating the young in their specific ideologies. All the Zionist factions relied upon their youth movements to perpetuate their ideals. The resulting fervently ideological atmosphere led to competition and conflict between the various groups concerning issues of cross-proselytizing, as well as disagreements regarding pragmatic matters such as the distribution of resources and immigration certificates to (then) British Mandate Palestine.

After the Holocaust, members of the Jewish ideological movements, young survivors themselves, set out to rebuild their parties. They established kibbutzim for young adults aimed at reconstructing their lives in *Eretz Israel* and started organizing children's homes for surviving children that were centred on each movement's ideology, and likewise on the promise of a new life in *Eretz Israel*. In addition to ideology, these groups, with their dedicated leaders, gave the children, most of whom had no family left, a sense of belonging, a warm community, and a coherent identity, as well as a goal and hope for the future. The words of one youngster in one such children's home, written years later, express these emotions most vividly:

> For us it was not an idea—this was craving for *Eretz Israel*! It was our only hope. I don't think it would have been worth living without *Eretz Israel*. Deep inside I feel that if I would not have come to *Eretz Israel* I would have taken my own life. Because what life could I have had? No family, no relatives, no country and no honour. The aim of getting to *Eretz Israel* kept us alive and encouraged us during those terrible days.[11]

The children were well aware that many of their *madrikhim* had lost their own families during the Holocaust, and that none of them received payment for their dedicated work. This knowledge bonded the children and the *madrikhim* very strongly, with the latter becoming mother and father figures for the orphaned children.[12] Jewish activists gave priority to smuggling youth groups and their madrichim into the American Zone and from there to *Eretz Israel*, even at the expense of other Jewish DPs.

Once they reached the American Zone, these youth groups were initially placed in already existing DP camps or in the only children's centre, located at Lindelfels. Soon, the need arose for more DP centres catering exclusively to children, and UNRRA decided to open three additional centres immediately, one of them in Aschau.[13] By December 1946, it was reported that there were 26,506 Jewish children under UNRRA care in the American Zone. Of those, 13,878 entered the Zone in the four months preceding 1 November 1946. A large number of them—5,703—had no relative left at all and were recognized by UNRRA as "unaccompanied children". By December, 3,146 of these young refugees were already housed in children's centres.[14]

At an early stage it was decided that the Aschau camp would cater mainly to children's groups affiliated with the *Mizrahi* (the religious-Zionist movement) and that its educational facilities, as well as the kitchen, would be organized appropriately. UNRRA area team no. 154 ran the camp, which became a centre of religious life, providing, for example, a course in kosher cooking for cooks from all over the American Zone.[15] Since most of the children were from "very religious groups", the camp staff included several rabbi-teachers, and no work was done on the Sabbath.[16]

Susan Pettiss, Child Welfare Officer for Jewish Children, inspected the new Aschau camp on 20 March 1946, and gave a description of the camp and a breakdown of its population:

> The camp is relatively new; it is about 10–12 miles out of Muhldorf off the main road. The people are housed in rather good stone barracks set near the village of Aschau in the pine forest.[17]

> The present population is about 400 but about 100 more people are expected. Of the present pop[ulation] 6 are under 6, 30 are 6–10[,and] 80 between 10–14. Most of the rest of the population seems to be under 35. They are all in kibbutzim of which there are 8 in all; there are Polish and Hungarian Jews.[18]

The experience of working with the young survivors gave rise to an interesting attempt by the UNRRA to upgrade the work of the *madrikhim*. Lotte Lotheim, the Principal Welfare Officer, ran a "Mental Hygiene Program" in Aschau and the adjacent camp of Pürten I. She offered a general training course for *madrikhim* on "basic concepts of a child's development, his behavior, [and] his problems" in both camps. She intended to

create "a basis for discussion of specific children's problems with the individual *madrikh*".[19] Initial responses to the UNRRA efforts were not very positive: "we do not need social work, we need nationalism", Lotheim was told at one meeting. She, on her part, was also quick to point out to the *madrikhim* participating in her course "the dangers of their nationalistic education"[20] in her words. However, these exchanges did not hamper the programme, which was carried out with the full involvement of all concerned in both camps. We learn from Lotheim that the staff in Aschau were greatly concerned about "children with severe behavior difficulties".[21]

The camp in Aschau existed from early 1946 until the summer of 1948. It had various educational facilities, including an ORT (vocational education) Centre. In 1948, the camp was dissolved and the remaining youngsters were taken to Israel; the ORT Centre, however, remained in operation until May 1950.[22]

2. The Bnei Akiva Kibbutzim in Aschau

Why did the *Mizrahi*[23] and other religious movements need a separate camp for their *kibbutzim* and children's groups? First and foremost, this was in order to create an environment focusing on providing a religious atmosphere and education. All Jewish religious factions agreed that these were imperative for the rehabilitation of young Jews who had been through the Holocaust:

> The religious moment seems to us to be perhaps the most important factor in the moral rehabilitation of the young people in the camps. The religious matters and need of the displaced person cannot and should not be treated as merely technical ones of providing some religious items and facilities to those asking for them. It is rather a matter of enabling Jewish religious authorities to bring about a proper religious atmosphere, to provide religious education and inspiration to all those young people in the camps, who for years were deprived of it. It is a hard task of spiritual revival, of religious and moral upheaval.[24]

The leaders of the *Mizrahi*, however, were not satisfied with a standard "religious atmosphere"; they wanted a Zionist one as well. It was on this issue that the special predicament of the religious Zionists came into the limelight. They were working to reconcile two ordinarily incompatible ideologies: the continuity of traditional Jewish religious life and Zionism, which saw itself as a revolutionary secular national movement.

The *Mizrahi* thus had to fight for its views on two fronts. On the one hand, as a part of the Zionist movement it had to accommodate itself to a movement led by secular socialists who understood religion in Marxist terms, either as a harmful "opiate for the masses", or, at best, an anachronistic tradition to be superseded by modern humanist, socialist and national values. The *Mizrahi* movement was therefore given short shrift on allocations of certificates for immigration to Palestine, for land on which to build religious kibbutzim, and on myriad other issues; this bias was also felt in the DP camps.[25] On the other hand, the *Mizrahi* had to manage with attacks from the ultra-Orthodox factions, which were, as a rule, anti-Zionist. For the most part, they were instigated by the *Agudat Israel* party. The conflict here was a religious one: was the Zionist ideology and nation-building in *Eretz Israel* compatible with Jewish tradition,

as the *Mizrahim* claimed, or was it sacrilege, as the ultra-Orthodox claimed? In the DP camps this conflict was manifested in a dispute over resources for religious life which were distributed through the religious Rescue Committee, *Va`ad hahatzalah*.

In this atmosphere of both secular and ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist challenges, the establishment of Aschau as a religious Zionist camp opened new possibilities for the *Mizrahi—Torah Va`avodah* movement and enabled it to work unhampered on building the Zionist religious identity of its members and charges. The camp had several youth and children's groups; among them was the *She'ifa* (Aspiration) group of 65 children from Hungary. The older members of this youth group later broke away to establish the *Ge'ulah* (Redemption) group.[26] Another youth group or kibbutz was the Atid (Future) group. Aschau also had a *yeshiva* with 30 students modelled on the *Bnei Akiva yeshiva* in Israel.[27]

In addition to these youth and children's groups, Aschau was home to three adult *kibbutzim*. These were loosely connected groups sharing communal dwelling, dining facilities and the aim of going to *Eretz Israel* and building a settlement. Most of the kibbutzim had a study programme focusing on the Hebrew language and Judaism, contributing to a vibrant Jewish Zionist-religious atmosphere. The groups' names mirrored their worldview: one was called *Tikva* ("Hope", also the title of the Zionist and later Israeli national anthem) and another was *Af Al Pi* (literally: "in spite of").[28]

More than being home to a few hundred children, the Aschau camp's importance to the Religious Zionist organizations was its function as a base and centre for their activities: in 1947, one of the movement's conclaves with 400 attendants was held there, as well as three summer camps. The high point of each summer camp was the *Eretz Israel* day, a time during which the children spoke only Hebrew and simulated the building and defence of a new Jewish settlement. A seminar for religious youth leaders was also held in Aschau. In addition to being an important religious Zionist centre, Aschau also housed non-religious Zionist groups such as the *Avodah* ("Labour") group of the *Noar Hazioni* (Zionist Youth) and units of the *Dror* (Freedom) movement.[29]

3. The testimonies taken in Aschau

The Central Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Munich, like the majority of other historical commissions, specifically sought the testimony of children within its large-scale testimony collection project. Hundreds of testimonies from teenage and child survivors were taken, either by representatives of the Central Historical Commission or by people who had responded to the urgent call of the Commission to record children's memories and send them to the Commission.[30]

The Central Historical Commission was established by survivors in order to document the Holocaust. Such commissions were set up wherever a sizeable survivor community existed, like the one in the Munich area in the American Zone of occupation, and those in Poland and Hungary. Fuelled by a commitment to commemorate the dead, to record this painful chapter of their history, and to memorialize their destroyed communities, the Historical Commissions collected testimonies, ethnographic materials, and other documents, including completed questionnaires. They also published journals, books, photo albums, and anthologies.

Yisrael Kaplan, a teacher from the Kovno ghetto, one of the leaders of the Central Historical Commission, was the driving force behind the children's testimony collection project that yielded hundreds of such testimonies. Kaplan, who was also the editor of the journal of the Central Historical Commission, *Fun letzten Hurbn* (English title: *From the Last Extermination, Journal for the History of the Jewish People during the Nazi Regime*), published a child-survivor testimony in each issue of the journal.[31] In the early 1950s, the Historical Commission's entire collection was deposited in Yad Vashem.

In order to reconstruct the setting and the immediate environment of the giving of testimonies, they need to be read not in isolation, as linguists are prone to do, or grouped together according to topics, as they are customarily read by historians, but rather in groups that were recorded in the same place and at, or about, the same time, possibly together. It will then become evident that such groups of testimonies possess a degree of internal similarity and differ as units from other groups of testimonies that were recorded at other locations and/or times. It is precisely these similarities and differences that can be attributed to the various environments in which the testimonies were rendered. Recognizing the common elements can therefore help us both to reconstruct the environment in which the testimonies were given and understand why and how the specific circumstances became integrated within the structure of the testimonies that were, in fact, concerned with earlier times: the time of the Holocaust.

Twenty-three teenage boys born between 1927 and 1932 gave testimonies while in the Aschau children's centre.[32] Their testimonies are in the archives of the Central Historical Commission that are now in Yad Vashem.[33] Eight of these testimonies were given in Hungarian and the rest in Yiddish.[34] All of them are in the form of compositions, most with uniform titles, though some are left untitled.

Compared to the total number of youngsters in the Aschau children's centre, the number of teenagers who testified is relatively small. We can deduce from this that obtaining children's testimonies was not undertaken as a project by the camp's leadership, though there was clearly at least one person among the caregivers for whom collecting testimonies was indeed important, and who either aided the representative of the Historical Commission to collect them or did the work himself. The relatively low serial numbers given to the testimonies by the Historical Commission indicate that these writings reached the archives of the Historical Commission quite early, which is further evidence of the Aschau collector's enthusiasm. Since the testimonies are consecutively numbered, we can assume that they reached the Central Historical Commission together, and therefore, that they were given at about the same time. One of the 23 was dated 18 July 1946,[35] so we can conclude that the other testimonies were also given in the summer of 1946. The fact that some of the testifying youngsters left Aschau during the fall or winter of that year provides additional verification of the date of these testimonies.[36]

It can be presumed that the person responsible for collecting these testimonies was an authority figure of some sort, such as a teacher or a *madrikh*, and was thus able to influence the boys. Two major groups testified: boys from Kibbutz *Atid*, who wrote their accounts in Yiddish, and boys belonging to Kibbutz *She'ifa*, who testified in Hungarian.[37] Our conjecture that the collector of the testimony-compositions exercised a certain authority over the youngsters is substantiated by the evidence that in addition to the boys who clearly found testifying important, there were others whose texts

reveal that they testified reluctantly. The person who requested the testimonies was therefore obeyed even when the individual solicited to witness was disinclined to do so.

4. Analysis

The two testimonies analysed below constitute a distinct subgroup within the larger collection of testimonies that were given concurrently: that is, it is clear that one youngster copied from the other. We are not talking about verbatim copying but about the replication of ideas, details, and even particular expressions.

Hundreds of memoirs and testimonies from both children and caretakers demonstrate clearly that the sense of being part of a group, of belonging, was fundamental to the emotional security of the overwhelming majority of survivors. This confirms the wisdom of UNRRA's decision to work with the children in their previously established groups and their original *madrikhim*. Time and again survivors affirm that it was the membership in a group that enabled them to make the transition to a new life after their entire world had been destroyed in the Holocaust. Many of the survivors go even further and assert that peer groups facilitated their emotional survival much more effectively than a family could have done. A child survivor who was liberated in Buchenwald and later taken to France as part of a group claimed as an adult:

> I think to be together in a society where everybody is like that, assured us [...] a better re-adaptation than the family life. I think that such a hostel was even better than one's own family, where they would have said: 'How did you change, you are no more the same, etc.[38]

This hypothetical choice of a peer group over family was actually enacted by many Jewish Hungarian teenagers who survived either in Budapest[39] or Strasshof.[40] Unlike the majority of child survivors, they typically had several surviving close family members, yet still opted to leave their families and Hungary in the framework of youth groups in order to build a new, meaningful life for themselves in *Eretz Israel*. Mór László G.'s testimony given in the Aschau children's camp is characteristic of this phenomenon. He and his family were deported to Strasshof. Mór László G. wrote:

> My mother and us, the four siblings survived, but our daddy was unfortunately lost. [He died as a forced labourer, R.H.] When I arrived home [,] after a few days of being home[,] I joined the Bnei Akiba Zionist Movement.[41]

Mór László G. ends his testimony with this sentence. It signals that he chose to join a Zionist youth movement in order to go to a DP camp with its members and wait for *aliya* rather than remain in Hungary with his family. For Mór László G. this decision constituted a necessary new beginning.

In testimonies given many years later, survivors customarily add that they had left in peer groups, not only because they had embraced Zionism, but because they found it impossible to return to their pre-Holocaust status as children taking orders from their elders. Almost without exception, they imply that they were no longer able to accept the authority of adults whom they still loved, but who had been so completely

victimized that they had been powerless to fulfil their primary role as parents/primary care-givers: saving their children.

The boys who gave the 23 testimonies belonged to youth groups that provided a community crucial to their emotional survival. The majority of the Hungarian compositions have the same title: "How did I pull through the times of the German regime" (YVA M-1/E 162–164).[42] Testimonies nos. YVA M-1/E 161 and 165 have the same structure, but they are untitled, and YVA M-1/E 167 has a very similar title: "How did I live through the war." The correspondence between the titles is another indication that the youngsters gave the testimonies together. The Yiddish compositions fall into two categories according to their title and structure. They are called either "My Survival" or "Autobiography". Those that were left untitled also display the structure of one or the other of these two groups. We do not know whether the boys writing in Yiddish gave their testimonies together with the youngsters testifying in Hungarian, but we can infer that the boys belonging to the same *kibbutzim* most probably gave the testimonies in one another's company.[43]

If we look at the beginnings of the testimonies together with their headings, which feature the pre-Holocaust address of the teenagers, we discover that within the Hungarian-language group there was a more intimate circle, consisting of four boys who came from the same area of neighbouring counties: Békés, Hajdú, and Bihar (YVA M-1/E 162–165).

Judith Hemmendinger's memoir-article calls attention to the importance for young Holocaust survivors of having come from the same area. The director of a religious orphanage in France (Loire-Chateau d'Ambloy then chateau of Taverny) where teenage boys liberated from Buchenwald were taken, she reports that when the boys were divided according to age groups, they constantly fought with one another.[44] However, when the boys were given the freedom "to choose their own roommates and dormitories", the fights stopped.

> The choices were in terms of the town of origin (Landsmannschaft) and these names were put on their rooms: Munkacs, Sotmar [Sic.], Oradiamare, Cluj, etc. These were large rooms with many survivors, and smaller ones like Lodz and other Polish towns. [...] In every dormitory, now the ages were mixed from eight to twenty-one. The big boys looked after the small ones. The fights stopped and soon good brotherly relations were present amongst the groups. It was the beginning of the surrogate family.[45]

The testimonies taken in Aschau clearly confirm the importance of shared pre-Holocaust "homelands" in the formation of post-Holocaust groups. Shared geographical background engendered a very strong bond. The four testimonies of the youngsters coming from the same area in Hungary have much in common, especially the first part of their accounts; in order to be accurate the boys most probably cross-checked dates, such as when they had to start wearing the yellow Star of David on their clothing. The content of two testimonies, however, are even closer to each other; we conjecture that one boy copied from the other. From the headings it is clear that these youngsters lived in the same village[46] before the Holocaust. A "Jaross list" reveals that they were also relatives, as Jákob W.'s mother's maiden name is the same as Jákob F.'s family name.[47] Additionally, the two boys were close with respect to age: Jákob F. was born in 1930 and Jákob W. in 1931.

When we compare the two testimonies, however, the differences between them also become obvious. Jákob F.'s testimony is a long, carefully constructed composition. He paid special attention to his penmanship, taking care to render his testimony in easily legible handwriting. These facts by themselves demonstrate that Jákob F. took his role as a witness very seriously. By contrast, Jákob W.'s testimony is much shorter; it is less than half of the length of Jákob F.'s, and in fact one of the shortest of the testimonies given in Hungarian in the Aschau children's camp. If we do not count the beginning of the testimony, most of which Jákob W. copied from Jákob F., his composition is the shortest, consisting of merely 174 words.

Both youngsters were well educated, as the headings of the testimonies indicate, and one cannot explain the differences between the compositions as stemming from differences in their schooling and language skills.[48] Nonetheless they both made a fair amount of spelling and grammatical mistakes. They also shared a clever, dark sense of humour. The dissimilarities of the compositions, therefore, can be attributed solely to their different levels of motivation and dissimilar self-perception. Both the form and the content of the testimonies suggest that while Jákob W. did not want to dwell on the traumatic past, Jákob F. was enthusiastic about testifying and well prepared for it. Being together with his peers writing their testimonies, Jákob W. probably did not want to completely refuse participating in the common group activity, though the fact that he copied the beginning of his testimony reveals his resistance to the task.

Jákob F. carefully recorded the title they were given under the heading, in the middle of the page. He emphasized the importance of that title and indicated his own enthusiasm by ending it with an exclamation mark, which is not a customary practice in Hungarian. Jákob W., by contrast, forgot to write down the title, and probably only after glancing over at Jákob F.'s paper squeezed it into the space between the heading and the first sentence. Moreover, though titles in Hungarian are customarily written without punctuation, he downplayed the importance of the title further by ending it with a period, even though it is technically a question.

In table 1, we have put the beginnings of the two compositions side-by-side to support our claim that Jákob W. was paying close attention to what his friend was writing, as he incorporated into his text the same joke and even reported events which he himself, unlike Jákob F., had not directly witnessed. (see table 1)

In general, Jákob F. formulates his thoughts in longer and more sophisticated sentences than Jákob W. This is especially striking with regard to explanations: "From this moment on, the constant dread and agitation began. The population, sensing a stronger force backing them, began tormenting the Jewry." Jákob W.'s sentence about the "J. hatred" is particularly awkward. However, the pun that both youngsters employ, and which is one of the clearest indications that they had been in close contact while writing the testimonies, is grammatically more correct in Jákob W.'s composition.

The point in the text at which Jákob W. stops copying is crucial. He reproduced the information about the big raid in his home village, about which he had probably heard previously. However, when Jákob F. inserts a sentence stating that he was among the arrested Jews, a detail that establishes his authority as a first-hand witness, Jákob W., who did not himself have that personal experience, can only insert a disclaimer: "at that time I stayed in Debrecen", [accurately] relegating himself to the position of having merely secondary information. At this point, Jákob W. begins to write his own story.

TABLE 1 The beginnings of the testimonies of Jákob W. and Jákob F.

Jákob W. (YVA M-1/E 163)	*Jákob F. (YVA M-1/E 164)*
Title: How did I pull through the times of the German regime.	Title: How did I pull through the times of the German regime!
[On] March 19, 1944, the German bandit troops appeared.	On March 19, 1944, late Sunday afternoon, the first German occupying troops appeared.
	From this moment on, the constant dread and agitation began.
The Hungarian population, seeing this, began to display the J.[ews]-hatred. [He means their hatred for the Jews.]	The population, sensing a stronger force backing them, began tormenting the Jewry.
The smashing of windows and heads began. [It is a pun in Hungarian. (ablak*törés* = breakage of windows, fej*törés* = racking one's brain but also smashing in one's head)]	The smashing in of windows[,] window-shops and heads were on the daily agenda. [The sentence, which draws upon a pun, is grammatically incorrect: Jákob F. uses the words 'windows' and 'window-shops' in plural form, which is incorrect according to Hungarian grammar.]
On March 25[,] the village gendarmes carried out a large raid in the village.	On March 25[,] the gendarmerie carried out a large raid.
On April 5[,] the stars-wearing began.	
	Every Jew whom they found on the street was taken into the gendarmerie barracks.
At that time I stayed in Debrecen.	I too was among these unfortunate people.

Jákob W. mentions the discriminatory decree ordering the Jews to wear the yellow star in the framework of his personal story, noting how this affected his ability to travel. Because of his special status as a "war orphan" that exempted him from wearing the discriminatory mark, he was able to travel back to his village from Debrecen. Upon his return however, because he travelled with others, he also needed a special travel permit to go back to the nearby city, Debrecen. By contrast, Jákob F. talks about the decree concerning the wearing of the yellow star not on a personal level, but rather enumerating it as one of the most significant of the "horrible, increasingly severe laws" constraining the lives of the Jews evermore. He relates:

> Horrible, increasingly severe laws followed one another. For April 5, the law of wearing the star appeared which completely paralyzed our lives. On April 17, my dad joined his unit. [Jákob F. does not specify, probably because it is so obvious, that his father was called up for forced labour service within the framework of the Hungarian army. RH] He left me with my mom and 5 little siblings, a half-year-old brother among them, and two old grandparents. Day after day, worse and worse news arrived. All of our relatives were taken to ghettos and deported. Every day we had been expecting with dread our transfer to a ghetto.[49]

This is the point where the testimonies diverge, each taking its own course. Jákob F. relates how he and his family were taken to the ghetto of Nagyvárad (today Oradea Mare, Romania). There, suddenly and unexpectedly, the family's fate deviated from that

of the other Jews of the village, who were deported from Nagyvárad to Auschwitz. Jákob F.'s grandfather, Ben Cion Blum, the son of the famous Talmudic scholar, Amram Blum, was the rabbi of Berettyóújfalu. Thanks to Kasztner's rescue operation, some of the rabbis and their families were separated from the other Jews, who had been taken to the Nagyvárad ghetto from the surrounding areas. Then this special group was transferred to Budapest to the protected camps of those who were waiting to board the famous Kasztner train.[50] In fact, Jákob F.'s family did not leave Hungary on the Kasztner train but, rather, were eventually taken to the ghetto of Pest where Jákob F., his five siblings, his mother, and his grandmother survived. His grandfather, however, perished in the ghetto; as Jákob F. painfully expresses it: "A week before liberation my grandfather died of starvation."[51]

This course of events makes Jákob F.'s testimony unique, and his writing shows that he is well aware of that fact. He was together with prominent adults all the while, especially in the protected camps of the Aréna Street Synagogue and Columbus Street. His grandfather had been the spiritual leader of his community, and in Pest Jákob F. was surrounded by leading Jewish figures who had a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the ongoing events than had the average Jew. Some of Jákob F.'s more sophisticated phrases and sentences sound like direct quotes from these adults, such as: "At dawn on Monday, about 200 sickle-feathered beasts [gendarmes] made their appearance in the courtyard of the ghetto." Another example is Jákob F.'s description of the events of 15 October 1944:

> Yet came Oct. 15, the famous day[:] Horthy's asking for an armistice, and Szállasi's [the name is misspelled] rise to power. At noon, Horthy issued a proclamation to the Hungarian army and to the Hungarian nation to end the senseless fighting. The Jews of Pest breathed a sigh of relief. The stars came off the houses and the coats.
>
> But unfortunately the happiness was short-lived. Szállasi's arrow-cross gangs were waiting only for this moment. After overcoming smaller resistances the power was completely in arrow-cross hands. This naturally meant for us, Jews, that we were doomed.[52]

This multi-voiced style replete with unmarked quotes indicates that Jákob F. was listening carefully to the adults' conversations, making mental notes all the while. Besides trying to understand what was happening and assuage his fears, it appears that, realizing his special position, he also wanted to collect information in order to subsequently bear witness. In other words, he understood the role of witness as a means of his being active, a means of making sense of, as well as assigning meaning to all the suffering around him.[53] This seems to be the reason why Jákob F.'s testimony is not only full of detailed descriptions, such as the scene of the entrainment,[54] but also contains explanations, evaluations, and even statements of consolation. For example, immediately after reporting his grandfather's death, Jákob F. writes the following evaluative and consoling sentence: "The survival of each and every person was a special divine miracle."

Jákob F. ends his testimony by enthusiastically announcing the ghetto's liberation: "At last on Jan. 18[,] in the small hours[,] the liberating Russian troops appeared, and

we could become free people once again." Contrary to many of the other youngsters testifying in DP camps, who related their experiences after liberation, for Jákob F., post-war reality was not relevant to his witness account.

The majority of the youngsters wrote their post-war experiences stressing their ultimate goal which, in the majority of the cases, was making *aliyah* and participating in the building of *Eretz Israel*. The firm statement of an aim endows the survivor self with a sense of meaning, counteracting the utter senselessness of traumatic suffering, at least for the duration of giving the testimony. Thus, a statement of purpose not only allows the testimony to emerge, but it is typically the ultimate means of consolidating the testifying "I" that has been constructed in place of the victim-self through writing the testimony. Contrary to this model, Jákob F. does not need to assert any aim pertaining to post-war reality, because his testimony itself acts, at least temporarily, as his worthy aim. Testifying, for him, is an end in itself.

The language, content, and form of Jákob F.'s testimony demonstrate that constructing himself as a witness is not only a goal that the survivor-self feels to be valuable, but that it was already his survival strategy during the Holocaust and, as such, a part of his total Holocaust experience. He consciously and conscientiously listened to the conversations and opinions of the adults surrounding him, whom he recognized as having deeper insight into the meaning of the current events. Jákob F. appears to have listened to them at least partly in order to become a unique and particularly credible witness. For him, thus, on the one hand, the Holocaust and its aftermath are completely separated: one is the subject of the testimony and the other is the time to render one's testimony. On the other hand, the eras of the Holocaust and its aftermath are connected precisely by the historical and personal need to bear witness. Therefore the two eras have a special relevance to each other for Jákob F., but the time of the Holocaust has unequivocal priority as the exclusive subject matter, and also as a time for preparing to testify. Jákob F. thus adopted the attitude of the witness during the Holocaust in order to enable him to survive and remain as mentally intact as possible.

Many survivors talk about having taken upon themselves the aim of testifying during the Holocaust. In testimonies, diaries, and Holocaust literature in general, it is typical to read of people urging themselves or others to survive in order to tell the world exactly what happened. For example, Charlotte Delbo, a survivor of Auschwitz, centres her play entitled, "Who will Carry the Word?" on this phenomenon. In order to be a witness, though, one has to have special knowledge to transmit. Jákob F., however, was a child at the time, and children were usually even less informed than adults. What is unusual about his choice of survival strategy is that his unique position of being in the company of prominent adults allowed him to become a witness of historical value even though in those times adults did not normally discuss serious matters with youngsters.

By contrast, we do not learn what strategies Jákob W. employed to survive. His story is also atypical within the history of the Holocaust. Unlike the overwhelming majority of the Jews of Hungary who were deported to Auschwitz, he, together with those family members with whom he was deported, survived in the Strasshof work camp complex. His father, however, was murdered as a forced labourer in the Hungarian Army before the deportation of the W. family. Jákob W.'s testimony—its structure, wording, and form—displays numerous signs that he did not want to testify, since he knew that dwelling on the past just then was harmful for him. As we read his testimony,

we can see that his misgivings were fully justified: we follow the way in which the self, the testifying "I", disintegrates during writing.

Jákob W.'s anxiety concerning the task already surfaces at the beginning of the testimony. When we compare the openings of the two testimonies, that is, the parts which the boys were writing in close contact with each other, we see that Jákob W.'s text is already more emotional at the beginning than Jákob F.'s. Jákob F. reports calmly that "the first German occupying troops appeared", whereas Jákob W. employs an emotionally laden adjective immediately at the outset: "the German *bandit* troops." The beginning of Jákob F.'s testimony is quite neutral and the writing becomes increasingly emotional as it develops. The most emotionally filled parts are the report of his grandfather's death and liberation. By contrast, Jákob W.'s testimony commences at a more emotional level, showing that he has significantly less distance from his subject matter than Jákob F. does. This is a warning sign of the coming explosion of raw trauma within the text.

Jákob W.'s writing self remains intact as long as he copies and does not dwell on his own experiences, but once he begins to talk about his personal memories, the "I" immediately begins to descend into an emotionally overpowering chaos of fear and pain. It is agonizing to watch how the traumatic memories burst forth, overpower the witness, and drag him back into the midst of the Holocaust.[55] Cathy Caruth calls the effects of trauma a "singular possession by the past", "in which the overwhelming events of the past repeatedly possess, in intrusive images and thoughts, the one who has lived through them".[56]

In spite of the emotional flooding, Jákob W. clearly aims to be precise, and to impart exact information such as dates and measurements:

> We were in the ghetto until *June. On June 12* excise-men surrounded the ghetto. They closed down every house, subjected everybody to a manual search, [and] took away every piece of jewellery. After the manual search they took us to the brick factory on foot. *34 [of] us lived in a territory [of] 3 m*^{2}.[57]

Given this pattern, the fact that he does not seem to be able to render any precise information concerning his personal experiences and family is a sign of the chaos that has engulfed him: "On April 5 the wearing of stars started. As a war orphan I was exempt from [wearing] the star for a little while, I travelled to Berettyóújfalu during this time. On April 15 we returned to Debrecen with travel permits".[58] In light of the events of the Holocaust in Hungary, his statement that he was a "war orphan" is sufficient to indicate that his father had perished as a forced labourer, probably on the Eastern Front. Jákob W. therefore has informed us about his father's death, but only indirectly! This is the most impersonal way to relate the death of his father linguistically possible: Jákob W. himself is the protagonist of the sentence and his dead father is not even granted an independent subject position within the testimony.

Though we learn that Jákob W. returned without delay to his village by exploiting his advantage of being able to travel when this was already forbidden for Jews, he does not say why and to whom he felt that it was important to return. By the use of the pronoun "we", he might be implying that he returned to the city together with his family, but he does not specify explicitly who the "we" are or to whom the "we" travelled to Debrecen.[59] Therefore we can see that all personal details are effectively missing from

Jákob W.'s testimony. The sentences and phrases are short, stark, and intense. Many times, they are also ungrammatical, signalling an emotional overheatedness. Even simple repetitions increase the tension to unbearable proportions: "They closed down *every* house, subjected *every*body to manual search, [and] took away *every* piece of jewelry" (italics ours). Unconnected images of bombings by the Allied forces are reported, but Jákob W. does not elaborate on the details. Rather than being informative or moving the storyline along, the repeated laconic references to the bombings serve as occasions where raw, unmitigated fear emerges in the testimony.

> In Debrecen the American planes appeared and it [*sic*] carried out a large air raid against Debrecen. A bomb fell next to the ghetto. We were in the ghetto until June. [...] Bombs were a common occurrence [in Vienna. In Hungarian Jákob W. uses an expression: The bomb was "on the daily agenda."]

> On March 21, 1945, we were taken to Strászhof [Strasshof], in order to [be taken] further on from there. We were in the cattle car when the American bombs appeared. The second cattle car was hit directly.[60]

After reporting that "the second cattle car was hit directly" without stating what happened, who was in it, or where he or his loved ones were, Jákob W. ends his composition, abruptly from the point of view of the content, with the following sentence: "On April 10 the Russians came in and I am staying in Germany since then." Formally, however, he indents the last sentence to signal that it is a proper conclusion. The importance of the missing information concerning the bombing receives a special emphasis by the fact that the author at that point has become emotionally incapable of continuing the writing. For this reason, Jákob W. finishes his composition abruptly but resolutely.

The emergence of the raw trauma of his experiences is clearly indicated not only by the survivor's inability to report personal information, losses, and emotions, but also by the fact that he perceives himself to be painfully alone face-to-face with the traumatic past. Apart from the scarce use of the unspecified "we", Jákob W.'s fragmented self is the only presence in the second part of the testimony, after he began to write alone, without the support of his cousin, Jákob F.

Jákob W.'s last sentence "On April 10 the Russians came in and I am staying in Germany since then", particularly when we compare it to Jákob F.'s concluding sentence, does not display any element of happiness, or even relief. Words like "freedom", "liberation", or the concept of dawn are missing; the liberating forces simply "came in". The second half of the sentence: "and I am staying in Germany since then" connotes complete aimlessness. We do not learn why he is in Germany, precisely what it means for him to be in Germany, or what has happened to his family. The completely disintegrated self is trapped in an aimless, continuous present, in a vacuum. The emotional flatness of the ending is in sharp contrast to the intense fear radiating from the description of the bombing in the previous paragraph of Jákob W.'s testimony. The entrapment in an aimless present is the result of the emergence of the raw trauma within the testimony. By comparing the testimonies given together, we can see both the importance of the immediate environment of testifying and the various ways in which the traumatic time of the Holocaust unambiguously assumes the centre.

Jákob F.'s testimony that meticulously reports facts as he perceived them by carefully listening to prominent adults with deep understanding of the events is the closest to the ideal from a historian's point of view. Therefore, we can learn a great deal when analysing it in isolation. Nevertheless, we can learn even more from this testimony if we expose its textual mechanisms that reveal, for example, Jákob F.'s commitment to being a witness. However, if we read Jákob W.'s testimony in isolation, without understanding its relationship to Jákob F.'s composition, the text proves to be utterly incomprehensible and thus useless. Reading them in each other's context enables us to understand Jákob W.'s testimony as well. Through the revealed mechanisms of testifying, such as the emergence of raw traumatic and re-traumatizing experiences in Jákob W.'s testimony, we can draw upon both testimonies as crucial historical sources.

Conclusion

The hundreds of child survivor testimonies collected after the war are a yet untapped resource for the understanding of the Holocaust, as well as children's experience of it and its aftermath. Written as they were by children, the testimonies challenge conventional historical research and demand the use of interdisciplinary research tools as demonstrated in this paper.

By employing literary analytic techniques together with historical research methods, we analysed two child survivors' testimonies rendered together in a DP camp in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust. We have chosen these specific testimonies because they constitute a distinct subgroup within a larger collection of testimonies that were given concurrently. They, thus, provide each other's immediate context. By drawing upon textual analytic methods, we were able to utilize this aspect of the testimonies, while other layers of the contemporary contexts had to be revealed by historical research procedures. This combined research into the immediate contexts of testimonies demonstrates that analysing testimonies together with the contemporaneous circumstances of their rendition not only deepens our understanding of the testimonies but teaches us about post-war survivor communities and their sensibilities. It also provides valuable insight into the special position and role that survivor children held within post-war Jewish society, opening new possibilities for further Holocaust-centred research focusing on the survivors, their ways of transmitting their experiences, and their transition to a new life.

Notes

1. This paper was researched and written as a part of the "Voices of Child Survivors: Children's Holocaust Testimonies" project, Bar-Ilan University, which was made possible by a grant from the Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Research, Documentation and Education of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. The project brought together a socio-linguist, Joel Walters, an historian, Boaz Cohen, and a literary scholar and historian, Rita Horváth. This team worked together to develop multidisciplinary techniques for analysing children's Holocaust testimonies in context. Hundreds of testimonies, from various sources and languages, were

processed and about a quarter of them underwent in-depth analyses. The more general statements concerning child testimonies, such as the above one, are based on this project's findings.

2. Cohen, "The Children's Voice", 74–95; Horváth, "A Jewish Historical Commission", 475–96.
3. Children's Centre, Children's Camp, Children's DP Camp, or any combination of these terms are used in contemporaneous sources to refer to the same institution. Therefore, we will use the terms interchangeably in this article.
4. For reasons of privacy no full names of the children are used, even though full archival information is given. Since the analyses of the testimonies used here focus also on their language, during the translation into English care was taken to stay as close to the Hungarian original as possible. Therefore, wherever the text is awkward, strange, or grammatically incorrect in English, it is because representation of the original Hungarian text requires such measures. Naturally, the analyses are based on the Hungarian originals.
5. E. E. Rhatigan deputy director general to Sir Michael Creagh, UNRRA, European Regional Office, 29 September 1945 (UN Archives S-0416-0008-5). On numerous occasions in this paper we quote from reports or other documents in English by officials whose mother tongue was not English. We are aware that in some cases the wording is awkward, but we have rendered their words verbatim, as they were recorded in the documents.
6. "Unaccompanied Children" was the UNRRA term used to describe DP children, Jewish and other, who arrived or were registered in Germany without close relatives.
7. "Subject: Jewish Infiltree Children", E. Blackey to Mr. B. R. Alpert 10 August, 1946. (UN Archives S-0402-0002-6.) [henceforth: Blackey]
8. Blackey.
9. "Report on Jewish infiltree children", Susan Pettiss, Child Welfare Officer for Jewish Children, 5 December, 1946. (UN Archives 0401-0002-3.) [henceforth Pettis Report]
10. Petiss Report.
11. Shmuel Shilo's letter is quoted in Mivtzari 84.
12. In numerous cases, the *madrikhim* and their "children" have maintained a close relationship well into the 2000s. Reunions and birthday parties for 80-year-old *madrikhim* are not a rare occurrence in Israel.
13. "Installations to be opened immediately: Goldcup – capacity – 450, Aschau (Muhldorf) capacity 500, Schliersee – 600, Lindelfels (in operation) capacity 450" (no date, circa November 1946—date of other correspondence pertaining to the situation in Lindenfels of which this report is one.) Ultimately there were eight such centres for Jewish children. (UN Archives S-0437-0012-22) The DP camp in Aschau am Inn (near Mühldorf) existed from February 1946 until the summer of 1948. Tobias and Schlichting; Tobias, 129-147. (According to survivor testimonies, it is feasible that the Aschau Children's Centre (DP camp) had been opened a bit earlier, already in January 1946.)
14. Pettis Report.
15. See "Tentative Cookery School Course: Kosher Food School", 20 Feb. 1946 (UN Archives S-0425-0064-7).
16. Susan Pettiss, Child Welfare Officer for Jewish Children, "Visit to Jewish Children's Centres in the Muhldorf Area, 19th December 1946" (UN Archives S-0437-0012-7).

17. The children were impressed with the facilities in the camp. "The place was amazingly organized", testified Jákob F. in 1983 (YVA 03/5389). He and his friends thought that the camp had originally been a Hitler Jugend facility intended for privileged children and teenagers. In reality, it had been constructed and used for workers of the Dynamit Nobel Armaments Company.
18. "Aschau camp, under team 154, Muhldorf – visited 20 March, 1946." (UN Archives S-0435-0014-19.)
19. Miss Lotte Lotheim, "Mental Hygiene Program in Purten I and Aschau – Monthly report Feb. 6th to Feb. 20th 1947", 19 Feb. 1947 (UN Archives S-0425- 64-8). [Henceforth Lotheim]
20. Lotheim, February 8, 1947. Mankowitz, in his *Life Between Memory and Hope* emphasizes the antagonisms between the objectives of nationalist ideology and those of social work (142).This basic incompatibility notwithstanding, the bottom line was that the "mental hygiene program" was carried out, the *madrikhim* and their leaders were willing to receive professional help and advice—the antagonism could be and was breached.
21. Lotheim, February 19, 1947.
22. For details about the Aschau DP camp, see: YVA, O.48/297.12 as well as two testimonies: YVA, O.3/10124 and YVA, O.3/9024.
23. The *Mizrahi* (Hebrew acronym of *merkaz ruhani*—spiritual centre) was a Religious Zionist movement that was founded in 1902 to encourage Zionism among Orthodox Jews and promote religious as well as cultural ideas among its constituents. Its socialist offshoots furthered the principle of *Torah va`avodah* (Torah and Labour) and established its youth movement: *Bnei Akiva*. We found that in the DP camps the movement and its *kibbutzim* used the terms *Mizrahi*, *Torah va`avodah*, and *Bnei Akiva* interchangeably.
24. "Z. Warhaftig and Dr. I. Lewin *Va`ad Hatzalah* to Miss Marjorie Bradford UNRRA Central Headquarters, Hoechst" (UN Archive S-0416-0008-5). *Va`ad Hatzalah* was a Jewish religious organization established by leaders of the *Mizrahi* and *Agudath Israel* movements in the USA with the aim of rescuing Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe. In the postwar era they focused on catering to the religious needs of survivors. Their mission *vis–à-vis* surviving children was to: "establish orphanages under Jewish religious supervision, establish religious schools and train individuals for such functions." *Va`ad Hatzalah* (emergency committee) to the UNRRA headquarters, 8 August 1945 (UN Archive S-0416-0008-5).
25. An illuminating example was the situation in the Lindenfels Children Centre where the UNRRA decided that the *Mizrahi* group would have to leave the centre because, among other problems, the dominant *Hashomer hatza`ir* group leaders were "not in sympathy with the Orthodox teachings and philosophy of the *Mizrahi* group, finding it difficult to work with them" (UN Archives S-0402-007-6). It seems, however, that this decision was not carried out.
26. Interviews with Jehuda Don and Jákob F. conducted by RH in August 2009.
27. For information on the *Bnei Akiva, Torah va`avodah*, and Mizrahi activities in Aschau and other DP camps, see Weinstein, *Peduyim lezion berinah*, 8.
28. This name was very popular in young survivor circles. *Torah va`avodah* also had three kibbutzim with this name in Italy.
29. According to RH's interview with AG (12 Oct. 2009), there was at least one small *Hashomer Hatza`ir* group as well in Aschau.

30. On Historical Commissions see Jockusch, "Khurbn Forshung", 441–73 and Cohen, "Holocaust Survivors", 290–300. On the Munich Historical Commission's call for children's testimonies, see Jockusch, "Khurbn Forshung", 467.
31. *Fun Lezten Hurban* was the first Holocaust research journal. See Cohen, "Representing Children's Holocaust", 74–97.
32. One was born in 1927, one in 1928, two in 1929, six in 1930, seven in 1931, and six in 1932.
33. YVA M-1/E 147–YVA M-1/E 169.
34. The Hungarian ones are the following: YVA M-1/E 161–YVA M-1/E 168.
35. YVA M-1/E 149, written in Yiddish.
36. See, for example, the following documents held in the ITS: OuSArchives Document ID 68403809: Walter N. left Aschau on December 23, 1946 (He gave testimony No. YVA M-1/E 167); OuSArchives Document ID 68005996: Márkusz L. left Aschau on December 16, 1946 (He gave testimony No. YVA M-1/E 161); OuSArchives Document ID 66628707: Boruch B. left Aschau on December 20, 1946 (He gave testimony No. YVA M-1/E 147); OuSArchives Document ID 66698063: Mendel B., left Aschau on December 23, 1946, (He gave testimony No. YVA M-1/E 155); OuSArchives Document ID 67372266: Zew H. left Aschau on December 24, 1946 (He gave testimony No. YVA M-1/E 153). From a much later testimony, we learn that AG, who had given testimony No. YVA M-1/E 168, left Aschau in November 1946. It follows, then, that the testimonies were given before that date. (AG's 1999 Interview, Budapest. USC Shoah Foundation Institute, Univ. of Southern California; No. 49301 (YVA O.93/49301).
37. There is one exception: AG (YVA M-1/E 168) belonged to Kibbutz *Avoda*. His testimony, unlike the others in a number of aspects, was probably given separately. For the comprehensive and theoretical in-depth analysis of all of AG's testimonies, see Horváth's work in progress that is being prepared in the framework of the Gertner Research fellowship at The International Institute for Holocaust Research in Yad Vashem.
38. Cited in Hemmendinger, "Readjustment", 127–34. The same survivor also adds: "The crucial years for us were between 1945 and 1948. By 1947 we began to feel like children again" (Hemmendinger,"Readjustment", 132).
39. In Budapest during the Arrow-Cross reign of terror thousands of Jews had been murdered or deported. Unlike the ghettos in the provinces of Hungary, however, the ghettos of Budapest were not liquidated, and therefore more Jews belonging to specific at-risk age groups, such as children, elderly people, and young mothers, survived there than had in the provinces, from where—with the exception of the Strasshof groups—the Jews were deported to Auschwitz.
40. On 7 June 1944, the mayor of Vienna requested Hungarian Jews from Kaltenbrunner, the head of the RSHA, to work in war industry plants. Most likely thanks to this request and to Rezső Kasztner's negotiations with Eichmann, about 10–15,000 Jews from the Hungarian provinces were not deported to Auschwitz, but rather were sent to work camps in the vicinity of Vienna and in the city itself. Since in the Strasshof distribution camp the transports from Hungary did not undergo selection upon arrival, and in most cases the families were allowed to stay together, the majority of Jews deported in the Strasshof Action survived. (Molnár, *Csendőrök, hivatalnokok, zsidók*, 194–7).
41. YVA M-1/E 162.
42. The title in Hungarian is: "Hogy vészeltem át a német rezsim alatti időket." The Hungarian word in the title "átvészel" is a synonym of "survive", but the term connotes an

emphasis on the active struggle through a period of extreme danger. Hence, I have translated it as "pull through". This word in Hungarian contains the root "vész", which signifies catastrophe/danger/calamity, that is also contained in the Hungarian term for the Holocaust: "Vészkorszak".

43. Based on later oral testimonies, we assume that there was not much interaction between these two youth groups, and that they probably lived in separate blocks. Only one of the kids who testified in Hungarian specified his block in Aschau (at the heading of the testimony): Block 18. We know that the vast majority of the youngsters testifying in Yiddish lived in blocks 14, 15 or 17. (Five boys from block No. 14, six boys from block No. 15, one witness from No. 17—three do not specify their blocks.) Moreover, it appears that the testimonies were given separately by the two youth groups, since the Yiddish compositions (with only one exception) are numbered consecutively (YVA M-1/E 147–160) as are the Hungarian ones (YVA M-1/E 161–168) after the Yiddish ones. They are not mixed. The last two testimonies of the entire Aschau group, one in Hungarian (YVA M-1/E 168) and one in Yiddish (YVA M-1/E 169), appear to have been given separately from the rest of the testimonies.
44. "We had to deal with the many fights between the Polish boys, who had suffered the longest, since they were earlier, and the Hungarian-Romanian boys, who were deported later. Also, there were the fights with the former Kapos, so that everyday there were boys who were injured." Hemmendinger, "Readjustment", 129.
45. Ibid.
46. Berettyóújfalu is technically a village but it is a very large one, and has special administrative significance. It became the county seat of the remaining Bihar County from after the Trianon Peace Treaty until the Second Vienna Award, when Nagyvárad (today Oradea Mare, Romania) became the county seat once again. According to the 1941 census, 11,781 people lived in Berettyóújfalu; 982 of them were of the Jewish faith. (CENSUS Kepecs József, *A zsidó népesség száma településenként, 1840–1941*. (Concerning Berettyóújfalu, see Nesher and Gerő, *Berettyóújfalu és környéke zsidóságának emlékkönyve*; Haifa, 2001, and Lőwy, "Berettyóújfalu", 307–09.
47. ITS's OuSArchives Document ID 67081777 and "Névjegyzék Berettyóújfalu községben lakó zsidókról" [List of the names of the Jews living in the village of Berettyóújfalu] compiled by the gendarmerie in Berettyóújfalu according to the order of the headquarters of the Hung. Royal Sixth Gendarme District in Debrecen No. 420/B. 1944. dated to April 8, 1944 (YVA O.15/64A). It is a so-called Jaross list. The order was a response to the 4 April 1944 Decree of the Ministry of the Interior No. 6136/1944. BM VII. res., which ordered the census of the Jews in order to facilitate ghettoization. (The Decree was announced on 5 April in the Nyomozati Értesítő [Investigation Bulletin] of the gendarmerie (Vol. 15 No 76). After the present paper had been completed, we had the opportunity to talk to Jákob F. over the phone, and he confirmed that Jákob W. was a cousin of his.
48. As part of the headings of the testimonies ("Ed.[ucational] Lev.[el]"), it is recorded that Jákob F. had completed "4 classes of higher elementary school" and Jákob W. had completed "one year of high school". The headings of the testimonies consisted of "D.P. CAMP. ASCHAU. U.N.R.R.A. TEAM. 154", and they also contained the name, the date of birth, the educational level, and the pre-ghettoization address of the testifier.
49. YVA M-1/E 164.
50. In Hungary, a number of Zionist groups formed the Rescue Committee of Budapest (Budapesti Mentőbizottság, the Vaada) in January 1943. Ottó Komoly, the president

of the Hungarian Zionist Alliance, became the president of this new organization, and Rezső (Yisrael) Kasztner, a Zionist leader who moved to Budapest from Transylvania in September 1940, became his deputy. In order to save Jews, they immediately began negotiations with SS officer Dieter von Wisliceny, and from May onwards, with Adolf Eichmann. The "Kasztner-train" rescue operation was the result of these negotiations. As part of the "Kasztner-train" operation, certain Jews from various ghettos were taken to Budapest as future passengers on the train. SS-Obersturmbannführer Kurt Becher, Himmler's economical expert, gradually took over the negotiations during the organization of the Kasztner-train in June 1944. The passengers of the train were Jews selected by the Vaada and the Central Council of the Hungarian Jews in Budapest, but the final list was altered by Wisliceny, who supervised the deportations. The Kasztner-train left Budapest on 30 June 1944 with 1,684 passengers.

51. YVA M-1/E 164.
52. Ibid.
53. Eva Heyman, a 14-year-old girl from Nagyvárad, records this type of behaviour on the part of teenagers in her famous diary: Ágnes Zsolt, *Éva lányom*. The English version, translated from the Hebrew, was published in 1988.
54. "At dawn on June 7, the gendarmerie together with the military occupied all the Jewish houses[.] Giving 10 minutes for packing[,] they herded the Jewish inhabitants of the village to a lumberyard. From here, in the evening, they entrained [bevagonir-oztak] us with the help of rifle butts and gendarme's bayonets. We traveled for one day [:] until Nagyvárad, a 30 km-distance. From here they pushed us into an enormous stable 1000 people. [ungrammatical; the sentence has two subjects: us and 1000 people.] We had been languishing here for three weeks. Meanwhile the detectives picked out the older and richer people and amongst horrible beatings, they interrogated [them] concerning the whereabouts of hidden riches."
55. It is especially painful to observe the process of this disintegration in comparison to other testimonies, in which a construction of the self can be observed. For examination of such a process, see Rita Horváth's in-depth analysis of AG's testimony entitled "Break, Reconstruction or Continuation."
56. Caruth, *Trauma*, 151.
57. YVA M-1/E 163; italics ours.
58. Ibid.
59. From RH's telephone interview with Jákob W.'s sister in August 2009, we learned that the mother with her three children travelled to the grandmother who lived in Debrecen. The grandmother's house was inside one of the ghettos of the city, and the family remained there together. Later, they were taken together to Strasshof, and so survived the Holocaust.
60. YVA M-1/E 163.

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