The Return and New Beginning for Hungarian Holocaust Survivors, 1945-1949

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Abstract

This thesis first examines the circumstances of Holocaust survivors' arrival back from Nazi camps to Hungary after liberation, and then investigates the most typical modes and strategies of how it was possible to begin a new life. After the mapping and presentation of the Jewish relief agencies who were waiting for deportees to return to Hungary in 1945, there is a focus on the deportees' perceptions about the welcoming and the circumstances to which they arrived to. The earliest accounts through which the deportees' impressions are studied are that of the reports recorded by workers of the National Committee of Attending Deportees (DEGOB) in 1945/6. Subsequently, after outlining the developed Jewish relief institutions functioning in Hungary –between 1946 and 1949–, the most typical coping strategies of the deportees are viewed: the (re-)establishment of families and emigration. Through an analysis of the articulations about these typical coping strategies, the unique characteristics of the group of deportees will outline, which eventually bears the significance of distuingishing this group from the entirety of Hungarian Holocaust survivors. I have reached my conclusions based on an approach of supplementing quantitative findings of the examined time period with a qualitative research at several archives based on a methodological sampling.

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I stand with CEU.

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Chapter 1.: Introduction

The return of Jewish deportees from Nazi camps to their homes meant a unique life experience with dilemmas paving the way to a new beginning. Every step and impact in this transitory period determined the afterlife of those Holocaust survivors who had not only witnessed, but lived through the unthinkable. In my paper, I am going to examine the circumstances and the perceptions of camp survivors arriving back to Hungary in order to examine what effects this experience meant in their life choices further ahead. The question whether there were explicit expectations about going back home from the liberated or displaced persons camps can only be answered with the consideration of the collective Jewish identity typical in Hungary prior to the Shoah with the combination of the inevitable change of perspective caused by the experiences of the Nazi camps.

The Jewry of Hungary is noted to be a "success story" in terms of assimilation after the first emancipation law passed in 1867. The fast process of assimilation and its results are mostly graspable by the growing number of Hungarian-speakers due to *magyarization*, the acculturation process which meant the full adoption of the Hungarian language and culture.[1] Another element of the rapid assimilation was the modernization of religious practice, which eventually led to the schism of Judaism in Hungary into Orthodox, Status Quo, and Neolog communities.[2] Based on this process of acculturation, the Hungarian Jewish assimilation fits the first stage of Milton Gordon's assimilation theory.[3] It further aligns to *structural*

[1]András Kovács, „Asszimiláció, antiszemitizmus, identitás," in *Zsidók és antiszemiták a háború utáni Magyarországon*, ed. András Kovács (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2008), 61.

[2] For an elaborate understanding on the transformation of the Jewish denominations in Hungary, see: Jacob Katz, *A House Divided: Orthodoxy and Schism in Nineteenth-Century Central European Jewry* (London: Brandeis University Press, 1998)

[3] András Kovács, „Jewish Groups and Identity Strategies in Post-Communist Hungary," in *New Jewish Identities: Contemporary Europe and Beyond* ed. Zvi Gitelman and Barry Kosmin and András Kovács (Budapest: CEU Press, 2002), 213-214.

assimilation, the second phase of the theory according to which the minority enters into regular interaction on a civic level with the given society. Eventually, the process of assimilation of the Jews of Hungary fit the theory's high level of *identificational assimilation*, which as it name implies, signifies the feeling of belonging to a nation. During the process of modernization, however, the assimilation process of the Jewry meant the appearance of a new social subgroup in the majority society against its expectation of becoming a private religious matter, or yet better, an outcome of full absorption into society.[4] Subsequently, the Hungarian Jewry became the leading actor in the process of urbanization at the turn of the 20th century[5], which also brought antisemitism forward, or rather came hand in hand[6], as it was the reaction of those layers whose status was thus threatened by the change.

The Gentile reaction, the fact that 20th-century Hungary lamented on "the Jewish question", was not in accordance with the developed identity of the majority of the Jewry in Hungary.[7] Consequently, this led to an *assimilationist dilemma* because of the developed state of feeling Hungarian but at the same time remaining Jewish in the eye of society.[8] The dilemma meant having to choose between struggling for further accomplishments in the criteria of assimilation by the Hungarian society, or reviving religious and cultural traditions to strengthen Jewish collective consciousness. This course of identity change was somewhat altered by the Holocaust in the direction of the extreme: the possibilities of alienation and dissimilation strengthened.

In my thesis, I will argue that the specific group of deportees (those who were deported to labor or concentration camps) in terms of the *assimilationist dilemma* diverted from the path

[4] Ibid.
[5] John Lukács, *Budapest 1900, A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture* (New York: Grove Press, 1988), xiii.
[6] See Arthur Ruppin, *The Jewish Fate and Future* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1940)
[7] See István Bibó, „Zsidókérdés Magyarországon 1944 után," in *Bibó István összegyűjtött írásai: Az európai politikai fejlődés értelme*, ed. István Zoltán Dénes (Budapest: Kalligram, 2016.), 944-1083
[8] Kovács, Zsidók, 60.

of assimilationist strategies on a majority level in the Hungarian setting. This is most evident by those deportees who after liberation declined repatriation, and emigrated to other countries.[9] Those survivors of camps who did decide to return to Hungary had a whole new experience ahead of themselves which inevitably had a huge effect in solving this dilemma.

After placing the subject of my inquiry into a historiographical and a methodological context, I will discuss the path of the deportees after liberation in a linear structure: first I will examine the circumstances awaiting them in Hungary (mostly in Budapest), then by following their road into Hungary, I will present the descriptions about the train stations and the modes of welcoming, with eventually discussing the circumstances in Budapest. Following their arrival in the capital, I will present the perceptions of going home, which on a majority level in Eastern Europe meant finding their old houses and apartments plundered and/or destroyed.[10] Furthermore, I will present the priority of looking for family members which similarly was an experience of despair as a very small number of Jewish families remained untouched throughout Europe, and even overseas.[11] After their passing from the borderlines of Hungary to cities, then to their old homes, in some cases to the arms of the surviving loved ones, I will examine the very first articulations of possible future plans in the midst of the return in 1945.

As a next step, I will chronologically continue in mapping the contemporary organizational circumstances in Hungary in the following years from 1946 to 1949. Subsequently, I will analyze deportees' most common coping strategies that came to surface in the immediate post-war years: starting a family and emigration. I will supplement the quantitative findings on both of the prominent coping strategies with an own qualitative

[9] According to Ildikó Barna the Hungarian Jewish displaced persons is greatly under-researched. In: Ildikó Barna, „Interdisciplinary Analysis of Hungarian Jewish Displaced Persons and Children using the ITS Digital Archives," *Freilegungen: Rebuilding Lives – Child Survivors and DP Children in the Aftermath of the Holocaust and Forced Labor* (Wallstein: International Tracing System Yearbook, 2017), 196.
[10] Viktor Karády, The Jews of Europe in the Modern Era: A Socio-Historical Outline (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), 389.
[11] Ibid., 388.

research. My aim is to present a holistic picture of the afterlife of camp survivors in Hungary with the utilization of quantitative and qualitative findings in order to grasp both of the dimensions of the collective and the individual in its connecting points.

1.2. Literature Overview

The Holocaust historiography has a wide variety of perspectives and approaches dating histories up until liberation. Dating back from the Numerus Clausus, the most elaborative research and understanding on the persecution of the Jewry in Hungary has been achieved by Randolph L. Braham. His work serving as a starting point, most historians examined widespread and specific dimensions regarding events of persecution under World War II in Hungary and Transylvania, Jewish-Gentile relationship, Jewish institutional responses to persecution, etc. mostly dealing with the historical events until late 1945. In his comprehensive two-volume study, *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary*, Braham sketches the functioning of Jewish relief agencies and the reorganizing Jewish communities found in Hungary after liberation together with the topic of restitution issues and war crimes trials prevalent at the time.[12]

Academic research of Jewish responses and identities in the post-war years have mainly come about after the end of Communism in Hungary, in 1989.[13] Realizing this gap, scholarship turned its attention towards the years precisely of this repression, on the change of Jewish identity and identification since liberation, memory politics of the era, policies of mainstream politics about the "Jewish question" under the Communist government, and so on. These years –1949 to 1989 – mark a significant period in Hungarian history that still has several questions unanswered. My thesis, therefore, would concentrate on the "forestage phase" to Communist rule in Hungary, the years of democratic recommencement in Hungary: 1945 to 1949. These

[12] Randolph L. Braham, *A népirtás politikája: A Holocaust Magyarországon* (Budapest: Belvárosi Könyvkiadó, 1997), 1244-1280.
[13] A more elaborate discussion on the reasons can be found in Viktor Karády, *Túlélők és újrakezdők* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 2002), 7-8.

four years mark a transitory period in Hungary in many respects between the end of the Second World War, 1945, and the beginning of the Hungarian People's Republic, 1949.

The aftermath of the Holocaust in Hungary has been scholarly considered in this specific timeframe, most significantly in terms of sociological works and political history. András Kovács's study on Hungarian Jewish politics highlights that the immediate post-war years is to be considered the brief golden age of Jewish politics by giving an overview of the Zionist organizations and institutions, their conflicts, and the relationship with the Communist Party.[14] Attila Novák, in his book *Átmenetben* (*In Transition*), similarly, presents the Zionist movement in the four years of 1945 to 1949 through a thorough research of its main actors and operations.[15] Ildikó Barna and Andrea Pető focus their attention on political justice in Budapest after World War II with the aim of reconsidering the people's tribunals because of its state in public memory.[16]

More specifically concentrating on social history, Tamás Stark and Viktor Karády's works present a demographic overview of the Jewish population in Hungary at the examined time period. Tamás Stark's time scope also involves the years of the Holocaust[17], while Karády's book concentrates only on the post-war era.[18] The statistics from both of the works will be of crucial significance to my thesis, as I will build up on the quantitive findings with a qualitative approach.

Further studies from a social historical point of view helped me in the directions of the research I wanted to undergo, which works include Viktória Bányai's and Eszer Gombócz's

[14]András Kovács, „Hungarian Jewish Politics from the End of the Second World War until the Collapse of Communism," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: Volume XIX: Jews and the State: Dangerous Alliances and the Perils of Privilage*, ed. Ezra Mendelssohn (Oxford University Press, 2003), 124-157.
[15] Attila Novák, *Átmenetben* (Budapest: Jövő Kiadó, 2000)
[16] Ildikó Barna and Andrea Pető, *Political Justice in Budapest after World War II* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015)
[17] Tamás Stark, *A zsidóság a vészkorszakban és a felszabadulás után, 1939-1955* (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1995)
[18] Karády, Viktor, *Túlélők és újrakezdők* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 2002)

study on children's homes and Jewish orphans in the immediate post-war years.[19] With a similar interest in Jewish Holocaust orphans, Ildikó Barna establishes socio-historic methodological outset for the research of Hungarian Jewish displaced persons and children.[20] These studies helped me understand that the 'Holocaust survivor' is a complex term and is not homogenous, it consists of several groups – people with different outcomes of surviving the Shoah –, with each research focusing on one segment to understand the history of the survivors. Therefore, I chose to zoom out to the wider perspective of both surviving adults and youngsters, however, narrowing down my examination by their lived experience. My interest lies in those Jewish survivors who were deported to concentration and labor camps and who, after liberation, chose to come back to Hungary. The group of survivors I am interested in may be based on the ideal type of "the Auschwitz survivor", nonetheless, I refrain myself from using this distinction. It might be considered a just ideal type as most of the Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz[21], however, not *all* were, and in agreement with Timothy Snyder's thesis on the Auschwitz paradox[22], I would not like to centralize the sufferings of the Shoah in the camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau alone.

I believe that a research aiming to understand the perceptions of deportees returning back to Hungary contributes to the field of history by addressing the aftermath of the Holocaust on a social level. As mentioned above, the historiography of the Holocaust marks liberation as the end point of the Holocaust. However, according to Dan Stone, liberation was not a point in time, but a process, which makes it a complex phenomenon, and has been simplified to the

[19] Viktória Bányai and Eszter Gombocz, „A traumafeldolgozás útjain – Holokauszt túlélő gyerekek Magyarországon, 1945-49," *Regio* 24, no. 2 (2016): 31-48. http://dx.doi.org/10.17355/rkkpt.v24i2.111
[20] Ildikó Barna, „Interdisciplinary Analysis," 194-207.
[21] Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Táborok könyve* (Budapest: Könyv és kávé kiadó, 2017), 647.
[22] Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (London: The Bodley Head, 2015), 207-226.

point that it is considered "the happy end of the Shoah".[23] Stone's initiative to understand liberation better on a social level aims to lead to the unfolding of the postwar years in Europe.[24]

Therefore, adding to the scholarly work already conducted in understanding the demographic changes, political changes, and institutional developments in the post-war years in Hungary, I will be exploring the circumstances and the perceptions of deportees' return and afterlife. Subsequently to the organizational and institutional mapping of Jewish relief agencies in Hungary based on archival research and Rita Horváth's detailed study of the main organization to attend to deportees[25], I wish to present my findings on the grounds of social historical inquiry. I aim to present a work where voicing the personal stories of the survivors brings forth the understanding that the deportees returning back to Hungary consist of a unique collective. This emphasis on the division aims to direct scholarly attention towards the genuine characteristics of the deportees as on a majority level their outsets and fates altered from the survivors of Budapest, for instance. Moreover, after presenting the demographics of the Jewish population in Hungary post-1945, with this paper's qualitative approach, the specifics of the group of deportees will become more outlined. The first section aims to add the dimension of a qualitative research to the existing quantitative findings by Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági on the earliest interviews with deportees from 1945-6.[26] In the next section, a similar approach will be implemented for the examination of the deportees' coping strategies in the years of 1946-9 in the light of the statistical findings mainly by Karády, and Stark.

[23] Dan Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (London: Yale University Press, 2015), 2.
[24] Ibid., 3.
[25] Rita Horváth, „A Magyarországi Zsidók Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottsága (DEGOB) története", *MAKOR (Magyar Zsidó Levéltári Füzetek)* no 1, (Summer 1997): 11-63.
[26] Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, Társadalmi Konfliktusok Kutatóközpont, "Hazatérés és kivándorlás," accessed 30 May 2018, http://konfliktuskutato.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=287:hazateres-es-kivandorlas&catid=34:tulelesi-strategiak

1.3. Framework and methodology

As a basis of a social history of the Jews, I am going to follow the so-called "Jerusalem school", an approach distinguished by Jacob Katz. Max Weber's understanding of the Jewish social status is that of a *pariah people*, an outcast group whose social attitude is based on this experience.[27] For this reason does Jacob Katz dwell on the question of what the unifying unit could be for diaspora Jews, therefore, sees social history the most suitable form of understanding a Jewish community at a given time. Katz states that there is no common ground for Jews in several diasporas, such as one common body of politics, therefore the groups have to be specifically defined to circumscribe the Jewish collective. Consequently, the Jewish people are to be treated as "a status group" and not a class defined economically, but by socio-cultural interaction. Therefore, the status group my paper examines is deportees returning back to Hungary after liberation in 1945-6. I will further base my inquiry on the Jewish collective based on their coping strategies until 1949.

Methodologically, Katz distinguishes the modes of research and historiography of social history based on Weber's ideal type and underlines the importance of *generalization*.[28] He states that ignoring the details is the first step towards abstraction, which is the base for social history. He brings forth the critical argument that the "art of generalization" raises the question of presenting reality and how sources are of "blind chance", but it is still the right method because each society has its own norms which serve as a model for the individual. Therefore, the actual task of the social historian is to find the norm of a given society as a criterion for study. The methodological problem of such a research is not the task of knowing

[27] Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism* (Illinois: Free Press, 1967.), 3-5.
[28] Jacob Katz, "The Concept of Social History and its Possible Use in Jewish Historical Research", *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 3 (1955): 292-312.

all the individuals in the examined society, but to screen the factors which are representative. However, since researching and analyzing the whole group of Hungarian Jewish survivors in its totality for representative values would be rather difficult to undergo (and would most probably exceed the limitations of this thesis), I am examining only a sample, which is a fragment of the whole group. Nonetheless, based on the chosen methodology – discussed below –, I am presenting my research on the presumption that the achieved sample contains the most typical characetirstics of the examined group. I have reached a sampling of over four hundred interviews conducted with deportees from 1945-6, forty-five audiovisual interviews from the 1990s and early 2000s, with a cross check of thirty-eight results of personal files of those emigrating from Hungary.

Furthermore, Katz rules the focus of unique events out, claiming that only generalizations, namely repeated events are to be examined.[29] Consequently, in my research of Holocaust survivors' coping strategies, I will not put emphasis on individual and outstanding cases, but I will look at the general and most common choices and plans the survivors had once arriving back to Hungary. Furthermore, I will use direct quotes from the testimonies only which represent a general point or approach to the discussed perception or coping strategy.

In my paper, I will be addressing some very typical female experiences on the note of the deportees' coping strategies regarding family structures. Therefore, I find it important to note that I am taking the gender perspective in Holocaust historiography into consideration. In recent scholarship, gendering the Holocaust can be of controversy and might endure the negative interpretation of equality-differences, namely, that highlighting female suffering takes attention away from male suffering.[30] Since I agree with the importance of gender equality, my paper will be reflective of the male experience too, even in the specifically "female"

[29] Ibid., 292-300.
[30] "Introduction," *Women and the Holocaust: New Perspectives and Challenges*, ed. Andrea Pető and Louise Hecht and Karolina Krasuska (Warsaw: IBL PAN, 2015.), 14-15.

examination of miscarriages. The first possible point of male inclusion in the discussed topic was not excluding the accounts of men when searching through testimonies of Holocaust survivors discussing the topic of failed pregnancies. Secondly, I will not be debating the pain of the mother against the father when discussing the occurrences of having lost a child.

Moreover, in the research and discussion of female experiences in the Holocaust, the female perception of the events (miscarriages) will be based on the "sequential framework" by Lenore J. Weitzman and Dalia Ofer.[31] This model concentrates on the continuity of events and reactions caused by the Holocaust in a timely manner – in my interpretation, as if looking at the "longue durée" of female experience. Understanding the corporeal and psychological effects of miscarriages through this framework, allows the consideration of reproductive problems in a sequential sense, i.e. that it is not only characteristic of the female experience during the Holocaust statically, in singular point(s) of time ending with the time limit of 1945, but as a possible continuation even in the post-war period.

Finally, I find it important to approach the primary sources of my inquiry – the survivor testimonials – on a critical note. Based on theoretical works on the methodology of oral history, I will take source criticism into account. My thesis will be based on the earliest typed survivor accounts available through the Hungarian Jewish Archives called the DEGOB[32] from 1945-6 and audiovisual testimonies by the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archives (VHA).

First, it is important to note the rudimentary nature of the DEGOB reports. The process itself was initiated by the workers of DEGOB, who while attending deportees asked them about their experiences and typed the responses synchronically. Presumably a more structured questionnaire evolved after the first recordings, however the questions to be asked and the answers noted most probably also depended on the interviewer and his interests or

[31] Lenore J. Weitzman and Dalia Ofer, „The Sequential Development," in *Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Andrea Pető and Louise Hecht and Karolina Krasuska (Warsaw: IBL PAN, 2015.): 27-64.
[32] Hungarian abbreviation for National Committee of Attending Deportees.

circumstances while typing the accounts.[33] Gábor Murányi, one of the first researchers of the archival documents, reconstructed the questionnaire and also tested credibility, which process made the typed testimonies valid and usable primary sources. The only questionable issue regarding the DEGOB files relates to survivors' answers regarding their future plans. As the articulation of future plans is the main scope of my research, I find it important to note that the credibility of the reports in the specific question of migration is challenged. According to Murányi, there might be some kind of a political manipulation included in the testimonials when looking at the 78.7% common answers of aiming to move to Palestine. [34] However, Rita Horváth, other significant researcher of the DEGOB archival material, claims that emigrational manipulation cannot be concluded, nor proved to be the case.[35] In my discussion on emigration, I will return to this question and add my view based on my findings concerning the coping strategy of emigration.

In order to further support the credibility of the accounts in the DEGOB reports, I have conducted an additional research on their respondents at the Archives of the International Tracing System (ITS) in Bad Arolsen, Germany. I searched for the deportees who had conducted the interviews at the DEGOB offices in 1945/6 based on their names, dates and places of birth, which full list I have received from the Hungarian Jewish Archives. This resulted in a match of thirty-eight persons, whose documents were most commonly trace documentations by the Red Cross, and in some cases photographical personal files by the International Refugee Organization. The found records mainly prove the intention of emigration in those reports to be true, but in some cases the actual destination of emigration varies. I will touch upon this phenomenon based on deportee behavior in the relevant chapter.

[33] Gábor Murányi, „Volna lelke egy zsidó társát kihagyni ebből a mókából?" *Múlt és Jövő* 3, (1991): 44.
[34] Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, „Hazatérés és kivándorlás"
[35] Ibid.

A similar critical approach is included in my research when looking at the video testimonials from the Shoah Archives. I find it important to note the time difference of the conducted interviews. The survivors' accounts were videotaped during the 1990s or early 2000s (very small number at the end of the 1980s), therefore the elements of memory and remembrance might present themselves problematic in the passing of over forty-five years. Considering the fact that the speaker is inevitably embedded in the social matrix of the time of speaking – which in case of the VHA interviews adds up to the current state of memory of politics at the end of the twentieth century – speaking about memories adds the "possibility of distorions influenced by subsequent changes in values and norms, which may perhaps quite unconsciously alter perceptions."[36] Considering this chance of alteration, I will implement the the sources of VHA mainly as an additional layer to back up the accounts from 1945/6. Subsequently, the added value of reliability for the accounts strengthens because of their audiovisual form, which is more accurate and trustworthy than a purely written record.[37] The blended use of oral history sources – in terms of form and timing of the recordings –, enables the selection of the typical and common events in the studied time and space.

Moreover, to view some typical responses about circumstances and coping strategies, I have considered the published diary of a deportee who kept track of the events of liberation, the way back home, the arrival in Hungary, as well as the first experiences of restarting life until 1946. On a critical note, written and published testimonies bear the problem of performativity because the writer knows that the writing will have its audience.[38] Source criticism regarding this aspect would be invalid as the text is a personal diary, but the editors of the publication disclose the fact that the author of the diary retyped the whole text, with the

[36] Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 128-129.
[37]Ibid., 126.
[38] Ibid., 118-120

possible knowledge of a later publication.[39] Nonetheless, I have only consulted the diary in crucial sections, where both DEGOB and VHA accounts did not suffice in terms of expression, or in cases where I aimed to describe a typical perception in a well-written mode as a quote.

I filtered my search in both of the databases of survivor testimonies based on several indexing terms, which overall resulted in four hundred and twenty-five DEGOB reports and forty-five audiovisual testimonies. For a more systematic and orderly understanding of my grouped results, I will present the specific search terms in the introduction of the relevant sections. In order to filter and present the *typical*, I gathered the information in an excel file for an easier screening of the majority responses. There is a division among two sets of DEGOB reports: the general group where I was looking for information on the circumstances and experiences of the return to Hungary together with articulations of future plans, and the emigration group, in which I separated those reports which only mention going to Palestine as a future reference, none more. The response-categories on which I based my inquiry of the general group with a result of one hundred and thirteen applicable responses were the following: place of residence before deportation, camp(s) deported to, first Hungarian train stop coming back, circumstances there, other mentioned train stops in Hungary, circumstances there, first stop in Budapest, circumstances and welcoming there, further train stops after Hungary, any deceased in the family, state of properties and homes, Gentile interactions, future plans, Czech positive experience, quotes, ITS match, VHA match, other information, and their personal data (out of which, for the purposes of personal rights, I will only be using first names in this thesis).

[39] Heléna Huhák and András Szécsényi, „Bevezető," in *Lágerutazás: Holländer Margit feljegyzései a vészkorszakról és az újrakezdésről (1945-1946)*, ed. Heléna Huhák and András Szécsényi (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2017), 8.

Chapter 2.: The Return

In order to grasp a fuller picture of the arrival of deportees in Hungary from Nazi camps, I find it important to map the relief organizations already present in Hungary by 1945. One of the most prominent institutions was the National Committee for Attending Deportees (hereafter DEGOB, following the Hungarian abbreviation), whose history, modes, and places of operation will be presented in this chapter. Thereafter, reactive perceptions of the received support will be presented based on the testimonies given by deportees at the offices of DEGOB. Moreover, I will present a focus of interest in the DEGOB questionnaire, respectively, the inquiry about the deportees' future plans.

The voices of Jewish survivors give a more personal and lively description of the arrival, the circumstances of which will be viewed from a linear perspective. Understanding the earliest perceptions of the arriving deportees will show how this specific group of Hungarian Jews, on a majority level, after the shock of camp life yearned to come back home and were able to reintegrate into society or whether the circumstances of arrival rather strengthened estrangement, up to the point of considering dissimilation. Naturally, if the inclination towards dissimilating from the Hungarian society had been present at the outset, the majority of the Jewish survivors liberated outside of Hungary would not have returned. I wish to show the growing tendency of estrangement based on the deportees' route of coming "home", by presenting the circumstances at train stops by Hungarian border crossings, in Budapest, by the old homes and upon meeting the neighbors, and, finally, by the first articulation of thinking about the future. Following step by step the path of the deportee arriving home will provide a close-up view to their perceptions, and eventually to the development of their coping strategies for a new beginning.

2.1. Organizational Background at Work

The Jewish survivors who were not deported and survived the Shoah living in a ghetto, in the yellow-star houses of Budapest, or in hiding were the first group to react to those taken away. Power and instinct to regain consciousness after liberation and to start helping those in need—especially by attending deportees coming back from Nazi camps to Hungary—had come to mind immediately at the moment of surfacing as József Pásztor writes:

> It begins when masses come to the surface from the basement dens, from the hiding of the air-raid trenches and the bolt-holes. … Over the sight of the horrible, the ruins of houses, the unburied corpses laying in the streets and courtyards—the first thought was to look around, who is still there and who is missing. To determine the number, if there is a number, of how many of us survived. What happened to our relatives, the elderly and the children, our husbands and wives, who had been violently torn apart, what happened to our once cozy home.[40]

Pásztor, who later became the secretary of DEGOB, in these lines perfectly exhibits the willpower of those Jewish survivors who remained in Budapest, who had not been deported, and whose only wish once the bombings were over was to find their remaining Jewish brethren.

Such a response of rushing to give a helping hand culminated in an organized establishment that helped deportees who returned in terrible physical and mental shape to Hungary, as well as to those deportees who were still stuck abroad. The first committee attending to Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, DEGOB was established in March 1945[41] and financed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (hereafter "Joint" or AJDC).[42] The Joint had been operating for the aid of the Jewish masses already before the Second World War. During the war, Joint joined their forces with the Jewish Agency in order to save the physical existence of the persecuted European Jewry, including that of Hungary.[43] Initially,

[40] Rita Horváth, „A (DEGOB) története", 19-20., originally quoted in Hungarian, own translation.
[41] Tamás Stark, *Zsidóság*, 48–49.
[42] Randolph L. Braham., *A népirtás politikája*, 1252.
[43] Hungarian Jewish Archives (hereafter HJA), XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a-2, Folder 15: Studies and notes related to the Jewry of Hungary, Typescript of *The Objectives of Jewish Organizations and the Modes of the Social Tasks of the Jewry of Hungary*, 5.

AJDC, the American branch, transferred financial aid through the Budapest Delegation of the International Red Cross (due to the military situation, transmissions of cash to Hungary were possible only through Switzerland).[44] Besides financial aid, food and medical supplies began to arrive in Hungary by early 1945 from the United States.[45] Collaboration between relief agencies attending to all Jewish survivors was most probably effortless because of the urgency of the situation. Moreover, due to the slow development of an organizational system, including paper shortages, minute-by-minute sources of documentation are unavailable regarding the collaboration between aid organizations. Consequently, Jewish relief organizations in Hungary cannot be clearly delineated, whose transparency is further complicated by the fact that they share the same elements and officials in their directorates.[46] Eventually, the official Hungarian Joint office with a committee of twelve leaders was established in Budapest in June 1945.[47] Soon after, on 31 August, the National Jewish Aid Organization (hereafter OZSSB[48]) effectively took over the operation of DEGOB, but the name and tasks remained.[49] Next to DEGOB, in the immediate post-war period, the Red Cross was present in the country attending to the arriving deportees at arrival points as well. DEGOB, however, served as a "center for arrival" and a large number of returning deportees visited their main office in Bethlen Square. According to the statistical data by the committee, in 1945 82,144 deportees went to DEGOB offices, with an additional 1187 in 1946.[50]

The three main tasks of the organization were to offer aid to the recently arrived deportees, documentation of all obtained information, and sending expeditions to previous concentration and displaced persons camps in order to bring back survivors to Hungary (by the

[44] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a-1, Folder 1: Typescript of *The Declaration of AJDC and the Leaders of the Pest Israelite Congregation*
[45] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a-2, Folder 9: Typescript of the *Documents of Jewish Healthcare and Medical Work in Europe* from the Paris conference, 1948
[46] Horváth, „A DEGOB története", 12.
[47] Braham, *A népirtás politikája*, 1251.
[48] Based on the original Hungarian acronym: Országos Zsidó Segítő Bizottság.
[49] Horváth, „A DEGOB története", 14-15.
[50] Ibid., 25.

end of 1945, already 26 expeditions were initiated and thousands of survivors were brought back[51]). The importance of documentation was multifold: it aimed to record the personal experiences of the deportees, but it also intertwined with the task of bringing survivors back home by obtaining and providing information about lost relatives. Lists of Hungarian displaced persons and the deceased were gathered from the expeditions, which was supplemented by the returning deportees bringing registers of names with them to Budapest from the DP camps.

By July 1945, such a huge amount of information was gathered that the head office of DEGOB on Bethlen Square was not able to hold data provision by itself, therefore a newspaper was launched by DEGOB under the title *News About the Deportees* (*Hírek az elhurcoltakról*). Clerks of DEGOB were also determined to advocate for more help to bring back Hungarian survivors to the country by pestering Hungarian ministry officials Sándor Millok and Mihály Farkas.[52] Although there was official communication regarding the repatriation of Jewish deportees by the foreign minister János Gyöngyösi in the spring of 1945, actual steps of action were not taken until August by which time the majority had already returned to Hungary by private or illegal means.[53] The governmental committee responsible for returning its citizens to the country led by Millok was rather engaged in the exploration of prisoners of war in the West and banished civilians.[54]

[51] Braham, *A népirtás politikája*, 1252.
[52] Horváth, „A DEGOB története", 28.
[53] According to DEGOB testimonies, many of the survivors came on trains on which other nations' displaced persons were allowed by lying about their nationality, or by cars based on favors, or in some cases even on foot.
[54] Stark, *Zsidóság*, 50.

Figure 1 The branch office/transitory room set up by the Ministry of Welfare at Keleti railway station for returning prisoners of war, refugees, and deportees. Photo by Tibor Bass, 2 June 1947

As the photograph shows (Figure 1), the Ministry of Welfare set up transitory rooms at railway stations for those arriving back to Hungary in 1947. By this time, the vast majority of the deportees from Nazi and DP camps arrived back. Therefore, the crucial duty of immediately attending deportees was truly that of the DEGOB. Employees of DEGOB were also present at several train stops in order to provide medical first aid, nourishment, money, clothes, etc. They offered further transport for those travelling to Budapest's main train stations, and invited those in need to the hospitals, homes, and/or soup kitchens established and financed by the Jewish aid organizations within Budapest.

According to the official reporting of DEGOB about their work in 1945, initially organizing for the care of the returned deportees was rather sparse, as there were not enough shelters to accommodate them, hospitals to for proper healthcare, and in many instances the

welcoming was not "ceremonial".[55] The authors of the report ashamedly admit to not have been able to accommodate everyone arriving back, therefore it happened that the newly arrived deportees had to sleep in the halls, on the floors, and in the court (next to the ghetto graves) of the main DEGOB office. Therefore, DEGOB organized shelter and care in several sanatoriums, schools, and boarding houses as transitory homing for those deportees who could not go home immediately, or had no homes anymore. DEGOB tried to provide cars for transportation to these different locations as well, however, according to several testimonies, not all deportees were taken by car and many had to walk to get to different points in Budapest. To illustrate the distances, I pinned the locations set up for deportees by DEGOB[56] on a 1945 map of Budapest with an indication of how many kilometers those distances counted for from Nyugati railway station (air distances, that is, the routes were actually longer considering the layout of the city, streets, etc.).

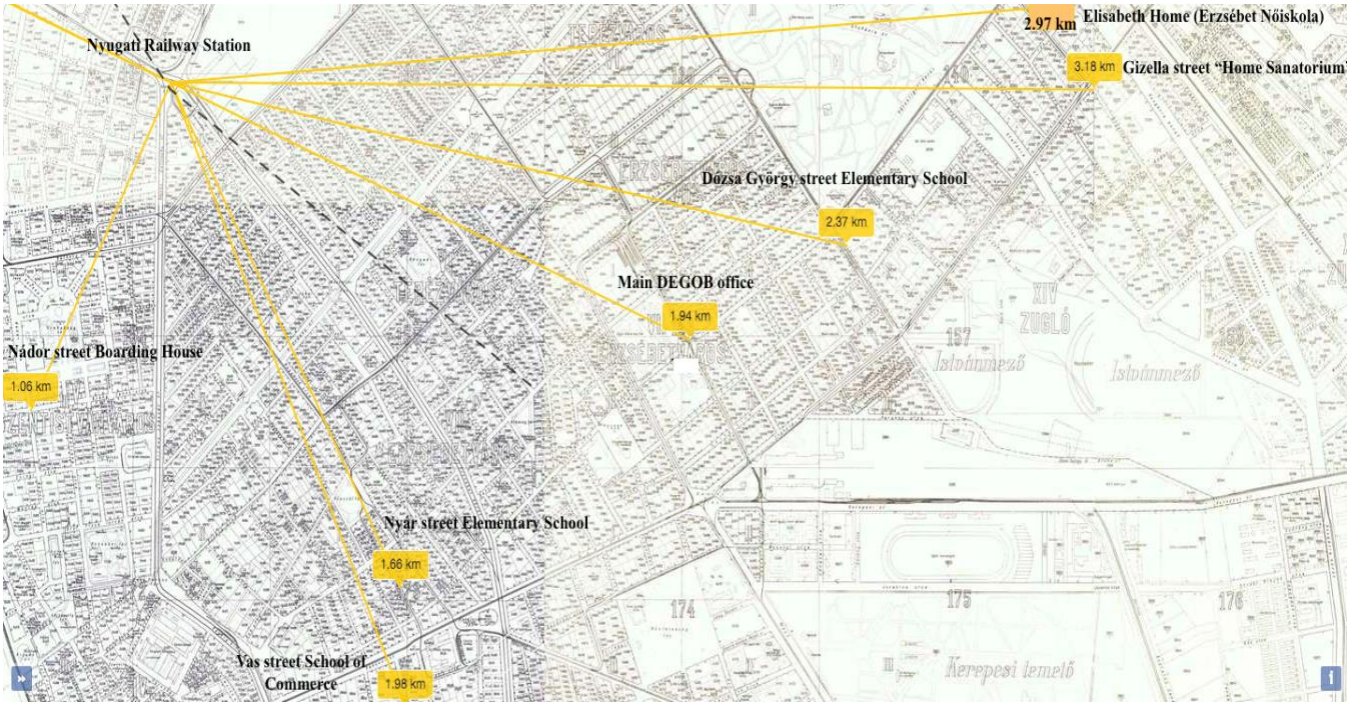


Figure 2 Distances for deportees from Nyugati railway station. Source of the map: www.mapire.eu (Budapest közigazgatási térképsorozata, 1945) with own markers

[55] „Jelentés a Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság és Országos Zsidó Segítő Bizottság budapesti Segélyezési Osztályának munkájáról," Hungaricana: digitalized from The Hungarian Jewish Archives, accessed 4 June 2018, https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/mioi_segelyszervezetek_degob_jelentes_1946/?pg=5&layout=s

[56] Based on the same DEGOB report.

As of one of DEGOB's main tasks of documentation, the employees in their offices recorded reports about survivor testimonies based on the interviews they had conducted when attending deportees. Besides some exceptions of earlier reports[57], the majority of the gathered accounts are from survivors who had just arrived from deportation, labor camp, or had been hiding. József Pásztor's account about the first group of survivors in Budapest gives an vivid image of the arrival:

> On Bethlen Square and in Síp Street, they have started gathering data in unheated rooms, but with a warm heart and soul, hungry, but still with amazing stamina, without printed paper, with incipient tools, but led by the gentlest sentiments. The first men from labor service have appeared in rags, with shrunken bodies, all ill. They bring hope and hopelessness. A few deportees are also appearing, who had stayed behind on the road, had fled, and outbraved thousands of dangerous occasions and the adversities of weather conditions to somehow drag themselves all the way back here.[58]

Although this account might seem romantic initially in its word use, the depiction of the people standing in front of the committee reveals a shocking and unprecedented sight reasonably calling for an emotional reaction. According to most of the testimonies given by survivors coming from camps, they lost extreme weight, men were below 40–50 kilograms and women even less.[59] The newly arisen and unseen precedent of people coming back to Hungary from Nazi camps was intended to be recorded, undoubtedly in order to create a historical database of accounts and memories of the Shoah.

According to Gábor Murányi, historian who studied DEGOB reports extensively, the structure of the questionnaire had not been fixed initially, and systematic headings of information and questions are rather common for reports created after April 1945. He argues that the flow, the length, and the quality of information strongly depended on the interviewer,

[57] The (historical) demand to record the confessions and memories of the Shoah by DEGOB already started in 1944, when the first report was written in the Swiss vice-consul Glass House in Budapest (report nr. 3659). In Horváth, „A DEGOB története", 43.
[58] Ibid., 43-44., Own translation.
[59] Some examples: HJA, DEGOB, Ödön István V., report 39, accessed 10 May 2018.; HJA, DEGOB, Ödön S., report 727, accessed 10 May 2018.; HJA, DEGOB, Dr. Árminné Gy., report 1112, accessed 10 May 2018.

and out of the twenty-two reporters only five or six of them did a thorough job.[60] The historian reconstructed the "prototype" of the perfect questionnaire, whose main sections were: 1) an overview of the Jewish community prior to persecution, 2) the circumstances of compression into ghettos, 3) deportation from Hungary, 4) arrival to the camps, 5) life and work in the camps, 6) evacuation, 7) stages after evacuation, 8) liberation, 8) circumstances of DP camps, 9) the journey back home, and the final questions in the last section were: "How do you imagine your future, do you have any plans?" and "Where do you want to realize these plans?"[61] As mentioned above, my interest lies precisely in the last questions, the circumstances of arrival back to Hungary, and what the deportees had in mind at the very moment of the arrival in order to map and reconstruct perceptions of Jewish survivors in Hungary after having lived through the unthinkable.

In this last section of the questionnaire, some depictions of the return are given by DEGOB interviewees, which perceptions I will present below. Since the main focus of this section was questioning future plans, most of the reports lack answers about the experiences of arriving back to Hungary. According to a research conducted on the DEGOB database by Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, the reporters must have left out asking these questions from the deportees because of timing issues.[62]

2.2. Perceptions of the Arrival

The total number of DEGOB reports is unclear, most probably there are between 3500 and 4000 accounts.[63] In my examination, I have consulted over 300 accounts out of which 113 contained information regarding my inquiry. I have excluded reports that either finish with the event of liberation and do not give any further information; whose subject did not arrive from

[60] Gábor Murányi, „Volna lelke egy zsidó társát kihagyni ebből a mókából?", 46.
[61] Ibid., 50-53.
[62] Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, "Hazatérés és kivándorlás"
[63] „The protocols", DEGOB: Recollections on the Holocaust – The world's most extensive testimonial site, accessed May 10, 2018, http://degob.org/index.php?showarticle=201

a camp, but was in hiding during the years of the war; or only mentions Palestine to the last question.[64] I did not consider the accounts where emigrating to Palestine is the only information given post-liberation in the general understanding of the circumstances of arrival to Hungary because it does not give an actual insight into the survivor's perception, nor does it elaborate on reasons for such a future plan and would only lead to speculation. I will, however, use the responses of survivors who only answered the last question as to wishing to emigrate in order to react to the Hungarian scholarship discussing emigration (especially to Palestine/Israel) as a coping strategy of Holocaust survivors. Furthermore, I will extend the scope of this examination with a cross-check of other archival material on emigrating survivors in the subchapter 3.2.1. "Emigration" under my next chapter, "New Beginnings".

In some cases, the DEGOB reports are not typed in the Hungarian language, but about 20% in German/Yiddish,[65] which I have also incorporated into my research. All in all, even if 300+ reports count to a 10% of representative value considering the whole database, I believe my case study will offer new insights into the understanding of Jewish deportees in immediate post-Holocaust Hungary because of the search methodology I have adopted. My research aiming to find broader descriptions on the circumstances of arrival and possible future plans was based on a specific keyword search. I looked for accounts under the terms "*hazatérés*" (arrival home), "DEGOB," "*fogadtatás*" (welcoming), "*itthon*" (home), "Nyugati pályaudvar" (the Western railway station in Budapest), "Kelenföld" (another railway station in the border of Budapest), "Miskolc" (a Hungarian city), "Joint," "*szomszéd*" (neighbor), and "Pozsony" (the Hungarian name for Bratislava). Five indexing terms—"arrival," "welcoming," "DEGOB," "Joint," and "home"—were the most obvious ones to find information on the experience of arrival, from which the arrival stations most commonly mentioned by survivors

[64] Most of these sections read as follows: „Future plans: Palestine" („Jövő terveim: Palesztina!")
[65] According to Murányi the reports are in German, however, having read through some of them, I am convinced that they are accounts of Yiddish-speaking Hungary-born survivors.

started to outline: Nyugati Railway Station and the Kelenföld train stop. As a result, besides the two main references, I did another search for the other main railway stations in Budapest, Déli pályaudvar and Keleti pályaudvar, but have only found results about them as the stations of deportation and departure from Hungary, or in the case of Keleti Railway Station, it was also one of the sites of labor service before 1945. I have searched for Miskolc and Pozsony because out of the first expressive accounts about the arrivals back to Hungary, these two cities were mentioned the most. I searched for reports containing the word "neighbor," looking for the possibly first interaction with Gentiles back in Hungary after having arrived back to Hungary. Finally, I have to note that there were other indexing terms I have applied in my research, such as "*Hírek az elhurcoltakról*" (the title of the newspaper listing names of deportees, *News About the Deportees*) and "*elhurcoltakról*" (a section of the title of the same paper) to find any additional information about the modes of looking for lost loved ones, unfortunately, without any results.

2.2.1. Stepping into Hungary

Going back home from the liberated camps was never an immediate and simple choice, in most cases the survivors were under the supervision of the English, American, or Russian troops and rabbis, and/or expedition groups.[66] Even those survivors who were "free" could not depart immediately after liberation because of their state of physical and mental health. The first road for the majority of the liberated deportees led to a nearby hospital, a DP camp, or to unoccupied properties to gain enough strength to prepare for a longer journey back home. In several instances, the sensation of belonging kept the survivors in a group together, occupying some estate in a foreign land.[67] Since the regions of Europe where the labor and concentration

[66] A newly developed system of supervision and control or direction of the people came to the surface, one of the most elaborate descriptions is given by Holocaust survivor Margit Holländer in *Lágerutazás*, 101-117.
[67] For example, Ilona G. and Katalin K. both tell the story of them living for weeks in a villa in Borken with tens of other survivors: Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, (hereafter: VHA USC) Katalin K., interview 50273, segments 166-174, 1999, accessed 14 May 2018.; VHA USC, Ilona G., interview 50284, segments 220-227, 1999, accessed 14 May 2018.

camps had been functioning were mostly struck and destroyed by the war, trains were not regularly running and transportation to Hungary could last up to days, if not weeks.

The route back home also depended on where home was for the returning survivor, the capital or another city in the provinces, a smaller town or a village in the countryside. Considering the Hungarian railway network, it is clear however, that Budapest is the central

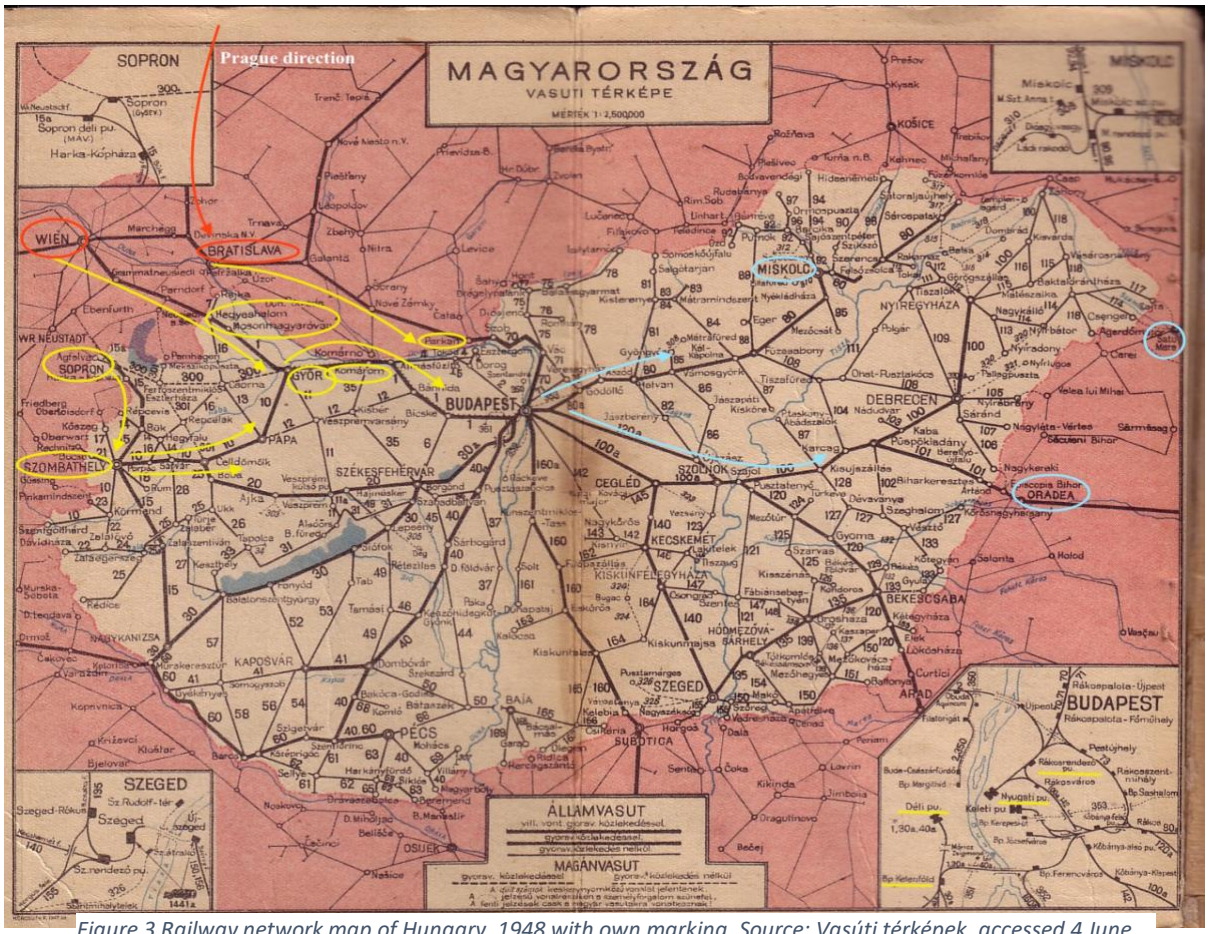


Figure 3 Railway network map of Hungary, 1948 with own marking. Source: Vasúti térképek, accessed 4 June 2018, http://www.vasutallomasok.hu/terk/mav1948.jpg

transit [illegible]ore those going to, for example, the North-Eastern part (e.g. Debrecen, Nyírbátor, Miskolc) most probably had to cross Budapest. Even if this aspect is not dwelled upon by the survivors themselves when talking about their first arrival to the country, it surely explains why most of them are still in Budapest in late 1945 or even in 1946, how their first way led to the capital instead of their hometown.

As the map indicates, those arriving from the direction of the north came through Prague and their first "Hungarian experience" was in the train station of Pozsony (Bratislava, which in

1945 politically was not a Hungarian city anymore, however, considered Hungarian in the sense that Hungarian-speaking people went to receive the arriving deportees). According to all of the accounts describing the train station of Pozsony, there was organized assistance waiting for the arriving survivors, in some cases with hot meals from a Jewish soup kitchen and 500 pengős[68], in other cases, only with some bread and black coffee. The impressions as to the welcoming of Pozsony vary from disappointed to grateful tones, which sensations most probably depended on the "richness" of the provided goods. In some cases, the manner of welcoming is also mentioned, however, some said the attendants were awfully rude and only gave information upon constantly having to raise questions, while others claimed the reception to be decent. Conclusions as to why the perceptions of Pozsony differ cannot be drawn since there is no common marker: the interviewees' age, gender, experience of liberation, and departure vary.

There is one—not demographical—important difference to note. Those stopping at Pozsony came through Prague, which can easily be considered one of the most hospitable environments to Jewish deportees on the move. A very high number of interviewees remember their halt at Prague fondly. About 80% of the examined testimonies refer to the Czech welcoming being outstanding at the train stations and in the city as well. Women recount how they were given clothes by by-passers on the streets, and general attentiveness was present all over the city: "The attitude of the Czech population to us was appealing. For example, on trams, no one would get on until the deportees would, they usually showed their affection and sympathy in every way possible."[69] It is not surprising, therefore, that several of the respondents to the DEGOB interviews, when asked what their future plans were, considered Prague as their ideal destination of emigration. One could argue that Pozsony was thus regarded as less friendly

[68] One kilogram of flour was worth 100 pengős. See: Jenő Heltai, *Négy fal között: Naplójegyzetek 1944-1945*, ed. Zsuzsanna Tamás (Budapest: Magvető kiadó, 2017), 509.
Figure 1: „Railway Map of Hungary from 1948 from MÁV official scedule book," *Railway Maps*, accessed 4 June 2018, http://www.vasutallomasok.hu/terk/mav1948.jpg
[69] HJA, DEGOB, Lucia Sz., report 3495, accessed 14 May, 2018.

by the returning deportees, relative to their prior experience in Prague. Nonetheless, Pozsony was an important and possibly a larger waiting point, constantly set up by the Red Cross and/or Joint.[70]

The other most commonly named first stop in Hungary is Sopron. The deportees arriving first to Sopron unanimously referred to the Joint gently welcoming them at the train station, distributing food, travel expenses, and even providing assistance in arranging identification documents. The trains running into the Sopron train station came from the direction of Vienna. Similar to Prague, Vienna is considered extraordinary in the perception of its welcoming. Besides mentioning the received bread and dripping (fat), coffee, and cigarettes, testimonies agree on the kindness of the volunteers providing aliment. Although those coming to Hungary through Vienna had similarly positive encounters in the Austrian setting, a difference can be noted for the reason of similarly feeling warmly welcomed in Sopron: the survivors were attended only on the trains or platforms in Vienna, and, according to my findings, they did not leave the station in order to go into the city. This would seem plausible as Budapest is somewhat above 200 kilometers from Vienna, thus it was most certainly one line, just as it is today, consequently, those already in Vienna on the railroad had a higher chance of proceeding forward to Budapest uninterruptedly than those coming from Prague.

The "Czech experience" signifies *interaction* which was manifold in the sense that food was not only passed onto the wagons for the deportees or distributed on the platforms as at many other stations, but the deportees were invited to meals, and even asked questions in order to take part in conversations. This is a very significant point of change in the perception of Jewish survivors coming from Nazi camps, as for those coming through Prague, this was the first instance of socially engaging with others besides camp inmates. The significance of this

[70] According to a more detailed testimony, the Joint in Bratislava paid 500 Czech korunas, and additional 200 after every third day spent under their care.

event can be grasped by the high-spirited mode of a narrative, for example: "At every Czech station the local branch of the Red Cross welcomed us like big (important) guests. When our train arrived, young girls came to inquire whether there were deportees onboard. They made us get off, dined us in a gentlemanly manner, made us tell our stories, and promised solemnly that all of our grievances will be revenged, they know what it is to suffer from the Germans."[71] This testimony shows a difference in approach, how the deportees not only received the sensation of sympathy, but could share a kind of commonness with other people. Without commenting on the content of the reported speech (as it could open a whole discussion on the topic of "Jewish revenge"), it must be carefully noted that such an approach and rhetoric must have meant much more emotionally to the returning deportees at this specific time period.

Those arriving from the northern direction, most commonly noted the reception by the Joint at the Komárom train station, where hot meals were served (although the soup was said to taste terribly[72]). More interestingly though, in Komárom there is an account of the local Jewish community waiting for Jewish survivors to arrive on trains and were hosted with additional meals on private means. Similarly, the Jewish communities of Nagyvárad, Máramarossziget, and Miskolc were waiting at train stations for the deportees and greeted them warmly, distributed bread and money among them. A more detailed report even names two figures from the Nagyvárad Jewish community, Oszkár Dávid and Rezső Fischer. Oszkár Dávid is the Jewish survivor from Nagyvárad whose story is told by Randolph L. Braham in history of *Genocide and Retribution*,[73] and Rezső Fischer is probably the active Jewish politician from Transylvania mentioned in the *Hungarian Jewish Encyclopedia*.[74] According to this testimony, they represented the Jewish community of Hungarian-speaking Transylvania and greeted them

[71] HJA DEGOB, Elli S., report 3554, accessed 14 May, 2018.
[72] HJA DEGOB, Magda P. and Gyuláné B., report 1878, accessed 14 May 2018.
[73] Randolph L. Braham, *Genocide and Retribution: The Holocaust in Hungarian-Ruled Northern Transylvania* (Kluwer Nijhoff Publishing, 1983), 97-99.
[74] Péter Újvári, ed., *Magyar Zsidó Lexikon* (Budapest: Makkabi Kiadó, 1929), 712, http://mek-oszk.uz.ua/04000/04093/html/0720.html

warmly by providing meal-tickets, 1000 Lei per person, accommodation for those wishing to stay, and even assistance in obtaining documents from the Romanian authorities for a smooth border crossing into Hungary.[75]

Jewish communities engaged in attending deportees in other (Hungarian) cities as well, out of which the most highly regarded was that of Miskolc. Aid was provided not only for the bypassing deportees, but for those choosing to stay in Miskolc too: accommodation, meals and healthcare assistance was arranged. Moreover, inquiry and documentation of Holocaust experiences is also noted by the National Committee of Miskolc, but most probably these interviews were conducted only on returning deportees originally from Miskolc.[76] Based on the interview, Miskolc was the second or third stop in Hungary, not only for those originally returning to Miskolc, but many of whom were passing by. Therefore, on the map of immediate post-1945 Hungary, Miskolc served as an important transit city for the arriving deportees. The biggest hub for Jewish survivors on the move, however, was the capital, Budapest.

2.2.2. Budapest

Based on the diverse profiles of the DEGOB reports, it can be said that most of the deportees' travel destination was intended to be to Budapest, even if they had not resided in the capital prior to deportation. The most probable explanation is that they had gained knowledge about Jewish aid agencies, homes, and hospitals in Budapest. According to the accounts, the trains mostly arrived at the Kelenföld and Rákosrendező stops, as well as the Nyugati and Déli railway stations.

[75] HJA DEGOB, Dr. László S., Gyula H., Dr. László Z., Gyula M., Gáspár W., Lajos P., Jenő S., Károly P., László S., report 3448, accessed 15 May, 2018.

[76] Due to the scope of this paper, focused research on the post-war Jewish community of Miskolc is not considered, nonetheless, the mentioned archival documents would open ground to a new and more specific research on the topic of returning and restarting life in Miskolc after the Shoah. The archival material is to be found in the Archives of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county in Miskolc, under XVII. 2. A Miskolci Nemzeti Bizottság iratai 1945-1949.

The perceptions of the Joint and Red Cross at the Budapest arrivals were quite mixed, especially because in some cases it did happen that the volunteers of the aid organizations were not present at all. When they were present, however, food was given immediately, and their carry-ons were put on and delivered by trucks so they would not have to exert their last strength walking home or to the halfway houses and nursing homes. Joint workers directed the deportees to DEGOB offices to arrange their arrival and to obtain information about their vanished families or helped them reach a hospital in case of urgent healthcare. DEGOB had soup kitchens and halfway houses where the deportees remained to wait for relatives, friends, or acquaintances to appear or for any new information regarding lost loved ones.

At the outset of its work, the AJDC did not immediately organize an independent medical department and Jewish hospitals, the reconstruction of the main Jewish hospital of Budapest was realized by the end of 1945 and financial support was granted by the Joint to other functioning hospitals in some cities of Hungary, including the capital. Furthermore, at the beginning of the relief-work, small emergency infirmaries were established in cities as Szeged, Debrecen, and Miskolc, which were closing down with the establishment and renovation of more and more hospitals after 1946.[77]

In addition to the numerous soup kitchens and halfway homes, from 1 April 1945 onwards OZSSB reopened the previously Red Cross-operated children's homes for the surviving children of the Shoah. The organization had set out two directions on the means of child relief: 1) support of the children gathering in communities, with the help of political or religious movements, 2) individual support. The first indicated the creation and maintenance of children's homes, to which institutions primarily orphans, half-orphans, abandoned and unprovided, homeless children were accepted. The second category, individual support meant providing healthcare and medical assistance, donating clothes, medical supplies, such as glasses

[77] HJA, HU HJA XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a-2, File 9: *Documents of Jewish Healthcare*

or orthopedic shoes, school supplies, and aliment. The realization of such a relief system was to be achieved by the establishment of a four-directive operation of the Children's Department of OZSSB, dedicating work and attention separately to children's homes, individual support, medical support and infant protection, and education. Based on these main categories of focus, the Children's Department branched into four departments functioning separately from one another.[78]

The duration of the deportees' stays in homes or hospitals, and generally in Budapest for those who originally were from the provinces cannot be determined. The accounts reveal that at the time the DEGOB reports were recorded, their subjects were in a transitory state, not yet fully sure about further steps to be taken, either if the question was to go back to the old home, wait for the family to return there, and how to proceed once they arrive or once it becomes clear that they will never return.

2.2.3. Homes and Neighbors

Half of the examined testimonies reveal that the deportees had not gone home before having arrived at the offices of DEGOB, in which cases home meant another town or village. Those who prior to deportation had resided in Budapest could immediately go home and check the state of their properties. The reasons why Budapest was a focal point for deportees from the provinces are evidently due to the fact that they needed assistance and time to recover physically, or guidance as to where to find their missing parents, spouses, or even children before going home. Another common reason for not having visited their property yet was that coming to Budapest was logistically a transfer point in their arrival. The group of respondents who had not been home yet, most usually did aim to eventually go home, and planned to do so some time after staying in touch with DEGOB for information about their families. In cases

[78] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a-5, File 30: Typescript of Certified Public Accountant's Report: Official National Jewish Aid Organization, 1946.

where the deportees did not obtain any information, they parted to see whether their loved ones had maybe arrived in their hometown without previously passing any DP camps or aid points.

A smaller percentage of the interviewees claimed that they did not intend to go home at all. Their plans for the near future did not involve the return to their hometown due to the knowledge of their loved ones having perished. In these cases, the deportees' expressions reveal a numb pain and disappointment in everything that ever meant a home for them: "I don't want to go home, unfortunately, it is no place for me anymore".[79]

The other half of the interviews affirm that they had already gone and seen their old homes, and noted the damages. Out of my sampling of the DEGOB reports, a clear 100% show that the properties of the deportees had been plundered and/or occupied by strangers. In cases of other families or persons living in their homes, the deportees either were sent away and lived in one of the shelters provided by the Jewish relief agencies, or insisted and stayed in one room of the apartment or house. Usually the destruction of properties meant the robbery of all valuables and furniture, even clothing and smaller accessories, and in some cases the buildings were physically destroyed and bombed.

The return to homes is, in most cases, the first instance when the deportees encountered Gentile acquaintances. First, this meant meeting the neighbors, which encounters generally were not considered positive due to the fact that deportees considered their belongings to have been stolen by them. In many of the reports, it is those neighbors or acquaintances (even friends) named to have taken their belongings, who on common agreement were trusted to secure them until they get back from the deportations, which promises were most commonly not kept. For instance, an interviewee from the Visual History Archives sheds light and elaborates on the fate of her family's possessions and how she found out about the theft. B. Sari's account acknowledges a general friendliness of her Gentile environment, but explains the loss of her

[79] HJA, DEGOB, Szerén A., report 3171, accessed 17 May 2018.

trust by telling the story of how she spotted her family's lost furniture in her neighbor's attic. After returning home, the mayor of her hometown, Beled, good friend of his father, returned some of her family's possessions that he managed to save (from the neighbors?). Still, the general atmosphere of Beled was surely hostile, as according to B. Sari's account, the mayor was reported to the authorities when helping the Jews of Beled at the time of persecution. (His punishment was the deportation of his children to Auschwitz.)[80]

Consequently, meeting the general population of a deportee's hometown was similarly a first-hand experience of Gentile encounters upon arrival. Although it was by chance who the encountered persons were, these experiences are also described to be negative, even more so as the proximity of the relationships were not as tight as with a neighbor, for example. One of the interviews, which was conducted on 3 April 1946, tells the story of a deportee who returned back home to Ózd (about 160 kilometers from Budapest) in 1945 together with his wife, for whom he had been waiting to arrive from deportation while working at the Erzsébet Home in Budapest. They looked forward to restarting their lives together and planned to reintegrate into society in Hungary, so the man continued his work as a teacher at the local school. However, one morning in February 1946, they woke up to a day which ended in a pogrom in the small town of Ózd. During an upheaval against a recent murder, a Jewish police officer urged the crowd to disperse, to which someone shouted invectives at the Jews. The police officer then drew his revolver and the crowd reacted by attacking and beating him up, which incident led to atrocities against all the Jews of Ózd. Consequently, H. Andor and his wife returned to Budapest.[81] Unfortunately this incident comes as no surprise to the historian, as the numbers of pogroms in the immediate years after the Holocaust are of very high number in Hungary.[82]

[80] VHA USC, Sari B., interview 22391, segments 75-80, 1996, accessed 17 May 2018.
[81] HJA, DEGOB, Andor H., report 3651, accessed 17 May 2018.
[82] The case of Ózd was a pogrom as the consequence of an anti-campaign against reactionaries, for further reading, see: Ildikó Barna, György Csepeli, László Csősz, István Dancs, Anna Deme, Róbert Hermann, Gábor Kádár, András Pásztor Attila Szakolczai, and Zoltán Vági, *Társadalmi és etnikai konfliktusok a 19-20. Században – Atrocitások, pogromok, tömeggyilkosságok, népirtások* (Digitális Konfliktus Adatbázis), accessed 30 May 2018:

The mentioned events uphold the general perceptions of the deportees in 1945: the first interactions with the Gentile acquaintances were extremely hostile. The catch phrase "more Jews came back than how many left" was resonating in the ears of the deportees[83] at this time period and is actually known to all even today. The fact that the DEGOB reports do not elaborate on neighbors' and acquaintances' roles in the plundering of homes, in my view, either shows that this was a delicate subject to discuss or that material possessions at this stage of the arrival did not matter to them. Based on the focus of my readings and research, I find that the biggest concern to the deportees was first and foremost to find their lost loved ones, and then to think about the future in wider terms than the retrieval of furniture and home objects.

2.2.4. Early Articulations of Future Plans

As mentioned above, the questions what the deportees' future plans were and where their realization was imagined were the last ones on the DEGOB questionnaires. According to the quantitative analysis of Kádár and Vági, the deportees from Nazi camps (the ideal type of Auschwitz deportees in 949 reports) mainly expressed their desire to emigrate with a count of 73,3% of the respondents.[84] The remaining 20.8% of the answers reveal the intention of restarting life in Hungary, and 7.2% answered unknowingly. The division among those interviewees who came back from labor camps (an overall count of 292 reports) do not significantly differ, 62.3% said they were considering emigration, 34.2% remaining in Hungary, and 6.8% did not know their future plans yet. In my narrowed research for a qualitative understanding of the reports, I viewed deportees from concentration camps and labor camps as one group. The results of my sampling are in accordance to the overall examination conducted by Kádár and Vági.

http://tarsadalominformatika.elte.hu/tananyagok/dka/lecke22_lap1.html, and for its connection to the Miskolc case: Péter Apor, "The Lost Deportations and the Lost People of Kunmadaras: A Pogrom in Hungary, 1946," The *Hungarian Historical Review: New Series of Acta Historica Academiae Scieniarum Hungaricae* no. 3 (2013): 566-604.

[83] Holländer, *Lágerutazás*, 127.

[84] Gábor and Vági, „Hazatérés és kivándorlás."

In my sampling of 300+ reports, a mere 113 responded *elaborately*. This is not surprising taking into consideration that these are the earliest expressions of thinking further after the arrival from the hell of Nazi camps. Although much more deportees than the sampling of 113 accounts express the intention of emigration, in this chapter I am only discussing the detailed responses regarding the near future. In my interpretation, the plans of emigration are not articulated as immediate steps to be taken in the accounts. Therefore, I classify emigration as a coping strategy, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

As already implied by the discussion of returning back to the old homes, the very first and most crucial objective was to find lost family members. Those interviewees who could only concentrate on waiting for their loved ones, answered the question by stating that they will decide together with the family once they meet. A majority of these respondents added, in case relatives do not reappear, they wish to emigrate.

About a third of the responses to the question about future plans were answered in the interpretation that present circumstances will establish future prospects for them. Most commonly, these are the reports which specifically contain the word 'DEGOB', as that was their main point of reference for life after the arrival back to Hungary. In some cases, these hesitant future plans are implicit, as in the case of Gy. Árminné (Mrs. Ármin) who at the time of recording her experiences, still had not heard neither from her husband, nor from her son. Her reaction about the future was the following: "I was promised at DEGOB that I will be helped to find a job and that they will strive to help me with my life."[85]

A more direct articulation of undecided future prospects can also be heard: a representative report which was recorded on four women's common account, best exemplifies this explicitness. Based on their surnames and hometowns, the women are not relatives, their account might have been taken together as a group because they came from the same line of

[85] HJA, DEGOB, Dr. Gy. Árminné, report 1112, accessed 18 May 2018.

camps – Auschwitz, Fallersleben, Salzwedel –, and probably arrived to the DEGOB office together. Their testimony says that their future "all depends on whether we meet our husbands and other family members, at the moment we are waiting without any extra thought, because we are not far enough[86] that we could be able to think."[87] Generally speaking, time the reports were recorded, thus the timing the questions asked relating to the future is unique in the sense that most of the deportees were in a transitory state in several ways: in-between the Nyilas-era and an anti-fascist era, in-between the not so distant memories of systematic persecution leading to death camps and first experiences of freedom, in-between having arrived home to Hungary but not having arrived home to the family property yet, in-between hoping that the family survived and actually finding out about the reality of their fates, etc. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that hesitation is present in the voice of the recently arrived deportees, however, this hesitation is not dominant (and is not a characteristic of female responses, even if the mentioned example is that of four women, in the general outcome there is no difference between the genders in my sampling).

Several responses show that the question relating to the future does have an assertive answer, out of which the leading response was leaving Hungary, in most cases leaving Europe. As mentioned above, the topic of emigration in my view constitutes a coping strategy considering the issue of time and the state of in-betweenness. The reason for this designed distinction is the lack of further implications about the plans of emigration. A very small number of people claimed that they were Zionists in which case the plan to go to Palestine might have been a more immediate plan than for those who contemplated on the idea of emigration, but before all else preferred to stay and wait for news about relatives, or just to see how life evolves.

[86] The phrasing is more understandable in Hungarian: „Minden attól függ, hogy találkozunk-e férjeinkkel és családunk más tagjaival, most egyenlőre (sic!) várunk, minden gondolkodás nélkül, mert még ennyire nem vagyunk, hogy gondolkodni is tudjunk."
[87] HJA, DEGOB, Rózsi É., Szerén S., Etel R., report 2184, accessed 18 May 2018.

Another common answer from deportees was the intention of starting to work again. Some tell how they were rehired by their previous employers, and some talk about wanting to start their own private businesses after their physical and mental recovery. As to the question *where* they would like to start working again, half of the deportees say that they would prefer to remain in their hometown, or relocate to Budapest. Most commonly the respondents who explicitly wish to stay in Hungary to continue work are white collar workers, such as doctors, engineers, pressmen, and even of artistic professions, as musicians, among the filtered reports, there is a known theater director, for example.

Another half of those expressing their desire to start work again did not express Hungary to be the locus of this plan. This group of deportees want to work in Hungary either because they lost all of their assets and/or because they were left alone, none of the relatives had yet arrived. Therefore, they wished to work in order to gain the financial means to emigrate.

Similarly, a group of teenagers can be distinguished, who expressed their desire to stay in Hungary for the specific reason of continuing their studies. The adolescent deportees set the reunion of their families as the starting point from which onwards the possibility of pursuing their further studies can be achieved. They do not elaborate as to what changes in their plans in case they will not find their parents, but based on the general "atmosphere" of the teenagers' interviews, I presumed emigration was just as much a choice as staying in Hungary. Based on an additional research I conducted at the Archives of International Tracing Service (ITS) on the list of deportees from my sampling, I have found matches with those youngsters who originally, at the DEGOB questioning, only said that their future plans were to continue their work or studies, but eventually left the country.

Another even more specific group could be mapped out of the sampling: those young adults who wished to study at universities. Most commonly, those with the intention of gaining a university degree or a vocation preferred to stay in Hungary. A small number of young adults

seeking possibilities for further studies wanted to specifically go to the university in Prague. Interestingly, this desire is mainly expressed by women in my finding, therefore I cross-checked this phenomena in the Shoah Archives looking for a more detailed narrative. Specific reasons as to why Prague was the chosen destination to pursue further studies are not elaborated on (maybe not even specifically known by the individuals themselves), which is most apparent in the story of Zuzana A. According to her recollection, she got married in 1946 (at the age of 21) after which, together with her husband, they enrolled to the university of Prague. Then, her husband took her to the dean, where her Czech language barriers were explained, and the dean insisted that she noted down her Jewish origins on her official documents (leaving the fact of Hungarian citizenship out). In Zuzana's account afterwards, we can only hear about her struggles with the language, and the fact that she successfully achieved a Master's degree.[88] This shows that they knowingly preferred to choose foreign possibilities instead of Hungarian universities, but there might have been a wider knowledge of positive discrimination at the university of Prague for Jewish students in the immediate post-war years.[89]

Overall, articulations about future prospects – whether hesitant or assertive in its rhetoric – are already present at the very early stage of deportees' homecoming. The expectation as to the *reality* of the outcome of these plans, in my view and in my paper, is not relevant as these accounts mainly serve as a mirror to see the presence of a future perspective in the initial perceptions of deportees. An examination in terms of the culmination of future prospects is only obtainable and relevant when looking at it in plausible steps: that is, which intentions form into coping strategies.

In the next chapter, I will present those actions taken by the examined group of deportees which are generally true about the majority. These community-level actions, which I call

[88] VHA USC, Zuzana A., interview 14708, segments 66-70, 1996, accessed 17 May 2018.
[89] Most probably this was not a proclaimed position of the university, however, together with my findings mentioned beforehand about the "Czech experience", I find that these assonant experiences would be a strong base for further research on the topic.

deportees' coping strategies – as to continuing life in the shadow of the Shoah – are all in the course of a future direction. In my interpretation, already the early perceptions about Hungary, based on the circumstances of arrival, show the tendencies of estrangement and a direction of creating further coping strategies than just planning to restart the life the survivors had left behind before deportation.

Chapter 3.: New Beginnings

After the understanding of what it was like to arrive back to Hungary, I will present the modes of restarting life in order to show the patterns of the dissimilatory directions deportees in Hungary took. Similarly to the previous chapter, I will present the organizational background at work, which beginning with the year of 1946, already institutionalized. I will lay out the established institutions and operations of the Jewish aid agencies in Hungary for a fuller understanding of what relief background deportees had in the immediate years after World War II. Next, based on sociological findings of the examined time period of 1946-1949, I will outline the main coping strategies deportees chose after liberation and having returned to Hungary. In my paper, I use the term coping strategies as to what conscious efforts were taken on a social level in order to tackle the psychological effects of the Shoah and to be able to restart life. The main reference to quantitative data about the survivors of the Holocaust in Hungary is based on Viktor Karády's and Tamás Stark's findings, which data I will blend with a qualitative approach. Consequently, I will examine the general coping strategies on an individual level by filtering and narrowing them down specifically to deportees through oral testimonies. Similarly to the previous chapter, here I will use the base of the DEGOB reports, to which I will adjoin additional findings from the Visual History Archive and the ITS.

According to my research, the most common coping strategies of deportees to restart life after the Holocaust were those which resonate the typical patterns of dissimilation and estrangement: emigration and marriage. In this chapter, I will present the tendency of deportees choosing spouses not only within the same faith, but with the same experience of persecution. In addition, I will engage with the question how far the dissimilatory strategy of Zionism had an impact on the deportees who came back to Hungary after liberation based on the archival sources of DEGOB reports. As already implied in my previous chapter, I will argue throughout

the examination and analysis of deportee perceptions that emotional reactions outweigh the rational ones.

3.1. Institutional Background at Work

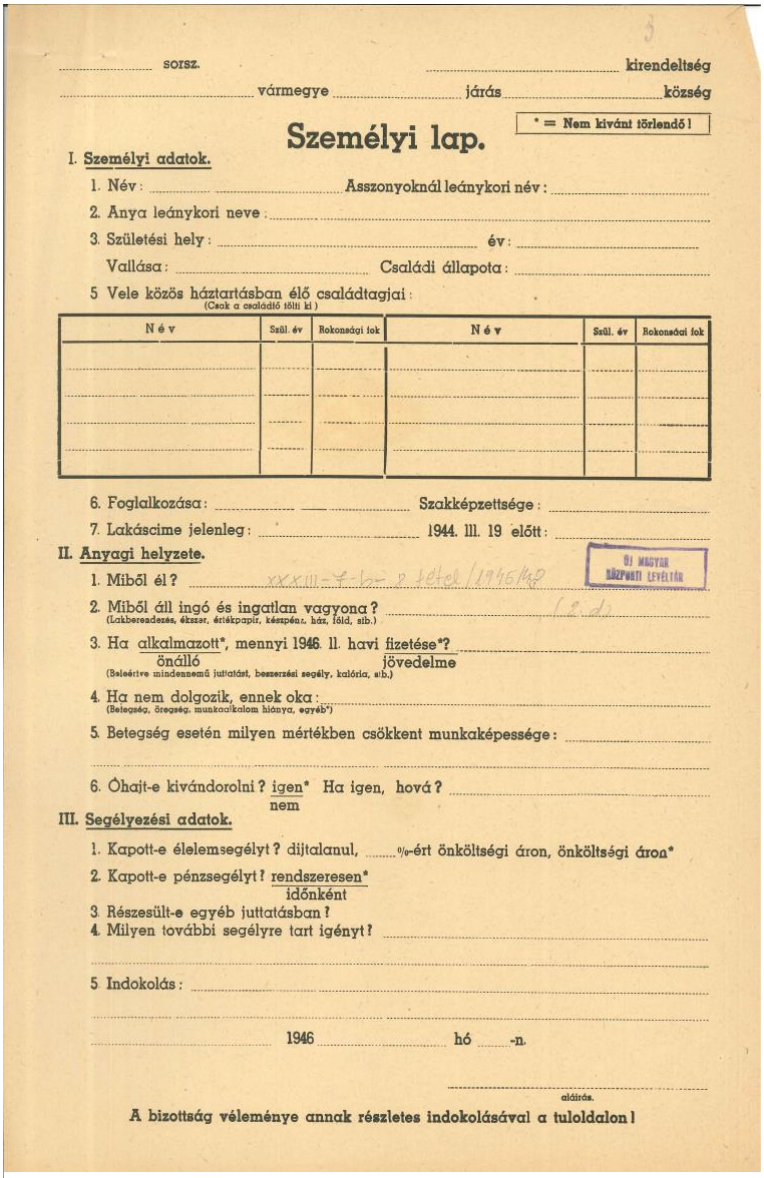
Besides the maintenance of DEGOB and thus offering immediate relief for deportees arriving to Hungary, Joint planned further ahead. The organization emphasized its main tasks from 1946 onwards based on two categories: charity and rehabilitation.[90] The first task of charity meant the distribution of financial aids, food, medicine, clothes, etc. which was planned to be done based on a cadastral system of eligibility requirements of the beneficiaries. The groupings were determined by age and the extent of being disadvantaged, thus the first group was the needy above the age of 60 – which according to the quoted report was 20.84% of Jews in Budapest in the examined year –, those who had remained with no relatives and/or no property, had to receive enough aid to go to a home besides basic support. While the elderly who had surviving relatives, could ask for some additional aid for the household where they would live, depending on their common financial status. The second determined group was that of the unemployed between the age of 20-60 who would receive basic financial aid. The third disadvantaged group to receive full care was the group of orphans between ages 1 to 14 going to orphanages, similarly to the children of poverty-stricken parents, and a separate list for semi-orphans with full or partial aid, depending on the parent's status. Finally, there were smaller groupings of those who needed food aid alone; those who required food and financial aid; and those who besides food and money, were deprived of clothes.

The distribution of financial aid changed with the development of the rehabilitative help provided, as more and more Jewish survivors were working again. By 1949, the determination of groups receiving regular cash aid changed and was narrowed down. Those remained eligible who were either above the age of 60, single mothers with at least two children, or who were

[90] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a, Folder 15: Typescript of *The Objectives of Jewish Organizations and the Modes of the Social Tasks of the Jewry of Hungary*, p. 5-7.

determined of work incapability by the medical committee of AJDC. However, there was not much significant change in the aid of the children and the ill, they were continuously entitled for healthcare provided by the Joint. [91]

There was a separate department functioning to aid those in need in the provinces of Hungary under OZSSB. The main principle of providing financial support was based on the degree of reliance.[92] Regular financial aid was given to Holocaust survivors without any income (the elderly, the disabled, the ill, and the unprovided orphans) and with an income that does not suffice for the living standards. Further financial support was available for those Jewish survivors after 1946, who did earn a living, but could not cover additional costs (e.g. pregnancy, illnesses, dentistry, etc.) or could not afford clothes. According to a report by OZSSB for the Joint Distribution Committee, the number of aided Jewish survivors in 1949 was 34,576 adults and 4792 children.[93] Furthermore, special attention and extra aid was granted for children who were studying.



..... sorsz. ..... kirendeltség

..... vármegye ..... járás ..... község

Személyi lap.

* = Nem kívánt törlendő!

I. **Személyi adatok.**

1. Név: ..... Asszonyoknál leánykori név: .....
2. Anya leánykori neve: .....
3. Születési hely: ..... év: .....

Vallása: ..... Családi állapota: .....

5 Vele közös háztartásban élő családtagjai:
(Csak a családfő tölti ki.)

Név	Szül. év	Rokonsági fok	Név	Szül. év	Rokonsági fok

6. Foglalkozása: ..... Szakképzettsége: .....
7. Lakáscime jelenleg: ..... 1944. III. 19 előtt: .....

II. **Anyagi helyzete.**

1. Miből él? XXXIII-7-b-2 9 tétel 1945/49
2. Miből áll ingó és ingatlan vagyona? (Lakberendezés, ékszer, értékpapír, készpénz, ház, föld, stb.)
3. Ha alkalmazott*, mennyi 1946. II. havi fizetése*? önálló jövedelme
(Beleértve mindennemű juttatást, beszerzési segély, kalória, stb.)
4. Ha nem dolgozik, ennek oka: (Betegség, öregség, munkaalkalom hiánya, egyéb*)
5. Betegség esetén milyen mértékben csökkent munkaképessége: .....
6. Óhajt-e kivándorolni? igen* nem Ha igen, hová? .....

III. **Segélyezési adatok.**

1. Kapott-e élelemsegélyt? díjtalanul, ...%-ért önköltségi áron, önköltségi áron*
2. Kapott-e pénzsegélyt? rendszeresen* időnként
3. Részesült-e egyéb juttatásban?
4. Milyen további segélyre tart igényt? .....
5. Indokolás: .....

..... 1946 ..... hó ..... -n.

aláírás.

A bizottság véleménye annak részletes indokolásával a tuloldalon!

Figure 4 The Personal Record Card that had to be filled in by Jewish survivors for financial aid provided by OZSSB. Source: HJA, XXXIII-7-b-item 8/1945/48.

[91] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a-5, Folder 28: Typescript of *Cash Aid Directives*, 1949
[92] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-7-b-2, Folder 8: Typescript of *Circular Letter no. 12 for All of our Branches*, 1946
[93] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-7-b-2, Folder 9, Report dated 16 August 1949

The second task of a methodological distribution of the money arriving from the AJDC was rehabilitation. This aimed to constructively help the Jewry of Hungary by creating workplaces for the needy, but able Jews next to regular charity. In order to reach such a rehabilitation plan, it was set out to either create collectives (social and/or economic), supply individual businesses with capital equipment, or grant capital to those intellectuals or tradesmen who could prove to find the means to making a living. For a carrying the rehabilitative plans into effect, those had to be listed into cadasters who already had a profession or were keen on learning a new profession. [94]

According to a report for AJDC, the achievements of the rehabilitation program in Europe were met based on a variety of reconstruction techniques.[95] The basic aim of the reconstruction activities were to either integrate the remaining Jewry into their respective European economies, or to prepare those wishing to emigrate for a smoother integration into the economies of their chosen destinations. Very specifically, economic reconstruction meant the creation of producers' cooperatives, credit cooperatives, loan funds, work projects, hachsharoth (camps preparing for the emigration to the Land of Israel), finally, vocational training courses and schools.

Generally speaking, throughout the course of 1946, several rest homes, children's homes, hospitals, and healthcare centers were established for the survivors of the Holocaust in Hungary under the operation of several Jewish aid organizations thanks to the expenditure of the AJDC.[96] In addition to the basic relief and aid purposes, the creation of possibilities for cultural activities was an important objective of the Joint.[97] Therefore, several art forms were

[94] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a, Folder 15: Typescript of *The Objectives of Jewish Organizations*
[95] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a-2, Folder 10: report, 1948.
[96] For further data see: *JDC Archives, The Year of Survival: 1946 Annual Report, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee,* (New York: AJJDC Inc., 1947.), accessed 22 May 2018, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/Geneva45-54/G45-54_ADM/G45-54_ADM_051/G45-54_ADM_051_0672.pdf#search
[97] HJA, XXIV-A-XXXIII-4-a-2, Folder 2: Typescript of *The Objectives of Jewish Organizations and the Modes of the Social Tasks of the Jewry of Hungary*, 8.

to be endorsed, bringing music and arts into the institutions, moreover, scholarships, and libraries for students.

Figure 5 Children on stage in a play, 1946. Source: Fortepan, photo ID 104985, Gyula Hámori, accessed 4 June 2018.

possible doors for the Jewish survivors onto their new beginnings in Hungary. Therefore, taking this as the starting point, I wish to examine the perceptions of the arrived deportees within this setting. However, in order to zoom into the group of deportees examined in the previous chapter, first, a wider perspective has to be taken into consideration, namely the entire surviving Jewry's demographic conditions and thus the changes of social structures. An overview of sociological findings in the examined time period will shed light on the most typical social changes, which help in the understanding of the surviving Jewry's coping strategies in their new environment.

3.2. Coping Strategies

In my paper, I use this psychological term 'coping strategy' as the chosen strategy of the surviving Jewry to *continue* life. Since the main focus of my examination is the group of deportees having come back to Hungary from Nazi camps, the question of embracing life and aiming for a new beginning is specifically significant for two reasons. The first reason is that not all Hungarian Jews decided to come back to Hungary after liberation, and emigrated from the locus of liberation. Secondly, several survivors found death to be the only solution to cope with their experiences of the unthinkable. Although precise data is not available on the number of self-destruction in the period, nor specific mentions of such plans by deportees in the DEGOB reports[98], psychological dilemma on the question is more traceable. The changing dilemma whether it is worth continuing life or not is best illustrated by Margit Holländer in her diary following starting with a hesitation already in the DP camp: "We won the war? That's not true! They did. We are here without parents, siblings, without anyone, abroad and without much hope that we will ever be free. We have been knocked out for a lifetime. So, is it worth living? No."[99] While a couple of days before, in her diary Margit writes a poem about the desire to return back home: "Our home will be pretty, / if we eventually go home. / … / When the train will take us / in the direction of Kassa. / Our mothers, fathers / siblings and grandmothers. / Our homes will be pretty, / because we want to go home."[100] Later, after having returned to Hungary, Margit writes: "BEING HOME, THIS ISN'T GOOD EITHER, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH BETTER TO BE SLAUGHTERED OUT THERE IN AUSHVITZ (sic!)."[101] But Margit did not kill herself, even if it was hard for her to readjust to life in Hungary.

[98] Naturally, as suicidal thoughts are characteristic of not being publicly voiced. For example, known writer and journalist, Béla Zsolt's wife, Ágnes Zsolt had discussed her future plans during a DEGOB interview (report nr. 3133) without any mention of problems concerning future prospects before she decided to commit suicide.
[99] Huhák and Szécsényi, *Lágerutazás*, 97.
[100] Ibid., 90.
[101] Ibid., 143.

I have chosen the two always present topics in survival testimonies to discuss as of the most common coping strategies: starting a (new) family and/or emigration. Based on Viktor Karády's extensive work on the Hungarian Jewry after 1945[102], it becomes clear that the main changes in the social structure of the Jewish community was the high number of demographic loss due to casualties (illnesses and poor physical state of survivors, self-destruction, miscarriages, and even pogroms), conversion, emigration, and even mixed marriages (although the numbers are of a rough estimate in Budapest, and unknown in the provinces.[103]) Moreover, a significant upsurge can be observed in terms of Jewish marriages, and a change in family structures which corresponds to the testimonies. Even in the interpretation of demographics, the question of assimilation and dissimilation in this period for the surviving Jewry was truly a dramatic dilemma.[104] I have chosen to discuss the options of starting a new family and emigration because next to the outstanding growth in statistics regarding these social changes, the accounts unanimously refer to these life events being most significant on the individual level. The survivors of the Shoah undoubtedly debated specifically these possibilities and directions regarding their futures.

The development of the deportees' estrangement from the Hungarian society can first be observed through their family choices. Deportees – both of fully and partially destructed families – show a tendency of *grouping*, which cohesion was significantly based on the common experience of having survived labor and concentration camps. Forming (new) families resulted in collective decision-making in terms of the assimilationist dilemma, which on a high level resulted in dissimilating from the Hungarian society and leaving the country behind.

[102] Viktor Karády, *Túlélők és újrakezdők,* 67-135.
[103] Ibid., 104.
[104] Ibid., 98.

3.2.2. Family Strategies

The social change of Jewish communities in Hungary is an outcome of structural changes in Jewish families. This meant a considerable demographic boost for the surviving Jewish community in Hungary in the immediate post-war period compared to the years before, and especially, during the war, which however, returned to the pre-war trend due to the distorted age structure.[105] Following the peak of 1945, there was a continuous drop in numbers, which will be presented for the sections of marriage and live births below until 1949-50. The compensatory demographic process in the immediate post-war years is very significant in the line of understanding the coping strategies of the Holocaust survivors on a macrolevel.

Based on this upsurge, I have examined the family strategies of camp survivors, what their specific articulations and the most common outcomes were. One prevalent difference between the statistics and my sampling is the absence of any mention of intermarriages. Karády's findings show that similarly to other demographics, there was a peak in the number of mixed marriages in the year of 1945: 27.6% of the male population and 18.4% of the female population were registered to have married outside of the Jewish faith.[106] This percentage shows the highest number of interfaith marriages for both genders looking at it from 1931, which then drops again between the years of 1946 and 1948, but inclines further above the rates of 1945 from 1949 onwards. The reason for such a significant rise of mixed marriages in 1945 is most likely because of the anti-Jewish law of 1941 that forbade mixed marriages. This kept down the number of prospective marriages, and the whole trend in general.[107]

In my research of oral testimonies, I have only found instances of marriages between deportees and marriages under the chuppah, but no mixed marriages. The question arises what conclusions can be drawn from this: whether the group of deportees exclusively aimed to get

[105] Ibid., 83.
[106] Ibid., 104.
[107] Ibid., 104-105.

married with companions in distress or the survivors during the interview intentionally avoided to distinguish whether their spouse was or was not Jewish. Considering the fact that the majority of the accounts reveal that the weddings were conducted by a rabbi and/or took place under the chuppah, moreover, that most of the testimonies details the spouse's past suffering in camps, it is more probable that the average 27% and 18% of Jews getting mixed married were less likely to be camp survivors. As mentioned before, the group of Hungarian survivors is not homogenous, especially because a large number of Hungarian Jews were not deported from Budapest (which group again is not homogenous in itself[108]). Due to the limitations of my paper, however, I am only concentrating on the findings of those survivors who were deported and liberated outside of Hungary.

Methodologically, a similar approach led to my achieved results from the VHA testimonies as the findings of the previous chapter, however without the use of DEGOB reports in this section as the interviews conducted in 1945 are too early to contain any information about established families after the return (or the non-return of spouses). I created online projects based on the index searches 'survivor marriages' and 'miscarriages' to map the change in family structures. The reason I have added a search of miscarriages is due to the low numbers of live births in the examined period compared to the number of marriages. Consequently, I will discuss the topic divided into the two subsections of marriages and childbearing.

3.2.2.1. Marriages

The demographic compensation in 1945-6 is obviously explained by the trauma of the Shoah, how those survivors choosing to begin a new life started to do so by creating a new family, which choice was one of the most prevalent coping strategies. This process is mainly visible from the growing number of marriages in Budapest:

[108] See: Péter Tibor Nagy, „The Sociology of Survival: The Presence of the Budapest Jewish Population Groups of 1941 in the 1945 Budapest Population," in *The Holocaust in Hungary: Seventy Years Later*, ed. Randolph L. Braham and András Kovács (Budapest: CEU Press, 2016): 183-195.

Table 1: Number of men getting marriedin Budapest based on religion[109]

	of the Jewish faith	of other religion
1938-1939 (average per year)	2005	10 970
1941-1943 (average per year)	1459	11 325
1945	1742	10 333
1946	2734	10 141
1947	2221	
1948	1894	
1949	1544	
1950	804	

Statistics are only available from Budapest, which might seem unreliable considering the whole country. However, besides the absence of numbers from outside of Budapest, representation could be considered liable based on the fact that migration to the capital was high among Jews from the countryside, or the probability that deportees stayed directly in Budapest where they originally received healthcare, financial aid, and even accommodation as discussed in the previous chapter.

In order to perceive the upsurge in statistics, the above-mentioned numbers must be placed into context. Previously, there was a significant drop in the number of registered marriages between 1938 and 1943, during the years of the Hungarian anti-Jewish laws and the war. There is a lack of precise statistics concerning the year of 1944 because no reliable data exists from that period.[110] Nonetheless, according to Karády, the year of 1944 would surely represent the historically lowest point in the graph of Jewish marriages.[111] Then, the upsurge in numbers is already significant in 1945, especially by considering the fact that by this time the male population of the Hungarian Jewry had significantly dropped, furthermore, the civil

[109] Ibid., 83.
[110] Yehuda Don, "The Demographic Development of Hungarian Jewry," in *Jewish Social Studies* 45, 3-4 (1983), 199
[111] Karády, *Túlélők*, 84.

registry offices did not operate for the first couple of months after liberation.[112] Additionally to the visibly huge jump of approximately 1000-1200 more survivor marriages in 1946 than in 1943/5, and still over 2200 marriages taking place in Budapest in 1947, the demographic upswing can be understood as an extraordinary amplitude by comparing the growth of the numbers of Jewish marriages to the stagnant number of marriages of different faith.

In my qualitative research of the returning deportees, oral testimonies confirm the significant rise in numbers of marriages between the years of 1945 and 1949. Ernő A. explicitly notes how he perceived the number of Jewish weddings phenomenal in Hungary at the time.[113] This linkage between the macro and the micro level proves the amplitude of this social phenomenon, as the individual not only notes it in its contemporary time, but recalls it from a distance of 50 years. The memory of large amounts of marriages taking place in Hungary is present in several testimonies: deportees especially remember group weddings.

Figure 6 Jewish wedding ceremony under the chuppah at the Orthodox Synagogue in Kazinczy street, Budapest, 1946. Source: . Source: Fortepan, photo ID 105045, Gyula Hámori, accessed 4 June 2018.

[112] Ibid.
[113] VHA, Ernő A., interview 4710, segments 108-111, 1995, accessed 24 May 2018.

Another significant characteristic of Jewish wedding at the time were getting married in groups at the same time and place. Jewish brides and grooms had joint weddings with family members and friends who survived the Holocaust and did not have the wedding ceremony at separate times. The common fate of deportees not only signified commonness in grieving, but in sharing happiness. Siblings and cousins got married at the same time and place with their chosen partners, but occasionally the weddings were multiple by chance. For example, Binyamin O. got married in 1947 under the chuppah with three other couples who were not relatives.[114] (Another survivor remembers this same wedding from Israel 50 years later.[115]) Not only was cohesion characteristic of weddings, but of the way couples formed, how they got to know each other.

The accounts from VHA testimonies tell more about the private life of the deportees after returning to Hungary than the other sources. In most of the cases, especially with women who had no surviving family members, groups of deportees started living together in one of the deportee's old home, or would simply spend most of their time together. The formation of these groups was usually based on relationships formed in the camps, and/or consisted further of found relatives or friends. Etelka B.'s story illustrates the exclusivity of the deportee-groups: she met her husband in 1946 at her camp sister's wedding reception, which was a co-wedding with her cousin, who married another camp sister. This shows how tight the groups were, even in terms of the familial matrix, camp sisters usually married other

Figure 7 Company at a Jewish wedding, 1946. . Source: Fortepan, photo ID 105047, Gyula Hámori, accessed 4 June 2018.

[114] VHA, Binyamin O., interview 26685, segment 112 , 1997, accessed 24 May 2018.
[115] VHA, Iren E., interview 33795, segment 69, 1997, accessed 24 May 2018.

camps sisters' surviving relatives or the "camp brothers" of male relatives.

Even closer relationships meant a possibility of starting a new family according to Jewish traditions. When Irene G. heard it from someone after liberation in Budapest that her brother-in-law, Samuel had returned to his hometown in Szatmárnémeti (Satu Mare/Satmar), she immediately went to pay him a visit. The man, without hesitation, said that if her sister (his wife) would not reappear, he would like to marry her. Irene and Samuel "reached an agreement in three minutes"[116], and got married under the chuppah in 1946, but the civil registrar ceremony only took place in 1948. Irene admitted the divisive anxiety this marriage caused her when thinking about her sister having survived and reappearing in their lives.[117]

Many solely deportees became couples during or after medical treatments in hospitals. Edit V. was a laboratory assistant at the Jewish Hospital where her husband-to-be was ailing. After his recovery, he went back to find Edit and asked her hand in marriage.[118] Endre K. first met his wife in 1946 in the sanatorium of Budakeszi, which they already left together (because the hospital director was said to have been demanding gold from Jewish patients).[119] Afterwards, they went to different medical centers in Hungary already together, and eventually got married in 1948.

The possibilities of meeting potential partners for deportees was in their immediate environment, which in most cases was the hospital, the family, or a group of individuals intentionally sticking together. In households, where the older relatives of the young deportees survived as well, the parents or grandparents became assertive matchmakers. Adela R. explains how she got married because she needed support in the upbringing of the small children in the family, which marriage was arranged with an older man who had lost his whole family in Auschwitz. She then compares her story to the neighbors' means of finding husbands, who also

[116] In Hungarian: "Három perc alatt megkötöttük az egyességet."
[117] VHA, Irene G., interview 13441, segments 60-63, 1996, 24 May 2018.
[118] VHA, Edit V., interview 54409, segment 110, 1993, accessed 24 May 2018.
[119] VHA, Endre K., interview 49558, segments 140-142, 1999, accessed 24 May 2018.

got married based on agreements among the neighboring families "out of a sense of security", she explains. Adela lived in the small village of Bedő, where besides the future perspectives of the neighbors, young Jewish soldiers appeared to find themselves young Jewish brides, as it was considered a mitzvah for the men to marry poor girls, she adds.[120]

Whichever the case, it is quite evident that the duration of engagements did not linger, religious wedding ceremonies were performed by rabbis in a very short time. As mentioned in the case of Irene, the civil registrar ceremonies, however, had to wait for themselves. The reason for a belated civil marriage is that one of the newlyweds was a widow, for which the documentation process and permit for a new marriage took a lot of time.[121]

The number of marriages in general, including a high number of widows and widowers getting remarried, shows that in this time period, age was not such a significant factor in the choice of starting a new family. This tendency proves that marriage, indeed was a coping strategy for the returning deportees, but also for those who did not return to Hungary (yet or ever). Before presenting the age aspect of the findings, a view on the non-returning deportees will show how paramount this coping strategy actually was.

The mass phenomenon of marriages already started before the return to Hungary: in DP camps, or in the deportees' transitional period between camp life and real life. There were some instances where soldiers married liberated deportees, however, the most common weddings were between deportees immediately after liberation. A "famous" love story among deportees of which diverse testimonies referred to happened in a villa in Borken. Katalin K. after having received a letter that her fiancé had survived the Holocaust and was in a liberated camp in Germany, immediately parted for an expedition to look for him. After the couple found each

[120] VHA, Adela R., interview 48770, segments 135-142, 1998, accessed 24 May 2018.
[121] For further information on the process of declaring a missing person deceased, see: JDC Archives, *Information Sheets, Series D: Missing Persons, V. Hungary* (New York: AJJDC Inc., 1946.), accessed 24 May 2018, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/Geneva45-54/G45-54_Count/USHMM-GENEVA_00048/USHMM-GENEVA_00048_00195.pdf#search

other and reunited, they left the world of the DP camps, and together with several friends, settled in a villa in Borken.[122] They immediately started organizing their wedding ceremony, and got married in the chaos of an abandoned villa. The chuppah and the wedding dress was made of the bed sheets found in the house, the menu was set up of tinned food, and the wedding-party was made up of all the people who heard of this "wonder" from nearby villages. The American troops were in that region, thus an American rabbi officiated at the ceremony.[123] Surviving couples who had not had the possibility to realize their engagement and commitment to each other before deportation were probably the very first ones to get married after liberation. Even if this meant having a wedding in a foreign place, close to the past period's sufferings. Urgency most definitely is a significant marker of survivor marriages, especially in the case of deportees.

In my findings, the age differences are varied, both young deportees chose to get married, and those who had lost their spouses chose to get remarried at an older age. Some testimonies reflect on the fact that these marriages in their lives were strategies implicitly. Deportees in their twenties, especially those whose families had fully perished, did not want to live all by themselves, so the young men chose brides for themselves, and the women accepted marriage proposals without hesitation. János L. says when he finally understood that his family would never return, he immediately proposed to the girl she had been courting before the war (and also survived the Shoah). He admits that the realization of staying alone "was the reason for the fast wedding".[124] Similarly, Magdolna P.'s relatives did not survive, so she lived with a "camp sister" in other Jewish acquaintances' apartment that was left behind. In the evenings, they would host gatherings for other deportees to discuss intellectual topics, whose group of friends Miklós P. was a part of. Miklós helped Magdolna sort out her documents in order to get back to teaching, and eventually offered her to stay in his apartment in case the landlords where

[122] VHA, Katalin K., interview 50273, segments 166-181, 1999, accessed 25 May, 2018.
[123] VHA, Ilona G., interview 50284, segments 220-228, 1999, accessed 25 May 2018.
[124] VHA, János L., interview 50989, segment 110, 2000, accessed 25 May 2018.

she was staying would return. Magdolna thought such a move would be disgraceful, so Miklós finally asked her to marry him, adding "let's just try, you don't even have to live with me, if you don't want to". This shows that the man, a deportee left all by himself, wanted to have more company in his life than just gathering with friends in the evenings. Magdolna admits that she had to brace herself to take this step and accept his proposal, and after both Magdolna's and Miklós's previous spouses were declared dead, they got married at the end of 1946 under the chuppah.[125]

Widow-marriages, where both parties' spouses had perished in the Holocaust, were just as frequent as young adults starting their lives together. Katharina M. tells the moving story of how she married the closest person to her in the very unique setting of post-Holocaust grievances. Katharina was camp sisters with her neighbor, who did not survive and passed away before liberation. After Katharina's return back home, her camp sister's husband was the closest person to have survived, just as the other way around, both of their spouses passed away. The two widowed eventually chose each other for life partners, and got married. The wedding took place in a small bedroom, officiated by the local rebbe, which destitute ceremony symbolizes the outset of the marriage itself: two lonely and aching beings choosing life and continuation in any circumstance as soon as possible. Katharina recounts how her husband was mourning for a long time even after they got married, especially her daughter who had died in Auschwitz. His daughter's birthday, 1 May, was remembered in the household for long. [126]

To conclude, Karády's findings already show that for the surviving Jewry of Hungary, marriage was an important first step. Zooming specifically into the group of deportees having returned to Hungary, the statistics align to the accounts told by the camp survivors with an added value of understanding its multitude. In my interpretation this signifies that out of the entire group of survivors, deportees more commonly chose to get (re-)married, and more

[125] VHA, Magdolna P., interview 51821, segments 257-262, 2001, accessed 25 May 2018.
[126] VHA, Katharina M., interview 20208, segments 101-105, 1996, accessed 25 May 2018.

exclusively to spouses with similar experiences and sufferings behind them. This strong tendency among the deportees shows the unique phenomenon of cohesion and oneness, which might not be the case for those Hungarian survivors who had not been deported (especially viewing my findings of interfaith marriages). A further step in the analysis of family strategies after marriage is the question of childbearing, which aspect viewed specifically at the group of deportees might also somewhat alter the big picture of the Holocaust survivors in Hungary.

3.2.2.2. Childbearing

The demographic recuperative tendency of Jewish communities in Hungary after 1945, according to Karády, is not significant further the point of getting married; he believes that due to several reasons, such as the destruction of households, losses of property and wealth, psychological effects of persecution, etc. all stopped or lessened recuperative fertility.[127] By presenting the rates of live-births of those from the Jewish fate in Budapest, indeed the numbers do not show such a significant increase, as for example, the number of births in 1947 recuperate to the rates of 1938.

Table 2: Number of live-births in Budapest based on religion (1938-1950)[128]

	Jews	Non-Jews	Children of homogamous Jewish parents	Children born to heterogamous families
1938	1540	15 034		
1939	996	16 034		
1940	991	17 777		
1941	914	13 938		
1942	1328	15 300		
1943	988	16 290		
1944	1164	20 009	1008	261
1945	529	15 542	524	153
1946	1445	15 220	1401	286
1947	1590	19 479	1590	395
1948			1507	537
1949			1123	388
1950			777	315

[127] Karády, *Túlélők*, 83-87.
[128] Ibid., 86.

The findings further show that after the peak in 1947, the rates decrease, which is only visible until 1950 (which year's results are an estimation).[129] In the analysis of these demographics, Karády states that this is an authentic example of the typical negative demographics of Jewish populations.[130] He then continues with exploring the reasons: 1) After 1948 with the arrival of Communism, the appeal of leaving Hungary grew stronger, 2) the surplus of women between the ages of 0-20, 3) the structural change of families, which is most visible by the high number of orphans, the shrinkage of families, and fragmented families.[131] The shrinkage of families means less children were born into families for Jewish families in pre-WWII Hungary supposedly had four or more children, which changed to having one or two children by post-1945. Under fragmented families, the author implies families of widow/ers and/or lost children in nuclear families.

Moreover, emigration is a crucial factor of the significant drop in the numbers of live-births. As presented above, the period of the immediate post-war years was an active migratory period, and many left Hungary with their new spouses. Obviously, this meant that couples as prospective families left, children were to be born in different countries already. The majority of newlywed deportees had children soon after their wedding, more or less still in the examined time period until 1949. In these four years, however, only one or two children were born into a family considering the time span.

Figure 8 New family, 1948. Source:Fortepan, photo ID: 105006, Gyula Hámori

[129] Ibid., 86-87.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 88-89.

Similarly to the indifference towards age perspectives, even the older couples had children. Ilona G. when returning back to Hungary found her father already waiting for her at the train station in their hometown. Afterwards, they were both waiting for the mother and younger brother to come back, but they never did. Ilona's dad eventually remarried at the age of forty-eight and around 1947 left Hungary for Israel with his new family. The very same year, Ilona also got married to a young widower, who had lost his pregnant wife and the whole family in 1944, as Ilona explains. Their son, Károly, was born still in the forties and the family remained in Debrecen.[132] This story perfectly illustrates that there was not much of a difference between generations, both the father and the daughter got remarried and started new families, one in Hungary, and the other in Israel. Karády's observation on age, namely, that older widows getting remarried were not potentially having children anymore did not come up in my research on the group of deportees. Unmistakably, this aspect could only be observed through the testimony of the younger generation, just as Ilona talks about her father, since the older generation was most probably not alive anymore at the time the audiovisual interviews were conducted by the Shoah Foundation.

In the view of the testimonies, the reason for the low average of childbirths in Hungary is assonant with Karády's observation about the structural change of families: nuclear families had changed from an average of four to eight children to one or two, maximum three. Most of the interviewed deportees, especially those who came from the provinces, had several siblings, but would not (or could not) extend their new families to same number of members. This observation is based on the fact that in the course of four years (1945-1949) the birth of more than two children into one family would not have been typical in itself due to the duration of a pregnancy and the time-effects of a childbirth. However, I have found a significant other factor among the group of deportees in the view of the low rates of live births which has to be taken

[132] VHA, Ilona G., interview 50284, segment 240-244, 1999, accessed 25 May 2018.

into serious consideration: the women's state of reproductive health both in terms of psychological and physiological effects.

Specific health problems were mentioned in some of the survivor interviews by women, especially related to menstruation and other gynecological issues. Katharina M. says that neither her, nor the women in her environment would menstruate after liberation.[133] Julianna W. explains that even years after liberation she had to spend weeks in the hospital due to several health problems she could not overcome, but she does not go into detail on the nature of her illnesses.[134] Finally, Magdolna P. mentions that she had a miscarriage in 1947.[135] Her comment on her miscarriage was passing, and stated in a very marginal manner, nevertheless, expressive to the point that it becomes clear that the event of a miscarriage by a female deportee was not exceptional. Moreover, the question of shame also arises here, whether the women actually wanted to talk about these events, whether they were ashamed to do so, or found the discussion too intimate to bring up. Subsequently, this issue might shed more light on women who got married, but had no children, or only one, whether this was a question of will, or rather a psychological-physiological outcome of the Holocaust and camp-life.

The physiological attributions of being a woman is an important aspect to be integrated in the analysis of female experiences in and after the Holocaust, primarily because the biological experiences of menstruation, childbearing, childbirth were all planned to be ceased by the Nazis in labor and concentration camps.[136] Based on a study about female experiences in the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, the methodologically planned steps by the Nazis against menstruation were coffee-like drinks that contained bromide, sterilization against pregnancy, and sending infants and children to the gas chamber against motherhood.[137] This

[133] VHA, Katharina M., interview 20208, segments 101-105, 1996, accessed 25 May 2018.
[134] VHA, Julianna W., interview 19618, segments 81-83, 1996, accessed 28 May 2018.
[135] VHA, Magdolna P., interview 51821, segments 257-262, 2001, accessed 25 May 2018.
[136] Rochelle G. Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.), 210.
[137] Ibid., 210-211.

shows that besides the psychologically traumatic experience of the Shoah that had an effect on the women's bodies, there were directed corporeal attacks on the female reproductive system. Taken this into account, it is no surprise that the impact of Nazi camps and persecution did not end with liberation in 1945, especially in the female body. Women were less likely able of healthy childbearing.

For a further insight, I conducted a separate index search of 'miscarriages' in the database of USC Shoah Foundation with a result of sixteen testimonies. Out of these results, five of the interviewees were from Hungarian-speaking towns or villages (in today's Romania and Slovakia), hence, for the limitations of this paper, I only consider these accounts for discussion. Out of the five women, two tell the stories of failed pregnancies while being still in the camps with vivid details. Marika, Hungarian Jewish prisoner of Ravensbrück was Elvira N.'s camp sister, who eventually told her story. Marika became pregnant in the previous concentration camp of Frankfurt am Main, and did not tell anyone, but became very sick, up until the point that she could not stand anymore. The miscarriage happened when she was laying on the top bunk, Elvira and the other women there saw that blood started to flow down onto the floor from the top bunk, so they took her down. Then, they brought her to an isolated part of the camp where corpses were laying, and left her there crying out loud in pain. Elvira says there was nothing they could have done for her, but shows regret as of whether this was the best choice to leave Marika there, probably in the midst of losing her baby.[138] Marika's story in the case of post-liberation female bodily experience is unfortunately not representative as she most probably passed away where she was left. Nonetheless, besides a sense of duty in telling her story once having encountered it, the events show that being pregnant while still in the camps

[138] VHA, Elvira N., interview 10705, segment 20, 1996, accessed 28 May 2018.

was kept a secret.[139] Consequently, miscarriages were most probably kept a secret, therefore not treated medically at all.

Eszter K.'s story perfectly illustrates the lack of adequate medical treatment, and hygiene. She managed to keep her pregnancy a secret until giving birth to her son on 5 December when she was taken for medical care in Auschwitz. After the birth, her placenta did not come out, and a Polish woman attending to her (not a Jewish woman, not quite clear who the personnel were from the testimony) did not call the doctor for medical attention and help. After constant bleeding, the doctor finally arrived 2 hours later and pulled the placenta out, when the bleeding finally stopped. Eszter recalls that the people treating her did not wash their hands, but eventually she did not get any infection. The people who knew about her childbirth did not put her back in the barracks, because then she would have been sent to the gas chambers, so they gave her a job in the hospital.[140] Although the medical staff saved Eszter's life with keeping her pregnancy a secret, the mistreatment

Figure 9 Drawing of a prisoner comforted by a camp sister by artist Helen Ernst, a survivor of Ravensbrück, 1946. Collection of Museen der Landeshauptstadt Schwerin, Stadtgeschichtsmuseum, Schwerin. Source: Rochelle G. Saidel, The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.)

[139] In some cases the child was successfully born in secret, see: Rivka Schiller, „How a Jewish woman survived pregnancy in a Nazi concentration camp to give birth to her son," Independent Online, accessed 29 May 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/how-a-jewish-woman-survived-pregnancy-in-a-nazi-concentration-camp-to-give-birth-to-her-son-a6731816.html

[140] VHA, Eszter K., interview 52181, segments 9-10, 1990, accessed 29 May 2018.

she had to undergo not only risked the health of her reproductive system, but her life as well. Most definitely such events in the camps had an impact on the mothers' future childbearing, but since reproductive health is a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"[141], not only in those cases were women influenced where miscarriages took place in the period of the Holocaust.

The other women out of my sampling all admit to have had several miscarriages post-1945 at varied stages. Dora R. reveals four early miscarriages after her marriage in 1948, and explicitly states that she was unable to stay pregnant due to the experiences of the camps.[142] Tobi B. tells her story of losing her baby being already seven months along, she believes that the reason for the miscarriage was the cruel and hostile nature of her new boss and working environment. The baby she lost was a girl, which loss had such an impact on her that the doctor said she has to move on immediately and try again and again. At the time when she became pregnant again, she had financial difficulties, therefore the agreement with her obstetric was that she would pay the fee of the labor and delivery care in monthly installments, which in case of failing to carry out, she would have had to give her baby as payment.[143] Tobi's story not only illustrates female deportees' sensitive and vulnerable state in the immediate post-war period, but the demeanor of their immediate environment they had to deal with. Although the thorough danger of persecution had ended in 1945, the state of insecurity did not cease to be for the women.

Moreover, as most of the deportees were on the move in this period, pregnant women besides having to deal with hostile and/or exploitive people, were exposed to unsafe conditions. Maria W. was on her way to make Aliyah when, in Marseille, she had a miscarriage. As she did not speak the language, she felt even more vulnerable to the happenings around her and was

[141] „Reproductive health," World Health Organization, accessed 29 May, 2018., http://www.wpro.who.int/topics/reproductive_health/en/
[142] VHA, Dora R., interview 54627, segments 195-196, 1997, accessed 21 April 2018.
[143] VHA, Tobi B., interview 54504, segments 167-171, 1996, accessed 21 April 2018.

rather an observer of what was happening to her. After some days in the hospital, they took her back to a DP camp, where she was left lying on the floor for two weeks. Only later, after having arrived in Israel was she provided the professional medical attention that a miscarriage would necessitate.[144]

Maria never had a child after this experience. In her testimony, she does not elaborate on her not having children, whether it was for physiological or psychological reasons. However, it becomes clear that for all of the ladies, circumstances of childbirth were rather difficult, sometimes even harsh. Although most of the female deportees did have children, Maria's story shows that starting a family was beyond pure intention. Women had to deal with the continuation of the Holocaust in their bodies, both mentally and physiologically, moreover, with the odds as to which circumstances and environments they found themselves in at a moment of emergency.

Overall, I find that even if there is a small amount of information on the cases of miscarriages in the post-liberation period, it is important to examine them closely in order to see behind demographic statistics, especially when dealing with the group of camp survivors. I believe that one of the biggest reasons for a significantly lower rate of childbirths in Hungary in the period of 1945 to 1949 is due to the high chances of miscarriages. As my research mainly focuses on the state of deportees, the whole category of Jewish survivors might not be covered, nonetheless, hiding and remaining in the Budapest ghetto could have been of the same effect to the reproductive system of women.[145] As the topics of failed pregnancies and the caused sufferings were not easily brought up by the interviewees, nor specifically asked by the interviewers, a more in-depth qualitative analysis on the reasons for a low average of births in Hungary in the examined time period is hardly attainable through testimonies in the Visual

[144] VHA, Maria W., interview 55436, segments 102-105, 1995, accessed 21 April 2018.
[145] I have some findings about Polish women who had miscarriages during the invasion of Poland and during ghettoization.

History Archives of the Shoah Foundation. The findings, however, are of indicative quality, therefore this issue of female reproductiveness in the immediate post-war period would be grounds to further research in order to look behind the sociological findings and gaining a wider perspective and knowledge concerning the era.

3.2.1. Emigration

Emigration is the most definite and supreme marker of dissimilation. The subject of emigration was even part of the lives of those deportees, who eventually did not emigrate, but considered it, or ended up having a fractured family because of other relatives who had left Hungary. Precise data on the total number of emigrants can only be a rough estimate, as both Karády and Stark point it out in their works. Reports of Hungarian and international Jewish agencies reported that in the year of 1946 63,500 people wished to move to Palestine, and another 45,000 to other destinations.[146] However, such reports can easily contain exaggerations, Stark believes that a more reasonable number is to be found on a list created by the Palestine Office in Budapest up until February 1947, which considers 32,007 people to be planning to leave for Eretz Israel.

Viewing the actual numbers of those emigrating is just as difficult as determining the number of those who were open to the possibility. Nonetheless, there is an estimation of the scale of emigration based on the registered immigration numbers of Palestine until May 1948, then Israel, the United States of America, and other overseas destinations. The number of those arriving to Palestine from Hungary between 1946 and 1948 (15 May) is 4,713, and between 1948 (15 May) and 1949 (31 December) is 10,307.[147] The number of Hungarian Jews arriving to the US is similarly only an estimate, since the numbers given are from the whole of Central Europe between the years 1945 to 1952: 16 250 without excluding Austria, from Austria alone 59 000. Overall, if we add up all the numbers, the final outcome is still not precise data as those

[146] Stark, *Zsidóság*, 93-94.
[147] Karády, *Túlélők*, 127.

settling in Western Europe are not included. The approximate of Jewish survivors emigrating to Western Europe or overseas (Canada, Australia, etc.) is, however, said to be of just as a large-scale as to the land of Israel.[148]

It must be noted that emigration from Hungary in the very specific time period of 1945/6-1949 is a complex phenomenon. Karády distinguishes four specific reasons: 1) geographical root loss, that is, deportees' and forced laborers sense of losing their desire to go home; 2) Israel becoming an independent country, by which the Jewish identity and the sense of belonging altered; 3) pre- and inter-war Jewish emigration that can be viewed as a model for the possibility of emigration, and 4) the perishment and disruption of families.[149] Undoubtedly all four factors effected the deportees who returned to Hungary in my examination, but the most striking and most commonly expressed factor that enforced plans of emigration was the fourth point, having to continue life without the (whole) family.

On a perceptual level, the loss of loved ones is the most apparent reason for wanting to leave Hungary, as the DEGOB reports reveal. Out of my sampling, every subject when asked or when deliberately talking about it, is missing at least one family member; none of the reports affirm a case where all relatives had arrived back. Comparatively, the audio-visual testimonies of VHA might alter the picture of fractured families being the strongest reason for emigration, for which reason, the passing of time is a crucial point to be considered. Survivor accounts recorded 40-50 years after the events fade the emotional reasons behind life events, and give space for rational reconsideration. This shift can be traced when comparing the immediate responses at DEGOB and at VHA interviews conducted decades later, next to the fact that the layout of the testimonies differs extremely.

The DEGOB reports have a bigger factor of obscurity, which is why it allows further implications about its content, and its credibility. For this reason, Murányi disputes the truth

[148] Ibid., 134.
[149] Ibid., 125-126.

about all the "Palestine-responses" to the last question of the DEGOB reports (see footnote no. 65).[150] Although originally, he agrees that most of the deportees expressed doubt about being able to live in a country where everything that had happened to them was ever possible. Moreover, he mentions deportees who already mourned their loved ones in DP camps and never returned to Hungary, speculating whether those who did return might have only done so in the hope of more certain news. Nevertheless, he declares strong doubt about the validity of these responses, contemplating about DEGOB workers who helped Jewish survivors with making Aliyahs.

In my interpretation, Murányi basically argues that due to Zionist bias, workers of DEGOB forged the authenticity of survivor testimonies. I do not find this standpoint politically offensive due to the historical context, yet I do find it very unlikely, mainly because of DEGOB's original objective of documentation, the significant task set when attending deportees. Even if the majority of DEGOB workers were Zionists and tried to help people get to Palestine, I do not think they would have aimed to alter the historical significance of these reports, which were intentionally recorded for this reason. Moreover, loud expression of having Zionist beliefs was also a possibility, there were instances of interviewees calling themselves Zionists, however in a very small number within my sampling. In order to interfere with these concerns, in my research, I cross-checked a group of people who mention emigration in the DEGOB reports with material from the Archives of ITS. For this reason, I added an additional search to my existing findings from the DEGOB database as well.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, to examine the circumstances of arrival and welcoming, I have excluded reports which only mention Palestine as a future plan to the last question of the questionnaire. After this exclusion, out of the 113 reports, 40 discuss emigration in general, the majority specifically to Palestine. According to a research conducted on the

[150] Murányi, „Volna lelke egy zsidó társát kihagyni ebből a mókából?", 49.

DEGOB database by Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, 73% of those deportees who were in Auschwitz wanted to emigrate, and 62% who were in labor camps.[151] In my sampling, I did not aim to distinguish deportees coming from different camps, as my focus is the understanding of returning deportees as a whole group. My original sampling was condensed based on elaborate descriptions about any aspects post-liberation. Nonetheless, I expanded the number of reports for examination when arriving to the topic of emigration.

Consequently, I conducted an additional research in the DEGOB database by the indexing term '*Palesztina'* (Palestine). This new filter resulted in 61 matches, out of which 56 reports contain the actual answer of wanting to emigrate to Palestine. Altogether the received results approximately reflect Kádár and Vági's findings, namely, that about 60-65% of the deportees expressed a desire to leave the country. Subsequently, I surveyed the subjects of the original and the new filtered reports under in the International Tracing System database, which resulted in 38 matches.

The matches of the ITS all shed light on the lives of the deportees after their interviews in Budapest at the DEGOB office. As all of the surveyed persons originally expressed wanting to leave Hungary at the time of arrival (1945), this finding could somewhat indicate the integrity of the DEGOB reports and that the subjects of these interviews articulated their actual future plans, and were not influenced (by Zionist workers of the DEGOB). Nonetheless, I do not consider this finding to be of representative value in its numbers, that is, the result of 38 persons having emigrated from Hungary only proves that 38 persons emigrated from Hungary, and not that there is a definite percentage of people having realized their plans of emigration.

Generally, the ITS matches show that the younger generation took the leap of faith and left their hometowns and pasts behind them. The average age of the emigrants is between 20 and 30, and the genders vary based on DEGOB sampling, however, the women usually left as

[151]Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, „Hazatérés és kivándorlás"

newlyweds with their husbands. Most of the departures happened precisely in the time period under examination in this paper, between 1945 and 1949, a few in 1950. Those having waited a couple of years most usually did not leave Hungary by themselves, most of the deportees left with their siblings, or their new spouses. First of all, this proves that the younger generation of deportees – who in the DEGOB reports express the most concern about lost loved ones – were actually waiting for their families to return and to decide together with the surviving relatives on future prospects, which they originally stated when interviewed in 1945. Secondly, this also shows that getting married was another crucial point in their lives, an unarticulated coping strategy at the time of waiting for relatives.

Regarding the destinations of emigration, the deportees most commonly moved to the United States of America, Canada, South America, and Palestine/Israel. In some cases, the route to a new life was not unidirectional. For instance, Tamás K. returned to Hungary from around Mauthausen (before liberation he and three of his associates escaped in hiding) in 1945, in which year (at the end of August) he gave an interview at DEGOB. Afterwards, Tamás went to Germany and worked for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration until 1947, after to have transferred to Frankfurt for work at AJDC for a year. In 1948, he applied for assistance in order to emigrate overseas at the International Refugee Organization (IRO), and the same year he got on The Marine Flasher to settle in Canada with his wife (N. Vera, also from Hungary).[152] Similarly to Tamás, whose route I could trace back, other deportees after returning to Hungary in 1945 left and went back to Germany, or to DP Camps. Clearly, the reason as we can see from Tamás and Vera's case was to seek assistance for emigrational purposes.

The findings show that bond between deportees was so strong that looking for a new home happened in groups, not individually. This phenomenon is most common among

[152] ITS Archives, 3.2.1.1/79363630, Certificate of IRO Eligibility: Thomas Künstler, 1948.

relatives, such as siblings and cousins, but not only. The pull effect of far destinations seems to greatly depend on those acquaintances who were already residing there. A DEGOB report whose subjects were three sisters and one friend (or perhaps extended family member, but clearly separated on the report, not only by the differing surname) perfectly illustrates this connectedness.

Four ladies in their twenties were interviewed at the end of June in 1945, whose path led to Budapest from the ghetto in Ungvár and the camps of Birkenau and Lenzing (which allows the connotation of them being "camp sisters").[153] At the tracing archive of ITS, I have found that three of the girls left Hungary in the examined time period at different times and with several stops. Klára G., the friend, was the first to get married in 1946 to Zoltán K., with whom she left for America with The Queen Elizabeth two years later at the end of 1948.[154] Zsuzsa P., one of the sisters got married a year after Klára, and the other sister Irén in 1951. Irén left Hungary before in 1950 with the transport ship called Howze to the US (after Klára).[155] Zsuzsa's, Irén's sister's, departure from Hungary is not quite clear, however, in 1954 she already had a registered address in Tel Aviv with her husband, Móric B.[156] However, the very same year, the couple left Israel and emigrated to the US, probably following Irén and Klára. There is no information available on the third sister, Ibolya P., in any of the Archives (ITS and VHA). Most importantly withal, in my view, this pull towards a common destination started with Klára originally leaving for the States. Likewise, several other groups, families of deportees from Hungary can be traced of having arrived together in a new land for a new beginning.

[153] HJA, DEGOB, Klára G., Ibolya P., Irén P., Zsuzsa P., report 156, accessed 23 May 2018.
[154] ITS Archives, 6.3.3.2/104636964, Comite International de la Croix-Rouge International Tracing Service report, 1958.
[155] ITS Archives, 6.3.3.2/99431136, Regierungsbezirksamt, 1955.
[156] ITS Archives, 6.3.3.2/93806684, Request for Records Check, American Consulate General, 1954.

Precisely the articulations of waiting for relatives still in Hungary, and the fact that decision-making were rather collective activities, lift the (re-)creation of a family web to the level of a coping strategy which was the most common launch pad for those wishing to emigrate. Similarly, it becomes clear that the deportees' approach towards the confiscated or plundered homes in Hungary was not usually based on a material demand, but on an emotional reaction as to where the family and the home was to be found afterwards. This emotional reaction, however, was complex as it most probably raised the question of how can one restart their life and live together with those neighbors and acquaintances who had most probably robbed them single-handedly while the family might never return.[157] Other illustrative occurrences are when survivors of death camps did not even consider going back to their old houses, whether they were already in Budapest or never even went in the direction of Hungary from DP camps. These survivors decided to leave everything they had behind on an emotional basis, which type of break with the past is also told by Steven Spielberg's and the Shoah Foundation's documentary on Hungarian Jewish survivors, *The Last Days*.[158]

All in all, based on the sociological findings of this period, it is clear that the coping strategies of the entire surviving Jewry in Hungary are characteristic of the groupf of deportees as well, however, my findings show that the two examined coping strategies go hand in hand. The initial step was the establishment of a family with a strong reliance of remaining in the group of others with similar experiences of the Shoah, after which families either chose to restart their lives in Hungary, or elsewhere. The assimilationist dilemma, therefore, in this period is characteristic of not being an individual dilemma, but more of a familial choice. Since the process of estrangement had already begun either with the negative experiences of the

[157] Sari B's case mentioned in the previous chapter reveals this complexity, see: VHA USC, Sari B., interview 22391, segments 75-80, 1996, accessed 17 May 2018.
[158] James Moll, *The Last Days*, DVD, (Los Angeles, California: Allentown Productions, 1998)

return, or the developed coping strategy of remaining a closed group, the most common outcome of the dilemma was emigration, that is, dissimilation.

Chapter 4.: Conclusion

I tried to expand the scholarly approach toward the surviving Jewry of Hungary that their highly assimilated nature remained a significant characteristic throughout by shedding light on the unique group of deportees separately, thus showing that in its entirety the survivors do not compromise of a homogenous collective. The qualitative examination of the very specific group of Jewish Holocaust survivors who had been deported from Hungary to labor or concentration camps reveals that on a majority level not only was there a common path in coping strategies, but that they are significant in their differences from other Holocaust survivors in Hungary. The linear direction according to which I observed the specific group of deportees is from liberation in Nazi camps to repatriation, recuperation in the homes and hospitals of Budapest, to be followed by negative encounters with the old homes and neighbors. This line of investigation confirmed that the first impressions the deportees had about "the home" they returned to was an added factor in their inclination to leave to Hungary. Therefore, I stepped further and examined the most typical coping strategies of deportees.

As most of the DEGOB reports reveal, thinking about the future was among the first (instinctive) coping strategies after having survived the unthinkable. A small number of the interviewees, thus started re-planning their old lives by getting back to their respective workplaces or schools. A higher number of the respondents, however, was stuck in the despair of waiting for their families, while being confronted with their ruined family homes due to plunder and destruction. Therefore, while waiting at halfway houses, hospitals, homes, etc. they delayed restarting life by themselves and placed all the answers and possibilities of a new beginning in the hands of the lost loved ones. Consequently, the majority of deportees eventually developed specific coping mechanisms as there were hardly any Jewish families left without being fractured.

According to statistics from the time period between 1945 to 1949 in Hungary, a very high number of Jews got immediately married or remarried after liberation, which change affected the family structures of the Jewish population. Therefore, with the focused research of family nets only among the deportees, I have found that the most prevalent coping strategy for this specific group was the creation of family life. By reading and listening to survivor testimonies, the modes of finding partners stood out: deportee relations were so exclusive that deportees formed their own groups, in which friends of deportees or relatives of deportees were considered as potential spouses. However, the high number of Jewish weddings in Hungary did not mean leaving the assimilationist dilemma behind for some: newlyweds reconsidered the choice of leaving the country behind together.

In my research, I have found that the majority of the deportees did not plan to restart life in Hungary anymore, that the next most common coping strategy was the definite marker of dissimilation: emigration. After taking into account that the articulations found in DEGOB reports about the future prospects of leaving the country were on the level of initial planning, I conducted further research on my sampling to find that most of these plans were actually realized. Based on these individual stories, it became clear that people did wait for lost relatives to return or started new families in order to make these life choices together, thus emigrating in pairs or groups.

4.1. Perceptions

Most commonly the perceptions about the welcome in Hungary were negative, dissatisfaction about the received food and money together with the complaints of not having any welcoming at all outweigh the positive impressions. Generally, the direction of such remarks was never towards the relief agencies themselves though, but rather for the country and authorities: "We do not get moral or material satisfaction for our sufferings, and the authorities, whose duty would be to absolutely assist us, also behave passively with us. They idly watch and bear the fact that any number of deportees still after months are adrift at relatives,

or at acquaintances, or in temporary homes, some are still not sleeping in beds between pillows, but just as in Auschwitz, on straw mattresses or on the bare floors, and many are not able to reclaim their homes out of which they had been dislodged despite law and justice."[159]

Similarly, experiences about life after 1945 in Hungary vary. Several accounts reveal encountering antisemitism, remembering that the feeling of being "the other" never really vanished. Presumably, this effect is another reason for the unique tendency of exclusive cohesion among the examined deportees, however, after a period of time a bigger freedom was longed for to be able to restart life. "There is so much suffering behind me that even I cannot believe the number of years behind me, I would like to find a home where my work will be appreciated and I will not always be the tolerated or untolerated alien."[160] Such expressions go beyond the established viewpoint that the whole of Europe was in a state of chaos immediately after the war and that the priority was to rebuild cities (Budapest) first, as this shows the general impression of the people, not the streets.

More specific perceptions about the Jewish agencies and/or institutions is not very much expressed in the examined sources, although some results showed up in my research about problems with children's homes[161] and the functioning of the Joint office in Budapest[162]. In their study about Holocaust survivor children, Bányai and Gombocz demonstrate some children's perceptions of the orphanages and schools, which approach has new aspects to offer. Consequently, deeper insight could be gained about experience in Hungary as a Holocaust survivor with further focused research on specific perceptions about the actions taken and institutions set up by the authorities and/or Jewish relief agencies. Such an explicit examination

[159] HJA, DEGOB, L. Jenő, report 3555 , accessed 20 April 2018.
[160] HJA, DEGOB, H. Bernát, report 2955, accessed 20 April 2018.
[161] The JDC Archives, item ID 1029343, "Letter from AJDC – New York to AJDC - Paris", 1947, accessed 05 June 2018, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/Geneva45-54/G45-54_Count/G45-54_HU_006/G45-54_HU_006_0206.pdf#search=
[162] There are several complaint letters about the Budapest branch, as well as financial issues in archival documents from the Paris and New York office.

would, moreover, add to the understanding of one of the significant coping strategies after the war: emigration. However, to achieve newer insights in the research of Holocaust survivors from/in Hungary, I find it crucial to distuingish the layers of the group, creating a difference in the interpretation of camp survivors, ghetto survivors, survivors liberated in the Yellow Star houses, survivors of hiding, etc.

Overall, this thesis aims to open discussion about the afterlife of Holocaust survivors to have a better understanding about Europe in the immediate post-war setting. More specifically, however, my paper aims to present the voices of the survivors because behind all the archival material and demographic findings, their personal stories present an organic part of Holocaust history. I find the period of 1945 to 1949 in Hungary of crucial importance to view the very first articulations about the Holocaust in the very unique setting of how people having lived through the unthinkable were received for it is the basis of today's memory of politics of the Holocaust.

Figure 10 Their Skin Says Never Forget, Source: Uriel Sinai, New York Times, accessed 5 June 2018,

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