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Niemals und nirgends findet er Ruhe:[1] The Abandonment of Elderly Holocaust Survivors, 1945-1960

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[1] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 28. Dezember 1948. Translates to "He will never find rest anywhere."

"Today I am a homeless old man without a roof over my head, without a family, without any next of kin… Do I look like a human being? No, decidedly not."[2] Jankiel Wiernick, like many elders who lived through the Holocaust, felt abandoned and without hope. Many cultures, including the religious tradition of Judaism, show a significant amount of respect and deference towards elders. People feel an instinctual compassion toward those who are in the latter years of their lives. In the case of Wiernick, as well as thousands of other elderly Jewish people who survived the Holocaust, the whole world became distracted with visions of the future, leaving the elders to forever live in the past, trapped in their memories of the Shoah and all of the people they lost.

The Holocaust represents one of the largest atrocities committed in modern history; in the past forty years, it has become a staple in American education through well known books such as *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank and *Night* by Elie Wiesel. The primary subject of these books, movies, and scholarly studies is almost always children and young adults, those that represented the future of Ashkenazi Judaism.[3] Tucked away in the background, another demographic of survivors has gone entirely ignored by their community at the time and by scholars of the 21st century. In the immediate postwar period, elderly Holocaust survivors found themselves abandoned by society and left without family and community. Most of them were too old to be appealing to the young nation of Israel,[4] who was seeking young families and military recruits, and many Western nations were maintaining tight restrictions on immigration and

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[2] Jankiel Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka* (Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza MakPrint, 2003), 47. *A Year in Treblinka* was originally published in 1944, but the quoted translation was published in 2003.

[3] The term "Ashkenazi" refers to a sect of Judaism that migrated to Eastern and Central Europe after the Crusades.

[4] Although the terms and definitions are politically debated, depending on whether or not people regard Israel as a legitimate nation, this paper will be referring to the land as Israel, even in the early stages of establishment when it was still deemed as Palestine in order to provide clear understanding that it was not migration to the land itself that is important, it is the migration to a Jewish nation.

similarly seeking out younger skilled laborers. As a result, this population, most of whom felt as though their lives were already behind them, had nothing to do but to "wait for their end."[5]

In the latter half of the 20th century, scholars began to develop a detailed understanding of how the Holocaust was possible, and how the communities and landscapes recovered. Studies have even produced analyses of the historiography of the Holocaust itself.[6] Amidst all this scholarly research, there is one single academic journal article that discusses the plight of the small demographic of elders, as defined as those over 55, that survived the Holocaust. In his article titled "Somehow the pathetic dumb suffering of these elderly people moves me more than anything': Caring for Elderly Holocaust Survivors in the Immediate Postwar Years," Dan Stone examines the elderly population in the direct aftermath of the Holocaust. Approximately 4,800 elderly Jews survived and were subsequently liberated from Theresienstadt,[7] a combined ghetto and concentration camp located in Terezin, Czechoslovakia, and are the primary subject in this article. Only a couple hundred elders survived the concentration camps in Germany and Austria.[8] Although there is very little work regarding this demographic, Stone is able to use witness testimony of those who met with them and saw firsthand the daily lives of and the treatment experienced by the elderly Jews[9] who survived the Holocaust.

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[5] Rose L. Henriques, "Report of Visit to Berlin, 19th to 22nd October 1945," 24 October 1945, in Dan Stone, "Somehow the pathetic dumb suffering of these elderly people moves me more than anything': Caring for Elderly Holocaust Survivors in the Immediate Postwar Years," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2018): 393, https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcy057.

[6] Dan Stone, "Der Holocaust und seine Historiografie," in *Das Zeitalter der Genozide: Ursprünge, Formen und Folgen politischer Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Olaf Glöckner und Roy Knocke, (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt GmbH, 2011), 33-55.

[7] This particular concentration camp and ghetto is also commonly known as Terezin, in reference to the Czech town it was located in. This paper will be using the term Theresienstadt in order to make it clear that it is in reference to the concentration camp established by the Nazi Reich.

[8] Dan Stone, "Somehow the pathetic dumb suffering of these elderly people moves me more than anything': Caring for Elderly Holocaust Survivors in the Immediate Postwar Years," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2018): 384-403, https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcy057.

[9] In civil discourse, the term 'Jew' grows increasingly more controversial, and some might oppose my use of it here; however, it is the term most commonly used in Jewish studies, history, and variations for each respective religious group is used in religious studies. Therefore, I chose to use it here in order to be as accurate as possible, while remaining respectful to the community.

Throughout the scholarly literature, elders are usually only mentioned in short sentences or footnotes. After liberation, scholarship and society largely ignored this group, focusing instead on the younger populations. This willful ignorance occurred despite the similarity in experience between the elderly and the much younger population. The combined location for all of the people, displaced by the war in some form or another, known as Displaced Persons camps, or DP camps. DP camps were home to both Holocaust survivors and other civilians, and it was home to some surviving elders. In Vincent Slatt's work discussing DPs, the elderly Jewish survivors are only mentioned a few times, but the article itself provides important background on liberation and aid for the Holocaust survivors in postwar Europe.[10] The limited works on DP camps in Europe rarely mention the elderly population explicitly; however, understanding the nature of the DP camps itself will provide a more detailed picture of what post-liberation life was like for elders.

In order to understand this group and its abandonment, the only option is to examine other research about Jews and Jewish communities in the fifteen years after the Shoah. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, it is only logical that the primary concern for thousands of survivors was migration. The land that raised them turned its back and cast them away to a brutal death. As a result, the study of postwar Jewish life is largely centered around the Diaspora and the establishment of Israel, whether it be discussion on the Israeli paramilitary group known as the Haganah and their efforts to aid immigration while also expanding their own forces,[11] or analysis on the patterns of migration and Diaspora.[12] Israel and other Jewish communities around the

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[10] Vincent Slatt, "Nowhere to Go: Displaced Persons in Post V.E. Day Germany," *The Historian* 64, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 275-293, https://www.jstor.org/stable.26305238.

[11] Yehuda Bauer, "From Cooperation to Resistance: The Haganah 1938-1946," *Middle Eastern Studies* 2, no. 3 (April 1966): 182-210, https://www.jstor.org/stable.4282159.

[12] Sharon Kangisser Cohen, "Choosing a Heim: Survivors of the Holocaust and Post-War Immigration," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 46, no. 2 (Autumn 2013): 32-54, https://wwww.jstor.org/stable/42751137.

world focused on leaving their trauma in the past in order to form the "new Jew," leaving little space for the elderly who were not able to immigrate or rebuild their identity so late in their lives.[13] For a demographic of people that was recovering from a massive trauma that took many lives, it was only natural that all focus was pushed toward the youth, the future of their community; however, academia has taken a similar approach, leading to the senior population remaining underserved and underrepresented.

It is truly impossible to understand any aspect of a demographic's history, such as that of senior Holocaust survivors, without understanding the societal context of the time and location. It is the importance of context that influences many books and studies into painting the picture of life for elderly Holocaust survivors in the fifteen years following the Holocaust. Scholar Michael Brenner focuses his book, *Nach dem Holocaust: Juden in Deutschland 1945-1950,* on the aftermath of the Holocaust for the German-Jewish community, rather than following the established trend of examining the genocide itself and the steps that Germany took to get there.[14] There have been multiple works released in the years following Brenner's book; most notably, historian Lynn Rapaport's work on how the Holocaust reshaped the identity of Jews living in Europe, specifically in Germany. She uses historical documents and hundreds of witness testimonies to address the subject of Jewish identity when further complicated by experiences in the Holocaust.[15] Both of these works are helpful for further understanding how the Holocaust shaped identities in the Jewish community.

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[13] Irit Keynan, "The Memory of the Holocaust and Israel's Attitude Toward War Trauma, 1948-1973: The Collective vs. the Individual," *Israel Studies* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 95-117, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/israelstudies.23.2.05.

[14] Michael Brenner, *Nach dem Holocaust: Juden in Deutschland 1945-1950* (München: C.H. Beck, 1995).

[15] Lynn Rapaport, *Jews in Germany After the Holocaust: Memory, Identity and Jewish-German Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Immaterial things such as identity are foundational to human life; however, there are still material things that determine how people live. In the case of Holocaust survivors after 1945, that included the homes, schools, and synagogues they had once known. Michael Meng, a professor of European history, delves into the physical construction of Judaism in Germany and Poland, providing a view of Holocaust memory politics and the influence they had, and continue to have, over Jewish ruins, which were left in disrepair in the immediate aftermath of the Shoah; it was physically difficult, and in some cases impossible, to return to the lives they had lived before the war.[16] This is all important to establish because of what it meant to survivors. There was no chance of returning to the lives they had led before Hitler's rise to power in 1933, leaving only two options: rebuild or migrate. Neither of these options were particularly feasible to the elderly population, most of whom had lost all of their family and friends to the Nazis. Hundreds of elderly Jews had been living as prisoners under the rule of the Third Reich, and even after. Despite the guilt and responsibility the world feels towards Jews in more recent years, the elderly are not treated with the humanity and respect they deserve.

It is a known fact that the Holocaust almost entirely wiped out the European Jewish population. Scholars document that approximately six million Jews lost their lives in the Shoah.[17] Although there is no clear number on how many European Jews survived the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) estimates that only one out of every three Jews survived. By 1950, there was only a population of 3.5 million Jews in Europe,[18] as

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[16] Michael Meng, *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[17] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Documenting Numbers of Victims of the Holocaust and Nazi Persecution," Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed September 10, 2023, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution.

[18] It should be noted that this number does not give an accurate estimation to the Jewish population in 1945 because by 1950, many had emigrated from Europe already.

compared to the 1933 population of 9.5 million.[19] A few million Jews survived the Holocaust, only ~5,000 of these survivors were members of the elderly population: 4,800 were liberated from Theresienstadt and only a couple hundred survived the concentration camps of Germany and Austria.[20] Of the several million Jewish survivors, only a small percentage were elderly, or over the age of fifty-five.

In the 21st century, "elderly" is usually determined by age of retirement, social security, and overall health. Under the Nazi Reich, however, the ability to perform hard labor was the determining factor for the elderly demographic. Upon entering the concentration camps, the SS would hold a selection process, which would determine whether an individual would be sent to the barracks and be kept for heavy labor, or if they would be immediately sent into the gas chambers. The main factor that would decide whether someone would be kept alive longer or if they would meet a cruel end at their arrival was how fit they were for labor.[21] Fifty-five is by no means old, but the Nazis running the selection process often viewed individuals around that age as unfit for labor, and therefore, would not be kept alive. In the areas of Europe that had higher death tolls, primarily Poland, it was practically impossible to survive the death camps if you were not young and seemingly healthy enough to be an enslaved laborer.[22] As a result, most of the surviving elders were German and Austrian Jews who lived in the Theresienstadt ghetto rather than in the concentration camps and death camps that were scattered throughout Poland.

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[19] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Remaining Jewish Population of Europe in 1945," Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed September 10, 2023, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/remaining-jewish-population-of-europe-in-1945.

[20] Stone, "Somehow the pathetic dumb suffering of these elderly people moves me more than anything," 384.
[21] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "At the Killing Centers," Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed September 18, 2023, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/at-the-killing-centers.
[22] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Jewish Losses During the Holocaust: By Country," Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed September 1, 2023, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-losses-during-the-holocaust-by-country.

Arriving at the gates of a concentration camp meant being forced to participate in the selection, but many of the elderly Jewish population would neither make it to the selection, nor would they make it to Theresienstadt. In old people's homes in areas of Europe victim to the Third Reich, some elderly Jews debated whether or not it would be worth it to continue on at all. They had lived their lives, and did not want to live their last years in persecution and turmoil. In 1942, a Berlin Jew named Adolf Guttentag[23] wrote in his diary:

> Now fate has caught up with Uncle Ernst, too. Yesterday afternoon he was informed that he was to be ready tomorrow morning from 8:00 a.m. on; he would be picked up and evacuated together with his relative, Miss Lise N. (who has kept house for him). It is never divulged where they are going, presumably somewhere in Bohemia. He had always been determined not to go; he wanted to end his life because of his more and more frequent and painful heart troubles, which can only be interpreted as angina pectoris [...] At night, he presumably injected himself and Miss N. with morphine and took Veronal. Since it has now been at least 15 hours since he took the medicines, it can be assumed that the result will be absolutely fatal, and any resuscitation, which everybody fears, is impossible.[24]

Throughout the diary entries that are still available, the entries depict an inner battle that many of the elderly people in his community held; they did not want to die in fear. Some, such as Uncle Ernst, chose to maintain control over their own death, rather than allowing their fate to be up to the Nazis. While the population of elderly Holocaust survivors was incredibly small due to the terrors and disease that ravaged ghettos and concentration camps, there were a few who chose death on their own terms.

In the process of deportation and carrying out the Final Solution, the Nazi Reich deported many of the elderly Jews, some of whom had fought for Germany in the Great War, to Theresienstadt, which was meant to be an act of kindness.[25] Despite how Theresienstadt would

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[23] Adolf Guttentag fit into the elderly demographic and was seventy-four at the time of his writing the diary in 1942.
[24] Adolf Guttentag, *Diary,* August 31, 1942 to October 16, 1942, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed August 10, 2023, https://perspectives.ushmm.org/item/diary-of-adolf-guttentag. The USHMM is responsible for the English translation; they do not provide the name for this particular translator.
[25] Susanna Schrafstetter, *Flight and Concealment: Surviving the Holocaust Underground in Munich and Beyond,* translated by Allison Brown (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2022), 33.

present itself to the world,[26] it was a cruel and frightening place, as one would expect from a *konzentrationslager*.[27] For those imprisoned there, it had been years of barbed wire and fear before the Allied Powers, who had recently liberated them, would spread a pamphlet telling them: "Men and women of Theresienstadt!... In Theresienstadt you are safe! The war is not over yet! Those who leave Theresienstadt expose themselves to the dangers of war." [28] Similar to many other camps, the people in Theresienstadt experienced "liberation" only to have the Allied Powers keep them within the same confines and barbed wire fences that their Nazi oppressors had built.

For those imprisoned in the camps, liberation did not guarantee health, survival, or overall improvement in quality of life. The Allied Powers liberated most of the surviving elderly population from Theresienstadt and other concentration camps.[29] When help arrived for the Jews, healthcare workers faced an extra challenge in aiding them without injuring them further.[30] Whether it was in regards to food, water, or treating illnesses, medical professionals had to work slowly and meticulously in order to prevent further harm. The elderly population, most of whom already faced the health risks brought on by age, would have to wait for the life saving care they needed. Liberation meant that their Nazi oppressors were not a threat, but death and disease still reigned supreme; the elderly population were still limited to the confines of a camp, waiting for whatever would happen next, whether it be medical aid or their death.

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[26] Theresienstadt was inspected by the International Red Cross in order to show that they were not doing anything sinister, the camp would be prepared for these visits before returning to the wretched conditions that the prisoners lived in. For further reading regarding Theresienstadt, please refer to *Theresienstadt 1941-1945: The Face of Coerced Community by H.G. Adler*.

[27] The German term for the concentration camps built under the Third Reich

[28] "The War is Over for Remaining Inmates of Theresienstadt: An Announcement from Leo Baeck and Others" (1945), Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection, 2019.2.29., https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/143, accessed August 9, 2023. Translated by author, Maggie Garrett; for original German translation, see Appendix A, Source 1.

[29] Stone, "Somehow the pathetic dumb suffering of these elderly people moves me more than anything," 384.

[30] Pat Lynch, "US Nurse Describes Condition of Surviving Camp Inmates Upon Liberation," Interview by Sandra Bradley, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,* February 14, 1995, https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn511059

When the Allied forces liberated the *konzentrationslagern* of the Nazi Reich, there were many challenges presented by the sheer amount of people who were displaced and in need of aid, not limited to the Jews, Romani, and other ostracized groups who were victims of the camps. Following liberation, the Allied Powers notified those imprisoned in camps, such as Dachau, a concentration camp outside of Munich, that the Allied Forces would be moving them to another type of camp, the DP camps. This initially sparked outrage as Holocaust survivors felt as though the Allied Powers were merely taking them from one prison into another.[31] Looking at what remains of the Displaced Persons camps, such as photographs, makes it easy to understand their concerns.

[31] "Communique Addressed to Colonel Paul A. Roy from Former Prisoners of the Now Liberated Camp Dachau" (1945), *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection,* 2021.1.35, accessed July 21, 2023, https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1737.

Fig. 1: David Marcus, *Jewish Displaced Persons Enter the Main Gate of the Ziegenhain Displaced Persons Camps*, Photograph, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, September 1946, https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1178622.

These camps, such as the Ziegenhain DP camp[32] in Germany, are forever captured in photographs, with their ramshackle gates and their barbed wire fences. In some cases, the electric fences put in by the Nazis were still kept on even after the Allied Forces had taken over and chosen to aid and assist displaced persons in those areas.[33] Conditions were abysmal at best, and most efforts to aid these individuals were geared towards reuniting them with homes and families, which was a possibility for many of the non-Jewish DPs; however, the Holocaust wiped out entire family lines, often making reunions utterly impossible. The Allied Powers also attempted to repatriate many of the displaced persons, but for the Jewish DPs, that meant the possibility of being put back into a community that was entirely unsafe for them.

Repatriation, reinstatement, and assimilation: these three words describe the goals of various organizations and councils, such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the International Refugee Organization (IRO). In the case of the Jewish DPs, this was easier said than done. On both a material and metaphorical level, the Holocaust obliterated theJewish community of Europe. Homes, businesses, schools, and synagogues were all destroyed by the Nazis, leaving surviving Jews with nowhere to return. The elderly Jewish population had been part of the long established and assimilated community that had called Central Europe[34] its home for generations. Ripped out from under them, there was little to no possibility of returning to that home. A majority of the elderly Jewish survivors were originally citizens of Germany, meaning they had experienced the entirety of Adolf Hitler's rise to power. They had lived to see their neighbors and community members turn on them, and in

[32] Located in the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate in southwest Germany.
[33] Brenner, *Nach dem Holocaust,* 13.
[34] Rate of assimilation varied based on country.

the fifteen years following, postwar reconstruction and time reduced the physical landmarks of a Jewish community to rubble.[35] The IRO and UNRRA were attempting to reinstate communities when the physical land and infrastructure itself no longer existed.

It was likely never the intention of the UNRRA to leave and abandon the population of elderly Jews who had survived the Holocaust, but whether intention was present or not does not change the outcome. The global community and history itself abandoned and forgot them. The world at large was not only guilty of this, as the Jewish community at the time also left the elderly population to their plight. Organizations such as the United Jewish Appeal advertised and fundraised money in order to aid children and families that were victims of the Holocaust. These advertisements depict a photograph of two children, both looking tired and ill, one of them crying.[36] These were the Jewish Holocaust victims for whom those outside of Europe were concerned or and raising funds. While there is no doubt that aiding children was beyond important, especially in order to revive the Ashkenazi Jewish population, it does exist as further proof that the sick, elderly Jews, left alone in DP camps and in *Altenheime*[37] found themselves forgotten, left to live in their memories of the past several years.

All European Jews shared the experience of watching their homes and lives be destroyed, but what was different for the elderly community was, primarily, their age. As Dan Stone states:

> …where the elderly are concerned, what is most striking is the almost total absence of any hope for the future. Youngsters could not forget what had happened to them, but they had the possibility of starting a new life. The elderly (of course with exceptions) were focused on what and —primarily—whom they had lost, and they were devastated by the experience of the war and the Holocaust, with little hope for beginning life anew.[38]

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[35] Meng, *Shattered Spaces,* 63.
[36] "*Saturday Evening Post* Advertisement for the United Jewish Appeal" (1947), *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection.* 2012.1.366, accessed August 10, 2023, https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1055.
[37] German term for a retirement home or old person's home.
[38] Stone, "Somehow the pathetic dumb suffering of these elderly people moves me more than anything," 389.

The combination of feeling abandoned by society and a physical inability to restart life due to their age, the elderly were left without hopes for the future that other, younger generations of Holocaust survivors had. Rejoining the prewar Jewish community was not an option for the majority of people in the Displaced Persons camps, which led many to a different option: migration. With the establishment of Israel and the Allied Powers' aims to aid the DPs, largely with political motives,[39] there were seemingly many avenues that allowed for emigration; however, each of these avenues had stipulations that would restrict and prevent the elderly population from joining the diaspora.

After experiencing the pinnacle of centuries of antisemitism, Israel, an independent Jewish nation, was a concept that would provide security and acceptance to survivors of the Holocaust. While, in theory, it was a land that would be safe and accepting to Jews who had lived under the persecution of the Third Reich, it could not be ignored that the creation of Israel was going to require pain and bloodshed. From the beginning, Israel was preparing for battle, and before its establishment as a legitimate state, it was the Zionist paramilitary organization known as the Haganah that held a significant amount of power. The Haganah was the group responsible for aiding many Holocaust survivors in their (at the time) illegal immigration into Israel.[40] The journey to Israel was mentally and physically taxing, and for many it came with the decision to join the Haganah, or as they would later become, the Israeli Defense Force.[41] For the elderly population, the physical demands of migration were too extreme, and they were less

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[39] For further reading regarding the use of Displaced Persons as political pawns, please refer to Mark Elliot's *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in their Repatriation.*

[40] Schlomo Katz, "Understanding the Jewish Resistance in Palestine: The Aims and Methods of the Haganah," *Commentary (Pre-1986),* 07, 1946, 46-47, accessed August 5, 2023, https://login.proxy177.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/understanding-jewish-resistance-palestine/docview/199424367/se-2.

[41] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 29 January 1949. In this letter, Leo is explaining to Walter that several family friends would be under the protection of the Haganah during their journeys, but that in exchange, their children were being trained within the organization.

likely to be valuable to the Haganah as potential recruits. The fact of the matter was that a paramilitary organization did not bring elderly people into their forces.

After the legal establishment of the Israeli state, the Haganah were no longer the only option for immigration to Israel. What was necessary for legal immigration was a passport or a temporary travel document, granted by governments and organizations, including in Displaced Persons camps. There are not any numbers or statistics currently available in regards to how often local and national governments issued these permits, and to whom, but of those that exist and that are housed in archives, they primarily belonged to Holocaust survivors under the age of fifty.[42] The temporary permit of Israel and Helena Elbaum Dorembus were a typical example of what these documents looked like and contain: pictures, birth dates, physical descriptions, etc.[43] Israel and Helena were also typical in the fact that they are young. Many of these documents represented physical permission for these Holocaust survivors to move on and build their lives anew, but that was a luxury that many of the elderly were unable to consider. It was never meant to be a meticulous exclusion of the elderly population. Rather, Israel and its citizens were busy establishing and building their new country, leaving the elderly behind and forgotten as a result.

Picture it in your head: children are sitting in rows of desks as their teacher stands at the front, similar to any classroom. Plastered on the walls behind the children are portraits of important Zionist leaders and the modern Jewish national anthem.[44] These children, still at an age where it is possible to quickly pick up a new language, such as Hebrew, became prepared to be

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[42] In my research, I came across over fifty copies of passports and temporary travel documents, none of them were for people over the age of fifty-five.

[43] "Post-WWII Temporary Travel Document in Lieu of Passport Issued by the Military Government of Germany to Israel and Helena Elbaum Dorembus" (1947), *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection,* 2019.2.244., accessed July 21, 2023, https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1571.

[44] It should be noted that the archive itself chose to describe the Jewish National Anthem as being specifically Jewish rather than Israeli, I chose to follow the descriptions provided by the archivists at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

strong and wise citizens of Israel.[45] The image I just described to you was a Jewish school in a German DP camp, and many of these children likely went on to make *aliyah*.[46] In another DP camp, young men and women were in a classroom learning about agriculture, in preparation for the labor they would do in a *kibbutz*[47] when they arrived in Israel.[48] An education was being provided specifically to the young Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, and the elderly were beginning to find themselves excluded from similar opportunities. This exclusion began even before DP camps and schools in the postwar period, as the Palestinian Jewish soldiers who fought in the war and attempted to aid their Jewish brethren brought pamphlets and flyers encouraging Zionism. These pamphlets, the aim of which was to help Holocaust survivors both before and after liberation by aiding them in immigration to Palestine, written in modern Hebrew, a language that a younger demographic was at a more apt age to learn.[49] Although the elderly Ashkenazi Jews would have had understanding of Biblical Hebrew or of Yiddish, they would be at a disadvantage for learning the primary language of Israel because of their age. Israel, the physical manifestation of a Jewish nation, was unintentionally excluding and forgetting an entire demographic of Jewish people, trapped in DP camps and *Altenheime* without hope and without the support of their community.

Having to make the decision of what to do next, especially for the older population who had limited options, was extremely difficult. One of the people faced with this decision was a

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[45] "Portraits of Zionist Leaders Hang in a Classroom," as posted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed September 10, 2023, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/portraits-of-zionist-leaders-hang-in-a-classroom.
[46] The direct translation of *aliyah* in Hebrew is ascent or rise; more often it is used in its religious and cultural connotation, meaning a Jewish person's immigration to Israel.
[47] A communal agricultural settlement in Israel.
[48] Agricultural Training before Emigration to Palestine," Photograph, as posted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed September 11, 2023, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/agricultural-training-before-emigration-to-palestine.
[49] "*Jewish Brigade Group* Pamphlet" (1944), *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection,* 2012.1.395, accessed July 21, 2023, https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1083.

man named Leo Ziffer. Born on November 25, 1884,[50] he was a lawyer and prominent figure of the Jewish community in the Czechoslovakian town of Český Těšín[51] before the events of World War II and Hitler's Final Solution. When the SS invaded the Ziffer family's town in 1942, Leo was fifty-eight years old, and was quickly separated from his family as they grouped him with other men of a similar age.[52] It is a miracle that Leo was able to return to his family in 1945, given that he was sixty-one, a part of the elderly demographic, and came from a background of white collar work, which was less useful for the Nazis who sought out manual laborers and tradesmen. The Ziffer family, unlike most of the Jewish population, and particularly the elderly Jewish population, were lucky in that their close and immediate family all survived: father (Leo), mother (Anny), daughter (Edith), and son (Walter) were all liberated and repatriated to Český Těšín.

There were many burdens facing Holocaust survivors who wanted to migrate and build a new life. For many, those burdens included being alone, as their family and friends had all perished. Leo Ziffer, who did lose people, still had immediate family members not only in his life, but successfully living in America. Due to that, his story should be heard and understood with the knowledge that while he faced many challenges, he also held some advantages that other elderly Jews did not. With that in mind, Leo still faced an extreme amount of frustration and despair in the years following the Shoah due to struggles with immigration and physical separation from his son, with whom he was extremely close. In 1948, his youngest child, Walter, immigrated to Nashville, Tennessee where he completed two years of high school before he enrolled in the engineering program at Vanderbilt University.[53] Despite the distance, Leo kept in

[50] Walter Ziffer, Interview 34886, Interview by Sara Ghitis, *Visual History Archive*, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation, October 21, 1997, accessed September 14, 2023, https://vha.usc.edu/testimony/34886.
[51] Due to the location of Český Těšín, it has gone back and forth throughout history of being in Poland or in Czechoslovakia.
[52] Walter Ziffer, *Confronting the Silence,* 54-56.
[53] Walter Ziffer, *Confronting the Silence,* 147-153.

contact with Walter and wrote him as many letters as he could.[54] It was through these letters that the experience of an elderly Jewish Holocaust survivor was revealed, rather than merely discussing the demographic from a distance.

Český Těšín, although not a Jewish village in and of itself, did have a substantial Jewish population in the years before the war, and it is this community that Leo mourns in his letters to Walter. He writes:

> Among the Jews here, there's only a few who will stay here. The ways everyone is going: Palestine, Australia, and other countries. The migration began again when they barely came out of the camps.
> The age old story of the eternal Jews. He will never find rest anywhere.[55]

Leo explains to his son how the Jews in their town are all leaving; whether it be making *Aliyah,* or immigration to the United States or Australia, very few people intended to stay. His remorse is clearly shown in the last two lines regarding how it felt as though Jews were never going to find peace and rest. Leo, unsurprisingly, is feeling despair, but he also expresses a certain level of acceptance that because they were Jewish, that would be their lot in life. Although his son was rebuilding a life in America, not wandering or living in the past, the lines above give the indication that Leo did not have strong hope for the future; this was his life, this was what he was cursed to.

As Walter left home, Leo, now at the age of sixty-four, felt responsible for staying in touch with family, friends, and neighbors scattered throughout the world in the post-Holocaust diaspora. He wrote to Walter that of the 210 Holocaust survivors in Český Těšín, he estimated that only thirty or so would remain.[56] A mere 14% chose to rebuild their lives in Český Těšín, but

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[54] In partnership with Walter Ziffer and Dr. Doria Killian at the Center for Jewish Studies at UNCA, I have been both transcribing and translating these letters and adding them to an online archive in order for Leo's story to be accessible for historians throughout time; the URL to this digital archive can be found in the bibliography.
[55] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 28. Dezember 1948. Translated by Garrett; for original German translation, see Appendix A, Source 2.
[56] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 29 Januar 1949.

Leo remained connected with those he could. It was through these connections and frequent letters that Leo learned of the state of Israel and the realities of what immigration there was like. In addition, he continuously expressed to Walter how Israel is for young people, and he was too old for *aliyah*.[57] This belief developed from the fact that Israel needed strong men and women who would be able to fight in the military, help build the infrastructure, or work on farms. On October 24, 1949 he wrote to Walter:

> I was never in doubt for a moment that only young people who are willing and able to participate in the construction or capital investments, can make their way in Israel. There they will surely get their money's worth, considering all of the conditions given there.[58]

Leo expressed that the only people who will be able to make their way in Israel are those who are young and dedicated, people who are capable of constructing and building up the country. He was highly aware of his situation and explained clearly to his son that it was not possible for him to move to a country where he did not speak the language, did not have money, and where he would have to rely entirely on the connections he had with people who had already immigrated to Israel.[59] Leo did not say it explicitly, but it is clear that he held too much pride to rely on others in such a way.

Age was not the only barrier that was restricting Leo and his wife Anny from finding a better future in Israel. In July of 1949, Leo wrote:

> Palestine is the land of promise and future for people who have a lot of money and can afford an apartment. It is certainly tragic that I was such a good Zionest in my youth, and yet now I can only glimpse the Promised Land from afar, and not even like Moses![60]

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[57] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 4 April, 1949.
[58] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 24 Oktober, 1949. Translated by Garrett; for original German translation, see Appendix A, Source 3.
[59] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 28 Januar 1949.
[60] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 1 Juli 1949. Translated by Garrett; for original German translation, see Appendix A, Source 4.

Leo was expressing how Israel was only a land of future and promise for those who had money, and could afford to buy an apartment.[61] He once again conveys his remorse for the course that things were taking, stating that it is tragic because he had been such a good Zionist since his youth, and now he would only ever see the holy land from a distance. Although the direct problem at hand was money and finances, finding a job and making money was a bigger challenge due to Leo's age and his past career.[62] At his age, the unreliability of housing, especially after such a long journey, was too big a risk. He described the housing crisis in Israel to Walter, saying:

> …unless they themselves took enough money / or valuables / to at least privatize some time. This is admittedly the case for many of the emigrants, including the residents. As Otto wrote to us, a one-bedroom apartment with a side room would cost a reported 400-600 pounds. There will be evacuations of fleeing Arabs from the Urban quarters populated by newcomers in Jaffa, Haifa, Tiberias, and Acre. Rent amounts to 3 Israeli pounds for one room and 4 ½ pounds for two rooms. Whether an assigned apartment is located in the former palace of an Arabic noble or in a drab almost deteriorated hole is a matter of luck, or is perhaps based on the desires of the allocation officer. [63]

As stated previously, Israel's emphasis on establishment and building a strong nation, unknowingly to them at the time, came at the cost of those, such as Leo, who had been loyal and dedicated Zionists even before the rise of Nazism.

While Leo spent a great deal of time debating the benefits and drawbacks of immigration to Israel, it was not the migration option that he or his wife were hoping for. The preferred alternative for the Ziffer family was the United States, where Leo's brother, Bruno, and Walter

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[61] One of the main issues in the early stages of Israel's establishment was the lack of organization and housing for the large influx of immigrants coming from Europe, as well as the large groups of Palestinians who were still fleeing.

[62] According to Walter Ziffer's memoir, *Confronting the Silence*, he explains that Leo was a lawyer before the war; however, due to Nazi regulation, it had been almost a decade since Leo had practiced law. In addition, he practiced law in Czechoslovakia, which was no longer a nation and was facing tumultuous times in the face of Soviet expansion.

[63] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 29 Januar 1949. Translated by Garrett; for original German translation, see Appendix A, Source 5.

were both already living. Although having family connections in America increased the likelihood of immigrating to the US, it did not always guarantee anything. For a year, every single letter that Leo sent to Walter expressed his frustration and concern with the waiting lists and the quota numbers assigned to them in the hopes of eventually making it to the United States.[64] Those who planned to migrate to the United States did not have advantages to illegally make a home there, like the Haganah provided for those heading to the Middle East.

Despite how rapidly global relations and finances had changed in the twenty-four years since its enactment, the Immigration Act of 1924 was still in place, controlling the rates at which displaced persons were able to enter the country. This legislation set out rules and regulations that would outline how immigration would occur in the United States. The US assigned quotas to various nations and regions around the world, declaring what percentage of the overall immigrant population intake could be from certain areas.[65] This was a highly controversial act in its time, and as things heated up in Europe, many felt anger at how the law prevented Jewish refugees from finding safety in the US. At the end of the war, and as Leo and Anny Ziffer joined the lists to immigrate, their waiting all came down to the maintenance of the 1924 quotas. In this particular case, it was not their age working against them, and so many others, but it is vital to understand the Immigration Act of 1924 in order to understand the legislation made in response to the DP crisis in Europe after the war.

The elderly Jews of Europe who held any hope of immigrating to the United States would be waiting on the strict restrictions of the Immigration Act of 1924, it was appealed twenty years after the end of the war; however, in 1948, Congress approved the Displaced Persons Act, adding

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[64] The cited letters for the year 1949 contain many updates and descriptions of the immigration process Leo and Anny were attempting to go through.
[65] Immigration Act of 1924, Public Law 139, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (May 26, 1924), accessed September 13, 2023, https://www.loc.gov/item/llsl-v43/.

to the Immigration Act in the hopes of aiding the displaced persons of Europe. This addition did not impact the quotas directly, rather it added stipulations of various groups that the United States allowed to have earlier entry. In many ways, these stipulations directly excluded the elderly population of Holocaust survivors. For example, one of the eligible groups that the US would aid in immigration for orphaned children under the age of sixteen.[66] It is understandable that a child without a caretaker or guardian is in an extremely vulnerable position, but it people cannot ignore the fact that the elderly population, whose health causes an increase in vulnerability, and many of whom were also abandoned and without family, should also be provided opportunities for a new future, whether it be via global powers or one of the Jewish aid organizations that made its mission to provide help to the Jewish children of Europe.

More than anything, what prevented the elderly Jewish population from meeting many of the eligibility requirements for migration to America was similar to that of Israel. America was and is a capitalist nation, and therefore prioritizes the work a person can do, and how that can contribute to the economy. Once again, it came down to labor and skill, which is something that people become increasingly unable to do as they get older. The Immigration Act of 1924 regulated immigration on the basis of nationality, and the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 created further regulations with regards to the age of the immigrants and their occupation, or labor skill and ability.[67] It was because of these two pieces of legislation that Leo and Anny faced such immense difficulties and bureaucratic hoops to jump through in order to reunite with their son in the United States. In the end, neither Leo nor Anny ever immigrated to the United States—both remained in the Czech Republic until their deaths in 1970 and 1993, respectively.[68]

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[66] Displaced Persons Act of 1948, Public Law 774, 80th Cong., 2nd sess. (June 25, 1948), accessed September 16, 2023, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Displaced_Persons_Act_1948.pdf.
[67] Slatt, "Nowhere to Go," 278.
[68] Walter Ziffer, *Confronting the Silence,* 217.

Leo knew, all along, that his age was proving to be a major disadvantage. He knew that life was now for the young people. His letters make it clear that he felt defeated and left behind. Time and time again, he describes how Israel was for young people. He expressed his frustration at not being able to learn more about immigration to America, and frustration at not having a plan for the future.[69] Leo was not alone; most of this demographic of Holocaust survivors became a silent and forgotten generation, a combination of pride and their isolation contributing to a distinct lack of biographical sources from this group. In addition, historians, scholars, and community members began to record Holocaust testimonies after this generation began to pass away.[70] It is because of this, that the words of the few, those who did share their experiences, are so important for capturing the stories and experiences of their generation.

These testimonies, although few and far between, share a feeling of despair and abandonment. They show an entire generation that was waiting to die. They were people, elderly members of their community who had earned compassion and respect, but who no longer felt human themselves. It is only through hearing the feelings and stories told in a testimony that the depth of despair and grief is shown. The voices of the elderly have not always been amplified and listened to at the extent that they deserve. One of the first testimonies given by a Holocaust survivor was by Jankiel Wiernik, who wrote and published *A Year in Treblinka* before the war had even ended. In this, Wiernik says:

> Today I am a homeless old man without a roof over my head, without a family, without any next of kin. I talk to myself. I answer my own questions. I am a nomad. It is with a sense of fear that I pass through human settlements. I have a feeling that all my experiences have become imprinted on my face. Whenever I look at my reflection in a stream or pool of water, awe and surprise twist my face into an ugly grimace. Do I look like a human being? No, decidedly not. Disheveled, untidy, run-down. It seems as if I were carrying a load of several

[69] Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 28 Februar 1949.
[70] Eva G. Reichmann, "We All Bear Witness," *Association of Jewish Refugees Information* 9, no. 2 (London), November 1954, https://ajr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1954_november.pdf.

> centuries on my shoulders. The load is wearisome, very wearisome, but I must carry it for the time being.[71]

Wiernik was one man, but he details the loss and grief that was experienced by thousands. At the time of his writing this, he had not given up hope in the way that so many had and would in the future. He felt it was his duty to ensure that his story, and that of all the others in the camps were told. Wiernik, burdened with the trauma of his experiences in the Holocaust, as millions of people would be. It would be isolating and terrifying for so many, and the elderly population felt doomed to stay and linger in it.

The trauma, isolation and terror caused by the Holocaust had extreme influence over both personal and communal identity in Ashkenazi communities. Poet Uvi Zvi Greenberg wrote:

> Go wander about Europe, God of Israel, Shepherd-Seer, and count Your Sheep:
> how many lie in ditches, their "Alas" grown dumb:
> how many lie in the cross's shadow, in the streets of weeping,
> as if in the middle of the sea.[72]

In this stanza, he shares a tone of bitterness and remorse at having been abandoned by God. Feelings such as these were not uncommon, but for many people, they were at least able to build a new life and build a new community. The senior population of Jews, as previously explained, were not able to do that. Instead, they dealt with the feelings shared in this poem, the feeling that God had abandoned them, while also having their community abandon them as well.

The elderly population, having lived through one of the most traumatic events in human history, found themselves isolated and alone. Leo Ziffer, who was beyond proud of Walter, had to watch his son immigrate to the US where he got an education, obtained a job, got married, and built a life for himself. Meanwhile, Leo was in the Czech Republic, right where his children left him. The elderly, liberated from the concentration camps and ghettos, brought into the arms of

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[71] Wiernick, *A Year in Treblinka,* 47.
[72] Uri Zvi Greenberg, "To God in Europe," in *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe,* ed. by David G. Roskies (New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 573.

the displaced persons camps, and then left behind. The creation of Israel allowed for a haven for the Holocaust survivors who were able to make the journey and work to help establish the nation, but the elderly were not able to do so. The United States created certain allowances for children and workers to immigrate to the United States, but the elderly were not able to do so. The elderly, who were parents, grandparents, friends, and loved ones, were abandoned, and left alone in DP camps and in retirement homes, forgotten by their community, the Allied Powers, and history itself. This group, isolated and abandoned, had to live in their memories of the Holocaust while they waited for their death. They were all alone in their fear and pain, right where we left them.

Appendix A: Original German Sources

Source 1

“Männer und Frauen von Theresienstadt!... In Theresienstadt seid Ihr sicher! Der Krieg ist noch nicht beendet! Wer Theresienstadt verlässt, setzt sich allen Kriegsgefahren aus.”

Source 2

“Unter den Juden hier gibt es nur wenige, die hier bleiben werden. Alles geht weg: nach Palästina, Australien und nach anderen Ländern. Kaum sind sie aus den Lagern gekommen, beginnt die Wanderung wieder. Die uralte Geschichte vom ewigen Juden. Niemals und nirgends findet er Ruhe.”

Source 3

“Mir war es keinen Moment zweifelhaft, dass sich in Israel nur junge Menschen durchsetzen können, die gewillt und geeignet sind, produktiv am Aufbau mitzuarbeiten, oder Kapitalinvestitionen in Israel. Diese werden dort bestimmt auf ihre Rechnung kommen, da dort alle Voraussetzungen dafür gegeben sind.”

Source 4

“Palästina ist das Land der Verheissung und Zukunft für Leute, die viel Geld haben und sich eine Wohnung kaufen können. Es ist sicherlich tragisch, das gerade ich, der von Jugend an eine guter Zionist war, jetzt das gelobte Land nur von weitem– und nicht einmal wie Moses – erblicken kann!”

Source 5

“…dass sie sich genügend Geld mitgenommen haben / oder Wertsachen /, um wenigstens einige Zeit privatisieren zu können. Das ist freilich bei so manchem der Auswanderer – auch bei und – der Fall. Wie und Otto geschrieben hat und auch sonst übereichstimmend berichtet wird, kostet die Ablösung einer Einzimmerwohnung mit Nebenraum 400 bis 600 pal. Pfund. Es werden die von den geflüchteten Arabern verlassen Stadtviertel von Jaffa, Haifa, Tiberias und Akko von den Zuzüglern besiedelt. Die Miete beträgt 3 ist. Pfund für 1 Zimmer und 4 ½ Pfund für 2 Zimmer. Ob sich eine solche zugewiesene Wohnung in dem ehemaligen “Palast” eines arabischen Feudalen befindet oder in einem düsteren, fast verfallenen Loch, ist Sache des Zufalls oder beruht auf des Wohlwollen der Zuteilungsbeamten. Nun, genug davon.”

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"Communique Addressed to Colonel Paul A. Roy from Former Prisoners of the Now Liberated Camp Dachau" (1945). *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection.* 2021.1.35. https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1737. Accessed July 21, 2023.

As Holocaust survivors were liberated, they were moved from one camp to another, continuously being kept behind barbed wire and fences. In this letter, survivors make it known to a military leader from the Allied Powers that they had zero intention of moving again. This emphasizes the harsh conditions the Jews experienced even as they were "liberated".

Displaced Persons Act of 1948, Public Law 774, 80th Cong., 2nd sess. (June 25, 1948). Accessed September 16, 2023. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Displaced_Persons_Act_1948.pdf

This government document outlines how the Immigration Act of 1948 would be amended in order to accommodate Displaced Persons of Europe. For the sake of this paper, the Displaced Persons Act allows for further understanding of the barriers put in place for the elderly Holocaust survivors attempting to immigrate

Greenberg, Uri Zvi. "To God in Europe." In *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe*, edited by David G. Roskies, 571-577. New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989.

This poem, from Holocaust survivor Uri Zvi Greenberg, is an expression of the desperate attempt from Greenberg, and other survivors, to understand how God could have allowed for this to happen to his "chosen people."

Guttentag, Adolf. *Diary.* August 31, 1942 to October 16, 1942. US Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed August 10, 2023. https://perspectives.ushmm.org/item/diary-of-adolf-guttentag.

Through these fifteen pages written by an elderly Jewish man during the Holocaust allow me to provide insight and perspective into what was being felt and experienced by the elderly population during this time. The US Holocaust Memorial Museum provides both the scanned pages in their original German, and a translation. For the sake of authenticity, this paper will be using the German initially written by Mr. Guttentag.

Immigration Act of 1924, Public Law 139, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (May 26, 1924). Accessed September 13, 2021. https://www.loc.gov/item/llsl-v43/.

The Immigration Act of 1924 is an important piece of legislation that directly affects the ability of Holocaust survivors in their attempts to immigrate to the United States. In this paper, this act is important in explaining the immigration process in the USA and why it was so difficult for elderly survivors.

"*Jewish Brigade Group* Pamphlet" (1944). *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection.* 2012.1.395. Accessed July 21, 2023. https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1083.

This pamphlet, initially in modern Hebrew, was passed along by the Jewish Brigade Group as they aided Jews in Europe. In it, the pamphlet promoted zionism and aliyah. The use of Hebrew with no translation into another language shows the language barrier present even before liberation, when large numbers of survivors would be interested in migration.

Katz, Shlomo. "Understanding Jewish Resistance in Palestine: The Aims and Methods of the Haganah." *Commentary (Pre-1986),* 07, 1946, 45-50. Accessed August 5, 2023. https://login.proxy177.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/understanding-jewish-resistance-palestine/docview/199424367/se-2.

This journal article from 1946 provides an overview and explanation of the Haganah from a Jewish person at that time. Through this article, a greater understanding is given in regards to the efforts this paramilitary group put into migration.

Lynch, Pat. "US Nurse Pat Lynch Describes Condition of Surviving Camp Inmates Upon Liberation." By Sandra Bradley. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,* February 14, 1995. https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn511059

. *This short interview from an American nurse who aided Holocaust survivors as they were liberated from the camps. She describes the conditions of the survivors and the difficulties in treating them. Through this interview, we can establish a clear understanding of how the process went for Holocaust survivors between liberation into life after.*

"Post-WWII Temporary Travel Document in Lieu of Passport Issued by the Military Government of Germany to Israel and Helena Elbaum Dorembus" (1947). *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection.* 2019.2.244. Accessed July 21, 2023. https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1571.

This travel visa was issued to a family of three, the married Israel and Helena, age 37, and their child, age 1. They did not have passports, given the passports initially being issued by the Third Reich. It is one document among many that emphasizes how Palestine was for the young families who survived the Holocaust.

Reichmann, Eva G. “We All Bear Witness.” *Association of Jewish Refugees Information* 9, no. 2 (London). November 1954. https://ajr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1954_november.pdf.

This article in 1954 is a call for Holocaust survivors to begin discussing their experience and testifying. The importance of this article for this paper is that this article marks the beginning of testimonies in Holocaust studies, highlighting the decade of time that passed before the world would begin to discuss and attempt to understand the events of the Shoah.

"*Saturday Evening Post* Advertisement for the United Jewish Appeal" (1947). *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection.* 2012.1.366.Accessed August 10, 2023. https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1055.

This advertisement pictures two small children, a girl of approximately ten years old, and a boy of approximately four or five years old. They serve as figures intended to draw pity from Americans in hopes that the viewers will be persuaded to donate money to the United Jewish Appeal. This advertisement highlights the way that younger individuals were portrayed to the world as needing help, meanwhile the plight of elderly individuals was largely ignored.

Swift, Taylor. “right where you left me.” Track 16 on evermore (deluxe edition). Spotify streaming audio. https://open.spotify.com/track/3zwMVvkBe2qIKDObWgXw4N?si=a939bda8f3a6482f.

This song inspired the title of the paper itself. Although the song was written about a romantic relationship that has left the speaker behind in the past; however, the way that the lyrics describes this phenomenon also perfectly captures how this generation of Holocaust survivors was trapped in that horrific chapter of their lives while the rest of the world was able to move on.

"Temporary Registration Permit in the Jewish Displaced Persons Community of Furstenfeldbruck, Germany Issued by Allied Military Government of Germany to Szymon Graus" (1946). *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection*. 2022.1.10.Accessed July 21, 2023. https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1857.

This registration permit was issued to Szymon Graus and contained his address, age, and the name of the town/displaced persons camp he belonged to. The permit states that if he is outside of that area, he is to be arrested. This permit shows how much mobility the Holocaust survivors lacked when they were under the watch of the Allied Powers.

"The War is Over for Remaining Inmates of Theresienstadt: An Announcement from Leo Baeck and Others" (1945). Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection. 2019.2.29. https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1432. Accessed August 9, 2023.

This letter, written in both German and Czech, notified those imprisoned in the Theresienstadt ghetto that the war in Europe was over. This was the ghetto where a large majority of the surviving elderly German and Austrian Jews were detained. It was through this letter that the population under examination in my thesis was notified of the end of the war.

Wiernik, Jankiel. *A Year in Treblinka.* Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza MakPrint, 2003.

Jankiel Wiernik was a Polish Jew who survived the Holocaust and immediately shared his testimony with the world. Wiernik was 56 years old at the end of the war, meaning that he was an elder among the surviving Jews. His testimony provides first hand accounts of the Holocaust and its impact on him as someone who was in later stages of life.

Ziffer, Walter. *Confronting the Silence: A Holocaust Survivor's Search for God.* Weaverville, NC: Dykeman Legacy Press, 2017.

Walter Ziffer tells the story of his life in this memoir, from the pre-Nazi days in Czechoslovakia to his life in Asheville, North Carolina. He provides background on both himself, and his family that is vital context to the letters he provided to the German department. This memoir also deals more directly with his search for identity and purpose in the aftermath of the Holocaust, which he did not find in European Jewishness. This memoir sets the stage for me to explain and understand the letters between Walter and his father.

Ziffer, Walter. Interview 34886. Interview by Sara Ghitis. *Visual History Archive*, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation, October 21, 1997. Accessed September 14, 2023. https://vha.usc.edu/testimony/34886.

In this interview, Walter Ziffer, the recipient of many of the letters, describes his family and his life growing up before the war. He then delves into his experience during the Holocaust. Overall, this interview, when paired with Walter Ziffer's memoir, provides important context for the large collection of letters used in this research.

Letters

Ziffer, Leo. Letters between Leo and Walter Ziffer. The Ziffer Digital Archive, https://thezifferproject.wordpress.com/.

This collection of letters spans from late 1948 into 1951 and were mailed from Leo Ziffer, an elderly Holocaust survivor living in the Czech Republic, to his son, Walter Ziffer, who immigrated to Nasheville, Tennessee in December of 1948 to complete his high school education and to study at Vanderbilt University. These letters detail the personal struggle and battles that Leo and his wife, Anny, were experiencing as elderly Holocaust survivors who were unable to emigrate from Europe and watched as their communities disappeared.

Ziffer, Leo. *Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 23 Dezember 1948*. Letter. From The Ziffer Digital Archive. https://thezifferproject.wordpress.com/2023/03/22/23-dezember-1948/ (accessed August 10, 2023).

Ziffer, Leo. *Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 29 Jänner 1949*. Letter. From The Ziffer Digital Archive. https://thezifferproject.wordpress.com/2023/03/29/29-janner-1949/ (accessed August 10, 2023).

Ziffer, Leo. *Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 28 Februar 1949*. Letter. From The Ziffer Digital Archive. https://thezifferproject.wordpress.com/2023/04/11/28-februar-1949/ (accessed August 10, 2023).

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Ziffer, Leo. *Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 22 August 1949*. Letter. From The Ziffer Digital Archive. https://thezifferproject.wordpress.com/2023/09/07/22-august-1949/ (accessed September 7, 2023).

Ziffer, Leo. *Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 28 September 1949*. Letter. From The Ziffer Digital Archive. https://thezifferproject.wordpress.com/2023/09/07/28-september-1949/ (accessed September 7, 2023).

Ziffer, Leo. *Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 24 Oktober 1949*. Letter. From The Ziffer Digital Archive. https://thezifferproject.wordpress.com/2023/09/07/24-oktober-1949/ (accessed September 7, 2023).

Ziffer, Leo. *Leo Ziffer to Walter Ziffer, 16 November 1949*. Letter. From The Ziffer Digital Archive. https://thezifferproject.wordpress.com/2023/09/07/16-november-1949/ (accessed September 7, 2023).

Photographs

"Agricultural Training before Emigration to Palestine." Photograph. As posted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed September 11, 2023. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/agricultural-training-before-emigration-to-palestine.

Black and white photograph of a schoolhouse with Hebrew written on the side located in Germany. This photograph illustrates the training and preparation provided to the younger Jews who would be making aliyah.

Marcus, David. *Jewish Displaced Persons Enter the Main Gate of the Ziegenhain Displaced Persons Camps*. Photograph. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. September 1946. https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1178622.

This black and white photograph depicts Displaced Persons entering and leaving the Displaced Persons camp, which was surrounded by chain link fences topped with barbed wire. This photograph emphasizes the prison-like conditions that Holocaust survivors were continuing to live in even after liberation.

"Portraits of Zionist Leaders Hang in a Classroom." Photograph. As posted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed September 10, 2023. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/portraits-of-zionist-leaders-hang-in-a-classroom.

In this photograph, Jewish school children are in a classroom listening attentively to their teacher. Behind them, posted on the wall, were portraits of important Zionist leaders. These children, having survived the Holocaust, were being shown that there was a place for them and a way for them in Zionism and in Israel, which provides contrast to the elderly demographic who were not given the same opportunities.

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Bauer, Yehuda. "From Cooperation to Resistance: The Haganah 1938-1946." *Middle Eastern Studies* 2, no. 3 (April 1966): 182-210. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4282159.

This article was one of the first scholarly works discussing the history and impact of the Haganah militia, who was largely responsible for the waves of immigration into Palestine. The Haganah was particular on aiding young men and women with their immigration with the agreement that those young people would serve with Israel.

Brenner, Michael. *Nach dem Holocaust: Juden in Deutschland 1945-1950.* München: C.H. Beck, 1995.

Michael Brenner reviews and analyzes how life was rebuilt, who rebuilt it, and its influence over the remaining Jewish population, providing useful insight into the Jewish survivors who remained in Germany in order to rebuild the community.

Cohen, Sharon Kangisser. "Choosing a Heim: Survivors of the Holocaust and Post-War Immigration." *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 46, no. 2 (Autumn 2013): 32-54. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42751137.

Throughout this journal article, Sharon Kangisser Cohen analyzes and breaks down the populations of immigrants: primarily younger, single Jewish survivors. This article makes it clear that older survivors were a much smaller portion of the immigration population, providing an analysis of immigration, and thereby its exclusion of the elderly.

Cohen-Weisz, Susanne. *Jewish Life in Austria and Germany since 1945: Identity and Communal Reconstructions.* Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016.

Although many chose migration, there were still many Jewish people who remained in Austria and Germany after 1945. This book covers from 1945 to the present, but I am particularly focused on the section that covers the decade after World War II and how the Jewish community molded and shaped through those turbulent years due to how the emigration process and the changes in the Jewish communities would further isolate the demographic of elderly Holocaust survivors.

Gitelman, Zvi. "The Decline of the Diaspora Jewish Nation: Boundaries, Content and Jewish Identity." *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1998): 112-132. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4467522.

Zvi Gitelman examines the Diaspora and secularism's influence on Judaism and how it came to form the modern generation of Jews, both as a cultural group and a religion, painting a picture of Jewish identity issues during the Diaspora.

Keynan, Irit. "The Memory of the Holocaust and Israel's Attitude Toward War Trauma, 1948-1973: The Collective vs. the Individual." *Israel Studies* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 95-117. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/israelstudies.23.2.05.

A comparison is drawn between the Israeli public's treatment of Holocaust survivors as it compares to their treatment of war veterans, this article provides support for my claims surrounding the silencing of individuals and their culture and experiences for the sake of assimilation and validation of the so-called "new Jew."

Meng, Michael. *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

In this book, Michael Meng discusses Holocaust memory politics and the influence they have had over Jewish ruins, which were left in disrepair in the immediate aftermath of the Shoah; there was nowhere for the survivors to go.

Rapaport, Lynn. *Jews in Germany After the Holocaust: Memory, identity and Jewish-German Relations.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

In her book, Lynn Rapaport uses historical documents and hundreds of witness testimonies to address the subject of Jewish identity when complicated by memory of the Holocaust for the general Jewish community in Germany, but even more so for the Holocaust survivors who remained in Germany after the end of World War II.

Schraftstetter, Susanna. *Flight and Concealment: Surviving the Holocaust Underground in Munich and Beyond.* Translated by Allison Brown. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2022.

As the title alludes to, Susanna Schraftstetter's book is focused on the Holocaust and wartime years in Munich and other areas of Germany, as well as their underground organizations. She also dedicates time to discussing and explaining Theresienstadt and its relationship to German Jews. This is vital to understanding the elderly Holocaust survivors because a large majority of them spent their time in this particular ghetto/concentration camp.

Slatt, Vincent. "Nowhere to Go: Displaced Persons in Post V.E. Day Germany." *The Historian* 64, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 275-293. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26305238.

Despite the effort put in to support DPs after the end of the war, there is a lot of information missing in regards to what everyday life looked like for this group. Slatt addresses how the Displaced Persons camps functioned, how long they lasted, and the many types of people staying in them. He mentions many times how elders were left in these camps with no alternative options.

Stone, Dan. "Der Holocaust und seine Historiografie." In *Ursprünge, Formen und Folgen politischer Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Olaf Glöckner and Roy Knocke, 33-55. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot GmbH, 2017. www.jstor.org.stable/j.ctv1q69vnz.5.

This article, as given away by its title, provides a thorough explanation of the historiography of the Holocaust, which will allow my own historiography to have more detail and understanding of the Holocaust itself before narrowing in on my focus of the surviving elderly population in the immediate postwar years.

Stone, Dan. "Somehow the pathetic dumb suffering of these elderly people moves me more than anything': Caring for Elderly Holocaust Survivors in the Immediate Postwar Years."

Holocaust and Genocide Studies 32, no. 3 (Winter 2018): 384-403. https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcy057.

This article from Dan Stone provides one of the only scholarly works concentrating on the small population of elders, or those over fifty-five years of age, who survived the Holocaust, as well as the shape of their immediate postwar years.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "At the Killing Centers." Holocaust Encyclopedia. Accessed September 18, 2023. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/at-the-killing-centers.

This webpage from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides further reference for readers interested in learning about the selection process that occurred in the death camps during the Holocaust. It was through this selection process that many elderly Jews, seen as unfit for work, would lose their lives.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Documenting Numbers of Victims of the Holocaust and Nazi Persecution." Holocaust Encyclopedia. Accessed September 10, 2023. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution.

This webpage from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides the most up to date statistics in regards to targeted demographics in the Holocaust, and their population numbers before and after the war. These numbers help put things in perspective in regards to the losses suffered by the Jewish community.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Jewish Losses During the Holocaust: By Country." Holocaust Encyclopedia. Accessed September 1, 2023. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-losses-during-the-holocaust-by-country.

Similar to the webpage regarding the victims of the Holocaust, this webpage from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also provides statistics regarding populations. Specifically, this page breaks down the statistics of Jewish populations before and after the Holocaust by country. This allows for further analysis of the Jewish communities that different elderly Holocaust survivors had been a part of, and how it fared in the war.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Remaining Jewish Population of Europe in 1945." Holocaust Encyclopedia. Accessed September 10, 2023. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/remaining-jewish-population-of-europe-in-1945.

This webpage provides another round of statistics describing the Jewish community of Europe, more specifically, it outlines the population size of these communities in the aftermath of liberation. Although these statistics may be broad when this paper is describing a particular

demographic; however, these numbers are important in describing and emphasizing the losses that elderly Jews also faced, and the way in which it would contribute to their feelings of isolation.