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“WE MISSED OUR YOUTH”: THE IDENTITY FORMATION OF CHILD  
MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND JEWISH CHILDREN IN FRANCE FROM 1940 TO  
1942

by  
Michaela Watson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements of the Croft Institute for International Studies and the Sally McDonnell  
Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford  
May 2020

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## Abstract

Michaela Watson: Missing Youth: The Identity Formation of Child Migrants, Refugees, and Jewish Children in France from 1940-1942  
(Under the direction of Willa M. Johnson, Ph.D.)

From 1940 – 1942, hundreds of Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Russia, and France were hidden from Nazi and Vichy French authorities in children’s homes in France. These homes were administered by the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants, a Jewish aid organization that assisted children in need during World War II. This study employs a quantitative content analysis of the testimonies of twenty Holocaust survivors who were hidden children in France between 1940 and 1942 to investigate to what extent the experience of outsider status and trauma affected these children’s personal and religious identity formation. The analysis finds that the experience of forced familial separation and trauma had adverse effects on survivors’ formation of a personal identity and affiliation links and had other unexpected consequences in their lives. This thesis integrates scholarship about Vichy France and its persecution of Jews with modern literature about identity, racialization, and immigration in France. Finally, this thesis uses the historical analysis and modern scholarship to provide insight into the experience of contemporary refugee children in France and the world.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	6
Literature Review.....	11
Methodology.....	20
Results.....	27
Discussion.....	42
Conclusion.....	61
Limitations and Ethical Considerations.....	68
Appendix.....	70
Bibliography.....	73

## Introduction

On September 3, 1940, France declared war on Germany following Germany's invasion of Poland. Germany dealt France a humiliatingly final – and surprisingly quick – defeat in June of 1940, and immediately signed an armistice peace agreement on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1940, by which Germany was recognized as an occupier, and France the occupied. The chaos of war, coupled with the demographic crisis that was caused by the gross loss of French lives in WWI, left France and the French people in a vulnerable, exhausted state.<sup>1</sup> As prominent Vichy historian Robert Paxton describes in his book, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order*, France and the French populace were tired of war, and more than anything wanted to return to a state of order.<sup>2</sup> To many, the armistice seemed to provide the right conditions for that peace and order to return. In this thesis, I will examine the identity formation of Jewish children that were hidden in children's homes in wartime France and compare their experiences to modern-day migrant children in France. My research questions are:

- 1) How did experiencing “outsider status” in 1940s France impact the formation of a personal identity in Jewish migrant and refugee children?
  - 1a) How did outsider status affect belongingness in Jewish migrant and refugee children?
- 2) How did the state and even aid agencies identify Jewish and refugee children in France?
- 3) How did these children's perceptions of religion and religious expression change as they grew older?
- 4) How can examining the experiences of “outsider” children in 1940s France inform discussions about the current refugee crisis in France and Europe?

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order*, (New York, 2001), 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

By the end of World War II, approximately 77,000 Jews who were living on French territory, a third of whom were French citizens, died in concentration camps after deportation or while in detention in French camps.<sup>3</sup> Pierre Laval became part of the French government on the eve of the armistice, and on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1940 proposed a bill to the National Assembly to endow Marshall Pétain, the glorified war hero of Verdun, with full, sweeping executive powers that effectively rendered France an authoritarian state under the occupation of Germany.

France was divided into two zones: occupied in the north, and unoccupied in the south. The occupied zone was directly under the administration and authority of the German Nazi party, led by Adolf Hitler, and the unoccupied zone was governed by Vichy authorities. This cabinet took the general administrative form of the previous government, the Third Republic, however, many of the officials from the Third Republic were purged when the Vichy government in France was created. This was largely because of their republicanism or differing ideas about France's future – in fact, after the new government of September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1940, Laval was the only remaining parliamentarian from the Third Republic.<sup>4</sup> Along with this purge of officials, Third Republic values were jettisoned as the new regime took power with a dramatically different ideology.

Some argue that collaborationist Vichy France had no choice but to comply with German demands, and further that by complying it was able to protect some of its targeted citizens, notably Jewish French citizens. However, there is a plethora of evidence

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<sup>3</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "France," Holocaust Encyclopedia. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/france>. Accessed on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 100.



that the *Statuts des juifs* that marginalized, and eventually directly facilitated the internment of, Jews in France were written absent either any German influence or suggestions.<sup>5</sup> Further, Vichy France consistently and systematically undertook efforts to marginalize and reduce the influence of Jewish people in France, citizens and non-citizens alike, that were not mandated by the German authorities.<sup>6</sup> These efforts included the forcible internment of foreign Jews, the loss of Algerian Jewish citizenship, and the deportation of Jewish people from France. One such instance saw thousands of both foreign and French Jews interned at a stadium named the “Velondrome d’Hiver,” before being deported en masse to Auschwitz. This scheme was enacted by French authorities.<sup>7</sup> Many of the Jews who were deported from Vel d’Hiv were children, sent to their deaths alone and without basic facilities or care.<sup>8</sup> These occurrences would have been significantly more difficult to execute, if not impossible, without the willing aid of the French *gendarmes*.<sup>9</sup> Further demonstrating this point, Paxton highlights the fact that Italian soldiers who occupied Alpine France refused to cooperate with German authorities to orchestrate the deportation of Jews who lived in the area, preventing many Jews from being killed by Nazi Germany.<sup>10</sup>

The *statuts des juifs* became progressively more extensive and allowed for more Jewish people to be marginalized and eventually interned. Foreign-born Jews primarily from Poland, Austria, and Germany were deported to certain eventual death in Germany

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995), 5-8.

<sup>6</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 174.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, The French, and The Jews*, (New York, 1993), 99-102.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-117.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>10</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 182.

as early as July of 1942, and many French Jews followed shortly after in November of 1942.<sup>11</sup>

Despite these actions undertaken by the French and German authorities, there were Jewish and foreign aid organizations that worked in France to provide for and in some cases save Jewish children. One such organization, the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) worked to rescue and relocate Jewish children who were in danger of deportation or who were interned (with or without their parents) in camps in France. The OSE sought to provide socio-medical assistance to children and adults both in internment camps and in France, to relocate children to children's homes, and to provide medical help. Many of these children were torn from their families, placed in children's homes, and never saw their parents again (as they were deported). This reality left many Jewish foreign-born children alone and forced to integrate into French society.

The children who experienced what I will define as "outsider status" in France between 1940-1942 include both Jewish French citizens and Jewish migrant children. By *outsider status*, I mean having the experience of being "othered"<sup>12</sup> by being ostracized, racialized, discriminated against, or segregated from mainstream society as a result of a quality, behavior, or identity. The detrimental effects of this experience on hidden children in France may be exacerbated by the violent act of being removed from their families and communities, an act that the 1948 UN Convention on Human Rights determined is genocidal.<sup>13</sup> Their experiences are important to the historical record

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<sup>11</sup> Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, The French, and The Jews*, 119-120, 136.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Francois Staszak, "Other/Otherness," *International Encyclopedia Of Human Geography* (2008): 1-7, <https://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/geo/files/3214/4464/7634/OtherOtherness.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, New York, 9 December 1948, *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol.78. No. 1021, p. 1-25, available from <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf>.

because it may help us to better understand the experiences of contemporary children who are facing outsider status in France (and) elsewhere in the world today.

I hypothesize that experiencing “outsider status” as a child in France had adverse effects on these children’s ability to form a complete identity as it pertains to their relation to nation, culture, and self that was free of trauma. I further hypothesize that while some Jewish migrant and refugee children in France must have had positive experiences with the non-Jewish French national community, many others likely experienced discrimination by French society at large, which would have had consequences concerning their self-identify with respect to religion. Finally, I hypothesize that the experiences of these children from 1940s France will be directly relevant to understanding the experience of refugee and migrant children in France today.

## Literature Review

The bodies of literature for this project cover four conceptual themes: the historical background of Vichy France, the treatment of Jewish children in France during World War II, immigration and the racialization of religious social groups, and identity formation and trauma as processes. Perhaps the foremost scholar who writes about Vichy France is Robert Paxton, prolific political scientist and historian. Two of his works – *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940 – 1944*, and *Vichy France and the Jews* (co-written with Michael R. Marrus), are considered among the most important works about Vichy France. In *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order*, Paxton provides a detailed history of the Vichy regime, including thorough explanations of each leading member’s personal ideologies and contributions to the state. In *Vichy France and the Jews*, Marrus and Paxton discuss the Vichy state’s treatment of Jews and antisemitism in more detail. This history is invaluable for determining the culture of the Vichy regime, and further how the regime responded to outside demands of the Germans, and inside demands from the more fervent anti-Semites of Vichy France.

Vicki Caron contextualizes the rise of Vichy France and Antisemitism in France in the 1930s in her 1998 article, “The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered,” arguing that French society’s identification of Jews with “unfettered economic competition” created an “economic antisemitism” that is integral to understanding antisemitism in 1930s France.<sup>14</sup>

Susan Zuccotti’s 1993 book *The Holocaust, The French, and the Jews* provides further insight that details the experiences of the children who were either taken from or

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<sup>14</sup> Vicki Caron, “The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered,” *The Journal of Modern History* 70, (1998): 27.

given by their Jewish parents to aid organizations and resettled in Catholic homes and missions, and the at times tumultuously consequential effects of this move on their religious expression and identity.<sup>15</sup> Further, this book provides important insight on the slow progression of antisemitism in France from 1939-1944, and explains clearly and sufficiently why many French non-Jews and French Jews did not anticipate the Holocaust or the mass executions that began to occur in 1943 and 1944. Perhaps most importantly, it explains why many Jews continued, to some degree, to trust the French government even during the German occupation, and why they often went to great lengths to identify themselves as Jewish to a hostile French state that they believed would protect them.<sup>16</sup>

This theme, of children who existed in the liminal space created by a hostile Vichy government in the early, uncertain stage of occupation in which their existence was tolerated, is expanded upon in Daniel Lee's 2014 *Pétain's Jewish Children*.<sup>17</sup> Lee explains that some Vichy authorities that held jurisdiction over Jewish children, such as Georges Lamirand, believed that Jews could have an integral place in the "New Order" of the Vichy regime and consequently allowed many Jewish organizations to continue with official recognition under Vichy.<sup>18</sup> However, others such as Xavier Vallat were overtly antisemitic and sought to minimize the reach of Jewish youth organizations.<sup>19</sup> The book highlights the important role that Jewish youth organizations had in the early days of Vichy France, both in providing an integral sense of community for many Jewish youths and also in advancing a particular ideology about the direction of progress in France.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, The French, and The Jews*, (New York, 1993), 241-243.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Lee, *Pétain's Jewish Children*, (Oxford, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-71.

Both Zuccotti and Lee mention the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) in their research, and explain the importance of the Jewish aid organization in the rescue and relocation of Jewish children in wartime France. Georges Weills' 2012 French article, "Andrée Salomon et le sauvetage des enfants juifs," details the role of Andrée Salomon, OSE delegate to the Gurs and Rivesaltes camps in France, in saving Jewish children.

Weills primarily details Salomon's life and the heroic acts that she undertook to save these children. However, Weills also importantly explains that a number of non-Jewish families that hid Jewish children under the occupation considered these actions to be a moral duty. Thus, the education of these 'saved' children was often also based on a "severe morality" that did not allow for age appropriate distractions such as those games practiced by other young children in the village.<sup>21</sup>

Other primary sources that contextualize an understanding of wartime France include the "Letter of S.E. Msg. the Archbishop of Toulouse On the Human Person," which reveals the horror of the Archbishop of Toulouse when he considered the indifference and negligence of the Catholic Church in providing aid to French Jews,<sup>22</sup> and Georges Perec's *W or The Memory of Childhood*, a fairly abstract recollection of a child's experience in wartime France.<sup>23</sup> Perec's humanizing narrative of the struggle of the narrator to forge meaningful familial connections after having his mother and father ripped away from him is particularly poignant and pertinent to a discussion of children who were taken from their parents in Vichy France.

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<sup>21</sup> Georges Weills, "Andrée Salomon et le sauvetage des enfants juifs," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 30, No. 2 (2012): 91-92.

<sup>22</sup> Jules-Géraud Saliège, "Archbishop Jules-Géraud Saliège To Priests "Sur La Personne Humaine,"" (Washington, 1942), Letter, 1 W 656, Archive département du Gers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive.

<sup>23</sup> Georges Perec, *W or The Memory of Childhood*, (Boston, 2010).

The literature about the racialization of religious social groups may account for why and how Jewish people were treated. This phenomenon facilitated the othering and discrimination of Jewish people in Vichy France. Saher Selod and Steve Garner describe this process in great detail as it pertains to Muslims in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a 2014 article titled “The Racialization of Muslims: Empirical Studies of Islamophobia.”<sup>24</sup> While the article primarily makes reference to the racialization of Muslim people, Garner and Selod articulate a compelling argument for the ability of racialization to be performed on a religious social group independent of the group’s homogeneity in physical or perceived attributes. Rather, they explain that racialization can both be performed by a majority group against a minority group as an assertion of power over them, or by the minority group as an act of self-racialization for the purpose of forming a common identity to strategically challenge the group in power. This article primarily focuses on the scant research that has been done about the racialization of Muslims and how Islamophobia arises from this process, but there are some explicit parallels to the situation of Jewish people in France during the Holocaust. Garner and Selod mention that a key part of racialization is when a group of people are treated “as if specific characteristics were natural and innate to each member of the group,” which certainly occurred in rampant propaganda concerning the inherent “nature” of Jews directly preceding the Holocaust. Further, Garner and Selod’s idea that minority groups learn to identify themselves based on the gaze and ideas of the majority population could be applied to any number of minority or power minority groups, including Jewish people in France preceding and in the wake of the Holocaust. This article is doubly relevant as it also addresses current

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<sup>24</sup> Steve Garner and Saher Selod, “The Racialization of Muslims: Empirical Studies of Islamophobia,” *Critical Sociology* 14, no. 1 (2014).

treatment of migrant children in contemporary France. In the pursuit of understanding the current situation in France regarding refugee and migrant children, Jacques Barou's 2014 "The Integration of Immigrants in France: a historical perspective," is important.<sup>25</sup>

Barou explains the different models of integration that France has employed throughout history, noting that civic-territorial and assimilationist models have been dominant for much of this time. Barou succeeds in asserting the importance of socio-economic integration of immigrants, and notably how immigrants have sometimes been excluded from participating in the French economy as a result of discrimination, causing a plethora of issues that challenge the current French model of integration.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the article raises a very important point pertaining to the unwillingness of the French government to formally record or give an official status to the children of immigrants because of republican values, and how while this sounds like equality, it can actually result in a blind spot by which researchers are unable to understand the extent to which these children experience discrimination.<sup>27</sup> The article also provides a compelling argument as to the gravity that social institutions played historically in integrating both the working class and, later, immigrants into common French society.

A final thematic area of interest in the literature concerns the actual process of identity formation. Sociologists such as Erving Goffman have examined the concept of identity in some depth. Goffman's 1963 book, *Stigma, Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* provides particular insight into the development of a "social identity," as he notes that "tribal" stigma such as those related to "race, nation, and religion" is often

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<sup>25</sup> Jacques Barou, "The Integration of Immigrants in France: a historical perspective," *Identities* 21, no. 6 (2014): 642-657.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 643-644.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 644.



responsible for discrimination.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps as profound, Goffman's discussion of stigma theory helps to explain how Jewish persons in Vichy France were discredited as nearly inhuman. Goffman explicitly mentions Jews in two separate instances when discussing stigmatized persons forming categories and groups and supporting agencies that represent them.<sup>29</sup> He further argues that where discrepancies exist between a virtual social identity, or the attributes that society assumes and demands that an individual possesses, and an actual identity, or the "category and attributes he could in fact be proved to possess,"<sup>30</sup> they may "spoil" the stigmatized person's social identity, isolating the person from society.<sup>31</sup> This description of social identity informs my understanding of group identity formation of stigmatized persons, which is a category that applies to foreign Jewish people in Vichy France.

Among the problems particular to Jewish identity was the conceptualization of the *demi-aryan* or *Mischlinge*. Peter Monteath describes the experience of those characterized by German authorities as "mixed race," or "*Mischlinge*," during the Holocaust in his 2008 article "The Mischling Experience in Oral History." Monteath provides interesting testimonies from oral histories of *Mischling* people about their experiences growing up in the Third Reich, notably including stories from children who discuss feeling like outsiders as a result of their *Mischling* status.<sup>32</sup> This article is useful insofar as it speaks to experiences of children who were marginalized by antisemitic authorities during WWII, which is generally pertinent to my topic.

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<sup>28</sup> Erving Goffman, *Stigma*, (New York, 1963): 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Monteath, "The *Mischling* Experience in Oral History," *The Oral History Review* 35, no. 2 (2008): 147-151.

Finally, there have been a number of scholars who have previously studied Jewish hidden children in France. This includes Marion Feldman, Professor at the Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, who has written three pivotal works about Jewish hidden children under occupation. Each of the articles discuss the difficulties of being forced to hide or live under a borrowed identity, and the considerable trauma that can be attributed to this dissonant duality of life experience and identity. In their 2014 article “The Jewish Children Hidden in France During the Second World War: A Retrospective Study” Feldman and her co-authors Yoram Mouchenik and Marie Rose Moro attest that the trauma that hidden children experienced was multifaceted, involving the loss of a familiar environment, detachment from family, social, and cultural groups, and experiences of fear, anguish, and depersonalization.<sup>33</sup> Other works that study Jewish hidden children under occupation include a 2010 article titled “Jewish Children Hidden in France Between 1940 and 1944: An Analysis of Their Narratives Today” by Feldman, Olivier Taïeb, and Marie Rose Moro. The authors identify three primary themes that emerge from interviews with former hidden children: vulnerability due to loss and damage to affiliation links, disorders that emerged as consequences of the accumulation of trauma that many survivors experienced, and competence factors that described both factors that provided some level of protection for hidden children and various coping mechanisms.<sup>34</sup> The authors also notably find that the loss of a cultural identity reflected a “failed, unfinished acculturation experience”<sup>35</sup> that ultimately caused Type II repeated

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<sup>33</sup> Marion Feldman, Yoram Mouchenik, Marie Rose Moro, “The Jewish Children Hidden in France During the Second World War: A Retrospective Study,” *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 20, no. 85-93 (2015): 86-87.

<sup>34</sup> Marion Feldman, Olivier Taïeb, Marie Rose Moro, “Jewish Children Hidden in France Between 1940 and 1944: An Analysis of Their Narratives Today,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 80, no. 4 (2010): 549-552.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 553.

trauma to the hidden children, as defined by Terr in 1991 as trauma that is caused by repeated exposure to extreme external events.<sup>36</sup> Another of Feldman's works, co-authored with Hana Rottman, "Transmission: From Experience to Awareness: Jewish Children Hidden in France and Their Children," provides an understanding of how the trauma of having been a Jewish hidden child under occupation was transmitted to offspring. This trauma, they explain, was induced by violence from the outside world, the threat of annihilation, the risk of abuse, and separation and abandonment anxieties that directly resulted from forced familial separation.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Adeline Fohn, Susann Heenen-Wolff, and Yoram Mouchenik wrote the French article "Silence et reconnaissance sociale dans le processus de reconstruction d'anciens enfants juifs cachés," or "Silence and social acknowledgement in the healing process of former hidden Jewish children" in English. In this article, they discuss the importance of social acknowledgment of trauma to allow survivors to process traumatic events, and how many hidden children were denied this necessary component to healing in the aftermath of Liberation.<sup>38</sup>

Each of these bodies of literature combine to reveal pieces of a greater puzzle: the experience of racialized Jewish children in Vichy France. Based on the experiences of Jewish children from 1940-1942, my research develops a model that addresses how

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<sup>36</sup> Lenore Terr, "Childhood traumas: an outline and overview," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 148, no. 1 (1991): 10-20.

<sup>37</sup> Marion Feldman, Hana Rottman, "Transmission: From Experience to Awareness: Jewish Hidden Children in France and Their Children," *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 23, no. 3 (2018): 183-184.

<sup>38</sup> Adeline Fohn, Susann Heenen-Wolff, and Yoram Mouchenik, "Silence et reconnaissance sociale dans le processus de reconstruction d'anciens enfants juifs cachés," *Neuropsychiatrie de l'enfance et de l'adolescence* 62 (2014) : 293-298.

stigmatized migrant children actually understood and contextualized their experiences with being “othered” in war-period France. The goal of this research is to understand whether similarities and differences exist between these children’s experiences and those of contemporary child migrants in France.

## **Methodology**

I subjected twenty transcribed oral histories to a qualitative content analysis utilizing Excel and Dedoose. A Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is a methodology that aims to uncover implicit meaning in qualitative data, using a systematic analysis driven by a rigorous coding framework. In a QCA, relevant excerpts from the data are recorded, categorized, and analyzed to reveal themes and findings.

I gathered these data in October 2019 at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive in Washington, D.C. In preparation for data collection, I searched the USHMM online collections database to identify potential oral histories of survivors from France. I limited my examination of oral testimonies to persons who were between the ages of seven and 18 years-old in 1940, and persons who mentioned being hidden by the Oeuvre des Secours aux Enfants (OSE) organization in French children's homes. The OSE was responsible for the relocation of many Jewish children in wartime France. I read through each transcript to confirm that these conditions were met, and if they were, I downloaded a PDF of the transcript to a USB drive. After two days of searching databases, I downloaded 19 PDFs of testimonies that met the prescribed conditions and transcribed one oral history that did not have a transcript, but that met the study's parameters. I recorded and described in an Excel document each transcript and all other related pieces of evidence that I located at the USHMM Archive. Later, I transcribed these notes from Excel to a Word document to ensure accuracy when referencing these materials.

I operationalized the following five main terms: outsider status, religious identity, trauma, personal identity, and sentiments of belonging. Understanding that modern

definitions of these complex ideas likely differ vastly from their historical identifications, I read both primary sources from the era (1935-1945) that described these terms as they related to the topic, and secondary sources about each of these historical experiences. For the term “religious identity,” I drew on a 1937 article written by an anonymous Jewish academic in the *International Journal of Ethics* entitled “An Analysis of Jewish Culture,”<sup>39</sup> to inform how some Jewish people attempted to “objectively”<sup>40</sup> as he explains, view Jewish culture. I further drew on more modern-day works such as Susan Zuccotti’s aforementioned *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* to provide a contextual basis for the different identifications and expressions of Judaism and Jewish identity in the years directly preceding the war.

It was especially important to contextualize the term “trauma” utilizing contemporary literature as our understanding of the complexity of trauma and its consequences has evolved greatly since the end of World War I. To inform my understanding of the term “trauma,” I drew on articles written by Kylie Agllias and Mel Gray, “Trauma and Its Effects on Refugee Families,”<sup>41</sup> and the *United Nations Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*.<sup>42</sup> Social psychologists, Brock Bastian and Nick Haslam’s work, “Excluded from humanity: The dehumanizing effects of social ostracism” identifies several important concepts that inform my definition of

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<sup>39</sup> Editor, “An Analysis of Jewish Culture,” *International Journal of Ethics* 47, no. 4 (1937): 428-450

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 428.

<sup>41</sup> Kylie Agllias and Mel Gray, “Trauma and Its Effects on Refugee Families,” in *Refugees Worldwide*, eds. Doreen Elliott and Uma A. Segal (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 49-75.

<sup>42</sup> Dinah Shelton, “Forcible Transfer” in *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, (Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 371-372.

trauma and personal identity.<sup>43</sup> These are: “dehumanization,” “ostracism,” “animalization,” “belonging,” “control,” “self-esteem,” and “meaningful existence.”

Below I outline the primary definition of five terms, and any indicator words and phrases. By *indicator* terms, I mean words or phrases that appeared to be applicable in the first round of coding. This allowed me to cast a wide net, understanding that further analysis would reveal, with more specificity, each survivor’s experience of the themes under consideration. There is huge potential for overlap in each of these categories, as, for example, religious identity can and does play a part in personal identity, and definitely contributed to the experience of outsider status for many of the survivors.

The five primary parent code terms and their definitions follow:

1. Outsider status

- a. **Definition:** experiencing “otherness”<sup>44</sup> by being ostracized, racialized, discriminated against, or segregated from mainstream society as a result of an intrinsic quality, behavior, or identity.
- b. **Indicator terms:** discrimination, left out, isolated, other, ostracized, segregated

2. Religious identity

- a. **Definition:** how a person interprets and expresses their religious beliefs, involving both their community and personal identities
- b. **Indicator terms:** *shabbat*, synagogue, Jewish, Judaism, Orthodox

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<sup>43</sup> Brock Bastian and Nick Haslam, “Excluded from humanity: The dehumanizing effects of social ostracism,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 46, (2010): 107-113.

<sup>44</sup> Jean-Francois Staszak, "Other/Otherness", *International Encyclopedia Of Human Geography*, 2008, 1-7, <https://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/geo/files/3214/4464/7634/OtherOtherness.pdf>.

3. Trauma
  - a. **Definition:** a distressing or disturbing experience; complex trauma happens repetitively (not from a single event)<sup>45</sup>
  - b. **Indicator terms:** distressed, sad, stress, disturbed, traumatized, hurt, wounded, emotional, anti-Semitic, anti-Semitism, antisemitism, ostracized
4. Personal identity:
  - a. **Definition:** how one comes to identify themselves over the course of their lives, including facets of religious, cultural, and familial identities, with a particular emphasis on how one views themselves in relation to each of these distinct communities
  - b. **Indicator terms:** Feel, felt, identity, identify, belong, family, culture, French, Austrian, German, religion, Jewish, alone, lonely, group, control, self-esteem, meaningful existence
5. Sentiments of belonging:
  - a. **Definition:** feeling like one is part of a group, whether that be a localized community, ethnic group, or national community
  - b. **Indicator terms:** French, belong, group, family, community, Jewish

Coding data as a process permits adding categories as they emerge so long as all of the data are examined for the same categories.

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<sup>45</sup> Andrew Rosen, "What Is Trauma - The Center For Treatment Of Anxiety And Mood Disorders", *The Center For Treatment Of Anxiety And Mood Disorders*, accessed 7 November 2019, <https://centerforanxietydisorders.com/what-is-trauma/>.



To use Dedoose, it was necessary to first prepare the data in a format that was compatible with the program. Utilizing Adobe Acrobat DC, I exported the 20 transcribed oral history testimonies from PDFs to Word Documents. This was done to allow for in-text searching in Dedoose. I then uploaded all of the newly formatted transcripts to the “Media” section in Dedoose.

Next, I created an Excel spreadsheet titled, “Descriptor Definitions.”<sup>46</sup> This spreadsheet includes the following demographic labels: ID, name, age in 1940, gender, places mentioned, accession number, RG number, VHA interview code, country of origin, and Fortunoff code. In addition to providing demographic information, I used this Excel sheet to keep track of the sources of primary data associated with each of the 20 subjects.

Each label in the “Descriptor Definitions” Excel sheet is accompanied by a memo column that explains the label, a descriptor type column that describes what format the data will be in (Number, Text, or List), and a ListData column that explains the list options if the data point follows this format (such as female and male for gender).

Third, I developed an Excel spreadsheet entitled “Descriptor Values”<sup>47</sup> that includes values for each demographic label according to their corresponding values in each transcript. For example, ID 1 refers to Rita Ancell, who was born in Austria, was age nine in 1940, and has a VHA interview code number 1330. Both excel tables are available for reference in the appendix.

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<sup>46</sup> Figure 1, Appendix.

<sup>47</sup> Figure 2, Appendix.

I uploaded both of these spreadsheets to the “Descriptor” header in Dedoose and added the five key phrases (religious identity, trauma, personal identity, sentiments of belonging, and outsider status) as parent codes under the “code” header in Dedoose.

I began the process of coding by performing “reductive coding.” With this method, I read through each transcript with my research questions in mind and looked for pertinent excerpts. When I found, for example, a clear reference to antisemitism, I highlighted the excerpt and added a code “antisemitism” to be attached to the excerpt. I then added a memo (also linked to the excerpt) about why I identified this excerpt as matching the particular code that I chose.

After analyzing a few transcripts in this way, I discovered new themes that were not specifically coded for in my initial coding framework. For example, I discovered an instance of a survivor expressing guilt about surviving the war when their parents did not. I thus added the code “survivor’s guilt” under the parent code “trauma.” I coded this initial example excerpt under the new code, and then returned to the first transcript to re-analyze it and each of the transcripts that I had already analyzed for this new theme. I then resumed analysis of the remaining transcripts with the new set of codes. Each time that I discovered a new theme, I repeated this process. Throughout the coding process, I kept a word document in which I summarized each survivor’s testimony in paragraph form and copied quotes that were relevant to my research questions.

Once the analysis was complete, I downloaded the excerpts to an Excel document, which provided me with every excerpt that I had coded, along with all descriptive information (ID, Name, etc.). Following this, I compiled my results chapter by identifying excerpts that pertained to each research question and the unexpected findings.

I did this by organizing the data in Excel using the “Data” and “Filter” functions, which allowed me to select specific codes and view each excerpt for which the code was used.

## Results

My first research question asks about the how Jewish migrant and refugee children experienced outsider status in 1940s France. I found that the experiences of otherness were an important part of childhood experiences that informed Jewish migrant and refugee children's personal identity. It is worth reiterating here that there exists significant crossover between the themes of personal and religious identity. As a result of the data analysis, it is apparent that religious identity is inextricably linked to the formation of a personal identity and other categories under consideration in the study. Of the 15 survivors who explicitly state how their religious beliefs have influenced their personal identities in their lives, 13, or 86.7%, state that being Jewish is a significant part of their identity. To varying degrees, each of these survivors considered either their Jewish faith or their identification by others as being Jewish to be of significance to their personal identity.

Some survivors mention clinging to their previous sense of self as a way to weather the upheaval that came from being forcibly relocated. Others describe this migration as taking away their sense of "roots," or belonging to a specific place, which ultimately left them feeling disconnected from a sense of self. Irene Gregory, who was 15 when she was forced to flee Germany for France with her mother and father, describes both of these sentiments in her testimony. She explains that she became "fiercely Jewish by then<sup>48</sup> because I was angry" in the face of intense antisemitism in Germany, explaining that she remembers "fiercely clinging to my identity, which is really what

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<sup>48</sup> 1938

everybody has to have to survive all this.”<sup>49</sup> Later in her testimony, Ms. Gregory states that she believes that her children are fortunate to have so many connections from their youth, adding that “you don’t seem to have any roots”<sup>50</sup> when you do not have these connections to people who knew you as a child. Other survivors mention developing lifelong character traits in response to the traumas and encounters that they had. Egon Gruenhut says the following about the result of his wartime experiences: “But it left a deep impact on me what injustice means that you pick on the weakest, and I had developed after that a very strong sense of justice that prevails even to this day.”<sup>51</sup>

A further pertinent finding relating to personal identity formation is that many of the survivors, though children, understood that they had to “become” someone else to ensure their best chance of survival. For example, Frances Jones describes being converted to Catholicism as “play[ing] the game” to survive. She remarks:

But one day, Mother Superior decided it was not very good for me. I had to become a Catholic now. So I said, fine. I became a Catholic, and I went through the conversion. And—

INT:<sup>52</sup> Could you describe the conversion? Did you have to pray?

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<sup>49</sup> Gregory, Irene. Interview 22728. Transcript page 14. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>51</sup> Gruenhut, Egon. Interview 40167. Transcript Page 8. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>52</sup> INT refers to “Interviewer.”

FJ: Oh, yes. I got a rosary, I was baptized. And, yeah, it was through a whole conversion I went. But again, I had to play the game. I had to go along because I was determined I was going to survive this war.<sup>53</sup>

Later in her testimony, Ms. Jones repeats this sentiment of consciously crafting and maintaining a new identity to avoid detection and ensure her survival. However, as I discuss later in this section, Ms. Jones continued to secretly practice Judaism and ultimately was able to explore a truer expression of her personal identity after the war.

The second part of the first research question probes sentiments of belongingness in Jewish migrant and refugee children. The data addressing this question was mixed and yielded an unexpected result. I hypothesized that children who experienced outsider status in children's homes would feel ostracized and have adverse reactions to this injustice. Some survivors did feel ostracized in children's homes, but this was by no accounts a universal sentiment. Of the 13 survivors who describe their experiences in children's homes, six, or 46.2%, mention feeling ostracized by either their peers, the administrators of the homes, or the French public with whom they interacted. One survivor, Erna Florsheim, describes being incredibly lonely throughout her time in Girl Guide's camps and children's homes as she only had one "acquaintance" with whom she was not very close during this time.<sup>54</sup> Another survivor, Arthur Kern, describes feeling lonely on visitor's days in the home, when none of his family members were able to visit him. He says: "I mean, there were times when I wanted to cry, because other kids got

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<sup>53</sup> Jones, Frances. Interview 4184. Page 15. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Florsheim, Erna. Interview 21139. Page 27. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019..

visitors and I didn't."<sup>55</sup> Further, a number of the children recount feeling the weight of antisemitism despite being in the relatively isolated environment of the children's home. Leon Wise recounts his experience with non-Jewish French children at a school two kilometers from the Chateau de Morelles children's home:

There was a bit of anti-Semitism, definitely. Because we often used to fight. They used to call us—in French, it's called, you know, dirty Jew or something like that. And of course, we used to gang—they ganged up against us and we'd do the same thing. But that—it was the norm in those days. And we had to be very careful, because we could be denounced. And it got—it kept on getting worse and worse as time went by.<sup>56</sup>

Despite these adverse occurrences with the outside French community, some survivors also describe friendship, community, and even familial structures in the home. Mr. Kern explains:

There were six other boys, all the same age group, and we started forming a real close friendship. And basically what happened was we started becoming a family. Instead of—instead of being friends, it was more like becoming siblings with the kids in your own room.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Kern, Arthur. Interview 3874. Page 11. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Wise, Leon. Interview 5654. Page 29. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Kern, Arthur. Interview 3874. Page 11. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019..

This interesting phenomenon was also described by survivor Leon Wise, who describes the directors of his camp as being “virtually like parents to us.”<sup>58</sup> This dichotomy of experiences reflects the fact that each survivor’s experience was dependent on environmental and personal factors.

Research question two asks how state and aid agencies identified Jewish and refugee children in France, and further how the children identified them. These results were fairly predictable considering what is known about Vichy France. In most cases, the Vichy state proved to be a hostile force that acted to repress, intern, deport, and generally terrorize Jewish people, whether they were children or adults. There were some examples in the data of sympathetic French soldiers who allowed small digressions from official orders, such as in the case of Egon Gruenhut, who despite nearly murdering a French soldier who abused his father at Camp Gurs, was allowed by the camp commandant to leave the camp and attempt to hide in a nearby village.<sup>59</sup> This implies some degree of compassion on the part of the French camp commander. There are other examples of French officials hesitating in carrying out discriminatory orders or attempting to mitigate their effects. However, generally the survivors report feeling afraid of French soldiers and, if old enough during the war provided a contemporaneous political opinion, critical of the Vichy government. For example, Frances Jones reports that she and the people around her were more afraid of the French soldiers than the occupying Germans. She states:

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<sup>58</sup> Wise, Leon. Interview 5654. Page 30. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>59</sup> Gruenhut, Egon. Interview 40167. Page 12. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.



And I had my French papers. But the underground, what they do to you, they give you a whole new birth certificate, a whole new identification card, and they drill you. You have to, sort of, block out your past life. You are now—my name was changed to Florence Suzanne Van Sant.

And they really work with you because if, God forbid, the French looked at your papers and—I was more worried about the French looking at my papers than the Germans. The Germans didn't know. They saw my papers. They didn't pay any attention They didn't know [? Whether they were ?] real or false.

I was—we were more afraid of the French government, the pro-German, the Vichy government. But so far, I had lucked out. You know, I had no problem.<sup>60</sup>

By contrast, aid agencies such as the OSE seem to have been relatively effective, considering the circumstances, at removing at-risk Jewish children from their families and placing them in either children's homes or the homes of sympathetic French people. The OSE even provided at least one child who initially refused to leave her grandmother to join a children's home, Rose-Helene Spreiregen, with a small stipend to support her in this decision. Beyond this, multiple small, municipal Jewish committees are mentioned by survivors as having provided assistance to Jewish families who were unable to work in France after the *Statuts des juifs* and other discriminatory French laws were enacted. These aid organizations appear to have sympathized with the plight of French and foreign-born Jews, and to have actively tried to alleviate their suffering.

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<sup>60</sup> Jones, Frances. Interview 4184. Page 13. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019..

With regards to question three that focused on the survivors' religious identities, the majority (15, or 75%) of the survivors describe themselves as being part of a Jewish family before the war, although their specific religious identities vary from those who describe their families on the continuum from "ultra-orthodox" to "conservative" to "observant." The remaining five survivors describe themselves as being from either entirely non-practicing Jewish families, or families where religion was not openly discussed. Of those who identified themselves as religious before the war, 14, or 93.3%, said that they were still religious at the time of the interview, while one did not mention his current religious beliefs in his interview. Of the five survivors who described themselves as not religious before the war, two described themselves as religious at the time of their interview, and the remaining three either did not comment on their current religious beliefs or said that they were still not religious. Some of the survivors report that their experiences during the war influenced their religious beliefs positively, that is, that they felt more strongly about Judaism than they did before the war. Frances Jones explains this:

And it's interesting—after the war, I was asked a question about my religion. They say, well, you still believe in God after all what is happening? Because I know of people that, shortly after the war, they had children. They would not circumcise their children. They didn't want to have—they were afraid that maybe another Hitler would come or something.

And I never felt that way. As a matter of fact, it made me a stronger religious person. [PAUSES FOR 4 SECONDS] It never took my religion away from me.

Because I was asked that by my rabbi here, and by other people. I says, uh-uh. I really became almost a stronger Jew because of what I witnessed and what I went through.<sup>61</sup>

Others, such as Erna Florsheim, retained their Jewish beliefs and practiced them in secret during the war. She explains that while she did act like a Catholic while hidden in a convent to avoid detection, she still prayed in the evenings, saying: “But if—OK, I had to learn to pray in French and this. I did all this. But in my heart, in the evening, I did my own prayers. But I remember it from home—by—by heart.”<sup>62</sup>

However, other survivors reported feeling resentful of God after the war’s end, and not continuing to practice their original religious beliefs after the war. Irene Gregory says about her experience:

At one point in time, I hated being Jewish, and that subsided. What’s so great about being Jewish? My God let me down.

[PAUSES FOR 4 SECONDS]

And the idea that we are a chosen people is a bunch of propaganda, I thought.

Chosen for what? You know, I was a very angry person for a long time. But I kept it well hidden. I had a lot of fun.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Jones, Frances. Interview 4184. Page 22. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>62</sup> Florsheim, Erna. Interview 21139. Page 31. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>63</sup> Gregory, Irene. Interview 22728. Page 36. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

Finally, it was apparent that some degree of trauma, whether due to forced familial separation, outsider status, and antisemitism, was present in each survivor's testimony. This trauma was multi-faceted and manifested in different ways depending on personal factors; some came from the circumstances of the war and antisemitism, and some directly resulted from the abrupt familial separation and other experiences specific to the hidden children. The lasting effects of this trauma also differed vastly due to the wide spectrum of encounters in the homes, with some of the manifestations of this trauma being lasting survivor's guilt and generational silence.

Maya Schwartz, who was nine years old when she was separated from her mother, recounts the trauma of living in fear of bomb blasts while hiding at a convent:

Our day was completely dislocated. We would go to sleep with our clothes on. And, and while the bombs were falling all of us, and the shooting was going on, we would have our arms like this in the cross, praying Christ to spare us.<sup>64</sup>

This experience of trauma appears to be fairly general in that it could have happened to any French citizen regardless of their religious identity or location. However, Ms. Schwartz also recounts severe abuse, starvation, and fear of denouncement at the hands of a French woman who hid her for a few months when she first separated from her mother. This trauma is highly specific and reveals the vulnerability of the hidden children:

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<sup>64</sup> Schwartz, Maya. Interview 22652. Page 16. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

She had a big stick. And if I coughed and disturbed her sleep, or—she would beat me up. And I was also starved. And she always threatened to denounce me to the Gestapo.

And she would sometimes say, if I didn't have to hide you, I could have a nice hunk of ham or salami. And if the check from the social welfare agency came late, she would beat me severely. And so I was cold and hungry, and I was beaten up.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the relative protection from deportation that some hidden children were afforded due to their clandestine existence, they were not exempt from severe trauma resulting from the war, antisemitism, separation from their families, and abuse due to their vulnerability.

I have identified two other unexpected themes that emerged in the analysis. These are: the similar pressures of living under Catholic and Jewish orthodoxy in homes, and the existence of an education void for survivors and their consequential future challenges. Both of these themes are present in multiple testimonies. However, these experiences varied among hidden children and were dependent on their citizenship status and place of birth, the type and administration of children's homes, whether or not the children remained with siblings in the home, whether the children remained in contact with their parents for some portion of their time in the home, their age when they entered the home, the kindness and tolerance of surrounding French people, their personality, and other

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 11.

factors. Considering this vast disparity of experience, these two themes appeared often enough in the testimonies to warrant discussion.

One unexpected finding that emerged in the transcripts was the existence of a spectrum of religious orthodoxy in the homes. Some survivors describe being in very orthodox Jewish homes, in which they were expected to continue their Jewish religious education and participate in religious activities such as Shabbat, a Jewish celebration of the Sabbath that occurs on Friday evenings. This was an expectation regardless of each child's individual religious beliefs. Arthur Kern notes that he was in one such children's home in Eaubonne:

Well, we were somewhat religious at home. But when I talk religious in Eaubonne, I mean they were ultra orthodox. I mean, really, ultra orthodox. It was—I mean, it was like the [unintelligible] And that just wasn't me. But you know, children want to adapt. So I adapted to that lifestyle... We had Shabbats, we—we went to synagogues. We went to synagogues on Shabbat.<sup>66</sup>

In this excerpt, Kern articulates a pertinent finding – that although children's homes often differed vastly from what children were used to in terms of religious expression, many of these children, wanting to fit in to their new environment, “adapted to that lifestyle.” This “adaptation” could also be seen as children succumbing to pressure to conform to the practices of the home, despite not necessarily agreeing with its lifestyle or religious beliefs. While Kern's experience was of an “ultra orthodox” Jewish home, at

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<sup>66</sup> Kern, Arthur. Interview 3874. Page 11. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

the other extreme of the spectrum of French religiosity, children were placed in Catholic convents or homes that practiced traditional Catholicism. This presented its own set of pressures and challenges. Erna Florsheim describes being asked to act like a Catholic while living in a convent as a hidden child:

I did it because I was asked to do it. I don't know for sure if they tried to convert me. Maybe they would have liked to try in case I would have had to stay there, that no one would have come for me. I do not—that I cannot say for certain. I did it because—only because I was asked to do, to kneel with them, and they taught me the prayers. And I—I went along with whatever they wanted me to do.<sup>67</sup>

In this excerpt, it is clear that Ms. Florsheim felt that she was under some degree of pressure to participate in Catholic rituals, despite those in authority in the convent knowing that she was Jewish. She describes that she “went along” with these expectations because she was asked to. Considering the constant fear of denouncement that many of the hidden children felt, it is not surprising that many chose to suppress their individual religious expression in the hopes of ensuring their personal safety.

Other survivors, such as Gunther Katz, describe being placed in a family that encouraged him to continue his Jewish religious education, but did not force him to.<sup>68</sup> It is apparent from this wide variety of experiences that there was a spectrum of religious orthodoxy, from “ultra-orthodox” Judaism to enforced Catholicism, within which the

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<sup>67</sup> Florsheim, Erna. Interview 21139. Page 33. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>68</sup> Katz, Gunther. Interview 19690. Page 21. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

hidden children were expected to conform to the beliefs of the home. Children such as Gunther Katz whose placements were in less orthodox homes were allowed to dictate their own religious expression more so than children who were placed in convents or ultra-orthodox Jewish homes.

One other intuitive finding was the existence of an education void for many of the survivors – that is, that many of the hidden children, while technically expected to be attending some sort of school, did not receive an education for a period of time ranging from a few weeks to years. The most extreme example of this comes from Kurt Greenhut, who explains his situation after fleeing Germany:

So there was never a teacher around. So I would say that between 1935 and '42, I didn't get much of an education.

INT: So it had been like seven years?

KG: Seven years. Seven years. And it's just like—the only education I got was basically real life experiences.

INT: And learning to play chess.

KG: Yeah—oh, and chess. That's right. Right.

INT: Right. So describe this education that you got in this new country.

KG: Well, first of all, I—I had a sort of a rough beginning, because they put me in a—I think the fifth grade, you know, where I should have been much higher. But I got some double promotions. But still, I—I graduated high school at age 20.



But it didn't make any difference, because when I went to college I had a lot of students that were my age, you know.<sup>69</sup>

Despite a seven-year hiatus from school, after emigrating to the United States following the war, Mr. Greenhut was ultimately able to graduate high school.

Similar to the spectrum of religious environments described above, the quality and amount of education available to these children varied vastly between homes. Arthur Kern mentions that "they [the OSE] set up actually schools in the homes, themselves."<sup>70</sup> Mr. Kern studied carpentry, English, and other school subjects while staying at children's homes in Eaubonne and Montintin.<sup>71</sup>

However, other survivors who were not in children's homes, but rather hidden under other circumstances, often had different experiences. Rose-Helene Spreiregen was born in Paris and lived with her Polish-born mother and grandmother. She attended a boarding school in Paris until the Vélodrome d'Hiver roundup in July of 1942. After this, her mother attempted to escape to the Free Zone, but was deported. Ms. Spreiregen describes running away with her grandmother to the south of France after refusing to be hidden by the OSE. Spreiregen believed that her grandmother would not survive without her help. She also mentions how, at age 12, she managed a grocery store in the town (near Voiron, France) where she and her grandmother hid for a period of time. When asked about school, she notes:

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<sup>69</sup> Greenhut, Kurt. Interview 10496. Page 25-26. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>70</sup> Kern, Arthur. Interview 3874. Page 11. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 16.

And I couldn't really go to school, because it was not so wise to do it, even with false papers, because we were the refugees. So you never could tell what was going to happen.

And I had a very curious mind. And I was always very eager to learn. And we were very fortunate that across the street from where we lived there was a big library—public library. And I would take out stacks of books—a huge amount of books.<sup>72</sup>

Even though Ms. Spreiregen was a French-born Jew, she was unable to attend school after age 11 for fear of denouncement and deportation. However, despite this reality, she persisted in attempting to learn as much as she could independently. This appears to be a recurrent theme – that survivors may have gone anywhere from a few weeks to many years in their childhoods without formal education, but through their own determination continued to learn, whether that be a skill, trade, or from books.

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<sup>72</sup> Spreiregen, Rose-Helene. Interview 45717. Page 26. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

## Discussion

The 20 survivors were a diverse group ranging from age seven to 17. Twelve of the group were male, and eight were female. Six of the survivors were born in France to foreign-born parents, 10 were born in Germany, three were born in Austria, and one was born in Russia, but emigrated to Germany when he was an infant before the war. Eleven of the survivors mention either themselves or immediate family members being interned at Camp Gurs, and six mention Camp Rivesaltes, while three note that they or a family member had been to both camps. Thirteen of the survivors were homed in official children's homes that were administered by the OSE, four were hidden in the homes of individual French families, some of which received monetary compensation from the OSE or another aid organization to hide a Jewish child, and the last three were both detained in French concentration camps such as Camp Gurs and Camp Rivesaltes and hidden in French villages during the war.

The disruptions caused by traumatic, forced relocation, antisemitism and racialization had significant effects on each of the survivors and how they perceived themselves with respect to outsider status. Irene Gregory's story reveals that in the face of antisemitic racialization, some survivors chose to embrace their perceived identity, as she recalls becoming "fiercely Jewish" in response to severe discrimination. Erving Goffman explains this kind of response in *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. According to Goffman, minority groups may form their identities strategically in response to stigmatization deriving from their perceived group identity.<sup>73</sup> Other survivors, such as Michelle Marmor, a French Jew, also seem to display the same tendency that

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<sup>73</sup> Erving Goffman, *Stigma*, (New York, 1963): 24.

Gregory did. Marmor, who was 16 when the war began, states that she felt that other Jewish people were ashamed to wear the yellow Star of David and recalls thinking “the shame should be on them, not on me.”<sup>74</sup> In an act of rebellion, Marmor decided to wear bright yellow earrings and a yellow flower in her hair, to match her star. After an argument with her mother, she was stopped by a policeman and ordered to take off the flower, as he recognized that it was a political statement. When discussing this, Marmor says “and this is my first act of underground, [LAUGHS] my first act of rebellion.”<sup>75</sup> It is important to note that as a French citizen, a native French speaker, and an older teenager, Marmor was in a slightly more secure position at the beginning of the war than other foreign-born Jewish children, and as such may have felt more liberty to rebel against unjust laws. Marmor highlights how some survivors demonstrated their anger at an unfair and discriminatory system by embracing the part of their identity (their religious identity) that made them subject to this harassment. Neither fiercely embracing Judaism nor rebellion were universal.

Maya Schwartz, also a French Jew, notes in her testimony that she did not grow up in a religious family, and further that her father might have been an atheist. When she recalls the experience of being forced to wear the Star of David, she sobs. She says that from the moment that the star was sewed onto her clothing, “my being part of French civilization kind of set me apart.”<sup>76</sup> Schwartz understood that her public religious identification relegated her to the status of outsider and she resented that it created a

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<sup>74</sup> Marmor, Michelle. Interview 24830. Page 31. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Schwartz, Maya. Interview 22652. Page 6. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

barrier to her participation in French civilization. Another survivor, Henri Bouton, describes how wearing the star changed as he became aware of its implicit meaning: “I was wearing the star. At first, being that I was only a kid-- to me, I felt almost like a sheriff's deputy. You know, it was kind of fun. But then little by little, the thoughts came to me. I'm like a marked piece of cattle.”<sup>77</sup> Survivors also describe acts of antisemitism and violence in France, with Mr. Bouton even saying that “when you speak about the vast majority – when I say the French are anti-Semitic, it's because the majority is, not the minority.”<sup>78</sup>

Many of the survivors who were born in Germany experienced rabid, rampant antisemitism in their childhoods before fleeing to France. Erna Florsheim recalls a teacher at her primary school in Germany forcing her to do the heil Hitler salute when she passed the teacher. She remembers that his intention was “to—to humiliate me, I suppose, because although—I was very young, but as the years went by and I thought about it and this is I presumed the purpose of his—his treatment.”<sup>79</sup> German Jewish children’s treatment at the hands of both Nazi officials and their non-Jewish German peers is well documented by Peter Monteath in his article “The Mischling Experience in Oral History.” Monteath, who writes about so-called “mixed-race” Jewish persons, those with at least one Jewish grandparent, notes that these children were persecuted “on the basis on an ascribed racial identity which, in most cases, had meant little or nothing to them before Nazi racial mania became official policy.”<sup>80</sup> This idea was present in my

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<sup>77</sup> Bouton, Henri. Interview HVT-80. Page 4. *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies*, Yale University. Retrieved Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Florsheim, Erna. Interview 21139. Page 8. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Monteath, “The *Mischling* Experience in Oral History,” *The Oral History Review* 35, no. 2 (2008): 140.

analysis. Many of the survivors were not aware that they were perceived differently from the other children in their German schools until they began to be persecuted in the mid-1930s. Lucy Porges explains that she learned that she was different when her school forced her to attend a “Jewish religious hour.” Porges remarked, “and we were looked upon as totally different. It was not a pleasant thing. Because children always want to be part of the majority. They don’t want to be different. And I realized it then already that we were different. It wasn’t pleasant.”<sup>81</sup> While each German-born survivor experienced antisemitism in Germany, some survivors felt as though this racialization and discrimination was not as prevalent in France, and some even felt grateful that they were no longer the subject of the extreme antisemitism that they had experienced in Germany or Austria. Arthur Kern notes that when he learned that he would leave Austria, “I was not particularly unhappy. I couldn’t go outside and play anymore, because you’d always be afraid that the Hitler Youth gangs would come along. So going to France really was a very pleasant thing for me.”<sup>82</sup>

Beyond the ability to leave behind difficulty, some survivors described mechanisms such as “adapting” to their new environments, by learning French, and generally forming connections and experiences that complemented this new existence. Frances Jones notes that she “blocked out” her German language skills and says that “I didn’t want to remember German. I was French.”<sup>83</sup> After being reunited with her mother at the end of the war, Ms. Jones realized that “I became so French that I couldn’t talk to

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<sup>81</sup> Porges, Lucy. Interview 8212. Page 8. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>82</sup> Kern, Arthur. Interview 3874. Page 9. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>83</sup> Jones, Frances. Interview 4184. Page 20. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

[her mother]. I couldn't talk to her for about two days.”<sup>84</sup> This is a common sentiment of children who, in wanting to “fit in” their new environment as Arthur Kern described, forged a new identity at the expense of their old one. At times, as in the case of Ms. Jones, this included losing ties to a cultural heritage, and ironically, to her family. Although some children may have continued to speak their native language with other children in the home, generally they were instructed in and expected to learn French. This was likely primarily due to concerns about their visibility as immigrants, and potential discovery and denouncement if their identities became known by the French public and police. However necessary this language expectation, it is apparent that when coupled with a complete separation from a child's family and cultural environment, it contributed to the breakdown of existing identity and affiliation links.

In addition, my data shows that establishing familial structures and bonds in the new home, with adults or other children, often replaced original affiliation links. In this respect, age appears to have been a particularly significant factor—especially since those who were very young when they were separated from their parents were often taken under the care of older children in the homes. Rita Ancell explains that some of the older girls would “choose some of the younger ones and say ‘Moi, je suis ton papa, je suis ta maman.’” Ancell remarks that while today she thinks it was “probably really nonsense,” nevertheless, “in those days it meant so much that you had an elderly [sic] girl there who was willing to take on your young life, to be a bit kinder to you or whatever.”<sup>85</sup> This kindness and familial structure in the home appears to have mitigated, to some degree,

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ancell, Rita. Interview 1330. Page 8. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

the abrupt familial separation for Ms. Ancell and others. Many other children formed extremely close relationships in the home. Arthur Kern described other hidden children in his age group as “siblings.” Mr. Kern reiterates that point throughout his testimony, saying that these children became his “second family.” Mr. Kern mentions that he and his “siblings” had the opportunity to join a refugee transport to the U.S. However, while the rest of them were sent to the U.S. together, he was held back (for unknown reasons). He describes that event as “traumatizing.” Kern disclosed:

I was absolutely traumatized because the other children in my group—the other boys—all my age group, that—they all went on the first transport. And basically what had happened by then is we had formed like, families. And I just thought my second family. I was absolutely—it was horrendous to me. You have no idea how much I cried.<sup>86</sup>

After facing the devastation of being separated from his biological family, Mr. Kern created a new family in the home. To then be separated from this second family was extremely traumatizing for him, unsurprisingly. However, the bonds identified by Kern were not merely circumstantial and, in some cases, provided a significant opportunity for collective healing after the war ended. Mr. Kern explains that he has been finding his friends from the children’s home since he arrived in the United States, and now has a group of about 30 former hidden children, who regularly meet and discuss their experiences. About this group, Mr. Kern describes “we all have become—it’s become a

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<sup>86</sup> Kern, Arthur. Interview 3874. Page 17. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.



family. It's really not—it's really not just friends. It's—it's much more than that. We see each other constantly, either, you know—either on a social basis.”<sup>87</sup> Feldman et al. mention that “collective recognition” of traumas endured is a fundamentally important way that survivors find healing, and further that “ending the isolation by allowing words to be spoken and acts to be observed was necessary in the difficult and painful mourning process undertaken by the hidden children.”<sup>88</sup> Mouchenik et al. also discuss the need for social acknowledgment of trauma to initiate healing.<sup>89</sup> For Mr. Kern and his group of former hidden children, it appears that collective remembering and support has allowed healing and the creation of a new family, in the absence of many survivors' families who were murdered during the Holocaust.

Regarding the survivors' religious identities, there was a spectrum of ideas about religion, dependent on survivors' familial religious observance, the environment of their home, personal beliefs, and other considerations. Rita Ancell considered her good behavior in the children's home to be a promise to God, and in part a reciprocal arrangement – if she behaved herself well enough, her mother would be returned to her. She remembers:

My priorities were that I should behave in such a manner that my God, who I loved him so much and he loved me, and I was told about it, I witnessed it in the synagogues in Vienna, it was in my blood, it was in my spirit, that I must do

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>88</sup> Marion Feldman, Yoram Mouchenik, Marie Rose Moro, “The Jewish Children Hidden in France During the Second World War: A Retrospective Study,” *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 20, no. 85-93 (2015): 92.

<sup>89</sup> Adeline Fohn, Susann Heenen-Wolff, and Yoram Mouchenik, “Silence et reconnaissance sociale dans le processus de reconstruction d'anciens enfants juifs cachés,” *Neuropsychiatrie de l'enfance et de l'adolescence* 62 (2014): 293-298.

everything right, and I wanted to do it right, so much, that my beautiful mother should come back.<sup>90</sup>

After the war, Ms. Ancell says that she was “very happy to be Jewish,” and further explains that her mother was Jewish, and that “the whole war had been about all this, and I was going to be Jewish and I was pleased about it.”<sup>91</sup> In this way, it is evident that she considers her faith to be an integral part of her identity, both in how it connects her to her late mother, and to a broader sense of identity considering the great suffering of the Jewish people during the war.

Other survivors, such as Gunther Katz, echo this sentiment of religion providing a sense of family identity. He sobs when recounting his bar mitzvah in Germany, which took place on the same day as his father’s. As a result, he sang the same Torah portion as his father did. Mr. Katz says that he “could feel the pride that [his father] had in what was going on.”<sup>92</sup> Although Mr. Katz developed a close relationship with his foster family in France, this sense of connection and identity that was forged through familial religious tradition never left him. In this way, both familial and religious structures are interrelated. Mouchenik et al. affirm this idea by noting both the importance of Jewish collective identity and the connection between cultural and ancestral, or familial, dimensions of Jewish identity.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ancell, Rita. Interview 1330. Page 10. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>92</sup> Katz, Gunther. Interview 19690. Page 17. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>93</sup> Marion Feldman, Yoram Mouchenik, Marie Rose Moro, “The Jewish Children Hidden in France During the Second World War: A Retrospective Study,” *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 20, no. 85-93 (2015): 92.

Regarding the role of aid agencies in wartime France, in 1947 the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation produced a booklet about the OSE's activities, a contemporaneous account that exists today in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive. According to the OSE booklet, the OSE operated during WWI with the goal of helping refugees and Jewish populations in France. After the war ended, OSE was transported to countries in Eastern Europe, and primarily sought to protect children and monitor the health of at-risk adults.<sup>94</sup> In 1939, the OSE had 300 refugee children in its charge, who they homed in children's homes across France. The report states that it is not an exaggeration to say that the OSE played "dans de nombreux pays, et en particulier en France, ce rôle de service public dans la vie juive."<sup>95</sup> The effectiveness of the OSE's mission to support Jewish youth and their families is shown in the testimonies of multiple survivors, who attest to the OSE's role both in relocating them and providing them with other assistance (such as in the case of Rose-Helene Spreiregen, who received a stipend from the OSE when she refused to leave her grandmother in Paris).

In one source which contains contemporaneous OSE materials, there is a document that attests that immediately after liberation, the OSE Family Regrouping Service was established to recover hidden children and attempt to reunite them with their families.<sup>96</sup> While this may have been the case, it is apparent from the testimony of Herbert Karliner that many hidden children, due to incomplete or lost records during the

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<sup>94</sup> File 05517, Microfilm #362, RG-68.112.M, Nichnasot Files, page 117, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>96</sup> File 9741, Microfilm #163, RG-68.112.M, Beit Lohamei Haghetat, page 6, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.

war, remained hidden with French families after the war ended, and were not able to be reunited with any surviving family.

One anticipated finding that was evident in nearly all of the transcripts was how traumatic the forced separation of children from their families was. Kurt Greenhut describes his mother's emigration without him as "just a traumatic experience. Traumatic."<sup>97</sup> Erna Florsheim says that despite the fact that she was surrounded by young people, and was "part of a group," which was "something so special for us," that the most important thing to her was "what will happen to my parents?"<sup>98</sup>

Gunther Katz describes how despite the knowledge that children's homes would offer potential salvation for himself and other children who were to be hidden to avoid deportation, he initially refused to go because he wanted to stay with his family.

At that point, the committee came to the parents of the younger children and said that they can take everyone under 18 out of the camp and get them into homes, children's homes. And I absolutely refused to do anything of the sort. I wanted to go with my mother and father.<sup>99</sup>

The fact that separation from one's parents at a young age is traumatic is not surprising, but is well-documented in literature, including Feldman et al.'s article "Jewish Children Hidden in France Between 1940 and 1944: An Analysis of Their Narratives

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<sup>97</sup> Greenhut, Kurt. Interview 10496. Page 9. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>98</sup> Florsheim, Erna. Interview 21139. Page 26. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>99</sup> Katz, Gunther. Interview 19690. Page 18. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

Today.” The authors describe the forced separation of hidden children from their families is traumatic primarily because it involved (often permanent) damage to affiliation and filiation links. They note that once the children were hidden, to be protected they “could no longer be Jewish (damage to affiliation links) and thus could no longer be their parents’ children (damage to filiation links). The changes in family name, first name, and religion were part of this metamorphosis.”<sup>100</sup> This concept is significant because it highlights the reality that familial bonds were broken by the process of hiding children. However, it is evident in the data that some children were able to mitigate this devastation by maintaining some familial ties, either in the form of sending or receiving letters to their parents, or by having the luck of being hidden in the same environment as a sibling.

Some hidden children experienced survivor’s guilt after the war that contributed to their repression of and silence about their experience in wartime France. This phenomenon has been documented by Marion Feldman and Hana Rottman in “Transmission: From Experience to Awareness: Jewish Children Hidden in France and Their Children.” In the first reading of the transcripts, it became apparent that a number of the survivors mention being “lucky” or “fortunate” to have had their set of experiences during the war, often positioning themselves in opposition to their family members who were sent to concentration camps.

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<sup>100</sup> Marion Feldman, Olivier Taïeb, Marie Rose Moro, “Jewish Children Hidden in France Between 1940 and 1944: An Analysis of Their Narratives Today,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 80, no. 4 (2010): 550.

Erna Florsheim, originally from Germany, mentions feeling “fortunate” about not being sent on a particular convoy to be deported.<sup>101</sup> In the same passage, Ms. Florsheim acknowledges a constant fear of deportation, and yet says that she and her companion were “fortunate” because they ultimately were not deported, while other children were. This reveals an interesting disparity between how she perceives her experience and how modern scholars would perhaps characterize it. Lenore Terr notes that living in fear and being repeatedly exposed to fear-inciting situations can create Type II trauma.<sup>102</sup> Commentary by Mr. Alfred Florsheim, Mrs. Florsheim’s husband, makes clear that she was impacted by this state of constant fear. He notes:

Actually, only lately I got the rest of her experiences. She always was a little—she didn’t like to talk about it. It—it make her too—it brought tears to her eyes when she talked about her—her parents especially. And in the beginning, I remember if a—a couple planes went overhead, she tightened up. It was still in her from the wartime. Thank god, it’s—lately I don’t think it—it bothers her anymore.<sup>103</sup>

Mr. Florsheim notes war-period experiences were so impactful on her that she would cry or physically “tighten[] up” when reminded of the threat that it presented. In today’s parlance, even laypersons would recognize Mrs. Florsheim’s reaction as a

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<sup>101</sup> Florsheim, Erna. Interview 21139. Page 26. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>102</sup> Lenore Terr, “Childhood traumas: an outline and overview, *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 148, no. 1 (1991): 10-20.

<sup>103</sup> Florsheim, Erna. Interview 21139. Page 43. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

symptom of PTSD, but Mrs. Florsheim does not characterize her experience and reactions as such. Rather, she says the following:

I always felt [PAUSES FOR 4 SECONDS] there was so much missing in my life. [PAUSES FOR 3 SECONDS] And as my husband told me, said, he even says it to me now, I'm too serious. I take everything just very hard, and I can't ever relax and all this.

I can't. It's in me. It's something that I grew up with, and I could never shake it. It's something that stay—will stay with me always. It—but I've been *fortunate* in many things, and I'm grateful for that.<sup>104</sup> (Emphasis mine)

While Mrs. Florsheim recognizes that as a result of her traumatic experiences, she is simultaneously compelled to note her gratitude.

Frances Jones forthrightly says that the hidden children “cannot compete or compare, I want to say, with people that actually went in the camp. We had our moments of fear and of tragedies.”<sup>105</sup> Ms. Jones recognizes that hidden children experienced fear and tragedy, but that these experiences were fundamentally different from others who were in concentration camps. Feldman et al. discuss this concept in some depth, noting that:

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>105</sup> Jones, Frances. Interview 4184. Page 27. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

The children discovered what had happened to their close family and what they had experienced, they were shocked to learn of the existence of the death camps, and they were upset by the brutality of the details of the deaths of family members. The stories were so dramatic that it seemed that their own experience as hidden children paled into insignificance. Thus, their own stories were silenced. And from this silence arose guilt.<sup>106</sup>

Some survivors' testimonies express a sentiment of responsibility. Maya Schwartz feels that if she had made a different decision and separated from her mother earlier, her mother may have survived the war. She explains:

And later on, when my mother was arrested and deported, I sometimes regretted. [SOBBING] I thought maybe had I gone to Switzerland, maybe her life would have been spared. But you know, it's—it's hard to make sound decisions in those situations at that age.<sup>107</sup>

Schwartz sobs while remembering how she refused a social worker's offer to go to Switzerland by herself and leave her mother at age nine. She acknowledges that it is difficult for young children to make "sound decisions," but she still carries with her some semblance of guilt. Survivors' guilt continues into adulthood for some of the subjects'

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<sup>106</sup> Marion Feldman, Olivier Taïeb, Marie Rose Moro, "Jewish Children Hidden in France Between 1940 and 1944: An Analysis of Their Narratives Today," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 80, no. 4 (2010): 553.

<sup>107</sup> Schwartz, Maya. Interview 22652. Page 8. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019..



whose testimonies were analyzed in this study, while others appear to have been successful in recontextualizing their experiences through collective support.

Even though some children experienced kindness in children's homes and formed lasting friendships and familial bonds with administrators and other children, all were affected in some way by the trauma of their experience. Each of these erosions of personal identity, religious identity, and filiation and affiliation links contributed to what some survivors characterize as a loss of childhood. Leon Wise says that "we missed our youth, virtually. Because by the time we were, let's say, 15, 16, we had lived like somebody who was 25 with all what happened to us. I think it's normal. No?"<sup>108</sup> Some children did not have sympathetic adults to rely on. Therefore, they had to navigate a complex and hostile French society by themselves at a young age. Rose-Helene Spreiregen notes that she never had "real role models," and that hearing "dehumanizing" antisemitic talk in Paris made her always want to "prove that I wasn't what those anti-Semites made me to be, which I was not. I was a very good child. And I was made to feel that I was really less than dirt. That's difficult."<sup>109</sup> Spreiregen speak about taking care of her elderly grandmother after her mother was deported, and recognizes how assuming the role of caretaker at 12-years-old affected her: "and I was obviously very scared, because after all, I was a 12-year-old assuming the, the adult role, when in fact, someone should have been protecting me. An adult should have been protecting me, the child."<sup>110</sup> In contrast, the few children who were able to remain with an older family member, while

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<sup>108</sup> Wise, Leon. Interview 5654. Page 39. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>109</sup> Spreiregen, Rose-Helene. Interview 45717. Page 21. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation. Retrieved Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

still being hidden, were able to avoid some of the worst realities that those without any family had to face alone. Sigi Hart, a survivor who was interned as a child at Camp Gurs and later hid in a village with his mother speaks about this:

So I stayed with my mother. And for me, it was all an adventure. You know, we were kids there. We had barracks, we were sleeping on straw. It was camping for me. Because we did not realize—we did not realize really the troubles we were in. Our parents knew. But you know, children play.<sup>111</sup>

For Hart, the presence of his mother, despite dire conditions in the camp, allowed him to retain some degree of childhood innocence that other children without family members did not.

Some hidden children faced severe orthodox pressures in children's homes, convents, and in the homes of French host families. Their age at the time of separation from their family had a significant impact on both their ability to adapt to the culture of their new environment and the degree to which they were influenced by this culture. Herbert Karliner offers a rare perspective on the hidden children's situation. Mr. Karliner turned 18 shortly after liberation and was asked to stay in France to facilitate the location and return of hidden children to their parents. He describes this work as difficult, explaining that in many cases, hidden children seemed to "disappear" after the war, especially those who were too young at the beginning of the war to remember much

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<sup>111</sup> Hart, Sigi. Interview 232. Page 15. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

about their parents or backgrounds. Mr. Karliner mentions that despite the lack of documentation, he suspected that there were hidden children in one particular convent:

HK: But we had some ideas that in this convent, there was some children there. So we went there. Some of the nuns don't want to tell you. Some of the children we got out, they were so brainwashed that they told us, even after, that they're going to go to Israel and convert the Jews to—

INT: Mhm. Right.

HK: Catholicism, you know?

INT: Catholicism, right.

HK: So you see, it was very difficult. And then also, the children naturally were without parents. They were hidden without the parents. But then they want their parents back, and they were not there.

It was a very difficult—difficult situation for the children. And we had wonderful people who understood us, who helped us. We didn't have psychiatrists or things like—there was only people, down-to-earth.<sup>112</sup>

Mr. Karliner presents a unique and troubling account of Jewish children who were indoctrinated into Catholicism by their hosts at a convent. Regardless of intention, the loss of religious identity and the conversion without consent of a vulnerable population of minors is worrisome.

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<sup>112</sup> Karliner, Herbert. Interview 7624. Page 26. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

It is essential to note that not all children who resided in convents or orthodox Jewish homes were forced to perform a certain religious expression. Kurt Greenhut was allowed to continue to express his Jewish religious beliefs despite living in a convent. When asked to kneel during Catholic Mass, Mr. Greenhut refused. He says that the nuns essentially chose to leave him alone, and notes that “they were very helpful, really. They were thoughtful. I really thought a lot about these Catholic nuns that really were great... I was really well-protected by these Catholic nuns.”<sup>113</sup> Rita Ancell had a similar experience with the Catholic family that hid her for a time. She describes being “curious for mystic things like Christ and Church and the prayers,” and despite thinking that her grandmother would not have liked her to, she chose to attend church with her host family. She says that “I couldn’t see anything wrong with it, nobody did me any harm,” and further that “[church caused] more towards comfort than discomfort.”<sup>114</sup> In these two testimonies, it is evident that a middle ground uninfluenced by Jewish or Catholic orthodoxy existed for some hidden children. Ostensibly, the relative freedom that they were afforded as a result of this benefited them greatly.

Even for children in the same family, experiences differed vastly depending on which home or host family they were sent to. Lucy Porges’ experience reflects this reality. Porges was sent to Bern to live with a Jewish family, but discovered shortly after arriving that they only wanted to have an “in-servant” and “didn’t send me to any school.”<sup>115</sup> At the same time, Ms. Porges’ sister was sent to a non-Jewish Swiss family,

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<sup>113</sup> Greenhut, Kurt. Interview 10496. Page 15. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>114</sup> Ancell, Rita. Interview 1330. Page 11. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>115</sup> Porges, Lucy. Interview 8212. Page 22. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

who Porges describes as “wonderful people and they taught her a lot of things. And she went to school. They sent her to school.”<sup>116</sup>

In every OSE children’s home, there were more or less homogenous teaching staff that included young women from Jewish Youth Movements, nurses, and other assistant teachers that may have also been refugees themselves, having arrived shortly before the children in France. For some children, such as Arthur Kern, this assertion appears to be true. However, this was not the environment experienced by other children, often those who were not hidden in official OSE children’s homes, but rather sent to households, such as the one that Lucy Porges depicts.

Finally, Arthur Kern articulates a pertinent and positive finding – that despite this adversity and potential education void, the hidden children have a very high “success rate.” Kern maintains that his group of hidden children are a “very success-oriented group,” and that “it really amazes me that kids who started up with absolutely nothing made something of their lives. And most of these people are very upbeat.”<sup>117</sup> Mr. Kern acknowledges that “we all remember our past, some more than others,” but claims that generally, the hidden children that he knows are “very upbeat” considering their experiences.<sup>118</sup> Kern’s observation is validated by the subjects of this study. All found some form of employment upon arrival in their new host country, and all describe themselves as being generally satisfied with what they have achieved in their lives.

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Kern, Arthur. Interview 3874. Page 21. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct 23, 2019.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

In 2018, humanitarian aid worker and geography teacher Scott Warren found two Central American migrants, who were dehydrated and barefoot, in the Arizona desert near his home – the same desert where, since the 1990s, at least 7,000 migrants have died attempting to cross the US-Mexico border.<sup>119</sup> He provided them with shelter, first aid, and food. For this simple act, Warren was arrested and charged with conspiracy to harbor and transport undocumented immigrants. He was acquitted, tried again on the charge of harboring undocumented immigrants, and acquitted once again.<sup>120</sup> This story, of a humanitarian aid worker attempting to provide assistance to migrants in desperate need and being taken to court for his efforts, draws a parallel to those OSE workers who risked their own freedom to save the lives of Jewish children that the French state deemed ineligible for protection as a result of their ethnicity, religion, or nationality. This situation has played out in numerous European countries including France, where in 2018, an olive grower named Cédric Herrou saw the French Constitutional Council overturn his prior conviction for helping undocumented African migrants. Herrou successfully argued that he acted under the French principle of *fraternité* and as such was within his rights as a French citizen.<sup>121</sup>

In this project, I found that every survivor who was forcibly repatriated and separated from their family encountered repeated trauma as a direct result of this

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<sup>119</sup> Jasmine Aguilera, “Humanitarian Scott Warren Found Not Guilty After Retrial for Helping Migrants at Mexican Border,” *Time Magazine*, <https://time.com/5732485/scott-warren-trial-not-guilty/?amp=true> (accessed April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ellan Peitier and Richard Pérez-Pena, “‘Fraternité’ Brings Immunity for Migrant Advocate in France,” *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/06/world/europe/france-migrants-farmer-fraternity.html?auth=login-email&login=email> (Accessed April 9<sup>h</sup>, 2020).

experience – each survivor mentioned feeling “afraid,” “fearful,” “terrified,” or “scared” for a prolonged period of time at least once in their testimony. Further, I found that there was a myriad of ways that survivors interpreted and contextualized these traumas into their personal and religious identities and expressions – some felt their faith was strengthened by the experiences that they faced, and others lost faith entirely. Some survivors who were forced to flee their home countries to France left France after the war, never to return, while others created lives in the new country that they felt they now belonged to. Survivors had vastly different experiences based on the type of environment in which they were hidden, the degree of orthodoxy, whether Catholic or Jewish, of their hosts, their age, whether or not they were hidden with siblings, the degree to which they were able to maintain contact with their families while in the home, and a variety of other personal factors. Each of these factors influenced how well survivors coped with the immense trauma that they all experienced.

Generally, the experiences of forced repatriation and familial separation impacted how survivors viewed themselves, both in terms of their personal and religious identity formation. Some became defiant in the face of overt discrimination, while others survived by creating familial attachments to their peers in the children’s homes or to host families. These divergent strategies were largely informed by the survivors’ ages (intuitively, the two survivors that joined resistance efforts were older teenagers) and citizenship status (French-born survivors were at times able to perform acts of defiance more easily due to their language abilities, citizenship status in early Vichy France, and connections to non-Jewish French citizens).

This research project is significant because it provides both an important historical analysis, and a unique perspective about how children are affected by migration and familial separation, issues which are pertinent today. In a 2019 report, the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the International Office of Migration (IOM), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 1/3 of asylum seekers are children.<sup>122</sup> In 2016, France recorded 13,000 unaccompanied refugee minors arriving in the country.<sup>123</sup> A 2018 study conducted by the French National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN NCP) details the current situation of unaccompanied refugee minors in France after they receive their designation as an unaccompanied minor, and reveals that French child welfare policy is underpinned by a “code de l’action sociale et des familles” (CASF) which “aims to guarantee the child’s physical, psychological, emotional, intellectual and social development.”<sup>124</sup> The report highlights that based on French law, unaccompanied refugee minors first undergo an age assessment to determine if the child is a minor, and further ascertain if the child is alone in France and does not have family residing in the country. If these conditions are met, the child is placed in the child welfare system and is cared for by the French state. URM’s do not have to apply for asylum status and can apply for other residence permits once they turn 18 if they have met a number of requirements, including committing no crimes while in France, undertaking an educational course, and others. The department emphasizes the difficulty of providing “socio-professional integration” services to all unaccompanied refugee minors who arrive, primarily because the majority

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<sup>122</sup>UNHCR, UNICEF, and IOM, “Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe” *Unicef.org*, 2019, 6.

<sup>123</sup> French National Contact Point of the European Migration Network, “Approaches in France to unaccompanied minors following status determination” *Informie.net*, 10.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.



are teenagers, which leaves a small window of time in which these services can be delivered.<sup>125</sup> However, the report accentuates the fact that all children in the welfare system are afforded the same protections, regardless of nationality, which includes care, socio-educational support, and legal support until a child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>126</sup>

Despite these protections, after a review of France's assessments of unaccompanied refugee minors when granting asylum status, Human Rights Watch found that French examiners, whose job includes "certifying a child's status as a minor," were often in violation of international standards; at times these examiners ignored signs of PTSD that affect memory when concluding that a child was not a minor, and thus could not be granted access to protective programs in France.<sup>127</sup> This calls into question the accuracy of official statistics of unaccompanied refugee minors currently residing in France without access to protective programs because their age could not be – or was incorrectly – determined by French examiners.

The 2018 EMN NCP report additionally acknowledges that there are a number of problems that complicate proper care of unaccompanied refugee minors in France, including difficulties and delays in placing minors in schools and difficulties in adequately treating these minors' physical and mental health concerns. Much concern has been raised in the past years about refugee and migrant access to healthcare in France. This is largely because refugee and migrants' access to the otherwise comprehensive French *couverture maladie universelle* is limited by a number of "difficulties, including financial and language barriers, administrative problems and a lack of knowledge and

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>127</sup> Human Rights Watch, "France: Immigrant Children Being Denied Protection" *Hrw.org*, 2019.

understanding of their rights,” that can in practice exclude these populations from receiving adequate care.<sup>128</sup>

The EMN NCP report further notes that professionals who are involved with the French child welfare system encounter “young people who are often de-socialised, who have spent time not in education and who are no longer used to being managed by adults” which presents challenges to these educators, doctors, social workers, and other professionals. Importantly, the report notes that these challenges differ based on some of the same factors that I identified in my study as causing a divergence of experiences. The report explains:

The challenges relating to the integration of unaccompanied minors differ according to *their profile, the age at which they arrived in France, and their ability in French*. Social and professional integration plays an important role in the decision to issue a residence permit, and unaccompanied minors *often feel significant pressure to learn French quickly* to then be able to be directed towards training (Emphasis mine).<sup>129</sup>

A number of contemporary scholars are currently investigating the psychological effects of forced migration on children, including psychiatrist Dr. Niranjan Karnik. In his 2011 article “Psychopathology in African Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in Austria” Dr. Karnik and his colleagues diagnosed 56% of the unaccompanied refugee minors with a

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<sup>128</sup> Pierre Chauvin et al, “Access to healthcare for people facing multiple health vulnerabilities.” (2015).

<sup>129</sup> French National Contact Point of the European Migration Network, “Approaches in France to unaccompanied minors following status determination.” *Informie.net*, 44.

psychiatric condition, with the most common diagnoses being adjustment disorder, PTSD, and dysthymia (persistent, mild depression).<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, in a study of displaced and refugee children in Croatia, Dr. Mina Fazel et al. found that psychosocial adaptation was worse in displaced children.<sup>131</sup> They further found that refugee children had higher anxiety and “had fewer effective coping strategies to manage stressful situations” than other children.<sup>132</sup> This finding is pertinent when considering the situation of the survivors who were unaccompanied minors hidden by the OSE and French families from 1940 to 1942. The survivors suffered traumas including exposure to wartime violence, discrimination, and separation from their families, each of which are also components of the experience of unaccompanied refugee minors throughout the world today. The effects of this trauma on groups of displaced children have been studied by Dr. Karnik, Dr. Mina Fazel, and others, who each find that the experience of displacement and separation from family under traumatic circumstances has adverse effects on the psychosocial health of refugee children. The result of my historical analysis finds concordance with these studies because it too, shows that the forcible separation of children from their families and relocation to another country had adverse effects on the formation of child migrants and refugees’ identity formation and their senses of self. Each of the survivors who fled to France from Germany characterized the experience, of being forced to flee their home country and integrate without their parents, as traumatic.

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<sup>130</sup> Niranjan Karnik et al, “Psychopathology in African Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in Austria” *Child Psychiatry Human Development* 42 (2011): 312.

<sup>131</sup> Mina Fazel et al, “Mental health of displaced and refugee children resettled in high-income countries: risk and protective factors” *The Lancet* 379 (2012): 267-269.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

Considering this, many of the experiences of unaccompanied refugee minors today mirror those of the survivors that I examined in this project. Much can be gained from examining the historical record and learning from the experiences that are outlined here, especially as it pertains to such vulnerable populations as refugee and migrant children, who are often alone, traumatized by their repatriation experience, and reeling from familial separation. Further research that involves asking modern refugee and migrant children the same questions that I asked of the data in this project would strengthen and expand our comprehension of the social and psychological conditions faced by migrant and refugee children. With such data, it would be possible to develop preventative policies and earlier interventions.

## **Limitations and Ethical Considerations**

One of the limitations of this project is that I was not able to interview the survivors directly and ask questions that would address my research questions. Therefore, results are likely missing relevant parts of the survivors' experiences. The interviewers were thorough, but all interviewees were not asked the same questions. For example, none of the survivors were asked explicitly about how they felt their personal and religious identity changed as a result of their traumatic experiences. While some interviewers enquired about survivors' religious practices after the war, others did not. This unevenness complicated my project. Fortunately, in the majority of cases the subjects volunteered information about how their experiences affected their religious beliefs and how their religious beliefs informed their identities.

A second limitation of the project is that due to difficulties with IRB approval, I was unable to fulfil my original research plan to interview modern refugee and migrant children in France for comparative purposes. This would have offered a more direct comparison to the historical example that I analyzed.

Finally, another limitation was the time frame to complete the project. The time to familiarize myself with the Dedoose software and the sources limited the number of interviews that I analyzed and the number of common themes that I investigated with respect to identity. With an expanded timeframe, I could have discussed many more themes that emerged in the data that were relevant to the overall experience of the children, if not my specific research questions. As it was, I performed multiple rounds of analysis, adding new codes and re-coding each time. More time would have allowed me to explore social psychology and human rights literature in sociology as per Dr.

Johnson's suggestion, which would have provided other lenses through which to view my research.

## Appendix

Figure 1: Excel Descriptor Definitions Table

	A	B	C	D
1	Descriptor Names	Memo	Descriptor Type	ListData
2	ID		Number	
3	Name	First Name Last Name	Text	
4	Age in 1940	Unit is years	Text	
5	Gender		List	Female, Male
5	Places Mentioned	Locations mentioned in transcript	List	OSE Village, OSE, Le Couret, Gurs, N
7	Accession Number		Text	
3	RG Number		Text	
3	VHA Interview Code		Text	
0	Country of Origin	Place of birth	List	France, Germany, Austria, Russia
1	Fortunoff Code		Text	

Figure 2: Excel Descriptor Values Table

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
ID	Name	Country of Origin	Age in 1940	Places Mentioned	Accession Number	RG Number	VHA Interview Code	Fortunoff Code
1	Rita Ancell	Austria	9	OSE, Le Couret				1330
2	Arthur Kern	Austria	12	OSE, Montintin				3874
3	Rose-Helene Spreiregen	France	9	OSE, children's homes				45717
4	Gunther Katz	Germany	11	Gurs, OSE				19690
5	H. Henry Sinason	Germany	15	Children's homes				15686
6	Erna Florsheim	Germany	14	Gurs, Rivesaltes,				21139
7	Rafael Lewin	Russia	15	Rivesales, Gurs				27687
8	Egon Gruenhut	Germany	17	Rivesaltes, Gurs				40167
9	Kurt Greenhut	Germany	12	Rivesaltes, Gurs				10496
10	Irene Gregory	Germany	17	Gurs				22728
11	Sigi Hart	Germany	15	Le Vernet, Gurs				232
12	Eddie Willner	Germany	14	Gurs, children's homes				30082
13	Frances Jones	Germany	16	Children's homes, Chabannes				4184
14	Maya Schwartz	France	8	Montmorency, children's homes, convents				22652
15	Lucie Porges	Austria	14	Brens, Switzerland				
16	Leon Wise	France	7	Bout-Vernet, children's homes				5654
17	Micheline Marmor	France	17	Nice, OSE				24830
18	Herbert Karliner	Germany	14	OSE, children's homes				7624
19	Fred Raymes	Germany	11	Gurs, children's homes	1992.A.0125.105	RG-50.233.0105		
20	Henri B	France	14	Rivesaltes, children's homes				HVT-80

### International Policy Addendum

The rights of children have been outlined, affirmed, and ratified by every member of the United Nations except the United States in the United Nation’s 1989 “Convention on the Rights of the Child.”<sup>133</sup> The United States abstained from ratifying the convention due to concerns about sovereignty, a decision that has been questioned by child advocacy

<sup>133</sup> *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, New York, 30 November 1989, *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 1577. No. 27531, available from [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=\\_en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=_en).

groups.<sup>134</sup> Notably, the convention maintains that nations must “respect and *ensure* the rights set forth” “to each child *within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind*, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardians race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, *national, social, or ethnic origin*, property, disability, birth, or other status (Emphasis mine).”<sup>135</sup> Further, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol (Relating to the Status of Refugees) maintain that “refugees must receive the “same treatment” as nationals in primary education, and treatment at least as favorable as that given to non-refugee aliens in secondary education (art. 22).”<sup>136</sup> These agreements and protocols are clear: refugee children are entitled to the same protections and rights as children who are citizens of host countries, and it is the responsibility of nations that host refugees to ensure these rights.

The UNHCR’s “Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care” acknowledges that the right to take part in cultural life is a human right and recommends that nations that host child refugees attempt to restore cultural normalcy as an important part of ensuring the healthy and positive development of the child. These recommendations include supporting community development, encouraging refugee participation in decisions that affect them, encouraging children to maintain and practice their mother tongue, renewing religious practices, and notably, avoiding coercive attempts to impose foreign religious beliefs on children, who are vulnerable to these

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<sup>134</sup> S.C., “Why won't America ratify the UN convention on children's rights?” *The Economist*, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013, <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2013/10/06/why-wont-america-ratify-the-un-convention-on-childrens-rights>.

<sup>135</sup> *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, New York, 30 November 1989, *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 1577. No. 27531, available from [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=\\_en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=_en).

<sup>136</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care,” <https://www.unhcr.org/3b84c6c67.pdf> page 4-5.



efforts.<sup>137</sup> The UNHCR report further states that refugee children’s psychosocial wellbeing must be maintained, and state that re-establishing normalcy for unaccompanied refugee minors is essential, whether through family reunification efforts, immediate entry into school, the placement of children with foster families, or other methods. Finally, the UNHCR asserts that children who are separated from their families and who spend time in refugee camps may experience developmental disruptions that cause a range of effects from “depression, apathy, delinquent behaviour or aggressive acts to situational mental disturbances, drug abuse and suicide.”<sup>138</sup>

These potential consequences have been observed in contemporaneous refugee child populations, notably in Dr. Karnik et al.’s work with unaccompanied refugee minors in Austria. These effects for refugee children are enormous, and must be mitigated by host societies, who have a demonstrable responsibility, as shown in the UN “Convention on the Rights of the Child,” to ensure that refugee children in their country have every opportunity to develop normally and lead a happy life. This imperative has been interpreted differently across world governments according to cultural, economic, and political differences, with some countries responding more enthusiastically to providing services to refugees and migrants than others. However, in cases where nations fail to meet their obligations, the consequences are simply too high to ignore.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 17.

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