Experiencing and Remembering the *Hachsharah*. Documents and Stories from and about the He-Halutz in Sweden

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Abstract

In the spring of 1933, the halutz*-quota was established in Sweden. This quota gave young German Jews the possibility to come to Sweden as transmigrants to receive training in agricultural work for 18 months and then continue to Palestine. In total, between the years 1933-1941 490 teenagers were sent to Sweden through the* halutz*-quota. The focus of this article is on how and what the young people communicate about their time in Sweden in different sources. Drawing from various unpublished materials produced within the movement in Sweden as well as interviews with former members of the He-Halutz, the aim is to place the persons who entered Sweden through the halutz-quota as central actors in the text, both as important agents in the past and as constructors of the stories of that past.*

Introduction: Survivors as Agents in the Past and as Constructors of the Stories of that Past

> The destinies of young Jewish persons who happened to come to Sweden and lived there isolated from the events of the world and the Jewish people for many years can certainly be of interest, as their experiences can be compared to the experiences of other Jewish and non-Jewish refugees during the same period [...].[1]

This quotation comes from an unpublished manuscript, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948 und Geschichte des Schwedischen Hechaluz",[2] about the history of the *hachsharah* and the He-Halutz movement in Sweden, written by Seew Shalmon in 1949.[3] Shalmon was one of the 490 young people who were granted entry from Germany into Sweden through the *halutz*-quota between the years 1933 and 1941.[4] He wrote the nearly 200-page history of He-Halutz in Sweden at the request of Emil Glück, the benefactor of He-Halutz in Sweden.[5] His version was never published; however, Glück published a book in Swedish in the mid-1980s that is largely based on Shalmon's work.[6] Seew Shalmon and his

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[1] Seew Smulowi[c]z (Shalmon), "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948 und Geschichte des Schwedische Hechaluz," (Unpublished manuscript, 1949), p. 2, Sweden Collection O74/1, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, [Author's translation from the original German to English].

[2] The transliteration of Hebrew terms in this article follows the transliteration rules of the journal. However, He-Halutz in Sweden used other transliteration rules. This is why I when referring to titles and quotes from and about the movement in Sweden, I follow the transliteration rules of the movement in Sweden. For example, He-Halutz was spelled Hechaluz within the movement in Sweden (as in the title of Shalmon's manuscript).

[3] Seew Smulowicz was originally named Willi Smulowicz. In Sweden, he changed his first name to a Hebrew first name (Seew). Later in Israel, he also changed his surname Smulowicz to Shalmon. I refer to him as Seew Shalmon in this text.

[4] As Seew Shalmon could speak and read Hebrew, he was soon released from the obligatory farm work. Instead, he worked as a Hebrew teacher within the He-Halutz movement. In 1945 he worked as a counselor in various reception camps for survivors in Sweden. He passed away before I started my research on He-Halutz, which is why I never had the opportunity to meet him. However, I met his widow Esther Shalmon (née Warburg) in Israel in early 2001.

[5] Interview with Esther Shalmon (née Warburg), March 3, 2001, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby).

[6] Emil Glück, *På väg till Israel. Hachscharah i Sverige 1933–1948. Transmigrationen av judisk ungdom från Nazi-Tyskland för utbildning i lantbruk m.m. och vidare vandring till Palestina* (Stockholm: Författares Bokmaskin, 1985).

manuscript is one example of how refugees and survivors can be important agents in the past and at the same time important knowledge producers of that past. Shalmon's manuscript is also an example of how diverse experiences during the Holocaust were documented and interpreted by the persecuted in different countries and contexts during and immediately after the war. As previous research has concluded, this documentation came to significantly affect the development of Holocaust studies in the twentieth century.[7] It is often argued that Swedish Holocaust historiography did not emerge until the 1990s. For example, historian Paul A. Levine wrote in the middle of 1990s that although an extensive historical literature about Sweden during the Second World War existed, only one study, Steven Koblik's *The Stones Cry out Sweden's Response to the Persecution of Jews 1933–1945*, discussed Sweden's response to the Holocaust.[8] Levine's own dissertation about Swedish diplomacy during the Holocaust should according to the logic of this argument be the second study in Swedish Holocaust studies. The historical literature about Sweden during the Second World War Levine refers to as "extensive" includes about 20 doctoral dissertations, focusing on Swedish politics, opinions and foreign policies and relations during the war, published in the 1970s and 1980s within the framework of the research project, "Sverige under andra världskriget," (SUAV, Sweden During the Second World War).[9] Still, though Koblik and Levine's works addressed Sweden's relation to the Holocaust and not Sweden's situation or foreign policies during the war, one can argue that they followed the same path as previous research, mainly focusing on the Swedish state's perspectives and political histories. It should also be noticed that one year before Levine's dissertation was published, historian Lars Olsson published a

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[7] See for example Boaz Cohen, *Israeli Holocaust research: Birth and evolution* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Sharon Geva, "Documenters, Researchers and Commemorators. The Life Stories and Work of Miriam Novitch and Rachel Auerbach in Comparative Perspective," *Moreshet: Journal for the Study of the Holocaust and Antisemitism* 16 (2019): 56-91; Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).

[8] Paul A. Levine, *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust 1938–44* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1996), 30-32.

[9] Stig Ekman, "The research Project Sweden during the Second World War (SUAV)," *Meddelande från Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek* 16, no. 4 (1980): 16-22.

book on how survivors from the Holocaust were integrated in the Swedish labor market.[10] Hence, as I have suggested elsewhere, one can argue that Holocaust studies in Sweden had more than one beginning.[11] Further, about the same time as Koblik's, Levine's and Olsson's books were published, two dissertations based on oral history and with survivor-centered perspectives were published.[12] Also, Holocaust testimonies were collected and Holocaust archives created even before the Second World War ended and these collecting, documenting, writing and researching activities continued in Sweden with the arrival of the survivors. Most of these "survivor stories" were intended to be used as evidence in Nazi trials or for future scientific or historical studies. In a recently published report on scholarship about Holocaust testimonies and survivor stories in Sweden we concluded that little research exists on the situatedness of Swedish collection efforts in a greater European and international context.[13] Although some efforts have been made recently to highlight that the survivors themselves were some of the most ardent collectors of testimonies and creators of survivor stories, these aspects of Holocaust historiography in Sweden need to be further explored.[14] As argued above, Seew

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[10] Lars Olsson, *På tröskeln till folkhemmet. Baltiska flyktingar och polska koncentrationslägerfångar som reservarbetskraft i skånskt jordbruk kring slutet av andra världskriget* (Lund: Morgonrodnad, 1995). An English edition of the book was published two years later: *On the threshold of the People's home of Sweden: A Labor Perspective of Baltic Refugees and Relieved Polish Concentration Camp Prisoners in Sweden at the End of World War II* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1997).

[11] Malin Thor Tureby, "Svenska judars berättelser om flyktingar, överlevande och hjälpverksamheter under och efter Förintelsen," *Nordisk Judaistik* 31, no. 2 (2020): 60-84, for the discussion about Holocaust historiography in Sweden see 61-63.

[12] Mirjam Sterner Carlberg, *Gemenskap och överlevnad. Om den judiska gruppen i Borås och dess historia* (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1994); Ingrid Lomfors, *Förlorad barndom – återvunnet liv. De judiska flyktingbarnen från Nazityskland*, (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1996).

[13] Malin Thor Tureby and Kristin Wagrell, *Vittnesmål från Förintelsen och de överlevandes berättelser. Definitioner, insamlingar och användningar, 1939–2020* (Stockholm: Forum för levande historia, 2020).

[14] See for example Izabela A. Dahl, " '...this is material arousing interest in common history': Zygmunt Łakociński and Polish Survivors' Protocols," *Jewish History Quarterly* 223, no. 3 (2007): 319-338; Dahl, "Collective Memory and National Identity Construction. Polish Survivors' Records in Sweden," in *Landscapes after Battle. Justice, Politics and Memory in Europe after the Second World War*, eds. David Cesarani, Suzanne Bardgett, Jessica Reinisch, and Dieter Steinert (London - Portland: Valentine Mitchell Publishers, 2011), 169-186. See also Victoria Van Orden Martinez, "Witnessing against a divide? An analysis of early Holocaust testimonies constructed in interviews

Shalmon's manuscript might also be understood as part of an early documentation and knowledge production on Sweden and the Holocaust.[15] Another example in connection to the Hachsharah and the He-Halutz in Sweden are Eli Getreu writings and works. Eli Getreu was, just like Seew Shalmon, a member of the He-Halutz in Sweden. In 1946-1948 he worked as a teacher at Smedsbo, a school for children and young people who came to Sweden as survivors in 1945. He collected his pupils' testimonies and stories. In 1953, he published an 80-page long article about his pupils' experiences during the Holocaust. Getreu and his work are very rarely referred to or mentioned as part of the research field of Holocaust studies in Sweden. Holocaust survivors have in general not been taken into account by Holocaust historiography and Holocaust studies in Sweden.[16] They have not been recognized as experts or authorities on knowledge about the Holocaust. They have rather been excluded as agents in research on the Holocaust and are often ignored as important knowledge producers of that past. The questions of authority and when, how and for whom stories from or about the Holocaust are documented and told also relates to the research field of oral history where the art of participatory practice, shared/sharing authority, sustained conversations and collaborative interpretation in knowledge production has been elaborated for many years.[17] Oral historian and Holocaust

between Jewish and non-Jewish Poles," *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History* 27 (2021). Accessed June 22, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2021.1981627.

[15] The definition of who is included in the concept of "survivor" is under debate and changes over time. One could argue that since Seew Shalmon and his group of halutzim came to Sweden between the years 1933-1941, before the mass killings had started, they should not be defined as "survivors." However, Shalmon's manuscript includes the years after 1941 and includes his perspectives on meeting with the Danish halutzim and the survivors from the concentration camps that arrived in Sweden during the spring and summer of 1945. Furthermore, many of the halutzim that I met in the 1990's referred to themselves as survivors, not refugees. Immediately after the war the most common term were "*sherit hapletah"*: that term included every Jewish person that was alive in Europe, regardless of how they survived (in hiding, in the camps, as refugees etc.). For a discussion on the concept "survivor," see for example Alina Bothe and Markus Nesselrodt, "Survivor: Towards a Conceptual History," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 61 (2016): 57-82.

[16] Thor Tureby and Wagrell, *Vittnesmål från Förintelsen och de överlevandes berättelser.*

[17] See for example Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990); Steven High, *Oral history at the Crossroads: Sharing Life Stories of Survival and Displacement* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014); Stacey Zembrzycki, *According to Baba: A Collaborative Oral History of Sudbury's Ukrainian Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014).

scholar Henry Greenspan has, for example, pioneered studies of stories from the Holocaust by questioning the very concept of testimony itself, contending that the act of listening to Holocaust survivors never involves the extraction of truth from living subjects, but rather, constitutes a dialogic exchange through which the interviewer and interviewee find new ways of remembering and interpreting the past together.[18] Understanding a story about the Holocaust, though, is not only about the dialogues that take place between survivors and their partners' in conversation, but also about the institutions, both physical and discursive, whose practices influence who will be listened to, who will be considered an expert or an authority on the Holocaust and what can be said in a specific time and context. Thus, as argued by historian Tony Kushner, the creations of different documents, writings and recountings, collections and archives, are important pieces of the puzzle in a greater understanding of survivors' experiences and expressions and the place they have been allowed to take in the writing of history about the Holocaust.[19]

In Refugee studies we have not seen the same epistemological discussions or methodological developments regarding participatory practice, shared/sharing authority, sustained conversations, and collaborative interpretation as in Holocaust studies and oral history—until recently. British historian Peter Gatrell finds it striking that the ways in which refugees have been given space in the writing of history has received so little attention. He argues that in those cases where "refugees" are investigated, they are usually portrayed as an unnamed mass—passive victims of persecution, war, or revolution—not as named actors in various contexts. According to Gatrell, history writing has focused unilaterally on what is being done *to* or *for* those who are referred to as refugees rather than placing the focus on them as actors or persons.[20] Tony Kushner argues in a similar way regarding the representations of refugees in general and more specially refugees from the Holocaust in a heritage context: "Only a few and carefully

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[18] Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Beyond Testimony* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2010).

[19] Tony Kushner, "Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience: Holocaust Testimony in a Museum Setting," *Oral History* 29, no. 2 (2001): 83-94; Kushner, "Holocaust Testimony, Ethics, and the Problem of Representation," *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 276-295.

[20] Peter Gatrell, "Refugees – What's Wrong with History?," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 30, no.2 (2017): 170-189.

selected groups, and especially the help that was given to them, have been recognized and celebrated, especially in relation to those who escaped Nazism."[21] Gatrell stresses the importance of not getting caught up in different legal definitions and categorizations of "refugees" at different times and contexts and further explains that we must try to place the persons defined as refugees at the heart of history writing and explore their perspectives, actions, experiences, self-understandings and how they narrate displacement.[22] Inspired by the ongoing discussion within the fields of Oral History, Holocaust studies and Refugees studies, I aim to situate the persons who entered Sweden through the halutz-quota as central actors in this text, both as important agents in the past and as constructors and interpreters of the stories of that past. The overriding aim of this article is to give an overview of the history of the He-Halutz in Sweden, where the experiences and perspectives of the people who came to Sweden through the halutz-quota are at the center. To this aim, I draw from Shalmon's unpublished manuscript as well as letters and reports written by the He-Halutz members to various Zionist institutions in Europe and Palestine during the 1930s and 1940s.[23] Further, I revisit the interviews I conducted in the late 1990s with approximately 50 former *halutzim*, who, at the time, were living in Sweden or Israel.[24] The focus

[21] Tony Kushner, *Remembering Refugees: Then and Now* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 223.

[22] See for example Lauren Banko, Katarzyna Nowak, and Peter Gatrell, "What is Refugee History, Now?," *Journal of Global History* 17, no. 1 (2021): 1-19; Gatrell, "Refugees."

[23] I have previously published on the hachsharah and the He-Halutz in Sweden: Malin Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum. Tysk-judiska ungdomars exil i Sverige 1933-1943* (Växjö: Växjö University Press, 2005); Thor, "Memories of the Exile. Young German Jews Remember the Forced Emigration Experience," in *Beyond Camps and Forced Labour Current International Research on Survivors of Nazi Persecution*, eds. Johannes-Dieter Steinert and Inge Weber-Newth (Osnabrück: Secolo, 2005); Thor, "Flyktingar, transmigranter och arbetare. Hechaluz i Sverige 1933–1943," *Arbetarhistoria* 3 (2006): 43-49; Malin Thor Tureby, *Kibbutzer i Sverige. Judiska lantbrukskollektiv i Sverige 1936–1946* (Stockholm: Judiska Museet, 2012); Thor Tureby, "Pionjärer, flyktingar och överlevande: Hechaluz i Sverige 1933–1949," in *Heimat Sverige? Tysk-judisk emigration till Sverige 1774–1945*, eds. Lars M Andersson, Helmut Müssener, and Daniel Pedersen (Stockholm: Bokförlaget Faethon, 2021), 443-462. This article builds upon my previous publications on the hachsharah and the He-Halutz in Sweden. In the footnotes I refer to the relevant publication but also to the archives and documents used in the referred publications.

[24] I would like to underline that although I refer to specific recorded interviews in the footnotes, I met with several of the former halutzim multiple times. We had a continuous dialogue and conversation, about the He-Halutz and their experiences, and more importantly about their

will be on the persons who came to Sweden through the halutz-quota and on how and what they tell about their time and experiences in Sweden in different materials. Which historical experience and historical perspective emerged in the Swedish periphery? When did He-Halutz members become aware of the Holocaust and what effect did it have on their own identities? Did their perception of of their activities and goals change over time during their stay in Sweden? By answering these questions, the history of He-Halutz in Sweden will be made into a story of what is not a story, but rather several individuals' diverse experiences expressed and communicated in various recountings and writings.[25]

The Differing Stories of how It all started

Even before the Nazi takeover there was a Landesverband Hechaluz with its center in Berlin, which since the beginning of the 1920's had organized Hachsharah (training) for young people over 18 years old.[26] For the first ten years, He-Halutz in Germany consisted of about a hundred members. A massive increase in membership followed the Nazi's rise to power. The increasingly threatening situation and the influx of members led the Hechaluz Deutscher Landesverbands to explore ways to rescue Jewish youths out of Germany without giving up on the movement's ideological goals. One such way was to move the Hachsharah abroad. The Auslandshachscharah (hachsharah abroad) would be built according to the same pattern and with the same ideological content (labour zionism) and goal (*aliyah*) as the hachsharah in Germany.[27]

Organized by the He-Halutz movement in Germany, hachsharah began in Sweden in 1933 immediately after the Nazi takeover, but there are different stories

continuing lives and experiences after the Holocaust. I am still today in contact with many of their descendants.

[25] Compare Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, 20-24.

[26] Perez Leshem, *Strasse zur Rettung, 1933–1939 aus Deutschland Vertrieben - Bereitet sich Jüdische Jugend auf Palästina vor* (Tel Aviv: Verband der Freunde der Histadrut, 1973).

[27] For a detailed history of the He-Halutz in Germany, see Thor*, Hechaluz -en rörelse i tid och rum*, 78-125. See also Perez Leshem, *Strasse zur Rettung,* for an insider's perspective of the organization of Auslandshachscharah. Large parts of the section "The differing stories of how it all started" has previously been published in Thor Tureby, "Pionjärer, flyktingar och överlevande."

of how it all started, depending on whether they are told from the perspective of He-Halutz or the perspective of the Swedish state and/or helpers in Sweden.
In his book, Emil Glück claims that:

> On a visit to Berlin in the spring of 1933, I contacted Hehalutz's office in Meinickestr. 10 in Berlin. [...] I offered to organize a Hachscharah in Sweden of a similar kind to Denmark. Collaboration was agreed. Hehalutz would select suitable young people and be responsible for that, after 1 1/2 years of training, they would leave for Palestine or another country.[28]

According to Emil Glück, he himself initiated the hachsharah in Sweden after he alone managed to get the National Board of Health and Welfare to establish what would be called the halutz-quota, which meant that on a trial basis, he was to train 10 young people in agricultural work for 18 months. As the young participants left for Palestine, new candidates were allowed admission within the framework of the quota.[29] However, Perez Leshem (Fritz Lichtenstein), one of the leaders of the German He-Halutz movement, gives a different version of how the collaboration with Emil Glück started. According to Leshem, in the spring of 1933 he traveled to several European countries to explore the possibility of starting and running hachsharah in other countries within the framework of the German He-Halutz. Leshem writes that after meeting with Benjamin Slor in Denmark, on his advice, Leshem went on to Sweden to meet Emil Glück in Helsingborg. They discussed employment and education opportunities in Sweden for the *halutzim* from Germany. Leshem further writes that he found Glück a tireless and willing co-worker who listened to and respected the movement. According to Leshem, Glück later acted as a mediator between He-Halutz and the Jewish community in Stockholm.[30]
Glück's meeting with Perez Leshem is not mentioned in Glück's book. Instead, the role and actions of Glück himself are emphasized; for example, the cover text states that "Glück almost single-handedly built up a Swedish section of the Zionist organization Hehalutz."

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[28] Glück, *På väg till Israel*, 15.
[29] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i rum och tid,* 143-145.
[30] Leshem, *Strasse zur Rettung,* 30-32.

Glück writes that when the Jewish community in Stockholm learned that he had been granted permission by the National Board of Health and Welfare to educate ten young people from Germany for 18 months as agricultural students, the community contacted him. According to Glück, the Jewish community in Stockholm expressed doubts about a private person being granted permission to bring Jews from Germany to Sweden but nevertheless offered to help. Glück writes that he agreed, and it was decided that a quota of ten people would be handled by him personally. It was also decided that the application documents would be passed on to the National Board of Health and Welfare via the Jewish community in Stockholm.[31]

It is not my aim to in any way diminish Glück's endeavors and the efforts he and his wife, Anna Glück, made (especially in the early years) to find work for and provide for the German-Jewish youth that were granted entry to Sweden through the halutz-quota. Glück was clearly an important actor in the establishment of the halutz-quota and finding work for the first halutzim who arrived in Sweden. Without his help, the He-Halutz may never have had the opportunity to establish a hachsharah in Sweden, but he was never the leader of the movement (although he probably understood himself as such), nor was he ever a member of the movement or considered as a member of the movement by the halutzim.

When reviewing correspondence to and from the movement in Sweden and during interviews with former members of the He-Halutz, it is obvious that they had great respect for Glück and felt gratitude for his endeavors. However, he is never portrayed as a leader or a member of the movement by its members (the halutzim). Although acknowledged as a benefactor, he is always positioned as a "Swede," "Swedish Jew," or "Swedish Zionist" and is thus defined as someone outside the movement by its members. This is also how Alfred Kalter explains it in an interview. He stressed during our conversation that he personally liked Emil Glück very much, but Glück was not part of the movement. According to Kalter, Glück did not understand young people and was therefore regarded as an outsider and a stranger by the members of the He-Halutz. Kalter thus emphasizes during our conversation that Glück did not belong to He-Halutz. He also mentions the continuous power struggle between the community in Stockholm and Glück.

[31] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 143-151.

According to Kalter, Swedish Jews were part of bourgeois society and fearful of increased antisemitism if too many Jewish refugees were allowed to come to Sweden, while the halutzim regarded themselves as the avantgarde who would build up socialism and the new Jewish homeland. Therefore, the Jewish community in Stockholm as well as the community in Malmö were viewed with skepticism by halutzim, according to Kalter.[32] The question of whether Glück was a member of the movement in Sweden or its leader sheds light on perspectives and the experiences of the German Jewish youth that were allowed entry visas to Sweden through the halutz-quota and their identities as halutzim. Further, it highlights the importance of recognizing the refugees as actors in the past and as knowledge producers of the past and of acknowledging their perspectives when writing their history. As pointed out within the research field of Refugee studies standards on the production of knowledge must be strengthened to address a very real gap in the way researchers write about refugees. Working towards changing national narratives about migration, refugees and refugee aid, that often build upon the archives of the states or the aid organizations, it is essential to listen to the voices of the refugees in different materials and let their perspectives and the creation of stories play a more leading role.[33]

In my conversation with Alfred Kalter, it is quite clear that he talks from the position of a young Zionist and socialist rather than a Jewish refugee.

Kalter spoke from the position of a young Zionist during the interview, but during my conversations with other former halutzim there were also those who expressed disappointment with Swedish Jews from a more personal position or a refugee position

> They [the Swedish Jews] didn't seem to consider us to be equal. I asked the community in Malmö to lend me $400 to help my mother to escape from Aachen to America. They told me, "We have enough trouble with the poor people of our own!" Their attitude towards Israel and the

[32] Interview with Alfred Kalter November 3, 1998, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby).

[33] See for example Kushner, "Holocaust Testimony, Ethics, and the Problem of Representation," 276-295; Adam Saltsman and Nassim Majidi, "Storytelling in Research with Refugees: On the Promise and Politics of Audibility and Visibility in Participatory Research in Contexts of Forced Migration," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no. 3 (2021): 2522-2538.

> Hehalutz was chilly at the time. But there were exceptions, and as time went by, they changed their attitudes more and more [...].[34]

Many former halutzim express a similar attitude in relation to Swedish Jews and tell stories about how they felt that Swedish Jews did not treat them as equals or in a respectful way. These ambivalent feelings were common among the Jews who escaped the Nazis.[35]

Regardless of how Alfred Kalter and other halutzim perceived and experienced Glück and other representatives of the Jewish minority in Sweden, Glück was nevertheless an important actor, along with the Jewish community in Stockholm and other Jewish communities in Sweden, in the establishment of the halutz-quota and the funding of the He-Halutz activities in Sweden.[36]

Which halutz would be selected to travel to Sweden was decided by the German He-Halutz movement's department of Auslandshachscharah. Toward the end of the 1930s, however, the movement in Germany became increasingly concerned about the increased terror against the Jewish population in Nazi Germany. Therefore, in 1938 and 1939, candidates could no longer be screened in the same way, and as a result, several unconvinced Zionists came to Sweden through the halutz-quota.[37] According to Shalmon, this became a problem for the hachsharah in Sweden, particularly as the Jewish community in Stockholm and the Swedish authorities continued to treat everyone who had come to Sweden through the halutz-quota as a member of the He-Halutz movement.[38] According to Shalmon, representatives from the Jewish community and the Swedish authorities did not

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[34] Interview with NN. In accordance with the interviewee's wish, I do not to name this interviewee.

[35] In 1943, the philosopher Hannah Arendt published the article, "We Refugees," which gives a good description of the emotional unease of the persecuted Jews of Europe. See Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," in *The Jewish writings. Hannah Arendt*, eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York: Schocken Books, 2007). See also, Thor, "Memories of the Exile" for more quotes from interviews with the former halutzim about their experiences from and views on the Jewish communities in Sweden.

[36] The communities in Gothenburg and Malmö also contributed funding to the He-Halutz in Sweden: See for example Protokoll 1933–1942, Ai:1, Judiska Församlingen i Göteborg. Region- och Stadsarkivet Göteborg med Folkrörelsernas Arkiv, Göteborg.

[37] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 178-187.

[38] Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 10-14.

understand the activities that the movement in Sweden sought to run. They demanded that both Zionists and non-Zionists (who had been granted entry through the halutz-quota) be managed by the leadership of the He-Halutz in Sweden, which, according to Shalmon, caused many problems and conflicts within the movement.[39] He writes that 59 of the 177 people who came to Sweden through the halutz quota in 1939 left He-Halutz immediately after the arrival.[40] In a contemporary report, however, this was not described as a problem, but as a positive thing because it meant that only righteous members remained in He-Halutz. In addition, an expulsion action was carried out in 1939, when the leadership of the He-Halutz in Sweden (the Mazkirut) decided that all those who had been granted entry visas to Sweden through the halutz-quota but did not identify as Zionists, should be excluded from the movement. Ultimately, therefore, the exclusion process was about He-Halutz opposing being regarded as a refugee organization by the Swedish authorities and Swedish Jews. The decision to exclude non-Zionists from the movement can thus be understood as a move by He-Halutz both to secure the ideological and educational quality and goal of the hachsharah as well as to present itself as a pioneer movement, not an organization for refugees.[41]

Stories about Kibbutz Svartingstorp

Swedish Jews' lack of knowledge and understanding of the activities of He-Halutz and its commitment to Zionism is also a recurring theme in the correspondence between the He-Halutz in Sweden and the Zionist institutions in Palestine/Israel.[42] In documents from the movement, both the community in Stockholm and the Swedish authorities refer to He-Halutz members primarily as transmigrants or refugees, while they themselves maintained an identity and acted

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 27-28; Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 189.

[41] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 178-244.

[42] The section about Kibbutz Svartingstorp has previously been published in Swedish in Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 156-177; Thor, "Kibbutz Svartingstorp 1936–1940," in *Kibbutzer i Sverige*, ed. Thor, 67-79.

from the position of working-class Zionist pioneers on their way to Palestine.[43] A distinct example of how this [misunderstanding] manifested itself are the many conflicts about kibbutz Svartingstorp.

At the beginning of 1936, one of the leaders of the He-Halutz in Germany, Georg Josephtal, visited Sweden to discuss the possibility of expanding and improving the hachsharah in Sweden, among other things, through the establishment of a kibbutz. The He-Halutz leadership in Germany preferred this form of education, as it best corresponded to future life in Palestine. Given that the movement in Germany did not have any resources available, the implementation of the project depended on finding benefactors in Sweden willing to finance it. Emil Glück began the search for donors for the purchase of a suitable farm. Through his contacts with the Jewish community in Stockholm, Glück learned that Professor Eli Heckscher's mother, Rosa Heckscher, wanted to donate a large amount of money to help Jewish refugees from Germany. With the help of these funds, the Foundation for Agricultural Education (Stiftelsen för Lantbruksutbildning) was founded and the Svartingstorp farm in southern Sweden was purchased.[44]

On November 1, 1936, kibbutz Svartingstorp opened. The first group consisted of eight boys and three girls led by Hardy Winter. Glück describes Hardy Winter as an older and experienced halutz who had been sent to the hachsharah in Sweden to lead the workers.[45] I met Hardy Winter at his home in kibbutz Dafna in Israel in November 2000. Winter was 89 years old when we first met. He told me that he was not at all an experienced halutz and that he had never been a member of He-Halutz or any other Zionist youth movement in Germany. During our conversations, Winter told me that he was a socialist and anti-Nazi and a member of the youth movement Kameraden in Germany. His anti-Nazi and socialist activities were one of the reasons why he was compelled to leave Germany quickly. After being severely beaten up by Nazis, he went to the He-Halutz office in Berlin and asked for help to leave Germany. He knew that they were arranging visas for young people who wanted to emigrate. His girlfriend had already left Germany

[43] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum,* 172.

[44] Ibid., 156-177; Thor, "Kibbutz Svartingstorp 1936–1940," 67-79.

[45] Glück, *På väg till Israel*, 20-23.

and traveled to Sweden. Winter therefore explained to He-Halutz that he was happy to travel to Sweden while waiting for an aliyah-certificate to Palestine.[46]
He was thus not an experienced halutz, as Glück claims, but had some life experience, a socialist conviction, and was slightly older, at age 24, than the other young people sent from Germany to Sweden. Hardy Winter estimates that there were about 15-20 He-Halutz members in Sweden upon his arrival in the autumn of 1936. Although not an experienced halutz, Winter became one of the leaders of the hachsharah and kibbutz Svartingstorp when it opened in November 1936.
We can read about the first days at the kibbutz from an unknown diary writer that published his diary entries from the first weeks of the kibbutz in the movement's journal *Darkenu* (Our Way). This is what the diarist wrote about the first day at the kibbutz: "*Sunday. November 1, 1936.* There's nothing here. No table, no bed, nothing to eat. Just empty rooms. And a barn that gives a comfortless impression, which is very dilapidated and neglected."[47]
The diarist's first impression of what was going to be his home for the near future was far from positive, and the negative emotions continued:

> *Monday. November 2, 1936.* Our first working day started at 6:00 with the cows in the barn. There was apparently several weeks of dung, and the cleaning took several hours. Cleaning the entire complex will take several weeks. We can only carry out the most necessary work, [and] as we do not yet have any tools, the work is more than enough for us three boys. Our two women in the kitchen prepared a grandiose meal for dinner today. Tomorrow, we will start with the beet harvest and the plowing. Our four horses are old but can run. The cows are thin and give very little milk, the pigs sink into their own dung, and this dirt found in this stable is worse than can be expressed in words. The hens are slender and neglected. Will we later be able to tell you about our great success? Maybe additional *chawerim* will join us soon, then we'll get ahead faster with the work.[48]

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[46] Interview with Hardy Winter, November 16, 2000, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby).
[47] "Aus den ersten Tagen des Kibuz. Tagebuch Auszuge Svartingstorp," in *Darkenu* 2 (August, 1937). The authors' translation from German, Z8/4-25, Ghetto Fighters House Archive, Western Galilee. See also Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 156-158, for a translation and discussion of the diary in Swedish.
[48] "Aus den ersten Tagen des Kibuz."

The diarist's negative attitude seems to turn to acceptance during the first and second weeks at the kibbutz, as he wrote that he began to feel at home in the kibbutz and became accustomed to all the awkwardness. They had also found the first two eggs in the hen house: on Wednesday, November 18, 1936 (the last day described in *Darkenu*), the diarist writes,

> The external image has changed, a little bit, for the better. The manure stack is gone. The farm and the stables are clean, and our cows are freed from their thick dung layers. In the stable, there are new boxes, the cobwebs are gone from the walls, and the horses are fine. In the house, the windows have curtains, and the house has become convivial and more comfortable.[49]

Svartingstorp was a dilapidated farm but nevertheless quickly developed into the heart of the movement. In addition to Hardy Winter, a Swedish agronomist hired by the Jewish community in Stockholm was on the kibbutz to lead the work. However, the community in Stockholm and the Swedish agronomist considered Svartingstorp to be primarily an agricultural school and not a kibbutz, and this resulted in many problems and conflicts at Svartingstorp.

Contemporary documents authored by members of the hachsharah in Sweden state that Svartingstorp's main flaw was that any attempt at independence and responsibility by both the management and the halutzim was quashed. A proposal to have a closed *chewra* (community) based on collective values was rejected as well as any connection at all to He-Halutz. A request from the halutzim for self-management had also been rejected. The only authority in the house would be Swedish agronomist Enblom and his wife, as representatives of the foundation in Stockholm.[50]

The halutzim's dissatisfaction with the Swedish agronomist's management of the kibbutz led them to write to representatives of the movement in Eretz Israel asking for help. They requested that the Histadrut should send an experienced *schaliach*

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 158-160.

who could take over the leadership of kibbutz Svartingstorp.[51] In addition to the members' request for a leader to be sent from Eretz Israel to organize the work, discussions about Svartingstorp included in the movement's journal, *Darkenu*, and revelations/comments from contemporary interviews indicate that kibbutz Svartingstorp was important for the members in Sweden.[52]

However, economic reasons ultimately led to the closure of the operations at Svartingstorp. In the autumn of 1939, the economy was so bad that the halutzim had to be sent to work on different farms. As a result, kibbutz Svartingstorp was closed.

Emil Glück writes in his book that Svartingstorp, despite all the setbacks and difficulties, was an asset, as it brought together refugees and Swedish Jews. The constant connection between Svartingstorp and the Jewish community in Stockholm made the leaders of the community aware of the young refugees from Germany and their goals and needs.[53]

When I interviewed former members of the He-Halutz in Sweden and Israel in the late 1990s and early 2000s, many had stories to tell about Svartingstorp. A consistent feature of the former members' stories about Svartingstorp are funny anecdotes about the Swedish agronomist's incompetence and his inability—as well as that of other representatives from the Jewish community in Stockholm—to accept their Zionist way of life. However, first and foremost, the former members of the He-Halutz recall the importance of being with other young people in the same situation as themselves and the sense of belonging and security the collective living at kibbutz Svartingstorp offered them in a new country, on their own without their families. It was thus not only for ideological reasons that Svartingstorp was important for some of the members of the He-Halutz. Werner Braun, who lived on kibbutz Svartingstorp for a couple of years, explained it this way to me when we met at his home in Jerusalem in the early 2000s:

> Werner: [...] I was a regular member of the Hehalutz. I was supposed to go to a kibbutz [in Palestine]. But I never had any intention of going. I'm

[51] Berthold Rotschild/Kibbutz Svartingstorp, Letter to Fritz Lichtenstein, Mazkiruth Hakibbuz, Ein Charod, October 6, 1937, File: 2/11/59, Yad Tabenkin Archives, Ramat Ef'al.

[52] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 161.

[53] Glück, *På väg till Israel*, 26.

> too much of an individualist. I couldn't go to a kibbutz, but I didn't tell them.
> Malin: Did you ever think about leaving the Hehalutz in Sweden and live on your own?
> Werner: No, there was no question about that. I could only have been on my own if I had left the Hehalutz. But as a member of the Hehalutz ... no, I never thought about it. No, I didn't want to be alone [in Sweden]; I wanted to be alone in Israel.[54]

The Reception and Integration of the *Halutzim* from the *Hachsharah* in Denmark in 1943

The rescue of Danish Jews to Sweden in October 1943 is a well-known event in the history of the Holocaust. The rescue has been researched, re-told and exhibited as a unique story for the reason that over 90% of the circa 8,000 Jews (6,000 Danish citizens and about 1,500 refugees or stateless persons) in Denmark survived the Nazi persecution.[55] Yet, as pointed out by Danish historian Sofie Lene Bak, the historiography is almost limited to the Danish rescuers and the events which occurred in the autumn of 1943, neglecting the Danish Jews experiences of flight and exile.[56] From a Swedish perspective it has recently been argued that almost no research about the reception of the Danish Jews and the their stay in Sweden exist.[57] In this section I will first and foremost focus on the He-Halutz perspective on the arrival and reception of the halutzim from the Danish hachsharah and on

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[54] Interview with Werner Braun, January 9, 2001, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby).

[55] See for example Leni Yahil, *Hatsalat ha-Yehudim be-Denyah: demokratyah she-'amdah ba-mivḥan* (Jerusalem: Hotsa'at Sefarim 'a. sh. Y. L. Magnes, ha-Universiṭah ha-'ivrit, 1966) (see also Yahil 1967 for a Danish translation of the book and Yahil 1969 for an English translation of the same book); Therkel Stræde, *October 1943*: *The rescue of the Danish Jews from annihilation* (Köpenhamn: Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1993); See also other memorial institutions' websites for examples of how the rescue of the Danish Jews is narrated: accessed June 22, 2022, http://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/the-rescue-of-denmark-jews.html.

[56] Sofie Lene Bak, "Repatriation and restitution of Holocaust victims in post-war Denmark," *Jewish Studies in the Nordic Countries Today* 27 (2016): 134-152.

[57] Klas Åmark, *Förintelsen och antisemitism – en kartläggning av svensk forskning* (Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet, 2021), 56.

how the refugees/halutzim from Germany were helping other refugees/halutzim when they were forced to move a second time.[58]

In October 1943, the members of the He-Halutz and the Jugendaliyah in Denmark fled to Sweden together with the Danish Jews.[59] Thereafter, the number of halutzim in Sweden doubled. In total, 364 persons from the hachsharah in Denmark (223 men, 96 women, and 35 children) came to Sweden and were integrated into the hachsharah. Twenty-eight He-Halutz members and 40 Jugendaliyah-children from Denmark were arrested by the Nazis in Denmark and deported to Theresienstadt. All of them survived and were rescued to Sweden later in the spring of 1945. Two members of the Danish hachsharah drowned during their escape to Sweden in 1943, and five people are still missing—no one knows what happened to them, according to Shalmon.[60]

The He-Halutz in Sweden informed the Zionist institutions in Palestine of the arrival of the halutzim from Denmark.[61] Shalmon writes that He-Halutz decided to create a transitional camp to place the Danish members in "normal working conditions" as soon as possible. The camp was established in Bjärnum, north of Hässleholm (where the Mazkirut [the secretariat] had its office).[62] The members of the Youth Aliyah were taken care of by a Youth Aliyah group who were at a kibbutz in Falun and by a Bachad[63] group living at a kibbutz in Norrköping. The doubling of its members resulted in several organizational challenges for the movement. Mazkirut was given new duties and needed to be expanded to carry out all the necessary tasks. One person was put in charge of getting jobs for the halutzim from Denmark and handled all negotiations with the authorities. Another person became responsible for the connection between the Mazkirut and

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[58] The section on the reception of the halutzim from Denmark has been published previously in Swedish in Thor Tureby, "Pionjärer, flyktingar och överlevande," 452-455.

[59] For stories about the Danish hachscharah see Jørgen Hæstrup, *Dengang in Denmark. Jødisk ungdom på træk 1932–1945* (Odense: Odense universitetsforlag, 1982).

[60] Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 92.

[61] Michael Wächter (Hechaluz i Sverige) Telegram to Histadrut, October 15, 1943. IV 209-4-159, Lavon Institute Labour Archives, Tel Aviv.

[62] Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 92.

[63] Brit Chalutzim Dati'im (The Alliance of Religious Pioneers, short form: Bachad) was founded in Germany in 1928. He-Halutz and Bachad cooperated in Sweden. Bachad was organizationally subsumed under the He-Halutz in Sweden but maintained its cultural autonomy.

the Danish members of the Bjärnum camp.[64] Shalmon's writings about the reception of the halutzim from Denmark is written from an administrative point of view: the focus is on how the halutzim in Sweden overcame the challenges in integrating the halutzim from Denmark into the movement. He does not relate to or write anything about the ongoing war and the threatening situation for the persecuted Jews of Europe. The encounter with the halutzim from Denmark is not framed or described as an encounter with persons that once again are fleeing from the Nazis but as a meeting with like-minded young people like himself, an encounter with pioneers, on their way to the Jewish homeland in Palestine. Hans Kaufmann, who belonged to a Youth Aliyah group in Denmark, and was among the first who managed to flee to Sweden narrates about his flight and reception in Sweden in a similar way in a written life story:

> On the first day we met people from Hechaluz in Sweden [...]. They looked among the refugees for young people who belonged to the Zionist youth organizations. What a wonderful feeling! Less than 24 hours after our arrival, we were taken care of by Jews, with the same commitment, ideology and goal as us.[65]

In neither Schalmon's nor Kaufman's accounts are the events in Europe at the center of the narrative. This generally also applies to materials that were created within the framework of the movement in Sweden. Journals and meeting minutes contain few or no reports on the war or the threatening situation in Europe. On the other hand, the situation in the Middle East and especially in the Yishuv and in the kibbutz movement and how the British Mandate in Palestine made it hard for the members in Sweden to make aliyah when they were ready was often discussed in detail. The problems with too few certificates and no possibility to make aliyah was continually discussed within the movement in Sweden. After the Danish Jews' flight to Sweden, Eva Warburg, who organized the activities of the Youth Aliyah in Sweden, wrote a personal letter to the Head of the immigration department of the Jewish Agency, Elijahu Dobkin, appealing for 400 certificates

[64] Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 93.

[65] Hans Kaufmann, "Livet på Kibbutz Hälsinggården," in *Kibbutzer i Sverige,* ed. Thor Tureby, 13-14. Author's translation of quote to English from Swedish.

for those who had fled from Denmark to Sweden.[66] In the letter, she highlighted that these children and young people had been forced to flee for their lives for the second or third time. She also argued that the young people in Sweden could be an asset to Eretz Israel, as they were both mentally and physically strong due to their healthy lifestyle in Scandinavia over the years.[67] However, the requested aliyah-certificates were still not available at that time. In my meetings with former halutzim, however, not all of them saw the small chances of achieving aliyah-certificates as a problem. Otto Schwarz, who decided to stay in Sweden after the war, told me that he and the group of halutzim that he lived together with in Sweden just laughed whenever aliyah was discussed at meetings, because they didn't have any "illusions" that they would ever be able to travel to Palestine.[68]

In early November 1943, the camp in Bjärnum was closed. Shalmon proudly writes in his history of the He-Halutz that it was the first refugee and transit camp for Danish refugees in Sweden to be dismantled. He points out that the He-Halutz effectively and in solidarity took care of and integrated the halutzim from Denmark into the Swedish movement.[69] However, Salmon also writes about how the arrival and integration of "the Danes" was far from trouble-free. Several of them had fled in haste and had not brought any clothes or other personal belongings with them, and few had any money. The He-Halutz in Sweden thus decided that all its members would donate whatever salary they had as farmworkers to the newcomers. As a result, all the He-Halutz members waived their October salary in 1943 in support for the Danish halutzim.[70] Shalmon's narrative also illustrates that some of the members of the He-Halutz were active in

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[66] Eva Warburg's efforts during the Holocaust have unfortunately not yet been researched to the extent that they deserve. She was a key person in the organization of the Jugendaliyah in Sweden. She also helped save children from Denmark and Lithuania to Sweden and organized several *alijot* for children in Sweden. See Interview with Eva Warburg November 6, 2001, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby). See also Anne E. Dünzelmann, *... keine normale Reise: Eva Warburg und die Kinder/Jugendalijah in Schweden* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2017).

[67] Eva Warburg, Letter to Elijahu Dobkin, Jewish Agency, Jerusalem, November 23, 1943, File S6/3620, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem; Thor Tureby, "Pionjärer, flyktingar och överlevande," 453.

[68] Interview with Otto Schwarz, November 6, 2002, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby).

[69] Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 93.

[70] Ibid., 94-96.

the reception of the refugees from Denmark, and how in 1943 they acted like and regarded themselves as refugee helpers rather than as refugees.[71]

It was not only in relation to the Danish halutzim that the He-Halutz members in Sweden showed agency by helping their less fortunate comrades in Europe that were on hachsharah in countries occupied by the Nazis. Another similar event took place in the first months of the war. After Nazi Germany's attack on Poland, several halutzim who had been on hachsharah there fled by foot to Vilnius. In early November 1939, He-Halutz in Sweden received a letter from Arjeh Golani, who was the leader of this group. The letter describes the situation for the halutzim in eastern Europe, and Golani wrote, among other things, that over 500 members lived on the *hachscharahkibbutz* Schecharia.[72] Many of them had fled on foot from other places and owned no more than the clothes they were wearing. Golani therefore asked the He-Halutz in Sweden to arrange a fundraising for the benefit of the comrades in Vilnius.[73] The He-Halutz in Sweden agreed, and clothes were collected and sent to their comrades in Lithuania. In addition, a plan was drawn up to temporarily transfer 300 of the halutzim who were in Vilnius to Sweden. The idea was that they would be transferred to Sweden and wait in security for certificates and a possible travel route to Palestine. However, problems of all kinds—failure to find transport from Lithuania to Sweden, high costs for the transfer to Sweden, and the question of who would guarantee their livelihood in Sweden—could not be solved. Therefore, the plan never materialized. However, the majority of German halutzim in Vilnius would later manage to get to Palestine by traveling across the Soviet Union.[74]

The He-Halutz in Sweden continued to assist detained members in Europe throughout the war, including through monthly payments to Nathan Schwalb at the He-Halutz Merkaz Olami based in Geneva, Switzerland. Schwalb conveyed

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[71] Thor Tureby, "Pionjärer, flyktingar, överlevande," 453-454.

[72] Akiba Eger (Hechaluz i Sverige) Letter to Mazkiruth Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Tel Aviv, November 2, 1939, File Z8/4-34, Ghetto Fighters House Archive, Western Galilee. A copy of the letter was also sent to; Waad Hapoel schel Hahistadruth, Mazkiruth Lemaaraw Europe, Pino Ginsburg and Uri Koch in Amsterdam, Chanan Reichmann in Copenhagen, and Elijahu Dobkin in Tel Aviv.

[73] Arjeh Golani, Riga, Letter to Den Chawerim in Schweden, November 8, 1939, File Z8/4-34, Ghetto Fighters House Archive, Western Galilee.

[74] "Abschrift. Aus einem Brief von Akiba Eger" November 19, 1939, File Z8/4-34, Ghetto Fighters House Archive, Western Galilee; Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 32-33.

letters, packages, and financial contributions to members who had been imprisoned by the Nazis in Europe. He also served as a liaison between He-Halutz in Sweden and the Zionist institutions in Palestine and conveyed letters to family and friends in Palestine.[75] The He-Halutz in Sweden also sent food and clothing packages via the Red Cross to the Danish halutzim who failed to escape to Sweden and were deported to Theresienstadt. All of them survived and came to Sweden together with thousands of other people who were liberated from Nazi concentration camps in the spring of 1945. Thus, more and more of the movement's and its members' time and incomes went to helping the survivors who arrived in Sweden during the spring and summer of 1945.[76]

The Reception and Integration of the Survivors

During the spring and summer of 1945 as many as 31,000 survivors arrived in Sweden via two "rescue and relief" operations in 1945: the Red Cross "White Buses" in the spring and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) "White Boats" in the summer.[77]

Seew Shalmon writes that, of the approximately 12,000 Jews rescued to Sweden from the concentration camps in the spring and summer of 1945, more than 3,000 immediately joined the He-Halutz. According to his statement, many of the "old" members were also hired as counselors and social workers to take care of the new arrivals. The majority of the movement's members lived and worked in Southern Sweden, where many of the survivors first arrived. Therefore, in many cases, a representative of He-Halutz was the first to meet the survivors upon their arrival in Sweden.[78]

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[75] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 308-313.

[76] Thor Tureby, "Pionjärer, flyktingar och överlevande," 455.

[77] Olsson, *På tröskeln till folkhemmet*; Sune Persson, "*Vi åker till Sverige." De vita bussarna 1945* (Rimbo: Fischer & Co, 2002); Roman Wroblewski, *The Liberated 1945: White Boat Mission from Bergen-Belsen to Sweden* (Stockholm: Swedish Holocaust Memorial Association – SHMA, 2020). This section about the reception and integration of the Survivors has previously been published in Swedish in Thor Tureby, "Pionjärer, flyktingar och överlevande," 455-462.

[78] Shalmon. "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 139.

In 1946, the He-Halutz had more than 3,200 registered members. Of these, about 300 were so-called old *haverim* and 2,900 were new arrivals. In addition, about 1,000 people registered in the Bachad (the religious movement). Shalmon writes that, about 4,000 new members of Bachad and He-Halutz had emigrated to Palestine/Israel by the end of 1949.[79]

Shalmon's account was written a few years after the arrival of the survivors, but it fits well with other accounts that are closer in time or that describe the events there and then. In May 1945, for example, Hans Wellisch wrote to the Jewish Agency in Palestine that thousands of survivors had arrived in Sweden from the camps. According to Wellisch, roughly 4,000 of them were Jews and the majority were women. Wellisch writes that He-Halutz will do everything to help the women and to stay in touch with the new members. He also promises to send lists of the women who join the He-Halutz movement in Sweden. In the letter, Wellisch also announces that He-Halutz has compiled and published a newsletter with an overview of the most important Jewish and Zionist events that have occurred in recent years. The newsletter was distributed to all camps housing Jewish survivors. Wellisch also explains that He-Halutz plans to continue to regularly convey news and information to the survivors (referred to as "the women," as most of the survivors that came to Sweden were women) in some form of publication.[80] He-Halutz had also distributed the self-produced magazine *Hapoel* (The Worker) in all the camps and Wellisch reports that "all *chaverot* (female members) liked it very much." He also asks the movement in Palestine to send literature, books, and newspapers, as several of the new members speak Hebrew fluently.[81]

Later, at the request of the Zionist institutions in Palestine, He-Halutz would also make lists of the survivors in Sweden. Such lists of new, excluded, or departed members were continuously compiled and sent to various Zionist institutions in Palestine/Israel.[82]

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[79] Ibid., 187.

[80] Hans Wellisch (Hechaluz i Sverige) letter to B. Ben Shalom, Jewish Agency's Youth Department in Jerusalem May 22, 1945, File S32/943, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

[81] Hans Wellisch (Hechaluz i Sverige) letter to B. Ben Shalom, Jewish Agency's Youth Department, May 5, 1945, File S32/943, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

[82] See for example Letter to He-Halutz in Sweden from Jewish Agency"s Youth Department', August 8, 1945, File S32/943; Liste der Chawerim des Hechaluz in Schweden. Nach dem Stande vom 15. October 1945; Nachtragsliste No. 1 Zur Liste der Chawerim des Hechaluz vom 15.10.45 12/12

In early August 1945, another detailed report "Memorandum on the present and future tasks of the Swedish He-Halutz movement among the refugees who have come to Sweden" was sent to the World Jewish Congress Relief and Rehabilitation Department in Stockholm. The report was written in English (otherwise German, and to some extent Hebrew, were mainly used by the movement in Sweden and in various communications with Zionist institutions). This report also mentions that two people from He-Halutz immediately traveled to Malmö to meet the survivors in the reception camps arranged for them by the Swedish authorities. This report describes in detail the work carried out by He-Halutz for the survivors. For example, it describes how a He-Halutz member visited the camps as often as possible but given that there were about 40 camps in Sweden, each camp could not be visited more than once a month. Furthermore, the report states that the He-Halutz office responded to 50-60 letters daily from the camps, which resulted in large postage expenses. I have not found any of these letters from the survivors during my research in the Swedish or Israeli archives. However, there are traces of these letters in the form of requests to Merkaz Olami, Histadrut, and other Zionist institutions from He-Halutz asking for information, mainly about missing relatives, on behalf of the survivors.[83] During an interview, Ofra Lustgarten told me that she wrote to the He-Halutz when the doctors at the hospital told her that she was rehabilitated and healthy enough to leave. She asked He-Halutz (she got the address from the hospital) what to do as she did not want to be alone in Sweden. The He-Halutz replied to her and sent her a train ticket to Norrköping. In Norrköping she lived together with a group of other female survivors who called themselves Kutzah Shahar. They worked at a factory during the day and at

1945; Nachtragsliste No 3 Liste der Chawerim des Hechaluz vom 15.10.45, March 30, 1946, S6/2107, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem; List of new haverim 12/12 1945 (Attachment in letter to Nathan Schwalb, Merkaz Olami Geneva December 13 1945, File III 37A-39B, Lavon Archives, Tel Aviv; List of haverim in Sweden October 15, 1945 and List of Jewish Women in the camp Kjesater-Vingåker/Sweden, File IV-209-4-159, Lavon Archives, Tel Aviv.

[83] He-Halutz in Sweden Telegram to Histadrut June 9, 1945; Histadrut Telegram to He-Halutz in Sweden July 10, 1945; He-Halutz in Sweden Letters to Histadrut Haovdim October 16, 1945 and October 17, 1945; He-Halutz in Sweden Letters to Nathan Schwalb, Geneva September 18, 1945; October 25, 1945; Nathan Schwalb letters to He-Halutz in Sweden October 9, 1945; October 17, 1945; October 25, 1945; November 1, 1945; November 2, 1945; March 14, 1946; March 26, 1946, File III 37A-39 B, Lavon Archives, Tel Aviv.

night and on Sundays studied Hebrew and prepared themselves for a future life in Israel.[84]

Educational work among the survivors is also described in the report from August 1945. According to the report, most of the women survivors wanted to form so-called *plugot* (working groups) to live and work together. Some had joined already existing He-Halutz centers where they lived and worked together with the "old" halutzim, and others chose to stay in the camps while waiting for housing and work. The report states that the survivors (referred to as "the liberated" in the report) want to learn English and Hebrew and that many of them were taken to the German camps when they were 11-12 years old, which is why they lacked education. The report adds that although the Swedish state will offer education for these young girls, they will also need to be educated in Jewish and Zionist topics. However, the Swedish He-Halutz movement emphasized that it would not be able to offer this training without financial support. Until that point, all the work done by the He-Halutz (the extra office work, the visits to the camps, and the publication of the newspaper) were financed by a voluntary tax imposed on the members of the movement and through 1,000 Swedish crowns that constituted the movement's emergency cash. However, the funds had been exhausted, and Hans Wellisch wrote to the World Jewish Congress to inform them that for the first time in the history of the Swedish He-Halutz movement, the He-Halutz cannot see how they can continue their work either among their old members or among "the refugees."[85] Therefore, he asks the World Jewish Congress for more funding for the work carried out by He-Halutz with the survivors, or with the refugees as Wellisch calls them.

In Shalmon's writings and the contemporary reports from the movement in Sweden to various Zionist institutions in Europe and the Yishuv, we can hardly hear or see the survivors (although at the time they formed the majority of the movement's members). In the report referred to here, Wellisch is describing what He-Halutz is doing for the survivors. However, many of the survivors were

[84] Interview with Ofra Lustgarten, February 5, 2001, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby).

[85] "Memorandum on the present and future tasks of the Swedish Hechaluz movement among the refugees who have come to Sweden," August 5, 1945 addressed to The World Jewish Congress, File III 37A-39B. See also Hans Wellish (Hechaluz i Sverige) letter to Eliahu Dobkin, Immigration Department, Jewish Agency, September 14, 1945, where Wellish writes about his request to the WJC for funding, File S6/2107, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

Zionists before the Holocaust. During an interview with Dwora Henefeld, she told me that she belonged to a Zionist youth movement, that her family was Zionist and that she learned how to speak and read Hebrew in school before the Holocaust. When she was rescued to Sweden in 1945, she came to the refugee camp of Doverstorp, where she met members of the He-Halutz movement that visited the camp. According to Dwora, the members of He-Halutz were the only persons in Sweden who tried to understand what she and the other survivors had been through and that was why she joined the movement. According to her, the representatives from He-Halutz were very pleased when they understood that she could speak Hebrew. After some time, she started to work as a teacher of Hebrew at a school for girls of 14-19 years.[86] Dwora's story illuminates how camp survivors were not only helped by He-Halutz but how they also became members of and contributed to the movement.

In September 1945, Wellisch wrote another report on the Swedish He-Halutz work with the survivors. He writes that, since his last report, more refugees have been transported to Sweden, of whom about 8,000 were Jews. Compared with previous arrivals, there were more men in this group than ever before. According to Wellisch, He-Halutz and other Jewish organizations were better prepared for the arrival of this group, and eight members from He-Halutz helped with their reception, for example, by registering the new arrivals. The He-Halutz members doing the registration also asked all the refugees they spoke to if they were former He-Halutz members and/or if they would like to join the movement in Sweden.[87] The greatest challenge for the leadership of the He-Halutz, according to Shalmon, was to determine which of the new members seriously wanted to become a halutz and really intended to make aliyah. He writes that several of the new arrivals also registered as members of other associations and organizations and signed up to emigration lists to other countries to ensure they had somewhere to go after their rehabilitation in Sweden. It was therefore crucial for the He-Halutz to investigate who was truly a convinced Zionist or not. The approximately 300 "old" members were firmly determined to continue their Zionist work and convinced that the

[86] Interview with Dwora Henefeld, January 22, 2001, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby).

[87] To all Merkasej Hechaluz. Report on the Swedish Hechaluz movement's activities during the last months, especially among refugees, November 12, 1945, File Z8/4-51, Ghetto Fighters House Archive, Western Galilee.

new members would also be assigned to work (as soon as they were healthy and strong enough) and pursue cultural work to prepare for life in Eretz Israel. He-Halutz thus did not abandon its main principles as a educational and ideological movement. The movement's goal of educating young people into a Hebrew working life in the Jewish homeland was also set at a meeting (*Moezah*) that took place in the autumn of 1946, where 3,200 members were represented by 82 delegates from different parts of Sweden. However, the massive influx of members meant that more money and more people were needed to lead the ideological schooling and cultural work. Some of the survivors who came to Sweden were experienced halutzim and able to help with the Zionist work.[88] Several of the new arrivals were also elected to the Mazkirut and the Merkas during the meeting.[89] The He-Halutz in Sweden also requested urgent support from the Zionist leadership in Palestine. They asked for several *schlichim* (emissaries from the Zionist movement in Palestine/Israel to come to Sweden and lead the work and for more certificates to be immediately sent for the halutzim in Sweden.[90] The demand for aliyah-certificates was a constant feature in the correspondence with the Zionist institutions in Palestine. The He-Halutz asked for more certificates only a few days after the arrival of the first transport of survivors: "Hundreds Polish women Zionists arrived arrived [sic] Sweden last days mostly pioneers Please inform Histadrut stop Immediate immigration Palestine needed confirm cable Hechaluz Wellish."[91]

As in the autumn of 1943 when the arrival of Danish halutzim was used as an argument to get more certificates, the telegram emphasizes that this is not only for survivors in need of aid but also for Zionist pioneers whose arrival will benefit the country. However, in a letter from autumn 1945, Wellisch admits that few of the new members are experienced Zionists and that few had been on hachsharah before being deported to the concentration camps. He asks the leadership in Palestine for advice on how to distribute certificates for He-Halutz in Sweden.

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[88] *Hapoel* 2, no. 9 (September, 1946), 3-6, File S6/2107, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem; Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 141.

[89] *Hapoel* 2, no. 9 (September, 1946), 6, File S6/2107, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

[90] Hechaluz i Sverige letter to Pinhas Lubianiker, Histadrut September 14, 1945, File S6/2107, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

[91] Hechaluz i Sverige, Telegram to Jewish Agency, Jerusalem, May 5, 1945, File S25/5230, Central Zionist Archives Jerusalem.

Wellish writes that, on the one hand, there is a large group of experienced halutzim who have been on hachsharah for many years, some of them up to 14 years. They have been waiting for aliyah for countless years, are trained workers, and would be a great asset to the country. On the other hand, Wellisch points out that the situation for the new refugees (the survivors) is very hard, and many of them long to settle in Palestine as soon as possible, even though they are not experienced Zionists.[92]

Chaim Barlas from the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department in Jerusalem visited Sweden at the end of 1945. He went to see the camps and homes where the survivors lived. Barlas also met with representatives of He-Halutz. Shalmon writes that despite Barlas' visit, few aliyah-certificates were assigned for Sweden. Instead, most of the certificates were distributed to survivors living in more difficult conditions in DP-camps in Germany, Austria, or Italy. Shalmon writes in his history of the He-Halutz that there was an understanding within the movement in Sweden that survivors in Central Europe lived in worse conditions compared to the survivors who had arrived in Sweden. Nevertheless, he stresses that conditions in Sweden, especially for the women, were difficult. They had, according to Shalmon, both mental and spiritual problems that could not heal or fully recover in a place where they did not understand the local language. The women also constantly felt anxiety about the threat of being repatriated to their so-called home countries. As pointed out in the introduction of this article, Peter Gatrell stresses the importance of not getting caught up in the different legal definitions and categorizations of "refugees" at different times and in different contexts when writing the history of refugees. However, as the example of the anxious women shows, categorizations do matter and affect people's experiences, lives and histories. The survivors that arrived in Sweden via two "rescue and relief" operations in 1945—the Red Cross "White Buses" in the spring and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) "White Boats" in the summer of 1945—were not categorized as refugees by the Swedish state, but as "repatriandi." The category repatriandi meant that the Swedish state had no other plans for the survivors other than their return to their home countries as soon as

[92] Hechaluz i Sverige letter to Jewish Agency's Immigration Department (Elijahu Dobkin) September 9, 1945, File S6/2107, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

they were rehabilitated back to a normal life.[93] Shalmon writes in his manuscript that the longstanding He-Halutz members were fully aware that the survivors were anxious about their status as repatriandi and that they could not live a so-called normal life in Sweden. Also, even if they could stay in Sweden, it would be hard for them to find a Jewish man to marry or to live a Jewish life in Sweden.[94] Also, when corresponding with the Zionist institutions in Palestine/Israel, the leadership of the He-Halutz in Sweden did not present the situation as solely a problem for the women. It was rather communicated as a problem for the Zionist movement itself if it lost these women members, either through marriage to non-Jewish men or by choosing to move to another country, such as the United States.[95] Therefore, aliyah was an urgent solution.

Similar statements can be found in a report from the end of 1947 by Rudolf H. Melitz.[96] He claims in the report that the remaining members of He-Halutz (many of them survivors and women) are displeased with life in Sweden, even though the overall conditions are generally good. The reasons for their dissatisfaction are that there is no Jewish social life or any cultural activities in Sweden. Melitz describes Swedish Jews as fully assimilated and belonging to the wealthier classes and therefore unwilling to socialize with the Jewish refugees. Consequently, the refugees were completely at the mercy of themselves, according to Melitz. Even non-Jewish Swedes were reluctant to socialize with foreigners, which is explained in the report by the common understanding that Swedes generally suffer from a certain shyness. A few Swedish men are reported to have married "refugee girls" [survivors], but these marriages are exceptions. Furthermore, Melitz writes about the lack of housing in the larger cities and the fact that the girls have not learned Swedish because they have always been prepared

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[93] Olsson, *På tröskeln till folkhemmet*, 149-151.

[94] Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 177.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Rudolf Melitz should have been familiar with the situation in Sweden. In 1945, he organized the establishment of 13 schools for over 800 children rescued to Sweden in 1945. See *Judisk Krönika* 3 (1948), 38. Smedsbo school, that is mentioned in the introduction to this article, where Eli Getreu from the He-Halutz worked between 1946 and1948, was one of these schools. See also Beth Cohen, "Saving Jewish Girls: A Case Study in Lidingö, Sweden" in *Agency and the Holocaust: Essays in Honor of Debórah Dwork*, eds. Thomas Kühne and Mary Jane Rein (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 31-47; Chana (Igell) Mantel, *Lidingo: Memories of the small Swedish haven which 200 girls called "home" after the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Machon Yachdav, 1998).

to leave Sweden shortly, which is why many of them are unemployed or work in poorly paid jobs where no knowledge of the Swedish language is needed. The report therefore expresses an understanding that, despite the seemingly relatively good overall conditions, especially compared to those in the DP-camps in Europe, these women must be allowed to make aliyah soon.[97]

Shalmon writes that when the State of Israel was proclaimed in 1948, 11 ships from Scandinavia were immediately organized. These were funded by two Jewish humanitarian organizations based in the United States, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). He does not specify exactly how many people were involved but does state that about 50% of those who left on these ships to make aliyah were members of the He-Halutz.[98] Shalmon also gives figures of how many of those who had come to Sweden through He-Halutz, or who had become members after their arrival in Sweden, went on to make aliyah. According to him, between 1933 and 1941 a total of 190 adults (and 10 children) made aliyah, and another 85 adults (and 20 children) made aliyah between 1945 and 1949. Thus, a total of 275 of the "old" halutzim (490 had been given entrance to Sweden through the halutz-quota) made aliyah. Others emigrated to other countries (65 people), three people had died when Shalmon wrote his history (1949), and 190 chose to stay in Sweden. Of the 320 halutzim who fled to Sweden from Denmark and the 45 halutzim who had been in Denmark but were deported to Theresienstadt and were freed in 1945, approximately 150 people made aliyah, while the rest chose to return to Denmark or stayed in Sweden.[99] Of the approximately 4,000 people who chose to join He-Halutz or Bachad after coming to Sweden as camp survivors, an estimated 2,000 had made aliyah in 1949, according to Shalmon. Therefore, when Shalmon wrote his history, according to him, about 2,400 people who had been members of He-Halutz in Sweden had made aliyah. In the end, the knowledge that 275 members (more than half) of the old halutzim (i.e., those who belonged to the group of 490 people admitted through the halutz-quota between 1933 and 1941) did make aliyah indicates that

97 Rudolf E. Melitz, Report on Sweden, December 12, 1947, File S32/943, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

98 Shalmon, "Die Schwedische Hachscharah 1933–1948," 177.

99 Ibid., 186.

the movement in Sweden never gave up its ideological goals but remained a pioneering and teaching movement throughout the war.

It is hard to say anything precise or specific about the extent to which the encounter and the confrontation with mass extermination and camp survivors' experiences shaped the collective consciousness of the "old" members of He-Halutz. The leadership of the movement were all "old" halutzim and they seldom reflect or narrate about the survivors as survivors, but rather as potential pioneers for the Jewish homeland. In the sources from the movement in Sweden the survivors from the camps or the refugees from Denmark are seldom heard. The story of the He-Halutz in Sweden is rather told as a story about young Jewish people who happened to come to Sweden and lived there, isolated from the events of the world and those of rest of the Jewish people for many years.

Concluding Remarks

By reading the sources from the movement it is hard to conclude when He-Halutz members become aware of the Holocaust and what effect did it have on their own identity. In addition to Shalmon's history, much of the archived materials from the hachsharah and the He-Halutz in Sweden referred to in this text—such as for example the correspondence with various Zionist institutions, meeting protocols, reports and journals—contains discussions on Zionist ideology and (the successful) organization of the movement's activities. The main theme is the Zionist project, not the situation or the war in Europe, which is why the young people at the time are mainly described or positioned as strong and convinced pioneers on their way to the Jewish homeland in Palestine. Very little in this material discusses the threatening situation in Europe or their background in and flight from Germany. Their situation and identity are described through the whole period (1933-1948) as being in exile from the Jewish homeland, not as refugees from their countries of birth, on their run from the Nazi persecutors. The goal for the movement and for its individual members is described as making aliyah and live their future life as halutzim in a kibbutz in the Jewish homeland. The interviews have other recurrent themes, such as, for example, childhood

memories of Germany, the refugee experience, and the loss of parents and other loved ones during the Holocaust:

> I was very young and naïve. I missed my mother. I fell asleep every night on my boyfriend's arm, but it wasn't romantic. I cried and said, "I want my mom. I want my mom." He comforted me. We got married after the war. My mother was murdered in Auschwitz.[100]

The interviews with former halutzim thus make it possible to problematize the "success stories" and the self-image of He-Halutz and the collective halutz identity that emerges from the documents and writings produced within the movement in the 1930s and 1940s. During my conversations with the former halutzim it also became quite clear that they had widely differing perceptions of not only the movement and their role in it, but also of Zionism, Swedish society, the Swedish Jews, and their future life in Palestine/Israel or Sweden. Bearing in mind that the people I interviewed knew that I wanted to meet them to talk about their time in the He-Halutz, relatively few of them, whether interviewed in Sweden or in Israel, relayed their experiences and their lives from this perspective.[101]

Without having to be asked, most of them described their first workplace in Sweden. The first things many of the interviewees called to mind about life in the Swedish countryside in the 1930s and 1940s was the hard, toilsome work in the fields and in the cowsheds, the meager accommodation, and the language problems. Few said anything (at least not until I asked) about Hebrew language tuition, Zionist ideology, meetings, seminars, elections to the leadership of the movement, discussions, and ideological based conflicts within the movement. It is thus not the Zionist identity or the ideological discussions that primarily feature in the former halutzims' stories of life in exile in rural Sweden but rather the material reality and the refugee experience. By placing these young people at the heart of history writing and exploring their perspectives, actions, and experiences, the history of the He-Halutz in Sweden becomes richer, more nuanced, and more multi-faceted. The analysis of various documents and writings from the movement back in the 1930s and 1940s and the stories of the interviewees in the

[100] Interview with Yael Braun, January 17, 2001, interviewed by Malin Thor (Tureby).

[101] Thor, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum*, 407-421.

late 1990s and early 2000s illuminate separate, albeit not totally different, versions of the history of the hachsharah and the He-Halutz and their significance for the members in Sweden.[102] In addition, both the documents from the movement that are archived in various archives in Israel and the interviews with the former halutzim demonstrate that they were not only important actors within the framework of the Zionist movement, but also active agents in receiving and helping refugees/halutzim and survivors in Sweden, in both 1943 and 1945. The line between "the one being helped" and "those who help" does not always coincide with who is defined as a refugee by states, other actors or the benefactor of refugees. The history of the hachsharah and the He-Halutz in Sweden serves as an illustrative example of how people who are defined as refugees can be central actors in historical processes, not solely as refugees, but also, at the same time, as refugee helpers, and political subjects with agency. Further, the history of He-Halutz is not *one* story, but the history of several individuals' different experiences, recountings, and writings. The history of the He-Halutz in Sweden and its members is also a part of Holocaust history. The history of the He-Halutz in Sweden depicted here is mainly the history of the Jewish young people who managed to get to Sweden before 1941. It is their voices, perspectives, and experiences—from meeting the refugees/halutzim from Denmark in 1943 and the survivors in 1945—that are mainly described in the sources. It is important to acknowledge that their historical experiences are both quite different from other Jewish refugees/survivors during the same period, but also quite similar. Most importantly their historical experiences are related to the developments during the Holocaust and other Jewish refuges/survivors experiences. Shalmon argues that they lived in Sweden "isolated from the events of the world and the Jewish people for many years." Certainly, they lived quite isolated in a country that was never occupied by the Nazis and they had very few contacts with Swedish Jews. But they were never completely isolated, as Shalmon writes, they were in constant contact with halutzim in other countries and with the Zionist institutions in the Yishuv. Further, the movement and its members in Sweden were important actors in the reception of the Danish Jews in 1943 and of the survivors from the liberated camps in Europe in 1945. The reception and the integration of these two groups not only

[102] Thor, *Hechaluz - en rörelse i tid och rum*, 407-421.

increased the membership of the movement, but also made it into a movement with members with diverse backgrounds and experiences before and during the Holocaust. Finally, although the "old" halutzim were not persecuted again after their arrival in Sweden, they also shared the experience of persecution, of leaving their country of birth, family and friends behind, the experience of anxiety for their own and others safety during the war, and finally sharing the experience of losing the majority of their family, friends and loved ones in the Holocaust. In that way their experiences can be compared to the experiences of other Jewish refugees and survivors during the same period.

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