

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

I would like to open this issue of the International Bulletin with some lines on Dan Bar-On who passed away on the 4th of September. I co-operated with him between 1987 and 1994 and without this joint work and the international contacts resulting from this work, I guess the International Bulletin would never have existed.

Sakino Mathilde Sternberg participated in a three year training program 'Storytelling in conflict situations' facilitated by Dan Bar-On and she shares with us some of her experiences during this program and her memories of Dan.

On the 1st of November a small group met in one of the buildings of the Freie Universität in Berlin to discuss the founding of an International Dialogue Center, one of the outcomes of the training program. I wrote a short impression of the meeting.

In his book 'War Child' Martin Parsons devoted one chapter to today's child soldiers. He gave me permission to publish a couple of paragraphs from this text.

In a magazine edited by an organisation providing development aid I came across an article of Ton van der Lee who describes a traditional African form of trial, the 'bitter cup', that intends to re-integrate perpetrators after they have served their sentence.

Martin Parsons invited a couple of war-child scholars to collaborate on an interdisciplinary study of war children. In October the book 'Children: The Invisible Victims of War' was launched in London.

In the International Journal of Evacuee and War Child Studies, issue 5 (January 2008) Kaija Olausson wrote on the topic 'War consciousness'. She allowed me to publish her text in the International Bulletin.

Even if one is born after the war, listening to the stories of the war children can make tangible the blast of the bombings one did not experience oneself. Martin wrote a moving poem on this issue.

My husband Ton Scheffel, member of the board of our self-help organisation Herkenning, participated in a symposium in Kiel and he reports on the papers that were presented and the resulting discussions.

Luke Holland started with his project 'Final Account' in which he intends to interview Nazis and collaborators. According to him it is important to record their testimonies, because they form part of the same chapter in European history as the testimonies of the victims. The generations to come deserve a comprehensive record of their history, with testimonies of all sides.

Hannes Dollinger asked Annegret Lamey to write down his story so that it could encourage other people in search of their biological parents to press on and not to despair. 'Child of unknown origin' (Kind unbekannter Herkunft) is the report of his endeavour.

The Mathers Museum in Indiana organises an exhibition of sculptures and artists books of Björn Krondorfer and Karen Baldner. Although most of you will not have the opportunity to visit the museum, I like to announce the exhibition of Björn, one of the readers of this International Bulletin.

I hope that you will appreciate the articles in this issue. Reactions and new articles are welcome! Please inform me of any change of your postal or e-mail address, so that we can stay in contact.

All the best,
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

Next issue: Spring 2009

Reactions and articles till the 1st of April 2009

IN MEMORY OF DAN BAR-ON (1938-2008)

*Rabbi Nachman from Bratzlaw once said
that the highest level of belief is doubt
and the highest level of doubt is belief.
I believe you and perhaps myself need and try
to reach beyond that: will we succeed?
(Dan Bar-On in his letter of July 5, 1987)*

The Israeli Professor Dr Dan Bar-On of the Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva passed away on the 4th of September. In spite of his brain tumor, he continued his work as long as his physical strength allowed him to do so.

In 1985 he started a research project in Germany and interviewed about 50 people, among them a couple of children of high-ranked Nazi's. As a therapist he had treated child survivors of the Shoah and one day he wondered whether the Germans who were children during the war were suffering from war-related psychological problems as were his clients. He showed to be brave when he went to Germany to meet the 'children of the enemy', notwithstanding sharp opposition in his social context.

The board of the Dutch self-help organisation Herkenning learned about Dan's German study project through a short message in a magazine for psychologists. They asked me to contact him and we met in March 1987 in Beer Sheva when I participated in a study trip. We

discussed the experiences of the Dutch collaborators' children and Dan felt that their stories could complement those of the German children. We decided to start a co-operation and in June that same year he came to Holland and interviewed five members of Herkenning. Their stories confirmed on several points the results of his German study. He felt relieved, he wrote me. He now was convinced that his conclusions made sense and this increased his self-confidence. To us, members of Herkenning, his words of recognition and acceptance meant a support we until then had hardly received in the Dutch context. It was even more important that this support was given by a man belonging to the people that the political system our parents supported had intended to eliminate. He reached out to us, bridging the gap that history and politics had created between the children of the perpetrators and those of the victims.

In 1989 he met again a couple of members of Herkenning at Wuppertal University where he presented the results of his study. He asked them to help some of his interviewees to found a self-help group. Annelies Aaldijk-Rehbein and I undertook this task and we were members of this group for 4 years. We met 3 or 4 times a year, telling our stories and working through our problems.

In 1992 this group merged with a group of American Jews, children of Holocaust survivors, and the new group became known as TRT (To Reflect and Trust). As early as 1988 Dan had learned about a Dutch project organising encounters for war children from different background (Jewish, resistance fighters, Indonesian, German, collaborators, bombings' victims). He was rather sceptical about this initiative, but in 1992 he experienced himself that a genuine dialogue was possible between war children from different backgrounds and how healing storytelling was.

As early as 1987 Dan and I planned an international network of collaborators' children in the West-European countries, but it was not easy to come into contact with them. In 1991, the few lines on the Dutch collaborators' children in an article about the German self-help group in an English magazine, attracted the attention of a Norwegian son of a collaborator and a French social historian. They contacted me and this was the start of the network. Over the next years, I met people at international conferences and by 1995 I knew a few people in Europe who were involved in studying the problems of war children or organising help for them. That year the Dutch government decided to give financial support to Herkenning for the next nine years and the board thought that this was the proper time to launch an International Bulletin. This was to be a meetingplace where people could exchange their experiences, give each other feedback and support and could learn from each others' activities. Dan sent me his congratulations and felt happy that 'our dream' now had come through. By then, however, we had stopped our co-operation, feeling that we needed to follow our own views and ways, although both still committed to the war children and to the dialogue between the different background groups.

Dan opened a new chapter in his life when he started co-operation with professor Sami Adwan of the University of Bethlehem and founded together with him the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East in Beit Jalla. Again he reached out to people at the 'other side', and again people commented negatively upon his initiative. One of their joint activities was writing a schoolbook in which the history of the Jews and the Palestinians in the 20th century in that part of the world was described in an evenly balanced way, drawing attention to the sensitivities on both sides.

In 2006 Dan started in Hamburg a three-year training seminar, 'Storytelling in conflicts', during which the participants learnt to use personal storytelling in social conflict situations. In May this year the students completed their studies and despite his weak condition, Dan was present at the ceremonies that closed the seminar. He came home, happy to have been able to see his students graduated, but physically broken.

He was a pioneer, kindling enthusiasm in people for his projects, a talented interviewer and a dedicated worker, looking for answers to the existential questions in life.

In the introduction of his book 'Legacy of Silence' Dan described one of the last conversations between him and the 17-year-old son of his wife, who had been diagnosed with lymphoma. Yariv wanted to hear about the people Dan had met in Germany and he asked why this study was so important to Dan. Dan reflected for a moment, but suddenly Yariv's face lit up in a wide smile: 'I know why, you are looking for hope, for them and for yourself.'

'What do you mean by that?' Dan said, surprised by his directness.

'Because you told me once that, for you, the quest for hope has to do with confronting the truth.'

May his memory be a blessing to all of us.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

MEETING DAN BAR-ON

By Sakino Mathilde Sternberg

In April 2001 I attended a conference for systemic work in Wuerzburg, Germany. I sat in the auditorium of the congress center for a lecture. Two men were taking their places on the podium: the Israeli professor Dan Bar-On and his Palestinian colleague Sami Adwan. A gesture of affection and mutual respect between them touched me very much: Dan was first pouring a glass of water for Sami and then for himself, before he started to speak. This gesture of care touched me very much. I listened to their speech like I had never listened before in my life.

They talked about the story of their friendship, how they got to know each other and how they and their families became friends. Both are the founders and co-directors of PRIME, the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East which supports dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis in various projects. PRIME meetings took place under extremely difficult conditions. Both, Sami and Dan and their families were always worried about the wellbeing of the other when suicide attacks or military actions were happening again on either side. Dan told a story about his son: he wanted to join the Israeli army out of an attitude of patriotism. He faced the possibility of having to shoot at a son of Sami. Both families were searching for a solution together. They found one: Dan's son was joining the medical service in his army. I remember that tears were running down my face listening to all of this. I felt all kinds of emotions, deep affection, compassion and connection to both of them and their people. And a question arose inside of me: "What can I do?"

I joined their workshop in the afternoon. It was taking place in a room of a size fitting for about 30 people, but almost 100 came and squeezed into it, and more were waiting outside. Again I noticed a quality in both, Sami and Dan, which moved me. They made it possible that everybody got a place. There was an energy of "togetherness" when the workshop started. Bert Hellinger (founder of the "family constellation" method) was also participating in the workshop. Dan asked him if his method might be helpful to take a look at the Palestinian – Israeli conflict. Bert suggested a constellation with representatives for both sides of the conflict. He chose representatives of Jewish origin for the Palestinians and of Palestinian origin for the Israelis and asked them to stand opposite facing each other. Two lines with about 10 people on each side were formed. Bert asked the representatives to look into each other's eyes and follow the inner movement that would arise in them. The movements and emotional expressions were incredibly intense and included all observing participants. I cried. I felt as if I was one of them, it did not even matter which side. This was a key experience which even now I cannot really explain. It became the foundation of my motivation to move into a new direction in my life.

At the end of the workshop I approached Sami and Dan and we hugged. I said to Dan that I felt a longing to do something and he smiled and answered: "Your compassion is more than enough". His words touched me. They did not relieve me.

May 2003. Another conference for systemic constellation work in Wuerzburg, another lecture of Sami and Dan. I met both on their way to the podium and introduced myself again. A friendly smile, and then I sat in the auditorium. Two years full of terrible events had passed, and it was a miracle that Sami had been allowed to travel. They had kept doing their work under extremely difficult conditions, never giving up.

I participated again in their workshop. This time they did a role play. The participants were divided into 6 groups, 3 Israeli and 3 Palestinian. Each group had to discuss one of 3 different periods of the Palestinian/ Israeli conflict, first in each national group, then meeting the others from the other side and listening to their version. I was in a Palestinian group for the period of 1948, and I immediately felt like "becoming" an old Palestinian woman, upset, hurt and full of hate. In the encounter with the Israeli group I exploded, I felt the cruelty of the situation, the pain of all the humiliations over the decades and an incredible feeling of helplessness and rage, "it is more than enough". For the first time I was able to really feel and understand the Palestinian side.

After the workshop I went to Sami and we hugged each other without words.

I also approached Dan, I knew from now on we were connected. I had no clue yet that I would also have to face unresolved personal issues, but I felt a certainty and a trust which I followed throughout the coming weeks, months and years, which has led me to where I am now.

In July 2003 I attended a seminar with Dan in Hamburg, where he was introducing his approach of storytelling to masterstudents of the "Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik". He had invited one of the participants of the TRT - group ("To Reflect and Trust", a group of descendants of Nazi perpetrators and Holocaust survivors who met under his guidance over many years, listening to each other's life stories). She shared her life story in the group. Her father, a physician, had been responsible in the 3.Reich for the killing of thousands of Jews. She never met him (he was executed in 1946). She talked about the silencing in her family concerning her father and the Nazi time. The way she was sharing her story, awoke memories of silencing in my own family: "It is over, no need to talk about it". Even the expressions that were used in our family seemed to be the same.

After the seminar I phoned my only living aunt and asked her if she knew something about my father's war experiences. Her answer was: "No. Those who have had heavy experiences, don't talk about it." I remember this sentence so well because I could feel that she really meant it, and I remember the sadness in her voice which touched me.

The sharing of the TRT woman upset me deeply. In the following night I woke up crying. I went through a very strong emotional process which I related to the story of the TRT woman. It had obviously brought to surface all the suppressed memories of my father and his past.

In the following months and years I searched for my father's story which in a certain sense is mine too. It is a slow, intense process. I approach it with a lot of patience for my own emotional and physical limits.

The more I am searching and finding, the more I become quiet. I understand now, that not knowing drives one crazy, knowing helps finding inner peace, even if the findings are atrocious and horrible. I have not found many facts about my father himself. I found facts about the things which happened in the area where he was stationed which he might have been involved in or witnessed or known about. Those findings were very hard to digest. Sometimes I was almost at a point to give up, because I could not handle those informations.

Additional to this personal search I read many books of people who were soldiers in the war and wrote about their experiences, or whose fathers were involved in war activities, Nazis, perpetrators or bystanders. I have a longing to understand, no matter how difficult it might be. I contacted the woman from the TRT group. The phone calls and e-mails were helpful in this painful process of searching, because she understood how I felt.

In January 2006 I joined the “Storytelling in Conflicts Dialogue Training”, led by Dan Bar-On. I wanted to learn and understand more, both myself and others. Together with 15 people, practitioners from different countries and conflict zones, we learned Dan’s approach of personal lifestory telling as a way to get into dialogue with each other and with oneself.

For three years we met under the guidance of Dan Bar-On and his colleagues Lena Inowlocki and Tal Litvak Hirsch twice a year for 5 days, sharing our projects and listening to each other’s life stories.

Meaningful dialogue projects were created in this time.

Many of us became friends, some are sharing projects and visions.

For me personally the biggest achievement is the initiative of some of the participants to create an International Dialogue Center which will continue the work we have learned from an incredible human being and teacher.

Dan Bar-On died on September 4, 2008 from a brain tumour he had been suffering since 2006.

He completed the training with us despite his physical condition.

He was a loved friend, an inspiring teacher and a listener from the heart.

He will be in my heart forever.

SYMPOSIUM IN BERLIN: Towards the creation of an International Dialogue Center

On the 1st of November, a small group of 20 people met in one of the conference rooms of the Freie Universität in Berlin. The meeting was initiated by the moderators of the training seminar ‘Storytelling in Conflict situations’ and a couple of participants in this programme. One of them, Sakino Sternberg, invited people who might be interested in supporting the centre or who might contribute to it in any form.

In the original programme of the day, it was scheduled that Professor Dan Bar-On would present a paper, but his death interfered. His colleague, Professor Sami Adwan, who would speak on the PRIME, the Institute he founded together with Dan in Beit Jalla, sent a message that he wasn’t able to come. We missed these two men who certainly would have played an inspiring role during the meeting, but the organising team was not put out of countenance and succeeded, nevertheless, in presenting an interesting programme to the participants. Among them, Dan’s wife and his youngest son, who followed the discussions with much interest and took an active part in the brainstorming.

Christiane Walesch Schneller of the Förderverein Jüdisches Leben in Breisach (Support Association of Jewish Community Life) shared with us her experiences in this association, which organises a couple of activities in the former Jewish Community Centre in Breisach. This ‘Blue House’ was purchased in 2000 by the Förderverein and was restored in 2002/2003. It is an old building, constructed in 1691 and purchased by the Jewish community in 1829. Until 1876, it was used as a school and as a temporary Jewish infirmary for the poor. Until 1940, it was the Jewish Community Centre and it was also used as the cantor’s lodgings.

The association established in the building a regional museum dedicated to the history of the Jews in Breisach. It sponsors encounters with survivors of the Breisach Jewish community

and their descendants and preserves a documentation centre. The association intends to promote the understanding and tolerance between different cultures. The activities – exhibitions, summer camps, visits of school classes, family visits – promote the awareness of what happened in the past and of what should be prevented to-day and in the future. Knowledge and personal encounters are prerequisite to understanding and these two goals are aimed at in the centre. (see for more information the website: www.juedisches-leben-in-breisach.de).

Christiane described the opportunities and the possibilities of having a building in which activities can take place, but also the problems they have had and still have in the financial and material fields and the solutions they have found to overcome some of the troubles.

David Becker moderated the discussion on Dan Bar-On's paper "From Jews and Germans, Israelis and Palestinians to the 'Tense Triangle' between Germans, Israeli-Jews and Palestinians from an Israeli-Jewish perspective".

In this paper Dan described how Israeli-Jewish researchers discuss issues on Israelis and Palestinians totally separately from issues concerning Jews and Germans, whereas, according to him, the issues must be considered in a triangle in which each side influences the other sides.

He held the view that 'displaced aggression' is an important aspect that could to a certain extent explain the tension in the triangle. Jews in general, seen as a community, never took revenge on the Germans, their aggression was neither released through acts of revenge nor worked through, but internalized, seeking later for a legitimate outlet. Aggression, if not worked through will be repressed, and may burst out at a later stage in another context. (Freud 1930). On a collective Israeli-Jewish level, the internalized aggression from the Holocaust could be taken out on the Palestinians, to whom they felt more powerful, thereby making aggression legitimate, because they perceived and socially constructed the Palestinians as a continuation of their previous ultimate aggressors. The Palestinians probably have their own displaced aggression accumulating in them from previous oppressors and persecutors (Ottomans, Arab countries, British Mandate).

In this paper Dan also focused on the need of people to have a monolithic identity. In certain circumstances and periods the collective construction of a monolithic identity can be functional, e.g. in Israel where it psychologically blended together people from different countries who established 'a nation' within a very short period and under difficult circumstances. But such a monolithic identity can impede the understanding of other peoples and cultures.

An inner dialogue is a precondition for dialogue. People have to start to acknowledge what is inside them, what aspects of reality that one wants to keep undiscussable (the 'untold' story) are covered up by talking about the 'discussable' (the 'told' story).

He also focused on power asymmetries that might impede the development of a genuine dialogue.

These are just a couple of issues he elaborated in his paper. As in many of his writings he described some of his personal learning processes beside a couple of theoretical constructs that helped him make sense of his experiences.

In the last part of the symposium Sakino set forth how she views the centre.

The objectives are clear: the programmes and encounters offered in the centre will focus on dealing with the effects of persecution and wars and on conflict transformation in the present. The centre will develop practice, research and training. The centre will help people to learn about and understand individual and collective history. It will facilitate dialogue during and after conflict and will promote research and analysis of social, psychological and political structures and conditions that determine individual and collective behaviour in contexts of conflict and war.

But the practical problems are manifold. We explored the possibilities of a 'fictive centre' on internet and discussed the desirability of a building such as the 'Blue House'. Moreover: who will be able to take charge of the project and who will be available to join the core group?

It was evident that this meeting was a first orientation on the possibilities, the problems and bottlenecks and the funding.

The organising team of this symposium decided to form the core group and some other participants joined them. A new meeting has been scheduled for early spring 2009 in the 'Blue House' and several participants promised help in any form. The centre will be given the name of Dan Bar-On, because it will, in a certain way, continue his work and preserve his legacy.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

CHILD SOLDIERS

Some paragraphs of the 11th chapter of the book War Child by Dr Martin L. Parsons

Despite the hope and the optimism at the time, the Second World War was not to be the last major conflict in the world. Today, as you read this, there are around thirty-one conflicts taking place around the world. All these war zones contain children and many of them are experiencing conflict and its results first hand.

The situation really has not changed that much since the Second World War. It is estimated that over 2 million children have lost their childhood, innocence and ultimately their lives as a result of being forced to join government armies or local militias. A further 6 million have received disabling injuries and, so far, in 2007 an estimated 250,000 continue to be exploited. Despite evidence that these children in modern-day war zones are, and will be, affected even into the late twenty-first century, and in spite of work being carried out by UNICEF, Save the Children and Human Rights Watch, their plight is still being largely ignored by countries and those with a vested economic interest in such conflicts, in the same way as that of their forebears in the Second World War.

In 1945 there were around 13 million displaced people wandering around Europe; now there are an estimated 20 million child refugees and asylum seekers still searching for a safe haven, not only in other countries, but, in some cases, even within their own. This problem is not only confined to recognised war zones, it is also apparent in so-called social mobility programmes such as that witnessed in Zimbabwe where since 2005 whole communities have been removed from their homelands under the government's urban slum demolition drive. A scheme which, according to UN estimates, has left 700,000 people without jobs or homes.

However, what is new is the modern-day exploitation of children in carrying out actual acts of warfare – a direct violation of Children's Rights. One immediately thinks of the present situation in parts of Africa but according to Ken Caldwell, Director of International Operations at Save the Children: 'The recruitment of vulnerable children by armed groups is not just a West African problem; it is a global one that each year ensnares thousands of children in a web of abuse and hardship'.

What is behind the exploitation? One of the greatest problems at the present time is the globalisation of what in the past may have been viewed as a local conflict. Today these are often fuelled by the more affluent countries which have an economic interest in the local natural resources such as oil, precious stones and minerals, and by drug-related cartels which make vast profits by selling illegal drugs manufactured in third world countries. Arms dealers make a great deal of money supplying weapons and equipment to insurgent groups. Some of the guns have been developed so that small children can carry them, for example the 'popular' AK-47 rifle is light enough for ten-year-old children to use and costs the equivalent of the price of a goat.

There are also economic factors. As emerging nations find it difficult to cope with struggling debt and rising inflation, they are often required to cut back on social care, basic health provision and public service infrastructures. As a result, many people, including children, are motivated to join rebel factions as a way out of their cycle of poverty.

The *Cape Town Principles*, adopted at a symposium on the prevention of recruitment of children into the armed forces, and demobilisation and social reintegration of child soldiers in Africa, organised by UNICEF in 1997, defined recommendations, notably that recruitment and use of child soldiers violates children's rights and is a war crime if the children are under fifteen. Reintegration of demobilised children must include arrangements for children ensuring that they have sufficient health care, and are provided with an education and/or skills' training sufficient to make them viable commodities in the job market. Finally, they are to be given help in tracing their families with the long-term aim of reuniting them. There was also a requirement to respond to the particular needs of girls, many of whom have struggled with the psychological, physical and social consequences of sexual and other forms of abuse, the practice of forced marriage and, in both cases, the possible resultant pregnancy and childbirth. There was also the serious problem of HIV/Aids.

Why are children still being recruited, despite these guidelines, and what is being done to prevent the practice? In countries that are already poor, the costs involved in war and conflict, often results in soaring inflation thereby forcing families into further financial hardship in order to eke out a basic standard of living. As a result, many children may join armed groups to secure daily food for themselves and their families, thus ensuring their survival, even on a short term basis.

Conflict in all war zones, including those in the Second World War, is also likely to disrupt children's education. Today, in places where schools are permanently closed, children are left with few alternatives other than aimlessly walking around the streets and, as a result, may be more easily persuaded to join up.

When the hostilities are prolonged, armed forces and insurgents are more likely to use children to replenish their ranks. Confusing war and play, many new recruits have little understanding of what combat actually entails and therefore have no idea of the dangers. This perceived lack of fear is often exploited by group commanders who use the children in a variety of roles such as human mine detectors, putting them into the front of the advancing forces and, as witnessed recently in Iraq and Afghanistan, as suicide bombers. An insurgent leader in Afghanistan explained that children as young as six are unlikely to be suspected by enemy forces: '...they go unnoticed.'

However, not all are attracted by the war lord's propaganda. Other children are 'press-ganged', some are physically threatened and in some cases schools and orphanages are forced to give up any children in their care above the age of fifteen for 'military' purposes. As a result, all these children are robbed of their childhood and in many cases subjected to extreme brutality by their commanders and their peers for not carrying out their roles efficiently enough. For those who are deemed successful, the rewards are seemingly enticing: promotion, more food, relative material wealth and sexual partners. However, many are drugged or plied with alcohol before being sent out to fight and some are forced to carry out atrocities against their own families and villages in order to destroy family and community ties. In the long term there is a gradual desensitisation that in some ways makes the task easier to carry out. The longer such exposure to traumatic situations continues, the more difficult it is for those children who have escaped the clutches of the warring factions or who have been legitimately reintegrated into society, to lead a normal life.

As well as fighting in combat units, children are used for sexual purposes and girls are commonly assigned to a commander and at times gang-raped. As a result, many are infected with HIV/AIDs and tuberculosis which makes their assimilation into a post-war

society even more difficult. In addition, such 'killer' diseases again pose a serious threat to the long-term future of the warring nations.

Again, the spread of disease among an indigenous population is not new. Even as late as 1947 there were approximately 100,000 orphaned and separated children in the British zone in Germany alone, living off the proceeds of petty crime and prostitution. Over 80 per cent of the girls were suffering from venereal disease. However, the main difference is that in the present-day war zones the doctors and health centres, have themselves become personal and material targets. As a result, in some areas of Africa, more people are dying from HIV/AIDs than combat, a situation not helped by the fact that as military power is seen as the priority, more money is being spent on arms and ammunition than on tackling these burgeoning serious health issues.

Unlike the war children of the Second World War, who in the main were very much left to their own devices after 1945, the plight of the present-day child soldiers has resulted in legislation aimed at protecting children. But of course this only works if all countries presently using children for such purposes, will sign up to it.

On 12 February 2002, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force. This represented a milestone in the campaign to strengthen the legal protection of children and prevent their use in armed conflicts. Although it did not put a stop to the use of child soldiers, it did lay down strict guidelines relating to their recruitment. For example, it raised the minimum age for direct participation in hostilities from fifteen to eighteen. It also prohibited the compulsory recruitment by non-government forces of anyone under eighteen, while at the same time allowing nation states to establish a minimum age for recruitment that could be under eighteen. This resulted in a great deal of confusion. In the case of non-state armed groups, the treaty prohibits all recruitment, voluntary and compulsory, for anyone under eighteen.

All these regulations presuppose a number of things. First, that the countries involved have adequate legislation in place for the compulsory registration of births. Some children do not know how old they are and the birth of an estimated 40 million children worldwide have gone unregistered.

Second, that their parents and/or guardians are *able* to 'give their consent'.

Third, do the children themselves realise that the process is voluntary?

Fourth, and probably the most significant, bearing in mind the possible confusion between 'reality' and 'play', are they really aware of what military service entails?

On 11 November 2007, Save the Children published its 'Fighting Back Report'. It was based on interviews with 300 children and 200 parents/carers in Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The research found that although some joined armed groups against their will, others joined 'voluntarily' for the following reasons (although one has to question the term *voluntarily* in this context as some were given up to rebel groups by their parents or by their local community as a duty and form of 'community service', it is important that one does not lose sight of the fact that some of these children genuinely chose to join the armed forces and militia in order to improve their way of life):

First, a general lack of any alternatives. Many cited a lack of access to education and vocational training.

Second, inadequate care. 30 per cent of ex-soldiers said they had been recruited after becoming separated from their parents and carers.

Third, poverty and hunger. Having sufficient food to eat, or being able to provide for parents and siblings, was consistently described as one of the only benefits of joining up. 'Finding food was a problem ... so I told my mother that I will go round to see the fighters'.

Fourth, protection. Some joined to safeguard themselves and/or their families and their possessions. 'If you had a gun your friend would not come to your house and humiliate and harass your family. You can also defend them'.

Others referred to personal gain and 'power'. Some ex-child soldiers said they joined to gain power and material wealth and be able to do things they would not normally be able to do.

Some boys were accused of joining simply to rape girls. Another was revenge both for personal and family reasons. Some joined to avenge abusive or humiliating behaviour, or the death of a family member by another armed group.

Finally, some expressed a simple need for excitement. Some were lured by a desire to have fun and/or adventure, make friends, or find a partner.

The report concluded that attempts to change attitudes to the recruitment of children by armed groups, either to act as soldiers or to carry out supporting roles such as cooking and carrying, must be long term, preferably initiated during times of relative peace and stability. Provision also has to be made to prevent hunger and reduce household poverty. Local groups should develop methods to avoid recruitment by providing at-risk children with alternative life skills training and good quality education, preferably free, and any such help should be context specific. As many were recruited after being separated from their families, the report also recommended that there should be previously agreed safe meeting places in case families get separated. Children should be given to attend schools close to their homes. Proper mechanisms should be put in place to care for children whilst their parents are being medically treated. They should develop household or community early warning systems to warn when fighters are near. And children should be reunited with their families as quickly as possible when separation occurs.

In April 2007 Kenneth Caldwell commented: 'For every child who joins an armed group, many more do not, and by building on existing community-led initiatives to prevent recruitment, as well as tackling the reasons children join, such as poverty and hunger, we can help eradicate this gross abuse of human rights'.

Despite the legislation and reports, the abuse of children is still taking place. In the Congo there are an estimated 300-500 Congolese Tutsi children, some well below the legal age requirement, currently taking an active role in conflicts. In Sri Lanka the 'Karuna' group are forcibly recruiting children in eastern Sri Lanka, with the compliance of the national government, seeing Karuna as a useful ally in its fight against the Tamil Tigers. One area known for its exploitation of children but often forgotten, is Burma, where the government is active in forcibly recruiting children into its army. In Nepal, there are an estimated 3,500-4,500 children fighting in the army of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists). Despite a ceasefire agreement between the Maoists and the Nepalese government, demobilisation of children is postponed because there is no social service infrastructure necessary to ensure that all the demobbed children can be effectively assimilated into society. One area that has had more success than others in releasing children from armed groups is Burundi, but not all have benefited from the process. Despite peace talks in Dar es Salaam in May 2006, the National Liberation Forces (FNL) persists in using children not only as combat troops but also in support roles. The children who fought with the FNL and have been captured or deserted are now in government custody, with few legal rights.

The continued use of children in this way has posed a threat to the security and stability of those communities directly involved and those allied to them. However, the situation is now changing. Within all the gloom surrounding child soldiers there is hope. On 20 June 2007, a special court in Sierra Leone convicted three members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) for crimes against humanity and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. This landmark case has been seen by the Human Rights Watch as important in ending impunity for military commanders and personnel who use children in conflict zones across the world.

THE 'BITTER CUP'

Filmproducer Ton van der Lee, living in Africa for eleven years, came across an interesting traditional form of trial on one of his trips through Kenya and Uganda. In the area on both sides of the border between the two countries he met many people who had fled the violence of the civil war in the northern provinces of Uganda. Many of them live in camps, others have settled just somewhere. All refugees hope that the end of this 'dirty' war will come soon. They call this war 'dirty' because the insurgent Lords Resistance Army, LRA, uses child soldiers against the governmental armed forces and the civilian population. Since July 2006 the end of the war has seemed within reach, but the LRA leader Joseph Kony shrank back from signing the peace treaty, fearing to be sent to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Ton van der Lee feels that Kony would have signed if he had been promised to be brought up for trial in the traditional way of the 'mato oput', the 'bitter cup'. This is a form of judgement and penance among the Acholi, the people many leaders, soldiers and victims of the LRA belong to. Around 17,000 LRA soldiers have already been put on trial by means of the procedure of the 'bitter cup'. They did penance and got amnesty and are today fully accepted members of society.

What makes this 'bitter cup' procedure so special? The offender is brought before the old people's council of the tribe. The representative of the family of which one or more members have been murdered or victimized presents his case. Then the offender is given the opportunity to explain his behaviour. The council considers all aspects, the pros and the cons, while the public, often present in large numbers, wait for the pronouncement of the sentence. The offender has to pay a fine proportional to his financial strength, in the form of money, cattle or social service. The council fixes the term in which the fine ought to be settled. Then the representative of the family starts to jeer at the offender, expressing all his anger and grief, and the offender has to answer any complaint with 'forgive me, forgive me'. To end the trial, the prosecutor and the offender both drink a traditional, very bitter juice from a calabash. When the juice is finished, the case is closed. After having paid the fine, the offender receives forgiveness, no one will ever refer to his crime again and it is as if nothing has happened.

Many LRA soldiers are not only perpetrators, they are victims as well. Many were forced to join the LRA, many of them were just children. Therefore, the council takes into account the circumstances in which the soldier began his service. The 'bitter cup' procedure may be not the best form of trial for the leaders, but is it for the ordinary members. The Uganda government recently recognised this form of traditional trial as legally valid.

As a daughter of a Dutch collaborator I feel that much pain would have been spared the collaborators' children and their parents, if we had had such a procedure as the 'bitter cup' in our country after the war. When our parents had served their sentence, they got a moral sentence: once 'wrong', always 'wrong'. Ex-collaborators and their families were excluded from society and emotional reintegration became out of reach. I admire the wisdom of the 'bitter cup' and feel ashamed of the failing procedures of our so often highly praised 'civilised' part of the world.

GSB

Dr. Martin Parsons, editor: CHILDREN: THE INVISIBLE VICTIMS OF WAR

An interdisciplinary Study

DSN Technical Publications Ltd, 2008

ISBN 0954722949

Preface

Today the vast majority of the post-war population living in those countries affected by the Second World War cannot empathise with the sociological, emotional and psychological turmoil that children went through at the time and since. Few can imagine the pressures placed on evacuees, the children whose parents were labelled as collaborators, those who spent their formative years in totalitarian regimes and those who were uprooted from their culture and their language. However, these experiences are not limited to World War Two or the immediate post-war years because, as you read this, children are still suffering in parts of Africa, Palestine, Iraq, Sri Lanka to name just a few.

What on the surface looks like a very simple area of study, is in fact a complex weave of interdisciplinary issues which have, until recently, been largely ignored and in some cases dismissed as irrelevant.

When I started my own research in 1990 into British Evacuees I was unaware of the investigations being carried out by colleagues in other parts of the world. Those working in this area of research, many of them war children themselves, are few in number and as such have, over time, become a self-supporting group with a common bond...an interdisciplinary interest in war children. We have all learnt from each other, both in terms of our subject specialism and specific individual experiences. Consequently it has been a privilege to be given the responsibility of editing this book. The chapters are written by renowned experts in their fields, and cover many of the aspects of the war child experience. As a result it is the first such book of its kind.

Martin L. Parsons

A number of chapters focus on different aspects of the British Evacuation: Introduction (James Roffey); Boots for the Bairns (Penny Starns); the Evacuation of Scottish Children – a largely neglected event (Mattie Turnbull); the Evacuation to North America – a good idea or a bad mistake? (Michael Henderson); Female British evacuees tell their mothers' stories (Margaret Simmons); What psychological damage did Britain's Wartime Evacuation inflict and what do we learn from it? (Stephen Davies); the Evacuation of Belfast – a non-event? (Martin Parsons).

Ruth Barnett's chapter 'Children of the Nazi Holocaust: the Ones who Escaped', describes in particular the Kindertransporte and their impact.

Two chapters deal with the children of Leningrad: The evacuation of children from Leningrad during WWII (Elizabeth White) and The experiences of children who survived the Siege of Leningrad (Marina Gulina).

Two chapters focus on the experiences of collaborators' children: Children of Dutch collaborators – from isolation to acceptance (Gonda Scheffel-Baars) and Late effects of psychological stress in collaborator descendants in Norway (Baard Borge).

A couple of chapters put to the fore the experiences of war children in different countries: Recollections of wartime in a German provincial town (Geoffrey Roberts); Language and Culture in mass evacuations: the Basque children of 1937 (Hilary Footitt); The effects of

chronic war trauma among Palestinian children (Mohamed Altawil); One Finnish war child's exceptional memories and circumstances (Sue Saffle); Indochina's invisible victims (Catherine Earl).

Although in all the chapters the impact of war experiences at the psychological well-being of the children is discussed, a couple of chapters focus in particular on the effects of being exposed to war and violence: The Legacy of war and the distortion of cultural mirroring (Teresa von Sommaruga Howard); The Recognition of the 'disease' of childhood war trauma (Peter Heintl); Post traumatic stress syndrome during WWII 65 years on (Eva Roman); The experience and memory of war-related 'fatherlessness' in Germany and Poland after 1945 (Lu Seegers); Extended knowledge on German war children as exemplified by self-experience in depth psychologically founded groups in a neurobiological context (Helga Spranger).

Two chapters deal with the way in which the war is depicted in books or media: American representations of the children of the French in WWII TV Series Combat! (Erwin F. Erhardt, III); Reflections of war in children's picture books (Michael Lockwood, Catriona Nicholson and Prue Goodwin).

Andy Kempe's chapter 'Playing with the past: drama, history and critical literacy' and Philippa Bleach's chapter 'Songs of innocence: using childhood experiences in teaching the Holocaust' describe how drama and music can help children to reflect in a more emotional than rational way on the past.

A historical effect of war experiences is described in 'Wartime childhood and the '68 movement in Germany – ambivalence in the memory of the history of a generation' (Ulla Roberts).

In this book the experts in the field of War Child Studies and War Related Trauma provide new insights into what war means to children. Many of them are war children themselves. The effect that their experiences have had on their own lives and their families effectively invalidates claims that, given time, children simply forget or are able to put the past behind them; rather, their stories add a major dimension to our understanding of conflict.

WAR CONSCIOUSNESS

Kaija Olausson

Wars and armed conflicts today affect people to a far greater extent than ever previously realized. One can easily imagine what impact war has on children, still depending on their parents for their basic needs and very survival. It is more difficult to assess how the combination of war and separation from their parents affects children.

During the Second World War many Finnish children (how many, is still debated today, but a number that is often mentioned is 70 000 children) were moved from their parents and their homes in Finland to Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The majority of these children were sent to Sweden, a country they didn't know, where people spoke a language completely alien to most of them. They didn't even know how to ask for something as basic as a glass of water! Many of these people today do in fact speak warmly about their Swedish families and the friends they made during their expatriation. Yet there are many, many more who feel utterly differently about their childhood memories. They have lived their entire lives with a sense of rootlessness and anxiety. They suffer from being separated from their families and from the stigma of sometimes being treated differently than Swedish children. Many of them have

experienced bombings, having to escape from their native village and witnessing the killing of relatives. Some of these children have no memories whatsoever of their early childhood, but they have psychological scars that may give a hint of what kind of experiences they had in early childhood.

When researching my master's thesis in International Relations at the University of Stockholm I interviewed seven war children. I also received written accounts from a large number of children who have had these type of scarring childhood experiences. I wanted to find out specifically what war and the separation did to the children and how they perceive this many years late. To expand the material I also included an unpublished survey made by Pirkko Ahlin et al at the Swedisch Finnish War Children Organization (Riksförbundet Finska Krigsbarn).

Most of the people I interviewed, as well as many from the survey, still suffer from their childhood traumas today. Some suffer to such an extent that it is psychologically crippling. I have identified a few similarities in their ways of suffering. These do sometimes, but not always, reflect their childhood memories. I call this collection of symptoms 'war consciousness' (in Swedish: 'krigsmedvetande').

By warconsciousness I mean a state of mind dictated by the unprocessed imagery and emotional turmoil generated by the unprocessed experiences caused by living through a situation caused by a war, or war-like scenario, as a non-participant, altered in war children by the trauma of being separated from their families. The persons affected by war consciousness go about their everyday life with the war still going on in their subconscious, and they are (sub)consciously always preparing for it, i.e. for surviving the war, in different ways as stock-piling foodstuffs. These different ways they use to cope with their reality (the war that they subconsciously think is still going on, or the war that they think will start again soon) are all symptoms of war-consciousness. One person can have only one symptom or many more. The symptoms may, or may not, be connected to their actual childhood experiences.

Symptoms

One symptom is to actually be waiting for the war to break out. One woman told me about a beautiful building she saw as an adult in central Stockholm. It was newly built and the surface of the building was covered with glass. She could not enjoy the beauty of the building, all she could think about was the poor people that would have to clean up all the shattered glass after the bombings.

The second symptom is fear of loud noises. These people are not at all fond of fireworks. They are often scared by the sound of aircraft and sudden bangs, and many of them can connect these fears to bombings. Even if they do know why they have these fears, the terror may deepen from year to year.

The third symptom is a combination of suspicion and loneliness. They simply cannot bring themselves to trust anyone. They have no close friends, or maybe just one. They always suspect that anyone trying to make conversation is in fact spying on them (which may explain why they have no friends), nor do they allow anyone to come close to them, out of fear of loving somebody and losing them. They'd rather stay away than risk the gut-wrenching emotional turmoil all over again!

The fourth symptom is the need to make sure they can survive in their home, again providing a very convincing back-drop, and thus a constant reminder, of life in a conflict zone. One woman, who lives alone in a three bedroom apartment, has enormous piles of shoes by her entrance – always ready to evacuate. One bedroom is filled with glasses and television sets etc. another with old canned food and old clothes. All the other rooms are likewise filled with all kind of things. Still she doesn't realize nor view this as a problem, to her it's how any

normal and sane person would organize their home. Here we arrive the very fulcrum on which the concept of war consciousness balances. War children live with their collecting/suspicions/other symptoms, as if it was totally normal. And why shouldn't they? They grew up like that, that's the pattern of thinking and behaving they learned when they were very small children and they have no idea the rest of the world is not like that. They might suspect it, they have no idea that they are the ones with the problem.

Some war children have no symptoms of war-consciousness, how is it that they do not suffer like the others? First of all, further studies need to be done before we know for sure, but I found that they share something: pre-preparation by their parents! They were told where they were going (to Sweden), why (because of the war), and they were also told to behave properly and that they would return home when it was safe to do so. One girl was taught by her mother to say thank you (tack) and goodbye (adjö) in Swedish, something that made her feel a bit more secure. The knowledge she was given, both regarding her immediate future and the traces of her new language, was enough for her to hold on until the war was over. She never doubted her mother's love for her, or the fact that her mother did this because it was the best for the young girl. One boy was also informed that he was to go to Sweden to be saved from the war. The parents also told him he would learn Swedish, and that he would benefit very much from knowing another language, so he needed to be a good student in Sweden. That was enough for him until he could return. These children were also old enough to reason with. Perhaps the age is important in whether the child develops war-consciousness or not. Further studies are needed. It is possible that it is easier for older children, since they can be reasoned with, but on the other hand, they might feel they are abandoning the family and younger siblings in a war that may decimate their family. Many war children experience feelings of guilt. It is plausible that the guilt is derived from this involuntary abandonment of their family.

Not only war children have symptoms

Another group of people that may have these symptoms is, interesting enough, children of war children. Though they were never in contact with war, they were brought up by one or two parents with war-consciousness. Research suggests that the patterns they learn from their parents are repeated and go on to form the basis of their own reality. If the subconscious reality of one or both of the parents is war, they act out on their subconscious impulses by actually living in a non-existing war, showing the symptoms of war-consciousness. This of course marks the young child, who learns everything by observing and listening to the parents. Thus this war-consciousness is possibly reproduced through several generations. The child might not know why it has the need to collect everything, but it feels the fear of not having all the things it might need in future. The child might not know why it fears noises, it does not connect it to the parent jumping at every bang. The child might be suspicious, not having many friends when it grows up, or always expecting everything it hears from others to be a lie, but all the time not knowing that it is because of the negative patterns the parents has had towards other people. As it is not conscious, it is 'normal' and the child never challenges the ideas and patterns it learned from a very young age.

Responses to my thesis

After having read my thesis, my sources and study subjects contacted me again. They all thanked me for listening to them, it means they need to talk about what they have been through, and that speaking to someone who listens actually gives them relief. One woman told me she cried the whole time she read my thesis, because after a whole life of feeling inferior or less of a person to everybody else, she finally understood why she had her traumas and fears. Now that she knew why, she could finally deal with it! It's such a shame she had to wait for so long... that's one of the reasons why further studies on this matter are so important: it's not only because of the academic interest, it has to do with the well-being of

so many people who have experienced war and may have war-consciousness, without knowing what is wrong with them and why they have these feelings.

The Grandson

A couple of weeks ago I met a young man. Since we were about to collaborate on a project together, I was to spend a few hours in his company. It was hard to make conversation with him as he was very serious and quiet. Finally he said that he was curious about my name, and asked if I was Finnish. 'Half', I answered. He replied that he was also half Finnish. His mother is from Finland. For some reason, I do still not know why, I started telling him about my thesis. He seemed to be mildly interested, so I continued by telling him about the war-consciousness symptoms. He became even more quiet and I concluded I had bored him stiff. At last he spoke. He said, in a toneless voice, that I had just described his mother. He also said he was beginning to fear he would become 'as crazy as she is', as he put it. His mother was too young to be a war child, since she was born in 1958, but her problems had something to do with the war anyway. Finally he told me his mothers' parents were war children! This means that the possible war-consciousness that has affected both his grandparents has made his mother psychologically ill, and he fears that it is affecting him too.

If this is a case of war-consciousness being transmitted to a third generation, then it is possible that it can go on reproducing through many generations until somebody reacts to it, either by finding a method to heal these people or by starting another war. Why another war? Well, it may be over resources (the collecting mania, which is based upon the fear that there are never enough things to go around). It may also be because of the feeling that the neighbouring country is about to start a war against our country (the no-trusting feeling, that says everyone can be a spy, no one is to be trusted). This war-consciousness is thus not only a concern for the people affected and their families. It may actually start new conflicts, if not recognized and treated.

I asked my sources and study subjects for some advice about how to help the today war children. Their most important message to the political leaders of the world was to help the children in their own country and their family surroundings. If there is a war, if the children need to be sent away to a safe country, they need to be sent with or to a relative. First of all they need the security and love a relative can offer. Secondly, the relative will help the child not to forget his or her own language! Many Finnish war children feel deep sorrow over having lost their first language: they feel like 'half persons'. And last, but not least, they need to be helped with communicating in their new language. Having the ability to master basic communication skills when meeting these people is absolutely crucial if they are to be assimilated into the community.

This is the message from the war children of yesterday to the leaders of the world of today. The Finnish war children still suffer from their traumas. We need to make sure the war children of today are helped so that they will not suffer throughout their whole lives.

PUSHMEPULLYOU: a Jewish/German Dialogue Disclosed An interactive installation by Karen Baldner and Björn Krondorfer

Mathers Museum of World Cultures
416 North Indiana Avenue
Bloomington, Indiana
September 2 – December 19, 2008

How do two Germans talk to each other in a post-Holocaust world if they come from a Jewish and a non-Jewish family background? Karen Baldner and Björn Krondorfer explore this question in an interactive installation of sculptures and artists books.

For more information about the exhibit, please visit the web site
web.me.com/j.g.dialogueproject

I DID NOT HEAR THE BOMB....

I did not hear the bomb...
Just felt the blast...
the brick-dust in my throat
the plaster in my hair
the beams upon my legs
...the silence,
... the approaching darkness

I did not hear the bomb
Just felt the blast...
the burning of my clothes
my nakedness and fear
the scorching of my skin
...the silence,
...the approaching darkness

I did not hear the bomb
Just felt the blast...
the glass within my face,
the blood across my arms
the pressure in my ears
...the silence,
...the approaching darkness

I did not hear the bomb
Just felt the blast...
the letting go of hands
the searching for a soul
the loneliness of life
...the silence

...the darkness

I did not hear the bomb
Nor feel the blast...
the dryness in my throat
the fear
the pain
the shadows
the separation

Perhaps....

just perhaps....

this is what peace feels like.....

SYMPOSIUM IN KIEL

The organisations 'kriegskind.de' and 'Förderverein Kriegskinder für den Frieden' hosted on 20 September a symposium in Kiel (North Germany) in which war children from Germany and from a couple of other European countries participated. On the speakers' list figured Mr Z. Czarnuch from Witnica (Poland), Mr J. Gromsen from Denmark, Mr P. Kaven from Finland, Mr J. Dekkers and Mr T. Scheffel both from the Netherlands and Mr W. Derewjanski from Russia. This symposium did not focus on political or historical issues, but on the personal experiences and traumas of people in war time and in particular on children's experiences. The speakers related their personal stories and explained the impact their war experiences had had on their lives and described the psychological and social problems they had had to face. In some presentations the pictures showed in an impressive way the emotions of the people whose stories were presented.

Because my wife could not be present in Kiel, I read her paper discussing the plight of the children of Dutch collaborators during and after the war and the ways in which war events and the rejection by Dutch society affected their psychological and social well-being.

Mr H. Alpei from Lindau (Germany) was the last speaker of the day. He started his presentation with the question whether he had actually the right to relate his life story, because other people had suffered much more than he and his family. Many participants recognised their own doubts about the importance of their story compared to those of other war children. Alpei's paper, however, made it evident that the war affected the German children very much and that it is important to know their stories.

The forum discussion focused on the question: what could be war children's contribution to peace? The presentations evidenced that story telling is a powerful method that induces the insight that children of both sides in a conflict situation are always victims, often invisible, their stories often ignored. The dialogue model can bridge the gap caused by history between war children of different categories. An international dialogue will help people to open up for the stories and experiences of people in other countries, even those countries that were former enemies. In a genuine dialogue people learn to see 'the others' as human beings like themselves.

In the open discussion people were invited to ask questions or to put to the fore issues they wanted to discuss or to share their experiences and emotions with the other participants. Some people related very emotional experiences and this showed that the atmosphere during this symposium was one of safety, closeness, recognition and acceptance.

In his speech at the end of the day, the chairman of the Förderverein expressed his thanks to all the participants for their contributions in whatever way. He expressed the hope that more meetings of this type would be organised in future, giving the German war children and those of other countries the opportunity to meet and share their experiences.

Ton Scheffel

FINAL ACCOUNT: THIRD REICH TESTIMONIES

- An urgent archival project being developed by documentary filmmaker Luke Holland.

'Nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer; nothing is more difficult than to understand him.' (Fyodor Dostoevsky)

Introduction

The Nazi ideologues, the men who conceived and commissioned the Holocaust, are dead. Many of the 'little perpetrators', or the 'willing executioners' of Daniel Goldhagen's chilling and controversial designation, are not. Now they are old. Very old. Very few have told their stories. If they are willing to speak, they must not be allowed to take their stories to the grave. 'Das Grosse Schweigen', the great post-war silence in Germany, was largely a function of the fact that no one was asking the questions - or willing to hear the answers. Traumatized victims returning like ghosts from the camps, found few sympathetic listeners and soon stopped reporting their barely credible experiences. Often, it took decades for their stories to be properly heard. The perpetrators, former members of the SS; members of the Einsatzgruppen and Special Police Battalions, whose murderous actions had accounted for over a million Jewish deaths, even before the 'Final Solution' of January 1942 was put into effect, had even stronger motives for remaining silent, slipping back into civilian life and denying their active role in the nightmare that had overtaken them. Times have changed. The Cold War is decidedly over. Anti-Communism no longer serves as a convenient screen to mask the legacy of Third Reich anti-semitism. Other genocides, Cambodia, the Balkans, Ruanda, Darfur have confronted us with new horrors and a sobering thought. Perhaps the only lesson of history, is that there are none?

The Interviews

Final Account is an urgent archival project proposing a comprehensive series of filmed interviews with surviving perpetrators of the Third Reich's killing fields. These testimonies may be as important as the tens of thousands of interviews that have been recorded with victims of the Nazis' murderous policies. It is a source of surprise and regret that the same systematic effort, rigour and resources, applied to securing victim testimony, has not also been applied to gathering perpetrator testimony. My mother is one of over 60,000 Jewish Survivors interviewed by the Spielberg-funded archive project. Regrettably there is nowhere to go for interview material with those who deported her parents (the grandparents I never knew) and with those who murdered them somewhere 'in the East'. On a recent visit to two of Berlin's Museums dealing with the legacy of the Third Reich, I was steered towards a bank of screens that offered a comprehensive archive of moving, first person, victim testimony. 'Where', I asked, 'is the counterpart perpetrator testimony?' If the gap is to be filled it must be done with some sense of urgency.

These testimonies are almost as important as those by the victims because they form part of the same chapter in European history. We owe generations to come a comprehensive record of their history – with testimony from all sides in the conflicts that shape our future.

Interviews will be conducted in the original language of the interviewee, ideally in their homes or a setting of their choice. The length of interview will vary depending on circumstances. Interviewees will have the opportunity to express their ideas about how and if their filmed interview will be made available and for which purposes.

A key aim of the Project will be to ensure that the range of perpetrator testimony accurately reflects the type of crimes committed and the different geographic locations where these

crimes were committed. Those able to recognize their complicity and guilt may also be able to offer insights on the process that lead to their criminal activity.

The master material will be transcribed and stored in the best available archival conditions. Details of the institutional affiliations that will ensure that best archival, research and public educational use can be made of the material are currently under active consideration.

The Team

Luke Holland – Project Director & Fleur Knopperts – Project Coordinator

Born in Shropshire in 1948, Luke spent his formative years in a German-speaking Christian Community, the Bruderhof, in Eastern Paraguay. His mother, Gerty Hortner, is a Jewish refugee who fled Vienna in 1938. His father, the artist-illustrator Leslie Holland (Huxley's 'Brave New World'), spent the last year of peace in Europe working as an artist in Frankfurt, Germany. Gerty and Leslie died in 2005 aged 92 and 97. Luke is a fluent German speaker, whose films include the Channel 4 Prix Europa and Emmy-listed 'Good Morning Mr Hitler', a chilling analysis of the 'seductive' power of the Nazi aesthetic and 'I Was a Slave Labourer'. Made for the BBC, arte France and the Westdeutscher Rundfunk, this is the inside story of the international campaign, which Luke Holland helped to initiate, which ultimately secured \$5 billion for former forced and slave labourers. The film has travelled internationally, including screenings at The Imperial War Museum, London and twice at the Berlin Reichstag – once for MPs and on another occasion to mark Germany's Holocaust Memorial Day.

From 1996 till 2008, Fleur Knopperts has worked for different film festivals in The Netherlands and the UK. She was Director of The Amsterdam FORUM, the world's largest financing market for documentary films from 2001 – 2006. Currently, she works as a freelance project manager on various projects, amongst which Final Account – Third Reich Testimonies.

We would like to get in touch with people that could contribute to this urgent archive project. If you think you could contribute or if you know someone who might be able to contribute to this project, please contact Gonda Scheffel-Baars.

ANNEGRET LAMEY: KIND UNBEKANNTER HERKUNFT (Child of unknown origin)

Wißner-Verlag, Augsburg 2008, ISBN 978-3-89639-664-0

When reading this book I wondered how many troubles in life an ordinary human being can bear without succumbing.

This is the story of Hannes Dollinger, one of the thousands of children born or brought up in Lebensborn homes – those homes providing protection to both married and unmarried women and their unborn children or their babies, provided that they were of the protection-worthy Aryan race.

This book shows how deeply and unavoidably the 'big' history of the politicians influenced the 'small' history of ordinary people and disturbed their lives.

It shows also how not-remembered and not-worked through traumatic experiences – such as being separated from one's mother, being housed in several children's homes before being adopted – and how in particular the silence, the lies and the half-lies of the adoptive parents damaged this man and indirectly influenced his children.

Hannes was almost 15 years of age when he learned about his adoption. Just before his leaving home to go back to boarding-school, his parents told him that he was a foundling and

showed him the clothes in which he was wrapped when people found him. They showed him the label with his name that he wore around his neck, but because of the shock of the moment he later did not remember this name.

After these disclosures his parents left him alone, glad that they could lay down the burden of the secret they had concealed throughout the years, unaware of the fact that this burden was now on Hannes' shoulders. In some way he felt relief, understanding now certain events better than when they occurred, understanding also why there was never an emotional bond between him and his parents. Their butcher's shop and guesthouse had demanded almost all their attention and although Hannes profited from the relative wealth of the family accumulated through the hard work of the parents, in the emotional field he did not get much from them. Emma, the cook, was the one providing him with motherly care and love.

It was Emma who at last, shortly before her death, broke the promise her boss and his wife had forced her to make never to speak with Hannes about what she knew about his roots. By then Hannes was preparing his 50th birthday party. After years of illnesses and accidents that had happened to himself, his parents and his parents-in-law, and the serious problems of his daughters, his life finally had come in a quieter rhythm, thanks also to the never-ending emotional and mental support of his wife Edith. Emma's disclosure shocked him, but at the same time he now was capable and strong enough to go in search of his parents. Inspired by the autobiography of Turid Ormseth, a Lebensborn child herself and fortunate enough to find her biological parents, and with the help of the Lebensborn expert Dr. Georg Lilienthal, Hannes found his Norwegian family. There he was welcomed in the circle of aunts and uncles and a large number of cousins. He also found the brothers of his German father who liked to get acquainted with him.

For more than two years Hannes – or Otto Ackermann – had to face the obstructions of the German authorities, for a while even risking to lose his German nationality! If necessary, the Norwegians were willing to grant him the Norwegian nationality. The story had a happy ending, Hannes got permission to keep his German nationality, on the condition that he would change his first name...

He asked Annegret Lamey to write down his story so that it could encourage other people in search of their biological parents to press on, not to despair and to persevere in their research. Some months before the book was published, he died, but his story will inspire people never to give up hope.

GSB

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

The Foundation Trust, international network of organizations and groups of second and third generations children of war:

www.thefoundationtrust.org

Dachau Institut Psychologie und Pädagogik:

www.Dachau-institut.de

Kriegskind Deutschland:

www.kriegskind.de

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.coeurssansfrontières.biz

Organisation d'enfants de guerre

www.nésdelalibération.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 (in preparation)