

Children's Institutions and Education – 1945–1956

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The examined period in the following essay is divided into two phases (1945–1948/49 and 1949–1956). This period is characterized by the historical turning point of the Communist takeover of 1948–1949, which radically changed the organizational framework of Jewish schools, children's institutions, and youth movements, and even liquidated them in several spheres. Here, two significantly different stories of two groups of children – survivors and those born after the war – are told, making an effort to show the diversity of fortune.¹ At this time, there was a reorganization of Jewish communities, organizations and institutions, and there were those children, or their families, who chose to keep their distance from all forms of Jewish religious and community life. Their path or choice was common and should not be disregarded. This essay, however, deals with children connected in one way or another to the Jewish community.²

1945–1948/49

Family replacement, children's homes

Due to the destruction caused by the Holocaust, it was difficult to find intact Jewish families in 1945. A great proportion of children had lost one or both parents, in addition to several members of their extended family as well: grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Surviving family members were often psychologically or financially unfit to educate the children or to care for them.³ In 1941, in the 0–19 age group, there were 60,132 children in the provinces, while in Budapest there were 29,042. The 1946 figures dropped to 7,566 in the provinces (that is 87.5% lower than the number five years earlier), and to 13,184 in the capital (55% lower).⁴ It should, however, be pointed out that the decreases and the proportions of loss were also influenced by migration, as observed in the 1946 data. Moreover, the picture is distorted because different age groups are referred to after five years; those beyond their nineteenth birthday were replaced by those born who had been in the meantime. Between the two world wars, the number of births showed a steady decrease, and during the war, it dropped drastically.⁵ As a result, the potential

¹ The time boundary between the two groups, however, may have been drawn a few years later, around 1953. From this year on, the postwar generation appears in surviving documents about religious education, etc.

² Viktor Karády, *Túlélők és újrakezdők* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 2002), pp. 98–103.

³ On the decrease and the breakup of the family, see *ibid.*, p. 89.

⁴ ZSVK Magyarországi képviselő és az Amerikai Joint Distribution Committee Statisztikai Osztályának *Közleményei*, no. 10 (May 1949) (2nd ed.), pp. 3–4.

⁵ Zsigmond Pál Pach, "A magyarországi zsidóság mai statisztikájának szembevető jelenségei," in Imre Benoschofsky, *Maradék-zsidóság. A magyarországi zsidóság 1945-46-ban* (Budapest: A Budai Izraelita Aggok és Árvák Menházegegyesülete, 1947), pp. 22–32, esp. p. 31. From 1927 on, the Jewish population was decreasing throughout the country.

members of the youngest cohort of 1946 were not only dead but many of them had never even been born.

We are familiar with many beautiful examples of adoption within the extended family, as well as, less obviously, within the circle of friends' and classmates' parents. Forming part of the numerous suppressed and reticent narratives of the generation, sometimes small children were adopted without their knowledge. As an illustration, let's look at a case from the archives of the Orthodox Jewish school on Dob Street, Budapest. The subject is a first grader who was taken in by Herman Wertheimer in 1944 at the age of two. In 1947, following a resolution by the orphans' court of Szabolcs County, the child was officially adopted by Wertheimer. The girl's first school report in February 1948 bears her former name (Weinberger), so her stepfather applied for a new school report to ensure that she would not find out about the adoption.⁶

In the life of adults, the most natural way to replace lost family was to marry. This also meant renewal and recommencement for the whole community, which supported the new families in various ways, for example, by freeing *agunim* and *agunot*⁷ by providing them with rabbinical authorization to remarry, and helping young couples to get married. Nevertheless, in less fortunate cases, remarriage could lead to a loss of family on account of their children's unwillingness to accept the marriage.

Most of the children are deeply traumatized by fears and worries, by missing affection, to such a degree that for them the new family member means trouble instead of relief for the constant sense of want.⁸

A crowd of children squeezed together. Caked with dirt, hair unkempt, trachoma, gigantic boils, scars, and bleeding wounds. We had some awful swill there for lunch. The wretched children had only spoons, and they gobbled up their meal from shoddy mess tins with a famished look [...]. In fact, they were deserted, discarded children, orphans and half-orphans. Most of them were obstacles for their mothers to remarry. They were waiting to emigrate, without knowing where, or when, or why.⁹

These quotes illustrate the just and serious criticism against the institutions for orphans and half-orphans, who were left without adequate care in dispossessed and mutilated families. In the summer of 1945, Géza Varsányi, head of the Joint's Children's Department, drafted a project, which included an in-depth list of the deficiencies of equipment, and organizational and personal failures. Subsequently, he added: "Luckily, the public is unaware of the huge amounts of money that children's homes use up. [...] They cannot show any positive achievements in the face of the

⁶ Budapest City Archives [henceforth: BCA] VIII-254. a. I. dated February 17, 1948.

⁷ A term used in Jewish law meaning "chained" to describe a woman bound in marriage by a husband who refuses to grant a divorce or who is missing and not proved dead. In this case, the term also applied to men whose wives had not been proven dead.

⁸ Margit Hrabovszkyné Révész, "Háborúsújtotta gyerekek," *Köznevelés*, no. 22 (1948), p. 558.

⁹ Description of the children's home in Deszk by Pál Bárdos, after a visit in the spring of 1948. Pál Bárdos, *A második évtized* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1981), p. 98.

torrent of complaints against them."¹⁰ As an experienced and qualified expert in the fields of child protection, community development, and social work, Varsányi, in his draft, called for a more efficient, just, and considerate use of resources.¹¹ He was in favor of a comprehensive network, including extensive family protection and social work for handling the children's case, with the support of district nurses, family welfare officials, and educational advisory centers. He proposed setting up daycare centers instead of institutes with residence requirements; helping adults, especially widowed mothers, earn a livelihood; having institutions with a Zionist, community spirit, according to the settlement model; and providing adult education. He considered the reduction of children's homes as the most urgent and significant task, transferring the money to support children living with families.¹² "It is a vital issue and a point of honor for Hungarian Jewry to replace the unplanned charity economy with an action-plan based on welfare policy, which would transform society!"¹³

Varsányi's plan was a professionally well-founded system, rational from the aspect of costs and social expedience. Its main aims were identical to those of the program implemented gradually by the Joint and the National Jewish Relief Committee (henceforth: NJRC) from the end of 1947.¹⁴ Previously, child protection had been dominated by Zionist ideological aspects, and characterized by haphazardness, irregularities, deficiencies, and emergency improvisation.¹⁵ On the other hand, it offered a large scope of initiatives by the community and by individuals, which provided lasting, positive experience for the children and the non-professional care providers, including young people trying out the role of the helper while coping with their own losses and traumas.

In the fall of 1945, a proposal was received from Mezőkovácsháza: a few labor servicemen who came back and their children had been murdered, were missing the

¹⁰ Hungarian Jewish Archives (henceforth: HJA) – Joint documents XXXIII. 4. a. box no. 5, pile no. 30, July 25, 1945, pp. 3–4.

¹¹ Varsányi's book *Népház, settlement, Volksheim* (published in 1912) has been considered as basic reading for the settlement movement. He was the secretary of the National Israelite Benefactors' Society, and for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the society, he edited and co-authored the volume *Szociális segítőmunka a gyermek- és ifjúságvédelem területén* (Budapest, 1936).

¹² HJA XXXIII. 4. a. box no. 5, pile no. 30, July 25, 1945, p. 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 9. In the spring of 1946, the Joint's Children's Department was split into two: one for children's homes and the other dealing with the support of individual children living in families. The latter was headed by Varsányi, who thought it provided a better opportunity to realize his endeavors for complex family protection. Children's homes were supervised by the committed Zionist László (Perc) Révész.

¹⁴ On the relief activities of the Joint and the NJRC, see Kinga Frojimovics, *Szétszakadt történelem. Zsidó vallási irányzatok Magyarországon, 1868–1950* (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2008), pp. 386–392.

¹⁵ Children under six or handicapped made up the most high-risk group from the aspect of child protection; they were not targeted by the Zionist movements and their placement was extremely problematic (HJA – XXXIII. 4. a. box no. 5, pile no. 30).

voices of children. Since there were unused premises, they requested the establishment of a children's home there for orphans from Hajdúság and Budapest.¹⁶

From the end of 1944 until the spring of 1945, ex-labor servicemen, waiting for the return of their deported families, set up communes in several places, trying to substitute family with community and soup kitchens. Similar offers and proposals can be read in the articles of *Új Élet*, reporting from the provinces.¹⁷ Alongside the growing number of Zionist children's homes, in 1945–1946, several homes were established by the Jewish communities as well throughout the country on account of the grave deficiency of provisions in Budapest and the willingness of provincial communities longing for children. They were also supported by the Joint.

There were no children left in the Jewish community of Pécs, apart from a set of under fourteen twin survivors. Nevertheless, on account of the children's home accommodated by the local community, the Jewish elementary school could open and the 1945/46 school year began with 30 pupils, among them only one native of the town.¹⁸ The Győr Jewish community also received children from Budapest. The home was in a three-room apartment in Szent Imre herceg Road, and was visited by the mayor's deputies at the end of 1946.¹⁹ According to the protocols, from November 1947, the Győr community was campaigning for the children and the home to remain in the town.

Due to the unfortunate fact that the children of Győr had been destroyed by the Fascists, the Jewish community devoted its efforts to convince the Joint's highest leadership about the need to leave the children's home in Győr.²⁰

In the spring of 1948, the Győr Jewish community volunteered to provide full support for the home, which in fact was beyond their means, in order to keep the 20 children there.

The establishment of homes for children and youth was started by the Zionist organizations in February/March 1945. The pioneer movements Hashomer Hatzair of Békéscsaba, Hanoar Hatzioni of Debrecen and the Maccabi Hatzair were among the first.²¹ Apart from them, among the significant organizations running children's homes, you could find the Mizrahi, Bnei Akiva and Agudat Israel, all of them religious and affiliated to Orthodoxy. Their

¹⁶ The memoirs of Ervin Groszberg, head of Agudat Israel's Children's Department and one of the organizers of the children's homes, see Sándor Bacskai, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő Kiadó, 1997), p. 39.

¹⁷ Proposal by the Mohács Jewish community, *Új Élet*, February 14, 1946, p. 4.

¹⁸ Sándor Krassó, *Kötéltánc* (Pécs: Pannónia könyvek, 2011), p. 79.

¹⁹ *Győri Munkás*, December 15, 1946, p. 4. István Nagy helped me to find the sources in connection with the children's home in Győr.

²⁰ Győr Jewish Community Archives: Protocols about the meeting of the Győr Israelite Community's Children's Home Committee, April 4, 1948.

²¹ Attila Novák, *Átmenetben. A cionista mozgalom négy éve Magyarországon* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő Kiadó, 2000), p. 26. The chapter "A gyermekotthonok és az ifjúság világa" (on children's homes and the world of young people) is highly informative.

networks, which also included daycare centers, agricultural and industrial *hahsharot* (training centers preparing for *aliya* to the Land of Israel), and *moshavot* (training camps for farming, with the same goal) were constantly growing and changing in 1945–1946, so the figures for children's home residents can be given only approximately as: 3,734 in May 1946, 1,650 in May 1947, and 1,300 in July 1948.²²

Most of those who were children at that time, remembered later the attention, empathy, and positive attitude to life of the young directors at the Zionist homes and camps. They highlighted the positive impact of intensive community life, hardly noticing the problems with supplies and equipment. In contrast, contemporaries from the outside pointed out the deficiencies. For instance, drinking coffee from plates since there were no mugs, scabies and contagious cutaneous eruptions because of the lack of sheets and towels, malnutrition, organizational "anomalies," and pedagogically unqualified and irresponsible directors.²³ The latter complaints were fostered by the generation gap as well as ideological differences. Unlike the lack of hygiene, laxity concerning the adherence to rules on documentation, coeducation, or a disregard for the Jewish religious tradition were not considered objective problems. For this reason, the conflicts could not be resolved and accompanied the running of the children's homes throughout that period.

In his circular of May 1947, Adolf Fisch, the religious education inspector for the Pest Israelite Community and the Joint's Children's Department For Educational Affairs, tried to convince the educators of all the children's homes and daycare centers financed by the Joint about the necessity to include a minimum of religious observance in the education of each and every Jewish child.²⁴ He thought that children educated without it, or professedly against it, would be lost for the Jewish community if they did not manage to make *aliya* before long. He considered it essential to light candles on Friday night and welcome in Shabbat in the homes, as well as to celebrate *Hanukka* and *Purim* in the synagogue and observe the traditional forms of bar mitzva. He emphasized that knowledge and respect of the religious traditions should be part of their education, irrespective of personal religious conviction. As for regular synagogue attendance by children, he was in favor of youth services with Sephardi pronunciation, but since this could not be arranged, he did not insist. Kashrut (the observance of religious dietary laws) was not mentioned in the circular and was only observed in homes run by the Agudat Israel and Mizrahi (Bnei Akiva) movements that were affiliated to the Orthodox community. As an

²² Data for May 1946: HJA XXXIII. 4. a. box no. 5, pile 30; data for May 1947: *Fény*, I (May 1947), p. 5 (see Novák, *Átmenetben*, p. 118); data for July 1948: HJA-NJRC documents XXXIII. 7. b. 1. Report by the Social Welfare Center for July 1948. Children's homes run by the Jewish community are also included in the data.

²³ See HJA XXXIII. 4. a. box no. 1, pile no. 30 and XXXIII. 7. b. 1, inspection protocols of 1946. The lack of educational training was mentioned in other places as well. See the press debate in the spring of 1947 in Novák, *Átmenetben*, pp. 120–121.

²⁴ HJA XXXIII. 4. a. box no. 1, pile no. 6.

inspection by the customs authorities revealed, some of the Joint's supplies of canned food were not considered kosher, which made the life of homes adhering to kashrut more difficult.²⁵

Zionist homes were often accused of admitting teenagers without the knowledge and approval of the parents or a referral from the Children's Department; however, the teenagers felt they were choosing a certain form of community life, leaving – or not re-adapting to – the environment that could not protect them from persecution, that could involuntarily abandon them in situations when even the adults had to face unbearably difficult decisions. Community life, shared experiences, and working for the other proved therapeutic, family relations were replaced by attachments found in the community, and the option of a totally different life in the Land of Israel provided a goal. In addition, youth aliya was a rebellion against the values of the former family and community.

As mentioned above, in 1945–1947, children from Budapest were temporarily housed in the network of children's homes in the provinces. However, sometimes the opposite happened: children from villages and small towns were moved to the capital that offered educational opportunities, and orphans were transferred from the provinces to institutions in Budapest. In the wake of the anti-Jewish atrocities in the provinces in February–March 1946, several parents thought it was safer to send their children to Budapest.²⁶ At that time, 100 children arrived from the Orthodox communities to the network of the Mizrahi movement, which established a new home for them at 30 Nagymező Street.²⁷

In 1946–1947, action was taken to get back from the provinces child survivors who had been saved and cared for by Christian institutions (convents, Protestant children's homes) or Christian families, and who had not been reclaimed by their parents or other relatives, so were probably orphans. The initiatives to return the children to the community came from different Orthodox organizations. In January 1946, Bnei Akiva posted an ad to find a two-year-old boy who had been with a Christian family for more than one and a half years.²⁸ Agudat Israel activists Benő Stein and Ervin Friedman found 70 Jewish children in convents in 1946.²⁹ That summer, 60 children were transferred by the Agudat Israel from Calvinist children's homes to a home established in Rózsadomb (Budapest's second district).³⁰ According to the report, the greatest concern of the Orthodox Jewish community was the reintroduction of the children's religious education, and did not show any sensitivity to the trauma of the orphans:

²⁵ See *ibid.*, pile no. 1. In September 1949, the director of the Makó daycare center sent 170 cans back to a dealer in Budapest to exchange them for kosher jam. The Joint's cans, as emblematic objects of the period, appear in the memoirs of many.

²⁶ See László Csősz, *Népiút után: zsidóellenes atrocitások Magyarországon 1945-1948* (Budapest: Társadalmi Konfliktusok Kutatóközpont, 2010).

²⁷ HJA XXXIII. 7. b. 1, a letter from the NJRC's Children's Department to Lajos Stöckler, March 14, 1946.

²⁸ *Új Élet*, January 10, 1946, p. 8.

²⁹ Ernst Fülöp, "Mit alkotott az Agudat Jisrael Magyarországon?" *Darkénu*, Fall 1946, p. 3.

³⁰ Novák, *Átmenetben*, p. 119.

The education of the children will be entrusted to an unaffiliated Orthodox professional committee, with regard to the special task of reeducating children who have been in Christian hands for years.³¹

In the same year, Menyhért Spiegel, the deputy president of the Orthodox Jewish Community in Budapest, organized a search for Jewish children who had been hidden by peasant families. There is no exact data on this case, but one thing is certain: the families caring for the children for two or two and a half years were reluctant to give them up and often denied the children's Jewish origin.³² Even in 1948, dozens of Jewish children who were found living with Christian families in dire circumstances were transferred to the network of Jewish children's homes.³³ These recollections and the stories of children removed from the hiding families have not been researched yet in Hungary, and have sunk into oblivion.³⁴

The recollections of a woman born at the end of 1943 in Cluj can help us understand what these children had to undergo.³⁵ Éva was only a few weeks old when she was passed into the care of a Christian woman in Nagybánya. At the end of the war, the woman requested the Joint's financial support for the girl, but, instead, the child was transferred to the family of Rabbi Kálmán Eliezer Eckstein. Subsequently, only knowing her real name, Éva was unable to find any information about her parents or other members of her family. Hence, she considered the rabbi's family as her own. It was highly traumatic for her when the rabbi and his family emigrated, depositing her in the Rózsadomb children's home, with Henrik Frischmann as director.³⁶ This is how Éva remembers the home: "Our food was stolen, and we were beaten, although we were only four or five years old. The Joint sent inspectors to see the state of affairs and they closed it down."³⁷ The children were moved to the Orthodox children's home in Domonkos Street where they were provided for properly, but the psychological wounds were left untreated, and behavioral problems were met with punishment. In 1953, the home was closed down, and the handful of girls, left without relatives, were entrusted to the custody of a care provider whom Éva did not like. In 1956, the group emigrated together and stayed together until the girls got married.

³¹ *Sabbaton*, June 15, 1946, p. 3.

³² Pál Balázs, *Forgószélben. A budapesti ortodox zsidóság és iskolái* (Budapest: Novella Kiadó, 2009), p. 439.

³³ HJA XXXIII. 4. a. 5, report by Florence S. Jacobson about the period February–November 1948, p. 21.

³⁴ In contrast, the Polish counterpart has been widely researched. See, for instance, Emunah Nachmany Gafny, *Dividing Hearts. The Removal of Jewish Children from Gentile Families in Poland in the Immediate Post Holocaust Years* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009). In the 1990s, activists in Poland admitted their uncertainties in identifying children, and the possibility of mistakes.

³⁵ My thanks to Sándor Bacskai for sharing with me this interview (Boro Park, May 1998).

³⁶ Hungarian Orthodox Israelite Archives and Library (henceforth: HOIAL). According to the community register, in September 1946, HOIAL was asked for financial support in order to establish the home, which was granted in March 1947. Thanks to Tamás Lóczy for the opportunity to research the archives while its resources were still in the process of being organized.

³⁷ There were similar cases: in March 1949, the whole staff of the home on Cinege Street was replaced by the NJRC on account of "improper behavior towards the children." HJA XXXIII. 7. b. 1, report from March 1949.

The network of children's homes was gradually growing in 1945–1946–1947. But from the end of 1947, it started to decrease, with homes merging or closing down. As a result, children living there went on the move, changing schools every year, sometimes moving even during the school year. There were children who experienced six or seven homes and schools in a few years.³⁸ The circumstances of the children changed quickly, as revealed by the correspondence between the director of the school on Zsigmond Street, Budapest, and the children's home on Ady Endre Street. In October 1947, he wanted to find out about children's home residents who had been registered at his school but had failed to attend. In response to his query, it was pointed out that some of the pupils had been moved to other places as a result of mergers, while others were learning with a tutor in the home.³⁹

One of the interviews collected by Centropa and illustrated with photos offers a characteristic example of those turbulent school years.⁴⁰ Péter Kertész (b. 1937, Karcag) attended a different school every year, as confirmed by his school reports. From May 1945, he attended second grade at the Karcag convent school. During the 1945/46 school year, he attended the reestablished Jewish elementary school in Karcag. In the 1946/47 school year, he went to the Tarbut⁴¹ Hebrew elementary school in Budapest and lived in a home run by Dror Habonim (a Zionist Socialist youth movement). In the 1947/48 school year (fifth grade), he attended the Szeged Jewish community school and lived in a local children's home. In the 1948/49 school year, he was transferred to the already nationalized elementary school on Röck Szilárd Street, Budapest, and lived in the home on Tárogató Road. In 1949/50, he remained in the Tárogató Road home, but went to the district elementary on Labanc Street. Finally, in 1950/51 (eighth grade), he was moved to the boys' orphanage on Vilma Királynő Road and attended the school on Rottenbiller Street.

I do not really know why we had to move from one place to another. There were reorganizations. The former place did not work out? I do not know. However, there were nice things, leisure activities like camping were fun. There was a bonfire, we danced around it somehow, went fishing, I have no idea what else we used to do.⁴²

³⁸ The interviews of Eszter Gombocz document several similar life stories. See <http://zsidoiskolasok.tk.mta.hu/>. For the story of Gábor Deutsch in the Orthodox children's homes, see Gábor Deutsch, "Máon a végeken," in Gábor Deutsch, *Gyökér, szár, virág* (Budapest: OR-ZSE, 1999), pp. 69–74.

³⁹ BCA VIII. 313. 1. Nos. 280–282.

⁴⁰ <http://www.centropa.org/hu/biography/kertesz-peter> (May 4, 2015).

⁴¹ Between the two world wars, there was a network of secular Hebrew schools called Tarbut ("culture" in Hebrew) operating in the Baltic states, Poland, and Romania.

⁴² Ibid.

There were three ways for children to leave the home: coming of age, emigration or reunion with their family who had managed to get back on their feet somehow. Emigration by children and youth groups was coordinated by the Youth Aliya Committee, set up in early 1946.⁴³

The organized return of children to their families in the first half of 1948 was preceded by preparing the families in Budapest and its surroundings, checking their entitlement, and inspecting the practical risks in the environment. Following the mergers of the children's homes at the end of the school year and during the summer, by the end of August, there were only 13 residential homes left, run by the NJRC, and the staff was reduced from 378 to 203.⁴⁴ As for the provinces, homes remained only in Szeged and Debrecen.

Not only Jewish organizations provided aid for Jewish children in need during the postwar years. According to the memoirs of Endre Gyárfás, after the siege of Pest, the Friends of Children Association was the first to organize afternoon parties for the children, playing with them and providing a light meal.⁴⁵ The children's home run by Gábor Sztehlo, which was widely known and recognized, had relatively few Jewish children from the spring of 1945. In the beginning (and during the war as well), it was supported by the Jó Pásztor Foundation, and from May 1946 on, it operated within the framework of the Pax Foundation, set up by the staff and its sponsors, including Rezső Hilscher, a leading figure in Hungarian social policy. According to the psychologist of the home, Margit Révész, most of the Jewish children residing in the home were born into families who had converted to Christianity, and were forced to face their Jewish past only during the persecutions.⁴⁶

Until 1948, the role of the state in caring for Jewish children was minor: on the one hand, this was owing to the characteristics of the state system at this point (a scarcity of residential homes, war damage, looting);⁴⁷ on the other hand, the Jewish organizations made every effort to keep the children in Jewish hands. However, children in need of special care were placed in the National Home of Disabled Children, with regular support from the Joint. During this period, a previously unknown phenomenon entered the scope of state child protection: gangs of young, Jewish troublemakers whose cases ended up at the Juvenile Court.⁴⁸

Community and Tarbut schools until nationalization

⁴³ Attila Novák, "Cionizmus érett korban," *Múlt és Jövő*, vol. 10, nos. 2–3 (1998), p. 94. On the question in general, see Géza Komoróczy, *A zsidók története Magyarországon, II.* (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2012), pp. 973–983. For studies about characteristic emigration stories including youth *aliya*, see Kinga Frojimovics, "A bricha kezdetei Magyarországon (summer, 1945 – March, 1946)" *Korunk*, vol. 26, no. 5 (2015), pp. 63–71.

⁴⁴ HJA XXXIII. 4. a. 5, report by F. S. Jacobson about February–November 1948, p. 21.

⁴⁵ Endre Gyárfás, *Mátyásföld, alkonyuló éden* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő Kiadó, 2013), p. 175.

⁴⁶ Margit Hrabovszkyné Révész, "Háborúsújtotta gyerekek," pp. 555–562.

⁴⁷ Ferenc Gergely, *A magyar gyerekvédelem története, 1867–1991* (Budapest: Püski, 1997), pp. 66–75.

⁴⁸ *Új Élet*, December 4, 1945, p. 7.

In this short and eventful period of three and a half school years, schools had to face a great number of serious difficulties, undertaking roles that had not been traditionally required of these institutions. Despite the war losses and the persecutions, the staff attempted to return to an orderly school life, adapting gradually to the new regime and its ideology, despite their functioning being paralyzed by nationalization. Figures and data in the available statistical sources are dissimilar regarding the number of Jewish schools reinstated after the Holocaust, and the number of pupils and teachers, due to uncertainties regarding the organization of the system: primary and middle schools as opposed to unified elementary schools, separate schools for boys and girls, mixed schools with coeducation, schools with a very low number of pupils sharing the same director, and branches operating in residential homes for children in the outskirts of the city.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in the 1946/47 school year, there were 17 schools in Budapest (three primary, six middle, and eight elementary) and 15 schools in the provinces (eight primary and seven elementary) run by the Israelite community.⁴⁹ The number of pupils learning in Jewish elementary schools in Budapest during the postwar years was about the same magnitude as in 1939/40. On the one hand, this shows that the schools managed to reach a similar capacity relatively quickly. The destruction caused by the war which affected buildings and institutions, was overcome by introducing emergency measures, such as learning in shifts and using other premises as classrooms. On the other hand, since the population of the 6–14-years age group had decreased by 50–60%, the same number of students in the Jewish schools meant an unprecedentedly high proportion in terms of their percentage (52.6%) within the given cohort. According to the reports by the Statistical Department of the Hungarian Agency for the Jewish World Congress, in the 1947/48 school year, 2,576 Jewish children (52.6%) in the capital attended Jewish community or Tarbut schools, while 2,316 went to state or public schools.⁵⁰ In comparison with data from the period before the Holocaust, this can be interpreted as concentration in Jewish institutions or self-imposed segregation.⁵¹

In the appendix, according to archival sources, you can find a chart summing up data about the institutions that ran schools. Among them, the Pest Israelite Community had the largest number of schools; the Buda Israelite Community had two small schools; the Budapest Orthodox Community had the Dob Street school and school branches operating in two orphanages; a school was jointly established by the Újpest Neolog⁵² and Orthodox communities in the fall of

⁴⁹ *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv, 1943–46* (Budapest, 1948), pp. 256ff. The figure does not include Tarbut schools.

⁵⁰ *Zsidó Világkongresszus Magyarországi Képvisellete és az Amerikai Joint Distribution Committee Statisztikai Osztályának Közleményei*, nos. 8–9 (April 1, 1948), p. 17. On the national scale, the proportion was less high: in the 1946/47 school year, out of 6,301 pupils of the Jewish faith – attending primary, elementary and middle schools – 2,819 (44%) went to Jewish community schools. (*Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv, 1943–46*, pp. 256ff.)

⁵¹ Karády, *Túlélők és újrakezdők*, pp. 112–113. For example, in the 1937/38 school year, the proportion of Jewish secondary school students attending Jewish community schools was only 14.6%.

⁵² The modernist stream in Hungary. One of the three movements (Neolog, Orthodox, Status Quo) that emerged from the Hungarian Jewish schism in the 19th century..

1946; and finally, the Óbuda Israelite Community also reorganized teaching from the fall of 1947.

Most of Hungarian Jewry outside Budapest was deported to Auschwitz in the spring and summer of 1944. In these communities hardly anyone under the age of 14 survived. About 17,500 people from the Hungarian Plains and from the Hajdúság region – from the ghettos of Baja, Debrecen, Szeged and Szolnok – were taken to Strasshof, near Vienna and made to work in local industrial and agricultural plants.⁵³ There, younger children and the elderly had a higher chance of surviving, and the three generations often made it home together. The geographic distribution of Jewish schools in the countryside after the war reflects this fact as most of them were located in the Hungarian Plains and Hajdúság region, the catchment areas of the above mentioned ghettos. Only 15 towns in the provinces reopened their Jewish schools and most of them were in the towns whose Jews had (at least in part) been deported to Strasshof. In Transdanubia, where all the communities were deported to Auschwitz, only two schools were reinstated: in Csorna and Pécs, and even there it was on account of children from Budapest being temporarily transferred to children's homes in the provinces. Even large communities in Transdanubia such as the one in Kaposvár were forced to give up their teachers' posts.⁵⁴

In the summer of 1946, in Miskolc, they showed me the children at school. Before the war, there were 17,000 Jews living in Miskolc; the Jewish school used to be attended by 1,500 children. Then, in 1946, they could gather only 22 children in the school yard: some of them had survived in Budapest, others had been hidden by Christians in various bunkers.⁵⁵

Most of the schools that reopened in the provinces had only a few pupils, less than 50, all learning as one class or divided into several classes. Upper grades were organized only in Debrecen, Szeged, Pécs and in the Deszk children's home. According to the statistical data of the Jewish World Congress, there were only 56 teachers and 1,308 children at the provincial Jewish schools.⁵⁶ Again, it should be emphasized that the loss of children in the provinces was actually more severe, since the number of pupils included children from the capital who had been moved to children's homes in the provinces.

The bilingual (Hebrew and Hungarian) Tarbut schools run by the Tarbut Cultural Association of the Hungarian Zionist Alliance were frequently mentioned in the recollections due to their uniqueness at that time in Hungary. In spirit and partly in person (by some of the teachers), they maintained continuity with the movement of Hebrew schools in the interwar

⁵³ Kinga Frojimovics and Éva Kovács, "Jews in a 'Judenrein' City: Hungarian Jewish Slave Laborers in Vienna (1944–1945)," *Hungarian Historical Review*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2015), pp. 705–736.

⁵⁴ HJA-X. Kaposvár, miscellaneous documents, December 1945.

⁵⁵ Ervin / Slomo Groszberg's memoirs in Bacskai, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé*, p. 38.

⁵⁶ *Zsidó Világkongresszus Magyarországi Képviselete és az Amerikai Joint Distribution Committee Statisztikai Osztályának Közleményei*, nos. 8–9 (April 1, 1948), p. 16.

period, more specifically with those in Carpatho-Ukraine.⁵⁷ In the 1945/46 school year, teaching started with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, on an elementary level and in the lower grades of the gymnasium in Budapest and the Deszk children's home.⁵⁸ Details can be found in the yearbook of the Tarbut Cultural Association⁵⁹ in which plans are also mentioned to open new schools the following year. In Budapest, during the 1946/47 school year, the building of the Rabbinical Seminary at 26 Röck Szilárd Street housed an elementary school and a gymnasium; elementary school grades were run in the building of the children's home on Hungaria Boulevard; and there was another branch in the Mátyásföld children's home.

Not all of the plans could be realized. The transformation of the Szeged Israelite primary school into an eighth grade Tarbut school from the fall of 1946 remained an unrealized project. The planned change for the Hebrew school was mainly advanced by the directors of the Zionist children's homes. The Jewish community also supported it, hoping to get money for the renovation and the development of the school. Eventually, the cooperation fell through, and the community had to run all the six grades on its own. In May 1947, preparing for next year, the school board was uncertain whether to employ a new teacher with a tenure for the seventh grade when 70% of the pupils resided in a children's home and would soon make aliya.⁶⁰

According to the elementary school register of the Tarbut school in Budapest, a significant portion of the pupils were orphans and half-orphans and living in children's homes: Zionist organizations running children's homes (43 Mexikói Road, 26 Délibáb Street, 58/b Bácskai Street, 112/b Róna Street, 39 Nürnberg Street) apparently preferred the bilingual Tarbut school for their charges.⁶¹ Of course, Hebrew as the teaching language could be introduced only gradually. The children did not know the language and there was a shortage of teaching materials in Hebrew as well as teachers who could speak the language well enough. In order to solve these problems, Endre Gellért, at a conference held in Jerusalem in the summer of 1947, asked for help regarding Hebrew education in the Diaspora.⁶²

On account of the long, involuntary break, the 1945 school year ran until mid-July, trying to save the school year and also introduce normalcy into the lives of the children, despite the terrible losses. Facing the losses and missing the teachers and children was the essence of the

⁵⁷ On Hebrew schools in the Carpatho-Ukraine, see Viktória Bányai, "Oktatásügy," in Viktória Bányai, Csilla Fedinec and Szonja Ráhel Komoróczy, eds., *Zsidók Kárpátalján: történelem és örökség. A dualizmus korától napjainkig* (Budapest: Aposztróf Kiadó, 2013), pp. 173–183. Illés Rubin, the former director of the Jewish Gymnasium in Munkachevo led the organization of the Budapest school from July to December 1945. As for the Deszk school, many of the teaching staff from Uzhhorod were active there.

⁵⁸ Decree 34.693/1945 about Hebrew as the teaching language and Decree 651/1945 (both by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs) about the transformation of the gymnasium of the Rabbinical Seminary into a Tarbut gymnasium.

⁵⁹ Aladár Spiegel, ed. *A Tarbut Héber Kultúregyesület iskoláinak Évkönyve az 1945/46-os tanévről* (Budapest, 1946).

⁶⁰ From the archives of the Szeged Jewish Community, protocols of the school board meeting (document 156/1947).

⁶¹ BCA VIII. 2050. Register of the Tarbut Hebrew Elementary School about the 1947/48 school year.

⁶² Endre Gellért, "Hahinnuh Haiври BeHungaria," in Hahinnuh Haiври BeTfutzot Hagola (Jerusalem, 1948), pp. 141–143.

poem "The Higher Grade" written by Mrs. Miksa Almási, an elementary school teacher from the Debrecen Orthodox Jewish school, in memory of the three missing colleagues and 200 children. It was recited at the closing ceremony of the six-week course that replaced the school year.⁶³ There were losses in Budapest schools as well: on the pages of *Új Élet*, the educational inspector of the Pest Jewish community, Endre Gellért, called on Jewish teachers working in non-Jewish schools and pensioners in Budapest to help out at the Jewish schools.⁶⁴

Instead of returning to school, a great number of Jewish children from Budapest spent the spring and summer of 1945 on vacation at various children's homes in the provinces, in the care of different organizations, in order to recuperate physically and mentally.⁶⁵ Supplementary exams had to be taken for the school work they had missed. Also, due to the severe shortage of food and fuel supplies in the winter of 1945/46, again, a lot of children had to be moved to the provinces. The absence of pupils in the city schools reached such an extent that grading became impossible: among the documents of the Budapest schools there is a great number of protocols on grading exams. The 1945/46 school year was highly problematic, as demonstrated by the evaluations of the Dob Street Orthodox school form masters:

Many of the children are anemic, weak, suffering from malnutrition; colds are widespread.

One pupil died, three pupils were absent for a long time.

There were long absences, due to skin-diseases caused by chilblains and vitamin deficiency.

On account of restrictions in tram services this year, many pupils were late because they live in various parts of the city.

Fourteen children were left ungraded [out of 44]. Some of them left the country, others spent the winter months in the provinces due to the food shortage and there were also transfers to other schools.

A little girl died of the illness she had contracted in the ghetto. The number of ungradable pupils, due to absence, is five.⁶⁶

Cases are documented about the return of children to school in 1946/47 or 1947/48, for instance, after prolonged medical treatment, and by then, somewhat older than their classmates.

Aid, such as school equipment, clothes, and shoes, for needy orphaned and half-orphaned pupils was provided by the Joint through the schools. A network of daycare homes was organized where children were given lunch, could learn in a warm and orderly place under the supervision of a tutor, and had the opportunity to socialize. The budget was always financed by

⁶³ HJA XIX. Legacy of the Almási family, published in: *A debreceni holokauszt ötvenedik évfordulójára, 1944–1994* (Debrecen: Debreceni Zsidó Hitközség, 1994).

⁶⁴ *Új Élet*, no. 6, February 7, 1946, p. 7.

⁶⁵ See for instance: Gyárfás, *Mátyásföld, alkonyuló éden*, pp. 182–242.

⁶⁶ BCA VIII. 254. a. box 2, containing protocols. Since skin diseases, such as scabies, were widespread in the fall of 1946, pupils were provided with the opportunity to bathe in the *mikva* (ritual bath).

the Joint or the NJRC and the centers were run by the Zionist Youth Organizations and the Jewish communities. In Budapest, you could also find daycare homes in areas where community schools had not reopened: among others, at 31 Magdolna Street, 9 Román Street (Kőbánya), and 9 Zichy Street (Óbuda). There were daycare homes operating side by side with the schools in the provinces; for instance, in Karcag, Szarvas, Szolnok, Kiskunhalas, and Debrecen. It should be pointed out that even after nationalization, some of the daycare homes run by the communities continued to operate, although the number of recipients dropped drastically due to the restricted conditions of entitlement. According to NJRC data, in the 1949/50 school year more than 700 children were provided for.⁶⁷

Because of Shabbat, teaching days at the Jewish schools were different from other schools. There was no teaching on Saturday, and children had to attend services at the synagogue. In some places, teaching was five days a week, from Monday to Friday; in other schools, it included Sundays, running for six days. The winter term was abridged in 1946/47 as well, due to the shortage of fuel, the "coal break," and affected not only the Jewish schools. In order to observe Shabbat, the pupils of Dob Street school were exempted from participation in the procession on the March 15, 1947 national holiday, since it fell on a Saturday.

Before 1944, German was taught as a foreign language in the Jewish middle schools and Jewish gymnasiums. In 1945, there were still German language exams, but lessons in that subject were subsequently stopped at Jewish schools, even for those students who had been learning it before, and replaced with English from the fifth grade on. Despite the parents' support and the children's willingness, as confirmed by several sources, grades in English were rather poor in the beginning. However, the children's English language skills improved through the efforts of the Jewish World Congress, which set the children up with American pen pals.⁶⁸ It is a well-known fact, however, that after nationalization, the instruction of the Russian language began instead of English.

Hebrew was already included in religious education, beginning in the lower grades. The framework remained characteristic of teaching a dead language, i.e. teaching through translation and based on the Bible, but now included modern methods for teaching the spoken language. Teaching the modern language was welcomed by pupils, many of whom were affiliated with a local Zionist movement. The educational directors of the Pest Israelite Community (PIC), Endre Gellért and Adolf Fisch, were also committed to teaching modern Hebrew.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, most RE teachers opted for an intermediary position.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ HJA XXXIII. 7. b. 1. In 1950, a new daycare center was organized by the Székesfehérvár community.

⁶⁸ BCA VIII. 254. a. I. no. 145.

⁶⁹ In the absence of a modern Hebrew textbook, Endre Gellért himself prepared a few chapters, writing and drawing, in the spring of 1945: HOIAL, 1945 miscellaneous registered material: 85/1945. Adolf Fisch petitioned the rabbinate for the introduction of Sephardic pronunciation in religious education and youth services, because it was closer to the spoken language of the Holy Land: HOIAL, 1945 miscellaneous registered material: 134/1945.

⁷⁰ See the lecture by József Schmidég at the meeting on teaching methods in the middle schools (for boys and girls separately) run by the PIH, February 25, 1946. BCA VIII. 265. a. I. no. 445. Regarding Jenő Rácz, the RE and

The political change, increasingly interfering with school life, and the attitude of the respective institutions to this, can be reconstructed quite accurately from the schools' archives: from circulars by the director general of the school district and the drafts or copies of the replies sent by the school. Already in the 1946/47 school year, there were circulars about obligatory commemoration ceremonies, training courses for teachers, requests for donations and collections, and recommendations for cultural programs. In the 1947/48 school year, political pressure intensified. To illustrate the well-known phenomenon, here are a few examples of the forms and tools of political propaganda: students' "Hive" movement, obligatory introduction to the National Association of People's Colleges (NÉKOSZ), distribution of *Pajtás*, the periodical of the Hungarian Pioneer Federation, training courses for pioneer leaders, the première of *Timur and His Squad*, a Soviet pedagogy exhibition, forming parental boards, Learn Better! movement, etc.

Beyond the administrative requirements (statistics, reports, and the like), Buda schools, which had a small number of pupils apparently tried to ward off the communist demands by finding pretexts, such as explaining that most of their pupils were orphans from children's homes, which unfortunately made it impossible for them to participate in charity collections, to form a parental board or a pioneer troop, or even to pay students' insurance policies. The Dob Street school followed the traditional rabbinical principle of "the law of the country is the law," and fulfilled the tasks it was expected to (in order to avoid receiving critical remarks), but with moderate enthusiasm and results. In the collection of paper, organized in the fall of 1948, for example, 438 pupils of the school collected only 35 kilograms of paper and 0 kilogram of rags.⁷¹ The sale of Chain Bridge badges also ended with modest results and precise accounts. In the spring of 1947, the pioneer troop was established under the leadership of the teacher Ödön Gáti, but just a year later, it numbered only 38 boys as members, and its activities were minimal.⁷² Some of the Pest Neolog schools demonstrated more enthusiastic cooperation due to their serious democratic commitment.

The end of community elementary schools is well documented: in the summer of 1948, they were all nationalized, including the school buildings themselves along with all their equipment.⁷³ On December 7, 1948, the agreement to regulate relations between the state and the Israelite communities was signed by Gyula Ortutay, Lajos Stöckler, and Samu Kahan-Frankl. Only the continuation of the girls' and the boys' gymnasiums of the Pest Israelite community was sanctioned.

During the summer 1948 school preparatory talks, representatives of the Orthodox and Neolog communities attempted to keep as many of their schools as possible running and to have

Hebrew teacher of the girls' gymnasium, who taught Hebrew in the way Latin was taught, see Ágnes Gergely, *Két szimpla a kedvesben* (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 2014), pp. 86–87.

⁷¹ BCA VIII. 1911. a. I. no. 209.

⁷² BCA VIII. 254. a. I. no. 304.

⁷³ The Budapest Orthodox community "donated" a huge building at 27 Kazinczy Street to the Hungarian state in order to be allowed to keep the original school building in the yard of the synagogue where the Talmud Tora was left.

a say in the educational program and the selection of teachers in schools that would be transferred. In the first draft of the agreement between the state and the Israelite communities, the elementary school on Wesselényi Street, the boys' and girls' schools on Dob Street, the *Status Quo*⁷⁴ school in Debrecen, the Neolog school in Szeged, and the Orthodox school in Makó were designated to remain in the hands of the Jewish community, in addition to the boys' and girls' gymnasiums and the affiliated vocational schools.⁷⁵

On June 10, 1948, during the discussions between Gyula Ortutay and two state secretaries (László Bóka and György Alexits) on the one hand, and Lajos Stöckler and Samu Kahan-Frankl, on the other, the ministry made it clear that if elementary schools were left in the hands of the community, they would forfeit the right to provide school reports. As a compromise, a special local curriculum was offered to the Dob Street school: "With the transfer of authority to the state, which would only be a formal change, the Jewish community was to be consulted concerning every issue, as a partner."⁷⁶ The possibility of a local curriculum was approved by Ortutay for one Orthodox and one Neolog institution; for the latter, Stöckler suggested the gymnasium. According to the protocol, Alexits proposed that "in order to preserve the character of the Tarbut school, they could get teachers from Palestine, if there were no other options."⁷⁷ Ortutay promised that after nationalization, the same teachers could stay: "There would be no teaching on Saturdays, and they would have to make up for missed classes with the same technical procedures as before."⁷⁸

The next round of talks took place on August 10. In preparation for the meeting, the central representative bodies of both the Orthodox and the Neolog communities prepared memoranda about their suggestions and requests. These documents, accepting the nationalization of all the denominational elementary schools, tried to ensure the conditions, which were considered significant from a religious point of view, were respected: no teaching on Saturdays, kosher food, the use of religious symbols, the number of RE classes, and the option of extending a local curriculum to other institutions (on the Orthodox side, to the orphanages affiliated to Dob Street and the schools in Makó and Debrecen; on the Neolog side, to the boys' and girls' elementary schools on Wesselényi Street and Szent Domonkos/Abonyi Street).

The Neolog memo called for preserving the religious character of the vocational schools and the boys' orphanage, in addition to the provincial Debrecen Status Quo school and the Szeged Neolog school.⁷⁹ The Jewish community of Kiskunhalas petitioned for the lower grades of the state school to be placed in their own well-equipped and well-preserved four-classroom

⁷⁴ Status Quo was an independent movement that emerged from the Hungarian Jewish schism.

⁷⁵ HOIAL, documents of the Orthodox Israelite Central Bureau, 636/1948, undated.

⁷⁶ HOIAL, documents of the Orthodox Israelite Central Bureau 636/1948, protocol from the session on June 10, 1948.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.3.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.5.

⁷⁹ *Memorandum for the August 10 meeting between the working committees of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the National Office of Hungarian Israelites*. HOIAL, documents of the Orthodox Israelite Central Office 636/1948.

building, in an attempt to ensure that their 20 Jewish pupils remained there. Both the Orthodox and Neolog communities requested exemption from the nationalization of their provincial school's building where teaching could not be resumed since there were no children. Hence, these buildings were used by the community for other purposes such as a house of prayer instead of the ruined synagogue, a Joint canteen, a hall for cultural events, and an office. The memorandum listed Devecser, Gyoma, Jászberény, Nagykanizsa, Sátoraljaújhely, and Orosháza. After nationalization of the school in Pécs (1 Fürdő Street), the Jewish community appealed to the authorities to reclaim rooms in the old people's home, which had been used temporarily for teaching purposes when the school building had been turned into a children's home.⁸⁰

In the 1948/49 school year, only a few government promises and community requests were fulfilled. Already in the summer, schools with a low number of pupils were informed by the respective supervising authorities about their closure: two schools in Buda were notified that their maintenance, according to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, "was not found to be justified, as it did not serve the interest of public education." The transfer of school equipment and teaching staff to a state school was demanded as well. The elementary grades, which had a large number of pupils, were also closed down by the authorities in the Abonyi Street gymnasium building. In February 1949, in the middle of the school year, the already nationalized boys' orphanage school was closed down and merged with the elementary school at 19 Vilma Királynő Road. The merged class in the Orthodox girls' orphanage school in Rákosszentmihály would have faced the same fate if their teacher Andor Hauer (placed there from the closed down school on Váli Street) had not emigrated in October. The appeals of Director Ármin Reif for help to fill the post were ignored by the school district authority, and therefore, the girls had to be registered at another school.⁸¹ The Tarbut school on Rökk Szilárd Street, which had been mentioned during the talks, was also closed down during the 1948/49 school year.

The first school year at the larger schools, which were allowed to operate after nationalization – those on Dob and Wesselényi Streets and the Status Quo school in Debrecen – was characterized by continuity, from the aspect of both teachers and students. Nevertheless, this proved to be a disadvantage due to the new regulation regarding the "option" to observe Shabbat. In contrast to the ministerial promise, the agreement signed in December (paragraph/article 7/e) allowed only 20% of the students to be exempt from school attendance on Shabbat. The rest of the students and children from non-observant families were exempt only from writing, drawing, and arts and crafts on Saturdays. Parents had to apply for exemption, a procedure that was unthinkable for some of them because of their positions.⁸² The families' Shabbat observance was

⁸⁰ Pécs Jewish Community, 1948–d469. Correspondence still exists from Foncière General Insurance Company regarding the Jewish community's cancellation of the nationalized school building's insurance policy.

⁸¹ BCA VIII. 1911.a. nos. 429, 464.

⁸² According to Benjamin Abelesz in Budapest in 1953, both parents had to apply separately to the District Council. In Bacskai, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé*, p. 22.

certified by the Jewish community, but the exemption was left to the schools' discretion.⁸³ Children who were transferred from the protection of denominational schools to state schools, especially in the provinces, faced painful experiences such as antisemitic remarks and teasing.⁸⁴

For the high school age group, Jewish schools resumed work only in Budapest.⁸⁵ The boys' and girls' gymnasiums of the PIC were the most widely known and were the only institutions left in the hands of the Jewish community after nationalization.⁸⁶ The girls' school, which had been established in 1940, was moved to Fürst Sándor Street after the war. The Tarbut Hebrew gymnasium had previously been the Rabbinical seminary's gymnasium. The Rökk Szilárd Street building now housed the Israelite Teacher Training College, an engineering high school for boys, and a vocational high school for girls, the latter two both supported by the ORT. The total number of students in the abovementioned institutions was 1,147 in the 1946/47 school year and 1,121 in 1947/48.⁸⁷

While in the prewar era the *numerus clausus*⁸⁸ made university education almost impossible and pushed some of the young people to learn trades, after the war, it was poverty that made vocational training attractive, by enabling the students to look after themselves as soon as possible. For young people participating in vocational training run by the state, apprentice homes were established with Joint support, of course. The vocational training was the aim of specialized Jewish institutions. Seamstresses were trained in the Szenes Anikó girls' home (Keleti Károly Street), supported by WIZO and the Buda Women's Association.⁸⁹ Agricultural and industrial training (for example, gardening and upholstery) was offered in the apprentice home (Hermina Road) and the colony (Keresztúri Road) run by the venerable, well-established MIKÉFE (Hungarian Israelite Association of Crafts and Agriculture).⁹⁰ Older boys were also offered vocational training by the Orthodox children's home on Szent Domonkos Street and sewing was organized for girls learning in the Dob Street school.⁹¹ Of course, the *hahsharot* of the Zionist movements had similar objectives.

⁸³ The recollections of Miklós Braun. In *ibid.*, p. 78. A similar experience was shared by Ráchel Lemberger in the nationalized school at Makó, *ibid.*, p. 161.

⁸⁴ See, for instance, the USC Shoah Foundation interview with Péter Gulyás, Debrecen; also Gábor Gombi, Makó, in Bacskai, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé*, p. 161.

⁸⁵ Between the two world wars, there were only a few Jewish secondary schools in the provinces: the gymnasium in Debrecen and the Orthodox Teacher Training College and Girls' Liceum in Miskolc.

⁸⁶ For a detailed history of the institution, see László Felkai, *A budapesti zsidó fiú- és leánygimnázium története* (Budapest: Anna Frank Gimnázium, 1992).

⁸⁷ *Zsidó Világkongresszus Magyarországi Képvisellete és az Amerikai Joint Distribution Committee Statisztikai Osztályának Közleményei*, nos. 8–9 (April 1, 1948), pp. 16–17.

⁸⁸ The law was introduced in 1920. Its aim was to limit the percentage of Jewish students in colleges and universities to 6 percent.

⁸⁹ Mária Ember, *El a faluból* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő Kiadó, 2002). A great number of details about the institution are revealed in this memoir.

⁹⁰ About the history of the organization, see Erika Izsák, ed., *Magyar Izraelita Kézműves és Földművelési Egyesület, 1842–1949, dokumentumok*. MIKÉFE Világtalálkozó, 2000 (Budapest: Budapesti Zsidó Hitközség, 2000).

⁹¹ Balázs, *Forgószélben*, p. 441.

The pupils and staff of the Jewish boys' and girls' gymnasiums were permitted to stay in their own building until 1950. Then, in the 1950/51 school year, the girls had to move to Szent Domonkos Street, giving up their place to the Southern Slavic Teacher Training College. The following school year, both boys and girls had to move to the rabbinical seminary building.

The girls' gymnasium on Abonyi Street and its nearby counterpart, the boys' gymnasium on Szent Domonkos Street – both venerable and well-established institutions that used to compete with the most significant religious schools in terms of teachers and subjects – were not the same. Their famous teacher had retired, and their books were piled up in a storeroom. Nevertheless, a few fascinatingly knowledgeable and amazing teachers were still left.⁹²

It [the boys' gymnasium] was a nice school, with not too high standards, it was a point of honor to leave the Jewish gymnasium alone. Of course, out of all the denominational schools, some were left. [...] I passed the final examinations in 1955 (It was called baccalaureate). It was a scary situation: real life started. What should I do? To get into university from a denominational school is impossible. Maybe in the provinces it is worth trying.⁹³

The period of compulsory religious education

The issue of religious education (RE) should be discussed separately, since, until the fall of 1949, each and every student in the public education system had to study and take an exam in religious education, according to his or her denomination. That is, theoretically, all Jewish children had RE lessons, irrespective of the character of the school they attended or the place where they lived. However, RE was part of the class schedule only in the schools of larger Jewish communities, such as in Budapest, both in Jewish and non-Jewish schools. In smaller communities, there was either a shortage of instructors or the number of pupils was too low, so there was only one study group on Sunday mornings. According to the statistics of the Jewish World Congress, religious education was offered in 88 provincial Jewish communities in the 1946/47 school year, while children in villages were given none.⁹⁴ An Auschwitz survivor, who returned with her mother to Devecser at the age of 12 and attended the middle school there, remembered being taught by her parents, and during the High Holidays by the visiting rabbi. The rabbi used to give her an examination so that she could have a grade in RE.⁹⁵ Even in larger

⁹² Gergely, *Két szimpla a kedvesben*, pp. 86–87.

⁹³ <http://www.centropa.org/hu/biography/kertesz-peter> (May 4, 2015).

⁹⁴ *Zsidó Világkongresszus Magyarországi Képviselete és az Amerikai Joint Distribution Committee Statisztikai Osztályának Közleményei*, nos. 8–9 (April 1, 1948), p. 16.

⁹⁵ Oral testimony by Mrs. Imre Vadász (Győr, 2014).

communities like Makó, RE was sometimes problematic for children attending non-Jewish schools:

I had no reason to be annoyed at the rabbinical establishment, we did not even have a rabbi. During RE classes we listened to scientific explanations of Biblical miracles. Despite the fact that I did not even know a single letter in Hebrew and kept quiet during the lessons, I was always presented with a five [the best grade, VB]. [...] Not going to church on Sundays was marked as an unjustified absence for Catholic children. It was not compulsory for me to attend services, so, during the postwar surge of religious feelings, I went to the synagogue on my own initiative.⁹⁶

To alleviate the shortage of RE instructors, in the fall of 1946, the Budapest Orthodox Jewish community established a Beit Yaakov school for girls, following their middle school education, and comprised a two-year program to train them as RE instructors, headed by Mrs. Ráhel Stein née Adler.⁹⁷ In addition to religious subjects, the students studied Hebrew, English, the basics of psychology and education, and even hygiene. Regular studies continued at the institution until June 1952.⁹⁸ Beit Yaakov graduates were employed at Talmud Tora schools throughout the country.⁹⁹

RE instructors received tenure only at larger schools; elsewhere they were under the supervision of the Jewish communities and paid by the hour. In the fall of 1946, certificates for RE instructors who were paid hourly had to be sent to the inspectorate, and, just like other employees in public education, were required to take an oath to honor the constitution of the republic.¹⁰⁰

Religious education raised difficult issues during these years. It was essentially the same problematic question articulated in many different forums and forms: “After Auschwitz, after the deportations and the ghettos, how can we teach about Man and God, faith, and morality?”

We work with young people who are different from previous generations taught by RE instructors. The pupil of the recent past has entered the "upper grades" following a terrible world experience. He has learnt that lying is a virtue, unlawfulness is cunning, denial is courage. An ethical world order and world view, God above the laws of nature,

⁹⁶ Bárdos, *A második évtized*, p. 76.

⁹⁷ They named it after the network of Beit Yaakov (Ultra) Orthodox girls' schools and teacher training colleges in the period between the two world wars in Poland, Lithuania, and Austria.

⁹⁸ HOIAL, report by Ervin Groszberg to the Talmud Tora Committee of the BJC's Orthodox Section, September 1952.

⁹⁹ For instance, Mrs. Piroska Fischer née Breuer was sent to Hajdúnánás to teach RE in the afternoon to elementary school pupils in 1948–1950.

¹⁰⁰ BCA VIII. 254. a. 1, among the documents.

and supportive maternal care are not merely unknown concepts, they are ideas, or more precisely, rejected ideas, that are denied with force.¹⁰¹

The uselessness of old content and methods was recognized by the RE instructors and the community's educational directors. A teacher's personal authenticity was emphasized by many, referring to the fact, without verbalizing it, that the Holocaust had taken its toll on the faith and integrity of the adults. Thus, not just run-of-the-mill RE instructors were required, but those with whom bonds could be formed.¹⁰² As for the methods, stimulating activities, renewed youth services, singing, and the importance of Hebrew culture were stressed. RE inspector Adolf Fisch, in his circular to the staff of the PIC's RE instructors, went even further than that, denying the former basic principles of Neology. He refuted the belief in the compatibility of the Jewish religion with Hungarian nationality, calling the "Israelite-Hungarian" a historical fiction, "negative acrobatics." According to Fisch, after getting rid of this belief, at long last one could talk about and teach "Jewish Jewry," the Jewish people, the national language, a return to the "ancient-new country."¹⁰³ In the same spirit, based on the values of a Jewish people and a national language in *Galut* and *Eretz*,¹⁰⁴ and also of the importance of knowing the Land of Israel, he compiled a new syllabus for religious education in the summer of 1945, planned for grades 1–8 of a Jewish high school. According to his schedule, in every school year there would be six RE lessons a week teaching five subjects: Bible, religious practice (liturgy, holidays), Hebrew language, Hebrew literature, and Judaic studies (by that he meant Jewish history and "Palestinography"). Palestinography stood for studies in geography (including nature and social geography) and history.

The work of RE instructors was undermined by the tension between different educational standards as well: the contrast between RE education at school as opposed to the pupil's home, or between the school and the views of the Zionist children's home.¹⁰⁵ The pupil was learning about the Jewish holidays, the traditions, but the family did not observe Shabbat, Passover, etc., and in some children's homes, the education was expressly anti-religious.¹⁰⁶

In the spring of 1947, there was a general outcry throughout the country against the planned cancellation of compulsory religious education, or the introduction of optional RE education, as the inspectorate preferred to put it. In Szeged, the pupils demonstrated against the plan. Circulars written in early April by the general directors of the educational districts included exact and detailed instructions for school directors on how to deal with the situation: convene a

¹⁰¹ Miklós Klein, "Korszerű hitoktatás," *Országos Rabbiegyesület Értesítője*, June 1947, p. 17.

¹⁰² Miklós Bernáth, "Korszerű hitoktatás," *Országos Rabbiegyesület Értesítője*, June 1947, p. 20.

¹⁰³ HOIAL, 1945, miscellaneous registered material: 93/1945.

¹⁰⁴ *Galut* = Diaspora (in Hebrew). In contrast with the former view of Neology, considering Hungary as the real homeland of the "Hungarian-Jews," Adolf Fisch regarded Hungary as a scene in the Diaspora. *Eretz* = country, land (in Hebrew), meaning the Land of Israel in Jewish tradition and in Zionist terminology.

¹⁰⁵ HOIAL, 1945, miscellaneous registered material: 149/1945. See also Gellért Endre, "Újjáélednek zsidó iskoláink," *Új Élet*, March 14, 1946, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ See the article by Endre Gellért, *Szabad Újpesti Zsidó Élet*, April 1947, pp. 9–11.

staff meeting, inform pupils in the right spirit, and hold a parent-teacher meeting regarding the issue.¹⁰⁷ "It should be made clear to the parents and the youth that optional religious education would not harm religious life, it will make it a lot more sincere." The directors were provided with convincing arguments in the circular, emphasizing that optional religious education was not the product of socialism; it was common in bourgeois democracies.¹⁰⁸ All the schools had to report back to the school district about holding parent-teacher meetings. The director of the boys' elementary on Wesselényi Street sent the following account: "The position taken unanimously by the parents was fully appreciative of the decree's intentions. My lecture on optional religious education was received with calm understanding."¹⁰⁹ In an article in the rabbinical association's bulletin in the summer of 1947, Adolf Fisch saluted the plan of optional religious education and, in accordance with the official argument, he welcomed it as a great opportunity for self-examination. The Jewish community would have to face real interest as well as indifference from the families that had been covered by the compulsory character of the subject. According to Fisch, compulsory religious education by the state was the real danger, because it created an illusory world.¹¹⁰ However, when optional religious education was actually introduced in September 1949, a national campaign was introduced to mobilize Jewish communities to have all parents sign up their children for religious education; the community leaders would not let the result become an opportunity for self-examination.

Fisch did not seem to be an advocate of free choice in the cases of children registered after birth as Jewish when the denominational status of their families changed. Together with the rabbinical establishment of the PIC, he fought incessantly against educational institutions, the Budapest Orphans' Court, and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, in order for these children to receive a Jewish religious education. When a Jewish widow remarried a Christian, the Orphans' Court gave permission to change the minor's religion for the sake of religious unity within the family. In reference to the current laws, Fisch regarded these decisions unfounded. In a complaint to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, in the name of the PIC directorate, the losses of the community were stressed, in addition to the legal argument: "Our pain is doubled by the fact that from the number of our fellow congregants, reduced close to total extinction, we are about to lose young souls, as a result of official measures."¹¹¹

From the beginning of the twentieth century, a significant portion of Neolog families in the cities were content with compulsory religious education in school and did not send their children to private tutors or Talmud Torah. This practice was continued after the war, until 1949. From this period, we have data about Talmud Tora schools only in the Orthodox communities

¹⁰⁷ BCA VIII. 254. a. I. no. 428 and BCA VIII. 313. I. no. 195.

¹⁰⁸ In addition to the viewpoints of the circular for the parent-teacher meeting, the periodical *Köznevelés* in its April 1, 1947 issue also provided guidelines.

¹⁰⁹ BCA VIII. 1912. a. I. 2222/1947.

¹¹⁰ Adolf Fisch, "A fakultatív vallástanítás kérdéséhez," in *Országos Rabbiegyesület Értesítője*, June 1947, pp. 12–16.

¹¹¹ See the correspondence on this issue: HOIAL, 1948, miscellaneous documents.

(Budapest, Debrecen, Békéscsaba, Hajdúböszörmény, Újpest)¹¹² and in the children's homes and daycare centers¹¹³ run by Orthodox organizations. Studies were carried out on a daily basis, centering on the texts taught, traditional curriculum, and teaching methods.

In addition to compulsory religious education, Neolog communities tried to organize activities for the children in connection with the holidays, which would provide fun experiences: *Hanukka* and *Purim* plays, children's *seder*, *Oneg Shabbat*,¹¹⁴ *Tu Bishvat seder*.¹¹⁵ Children's events and plays filled the synagogue with parents who would otherwise have kept their distance from it. Even communities with hardly any children left, started such projects for children, centered around the adults with a sense of calling. For instance, in 1946, in Kecskemét, Ilona Schlesinger prepared the *Purim Spiel*¹¹⁶ with 16 children, out of whom there were only two local children of the 160 pupils that used to attend school there.¹¹⁷

Methods for processing trauma

As mentioned before, after the Holocaust, the children's losses should have been considered by all those involved with child survivors, aiding them to process their trauma as much as possible. Surveys by Ilona Benoschofsky and Livia Koralek were intended to provide a picture about the children's associations, their fears, and desires.¹¹⁸ Perhaps the lack of pleasure and the uniformity of desires were the most shocking features: out of 100 children, 92 wanted food as one of their three wishes, and 74 asked for the return of their lost parents. Between May 1945 and June 1948, Margit Hrabovszky née Révész observed 226 children who had been traumatized by the war in the Pax home led by Gábor Sztehlo.¹¹⁹ She found that originally healthy children who had come from good families could process the trauma of loss in one to one and a half years. She also pointed out that Jewish roots caused extra difficulty among the war-traumatized children, due to the loss of ideals and the permanent danger to life. In the Pax home, processing was aided by

¹¹² *Zsidó Világkongresszus Magyarországi Képvisellete és az Amerikai Joint Distribution Committee Statisztikai Osztályának Közleményei*, nos. 8–9 (April 1, 1948), p. 16.

¹¹³ Novák, *Átmenetben*, p. 119. Talmud Tora schools run by the Mizrahi: Deszk, Szarvas, Kiskunhalas, Rákosszentmihály, 6 Rákóczi Road in Budapest. Agudat Israel daycare centers: Makó, Debrecen, Hajdúnánás, Balmazújváros.

¹¹⁴ A traditional celebratory gathering after the conclusion of the religious services on shabbat.

¹¹⁵ The festive meal for the traditional Jewish festival of Tu Bishvat.

¹¹⁶ Usually referring to a folk theatre that reenacts the events of the Book of Esther.

¹¹⁷ *Új Élet*, March 28, 1946, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ Ilona Benoschofsky, "Korszellem és gyerekkor. Lelki helyzetkép gyermekeinkről," in Benoschofsky, *Maradék-zsidóság*, pp. 38–46; and Livia Koralek, "A második világháború hatása a zsidó gyermek lelkivilágára," in Spiegel, ed., *A Tarbut Héber Kultúregyesület iskoláinak Évkönyve az 1945-46-os tanévről*, pp. 14–17.

¹¹⁹ Hrabovszkyné Révész, "Háborúsújtotta gyerekek," pp. 555–562. On Gábor Sztehlo (1909–1974) and his children's home, see Charles Fenyvesi, *When Angels Fooled the World. Rescuers of Jews in Wartime Hungary* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), Ch. 5.

community life, exercise, work, and the arts; in other places the process was unplanned and sometimes halting.¹²⁰

It was a sign of lost childhood that the children had forgotten how to play: their experience made them wild, disillusioned, precocious, and cynical.¹²¹ "We have forgotten how to play, we don't play anymore" as an 11-year-old survivor from Pécs, one of a set of twins put it.¹²² After the Holocaust, communities where children could relearn to have fun and to engage in activities normal for their age group played an important role in getting this generation back on its feet. Such communities were organized, although not exclusively, on a denominational basis. However, for this essay, only denominational schools with a family atmosphere, Zionist children's homes, camps, daycare centers, Jewish scout troops, communal daycare centers, and summer camps are focused on.

We were so busy that we had no time to think at all. We had all kinds of programs from 6 A.M. to 7 P.M. We had sports, classes, Hebrew language, Zionistics, Palestinography [...]. The experience we had in this community had a decisive influence on our later behavior at school, at work, everywhere. Most of us knew our way around pretty well.¹²³ At the age of ten, I took the train to Deszk and spent the day there. When I returned home I knew that I wanted to be with them. Me and my younger sister moved there. I felt like a kid again.¹²⁴

The case of Izsák Perlmutter (above) shows the duality of a family left without its head, where the ten-year-old boy makes a decision about himself and his sister (he must have done so during the previous months) while longing to live like a child, which could eventually be realized when the community was a replacement for the disintegrated family.

The political diversity of the Zionist organizations was not clear or discernible on the children's level, and the same communal activities could be found everywhere: singing, hiking, making bonfires, playing games such as "number war" (in which a player is out when the number attached to his head has been read and called out by a member of the opposing team), etc. The real differences were in (the lack of) coeducation and observance. Absolute equality was highlighted by Pál Bárdos in the Makó Habonim group, irrespective of social position, money or religion, and there was informal mixing of boys and girls.¹²⁵ These principles were totally

¹²⁰ Halting could tragically turn into suicide. Such a case was mentioned by Ember, *El a faluból*, p. 62.

¹²¹ Pál Bárdos showed in detail the savageness of their activities, endangering safety and causing material damage. Bárdos, *Második évtized*, pp. 67–70. The phenomenon was highlighted by Gábor Sztéhlo as well: the 10–14 year-olds had to be taught how to play. The memoirs of Gábor Sztéhlo, pp. 134–135 and 157. Evangelical National Archive, the documents of Gábor Sztéhlo.

¹²² Krassó, *Kötéltánc*, p. 169. They had lost their mother and sister in Auschwitz.

¹²³ Interview with Zsuzsa Gyöngyösi about the Darabos Street children's home in Debrecen, made by Eszter Gombocz (2013).

¹²⁴ Zsolt Urbancsok, "Recollections of Izsák Perlmutter," in *A Holokauszt gyermekei* (Makó, 2010), p. 94.

¹²⁵ Bárdos, *A második évtized*, pp. 96–98.

different from the children's previous educational environment and had a liberating impact on the development of individual talents.

The arts were also part of daily life at children's homes and daycare centers: singing in a choir, reciting poetry, and acting. The residents of the Pécs children's home staged a children's opera of *Cinderella* by Ede Poldini and were invited by the Joint to perform it in Budapest in the spring of 1948.¹²⁶ The residents of two children's homes in Budapest run by Bnei Akiva, performed *The Dybbuk* at the City Theater.¹²⁷ Painful memories were dimmed by humor in the *Purim Spiel* of the PIC boys' orphanage:

We used to have a young teacher called Mr. Braun, he was not our regular teacher. He used to write and direct funny plays [...]. Braun put new words to traditional melodies...now I remember, it goes like this: "There's a small mansion at Markó Street corner, my little *Führer*, drop in for humor! The gate there is always closed, János Bogár will be your host." János Bogár was the state executioner. These were all beautiful, precious words, and the tunes were also nice.¹²⁸

For other children, the participation in Jewish scout troops had similar significance. "The troop meant for us a community of friends, members were like siblings with a similar lifestyle and mind-set, and the leader was a bit like a parent."¹²⁹ Independent Jewish scout troops were organized between the two world wars, partly on account of the school-based approach (all the Israelite middle schools and gymnasiums had their own troops) and partly because of the antisemitic discrimination within the scout movement. In 1941, all Jewish scout troops were dissolved, expelled from the scout association.¹³⁰ They began running again after the war, helping children and teenagers to revive their spirit through the values of community life, experiencing nature, and belonging together. We have data on five troops in Budapest and two in the provinces (see appendix).¹³¹ The forced merger of the Hungarian Boy Scouts Association with the pioneer movement in June 1948 and the liquidation and reorganization of scout troops were traumatic for many children, similar to the expulsion of 1941. "My father died. Mother has to earn a living. I have been raised by the troop. Who will raise me now?"¹³²

¹²⁶ *Új Dunántúl*, March 18, 1948.

¹²⁷ *Revivim*, March 1947, pp. 18–19, reported by Noémi Munkácsi.

¹²⁸ <http://www.centropa.org/hu/biography/kertes-z-peter> (May 4, 2015).

¹²⁹ The memories of Mária Korányi in György Bánki, Ottó Beck, Péter Deák, et al., eds., *A 311. Vörösmarty Cserkészcsapat, 1934–1948* (Budapest: 311. Vörösmarty Cserkészcsapat Öregcserkész Klubja, 2004), p. 78.

¹³⁰ The history of Jewish scout troops has not been researched yet. There are memoirs about certain troops, and it is also referred to by Ferenc Gergely in his books, for example, in *A magyar cserkészlet története, 1910–1948* (Budapest: Göncöl Kiadó, 1989).

¹³¹ The Scout Library and Archives collection in the municipal library in Gödöllő is a rich source of material on this matter.

¹³² From the diary of Panni Gyöngyi, October 1948, in Bánki, Beck, Deák, et al., eds., *A 311. Vörösmarty Cserkészcsapat, 1934–1948*, p. 88.

The story of the Amos scout troop no. 615 in Pécs was unusual: only three boys survived deportations out of the prewar membership. Nevertheless, many of the officers returned from military labor service, so in February 1946, they could resume scouting with two patrols, each with seven members. Children's home residents and Christian boys also joined the original members. One of the patrols received girls as members, but soon the girls formed their own patrol. In the summer of 1946, the troop went on a camping trip in the eastern part of the Mecsek Hills, and in the summer of 1947, they organized a large camp together with the scouts of Szeged, in Mánfa.¹³³ At the end of 1946, the troop had 32 members, out of that 14 Israelites, 16 Catholics, 1 Calvinist, and 1 Unitarian.¹³⁴ The set of twins mentioned above were among the first members of the troop. One of them completed a training course for patrol leaders, the other was promoted by the leader to be in charge of the troop's nest.¹³⁵

Finally, specialized institutions for problematic children should be mentioned. Despite the early recognition of the need for such institutions, they were established by the NJRC only much later, at the end of 1948–beginning of 1949. Three and a half to four years after the war, the children in need were probably more traumatized by the time spent with families whose crucial members were missing or in a bad institutional environment than by the war itself. From early 1948, children and families were sent to the Childcare Institute (5 Somogyi Béla Street) by the family care network of the NJRC. The institute was in charge of the examination, treatment, and counselling of problematic children living with families or in children's homes. In February 1949, there were four psychologists treating 215 children; in June, there were already 401 patients, but only two psychologists, which made effective work virtually impossible.¹³⁶ A new residential children's home with four educators was opened for children with special needs in February 1949 (62 Vöröshadsereg Road); 23 boys between the ages of seven and twelve were transferred there from other homes. Reports sent to the Social Welfare Center of the NJRC during that year confirm positive results: more balanced grades, the organization of an exhibition, and a peaceful vacation at Balatonlelle.

1949–1956

The second era after the war began with the nationalization of public education and the protection of children, the liquidation of Zionist movements and scouting, and the abolishment of compulsory religious education. The previously presented institutional network, organizational frameworks, and activities were either stopped or drastically reduced in numbers. Parallel to the repression of denominational and independent civil life by the political regime, topics left open

¹³³ Full documentation of the camp (correspondence, preparation, budget) can be found in the Pécs Jewish community archives.

¹³⁴ Annual report to the Hungarian Boy Scouts Association, Hungarian Scout Archive (Gödöllő).

¹³⁵ *Csapatparancs*, December 1947, Hungarian Scout Archive (Gödöllő).

¹³⁶ HJA, NJRC documents, XXXIII. 7. b. 1, reports from February and June 1949.

for discussion were reduced as well: basically it was religious education and children's programs in the Jewish community, and the few denominational institutions that were left for show. Nevertheless, an independent examination of the era can be of interest. On the one hand, the general picture can be supplemented by important finds; on the other, the generation of children born after the war and raised within community life of the 1950s deserves a separate discussion.

Religious education

The decision of the Presidential Council, made public by a decree with legal force, as was usual in the era, abolished compulsory religious education. The instructor was allowed to teach children at school only at the parents' request, and both parents had to make a declaration beforehand. In the first days of September, the Central Office of Hungarian Israelites and other denominations started a campaign to inform parents to get as many children registered as possible. Circulars were addressed to all the provincial communities, with declaration forms attached to be signed by parents. Reports on local results were requested to be sent back to the Central Office. Most of the replies, for instance, from Cegléd, Kalocsa, Gyömrő, Zalaszentgrót, Rákosliget, and Rákoskeresztúr related unanimous parental support, although this sometimes meant only one, two or three school-age children per community.¹³⁷ Other communities with full registration were Mezőtúr, Szolnok (32 pupils), Tata, and Bonyhád. Veszprém reported the absence of any school-age children in the community. Orosháza had 23, Hódmezővásárhely registered 60 pupils, and Szentes reported 16 out of 24.

The president of the Szarvas Neolog Jewish Community, Jenő Kálmán, sent two letters about the registration process. On September 8, he mentioned the resistance of the Orthodox families and that he expected only eight Neolog children to be registered for RE: "In the name of the 19 Orthodox children, the leaders of their community announced that they had *heder* for the boys, and girls should be taught cooking by their mothers. We have no influence on them."¹³⁸ Nevertheless, on September 19, he reported that the Orthodox had changed their minds and registered all their children. Probably the pressure of the Christian environment also played a role in this, with their 100% registration. According to the letter, the school directors and teachers were appalled by the resistance: "Grab them by the ears and bring them here, and we shall show them how to sign [the registration]." Eventually, only two children remained unregistered: the daughter of a mill owner and a girl from Budapest who came from a mixed marriage where the father was a Joint official and was afraid of losing his party position.

Unfortunately, there is no total sum of denominational data on a national scale. The national data, including all the denominations, indicated an 80% registration, which dropped to 26% in two years, and in Budapest, it was under 2% (!).¹³⁹ In addition to intensive anticlerical

¹³⁷ HOIAL, miscellaneous documents, box 1949.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Péter Tibor Nagy, "Hitoktatás az ötvenes években," *Iskolakultúra*, no. 2 (2000), p. 43.

propaganda, it was induced by the decree of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (September 15, 1950) introducing further restrictions. When the government of Imre Nagy entered office in 1953, a degree of détente could be felt regarding the issue: during the 1954/55 and 1955/56 school years, registration rose to 35–40%, but schools were not the centers for RE anymore.¹⁴⁰ By organizing classes for children outside of the schools – at church, in the community, at the synagogue – all the denominations tried to make up for the education that the pupils were missing.¹⁴¹ Exemptions for Shabbat and High Holidays proved problematic in the 1950s as well. Vocational schools not supervised by the Ministry of Education did not permit the absence of their Jewish students during the holidays, regarding it as unjustified. As for Shabbat, it became the practice for secondary schools to exempt children from observant families only to attend the services.¹⁴²

Religious education schools in all the Jewish communities were called Talmud Torah, which could refer to two different things in this era. On the one hand, they were regular, traditional educational institutions of the Orthodox communities where children spent all their time during the week when not at school. In a few provincial communities, the language of instruction was Yiddish; for instance, on Pásti Street in Debrecen, and these were called *heder*. On the other hand, the weekly one- or two-hour classes on Sunday morning or in an afternoon, organized by the community to replace RE in school, were also called Talmud Torah.¹⁴³

Following the liquidation of the Zionist organizations, certain elements of the educational activities and aspects of the communal life in the Agudat Israel daycare centers and the Bnei Akiva movement from previous years could be preserved in community daycare centers and through religious education. The Talmud Tora of the Budapest Orthodox Community (from 1950, Orthodox section¹⁴⁴) on Dob Street operated out of the old school building and provided daycare. The schedule comprised two or three hours of religious studies daily, and the rest of the time was spent doing homework and playing soccer and table tennis, until 6 or 7 P.M.¹⁴⁵ In the 1952/53 school year, when the number of pupils reached rock bottom during the surveyed period, there were 94 girls and 86 boys attending the Budapest Orthodox Talmud Torah. In 1955, at the request of the parents' association, the empty plot at 4 Kisdiófa Street was leased to serve

¹⁴⁰ During the 1955/56 school year in Debrecen, the former Status Quo school, the elementary on Simonffy Street, was the school assigned for RE in town by the inspectorate, where the 51 registered pupils (grades one through eight) were taught in two merged groups by Chief Rabbi Miksa Weiss. (Unarranged documents of the Debrecen Jewish Community).

¹⁴¹ Nagy, "Hitoktatás az ötvenes években," p. 42.

¹⁴² Unarranged documents of the Debrecen Jewish community, reference number 384/952–953.

¹⁴³ Religious studies on a higher level were offered by the *yeshivas*. About the history of the *yeshivas* after the war, see the article of Sándor Bacskai in this volume of studies.

¹⁴⁴ After the forced unification of Jewish religious trends in 1950, the Orthodox community lost its autonomy and became a section within the unified organization. The compulsory union did not create ideological unity among the Neolog and Orthodox communities. See Nathaniel Katzburg, "Bein Shihrir Lemahpeha: Jehude Hungaria Mul Mishtar Mishtane, 1945–1948," in Yisrael Gutman and Adina Drechsler, eds., *She'erit Hapleta 1944–1948* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990), p. 115.

¹⁴⁵ The recollections of Miklós Braun, in Bacskai, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé*, pp. 78–79.

as a playground. Ervin Groszberg, using his great experience as the official in Agudat Israel's children's department, was the chief organizer of the Budapest Orthodox Talmud Tora and summer vacations for the Jewish community. In 1953, Groszberg was arrested by the ÁVH (State Protection Authority, the dreaded secret police), kept in detention, and tortured for months, under suspicion of conducting Zionist activities and spying for the Israeli government; people in his circle were also abused.¹⁴⁶

At the forced unification of Jewish religious trends in 1950, when the whole community administration was forced to undergo a transformation, statistical surveys were carried out in every community district that included the question of religious education. Religious education was one of the criteria of the new administrative order (in which 'independent community,' 'branch' and 'village community' terms/grades were used), in addition to regular services and the employment of a rabbi, an assistant rabbi or a ritual slaughterer.¹⁴⁷ The weight of each criterion was unclear. Some communities did not participate in the community district meetings, while others requested the reexamination of their status, so the seemingly exact data could be only approximately correct. In each of the 50 communities graded as independent, there had to be a Talmud Tora operating. Out of these communities, nine were in the northern part of Transdanubia and eight in the southern part, thirteen in the territory east of the River Tisza, twelve in the Great Hungarian Plain, seven in Northern Hungary, and one in the Budapest community district. Subdistricts of Budapest were not included in the data above. In some of the 32 branches there were enough children to be instructed, at least by the ritual slaughterer if there was no rabbi or teacher.

At first glance, it could be surprising that the number of Talmud Torahs had not decreased by 1955, since the provincial Jewish population continued to shrink, and by 1954, there were only 16 communities left with more than 200 members in total.¹⁴⁸ In 1955, József Schindler reported about 64 provincial groups of Talmud Tora.¹⁴⁹ While in Budapest, at the same time, there were one central and seven district Talmud Torahs run by the Orthodox section, and the Neolog trend had one for each temple district. The explanation for the apparent contradiction can be found in the postwar temporary baby boom. Between 1946 and 1949, the number of marriages and births shows compensation for the years of persecution. Nevertheless, figures dropped again because of emigration and the Communist takeover.¹⁵⁰ By 1955, baby boomers were stuck in the narrowed framework of community life, religious education, and children's programs.

¹⁴⁶ Documents relating to the investigation: Historical Archive of State Protection Services IV 56. The case was closed without indictment.

¹⁴⁷ HOIAL, miscellaneous documents, Religious Affairs Department of the NOHL (National Office of Hungarian Israelites), 1950.

¹⁴⁸ József Schindler, "Vidéki zsidóságunk," *Vidéki Rabbikar Körlevele*, vol. 2 (1955), p. 57.

¹⁴⁹ Idem, "Vidéki zsidóság," *Új Élet Naptár*, 1959, p. 152. An annual report on the national scale only regarding the Talmud Torahs of the Orthodox section is included in the appendix.

¹⁵⁰ Karády, *Túlélők és újrakezdők*, pp. 87–88.

The first shoots of children born after the Holocaust are about 7–8 years old. Activities at the Talmud Tora should be structured in order to enable them to get to know the largest possible section of Jewish life in a fun way. Work at the Talmud Tora is an assignment of primary importance for the Rabbi today.¹⁵¹

The examples were chosen from Transdanubia to demonstrate the significance of the postwar generation, since after the deportations there were no pupils left to restart schools in many illustrious Jewish communities or there were hardly any children under 13 in need of religious education. Nevertheless, by 1955, there were enough children under 10 in most communities to make it worthwhile to organize religious education. In August 1955, a survey on the Jewish communities was prepared by Kornél Schmelzer and István Löwinger, at the initiative of Alexander Scheiber director of the Rabbinical seminary in Budapest, whereby they visited several communities in the southern and middle parts of Transdanubia.¹⁵²

In the Bonyhád Talmud Tora there were 70 pupils, all under the age of ten, and two instructors; in Pápa, there were 58 pupils under 10 and two older ones; in Paks, 16 children were taught by the ritual slaughterer; in Keszthely, seven children participated in religious education.¹⁵³ Smaller communities were visited by instructors, shuttling back and forth. The cantor from Szekszárd provided religious education to six children in his home town, eight in Tolna, and two in Decs. The cantor for Celldömölk taught 21 local children, and, in addition, he had pupils in Nagysimony, Jánosháza, and Kemenessömjén. In Hőgyész, the eight local children were instructed by Sándor Lazarovits, who also held residential RE classes for children from nearby villages (for instance, from Pincehely and Balatonszemes) in the summer, achieving grand results in just a few weeks. In settlements with only two or three Jewish children, such as Pincehely, Tab, Marcali, Lengyeltóti, and Devecser, religious education could usually not be provided. There were also settlements where the parents did not want to organize religious education for their children, such as in Tapolca and Sümeg.

Rabbis had to face a previously unknown problem as well: What to do with teenagers who did not have any previous religious education for one reason or another, and whose parents insisted on organizing a *bar mitzva* for their sons? In 1954, Tibor Klein, the chief rabbi of Győr, invited his colleagues to a discussion on the *Vidéki Rabbikar Körlevele*¹⁵⁴, where he proposed to handle the issue in a similar way as the case of conversion to Judaism.¹⁵⁵ They should not be satisfied with the easiest solution, but should take the opportunity instead for more

¹⁵¹ József Schindler, "Vágyak és remények," *Vidéki Rabbikar Körlevele*, vol. 1 (1954), p. 56.

¹⁵² Report by István Löwinger and Kornél Schmelzer about the survey of Jewish communities in Transdanubia, September 22, 1955, in Zsuzsanna Toronyi, ed., *Zsidó közösségek öröksége* (Budapest, Magyar Zsidó Levéltár, 2010), pp. 93–113.

¹⁵³ In Kaposvár, there were 20 children, aged 6–7, learning in the Talmud Torah. See *Vidéki Rabbikar Körlevele*, vol. 1 (1954), p. 49.

¹⁵⁴ *Vidéki Rabbikar Körlevele* = *Circular of Rabbis in the Provinces*. The Circular was edited by R. József Schindler in Szeged, and distributed to Neolog rabbis, cantors and leaders of Jewish communities.

¹⁵⁵ Tibor Klein, "Vallásoktatásban részt nem vett gyerekek bár-micvó előkészítése," *ibid.*, pp. 17–18, 46–47.

comprehensive and in-depth preparatory studies. He worked out a 45-hour course recommended for use during the summer holidays.

At the same forum, there were several comments regarding the methodological issue of how to pass on a minimal amount of knowledge through the Talmud Tora schools to the next generation in order to enable them to follow services. They considered if it would be acceptable to use a transcription in Latin characters for the prayers or to concentrate only on the beginnings and the endings of the paragraphs. "The only question is to fix the standard that should not be lowered anymore and to know how to reach it."¹⁵⁶

Other areas of children's programs

During these years, holiday performances and children's programs continued. The new postwar generation was raised in an environment of *Purim spiels*, *Hanukka* plays, and Passover and *Tu Bishvat seders*. Talmud Tora for the 3–6 age group operated all day long, providing both kindergarten and religious education. In January 1952, the Orthodox Talmud Tora in Pest had 124 kindergarten-age children, 58 of them receiving full daycare.¹⁵⁷ Smaller communities could be also found with similar options. For instance, in Vác, a young Beit Yaakov graduate was in charge of four or five children in the morning, while in the afternoon, the ritual slaughterer taught them.¹⁵⁸

From 1949 on, the network of children's homes underwent further gradual reductions. The homes in Szeged and on Böszörményi Road in Debrecen were closed down in the summer of 1949. The last provincial children's home – the Orthodox home on Bajcsy Road, Debrecen – operated until 1951. By September 1949, there were only four institutions left in Budapest run by the NJRC: the homes at 10 Cinege Street, 2 Tárogató Street, 26 Délibáb Street, and 4 Rege Street.¹⁵⁹ In addition, the Orthodox children's home at 9 Szent Domonkos Street and the PIC orphanages for boys and girls continued to provide care for those in need. After the closure of the NJRC homes in 1951, there was a severe shortage of places for Jewish children in need of welfare; copies of desperate petitioning letters and mediating attempts still exist in the archives of the correspondence of provincial Jewish communities. At the end of the 1952/53 academic year, the Orthodox orphanage on Szent Domonkos Street was closed down, too. On behalf of its former residents, two girls from Debrecen, the Debrecen Jewish community requested placement in the Neolog girls' orphanage, since the girls' widowed mother could not provide care for her daughters.¹⁶⁰ The Pest Orthodox branch acknowledged with a certain degree of indignation that Orthodox girls were placed in a Neolog institution. In 1955, there were 75 boys and 57 girls in

¹⁵⁶ Jakab Teichmann, "Az imakönyv tanításához," *ibid.* (1955), p. 38.

¹⁵⁷ HOIAL, 1952/30.

¹⁵⁸ Recollections of Frigyes Rosenberg, in Bacskai, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé*, p. 58.

¹⁵⁹ HJA, NJRC documents, XXXIII 7.b.I, report from September 1949.

¹⁶⁰ Debrecen Jewish Community Archive, unarranged documents, registration number 278/1952–53.

the PIC orphanages for boys and girls. Many of the children's homes that ceased to exist were transformed into homes for the elderly and chronically ill (see, for instance, the home in Rákosszentmihály run by the Bikkur Holim Association,¹⁶¹ the home on Keleti Károly Street run by the Women's Association in Buda, and the institution on 2 Apponyi Street, Mátyásföld).¹⁶²

Summer vacation was an especially rewarding part of the community's activities for children. In the examined period, youngsters with their families went to visit relatives, at most. As a result, vacations organized at Lake Balaton or in the hills were unique and memorable experiences for them. Even kindergarten-age children were sent on vacation for a change of air and nutritious meals ("feeding up" was the term used).

Between 1945 and 1948, the Zionist movement camps and scouting troops set the tone, with romantic bonfires and hiking in nature. Vacations organized later by the NJRC and the communities were usually for a larger number of participants and supervised by teachers. The participants were housed in stone buildings in which the dining room tables were covered with tablecloths. In the summer of 1949, the NJRC provided three-week vacations to Balatonlelle for 625 pupils from Budapest and 256 from the provinces.¹⁶³ During the same summer, kindergarten-age children – 314 from Budapest and 92 from the provinces – spent their vacation in Buda at 30 Mátyás király Road. The Israelite Vacation Children's Colony Association, established in 1909 to provide vacations to poor school-age children from Budapest, were accommodating pupils in their own colony in Balatonboglár until its dissolution in 1949; in 1947, it provided for 300 children.¹⁶⁴

Between 1948 and 1951, the Budapest Orthodox community organized annual vacations to Balatonszemes. Kosher meals were provided, and, consequently, they were joined by the residents of the Debrecen Orthodox children's home on Bajcsy Road.¹⁶⁵ From 1952, there was no longer any budget for vacations to Lake Balaton, so day camps were organized at Szabadság Hill instead, leasing plots and villas there, transporting the children by tram (in private service) and a cog-wheeled train, and ordering lunch from Hanna, a kosher restaurant in Pest. In 1955, on Költő Street, 80–90 children were camping at a time, boys and girls separately and at different times.¹⁶⁶ The PIC boys' orphanage had a holiday home in Tahitótfalu, on Szentendre Island. The Danube bank, boating, and soccer offered recreation for those unable to spend the summer with their families. In 1953, however, the usual summer vacation was cancelled. A widowed mother of an eleven-year-old boy from Budapest turned to the Jewish community in Pécs in order to find a

¹⁶¹ A communal organization to assist the sick members of the community.

¹⁶² HJA, NJRC documents, XXXIII 7. b.I, report from February 1949.

¹⁶³ HJA, NJRC documents, XXXIII 7.b.I, report from August 1949. About the 1948 Balatonlelle vacation. See Bárdos, *A második évtized*, pp. 111–113.

¹⁶⁴ *Áhívás Reim Országos Felebaráti Szeretet Egylet zsebnaptára 1947–48-as évre* (Budapest, 1947), p. 27.

¹⁶⁵ The recollections of Ervin (Shlomo) Groszberg, in Bacskai, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁶ HOIAL, 1955/114. There are several photos of the summer camp organized in 1956 attached to the interview of Ervin (Shlomo) Groszberg by Sándor Bacskai, in *Múlt és Jövő*, no. 4 (1993), pp. 75–80.

family to take in her son for 10–14 days, which could be a vacation for him. The community's answer was affirmative, they managed to find hosts for the boy.¹⁶⁷

Afterword

The period of postwar recovery was outlined in the essay, when survivors attempted to reconstruct pre-Holocaust community life as much as possible, also in the areas related to children. This endeavor proved more or less successful in communities with surviving or "adopted" children. The few years of intensive work carried out by Zionist organizations created new actors, organizations, and educational concepts, which, inevitably, generated conflicts. Nevertheless, the disagreements were not the reason for the disintegration and the narrowing down of reconstructed community life and institutions. It was not caused by ongoing emigration either, but by purely political-ideological processes: the Communist takeover liquidated every difference/alternative in public education, child protection, and the running of youth movements.

The postwar generation was raised in the already narrowed conditions, i.e. places and activities, of community life. However, we know very little detail about this generation, about their childhood experiences of community life. Members of this generation are now close to 70 years of age, and their fading memories about their lives have not been preserved through interviews, or by self-published memoirs: overshadowed by the generation of survivors, they are being forgotten.

In the summer of 1947, Éva Murányi, an elementary school teacher from Újpest formulated her hope and joy for the future, under the title *Új gyerekek* [New Children]: "For a Jewish teacher in 1947, each child survivor is a rare treasure. In the Újpest Jewish community, almost 100 new children have been born since the war ended. When they grow a bit older, there will be not only seven or eight children a year in the Jewish school."¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, by the time the "new children" had grown, there was neither a Jewish school, nor a replacement for the unborn generation or the children killed in Auschwitz or elsewhere, who would have been young adults by the late 1950s, starting families of their own. The generation before them was missing, too, since most of them emigrated during 1947–1949.¹⁶⁹ The emigration of many Jewish families in 1956 gave the last push to turning the Jewish child into a rare treasure in the early 1960s, just as it had been immediately after the Holocaust.

¹⁶⁷ Jewish community archive, Pécs, documents from 1953.

¹⁶⁸ *Szabad Újpesti Zsidó Élet*, August–September 1947, p. 8.

¹⁶⁹ Schindler, "Vidéki zsidóságunk," p. 181. In the article, Schindler analyzes the demographical make-up of Jewish communities in the Great Hungarian Plain, differentiating between the population pyramids of communities according to the deportation destination – Auschwitz or Strasshof. Nevertheless, the absence of the 15–29 age group was a shared characteristic.

APPENDIX

A. Schools in Budapest

Maintenance	Name and address of institution	Number of children ¹⁷⁰	Director/teachers
Buda Israelite Community	49 Zsigmond / Kunfi Zsigmond Street	1945/46: grades 1–4 undivided: 23 1946/47: grades 1–4 undivided: 18 1947/48: grades 1–3: 12 grades 2–4: 20	Mrs. Klára Spitzer née Kondor 1947/48: Éva Klein Ágnes Róth
Buda Israelite Community	Baracs Károly School 6 Váli Road (temporarily until renovation was finished at 37 Bocskai Road)	grades 1–4: undivided, mixed classes 1946/47: 16 1947/48: 14 + fifth grade: 32	Gizella Polgár 1947/48: Andor Hauer, Zsuzsanna Gál
Pest Israelite Community	Boys and girls elementary and middle schools 44 Wesselényi Street	1945/46: (only middle school) 97 girls, 151 boys = 248 1946/47: grades 1–8: 231 girls grades 1–8: 259 boys	Béla Vihar Andor Gombos
Pest Israelite Community	21/b Hollán Ernő Street / 21/b Fürst S. Street	1946/47: grades 1–4: mixed classes grades 5–6: girls only 105 girls, 51 boys = 156	Béla Vihar
Pest Israelite Community	31 Eötvös Street	1946/47: grades 1–4: divided, mixed classes 29 girls, 45 boys = 74	Andor Gombos

¹⁷⁰ The data were taken from documents and statistical reports of the institutions sent to the Budapest City Archive after the nationalization of schools. See BCA VIII. Institutions under registration numbers 254, 265, 313, 1911, 1912, 1922, 1931, 1947, 1948 and 2050.

Pest Israelite Community	Szt. Domonkos-Abonyi Street boys' and girls' elementary school (today Cházár András Street)	1946/47: grades 1–4: mixed classes grades 5–6: separate classes 221 girls, 215 boys = 436 ¹⁷¹	Directors of the gymnasiums: Jenő Zsoldos Rafael Fuchs D.
Pest Israelite Community	Boys orphanage schools 25 Vilma királynő Road (today Városligeti Blvd)	No data (In 1945, there were 200 children in the orphanage.) ¹⁷²	Imre Wolf, Ferenc Lócsei
Pest Israelite Community	Training school for the Israelite Teacher Training College 26 Rökk Szilárd Street (today Somogyi Béla Street)	1948/49 (!): grades 1–6, mixed classes for 100 pupils ¹⁷³	Arnold Csech
Budapest Orthodox Community	Boys' and girls' middle school; boys' and girls' elementary 35 Dob Street	1946/47: 200 girls, 214 boys = 414	Ármin Reif
Budapest Orthodox Community	Bikkur Cholim Girls' orphanage – Rákosszentmihály (114 Károly király Road, today Csömöri Road))	grades 1–4: undivided ¹⁷⁴ 1946/47: 33 1947/48: 32 » 24 pupils	Mrs. Malvin Benedikt née Weinberger
Budapest Orthodox Community Budapest Orthodox Community	Orthodox orphanage – 9 Szt. Domonkos Street (today Cházár András Street)	grades 1–4: undivided, mixed classes 1945/46: 51 » 39 pupils 1946/47: 43 pupils	Mrs. Franciska Gedő née Lichtschein
Óbuda Israelite Community	9 Zichy Street	1947/48: undivided (Formerly, there was only a daycare center in the building.)	Andor Vándor

¹⁷¹ Jenő Zsoldos, ed., *A Pesti Izraelita Hitközség Leánygimnáziumának és Abonyi-utcai általános leányiskolájának évkönyve az 1946–47. iskolai évről* (Budapest, 1947), p. 67; Rafael D. Fuchs, ed., *A Pesti Izraelita Hitközség Gimnáziumának, Szent Domonkos-utcai Általános Fiúiskolájának és Gépészeti Ipari Középiscolájának évkönyve az 1946–47. iskolai évről* (Budapest, 1947), p. 74.

¹⁷² Orsolya Kissarnóti, “A Pesti Izraelita Hitközség Fiúárvaházának története,” in Péter Kertész, ed., *Árvaházi Világtalálkozó* (Budapest, 1995), II. supplement. See also the recollections of Rudolf Grád, p. 22.

¹⁷³ *A Budapest VIII. kerületi Állami Liceum és Tanítóképző Intézet évkönyve az 1948–49. iskolai évről* (Budapest, 1949), p. 15. The relationship between the training school and the Tarbut elementary school has not been clarified.

¹⁷⁴ Pupils in the upper grades are included in the number for the school on Dob Street, since there were private pupils who took grading exams there.

Újpest Neolog and Orthodox Community	Venetiáner Lajos School (Venetiáner Street 2)	Opened in August 1946. 1946/47: 37 pupils (grades 1– 2, 3–4 partially divided)	Ferenc Lőcsei
Hungarian Zionist Alliance Tarbut Cultural Association	Tarbut Hebrew elementary school 26 Röck Szilárd Street	1947/48: 167 pupils (grade 1: 9, 2: 19, 3: 19, 4: 15, 5: 35, 6: 30, 7:40) + externals taking exams	Sándor Back, Mrs. Lívia Spiegel née Koralek
Hungarian Zionist Alliance Tarbut Cultural Association	149 Hungária Blvd. Mátyásföld Children's home (2 Apponyi Street, today Táncsics street)	1945/46: 124 » 76 pupils 1945/46: 34 » 26 pupils	

B. Schools in the provinces

Maintenance ¹⁷⁵	Teachers	Pupils (1946/47)	Director/teacher
Békéscsaba, Orth.	2	82	
Csorna, Orth. (Opened in September 1946)	1	80	Miksa Sichermann, teacher
Debrecen, Orthodox	6	220	Mrs. Miksa Almási, teacher
Debrecen, Status quo	14	198	Dezső Gábor, director
Deszk, Tarbut-school	3	110	Ferenc Szabó, director Márton Reichmann
Hajdúnánás, Orth.	2	60	
Hódmezővásárhely, Neolog	2	41	Not included in the Hungarian Statistical Yearbook
Karcag, Orth.	2	26	Ignác Ausländer, teacher
Kiskunhalas, Orth. (Opened in September 1946)	2	30	Mrs. Anna Lusztig née Neubauer, teacher
Makó, Orth.	4	99	
Miskolc, Orth.	2	17	Mrs Júlia Herczeg née

¹⁷⁵Zsidó Világkongresszus Magyarországi képviselete és az Amerikai Joint Distribution Committee Statisztikai Osztályának Közleményei, nos. 8–9 (April 1, 1948), p. 16.

			Schwartz
Nyíregyháza, Orthodox	2	30	
Nyíregyháza, status quo	1	16	
Pécs, Neolog (Opened in January 1946)	2	60	Ernő Péter,director Márta Bőhm, teacher
Szarvas, Orth. and Neolog	1	24	
Szeged, Neolog	9	165	Alfréd Székely,director Jenő Grünfeld, teacher
Szolnok, Neolog	1	50	

C. Jewish scouting troops

Troop name	Base institution	Leader
no. 252. Kiss József Cscs.	PIC Boys' Middle school (44 Wesselényi Street)	Ármin Billes
no. 297. Eötvös József Cscs.	PIC boys'gymnasium	Géza Polgár Árpád Weisz
no. 310. Jókai Mór Cscs.	MIKÉFE	László Vészi
no. 311. Vörösmarty Cscs. + no. 461. Vörösmarty Ilona Cscs.	(Buda Jewish Community) After 1945: Trade Union Council	Mixed troop (Miklós Szabolcsi) Ágnes Mándi
no. 446. Salamon Cscs.	PIC boys' orphanage	
no. 598. Jósika Miklós Cscs.	Szeged Jewish Community	László Pollák
no. 615. Ámosz Cscs.	Pécs Israelite Schools	Miklós Pahmer György Dénes coeducated /Mixed troop

In addition to these troops, the Joint also provided financial support for troop no. 191, named after Miklós Toldi, Endre Ady, and George Washington.¹⁷⁶

D. Orthodox Talmud-Tora schools, 1955¹⁷⁷

Locality	Number of pupils	Name of instructor	Teaching schedule
Balassagyarmat	20	Krausz	twice a week
Békéscsaba	14	Bernát Adler	every day

¹⁷⁶ HJA XXXIII. 4. a. 1.

¹⁷⁷ HOIAL, miscellaneous documents of the Religious Affairs Department.

Bonyhád	10	Ferenc Finkelstein	every day
Celldömölk	5	László Steiner	two classes/week
Csorna	10	György Dux	two classes/ week
Debrecen	32	Jakab Reinitz and his wife	every day
Derecske and Berettyóújfalu	14	Mór Leibler	twice a week
Eger, Ózd, Putnok	10	József Weinberger	three times a week
Hajdúböszörmény	12	Menyhért Heimlich	eight classes a week
Hőgyész	4	Gottlieb	every day
Jánosháza	4	Kohn and his wife	once a week
Karcag, Tiszafüred	20–25	Sándor Bakonyi	three times a week
Kiskunhalas	8	Imre Rubovics	four classes a week
Kisvárdá	26	Áron Fülöp	eight classes a week
Makó	16	Henrik Schulmann	every day
Mátészalka, Kunhegyes	20	Ignác Weiss	two times a week in each community
Mezőcsát, Mezőkövesd, Sajószentpéter	23 (8+10+5)	Mór Tambur	once or twice a week
Mezőkovácsháza	8–10	Lieber	every day
Miskolc	30	József Frisch and his wife	every day
Nyírbátor	8	Béla Lissauer	eight classes a week
Nyíregyháza	33	Ignác Lissauer	every day
Olaszliszka, Sátoraljaújhely, Tokaj, Sárospatak	25	Oszkár (Amrom)Alter	one-three times a week
Paks	6	Jakab Paskesz	every day
Pápa	ca. 30	Emil Löwinger	every day
Salgótarján	ca. 20	Spitzer	three times a week
Szarvas	4	Fekete	every day
Szerencs, Mád	12	N. Drechsler	twice a week
Vác	29	Ungár	every day
Budapest Central Talmud Torah 35 Dob Street, 32 Kertész Street	1954/55: 367 1955/56: 435	Ervin Groszberg Dezső Braun, Klára Fischmann, Zsuzsa Gál, Hugó Glück, Edit Herstein, Imre Holczer, Izrael Schwartz	every day
Budapest district Talmud Torahs			
IV.: 45 Virág Street	16	Adolf Goldstein	

VI.: 23 Dessewffy Street	13	László Deutsch	
VII.: 4 Jósika Street	14	Ella Fuchs	
VII.: 16 Nefelejts Street	32	Gyula Weiss, Klein Jenő, Grünwald Herta	
XII.: 2b Alma Street	7	Zsuzsa Benzai	
XIII.: 3 Visegrádi Street	37	Adolf Schnürmacher Judit Frenkel	
XIV.: 83 Thököly Road	40	Jenő Schück and his wife	