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Jessica Katz 4/11/12

Di Griner in Buenos Aires: Exploring Holocaust Survivors' Oral Histories

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Abstract

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In the wake of the Holocaust Jewish survivors dispersed all across the world, mainly to the United States and Israel. A sizable number, however, made their way to Argentina, where today about 800 survivors still reside. While many chose Argentina solely because a relative was already living there the survivors were actually becoming members of the largest Jewish community in Latin America. In the past several decades many survivors have recorded their life stories, either in a video archive or in a published book. A critical analysis of several of these published oral histories revealed many insights about how the survivors felt and talked about their experiences in Argentina.

A focus on the interactions with the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, reactions to traumatic events such as the 1976 dictatorship and the AMIA and Israeli embassy bombings, and perceptions of anti-Semitism in Argentina demonstrated that the survivors were creating particular self-identities in their life stories that were shaped by those experiences. The patterns that emerged within the collection of oral histories pointed to a complex process of identity formation possibly resulting from feelings of rejection by the Jewish community, insecurity about the similarities between Argentina and nazi Europe, and fear of anti-Semitism in an overtly Catholic country.

The speculations that were drawn in this analysis revealed particularities about the experience of survivors in Argentina as well as general insights about the unique value of oral history as a literary form. Oral history is the subject of debate over its validity as a historical source. This work holds the opinion that while it may not be of use for the historical reconstruction of specific events, oral history is a valuable and crucial tool for understanding how individuals perceive and reflect on those events.

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INTRODUCTION

Holocaust survivors' oral histories from Argentina reveal that while people may have similar experiences, they remember and narrate those experiences in unique ways. At the same time they demonstrate certain patterns or similarities that are equally significant from an analytical point of view. What can be gleaned from these similarities and differences in terms of the survivors' experiences in Argentina? Furthermore, what can we learn about the nature of oral history and how can these lessons be useful?

I will argue that the reason why each survivor's account contains both unique individual memories as well as broader patterns of recollection is because the memories of the survivors are constructed through the filter of history. In other words, history intervenes in the recollection of events, emotions, and experiences, with earlier events impacting the retelling of later ones and vice versa. I believe that survivors seem to recall events in a particular way either because the memory was so impactful that it shaped the general outlook of their life story, or because their current point of view informs the way they remember past events. In the case of survivors who immigrated to Argentina after World War II I would argue that both are true. Specifically, my analysis will focus on the way that the survivors remember their relationship with the Jewish community, the 1976 dictatorship, and anti-Semitism because these areas of their oral histories seem to reveal a lot about their self-identification as Jews and as Argentineans, which in my opinion frames their overall recollection of their lives in Argentina. I will begin by providing a theoretical framework about the nature of memory, the significance of oral history, and the debate surrounding the use of oral history in the creation of official history. I will also provide a brief historical background of the Holocaust.

The overall pattern among the survivors' accounts seems to be an emphasis of Argentine identity and a de-emphasis of association with the Jewish community. There are several possible reasons including the fact that they were rejected by the Jewish community upon arrival in Argentina; the 1976 dictatorship as well as the AMIA and Israeli Embassy bombings created a sense of fear of being singled out; and they were living in a nationalist, Catholic country that would not allow them to enter as Jews and later accused them of dual loyalty for Israel. As such, my analysis will be broken up into three parts. First, drawing on patterns from a number of different primary sources I will analyze the way in which survivors reflect on their reception into the Jewish community. In this chapter I will provide some background about the structure of the Jewish community in the pre- and post-war years. My argument in chapter one is that the alienation that survivors felt upon arrival shaped the way they related to the Jewish community, and thus their Jewish identity. The second chapter seeks to understand how Holocaust survivors reflect on the 1976 dictatorship in Argentina. The chapter will open with a comparison between the Holocaust and the dictatorship because many Argentineans draw parallels between the two events, and thus the connection is embedded in the Argentinean collective memory. This analysis is important because it points to the complicated relationship that survivors had with Argentina. On the one hand it was so far from Europe both geographically and culturally, yet the "dirty wars" that began in 1976 represented the fear that nazi ideology could occur anywhere. The final chapter is concerned with the survivors' perception of anti-Semitism in Argentina. Anti-Semitism was acknowledged by the survivors, and yet it was de-emphasized in many ways. The historical account of immigration provided in this chapter reveals how state-sponsored anti-Semitism directly impacted the survivors. Furthermore, the discussion about dual-loyalty accusations after the creation of the state of Israel and the way that survivors reacted to these

accusations reveals another area in which anti-Jewish sentiments affected the survivors. Finally, in this chapter I will speculate on the idea that anti-Semitism played a significant role in the identity-formation of the survivors in the sense that it created a sense of insecurity that resulted in the need to blend into the larger society and claim their "*argentinidad*" or Argentinean identity

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Survivors are not telling their stories in a vacuum. Their narration is part of their life history. The fact that many did not share their experiences until at least half a century after the war means that during that time their memories were shifting and transforming with their life stories. As their opinions about aspects of their lives in Argentina change, so does their understanding of earlier events. These life stories were all written in the last several decades so the point of view of the survivors is most likely very different than it would have been if they were telling their stories immediately after arrival or even several decades later. It is important, then, to understand how the history of Argentina and the passing of time are reflected in their narratives.

Due to several obstacles that I encountered while researching this topic my primary sources were very limited. First, due to prior Institutional Review Board restrictions I was not able to utilize the interviews that I conducted with Holocaust survivors while I was studying abroad in Argentina. As they pertained specifically to the topic of the importance of testimony as perceived by the survivors, by the time the IRB restrictions changed the interviews were no longer relevant to this project. Second, for several reasons including Emory's technological incompatibility with the software and the difficulty of accessing the archive, I was only able to obtain two interviews from the Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive at USC. Access to this

archive would have provided me with abundant primary resources in the form of video interviews that are catalogued. Video interviews would have been an invaluable resource as they reveal many things that a book cannot: tone of voice, pauses, repetition, and other features of storytelling that cannot be conveyed in an edited written work. Last, there are simply not many accessible published oral histories by survivors in Argentina. The collection that I have analyzed here was the outcome of extensive searching.

MEMORY, HISTORY, AND ORAL HISTORY

Memory is a central concept in the analysis of oral history and the formation of history. Memory has various forms. Principally, there is individual and collective memory. Individual memory is that of a person, either of his or her personal history or family history. This person may recount his or her history as testimony and therefore share that memory. James Young observes in his comments on Saul Friedländer's notion of "deep memory," i.e., memory that is not able to be expressed or represented, that it presents a challenge for historians of the Holocaust.[1]

There is also collective memory which is manifested in collective histories (for example of an ethnic group, a community, or a generation), monuments or public spaces like museums, policies, archives of facts and testimonies, and other shared entities. According to Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, who analyze the ideas of the French historian Pierre Nora among others, "memory for Nora is associated with 'the remnants of experience still lived in the warmth of tradition, in

[1] Young, James E., "Between History and Memory: the Uncanny Voices of Historian and Survivor," *History and Memory* Vol.9 (Fall 1997): 49-50.

the silence of custom, in the repetition of the ancestral,' with 'collectively remembered values,' with 'skills passed down by unspoken traditions'; in other words, it is collective memory."[2]

Collective memories constitute the raw materials for the creation of social discourse as well as personal narratives, including public and private memorialization or commemoration. Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist who died in 1945 in a German concentration camp, theorized that individual memory operates within the context of historical memory, a term that denotes memories of collective rather than personal experiences. What we individually remember and forget depends largely on social factors. Halbwachs even argues that there is no memory at all without the social aspects.[3] Concerning collective memory, historian Donald Ritchie cites the oral historian Mary Chamberlain: "we cannot look, imagine, remember, describe, or recount without first having the imaginative structures that enable this….What is remembered, when, and why is molded by the culture in which [people] live, the language at their disposal, and the conventions and genre appropriate to the occasion."[4] In other words, Chamberlain shares the notion that collective memory shapes the construction of narrative genres. In his analysis of war trauma and the impact of trauma on memory, psychologist Nigel Hunt theorizes that "narrative is an essential function. We use and manipulate our memories, consciously and unconsciously, in order to present ourselves to the world in a particular way. Our life stories are constantly changing according to our circumstances. We do not have any choice in the matter. We are compelled to narrate."[5] Furthermore, while narratives are inherently

[2] Gedi, Noa, and Elam, Yigal, "Collective Memory- What Is It?" *History and Memory* Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 1996), 34.

[3] Hunt, Nigel C, *Memory, War, and Trauma*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 99.

[4] Ritchie, Donald, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) 88.

[5] Hunt, 3.

personal and individual, their origins lie in "social discourse," or the way people interpret events.[6]

The relationship between history and memory complicates this discussion because it is highly debated. It is important to understand that memory and history act upon one another and are no longer clearly distinguishable terms.[7] Young states that individual memory is the narrative which historians mistakenly categorize as in opposition to the construction of history. Friedlander describes how we are able to find a definition between the extremes, where we mix the concepts of memory and history. Michael Bernard-Donals, a professor of English and Jewish studies, contemplates memory as it passes into narrative and history, or the difference between what was seen and what can be said about it. He argues that when an event passes into language, and therefore knowledge – after receding into an "inaccessible past" at the moment it occurred – this "makes of the occurrence something (narrative, testimony, history) *other* than the event." Therefore the event and its narrative representation are inherently different, and "the event intrudes upon the witness's ability to place it into the fabric of narrative."[8] Nora argues that "memory is the living past (still reconstructed), whereas history is an attempt at reconstruction, which will always be incomplete," a distinction that Hunt shares. P. Geary, on the other hand, argues that "both collective memory and history are memories *for* something, i.e., that any representation of the past has some political meaning, and that historians are trying to develop a systematic understanding of the past."[9] University of Vermont professor Patrick Hutton adds that

[6] Hunt, 4.

[7] 6.

[8] Bernard-Donals, Michael, *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009) 3.

[9] Hunt, 100-101.

"history's work of imagining and recollecting the past ultimately interferes with memory's work of holding the past close and repeating it."[10]

According to Dan Stone, not only is there a bias by historians against the use of 'unreliable' first-person narratives, but the very idea of Holocaust testimony is problematic for the philosophy of history. Unlike in other forms of historiography, Stone notes that in the case of the Holocaust "conventional paradigms reign supreme."[11] By this he means that the philosophical framework of Holocaust historiography

> Is one that emplots the events of the Holocaust into a sequence which lends them a sense of inevitability which 'was surely lacking as they unfolded in real time, a teleological approach which deprives the past of its radical otherness. It is one which stresses linearity…hence robbing contingent moments of time of their power to shock. Most importantly, they are narratives which conform to the classical theological device of soteriology – the doctrine of salvation; catastrophe and redemption – whether this comes in the shape of the liberation of the camps, the founding of the state of Israel or resettlement in America. All of these approaches indicate a certain philosophy of history at work. I shall call this philosophy 'historism' because it implies a process in history even though this process is not – *pace* traditional historicism – one which is divine or ongoing irrespective of the actions of humans.[12]

Furthermore, 'trauma, which Stone characterizes as "involuntary memory" cannot be understood by historism. Trauma, which is ongoing and reveals itself often years after the event has occurred, defies the notion that the past is the past. By trying to write down a traumatic experience what are lost are precision, force, and the "essential incomprehensibility" of trauma.[13]

Author Jeremy Popkin describes the argument of historians about the superiority of history over individual testimony.

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[10] Hunt, 101.

[11] Dan Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity: Essays on the Holocaust and Genocide* (London: Valentine Mitchell Press, 2006) 135-136.

[12] Stone, 136.

[13] 138.

> Among the bases for history's claims are the fact that it is a collective enterprise and thus overcomes the subjectivity of individual memory, and that it operates on the basis of traces or evidence that are available to public scrutiny. History takes as its subject, not individual human beings with their arbitrary life spans, but larger collectivities, and it inserts their narratives in a larger temporal framework that, in principle, incorporates all human experience.[14]

Nevertheless, argues Popkin, "In the field of the Holocaust, second-hand scholarship is often seen as necessarily lacking the power of conviction found in direct testimonies. Survivors' memoirs have sometimes been accorded an almost sacred status."[15] For him, then, oral history would be utilized more on its basic level as part of the Holocaust historical canon.

Oral history exemplifies this blurring of lines between history and memory because it is both personal and real, while at the same time subjective and non-scientific, and as such becomes a point of contention for both historians and psychologists. Daniel James, a professor of history at Indiana University, focuses more on the form of oral histories than on the content. To illustrate his point he quotes Alessandro Portelli: "'the oral sources used in this essay are not always fully reliable in point of fact. Rather than being a weakness, this is, however, their strength: errors, inventions and myths lead us through and beyond facts to their meanings.' In particular, oral testimony enables us to approach the issue of agency and subjectivity in history."[16] James' overall position on the matter seems to be that while oral histories may augment our understanding of the facts in a limited way, they reveal how people felt about an event, as well as tacit social and cultural norms which would not be seen in the formal historical record. In terms of the use of oral history, Alessandro Portelli provides a clear interpretation.

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[14] Popkin, Jeremy D., "Holocaust Memories, Historians' Memoirs: First-Person Narrative and the Memory of the Holocaust," *History and Memory* Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2003), pp. 49-84.

[15] Popkin, 51.

[16] James, Daniel. *Doña María's Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity.* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000) 124.

> When we speak of life stories, much depends on whether we mean *life* stories or life *stories.* We may insist that these stories are true – these people exist, and they relate events that actually happened – and, therefore, interviews allow us to glimpse the actual experience (life). Or we may work with the assumption that we are dealing with verbal artifacts (stories) shaped by the narrators' self-perception, by the encounter with the interviewer, and by the interviewer's perception and interpretation of them and their words. The impossible dream of attaining absolute "authenticity" and "lived experience" blinds us to the fact that we have at hand something which bears at least a formal relationship to the subject's experience. After all, the telling of one's story is *part* of one's life. To paraphrase Walter Benjamin, the problem is not what is the relation *between* life and story; but rather what is the place of the story *within* the life.[17]

Oral histories, therefore, do not serve only to tell us about facts and past events. The actual telling of the story, with all of its complexities, reveals much about the narrator. Memory is ongoing and ever-present. If the telling of one's story is part of that same story, then inevitably the present will intervene when recalling the past.

Young presents an argument in favor of memory as a source for history. He states: "here I suggest, after Patrick Hutton, that 'What is at issue here is not how history can recover memory, but, rather, what memory will bequeath to history.' That is, how will the memory of survivors enter (or not enter) the historical record? Or to paraphrase Hutton again, 'How will the past be remembered as it passes from living memory to history?' Will it always be regarded as so overly laden with pathos as to make it unreliable as documentary evidence? Or is there a place for the understanding of the witness, as subjective and skewed as it may be, for our larger historical understanding of events?"[18] The problem for Young is the way in which historians reject testimony as a source.

> The survivor's memory has played little, if any, role in Holocaust historiography, due primarily to the somewhat forced distinction historians have maintained between memory and history: history as that which happened, memory as that which is remembered of what happened. Not only does such an ironclad distinction impose an artificial distance between the two categories, in Friedländer's eyes, but it also leaves

[17] James, 157-8.

[18] Young, 49.

> no room for the survivor's voice, much less room for the survivor's memory of events, whose value is thereby lost to the historian.[19]

But what value do these memories have? According to Young "it is their voices that reveal what was known and what *could* be known. Theirs were the only voices that conveyed both the clarity of insight and the total blindness of human beings confronted with an entirely new and utterly horrifying reality."[20] We cannot separate the feelings of the victims from the historical facts because those feelings are part of the reality of what happened.

French historian Bruno Groppo is in agreement with Young. He cites Holocaust survivor and writer Primo Levi who said that "it is natural and obvious that the essential source for the reconstruction of the truth of the camps is constituted by the memories of the survivors."[21] Why is this so obvious? According to Groppo, there are two reasons. Primarily, it is because the nazis tried to destroy the archives and proofs and because the nazis "did not leave a single testimony about what they had done." Secondly, because those who had died are not here to tell their story so the survivors speak "by delegation" to construct a "historical truth," even if it is partial. Furthermore, says Groppo, testimony "does not represent in itself the historical truth…it is a fragment of the truth, a source like any other, which needs to be integrated. It presents facts which oppose the strategies of the deliberate occultation" on the part of the perpetrators.[22]

While testimonial sources are valuable, one must keep in mind the limits of testimony. Groppo addresses the issue of the fragility of memory. He calls survivor testimony both an

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[19] 49-50

[20] Young, 50-51.

[21] Groppo, Bruno. "Primo Levi Y El Problema Del Testimonio." *Genocidio: La Administración De La Muerte En La Modernidad*, by Daniel Feierstein. [Caseros, Argentina]: Editorial De La Universidad Nacional De Tres De Febrero, 2005, 243.

[22] Groppo, 250.

indispensable source for historical reconstruction and a problematic one. Testimony is a "problematic element" because of the "fragility of human memory."[23] This fragility signifies, according to Levi, that memories are not permanent: "they tend to become erased over the years" and are also "modified or augmented literally, incorporating outside facts."[24] Finally, memory is always a reconstruction" of the past; it is "selective and inevitably subjective."[25] According to Groppo,

> Memory is thus not a faithful image of the past, nor a past restored in an identical way. It is always a reconstruction, a representation of this past realized from the present. Of the past, memory conserves and restitutes, in a selective and inevitably subjective way, certain aspects or elements that have marked it more profoundly, while others remain in darkness. This process is inevitable, as memory cannot retain everything: it acts as a projector over the darkness of the past, illuminating only a section of the landscape. It may even happen that the image of the past transmitted by memory is false.[26]

Levi describes certain experiences or factors that may contribute to the falsification of memories. They include "traumas, and not just cerebral ones; the interference of other 'concurrent' memories; abnormal states of consciousness; repressions, distancing…a slow degradation, a blurring of the outlines, a forgetting that we may call physiological, which few memories resist."[27] Groppo adds that witnesses may read the testimony of others and then

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[23] 243.

[24] 243-44.

[25] Groppo, 244.

[26] 244.

"La memoria no es pues una imagen fiel del pasado, ni un pasado restituido de manera idéntica. Es siempre una reconstrucción, una representación de ese pasado realizada a partir del presente. Del pasado, la memoria conserva y restituye, de manera selectiva e inevitablemente subjetiva, ciertos aspectos o elementos que la han marcado más profundamente, mientras que otros permanecen en tinieblas. Este proceso es inevitable, puesto que la memoria no puede retenerlo todo: actúa como un proyector sobre la oscuridad del pasado, iluminado solamente una sección del paisaje. Puede suceder incluso que la imagen del pasado transmitida por la memoria sea falsa."

[27] 244

consider or present those elements as his or her own memories. Furthermore, Levi argues that silence is an obstacle for remembering and has the ability to render one incapable of remembering a traumatic event. At times, he adds, this silence is therapeutic for the victim because it is more painful to recall the trauma than to forget it, though in his case it was absolutely crucial to write about his experiences. For some, it is a choice between forgetting and living. Nevertheless, Levi believes that testifying is a necessity because "the pain inflicted on human dignity cannot be erased, it is irreparable."[28] The perpetrators of crimes try to erase the memory of their misdeeds by creating a false story or silencing the memories. On the other hand, victims who have no reason to falsify the past nevertheless consciously alter or filter their memories. Levi explains that when telling their stories, survivors tend to stick to the more benign episodes as a mechanism for refraining from telling the most painful parts of their past. Since the latter are "not recalled voluntarily from the reserve of memory," they "tend to become clouded with time, until they lose their outlines."[29]

Diana Wang, a survivor and author, notes that child survivors of the Holocaust have a particularly difficult time remembering the events because of their age. Many who were infants or young children when they experienced the horrors of the Holocaust were simply too young to

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"los traumas, y no solo cerebrales; la interferencia de otros recuerdos 'concurrentes' estados anormales de la conciencia; represiones, distanciamientos…una lenta degradación, una ofuscación de los contornos, un olvido que podemos llamar fisiológico y al cual pocos recuerdos resisten."

[28] Groppo, 245

"la herida infligida a la dignidad humana no puede ser borrada, es irreparable."

[29] 246

"Estos últimos no son llamadas voluntariamente de la reserva de la memoria. Por eso tienden a nublarse con el tiempo, a perder sus contornos."

form reliable memories, if any at all.[30] In the account of her experiences immigrating to Argentina Wang points out that a lot of the facts in her story were hearsay (she learned them later). For example, she describes how she remembered the faces and smells of the first people she lived with in Argentina but not their names or the location.[31] This is important to take into consideration when analyzing survivor testimonies because it shows the limits and cautions one must take when reading and analyzing them. Wang sums up this point very clearly when she states that "I was never able to reconstruct well the history of our escape from Poland and arrival in Argentina. I continue to have fragments of it that I had to fill with suppositions and hypothesis. But what I know and what I suppose have become intertwined and are the trauma of my past."[32] The significant point here is that as in Wang's oral history, all of the stories analyzed here were created by the intertwining of knowledge (memories) and suppositions (retrospective reflections) into what the survivors believed is their past. Wang is pointing to her inability (and, I would argue, that of the other survivors) to coherently and completely reconstruct her past.

Isaias Lerner, who grew up in Buenos Aires during the time that many survivors were arriving in Argentina, elaborated this point. In concluding his essay "A Half Century Ago: The Jewish Experience in Argentina," he states that

> These pages do not claim to be more than a personal, selective and arbitrary recollection seen from the vantage point of a detached present. It is doubtless tinged with my new experiences in another society. It may seem unjust to ask for objectivity on my part. Certainly no memoir has objectivity. But when one

[30] Wang, Diana, *Los niños escondidos: del Holocausto a Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Marea, 2004) 225-226.

[31] Wang, Diana, *Hijos de la guerra: la segunda generación de sobrevivientes de la Shoa* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Marea, 2007) 36.

[32] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 31.

"Nunca pude reconstruir bien la historia de nuestra salida de Polonia y llegada a la Argentina. Sigo teniendo fragmentos de la misma que hube de llenar con suposiciones e hipótesis. Pero lo que sé y lo que supongo se han entretejido y son la trauma de mi pasado."

> exercises one's own memory from the viewpoint of a present separated from the continuity of living in the same society, the past is questioned less impartially and the remembrances accumulate in an unexpected way.[33]

I would make this same argument for the survivors whose stories are related here, except that I would also argue that memories can become "tinged with new experiences" even without moving to a different country later in life (Lerner is now living in the United States). The fact that Argentina has evolved in many ways, including the way it relates to Jews, changed the way that people remembered their experiences. Furthermore, I would disagree with Lerner that the memories he included in this essay are in any way "arbitrary." They were carefully selected, whether consciously or not, because they were important enough to remember.

While this review provides a somewhat broad range of opinions concerning the nature of memory and its role in the formation of history, I will hold a particular view in this work. First, I agree with Bruno Groppo's assessment of the nature of memory, namely that it is limited, subjective, and represents a view of the past as though seen through a sort of historical prism. Consequently, I would approach the use of oral history in the reconstruction of history with caution; nevertheless, I maintain Portelli's view of the value of oral history as a source. By understanding how memories are transmitted into oral history, I hope to shed some light on the value of Holocaust survivors' oral histories from Argentina and what specifically one can learn from a critical reading of oral histories.

[33] Isaias Lerner, *Identity in Dispersion: Selected Memoirs from Latin American Jews*, ed. Leon Klenicki (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 2000), 71-72.

THE HOLOCAUST

To paraphrase the description of the Holocaust given by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, by 1945, the German state and its collaborators killed about two out of every three European Jews, which numbered over nine million in 1933, as part of the "Final Solution." Although Jews were the primary victims of nazi racism, other victims included approximately 200,000 Roma (Gypsies), at least 200,000 institutionalized disabled patients, between two and three million Soviet prisoners of war, who were murdered or died of starvation, disease, neglect, or maltreatment, non-Jewish Polish intelligentsia, and millions of Polish and Soviet civilians who were deported for forced labor in Germany or in occupied Poland, where they often died under dreadful conditions, and homosexuals. The nazis also targeted "thousands of political opponents (including Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists) and religious dissidents (such as Jehovah's Witnesses). Many of these individuals died as a result of incarceration and maltreatment."

In order to carry out their extermination policies, the nazi regime created concentration camps "to detain real and imagined political and ideological opponents." Additionally, "to concentrate and monitor the Jewish population as well as to facilitate later deportation of the Jews, the Germans and their collaborators created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor camps for Jews during the war years." In 1941, Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) and militarized battalions of Order Police officials were added to the nazi arsenal. Between 1941 and 1944 deportations to foreign ghettos and death by gassing at extermination camps were carried out.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF BUENOS AIRES

In a quantitative study on the evolution of the eastern European Jewish community in Buenos Aires from the end of the 19th century until the end of WWII Eugene Sofer provides useful information about Jewish settlement patterns and institutionalization during a crucial period for this study. He outlines four major stages in the settlement of Jews in Buenos Aires. [34] The first stage was the "entry and the search for institutional and spatial stability" within the capital. In the last decades of the 19th century in the "main commercial thoroughfare of Buenos Aires,"[35]Jewish immigrants began creating religious and cultural institutions, among them the Congregación Israelita synagogue in 1897. Due to overcrowding and a housing crisis that created the need for migration, the Jewish community created a new center in *barrio* Once.

The second stage of settlement was "ghettoization and unity," which stretched from 1907 to 1925. While there were no walls surrounding the district, Once became a "ghetto" in its own right. It became a "distinctively Jewish" neighborhood because affordable rent, cultural affinity, and the proximity of employment opportunities created a unified environment for the Jewish population. [36] Furthermore, ghettoization was necessitated by "ignorance of the language of the new country, of its labour conditions, and of its general habits and ways of thought, as well as the natural timidity of a fugitive…."[37] As a result, cultural and religious institutions were created to help new immigrants adapt, such as the Chevra, created in 1895. It subsequently became a

[34] Sofer, Eugene, *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires*. (New York: Holmes & Meier,1982) 66.

[35] Sofer, 66.

[36] Sofer, 71.

[37] 71.

more centrally important institution than the synagogue because Russian and Polish immigrants were in the midst of a "battle against traditionalism" when they arrived in Argentina.[38] Interestingly, Sofer notes that despite the de-emphasis of the synagogue, "daily life was conducted along traditional lines."[39] Soon a cemetery, orphanage, old age home, hospital, as well as Yiddish publications, classes and other communal institutions and services were created in Once.

In her dissertation *Con Men, Cooks, and Cinema Kings: Popular Culture and Jewish Identities in Buenos Aires 1905-1930*, Mollie Lewis describes the cultural environment of the pre-war Jewish community in Buenos Aires. Through the analysis of crime and social activities as portrayed in the media, Lewis captures the complexity of the ethnic and national fields through which Jewish immigrants and their children navigated in the early decades of the 20th century.

During World War I, with the negative effects on economic progress and the decrease in immigration to Argentina, opportunity was created for an increase in Jewish "ethnic infrastructure." The Jewish Peddlers Union, *landsmanshaftn* (cultural groups based on country of origin), and several important Yiddish periodicals were all created during or immediately following the war.[40] As Lewis notes, "World War I galvanized the communal institutions into action, and women were central to these efforts. After this, fundraisers became a staple of the

[38] Sofer, 72.

[39] 71.

[40] Mollie Lewis, "Con Men, Cooks, and Cinema Kings: Popular Culture and Jewish Identities in Buenos Aires 1905-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2008), 51-52.

communal life, with different organizations creating events to make money for themselves or for their particular cause."[41]

The third stage of settlement was "second-stage ghettoization and westward movement." By 1920 there was a big shift west to Villa Crespo, which began with the turmoil of WWI in 1914. By 1936 twenty-five percent of the Jewish population of Buenos Aires was located in Villa Crespo.[42] It is important to note that even with the Jewish migration to Villa Crespo, Once remained a ghetto even in the 1940's, retaining its cultural and religious institutions.

On the whole, and unsurprisingly, it seems that the generation of Jews being raised in Buenos Aires up until 1930 was more concerned with their Argentinean identity than their Jewish one. For example, while the parents' generation was concerned with finding suitable Jewish partners for their children to marry, the children were often looking for suitors outside of their ethnic group. Additionally, Lewis describes the central role of dances and social events in Jewish middle-class life. As she explains, these events were more important for finding marriage partners and for socializing than as fundraisers for Jewish causes within and outside of Argentina.[43]

The military coup that resulted from the political tension created by the Depression in 1930 ended the era of democracy and prosperity. The hardship and changing political scene created the need for new Jewish organizations such as the DAIA (Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations) and the IKUF ("a leftist Yiddish cultural group") to replace the labor

[41] Lewis, 98.

[42] Sofer, 79.

[43] Lewis, 95.

unions that suffered during this period. These organizations and others had to deal with repressive political regimes and anti-Semitism. The Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Argentina during or after WWII were arriving either during or slightly after the 30's, the "década infame," infamous for its political and economic instability.[44]

It seems that in the 1930's there was a strong Jewish community with vibrant Yiddish culture and well-established social support systems. Yet with the growth of the first generation of Argentine-born Jews several problems arose. First, the lack of grassroots religious and educational leadership led to an increasing indifference to religious practice, creating an overwhelmingly secular community. The children of immigrants, who were less connected to Yiddish and the Old World, were especially secularized. Secondly, the lack of leadership meant dependence on the Jews' various countries of origin. The beginning of the Holocaust, along with other factors such as the weakening of Sephardic communities and new restrictions on Jewish immigration, meant that European Jewish leadership would be harder to import.[45] Victor Mirelman summarizes the outlook of the Jewish community in Buenos Aires entering the 1930s.

> The 1930s presented new problems for Argentine Jewry. The fate of European Jewry and of the Jewish National Home were a constant theme on the international arena, and Jews in far-away Argentina were closely following these issues. Local issues were also affecting Jews in Argentina. There was the growing peril of anti-Semitism menacing Jewish security; the Jewish community was becoming more Argentinean, both in the percentage of locally born Jews and in the time distance of immigrants from the old home. The Jews in Argentina were faced, at that juncture, with two sides of the same coin: they needed to live vicariously the Jewish tragedy in Europe and to respond sympathetically and forcefully to it, while, simultaneously, they had to provide for the internal growth of their own Jewish community.[46]

The internal issues facing the Argentine Jewish community seem to have been more pressing than the fate of European Jews. Probably the distance from Europe plus the restrictions

[44] 60.

[45] Mirelman, Victor, *Jewish Buenos Aires, 1890-1930*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990) 232-235.

[46] Mirelman, 235.

on immigration and the internal disorganization of the Jewish leadership in Buenos Aires contributed to this response. Yet the survivors themselves did not seem to be concerned with the internal dysfunctions of the Jewish organizations, nor did they reveal any awareness of the difficulties or disorganization on the part of the Jewish community in terms of bringing Jews to Argentina during WWII. Rather, their life stories are more concerned with the way that the Argentinean Jews received them and their tragedies.

The final stage, as outlined by Sofer, was "dispersion and fragmentation of the community." This stage lasted from 1936-1947 and is especially important because this is when the Holocaust survivors whose stories are analyzed here enter the scene. "In 1936, some 22 percent of the Jewish community resided in Once, while slightly more than a quarter lived in Villa Crespo." Once's Jewish population had risen by 10 percent and Villa Crespo's by an astounding 67 percent. Yet, while the Jewish population continued to be more segregated than other immigrant communities in Buenos Aires, during this period the Jewish population began to increase in other districts besides Once and Villa Crespo.[47] Some contributions to this dispersion included industrialization and the "state's more active participation in the economy." These factors resulted in a decrease in traditional reasons for ghettoization, i.e., working close to home and lack of acculturation.[48] Additionally, state-run welfare initiatives decreased the need for Jewish social welfare programs. All in all, it seems that when the Holocaust survivors entered the stage there was not as strong of a Jewish network as had received previous waves of immigrants. This may account for the lack of references to Jewish communal institutions in the life stories of the survivors.

[47] Sofer, 83.

[48] 83-84.

In Seymour B. Liebman's article "Argentine Jews and Their Institutions" he describes the state of the Jewish community in 1981 and predictions for the future of Argentine Jewry. The picture is somewhat bleak, and his analysis is worth noting because of the parallels that can be drawn with Jewish Buenos Aires of earlier decades. He states that

> If the strength of a Jewish community is indicated by the number of its institutions, the `Jewish community of Buenos Aires should be one of the most vital known. It has more organizations and institutions, proportionately, than any other city in the world. A prominent porteño Jew is reported to have said, 'we live under the illusion that we have great Jewish vitality because of the fact that there is an overabundance of public meetings, board of directors' meetings, and rallies, all more or less spectacular.' The man implied that 'it is a tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing.'[49]

As Liebman understands it, the Jewish community was vital, yet only on the surface. Later in his analysis he explains that the community was divided up by country and language of origin, a phenomenon that "serve[d] to divide rather than unify the Jewish population. The divisiveness has alienated their generation of Jews and weakened the general community." On top of the divisions, there was also the issue of a lack of "intellectual and spiritual leadership."[50] When an Israeli ambassador made a speech at the AMIA in 1977 he stated that "I cannot help but emphasize the tremendous difference between Argentine Jewish life twenty-five or thirty years ago with that of today….Years ago one might have thought that Argentine Jewry was more profoundly rooted in the Jewish tradition than American Jewry."[51] This passage is particularly interesting because the ambassador was reminiscing on precisely the era when the survivors were arriving in Argentina. Supposedly, this time was such a strong moment in the history of Argentine Jewry that it could be said to have surpassed American Jewry in terms of the level of

[49] Seymour B. Liebman, "Argentine Jews and Their Institutions," *Jewish Social Studies* 43 (Summer-Autumn 1981): 312.

[50] Liebman, 313.

[51] 314.

Jewish affiliation with tradition. Yet this aspect of the Jewish experience is, as will be shown in this work, conspicuously absent from the survivors' accounts. Was the ambassador simply overstating the issue so as to emphasize the problem the community was facing at the time of his speech, or were the survivors possibly excluded from this wave of traditional Jewish life?

SURVIVOR ACCOUNTS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The survivors' reflections about their reception into the Jewish community of Buenos Aires provide a possible basis for understanding the complicated nature of identity formation among the survivors. On the one hand, many of the survivors do not deny their Jewish identity, nor are they completely estranged from Jewish rituals and life cycle events. Many recall their children's bar/bat mitzvah's with pride; others describe family gatherings for Shabbat and holidays very warmly. There are even several survivors who talk about their participation in Jewish youth groups. In general, though, these recollections are told in the context of familial, rather than communal, relations. Furthermore, a large part of the content of the survivors' accounts that concerns Jewish life deals with the rejection and alienation that the survivors felt when they arrived. The combination of these factors, I would argue, led to a negative outlook on the part of the survivors towards their Jewish identity in Argentina.

According to interviews and surveys conducted by Alfredo José Schwarcz, for German Jewish immigrants after 1933 many, if given the choice, would have gone to the U.S. or Palestine. Despite bulletins put up in 1939 in Germany by the Association of Help for Jews in Argentina, a study showed that most knew little to nothing about Argentina when they

immigrated. Many imagined a savage land. In fact, one survey showed that the majority of participants stated that they knew nothing about Argentina, while the next biggest group knew only a little.[52] These data coincide with the expectations stated by the survivors in Argentina, some of whom are German, while many are not. Two trends among the survivors' stories are that Argentina was not the first stop or the most desired destination and that very little was known about Argentina among European Jews. They express very unrealistic expectations of Argentina.

Diana Wang describes the fears of Polish Jews. "Knowledge of Argentina amongst European Jews after the war was precarious. They possessed images of grand extensions of empty territories, tropical fruits, tango, and brothels. The organization of white slave trade that had been functioning until 1930, known as Zwi Migdal, was famous and feared in Poland."[53] Zwi Migdal was a Jewish white slave trade ring in which young Polish women were lured to Argentina with the promise of marriage and then forced into prostitution upon arrival. Several survivors state that their mothers were sometimes mistaken for Zwi Migdal prostitutes. For example, Wang recalls that because her mother spoke Polish, dressed lavishly like a "lady," and smoked cigarettes when she went to the Yiddish theater the Argentinean Jews, who were "prudish and moralistic," mistook her for a Zwi Migdal prostitute.[54] According to Mollie Lewis Yiddish theater, as a formerly popular destination for pimps and prostitutes, maintained such a

[52] Schwarcz, Alfredo José, *Y a pesar de todo: Los Judíos de habla alemana en la Argentina*. (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991) 240-241.

[53] Wang, *Los niños escondidos*, 183.

"El conocimiento que se tenía de la Argentina entre los judíos europeos después de la guerra era precario. Tenían imágenes de grandes extensiones de territorios vacíos, frutas tropicales, tango y prostíbulos. La organización de trata de blancas que había funcionado hasta 1930, conocida como la Zwi Migdal, era famosa y temida en Polonia."

[54] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 39

reputation until 1930.[55] It makes sense, then, that the Jews already living in Argentina might hold onto this prejudice in the following years during which new Polish immigrants arrived and settled in Buenos Aires; however, this stereotype was hurtful for new Polish immigrants and for the larger Jewish community in Argentina.

Thus, at least for Polish immigrants, they were arriving in a country they knew almost nothing about, which they already feared as presenting a danger to them, and when they arrived some were harshly misjudged by the Jews they met. What they perceived as the height of class and elegance in Poland in terms of dress and behavior was mistaken for the actions of prostitutes in Buenos Aires! This would seem to have impacted their attitude towards what they called their "prudish" porteño brethren. On the other hand, such judgments about the Argentinean Jews probably contributed just as much to this tension. The Argentinean Jews actually lived alongside the Zwi Migdal and worked very hard to cut it out of Jewish society because of the shame it brought to their community. It is not difficult to see why they would react the way that they did.

As in other countries, the survivors did not adapt homogeneously to their new culture in terms of their Jewish affiliation. Some completely hid their Judaism, as did Spanish and Portuguese Jews in the Inquisition; some merely avoided joining community activities and associations; and others fully embraced their Judaism in their new country. Generally speaking, two factors must be taken into consideration. First, the Jewish population even before the war was never homogeneous in terms of the level of affiliation and observance of Jewish practices.

[55] Lewis, 57.

Second, the horrors of the Holocaust had a major impact on the faith and belief of many survivors.[56]

The first important aspect of the survivors' reflections on their interaction with the Argentinean Jews is their feeling of 'otherness.' As the survivors began to tell their stories about the horrors that they experienced, the Argentinean Jews were left with conflicting feelings. On the one hand, those who had moved to Argentina before the war had planned to bring over their family members little by little, and they were prevented from doing so because of the Holocaust. On top of this feeling of guilt, they were faced with the survivors – in essence, those who stood in place of their lost loved ones. Sympathy turned into blame and suspicion; in the end, Wang explains, "we began to intuit what many years later became a slogan of the military dictatorship: 'silence is healthy'."[57] Many other survivors express the notion that the Jews they encountered did not want to hear their painful stories and so encouraged their silence. Noëlly, who arrived from Brussels in 1947 when she was eight years old, notes that for her adoptive parents in Argentina "the Holocaust almost did not exist for them, that is to say our experience did not have a place or attention."[58]

The survivors, however, were not only pressured to keep their traumatic stories to themselves. They were also faced with difficult questions by the Jews they encountered. Charles Papiernik reflects on how the Jews of Uruguay and Argentina "receive[d] us, the survivors." His

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[56] Wang,, *Los niños escondidos,* 184.

[57] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra,* 36-37.

"comenzamos a intuir lo que tantos años después se convirtió en un slogan de la dictadura militar: el silencio es salud."

[58] Wang, *Los niños escondidos,* 197.

answer reflects this tension: "Surely they were pleased that we arrived and that we had saved ourselves. Many of them had family members, friends, and acquaintances who had died at the hands of the nazis. But they would ask us, 'How was it that you specifically survived? What did you do to stay alive and come here? How did it happen that it was so easy for them to exterminate almost an entire people?' Sincerely, these questions hurt me a great deal."[59]

Bela Rubin, a German immigrant, had a similar experience, though she remembers it in a different way, more as a lack of family support. Her family did not go to Israel, even though they wanted to, because a relative told them that it was too dangerous for a baby: there was malaria and other dangers. They wanted to go to the United States but since her father had bronchitis he did not pass the test. They ended up going to Argentina because her mother's sister was there. Yet when they arrived they did not get the welcome that they expected. The suspicion underlying the comments of her family members in Argentina was that "we are making ourselves poor to take advantage of them." Her family spoke about the idealization of the family during immigration in contrast to the distrusting, envious, and accusatory attitude they encountered when they arrived. Bela felt completely isolated during this period because no one helped them transition.[60]

Charles and Bela's feelings of hurt are shared by others. It is not only a question of suspicion and mistrust, but it may have been seen as an attack on their place in the Jewish community. Not only had the survivors committed the transgression of surviving when others had not, but now they were threatening the peace and quiet of the Jewish community by telling

[59] Papiernik, Charles, *Unbroken: From Auschwitz to Buenos Aires*. (Albuquerque, University of Albuquerque Press: 2004) 129-30.

[60] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 71.

their horrific stories from Europe. Certainly these kinds of accusations would have made the survivors question whether they belonged in a community that could judge them so unfavorably.

Ilse Kaufmann encountered other kinds of problems within the Jewish community. For instance, she states that it was difficult to become accustomed to having the 'winter' holidays like Rosh Hashanah in the heat and humidity of the Buenos Aires summer.[61] Another important anecdote that she tells is about her son Carlos's bar-mitzvah. In Europe he was not allowed to get a circumcision, so when it was time for his bar-mitzvah the rabbi would not accept him. While Ilse was eventually successful at convincing the rabbi to conduct the ceremony, the story reveals two important aspects of the Jewish community. Primarily that they were, at least in this matter, traditionalist. Second, that the Jews of Buenos Aires really did not understand the complexity and depth of the plight of European Jewish refugees. The impact of the Holocaust on these immigrants extended far beyond what occurred in Europe.[62] Kati, who arrived in 1948 when she was fifteen, had a similar experience of misunderstanding. She was told that "as I did not speak Yiddish, they told me that I could not be Jewish…this happened until we could make people understand that someone could not speak Yiddish and be Jewish."[63] Actually, author Seymour B. Liebman states that "those who came from East Europe equated Yiddish with Yiddishkeit and Yiddishkeit with Jewishness or Judaism."[64] This example points to the fact that lines of division between the survivors and the Jews of Buenos Aires were drawn in many areas including religious practice, language, and places of origin, among others.

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[61] Kaufmann, Ilse, *La Historia de Ilse: Un viaje hacia la vida desde el infierno nazi* (Buenos Aires, Emecé Editores: 2002) 176-7.

[62] Kaufmann, 207.

[63] Wang, *Los niños escondidos*, 201.

[64] Liebman, 316.

Sergio Langer, an architect, cartoonist, and illustrator born in Buenos Aires to a mother who survived the Holocaust, describes the tension between his mother and his father's family. Langer's father was born in Argentina and Langer describes the problems and complaints of his mother after his father's death. His language exemplifies the tensions between the two parties. He states that his mother thought that she would have had an easier marriage if she had married a *griner*, a Yiddish word literally meaning "green ones" that referred to recently arrived immigrants who "understood nothing." On the contrary she had married a *hísigue chvoques,* a Yiddish word meaning "local nails" ("clavos locales") that was used by the new immigrants to refer to the Jews who were there when they arrived.[65] The existence and use of these terms, in my opinion, says a lot about the way that the two groups thought of each other.

It is clear from these examples that many survivors felt like outsiders and felt unwelcome or misunderstood in the Jewish community. Furthermore, most were compelled not to share their stories of survival with the Argentinean Jews, though this phenomenon is not unique to Argentina. Thus, right from the beginning of their experience in Argentina the survivors found that establishing their place in a community would not be clear-cut. As non-Catholics they were inherently separate, a *"comunidad extranjera"* as will be seen later, yet they might have asked themselves whether they were really a part of that community.

To complicate this picture, some survivors expressed their feelings of 'otherness' in relation to the larger society, not just their co-religionists. Cris Marie, who arrived in 1941 when she was eight years old, explains that she always felt like a "toad from a different pool."[66] With

[65] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 181.

[66] Wang, *Los niños escondidos,* 191.

her Catholic friends she felt like an outsider because she was a Jew, and with her new Jewish friends she was an outsider because she had spent her life until recently denying her Jewish identity.

In describing her family's interaction with and feelings about other immigrants Diana Wang states that after a few years in Argentina her family was living like any other immigrants: they met people, bought things, and were bettering their lives, but the Shoa was always lying dormant.[67] Diana felt like she was the link between the old and new cultures, i.e., between her parents and the culture of Buenos Aires because she taught her mother *castellano*.[68] On the other hand, she describes feeling like an outsider. "I only registered…the similarity of the 'otherness' that we had with respect to the rest of our neighbors, the Argentineans…I observed, astonished, the form in which the conversation circulated, the themes that were spoken about. I do not remember any with precision, only the sensation of opening up to a new form of living and the notion that ours was not equal to that of the rest of the world."[69]

Tomás Abraham mirrors this idea of 'otherness.' He describes the way that immigrants can try to calm themselves by staying together with others like themselves in a self-made ghetto, but at the same time they have to live in another language with different customs because they have to keep living. In response to this Wang states that "we agree that this description can be

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"sapo de otro pozo"

[67] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 119.

[68] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 39.

[69] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 132.

"solo registraba…la similitud en cuando a la ajenidad que teníamos respecto del resto de los vecinos, los argentinos…observaba atónita la forma en que circulaba la conversación, los temas de los que se hablaba. No recuerdo ninguno con precisión, tan solo la sensación de la apertura hacia una nueva forma de vivir y la noción de que la nuestra no era igual a la de todo el mundo."

applied to almost all of us who live as if sustained by these two different legs**,** that of not being like the others and that of having to show quickly that we are like everyone else."[70] This final statement points to the desire on the survivors' part to blend into society, revealing the complex process of adaptation that they had to face. They were at once acknowledging their unique status as survivors while trying to establish themselves as part of the Jewish community *and* the Argentinean one. At times feeling marginalized from both, finding their place in society and creating their identity was not a simple task.

It is also important to note how the survivors talk about their participation in Jewish communal life. In fact, most do not talk about it at all, which is significant. It may be that they were simply not interested in ritual practice as some of the survivors stated about their parents. In fact, the 1947 census revealed that 239, 949 people of "Jewish parentage" answered "without religion."[71] It would be interesting to know how the survivors would have fit into this statistic. It is also possible that their cold reception into the community turned them away from Jewish institutions. Wang notes several possible reasons for her family's "auto-exclusion" from the Jewish community. They include a language barrier, lack of family support, and the fact that in many instances the Jews that they encountered seriously misunderstood and oversimplified matters concerning the Holocaust, such as the *Judenrat* and the reasons why some people survived and others did not.[72] Additionally, from the historical account it is clear that

[70] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra,* 44.

"Coincidimos en que esta descripción puede ser aplicada a casi todos nosotros que vivimos como sostenidos por estas dos patas diferentes, la de no ser como los demás y la de tener que mostrar muy rápidamente que somos como cualquiera."

[71] Liebman, 318.

[72] Wang, *Hijos de la Guerra,* 197-99.

institutional life was weaker than in previous or following decades, so maybe there was simply a lack of manpower to recruit new members. Some of the survivors also preferred to maintain social circles with other survivors, and organizations like Sherit Hapleita[73] were created that may have replaced other organizations. Another possibility is that Jewish communal life is not important to the survivors today and so it did not seem significant enough to be included in their life stories.

For those who do speak about Jewish communal life it is important to observe what they said and how they said it. They may talk about it because it played an important role in their Jewish identity, because they are active members of Jewish organizations today, or because it was important for other reasons, for example in relation to milestones or major life changes.

David Galante's first memory of living in Buenos Aires is his membership in the Sephardic community center *Chalom*. As only a small number of the other survivors' accounts which I examined mention Jewish organizations, his story is unique. David's account of his life in Buenos Aires is mainly concerned with family and his journey towards being able to tell the story of his survival. I would argue that the centrality of *Chalom* in his story is connected to the theme of family because he talks about *Chalom* only in relation to how he met and married his wife. Furthermore, David provides an anecdote about how his son Ezequiel, as part of the

[73] Sherit Hapleita is an organization established by Polish survivors who immigrated to Argentina. It is a more political organization and it focuses on the transmission of memory. Sherit Hapleita and Tzedaka, a social action organization, work together to organize a reunion every Wednesday that acts as a space for survivors to speak about their experiences and socialize. The members of Sherit Hapleita speak at Jewish schools, organize commemoration ceremonies, events with embassies, and talk with AMIA and DAIA.

Hebrew Macabi Organization, learned about the Holocaust and began to ask questions.[74] This memory seems to be significant because it was a major milestone in David's ability to share his story. The descriptions of Jewish organizations in David's story focus on familial interactions rather than communal ones. Thus they do not reflect David's feelings towards the larger community.

Charles Papiernik speaks a lot more about Jewish life and institutions than the other survivors. This may be attributed to the fact that he moved there from Montevideo in 1974. Perhaps cultural and religious life was more active during that period than in the decades immediately following the war as Lerner states. He was also possibly more connected with religious observances than were other survivors. Furthermore, in the twenty-five years that Papiernik lived in Uruguay, he established a stronger Jewish affiliation in the smaller Jewish community of Montevideo. He states that he "participated in all activities of the Jewish community."[75] Interestingly, he maintains that in Buenos Aires "much more Jewish cultural work was possible," but he did not describe this "cultural work" any further. In fact, he immediately begins describing his activities in various Holocaust survivor groups through which he spent many years speaking to youths around Argentina and Uruguay. This led me to believe that "Jewish communal work" may be referring to Holocaust survivor organizations.

[74] Hazan, Martin, *Un día más de vida: Rodas-Auschwitz-Buenos Aires: La odisea de David Galante* (Buenos Aires, Lumiere: 2007) 180-181.

[75] Papiernik, 124.

THE 1976 DICTATORSHIP

Amid economic and political crisis, Argentina's President Isabel Perón welcomed a military coup in 1976. Very quickly the junta, whose main objectives were to control, intimidate, and disarticulate political and civil society, used their power to intervene in all channels of communication. Moreover, they unleashed a genocidal process to cleanse society of the root problems of societal conflict, which during the decade leading up to this coup was equated by many with democracy. The basic protocol included abduction of "subversives" by "la patota" (the gang), torture for an indefinite and prolonged time, arrest and detention in "chupaderos" (places that "sucked" victims from thin air and which numbered around 500), and execution or "the move." Many of the disappeared (the total number of *desaparecidos* is estimated between 9,000 and 30,000) belonged to the ERP (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo), Montoneros, social and political organizations, union leaders, political activists, priests, intellectuals, lawyers representing political prisoners, human rights activists, relatives, friends, students, and many others.[76] The junta ended its reign of terror in 1983 after an embarrassing military defeat by the British.

Many scholars have drawn parallels between the Nazi Holocaust and the "dirty wars" in Argentina. Florinda Goldberg points to four general areas of comparison: facts, representation, the concept of Diaspora, and the indifference of the two societies. First, the language used in Argentina to describe the "dirty wars" was borrowed from the Holocaust, including 'concentration camp,' 'ghetto,' 'genocide,' 'final solution,' and even 'holocaust.' Another

[76] Romero, Luis Alberto. *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 2002) 217-219

similarity "resides in the psycho-socio-politico mechanisms of the repression practiced from the power over a national social sector labeled…as 'internal enemy.' Facing this said 'enemy,' they brought into operation, in both cases, a mechanism of segregation/exclusion/ destruction." In terms of the Diaspora, "political exile is an integral part of Argentinean history…the particularity about the exile under the dictatorship of the 70's-80's, aside from its quantitative reach, was the consciousness (the desire) to constitute a *Diaspora*, a community that will alleviate the loss of homeland." Lastly, the fact of societal passivity in Europe during the Holocaust is well-established. Goldberg argues that the same was true of Argentineans.[77] Raquel Partnoy, an Argentinean artist who lost a daughter during the "dirty wars," adds that not only were people indifferent, but they often blamed the victims.[78] Roniger and Sznajder take the same stance, quoting Osvaldo Bayer: "What kind of people is this, whose passive tolerance and, in fact, criminal agreement made possible the emergence of such perverse powers? That was the question that the American journalist Margaret Bourke-White of Life Magazine asked the inhabitants of Bergen in 1945 after visiting the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp." [79]

[77] Goldberg, Florinda F. "Judíos del Sur: el modelo judío en la narrativa de la catástrofe argentina." *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 12:2 (2000-2001), 1.

"reside en el mecanismo psico-socio-político de la represión ejercida desde el poder sobre un sector de la sociedad nacional, rotulado (para usar la lamentable expresión acuñada por Lugones) como "enemigo interno". Frente a dicho 'enemigo', se puso en funcionamiento en ambos casos un mecanismo de *segregación / exclusión / destrucción.*"

"El exilio político es parte integral de la historia argentina y ha incluido generosamente a sus intelectuales, artistas y escritores. Lo peculiar del exilio bajo la dictadura de los 70-80, además de su alcance cuantitativo, fue la conciencia (el deseo) de constituir una *diáspora*, una comunidad que paliara la pérdida de la patria."

[78] Partnoy, Raquel. "Surviving Genocide" in *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean*. (Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005) 211.

[79] Roniger, Luis, and Mario Sznajder. "The Politics of Memory and Oblivion in Redemocratized Argentina and Uruguay." *History & Memory* 10.1 (1998), 146.

SARA RUS

Sobrevivir dos veces: De Auschwitz a madre de Plaza de Mayo is the testimony of Sara Rus, Holocaust survivor and mother of Daniel, a *desaparecido* of the Argentinean *Proceso* (1976-1983). This testimony, as it is called by author Eva Eisenstaedt, tells the story of Sara's survival and liberation from nazi Europe and her son's subsequent disappearance in Argentina. The numerous parallels drawn between the Holocaust and the *Proceso* reveal the way that the connection is embedded in the national memory. For Holocaust survivors this connection is doubly strong since they actually experienced both events. In her life story, it is clear that Sara consciously or subconsciously draws parallels between her own experiences in the Holocaust and those of her son in the *Proceso*. In other words, Sara's memory of the Argentinean *Proceso* affects the way that she recounts her experiences in the Holocaust, and vice versa. As such, Sara's intertwining descriptions reflect this collective memory.

Sara's life story opens with a ceremony dedicated to the memory of Daniel. This event, among other things, is a manifestation of the strong connection that Sara and other survivors make between the Holocaust and the *Proceso*. Barbara Myerhoff's analysis of "definitional ceremonies" will shed light on the particularities of this ceremony. On July 26, 2005, hundreds of people, including survivors of the Holocaust, Madres of the Plaza de Mayo, Jewish community leaders, and friends and family of Sara Rus gathered in the locale of Sherit Hapleita, an organization established by survivors of the Holocaust who immigrated to Argentina. The ceremony is a belated memorial to Sara's son Daniel, who was among the many Argentineans who were kidnapped, tortured, and killed during the military dictatorship from 1976-1983. It was a solemn and meaningful ceremony based around the ideas of solidarity and remembrance.

Barbara Myerhoff defines "definitional ceremonies" as "collective self-definitions specifically intended to proclaim an interpretation to an audience not otherwise available."[80] These ceremonies are artificially designed cultural performances in which "members embody their place in the scheme of things, their locations in the social structure, their purposes and natures, taking up the questions of who we are and why we are here." For marginalized members of society such as Sara and her fellow survivors, who are excluded from Argentinean society by virtue of their status as immigrants and as elderly people, these performances are crucial to their ability to self-reflect and make meaning of their lives. As Myerhoff describes her ethnographic subjects: "their self-consciousness, promoted by collective performances and private self-narration, their recounting of stories and life histories, influenced and nourished their success as old people."[81]

The ceremony described in the opening chapter of Sara's story is one such performance. Eisenstaedt describes an event in which Holocaust survivors who are members of the group *Sherit Hapleita* helped Sara memorialize her son and the other 30,000 *desaparecidos* almost 30 years after Daniel's disappearance. The presence of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (a group of mothers of disappeared Argentineans) and Holocaust survivors in the audience was not accidental. Sara belongs to both groups and this ceremony was an opportunity for solidarity, support, and self-reflection for both groups. An important part of Eisenstaedt's observations of the ceremony is the fact that "these men and women could open their hearts and resolve to share with the families of the *desaparecidos* that hole, impossible to close or comprehend. It is that the

[80] Myerhoff, Barbara. *Remembered Lives: The Work of Ritual, Storytelling, and Growing Older*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992) 234-235

[81] Myerhoff 233

survivors even carry on their backs their own traumatic experiences."[82] The survivors are able to support the families of *desaparecidos* because they share the same feelings of pain and loss. This ceremony was likewise an opportunity for both the Madres and the survivors to be visible in front of the other audience members, such as friends and family of Sara and important Jewish community members of Buenos Aires. It is also noteworthy that this memorial service was conducted at Sherit Hapleita, which is a specific space for survivors and one of Sara's first connections in Argentina, rather than in the Plaza de Mayo or another place specifically associated with the *desaparecidos* and their families.

Another interesting aspect of this ceremony is that it makes sense in the larger context of Argentinean discourse about the legacy of human rights violations and repression in Argentina. Roniger and Sznajder argue that

> the politics of memory and oblivion have embedded images of the past – about which there is no consensus – within the present, as meaningful factors that shape current visions and decision, precipitating an 'eternal return' to these issues. In Pierre Nora's terms, these societies have gone 'from a history sought in the continuity of memory to a memory cast in the discontinuity of history.'[83]

Argentina, like other Latin American countries with similar legacies, has failed to create institutional means by which a consensus about the history of the military dictatorships can be established. The policy of military pardons of President Menem immediately following the return to democracy is a perfect example. As a result, the continual reopening of discussion about the painful events of Argentina's recent history has not served, as it should, as the means by which Argentina can turn these events into an official history, distinct from the present; rather, it has served to perpetuate the collective memory of suffering. Sara's ceremony, carried

[82] Eisenstaedt, Eva. *Sobrevivir dos Veces: De Auschwitz a madre de Plaza de Mayo.* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Mila, 2007) 32.

[83] Roniger and Sznajder, 134.

out almost 30 years after the end of the disappearance of her son, is a manifestation of the fact that Argentineans are still deeply emotionally affected by the *Proceso* and are constantly trying to grapple with it. This ceremony is one of many attempts by civil society to attempt what the government has failed to do. Examples include the weekly marches by the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, graffiti, sculpture parks, and many other memorials.

In terms of Sara's descriptions of her own childhood and that of her son, there is a clear pattern, and Sara utilizes specific literary devices to draw a connection. In both cases she begins with schooling: both Sara and Daniel were successful in school and liked by their teachers. Additionally, both were taken out of school early; she, because her parents were afraid of the social and political climate, and he, because he was often sick. Sara and Daniel both seemed to have a lot of friends and admirers during their attendance at school. Lastly, both were passionate about music. Daniel also had a passion for physics from an early age. In the end, both her instruments and his thesis papers were destroyed by the antagonists in the story.

In both her case and that of her son, Sara describes a playful and happy childhood, free of worries and full of friends and admirers. The language is similar in both stories. This seems to be a pattern in other survivors' stories, as seen in Diana Wang's *Los niños escondidos*: a mostly carefree childhood, with loving parents, luxuries, success in school and in the social sphere, and lack of want. Were the majority of Jewish children in Europe living carefree, happy, privileged lives, or is there something else at play when survivors reminisce about their childhood? At first glance, it seems as though Sara is juxtaposing her blissful beginnings with what came immediately after, while creating the same juxtaposition for her son, for the sake of emphasizing the horrors that befell both generations. Another possibility, however, pertains to the idea (stated

above) that survivors see themselves as the last representatives of a culture destroyed by genocide. As Sara is a memory-bearer for her own generation, she may also feel responsible for the preservation and reverence of Daniel's memories. Sara's description of her childhood self also rings true in light of Luisa Passerini's analysis of the "wild girl" stereotype in women's narratives.[84] Sara paints herself (and her son) as popular and independent, marrying an older man whom her parents do not choose.

There are also several significant parallels between Sara's and Daniel's love stories. Sara relates an anecdote about a time when Daniel told an older girl he would marry her if he too was older. Later, she relates the beginning of her own relationship with Bernardo, which blossomed in the Lodz ghetto. In this story she emphasizes, through repetition, that Bernardo was a much older man. Another parallel is that just as her parents admired Bernardo for his intelligence and schooling, she describes Daniel's colleague as "brilliant." Furthermore, when describing Daniel's "beautiful proposal" she adds that the girl was "one that I had not chosen."[85] In the same way, Bernardo began pursuing Sara of his own accord, rather than as a match made by her parents.

Not only is Sara's budding relationship with Bernardo described at great length, but there is a sort of homage to love in the ghetto included in the chapter. Is the great detail on this subject perhaps attributed to the fact that Daniel will never have the opportunity to experience love, marriage, relationships, and a family of his own? In "Surviving Genocide" Partnoy discusses this issue. She argues that survivors of both genocides have to deal with the issue of families that are

[84] Passerini, Luisa, "Women's Personal Narratives: Myths, Experiences, and Emotions," in Personal Narrative Group, ed., *Interpreting Women's Lives,* 189-197.

[85] Eisenstaedt, 44.

cut off, and young victims represent lost potential. "Anne Frank is remembered as a symbol of lost possibilities. There were tens of thousands of young people in Germany as well as in Argentina…and other Latin American countries, who could fulfill neither their dreams, nor their right to live, due to genocide."[86]

Sara describes a time during the *Proceso* when she arrived at the Plaza de Mayo, saw a demonstration and a lot of police, and ran like a small child to the Assembly for Human Rights to recruit Madres. Eisensteadt follows this anecdote by stating poetically: "Sara running…running to escape the inferno of Auschwitz; running against the wind and the tide; running so that it is known; running to meet once and for all with *Daniel*; running since then."[87] Myerhoff suggests that the Holocaust further intensified an already existing awareness among Jews of their own distinctiveness, and "promoted among survivors a search through the events of their private and collective lives for an explanation of their destiny."[88] She explains further that according to Lifton, "survivors of mass destruction often become 'seekers after justice.'" According to Lifton, "any experience of survival – whether of large disaster or intimate personal loss…involves a journey to the edge of the world of the living…the search for signs of meaning, is the survivor's return from that edge."[89]

[86] Partnoy, 228.

[87] Eisenstaedt, 89.

[88] Myerhoff, 235.

[89] 236.

Furthermore, Daniel James mentions the "conversational narrative."[90] Oral history, according to James, is an interaction between the interviewer and interviewee who have different expectations, motives, prestige, and levels of cultural capital which affects their telling and interpreting of the story. Myerhoff observed that in the community of survivors that she studied, everyone was fiercely competing for the attention of others, especially for that of younger people with a higher level of prestige.[91] In chapter three Sara describes the events leading up to Daniel's disappearance. A friend had just disappeared, and Sara's husband told Daniel that maybe he should leave the country. Daniel firmly refused, saying that he was just finishing his thesis and was not doing anything wrong.[92] This refusal was mirrored in the stories of other survivors whose family members had to be persuaded or left behind. These victims also believed that whatever was happening elsewhere would not happen to them because they were not doing anything wrong. Vera Jarach, an Italian immigrant who also later lost her daughter in the *Proceso*, remembered her grandfather's refusal to leave Italy on the basis that he believed that nazi policies would never come to Italy. He was later deported to Auschwitz, where he died. Perhaps Sara's telling of this anecdote has been shaped both by her knowledge of her listener's expectations and by her own familiarity with other survivors' stories. Perhaps it is also an attempt to justify her inability to keep Daniel from harm. This anecdote shows that Daniel's persistence and dedication to his work, as well as his belief in his own innocence, made it impossible to convince him to leave.

[90] James,124.

[91] Myerhoff, 235.

[92] Eisenstaedt, 49.

Death is a prominent theme in Sara's life story. Throughout her story, Sara relates every person she has lost to Daniel's disappearance. When she recounts the death of her infant sibling in the ghetto, she states that "when she lost that baby I did not understand…recently when it happened to me, I was able to understand what it is to lose a son…"[93] Sara talks about the disappearance of Daniel in the same chapter as she describes the death of her husband. She states that she told herself "Bernardo is above with Daniel."[94] Bernardo died just after the end of the dictatorship while in the middle of his search for Daniel. When describing the death of her father in Auschwitz, Sara states that "never again did I see my father. I always asked what had happened to the men. I always wanted to know what happened to him."[95] Eisenstaedt then adds that after finding out that he had been sent to the gas chamber, "From that day, Sara continued dreaming day and night of a possible reunion with her father."[96] This seems like her experience with Daniel- even though she knows he is gone, she still circles the Plaza de Mayo every Thursday, looking for Justice and Truth. When she describes her mother, aside from a brief description, she only speaks about her in the context of Daniel. He used to visit her a lot, and when he disappeared she stopped speaking and stopped asking about him. Yet Sara's mother turns out to be a central figure in her story for survival. Why, when relating the details of her life in Argentina and her experience with Daniel, does she limit her mother's role to 'Daniel's grandmother'? Death and loss seem to be tied forcefully to Daniel's disappearance. As such, it colors the way Sara reflects the loss of her other loved ones.

[93]Eisenstaedt, 46.

[94] 51.

[95] 66.

[96] 67.

In contrast to her seemingly minimal role in Sara's later life, her mother plays a very prominent part in the story of Sara's survival of the Holocaust. One theme which runs through Sara's account of survival is her constantly saving or calling out for her mother- in the ghetto selections, in Birkenau, during and after the death march, in Mauthausen. Additionally, in her description of Birkenau described earlier in the essay Sara focuses on the idea of staying together. Perhaps this is her focus because this is what she lacked in Argentina – she was able to keep calling out for her mother and running after her so that they could stay together, yet she could not do anything to keep Daniel with her, no matter how many letters she sent to government officials or embassies, how many doors she knocked on, or how many times she marched in the Plaza de Mayo.

It should not go unnoticed that what appears in this analysis, namely a comparison between Sara's experiences and those of her son, is the extent of her life story. Unlike the other stories presented here, Sara's does not contain lengthy descriptions of her immigration and integration period. This story therefore provides an extreme picture of the impact that the *Proceso* was able to have on at least one survivor, perhaps many others. Though this story is the focus of this chapter because its structure lent itself to analysis of this type, there were other survivors' accounts that dealt with the *Proceso* and other traumatic events such as the AMIA and Israeli embassy bombings.

Fela, whose real name is not revealed in the story because she fears identifying herself, provides another interesting account of her experience with losing children in the *Proceso*. Like Sara, Fela makes a strong connection between the actions of the military dictatorship in Argentina and those of the nazis. For example, she remembers thinking that the police who were

sent to disband the protesting mothers of "disappeared" children (Madres de la Plaza de Mayo) reminded her of the Gestapo.[97] She also reveals her sentiment that like the nazis, the perpetrators of the *Proceso* were anti-Jewish. According to her housekeeper, who was arrested when Fela's children were sequestered, the police that took her told her not to work for a Jewish family anymore.[98] She adds that while she makes the connection between her own experiences in Europe and those in Argentina, her grandchildren do not.[99] This may be significant because it points to the changing perception of historical events across generations. One must ask: when the survivors in Argentina die out, will anyone continue to express such a strong connection between the Holocaust and the *Proceso*? It may be that the connection embedded in the national memory is so strong that it will outlast the survivors who experienced both events; but if a survivors' own grandchildren can fail to grasp the connection then who is to say that others will maintain it?

Pedro, a Hungarian survivor who arrived in 1948 when he was nine years old, was a direct victim of the *Proceso.* Despite what he went through, he states that at the time he did not see a connection with nazism. Curiously, he equated the post-dictatorship era of President Menem with nazism, though he does not explain why.[100] It is noteworthy, I think, that despite saying that the *Proceso* was not connected in his mind with nazism, something else was. Was the era of Menem similar in any way to the era of Hitler? It is true that victims of the dictatorship in 1976 had several reasons not to support Menem, the most significant being his pardoning of military officials involved in the *Proceso*. However, further investigation would be required in

[97] Wang, *Los niños escondidos*, 221.

[98] Wang, 219.

[99] 223.

[100] 204-5

order to understand why a connection might be made between Menem's and Hitler's regimes. What can be gleaned from this example is that Pedro's experiences in the Holocaust are being used as a paradigm on which to base his understanding of experiences in Argentina. Even if he does not make the same comparison as other survivors, he is still making a comparison.

Many of the survivors also talk about the AMIA and Israeli embassy bombings. Pedro, for example, describes the way that the AMIA bombing strengthened his sense of Jewishness. He expresses similar sentiments as Ania, a German survivor who arrived in 1951 at age twenty-three, and Alberto who arrived at age twenty-five in 1960: that this event showed them that what happened to them in Europe could happen anywhere.[101]

In sum, it is clear that certain events which occurred between the arrival of the survivors and the writing of their oral histories created a sense among some survivors that nazism could have followed them to Argentina. Fela is a clear example of the impact that events such as the *Proceso* and the AMIA bombing had on some survivors as she does not even want to reveal her name or the names of her children for fear of future persecution. My argument is that this feeling of fear may have contributed to the survivors' emphasis on their Argentine identity.

ANTI-SEMITISM

The topic of anti-Semitism was prevalent among the survivors' stories and it was highly debated. On the one hand, it was acknowledged, but on the other hand it was described as having a different quality than in Europe. Also, some survivors stated that they did not feel any anti-

[101] Wang, *Los niños escondidos,* 204, 212.

Semitic sentiments, yet many had to pretend to be Catholic in order to enter the country. This presents a somewhat paradoxical situation. There is also the issue of "dual loyalty" which is present after the establishment of the State of Israel. Overall, it seems that anti-Semitism was downplayed in many accounts, which I believe is part of the survivors' attempts to emphasize their Argentinean identities.

Historian Haim Avni's review of the patterns of Jewish immigration from the last decades of the 19th century reveals the possibility that institutionalized anti-Semitism has existed in Argentina. While in part it may be attributed to anti-Semitic individuals in positions of power Avni points to larger patterns in which those individuals were embedded. Furthermore, the Catholic identity of Argentina as a nation seemed to play a role in the presence of anti-Semitic sentiments. Lastly, dual-loyalty accusations may be seen as anti-Semitism, and in my opinion created a sense of insecurity that pushed survivors to emphasize their Argentine identity, a phenomenon that is reflected in their life stories.

According to Avni there were three actors involved in Jewish immigration to Argentina: the Jewish immigrants, the Jewish organizations, and the Argentinean state. Jewish immigration to Argentina began in 1889 during a period when the country was campaigning for immigrants and was providing free passage as an incentive. Most Jewish refugees of the Russian pogroms in the 1880s went to the United States, France, Great Britain, and Germany, but a smaller group went instead to Argentina. After the arrival of the first Jewish settlers Baron Mauricio Hirsch created and funded the Jewish Colonization Association agricultural colonies in the provinces of Entre Ríos and Santa Fe and began recruiting Jewish farmers. Although Argentina was willing and able to absorb many immigrants, the JCA's organizational capacities did not allow for it to

take advantage of Argentina's immigration policies. Focusing only on farming as an economic incentive to migrate, it limited its activities to the agricultural settlements, therefore leaving urban immigrants to fend for themselves.[102]

The Red Scare in the 1920s did not have as dramatic an effect in Argentina as it did in the United States, but immigration was made somewhat more difficult. The focus of Argentina's immigration policies was to recruit farmers and not urban migrants. This decade can be characterized by fractured Jewish organizational efforts to assist in Jewish immigration to Argentina, with rivaling organizations battling for special government privileges to aid them in pursuit of a shared cause. The variety of organizations, including the Commission for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants, Soprotimis (Society for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants), and the JCA, were not able to make immigration a priority for the Jewish establishment. HICEM, which devoted itself to international Jewish emigration and was a key player in the 1928 immigration conference, only assisted those who independently decided to emigrate, rather than encouraging emigration. The JCA did not take advantage of the opportunity to bring more Jews into Argentina as agriculturists.

These organizations and others changed their tactics after Hitler rose to power in the 1930s, though this did not accelerate or augment Jewish immigration to Argentina, nor did it bolster the importance of the issue among Argentine Jewry. Previously, the organizations played a passive role in immigration. Now they "approached the Argentinean authorities on behalf of potential immigrants and a new welfare organization…opened its doors."[103] The 1930s in the

[102] Avni, Haim *Argentina & The Jews* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1991) 196-7.

[103] Avni, 199.

wake of the Great Depression were characterized by xenophobia and nationalism. This manifested itself in discriminatory immigration policies which excluded refugees, most of whom at the time were Jews. On top of that, Jewish organizations did not encourage immigration to Argentina and many refugees instead tried to flee to the U.S. Avni proposes that European Jewish emigrants would not have wanted to go to Argentina because of the Jewish white slave trade ring, which scared many potential immigrants, and the disputes between the JCA and colonists.[104] Jewish refugees were only begrudgingly willing to go to Argentina in 1936 and especially 1938-41, usually illegally. This meant a new task for the Jewish organizations: helping illegal Jewish immigrants in Argentina, a group which increased greatly in numbers during this time.

In sum, the slow and uneasy closing of Argentina's doors to Jewish immigrants climaxed in the anti-Semitic policies put into effect at the most crucial moment of Jewish need during WWII. According to Avni,

> The only difference after the Holocaust was that the Argentine authorities dropped their mask and adopted a more explicitly anti-Jewish policy. Whereas urban immigration was no longer curbed, the bias against Jewish immigrants continued. Thus we see that though one of the players, Argentina, tried to leave the stage, the other two – the Jewish immigrant through illegal immigration and the Jewish organizations through their efforts to assist him – kept the act going. In the fifty years preceding the Nazi era, the volume of Jewish immigration to Argentina was determined by the lack of interest of the Jewish emigrants and the lack of encouragement by the Jewish organizations. During the Holocaust era and the postwar years, it was Argentine immigration policy that drastically limited the number of Jewish arrivals.[105]

What accounted for such a diversion from Argentina's long-standing open-door policy? What brought Argentina from handing out tickets for free passage to Buenos Aires to the strict rejection of European Jews? Sweeping anti-communist, nationalist and xenophobic sentiments in

[104] Avni, *Argentina & The Jews* 197-9.

[105] Avni, 199-200.

the 1920's, which were in no way unique to Argentina, were added to an Argentinean mindset that "our country needs workmen – manual laborers, people who want to take up the plow."[106]

The nature of the immigration debate under Juan Perón's regime points to the complexities in his relationship with the Jewish community. While Perón was campaigning for the presidency immigration did not seem to be an important topic, though communist and socialist parties favored an increase in immigration. The historical account paints a picture of Perón as a leader preoccupied with more pressing issues than the immigration debate, a passive player in the effort to keep Jews out of Argentina, and a president to whom political gestures are more important than the fate of Jewish refugees.

During the junta which reigned before Perón became president in 1946 Santiago Peralta, a vicious anti-Semite, became commissioner of the Immigration Department. While Perón was making public statements that he was friendly to the Jews, at the same time he kept Peralta in his position of power over immigration policies. The measures taken by Peralta to put a freeze on Jewish immigration included: the refusal to "permit family reunification even in the case of first-of-kin; Jews seeking to immigrate to Paraguay and Bolivia were denied transit visas, as were those who entered Argentina legally from neighboring countries."[107] Perón's attempts to improve relations with the Jewish community were "usually politically motivated and highly publicized." For example, the same week in 1947 that Perón released forty-seven Holocaust survivors who had been detained while trying to enter the country, the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA), the Jewish Peronist organization, was created. "The event was hailed by the Jewish press as a

[106] Avni, *Argentina & The Jews,* 103.

[107] Avni, 181.

turning point in the attitude to Jewish immigration. In fact, it remained an isolated humanitarian-political act."[108]

Conversely, "by the end of June 1947, Peralta had been dismissed and a new immigration policy was introduced in Argentina."[109] The new immigration policy established in 1946, motivated by the industrialization process that Perón hoped to accelerate during his presidency, showed that "Perón and his supporters were not discriminating, as it were, against 'undesirable' immigrants; they were only granting priority to the desirables, who now included those with urban-industrial professions."[110] Based on the immigration statistics that followed this new policy, it was clear that many Italian fascists and Nazi collaborators were considered desirable immigrants and allowed to settle freely in Argentina. When in 1947 Perón further amended the immigration laws to include the permission for any relatives of residents of Argentina to immigrate, there was optimism among the Jewish immigration organizations; yet, when the new immigration commissioner, Pablo Diana, denied these organizations recognition as legitimate immigration agents, they were disappointed. After failing to bring their complaints before the President, they realized that "it was not only Peralta who was to blame for locking the gates to Jews. The administration as a whole, from the president down, was responsible for keeping the Jews out of Argentina."[111]

[108] Avni, *Argentina & The Jews*, 181-2.

[109] Avni, 183.

[110] 184.

[111] 188.

Yet Argentina was not alone in implementing policies to keep Jewish immigrants from crossing its borders in the years immediately following WWII. Other countries such as the United States and Canada put new immigration policies into effect in 1946 that limited the number of Jewish refugees that could enter their gates. On the one hand, Argentina did not suffer the effects of the war so it was better equipped to absorb immigrants. On the other hand, out of the approximately 600,000 immigrants who entered Argentina between 1947 and 1951, only a very small number were Jewish.[112] Actually, the legal number of Jewish immigrants in the five years following the end of WWII was around 1,000 to 1,500.[113] One very important aspect of this piece of data is that it only tells the story of *legal* immigrants. In fact, there were many illegal immigrants who either entered in secret or falsified documents in order to obtain a visa, for example, all of the survivors whose stories are analyzed in this essay.

Despite this shortcoming, an interesting aspect of the historical account of immigration is that it places the expectations and difficulties described by the survivors in a larger context. The fact that they knew nothing about Argentina and that it was not their first choice can be explained by the fact that Argentina was not made a priority destination for organizations that helped Jewish refugees resettle until it became clear that there would be few other choices. Secondly, the fact that it was nearly impossible for Jews to obtain visas to Argentina (either legally or illegally) can be explained by the fact that the immigrants arrived during the "*década*

[112] Avni, Haim *Argentina y las migraciones judias: de la Inquisicion al Holocausto y después*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Mila, 2005) 412-414.

[113] Avni, *Argentina y las migraciones judias,* 415.

infame" after the ousting of President Hipólito Yrigoyen in 1930. This was a decade characterized by nationalism, fascist sympathies, and fraudulent authoritarian governments. [114]

In a survey of immigrants about anti-Semitism, Schwarcz finds that an overwhelming majority felt that they did not experience anti-Semitism. The next most significant category was "slight" anti-Semitism, such as comments. On the other hand, amongst the children of immigrants almost half felt that they experience anti-Semitism in Argentina. Schwarcz attributes this to several factors including the fact that the second generation was much more involved in Argentinean society and that the parents had come from a much more anti-Jewish society that made Argentina seem very benign and tolerant.[115] Surprisingly, the first generation of post-Holocaust German-Jewish immigrants seemed apolitical and unaware of the anti-democratic and anti-Semitic restrictions in effect, including those against immigrants. Schwarcz concludes that they "came from a dictatorship that had discriminated against them in every way, such that it made them value even more the economic freedom that they enjoyed in this new land."[116]

Ilse Kaufmann's story presents an interesting counterpoint to Schwarcz's argument because while she does valorize her new freedom in Argentina, her account is also highly political (at times it reads somewhat like a political history of Argentina) and she seems acutely aware of the potential dangers surrounding her. On the one hand, for example, she makes a comparison between the nazi environment in which her son Carlos was born and the "Argentina

[114] Schwarcz, 241-242.

[115] 261-2.

[116] 242.

"venían de una dictadura que los había discriminado en todos los órdenes, lo cual les hizo valorizar aún más la libertad económica que gozaban en estas nuevas tierras."

of peace" in which her daughter Lizy was born.[117] She also describes her excitement at being able to buy things that she could not access in Prague under the nazis. On the other hand, when Carlos was practicing for his bar-mitzvah she hired a tutor so that he would not have to risk traveling to the synagogue. She stated that at that time anti-Semitism was "in the background."[118]

Lea, who arrived in 1947 at age twenty, states that "my aunt refused to come; she stayed in Poland because she said that Argentina was a fascist country."[119] Interestingly, Wang notes that "in general, our country was imagined as an exotic place, barbarous in the sense of being uneducated and backwards, but receptive towards Jews."[120] She followed this comment with a description of the "violent Judeo-phobia" amongst some with political power, and the resulting restrictions on Jewish immigration. Thus, on the one hand Argentina was seen as a fascist, Judeo-phobic country and rumors among European Jews confirmed suspicions that Jews were not able to obtain visas to enter the country; on the other hand, it was "receptive towards Jews." How can this be so? If Diana was interviewed immediately prior to her departure for Argentina, how would she have described her expectations? With the knowledge of the difficulty Jews were having in entering Argentina, it is more likely that Diana's response would more closely coincide with that of Lea's aunt. The contradiction in her retrospective response may be attributed to her current attitude towards Argentina. The Argentina of the 21st century is very

[117] Kaufmann, 194.

[118] 204.

[119] Wang, *Los niños escondidos,* 195

"Mi tía no quiso venir, se quedo en Polonia porque decía que Argentina era un país fascista."

[120] Wang, 183

"en general, nuestro país era imaginado como un lugar exótico, bárbaro en el sentido de inculto y atrasado, pero receptivo para los judíos."

different for Jews than the Argentina of the 1940's in terms of institutional acceptance of Jews. For example, Isaias Lerner states that "in the last thirty years the Jewish community in Argentina has become more visible and Jews have participated more actively in all sectors of public life. The official attitude of the Argentina church seems to have changed just as that of the Vatican, but some brutal acts of violence and discrimination seem to be endemic."[121] Thus, Diana may be projecting the contemporary idea of a welcoming attitude towards Jews onto the Argentina that received her over half a century ago.

Tomás Abraham also acknowledges the existence of anti-Semitism in Argentina. He arrived on October 13, 1948, on Día de la Raza. That day 77 men and 20 women from the Jewish community were arrested in Plaza Francia, according to an article from the Argentinean newspaper *Clarín*. Tomás concluded that it was probably Yom Kippur or a demonstration for Israel or a moment of silence for the victims in Europe. His is the only reference to a possible act of solidarity on the part of the Argentinean Jews. His first impression of Argentina, therefore, was that of a country that was intolerant in certain respects towards Jews. Nevertheless, Tomas retrospectively described the anti-Semitism in Argentina as one that is "commonplace, it is a 'normal' anti-Semitism, it is like being [a fan of] River or Boca," rival soccer teams in Buenos Aires that are an integral part of the culture and identity of Buenos Aires. His use of River and Boca as an analogy here reveals how deeply rooted Abraham believes anti-Semitism is embedded into Argentine culture. Furthermore, while people will make anti-Semitic comments,

[121] Isaias Lerner, 71.

many times they will get embarrassed and apologize. He refers to this phenomenon as a "cultural restructuring" in Argentina.[122]

Charles Papiernik states that "in Argentina, I never suffered any act of anti-Semitism. I read of such cases. But I never experienced it personally, not in Argentina or in Montevideo."[123] Yet when he describes the 1994 bombing of the AMIA he explains that "suddenly, before my eyes were Birkenau-Auschwitz, the SS, the nazis. I again saw the dead bodies that we had to carry in small carts. I found myself once again in the Holocaust."[124] Papiernik was able to see the ruins of the AMIA because he had scheduled a meeting there that morning and had been running late because of his daughter. The woman he was meeting with was killed in the bombing. For him, the bombing was connected with the Holocaust, yet he claims he never experienced any anti-Semitism personally.

Claudia, who arrived in 1949 when she was eleven years old, claims that she did not look Jewish, so no one tried to hide their anti-Semitism when they were in front of her. She recalls a time when she had to leave the table she was sitting at because of the comments made in front of her. She continues by adding that the bombings at the Israeli embassy and at the AMIA made her feel "a very close danger."[125] Interestingly, this anecdote immediately follows two stories about her negative experiences with local Jews; it is much shorter and provides much less detail. On

[122]Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 46.

[123] Papiernik, 129.

[124] Papiernik, 132.

[125] Wang, *Los niños escondidos*, 209.

"me hacen sentir un peligro muy cercano."

the whole, it seems to be less important than the previous stories, possibly signifying that anti-Semitism was less impactful or significant than her bad experiences with the Jewish community.

An important aspect of the immigration process that was described in the survivors' stories is the fact that many Jewish immigrants at this time had to pretend to be Catholics in order to obtain an entry visa. Diana Wang arrived in Buenos Aires in 1947. She and her family had been inscribed on the list of passengers as Catholics. Of this fact she states that "at home this episode was always commented about, sometimes almost as a joke, as an inevitable fact, a price to pay for our insertion as Jews into Argentinean society."[126] Diana's parents' debate over this issue reveals the fact that the ability of Jews to obtain visas was not clear-cut. Her mother believed that not only was it inevitable that they should have to pretend to be Catholic, but it was well known among those in Europe that Jews would not be able to obtain visas to Argentina. Her father believed that one just had to know whom to talk to and how much money to pay in order to obtain the correct documentation. One very interesting aspect of their debate is what they agree upon: "what kind of anti-Semitism is this, that they believe you when you say you are Catholic. This is not serious anti-Semitism like there was in Poland."[127] Despite the seeming unfairness of the fact that they had to hide their Jewish identity, they found comfort in the fact that "Jewishness" was no longer detected by racist standards as in nazi Europe; rather, your word

[126] Wang, Diana, *Hijos de la guerra*, 23.

"En casa se comentaba siempre el episodio, de manera a veces hasta jocosa, como un hecho inevitable, un precio a pagar por nuestra inserción como judíos en la sociedad argentina."

[127] Wang, 24

"Qué tipo de de antisemitismo es este, que te creen cuando decís ser católico. Ni siquiera es un antisemitismo serio como el que había en Polonia."

was taken with very little proof.[128] On the other hand, the minimal requirements of proof, such as praying to a saint, were humiliating for some.[129] Irene, who arrived in 1948 at age twelve, states that "coming to Argentina had its difficulties. The war had ended, but the condition of Jews continued to be a problem, especially for the Argentina of Perón."[130] There are many other survivors who speak about the necessity to falsify their papers and enter as Catholics, and they expressed similar sentiments as Diana.[131]

Avni, commenting on the strong Catholic nature of Argentina, states that "we see that Argentina's attitude to Jewish immigration was closely bound up with its self-image as a Catholic society and its expectation that immigrants would integrate completely. This had an important bearing on the degree to which Argentina was disposed to grant legitimacy to the Jews."[132] Furthermore, the perception that Jews were unwilling to assimilate into the Argentinean culture, combined with growing nationalism, led to estrangement of the Jewish community in the pre-Perón era. His rise to power meant the addition of populism and Catholic overtones with the result that "anti-Jewish feeling was brought into the mainstream." Perón's willingness to grant legitimacy to the Jewish community did not extend further than status as a "*colectividad extranjera*" ("foreign community"). Furthermore, he did not include immigration

[128] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra*, 24

[129] Wang, *Los niños escondidos,* 200-201.

[130] 200

"Llegar a la Argentina tuvo sus dificultades. La guerra había terminado, pero la condición de judíos seguía siendo un problema, es especial para la Argentina de Perón."

[131] 192, 195, 200, 201, 205, 210, 211.

[132] Avni, *Argentina & The Jews,* 201-2.

as a means to strengthen the community, "hence the restrictions on the entry of Jews and the bureaucratic red tape introduced to deter potential immigrants."[133]

Wang encountered institutional insensitivity towards Jews when she was in school, but as a child she did not understand the significance of her experiences until her mother explained them to her. When Diana's parents enrolled her in school they did not mention that she was a Jew so that she would not face discrimination. She went to catechism classes with the other students in her class who were going to take communion that year, because the alternative was to take a 'morality' class, implying that if one did not participate in the Catholic teachings, one was not necessarily moral. When she told her mother that she was going to take communion her mother cried and discussed with Diana's father that maybe they did not need to hide their Judaism in Argentina like they did in Poland. Her mother told her that they are Jews and that Christians tried to kill Jews. This was nothing like what Diana had been learning in catechism and came as a shock to her. She calls this day as the "Day of the Revelation" about her Jewish identity and about the tension between Jews and Catholics. After that day her parents decided to send her younger brother to a totally Jewish school.[134]

This anecdote is telling for several reasons. First, it reveals that Diana, among many other survivors who have published their life stories in the last several decades was a child when she immigrated to Argentina. In this incident, it is clear that Diana did not fully understand the complexities of anti-Semitism and discrimination in the school system. The fact that Jews were given the option either to participate in catechism or to learn about morality speaks to the

[133] Avni, *Argentina & the Jews,* 201-2

[134] Wang, *Hijos de la guerra,* 122.

fundamental view of Catholics in Argentina towards Jews: they lack morality. Furthermore, her parents hid her Jewish identity from the school because of their fears of anti-Semitism, yet they had to explain what it was to Diana because she did not realize it existed. The question is, was there no outward sign of anti-Semitism in her school, or was she simply too young to see it? This is one of the limits of oral history from child survivors. Second, this story reveals that while parents feared discrimination for their children, they were not necessarily inclined to send their children to a Jewish school. The decision to send Diana's brother to a Jewish school seemingly only stemmed from this incident. So there is a tension between wanting their children to be part of the larger society, especially when it comes to education, and wanting to protect their children from that same society.

Raanan Rein traces the dual-loyalty discussion to the clandestine capture of Adolf Eichmann in Argentina by Israeli Mossad agents in 1960. This event became a difficult issue for Israeli-Argentinean relations, but even more so for relations between Jews and non-Jews within Argentina. It sparked a wave of anti-Semitic attacks that "among other things, did their best to cast doubt on the Jewish citizens' loyalty to the Argentine republic."[135]

Tomás Abraham revealed his feelings about this issue. He begins by explaining that one thing the nazis accomplished was to make all Jews Jewish. In other words, no matter what you practiced, who you married, or which of your parents was Jewish, you were Jewish. This, for Tomás, is an important aspect of his Jewish identity. Any questions about his 'Jewishness' are

[135] Rein, Raanan, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines? Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010) 171.

"irrelevant."[136] On the other hand, it is much more difficult to become an Argentinean because it is a choice, and it can be questioned. He states that "I am a Jew, but I become an Argentinean," pointing to the fact that there are two distinguishable parts of his identity.[137] After the establishment of the State of Israel this dual identity was seen as dual loyalty. Tomás asks, "How can I not have dual loyalty?"[138] Like many other Jewish immigrants he had to enter the country pretending to be a Christian. He juxtaposes this fact by saying that in Israel it would never be the policy to kill Jews. In his mind, then, a country that would not allow Jews to enter would also be capable of killing Jews. "The world has not given us another [choice]; it has shown us time and time again that our passing through other lands was transitory."[139] It seems that Tomás's mistrust of the Argentinean government, while directly related to his difficult entry into the country, is also part of a more general feeling of insecurity for Jews anywhere outside of Israel.

A final interesting aspect of the survivors' accounts about anti-Semitism is that some, following their description of anti-Semitism, talk about their families (spouses, children, grandchildren) in terms of their Argentinean identity. Dina, who arrived in Argentina in 1941 when she was nine years old, follows a story about anti-Semitic teachers with the statement that "I married while studying and we had two daughters, both Argentineans. My spouse was also

[136] Wang, Diana, *Hijos de la guerra*, 45.

[137] Wang, 45.

[138] 45.

"¿cómo no voy a tener doble lealtad?"

[139] 45.

"El mundo no nos ha dado otra, nos ha mostrado una y otra vez que nuestro paso por otras tierras era transitorio."

Argentinean. Today I also have two grandchildren, all Argentinean."[140] This statement seems like an unnecessary detail because if her children and grandchildren were born in Argentina then of course they are Argentinean. Also, it is the only information that she shares about her family. In other words, it seems like this was the most important detail about her family since it was the only one she felt she needed to include in her story.

Ilse Kaufmann described her process of becoming an Argentine citizen, stating that it had been her goal since she had arrived and when she achieved it, she cried. "…I was very moved because, after so many years without a homeland, I had fulfilled – finally! – my dream of being Argentine, and from this moment, any time that someone would ask me for my nationality, I would be able to respond, with happiness and pride: 'I am an Argentine!'" Her exclamation of pride reveals her devotion to her new country.[141]

On the contrary, a Jewish woman in Buenos Aires was quoted in 1979 saying that "you American Jews are more nationalistic, I mean, for America. You're really Americans. We're different. We are Jews, and we live in Argentina, and we limit our nationalism for Israel."[142] This statement, while made around twenty five-years before the survivors published their stories, may reveal the stark contrast that seems to stand between the survivors and other Argentinean Jews.

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[140] Wang, *Los ninos escondidos*, 187.

"Me casé mientras estudiaba y tuvimos dos hijas, ambas argentinas. Mi esposo también era argentino. Hoy tengo además dos nietos, todos argentinos."

[141] Kaufmann, Isle, 218.

"…estaba muy conmovida porque, después de tantos años sin tener una patria, había cumplido – por fin! – mi sueño de ser argentina, y que a partir de ese momento, cada vez que alguien me preguntara por mi nacionalidad, yo podría responder, con felicidad y orgullo: 'Soy argentina!'."

[142] Liebman, 318.

To complicate this picture further, Abraham, who arrived at age 15 in 1947, expresses his ambiguity towards his identity as an Argentine. He explains that "today I feel like a worthy *porteño*: I sing tangos, I study and practice *lunfardo*, I love Buenos Aires. I have been living in Buenos Aires for 57 years but at times I ask myself if I will not continue to be a foreigner. My parents are resting in Argentinean soil, but their graves were profaned, my children and grandchildren are Argentineans."[143] Thus, it seems that while some of the survivors express their loyalty to and identification with Argentina, their identity is not clear-cut, nor is it one-dimensional. Many factors play into the formation of their sense of self. The evidence presented in this study revealed that the important factors for the survivors were rejection by other Jews leading to feelings of isolation, similarities between experiences in Argentina and in nazi Europe leading to fear, and anti-Semitism leading to insecurity.

CONCLUSION

It seems that underlying the survivors' accounts of their immigration to and integration into Argentina is a layer of insecurity about their "*argentinidad*," or Argentine identity. At times their accounts abound with statements of their self-identity or the identity of their descendants as Argentineans, pointing to a need to prove their loyalty. Many also talk about their lack of connection to Judaism until very recently. Though this may be a phenomenon of having survived the Holocaust, it may also be a way of downplaying their identity as Jews so as to strengthen their identity as members of the Argentine nation. Furthermore, some survivors describe their feeling of 'otherness' or status as an outsider in the Jewish community. What could account for

[143] Wang, *Los niños escondidos,* 195.

these insecurities and how are they manifested? It is possible that in the wake of the 1976 military dictatorship, similar to the nazi regime in certain respects, survivors feared that the Holocaust was not necessarily unique to nazi Europe. The bombings of the AMIA (Argentinean Jewish Mutual Association) and the Israeli embassy, as well as the economic crisis of 2001 which reminded many of the conditions of pre-war Europe, may have had a similar impact. Coupled with these more tangible events was a feeling expressed by almost all of the survivors that no one in their own 'community' would listen to their stories about their experiences in the Holocaust. Some even express feelings of being unwelcome in that community. This may have created a sense of resentment and a distancing from the Jewish community until recently when many survivors began to tell their stories to the younger generations of Jews and Argentineans.

This insecurity is manifested in several ways in the survivors' accounts. First, while historians mention several Jewish organizations that played a significant role in the Jewish community of Buenos Aires, the survivors almost never mention Jewish organizations in their accounts. Is it possible that none of these survivors had any involvement in Jewish institutions, or was their involvement insignificant enough not to be remembered at all? Or, perhaps, their insecurity as Jews led them to simply downplay their involvement with Jewish institutions. Second, they make direct connections between traumatic experiences in Argentina and their experiences in the Holocaust. Third, they seem to defend Argentinean forms of anti-Semitism, especially when it concerned the fact that they had to pretend to be Catholic in order to enter the country.

A study of this kind not only reveals specifics about the perceptions and experiences of a specific group of people in a demarcated period of history. It also offers insight into the nature of

oral history and storytelling. As was explored in the theoretical section of this paper narrative is artificially constructed by the compilation of memories that have continued to change as time between the event and the recollection of the event grows longer. During this period of change, moreover, certain experiences impact the way that events are remembered. Furthermore, the act of narrating itself is an important event in the lives of the survivors, thus it can be treated much like the other memories that are recounted in their stories. In other words, as much can be learned by understanding the context of the memories as it can by exploring the context of the narration itself.

Further research would hopefully lead me towards a more profound understanding of the nature of the survivors' sense of identity. An advantage in this regard could be gained by speaking directly to the survivors themselves and being able to analyze not just their words but their composure and storytelling techniques as well. I hope that as is, this analysis can lend itself to a deeper insight into the experiences of Holocaust survivors in the post-war phase of their lives, as well as to a broader appreciation for the use of oral history and how it can be utilized.

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