

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

The majority of studies on war children focus on their psychological or social problems or on the historical context in which they went through traumatising events. In contrast with this general trend Perri Kaven made the political decisions that resulted in the evacuation of Finnish children to Denmark and Sweden the core of his dissertation.

In 2007 Alie Noorlag's book 'Een leven lang gezwegen' ('They do not speak about the past as long as they live') was published. It contains testimonies of former members of the Dutch National-Socialist Party and their relatives. Her book was translated into German. This translation appeared in November 2010, with the title 'Ein Leben lang geschwiegen'

In the Netherlands Hans Keilson had been known for years for his concept of sequential traumatising, but only now, after he celebrated his 100th birthday, there is a wider interest in the literary books he wrote and that for decades were more or less ignored.

Boudewijn de Groot is a well-known Dutch singer. At a ceremony in remembrance of those who perished during the war in the Japanese internment camps in the former colony of the Dutch East-Indies he performed two moving songs about his personal experiences.

The movie 'Unter Bauern' received very positive reactions. It pictures the story of Marga, Menno and Karin Spiegel who found hiding places offered to them by German farmers. The reviews of this movie are interesting and I would like to comment on two of them.

Liberationday was not for everyone that glorious day the usual tone of the speeches at commemoration ceremonies suggests. Only now, 65 after the war, some historians find the courage to study controversial issues and to draw attention to them.

In this Bulletin you will find some information on a meeting in Kiel, May 27 and 28. Since the language used in the workshops is German I have not translated the announcement.

In Reading the 4th international conference on war children will take place in September, 7 – 9. You will find the provisional programme and other useful information in this Bulletin.

Again I lost contact with some readers because they did not inform me of changes in their (e-mail) addresses. So I would like to stress the importance of sending me your new addresses!

I hope that you will appreciate the articles in this issue and that we will meet again in November. Your reactions and comments are welcome!

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

POLITICAL FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE EVACUATION OF FINNISH CHILDREN TO SWEDEN DURING WW II AND AFTER THE WAR

The evacuation of Finnish children to Sweden during WW II has often been called a “small migration”. Historical research on this subject is scarce, considering the great number of children involved.

My research looks for political factors involved in the evacuations during the Winter War (1939-40) and the Continuation War (1941-45) and the post-war period. The approach is wider than a purely humanitarian one. Political factors have had an impact in both Finland and Sweden, beginning from the decision-making process during the Winter War and ending with the discussion of the unexpected consequences of the evacuations in the Finnish Parliament in 1950.

The Winter War

The Winter War (30.11.1939–13.3.1940) witnessed the first child transports. About 8 000 children and 4 000 mothers were evacuated, but these figures are unreliable, because all evacuated children were not registered in the great hurry. This war was the model for future decision making. The transports were begun on the initiative of Swedes Maja Sandler, the wife of the resigned minister of foreign affairs Rickard Sandler, and Hanna Rydh-Munck af Rosenschöld, but this activity was soon accepted by the Swedish government because the humanitarian help in the form of child transports lightened the political burden of Prime Minister Hansson, who was not willing to help Finland militarily. It was help that Finland never asked for and it was rejected at the beginning. The negative response of the Finnish Minister Juho Koivisto was not taken very seriously. The political forces in Finland supporting child transports were stronger than those rejecting them. The major politicians in support belonged to Finland’s Swedish minority. In addition, close to 1 000 Finnish children remained in Sweden after the Winter War. No analysis was made of the reasons why these children did not return home because of the gratitude of the material help Finland got from Sweden.

The Continuation War

At the beginning of the Continuation War (25.6.1941–27.4.1945) negative opinion regarding child transports re-emerged in Finland. Karl-August Fagerholm implemented the transports in

September 1941. In 1942, members of the conservative parties in the Finnish Parliament expressed their fear of losing the children to the Swedes. They suggested that Finland should withdraw from the inter-Nordic agreement, according to which the adoptions were approved by the court of the country where the child resided. This initiative failed. Paavo Virkkunen, an influential member of the conservative party Kokoomus in Finland, favoured the so-called good-father system, where help was delivered to Finland in the form of money and goods. Virkkunen was concerned about the consequences of a long stay in a Swedish family. The risk of losing the children was clear.

The extreme conservative party (IKL, the Patriotic Movement of the Finnish People) wanted to alienate Finland from Sweden and bring Finland closer to Germany. Von Blücher, the German ambassador to Finland, had in his report to Berlin, mentioned the political consequences of the child transports. Among other things, they would bring Finland and Sweden closer to each other. He had also paid attention to the Nordic political orientation in Finland. He did not question or criticize the child transports. His main interest was to increase German political influence in Finland, and the Nordic political orientation was an obstacle. Fagerholm was politically ill-favoured by the Germans, because he had a strong Nordic political disposition and had criticised Germany's activities in Norway. The criticism of child transports was at the same time criticism of Fagerholm.

The official censorship organ of the Finnish government (VTL) denied all criticism of child transports in January 1942. The reasons were political. Statements made by members of the Finnish Parliament were also censored, because it was thought that they would offend the Swedes. In addition, the censorship organ used child transports as a means of active propaganda aimed at improving the relations between the two countries.

There was a Swedish effort to deliver help to Finland in the beginning of the Continuation War. A committee set up to help Finland and Norway was established in Sweden in 1941. Its chairman was Torsten Nothin, an influential Swedish politician. In December 1941 he appealed to the Swedish government to provide help to Finnish children under the authority of The International Red Cross. This plea had no results. The delivery of great amounts of food to Finland, which was now at war with Great Britain, had automatically caused reactions among the allies against the Swedish imports through Gothenburg. This included the import of oil, which was essential for the Swedish navy and air force. Oil was later used successfully to force a reduction in commerce between Sweden and Finland. The contradiction between Sweden's essential political interests and humanitarian help was solved in a way that did not harm the country's vital political interests. Instead of delivering help to Finland, Finnish children were transported to Sweden through the organisations that had already been created. International politics also had an impact on the decisions made regarding the help to Finnish children.

During the Continuation War about 50 000 children were evacuated to Sweden with the help of the Finnish authorities, 5 000 of these children were sent to receive medical treatment, especially on tuberculosis. About 15 000 children were evacuated privately. 4 000 children were evacuated to Denmark during the Continuation War. The total number of the Finnish children evacuated abroad during WW II makes about 80 000. It equals the figure of all children born in Finland in 1939. It's a world record.

The post-war period with the unexpected consequences

The Finnish Parliament was informed in 1948 that about 15 000 Finnish children still remained in Sweden. These children would stay there permanently. In 1950 the members of the Agrarian Party in Finland stated that Finland should actively strive to get the children back. The party on the left (SKDL, the Democratic Movement of Finnish People) also focused on the unexpected consequences of the child transports.

The Social Democrats, and largely Fagerholm, had been the main force in Finland behind the child transports. Members of the SKDL, controlled by Finland's Communist Party, stated that the war time authorities were responsible for this war loss. Many of the Finnish parents could not get their children back despite repeated requests. The discussion of the problem became political, for example von Born, a member of the Swedish minority party RKP, related this problem to foreign policy by stating that the request to repatriate the Finnish children would have negative political consequences for the relations between Finland and Sweden. He emphasized expressing feelings of gratitude to the Swedes. After the war a new foreign policy was established by Prime Minister (1944–1946) and later President (1946–1956) Juho Kusti Paasikivi. The main cornerstone of this policy was to establish good relations with the Soviet Union. The other, often forgotten, cornerstone was to simultaneously establish good relations with other Nordic countries, especially Sweden, as a counterbalance. The unexpected results of the child evacuation, a Swedish initiative, had violated the good relations with Sweden.

The motives of the Democratic Movement of Finnish People were much the same as those of the Patriotic Movement of Finnish People. Only the ideology was different. The Nordic political orientation was an obstacle to both parties. The position of the Democratic Movement of Finnish People was much better than that of the Patriotic Movement of Finnish People, because now one could clearly see the unexpected results, which included human tragedy for the many families who could not be re-united with their children despite their repeated requests.

The Swedes questioned the figure given to the Finnish Parliament regarding the number of children permanently remaining in Sweden. This research agrees with the Swedes. In a calculation based on Swedish population registers, the number of these children is about 7

100. The reliability of this figure is increased by the fact that the child allowance programme began in Sweden in 1948. The prerequisite to have this allowance was that the child be in the Swedish population register. It was not necessary for the child to have Swedish nationality.

The Finnish Parliament had false information about the number of Finnish children who remained in Sweden in 1942 and in 1950. There was no parliamentary control in Finland regarding child transports, because the decision was made by one cabinet member and speeches by MPs in the Finnish Parliament were censored, like all criticism regarding child transports to Sweden. In Great Britain parliamentary control worked better throughout the whole war, because the speeches regarding evacuation were not censored. At the beginning of the war certain members of the British Labour Party and the Welsh Nationalists were particularly outspoken about the scheme.

Fagerholm does not discuss to any great extent the child transports in his memoirs. He does not evaluate the process and results as a whole. This research provides some possibilities for an evaluation of this sort. The Swedish medical reports give a clear picture of the physical condition of the Finnish children when arriving in Sweden. The transports actually revealed how bad the situation of the poorest children was. According to Titmuss, similar observations were made in Great Britain during the British evacuations.

The achievement of national goals

The child transports saved the lives of approximately 2 900 children. Most of these children were removed to Sweden to receive treatment for illnesses, but many among the healthy children were undernourished and some suffered from the effects of tuberculosis. The medical inspection in Finland was not thorough.

If you compare the figure of 2 900 children saved and returned with the figure of about 7 100 children who remained permanently in Sweden, you may draw the conclusion that Finland as a country failed to benefit from the child transports, and that the whole operation was a political mistake with far-reaching consequences. The basic goal of the operation was to save lives and have absolutely all the children return to Finland after the war.

The difficulties with the repatriation of the children were mainly psychological. The level of child psychology in Finland at that time was low. One may question the report by Professor Martti Kaila regarding the adaptation of children to their families back in Finland. Anna Freud's warnings concerning the difficulties that arise when child evacuees return are also valid in Finland. Freud viewed the emotional life of children in a way different from Kaila: the physical survival of a small child forces her to create strong emotional ties to the person who is looking after her. This, a characteristic of all small children, occurred with the Finnish

children too, and it was something the political decision makers in Finland could not see during and after the war. It is a characteristic of all little children. Yet, such experiences were already evident during the Winter War.

The best possible solution had been to limit the child transports only to children in need of medical treatment. Children from large and poor families had been helped by organising meals and by buying food from Denmark with Swedish money. Assisting Finland by all possible means should have been the basic goal of Fagerholm in September 1941, when the offer of child transports came from Sweden. Fagerholm felt gratitude towards the Swedes. The risks of loosing the children became clear to him only in 1943.

War children to-day

The war children are today a rather scattered and diffuse group of people. Emotionally, part of these children remained in Sweden after the war. There is no clear collective memory, only individual memories; the collective memory of the war children has partly been shaped later through the activities of the war child associations. The main difference between the children evacuated in Finland (for example from Karelia to safer areas with their families) and the war children, who were sent abroad, is that the war children lack a shared story and experience with their families. They were “outsiders”. The whole matter is sensitive to many of such mothers and discussing the subject has often been avoided in families. The war-time censorship has continued in families through silence and avoidance and Finnish politicians and Finnish families had to face each other on this issue after the war. The lack of all-inclusive historical research has also prevented the formation of a collective awareness among war children returned to Finland or those remaining permanently abroad.

Knowledge of historical facts will help war children by providing an opportunity to create an all-inclusive approach to the past. Personal experiences should be regarded as part of a large historical entity shadowed by war and where many political factors were at work in both Finland and Sweden.

Pertti Kavén
Ph.D.

HANS KEILSON – psychiatrist and author

In the Netherlands Hans Keilson is a well-known psychiatrist who got his doctor's degree in 1979 with his dissertation on the after-effects of war traumas. In the late forties he helped Jewish war orphans to cope with the psychological problems caused by the stressful circumstances they lived in and the traumatising events they went through during and after the war. At the time some of his former clients objected to his use of their stories in his dissertation: 'He builds his career on our misery'. Even at present some people feel 'betrayed' by their former therapist. Some others agree that there is some reason for unpleasant feelings, because Keilson was rather careless by not using pseudonyms for his clients but their initials – so that they could easily be identified.

Keilson introduced the concept of sequential traumatising. Very often people do not meet with only one traumatising event, but have to face a series of stressful situations. The effects of the first traumatising event is not worked through before a next stressful event occurs. The new traumatising events cause a cumulation of effects, that are later on difficult to work through. In Keilson's opinion trauma in fact cannot be healed, but people can succeed in reaching a more or less stable emotional state of mind and can regain control of their lives. The more support a traumatized person receives, the more he will succeed in coming to grips.

From the interview with Keilson that was published in the NIW (New Israelite Weekly) on the occasion of his 101st birthday I learned about his books and the praise he received from Francine Prose in her review in the New York Times, August 5, 2010. With pleasure I quote here some passages from this article.

As Darkness Falls

'For busy, harried or distractible readers who have the time and energy only to skim the opening paragraph of a review, I'll say this as quickly and clearly as possible: 'The Death of the Adversary' and 'Comedy in a Minor Key' are masterpieces, and Hans Keilson is a genius.

First published in the Netherlands in 1947, 'Comedy in a Minor Key' is only now appearing in English in an eloquent translation by Damion Searls. 'The Death of the Adversary' (skillfully translated by Ivo Jarosy) appeared here in 1962, but has long been out of print. Born in 1909, their author, the centenarian Keilson, lives with his wife in a village near Amsterdam where until recently he practiced medicine, a profession he followed in his native Germany until the Nuremberg laws forced him to flee to the Netherlands. There he was active in the Dutch resistance and later became known for his work with children traumatized by the war.

Although the novels are quite different, both are set in Nazi-occupied Europe and display their author's eye for perfectly illustrative yet wholly unexpected incident and detail, as well as a talent for storytelling and his extraordinarily subtle and penetrating understanding of human nature. But perhaps the most distinctive aspect they share is the formal daring of the relationship between subject matter and tone. Rarely has a finer, more closely focused lens been used to study such a broad and brutal panorama, mimetically conveying a failure to come to grips with reality by refusing to call that reality by its proper name.

This unusual strategy is employed throughout 'The Death of the Adversary', whose narrator, a young man growing up during the ascendancy of National Socialism, is at once obsessed with Hitler and unable to speak or even think the name of the Führer, whom he can refer to only as 'my enemy', or occasionally, 'B'. The word 'Nazi' is never mentioned, and only the most coded allusions are made to the fact that the protagonist is Jewish.

With seeming effortlessness, Keilson performs the difficult trick of showing how a single psyche can embrace many contradictory thoughts, and how naturally extreme intelligence and sensitivity can coexist with obtuseness, denial and self-deception. To say that reading this novel makes it impossible not to understand how so many European Jews underestimated the growing menace of Nazism is to acknowledge only a fraction of its range. In fact the novel shows us how human beings, in any place, at any time, protectively shield themselves from the most frightening truths of their private lives and their historical moment.

Coded language and circumlocution are also factors in 'Comedy in a Minor Key', but the novel's tone is lighter and indeed, comedic, its subject not violence but the goofy, quotidian kindness that is one possible response to violence. Wim and Marie, an ordinary Dutch bookkeeper and his wife, have agreed, more from reflexive decency than careful reflection, to hide a Jewish perfume salesman whom they know only as Nico. Unlike the resolute resistance heroes familiar to us from books and films, Wim and Marie are dithering and uncertain. Desperately trying to do the right thing beyond the right thing they are doing. Fretting over the serious and trivial problems of sheltering Nico, they seem to have wandered in from a Beckett play of a Katherine Mansfield short story.

Nico dies of natural causes, inspiring a series of elegant plot twists. And Wim, behaving with a typical mixture of tenderness and anxiety, disposes of the body in a nearby park. Only after the corpse has been found, rescued from under a bench, does Maria allow herself thoughts that seem plausible, unexceptional, yet wildly brave in how much they reveal about the secret workings of the heart. Having grown attached to their boarder, she is grief-stricken, but also slightly annoyed at the surprising turn things have taken:

'She had secretly imagined what it would be like on liberation day, the three of them arm in arm walking out of their house...How the neighbours and everyone on the street would look when he suddenly walked out of their house and strolled up and down the street with them. It would give them a little sense of satisfaction, and everyone who makes a sacrifice needs a little sense of satisfaction. And then you'd feel that you, you personally, even if only just a little bit, had won the war. It all had gone up in smoke. It wasn't even a dream anymore. None of the three of them had any luck. But really, him least of all. Poor Nico!'

That passage should give you some sense of Hans Keilson's particular and astonishing gifts. Rarely have such harrowing narratives been related with such wry, off-kilter humor, and in so quiet a whisper. Read these books and join me in adding him to the list, which each of us must compose on our own, of the world's very greatest writers.'

One can wonder why Keilson's books, although published in Germany and in the Netherlands as early as 1947 and 1959 did not get the attention anchoring them in the general memory. As a psychiatrist he was known, his authorship forgotten until his books were reprinted last autumn. It is hard to avoid the impression that his view on the complexity of the human mind, the coexistence of good and bad impulses at the same time in the human being is to a great extent due to this oblivion, especially in the Netherlands where, for decades, people clung to the myth of right and wrong.

GSB

Hans Keilson, *The Death of the Adversary*, transl. by Ivo Jarosa, ed. Farrar, Straus & Giroux
Hans Keilson, *Comedy in a Minor Key*, transl. by Damion Searls, ed. Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Hans Keilson, *Komödie in Moll* (1947)
Hans Keilson, *Der Tod des Widersachers* (1959)

BITTER LIBERATION

At age 6 I saw a picture that made a profound impression. In the background there are houses in ruins and in the foreground one sees a piece of cardboard attached to the barbed wire on which is written: This WAS Ochten. At that time I did not know what Ochten was and the meaning of the picture, but the desolation of the scene touched me deeply.

Two years later we moved to another part of the Netherlands, to a village on the river Waal. I visited a primary school in a neighbouring village and there our teacher told us the story of Ochten, the village that was situated just opposite on the other side of the river. In September 1944, the southern provinces of the Netherlands had been liberated but because the Allied forces had failed to seize the bridge of Arnhem, the northern provinces remained occupied by the Germans. The frontline ran partly along the river Waal, so the south bank was in control of the Allies, the north bank in control of the Germans. To have their hands free for the fight, the Allied commanders and the Germans as well ordered the civil population to leave these areas. Some parts of the region in which Ochten is situated were flooded by the water of the small river Linge one of the dykes having been hit by a bomb. The inhabitants of Ochten and the villagers in that area were evacuated as well. Ochten was most terribly damaged by the shootings of both armies. When the inhabitants returned they found a place where only some houses were intact, many houses were completely destroyed and most of the others damaged in such a way that rebuilding was impossible. The man or woman who wrote 'This WAS Ochten' was right. These words expressed the inhabitants' despair and bitterness that the liberation had thrown on their hands a devastation they had no idea how to master. Nevertheless, they found somewhere the courage to rebuild their houses and their lives.

When one visits Ochten at present (and my husband and I often do, because there is a good restaurant with a river view and we like the coffee!), one sees immediately that the houses in the centre of the village show the typical style of the fifties. Here and there one sees houses built before the war, but the overwhelming majority of them is new.

In one of the villages, more to the east, in the neighbourhood of Nijmegen, lived Wim who was 5 years old when the war began in May 1940. His family lived in the middle of the fields and it took him almost an hour to walk to his school. In the last months of the war this was very dangerous. By chance he was not hit when one of the Allied planes crashed not far from the road on which he walked. He had not heard the air raid alarm. The smell of the burning plane and the shock that the pilot was still in there remained with him all his life.

Wim and the family heard how the planes unloaded their bombs on the German towns of Emmerich and Kleve and they hid in the shelter under their house. Wim was aware of the fact that they could be hit by a bomb as well but he could not express his fears unless by frightening his younger brothers and sisters.

In September 1941, his father was summoned to leave for Germany to serve in the Arbeitseinsatz. His mother had to look after her 6 children all alone and she did well, although it was not easy in the dangerous war situation. In 1944 his father managed to escape and to return, but he had to go into hiding. He found a safe place in the brick-works near the river, where there were many rooms nobody ever visited. When the authorities summoned the population to leave the village mother took the decision to join her husband in the brick-works. One day Wim saw two German soldiers approaching and he feared they were coming to catch his father. They were certainly informed well, because they walked straight to the hiding place. His mother talked to them, her baby on her arm, and managed to convince them that her husband was not there. What a relief! But now they could no longer avoid evacuation and the next day they left their region and set out to the north. Most of the way they had to walk, sometimes they could cover a distance sitting on a cart. They had only some bags for luggage and they were often very hungry. They had to beg for food. One day

Wim received a slice of bread from a German soldier which he ate gladly but also in deep confusion: the enemy had had mercy, whereas many Dutch farmers had refused to give them something to eat.

They found lodgings in a village in the east of the country, 100 kilometres from their village, where the evacuees had to undergo the humiliation of being cleaned in one hall, adults and children alike. The children were told to put their noses against the walls and not to look behind them until the order was given that they could do so. The adults could take off their clothes and could be washed, women and men, out of the sight of the kids. But these children all the same felt the shameful tension of the event.

Wim, his father and two of his brothers found a shelter in another house than his mother and the rest of the family. Because his father's absence which had lasted for almost 4 years, the relationship with him was rather difficult and Wim longed for his mother.

After the war they returned to their village, but Wim felt uprooted. He had seen so many awful things that his childhood had ended for good, the innocence of the child was lost for ever. He did not manage to study well, too full of the difficult events he had gone through and which remained in his mind. He was not able to speak about them or to work through them. When he started to work in the brick-works and was sent to the stable to take the horse, he suddenly remembered the dead pilots who had been laid in that stable after an air-raid and of which he knew that the youngest had been only 19 years old. He could not enter that place, but his boss was unrelenting and Wim could not explain what terrified him.

His physical and mental health caused him multiple problems and at the age of 50 he had to leave his job. Four years later he came across a brochure describing psychological problems of war children and one week later his attention was caught by an ad in a paper in which people were invited to join a group of war children. In this group Wim learned that many other people of his age suffered from what they lived through during the war. His story was accepted, although for a long time he felt that his story was less important than that of the Jewish people who had been in hiding or the people who had stayed in the Japanese internment camps. In this group he could express his bitterness about the liberation that had not given him any feeling of being liberated.

Wim and his family found their house intact. But many returning families found that belongings had disappeared, that people had ravaged their houses, broken the furniture, torn the clothes, mashed up the house with rubbish and stools.

Before the Germans left the villages because of their retreat, they very often took with them valuables and wrecked the place. But there are several villages in the area of Ochten where there was no looting at all before the Allied forces took over control. And it was the soldiers of the Allied forces who robbed and looted the houses. This is an issue hardly known in the Netherlands, because these events did not fit in the glorious story of the liberation and they were ignored for almost 65 years.

Last year three historians organised an exhibition on war issues and they published a book. They dedicated one chapter to the village of Ochten and the area it is situated in and they drew attention to the looting by the Allied soldiers. They studied official documents in which the looting problem was discussed at the time. The Dutch Prime Minister Gebrandy wrote a report of 33 pages on the issue and mentioned among other shameful events that 8 of the 17 mayors from the Nijmegen area reported during a meeting that they had had to hand over the community treasury to the Allied forces. Civil servants in several villages wrote letters to the authorities to describe to them the devastation and the looting of the houses. Military authorities reported the wreckage caused by Allied soldiers as well. Dutch officials tried to contact high ranked officers in the Allied forces to inform them of these embarrassing events. Major-General Kruls wrote to the head of the Civil Affairs, Brigadier-General De Cazenove: 'This looting, mainly attributed to American troops, deeply impressed the already bitterly beaten population'.

De Cazenove tried to reach Eisenhower, but did not succeed and he received orders from Brussels to reply in the following way:

‘While an occasional act of looting does most regrettably occur in spite of every effort, it is hoped that you will draw the attention of Major-General Kruls to the almost universal good behaviour and honesty of the troops and ask him to bear that in mind when considering the relatively small number of cases of bad behaviour which come to his notice.’

Of course, the looting was not ordered by the military authorities, they were not acts of deliberate tactics like the Germans had used. The British and American soldiers (and later on the Canadian as well) took the initiative personally, but it was not a relatively small number of men that were involved.

Meanwhile, the Dutch did not succeed in having their complaints heard at the highest level. That is to say, finally, in May 1945, after the surrender of the Germans, Montgomery published the following message:

‘During periods of active fighting the orders and regulations regarding looting are liable to be interpreted somewhat loosely, and in a very flexible manner’. ... ‘now that we have stopped fighting we must get this matter on a very firm foundation. Looting by individuals, or bodies of individuals, for personal gain is forbidden; all cases of contravention of this order will be tried by court-martial, whatever the rank of the individual concerned.’

The inhabitants of the villages looted by the Allied forces kept silent for a long time, each year feeling uneasy at the commemoration ceremonies when the liberators were praised as the heroes who had brought peace. They had a far different story to tell, but who, after the war, was interested in the black pages of the liberation story?

People in Den Haag and Nijmegen who became victims because of Allied bombs that ruined parts of their cities, found it very difficult to blame the Allied pilots for their mistakes and kept silent for more than 50 years before they dared to express their bitterness and accusations. Looting is not a mistake, it is a deliberate act. Bitterness about this robbery could never be expressed until recently.

The three historians have seen the need to have all aspects of the war and the liberation being studied and described, the right of people to have their particular war experiences told and recorded, even if these experiences spoil the cherished images of the brave liberators.

Martin Bossenbroek, Gerard Nijssen en Erik Willems: ‘Oranje bitter’,

ed. Waanders 2010

Wim’s story is related in: ‘**Niet vanzelfsprekend**, een dialoog tussen kinderen van de oorlog.’ Ed. Kombi 2000

I AM A SON

I am a son of the gray beaches in the West,
although the sand was red where I was born.
I am vaguely linked to that place
where started what has happened since.
There was my mother in the most vulnerable situation of her life,
there she gave birth to me in the midst of filth.
While those who barely were alive, grateful for what was left to them,
remained at their place
the Japanese dumped my mother’s body in a pit.

Nothing I know and little did I hear,
feeling was the only way left to me.
Always I took care not to disturb this vagueness.
I’ll never go back to where it started:

could I enjoy the silver white beaches
if I did not see how they took her to the pit
on a cart loaden with inanimate corpses, the empty dead hands
she used to pray for peace.

Now I live here in light, warm cities,
I am on the stage and sing my supreme songs,
Healthy am I and I enjoy peace.
But she who loved me doesn't know.
Should I go to those peaceful green fields
and look for that white cross
on which they listed not more than her name.
That name, I know already, - so I stay home.

GLAZED PICTURES

I saw my father in the picture,
in his white tropical wear.
And I asked him about the past,
when he was a woman-chaser
just like so many other men in the tropics,
beneath the palms of Soerabaja,
in the green alleys of Bandoeng,
surrounded by the fragrances of Djeroek Peroet.
But he kept silent, like always,
and this time it was for good.

I saw my mother in the picture,
a small white butterfly.
I asked her about the past,
when she was a young mother,
not hampered by any fear,
on the beach of Soerabaja,
in the cool gardens of Bandoeng,
surrounded by the noises of the Perkoetoet.
But she kept silent.
She would have liked to speak,
but she had been silenced for ever.

I see myself in the picture,
an old grey boy.
I don't know what the past was like,
when I was a new-born kid,
my life not yet defiled by the blood of Batavia,
the starving in Tjideng,
and the humiliating bowing for the Japanese.

Where my mother kept silent,
where my father kept silent,
because there was no other way,
and kept silent ever since.

Boudewijn de Groot

Alie Noorlag: Ein Leben lang geschwiegen

In 2007 Alie Noorlag published the results of a study in which she interviewed a couple of Dutch people who collaborated with the German Occupiers during the war and their relatives. Her study received positive reactions in the Dutch media and in Israël and in Germany people appreciated her work as well.

Alie lives in one of the northern provinces of the Netherlands. She is the chairwoman of the Regional Committee 'Church and Israel' Groningen-Drenthe of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. She has many good contacts with Germans living at the other side of the frontier and organises together with them activities in the field of historical research and inter-religious meetings.

Two of her German colleagues read her book and thought it would be worthwhile to have it translated in the German language. In Germany, especially in the region close to the Netherlands, many people are interested in knowing the effects of the German warfare on the people in the neighbouring country.

Alie contacted a translation agency and had her book translated. Although a native speaker had cooperated, there were a couple of issues that needed a better, a more 'German' translation. Alie and her two German colleagues spent a number of hours together to have the translation revised before it was sent to the publishing company. The book appeared in a series of publications initiated by the Stiftung Schulgeschichte des Bezirksverbandes Weser-Ems der Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft, a foundation editing publications on education and sciences.

One of her colleagues, Gernot Beykirch, had a study published on Jewish education and the Jewish school in Leer during the Nazi period in this series some years ago. The other, Klaus Klattenhoff, prepared the layout of the manuscript before it was sent to the publishing company, he is an expert in this field.

The presentation of the German book took place in the Dokumentations- und Informationszentrum (Documentation and Information Centre) in Papenburg, a centre organising meetings and exhibitions on historical and ethical issues. The media, Dutch as well as German, were interested in the event and before and after this day Alie Noorlag was interviewed several times. More than 100 people were present at the book ceremony, people of all kinds of backgrounds, young and old, Dutch, German and Israeli, interviewees and historians, war children of several categories.

This meant a lot to Alie who on the occasion of the publishing of her book in 2007 expressed the hope that her study would promote a better understanding between people. She is moved to see how Germans have the courage to face the painful effects of what the generation of their (grand)parents has wrought on the people of Europe. She is grateful that her work is indeed seen as a way to bridge the gaps between people and is appreciated as a contribution to the bringing of peace nearer.

Alie Noorlag 'Ein Leben lang geschwiegen'

Zeugnisse ehemaliger Mitglieder der niederländischen Nationalsozialistischen Bewegung (NSB) und ihrer Familien

BIS-Verlag der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, 2010

ISBN 978-3-8142-2228-8

UNTER BAUERN

The movie 'Unter Bauern' (Amongst farmers) is based on the memories of Marga Spiegel, published in 1965 (Retter in der Nacht) and reprinted in 2009.

The Israeli producer, Ludi Boeken, felt immediate affinity with the story, being the son of survivors who in the Netherlands found a hiding place.

The movie shows the events Marga, her husband Menno and their daughter Karin went through between February 1943 and the end of the war, May 1945. Heinrich Aschoff, the owner of the farm where Marga and her daughter had been given a hiding place, knew Menno because of their business contacts and he had offered him help in case of... When Menno was ordered to show up and have his personal documents verified, the time had come to accept Aschoff's help. Menno himself found shelter at another farm, of the Pentrup family.

The Aschoffs were Party members, pragmatic reasons had been more important than ideological ones in the decision to join the party. Nevertheless, it is special that these Party members were ready to take the risk to be unmasked as 'Judenhelper' and get punished severely. Heinrich countered his wife's objections with: 'These are also human beings, they are people of Westfalen like we are'. As a good Roman Catholic he was convinced he had to obey the divine commandments more than the orders of the Party. Moreover he shared with Menno the experiences of the front in the first World War where they both had received the Iron Cross.

The farmers' daughter, Anni, was an active member in the Nazi youth movement and she had a boy friend who was a group leader in the Hitlerjugend. When German people from the bombed cities had arrived in the village to find a shelter, one of the women recognised Marga Spiegel. For Anni this meant a difficult dilemma: as a Jungmädchel member she was supposed to hate Marga and to denounce her, but as the person she was herself she liked Marga and wanted to save her. Anni had the strength to follow her heart. She became convinced that her parents did the only one thing one can do in these difficult circumstances, that is saving people from persecution and death.

A good book and a good movie appeals to the readers' and the audience's power to identify with the main characters, to live through their dilemmas, to struggle with their difficult choices, to face the existential questions in life. 'Unter Bauern' is such a movie.

Achsa Vissel, a young journalist who wrote a review in the Dutch magazine NIW (New Israelite Weekly) said:

'The motto of the movie is the kabbalistic wisdom that someone who saves one life, saves in fact the whole world. And that is an undoubtable truth. This movie honours the few people who could not accept that innocent compatriots were doomed to be murdered, and risked their own lives to have that of others saved. In the lion's den they proved to have the courage to take the risk and one wonders if one would have had that same courage in those circumstances.'

These lines, written by the daughter of Holocaust-survivors, impress me a lot, because this young woman shows her readiness and ability to identify with people in another period and in very different circumstances than her own and above all, because she has the courage to admit that she is not sure that she would have made the right choice, there and then.

Henk Maurits wrote in his review, published in Cogiscope, that he supposes that far more than the 455 Germans who received the YadvaShem reward 'Righteous Gentile' helped Jews to escape their persecution. This shows that he views Germans no longer as guilty because of the mere fact they are Germans. He has learned to differentiate and judge them on what they actually did or failed to do and does not belong to those who still today cling to the concept of the collective guilt of the Germans.

Not only the movie, but also the commentaries, give me hope, that we as human beings can learn to differentiate and leave behind us the simple analyses that for such a long time after the war have troubled good relationships between countries and people.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

BELASTENDE BINDUNGEN? 27. und 28. Mai 2011

Psychotherapeutisches Seminar für Betroffene und Helfer

Tagungsort Falkstraße 9/Klosterkirchhof, D-24103-Kiel

Leitung: Dr.H. Spranger

Bindungen zwischen Eltern und Kindern können von beiden Generationen aus als schwer belastet empfunden werden.

Sind Eltern traumatisiert, fließen womöglich zusätzlich unerledigte Erfahrungsinhalte und Handlungsimpulse in die Beziehungen mit ein.

Unverarbeitete Schuld- und Gewaltinhalte finden ihren Weg in die emotionalen Erbschaften, die die Eltern ihren Kindern unbewusst hinterlassen. Das gilt im besonderen Maße auch für die Generation der Kriegskinder und deren Kinder. Hier wird die Verstrickung noch einmal offenbar.

Die Kinder der KreigsKinder leiden unter ihren Eltern.

Die Veranstaltung beinhaltet sechs Selbsterfahrungseinheiten.

Die Teilnehmerzahl ist begrenzt.

Die Gruppen werden von drei Therapeutinnen geleitet:

Ilse Maier, Dipl. Sozialpädagogin, Ausbildung in analytischer Familientherapie und Familienstellen. Fon: 0431-578462, mail : maier@zukunftswerkstatt-Kiel.de

Uta Peter, Dipl.Musiktherapeutin BZFO, Musikstudium Rh.Hochschule Köln/Düsseldorf, Diplommusiktherapiestudium in HH, Supervisionsausbildung i.Berlin, Fon: 0431-5308048

Dr. Helga Spranger, FÄ f.Neurologie und Psychiatrie, Psychotherapie, FÄ f. Psychotherapeutische Medizin, Leitung tiefenpsychologisch fundierter analytisch orientierter Selbsterfahrungsgruppen für Kriegskinder- und Enkel. Vorsitzende des Vereins kriegskind.de. Fon: 04349-919457, mail:kriegskinder@web.de

Freitag den 27.Mai

14:00 Ankommen und Erfrischung

14:15 Begrüßung und Einführung in das Thema, H.Spranger

15:00 – 16:30 Gruppensitzung 1

17:00 – 18:30 Gruppensitzung 2

Samstag den 28.Mai

9:30 – 11:00 Gruppensitzung 3

11:30 – 13:00 “ 4

14:00 – 15:30 “ 5

16:00 – 17:30 “ 6

17:45 Plenum, Abschluss und Ausblick

Die Veranstaltung ist mit 17 Fortbildungspunkten von der ÄKSH anerkannt

'THE LOST CHILDHOODS OF WARTIME'

4th INTERNATIONAL WAR CHILD CONFERENCE.

SEPT 7th – 9th 2011*

9.00 – 5.30 (9.00 – 4.00 Friday)

UNIVERSITY OF READING.

PALMER BUILDING.

WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS.

The 4th International Conference on War Children will take place at the University of Reading from the 7th-9th September 2011. This year it will be on the main campus at Whiteknights which will be much more convenient for accommodation, catering and travel arrangements. The event will be located in a large, comfortable, fully-equipped lecture room.

Bearing in mind financial constraints, as in previous years, we have tried to keep the charges to a minimum, so the all-inclusive cost for the conference will be £235pp. This will cover Bed and Breakfast for two nights in single en-suite rooms, three lunches and two dinners, including an official conference dinner on the Thursday evening.

It excludes teas and coffees, because the conference room is adjacent to a Coffee Shop, and wine with dinner. The latter can be purchased on the evening.

*Accommodation and breakfast will be available overnight on the 6th at any extra charge of £42.

Day tickets, to include Lunch, will be available at £25pp

Programmes will be sent in advance of the conference.

This year we have secured the services of Jennifer Allison who will deal with any 'housekeeping' issues.

So, in order to **book your place**, please contact her asap on:-

j.allison@reading.ac.uk

and she will give you payment details.

DAY 1 7th Sept.

9-15 - 9.45 registration

9.45 OPENING COMMENTS. **Prof. Andy Knapp**

10 – 11.30 SESSION 1

- Dr Lindsey Dodd. Radio Broadcasting to French children in World War Two: Barbar, bombs and the BBC.
- Prof. Baard Borge. Associative Stigmatisation of Collaborators descendants in Norway.
- Dr Anne Nehlin. Saving Children; humanitarianism or a political necessity.

12 – 13.00 SESSION 2

- Helga Lees. Sudeten War Children. A Central European Tragedy
- Dr Mai Maddison. Nowhere to go and nowhere to stay.

13.00-14.00 LUNCH

14.00 – 15.30 SESSION 3

- Dr Brita Stenius-Aarniala MD. Finnish Archive Project
- Yvonne Kyriacides . Photographic representation of children in extreme conflict
- Dr Pertti Kaven. In the shadow of Humanity. Political Factors in the Evacuation of children from Finland to Sweden 1939-46

16.00-17.30 **SESSION 4**

- Building a network; Supporting the social and emotional difficulties of children with parents in the armed forces.
- Lt. Col. Christopher MacGregor. Servicemen's Children. The Macgregor/Parsons Project.
- SOTALAPSI GROUP....CONFERENCE 'PLUG'
- Prof.Jolanta Daszynska. The miracle saved - the story of one German child saved from the Russian massacre in 1945

17-30 – 18.00 (CIRCLE TIME)

19.00 DINNER

DAY 2. Sept 8th

9.30 – 11.00 **SESSION 5**

- Natalia Benjamin . 70 years on: the Basque "children" recall their exile in Great Britain.
- Dr Nigel Stanley. Experiences of British children evacuated from Malaya after the Japanese invasion'.
- Ruth Barnett. Gypsy Children: the Part of the Holocaust that has not Ended".

11.30 – 13.00 **SESSION 6**

- Finbar Brown (Student) How has war been reflected in Youth Culture since 1956?
- Megan Brown (Student) The Second World War finished in 1945 but for many children the war has never ended'. To what extent is this statement true?
- Beth Lipoff. (Student) Flight to a strange country: The Kindertransport Experience".
- Ben McCarthy. (Student) Did the American Government renege on their responsibilities for the children of GIs and Vietnamese women?
- Rachel Escott (Student) The Second World War finished in 1945 but for many children the war has never ended'. To what extent is this statement true?
- Rhiannon Roberts. (Student) 'The Second World War Finished in 1945 but for many children the war has never ended.' To what extent is this statement true.
- Sarah O'Donnell. (Student) Propaganda surrounding the British Evacuation Schemes 1939-45

13.00 – 14.00 LUNCH

14.00 – 15.30 **SESSION 7**

- Ali Bathie. The impact of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict on children
- David Harrold/Dr Mohamed Atwhil . Children's Trauma Clinic in Palestine. A report
- Wym Mathies. 'Lick My Jew'

16.00 – 17.30 **SESSION 8**

- Prof. Pentti Anderson. Determinants of Individual Vulnerability in Finnish Evacuees. Some results from case-control studies.
- Dr Catherine Earl. Veterans and their families in post-conflict Vietnam."
- Prof. Sidney Brown. Getting back to normal. The post-war challenges for evacuated teachers and their pupils

17.30 – 18.00 FILM. Julie. A Gypsy survivor of Auschwitz

19.00 – CONFERENCE DINNER

DAY 3 Sept 9th

9.30 – 11.00 **SESSION 9**

- Dr Sue Wheatcroft. Holding their own. The contribution made to the war effort 1939-45 by Disabled Children and adolescents.
- Susan Soyinka . From East End to Lands End. The Evacuation of Jew's Free School, London, to Mousehole in Cornwall during World War Two
- Dr Christine Ryan. Lessons from the Field: A case study of NGOs in Southern Sudan working with former child soldiers of the SPLA.

11.30-13.00 **SESSION 10**

- Julie Summers. The Anguish of the Elders. The effect of evacuation on parents and foster families.
- Gonda Scheffel-Baars. The Quest for Truth. Beyond stereotypes and prejudices.
- John Oakes. Initiations. Preparing Children to Kill

13.00 – 14.00 LUNCH

14.00 – 16.00 **SESSION 11**

- Prof. Martin Parsons. Wartime Education
- Prof. Bob Rooke
- Prof. Erwin Erhardt III

PLENARY

CLOSURE. 16.30

WEBSITES

Organisation of Children of Dutch Collaborators:

www.werkgroepherkenning.nl

Organisation of Children of War of different Backgrounds:

www.stichting-kombi.nl

Organisation of Danish Children of War, Danske Krigsboern Foerening:

www.krigsboern.dk

Norwegian Children of War Association, Norges Krigsbarnforbund:

www.nkbfn.no

Organization of Norwegian NS Children:

www.nazichildren.com

Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn, Norway:

<http://home.no.net/lebenorg>

Organisation of NS-children Vennetreff:

<http://home.no.net/nsbarn>

Risikforbundet Finska Krigsbarn: (in swedish)

www.krigsbarn.se

Organisation of Finnish Children of War, Seundun Sotalapset:

www.sotalapset.fi

TRT, To Reflect and Trust, Organisation for encounters between descendants of victims and descendants of perpetrators:

www.torelectandtrust.org

Organisation of children of victims and children of the perpetrators:

www.one-by-one.org

Austrian Encounter, organisation for encounters between children of the victims and children of the perpetrators in Austria:

www.nach.ws

Dachau Institut Psychologie und Pädagogik:

www.Dachau-institut.de

Kriegskind Deutschland:

www.kriegskind.de

Website for the postwar-generation:

www.Forumkriegsenkel.com

Evacuees Reunion Association

www.evacuees.org.uk

Researchproject 'War and Children Identity Project', Bergen, Norway

www.warandchildren.org

Researchproject University München 'Kriegskindheit'

www.warchildhood.net

Coeurs Sans Frontières – Herzen Ohne Grenzen

www.coeurssansfrontieres.biz

Organisation d'enfants de guerre

www.nesdelaliberation.fr

Organisation of Us-descendants in Belgium

www.usad-ww2.be

Childsurvivors of the Holocaust in Australië

www.paulvalent.com

International organisation for educational and professional development focused on themes like racism, prejudices and antisemitism

www.facinghistory.org

Aktion Sühnezeigen Friedensdienste

www.asf-ev.de

Organisation of German Lebensbornkinder

www.lebensspuren-deutschland.eu

International Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Children born of War (INIRC)

www.childrenbornofwar.org

War-descendants Forum Kriegsenkel

www.forumkriegsenkel.com

Organisation Genocide Prevention Now

www.genocidepreventionnow.org