

The Tiyul: Rescuing Jews by Smuggling across the Hungarian-Romanian Border

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Introduction

From March to August 1944, between 5,000 and 7,000 Jews crossed the border between Hungary and Romania, fleeing persecution during the Holocaust. This included an organized rescue operation led by the Zionist youth movements – the ‘Halutz resistance’ – which became known as the Hungarian-Romanian ‘Tiyul’, the Hebrew word for ‘excursion’.¹ Officially, this Tiyul was directed by Joel Brand, a member of the Budapest Relief and Rescue Committee who had previously worked on smuggling Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia and Poland into Hungary.² While Brand’s contribution was important, the Tiyul was truly made possible by rank-and-file members of the youth movements, many of them in their late teens and early twenties. These young people created informal networks that formed the backbone of the operation. They drew on their own past experiences, skills and acquaintances to care for refugees, obtain and forge ‘aryan’ documents, courier information and documents around the country, and smuggle people across the border into Romania and further afield.

This chapter will outline how the Tiyul was organized and explore what it meant for how resistance and rescue operated in central/south-eastern Europe. Drawing on the experiences of fourteen youth movement members, it will chart how their lives, the movements they were a part of, and the activities they did were intertwined with the work of the Tiyul. Through them, narratives on resistance, ideology and identity combine, as their personal histories weave in and out of the Tiyul story. In so doing, it becomes possible to see how the Tiyul grew organically from the wider resistance network and Zionist community, in Hungary, Romania, and internationally. This is, therefore, at its core, a transnational history. Tracing the trajectories of individuals from across Europe who were involved in the Tiyul develops the perception proposed by Robert Gildea

¹ Asher Cohen, *The Halutz Resistance in Hungary, 1942-1944*, Carl Alpert (trans.), (New York, NY, 1986), 99.

² Hatzala work in Hungary: Preliminary Report by Joel Brand, undated, Yad Vashem Archives (henceforth YVA) P.32/3, pp. 128-137, p. 129.

and Ismee Tames of Europe as an “open” or interconnected space’.³ It was precisely these connections across borders – both physical and ideological – that enabled the Tiylul to be a success, combining people and ideas from Hungary, Romania, and beyond.

Resistance in Hungary was based largely on providing relief and assistance, as the integrated nature of Hungarian Jewry, the mass complicity with the Holocaust of the non-Jewish population, and large numbers of Jewish refugees who needed care created conditions adverse to armed resistance. Relief efforts included providing support to refugees, forging and couriering documents, and smuggling people across international borders. These efforts were led by the Budapest Relief and Rescue Committee, a group of predominantly Zionist Jews who coordinated relief activities and were funded through a delegation in Istanbul.⁴ In addition, Zionist youth movements provided manpower for these activities as well as running their own operations. Deeply committed to their own ideologies, the youth movements often disagreed with the established Jewish leadership – as well as between themselves – on how to respond to persecution.⁵ The Tiylul is a powerful example of a rescue operation that transcended these different groups, with ideologically diverse movements working towards a common goal in similar ways, although often not together.

In Romania, resistance was also focused on relief, refugee assistance, and aid. While the situation for Jews in Hungary radicalized as the war progressed, the almost opposite trajectory was true for Romania, where antisemitic persecution and the expropriation of Jewish wealth and property peaked earlier in the war.⁶ After the establishment of the National Legionary State led by General Ion Antonescu in late 1940, for example, a deadly pogrom took place in the capital Bucharest.⁷ The experience of persecution in Romania also varied geographically, with Jews in territories such as Bessarabia and Bukovina which Romania reclaimed during the war facing the

³ Robert Gildea and Ismee Tames, *Fighters across Frontiers : Transnational Resistance in Europe, 1936-48* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 240.

⁴ The Liaison office in Istanbul. Hungary – Incoming Letters, 31st July 1944, Ghetto Fighters’ House Archive (henceforth GFHA)/26218, 4.

⁵ Attila Novák, ‘Ellenállás vagy Önmentés? Adalékok az 1944-es Magyarországi Cionista Ellenállás Problémájához’ [Resistance or Self Rescue? Additives to the Problem of Hungarian Zionist Resistance in 1944], *Századok* 141.1 (2007), 144.

⁶ Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Rumania*, 2nd Ed. (Oxford: Center for Romanian Studies, 2001).

⁷ Moshe Carmilly, *A Zsidóság Története Erdélyben, 1623-1944 [A History of the Jews in Transylvania, 1623-1944]* (Budapest: MTA Judaisztikai Kutatócsoport, 1995), 293.

threat of death more often than in the remainder of the country.⁸ Indeed, unlike in Hungary, Jews in the majority of Romania did not face deportation into the concentration camp system. As a result, by 1944 many of the pre-war relief and aid structures remained or had been replaced by similar groups. These included the Zionist Cluj-Kolozsvár Rescue Committee for Refugees and the Union of Neolog Jewish Communities in Transylvania and Bánát. As in Hungary, members of the Zionist youth movements – with their headquarters in the Romanian town of Timișoara – worked alongside other Zionist organisations to support refugees, sending one of their leaders to Turda to help coordinate relief efforts.⁹

One of the most significant of the youth groups that took part in the Tiyul was *Hanoar Hatzioni*. Established in 1932, *Hanoar Hatzioni* was a moderate group of non-Socialist general Zionists, who rejected radical ideologies and promoted diversity in Judaism and Zionism.¹⁰ In his overview of the *HeHalutz* underground in Hungary, Israeli historian Asher Cohen cited *Hanoar Hatzioni* as the only Zionist youth group which succeeded in maintaining smuggling operations throughout the Tiyul, while others had to establish multiple routes.¹¹ Indeed, *Hanoar Hatzioni* members were heavily involved in the Tiyul. This chapter will explore the lives of six of their members: Eichler Hava, Tzipora Mann, Yitzhak Braun, Zelig Boyuk, Yehuda Levi, and Shulamit Meir. Together, they were involved in all elements of the underground, from helping refugees, obtaining ‘aryan’ documents, distributing forged papers, and smuggling people across the border to Romania.

Another active youth movement was *Hashomer Hatzair*, a group that originated in the Polish province of Galicia in the years preceding the First World War and which quickly spread across Europe. A Marxist-Zionist youth movement, it merged scouting and educational groups, adopting the name *Hashomer Hatzair*, Hebrew for ‘young watchman’. Its first publication was in Vienna in 1917, where it issued a guide for groups, stressing the importance of *Aliyah* – emigration to the British mandate of Palestine.¹² During the Holocaust, *Hashomer Hatzair* members took part

⁸ Ronit Fischer, ‘Transnistria: The Holocaust in Romania’, Jonathan C. Friedman (ed.), *The Routledge History of the Holocaust*, (London: Routledge, 2011), 277-9.

⁹ Moshe Carmilly, *The Road to Life: The Rescue operation of Jewish Refugees on the Hungarian-Romanian border in Transylvania, 1936-1944* (New York: Shengold, 1994), 108.

¹⁰ Avinoam J. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2009), 469.

¹¹ Asher Cohen, ‘He-Halutz Underground in Hungary, March-August 1944 (Based on Testimony of Survivors)’, *Yad Vashem Studies* 14 (1981), 255.

¹² Elkana Margalit, ‘Social and Intellectual Origins of the Hashomer Hatzair Youth Movement, 1913-20,’ *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, no. 2 (1969): 38.

in resistance activities across Europe including the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.¹³ In this chapter, the histories of three of its members – Rózsa Nusi, Tamar Benshalom, and Efraim Agmon – attest to its contribution to the Tiyul: forging documents, arranging groups of people, and accompanying them across the border.

Finally, another three youth movements involved in the Tiyul were *Maccabi-Hatzair*, *Dror*, and *Bnei Akiva*. *Maccabi-Hatzair* grew out of the wider *Maccabi* tradition that integrated sporting with the construction of Zionist identity.¹⁴ Established in 1929, it promoted Zionism, physical education, leadership, and good citizenship. One of its members', Hanna Atsmon's, history is explored in this chapter, outlining how she helped people cross the border in the south-eastern city of Nagyvárad (Oradea). *Dror* was a more general Socialist-Zionist youth movement that, like *Hashomer Hatzair*, followed the scouting tradition and had groups across Europe. In the interwar period it had been a part of the *HeHalutz* organisation, a group of Zionist youth movements which trained their members for Aliyah.¹⁵ Three of its members' experiences are recounted in this chapter. Tzvi Goldfarb and Józef Gárdos, who were active as emissaries for the movement in provincial towns, distributed forged documents and established safe houses on the route for those being smuggled into Romania. Lea Shahr, born in Romania herself, helped receive refugees when they arrived in her town and provided them with the documents they needed to travel further. The final group, *Bnei Akiva*, founded in 1919 in Jerusalem, was a religious-Zionist youth movement with branches around the world. From this group, Menahem Yakobi's experience of moving to Romania to meet and care for those smuggled across the border will help show how the movement supported the Tiyul.

Resistance in Hungary

On 19th March 1944, German troops crossed the border into Hungary and occupied the country. Thus began a new stage in the lives of Hungarians and, specifically, Jews living in Hungary and the territories it controlled. Soon after the occupation, antisemitic restrictions were

¹³ Raya Cohen, "'Against the Current': Hashomer Hatzair in the Warsaw Ghetto', *Jewish Social Studies* 7.1 (Autumn, 2000), 63-80.

¹⁴ Ofer Ashkenazi, 'German Jewish Athletes and the Formation of Zionist (Trans-)National Culture', *Jewish Social Studies* 17.3 (2011), 124.

¹⁵ A. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland*, 469.

introduced, forcing most Jews to wear an identifying mark (the yellow star) and limiting their freedoms.¹⁶ Over the following months, with the complicity and often active participation of local Hungarians, Jews were forced from their homes, concentrated into ghettos, and stripped of their belongings and dignity. Before long, they were deported on trains, the majority to their deaths in the extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. For Jews in the contested territory of Transylvania, Romanian until the Second Vienna Award of 1940, the German occupation of Hungary exposed them to the same dangers as other Jews in Hungary, bringing German troops into land claimed by Romania. Under German and Hungarian control, the fates of Jews in former Romanian territories thus became intertwined with the work of Hungarian resistance and rescue structures.¹⁷

The speed of the ghettoization and deportation process marks Hungary out among European countries in the history of the Holocaust and helps explain the types of Jewish responses that happened during this period. Deeply assimilated into Hungarian culture and society, Hungarian Jews on the whole viewed themselves as deeply connected to their country. In fact, despite growing antisemitic legislation and rank-and-file discourse in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, life for Jews in Hungary was comparatively good compared to other countries, where by 1944 large numbers of Jews had already been killed. This led to an influx of Jewish refugees from countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia to Hungary during the war. As one refugee put it, Hungary was ‘the only place you could be a Jew and stay alive’.¹⁸ Because of this, as well as the general complicity of non-Jewish Hungarians, Jewish responses to persecution centred around relief, assistance and, when the deportations started, hiding and smuggling. Although some Communists and youth groups did attempt armed resistance, this was on a small scale and often ended with death. A member of the Communist party and leader of the youth section of the Anti-Fascist People’s Front, Endre Ságvári, presents a pertinent example of this. When cornered by police in Budapest in July 1944, he was involved in a gun fight during which he was fatally wounded.¹⁹ Instead of pursuing such fatal armed resistance, the Jews of Hungary generally focused on relief and rescue. These emerged as the most effective means of resisting persecution and largely characterised Hungarian Jewry throughout the war.²⁰

¹⁶ The Situation of the Hungarian Jewry, Haifa 13th August 1944, YVA P.32/3, pp. 53-71, pp. 62-7.

¹⁷ M. Carmilly, *A Zsidóság Története Erdélyben*, 290.

¹⁸ Vera Goodwin, quoted in Alex Kershaw, *To Save A People*, (London, 2011), 12.

¹⁹ Stamps depicting resistance, liberation and POWs, 1858/1, Wiener Library, London, 51-52.

²⁰ Robert Rozett, ‘Jewish and Hungarian Armed Resistance in Hungary’, *Yad Vashem Studies* 19 (1988), 287.

There was not, however, agreement within the Jewish community on how to achieve this, with many different – and sometimes even opposing – arguments.²¹ Perhaps the most controversial of these proposals was the attempt by Rezső Kasztner to negotiate with the head of the SS in Hungary, Adolf Eichmann. Kasztner, born in 1906 in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), initially worked for the Jewish Agency in Bucharest, before returning to his hometown where he worked for the newspaper *Új Kelet* [New East] and edited several Zionist works in Romania.²² During the 1930s, his wife, Elizabeth Kasztner, supported the Romanian Cluj-Kolozsvár Rescue Committee for Refugees, along with other employees of *Új Kelet* including Ernő Marton, Ernő Hótszegi, and Danzig Hillél.²³ Kasztner then moved to Budapest to work for the Palestine Association before being conscripted into a forced labour battalion during the war. After the German occupation, Kasztner became a key member of the Jewish Relief and Rescue Committee in Budapest, where he famously arranged a transport of 1,684 Jews sent to safety in Switzerland via the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in exchange for a ransom after negotiations with Eichmann.²⁴ Deeply contentious both at the time and in later years, Kasztner was accused of collaboration and tried in Israel before being killed in 1960.

As well as the Kasztner mission, several other Jewish-led initiatives existed. Ottó Komoly, for example, was the President of the Hungarian Zionist Association and director of Department A of the International Committee for the Red Cross in Hungary.²⁵ In these roles, Komoly worked with international institutions and others in Budapest to support refugees and run children's homes. Described as the 'linchpin in the Budapest rescue operations', Komoly's network was wide ranging and his influence notable.²⁶ On any one day, his diaries tell of a busy schedule of meetings with individuals like Kasztner, the Swiss delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross Frederick Born, Albert Bereczky from the Calvinist Church, and major figures in the Hungarian

²¹ Ávihu Ronén, *Harc az Életért: Cionista Ellenállás Budapesten – 1944* (Budapest: Belvárosi Könyvkiadó, 1998), p. 56.

²² Szabolcs Szita, *Trading in Lives?: Operations of the Jewish Relief and Rescue Committee in Budapest, 1944-1945*, (trans.) Lamber Sean (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005), 4.

²³ M. Carmilly, *A Zsidóság Története Erdélyben*, 291.

²⁴ Anna Porter, *Kasztner's Train: The True Story of an Unknown Hero of the Holocaust*, (London: Constable, 2008), 249.

²⁵ Bela Vago, 'Budapest Jewry in the Summer of 1944 – Ottó Komoly's Diaries', *Yad Vashem Studies* 8 (1970), 83.

²⁶ Robert Rozett, 'International Intervention: The Role of Diplomats in Attempts to rescue Jews in Hungary', Randolph L. Braham & Scott Miller (eds.), *The Nazis' Last Victims: The Holocaust in Hungary*, (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 142.

government.²⁷ Both Kasztner and Komoly's work was also interconnected with that of the Zionist youth movements responsible for the Tiylul. The youth movements constituted a major part in the landscape of rescue in Hungary, particularly in Budapest.²⁸ Working alongside international figures like Swiss consul Carl Lutz and Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, youth movements helped administer houses protected by diplomats and distribute protective passes. They also ran their own independent activities, forging documents, helping people go into hiding, and sometimes even preparing for a potential armed conflict.

In fact, the forging of 'aryan' documents was a key part of rescue efforts in Hungary, but was marred with controversy among different members of the Hungarian Jewish community. Whereas figures like Komoly and his colleague Moshe Krausz, Secretary of the Palestine Office, insisted on only dealing with original, authentic documents, many in the Zionist youth movements threw themselves into forging, creating duplicates so that more people than had been negotiated for could be protected. One member of the Marxist-Zionist *Hashomer Hatzair* youth movement, Rafi Benshalom, lamented in his post-war memoir the frustration he felt at Krausz's insistence on not dealing with forged papers, believing that many more could be saved by embracing forging.²⁹ The differences in policy between Krausz and Benshalom, reflective of a broader trend in the Hungarian Jewish community, supports the wide body of literature which proposed that 'ideological conflicts' hampered cooperation between 'hostile' and 'rival' groups in Hungary.³⁰ This view, however, is too simplistic. While there certainly were differences, members of different movements did cooperate, their respective ideologies not stopping them from working and even sometimes living side by side. The Tiylul is a prime example of this. Not only did the smuggling operation rely on forged documents, the individuals involved in it came from many different Zionist youth movements, putting aside their ideological differences to work towards a common

²⁷ 'October 10th 1944', Excerpts from Ottó Komoly's 1944 work appointment book, YVA P.31/45, 25.

²⁸ A. Cohen, *The Halutz Resistance in Hungary*, 63.

²⁹ Rafi Benshalom, *We Struggled for Life: The Hungarian Zionist Youth Resistance During the Nazi Era*, (Jerusalem, 2001), 85.

³⁰ For examples of this thesis, see: Haim Genizi & Naomi Blank, 'The Rescue Efforts of Bnei Akiva in Hungary during the Holocaust', *Vad Vashem Studies* XXIII, (Jerusalem, 1993), 175; Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, (London, 1963), 179; A. Cohen, *The Halutz Resistance in Hungary*, 186; *Resistance Movements in Occupied and Satellite Europe: No. 3: Hungary*, (London, 1943), Wiener Library, London, F6d(1) 010; Theo Tschuy, *Dangerous Diplomacy: The Story of Carl Lutz, Rescuer of 62,000 Hungarian Jews*, (Cambridge, 2000), 103; David Kransler, *Thy Brother's Blood: The Orthodox Jewish Response During the Holocaust*, (New York, NY, 1987), 63; Asher Cohen, 'The Rescue Operations of Zionist Youth Movements' in Asher Cohen & Yehoyakim Cochavi (eds.), *Zionist Youth Movements During the Shoah*, (New York, NY, 1995), 132.

aim. Furthermore, the Tiyul transcended the boundary – both physical and ideological – between Hungarian and Romania, with Jews from conflicting national communities working together. As youth movements worked to establish a network of safe houses, forgers, and transportation, they did so within this mosaic of ideologies.

One of the major figures in the Hungarian Jewish youth underground was David Gur. Born as Endre Grósz in 1926 in Okány, south-eastern Hungary, Gur joined *Hashomer Hatzair* in Budapest as a teenager.³¹ After the German occupation, he joined and later led an underground workshop forging ‘aryan’ documents. These were distributed across all the youth movements, the Zionist organisation, as well as non-Jewish groups, irrespective of ideology.³² In his position, Gur worked closely with many different members of the underground, including those involved in the Tiyul. In December 1944, he was arrested along with other forgers and taken to a military prison in Budapest, narrowly avoiding execution by being rescued and taken to the Swiss consulate. After the war, Gur became a member of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership. When the Hungarian Communist regime banned the Zionist movement in 1949, he oversaw an escape operation named the ‘Bricha’, smuggling members of the youth movements through Czechoslovakia and Austria to Israel. There, he wrote widely about the history of the Zionist youth movements in Hungary. His book, *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, brought together the biographies of individuals involved in the movements and forms the backbone of this chapter.

Reflecting on his experience in the Jewish underground in Hungary, Gur told of how the Tiyul was ‘complicated and dangerous, it required perfect organization’.³³ Indeed, planning the Tiyul was a long process with multiple moving parts. This included providing assistance to refugees from outside Hungary, obtaining authentic documents from which to produce forgeries, arranging and distributing forged documents to Jews in need across the country, organizing and accompanying groups of Jews across the borders, looking after them when they arrived in Romania, and then facilitating onward travel to the British mandate of Palestine. As the biographies Gur collected show, different members of the Zionist youth movements were

³¹ Portrait of Endre Grosz (later David Gur), a member of the Hungarian Zionist youth resistance organization, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive (henceforth USHMMMA)/32767.

³² ‘Torch lighters: David Gur’, *Yad Vashem*, www.yadvashem.org, last accessed 17th June 2021.

³³ David Gur, *A Vihar Közepén: A Cionista Ifjúsági Mozgalmak Földalatti Ellenállása Magyarországon, a Német Megszállás Idején, [In the Center of the Storm: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary During the German Occupation]* (Budapest, 2004), 33.

responsible for their own parts of this process, each contributing their own piece. In this way, individual Jews entered and exited the Tiyul story at different points. Simultaneously, the Tiyul wove its way through the lives of people involved in the wider Zionist youth underground. These two narratives – the individual and the institutional – are, therefore, deeply interconnected. As such, researching the Tiyul provides a window not only onto the smuggling of people across borders but, also, broader Zionist responses to the Holocaust in Hungary, Romania, and beyond.

The Tiyul

As with most Jewish responses to the Holocaust in Hungary, the Tiyul started with Jews providing assistance and support. Eichler Hava, for example, born in Budapest in 1923, joined the moderate *Hanoar Hatzioni* youth movement aged fifteen. This movement was critical of the radical viewpoints of both Fascist and revolutionary Marxist ideologies and promoted a diverse understanding of Judaism and Zionism. When large numbers of Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia and Poland arrived in Hungary in 1942-3, Hava and her parents opened their home to them, providing them with sanctuary and food.³⁴ Looking after these refugees, Hava and other youth movement members spoke to them about their experiences, hearing harrowing stories of persecution and violence. This contrasted sharply with the relatively safe situation in Hungary and few Hungarian Jews imagined that they could fall victim too.³⁵ Only a few years later, however, Hava began distributing forged documents across provincial towns in Hungary so that people could go into hiding or attempt the Tiyul, as Jews in Hungary faced the threat of deportation. Although the Tiyul did not exist as a rescue operation when Hava first started helping refugees in 1942, her experiences show how *Hanoar Hatzioni* members began to come together for assistance and support. For the individual, the work people like Hava did in supporting refugees thus formed an unconscious preparation for later rescue work. Meanwhile, on an institutional level, early refugee support work shows the larger narrative of relief and rescue in Hungary. Helping refugees was the first step towards the Tiyul and formed a necessary starting point for foreign Jews in Hungary. With the aid of local Hungarians like Hava, Polish and Czechoslovakian Jews fleeing persecution

³⁴ David Gur, 'Dr. Eichler Hava', *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 76.

³⁵ Eichler Hava, *A Halál Árnyékában: A Nagy Megpróbáltatások Kora*, [*In the shadow of death: A time of great affliction*], (Kibbutz Tel Yitzhak, 1991), 13.

were able to enter an underground system that would eventually help them escape further. Indeed, historian of Hashomer Hatzair Ávihu Ronén argued convincingly that a broader Europe-wide Tiyul of youth movement members had taken place ‘continuously, with smaller and bigger interruptions, since the outbreak of the war’.³⁶ In so doing, Zionist youth group members constructed a transnational network of people that connected eastern-, central-, and south-eastern-Europe, something that would later be essential for the Hungarian-Romanian Tiyul.

In Romania, too, members of the Jewish community began relief and refugee assistance work as early as the 1930s. In Northern Transylvania – a Romanian territory in the 1930s, later annexed to Hungary as part of the Second Vienna Award in 1940 – the Union of Neolog Jewish Communities in Transylvania and Bánát first established an aid fund in 1934, before agreeing in 1937 that 5% of the annual taxes on the Neolog Jewish community would be used for refugee aid.³⁷ Concurrently, in 1936, the Cluj-Kolozsvár Rescue Committee for Refugees was established. This committee bribed police to direct Jewish refugees to the local Rabbi, where they gave them food and clothing, then arranged their travel to Bucharest and, from there, to a Romanian port for onward travel to Palestine by boat. Members of the Rescue Committee included Elizabeth Kasztner, wife of Rezső Kasztner, who would later play a major role in the Hungarian rescue efforts. These early efforts at refugee aid and assistance laid the groundwork for operations like the Tiyul and show a tradition of Jewish refugee migration through Romania. Importantly, this work existed both in Zionist elements of the community and the more widespread Neolog denominations. These rescue committees are particularly important for Transylvania, which by the time of the Tiyul was under Hungarian control and marked the border between the two countries.

Trans-European movement through this region thus had earlier roots before 1944. Although the organized element of the Tiyul as a rescue operation smuggling Jews across the border to Romania began only in March 1944, Zionist migration through Transylvania to the British mandate of Palestine had been active before the war too. In fact, in the months immediately before hostilities, Zionists smuggled 3,802 Jews out of Hungary and then in eight shipments across the Black Sea.³⁸ This reduced during the war as it became harder to move people across the continent, with only 958 people smuggled out in seven shipments between March 1941 and

³⁶ Ronén, *Harc az Életért*, p. 83.

³⁷ M. Carmilly, *The Road to Life*, 50-1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

October 1942.³⁹ The German occupation of Hungary reignited these efforts and developed the Tiyul as a rescue operation, smuggling 2,677 people in eight shipments between March and August 1944.⁴⁰ Traveling by boat across the Black Sea carried with it dangers; two of the boats used to smuggle Jews, the MV Struma and MV Mefkure, were sunk with the loss of over 1,000 lives. Furthermore, the numbers of Jews traveling across the Black Sea do not reflect the full picture of Jewish underground emigration through Hungary and Romania. They only show those who boarded boats for the British mandate of Palestine, not those who did not want to board boats nor those who were smuggled across European borders but did not succeed in boarding. As we see from the approximately 7,000 people who crossed the border to Romania in the spring of 1944 – this could sometimes be a sizeable majority. Nonetheless, the figures clearly demonstrate a precedent for the clandestine trans-European movement of people. This provides a further context within which the Tiyul must be viewed, as something that built on pre-existing ideas and practices.

The Tiyul also grew out of earlier traditions within the Zionist underground movement, particularly from Budapest, such as the forging of documents. Despite fierce debates over the use of forged documents in the wider Jewish community, the Zionist youth movements overwhelmingly supported forging.⁴¹ Obtaining authentic documents and forging multiple copies of these thus became a key component of the underground. Such was the case for Tzipora Mann, born Erika Mann in Budapest in 1925. Aged 13, she also joined the moderate *Hanoar Hatzioni* youth movement. Several years later, in 1943, she began supporting the underground efforts of the Zionist youth movements. Her role was to obtain ‘aryan’ documents from government offices which could be used to provide false identities and forged papers, as well as delivering equipment, food and medicine to those in hiding. In 1944, she was arrested while attempting to leave Hungary herself through the Tiyul in the south eastern Hungarian city of Békéscsaba and beaten heavily. Taken to Budapest, she successfully escaped and went to the offices of Department A of the International Red Cross. There, the head of the Hungarian Zionist Association, Ottó Komoly, helped move her into the Glass House, where thousands of Jews lived under the protection of the Swiss embassy.⁴² Despite being cared for there, she died in the winter of 1945 from injuries

³⁹ This figure does not include the 769 people who were onboard the MV Struma, which sank in December 1941.

⁴⁰ This figure does not include the 379 or 416 people who were onboard the MV Mefkure when it was torpedoed in August 1944.

⁴¹ Ronén, *Harc az Életért*, p. 85.

⁴² György Vámos, *1944 Glasshouse: Memorial Room Catalogue* (Budapest: Carl Lutz Foundation, [undated]), 1.

suffered during her imprisonment.⁴³ Mann's experiences show how the Tiyul was connected to and dependent on the wider practice of forging documents. Her work as someone who could obtain 'aryan' documents began before that of the Tiyul, but was an essential part of it, without which the rescue operation would have been impossible. Her history also shows how the different personalities in the underground engaged with each other and how individuals – like Mann – traversed multiple ideological spaces, from the Zionist youth movements to the more general and diverse Glass House. As the Tiyul began to take shape as a rescue operation – with the necessary documents at its core – it remained distinctly rooted in the approach of the Zionist youth movements as a whole.

Once original documents had been found, forging more of them was a process that defined the Zionist youth movements and monopolised much of their time. As Tzvi Goldfarb, a member of the Socialist-Zionist *Dror* youth movement, said in his memoir, 'simultaneously with smuggling across the frontiers, we engaged in the wholesale production of forged papers, an undertaking in which we attained incredible results'.⁴⁴ Indeed, the Zionist youth movements excelled at forging large quantities of documents, with most – if not all – of their members being either involved or benefiting from them. Rózsa Nusi, for instance, was born in Budapest in 1918. While working at the offices of the *Keren Kayemet*, the Jewish National Fund, on Király Utca in Budapest, she met Rafi Benshalom, Dan Zimmerman and Moshe Alpan, members of *Hashomer Hatzair*. After joining the movement, she worked at a factory producing rubber seals, which she stole and gave to Zimmerman so that he could use them to forge documents. Nusi also forged documents herself, changing the dates and other details on certificates so that they could be used by Jews.⁴⁵ Later, she took part in the Tiyul to Romania and emigrated to Israel after the war.⁴⁶ By providing the rubber stamps necessary for forging, Nusi's contribution to the Tiyul was consequential, enabling people to move about freely. The connection between herself and Zimmerman – who was an active forger in the underground – shows how multiple members of the youth movement, each playing their

⁴³ David Gur, 'Mann Tzipora', *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 172.

⁴⁴ Zvi Goldfarb, 'On "Hehalutz Resistance in Hungary"', in Zvi Szner (ed.) *Extermination and Resistance: Historical Records and Source Material*, J. Adler (trans.) (Kibbutz Lohamei Haghettaot: Ghetto Fighters' House, 1958), 163.

⁴⁵ Testimony of Nushi Anna (Rozsa) Marar, born in Budapest, 1918, regarding her experiences in Budapest and her illegal immigration to Eretz Israel, 1944, YVA O.3/10588, 10, 13.

⁴⁶ David Gur, 'Rózsa Nusi', *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 171.

own different role, were required to ensure the success of the Tiyul.⁴⁷ Moreover, as Goldfarb (Dror) and Nusi's (*Hashomer Hatzair*) testimonies attest, forging was an activity that transcended the boundaries between ideological groups of Zionist youth.

When documents – forged or original – were ready for use, they were then distributed to Jews who needed them across Hungary and Romania. To achieve this, the youth movements sent emissaries from town to town to distribute documents and encourage people to go into hiding, join the Tiyul, and organise for rescue and resistance. Such an informal network of individuals mirrored other Jewish underground movements across Europe. Often in European underground movements, these courier roles were taken mainly by women. In France, for example, Jewish scouts involved in underground work generally undertook highly gendered roles, with women directed towards smuggling and social work and men towards the armed activities of the maquis.⁴⁸ This was even implicitly ordered by Robert Gamzon, the leader of the Jewish Scouts of France and their underground wing the *Sixième*, who used French female-gendered language when referring to smugglers in reports and regularly sent young women as couriers across France.⁴⁹ Similarly, in Eastern Europe women couriers formed the backbone of communication for the Jewish underground. This is illustrated by prominent figures like Frumka Plotnicka, a courier for the Jewish Combat Organisation which helped lead events such as the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, who travelled around Poland to encourage resistance.⁵⁰ Across Europe, Jewish underground movements used women as couriers because they could more easily walk around during the day when men were expected to be at work, were more likely to have been educated at a state school and thus know the local language, and were less identifiable as Jewish than men whose circumcisions, if inspected, gave them away.⁵¹

These characteristics existed in Hungary too, where Jewish men were conscripted into forced labour battalions known as the *Munkaszolgálat*, Jewish schools were often single-sex male,

⁴⁷ Dan Zimmerman, a member of the Ha - Shomer ha - Tsa'ir youth movement and the Zionist pioneering underground in Hungary, GFHA/20895.

⁴⁸ Paul Bartrop and Samantha Lakin, *Heroines of Vichy France: Rescuing French Jews during the Holocaust*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2019), 119, 121.

⁴⁹ Certificate by Robert Gamzon regarding his work with Marc Amon, YVA O.89/50, p. 6; Letter from Robert Gamzon to his wife Denise Gamzon of 22nd June 1944, YVA O.75/525, pp. 57-8; Letter from Robert Gamzon to his wife Denise Gamzon of 5th July 1944, YVA O.75/525, 58-9.

⁵⁰ Havi Dreifuss, 'The Leadership of the Jewish Combat Organization during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: A Reassessment', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 31.1 (2017), 27, 29.

⁵¹ Sheryl Silver Ochayon, 'The Female Couriers During the Holocaust', *Yad Vashem*, www.yadvashem.org, last accessed 21st June 2021.

and intrusive ‘trouser inspections’ were known to happen in the streets for those the authorities suspected of being Jewish. Despite this, couriering and smuggling documents in Hungary was not a female-gendered activity, with both men and women heavily involved. In fact, of the 64 biographies of those involved in the Tiyul catalogued by David Gur, 20 of them were women and 44 men. Out of these, 8 men and 4 women were involved explicitly in couriering documents, roughly the same proportion as the gender split for the whole movement. One possible explanation for the lack of a gendered divide here is the more organic structure of the Tiyul compared to more organised resistance and rescue efforts in other countries. While countries like France and Poland had national and local rescue and resistance committees and hierarchies that coordinated much of their work, the equivalent committees in Hungary and Romania had less central control over events. As the Tiyul depended on multiple different youth groups working towards the same goal, different ones sent their people to different parts of regions. Moreover, small youth groups relied on a limited number of individuals who were able and willing to travel, which often led to those with personal connections taking on the roles. This was the experience of Yitzhak Braun, born Ferenc Braun in the western Hungarian city of Sopron in 1922, who was one of the first and few members of *Hanoar Hatzioni* in the area. Along with his fiancé Judit, they distributed forged documents and attempted to help children slated for deportation, before Bruan himself took part in the Tiyul, traveling via Nagyvárad (Oradea).⁵² The deeply personal and individual nature of this movement highlights how the youth movements worked as an underground network. While an element of coordination did exist, consequential actions and decisions were taken at a local level. As a result, both men and women were involved in couriering documents, as the movements scrambled to distribute papers and thus did not construct much of a structured hierarchy within which to implement gendered ideas.

Remembering this intense period of work preparing for the Tiyul, Tzvi Goldfarb of the *Dror* movement explained how ‘emissaries were sent in advance to make contacts, prepare hiding-places, obtain guides, etc.’.⁵³ This was an activity that truly transcended the different ideological groups in the youth movements. Zelig Boyuk, for example, of the *Hanoar Hatzioni* group, was born in Działoszyce in Poland and sought refuge in Hungary and Romania during the war. At the

⁵² Memoirs of Yitzkhak Braun, born in Sopron, Hungary, 1922, regarding his experiences in labor battalions and the underground in Budapest, in Romania and his aliya to Eretz Israel, 1944, YVA O.39/20, 5.

⁵³ Z. Goldfarb, ‘On “HeHalutz” Resistance in Hungary’, 163.

time of the Tiyl, the movement sent him to Nagyvárad (Oradea) to set up shelters for those to be smuggled across the border.⁵⁴ While there, he met a friend from Poland, Manus Djamant. In his memoirs, Djamant recalled helping Boyuk smuggle people across the border, describing how it felt like they were ‘in charge of the border checkpoint... through which we let dozens of Jewish young men and women pass from Hungary to Romania’.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Tamar Benshalom, born Kato Brunner in Budapest in 1921, was also sent to Nagyvárad (Oradea) by her movement, *Hashomer Hatzair*. There, she similarly helped dozens of young Jews cross the border into Romania before returning to Budapest when she realized the police were following her.⁵⁶ Not so lucky, Boyuk and Djamant were arrested and tortured. A third youth movement also operated out of Nagyvárad (Oradea), where Hanna Atsmon, born Lily Neuwirth in the Czechoslovakian town of Velký Meder (Nagymegyer in Hungarian) in 1921, escorted groups across the border as part of the Zionist-Sporting *Maccabi Hatzair* youth group. The intense yet fractured nature of the smuggling activity in Nagyvárad (Oradea) by these three different groups shows how the Tiyl existed both as a common activity among Zionist youth movements and, simultaneously, was led and run separately by them. There is no suggestion that the three groups worked together, or were even aware that they were in the same place. Moreover, as the danger so clearly expressed in Boyuk, Djamant and Benshalom’s experiences shows, when youth movement members were stationed in border crossing towns, they were at constant risk and often remained there only for a short time. It is quite possible, therefore, that the three of them were never in Nagyvárad (Oradea) at the same time, a consequence of the haphazard and ever-changing landscape of rescue. Nonetheless, the common work in the same location is a striking testament to the decentralized yet coherent way the Tiyl was organised.

As people began their journey across the border, members of the youth movements would arrange them into groups and ensure they had all they needed for their journey. One of these members was Efraim Agmon, born Ernő Teichmann in the North-eastern Hungarian town of

⁵⁴ Edith Ruina, *How They Lived to Tell: 1939-1945: Together members of a Jewish youth group fled from Poland to Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Romania and Palestine*, (Green Bay, WI: Mixed Media Memoirs, 2005), 155.

⁵⁵ Manus Djamant, ‘A struggle of Survival’, Yosef Chrust & Yosef Frankel (eds.), *Katowits: perihatah ve-shekiyatah hel ha-kehila ha-yehudit; sefer zikaron [Katowice: the Rise and Decline of the Jewish Community; Memorial Book (Katowice, Poland)]* (Tel Aviv, 1996), 300.

⁵⁶ Testimony of Tamar Ben Shalom, born in Budapest, Hungary, 1921, regarding her experiences in the Budapest underground, YVA O.3/12045, 13; David Gur, ‘Tamar Benshalom’, *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 57.

Kisvárdá in 1922.⁵⁷ Raised in an Orthodox family, Agmon became interested in Zionism as a teenager and joined *Hashomer Hatzair*. His work in the underground began in 1943, when he was conscripted into the forged labour battalions known as the *Munkaszolgálat*. Instead of reporting for work, and against his father's wishes, he moved to Budapest to help with *Hashomer Hatzair's* underground activities.⁵⁸ After the German occupation, he was sent as one of the youth movement's emissaries, like Tamar Benshalom, to distribute forged documents and warn Jewish communities across Hungary about the danger. During the Tiyul, he used a forged *Schutzpass* protective document, supposedly from the Swiss embassy, to move around freely and was responsible for organising groups, arranging their papers, and reassuring those who were being smuggled.⁵⁹ Wearing the uniform of a railway official and using documents he got from Dr László Somogy, who worked with Rezső Kasztner, he travelled on the trains without paying and moved about inconspicuously, visiting work camps to help people there escape.⁶⁰ Agmon's work shows how when the Tiyul began in earnest, multiple elements of Jewish rescue efforts combined. Arranging and preparing groups to cross the border required forged documents, personal networks, and movement. Agmon's experience in moving around Hungary to distribute forged documents prepared him and laid the groundwork for the Tiyul. His activities also show how the youth groups were interconnected with figures in the wider Jewish community like Kasztner, even though they did not agree on everything ideologically or procedurally. For Agmon, as with many young Zionists, the Tiyul was one further opportunity to help others and a continuation of his existing underground work, building out of his other responsibilities.

Reflecting on his work in the Zionist underground in his post-war testimony, Agmon commented that 'freedom of movement was the basis of our activity'.⁶¹ Indeed, movement characterised the lives of young people involved in the underground: constantly changing location to avoid capture and traveling across the country to distribute documents and information. For the Tiyul, movement was even more essential, not only for those involved in organising it but, also, for those taking part. Youth movement members often assisted those being smuggled in this

⁵⁷ David Gur, 'Agmon Efraim', *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 33.

⁵⁸ 'Efra Teichmann-Agmon's Testimony' in Rafi Benshalom, *We Struggled for Life: The Hungarian Zionist Youth Resistance During the Nazi Era*, (Jerusalem, 2001), 123.

⁵⁹ Forged protective pass issued to Ephraim and Tzippora Teichman under the name of Imre Benko, USHMM/55031.

⁶⁰ 'Efra Teichmann-Agmon's Testimony', 128.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 126.

journey, traveling with them on the trains and establishing a network of safe houses and contacts. This is demonstrated by the experience of Yehuda Levi, born Lajos Löwi in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) in 1925. A member of *Hanoar Hatzioni*, the group helped him move to Budapest with forged Christian papers after the German occupation, where he began work obtaining and distributing forged documents to others. During the summer of 1944, Levi escorted Jews on trains to Nagyvárad (Oradea) as part of the Tiyul, sometimes crossing the border with them until they were delivered to a safe house in Romania.⁶² Levi's work in the underground was, therefore, defined by movement. As one of the smugglers who accompanied Jews across the border, Levi was, in particular, on the coalface of the transnational element of the Tiyul. This brought with it many dangers – not least from the police with whom he once even had a gun fight. His almost constant travels across Hungary and Romania highlight the interaction between the Tiyul as a transnational event that transcended Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and beyond and the movement inherent in the Zionist underground. This movement is simultaneously local, national, and transnational. At a local level in key smuggling cities such as Nagyvárad (Oradea), Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), and Békéscsaba, moving between train station, border, and safe house was a dangerous and consequential activity, where every street corner posed a threat. Meanwhile, such local movement was being repeated on a national and international scale by youth groups for whom traveling was an almost daily component of their work. On a bigger scale, for those refugees who started their journey in Czechoslovakia or Poland, the Tiyul represented the latest step in a longer history of movement.

The interaction between these three levels was crucial for the Tiyul. Somewhat paradoxically, when considering this transnational movement, the local context becomes more important. Although taking part in the Tiyul meant traveling across several countries, its success rested on being able to navigate the local environment at multiple points: in Hungary, at the border, and in Romania. As has been shown, a large network of youth movement members working towards the same goal helped people through this journey. When it came to crossing the border, however, youth movements often relied on local smugglers, many of whom they paid or bribed to help. Józef Gárdos, born in the Budapest suburb of Újpest in 1921, was a member of the Socialist-Zionist *Dror* movement. During the Tiyul, he travelled to Arad in Transylvania where he made

⁶² David Gur, 'Levi Yehuda', *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 167.

contact with smugglers and set up ‘stations’ on the route for those making the journey.⁶³ In so doing, Gárdos made links with locals unconnected to the Zionist organisation but upon whom he and other Jews relied heavily. As such, the transnational movement of the Tiyul became intrinsically tied to the local politics and geography. These smugglers sometimes reneged on their agreements, taking payment but not helping Jews cross the border. In one example, *Hanoar Hatzioni* members hired a local smuggler to take them via train to Romania, who got them to jump off the train before it crossed the border, leaving them to be arrested by the police. This, they noticed, was a ‘scheme well practiced by smugglers’.⁶⁴ Relying on non-Jewish locals was risky and unreliable, but necessary for travellers who did not know the local area. The battle for survival that raged from Poland to Romania was thus to be won and lost in the smallest of physical spaces.

This danger continued once Jews had successfully crossed the border into Romania. Although by 1944 Romanian policies against the Jews were not as violent as they had been earlier in the war, refugee Jews – particularly those coming through Transylvania, a territory many Romanians resented losing and wished returned – were still at risk. This necessitated continued movement, as safe houses were never safe for long, as well as a reliance on those providing aid locally. This is clearly visible in the experience of Shulamit Meir, born Agnes Nuszbaum in Budapest in 1927.⁶⁵ Meir was a member of *Hanoar Hatzioni* and travelled to Romania as part of the Tiyul in June 1944. When she arrived in the country, however, she was arrested by the Romanian police. While others in her position were often returned to Hungary where they faced interrogation, torture and deportation to Auschwitz, Meir was sentenced to five years in prison, but only served two months before managing to travel across Romania and emigrating to Palestine, where she arrived in November 1944. Her arrest nonetheless highlights the continued risk faced by Jews after they had arrived in Romania. Although smuggling Jews across the border was a major hurdle – and thus a major achievement for the rescue networks – it was merely one hurdle in a series that faced Jewish refugees. Reaching Romania was, therefore, a steppingstone, not an end, and a decrease in the intensity of risk, not a reprieve.

⁶³ David Gur, ‘Gárdos Józeph’, *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 104.

⁶⁴ H. Ruina, *How They Lived to Tell*, 156.

⁶⁵ David Gur, ‘Shulamit Meir’, *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 175.

Essential for helping those taking part in the Tiyl were the youth movement members who lived in Romania. A number of emissaries from Hungary crossed the border and established themselves in Romania to provide the reception, assistance, and onward travel necessary for those arriving on the Tiyl. One of these was Lea Shahar, born Lya Weisz in Capu Corbului in Romania (Hollósarka in Hungarian) in 1928 and a member of *Dror Habonim*. Shahar could speak Romanian and was thus ideally placed to work for the movement there, drawing on her local knowledge to help those who were moving. She assisted Jewish refugees cross the border, preparing and providing documents to those who arrived in her town, before emigrating to Palestine herself.⁶⁶ Similarly, Menahem Yakobi, born Emil Jakubovics in Chop (near the then Hungarian city of Ungvár in modern day Ukraine) in 1923, was a member of *Bnei Akiva*.⁶⁷ In May 1944, he moved to Romania to meet and care for those smuggled from Hungary. Working within a Romanian context, and facing the animosity of a ‘quest’ for Transylvania that occupied both countries, individuals like Shahar and Yakobi were essential for the success of the Tiyl.⁶⁸ They smoothed the transition through a geopolitically sensitive and hostile environment and provided a necessary link to the local that refugees from afar were lacking.

When in Romania, the greatest assistance came from local Jews and regional aid structures. Indeed, crossing into Romania meant entering into the next part of a fragmented transnational chain that stretched across Europe. As in Hungary, a combination of Rescue Committees and youth movements facilitated much of this work. Arie Hirsch-Eldar, born in Șmig in Romania in 1919, was secretary of the Zionist youth movement in Transylvania, based at their headquarters in Timișoara.⁶⁹ In 1943, he moved to Turda to coordinate relief efforts for Jewish refugees from Hungary. In his post-war memoirs, Hirsch-Eldar recalled preparing refugees for their onward journey by practicing typical questions they might be asked – such as their name, where they had come from, and where they were going.⁷⁰ Being confident in these details and in interacting with others helped them not look suspicious. The efforts of youth movement members in Romania

⁶⁶ David Gur, ‘Lea Shahar’, *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 219.

⁶⁷ David Gur, ‘Menahem Yakobi’, *Brothers of Resistance and Rescue: The Underground Zionist Youth Movement in Hungary during World War II*, (Ramat-Gan, 2009), 257.

⁶⁸ Holly Case, *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea During World War II*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 69.

⁶⁹ M. Carmilly, *The Road to Life*, 108.

⁷⁰ Testimony of Ernest Arie Hirsh Eldar, born in Smig, Romania, 1919, regarding his experiences in Dumbraveni, forced labor in Timisoara and Turda, YVA O.3/2754, 13.

mirrored the work of providing documents, sanctuary, and facilitating movement of their counterparts in Hungary. In so doing, they helped refugees survive and continue their search for safety. They also worked with institutions such as the Cluj-Kolozsvár Rescue Committee, among others. These institutions, alongside non-Jewish and international ones, helped shelter and care for Jewish refugees in Romania and absorbed those who couldn't board boats for Palestine. As such, these refugees entered yet another context, becoming a part of the Jewish community there as they continued their journey.

Conclusion

On 23rd August 1944, Romanian Prime Minister Ion Antonescu was deposed in a coup d'état and removed from office by the King, Michael I. The new government unilaterally declared a ceasefire with the advancing Red Army and sought to switch sides to the Allies. In so doing, the border between Hungary and Romania hardened, with both now on opposite sides of the war. This brought a sharp end to the Tiyul, with smugglers largely unable to move between the warring countries.

In the five preceding months, some 7,000 Jews smuggled themselves across the border between Hungary and Romania, of which an estimated 1,000 were members of the Zionist youth movements themselves.⁷¹ Their ideological commitment to Zionism, which had remained steadfast throughout the Second World War, motivated and shaped the way they responded to persecution and took part in resistance and rescue operations. The youth movements were an integral, yet autonomous, part of the broader Zionist and Jewish Relief and Rescue structures, holding a special place in the landscape of resistance and operating within multiple contexts. When organizing the Tiyul, they drew on: pre-existing refugee migration routes; international youth movement ideologies and solidarities; the broader resistance activities in Hungary and Romania; and the skills of the Zionist youth movements, particularly in forging documents.

The Tiyul must thus take its place within the broader picture of resistance activity organized by the Zionist youth movements, the Budapest Relief and Rescue Committee, and the Rescue Committees in Transylvania and Romania. Members of all these institutions were involved

⁷¹ A. Cohen, *The Halutz Resistance in Hungary*, 99.

in the Tiyul, as well as with other activities, as individuals operated across multiple ideological and physical spaces. The institutions themselves sometimes worked together, with a significant amount of funding coming from the Relief and Rescue Committee's delegation in Istanbul, whose office promised in one letter to 'help as far as we can, particularly in Tiyul'.⁷² Meanwhile, young Zionists were often at odds with their elders on specific issues, such as forging documents. Furthermore, the youth movements themselves were fractured along ideological lines, constantly treading the line between cooperation and competition. In this way, the Tiyul brought together those from different backgrounds – who often disagreed on how to approach rescue work – in a common effort towards a united goal. While youth groups often worked separately, their actions and aim were shared.

Reflecting the international nature of Zionist youth movements with groups across Europe, the Tiyul constructed a transnational network of people that connected eastern-, central- and south-eastern Europe. This built on pre-existing refugee routes made by Zionists seeking Aliyah before and at the beginning of the war and continued afterwards too. Repurposed during the Holocaust as a rescue operation, however, traditional routes took on new meanings and intensity during the spring and summer of 1944. As Jewish refugees traveled from countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia into Hungary before the onward journey to Romania and beyond, they often sought out members of their youth movement, with international movements uniting those from different countries in ideological solidarity.

While international in character, the Tiyul was also deeply rooted in and dependent on the local practices and people. This was particularly visible in the forging of documents, an activity that often put youth movements at odds with their elders. Although marking them out as different to the established Jewish leadership, forging documents was an activity that united the Zionist youth movements irrespective of their ideological faction. Forging documents is also a good example of how the Tiyul combined local with international: whilst it was a regular activity for underground movements across Europe, it relied heavily on the local procurement of original documents to copy and of the necessary materials. Individual youth group members made this possible, as the Tiyul drew on the thriving underground forging activity in wartime Budapest and the pre-war history of Jewish refugee support in Romania.

⁷² The Liaison office in Istanbul. Hungary – Incoming Letters, 31st July 1944, GFHA/26218, 4.

The balance between local and international was also visible in the informal courier networks, emissaries, and smugglers who were so integral to the success of the Tiyul. In a striking reminder of the intimate organization and decentralized nature of the Tiyul, both men and women engaged actively with courier work, unlike other countries where it was a role generally held by women. Furthermore, local guides and smugglers, sometimes non-Jewish locals paid to help, were essential for navigating unknown parts of the border. In a journey that transcended multiple countries, every small step – from crossing into Hungary, finding refuge there, traveling to and crossing the border, and then finding a place to stay in Romania – was vital and was secured at a local level.

The Tiyul was, therefore, an operation which grew out of multiple contexts and cut across numerous narratives on resistance, ideology and identity. Somewhat paradoxically, it had a simultaneously transnational and local structure. It was also rooted in both the specificities of the Zionist youth movements and the generalities of the wider Relief and Recue Committees in both Hungary and Romania. And it drew on long-term trends and practices of Zionist movements while concurrently responding to the immediate needs of a genocidal crisis. Because of this, although only lasting five months, the Tiyul reveals much about the nature of resistance – especially Jewish resistance – in axis-supporting countries, where general complicity with the Holocaust led many to conclude that rescue was the most effective form of resistance. The Tiyul adds an extra element to this: as an operation led by Zionist groups, not only did participants fear being discovered by the authorities, they also acted within a Jewish community unsympathetic to the Zionist cause. By exploring the activities of young people within this environment, it becomes possible to gain a better understanding of the resistance: their networks, their relations across spatial and social boundaries, and their place within the Jewish community.

