

Family/Community: Most survivors lost their entire families and there were hardly any children in the DP camps. Alongside feelings of loss and loneliness was a desire to establish families of their own, resulting in a marriage boom and soaring birth rates. Medical care for newborns and their young mothers was one of the greatest challenges in the camps.

The wedding invitation shows conflicting feelings of sadness and joy. The bride and groom's parents and family members have mostly perished, yet they look to the future. Terms such as "consolation" and "solace" are mixed with "gladness" and "joy." Weddings in DP camps were deeply emotional for people who were both mourning and healing at once.



Babies born after World War II at Bad Reichenhall DP Camp near Salzburg, Austria (Yad Vashem Photo Archive, 176EO2)



Invitation to Devorah and Yakov's wedding, Bergen Belsen, Germany, 1948

Education: Children in the DP camps were sorely behind in their education or had missed out on it completely. The many challenges in DP camp schools included illiteracy, trauma, and no single language of instruction. Yet teachers – from among the survivors and from abroad – rose to the challenge in order to restore a childhood that had been lost and prepare young people for a very new future.



Salzburg, Austria: Kindergarten in a DP Camp (Yad Vashem Photo Archive 3380/452)

Culture/Press/Sports: An active cultural life grew in the DP camps and helped to spiritually heal many survivors. There were new orchestras, theater groups, and other artistic activities. Writing and the publication of Jewish newspapers was important as survivors had been cut off from information and unable to express their opinions during the war. In addition, sports clubs were established, which represented independence, will power, and strength



Jewish newspapers, exhibited at Bergen-Belsen in Germany, including the "Jewish Community News" and "Our Voice" (Yad Vashem Photo Archive, FA186/279)



Athletes of the Maccabi sports club after the war at Föhrenwald DP camp in Germany (Yad Vashem Photo Archive, 1486/10)



Children putting on a play at the Bari DP camp, Italy, 1947 (Yad Vashem Photo Archives 3380/107)