Jewish Families in Europe, 1939-Present

Fishman, Sylvia Barack, Michlic, Joanna Beata

Published by Brandeis University Press

Fishman, Sylvia Barack and Joanna Beata Michlic.
Jewish Families in Europe, 1939-Present: History, Representation, and Memory.
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May 8 [1945]

It is over. Our liberation has come, but she wears a prosaic face. No one has died of joy. No one has gone mad with excitement. When we used to dream of freedom, we bathed her with our tears. We crowned her with the garlands of our smiles and dreams. Now that she is here, she looks like a beggar, and we have nothing to give her. With what desperation did we call for her in those dark days. With what power did her far-off shimmer flesh out our thin bodies? Now she is here and she beckons to us from every corner. She is right before our eyes, yet we cannot see her. She begs us: “Touch me . . . enjoy me . . .” But we are tired. Our past, like a hawk, circles overhead, fluttering its black wings, devouring our days with horrible memories. It poisons our nights with terror. Poor, sad Freedom! Will she ever have the strength to free us from those dark shadowy wings?¹

For years my own feelings lay dormant like a fossil inside an amber bead. Now, fifty years after the war ended, I want to uncover my past and learn who I was. . . . For years I did not speak about the war. People were killed. Parents watched their children slain. I survived. What was there to tell? Only the dead can tell. But when my older son, Daniel, went to school, his teacher asked me to meet with the students to tell them about my life.²

The first passage is from the Diary of Chava Rosenfarb, today an acclaimed Yiddish writer, dated May 8, 1945, when she was twenty-two years old. The second is an excerpt from the memoir of Miriam Winter, a theater professor in the United States and a child survivor, who was, like Rosenfarb, born in the great prewar multicultural city of Lodz in 1933. Their writing encapsulates some central aspects of the Holocaust experience for young Jewish individuals. Both excerpts show common themes in the self-representations of young survivors and in the postwar social history of European Jewish youth.
That history is filled with multifactored silences. The war forced young Jews to suppress critical aspects of their own identity in order to survive. When that pressure abated, many pursued a sudden, compelling search for their prewar and wartime selves, while experiencing an overwhelming sense of the irreparable loss of their families. Memoirs and testimonies from young survivors are imbued with the realization that wartime experiences have a profound impact on one’s adult life, even for people who achieved what is socially regarded as a successful familial and professional life. They constitute a body of evidence that draws us as close as we can get to the young survivors’ apprehensions regarding their identities, their mourning of their murdered families, and their explorations and interrogations of their own memories.

Since the late nineteenth century, European culture has regarded childhood as a temporary and impermanent phase of the life cycle and has always defined it as a loss in adult life. For Jewish children during the Holocaust, and for that matter, for other children under the conditions of genocide in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, there was a total, violent loss of childhood experiences during the chronological phase of childhood. Their childhood was denied and destroyed. Examining the history of these experiences has prompted an ongoing methodological discussion of how and what young survivors, especially children, remember from their wartime childhood. Historians are also concerned with when the memory comes, whether and by whom it is transmitted, and how the children of survivors, generation two, and the grandchildren of survivors, generation three, engage with the wartime memories of their parents and grandparents.

This collective volume, *Jewish Families in Europe, 1939–Present: History, Representation, and Memory*, is the outcome of an interdisciplinary, in-depth research project on “Families, Children, and the Holocaust,” conducted at Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, and the vigorous academic discussions it prompted involving historians, sociologists, psychologists, literary scholars, and child survivors themselves, such as the acclaimed Polish Jewish American writer, Henryk Grynberg.

**AIMS OF THE BOOK**

The main goal of this work is to broaden our understanding of wartime and postwar histories and (self)-representations of mainly central east European Jewry through the lenses of Jewish parents, children, and youth, and to a lesser degree, through Jewish organizations and institutions. This work does not claim to provide the final word on the subject, but instead presents a rich sample of the most recent avenues of research into child survivors’ postwar memories and into the coping mechanisms of Jewish families and youth during the Holocaust; the possibilities, limitations, and dynamics of the re-
construction of the post-Holocaust Jewish family; and the impossibility of the recovery of childhood in the aftermath of the genocide. The mortality rate for Jewish children and also for elderly Jews was especially high during the Holocaust. According to reliable estimates, only 6 to 11 percent of Europe's prewar Jewish population of children numbering approximately between 1.1 and 1.5 million survived, as compared with 33 percent of the adults, so the history of Jewish child survivors also represents a history of a small youth minority.  

The book demonstrates how the fields of the Holocaust and postwar social Jewish history have been changing and expanding as a result of scholarly engagement with new archival collections and oral histories in a variety of audio and visual forms. The access to new archival collections in post-communist Europe and the recently opened Red Cross International Tracing Services (rrs) records at Bad Arolsen, Germany, which is now also available in digitized form at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., have led scholars to ask previously neglected questions. It enables historians to conduct richly detailed microstudies of everyday life in concentration and death camps and on different aspects of life in hiding on “the Aryan side” in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe, which was forbidden to Jews by the German laws and regulations. It also enables historians to conduct microhistories of children's lives and rehabilitation programs in Displaced Persons (dp) camps in occupied Germany in the early postwar period. Thanks to the engagement with these recovered or newly discovered sources, scholars are now involved in in-depth historical examinations of the dynamics of relationships in prisoner society; in ghetto society; between Jewish men and Jewish women, and Jewish children and Jewish adults; and between Jews and non-Jews on “the Aryan side,” including the still underresearched and in postcommunist Europe, greatly politicized, subject of the rescue of Jews, particularly children.  

Greater openness toward and critical engagement of historians with oral histories have enabled new interdisciplinary scholarly discussions on the memory and the postwar self-representations of young survivors. Nowhere is this as visible as in the growing scholarly interest in child Holocaust testimonies from different postwar periods, starting with the early postwar wave of 1945–1949 and ending with the latest and possibly the final postwar “boom” beginning in the 1990s, which is still continuing. After decades of denying agency to Jewish youths and children, historians began to acknowledge the agency of young survivors in ensuring their own survival and in helping others, especially siblings who were younger than they were.  

Conventional history has been suspicious of individual witnesses and lacked a vocabulary and methodology for dealing with ordinary people and their experiences and memories. Women and children have been ignored over a long period in conventional history. This historical school has viewed
child survivors’ testimonies with particularly great mistrust, though such testi-
monies were eagerly collected for psychological and educational purposes 
already at the end of the war. However, even the professional and amateur 
historians of the Jewish Historical Commissions in Hungary, Poland, and Ger-
many,10 established immediately in the aftermath of the Holocaust to docu-
ment the physical and cultural destruction of Jews, did not know what to do 
with the child survivors’ testimonies. These first collectors (zamlers) of child 
survivors’ testimonies saw child survivors’ accounts as being of little value 
to historians. In their eyes, child survivors’ testimonies could not be treated 
as historical evidence because children at this stage of cognitive develop-
ment lack the capacity to transmit their lived experiences and general infor-
modation accurately. This was, for instance, the view of Genia Silkes (Sylkes) 
(1914–1984), herself a survivor and an active member of the Central Jewish 
Historical Commission (Tsentrale yiddishe historische komisye), a body first es-
tablished in Poland in August 1944 and transformed into the Żydowski Instytut 
Historyczny (Jewish Historical Institute, zih) in October 1947. Among 7,300 
personal testimonies collected by the members of the Central Jewish Histori-
cal Commission in Poland between 1944 and 1948, 419 child survivors authored 
429 testimonies, as some wrote or dictated more than one testimony. More 
than three-quarters of these testimonies are in Polish, the second language 
of the testimonies is Yiddish, and a small minority of testimonies are in Ger-
man and Russian. In 1945, Silkes compiled the instructions for interviewing 
child survivors that became the guidelines for the newly established Jewish 
Historical Commissions in Poland. In the guide, published in both Polish and 
Yiddish in Lodz, a major thriving center of Jewish life in post-1945 Poland, 
children’s testimonies were considered valuable material for psychological 
and educational purposes rather than important documents for historians.11 
“When carrying out precise studies of children, we assume beforehand that 
they are less valuable than other evidentiary material; however, they have a 
psychological value that cannot be calculated, which adults are not in the po-
sition to give us.”12 Somewhat contradictorily, Silkes, and other like-minded 
activists of the Jewish Historical Commissions, viewed the children’s testimo-
nies as powerful emotional indices of resistance and heroism, demonstrating 
the young survivors’ courage (mut), practical survival skills (lebns hokhme), 
and the vigor of their resistance (vidershtands-kraft). But she was unable 
to acknowledge the agency of child survivors, in spite of the fact that 199 
child-survivor testimonies — ninety-nine of those by girls and one hundred 
by boys — named their own actions and wits as essential in the process of their 
own survival.
THE UNDERRESEARCHED HISTORY OF JEWISH SURVIVOR YOUTHS AND FAMILY

The literary scholar Lawrence Langer has argued that by dividing the history of the Holocaust into two histories, perpetrators and victims, conventional historians have failed the victims and privileged the perpetrators, merely because the Nazi regime created official archival documents. These historians created narratives concerned mainly with the perpetrators, ignoring or marginalizing the victims. They failed the youngest victims and survivors most by denying them not only agency, but also a legitimate place as a subject of historical inquiry.

Beginning in the late 1970s and through the 1980s and 1990s, new trends in scholarship in the form of the oral history, the history of everyday life, women’s history, gender studies, and the history of childhood have facilitated the rise and expansion of the social history of the Holocaust and post-1945 Jewish history by the inclusion of the previously hidden subjects, women and children. These developments have forced historians to look for analytical tools outside their discipline and to recognize that the study of history should be concerned not only with the past, but also with how collectives and individuals remember the past. Contemporary historians realize that the exploration of human subjectivity allows us to understand the emotional impact and the human meaning of events, and that therefore the subjectivity of children constitutes an appropriate topic for historical inquiry.

This collective volume is part of this exciting shift and follows in the footsteps of such works as the pioneering study of Jewish children in Nazi-occupied Europe by Debórah Dwork, Children with the Jewish Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi-Occupied Europe, published in 1991, which gives an overview of the different fates of Jewish children; and Nicholas Stargardt’s Witnesses of War: Children’s Lives under the Nazis, which demonstrates the merits of a history of children, written from a child’s point of view, and which places children’s experiences within the broader social and cultural contexts of the Second World War. Two contributors to this volume, Dalia Ofer and Leonore Weitzman, are pioneering scholars of the history of women and the Jewish family during the Holocaust, and their respective chapters represent the latest development of their approach to the modes of parenthood and survival strategies of Jewish families in the major ghettos in Nazi-occupied eastern Europe.

In addition to demonstrating the recent shifts in historical writing on the Holocaust and on post-Holocaust social Jewish history, Jewish Families in Europe, 1939–Present offers a vision for how these fields might develop in the future. It contributes to the deeper understanding of young individuals and families during and in the aftermath of the Holocaust. It provides insights into the role of children and youths in the post-Shoah reconstruction of Jewish
family and society, and the complexities, paradoxes, and contradictions of that process. It alerts our attention to the areas of the social history of the Holocaust of which our understanding is still fragmentary.

This book focuses primarily on Jewish communities in central east Europe and does not include comparative analysis with other child-victims of the Second World War, a field that has generated increasing academic interest in the last decade.19 This specific geographical focus demonstrates that there are still many unresearched historical and methodological topics and a wealth of understudied material that begs for a proper scholarly investigation. Even so, the need for more comparative studies is clear, for example, concerning the postwar modes of reconstruction of childhood experiences in biographical memory between Jewish children and non-Jewish children—victims of Nazi policies of violence, discrimination, and persecution. In agreement with Nicholas Stargardt’s position,20 I argue these studies should examine not only similarities but also the major differences between the different national and ethnic groups of children. It is crucial to pay attention to historical differences and the different historical contexts of the varied child-victims under discussion.

Jewish Families in Europe, 1939–Present does not attempt to make any comparisons with the experiences and memories of Jewish youths and families during and in the aftermath of the Holocaust in Western Europe. But it acknowledges the need for future comparative studies, involving Western and Eastern Europe, for example, of certain topics such as the rescue of Jewish children, the postwar reconstitution of Jewish families, the recovery of hidden Jewish children, and the wartime and early postwar experiences of antisemitism and its impact on young Jewish survivors. Certain parallels and similarities, between early postwar Poland and early postwar Holland, concerning the painful reconstitution of the Jewish family, the lack of reunion with Jewish parents, and the psychological problems of regaining a Jewish identity by hidden children have struck me while reading Diane L. Wolf’s Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children and Postwar Families in Holland,21 a sociological study based on interviews with former hidden Dutch Jewish children. Of course, in studying the nature of these similarities, one has to take into account major historical differences such as state-level family policy. In contrast to post-1945 Poland, in which family law at least theoretically guaranteed the right of surviving Jewish parents to be reunited with their offspring who were sheltered by individual Polish rescuers during the Holocaust, in the Netherlands, in August 1945, a special regulation was enacted that became a law concerning hidden Jewish children which made it almost impossible to reunite these children with their biological parents returning from concentration and death camps.

xx • Introduction
Jewish Families in Europe, 1939–Present demonstrates that the post-Holocaust history of central east European Jewish youths and family encompasses many transnational aspects, such as the reconstitution of Jewish families, adoption, and a variety of life trajectories of young survivors, including first loves, future marriages, lifelong friendships, and family-like relationships among youths who met in children’s homes and kibbutzim established in central east Europe and in the West in the aftermath of genocide. It is a history that must be approached through a transnational lens. One of the underresearched issues regarding the transnational history of young Holocaust survivors is, for example, the treatment of youths from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in early postwar British society. In her doctoral thesis, Mary Fraser Kirsh explores the ways the Anglo-Jewish relief organizations and press, including the leading weekly Jewish Chronicle, portrayed child survivors from the war-torn continent in the early postwar era. She offers a rather disturbing picture of the utilization of child survivors in the Anglo-Jewry’s propaganda and fund-raising campaigns in which the child survivor was reduced to a mere symbol of redemption and assimilation in middle-class British society. Adolescent survivors were always portrayed as serious, studious, and neatly dressed, and eager to learn a new trade, an antithesis of the delinquent youths so prominent in postwar British imagination. Despite the destruction written on children’s bodies, the social workers and the journalists typically emphasized the attractive appearance and health of young survivors from Bergen-Belsen and Terezin camps. There is a need for systematic investigation of how the Anglo-Jewish tradition of invisibility and acculturation, rooted in collective anxiety over the spread and influence of anti-Jewish stereotypes in postwar British society, has affected the lives of young survivors from central east Europe in postwar Britain. A subtle version of British antisemitism and its influence on the second and third generations of British Holocaust survivors also requires a thorough scholarly analysis.

To understand the short-term and long-term impact of the Shoah on young survivors and the post-1945 multigenerational Jewish family, it is essential to study that history in both the wartime and postwar historical contexts rather than treat these two periods separately. Many Czech, Slovak, Polish, or Hungarian Jewish children found themselves in the Displaced Persons camps in the early postwar American, British, and French zones in divided Germany, and made their new postwar homes in the West: in the United States, Canada, and Australia, and to a lesser degree in the United Kingdom and France. Many child survivors, the full orphans, were shattered by the painful realization that no one would “come for them,” because their immediate and extended families had been totally destroyed. As a result, they were attracted, not only in an ideological, but also in a primarily practical and existential sense, to
Zionism as the only attractive, meaningful alternative to build a future life.\textsuperscript{23} The children’s homes and kibbutzim that mushroomed in the early postwar period were the formative centers for young survivors in which the yearning for the “dreamed” safe Jewish homeland crystallized. These children emigrated mostly illegally to the Yishuv in Palestine/Israel between 1945 and 1950, but the sense of orphanhood did not disappear easily in their new homeland, as the simple poem by an unnamed child survivor written in Kibbutz Mishmar Ha’emek in 1946 exclaims:

I have so much of everything  
But I have no parents  
At the same time  
I hear the wind whisper  
Child, don’t listen to that voice  
There are many children like you  
Who have no mothers  
So don’t cry  
You must sing, study, and dance  
And build our land.\textsuperscript{24}

Other orphan children were adopted by unknown Jewish relatives or strangers in the United States through a variety of Jewish charities, such as the European Jewish Children’s Aid, which became part of the United Services for New Americans (USNA).\textsuperscript{25} The “lucky ones,” who were reunited with at least one surviving biological parent or another close relative, emigrated to the West after their newly reconstituted families met all the bureaucratic emigration criteria and passed the difficult task of proving that they were “blood relations,” often without possessing crucial documents such as birth and death certificates.

**THE HIDDEN CHILDREN**

Chapters on the postwar period in this volume throw new insights on the history of hidden children, whose wartime and postwar experiences and memories were barely known to historians in the early 1990s. Yet today, in 2016, hidden children have fully established active social networks, foundations, and associations not only in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe, but also in postcommunist Europe. With the help of Abraham H. Foxman, a former national director of the Anti-Defamation League and a child survivor from Poland, whose wartime rescue experiences, along with those of his parents, are also discussed in this volume, sixteen hundred former hidden children from twenty-eight countries met for the first time in late May 1991 in New York City at the First International Gathering of Chil-
Children Hidden during World War II. Thanks to this international gathering, which included a variety of social, cultural, academic, and psychotherapeutic events, hidden children for the first time publicly voiced their neglected wartime experience and thereby triggered and facilitated a scholarly interest in this group. Hidden children, the youngest born in 1939 or during the first three years of World War II, are the last living Holocaust survivors.

Hidden children are today part of the remarkable global social movement of memory among survivors, committed to the reconstruction of their prewar and wartime childhood and their postwar youth, which is characterized by a twisted sense of split identity and a complicated family history. Like other child survivors, many hidden child survivors are the driving force behind specific commemoration ceremonies in their heimats (places of their birth and childhood) and prewar homes of their ancestors. Some take on the role of survivor-educators, or “professional survivors,” by teaching about their experiences and the Holocaust in schools, colleges, and universities, and in public engagements, promoting tolerance and multicultural understanding. Many have deposited their interviews and memoirs in major archives such as Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the Imperial War Museum in London, or smaller local archives and museums. Between 1981 and 1995, the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University collected 34,000 testimonies, while between 1994 and 2002 Steven Spielberg’s Shoah Visual History Foundation collected 52,000. Many of these are those of child survivors. At the same time, we have to remember that there are child survivors who still avoid giving public interviews and testimonies and may never be ready to do so. There are many reasons for their silence, including familial concerns, psychological reservations, personal life trajectories, and/or drastically violent memories of wartime and early postwar experiences, such as emotional and sexual assault by those who were supposed to be their guardians.

Studies of child survivors’ testimonies unsettle a number of assumptions and popular conceptions about the Holocaust. First, they shatter the commonly accepted notion that the Holocaust ended in 1945. This sense that the Shoah is an ongoing trauma is poignantly expressed by Thomas Buergenthal, an internationally acclaimed American human rights lawyer and judge, and child survivor whose father was a Polish Jew from Galicia and whose mother was a German Jew: “That story, after all, continues to have a lasting impact on the person I have become.”

Second, an examination of child survivors’ accounts questions heroic and martyrrological traditions that tend to sentimentalize Jewish children and Jewish families and fail to recognize the complexity of the dilemmas they faced during the Holocaust and in its aftermath. For example, in the early postwar
period, some hidden children struggled to function in the newly reconstructed family units in which their surviving parent represented a forgotten and emotionally distant figure because of the long years of separation during the Holocaust or because the parent had remarried a new spouse immediately after the war.³⁰ As a result, these children sometimes yearned for a reunion with their loving wartime rescuer. Of course, this latter pattern was common among certain groups of hidden children from all over Nazi-occupied Europe, as it is revealed in the powerful documentary film Secret Lives: Hidden Children and Their Rescuers During WWII (2002), by the documentary filmmaker Aviva Slesin,³¹ herself a hidden child from Lithuania.

Third, child survivors’ testimonies reveal how extremely vulnerable young fugitives were in the world of adults under the conditions of war and genocide in Poland and other eastern European countries. Even among those who were supposed to shelter and protect them, there were rescuer-abusers who tormented them mentally and physically and treated them as a source of free labor, although there were also those who treated their young Jewish charges with love, compassion, and total dedication, as if they were their own children.

The postgenocide era did not bring an end to the confusion and vulnerability of youth in the world of adults. The key features of their early postwar experience were shattered dreams and a deeply felt sense of orphanhood buried beneath the surface of their joy at having survived. Other features include different, and often contradictory, expectations of behavior and educational and career choices among the young survivors and their newly appointed guardians, and a lack of understanding and sympathy on the part of some adoptive parents in the West and institutionalized authorities. Despite obvious differences between then and now, perhaps these unsettling findings about Jewish youths during and in the aftermath of the Holocaust constitute important lessons on how young victims of current and future genocides and wars should be treated.

**CONTENT OF THE BOOK**

*Jewish Families in Europe, 1939–Present* consists of an introduction, twelve chapters divided into two chronological sections, and an afterword by Henryk Grynberg.

The first section includes essays on parenthood, childhood, and the relationships between Jewish youths and adults during the Nazi era. It opens with a chapter by Dalia Ofer that discusses a variety of modes of parenthood, with special attention being paid to fatherhood in the major ghettos of Eastern Europe, such as Warsaw and Lodz.³² Ofer shows that the contemporaneous sources, such as personal diaries and letters, postwar memoirs, and oral his-
stories, offer us only a fragmentary portrayal of the Jewish family, one that is filled with contradictions and complexities.

The sociologist Leonore Weitzman’s chapter is in direct conversation with Ofer’s essay. It offers us an interpretation of self-help within a family unit under ghetto conditions. Weitzman presents a dynamic interpretation of role reversal between husbands and wives and between children and parents, suggesting greater fluidity, modifications, and “on and off switching roles” than the rather static understanding of role reversal. Her interpretation is particularly helpful in demonstrating how “role sharing” was realized in a variety of small and large families through different stages of ghettoization.

Joanna Sliwa’s essay investigates the survival strategies of children in the Kraków ghetto from the moment of its inception on March 3, 1941, until its final liquidation on March 13–14, 1943. On the eve of the Second World War, the Jewish community of Kraków numbered 56,000 inhabitants, one-third of the entire population of this medieval Polish capital, which became the capital of the Nazi-established administrative entity General Government, headed by the infamous Hans Frank. Sliwa provides an in-depth analysis of the variety of children’s survival strategies in the ghetto, through which the children emerge as historical actors exercising agency, albeit to varying degrees and with all restrictions imposed on that agency. Sliwa argues that smuggling goods and individuals in and out of the ghetto and food into the ghetto were two intertwined domains of Jewish youths. The acclaimed Polish French filmmaker Roman Polanski was one of such children of the Kraków ghetto.

Kinga Frojimovics’ chapter takes us into the discussion of a still largely neglected topic, the wartime and postwar experiences of disabled Jewish children. Frojimovics’s essay focuses on the survival of fifteen to twenty deaf and blind children in the Budapest ghetto, thanks to the efforts of a remarkable man, Dr Dezső Kanizsai, a children’s speech therapist and director of the National Institute for the Israelite Deaf-Mute, and the Blind in Budapest between 1926 and its closure at the end of 1940s. She offers a novel way of looking at the institutionalized rescue patterns and their policies and practices toward the most unfortunate children during genocide, and invites scholars to conduct further comparative research on the subject.

Kenneth Waltzer’s chapter examines patterns of social behavior among a group of 304 East European Jewish prisoners, sixteen years old and under, who were evacuated from Auschwitz-Buna (Monowitz) camp and Birkenau and taken on a death march to the west on January 19, 1945. Among them was the young Lazar (Eliezer) Wiesel (1928–2016), who documented his ordeal in the most well-known Holocaust memoir, Night, written first in Yiddish under the title Un di Velt Hot Geshvign.
Waltzer offers a passionate critique of a Hobbesian interpretation of concentration camp prisoner society as devoid of solidarity, human connection, and compassion. Instead, he contends that prisoner society must also be understood as a world of small-scale solidarities and connections between adult men and boys that enabled the latter to survive under extreme genocidal conditions. His work invites historians to conduct research on the small clusters of young survivors after the liberation, a study that would allow us to understand the short-term and long-term impact of social bonding among young survivors in the aftermath of genocide.

Jennifer Marlow’s chapter provides a historical reconstruction of the rescue of Jews through the lenses of former child survivors and also their parents. According to Marlow, the Nazi occupation and the Holocaust changed relationships between female Polish Catholic domestic workers and their former young Jewish charges whom they protected and sheltered, and the Jewish parents, the former employers of these domestic workers. The rescue dynamic unleashed, on the one hand, love, loyalty, and total dedication, and on the other, a darker mixture of emotions: possessive love, anger, cruelty, and jealousy.

The second part of Jewish Families in Europe, 1939–Present focuses on the complexities of the situation of Jewish children and youths during the early postwar period and examines the methodological and historical issues raised by survivor youths’ accounts of their wartime experiences. It also addresses the transmission of Holocaust memories in postwar Jewish families.

Avinoam Patt, a historian of Zionism in Jewish Displaced Persons (DP) camps in postwar Germany, discusses the early postwar life trajectories of 110 young survivors from two kibbutzim in the Polish Silesian towns of Bytom and Sosnowiec. This group spent fourteen months in the DP camps in the American zone of occupied Germany, where they named their united kibbutz after the Warsaw ghetto heroine Tosia Altman (1918–1943). Patt shows that for the young orphan survivors, the kibbutz came to serve as a substitute for the large Jewish families that the youths lost in the Shoah. Patt’s analysis also examines the manner in which young survivors internalized, utilized, and also sometimes rejected the Zionist ideology. Further studies comparing growing up, on the one hand, in collective orphan survivors’ centers and kibbutzim in DP camps in postwar Germany and in Israel, and on the other, in adoptive Jewish families of unknown relatives and strangers in the West would be a valuable tool in determining the role of peer groups in helping young survivors successfully adjust to a new life.

Joanna Beata Michlic and Rita Horváth discuss the importance of early postwar children’s testimonies in the reconstruction of the complexities of wartime experiences and the immediate effect of the Holocaust on the
children. Horváth’s and Michlic’s chapters derive from and contribute to the growing school of historical writing about children that recognizes the individual agency of children and views children as important historical co-creators of everyday life. While arguing for critical examination and broader contextualization of youth accounts, both scholars insist that early postwar child survivors’ testimonies show how the “granddaddy issue” in childhood history—that there is no access to children’s voices—can be overcome.

In their chapter, Boaz Cohen and Gabriel Finder reveal that the issue of the authenticity of children’s testimonies caused heated discussions in the early postwar period. One such discussion took place between the collector and editor, Benjamin Tenenbaum (1914–1999), and David Hanegbi, the publisher, of one of the first immediate postwar collections of the early postwar children’s testimonies, ehad me-‘ir u-shenayim mi-mishpahah (One from a City and Two from a Family), which appeared in Hebrew in 1947. Cohen and Finder discuss the history of this Hebrew language anthology, its origins, structure, and goals, and compare it to the other immediate postwar anthology of children’s testimonies, Dzieci oskarżają (The Children Accuse), originally published in Polish in 1946 by the Central Jewish Historical Commission.

Uta Larkey’s chapter looks at how the memories of Holocaust survivors are communicated and transmitted in family settings by members of the second generation (2G), any individual born in 1945 and after, and the third generation (3G), the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. The passing of the first decade of the twenty-first century, with the growing awareness of the inevitable encroachment of the “postsurvivor” era, makes the issue of how to interpret the Holocaust memories of survivors by 2G and 3G a compelling and timely research subject. Not only does the subject engage historians, psychologists, sociologists, and literary scholars, but also neuroscientists, who have recently claimed to identify the mode of transmission of Holocaust survivors’ stress to their offspring through their genes—“the epigenetic inheritance.”

Since 1977, there has been a growing global outpouring of fictional, life writings, and visual artistic works by the second generation, known as “the Heirs of the Holocaust,” a term coined by Helen Epstein, the pioneering voice of 2G who made “an unidentifiable group identifiable.” As regards the transmission of the Holocaust memories by 3G, we have also recently witnessed an outpouring of fictional works, such as Safran Foer’s Everything Is Illuminated (2002), Andrew Wiener’s The Marriage Artist (2010), and Nathan Englander’s What We Talk about When We Talk about Anne Frank (2012), and the emergence of new Holocaust memorialization projects. The latter includes tattooing oneself with a survivor’s number by grandchildren of the Holocaust survivors as a way of remembering and raising the awareness of the Holocaust. According to the Holocaust historian Michael Berenbaum, transmitting memories of
the Holocaust with one’s own body is a manifestation of a broader transition from “life” to “historical memories”: “We’re at that transition, and this is sort of a brazen, in-your-face way of bridging it.”

In her work, Larkey builds on research on familial transfer of memory, such as “postmemory,” the most significant concept in the discussion of the 2G memory, introduced by Marianna Hirsch, and the concepts of seeking a tikkun (mending repair) of self (atzmi), the world (olam), and (am) (healing of the Jewish people). Larkey offers a new conceptualization, “transmemory,” to define the engagement with the Holocaust by the generation of grandchildren. She also calls for a further investigation of a gendered transfer of a family’s memory in the 3G in a transnational context.

The second part ends with a chapter by psychologist and clinician Eva Fogelman, who is also a member of 2G. Fogelman argues that, for decades, the almost sole focus on and fascination with Anne Frank (1929–1945) — the famous young Jewish victim-figure — contributed to the neglect of the child survivors by scholars, the general public, and reparation authorities. Nonetheless, Fogelman contends that the last three decades have seen the recognition of child survivors’ suffering; and this development, in turn, has made a profound difference in the child survivors’ waning years. Fogelman’s essay offers a warning and important lesson for social workers, psychologists, and other professionals who deal with today’s young victims of genocide and war. It clearly shows how crucial it is to acknowledge and listen to the voices of young victims immediately in the aftermath of genocide.

Jewish Families in Europe, 1939–Present ends with the afterword by Henryk Grynberg, a prolific writer and poet, who dedicated his entire oeuvre to the writings about child survivors, based on his autobiographical experiences. In his essay, Grynberg, a child survivor born in 1936, was asked to comment on many academic essays included in this volume — a “reversal task,” since it is usually the scholars who critically analyze child survivors’ testimonies and statements. Grynberg offers intellectually sharp and poignant reflections about a variety of issues discussed in the volume. He makes us aware that children not only experience situations differently from adults, but they often face other horizons of experience: in contrast to adults, who had a normal past before the Holocaust, for many children the Holocaust was normality.

Grynberg also shares with the readers the ways in which he employed children’s testimonies in his book Children of Zion, based on the testimonies of 861 Polish Jewish children, mainly orphans, who in the fall of 1939 left Nazi-occupied Poland and found themselves under the Soviet occupation. In the summer of 1942, these children began their journey to Iran. They were a part of a group of 24,000 Polish civilians, who along with the recruits to the Polish Anders’ Army, were allowed to leave the Soviet Union for Iran. Known as the
“Tehran children,” they constitute one of the least-researched Jewish children’s cohorts during the Second World War.\textsuperscript{50}

\textit{Jewish Families in Europe, 1939–Present} reveals that there are still many questions about the wartime experiences of the Jewish family and certain groups of Jewish children in east-central Europe, and about how the Holocaust affected child survivors and the post-Holocaust multigenerational Jewish family. These questions require unraveling by the employment of various interdisciplinary scholarly approaches and different analytical tools. It is my hope that the research we present here will serve as a useful and inspirational guide for scholars of the social history of the Holocaust, Jewish childhood, and the post-1945 Jewish family, and for scholars of memory, human rights, childhood, and young people and families during and in the aftermath of war and genocide.

\textbf{NOTES}


3. There is a lack of studies concerning the cultural, social, and economic achievements of young East European Jewish survivors in the West. For an interesting sociological analysis of socioeconomic achievements in the United States among young Jewish refugees from German-speaking Central Europe, see Gerhard Sonnert and Gerald Holton, \textit{What Happened to the Children Who Fled Nazi Persecution} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).


6. For an essay based on previously understudied records of UNRRA’s child-tracing service held in the Archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS), see Verena Buser, “Displaced Children 1945 and the Child Tracing Division of the United Nations Relief and
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7. On the politics of memory of the Holocaust and its dark aspects, including the uses and abuses of the narratives of rescuers in the entire postcommunist Europe, see John-Paul Himka and Joanna B. Michlic, Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Memory of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).


12. Metodologische onveyzungen tsum dem khurbn fun poylishn yidntum, no. 5, 35.


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20. Stargardt, Witnesses of War, 17.


27. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, “Professionalizing Survival: The Politics of


34. On Roman Polanski’s wartime childhood, see, for example, the documentary film *Roman Polanski: A Film Memoir*, directed by Laurent Bouzereau and produced by Andrew Braunsberg, 2011.


40. Benjamin Tenenbaum, ed., *‘ehad me-‘ir u-shenayim mi-mishpahah* [One from a city and two from a family] (Sifriat Poalim: Merhavia, 1947).


47. There is a huge literature written about Anne Frank, her legacy, and her Diary. For an informative short summary of Frank’s biography and her legacy, see Dina Porat, “Biography of Anne Frank,” Jewish Women Encyclopedia, accessed on August 20, 2015, http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/frank-anne.

48. See, for example, Henryk Grynberg’s acclaimed The Jewish War and The Victory, published in English in one volume (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993). The Jewish War was Grynberg’s first full-size prose volume, written and published in Polish in 1965. The Victory, its sequel, was written in California after Grynberg decided to leave Poland in exile because of the antisemitic purge of 1968 and the official communist ban on his books.