

# INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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## INTRODUCTION

This is already the tenth issue of our International Bulletin. I am glad, that so many readers appreciate the articles and that this bulletin has actually become a meeting place in the way we intended. The other good news is that there is never a shortage of articles! There are lots of texts or announcements for workshops or meetings.

It is my sad task to inform you of the death of Hans Donkersloot, the chairman of the Organisation Herkenning, which sponsors this bulletin. It was he who took an immediate interest in my international activities when he became chairman and who played an important role in the initiative to start this little magazine. We miss him badly.

In this issue you will find four bookreviews.

Inger Cecilie Stridsklev wrote a review of the book '*Overvinneelse*', written by Erik Daehlin about the artist Nikolai Astrup Geelmuyden.

Arne Oeland was impressed by the book '*Nicht ungeschoren davonkommen*', written by Ebba D.Drolshagen about the women who had relationships with German soldiers.

Björn Krondorfer reviewed the book '*My Father's Testament*', written by Edward Gastfriend about his experiences in Poland from 1939 till 1945.

The book '*Modernity and the Holocaust*' written by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman gave me so many new insights, that I would like to recommend it to the readers of this bulletin.

Bauke Toshio Talens, chairman of the JIN, Organisation of children of war with a Dutch mother and a Japanese father, tells about his life and the many problems he has had to overcome, because he is the 'child of the enemy'.

Samson Munn submitted the text of an interview that appeared in the French paper *Le Monde*, in which five Austrians related about their lives in their country, where the past was silenced until recently. I chose one story, that of Peter, to pre-sent to you in this issue.

From Tania Nahum in Australia comes an announcement of the workshop she will organise this summer. The deadline for registration is May 12, but it is worthwhile to contact her even after this date. Maybe another workshop will take place if there are enough people to participate.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this issue.

All the best,

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

[This compilation does not include all the articles mentioned in the introduction]

## **IN MEMORIAM: Hans Donkersloot 1954 - 2000**

Hans was the first member of the board of our organisation Herkenning who came to me to see the archives and to talk with me about the contacts I had with many people abroad. He had just become president of Herkenning and wanted to learn about all the aspects of the work. His visit took place in the Autumn of 1994.

Some weeks later we got the news that Herkenning was granted a governmental subsidy. As an official in a federal Department Hans knew everything about procedures, including the people who made decisions about subsidies. Hans' continuous efforts were finally honoured with success. We could have our own office now! But more than this financial help, the recognition of our organisation by the government was important to us.

In the Spring of 1995, Hans invited me to a meeting of the board. He wanted me to tell about my international activities. There and then the plan was launched to begin an international bulletin. What would have been too expensive for a private initiative was now possible through the sponsorship of Herkenning. The first issue appeared in October, 1995. Hans, who was always rather critical, reacted enthusiastically. Now and then we phoned each other to talk about the positive developments of the newsletter and we participated in several international conferences.

In July 1999 we received the news that Hans was seriously ill with cancer of the throat. In December he let us know that the cancer had disappeared and that he was now on the way to complete recovery.

Things went differently. His still fragile health could not overcome an infection. Hans lost his last battle.

On February 5 we accompanied him to the cemetery: family, friends, neighbours, friends from the time he studied and from the cocounseling movement, representatives of other organisations of children of war, members of Herkenning.

There are two events I will always remember.

In the Spring of 1987 the Israeli psychologist Dan Bar-On visited Holland to interview some members of Herkenning. Hans was the last and took the opportunity for a walk in a natural reserve in the proximity of Nijmegen. When he entered in the afternoon we had problems hugging each other as we always did, he being almost 2 m tall and I only 1.60. He brought with him the fresh air, the wind and smells of the forest and the heath still in his hair.

This was characteristic of him; whenever he entered, he brought with him some freshness, the flair of eternal youth, the wonder of a child, but combined with adult sharpness of insight and determination.

In 1988 some members of Herkenning participated in a conference in Wuppertal. After the openingspeech Hans suggested that we introduce ourselves with our names and activities. He explained that we were not just participants, that there should not be just abstract and theoretical discussions, but that we ourselves with our own experiences were the important issue.

Hans was a good analyst, skilled in scientific research and he loved discussions. But he knew that what mattered most in life was the human being with his/her

feelings and his/her emotional needs.

His brother expressed this so well at the grave side: 'People who heard all the stories about my brother this afternoon could get the idea that he was an extreme human being. He was extremely human.'

We will remember him with love.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

**REVIEW** by Arne Oeland, Chairman of the Danish Organization of War Children, *Danske Krigsborns Forening*.

**Ebba D.Drolshagen:** *"Nicht ungeschoren davonkommen - Das Schicksal der Frauen in den besetzten Ländern, die Wehrmachtssoldaten liebten"* Hoffmann und Campe, Hamburg 1998.  
271 pages. One Photograph. DM 39.80

Unreservedly you have to read this unusual and important book, no matter which European nation you belong to. Many of the unanswered questions concerning your silent mother's love and announcement about which you pondered while growing up, are answered here - and many new and unexpected issues are raised and seen in a new light in this Drolshagen-book, the essayistic style is very adequate for the subject.

The point of departure of the book is a quite famous photograph from the Second World War - it is almost an icon - taken by the eminent war photographer, Robert Capa, born in 1913 in Budapest, killed in 1954 by a landmine in Indochina. The photograph shows a typically French regional town in August 1944, Chartres, France. A crowd of people 'escorts' a bald, shaven woman to an unknown destination. The woman carries a little dark-haired baby in her arms.

For the historically 'enlightened' there is no doubt: it is one of the fortunately, very few women - deprived and dim-witted - who behaved strongly unpatriotically in letting down the country by fornication with the enemy during the German occupation - or 'horizontally collaborating' according to common language, a 'nazi whore' (1) in other words - and here she suffers her well deserved humiliating punishment.

But it is precisely the many myths and clichés taken for granted about this opaque history that Drolshagen sets out to discuss. The so-called 'historical truths' have no resemblance at all to the fix star tableau - especially not in the collective memory of a post war period.

*'To realize why the woman with the baby was found guilty and humiliated, to make it possible to grasp the Capa-photo, we have to look at the time before, look back at the German occupation of France. We have to know how people at that time lived in the northernmost part of Norway or in the outskirts of France, in which way the life of women was different from the life of men. What was going on in Chartres and what was the life like of the woman on August the 18th 1944 before Capa took the photograph? How was her life on the 19th? What kind of life would follow for the woman and her child? What kind of society is it? How do they regard the sexuality of women? How do they perceive concepts such as disgrace and humiliation?'*(2)

The book is based on conversations with old women from France, The Netherlands, The Channel Island Guernsey, Denmark and Germany, but draws heavily on the relevant literature on the subject. The possible numbers of children from German soldiers in the different occupied countries are dwelled upon and causes for the immense differences are discussed: almost 6,000 officially registered in Denmark, 10,-12,000 in Norway, 40,000 in Belgium and 50,000 in Holland. Strange and intriguing national differences are asking for closer inquiry!

The international or global perspective is one of the real fine issues of the book. Drolshagen draws parallels with other 'more righteous' wars or occupations at other times and even other continents. The American occupation of Germany, Japan, Iceland and Korea after the Second World War and the significance of the presence of American soldiers to thousands of native women are compared with the consequences of earlier occupations of German Nazi soldiers. The troubles, which befall women and children in the devastated countries, are interpreted as almost being a fatality caused by a prevailing masculine chauvinism. The ruthless and prejudiced condemnation of the "Nazi whores" or the "battlefield mattresses" is softened and instead we are presented with an opposite feminine rage. As an example Drolshagen informs us about the often-heroic efforts and shrewdness the Norwegian women showed to reach Germany and 'their men':

*'A former member of the Norwegian resistance movement, whom I told the story, bitterly commented, that here was a willpower and energy which no doubt, could have been of great value for the resistance movement, if Kari and other women of the same category had made another choice.*

*Should they have done so, they would likely to have been honoured - for what they did dare was courageous or even foolhardy - and furthermore very romantic.*

*Circumstances separate the lovers, the despairing woman dressed as a man leaves the home and goes after her soldier because her love exceeds her fear or feminine modesty; she fights for her happiness. In the theatre or at the opera such a woman can pose as a splendid heroine where she acts as a man too. In the world of reality - the summer of 1945 in Denmark or Norway - she was the detested 'Nazi whore'. A Norwegian newspaper calls her a shameless bitch in heat, 'who behaves more and more impudent because she wants to go down to her own Fritz.'*(3)

Convincingly Drolshagen demonstrates the similarity of racist Nazi Germany to the so-called democratic countries, the double standard in the male chauvinist society: if the German Aryan women had something to do with the racially inferior slave workers or - even worse - with Jews, the Nazis pilloried them. When native women in the allied countries had had something to do with the beaten and déclassé soldiers belonging to a nation with inflated kudos, they were humiliated in the best fascist tradition after the capitulation.

Drolshagen makes superior use of several literary ideal models: famous women like Medea, Pocahontas, Rapunzel, Juliet and Madame Butterfly are heroines.

Personally I would have appreciated a similar chapter dedicated to the war children: Telemachus, Jesus, Kaspar Hauser would do fine as discursive idols; but it is not a book about war children, of course!

Not to be too panegyric, I have to criticise too:

*'Duras' young French woman says: "The only men in town were Germans. I was seventeen". Both the married and the unmarried women lived for years without the only men they were allowed to desire, if they had the right patriotic attitude. And sooner or later some women would prefer a fresh and blood love affair to the pale patriotism. But in Norway only a few men left the country, in Denmark none - nevertheless many women met the soldiers. Consequently the only reason why so many women threw themselves in the arms of the enemy could not be the lack of men and sexual need.'*(4) But also in Denmark a ever growing number left the country during the occupation: many Danish sailors in allied waters were suddenly cut off from Denmark in 1940; thousands of men (100,000) - fewer women - worked in Germany or Norway during the five years; at least 6,000 men volunteered at the eastern front; approximately 6,000 Danish Jews (women and children inclusive) fled to Sweden; a growing number of men from the resistance movement fled to Sweden lest they were sent to the concentration camps together with Jews, Communists and Danish policemen - or shot. It is difficult to say, how many men are concerned. And although the birth rate for registered 'German kids' steadily increased during the occupation (5), it is hard to say whether the reason was "lack of men and sexual need". Nevertheless Drolshagen may be perfectly right in her suspicion, that there might be other reasons for the women's infatuation with the enemy.

Notes:

1. There is no special word for "Nazi whore" in German. Just like the allied bombings of German cities almost went into oblivion from literature and the collective memory after the war, so did the thousands and thousands of foreign women and children.
2. Drolshagen, page 54
3. *ibid*, page 164
4. *ibid*, page 110
5. in Warring Ellingson Björnsdottir: *'Kvinner, krig og kjaerlighet'*, Oslo 1995

## MY FATHER'S TESTAMENT

**Memoir of a Jewish Teenager, 1938-1945.**

Authored by *Edward Gastfriend*

Edited with an Afterword by Björn Krondorfer

Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000

**Content:** *My Father's Testament* is an intimate portrait of a teenage boy trying to stay alive without losing his humanity - in hiding, in the camps, and during the death marches at the end of World War II. This first-person account, by the youngest of eight children of a pious Jewish family from Sosnowiec in Poland, is remarkable for the faith shown by a teenager faced with the horrifying realities of the Holocaust. Edward Gastfriend, known as Lolek as a boy, remembers inheart-wrenching details of the six years he survived in German-occupied Poland.

Embedded in this unique memoir are two other stories of fathers and sons. One lies in the moving Foreword by David R. Gastfriend, Edward's son, now a psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School. The other lies in Björn Krondorfer's Afterword. Years after

he met Ed Gastfriend, Krondorfer was startled to hear his father mention Blechhammer as one of the places he was stationed as a young German soldier in 1944. Blechhammer was where Lolek was held in a slave labor camp. The coincidental discovery of this piece of family history led this German father and son travel back to the site to confront the memory of those years.

Available at: Temple University Press (1-800-447-1656)  
US\$ 19.95

**Advance praise:** "*My Father's Testament* is a remarkable Holocaust memoir, written in a style of Biblical simplicity that evokes a child's voice of family love and kinship brutally interrupted, and an incredible determination to survive and retain, in adulthood, the ethical imperatives of his parental home. An altogether riveting and memorable narrative." *Chaim Potok*

## **MY FATHER WAS A JAPANESE! I AM A CHILD OF THE ENEMY!!**

About 10 years ago, Bauke Talens, chairman of the Japanese Dutch/Indonesian Descendants Association, felt like a 100% Dutch inhabitant, busy with his job and family. Today he wonders what impact his Japanese birth has had on his life.

I always knew that my father was Japanese. My mother always said that I did not have to feel ashamed about myself, because I was born as a love child and "he was a good man".

### **Mothers and Fathers**

My mother was born into a middle class environment. She had a natural artistic ability which was not appreciated within her Christian family. To flee from her parental home, she unexpectedly married with an agriculture engineer in 1938. She had met him in the orchestra in which she played cello and he helped her to flee from her parents. As a young woman of 22, she suddenly became the wife of an agriculture engineer on Surakarta (island of Java) in the Dutch colony of Indonesia. It was a very lonesome existence. Yes, he was a good friend, but not a husband. Besides, in 1942 he was already mobilized as a Dutch soldier and sent to Celebes, another island in Indonesia. He died in 1943 during a bombing by the Allied Forces. My mother became a prisoner of war in the spring of 1942 and lived in several internment camps.

Around 1942 she met my natural father. He was a literary man and like many other Japanese 'civilians', transferred to Indonesia as early as 1938. The Japanese government sent thousands of such civilians as forerunners of the coming invasion by Japanese forces. Japan would already have a strong base of support the moment the army landed. All these civilians had a military formation too. My Japanese father and my mother had a real love relationship, even in war time and in spite of the fact that my father already had a family in Japan. The relationship ended immediately after he learned that he was my father. He was transferred to Thailand.

## **The Japanese camps of women**

From 1942 until 1945 my mother lived in several Japanese camps for women prisoners. I knew that I was born in such a 'women's camp', but I did not know where. In 1998 our association got much publicity in the Netherlands and an old lady called our secretary with this information: "Your chairman is called Toshio and I knew a Toshio in our camp 'Banjoe Biroe'. In February 1944 a pregnant woman arrived in our camp. She gave birth to a son and called him Toshio. Maybe it is the same person." And indeed, it was. So now I know exactly where I was born. This woman sent me pictures of Banjoe Biroe. Toshio is my Japanese name like the name of my father. My mother always called me Toshio when she was sad or cuddled me. Since my mother's death I use my father's name together with my Dutch name: Bauke Toshio Talens.

I was born as a 6-month baby and my weight was only 3 pounds. Everybody thought that I would die within several days, but I managed to survive. But this was the reason that I was not listed in the birth index, so I do not have official papers of my birth. When I married I had to swear that I was who I am. To me, it looks like a joke. I never experienced it as a denial of my existence. Maybe I should feel like that, but maybe I have put it aside like many other tiresome memories.

My mother very often told me that if I had to live through a war, I must try to work in the vicinity of a kitchen, because I would get more food there.

## **After World War II**

As long as I live, I regularly have fire-flames and the noise of lowflying bombers in my head. These are symptoms of the traumatic experiences I had as a one year old. At that time my mother and I fled across the paddy fields, while bombers threw their bombs causing fire everywhere. It is strange that these experiences have so much impact on my life. But since my childhood I have hidden everything that hurts. Nowadays I still cannot talk about sad or horrible things which affected my life. I avoid hurting others, even when it is essential to speak honestly in the situation of that moment. I never want to hurt someone intentionally.

From the ages of 4 till 16, I lived in 'groups' in childrens' homes, because my mother had to work because she got no social assistance with me as a child of the enemy. I also lived in several asthma clinics. I never had a special bond with other kids. I just remember one real friend. He was the only one in my life and I cried when he moved to another city. All these bad experiences made me a loner, I think. I have difficulties forming relationships with other people. Maintaining relationships is difficult as well. I am confronted with that lack of social ability every day. Even sharing joy is difficult for me.

But I always try to come into contact with other people and sometimes I succeed. A psychologist told me that I became a loner because of the circumstances. I did not experience the security of a mother or a father as I lived in groups of children.

Moreover, I was always 'fighting to survive' due to my asthma. For that reason I could not trust even my own body. When one is out of breath, one does not want to see anybody. And nobody wants to meet you, because an asthma attack looks very dangerous; one fears that someone is suffocating.

So I never was allowed to play with friends in the street because of my asthma. They always said: "No, not you, because you will get an asthma attack."

In retrospect I do not experience my youth (4-16) as lonely. But I think I ignored those feelings of loneliness, because I always had to play on my own. I remember that everybody wanted to fight me because I was always the loser.

My mother never married again. She lived her life 'in the past'. She always talked about Indonesia, my father and 'her little Toshio'. In 1989 she died very lonely at the age of 72. At that time she had a wonderful house with a garden. But she closed all her windows with curtains and slept in the barn, because 'they' were after her. When she died I felt relieved, because her life was really no life at all.

### **Substitute**

My first marriage lasted about 9 years (1966-1975). The communality was too small. I knew my first wife just one week when we made love. She became pregnant immediately. I acted responsibly and married her. At that time, in the 1960's, everything was possible - freedom and joyfulness on all levels, even the sexual one. 'Flower power' and 'love' were the magic words and dominated the way of life. But as I got older I realised that we had been foolish. Unfortunately it was too late to change . . .

In 1977 I met a nice woman of 27 who left her boyfriend and we lived together for less than one year.

Then she left me. I did not blame her, because I thought: 'She is young and maybe I am too old (37) for her and I am always ill'. Because of my asthma I spent 6 weeks in the hospital 3 or 4 times a year and I lost my job. Since that time I have received unemployment benefits, first 50%, later 100%.

As a young man, it was almost impossible for me to study because of my asthma. Therefore I had to work at several jobs. In the last one, I worked as a secretary of the workers' council at a hospital, a 50% part-time job. (For the other 50%, I got a little benefit). But in my free time I studied. Business law and later at the Open University jurisprudence. I was always a member of a trade union. I defended the interests of others, because then I had no need to think about my own problems.

After my total disability in 1990, I became active in the association for asthma, bronchitis and emphysema. First I was a member of the board of the patients' council and later I served as chairman. Since 1985 I have been a member of the International Asthma Council as an expert by experience. In this function I travel around the world, telling about how to cope with asthma, not only for the benefit of the patients, but also for the doctors. Moreover I regularly write articles in professional periodicals, as an expert by experience. I am also the editor of a Dutch magazine for asthma patients, 'AstmaNieuws'.

Maybe my devotion to others is a substitute for relationships.

Fortunately, after 6 years of being alone, I married again in 1984. For the first time, I met a woman who taught me to handle my failures and to say what I really mean. I thought we would love each other forever - the ultimate marriage. Unfortunately we divorced in 1995. We never hurt each other, although there were moments that, maybe, arguments would have been better. But again there was no way back. She left me when I was hospitalized for a small operation. After 7 days I came back in



an empty house. In spite of that, we are still friends, which sometimes causes me very bad feelings. We have two nice children, born in 1985 and 1987. They live at my home one week and the other week with my ex-wife and her husband. Also in the holidays they spend half of the time with me and half with their mother.

### **My Dear Son**

After my mother's death in June 1989, I found a letter from the Japanese Red Cross, written in 1983, giving the address of my father but also the message that any contact would be impossible. My father was old, demented and very ill.

I wanted to throw the letter away, but my wife said: "No, we put it in our safety box". In 1991 I saw by chance a TV program about the foundation of the Japanese Dutch/Indonesian Descendants Society (JIN). The theme was about a Japanese father who located his daughter in Holland after 50 years. I never had the feeling of knowing anything about my father, but I contacted the Society. I showed my Japanese Red Cross letter and with the help of the Japanese father who found his daughter, I met my Japanese father in Japan, for the first time in 50 years. His first words were; "My dear son".

### **Meeting and Saying Goodbye**

I visited my father together with my eldest daughter. I was very nervous. I did not know very much about Japan and I never had feelings for 'a father'. In the Netherlands my fellow Society members taught me to bow like all Japanese when I would meet my father. But as we arrived on the airport in Sendai (Japan), a very small man came up to me and ... hugged me and started crying. That moment was very emotional and indescribable. All at once I sensed what it means to have a father. Fifty years without a father disappeared in that moment. We shared 4 days together. He confirmed that my mother was his great love, although he was already married. He never told his wife, his 3 daughters and his son about me and my mother. Therefore I did not meet my half sisters and half brother.

After our meeting he never contacted me. Why not?  
It seems it has to do with the Japanese culture which I absolutely do not understand. To me it is something like the Dutch saying: out of sight, out of the heart.

### **The box**

Since October 1997 the Japanese Government has been subsidizing an annual coming back assimilation-trip to Japan for ex-prisoners of war. Unfortunately, only a few members of our Society are allowed to join the group. So, when the Ex-prisoners Association (EKNJ) asked me in October 1996 to go with them - at my own costs - , I wanted to go of course, but only if I could meet my father. Therefore I again asked somebody in Japan to contact my father.

The word came back: "Your father passed away on May 19th, but your brother and sisters are willing to meet you". I was very sad about my father's death, but of course I wanted to meet my family. When I was with them, my brother showed me a box containing many letters and pictures of me, my wives and my children. They found the box after my father's death. It also included the correspondence with my mother, that he never answered and which always was a secret from his own family.

Together with my brother and sisters I visited his grave. We laid down the box with letters, but also a Dutch tulip (silk) representing my mother in the house-altar. This was a very emotional moment again.

But, just as after my visit in 1993, all contact is now lost. Why do people I love so much always disappear? A Catholic priest told me several months later: "Your brother will, maybe, contact you again after the death of his mother". Until now I have not heard from him.

### **The psychologist**

The Japanese Dutch/Indonesian Descendants Society was founded in 1991 and has about 50 members. Until 1998 the search for our Japanese fathers was priority number one. Aside from that, we have some therapeutic discussion groups. Almost all the members have had a very bad youth. As half-Japanese they were not welcome in the Indonesian community. Even in 2000 they aren't! Therefore, many mothers concealed the origin of their Japanese children. Some members just found out about it recently.

Unlike the most members who grew up in Indonesia, I had a Dutch upbringing and therefore I had few problems with my origin. Therefore I am very often the health-care-worker, the "psychologist" for my fellow members in our Society. But it is still very difficult to me to talk about my own problems in relation to Japan. I would rather put them far away.

### **Limitations**

If I am honest, my asthma problems and my Japanese background had a great impact on my life. Without them I really would have reached the point where I am today about 20 years earlier. Maybe I would have had a better life. Maybe I would not have made most of the mistakes I made. In the past, I very often felt very lonely, in spite of having my lovable children around me and I still feel lonely nowadays.

I have already overcome limitations to make my life better. And I know I still have to overcome several more and I try to do so.

But I still hope I will be happy again with a woman who will understand me and is willing to accept my limitations. And maybe we will succeed this time, because in 1999 I married again. This time it is not a European woman, but an Asian, a Philippina. I met her at several Asthma Congresses. I still feel uncertain, because my feelings are ambivalent. The past still has a big influence.

In the meantime, I have also been to Japan again as the representative of our organisation JIN. I did not inform my Japanese brother and sisters. Yes, it hurts, but I had to protect myself.

Bauke Toshio Talens  
March 2000

## **Zygmunt Bauman: MODERNITY AND THE HOLOCAUST**

Ed.Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York 1989

This book written by the Polish Jewish sociologist Bauman provided answers to a lot of questions I still had with regard to the Holocaust. The book is written in a difficult style. The contents are so important and interesting, however, that it is worthwhile to struggle through the text.

The central theme of this book is that the Holocaust was not a backsliding into barbarism, but it was a logic consequence, although a terribly destructive one, of Modernity. Since the period of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the peoples in Western Europe saw civilisation as progress and solely as progress. The two big crises in the 20th century, the two world wars, should have changed our opinion. Still, we are anxious to believe that these wars were accidents and incidents. We still ask ourselves how they could have taken place in the civilised world of Western Europe and we are perplexed that similar barbarian atrocities are again taking place in the former Yugoslavia.

Bauman describes how the scientific way of thinking influenced the daily life of people more and more. Scientists try to observe the subjects of their research (even the human being) in an objective way and to create distance between themselves and their objects, thus reducing subjective influences. The concept of social engineering stems from these scientific insights. Society has to be given shape by the human beings themselves, it is a 'makeable' world. Bauman uses the term 'the garden model': the designer decides where s/he wants to plant what kind of plants, how and when s/he will prune the trees, what s/he considers weeds and what should be destroyed for that reason.

In modern times we see how the technical development and the efficient division of labour go hand in hand (introduced in the Ford factories for example). The distance between the designer and the men who shape the (parts of the) products has become more and more remote. Each worker takes care of only one little part of the total production and often doesn't even know what will be the product at the end of the process.

This entailed a change in attitude. In the past one could assume a moral responsibility for one's work (what is the content of it, can I agree with the goal of the production?). Nowadays it is more and more replaced by a more technical responsibility (do I fulfill my task in an efficient and technically good way?). Bureaucracy played a role as well. One could add the pride of scientific researchers who boasted about their success in having freed the sciences of subjective elements, as for instance religion, which they considered as superstition, and who were proud that the sciences had become value-free.

All those ingredients - objective thinking, social engineering, division of work, replacing moral with technical responsibility, norms and values pushed into the background - could, in the hands of ideologues become a system in which the 'enemies of the nation' were eliminated in an industrially destructive way. In each dictatorial system this can still happen again.

Murdering is in itself an irrational phenomenon, although it fits well into the garden model (we know that Hitler made the strategic aims subsidiary to the genocide at the end of the war), but it was executed with rational, technical means.

Scholars could easily adjust to the system; in the name of science everything was allowed. We have to see the Mengele experiments with twins in this context. Those who declared at the Nuremberg Trials that they were just fulfilling their tasks and doing them as well as possible, did not tell lies. Seen from the view of the technical responsibility they told the truth and are not to be blamed.

After the trial of Eichmann in 1962 Hannah Arendt spoke about the 'banality of evil'. Milgram and Zimbardo proved in their experiments that under certain circumstances, totally normal people are ready to humiliate or to torture other human beings. Nazis were no monsters; they were normal people like we are. But this is precisely what 'the world' is anxious to learn. Evil comes too close to us then. As long as we can project evil into others, or into there and then, we think we can keep out of harm's way. But the tendency for evil is in all of us.

Technology and bureaucracy have developed since. The aggression of the human being is not yet domesticated. Norms and values could have blocked the rise of the Nazi system, but many of them were seen as 'bourgeois,' as relics of the not-yet-enlightened past.

Bauman states that we can resist totalitarian systems only when we reactivate the old values like solidarity and moral responsibility. The 'makeable' world concept can lead to intolerance and oppression. The aggression in human beings can be subdued when we learn to accept the 'otherness' of other human beings and stop viewing it as threatening, but in fact learn to appreciate it as an enrichment of ourselves and our culture. For that reason, democracy and pluralism are the conditions which decide about life and death.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

In the French paper 'Le Monde' of March 14th appeared an article written by Annette Cojean who interviewed five Austrians, three of them members of the group 'The Vienna Encounter'. I have translated one of the stories.

### **PETER, 41 years old, pediatricist**

I am the son of a Nazi, like so many people in Austria. This is not without consequences, because my parents' past influenced my life and shaped it. Therefore I would have preferred to be the son of a hero.

My father was born in a conservative family and as a student he joined the Party. The idealism of the Nazis inspired him, the praise of work, of beauty and of the community. He wanted to take part into something great, something that could transcend the individual. He was the youngest member of the family and he may have wanted to give himself some importance by becoming a Nazi. My mother was German and she worked together with members of the Hitlerjugend on farms. She found Hitler, this awful man, very attractive.

Being still a student of medicine in Vienna, the Party leaders ordered him to enroll in the army. Having obtained his licence they sent him to Russia and later on to France, where he became a prisoner of war. Back in Vienna he stood trial. In order to be able to pay his fine he sold his father's stamp collection. That's what he told me. In fact, I know only a few things. My father was not allowed to be a physician any longer, so he started a dentist practice. Two sons were born to him. I was born in 1959.

To all appearances we were a modern family, like in American movies: a house, a car, money, holidays in the mountains and at the sea side. But something was wrong. I was aware of it, but could not define what it was.

When I was on skiing holidays with other families, I experienced something different from what I felt at home. It was as if we always performed a play. It was as if my parents refused themselves the right to be happy. Their lives were devoted to their jobs, they did not have friends, they never went out. They were surrounded by a terrible secret which imprisoned them. With whom could they speak? Whom could they tell what they lived through in their youth? Nobody had the courage to do so.

When the t.v. showed a movie about the Nazis, I saw my parents cramped and suffering before the screen. They found no way to talk about it. Once my father just pronounced these words: "This is not true. They show only the horrors, but they never talk about the ideals." I listened to him seriously. I was just a little boy and I felt that I wanted to defend my father. That they told lies. That it was mere propaganda. But never, never I had the courage to ask questions.

In fact, my father did not have any principles he was proud of as a basis for the education of his children: no religion, no philosophy, no political engagement. And, which is remarkable, he did not take the Nazi political stand. He did not have the courage for engagement. But he always tracked Jews on t.v.: "Again one. They are everywhere. Don't trust them. You see how they support each other".

As an adolescent I had serious quarrels with my eldest brother who joined the neo-Nazi movement. Maybe he hoped, by his membership, to come closer to my father who, in my brother's opinion, did not love him so much. And indeed, my father thought that the young would take revenge. We had heavy disputes. I doubted everything. I attacked their words and behaviour. I felt myself the Jew of the family and this gave me the strength to leave them.

Being the child of a Nazi is not something one can take easily. It is as if one has not the right to have a real life, to live life to the full. And with guilt as a legacy.

I hope to find the indefinable thing that is missing in my life in the contacts with the children of the victims. In the beginning I was afraid. Afraid that they would condemn me and that they would see me in the same light as my parents, as culpable. As a henchman like my father. But the Jews in front of me were even more afraid of me. We talked a lot with each other, for hours and hours. Trust grew between us. I need this very much. The friendship with those of the 'other side' is very important to me.

I often say, that the family of Jörg Haider was surely like my own family. And that he

intends - like my brother - to revive the ideals of National Socialism. He declares that he does not allow Nazis to join his Party, but as soon as he feels attacked, he uses Nazi words and expressions to defend himself. I am sure that this Nazi language will give the old Nazis and sympathisers a signal that at least this man understands them. He allows them to keep their heads erect again. And he proves that one can come to power and glory even with this heritage and without denying the older generation.

I am not a follower of him, I voted the Greens. I try, nevertheless, to understand. And I don't believe that an instinctive fidelity towards my father - I don't deny that it is there - robs me of a clear insight.

There is no reason for panic or for making the people more diabolic than they are. Oh yes, my mother feels attracted to Haider. And yes, this man has something of a fascist. And indeed, our history makes us responsible to have a high degree of alertness. The Austria of 2000, however, is not the Austria of 1930. It is a calm country, without fanaticism. And finally, finally we are discussing the past. Finally, putting an end to the lies, we speak openly about it.

### **Announcement of New Foudation**

Please be advised of the existence of a new foundation called ***The Foundation Trust***.

You will find a very early version of the new web site at:

**<http://TheFoundationTrust.org>**

There you may learn in better detail of our mission statement, etc.

We welcome your commentary, suggested links, and so on.

Please be so kind as to pass this message on as you deem appropriate. Since our focus is related to genocide and related behavior, we have a strong desire to connect to those whose work relates to many areas and conflicts, including among others Palestine, South Africa, Cambodia, South America (re "The Disappeared", etc.), East Timor, Rwanda, Tibet, Congo, native or aboriginal groups in a number of countries, Armenia, genocide generally, and other importantly related areas and topics. (The personal projects of the founders of The Foundation Trust have related primarily to the Nazi-perpetrated Holocaust.)

With best wishes,

Samson Munn, M.D.

