

# Freilegungen

## Rebuilding Lives – Child Survivors and DP Children in the Aftermath of the Holocaust and Forced Labor

Edited by Henning Borggräfe,  
Akim Jah, Nina Ritz and Steffen Jost

International Tracing Service Yearbook

**ITS**  
International Tracing Service  
Service International de Recherches  
Internationaler Suchdienst

6

GENERAL TRACING BUREAU  
UNITED STATES HEADQUARTERS FOR GERMANY  
APO 757 or BAON

No. ....2076.....  
Date: 13 MAR 1946  
25 MAR 1946

FILE : 584-( )

SUBJECT: ENQUIRY CONCERNING RELATIVE of UNACCOMPANIED CHILD in GERMANY.

TO :

UNITED and the military authorities are conducting identification of unaccompanied United States children who they are cared for temporarily by UNITED States military authorities. Information is available about whom information is available. Together with replies from those listed in the file, with the relatives, a plan for the child's return to the relatives.

RELATIVE'S NAME

1. NAME Capt. MOUN (surname)  
(Christian name)

2. LAST KNOWN ADDRESS (and telephone number)

3. CHILD'S NAME MOUN (surname)  
(Christian name)

**I.T.S. CHILD SEARCH**

**CASE COVER SHEET**

Surname PLONIKI  
Given or christian names Henryk/Kennedy  
Other names used Mount.  
Nationally Pol-Jew.  
Birthdate 13.10.1924  
1925-1

Missing child  
Located child   
Registered child  
Relatively located

**Wallstein**

## *Freilegungen*

# INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE YEARBOOK

Volume 6

Edited by  
ITS Bad Arolsen



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Henning Borggräfe, Akim Jah, Nina Ritz and Steffen Jost  
in collaboration with Elisabeth Schwabauer



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This volume is based on a selection of papers presented at the international workshop *Life in the Aftermath – Displaced Persons, Displaced Children and Child Survivors on the Move. New Approaches in Education and Research* which was held on 30 May – 1 June 2016 at the *Max Mannheimer Study Center* in Dachau.

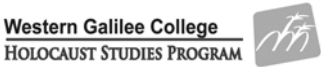
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## Foreword

I am honoured to introduce the 2017 Yearbook of the International Tracing Service (ITS), which includes a selection of the papers that were presented at the international workshop *Life in the Aftermath – Displaced Persons, Displaced Children and Child Survivors on the Move. New Approaches in Education and Research* dedicated to Child Survivors of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust. The conference was jointly organized by the ITS and the Max Mannheimer Study Center from 30<sup>th</sup> May through 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 June in Dachau.

The contributions published in this volume examine various aspects of the lives of Child Survivors and Displaced Children. They tell us about the traumatic experience, about violence, displacement, the loss of the home and the destruction of the family. They also tell us about hope and rebuilding homes and lives in a new country. Today this topic is more relevant than ever. More than 65 million people, including 10 million child refugees, are uprooted. They were forced to leave their homes in the wake of a conflict and are depending on the care of the international community.

The stakes for our institution are high. How can we provide access to the experience and the knowledge that is in our archives to make a positive and useful contribution to contemporary challenges? We believe that our mission is to inspire researchers to further work on this chapter of post-war history, in particular, on the basis of the archives of the *Child Search Branch* that are part of the collections of the ITS. The *Child Search Branch* was entrusted after liberation with the mission of searching for missing children and youths, with the goal of reuniting them with their families. The *Child Search Branch* also took care of unaccompanied children and youths and helped them to repatriate or emigrate. The documents of the *Child Search Branch*, which include more than 56,000 individual files, are fully digitized and accessible to researchers at the ITS.

The history of Child Survivors and Displaced Children in Europe after the Second World War needs to be told. The international community would be well served to identify practices that were, at the time, successful. If experience can be passed on, institutions like the ITS have the duty to tell or help others tell the stories of these children and youths – because they teach us that children and grandchildren of refugees live in the midst of our societies and that, indeed, being a refugee is not an abstract concept, but a reality very close to home.

*Floriane Hohenberg*  
*Director of the International Tracing Service*  
*June 2017*

## Foreword

Survivors of the Nazi concentration camps, forced laborers, people who had fled to the Soviet Union and Central Asia to avoid persecution, many of whom were children, infants from Eastern Europe, victims of the so-called Germanization, and many, many more, uprooted and displaced – all were confronted with a pressing question directly after the war: where could they go when everything has been destroyed, many families wiped out, and the enslaving and murdering of millions of people, the »rupture in civilization« brought about by the Nazi dictatorship, makes it impossible to return to the life led before the outbreak of the war? For those persecuted, the end of the war was by no means experienced only as a liberation; after the struggle to survive they now had to face up to another struggle – that of continuing to live – and this entailed realizing the enormity of what had happened, the traumatic experiences of concentration camp imprisonment and forced labor, the violent death of loved ones, and the loss of their homeland.

For the Allied administration and the staff of the tracing services it was a vast organizational and deeply emotional challenge, exacerbated by the rising political tensions between East and West, to support these people, described as Displaced Persons, in their difficult situation and point the way to a future that would allow them to lead a dignified life. To accomplish this task, DP camps were set up in the Western zones, foremost in the American. Besides providing basic care for and registering these people, the goal of these camps was also to organize – wherever possible – the repatriation of the deported and liberated, or otherwise show them the various opportunities for emigration and how to go about it. In this provisional transit zone, where they were at once both subject to extraneous definition and yet able to (re-)define themselves, and despite all the ensuing conflicts, an extraordinarily diverse social, cultural, and political life developed, a powerful testimony to the unwavering courage and optimism of the persecuted.

The theme of the Displaced Persons is given differing degrees of emphasis in non-school historical-political education work. While in formats that are short term, for instance memorial site tours, the topic is mentioned in passing, if at all, long-term programs take an in-depth approach, either in terms of a specific site such as Bergen-Belsen, where a large DP camp was set up on the grounds of the former concentration camp immediately after the end of the war, or as a specific workshop, for instance the photographic collection at the Jewish Museum Berlin. Traveling exhibitions such as the one curated by Susanne

Urban for the International Tracing Service (ITS), *Where to go after liberation? Transit Stops: Displaced Persons after 1945*, provide an excellent foundation for developing the theme didactically and preparing it for educational work. The Anne Frank Educational Center in Frankfurt and the Max Mannheimer Study Center in Dachau have both taken advantage of this. The key concern in presenting the subject of Displaced Persons is not only to show how complicated and complex the postwar situation was, but also to rekindle interest in an important topic that for a long time faded almost completely from public view and is now once more receiving increasing attention as a historical reference point for the refugee and immigration movements impacting on Europe today.

Against this background, the ITS and the Max Mannheimer Study Center Dachau initiated the workshop *Life in the Aftermath – Displaced Persons, Displaced Children and Child Survivors on the Move. New Approaches in Education and Research* in May/June 2016. While both focus their efforts on different activities as an archive and a non-school education institution respectively, synergies could be used to transfer scholarly research into the educational practice. The archives of the ITS are fundamentally important for well-founded historical research; they are also playing an increasingly significant role in historical-political education. Seventy-one years after the end of the war, fewer and fewer young people have an opportunity to speak personally with survivors of the Nazi era. Moreover, those sites where history took place have either vanished completely or, now turned into memorial sites, museums, and documentation centers, are arranged and staged to follow different narratives. At this juncture, working under pedagogic guidance with ITS documents and other sources such as diaries, letters, and photographs comes to the fore in its own right and, through investigative learning, is capable of helping young people to become interested in historical events and biographical accounts, animating them to actively research the past on their own. It is in this way that they learn to approach history – and the constructions and conceptions of history – with a critical awareness.

Both the workshop and this ensuing volume wish to shed light on how institutions approach the theme of Displaced Persons in their current education work in general as well as present new research findings on children as survivors and Displaced Persons. Whereas the workshop included discussions with contemporary witnesses from the first and second generation of Displaced Persons as well as excursions to the sites of former DP camps, namely Föhrenwald and the Children's Center in Kloster Markt Indersdorf, this volume takes up both the detailed insightful discussions and broader, farther-reaching issues. In the pedagogical context, along with the concepts underlying the education services offered, focus was placed on how these were received by participants; the other

main question discussed was what sort of opportunities the Displaced Persons theme principally offers for historical education work. The challenge of linking present day concerns to the historical theme was also discussed critically, although the presentation of new research brought to light what potential this subject can have beyond the historical dimension. Here the focus was on aspects of global history in research and the teaching of history as well as how the politics of remembrance impacts on the sites of former DP camps today.

Both the workshop and the current publication highlight that the theme of Displaced Persons has yet to be explored, both in education work and in research. Thus, it remains important in the future to find ways of investigating the historical theme with scholarly depth and acumen while ensuring that the results effectively serve pedagogical work. I would like to warmly thank the many contributors, who thanks to their international profile were able to shed light on the theme in the context of transnational networks. The support given to hold the workshop by the foundation *Remembrance, Responsibility and Future* and the *Comité International de Dachau* was indispensable for the success of the event. And finally, I would like to mention that working with the staff of the ITS in Bad Arolsen was a positive and significant experience for us, one for which I am very grateful.

*Nina Ritz*  
*Head of the Max Mannheimer Study Center*  
*June 2017*

## Rebuilding Lives

### Introduction

After the liberation from National Socialism, approximately 10 million Displaced Persons (DPs) were in the territory of the German Reich and former German-occupied areas. Among them were former forced laborers, survivors of the concentration camps, Jews who had escaped the Holocaust, and survivors of the Porajmos, the genocide of Sinti and Roma. The Allies defined DPs as »civilians outside the national boundaries of their country by reasons of the war« who were »[d]esirous but unable to return home or find homes without assistance.«<sup>1</sup> Especially the survivors of the concentration camps were in a catastrophically bad state of health; consequently, many of them died from physical weakness and health impairment resulting from their incarceration even after liberation.<sup>2</sup>

Among the DPs were large numbers of children and young people under 18;<sup>3</sup> minors made up around 1.5 million displaced forced laborers alone.<sup>4</sup> Former forced laborers and the survivors of the camps and the Holocaust also included children or youngsters without the company of adults. The Allies coined the term »unaccompanied children« to denote children and young people who had survived without their parents, because they either were separated from them in the concentration camps or had been deported as forced laborers without them. In other cases the parents had been murdered or had died. As their parents' fate was for the most part still unknown when their liberation took place, these children and young people were not called »war orphans« – as had been the case in

1 SHAEF Administrative Memorandum No. 39, Revised Version, 16. 4. 1945, 6.I.1/82495539/ ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen. Among the DPs who registered for help were also former collaborators and persons with ambiguous biographies. See Stefan Klemp: »NS-Kollaborateure als Displaced Persons (DPs)«, in: Rebecca Boehling, Susanne Urban and René Bienert (eds.), *Displaced Persons. Leben im Transit: Überlebende zwischen Repatriierung, Rehabilitation und Neuanfang*, Göttingen 2014, pp. 255-262.

2 Regarding the research on the situation of DPs see: Rebecca Boehling, Susanne Urban and René Bienert (eds.), *Displaced Persons. Leben im Transit: Überlebende zwischen Repatriierung, Rehabilitation und Neuanfang*, Göttingen 2014.

3 Any person under the age of 18 is defined as child here (see Julia Reus' paper, p. 49 in this volume).

4 See Johannes-Dieter Steinert's paper in this volume.



or after previous wars – but »unaccompanied children«. This group also included children of DPs who were born after liberation and whose mothers or parents died shortly thereafter. Finally, the children of deceased forced laborers living in German foster families were also regarded and described as »unaccompanied children«.

The war was not yet over when the Allies decided to create with the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (UNRRA) a transnational organization they tasked with the coordination of the care, repatriation and resettlement of the Displaced Persons.<sup>5</sup> By the end of 1945, UNRRA had already repatriated most of the DPs to their countries of origin. However, a relevant number of DPs still resided in Germany or former occupied territories, among them many children. Early in 1946, a *Child Tracing Bureau* (CTB) was established within UNRRA and given the mandate to take particular care of the unaccompanied children and reunite them with their families. Apart from tracing the relatives of Child Survivors and child-age forced laborers, the CTB initiated the search for and repatriation of in particular Polish »stolen children« abducted from their parents and sent to Germany for Germanization.<sup>6</sup> The UN's political intention behind the Child Search activities was to contribute to securing the future of war-torn countries by repatriating their children.<sup>7</sup>

Returning DPs to their (mostly Eastern European) home countries proved increasingly difficult once the Cold War had begun. DPs founded their refusal to return to the Soviet Union or the countries in Central-East Europe under Communist rule on political motives. Former forced laborers feared that, having returned to the Soviet Union, they might be accused of having collaborated with the enemy, and most Jews, especially from Poland, saw no possibility of returning to their home country owing to rampant antisemitic violence. Subsequently, the Western Allies were accused by the Soviet Union of preventing repatriation by acknowledging individual objections against the DPs' return.<sup>8</sup>

In July 1947 the *International Refugee Organization* (IRO) inherited UNRRA's mission of caring for DPs. The IRO's DP mandate comprised not only the aforementioned care for DPs, but also in assisting them with their migration to a third country. The search for and care of DP children was continued under the *Child Search Branch* (CSB), under the auspice of the then IRO-dependent

5 See Julia Reus' paper in this volume.

6 See in this respect Iris Helbing: »Suche und Fürsorge. Die UNRRA und die »germanisierten« polnischen Kinder. Das Beispiel der Antcak-Geschwister«, in: Rebecca Boehling, Susanne Urban and René Bienert (eds.), *Displaced Persons. Leben im Transit: Überlebende zwischen Repatriierung, Rehabilitation und Neuanfang*, Göttingen 2014, pp. 115-122.

7 See Julia Reus' and Kelsey Norris' papers in this volume.

8 See Mark Wyman: *DPs. Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951*, Ithaca/London 1989, pp. 61-85.

International Tracing Service (ITS). The CSB had central responsibility for the search for children up to the discontinuance of the active search in 1951.

For DPs' temporary accommodation and care, camps were opened in the Western zones of Germany where UNRRA and, later, the IRO administered and took care of the DPs. Some people spent years there before migrating to a new country. Apart from these camps for adults and families, specific institutions were created to house and give age-appropriate care to unaccompanied children and young people. Outstanding examples of these institutions were the former cloister Markt Indersdorf near Dachau<sup>9</sup> run by UNRRA and the IRO Children's Village in Bad Aibling.<sup>10</sup> Supported by volunteers from Jewish aid organizations and other welfare institutions, the social workers in the Children's Centers aimed to help the teenagers come »back (in)to life«, i. e. to assist them in coping with what they had gone through, to find a new identity and individuality, or regain the self that may have been lost and to develop a life perspective – or, to be concise, to rebuild lives.

Today the Jewish Child Survivors are among the last survivors of the Holocaust still alive, and those who were forced to work as children form the majority of the last contemporary witnesses of Nazi forced labor. For a long time, awareness of their specific situation has been low in both the public and academic research. Organizations that represented the interests of those who had survived the Holocaust as children were established fairly late, such as the *Child Survivors Deutschland* association, founded as late as 2001. Recently, the association has started publishing a series that makes the experiences and sufferings of Child Survivors before and after 1945 their central subject. »Society has taken a long time«, so Philipp Sonntag in the first volume of the series,

»to become aware of, and recognize by and by our suffering and its consequential damages after 1945. For decades, we Child Survivors after 1945 were told: »You were just a child before 1945 and hardly able to notice or realize what was going on. You remember fewer things than those who were grown-ups then, and anyhow you did not understand anything. Consequently, you do not suffer from anything, you are strong and you do not need any help.«<sup>11</sup>

In the past few years, interest in the aftermath, in the social and individual consequences of the Holocaust, of forced labor and of other aspects of Nazi persecution has increased. Today's differentiated research takes into account not only the consequential damage persecuted children have been faced with, but also

9 See Anna Andlauer: *The Rage to Live. The International D. P. Children's Center Kloster Indersdorf 1945-46*, Charleston 2012.

10 See Christian Höschler's paper in this volume.

11 Philipp Sonntag: *Wir Überlebenden des Nazi-Terrors in Aktion*, Berlin 2017, p. 6.

the specific situation of children after their liberation, their life circumstances, their further journey of life and the Allies' and aid organizations' activities to the children's benefit. Relevant research topics emerging from the post-war situation include early testimonies and regional micro-studies.<sup>12</sup>

As a documentation center that evolved from a (still active) tracing service for people persecuted by the Nazis and as an archive and keeper of innumerable person-related files on children as DPs, the CSB files included, the ITS feels particularly committed to the history of Child Survivors. Against this background, the ITS strives to support and encourage relevant research, to enhance the on-going description of its collections and to promote academic exchange. And what is more, the ITS is involved in giving pedagogic guidance on and elucidating the perspectives and experiences of the Child Survivors in historical-political education. Accordingly, the conference the ITS organized and held together with the Max Mannheimer Study Center in Dachau from 30 May through 1 June 2016 was aimed at bringing together scholars and educators of various disciplines and from different countries committed to education and research on Displaced Persons and Child Survivors to discuss research studies, educational projects and outlooks on the future of relevant approaches. Ninety researchers and educators from eight countries took part in this conference, giving or listening to lectures, or holding or participating in workshops and discussions. All this in the presence of witnesses who had survived the Holocaust as children and shared their stories. The talks given at the conference constitute the basis of the selected papers compiled in this volume.<sup>13</sup>

The conference took place against the backdrop of an unprecedentedly high number of refugees who had come to Europe since early 2015 fleeing conflict and crisis, among them almost 100,000 unaccompanied or separated children.<sup>14</sup> Historians, but also the public and the media as well as players in political education, repeatedly raised the question in the past months of how far and, if so, which knowledge for today could be derived from the historical experience of helpers' interaction with unaccompanied children after 1945. Also, the importance of (knowing) the history of practical welfare work for their work with young refugees today is under discussion among social workers. Aspects rele-

12 See Verena Buser's paper in this volume.

13 See Julia Reus: »Conference Report: Nach der Befreiung – zur Situation von Überlebenden und Kindern als Displaced Persons. Neue Zugänge in Bildung und Wissenschaft, 30. 5. 2016–1. 6. 2016 Dachau«, in: *H-Soz-Kult*, 10. 11. 2016, [www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-6800](http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-6800) (accessed 1. 2. 2017).

14 Save the Children and The International Rescue Committee: *Out of Sight, Exploited and Alone. A Joint Brief on the Situation for Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia*, <https://www.rescue-uk.org/report/out-sight-exploited-and-alone> (accessed 8. 6. 2017).

vant for today might be e. g. the structures and practices of help and assistance, the CSB's search activities and dealing with the specific situation of the children involved, trauma-educational work, and the IRO's assistance with their migration to a third country. Some contributors to this volume emphasize the political and social significance of the historical subject against the background of the current refugee situation. However, a systematic analysis that would have to encompass the current situation in its legal, (socio-)political, social and psychological dimensions as well as topical results of migration studies and research on the theory and practice of welfare work remains a research desideratum. One challenge facing historians seeking to relate the experiences of the DPs' history to general research on the subject of flight, migration and displacement today is to not efface »the specific history of National Socialist responsibility, the Jewish experience, and the Holocaust«, as Atina Grossmann points out. The aim should be »to understand the Holocaust, its victims and survivors, as well as, hopefully, our current refugee crisis and debates about immigration, more deeply and comprehensively.«<sup>15</sup>

The intention of this volume is to enhance a better understanding of the historical situation of Child Survivors and DP children after the Holocaust and Nazi persecution, and to show educational approaches to the subject. The volume is divided into three parts. The contributions in the first part address aspects, developments and structural elements of the history of the Child Survivors and DP children. They are both outlines and (geographic) case studies in general focusing on the situation of the children after and, partly, before their liberation. The second part comprises papers on the pedagogic guidance given to, or educational coverage of, this history which is more or less marginalized in historical-political education, while the third part contains essayistic reflections and perspectives on the subject of Child Survivors and Displaced Persons.

In her introductory paper, *Verena Buser* gives an overview-like account of the history of Child Survivors and a reflection of the current state of historical research on the subject of Displaced Children in the Aftermath Studies. She draws attention to the fact that it has only been in recent years that academic research has opened up to child-specific questions. Regarding to the historical situation after liberation, she describes the methods the welfare organization UNRRA in charge of DPs applied to deal with the »problem« of unaccompanied children and young people.

*Julia Reus* takes up the thread addressing the basics of the work and the history of the *Child Tracing Bureau* and the *Child Search Branch* of the ITS. She describes the beginning of UNRRA's search activities with regard to children,

15 See Atina Grossmann's paper, pp. 282-283, in this volume.

explaining the organizational proceedings of tracing children, the structure and methods of the CSB and its cooperation with the occupation zones. She analyses how problems and challenges regarding child search and repatriation were met and which work practice evolved from that. Furthermore, she gives an account of the care given to the children in the centers and describes how the staff tried to learn more about the children's family background.

*Susanne Urban's* contribution focuses on the specific situation of Jewish children as it is reflected in interviews with the children themselves documented in the CSB's children files. The purpose of the interviews was to compile as many pieces of information about the pertinent biographic backgrounds of each of the children. Decoding and discussing exemplary transcribed statements from the files, Urban accentuates the broad spectrum of Holocaust survival as experienced by the children.

*Karolina Panz's* paper is dedicated to the situation of Jewish Holocaust survivors as well. Panz retraces the violent anti-Jewish riots directed against an orphanage in Podhale in the south of Poland in the summer of 1945. The orphanage had been erected for seriously ill Jewish children; owing to the violent attacks on the home, the director fled abroad and took with her all the children in her care. The paper shows that the safety of Jewish children was by no means guaranteed after their liberation in Europe and that often these children's only chance was to migrate to a third country, mostly Palestine/Israel.

*Christian Höschler's* paper deals with the Children's Village in Bad Aibling, which the IRO constructed in the US American Zone in 1948 as a central accommodation for unaccompanied children of Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds. Up to 482 children and young people from various countries and of diverse circumstances were living here until their migration to another country or their repatriation to their original homeland. Höschler portrays the rehabilitation program which relief workers in Bad Aibling developed from 1948 onwards. The basic idea underlying the program was that the children were seen as individuals and given the feeling of family-like comfort and intimacy.

*Mary Fraser Kirsh* also places the welfare care given to Child Survivors in the center of her paper. Taking the case of Great Britain as example, she analyses the rehabilitation process of »defective« Jewish Child Survivors distributed over various countries after their liberation. She points out that, while there had been expectations that the children might be cured quickly and assimilated soon, adequate reactions to the children's traumata had often been lacking.

The following contributions address the situation not only of non-Jewish former forced laborers who were still children, but also of the children given birth to by forced laborers. *Johannes-Dieter Steinert* provides an overview of Polish and Soviet child forced laborers in Nazi Germany and German-Occupied

Eastern Europe in his paper pooling the pertinent research work done in recent years. He shows that minors made up an enormous percentage of forced laborers. Steinert describes the practice of deporting minor forced laborers to the Reich and their link to the Germanization programme, and he discusses the contents and quality of post-war statements made by the persons affected, thus throwing light on the widely unknown specific historical background of these children DPs.

*Olga Gnydiuk's* paper pursues this subject by taking a closer look at the situation of children coming from the Ukrainian part of the Soviet Union who were placed in German foster families. Using individual example cases, she addresses the examination of the families by IRO welfare officers who had to bring about a decision regarding the question of whether an unaccompanied child was to remain in Nazi Germany or be repatriated. The paper gives a detailed insight into the situation of unaccompanied children and into the day-to-day routine of the IRO welfare officers. This routine often demanded that they find a compromise between child welfare in theory, their personal convictions and practical challenges, and the stand taken by the Western military authorities.

Outlining her current dissertation project in her paper, *Kelsey Norris* deals with the individual fate of minor forced laborers in the wider context of the Soviet repatriation policy in relation to family policy in the Soviet Union, raising questions such as: To what degree did the Soviet policy proceed from the idea of a connection or even cohesion between family and nation? To what degree did the former Bolshevikist vision of the state suppressing and supplanting the family influence the regime's reaction to the displacement and separation of families? Norris sees and grasps a »bigger picture« here, taking into account the domestic policies of the Allies and the conflicts between the different countries of occupation.

*Ildikó Barna's* paper is the sketch of a current research project focusing on the hitherto under-researched survivors' group of Jewish Hungarian Displaced Persons. Barna gives an overview of the situation of Jewish survivors in Hungary and outlines her way of proceeding, her research question, the methodology she uses, and the source basis of her research project, which aims to produce a comprehensive description of the situation of the DPs, their routes and their demographic composition. Her research throws a clear light on the research potential of the IRO Care & Maintenance files preserved at the ITS – their quantitative evaluation is a central element of Barna's work – and the research avenues in the ITS Digital Archives to be sought by quantitative methods.

How DPs can be made the subject of historical-political education is analysed in four contributions in the second part of the volume, written by experts in this field. The starting point of the considerations and reflections discussed

in this part is the unfortunate fact that the history of the DPs is hardly taught in history lessons and the knowledge about this topic is fairly small.

*Steffen Jost* and *Nina Rabuza* outline an educational concept they developed at the *Max Mannheimer Study Center* to introduce interested groups to the history of Displaced Persons. The starting point of the concept idea was the ITS exhibition »*Where should we have gone after the liberation?*« *Transit Stations: Displaced Persons after 1945* shown in Dachau in 2016 and integrated into the educational work of the center. The basis of the concept is explorative work with primary sources mainly from the ITS archives on the fates of individuals, the history of the involved administrative bodies and the self-conception of the DPs. The authors discuss basic considerations on teaching, or giving guidance to, this history, and show which educational aspects the source material allows to be worked on and which practical experiences they have made.

Similar questions relating to the DPs' life situation and expectations for the future are the subject of the study offered at the Bergen-Belsen Camp Memorial presented by *Nicola Schlichting*. Explorative learning on the basis of sources is a central component of this one-day study. Schlichting stresses the pedagogic potential the participants' confrontation with the historical site of the former DP Camp in Bergen-Belsen and their visit to the memorial's permanent exhibition on the subject may have.

Educational work on private daily-life photographs of Jewish DPs is the subject of a workshop the Jewish Museum Berlin offers. *Katharina Erbe* explains the workshop concept, its educational objectives and the method of putting the photos to educational use. In her view, looking at and analysing the history of the Jewish DPs is particularly apt for rendering the generally neglected history of the years after the liberation into a prominent subject of historical research.

*Linda G. Levi* gives an overview of the multimedia educational material the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) offers on the internet. Actively involved in rescue and aid action in the post-war years, the JDC also played a part in the care of Jewish DPs. Based on the documents preserved in its archives, the JDC developed documentary material to educate the public on the DP camps and the role of the JDC. One special target group, which the JDC seeks to adjust its educational activities to, is the DPs' next-of-kin, as more often than not the survivors' children do not know any details of their parents' stories. The online resources comprise an exhibition on DP camps based on photos as well as the possibility to look for photos and names online in the JDC archives and to share the one's family story. Levi points out the importance these resources have for relatives and explains how they may be used for educational ends.

The third and last part of the volume is made up of two essays that give reflections on the topic and an outlook on further aspects or perspectives that

need to be researched. *Boaz Cohen* sums up the goals and challenges of the research on Child Survivors of the Holocaust. He addresses central aspects of the research and the research questions relating to Child Survivors of the Holocaust and child-age DPs, putting the rationale and the methodological questions on paper. The story of the post-war period, so Cohen, is incomplete without a consideration of the experiences of the children, who were an intrinsic part of the survivor community. Cohen's text shows how complex and intricate the history of the Child Survivors and child-age DPs is, while underlining the need for this research gap to be closed.

*Atina Grossmann's* closing essay gives a »broader picture« by drawing attention to an aspect of the history of the DPs which is increasingly acknowledged, but not yet integrated into the standard narratives of Holocaust survival: that the majority of the Jewish survivors who stayed in Europe after the Second World War had survived »behind the lines« in the Soviet Union. Grossmann discusses the history of this type of survival, and shows the route of the survivors, which led via labor camps and special settlements in the Soviet Union to Central Asia. She points out that not only British India had been an asylum for Jewish refugees, but also Iran had been a central site for the rescue of Jewish minors, the so-called »Tehran Children«. This aspect deserves researchers' attention and ought to be seen as an integral part of the history of Child Survivors and DP children.

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# New Findings on the History of Child Survivors and DP Children



Verena Buser

## Child Survivors and Displaced Children in the *Aftermath Studies* An Overview

Der Beitrag gibt eine kurze, überblicksartige Einführung in die Geschichte der Child Survivors und reflektiert den aktuellen Forschungsstand zum Thema Displaced Children in den *Aftermath Studies*. Ausgehend von den historischen Akten des *Child Search Branch* (Kindersuchdienst) des International Tracing Service werden Aktivitäten und Hilfsmaßnahmen der größten transnational operierenden Hilfsorganisation (UNRRA) für Kinder und Jugendliche nach Kriegsende untersucht. Am Ende steht die Frage: Können die Methoden und Instrumente von damals als *best practice*-Modell für heute dienen?

After entering the ITS archive for the first time in 2007 and while analyzing files, it was most astonishing to the author that the first and largest aid organization that entered liberated Germany – the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (UNRRA) – had no elaborated master plan to deal with those whom we call today naturally Child Survivors, apart from the general plan to repatriate them into their home country, resettle them and to reunite them with their relatives.<sup>1</sup> Both allied military forces and social welfare staff of UNRRA in the field were at first not sufficiently prepared for the confrontation with massive devastations and unprecedented atrocities conducted by National Socialist Germany. Guidelines, appropriate strategies and principles had to be developed on the basis of learning by doing. UNRRA's care for the DP children in general, and for the unaccompanied children in particular, was therefore a historical process, combined with the formulation and application of tailored methods, with recurring failures.<sup>2</sup>

Among the challenges UNRRA explicitly met regarding minors after liberation was mass displacement, questions of establishing a child's identity, the problem of statelessness, separation of a child from its relatives, and children on

- 1 In the files the term »unaccompanied children« was used for those without legal guardians or separated from families and relatives. For all other minors UNRRA used generally the term / expression *children* (who were regarded as minors until their 18th birthday) or Displaced Children.
- 2 Verena Buser: »Die Child Search and Registration Teams der UNRRA«, *Nurinst* 2016, *Jahrbuch des Nürnberger Instituts für NS-Forschung und jüdische Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Nürnberg 2016, pp. 75-88.

the run without relatives (called unaccompanied children then). Among them were Jewish minors, condemned to death under an antisemitic policy,<sup>3</sup> which resulted in the murder of at least six million European Jews, 1.5 million of them children. They survived the widespread Nazi concentration camp system, round-ups, or mass killings all over Europe, in hiding, such as with foreign families, in monasteries, in partisan units<sup>4</sup> or in the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, children of Sinti and Roma, then classified as »Gypsies«, and children of forced laborers were persecuted, imprisoned, and murdered. Minors from Poland, the Soviet Union, the Netherlands, and Yugoslavia<sup>6</sup> were deported for Germanization reasons. Between 1933 and 1945 all of these children had been victims of a unique atrocity against »non-Aryan« children and teenagers in general, and against Jewish children and teenagers in particular.

Generally speaking, under the auspices of military governments in the Western occupation zones the care and repatriation preparation for Displaced Persons and Displaced Children – both used in the following as a legal term – then was a transnational project, first and foremost initiated by the then world's largest transnational operating relief organization, the UNRRA, already founded in 1943 in the United States. New and innovative post-conflict instruments, principles and methodologies regarding interviews with genocide survivors for several reasons and aims<sup>7</sup> were developed in the immediate post-war years, which are in the author's eyes even relevant for today.<sup>8</sup>

Soon after starting its work in Europe, UNRRA established in January 1946 with the *Child Tracing Division* a separate unit in its *Central Tracing Bureau*,

3 Fundamental on children during the Shoah: Deborah Dwórk: *Children with a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe*, New Haven 1991; Noa Barbara Nussbaum (Noa Mckayton): *Für uns kein Ausweg. Jüdische Kinder und Jugendliche in ihren Schrift- und Bildzeugnissen aus der Zeit der Shoah*, Heidelberg 2004; Patricia Heberer: *Children during the Holocaust. Documenting Life and Destruction. Holocaust Sources in Context*, Series published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC 2011.

4 Examples are: Berl Finkel and Yehuda Melamedik, who survived with the *Battalion Max* in Belo Russia: [http://www.infocenters.co.il/gfh/notebook\\_ext.asp?book=39221&lang=eng](http://www.infocenters.co.il/gfh/notebook_ext.asp?book=39221&lang=eng) (accessed 20.12.2013).

5 An impressive example is the *Children's Collection* in the Yad Vashem Archives (copies in the author's possession). The majority of the children who were interviewed in DP centers survived in the Soviet Union.

6 UNRRA did not exactly distinguish between the concrete countries while ascertaining a child's nationality. Thus, in the historical sources most often »Yug.« was used for children of Croatian or Bosnian origin for example.

7 Laura Jockusch: *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*, Oxford 2012.

8 Verena Buser: »No Stone is Left Unturned. Die Entwicklung neuartiger Instrumentarien zur Kindersuche und -fürsorge nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs«, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 12, 2016, pp. 1059-1076.