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INTRODUCTION

Not only the children of Nazis or collaborators, not only the children with a German father, the children of the Liberators have to cope with the past as well.

Jan van de Ven from Holland learned at the age of 17 that his father was a Canadian soldier who participated in the liberation of the Netherlands in 1944/45. He and his family were reunited in 1984.

Katja's Russian half-sister Olga learned in 1986 that her father who died in the Gulag Archipelago, had a daughter in Berlin, where he lived after the Liberation of the city. She decided to find her sister and finally they met for the first time in Berlin in 1995.

Heidrun Schmidt, a journalist, interviewed the two sisters. The conversation was broadcast twice in the summer of 1995. Heidrun died in December 2001. I dedicated some lines to this warm and committed woman.

Teresa Howard led a workshop in June 2001. She sent me a report from which I quote some paragraphs.

Two readers of the International Bulletin wrote a book. Arne Oeland wrote about the children of the war in Danmark and about the reluctance of the Danish officials to help them find their fathers.
Dan Bar-On from Israel wrote a book about the stages in the Israelian identity. The English translation will be edited this year.

You will find a summary of three lectures held on June 8, 2001 in the Flemish Parliament.

The Dutch organisation "Herkenning" celebrated its 20th birthday. An impression.

I hope that this issue of the Bulletin will come up to your expectations. Your reactions and suggestions as well as articles are welcome.

All the best,

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

IN SEARCH OF MY FATHER
by Jan van de Ven

One day, when I visited my grandmother, she asked me how I felt about my parents. I did not understand what she meant and asked for an explanation. She revealed to me that my father was not my biological father, who was actually a Canadian. She said that I could always ask for help in case things did not go well at home.

Nice words, but as a 17-year old boy in the sixties, I was not assertive and did not have the courage to confront my parents. So I did nothing. My grandmother said that she had another secret to reveal, but she would do so only after my marriage or when I was old enough to be able to cope with it.

That evening I told my girlfriend Leeny what my grandmother had said to me. To my surprise she already knew the truth. Her neighbour, who lived in the same street as my grandmother during the war, had told her so. The neighbour had been acquainted with my father.

In August 1964, I married and in April 1965, I visited my grandmother to learn about the other secret. It was not so much a secret as a surprise, because she handed me an envelope with the address of my father and some pictures.

What to do now? I didn't know. I did not speak or write English and so I could not send him a letter. I had to ask someone for help. But I was too scared and I feared that my stepfather and my mother would learn about my action.

So I did nothing. The envelope with the pictures was lying in a drawer, and now and then I took them out and dreamed that some day I would meet my real father. I got a job as international car driver and my wife Leeny was often alone in the house. Because my parents often visited her - they even had their own key to my house - Leeny feared that the day would come that they would find the envelope. In that mood she threw it away. I did not blame her, because I understood her fears. Nevertheless, now I had no information any more and there was little chance I would ever find my father.

Years came and went. After one of my trips to Bulgaria in 1984, I came home and my daughter Wilma told me that that very evening the issue of the Canadian Liberation Children would be presented on TV in the show of Sonja Barend. My eldest daughter Jolanda suggested that I record it on video, so that we could watch it another time if we felt the need. Fortunately, we followed her advice.

Never before had it been this silent in the house as during that programme. Afterwards we discussed the interview and my family convinced me that I should try to find my father.

The next day, when I was working in the garden, my mother came to us to have a cup of coffee. My wife Leeny called me in and we spoke together about all sorts of things. Then I found the courage to ask my mother whether she had seen the programme of the evening before. She had. And then she said: 'One of the interviewees, Francis, I know her very well. She lived in our neighbourhood, and her

father and my father were friends.' And she revealed much more.

When my stepfather came in, we immediately switched to another issue. As I continued my work in the garden, I reflected on what I had heard. I was nervous about the fact that my mother knew Francis and I went in to watch the video again. Francis told that she had found her father, but she learned that he was dead, though she was invited to come to Canada and visit one of his friends, a war budd.

I was shocked! I phoned the TV company and I told my story. The people were very kind and gave me an address to contact in my own town. I was perplexed. I phoned and spoke with Tiny Oosterhoff who was secretary of the Organisation of Children of the Liberation. When I gave her my name, she was very amazed and said: 'Hello, Indian! [he did not know that his father was of Indian origin GSB] I have the phone number of Francis and she is eager to talk with you'. I made my call from the telephone booth at the camping place and I did not have enough money to make another call. I ran back to my caravan.

My face was white and someone asked me what the matter was. My wife Leeny asked the same. But I said: 'Not now, I am in a hurry to make a phone call.' It was a pity that Francis was not at home, but her daughter assured me that she would be there in two and a half hour. Two and a half hour! They seemed to last two and a half days.

And then I heard her voice:'Hello Jan, I am glad to speak with you'. I wondered why. 'You are in search of your father, aren't you?' I confirmed it and told her that I would like to meet her. She expected me that very day and we talked for hours and hours till early in the morning. The man who invited Francis to come to visit him in Canada was not my father, but was another friend. They were two of three friends: Dick Jones, Francis' father, Joe Johnson, my father and Grant Wilson.

Wednesday I contacted Olga (a member of the organisation in that period). She asked me to note all the information I had and to send it to her. Three weeks later she told me that she found the telephone number of my father, but had not yet made contact; apparently nobody was home. Some weeks later she informed me that that man in Jackson Points was not my father,[they thought that his father lived in that place GSB] but...
I needed some moments to cope with it, did not say a word. Olga checked that I was still on line and then announced: 'Would you like to speak with your father? I have his phonenumber and he is expecting your call.'I don't have the words to express what I was feeling in those moments. It is obvious however that it is strange to talk to your father for the first time in your life! Never before I had been so excited. I spoke to him in German, French, English. It was not easy, especially since he was more or less deaf.

He asked me to come to Canada and see him and urged me to come soon, because of his weak health (which was not true at all he was a very strong man). Suddenly I was a member of a big family. I had two sisters, two brothers, a lot of cousins and uncles and aunts. We called each other few more times and wrote letters. In August 1984 I flew to Toronto (an Indian name that means: meeting place). During the flight I had enough time to think: did they ever try to find me? Olga had said to me so and

had given some evidence, but I was not sure she was right. The 'unfasten your seatbelts' sign was lit and I arrived in Canada. I felt scared, I was sweeting, didn't know what to do or what to say. I could only wait and see what would happen.

The first to greet me was my sister Flo. I will never forget her words: 'Hi, John, welcome home, baby brother'. Then my father hugged me, held me against his breast and said: 'I'm your Dad, welcome home son.' It was so good to immediately feel accepted by my family. Flo's daughter Susy said: 'Hello, uncle John, you are a real Johnson, a big man.'

Olga, her husband and a camerateam accompanied us for a documentary film. On our way to my sister's she asked me whether I would like to drink something. I answered that I would like to have a beer and everyone laughed, because a Johnson who does not like beer is unimaginable.

Together with my brother Herb, I went to Toronto to see my brother Ron. Herb, an official at one of the government offices, told his colleagues about my visit. His boss, the Prime Minister Davies of Toronto was eager to meet me. He asked me about my impressions of Canada. I just arrived and did not yet have a real idea. He asked me to meet him again in two weeks.

Then I was invited to come to the Press Club of Toronto where Minister Davies arranged a dinner in my honour. He asked whether I would like to come to live in Canada. I told him that there was little chance, because I lacked the money and the proper education. He was sure that I could find a job as a truck driver and there would be no obstacles. 'If you ever get get trouble with your emigration, you can call me' and he gave me his card. 'Because your father is an Indian and belongs to the original inhabitants of Canada, you have the same right as I have to live in this country.' He offered me a nice book.

Back in the circle of the family, I saw pictures of Den Bosch, the city where I was born and where I still live. One of them showed the house of my grandmother, which has since been demolished. That proved that they really had tried to find me, but could not because they had the wrong name. When my brother Herb was in Germany to fulfill his military service in Baden-Baden, he too had tried, but to no avail.

My father never had denied the issue of his having a son in Holland. His wife knitted clothes for me, although they were poor during that period, and sent parcels to my grandmother with all kinds of practical things.

Now the picture was complete, I knew the whole truth.
This is the story of how I found my father; actually, how fate brought us together.

KGB brings two sisters together

Katja was 47 years old when she received a letter from the Red Cross in March 1993 that changed her life.

I read on the envelope "War prisoners mail" and immediately I knew what that meant. I knew it by intuition. After the death of my stepfather, my mother told me about my 'real' father and showed me a picture. I thought: "This cannot be my father".

Then I started to reflect. As soon as one is interested in a topic, one suddenly finds a lot of information, articles, films and so on. As a result I watched the documentary film "Befreier und Befreite" (Liberators and Liberated) by Helke Sander and Barbara John. They tell the stories of Russian women raped by German soldiers and German women raped by Russian soldiers. And I became convinced that I was the product of such an act because I was born in April 1946.

My mother gave me little information. Actually, the story was a family taboo. We did not speak about it. My mother told me that my father died after the end of the war because of a lack of medication. And, indeed, it was common knowledge that there was such a scarcity. But what my mother told me was not the truth. I did not ask more questions, though.

The Red Cross informed Katja, daughter of Wladimir Smirnov, that her half-sister was searching for her. Katja was not shocked; she felt relieved. She hoped to learn the whole truth about her origins. She went to the office of the civil registry in Köpenick to see whether her father's name was written on her birth certificate. It was not.

Three weeks later she found the courage to speak with her mother, who told her:" I have to tell you about your father. We had a love relationship and lived more or less together till your second birthday. He was an officer in the army and took care of you and me. And then, suddenly, he disappeared. Two commanders of the army came to see whether he was hidden in our home. They did not come back; neither did your father."

Later her mother told Katja that she, like so many other women, was raped by a Russian soldier who participated in the Battle of Berlin. They kept quiet about the issue and those who had a love relationship kept silent too, because common opinion judged them as unethical.

It was her half-sister Olga who could tell her what really happened. Her parents divorced in 1939. Her father, an engineer and a major in the Russian Army, took part in the liberation of Berlin. In his position as Vice-Commander he played an important role in the contacts with the other Allies in Berlin. In 1947, however, he was denounced by his car driver. He might have had plans to desert to the West and he was considered to be a traitor.

In Russia he got a 75 year sentence to a convict settlement, Magadan, known as the Gulag Archipelago. He died in 1952 at the age of 39. The officials stated that he

died from a stroke, but that was always the official reason.

As a 12 year old girl Olga, found a letter in which her father was called an enemy of the nation and she learned that he was in detention. Her mother implored her never to talk about this to others, even not to her best friends. The topic was taboo in the family. Her father's sentence prevented Olga from receiving her doctorate in engineering.

It was only in the Perestroika period that Olga learned more about her father's fate.

"In 1986 I received a letter from the KGB about the rehabilitation of my father. I asked for more information, especially about the lawsuit. Only four years later did I get permission to see the KGB material in their office. I read all the documents in the 12 hours which were given to me, more than 250 pages. I made notes, because it was not allowed to make copies. The documents mentioned a child whom my father conceived in Germany with a German woman. In court he admitted that it was his daughter.
Then I became determined to search for my half-sister, my only relative, since my mother had died one year before. I thought: "Maybe my half-sister knows the story of our father and is still convinced that he is a perpetrator. And I would like to tell her that he wasn't, as the documents prove.

Olga tried to find more evidence and she was successful. The brother of one of her friends had been in the same detention settlement as her father. He told her that there had been a revolt on May 9 1952. Olga's father died the next day. Coinci- dence? The rebels asked for better conditions. Stalin had them severely punished: 500 inmates were executed. Olga asked the KGB for more information about this uprising and got a promise to receive more. She never did.

In 1990 Olga continued her research with the help of the Red Cross in Moscow. The officials said that it could last for several years and she might never succeed. The administration in Germany was less strict. Maybe the mother had remarried and had another name now. Maybe she had moved to another address.

Three years later, however, the Red Cross found Katja, who wrote a letter to her sister, although her mother objected.
She planned a meeting. But it was not as easy as that. Olga did not react! Through friends and friends of friends in Moscow and through radio- and TV programs, she tried to find her sister. She learned that she had left Siberia and was still alive.

In July 1994, Katja finally received a letter from Olga. In April 1995 the two sisters met each other in Moscow. Katja recognized similarities in the pictures of her father and her sister with her own face. She was happy that now, she sudden- ly had a big family: a sister, two nephews, 4 grandnephews, an uncle and an aunt, whereas until then she had only one relative, - her mother.

Later that year Olga came to Berlin. Katja's mother refused to meet her. Her only reaction was: "Yes, today it is nice weather."

Later, Katja had to cope with an identity crisis. It was difficult to her to integrate the

new information.

Subsequently the two sisters met each other several times, alternately in Russia and in Germany. Katja and her husband visited Olga in the village where she was living. With the money Olga got from her sister, she bought a water filter installation. That was much needed for the poor conditions of this village.

Katja learned that her father loved children very much and she regrets that she had to grow up without a father and especially without a child-friendly father.

The two sisters speak German with each other. Olga learned the language in Königsberg where she lived during the war. The contact with Olga's sons is difficult because they speak only Russian.

It is uncertain whether they will meet in the future because of Olga's heart disease and the lack of room in Katja's new home. It will not be easy for them to accept this.

The story of Katja and Olga is not typical. Many children tried to find relatives and most of them were unsuccessful. The story is, however, certainly representative of the fact, that so many people learned the truth 50 years after the war. They learned that it was a lie, although it was loudly proclaimed in the former GDR, that, of course, the Russian liberators did not rape German women. They learned that women who had love relationships with foreign soldiers - sometimes for very practical reasons, such as food and shelter - were not to be judged so harshly as people had done.

This article is based on the text of radioprograms of June 16, 1995 on SFB (Sender Freies Berlin) and the broadcast of August 1995 on MDR (Mittel Deutscher Rundfunk) in which the two sisters were interviewed by Heidrun Schmidt, and on a personal letter that Katja sent me to tell me what happened since then.

GSB

IN MEMORY OF HEIDRUN SCHMIDT (1943-2001)

I met Heidrun in the spring 1995 in Berlin with Otto Duscheleit, one of the founders of the organisation, One by One. Heidrun, a journalist, was deeply interested in all the issues related to the war. She learned about One by One, and was amazed and happy that it was possible for the descendants of war victims and of perpetrators to meet and give each other support. Otto told her about the organisation Herkenning in the Netherlands, the Organisation of Children of Collaborators and about the international activities it sponsored. Heidrun was eager to learn more about the Dutch situation and so we met. The interview was broadcast on channel SBS in September 1995.

I remember Heidrun as an energetic, dedicated woman. Her questions were to the point. She was not only the interviewer but was also present as a warm and emotional woman.
From the outset in November 1995, she was among the readers of the International

Bulletin.

A short article in her memory appeared in the "Tagesspiegel", a Berlin newspaper, January 4 2002, written by Katja Füchsel. I would like to cite several paragraphs in paraphrased translation.

"One day, her friend Arturo found her at the table, silent, without make-up, her hair uncombed. She had done some research about National Socialism for a radioprogramme. In the war diaries she consulted, she found two names: those of her mother and her father. She was shocked. Arturo suggested that she marry him, so that she could live with another name.

"She was always active, never lazy, always concentrated on difficult issues like war and peace, East and West, atomic energy and gene technology, psychiatry and health care."
"One of her friends described Heidrun as a candle burning at both ends. Maybe she was more like a bar of dynamite."

"Heidrun suffered from heartproblems and cancer in her last three years. When her situation improved, she made new plans. The day before she died, she wrote in her diary: - Every morning when I awake, I feel happy that I am alive. The morning is the most beautiful. At home. I feel at rest. The offices are still closed. My assignments have to wait. Nobody calls me. It is nice to reflect when one is at rest.-"

Heidrun died on September 21 2001.
May her memory be a blessing to all of us.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

FORWARDS, BUT DON'T FORGET

This is the title of a book containing the lectures and proceedings of a seminar held on June 8 in the building of the Flemish Parliament. The seminar was planned and organised by a group of independent scholars, the "Voorwaarts" group, with the aim to activitate and give continuity to the dialogue about the Second World War in Belgium.

I would like to give a summary of three of the issues elaborated.

The historian Bruno de Wever procovatively titled his lecture "Collaboration and Repression: the FACTS."
As a historian he knows of course that there is not a thing like a fact in history. We always have to do with interpretations of what happened and with interpretations of interpretations and so on. That means that studying the past is always placed in a subjective framework. A sort of objectiveness can be reached when historians with different interpretations meet each other in a dialogue.

The first important question is to define who the collaborators actually were and what moved them to collaboration with the Occupiers. De Wever did not discuss those

collaborators who were motivated by ambition or opportunism, but focused on those who were pushed by political conviction. De Wever identified two motives: an anti-democratic conviction and Flemish Nationalism.

In many Western-European countries at the beginning of the 20th century an anti-democratic stream opposed the recently introduced parliamentary system with common vote. Some only critized the still poorly functioning of the system, whereas others opposed the system as such.

Flemish Nationalism was rooted in the Flemish Movement, which itself was part of an emancipation movement in the civil society of Flanders, a society consisting of a majority of Dutch speaking people who felt more and more dominated by a French speaking nation.
The Flemish movement aimed at equal juridical rights, - de iure and de facto -, for the Flemish inhabitants, whereas Flemish Nationalism claimed a Flemish State.

A small radical group married an anti-democratic conviction with Flemish nationalism and founded the Flemish National League (VNV). In 1939 this party obtained 15% of the votes. The leaders considered themselves to be THE representatives of the Flemish people. They were convinced to be only accountable to themselves. The anti-Belgian character of the party prevented it to be anchored in the powerstructure of the country. The leaders tried to gain power by collaborating with the Germans. Many people in Flanders sympathized with the party. Besides this VNV a party was set up which aimed to become part of the Great German Reich.

Bruno de Wever recalled to memory that the percentage of the population active in the resistance movement was almost the same as that of the collaborators. Between those poles existed a grey mass of people who just tried to survive and therefore adjusted to the new order.

Issues we charge the VNV with: The destruction of the legal order, criminalisation of each opinion or action which was not according to the National Socialist ideology, collaboration in the deportation and persecution of Jews, Roma and Sinti and other discriminated groups, usurpation of power and 'Gleichschaltung'.

What then was, on the other hand, Repression? The Belgian authorities failed when in September 1944 after the Liberation the people in the street took the law into their own hands. The collaborators who were put on trial in the first period got more severe sentences than those who were judged later. The 'expurgation' of the various professional and societal groups showed a lot of arbitrariness. The excesses in the internment camps which Belgian guards permitted themselves, embittered many of the collaborators, so that they focused on their Flemish motives and not on their aim to wage war against society.

De Wever pleads an open and fair dialogue, needed to explore the 'facts' at both sides with understanding for the circumstances which drove people to collaboration. But also with understanding for the period in which the legal order was not yet reestablished and in which emotions dictated the events at the cost of juridical objectiveness.

The philosopher, Jaap Kruithof, discussed in his lecture the ethical, philosophical and political aspects of 'forgetting, forgiving and reconciliation'.

About forgetting and remembering he stressed the fact that they cannot be manipulated by our consciousness or will. This is true for our individual memory as well as for the collective memory of a population.
Political and societal convictions and interests, however, influence the collective memory. Conscious or unconscious motives lead us to speak about one event and to keep silent about another. (In Belgium one spoke about the crimes of Stalin, but not about those of King Leopold III in the Congo).
His conclusion: It is impossible to forget what happened in the Second World War.

What about forgiving? One cannot demand of the victims to forgive the perpetrators. In the same way, one cannot expect the collaborators to forgive those who inflicted injustice on them during the Repression. It is important to be aware of the fact, what came first and what was the reaction: the Repression was a reaction to the Collaboration.

Forgiving is no realistic option. Will reconciliation be more realistic after all? Kruithof rejected any form of amnesty. One cannot live on as if nothing happened. On the contrary, everything that happened should be recognized and discussed. Kruithof brought to the forth that for many Belgians the unification of Europe is difficult to accept, more than in other countries. This issue is of prime importance, because the system of government played such a decisive role in the Second World War (and even in the First).

Kruithof saw but one 'solution': do not wipe out the past, do not wipe out the guilt. But it is time to close this issue, to close an era. That will enable reintegration.

The Dutch historian Jan Bank contrasted Dutch society with that of Belgium, a homogeneous versus a heterogeneous one. Till the sixties the societal discussions focused on legal issues and the occupation itself. Then people started to recognize what happened to the Jews, the more since it was not longer possible to ignore the fact that in Western-Europe the percentage of deported Jews was the highest in the Netherlands.

In Dutch society former collaborators or SS men don't play any role. Even their rare reunions receive the unanimous disapproval of the Dutch people, whereas Flemish nationalism is still prominently present in Belgian society.
The case of the Dutch collaborators has been 'psychologized': it was not by accident that it was the psychiatrist Hofman who wrote the first disseration about collaborators. Many of the collaborators' children have psychological problems and one will meet them in the rooms of psychologists and social workers. A national and collective issue has been reduced to an individual problem in the field of mental health. That enables the Dutch people to ignore the Repression that took place in the Netherlands just like in Belgium, with the same arbitrariness and the same sort of excesses.
GSB

WE DO NOT EVEN EXIST
Danisch children of war explore the past

At the occasion of the editing of the book
Horeunger og helligdage -tyskerboerns beretninger, edited by Det Schoenbergske Forlag and written by Arne Oeland, chairman of the Danish Organistation of children with a Danish mother and a soldier of the German Wehrmacht, the journalist Marc-Christoph Wagner wrote an article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on 28 December 2001.

A paraphrased summarized translation follows:

Wagner referred to a research projectby the physician and lay historian Kirsten Lyllof who found out that more than 13,000 German refugees, 7,000 of them children aged between 0 and 5, died in 1945. (Numbers for the years prior are not available). She related that, indeed, many of them died from starvation, inflammations and dehydration. But it is obvious that medical help could have saved many of them. However, after five years of occupation, most of the Danish physicians were reluctant to treat German civilians. Hospitals closed their doors. The refugees were lodged in internmentcamps where the hygienic conditions were especially miserable, an unacceptable situation. Only when an epidemic was about to spread to the Danish population, did the government take action.

Lyllof wondered whether the physician's oath can be betrayed in special situations or if precisely in situations in which hatred and rejection are the norm, the oath exhorts the physician to uphold it.

The Lyllof's article, published in 1999 in the "Historisk Tidsskrift" and in summarized form in the daily "Politiken," sparked an intense debate. Many declared, that Lyllof had not taken into account the special conditions at the end of the occupation. So many years after the events it was easy to view the refusal and reluctance as unethical, though in that period it was quite understandable. This kind of argumentation is typical of the way Danish people have coped with the past; that's to say of the way it did **not** cope at all.

A similar issue is in the spotlight again - that of the fate of the German children of war. It is estimated that there are between 6,000 and 8,000 of them. The number is probably much higher because women gave the child the name of a later husband or did not mention any name.

The book by Arne Oeland is another blow for the established historians, because this issue was also not put on their agenda. Arne, a teacher, did not learn until he was 48 years old that his biological father was a soldier of the German Wehrmacht. A cousin of his told him the secret, which was well known in the family but was a taboo topic. Arne went to the civil registry office and the archives of the church to discover that his father's name was absent from the registry. He was met with denial: there were no documents. Later the officials admitted with reluctance that there were files. Instead of helping him to find the requested information, which is a civil right, stated in the Constitution, they tried to block his research. Arne finally found his

father's name, although it had been eliminated from all the documents which citizens had a right to consult.

The case was no exception. Arne learned that many more children of German soldiers had met with the same reluctance and resistance. It was obvious that the staff of the Danish government had tried to destroy the fathers administratively. The children were robbed of their origins.

It is even more unacceptable that the civil administration not only violated the law **then** but is still doing it. In January 1938 a law was passed on in which the rights of children born out of wedlock were guaranteed. The law stipulated that the biological father should be found and that physicians, judges and officials had to do their utmost to find him. Even in the case that several men could be considered to be the father, each of them was obligated to pay support and education for the child until its 18th birthday.

During the occupation this law was not suspended. A special committee was charged with the search of the father. It diligently fulfilled its task. Even soldiers in the Siege of Stalingrad were asked to send blood for the proof of paternity! This measure can be seen in the tradition of the 1938 law which forbade marriages between 'Aryans' en 'not-Aryans'.

After the capitulation of Germany when the people in the street took revenge on the German'whores', the officials tried to blot out the descent of the children of the war. If German soldiers wanted to take their responsibility for their child, they were denied the contact with the mothers. The government wanted to prevent family reunions. The 'raison d'état' violated civil rights.

The issue was taboo and one can understand why. Whereas the physicians refused to save the lives of German refugees, the officials blotted out the descent of Danish children. Fifty years after the war it is unacceptable that the government continues the strategy of its predecessors. The conditions now are not 'special' at all.

GSB

Some paragraphs (in paraphrased translation) of the introduction of the book **DIE 'ANDEREN' IN UNS** written by Dan Bar-On
ed.Körber-Stiftung, Hamburg 2001
(The book will be edited in English under the title
THE OTHERS WITHIN US

Without dialogue no peace

After the attack on the World Trade Center it seems almost naïve to edit a book in which experiences and ways are described which could help to bring together people belonging to different parties in a political and violent conflict.
A book cannot stop the use of violence, it could be, however, a source of hope to all those who are trying to find peaceful solutions.[]

Violence and violent reactions dictate the situation in many regions in conflict, for instance Northern Ireland, Kosovo and Israel and the territories of the Palestinians. Nowhere the conflicts could be ended by using violence, on the contrary. How to break the circle of violence?
It is important that the world leaders act with prudence and thoughtfulness in order to prevent further escalation. They cannot succeed, however, without the support of people who are ready to meet 'the others', face to face, and to recognize their right of existence.[]

It is not sufficient to consider the political, social and economic conditions of the conflict. It is unevitable to explore its roots. It is the prejudices and hatred in the heads and the hearts, often for generations, which form the dynamite which causes the outbursts of violence.[]

'Fears, humiliation, myths and mistrust are the fuel for the fire,' says the Israelian psychologist Dan Bar-On. He tries to find in his research projects ways to enable people to recognize in themselves their experiences and feelings in the conflict and to confront them in encounters with 'the others', 'the enemies'.[]

Bar-On did research on the aftermath of the Holocaust in the lives of children of Nazi perpetrators in the eighties. In 1992 a small group of his interviewees met with a group of American and Israelian Jews. Since then they met several times and founded the group TRT (To Reflect and to Trust). In 1998 the group engaged in organising meetings to which people from other conflict situations were invited. The members felt that their method of storytelling could be helpful to other groups as well.[]

It is true that in the daily routine in the Middle East friendly meetings between people of both sides of the conflict are rare. The life of the inhabitants is full of fears, suppression an hope is scarce. At both sides a religious fanatism developed - cause or result of the conflict?[]

The Israelian identity is narrowly connected with the history of the country and the personal stories of the generation of the 'founding fathers'.
Dan Bar-On identifies three stages in the Israelian identity structure and illustrates them with interviews which he analysed with his students.
For the present stage in which old images dissolve he presents and discuss encouters with
- a Sabre (a person born in Israel from parents who emigrated)
- a fighter in the War of Independance in 1948, who suffers from a war trauma, a collectively denied topic in the Israelian society
- two soldiers who were in service in the Intifada period[]

At the end of the book two other interviews illustrate the present identity structure; a conversation between a daughter and her father who is a child survivor of the Holocaust; and an encounter between an Israelian Jew and an Israelian Arab.[]

The Körber-Stiftung is convinced that the method of storytelling is applicable in other situations. That is why the board decided to edit the German translation of the originally in Hebrew written book edited in 2000.[]

One could argue that it is rather unrealistic to see in dialogue between people of opposite parties a possible way to temper the conflict. Simple experiences might be, however, of prime importance. Without the recognition of our own prejudices and negative images of 'the others', we will never find peace in ourselves and with the others. It is not solely an issue for the politicians. The willignness of individuals to meet people of the other side is important as well.[]

We hope that the ideas developed in this book will stimulate those who are willing to engage in dialogue. The process is not easy at all, it is also a long-winded process. We would like to learn from projects and are disposed to serve as an intermediary between those who are interested in dialogue and engage themselves in similar projects.

Suzanne Kutz, Körber-Stiftung
Hamburg 2001

MORE THAN A DREAM

Hilversum, April 1982, a small hall in a meeting centre, that's the place.
People enter, pale, wary, nervous.
In the coffee corner a woman starts a conversation with one of the other participants. The others drink their coffee in silence.
The chairman welcomes those present, thirty men and women, and gives the programme of the day.
When in small groups - not too close to each other; they are not used to closeness - they tell their stories.
Some don't have the courage, even in this circle, to tell their names.
Some talk almost without breathing.
Others don't find the words to express what burdens their hearts.
Slowly, slowly they experience the safety of the place. They learn that they are not the only ones with a bizarre and painful life. They feel relieved by the understanding from the other participants.
At the end of the day they go home, less pale, less nervous, but still wary: a person they are acquainted with might see them leaving the meeting and might ask the theme of the meeting or might guess it....

February 2002, same hall.
People enter, they kiss, they hug each other, there is warmth and joy.
In the coffee corner people are in lively conversation with each other.
This time 180 persons subscribed. There are also some guests: representatives of the other organisations of children of war, representatives of the official Institute for War Documentation and of the governmental Organisation for Help to War Victims and some young historians who are engaged in research.
Marcel, the previous chairman, welcomes us in a speech which is alternately humoristic and serious.
Two members of the first board light candles for all those who died during these twenty years.
A number of members are honoured especially because of their support of the

organisation and because of fulfilling important tasks.
The first chairman, Dick, is appointed to be honorary president of our organisation.
And then, there is talking, talking, talking.
The atmosphere is vivid and people have too little time to talk to all the ones with whom they would like to speak.
It is a marvellous meeting.

Twenty years ago we could not have dreamed that such a party would ever happen in our circle.
We worked very hard to liberate us from a burdening past and to find strength in our thoughts and feelings. Slowly we became the warm persons we were in potential.
We sought the publicity to tell our stories so that the Dutch people learned about the injustice done to us and the stigmatisation. We hoped to bring forth a change of mentality.
Some beloved persons, some of them members of the resistance movement, took the initiative for our organisation and supported it. Much needed help in the beginning, without which we would have lacked the courage to start groups.
But most of the work we did all ourselves.

This was more than a dream come true.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

Some paragraphs of the report of Teresa Howard about the Summer workshop
BREAKING THE SILENCE - MENDING THE BROKEN CONNECTIONS
15 TO 17 JUNE 2001

This year, we used the simple format of the Median Group all weekend. There were no small groups. Through it all, I had the thoughtful assistance of a German pastor trained in pastoral counselling. He helped me with the German language and we chewed over the process by walking and talking together across the fields and through the forest during the breaks.[]

To begin, I asked everybody to take one of the large sheets of drawing paper and any of the assorted artist's materials provided. I suggested they find themselves a quiet place in the room and to 'draw or paint a map of the journey they had taken to get here'. They were also invited to take their time. Once started and despite the usual cries of, 'I don't know how to draw', each person got completely engrossed and an hour passed very quickly. Before dinner, we sat together in a circle, quietly for a time, just waiting. Waiting as we slowly took in the enormity of our own and each other's long, painful and yet accomplished, trek through life to arrive here in the quiet German forest on a late Friday afternoon. And then slowly, we began to talk. We talked about what we had tried to show on each of our maps. 'The images began to make sense of all the thoughts I had in my mind' one participant told us.[]

Another particpant drew a large tree without roots and a huge pair of scissors on one side of the picture. On the other was a stone wall which was slowly being taken down brick by brick as she faced the German past of her parents and grandparents. She had been so ashamed of her heritage that she had left Germany as soon as

she could at 16 and quickly learnt to speak English. Every drawing had a deep and complex story to tell of being born at this time in history. As well as the relief of finally being able to find a way to express the inexpressible, there were also fears of being retraumatised. There was a story told of a young woman who had been pulled out of the gas chamber because it was too full. Could we ever know what such a death would be like? We were trying to imgagine the unimaginable. Most in the room knew what it meant to grow up with gaping holes, that could not be imagined in the worl around them. Was this workshop going to push people into the jaws of an emotional death? We had all been left to make sense of blank spaces in our history or family tree. That was something we had all in common and it had brought us together. But staying in the room on that first Friday evening was very difficult. There was a tendency to rush away from the pain and potential conflict between us to think about other conflicts in the world outside our cosy retreat. Over the weekend we tried to look into these blank spaces but it was not so easy.[]

Shame was a theme that wound itself around many of the stories. The shame of being born a German. The shame of surviving expressing itself by dressing in rags, cooking the same boring meals every day and not admitting your Jewish heritage to your children. The shame of feeling cold. The shame of not having your own shoes. The shame of being a refugee being buried under a relentlessly positive outlook on life. Does shame grow in the dark we wondered? If we can bring it into the light will it disappear?

Saterday evening brought photographs, music, poems, and stories. Some were painful but the ability to use the pain as a creative ressource shone through. We listened to music so powerful that it could move us to tears. We witnessed a mother's love in the placing the first pair of leather boots on the shiny timber floor. We heard the story of one father's good death accompanied by his son's love, and of another father so ashamed of his part in making the VI and V2 bomber that he could not have contact with his son. We learnt that dreams can come true. If we really want to we can sail around the world.[]
Inevitably with so much richness in the room we found that we had to deal with our envy of each other. These powerful feelings were frightening but later one participant was pleased that we could at least acknowledge it to each other.[]

Feeling cold and the fear to be left out in the cold had been a continuing theme. Despite the comforting heat of the big iron, wood stove one woman felt particularly cold. I fetched her a blanket from the corner of the room despite her stoical insistence that it was 'only a symptom'. 'Sympton or not', I told her, 'if you feel cold, you are cold and it is important for you to feel warm and comfortable'. My action inevitably brought a reaction. After all I was convening a Group-Analytic workship! Group-Analytic or not, I was drawing on an important experience of my own. There was a time when I had similarly insisted that I was not cold and an insightful therapist had insisted on bringing me a rug,[] I noted that most of our parents and grandparents had been brought up with (such) a minimalist, survivalist approach to life. To survive the wars, our families could not afford to be in touch with their feelings of discomfort. We also learnt that the winters of 1946 and 1947 were bitterly cold. Europe had been devastated by the war and these were the coldest winters on record. There was not enough food. clothing or shelter.[]

At one point a Jewish man said he needed fresh air. At the same moment, a German woman felt cold and did not want the window opened. The group solved the problem by suggesting that the woman move close to the fire and the man to the other side of the room near an open window. Both had their needs satisfied while taking into account of the others. Somewhere in this story lies a way through what for now cannot be reconciled in each of our experiences.[]

Before the end I asked each person to draw a picture to describe what they had found over the weekend and would be taking with them. These, in contrast to the diffident sketch drawings at the beginning, were full of exuberance, colour and life.[] For one German man the pain was perhaps so deep it could not be recognised in the time we had together. His initial and final drawings stood for what can never be resolved but just lived with.[] His earlier drawings did not get full attention from the group. He seemed diffident about showing us. Perhaps none of us could bear to see what looked like a replica of Eduard Munch's The Scream. His last drawing, in contrast to everybody else's, left the white sheet mainly blank.[] He told us that this sketch represented many things but few words could be found to describe them.

Afterwards one German participant wrote that she thought the Germans did not share as much as the English Jewish people did. 'You may be right about that', I told her, 'but I understand that in a cultural way. There has been much less possibility for Germans to talk about their experience. If we think about it at the level of society, the German second and third generation have had to carry the guilt of their parents and grandparents about the Holocaust without much opportunity to talk about their experience. There has been little sympathy for that burden. Lots of books have been written about the transgenerational transmission of trauma for survivors and refugees but not for perpetrators, bystanders.

For anyone interested in joining us, we already have a date for this year: 12 to 14 July 2002.
The workshop will be at the same venue, Soonwald Schlösschen, Mengerscheid, Germany.
Please feel free to phone me on +44 (0) 20 8789 0350 or to email me on Teresah@dial.pipex.com if you are interested.

Teresa Howard