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INTRODUCTION

I can hardly believe that this is already the eighth issue of the International Bulletin. When I started it in the autumn of 1995 I could only hope that it would provide readers with interesting and important subjects. Now readers are sending me articles or proposals for articles and this makes my task a lot easier.

I always have the intention to offer the articles in German as well as in English. Sometimes, however, the texts are too long to translate literally, sometimes they are also difficult to summarize. In this issue you will find some texts only in German and I hope that readers who have difficulty with reading German will understand my choice.

Björn Krondorfer wrote an article about encounters between American/Jewish and German youngsters and their visit to Auschwitz.

Maria Marchetta shares with us her experiences at the Berlinale (International Filmfestival) and gives us interesting remarks about the films she saw there.

Gertrud Kauderer wrote a moving and personal article, which shows us a point of view concerning the Kosovo crisis which we, until now, probably have not been aware of.

I dedicated some lines to Judith Kestenberg who passed away in January 1999. She was a remarkable woman who was deeply engaged in studying the stories of all 'kinds' of children of the war.

Hans Donkersloot, president of the Dutch Organisation Herkenning, met representatives of 7 other Dutch organisations of children of war of different backgrounds.

In September a Conference will be held in Vienna. For more details see the announcement.

This issue ends with a review written by Manfred Jurgovsky about the actual situation of the international network.

I hope that this issue will come up to your expectations.

All the best,

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

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

The Presence of the Past: The Holocaust in the Lives of Young People

Björn Krondorfer

Washington, Berlin, Cracow, Auschwitz: the International Summer Program on the Holocaust brings together students from American and German universities for one month of study and personal reflection. For the first two weeks, students live and study at St. Mary's College (near Washington. D.C); the second half of the month is spent in Berlin and Poland. The core of the program is the extensive encounter between 20 Jewish and non Jewish participants from Germany and the United States. Students reflect intellectually, morally, and personally on their roles as 'third generation' in understanding the history, significance, and long-lasting effects of the Holocaust and the National Socialist regime.

Today, there is a tremendous cultural productivity with which individuals, religious communities, and nations are trying to come to terms with the Holocaust. Documentaries and movies are produced; each year dozens of new books are published; and museums are built. Educational centers and memorials are maintained at the actual sites in Europe. Such wide-ranging efforts in documenting, researching, preserving, explaining, teaching, and creatively responding to the Holocaust signal the growing awareness that this traumatic period is being recognized as a distinctive mark of the twentieth century.

What is less visible to the public is how the Holocaust continues to affect people born after 1945, the so-called second and third generations. Therapists and scholars have used the term intergenerational or transgenerational transmission to describe how the history and memory of the Holocaust (or Shoah in Hebrew) have been passed on from parents to children and to the children's children. The assumption here is that severe traumatization of whole communities and nations is being transmitted from one generation to the next, both on individual and social levels.

Postwar and post-Shoah generations

It is easy to understand that children born into families of Jewish survivors have felt severely the pain and the burden of the past because the so-called survivor symptoms have been passed on to this generation. In recent years, however, the psychopathological emphasis of psychological studies on Jewish survivors and their children has come under criticism, for it unnecessarily pathologized the victims and ignored the fact that many survivor families and their children had adjusted well to their cultural surroundings.

Moving our attention to non-Jewish German families after the war, one is struck by the absence of a therapeutic diagnosis and treatment of perpetrator families. No analogous syndrome, like a perpetrator syndrome, has been articulated. Whereas Holocaust survivors wanted and needed medical and therapeutic attention in the aftermath of their ordeals, perpetrators and bystanders seemed to be able to reenter a civilian life without psychological damage. The psychotherapeutic profession itself failed to make the intergenerational transmission of the Holocaust trauma part of their diagnosis when individual Germans stepped into their offices.

The absence of a perpetrator syndrome neither implies its non-existence nor that families of perpetrators and bystanders could not have benefitted from psychotherapeutic help, as readers of the International Bulletin certainly know. What it points to is that, for several decades, post-war German society as a whole chose a different path to dealing with National Socialism and the Holocaust: silence, avoidance, and, in some cases, outright denial.

The generation active during World War II did not leave their children and grandchildren unaffected. Suspicion and mistrust grew between parents and children: if nobody admitted his or her involvement in the Nazi crimes, everybody could have been a perpetrator; if everyone was silent, anyone could have been a Nazi criminal--even one's father or grandmother.

New studies about German family systems have confirmed that various symptoms related to the Nazi regime, World War II, and the Holocaust have been and still are intergenerationally transmitted. Feelings of guilt and anger, for example, are prevalent among children and grandchildren of perpetrator families. These emotional states, however, are usually not acknowledged as being rooted in the past. Only since the mid-1980s have growing numbers of second- and third-generation Germans begun to confront and examine the impact of the past on their lives.

Meeting the "Other"

In the mid-1980s, another phenomenon occurred: people of different religious and national backgrounds started to meet in order to reflect together how the Holocaust had burdened their lives and their relationships.
Unbeknownst to each other, several of these small, experimental projects evolved simultaneously in the United States, Germany, and Israel. The groups thematized the difficulty of relating to each other as Jews and Germans born after the Holocaust and, more specifically, as descendants of Jewish victims, survivors and refugees and of German perpetrators, bystanders, and opportunists. In light of Auschwitz, was it possible to examine together a history that seemed to fix group identities into categories of us and them, victims and victimizers? Would the participants have the courage to admit and overcome biases and prejudices with which they had grown up? Would they be able to share feelings of animosity, anger, and guilt, but also of friendship and love? Would they be able to trust each other? Would it be possible for young Jews to trust Germans without "betraying" their grand/parents' suffering, or for young Germans to relate to Jews without being called Nestbeschmutzer (soiling one's own nest) by their friends and families? Would it be desirable for children and grandchildren of survivors and perpetrators to mourn together, or to articulate a common vision for the future?

Shortly after I came to the United States from Germany as a twenty four year old student, who had never consciously met a Jewish person in Europe, I also got involved in a project on the relations between Jews and Germans. As a group of six artistically inclined Jewish Americans and non-Jewish Germans, we committed ourselves to exploring together the impact of the Holocaust on our lives through modern dance and experimental drama. We eventually founded The Jewish-German Dance Theatre in Philadelphia and created a performance piece that combined historical and biographical material into a mosaic of short images, stories,

and dances. This performance was shown both in the United States (frequently enabling Jewish survivors in the audience to meet young Germans for the first time) and in Germany, then still divided into East and West. Many of the young Germans who came to see our performance had never met Jewish people before; some of the older Germans had not seen Jews since the 1940s.

A distinctive feature of The Jewish German Dance Theatre was our willingness to present a profound personal encounter to the public in form of an artistic performance. But we were not unique in our desire to get together as young Jews and Germans in order to address a legacy that seemed to divide us. Other groups started to explore similar issues (.e.g. Dan Bar-On, One-by-One, Face-to-Face, To Trust and Reflect, or the dramatherapeutic work of Armand Volkas). What these and other groups have in common is their search for responding to a historic trauma of which they are descendants, and their desire to no longer remain blind to the experiences and perspectives of the respective "other".

International Summer Programs

Today, when younger generations learn about the Holocaust, they are no longer in the midst of the shock, horror, disbelief, and denial with which the world reacted in the immediate aftermath of the Shoah. Young people--and this is especially true for Jews and Germans--grow up in a world in which the Holocaust has attained various levels of symbolic, metaphoric, and politicized meanings.
They are often little aware of the degree to which they are identified with their communities' images, attitudes, biases, and fictionalizations. For many, the "Jew" or the "German," for example, are not real people but fictive images who occupy a certain place in the historical unfolding of the Holocaust and its aftermath.

To break through these fictionalizations and to get a more realistic view of each other, my colleague Christian Staffa (Berlin) and I (USA) became involved in setting up and facilita- ting summer programs on the Holocaust for groups of American and German students. After the successful completion of the first program in 1989, the programs were repeated in 1991, 1993, and 1995. For one month, a group of twenty students from both countries lived and studied together, first meeting in the United States, then traveling to Berlin and to the extermination camp of Auschwitz, Poland. Open to any students who could demonstrate their sincere interest in the subject, the final group usually consisted of about half of the American group coming from Jewish backgrounds, with the other half identifying as religiously unaffiliated or Christian.

These programs do not only aim at studying the Holocaust historically but at getting students to reflect and discuss their identities and relationships in light of the past. In four weeks, students listen to survivors, visit the Holocaust museum in Washington, discuss films about antisemitism, engage in role playing and group dynamic processes, spend a Sabbath weekend with survivor families, argue about the different burdens for children of survivors and of perpetrators, attend Jewish services in Berlin, examine the Holocaust memorial debate in Germany, and visit Auschwitz for three days--to name just a few of the highlights.

In the past, participating students realized that they were far more emotionally invested in the history and memory of the Holocaust than they had previously realized. The most passionate discussions usually emerged when the students had

difficulties in accepting other perspectives because they were emotionally at- tached to their own intellectual positions.

A simple example may illustrate this point: for many of the participating Jewish American students, the Holocaust refers specifically to the Nazi attempt at annihilating European Jews. For many young Germans (and this is frequently true also for non-Jewish Americans), the term "Holocaust" has a broader meaning and includes, minimally, the persecution of Jews, Gypsies and homo-sexuals, as well as euthanasia victims, Poles, Soviet POWs, and political prisoners. 'Holocaust' can also be understood as ap-plying to Hiroshima and recent genocides. Such usage does not automatically imply that young Germans are in denial of or indifferent to the fate of Jews. Rather, they do not wish to establish hierarchies among different victim groups, fearing that such hierarchization would continue the Nazi mentality of categorizing humans.

Initially students react defensively when stumbling upon such dfferences. Germans may dismiss the Jewish perspective as "narrow-minded," and Jews may denounce the German position as "insensitive" and "anti-Jewish." Ultimately, however, the students reach a point during the four weeks of living together that allows them to develop an understanding and toleration of other perspectives --even if they disagree with them. In German family memories, it is the absence of stories about the persecution and killing of Jews that informs the third generation, thus perpetuating the invisibility of Jews even in post-war Germany, long after they have been driven away, deported, or murdered by the Nazis. This cultural blindness may result in the belief that one's own family is innocent, thus strengthening family cohesion, but it can also feed the anxious suspicion that one's family is hiding secrets, thus destroying intimate and trusting relationships between the gene-rations.

Many of the German participants in the summer programs also did not notice the absence of Jews in their family narratives until it was pointed out to them by their American peers. For young Germans, to acknowledge this blindness is socially embarrassing. If they had previously believed that they did not repeat the mistakes of their grand/parents and had successfully broken through the legacy of silence, they now discovered that they were part of this legacy.

However, social embarrassment, if facilitated well, can turn into a valuable experience.'One thing we may need to learn', a German participant said during one of the programs, 'is to distrust the stories that circulate in German families'. But what if he would find what he always feared? What if young Germans discover within their close family circle an adamant member of the Nazi party, or even a war criminal? In the case of the student who articulated the generational distrust so well, family history had taken a strange twist;growing up in East Germany, he had learned as a child that his grandfather had died in the concentration camp of Buchenwald. He proudly presented this story in school to demonstrate his anti-fascist past. His father later told him that his grandfather had died in Buchenwald in 1948, three years after the liberation of the camps. By then, Buchenwald was already in the hands of the Soviets who were imprisoning people suspected of a Nazi past.

In American Jewish families, the third generation may grow up with stories about the horrendous suffering and heroic endurance of Jews, without being able to imagine the European landscape and political context within which the Holocaust

occurred. The Holocaust can thus turn into a nightmarish landscape of tremendous proportions, filled with personifications of good and evil, and devoid of the gray shades that characterize human interactions. In the summer programs we repeatedly observed that young American Jews, after befriending Germans, reacted with a diffuse sense of anger and helplessness. Some felt threatened by the fading of the figure of the evil German, which seemed to hold together their moral universe. They could no longer direct their anger indiscriminately against all Germans. As a result, they either specified who they were angry against (e.g. Nazi Germans) or decried, somewhat helplessly, the human condition in general. This reevaluation of their views made them uncomfortable at times, but in the end it helped them to clarify an understanding of the Holocaust germane to their situation.

Auschwitz-Birkenau

When visiting the extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland with our summer students, I found that the cultural differences in responding to this place were striking. For Jewish students, it was important to touch the earth, the cold wires, the wooden bunk beds. They tried to imagine, almost physically, the horrors that had taken place there. They mourned the loss of their people, sometimes of known family members who perished here. Many of the non-Jewish American students supported them in their grief; some began to question the silence of their churches or the American decision not to bomb the railroad tracks to Auschwitz. Many of the German students, on the other hand, experienced Auschwitz-Birkenau ambivalently, not knowing with whom to identify. Should they grieve for the victims, and support their American friends? If so, wouldn't they avoid the possibility that one of their family members might have been a camp guard? Should they identify with their German forefathers, and thus imagine the perpetrators? If so, how would they keep a distance to such identifications? Struggling with feelings that seemed to pull them into different directions, they frequently came across as emotionally less expressive than their American peers.

Surface appearances can betray profound inner struggles. I remember a German student whose grandfather, as she had shared with the group earlier, had joined the SS, the elite military unit of the Nazis, also responsible for organizing and executing the mass killings of Jews. When we walked with the students into Auschwitz-Birkenau, prepared to guide the students through the vast landscape of what once was the largest Nazi extermination camp, this German student approached me and asked whether we could start at the top of the main watchtower. Earlier, my co-facilitator Christian Staffa and I had decided to take the group through the main gate directly to the selection ramp, where the trains had unloaded their 'human cargo.' There, Jewish families were rushed out of the dark cattle cars, whipped, yelled at, lined up, 'selected,' ordered to go to the left or the right, ordered to undress to take a shower, and. . . . The few who were not immediately gassed but selected for slave labor had to learn quickly the internal camp routine, if they wanted to stay alive. From all the accounts we have today, we know that arriving in Auschwitz-Birkenau was a completely disorienting experience. Hence, as facilitators of the student group we wanted to convey part of this disorienting feeling and have the students discover the camp piece by piece.

I explained to the young German woman that, as a group, we did not want to

start at the watch tower, and assured her that there would later be time to explore the camp by herself. She got very upset and continued to insist that the whole group climb up the tower. When we denied her request again, her frustration and anger brought her close to tears.

In the evening, the entire group engaged in a passionate discussion of this episode. The German student explained that she wanted everyone on the tower so that they could to see the whole camp stretched out in front of them. She wanted to know whether she and others would suddenly feel a temptation for power and perhaps understand what had motivated Nazi Germans. The American students showed little understanding and sympathy for her position; some Germans supported her, others did not. The group did not solve the problem that night. But people became aware of how much one's cultural background influences one's emotional attachment to and intellectual assessment of history.

In an essay written about a year later, the student explained again why she was disappointed at the missed opportunity to include a brief visit to the watchtower. I am quoting from her statement at length because it reflects the heartfelt struggle of a young German woman trying to make sense of the burden her grandfather left her with.

The view of the watchtower conveyed the perspective of the perpetrator. Looking down from above, the camp appears infinitely larger and at the same time easily manageable. The view from the bird's eye makes it possible to recognize the camp as a center for cruelty, embedded in an otherwise peaceful and civil environment. ....At the same time--and this is essential to me--the view from the tower would have given me the opportunity to try to put myself into the shoes of an SS man and to get an idea of what kind of power one would enjoy when--in the truest sense of the word--one was above others, in a superior position.

I became afraid of my own feelings when contemplating the temptation inherent in such a position of superiority. My previous certainty that, if called upon, I would fight against a national-socialist terror regime began to crumble. Would I have been among the bystanders as millions of other Germans in the 'Third Reich'? Would I have perhaps found myself among the active defenders and participants of the terror system--perhaps only to get a taste of the power over others? Or would I have been strong enough to oppose the totalitarian regime? I am not able to say for sure.

My attempt to understand the thoughts and feelings of the SS men should not be construed as me trying to exonerate the perpetrators. What I want to convey is the idea that every person has the potential to become a perpetrator.

What will the Future bring?

For students of these summer programs it is often frustrating to return to a public that is largely unprepared for the new critical awareness they bring back to their communities, families, and friends. They again must confront old rhetoric, fictionalized images, and claims and counterclaims over the correct way of remembering the past. During occasional reunions, our summer students voiced these frustrations but also talked about their numerous attempts at reaching out to the public to share their experiences when encountering the 'other'. Do young Germans and Jews seek reconciliation on the back of the victims? Do they engage

in a cheap rhetoric of 'healing' that covers up the horrendous reality of Auschwitz? Do they inadvertently contribute to the general tendency of wanting to forget the Holocaust? Do we need to cling to group identities that remain distrustful of others? Or do we want to find ways to listen to each other, and thus begin the work of closing the divide left by massive traumatization in the past? As we move into the next millennium, we cannot afford to blind ourselves to the forces of history. The former Yugoslavia is one example of the volatile nature of memory. If we ignore or underestimate the power that lies in the transgenerational transmission of conflict and traumatization, memory can easily be turned into ethnocentric politics. Injurious memory--because it can be such a defining moment in who we are --is always in danger of being exploited for nationalistic loyalties and ethno-religious group identities, calling upon people to shed blood over artificially created, ideological divisions.

But if we agree, as I hope, that history and the memories thereof should strengthen our ability to trust the 'other' rather than reinforce ideological divisions, I suggest that we provide spaces where students from different backgrounds can get together to reflect on themselves in light of the past. The summer programs on the Holocaust is such a space, where students can listen to each other with a good sense of caution but without hostility; where they remember together without assuming that they share the same histories and memories; where they learn to articulate their fears and mistrust of each other without destroying relationships; where they can respect differences and weaknesses without becoming defensive; and where they can envision a common future without imposing their world views on others. Searching for responses to the history and memory of the Holocaust is not a nostalgic luxury but a necessity for the future.

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"Dem Holocaust steht ein besonderes Kapitel zu"(1)
oder
von der Präsenz der Vergangenheit in den Filmen der Berlinale 1999

Es gibt viele Motivationen einen Film zu machen, einen Film zu gucken oder einen Film zu zeigen. Die **Internationalen Filmfestspiele Berlin** scheinen mit ihren über 220 Filmpremieren - sofern man nicht im Taumel und Rausch des Angebotenen untergeht - einen guten Anlass zu bieten, über die eigenen Sehgewohnheiten und das eigene Verhältnis zum Film nachzudenken.

Von den 50 Filmen, die ich an der diesjährigen **Berlinale** (10.- 21. Feb. 99) gesehen hatte, beschäftigten sich 1/5 aus unterschiedlichsten Perspektiven mit der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. Aber anders als in den Jahren davor, wurde die Mehrheit dieser Filme nicht im unabhängig organisierten Programm **des Internationalen Forum des jungen Films** gezeigt, sondern in den beiden Sparten des **Panoramas** und des **Wettbewerbs**. Moritz de Hadeln, der verantwortliche Leiter auch der 49. Internationalen Filmfestspiele mass denn auch in der Einleitung zur diesjährigen

Berlinale Dokumentation dem Kino "als Instrument des Zeugnisses und der Analyse" zur Reflexion und zur Hinterfragung der verschiedenen Vergangenheitsinterpretationen "eine Schlüsselrolle" zu (2). Mit einer solchen Einschätzung gibt sich die **Berlinale** als ein Kind der späten 90er Jahre zu erkennen. Denn seit Beginn des neunten Dezenniums unseres Jahrhunderts hat nachgerade ein Erinnerungsboom eingesetzt. Das mag in der biologischen Tatsache begründet sein, dass die Augen- und Zeitzeugengeneration, sowohl auf der TäterInnen- als auch auf der Opferseite, allmählich wegstirbt und wir somit vor der Frage stehen, ob und wie die Erfahrungen der Shoah, des National-sozialismus' bzw. des Faschismus' und des Zweiten Weltkrieges vom kollektiven kommunikativen Gedächtnis' in das kollektive kulturelle Gedächtnis transformiert werden. Möglich auch, dass die weltweit festzustellende Suche nach neuen kollektiven wie individuellen Identitäten ihren Teil zu den zunehmenden Interpretationen der Vergangenheit beitragen. Möglicherweise haben wir es auch nur mit einem Erinnerungswunsch zu tun, den wir der postmodernen Überholspur des Vergessens entgegenhalten, um so die Angst vor der Globalisierung zu bannen.

Die Tatsache, dass 1/5 der von mir gesehenen Filme sich mit der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit beschäftigte, bestätigt ihrerseits, dass auch ich als Filmbetrachterin nur ein Kind meiner Zeit bin.

Dass die FilmemacherInnen diese Erinnerungssuche und Vergangenheitsbeschäftigung aufgegriffen haben, verwundert kaum. Denn Filme sind neben der individuellen künstlerischen Leistung immer und vornehmlich Visitenkarten einer bestimmten Gesellschaft. Sie spiegeln die geistigen Strömungen einer Zeit und einer Kultur wider. Insofern sind Filme materielle Güter, die als symbolisches Material der Selbstreflexion dienen und in die Kommunikationsprozesse konkreter Gesellschaften eintreten, aus denen sie sich gleichsam motivieren. Ein Filmfestival ist so gesehen nicht nur Momentaufnahme der weltweiten jährlichen Filmproduktion, sondern auch ein Spiegel des geistigen Weltklimas.

Die Tatsache, dass ein Film geguckt, also rezipiert wird, verweist auf das ihm zugrundeliegende Bedeutungsnetz. Aufgrund von ideologischen Strukturen und spezifisch kulturellen und sozialen Diskursen werden in diesem Spiel von Bedeutungen aber immer nur bestimmte Bedeutungen favorisiert.

Die in Filmen eingeschriebenen Interpretationen unserer Vergangenheiten können folglich nie eine objektive Interpretation einer Vergangenheit sein, sondern sind von den jeweiligen sozialen und kulturellen Diskursen und Ideologien abhängig, die in einer Gesellschaft kursieren. Sowohl jede filmische Interpretation der Vergangenheit (wie jede Vergangenheitsinterpretation) als auch jede Filminterpretation ist selbst Ausdruck der vorgängig von den InterpretInnen geteilten Ideologien.

An der **Berlinale** 1999 ist mir eine Fiktionalisierung des Dokumentarischen und eine Dokumentarisierung des Fiktionalen aufgefallen. Darüber nachzudenken, was die Zunahme von Filmen, die sich mit der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit beschäftigen, mit dieser Vermischung und Durchdringung zu tun haben könnte, hielte ich für lohnenswert und ertragreich. Ich verstehe die folgenden Filmbesprechungen als

einen ersten Beitrag hierzu.

Schon Scott Hicks Film SHINE (3), der einfühlsam die tragische Kindheits- und Lebensgeschichte des jüdischen Pianisten David Helfgott nachzeichnet, deutete an, dass auch in kommerziellen mainstream Filmen Probleme der Kinder von Überlebenden thematisiert werden können.
Diese Möglichkeit hat Léa Pool in ihrem Wettbewerbsbeitrag EMPORTE-MOI (4) besonders überzeugend umgesetzt. Wir erleben wie die 13-jährige Hannah Mitte der 60er Jahre im Umfeld einer jüdisch-katholischen Familie versucht, ihre eigene Orientierung und ihren eigenen Platz im Leben zu finden. Ihr Vater, ein jüdischer staatenloser und verkannter Dichter, ist ungestüm und ungeschickt, nur manchmal blitzt seine Zärtlichkeit durch seine aus Angst und verletzter Würde gezimmerte tyrannische Verhaltensweise hindurch. Die junge Mutter, eine zerbrechliche, überarbeitete Frau, Katholikin aus Québec, die ihren Mann zugleich liebt und hasst, bleibt für Hannah fremd und unnahbar. Antisemitische Momente und jüdisch-katholische Konfliktsituationen werden nicht didaktisch, sondern selbstverständlich wie nebenbei und witzig thematisiert.
Wie um den Spielplan auszubreiten, auf dem dann die Geschichte erzählt werden soll, steht am Anfang des Films ein Mittagessen bei den katholischen Grosseltern. Erwartungsvoll fragt die Oma Hannah wie ihr der Schinken schmecke. Kurz darauf klingelt das Telefon, Hannahs Vater will nicht nur wissen, wann sie nachhause komme, sondern auch, was sie essen. Schlitzohrig um einen drohenden üblichen Konflikt zu vermeiden antwortet sie "Fisch, wir essen Fisch". Das darauffolgende Schimpfen der Grossmutter und die Wut des Vaters können als Planskizze des nun folgenden Films gedeutet werden. Hannah steht dazwischen.
In der Schule eine ähnliche, aber äusserst lustig inszenierte Szene. Bei der Einschreibung muss Hannah ihre Religionszugehörigkeit angeben. Da ihre Mutter katholisch sei, das Katholische aber über den Vater weitergegeben werde, sei sie nicht katholisch. Ihr Vater sei Jude, doch da das Jüdische mütterlicherseits bestimmt werde, sei sie auch nicht jüdisch. Der Lacher der MitschülerInnen und der ZuschauerInnen kann sich Hannah gewiss sein. Aber auch hier bleibt sie eigenartig allein. Woher sich ihre Stärke und Keckheit motiviert, so selbstbewusst aufzutreten, erfahren wir kurze Zeit später. Durch Nana, der Hauptfigur in Jean-Luc Godards VIVRE SA VIE, ein Film den Hannah sich mehrere Male angeguckt hat, lernt sie, dass sie selbst verantwortlich ist, verantwortlich dafür, ihr eigenes Leben zu leben.
Am Ende des Schuljahres leiht die Lehrerin Laura Hannah eine 16mm Kamera. Im Urlaub mit ihrer Mutter versucht sie das Bild der Mutter einzufangen. Mit diesem Versuch Unnahbarkeit zu überwinden und Kontakt herzustellen endet nicht nur das Jahr in dem Hannah gelernt hat, frei zu sein, sondern auch der Film von Léa Pool. Die letzten Bilder dieses stillen und sensiblen Films gehören der verwackelten und amateurhaften Handkamera. Vielleicht, dass der autobiographische Hintergrund (so Pool bei der Pressekonferenz) diese Suche einer 13 Jährigen nach ihrem eigenen Ort in einer durch ihre Vergangenheit geprägten Gesellschaft, für mich zum gelungensten Film der diesjährigen **Berlinale** hat werden lassen. Ein rundum geglückter Film, dem ich viele ZuschauerInnen wünsche.

Der Dokumentarfilm, der mich am meisten berührt hat, endete mit dem eingefrorenen Bild des Tores von Auschwitz-Birkenau und dem Nachtgespenstlied. Damit

kristallisiert sich in den letzten Sekunden der Inhalt des gesamten Films noch einmal in komprimiertester Form. Ilona Ziok skizziert in ihrem Film KURT GERRON'S KARUSSELL (5) die berufliche Seite des grossen Berliner Entertainers Kurt Gerron. Bezeichnend für diesen Dokumentarfilm ist die eingangs erwähnte Verschmelzung des Dokumentarischen mit dem Fiktiven. Denn Ilona Ziok wagt den Versuch, ihrem Dokumentarfilm eine Neuinszenierung von Kurt Gerrons Kabarett "Karussell", das er 1944 im Konzentrationslager Theresienstadt gegründet hatte, zugrundezulegen. So lud sie ZeitzeugInnen, SängerInnen und SchauspielerInnen ein ins Kabarett **Schall und Rauch**, wo diese Chansons der 20er Jahre aus Gerrons "Karussell" noch einmal Revue passieren liessen.
Ihr Versuch, auf diese Weise Kurt Gerron vorzustellen, ist mehr als nur geglückt. Die Kamera, die ganz nah an die Gesichter der InterpretInnen und der ZeitzeugInnen heran geht, zeichnet wunderschöne Portraits, legt die Bedeutung auf die Mimik und zeigt an den Augen der SängerInnen und an den Gesichtern der ZuschauerInnnen, was für eine Wirkung Musik haben kann und wie sehr Lieder und Chansons Erinnerungsmedium sind. Schöne Überblendungen verknüpfen die Neuinszenierung mit historischem Material, Spielfilmszenen, in denen wir den Schauspieler Gerron sehen, und Interviews mit den ZeitzeugInnen.
Ilona Ziok versteht es, uns den Schauspieler (er spielte im Theater und in über 70 Filmen), den Regisseur und vor allem den Kabarettisten Kurt Gerron näherzubringen. Als Jude musste er, auf der Höhe seiner Karriere, emigrieren. Er floh vor den NationalsozialistInnen über Frankreich und Österreich nach Holland, wo er interniert und deportiert wurde. Ohne Idealisierung zeigt uns Ziok Kurt Gerrons Liebe zum Kabarett, und ohne Anklage geht sie auch auf seine korrupte Naivität ein. Denn, gegen das Versprechen mit dem Leben davonzukommen, liess sich Gerron darauf ein, einen Propagandafilm zu drehen. Dieser wurde unter dem nicht von Gerron gesetzten Titel DER FÜHRER SCHENKT DEN JUDEN EINE STADT (6) bekannt. Wie wenig ihm seine Kooperation genutzt hat, wurde ihm ernüchternd deutlich, als er zusammen mit den letzten seiner SchauspielerInnen nach Auschwitz deportiert und in Birkenau umgebracht wurde.
KURT GERRON'S KARUSSELL ist ein Film, der sinnlich zeigt, wieviel Verlust das barbarische Morden der Nazis auch für die deutsche Kultur selbst bedeutete.

Einen anderen Weg der Annäherung an nationale Mitschuld und Verlust nationaler Aufrichtigkeit geht Kaspar Kasics in seinem Film CLOSED COUNTRY (7). Wir erleben die Rekonstruktion zweier Geschehnisse an der schweizerisch-deutschen Grenze während des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Der Höhepunkt des Filmes ist die Begegnung jener Menschen miteinander, für die das Aufeinandertreffen an der Grenze jener Tage so schicksalhaft unterschiedliche Folgen hatte. Der Schweizer Fritz Straub war damals für den Abschnitt der Schweizer Grenze verantwortlich, an dem die Familie Sonabend von der Schweiz in die Hände der Nazis ausgeliefert wurde. Sowohl Fritz Straub als auch die Klosterschwestern, bei denen die Sonabends Zuflucht gesucht hatten, verhielten sich **nur** pflichtbewusst, nämlich gemäss den Anordnungen des Schweizerischen Polizeichefs Heinrich Rothmund. Auf diesen ging im übrigen auch die Anregung zurück, in die Pässe der jüdischen Bevölkerung ein J einzutragen. Während die Familie Sonabend von der schweizerischen Behörde wissend in den sicheren Tod geschickt wurde -dem nur die beiden Geschwister Sabine und Charles entgingen -wurde für die jüdische Flüchtlingsfamilie Popowski die Begegnung an der

Grenze zur Stunde der Rettung. Denn der Polizeichef Heinrich Rothmund hielt sich zufälligerweise gerade an der Grenze auf und brachte es in der persönlichen Begegnung nicht über sich, die Familie zurückzuschicken. In Kaspar Kasics Film stehen die Geretteten und die Überlebenden nun erstmals dem Grenzwächter und der Nonne gegenüber. Stunde der Wahrheit für Verschonte und Verfolgte, für Täter und Opfer.
Kaspar Kasic und Stefan Mächler haben das historische Material (Akten, Gesetzestexte und Briefauschnitte), die Begegnungen und die ZeitzeugInneninterviews (u.a. auch ein unglaubliches Interview mit der Witwe von Heinrich Rothmund, in welchem sie versucht, ihren Mann als Helfer und Wohltäter der Juden darzustellen) spielfilmmässig ineinander montiert und ihre Recherche so in ein nahezu kriminalistisches Genre gebracht. Das Zentrum und Scharnier des Films ist der Abgrund zwischen den zwei Welten der Begegnung und der Schreibtischtat. Denn während Rothmund vom Schreibtisch aus keinerlei Skrupel hatte, die Familie Sonabend in den Tod zu schicken, hinderte ihn die persönliche Konfrontation mit der Familie Popowski vor dieser Tat. Mit der Sichtbarmachung dieser verschiedenen Perspektiven haben die Filmemacher einen Nerv des schweizerischen Nationalcharakters getroffen und leisten mit CLOSED COUNTRY ihren Beitrag zu einer notwendigen Hinterfragung der schweizerischen Identität und Neutralität.

In einer Sondervorführung war Eyal Sivans UN SPECIALISTE (8)zu sehen.Sival montierte ausschliesslich aus den 350 Stunden Video-material, das Leo Hurwitz 1961 beim Eichmannprozess in Jerusalem gedreht hatte, eine zweistündige Dokumentation über Eichmann. Der Film beginnt mit einem betörenden voice over und macht mit einem Stimmen-, Geräusch- und Tongewirr vom ersten Augenblick an deutlich, dass es dem Regisseur um eine akustische Interpretation des Eichmannprozesses geht. Ein lobenswerter, wenn auch, meiner Meinung nach, gescheiterter Versuch, mit dem Konzept einer fast un-erträg- lichen Geräuschkulisse mehr sichtbar machen zu wollen, als das, was das Bildmaterial alleine hergibt. Der Angeklagte, Adolf Eichmann, ein schmaler kurzsichtiger Mann mit schütterem dunklen Haar und ruhigem, fast starren Blick, der nur hin und wieder durch seltsam nervöse Zuckungen aufgebrochen wird, sitzt in einem Glaskasten.
Wir sehen - immer hinterlegt von moderner Konzeptmusik und wirren Geräuschen - wie er in den vor sich sorgfältig aufgestapelten Akten nachliest, sie mit Anmerkungen versieht und pausenlos in ihnen blättert. Pedantisch und mit einer beklemmenden bürokratischen Präzision berichtet Eichmann von seiner Arbeit als Experte für Emigration, als Spezialist für die "jüdische Frage" und als von 1941 bis 1945 Verantwortlicher für den Transport der "aus rassischen Gründen" in die Konzentrationslager Deportierten. Wir erleben einen korrekten, sich höflich gebenden Mann, der sich bemüht, seinen Konflikt zwischen beruflicher Pflicht und mensch-lichem Gewissen präzise darzulegen. Genau so hat auch die Philosophin Hannah Arendt als Prozessbeobachterin den angeklagten Adolf Eichmann gesehen, als sie für dessen Verhalten den Begriff von der "Banalität des Bösen" prägte. Um aber diese Banalität des Bösen in einem Film sichtbar oder gar verstehbar zu machen - die erklärte Absicht Eyal Sivans - genügt es nun keineswegs, Bilder der Mit-genommenheit und Ergriffenheit der ZeugInnen, also die Emotiona- lität der ehemaligen Opfer, mit Bildern von Eichmanns Starrheit und Gefühllosigkeit gegeneinander zu schneiden und sie mit einer ans Unerträgliche grenzenden Musik

zu hinterlegen. So einfach ist das mit dem Bösen nicht.

Dass die Zeit des Zweiten Weltkriegs, des Nationalsozialismus und der Shoah an der **Berlinale** allgegenwärtig war, belegen eine Reihe weiterer Filme. Der Vollständigkeitshalber verweise ich auf diese kursorisch.

Der spanische Wettbewerbsbeitrag, den ich nicht gesehen habe, LA NINA DE TUS OJOS (9) von Fernando Trueba, spielt im national-sozialistischen Deutschland. Eine spanische, General Franco treue Filmcrew wird in die Ufa-Studio Berlins eingeladen, wo sie eine deutsch- und englischsprachige Fassung des beliebten andalusischen Musicals **Das Mädchen deiner Träume** drehen soll. Der Propagandaminister Joseph Goebbels kümmert sich persönlich um die spanischen Gäste. Als andalusisch aussehende Statisten gesucht werden, kommandiert Goebbels eine Gruppe Zigeunern und Juden, die in einem Konzentrationslager interniert waren, zur Filmarbeit ab. Als die Hauptdarstellerin sich in einen der Komparsen verliebt, begreifen die spanischen Filmleute langsam, was in Deutschland vorsichgeht.

Terrence Malicks mit dem goldenen Bären ausgezeichnete Wettbe- werbsbeitrag THE THIN RED LINE (10) begnügt sich nicht, uns die verlustreiche Schlacht um die von den Japanern besetzte Pazifikinsel Guadalcanal vor Augen zu führen. Nein, Malick will mehr, viel mehr. In poetischen Bildern meditiert er über die Schönheit der Natur und die Grausamkeit und Sinnlosigkeit des Krieges. THE THIN RED LINE ist dort ein starker Antikriegsfilm, wo nichts passiert, wo die Soldaten nur warten und wir ihre Erinnerungen und ihre Ängste ihnen ins Gesicht geschrieben sehen. Malick sabotiert sich aber dort selbst, wo er sich dann doch hinreissen lässt, realistische Schlachtszenen nachzustellen. Hier verlässt er das Genre Antikriegsfilm, und hier funktioniert sein engagierter Film wie jeder Actionfilm.

Soviel Vergangenheitsbeschäftigung und soviel Nazizeit gab es noch nie an der **Berlinale**. Diese vielzahl unterschiedlicher Auseinandersetzungen mit der Vergangehei und die dabei festgestellte Vermischung und Verwebung von Dokumentarischem und Fiktionalem scheinen die in den meisten Gesellschaften gegenwärtig virulente Sinnstruktur einer Suche nach Selbstvergewisserung und Identiät offenzulegen und filmisch sichtbar zu machen.

Maria Marchetta
Berlin

1. Moritz de Hadeln, Kontraste und Widersprüche. Auf der Suche nach dem Kino des 21.Jahrhunderts, in: Berlinale. 49.Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin, 10. - 21. Februar 1999, Dokumentation, hrsg.v. Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin 19999, S.9-13, hier S.10
2. Ebenda S.11
3. SHINE Australien 1995/96 105 Min. R.:Scott Hicks
   D.:Armin Mueller-Stahl, Geoffrey Rush V.:Buena Vista
4. EMPORTE-MOI Kanada/Schweiz/Frankreich 1998 94 Min.
   R.:Léa Pool D.:Karin Vanasse, Pascale Bussière, Nancy Huston,

Miki Manojlovic Produktion/Verleih bzw. Weltvertrieb aller an der Berlinale gezeigten Filme siehe den Berlinalekatalog, vgl 1

5. KURT GERRONS' KARUSSELL BRD/NL/CS 1999 70 Min R.:Ilonka Ziok
Mitwirkende: Bente Kahan, Ute Lemper, Ben Becker, Max Raabe
ZeitzeugInnen: Camilla Spira, Coco Schumann. Paul Kijzer u.v.a.
6. Gerrons Filmtitel lautete THERESIENSTADT
7. CLOSED COUNTRY CH 1998 85 Min R.:Kaspar Kasics
Idee und Recherche: Stefan Mächler
8. UN SPECIALISTE F/BRD/AU/Belgien/Israel 1998 123 Min
R.:Eyal Sivan
9. LA NINA DE TUS OJOS Spanien 1998 121 Min R.:Fernando Trueba
D.: Penélope Cruz, Antonio Resines, Neus Aseni, Hanna Schygulla
10.THE THIN RED LINE USA 1998 170 Min R.:Terence Malick D.:Sean Penn, Jim Caviezel, George Clooney, Nick Nolte, John Travolta

[The next text is to be found on the next page, due to layoutproblems].

THOUGHTS

In early January, I received a personal letter from Holland with the request that I write an article for the next edition of the Bulletin with a deadline of April 1, 1999. Half doubting, half knowing that I could do it, I agreed. Today is May 6 and I torment myself with my confused thoughts.
What happened?

For weeks I've been under pressure. On the surface nothing is perceivable; I'm functioning extraordinarily well, but inside, and especially at night, childhood memories of nights of bombing raids pursue me.

I was born on October 10, 1937, the first child of a master gardener and his wife in a small town in southern Germany. My father was an idealistic Nazi, who, in 1928, long before Hitler's seizure of power, at the age of nineteen, became a member of the Nazi Party through the influence of his older brother. Both were the children of missionaries, who wanted to do something for their tormented homeland, which was in the grip of massive unemployment and political confusion. Had they per chance been raised in a working class family, they would possibly have become Communists.

Why do I speculate so much about my father's motives for joining the Party, although I didn't really know him, was never able to talk with him person to person? All I have of him are a few photos and his farewell letter from Januar 2, 1945. Since then, he is counted as missing. He was thirty-five years old then, the same age as my daughter is today.

My whole life, my thinking, my behavior are overshadowed by and, at the same time, based on the historical events in which my parents were involved as participants, and which reached their dreadful apex in the Holocaust. I know that my parents certainly did not want that, and yet they were partly responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent people.

My parents are dead. They cannot change anything. I have to take up their legacy, even though I did not choose to be born into, of all things, a Nazi family. Many children of perpetrators deny the past. I, too, needed decades till I learned to accept it. Since then, I feel better. I only wish that others could also have this experience. Repression and denial take their toll in valuable psychic energy.

My mood has changed during the writing of this article. I now feel strong enough to say that which I feared most. I was afraid that many people would read this and I might possibly be misunderstood.

Despite that, I am grateful that I had this chance to share my thoughts with many people. It's about the war in Kosovo. I could scream. It isn't possible to bomb people into peace. I remember the nights in the air raid shelter. I was six years old. I didn't know why the bombs were falling.

But it was clear to me that something bad was coming to us from the outside. Had I been older and a boy, I would surely have voluntarily enlisted, to die a hero's death against our "enemies".

In view of the current NATO bombing raids, I ask myself, why science has made progress in all disciplines, but has completely failed in psychology. Did anyone really believe that a dictator would capitulate just because he was threatened with bombs? Did none of the people responsible for the bombings foresee that the hands of the country's reasonable people are bound through the bombing attacks, because a citizen cannot take a moral stand against his or her own people in such a threatening situation? Did no one have an inkling that the misery of the people, whom one allegedly wanted to protect, would be heightened to infinity?

I want to end abruptly with these questions. My hope resides therein that more and more people will dare to express their discomfort with this war. Maybe a time will come in which at least half of the costs of war and rebuilding will be used for prevention of wars. Maybe then enough money will be available for psychological studies about the source of humanity's shadow side and how it can be avoided at all levels. Since the Holocaust, we Germans, especially, should know what totally normal human beings are capable of doing unto other human beings. One thing is clear to me: terrorizing people with bombs increases this potential.

Gertrud Kauderer
translation: Uta Allers
Gertrud Kauderer is one of the founders of One by One and is a member of the Board of Trustees. In 1983 she became active in all kind of peace activities. She completed her studies at Vermont College (USA) wit a BA in Peace Studies.

IN MEMORY of Judith S.Kestenberg

Before I met her in Hamburg in September 1993, she was just a name to me; a famous name, it is true, but just a name. I read some articles she had written and knew from this that she was a psychoanalyst.

She was one of the three chairpersons of our workshop at the Hamburg Seminar. It was her turn to have the chair when I gave my lecture. After the discussion she hugged me warmly. I was very moved by this gesture and it felt like a personal and scientific reward, as acceptance and recognition. The next day I had a short encounter with her at lunch time and again she impressed me with her personality, a fragile and small woman with an incredible vitality and radiance. I could hardly believe she was in her eighties, I thought she was 10 years younger.

A half year later, I contacted her and she sent me more detailed information about her activities in the Child Development Research and in the International Study of the Organized Persecution of Children, which she founded in 1981. I was impressed by the fact that, as early as 1981, she was aware of the psychic problems not only of the children of the victims, but also of the children of perpetrators and collaborators. In Holland we had to fight a long time before we, as collaborators' children were

granted some way of recognition (in 1995 in the form of a governmental subsidy). She asked me to write the story of my life for her research and, at her request, I interviewed some other collaborators' children in the Netherlands. In the beginning of 1995 she planned to publish a book about the effects of persecution on children. Some months later, her secretary wrote me that Dr.Kestenberg was seriously ill. From that time on, even after her recovery, I stayed in contact with her through her secretary and later through Mrs.Charlotte Kahn, co-editor of the proposed book. I had an intensive correspondence with her about my contribution to the book, that was published in November 1998: 'Children Surviving Persecution' Praeger, Westport Connecticut/London, 1998 ISBN 0-275-96261-X). This was her last important publication.

This remarkable woman passed away on January 16, 1999, at the age of 88. It was a privilege that I met her and that I had the chance to work with her for several years. She was always interested in my activities and she was one of the readers of the International Bulletin.

I will remember her as a strong woman with a great love for human beings, especially for children. May her memory be a blessing to all of us.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

An Eightfold Dialogue

Report from the Second Dutch Post War Generation Conference

Hans Donkersloot

Summary. *On October 25, 1998, at Amersfoort in the Netherlands the second Dutch Post War Generation conference took place. Over 300 participants gathered there for intense discussions in a multitude of workshops revolving around the influence of World War II on the generation born after the war. Members of organized groups from eight different perspectives took part: Resistance, Jews, Sinti, Collaborators with the Nazi-invaders, the children of Allied, German and Japanese soldiers, and from those who suffered persecution or internment in the former Dutch East Indies by the invading Japanese army. The conference was the culmination of a long process of selfdiscovery and in creased cooperation by all the groups of the Post War Generation in the Netherlands*.

1. Prelude

The history of organized attempts by members of the Dutch Post War generation to deal with their legacy of war and genocide is maybe 20 years or longer. I participated in it myself from 1983 onwards as a member of 'Herkenning' (Recognition), the organisation of *children* of National Socialists and Collaborators, most of whom suffered in the Netherlands after the war from hatred and discrimination. The start of Herkenning in 1981 was speeded up by the encouragement and help of a number of social and health workers

(psychotherapists, doctors, vicars), who were confronted with these issues in their contacts with clients. Some other second generation groups also got outside help. Specialized agencies, that were formed after the war to help the Jewish, Resistance and Dutch East Indies groups in the population, gradually also took an interest in their children and started self help and discussion groups for them. Over the years independent organisations of the second generation for these three perspectives broke away from the confines of the organisations of their parents. Also the Sinti in the Netherlands are gradually getting organized now on a national level, though not specificially around issues related to the war.
In the last decade the children of the soldiers in World War II organised themselves, not in the least to search for (signs of) their father. Not only German and Allied forces contributed to new born children in the Netherlands; quite a number of women who were evacuated after the independence of Indonesia in 1949, had become pregnant from the Japanese soldiers and officials who invaded the Duch East Indies during the war.

In hindsight it is easy to see that this multitude of organized perspectives has a value in itself, and can illuminate aspects of the war and its aftermath that are difficult to understand and accept by each of the groups on their own. It took a long time, however, before steps in this direction were taken. Ground breaking work was done by KOMBI, an organisation set up in 1989 to bring individuals from the different war backgrounds together in dialogue groups. The other organisations, however, had little or no contact. This changed around 1995 when the government-sponsored agency ICODO took the lead in bringing together the Jewish, Resistance and East Indies second gene- ration groups. One year later also the groups that – in one way or another – experienced a societal stigma and had few if any government support (Nazi/German/Japanese/Allied soldiers background and Kombi with its dialogue groups including these perspectives) started a platform of their own. Then a signifi- cant move was made by the first three groups when they organised a Post War Generation Conference in 1996: they invited the other perspectives to participate as well. This first conference was organised like a celebration: speeches – one by a cabinet minister - films, theater and music inspired and entertained the crowd. Though a success, a need was felt by those present to find a form for more intense mutual interaction and dialogue. This became the aim of the second conference in Amersfoort, again sponsored and supported by ICODO. This time however, all the Post War Generation groups were invited from the onset to motor the process; those who wanted could also become part of the actual organising committee.
As a board member of Herkenning I participated in this committee, that convened during most of the year 1998. It was a unique chance to experience some post war dialogue-in-action.

2. Organizing the conference

The first meeting of the big Monitoring Group was in September 1997. Though with a clear agenda – to look back at the first conference and to start planning for the second - it proved to be a chance to get to know each other *at last*. Most of the time was spent – and well spent – with personal introductions; descriptions of organisations; and historical background information on all the perspectives present.

The atmosphere was formal and tense: what would the other groups look like? How 'ignorant' would they be? Would they accept 'my' perspective, vulnerabilities, needs? It took some móre meetings for the atmosphere to loosen up. Once the organising committee was formed, things took a more practical turn and cooperation became easier. Even then it proved necessary to exchange a lot of information in order for the needs of all groups to be understood.
Once understood, however, it proved to be possible to work out practical solutions; underneath the differences a clear sense of the importance of this process seemed to inspire all participants.

One of the first stumbling blocks proved to be the *age limit* to be set for the conference. The first conference had been rather strict in this sense, and some groups felt excluded as a result. A compromise was formed in that not so much the actual date of birth would be decisive, but the fact that the person did not *consciously* experience the war years. This also opened up the conference for some smaller groups that were not yet represented, like Jewish children born when hiding for the Nazi-persecutions. Another issue was formulating the *workshop topics* that would focus the debates and exchanges at the conference.

This was even discussed in the participating organisations, with all kinds of ideas as a result. Aided by some people with experience in self help groups, a workable shortlist was formed shortly before the conference.

Most of the discussions in the organising committee, however, centered around the question: how can we structure this conference in a way that all the people who participate will feel welcome, respected and maybe even understood? For we had to reckon not only with very different backgrounds, but also with vast differences in group-experience, self-esteem, and verbal qualities of the participants. The conference time available was only one day and we were well aware of the explosive cha-racter of some of the topics and feelings involved.
This led to decisions to bring down the number of 'uncertainties', compared with the first conference. We decided to invite only people who were already a member of one of the organizing groups, in order to ensure a minimum of self-reflection in the topics related to the war.
For similar reasons this time the partners were excluded, also because of limited space in the available accomodation. Places were eventually divided according to the amount of people in the relevant age-group in each of the participating organi-sations. The press was not permitted into the conference building, in order to preserve an open atmosphere as well as the privacy of all the participants.

The real test for the dialogue process would of course come in the workshops, where people would hear from each others perspectives maybe for the first time. A number of steps were taken to give these exchanges the best chances possible. All participants received a booklet well before the conference with interviews on all the eight backgrounds involved, in order to prepare them for the complex perspectives that could surface in the discussions. It was decided to keep the workshops small, to make room not only for facts but also for some of the personal feelings involved. We choose for three successive rounds of (parallel) workshops, in order to give each

participant the chance to experience at least two of them. And last but not least, we took care that each of the workshops was led by two experienced facilitators, members of the participating organisations as well as professional social workers who are active in this field. A team-building event was organised in advance by ICODO to prepare them for their task.

3. The dialogue itself

The conference opened with an introductory lecture about the experiences in the Netherlands with overcoming the emotional blocks and traumas that the war has left in this generation. Then it was time for the parallel workshops; participants went eagerly to the topics they had choosen. From reports of the facillitators afterwards we know that all of the discussions turned out to be lively and – in nearly all cases – respectful. In order to give an impression of the richness of the debate it is worthwhile to look at the list of topics:

Identity: support or trap?
The effect of silenc(e)(ing)
May I exist?
The not-known parent
Trans-generational effects
An identity apart from your parents?
The search to overcome our emotional blocks
The present day significance of your background
You and your partner
Pride and shame
Relations with your children
Thinking about History

Apart from this list there was also room for a more creative approach. Dance-therapy and art-therapy could be tried out by the participants. A number of films about the post war generation was shown in seperate rooms; the organisations involved presented themselves elsewhere with books, leaflets and the like. This contributed to a lively atmosphere, in which people roamed the conference site, meeting new people all the time. The evening was set aside for sharing a (traditional Dutch East Indies) meal and watching a play. This proved to be a chance for people to deepen their new or already existing relationships and to take some rest to let the events of the day sink in.
All in all, the day was a huge success.

4. Future perspectives

Has this Second Post War Generation Conference been the end of a process or just the beginning?
It might be too early to tell, but chances are that it will at least enhance the feeling of connectedness between the Post War Generation groups in the Netherlands. Not

that their specific organisations will become superfluous as a result: they have their own role to play in enhancing the awareness about the influence of this traumatic part of world history on each individual's life. But apart from differences we have a lot in common. Some of us might get hold of the tail, others of the foot, the trunk or the ear, but in the end it turns out to be the same elephant.

Some lessons can be learned from the set-up of this conference. It turns out to be possible to organise this dialogue on a larger scale and still in a meaningful way. Small workshops within the larger conference provide the inspiration and safety that foster real and honest connections. Barriers that seemed insurmountable for decades could be overcome. The decisive factors of course were *respect* and *mutual listening*: your story has as much right to be heard as mine.

Has this dialogue of the post war generation also a wider significance? I think it does. It shows society how long and pervasive the legacy of war and genocide can be: well into the second and third generation. It may remind society not to take war, violence and discrimination lightly, and to be well aware of the consequences for children in those circumstances.
My hope is that eventually the post war generation will speak up for these goals together.

April, 1999.