

# **Private Photos and Holocaust Testimony: A Complex Relationship**

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## **BIOS:**

Maiken Umbach is Professor of Modern History at the University of Nottingham. She is the author of four academic monographs, ten edited volumes, and numerous articles dealing with modern Germany history, Jewish history, and the use of photographs as historical evidence, including 'Photography, Migration, and Identity: A German-Jewish-American Story' (with S Sulzener, Palgrave, 2018) and 'Private Life and Privacy in Nazi Germany' (ed. with E Harvey, J Hürter, A Wirsching, Cambridge University Press, 2019). Maiken is currently PI of three AHRC-funded research projects that seek to analyse and transform the use of Holocaust photos in educational and museum settings.

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This work was supported by AHRC under Grant AH/R002886/1. Ethics approval for the interviews was obtained from the Faculty of Arts Ethics Review Board, University of Nottingham, on 21/8/2020, ref. R2021001. Written consent for all direct citations in the article and for the reproduction of the images was obtained from all interviewees in November 2021.

## **Private Photos and Holocaust Testimony: A Complex Relationship**

**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the legibility of personal photos taken by Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. Many museums and memorial sites have collected such photos to illustrate testimony. Photos and testimonies, however, are not always neatly aligned: in many cases, each medium appears to tell a very different story. Many of these photos also confound expectations that derive from macro-historical knowledge about the Holocaust. We focus on four case studies, each composed of survivor testimony and personal photo collections now at the Imperial War Museum London. The images were taken in Poland, Germany, and the UK between the late 1920s and the late 1940s; we examine them in the light of interviews we conducted with Holocaust survivors and their children about their family photos. This allows us to explore the complex relationship between private photos, memories, testimonies, and audience expectations. We conclude that bringing these genres into a dialogue can reveal different but complementary aspects of Jewish experiences during the Holocaust, and enrich the way in which modern audiences engage with this difficult history and develop empathy.

**KEYWORDS:** family photographs; testimony; Holocaust; memory, museums, archives

*‘This way of seeing the image [...] doesn’t give us a way to write or remember the events whose object is apparently depicted [...]. It does, however, give us a sense of the contours of memory, of what lies at its margins, and of how the marginal disrupts our knowledge of and our ability to easily write the event.’<sup>1</sup>*

## **I. Introduction**

The use of Holocaust survivor testimony to counter perpetrator accounts of Nazi persecution and genocide is now well established.<sup>2</sup> But perpetrator photos still constitute the vast majority of images reproduced in Holocaust museums and educational resources.<sup>3</sup> If educators and curators are to live up to Saul Friedländer’s injunction that victims’ perspectives of the Holocaust be given their due weight,<sup>4</sup> they must ensure that testimony sits alongside visual sources created *by* those targeted by the Nazis’ genocidal policies.<sup>5</sup> Photos by Jewish photographers have certainly attracted scholarly attention: prominent examples include clandestine photos taken by professional photographers, now acting in a private capacity, inside ghettos, such as Mendel Grossman and Henryk Ross,<sup>6</sup> and photos taken in concentration camps, such as the famous *Sonderkommando* photos of Auschwitz-Birkenau.<sup>7</sup> The much larger collections of private family photos passed on by Holocaust survivors, however, has been less extensively studied – perhaps because such photos show mostly ordinary scenes of family life, that do not render persecution visible. Batches have challenged such absences, suggesting that private photos enable ‘an empathetic, phenomenological style of historical writing that seeks to bridge the temporal and emotional gap between them and us’, and transform ‘an image viewed at a distance on the wall into an emotional exchange transacted in the heart’.<sup>8</sup>

Similar considerations are often cited by curators, who use private photos to endow Holocaust testimony with a human presence: *'You feel like you get to know people when you get to see these photographs, when you get to put names to faces, it's the same details you recognise, the family having a picnic, it's that very familiar family dynamics [...] visualised in front of you, your ability to relate to people on a human level, that gap is closed'*.<sup>9</sup> The assumption that photos make testimony more relatable also informs the use of photos in video testimonies.<sup>10</sup> The Shoah Visual History Foundation asked interviewees to comment on personal photos during the final minutes of their testimony; answers often do little more than name some of the individuals depicted.<sup>11</sup> Divorcing photos from the main body of testimony highlights the 'assumed evidentiary qualities' of photos: photos here simply give a 'face' to the written or spoken account; they do not speak themselves.<sup>12</sup>

In this article, we will explore opportunities for reading photos differently. The relationship between testimony and photos, we suggest, is most fruitfully approached as a juxtaposition between media that reveal different, but complementary, aspects of Jewish experiences and memories.<sup>13</sup> Photos can convey an immediacy of experiences at a particular historical moment, and speak of that moment without the benefit of historical hindsight.<sup>14</sup> What is recalled in testimony in hindsight, with full knowledge of the macro-historical context, often belies the 'momentary' truth of the photos. Photos can also be deceptive – in spite of, or even because of, their apparent authenticity. As Steffi De Jong has argued, *'by looking at a historical picture or at historical footage, we have the feeling of looking into the past. [...] Pictures appear as authentic because we tend to forget that they are representations.'*<sup>15</sup> As acts of (self) representation, photos are always partial and selective. But what appears at first glance as a problem is also, we shall argue, an opportunity to re-instate the agency of those who are too often

relegated to the role of passive victims, and to re-think the way in which different media shape the memory of the Holocaust. Photos not only express a different 'truth' from testimony: they can also engender different accounts in the act of viewing and contemplating images, to create a 'mnemohistory': the intermingling of history and memory.<sup>16</sup> As Assman argued, 'cultural memory' – reified in museums and official discourse -- has often become distant from everyday lived experience. Personal photos offer opportunities for historical practitioners and curators to draw on what Assman terms 'communicative memory', characterised by its proximity to the personal and the everyday, and all its attendant contradictions, quirkiness, and multiplicities.<sup>17</sup>

In this article, we explore the contours of such a mnemohistory of the Holocaust through four examples. We do not claim that our case studies are 'typical' or 'representative' of surviving family archives. We have chosen them to elucidate four distinct if intersecting problems relating to a disconnect between testimony and private photography. First, we explore why many private photos appear to capture moments of happiness in contexts which, in testimony, are described as marked by mounting anxiety. We then explore the performance of leisure in front of the camera, even during times of crisis and discrimination; the performance of 'liberation' in 1945 not as salvation, but as continuing struggle; and finally, the use of visual irony in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, which conflicts with expectations of reverence around Holocaust remembrance. In the conclusion, we offer some reflections on the implications of our findings for the broader use of private Jewish photos in commemoration and education about the Holocaust for the present.

Our sample comes from the Imperial War Museum in London (IWM), home to one of the UK's most significant collections of personal photos. When developing the Holocaust Exhibition that

opened in 2000, IWM encouraged survivors to donate photos and other artefacts, and record their testimony. The aim was to provide what curator Suzanne Bardgett calls a ‘potent representation of human stories’.<sup>18</sup> As part of the development of the new Holocaust Galleries, which opened in autumn 2021, the photo collection was expanded: several examples relating to pre-war life are now on display in a room entitled ‘Life Before’. Similar displays can be found in other museums, such as the ‘Tower of Faces’ at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where photos document the life of the Jewish community in Eišiškės (Yiddish: Eyshishok) before Nazi occupation, and in the staircase of the UK’s National Holocaust Centre and Museum.<sup>19</sup> IWM wanted to better understand the usability of this collection. A collaborative AHRC award enabled us to conduct new interviews with survivors about their photos.<sup>20</sup> Our interviews build on previously recorded testimony from the 1990s and early 2000s, but now focus specifically on the photos. For this article, we focus on Jan Imich, Esther Brunstein and Ruth Locke, and also interviews with their children: Tim Locke, Ruth’s son, and Lorna Brunstein, Esther’s daughter. This adds another dimension to the reading of photos in terms of inherited memory. At the same time, it is important not to draw too sharp a dividing line between survivors and their children. Several of the survivors whose testimony IWM have collected, including Jan Imich, were themselves children when the pre-war photos were taken, and often talk about their parents’ experiences. Moreover, as we shall see, collective systems of knowledge and remembrance that have evolved since 1945 have influenced all accounts of the Holocaust given today.<sup>21</sup>

Taking our cue from new trends in oral history, which focus on treating photos as reflexive subjects of the conversation, rather than just prompts for eliciting narratives, our interviews combined photo-elicitation, free-form and more structured interviewing.<sup>22</sup> We used the

interviews to explore not just the meaning of the photos themselves, but also their place in families' own cultures of memory and remembrance. According to Hirsch, "photographs, as the only material traces of an irrecoverable past, derive their power and their important cultural role from their embeddedness in the fundamental rites of family life."<sup>23</sup> Reducing such photos to the role of historical illustrations not only removes them from their original context and purpose: it is also misses an opportunity to harness their peculiar power to re-cast the act of remembering itself.

## **I. The Picturesque Language of Private Photos**

Private photos may focus on private life. But they rarely show quotidian moments. Taking a photo is always a special occasion; even more so when, in a pre-digital age, the cost of the equipment, material and development process made this a relatively expensive pursuit. To take a photo in the 1930s or 1940s was a deliberate act to create a portrait of the self or loved ones, showing them as they wanted to be remembered by those viewing the pictures later. Many depict joyous family celebrations, and show people dressed up for special occasions.<sup>24</sup> Studying Jewish life before National Socialism through the medium of private photography is therefore fraught with difficulties.<sup>25</sup> Many photos suggest a more luxurious lifestyle than everyday realities. The focus is mostly on the family; private photos rarely show social relations beyond the home, which can inadvertently cement notions of Jewish 'separateness' from society at large. The antisemitism that was already endemic in many European societies before Nazism also remains largely invisible in such images.<sup>26</sup> And the problems do not stop there. Photos depicting scenes of happiness and a life aspired to often continued to be taken well into the years of Nazi rule, creating stark incongruities with testimony.<sup>27</sup> This may be one of the reasons why Holocaust

museums and learning resources tend to use private Jewish photos to illustrate life *before* National Socialism, but very rarely *during* the years of persecution and extermination. Displayed for public consumption, the family photos serve to dramatise a rupture between seemingly happy, a-political lives before Nazism, and the horrors that followed. The fact that photos taken after 1933 in Germany, or after the German invasions elsewhere in Europe, often continued to show happy scenes remains hidden from view, because such photos are not aligned with our expectations. The same applies to emigration pictures, which often create impressions of holiday cruises, fun and relaxation, and make it hard to imagine the trauma of losing one's home, possessions, and often leaving family behind in mortal danger.<sup>28</sup> Such photos are therefore rarely displayed today. And yet, they provide important clues about Jewish experiences and agency. Many also contain hidden clues about changing political circumstances, which only become visible when the photos are carefully decoded.

Our first case study is a set of photos belonging to Holocaust survivor Jan Imich, who grew up in Kraków. In mid-summer 1940, Jan, his mother and aunt left Kraków to live in a farm about a mile from Wieliczka, south of Kraków.<sup>29</sup> In 1942, his mother arranged for Jan to hide with his father's friends in the city. On 8 December 1944, the Gestapo were informed of Jan's hiding place and arrested him. Jan was taken to Montelupich prison in Kraków, then to the Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp in Germany. He was later transported to a Dora subcamp, from where he was liberated by the US Army on 11 April 1945. After convalescing for six weeks in the Alps, Jan returned to Poland to search for information about his parents. He discovered his mother and aunt had been rounded up in Wieliczka; it is believed that they and other members of the family perished at Belzec camp. In 1947, Jan moved to Blackpool, England, to join his father who had survived the war, escaping internment with the Polish army in Romania and making his way across Europe



to the UK. In England, Jan hid his Jewish identity for years. He only shared the true story with his wife four years into their marriage; and with his four children when they were in their teens.

In the mid-1990s, Jan compiled photos from his childhood into an album, which he later shared with IWM. Jan reports that he made the album to help his new family understand his origins: ‘what I want to communicate here is the fact of... I want my family to know ...that I come from a *very* old family.’ The photos were taken by Jan’s parents, who sent them to Jan’s paternal uncle in Paris, as a way of sharing family life. Jan’s uncle survived the Holocaust, and later returned the photos to Jan. Today, these photos are the only material connection Jan has to his upbringing, his mother and other relatives who were murdered during the Holocaust. The photos show a comfortable childhood in a middle-class assimilated Jewish household, complete with fancy dress costumes, family embraces, and holidays in the Carpathian Mountains. They do not show antisemitism in pre-war Poland, nor the persecution experienced by Jan’s family after 1939, even though several photos were taken after this point. But there are also more specific and complicated discrepancies.

During our interviews, Jan shared stories of his childhood that diverged from the visual narratives found in photos. One photo from 1936 (fig.1) shows Jan riding his bike: a carefree scene of childhood in an apparently intact world unaffected by antisemitism. But when asked to provide more details of play in Kraków, Jan recalled how *‘I wasn’t allowed to play outside. [...] I was brought up very strictly [...]. That’s to say, not able to just run around and around with friends that I perhaps wanted to have in the same street or so. I had to have friends chosen, not exactly chosen but strictly controlled friendships.’*<sup>30</sup>



Figure 1: Jan Imich riding his bike in Kraków, September 1936. Jan Imich private archive.

The album contains several other photos of Jan playing outdoors, which he remembers as highly unusual. We cannot know whether his parents' tightly restricting outdoor play and controlling Jan's friendships was a response to a perception of endemic antisemitism in Polish society. What we do now is that, paradoxically, Jan experienced the German invasion of Poland as triggering a relaxation of these constraints. As the Germans were approaching Kraków, Jan's father joined the army, and Jan experienced new freedoms: *'I was introduced to one of the street boys. He*

*promised to look after me. We played outside [..]. So I then started having friends in the street. That was really, a real freedom for me being able to do all sorts of things not under anyone's watchful eye.*<sup>31</sup>

Another photo (fig. 2) shows Jan on his birthday dressed in a costume representing a historical soldier's outfit. Jan's posture and earnest facial expression mimic a soldier standing to attention. But the apparent freedom afforded by role-play is deceptive. Jan explained that, rather than enjoying dressing up and make-belief, birthdays meant further constraints: *'I hate birthdays, I really do. It was a custom at birthdays. You had to go into the room in the morning with a little present. You had to recite a poem... which meant for days before, I had to sweat my bloody guts out to learn it. I was always so nervous.'*<sup>32</sup> With this in mind, Jan's earnest expression in the photo takes on a new meaning, less aligned with a child role-playing, but more reflective of Jan's tightly controlled childhood.



Figure 2: Photograph of Jan on his birthday wearing a costume, 1936. Jan Imich private archive.

The rare moments of genuine carefree happiness that Jan recalls do not feature in the photos. One memory that surfaced on two occasions were Sunday mornings at home: *'Sunday morning was a day I can never forget. [...] I would go to my parents' bedroom and the cook, we had a cook naturally, the cook would then bring breakfast to bed and that was something; that was a real, real treat.'*<sup>33</sup> There was a warmth and flow to the way in which Jan described the memories of spending time with his parents alone, yet no photo captured this experience.

While we cannot know what Jan's parents intended when taking the photos, much about these photos was dictated by conventions which, under the shadow of mounting antisemitism, took on a

new importance and urgency. Photos of children often tell us more about parents' ideas about their children's ideal-typical upbringing than everyday realities. It is possible that the restrictions placed on Jan had something to do with the precarious position of this family in Kraków's society even before 1939: on this, the photos remain silent. As Gillian Rose notes, family photos help 'naturalise a Westernized middle-class model of the nuclear family, enacting family togetherness, glossing over death and loss and celebrating personal triumph'.<sup>34</sup> What is visible in them is the parents' desire to create memories that speak to expectations of a model childhood, which was not the one that the child actually experienced. But the more difficult life became, the more important it was to document Jan's childhood as it *should* have been: carefree, full of play, outdoor pursuits, and the carefree world of make-belief.

A third photo from Jan's childhood (Fig. 3) brings another omission into sharp relief. While Jan's testimony describes his family as one of assimilated Jews, it does not comment on their involvement in Polish political life. The impression is of a family very much focused on itself and the immediate friendship circle. This photo, however, shows Jan (and, in the background, his mother) taking part in a patriotic ritual, helping to build the so-called Piłsudski's Mound (also known as Independence Mound or Freedom Mound), which was constructed in Kraków between 1934 and 1937.



Figure 3. Photograph of Jan pushing a wheelbarrow to help build the Piłsudski Mound, 1935. Jan Imich private archive.

The mound was a monument to the re-establishment of Polish independence in 1918, and included soil from every First World War battlefield on which Poles had fought. The site was renamed 'Piłsudski Mound', honouring the death in May 1935 of Józef Piłsudski, Poland's Minister of Defence and *de facto* leader. It was not unusual for Jews to take part in patriotic rituals and celebrations in most European countries. And yet, Jan's memories of the 1930s as a

period of social isolation from other Poles sit oddly alongside this evident desire to document the family involved in a political act. The Mound also played a particular role for the Jewish community. Piłsudski's commitment to holding off the far Right with its starkly antisemitic agenda earned him significant support among Jewish citizens in Poland.<sup>35</sup> His death in turn paved the way for antisemitic laws instituted in 1936 by General Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, the newly appointed Prime Minister.<sup>36</sup>

The photo is carefully composed: the dark triangle shape of the corner of the mound contrasts with the edges of the bright footpath, on which Jan is pushing the wheelbarrow; he looks directly into the camera, and is framed as the protagonists 'leading' two adults, one of whom is his mother, who follow behind him. When asked to comment on the photo directly, Jan described Piłsudski as 'our great hero, because he was in charge of the war which we won and [when] we started being independent.' But he also saw the significance to Polish Jews: 'also he was very popular among the Jewish population simply because he wasn't a rabid anti-Jewish Pole.'<sup>37</sup> Helping to build the mound and attending Piłsudski's funeral were patriotic Polish acts, but also a gesture mourning the death of an era in which Piłsudski defended Jewish rights in Poland, when the tide of antisemitism was already turning. In Jan's testimony recorded in 1996, he recalled having 'no idea' how his parents were affected by antisemitism.<sup>38</sup> However, reflecting on the photo opened up a way of engaging with such questions, and generated insights into the way in which Jan's family shared anxieties about growing antisemitism in pre-Nazi Poland.

Read in conjunction, these photos reveal a number of new dimensions of Jan's family's experience. They show participation in the public sphere – from outdoor play to the participation in Polish national memory culture, and an effort to involve even young children in all of this –

in ways that remained hidden in the original testimony. Reading the photos in conjunction with Jan's recollections, they reveal a delicate balancing act between reality and fantasy: the attempt to create, and curate, the kind of upbringing that Jan's parents hoped for and aspired to give him.<sup>39</sup> Photos, then, show us not so much reality as it was, but the reality that Jan's parents sought to enact for the camera: a reality to which they had every entitlement, but which the political situation made increasingly impossible for them to create.

## **II. Leisure on the Edge of the Abyss**

With the rise of affordable, easy-to-use cameras in the early twentieth century, holidays became a favourite opportunity for taking personal photos. In previous research on vernacular photographic practice during the Nazi years, we have explored the special significance of photographing leisure, holidays and outings in this period.<sup>40</sup> Often, holiday and leisure photos also captured aspirations and imaginations of a future self: a carefree, joyful existence that was about sociability and adventure, rather than the mundane realities of everyday life and work. Such photos created opportunities to inscribe one's own experience into a *zeitgeist*: 'in their aspirational nature, conjuring up perfect worlds and brighter futures, accounts of private selves produced during the Nazi years often mirror official propaganda's propensity for promising an exciting new age. The regime was heavily invested in 'marketing' this promise through consumer goods such as KdF cars and holidays, even if it rarely succeeded in delivering them. This obsession with projecting oneself into a future defined by joyous, hopeful emotions and fantasies was embraced by many.'<sup>41</sup>



Photos taken by Jews living in Germany during this period share many of these characteristics. Jewish families like the Salzmans from Berlin created photo albums of weekend outings and holidays during this period.<sup>42</sup> On the surface, these images are hard to distinguish from the private photos of other Germans. But for the Salzmans, they had a different significance. With increasing strictures on Jewish life from the mid-1930s, Jews used photos to reassert and defend German identities, their deep immersion in German cultural traditions and the spirit of *Heimat*, from which Nazi ideology sought to exclude Jews.<sup>43</sup> The research project 'Still Lives: Jewish Photography under Nazism' directed at Hebrew University by Ofer Ashkenazi, has shown that this tendency was not unusual among German Jews: countless private albums from this period show performances of cultural consumption and vacations, with Italy and/or the Alps as favoured destinations.<sup>44</sup>

Such re-assertions of belonging rarely feature in testimony, however. Narratives created after the Holocaust make little room for the immense pride that German Jews took in their Germanness. This tension is evident in the relationship between the testimony and the photo albums of Ruth Locke, nee Neumeyer, both now at IWM. Vera was an instructor of eurythmics, a music and movement practice developed by Émile Jacques-Dalcroze in the early twentieth century. Her husband Hans taught musical theory and composition. They lived in Dachau near Munich. Their children, Ruth, born in 1923, and her younger brother Raimund, were raised as Protestants; Ruth had little understanding of her Jewish heritage until their lives started to change under Nazi rule. Hans, who was blind, was forced to give up his guide dog and his teaching job; Ruth and Raimund were forced out of school in 1938. In May 1939, Ruth and Raimund were sent on the *Kindertransport* to England. Hans died in Theresienstadt; Vera is believed to have died in Auschwitz.

Before her children left for England, Vera put together an album about their childhood. Vera had been a keen photographer, with her own darkroom in the family home. Her photos show the family playing in their garden, walking in the mountains, and performing plays. Our examples (figs 4-7) show three pages from one of her albums, containing photos taken on a family holiday in Italy from 1938. Her daughter Ruth added captions not long before she died.



Figure 4. Ruth and Raimund's album page about their holiday in Riccione, Italy, 1938. Locke private archive.



Figure 5. Ruth and Raimund's album page of Florence and Siena, Italy, 1938. Locke private archive.



Figure 6. Pages of Ruth and Raimund's album about their holiday in Italy, 1938. Locke private archive.





Figure 7. Raimund, Vera and Ruth Neumeyer (right to left) having tea in Italy, 1938. Locke private archive.

The Italian album combines a performance of enjoyment for the camera – relaxing on the beach, picnics, swimming and boating – with the cultural canon of the ‘Grand Tour’, which had been adopted by the German *Bildungsbürgertum*: a middle class defined by its educational attainments and sophisticated cultural tastes.<sup>45</sup> After Ruth’s death in 2012, her sons, Tim and Stephen Locke, started publishing a blog about her personal archive.<sup>46</sup> In a post entitled, *A Holiday away from Hell: A poignant picture of normality, 1938*, Tim wrote: ‘In 1938 life was getting increasingly difficult for my mother’s family in Dachau, with all the disadvantages

*attached to those deemed Jewish in Nazi Germany. [...] Yet they were determined to put a positive slant on things: at a time when Vera Neumeyer saw the family's world coming to an end, she rather wonderfully took the decision to spend a lot of their dwindling cash on holidays'.*

Tim is trying to make sense of the apparent mismatch between a life that was marred by extreme discrimination and exclusion, and photos that capture international travel, relaxation, and sightseeing. During our interview, Tim reflected on the baffling array of 'all those happy pictures of holidays, and friends and lovely pictures of walks in the mountains'.<sup>47</sup> They depict the life the Neumeyers wanted to live, and which they realised in specific moments that were, temporally, geographically, removed from the grim realities of everyday life in Nazi Germany. Tim reflects how there was a 'horrible feeling of injustice, they lost all this lifestyle and these nice things disappeared'.<sup>48</sup> On his blog, he says little about the holidays themselves. The photos remain as poignant symbols of a life hoped for, and togetherness right on the eve of permanent separation.

A disruptive detail is the absence of Hans in the holiday photos. This prompted Tim to investigate. He discovered that during the 1938 holiday, Hans and his secretary Dela travelled instead to Berlin, trying to obtain visas to emigrate to New York.<sup>49</sup> According to Tim, Ruth believed that her father was in Berlin making flutes. Tim now suggests that Vera had told Ruth a white lie to protect the children. Hans and Dela were known to be very close; the extent of their intimacy is unclear. What is clear is the distance between Vera and the children on an Italian holiday, and Hans and Dela in Berlin trying to organise their own emigration. This disrupts the projection of a family on holiday during the 'calm before the storm.' That is not to say that the children's evident enjoyment of the vacation with their mother was inauthentic. As Ruth later reflected, her parents attempted to shield the children from the realities of the situation.

Moreover, in 1938, Italy also offered other attractions to German Jews. It was not just part of the cultural itinerary of the German *Bildungsbürgertum*. As Sarah Wobick-Segev argued, fascist Italy became an ‘unlikely safe haven for German Jews between 1933-1938’, where they could ‘recover a sense of normalcy that included outings at cafes, restaurants, historic sites and spas that were devoid of threatening signs declaring that Jews were unwanted’.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, the vacation was not just separate from, but also a response to, Hans’s attempts to flee Germany. The testimony and the photos, read in conjunction, present a duality between self-assertion and fear: private pleasures had strong political subtexts. This disrupts the memory trope of an idyllic childhood time of freedom and happiness. It was only in 2021, noticing the father’s absence in the Italian photos, that Tim embarked upon research that unearthed a different history.

### **III. Survival: Liberation or Continuing Fight?**

When Allied forces liberated Nazi concentration camps in 1945, an era of unimaginable suffering was brought to an end. Allied troops took photos to document the terrible conditions inside the camps ‘for the world to know’.<sup>51</sup> These have become iconic representations of liberation. But scholars such as Hannah Arendt pointed out that British and American liberation photos be misleading, because they depict camps at a specific moment of chaos and disintegration, serving as the destination of death marches from camps further East, which bear little resemblance to how these camps function in the years prior to 1945.<sup>52</sup> More recently, a lively debate about the ethics of displaying graphic photos of extreme suffering and death has ensued.<sup>53</sup> Scholars have also drawn attention to the gendered nature of such images, especially when they depict male Western soldiers liberating women-only camps such as Ravensbrück,

which cast the survivors as helpless victims in need of male rescue.<sup>54</sup> In most Holocaust museums, however, such photos continue to represent the triumph over Nazi rule. The USHMM exhibition begins with photos of the liberation of Ohrdruf by American troops, and ends with further liberator images, which bookend the narrative. This, Andrea Liss suggests, ‘lays the foundation for the Americans as the saviours and the silent narrators/witnesses to the viewer’s experience’ on the visitor journey.<sup>55</sup> Testimonies, too, tend to look back at the moment of liberation as a macro-historical event; often, they also express gratitude towards the liberators, even when they acknowledge the hardships immediately after liberation. Survivor Anita Lasker Wallfisch wrote in her autobiography: ‘I doubt whether anything could ever match the feeling of relief, incredulity and gratitude which began to seep into our consciousness as we slowly dared to acknowledge that it really was true... We were alive, and the soldiers who were walking about in the camp were not our enemies.’<sup>56</sup> But how did those who survived the camp system document their own survival photographically? Their photos can reveal different aspects of this experience, which speak to a determination to continue to fight against injustice, focusing less on an immediate experience of ‘liberation’, and more on political expectations of the future.

Our case study elucidates this. Among the survivors liberated from camps were Lorna Brunstein’s mother Esther and her brother Perec. The Zylberberg family had three children: Perec, Esther, and David; all grew up in Łódź. Esther was eleven when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. In late April 1940, Esther, Perec and their mother were among the 180,000 Jews forced into the Łódź Ghetto. In 1944, Perec was deported to a munitions factory in Częstochowa Ghetto; Esther and her mother were deported to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, they were separated; Esther’s mother was sent to the gas chamber. In late January 1945, Esther went on a death march to Bergen Belsen, where she was liberated in April 1945, suffering from typhus. Esther was taken

to Sweden to recuperate, where she remained for two years, eventually obtaining a visa for the UK as a domestic worker. Perec and Esther were reunited in 1947.

As she described how the siblings discovered each other's survival, Lorna's voice descended into a whisper: *'I don't know who spoke to who first but letters were exchanged not directly to each other but somebody said to Perec "I think your sister is alive" and Mum was told "I think your brother is still alive"'*.<sup>57</sup> Before being reunited, Perec sent two photos of himself to his sister.



Figure 8: Perec in a photo studio, London, 6 December 1945, Brunstein Family Archive.





Figure 9. Perec in Columbia Studios, London, 15 April 1946, holding a photo of Esther she had previously sent him. Brunstein Family Archive.

Both photos were taken in a photo studio in London, on 6 December 1945 and 15 April 1946. The second (fig. 9) shows Perec lovingly gazing at a photo of his sister, which Esther sent to him responding to his first photo. Photos here served to communicate, and authenticate the essential fact of survival. The photo Perec is looking at is one that Esther sent him under the most difficult circumstances. The smiling face betrays little of these difficulties. But interviews reveal more. Lorna commented on the image of her mother: ‘That must have been taken in Sweden [...] and she’s got a full head of hair. Obviously, her head was shaven. We have a photograph that was taken soon after liberation from Belsen. It was very early days. Her hair was a bit wispy, which she didn’t like. I think this was taken in Sweden and they had traced each other so they must

have sent these letters.’ Lorna continued: ‘This was all just after the war. Given it was such a war, so many people lost their lives and went through such terrible things. A lot of them were smiling. Look at that. Sweden. Look at my mum’s hair. Somehow after a concentration camp. Death camp, labour camp, ghetto. [...] She had nothing. This dress would have been given to her.’ The photos, then, contain clues about eager attempts to reconstruct shattered lives and a sense of self: growing back the hair was symbolic of leaving the camp life behind.

The photos also contain more explicitly political statements. In the first image, Perec stands tall and defiant, lifting his clenched fist to his shoulder, mirroring the socialist stance of solidarity. In Poland, the Zylberbergs had been active members of the ‘Bund’, a secular Jewish socialist movement, which originated in the Russian Empire in the late nineteenth century, and flourished in Poland between the two World Wars.<sup>58</sup> The Bund made the Zylberberg children part of a confident Jewish community, despite the outbursts of antisemitic abuse directed at them.<sup>59</sup> Lorna told us that her family’s politics were central to how they navigated the experience of the Holocaust and its aftermath. This, she feels, is what the image of Perec demonstrates: ‘And I mean, this is him saying, the struggle continues comrades. You know. It was so ingrained in them. I mean, it’s great.’ Lorna believes that their political ideals kept Esther and Perec alive during the Holocaust. The 1945 photo of Perec, then, is not just an image of physical survival: the political gesture demonstrates his spiritual survival, and is a powerful demonstration of defiance not just of Nazi ideology, but also of any belief that liberation had resolved all political problems. To him, the struggle for a just society was ongoing.

In the post-war years, Holocaust survivors often felt discouraged from speaking about their experiences. As Kushner argued, the British public expected gratitude for liberation and for

providing a new home.<sup>60</sup> Stories about the past were to be confined to ‘normal’ family emotions. Private photos, then as now, are often used to cast such stories in a purely private, a-political light. Viewed thus, survivor photos can reinforce conventional ideals of family unity, and elide contentious politics. But as our example demonstrates, survivors themselves did not shed their political beliefs upon liberation. Familial relations were not an alternative to political ambitions: both, for survivors, could be deeply intertwined.

In this sense, the label ‘private photos’ can be misleading. Gil Pasternak and Marta Ziętkiewicz have explored how private Jewish photos taken before and during the Second World War were reframed in Poland in the 1990s.<sup>61</sup> They argue that even the term ‘family album’ is problematic, a reflection of a liberal convention, which idealises the realm of private life, and casts vernacular photos as a reflection of that ideal-typical private sphere focused on family, home, love and friendship. But vernacular photos, too, form part of a political sphere, in which identities are performed and negotiated in relation to social expectations, customs, and the politics of the time. In the case of Esther’s family, a purely private reading of these images is misleading. Photos were also integral to continuing political activism. In her testimony of 1996, Esther recalls how her childhood household was ‘full of idealism. It was not just preached, it was lived.’<sup>62</sup> She dedicated her life to promoting human rights and social justice.<sup>63</sup> Yet hers and many others’ dedication to such political causes are rarely recognised, even more so if photos are assigned a role as merely lending ‘a human face’ to a story. What were, on one level, private photos for loved ones, were also integral to a conversation between people whose lives were devastated by a totalitarian regime, and who were reassuring each other of their continued commitment to a better politics. They represent survival as well as the urgency of the Zylberbergs’ socialist agenda. As Lorna puts it: *‘I’m really envious. I just think there was so little hope and life was so*

*hard for them but they did have those ideals. ....That's where the politics comes in -- it's that Bundist background. She was going to save the world. The world needs to be saved so the people can live freely and without fear. And they were saying this before the Holocaust happened. This message was even more important [after the Holocaust]. It was that politics that kept her going all her life.*<sup>64</sup>

#### **IV. Irony in the Shadow of Memory**

Irony features rarely in Holocaust testimonies, whose languages range from the descriptive to the reflective and reverend. But photos reveal a different coping strategy: irony. One poignant example comes from Esther Brunstein's archive. After she had settled in England after the war, Esther joined the Woodcraft Folk. The Woodcraft Folk had emerged as a break-away fraction from the Boy Scouts movement, which the Woodcraft's founders deemed too militaristic and patriotic; theirs was a more pacifist, egalitarian and international ethos.<sup>65</sup> This echoed some of the utopian socialist ideas of the Bund, in which Esther had grown up. 'Learning through doing' made outdoor activities, such as hiking and camping, a central focus of the Woodcraft Folk. Esther took part in many gatherings. They included, in 1947, a fancy-dress party. Our photo (fig. 10) shows this occasion. Esther is standing in a field with nine others, dressed up as ghosts, princesses, and Turks in turbans. A tent in the background suggests the group posed near the campsite. Esther's handwritten caption on the back reads: '1947 – Woodland Folk Camp in Evesham. Fancy Dress, I dressed up as a concentration camp inmate.' The photo was kept in an A3 clear pocket in a photo album alongside seven others, which show group portraits with family and friends.



Figure 10: Esther, fourth from left, dressed up in a Concentration Camp uniform at a Woodcraft Folk Camp in Eversham, 1947. Brunstein Family Archive.

During our interview, Esther's daughter Lorna was astonished by the photo:

*'Dressed up as a concentration camp inmate! What?! I think I knew that but I had forgotten that.*

*Where is she? That's her writing [pointing to the back of the photograph.]*

*Where is she? [Lorna attempts to work out which figure in the photograph is her mother.]*

*What a weird connection.*

*That's not her there, is it? Let me get my magnifying glass.*

*What a strange thing to do. Isn't it? What was.....I don't know if you can zoom in.*  
*Concentration camp inmate (reading)*

*(Whispering) That's my mum, that's a very strange thing to do isn't it?'<sup>66</sup>*

Lorna was understandably baffled by this apparently light-hearted commentary on the unimaginable trauma her mother had experienced. To most outside observers, too, it would seem strange that someone who had survived Auschwitz would dress up in a concentration camp uniform for a fancy-dress party. As if to amplify the effect, Esther had also sown the yellow star onto the uniform, making the fancy-dress party outfit unmistakably a piece of commentary on the story of her persecution.

There were other contexts where survivors would re-enact parts of their traumatic experiences. As Rachel Perry argues, post-war re-enactments of past traumas served several purposes: to 'record and testify', to create 'commemorative communities', and to 'imaginatively remake the past.'<sup>67</sup> Before arriving in England, Esther spent some time in a Displaced Persons (DP) camp in Sweden, spaces where plays played an important role for survivors for making sense of their experience.<sup>68</sup> Margarete Myers Feinstein points to the ways in which survivors in DP camps performed plays as a therapeutic tool, 'rewriting the Holocaust experience from one of victimization into one of heroic resistance.'<sup>69</sup> But our photo of Esther's dressing up in a camp uniform was taken in a context that was temporally and geographically far removed from the solidarity of former camp inmates. This new context suggests her performance is more personally coded than what took place in the liberated concentration camps and DP camps. So what might have motivated the photo, and the decision to preserve it in an album?

This question takes us to the limits of photography, and what can and cannot be represented in this medium. It would appear that photography is ill-suited to capturing trauma, and those more intimate moments of doubt, disorientation, and existential angst, which constitute what writers such as Sebald identified as the core of the survivor experience.<sup>70</sup> Spitzer, too, speaks of the lingering presence of melancholy in the lives of those who escaped from or survived Nazi Germany. ‘Mourning’, he writes, was ‘deeply embedded within the refugee identity in general [... and] affected all refugees personally and profoundly for years to come’.<sup>71</sup> Photos, as we have seen, often focus on happy moments, on ideal-typical scenes, and on action and movement. They cannot capture essentially interior processes, such as anxiety and attempts to work through trauma. But Esther’s photo shows that trauma and its processing were not as invisible as one might assume. The incongruity of an English fancy dress party and Esther’s attempt to insert her harrowing experiences into it in a playful mode make this an example of visual irony, or an indirect way of saying, and showing, the unsayable.

The use of visual ironies in private Jewish photos has a longer pre-history. Studying the first phase of German-Jewish responses to Nazism in visual sources, Ashkenazi found that ‘irony was almost as prevalent as pathos in German Jewish vernacular photography of the 1930s’.<sup>72</sup> For him, the use of irony in private Jewish photos was a ‘tactic for creating a concoction of powerlessness and defiance’.<sup>73</sup> This reference to ‘tactics’ is inspired by the work of de Certeau. ‘Determined by the absence of power’, for de Certeau, ‘tactic’ is an act of tacit dissidence, performed through the re-appropriation of languages of power.<sup>74</sup> To be sure, the ironies Ashkenazi discusses relate to the immediate confrontation with Nazi propaganda. And yet, it could be argued that the same principle applies here. Esther’s gesture was the ultimate act of re-appropriation: the uniform which robbed her of a sense of dignity and individuality here appears

as part of dressing up, an ironic play on the ‘self’ in relation to another, make-belief self. Relegating the absolute power of the Nazi concentration camp system to the world of make-belief may have allowed Esther to process these memories; and the sympathetic environment of the Woodcraft Folk’ community may have enabled her to share this process with others, in the midst of a society where survivors mostly remained silent about their experiences.

Esther was not alone in finding herself amongst people who had little understanding of what she went through. The German-Jewish Salzmänn family escaped from Berlin on the last boat to reach the safety of the United States, the *Iberia*, in 1939. As we have argued elsewhere, in the extensive photographic archive this family left behind of their lives under Nazism and their new lives in the United States, irony was a frequent motif. But the Salzmanns used it not only to negotiate the experience of discrimination and persecution. Irony was also central to coping with their new lives in America, underscoring the precarious nature of the apparent ‘normality’ of post-migration life.<sup>75</sup> The challenge that such ‘normality’ presented was huge. In New York in the 1950s, Hans Salzmänn drafted an article entitled ‘Emotional Difficulties of the Refugee.’ In it, Hans, the doctor, connected corporeal problems in his patients to the psychological strains of post-war life for Jewish refugees. Hans identified neither persecution nor flight as the culprit; instead, to him, the problems arose out of an inability to reconcile the stresses of the past with the mundanity of modern American life. According to Hans, while a ‘refugee has the mental strength to survive the Nazi terror, he threatens to collapse under the normal conditions here’.<sup>76</sup>

Viewed through this lens, Esther’s photo was not just about coping with past trauma: it was also a method for negotiating her problematic status as a Holocaust survivor amid the normality of English life. Whereas camp uniforms evoke pathos in the onlooker, Esther’s photo is mirroring



that pathos ironically, by drawing attention to the incongruity of a symbol of internment with the ordinariness of the sociability she had now found. Being among like-minded people, who could nevertheless not comprehend her experience, created a safe space for such ironic performances. Such interpretations are, of course, impossible to prove. Lorna herself lamented the fact her mother is not here to explain why she was dressed up in such an outfit. Our intention here is not to offer a definitive explanation of this difficult image, but to use it to raise questions about our expectations of what Holocaust survivors ought to have photographed. As Dyer suggested, ‘some photographs are, of course, harder to fathom than others. When writing about difficult pictures...it’s important not to forget, deny or disguise one’s initial (or enduring) confusion or perplexity. Criticism offers an opportunity not to explain away one’s reactions but to articulate, record and preserve them in the hope that doing so might express a truth inherent in the work.’<sup>77</sup> Lorna’s surprise and confusion over the photo points to the challenges today of, reading such displays of irony. They clash not only with what we know about the history of Jews caught up in the Nazi Holocaust. They also clash with the reverence with which we tend to treat survivor testimony. These clashes reveal both the risks, but also the potential gains, of taking private Jewish photos from the era of the Holocaust seriously as sources in their own right -- sources that do not simply illustrate testimony, because they come from a different period, and because they speak a different language.

## V. Conclusion

The novel 'In the Darkroom' charts Susan Faludi's difficult relationship with her father, a Hungarian Jew, Holocaust survivor, and photographer.<sup>78</sup> For Stephen Faludi, the trauma of the Holocaust gave rise a life of sometimes bizarre metamorphoses and re-inventions. He rescued his parents from deportation by masquerading as a Hungarian fascist; he left Hungary after the war to become the perfect American Dad; he abandoned his American family to move back to Hungary and re-invent himself as a Hungarian nationalist; he underwent gender reassignment surgery. His career involved manipulating fashion photos in the darkroom. For Susan Faludi, the manipulation of photos was emblematic of appearances that conceal trauma, and inspired her novel's title. A year later, in 2017, she wrote an article 'In my world, photographs lie'. It explains that she did to include her father's photos in her book, because they bear no trace of the trauma, no visible signs of the difficulties of constructing a post-survival identity.<sup>79</sup> But Faludi then reconsidered that decision, and included numerous photos in the subsequent paperback edition:

*'For all their contrivance, these yellowing photos with serrated borders were a portal more revealing to me than the stacks of tapes and notes I'd amassed. [...] No amount of interviewing could extract such specificity, the odd tiny details that no one would ever be able to summon from memory. [...] No writing could compete with the minute particularities of these photographs.'*<sup>80</sup>

So what, exactly, do the minute particularities of such photos reveal? And how do we reconcile them with testimony? These are the questions we have tried to address in this article.

Testimony evolves over time. It addresses questions that the audience might have, and positions itself vis-a-vis historical narratives about the Holocaust. As research into the formation of Holocaust memory has shown, media events like the TV mini-series 'Holocaust' prompted many survivors to re-evaluate and reshape their own recollections.<sup>81</sup> This has improved the usability of testimony. It is able to answer the questions that the present asks of the past. But there is also a danger that the immediacy of the experience is lost, that testimony becomes too neatly aligned with audience expectations. This immediacy is present in private Jewish photos. Photos show how past events were experienced in that moment – without any knowledge of the future. That is not to say that photos are more 'authentic' sources. Photos are disruptive, but they can also be deceptive. As we have argued here, many private photos are marked by an aspirational character: they depict the life hoped and wished for, rather than 'normal' or 'typical' everyday experiences. Taken out of context, private photos that survived the Holocaust can therefore be confusing sources. But when placed in their proper context, and viewed with an awareness of the specific purposes of this genre, such photos can offer unique insights into the agency of Holocaust 'victims'. They can show negotiations between restrictions and personal freedom in a society which became complicit in the persecution of Jews, as we have seen in the example of Jan's childhood images. They can show aspirational moments of leisure, relaxation, and cultural consumption at a moment when the Nazi regime excluded Jews from all these practices, as in the example of Vera's holiday albums. They can show gestures of defiance, as in the example of Perec and Lorna, who did not feel that their struggle against injustice had ended with the moment of 'liberation'. And, as in our final example of Esther's 1947 image, photos can articulate an ironic engagement with the experience of the Holocaust, and a post-Holocaust society's refusal to engage with the trauma of survivors.

And finally, photos also throw into sharp relief a conflict between different sensual perceptions and their associated modes of representations. Narratives are constructed of a vocabulary and a 'phrasebook' that is far from unique to each speaker, and which produces meanings well beyond the explicit intentions of that speaker. Testimony carries a host of social meanings: it is not a one-for-one reflection of the experience it describes. It is also, as Waxman pointed out, framed by narrative conventions specific to the Holocaust: 'the concept of the Holocaust acts as an organizer of memory' that facilitates remembrance but also 'conceals the diversity of experiences it seeks to represent'.<sup>82</sup> Images, too, relate to conventions. No photo is entirely new. In taking a photo, the photographer, and often also those posing for the camera, draw on and interact with pictorial conventions. But they also fill them with new, individual meanings and purposes, and capture affective and visceral qualities of experience that are often absent from narratives.

All this makes photos neither more nor less 'true' than testimony. Each genre draws on different languages, and captures different, but complementary, dimensions of experience and identity. Both are crucial for understanding Jewish lives during Nazi rule. Photos offer insights into embodied experiences and aspirations. They can also be part of strategies of subversion, resistance, and irony: strategies that become visible if we allow photos to speak. As Apel has suggested, Holocaust testimony has a tendency to move towards closure and a 'happy end': the brief use of photos at the end of the Shoah Foundation's testimony collection, he contends, is contained within this framework.<sup>83</sup> But freeing photos from the role of mere illustrations means they can disrupt such frameworks. Photos are much more than just illustrations: they carry their own, distinctive meanings; and, in conversation, they can also prompt and give rise to new

languages for capturing dimensions of experience that were relegated to the margins of the original testimony.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard-Donals, “Forgetful Memory,” 401.

<sup>2</sup> A classic account based on one Holocaust testimony is Mark Roseman’s *The Past in Hiding*. Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust* provides an overview of the evolution of testimony and its uses, from the contemporaneous sources produced in Nazi ghettos to the various stages of post-war production. See also Remmler, “Gender Identities and the Remembrance of the Holocaust” and Ringelheim, “Genocide and Gender”, and Matthäus (ed), *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor*. On the mediation of testimony, see Wismviorka, *The Era of the Witness*; Trezise, *Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony*; Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*.

<sup>3</sup> On the absence of private Jewish photos from teaching resources in the UK, see Mills and Umbach, “Teaching with Images”.

<sup>4</sup> Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution: 1933–1939*; idem, *The Years of Extermination, 1939–1945*. For a summary of the ensuing debate, see Betts and Wiese, eds, *Years of Persecution*.

<sup>5</sup> Farmer, “Going Visual” explores the relationship between the visual, spoken and written sources on the Holocaust.

<sup>6</sup> Klugman (ed.), *The Last Journey of the Jews of Lodz*; Sened and Szner (eds.), *Mendel Grossman: With a Camera in the Ghetto*; Arani, ‘Mendel Grosman: The Lodz Ghetto’; Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*.

<sup>7</sup> Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*; Keilbach and Wächter, *Photographs, Symbolic Images, and the Holocaust*.

<sup>8</sup> Batchen, *Forget Me Not*.

<sup>9</sup> Jessica Talarico, IWM Holocaust Galleries Project Manager, interview by Alice Tofts, online, 9 April 2021.

<sup>10</sup> De Jong, *The Witness as Object*; Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*.

<sup>11</sup> An example is Jan Imich, Interview by Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive, 9 September 1997, VHA Interview Code: 35827. Accessed 10 September 2021 <https://sfiaccess.usc.edu/Testimonies/ViewTestimony.aspx?RequestID=91f919bb-5f4d-4b4f-a342-c56172a44f65>.

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<sup>12</sup> Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, 140.

<sup>13</sup> 'No documents, of any era, in any culture, in any language, whatever their quantity, comprise the total and true evidence of the historical past'. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust Reader*, 20.

<sup>14</sup> On inherited memory and Jewish family photos, see Sarkisova and Shevchenko, "Soviet Heroes and Jewish Victims".

<sup>15</sup> De Jong, *The Witness as Object*, 155. On the deceptive verisimilitude of photos from the Nazi era, see also Umbach and Harvey (eds), "Introduction."

<sup>16</sup> The concept of 'mnemohistory' was coined by Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian*. For a recent survey of the debates this sparked, see Tamm (ed.), *Afterlife of Events*.

<sup>17</sup> Assmann and Czaplicka, "Collective Memory", 128-29.

<sup>18</sup> Suzanne Bardgett, Project Director, Holocaust Exhibition 1995-2000, Imperial War Museum, interview by Alice Tofts, London, 15 October 2020.

<sup>19</sup> For the use of photos in the 2000-2020 iteration of the IWM's Holocaust Galleries, see Stiles, *Holocaust Memory*; Holtschneider, "Holocaust Representation in the Imperial War Museum: 2000-2020", and idem, *The Holocaust and Representations of Jews*, which considers both IWM and the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. On the use of photos at USHMM, see Wollaston, *Negotiating the Marketplace*; Liss, *Trespassing through Shadows*; Liss, "The Identity Card Project"; Levitt, "Returning to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum"; Edwards and Lien, *Uncertain Images*; and Crownshaw, "Photography and Memory".

<sup>20</sup> The interviews were conducted by Alice Tofts, under the joint supervision of Maiken Umbach, Elizabeth Harvey and IWM director of education Rachel Donnelly.

<sup>21</sup> Research on post-Soviet family photographic archives has explored how two generations interpret family photos, highlighting how 'divergent modes of mining the domestic photographic archive for meaning underscore the ways in which family memories are formed in conversation with larger cultural, political and national memory narratives'. Sarkisova and Shevchenko, "Soviet Heroes and Jewish Victims," 82.

<sup>22</sup> On the multidirectional relationship between photos and narratives, see Freund and Thomson (eds), *Oral History*. On the use of photos for exploring subjective structures of seeing and remembering, see Kuhn, "Memory Texts and Memory Work"; Langford, "Speaking the Album: An Application of the Oral-Photographic Framework". Arnold-de Simine Leal (eds), *Picturing the Family* urges researchers to ask how photos are embedded in social and cultural practices.

<sup>23</sup> Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 5.

<sup>24</sup> The act of constructing a familial identity through posing for the camera is explored in McLellan, *Six Generations Here*.

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<sup>25</sup> On photographic practice amongst European Jews, see Berkowitz, "Photography as a Jewish Business; on Mendel Grossman and Henryk Ross in Łódź ghetto, see Löw "Documenting as a Passion and Obsession"; on Soviet- Jewish photographers who documented the Holocaust, see Shneer, *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes*.

<sup>26</sup> Shneer, *Through Soviet Eyes*; Auslander, "Reading German Jewry through Vernacular Photography"; Batchen, "Seeing and Saying".

<sup>27</sup> Batchen, "Seeing and Saying"; Freund and Thiessen, "Mary Brockmeyer's Wedding Picture."

<sup>28</sup> Spitzer, *Hotel Bolivia*, esp. 49–59, grapples with the incongruity between apparently 'happy' emigration images and the realities of fleeing the Holocaust, and finds photos untrustworthy when they do not show trauma. See also Hirsch and Spitzer, "Incongruous Images."

<sup>29</sup> The General Government ordered the expulsion of most Kraków Jews to its subordinates, with privileges granted if they left before the 15 August 1941. See Sliwa, *Jewish Childhood in Kraków*.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Jan Imich, Interview by Alice Tofts, Eastbourne, September 15, 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Gillian Rose, "How Digital Technologies Do Family Snaps, Only Better."

<sup>35</sup> On how Polish Jews viewed Piłsudski, see Aleksium, "Regards from My Shtetl."

<sup>36</sup> For a sceptical view of Piłsudski's stance towards Polish Jews, see, Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe*, 69.

<sup>37</sup> Jan Imich, interview by Alice Tofts, Eastbourne, September 15, 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Jan Imich, interview by Lyn Smith, Imperial War Museums, 8 September 1996, 16821.

<sup>39</sup> Hirsch, *Family Frames*; Arnold-de Simine et al, *Picturing the Family*.

<sup>40</sup> On the rise of everyday photography in Germany, see Umbach and Harvey, "Introduction."

<sup>41</sup> Umbach, "(Re-) Inventing the Private under National Socialism," 129.

<sup>42</sup> The vast private archive of the Salzmann family is the topic of Umbach and Sulzener, *Photography, Migration and Identity*.

<sup>43</sup> On Jewish uses of Heimat imagery, see Ashkenazi, *Anti-Heimat Cinema*.

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<sup>44</sup> A book by Ashkenazi and his research group with the same title is forthcoming. Preliminary findings in Ashkenazi, “Exile at Home.” On Jewish holidays in this period, see idem and Miron, “Jewish Vacations in Nazi Germany.”

<sup>45</sup> On the Grand Tour, see Trease, *The Grand Tour*. On its appropriation as part of the German ideal of *Bildung*, or self-formation, see Horlacher, *The Educated Subject*.

<sup>46</sup> Tim Locke’s blog at <https://ephraimneumeyer.wordpress.com/about/>, accessed 6/11.2021.

<sup>47</sup> Tim Locke, interview by Alice Tofts, Lewes, 19 March 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Tim Locke, email correspondence with Alice Tofts, 25 May 2021. Tim discovered that Hans was attempting to emigrate from reading a book entitled, *Quellen zur Geschichte emigrierter Musiker, 1933-1950*. On Jewish tourism in Fascist Italy, see Wobick Segev “A Jewish Italienische Reise”.

<sup>50</sup> Wobick-Segev, “A Jewish Italienische Reise,” 725.

<sup>51</sup> On liberation photos, see Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*, 124-50; Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from Bathrick, *Visualizing the Holocaust*, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Lenga, “Seeing Things Differently”; Valerie Hébert, “Teaching with Photographs”, in Hilton and Patt (eds), *Understanding and Teaching the Holocaust*; Crane, ‘Choosing Not To Look’.

<sup>54</sup> Agostinho, “The Gendered Visuality of Liberation.”

<sup>55</sup> Liss, *Trespassing through Shadows*. See also Meredith and Pizzolato, “How We Represent and Memorialize the Holocaust.”

<sup>56</sup> Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth*, 96.

<sup>57</sup> Lorna Brunstein, interview by Alice Tofts, Bath, 5 March 2020.

<sup>58</sup> Gorny, *Converging Alternatives*.

<sup>59</sup> Esther Brunstein, interview by Conrad Wood, 29 October 1985, Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, No. 9122.

<sup>60</sup> On the British public’s reticence to hear about the horrors experienced by Holocaust survivors, see Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, esp. 237-38.

<sup>61</sup> Pasternak and Ziętkiewicz, “Beyond the Familial Impulse.”

<sup>62</sup> Esther Brunstein, interview by Conrad Wood, IWM Sound Archive, 29 October 1985.



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<sup>63</sup> Esther Brunstein campaigned for the creation of a British Holocaust museum and the establishment of the first Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001. In 1998, she addressed the UN at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights.

<sup>64</sup> Lorna Brunstein, interview by Alice Tofts, Bath, 5 March 2020.

<sup>65</sup> Mary Davis, *Fashioning a New World: A History of the Woodcraft Folk* (Oxford: Professional Book Supplies Ltd, 2000), 54.

<sup>66</sup> Lorna Brunstein, Interview by Alice Tofts, 5 March 2020.

<sup>67</sup> Perry, "The Holocaust is Present".

<sup>68</sup> Myers Feinstein, 'Re-Imagining the Unimaginable,' 52.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Sebald, *Die Ausgewanderten*. On the novel's reception and influence, see Cosgrove, "The Anxiety of German Influence"; Fischer (ed.), *W. G. Sebald*; Harris, "The Return of the Dead"; Long, 'History, Narrative, and Photography.'

<sup>71</sup> Spitzer, *Hotel Bolivia*, 59–60.

<sup>72</sup> Ashkenazi, "Reading Private Photography."

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Certeau, "The Practice of Everyday Life", 219.

<sup>75</sup> Umbach and Sulzener, *Photography*, 107.

<sup>76</sup> Hans M. Salzmann, M.D., "Vom Soldaten zum Zivilisten". *Aufbau*, 6 July (1945), 11/27, unpag.

<sup>77</sup> Dyer, *See/Saw*, 15.

<sup>78</sup> Faludi, *In the Darkroom*.

<sup>79</sup> Faludi, New York Times, 16 May 2017. <https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2017/05/16/susan-faludi-in-my-world-photographs-lie/>, accessed July 28, 2021.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*; LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz*; and Alexander et al, *Remembering the Holocaust*. On the influence of the TV series 'Holocaust', see Shandler, *While America Watches*; Doneson, *The Holocaust in American Film*. For the reception in West Germany, see Herf, "The 'Holocaust' Reception in West Germany"; Wilke, 'Die Fernsehserie "Holocaust" als Medienereignis.'

<sup>82</sup> Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, 152.

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<sup>83</sup> Apel, “You are participating in history.”

## Acknowledgments

We are indebted to the individuals who gave up their time to be involved in this research and for kindly giving us permission to use their material: Jan Imich, Tim Locke and Lorna Brunstein as well as the staff members at IWM who have been interviewed and provided the opportunity to visit the collection.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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