

Facing the Adult: Holocaust child-survivors and their Individual Migration Strategies.

Antoine BURGARD

Ph.D candidate at Université Lumière Lyon 2 / Université du Québec à Montréal

Between April 1947 and March 1952, 1121 Jewish Holocaust child-survivors were allowed to migrate to Canada as part of a refugee project sponsored by the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), at this time the main organization of the Canadian Jewry. As symbols of both Nazi persecution and post-war reconstruction, Jewish orphans and abandoned children were at the center of an intense competition between Zionist, nationalist, and internationalist agendas; immigration projects, local Jewish communities, and nation-states.

Recent historiography has explored how, during the immediate post-World War II era, adults defined the young survivors' "best interests" (Zahra 2011, Doron 2015). These works tend to ignore the children's agency and their ability to adapt their attitude and discourse – the way they represented themselves – based on how they perceived the adults' expectations and requirements. By focusing on the International Refugee Organization (IRO) casefiles of several orphans that migrated to Canada, this paper aims to highlight how those children and teenagers developed individual migration micro-strategies and managed to take over the categories imposed by the administration. Those cases reveal individuals that were fully active in their migration as well as the storytelling of their wartime experience.

Antoine Burgard is currently finishing his Ph.D. at Université Lumière Lyon 2 (France) and Université du Québec à Montréal (Canada). He is the co-editor of the last issue of *Canadian Jewish Studies/ Études Juives Canadiennes*, titled "None Is Too Many and Beyond: New Research on Canada and the Jews During the 1930-1940s". This paper is both part of his PhD dissertation as well as a postdoctoral research that he will start this fall at the Humanitarianism and Conflict Resolution Institute and the Centre for Jewish Studies of the University of Manchester.