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# INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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## Issue 18, Spring 2004

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### INTRODUCTION

In November 2003 the Organisation Kriegskind was founded at a conference in Bad Boll. In a letter dated January 10, Dr. Helga Spranger, the chairwoman, set forth the plans for the coming years to members and people interested in the activities. This letter is in German. Circumstances were such that I did not have the opportunity to translate it. I hope you don't mind.

Dorothee Schmitz-Köster did research on the German Lebensborn Homes, in particular on 'Friesland'. She lectured on her research at the Historikertreffen 2003 in Berlin and I made a summarized translation of it. I would like to thank Uta Allers for her help.

A Lebensborn Child of Norway, Elna Johnsen, spoke about her experiences at a conference in Bosnia in 1999. Her words are still impressive and of current interest.

Some years ago, Stein Larsen of the Bergen University in Norway started with colleagues the War and Child Identity Project. In 2002 they edited a report in which they define their special target group: children of foreign soldiers (occupiers). Moreover, they discussed the problems and limits of research on experiences of children of war. These are of interest to all people doing research on similar items.

The people who were evacuated to the countryside to escape the German bombings of the English cities founded an organisation some years ago. James Roffey, the secretary, wrote some lines about it.

Dr. Martin Parsons from Reading University succeeded in setting up a Research Centre as a result of the international network of researchers in the domain of war children's experiences. In May the first number of a new magazine was issued and in September a conference will take place at the university of Reading. There are still some places available. You will find detailed information about those initiatives in this issue of the International Bulletin.

Rauni Kemi from Finland participated in the INTERFEW meeting in Manchester and tells us about her experiences.

I hope that you will appreciate the articles in this bulletin. Reactions are welcome.

An URGENT REQUEST to all the readers who received this copy through ordinary mail: Please send me your e-mail address if you have one.

Another REQUEST: Please send me any change of postal or e-mail address so that we can stay in contact.

All the best,  
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

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**kriegskind.de e. V.**  
**Dr. Helga Spranger**  
**1. Vorsitzende**

**10. Januar 2004**

Sehr geehrte Mitglieder des Vereins,  
Spender und Spenderinnen,  
Interessierte, Freunde  
Betroffene,

Das Weihnachtsfest liegt hinter uns. Das neue Jahr klopfte stürmisch an und wollte herein. Es gab uns nur wenige Tage Zeit, das vergangene Jahr zu bedenken. Jeder von uns tat dies gewiss auf seine Weise.

Ich möchte Ihnen als Vorsitzende einige Gedanken über unser junges Kind, den Verein übermitteln. Harte Arbeit liegt hinter uns. Wir konnten uns aus einer dreijährigen Arbeitsgruppe zu einem satzungsgemäßen Verein entwickeln. Über geografische Begrenzungen hinweg konnten wir –der modernen Elektronik sei Dank-, Diskussionen führen und Übereinstimmungen finden, wo Entwicklungen und Abgleichungen erforderlich waren.

Die dritte, auf unsere Themen bezogene Tagung in Bad Boll - diesmal mit einer Vortagung - gestaltete sich kontrapunktisch lebhaft. Viele neue Facetten der Grundideen wurden sichtbar. Neben dem Tagungsablauf präzisierte der erweiterte Vorstand die für das neue Jahr anstehenden Entwicklungen. Mit besonderer Freude haben wir die Nachricht von Herrn Schäfer aufgenommen, dass die Akademie Bad Boll zukünftig das zentrale Archiv des Vereins zum Thema der Kriegskinder aufnehmen wird. Wir können Sie also schon jetzt bitten, wenn Sie Bücher, Erlebnisberichte oder sonstige Dokumente zur Verfügung stellen möchten, sich mit uns oder Herrn Schäfer in Verbindung zu setzen.

Wir haben thematische Schwerpunkte unserer zukünftigen Arbeit festgelegt und werden diese demnächst auf unserer neu gestalteten Homepage veröffentlichen. Durch die Unterstützung und Mitarbeit von Prof. Schönfeld können wir unsere Literaturliste ordnen, systematisch erweitern und konsequent ergänzen. Wir streben an, auch nichtdeutsche Literatur hinzuzufügen.

Wir werden durch aktive Spende bald über ein neues Logo und ein PC –Mitglieder-Verzeichnis verfügen können. Wir freuen uns sehr!

Verschiedene Vorträge, Interviews in Radio Fernsehen und Zeitung haben unserer Arbeit einen gewissen Bekanntheitsgrad verschafft und die Aufmerksamkeit auf die unglaubliche Missachtung der Zivilbevölkerung in Kriegszeiten erhöht. Derzeit hat der Stern mit uns Kontakt aufgenommen, um sich mit dem Thema auseinanderzusetzen.

Ich konnte unsere Kontakte nach Finnland, Schweden, Norwegen, England und in die Niederlande weiter verstärken. Mit der INTERFEW (International Federation of War – Children and Evacuees) werden wir weitere internationale Kontakte herstellen. Wir möchten gemeinsam mit INTERFEW ein Journal heraus geben in englischer und deutscher Sprache. Die erste Internationale Veranstaltung wird im September 2004 in England stattfinden, die zweite dann 2005 in Bad Boll.

Die bundesweite interdisziplinäre Forschungsgruppe „w2k“, an der wir beteiligt sind, hat die Vorarbeiten aufgenommen.

In Kiel hat der Verein aufgrund eines Zeitungsartikels in der lokalen Presse eine therapeutisch geleitete Selbsterfahrungsgruppe von betroffenen Männern und Frauen der 1. Generation konstituiert.

Ich danke Ihnen allen für Ihr Interesse an unserer Arbeit und bitte Sie um Ihre Mithilfe und auch finanzielle Unterstützung. Wir haben gelernt, dass es nicht nur um die betagten, direkt betroffenen deutschen Kriegskinder, sondern um unsere nachfolgenden Generationen und jetzt leidende Opfer der so genannter „Kollateralschäden“ in aktuellen Kriegen geht. Fundierte Kenntnisse über die körperlichen und seelischen Folgen von Kriegen und deren therapeutische Möglichkeit der Behandlung zu erweitern, ist unser Anliegen.

Ich wünsche Ihnen allen, jedem in seiner Art das Fest zu begehen, gesegnete Feiertage und ein angstfreies, einschätzbare neues Jahr ohne Krieg.

Ihre Helga Spranger

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### **THE LEBENSBORN HOME 'FRIESLAND'**

Dorothee Schmitz-Köster did research on the German Lebensborn homes and in particular the home 'Friesland' in the vicinity of Bremen where she lives.

Research on only one home enables a long-term and detailed exploration in which, for instance, it is possible to do research in the regional archives. Moreover, Dorothee learned a lot about this home and its neighbours who have their own memories and stories, and who almost unanimously described the home as 'mysterious'. She also became the person who could be contacted by former functionaries and employees, nurses and women who gave birth to their children. And of course, the people who were born there found in her the person who tried to unveil the past with them.

In the period that Dorothee studied the collected material, reports of the oral interviews and written documents, she became familiar with the daily life in the 'Friesland' home. That enabled her to get beneath the surface of the employees', nurses' and mothers' motivations and gain a better understanding of the majority viewpoint 'that they had a wonderful time there'. Amazingly they forgot or denied that they lived in a home whose aim it was to propagate the Aryan race, to select the 'good' mothers and the 'good' children, a home in which many individual rights were violated. That is the principal reason that it has taken until today and is still so difficult for the Lebensborn children to find their roots and develop a stable identity.

#### **Lebensborn Homes in Germany**

Between 1936 and 1945 nine Lebensborn homes were founded in Germany. Most of them had two functions: that of maternity hospitals and that of children's homes. The first to open in 1936 was 'Hochland' in Steinhöring near Munich. It was in active operation until 1945 and functioned as the Lebensborn Central Council during the last years of the war. In 1937 the homes 'Harz' in Wenigerode and 'Kurmark' in Klosterheide near Neuropin were founded. In 1938 'Friesland' near Bremen and 'Pommern' in Bad Polzin, about a hundred kilometers from Stettin, opened their doors. In the next year 'Taunus' in Wiesbaden came into operation. And finally in 1942 'Sonnenwiese' in Kohren Sahlis, near Leipzig, and 'Schwarzwald' in Nordrach opened their doors. The last home, 'Franken' became operational in 1944.

In the first years of the war the Lebensborn organisation focused on founding homes in the occupied countries, especially in Norway, where they had ten homes. In Austria two homes were founded and in Belgium, Luxemburg and France one each.

#### **Home 'Friesland'**

This children's home was in operation for only one and a half years, from May 1938 to January 1941. That is why only 217 babies were born here. It was the most luxurious home of the Lebensborn organisation. It had belonged to the Lahusen family, captains of industry in Bremen. They had this mansion built in 1928/1929 in the centre of the region called 'Bremen's Switzerland'. In 1931 the manufacturers' imperium went bankrupt. The furniture was put into storage and the property was

bought by the Lebensborn organisation in 1937. The house underwent some changes and in May 1938 it opened officially as a maternity hospital, although one baby was already born before that date. By the beginning of 1941 214 babies were born. 1944 was a peak year with 116 babies. In January 1941 the children and several mothers were evacuated because the home was located in the flight path of British bombers. The staff was moved to other Lebensborn homes, and the head nurse and the secretary were sent to Norway to set up a series of Lebensborn homes in that country. From February to the autumn of 1944 very little information is available. It is obvious that the home was in use as per the notes about food rationing. The neighbours testimony states that the home housed recovering SS men. In the autumn of 1944 Lebensborn took over and 'Friesland' again became a children's home. In November a transport of 30 Norwegian children arrived. In the beginning of 1945 three babies were born. On May, 5 1945 the British army seized the home. Staff and children were allowed to stay in the home until the summer. In July the Swedish Red Cross brought the Norwegian children to Sweden. This was presumably the last group of children to leave the house.

### **The Staff**

In the home 'Friesland' between 100 and 150 people were housed. Half of them were the children, the others were the mothers and the employees, almost all women. The Lebensborn homes were in fact run by women: nurses, school teachers of infants, midwives, a secretary, kitchen employees and charwomen. There were, however, several men: the steward, the gardener and several workmen. The position of director was always filled by a man and in all the Lebensborn homes the supervisor who also had the position of physician was also a man. In 'Friesland', however, the Lebensborn organisation could never appoint a physician. The SS doctor of Bremen took charge of the medical practice. In 'Friesland' the director was also the supervisor. It was the SS Untersturmführer Bachschneider who fulfilled these tasks. Of course these were confined only to the actual running of the home. But he took the liberty to make sexual proposals to young women in the home: 'You are young and healthy, and you don't have a child? If you don't have the opportunity to become pregnant, I am at your service!' This is the testimony of one of the nurses who left the house soon after these impertinent words. Bachschneider who was married and had two children living in the home, began a love affair with the housekeeper who gave birth to two children by him. Why did he behave this way? Did he follow the strict orders from Himmler, addressed to all the SS members and the police 'to breed'? Or was he only a macho who built up his self-confidence by means of his potency? Or was he unhappy in his marriage and in search of an alternative? Who knows?

Among the staff the second position of importance was the Head Nurse. Mostly this position was given to a 'brown' nurse, one who was a member of the NS nurses' organisation. She was responsible for all the activities inside the home, the housekeeping, the nurses' duty rotation and the work of the mothers. It was standard for the mothers to help with the housekeeping.

The secretary of the home was an important person as well. At home 'Friesland' one of the mothers was charged with the secretarial job. Also in other Lebensborn homes mothers were appointed to important positions on two conditions: first they must have given birth to a healthy child and secondly they must have fulfilled the requirements of race, character and behaviour. Upon their arrival, the mothers filled out a questionnaire which was evaluated by the staff.

The secretary's assignment was not only administrative, but included also civil registration. In all the Lebensborn homes the arrival of the mothers was registered as well as the birth of the babies. The reason for the use of this civil registration was the promise by the Lebensborn organisation to maintain secrecy about the birth if the mother so requested. The births inscribed in the home books were not transmitted to the administration of the father's or the mother's place of residence. Often, people in search of their fathers' name find only the sentence: 'The father recognized his fatherhood. The document will be kept by the Lebensborn organisation'. This hampers their search or makes it practically impossible. True enough, the mothers were obligated to reveal the father's name to the home's civil registration, because he had to prove, as did the mother, that he was healthy, did not have genetic diseases and was Aryan. Moreover, the homes compelled the fathers to pay for their children. The secrecy is maintained to this day, because the registration of the fathers is lost. At the end of the war most of the documents were burnt by the Lebensborn Council and one can imagine that the secret documents were the first to be put into the fire.

The midwives are the only Lebensborn employees of whom we know the names. There is no doubt about them, because they are written on the birth certificates. The midwives not only had the task of helping the mothers in the delivery room, they were also obligated to report to the Office of Health

about disabilities and so-called hereditary diseases. In this way they are also responsible for the killing of the disabled and unhealthy children. It is known that disabled children were born, as well as children with genetic disorders. It is also known that these children were brought to institutions to be killed. Stangely enough, the midwives of home 'Friesland' who Dorothee interviewed, could not remember the existence of such children....

### **The Mothers**

Pregnant women who wanted to give birth in one of the Lebensborn homes had to contact the Central Council in Munich and were accepted only if they were healthy, of Aryan blood and prepared to name the father. The same conditions applied to the father in addition to having to acknowledge his fatherhood. In the first year 56% of the requests were declined because the officials applied the conditions very strictly, as is obvious from their own registration. In the following years they gave a more lenient interpretation to their criteria.

For unmarried women the Lebensborn home was often the last place to 'solve the problem'. In those days being pregnant without being married was a downright shame for the family and was often also grounds for dismissal from employment. This was so, despite the propaganda appealing to women and girls to have a baby, as evidenced by Heinrich Himmler's order to the SS members and the police, October 1939: 'It is a duty to become a mother, even beyond the norms of the bourgeois laws and traditions, even without being married, and not because of indifference but inspired by a deep ethical earnestness'.

The Lebensborn organisation looked for a place where selected women and girls could give birth to their children in a quiet atmosphere. At the request of the mother the organisation maintained secrecy and accepted the guardianship. The mothers could leave their babies behind for several weeks, months or even forever. The organisation committed itself to urging the fathers to acknowledge their fatherhood and give financial support. It helped when the mothers had problems with their employers. The organisation appointed several mothers in their homes. It helped to find foster-parents or adoptive families and it took responsibility for the judicial procedure. Thus the organisation offered the women a complete package of measures which supported them during and after their pregnancy. The conditions were inviting and thus many of the women did not pay attention to or forgot why the Lebensborn organisation had developed its programme and why it was executed.

The registration books of the births and statistic material give clear information about the mother's vocational training and their jobs. Married women were registered as housewives. Surprisingly, many women had a job in new and modern professions. Maybe only such women were selected for admission; many of them were indeed active in Nazi organisations. Maybe during the selection not only race and health were taken into account, but the social attitude of the women as well. The purpose of the Lebensbornprogram, after all, was to create an elite class of human beings.

Whatever the women's reason for going to a Lebensborn home may have been, most of Dorothee's interviewees never seriously considered the organization's political and genetical implications. Several women said: 'We needed the Aryan certificate everywhere'. The women hardly noticed the political lessons in the homes, although they were obligated to follow them. The organisation of the homes was drafted according to Nazi principles. Most of the women accepted them without question. The intent of the Lebensborn organisation was to create a community of mothers shaped in which the individual disappeared and differences no longer existed, according to the model of the community of the people.

One of the most important political events in the homes was the festival of name-giving, which can be seen as a National Socialist counterpart of the Christian baptism. In a festive ritual most of the children, though not all, received their names, and an SS member filled the role of the godfather. He and the mother promised to give the child an education in accordance with the spirit of the Nazi ideology. The importance of the ceremony found its expression in the fact that the child, instead of being sprinkled with holy water, was touched by an SS dagger. By means of this ritual the baby became a member of the SS family.

### **The Children**

In the separate Lebensborn homes about 6000 children were born. The small number of 217 born in home 'Friesland' is due to the short period during which the home was in use. About two thirds of the

babies in 'Friesland' were born out-of-wedlock. Compared to the rates in other Lebensborn homes this was rather high. Normally 75 % of the babies were born to married women.

The children stayed in the baby rooms even when the mothers lived in the house. Later they stayed in the maternity school. As a result the mother and her child had physical and emotional contact only during the period of silence – obligatory in all the homes – and when the mother changed the napkins and during walks. The children who stayed there after the mothers left the home – the precise numbers are unknown, although they are presumed to be high – were robbed even of these short moments of contact. For many children this situation was fatal. Although the standards for hygiene and medical care were high, many children fell ill and several died. Children who lived in the home for a long period did not develop at the normal pace or lost the abilities they had acquired at an earlier stage.

Disabled and ill children were sent to other homes or to euthanasia centres. In this way one 'saved the expenses of care for years on end' as it is stated in the correspondence between home 'Pommern', the Health Resort of Görden and the Lebensborn Council. The maximum stay in the homes was set at two years, because, according to the staff, after that period, the child was able to reflect and remember what happened in the homes. To all appearances they considered the children before the age of two a biological organism which needed only to be fed, cleaned and kept quiet.

In the organisation's view the best way to raise the children was in the care of the mother or in SS families. Only a few of those families, however, were willing to adopt a child. Many children were therefore given to families which did not have close connections with the Nazi Party or the Nazi ideology.

The majority of the children went to their mothers after a couple of weeks or months. It is questionable whether they were whole-heartedly accepted. Most of the children did not learn the circumstances in which they were born from their mothers and this secrecy caused emotional and psychological damage when the children grew up.

## Research

It is likely that most of the mothers decided on secrecy and therefore chose to give birth to their children in one of the Lebensborn homes. Many Lebensborn children were unaware about their origins since and their mothers, their foster parents or adoptive parents never told them the truth. Today there are still people who don't know that they were born in a Lebensborn home.

The people who did research upon learning the truth in some way, are eager to know the names of their fathers and if possible, to meet them personally. They long to know more about their fathers' family lives after the war, about their other children, in case there are any.

The search is difficult and, if the name of the father is unknown, in fact hopeless. People need inventiveness, perseverance, courage and support from archives and civil servants to hold out. There are still people who don't know who their parents are. There are people in search of their fathers or their half-brothers and half-sisters. Many Lebensborn children had to give up, because their research was unsuccessful. Several, however, were lucky to find their parents and to learn everything about their own origins. A few of them were raised by mothers who never made a secret of the fact that her child was born in a Lebensborn home and who did not withhold the name of the father. Nevertheless, even these people feel the past to be a burden because they cannot see their mothers in a positive way due to the Nazi connections. They cannot forget that their mothers participated in one of the most questionable establishments in which the racial laws were fully implemented.

Dorothee Schmitz-Köster:

**"Deutsche Mutter, bist du bereit...";** Alltag im Lebensborn

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## LECTURE OF ELNA JOHNSEN IN VELIKA Kladusa, BOSNIA, 1999

Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all I would like to express my gratitude for being invited here today. I would like to tell you a little about myself and about the work of war children in Norway which we consider to be important for

both people who are searching for their family-roots and identity as well as for people who have been victims of hostility and harassment as children in the post-war-period because they were regarded as opponents during the war. I was such a child in Norway about 50 years ago.

My name is Elna, but it has not always been my name. I was born in a Lebensborn Home in Norway run by the German SS, and I lived there for two years. At the time my name was Gisela, named after my father's sister. My father was a German soldier. This information was kept from me until 15 years ago. When I was two years old I was given away by my mother. She was not able to take care of me. It was in 1945, the war had just ended, the wounds were new and hurting. Our mothers were regarded as traitors and even whores. Their hair was cut off. They were often put into labour camps – without conviction. Often they lost their jobs and could not get another. Socially they were isolated and afraid. My mother did not tell who my father was, and after some time I was sent back to her with a Nazi-swastika painted on my back when it was discovered that I had a German father. Later she tried again, she gave me away and I was lucky, grew up with a kind childless couple that later adopted me. But my mother had all her life been haunted in her dreams by that little girl with the Nazi-symbol painted on her back.

More than 12,000 children with German fathers were born in Norway during and after World War II. Their organisation is called NKBF (Norwegian War Children Organisation). It was founded in 1986, and has about 600 members today. It helps people to find their identities and their biological families because people are still searching – now 50 years after the war. The members are also dealing with the long term effects of growing up in post-war years as the children of 'the other side' of the invisible social border that the war made. For many of them these years have been very traumatic. Some have become well adapted citizens, but too many have got the wounds and scars in their heart and souls and do not function very well in their daily life due to this background. They are bitter and hateful. Often they are not very well educated and therefore they don't get the best jobs. They were harassed out of schools, by other kids or by the hostile attitudes of their teachers. It got to their nerves as grown-ups. Drug-addiction and alcoholism is not unusual for those people. They now work hard to get economic compensation from the State because of the childhood that they feel has been stolen from them.

All this could have been avoided – that is so easy to understand now afterwards. But what could a child do? We were dependent on the responsibility and the friendly attitudes from the adults who surrounded us. A convention of children's rights did not exist at that time. At best our mothers, our teachers, our society kept their mouths and shut their eyes, and we felt unprotected. We should not be talked about, not even thought about. We were the children of silence and shame. At first in 1945 there was really a discussion whether they should send us all to Germany or not. This plan was rejected in the Norwegian Parliament, but no initiative was taken to avoid the suffering of the children. We were regarded as less intelligent with a poorer genetic inheritance than others. No responsible discussion of our legal, social and educational rights was raised. Only silence and shame. That is why I am impressed that you, so soon after your war, are willing to raise this issue here and go into these problems.

Not until 40 years after the war did we dare to stand up, form an organisation and try to find each other. It was then shocking what we heard in our meetings of the treatment these children got from their families, from schools, from neighbours and from authorities. Every single one of us had up to then thought that he or she was all alone with these problems. Therefore it is from our own experience that we want to come here and ask you to avoid such things to happen again to children – and to avoid any harassment when the children here are still children.

More and more clearly we have understood that these problems are common throughout the world in a post-war-period. People react alike all over. [] We would like to tell people everywhere not to prolong the war by leading it into the next generation.[]

I am sure that we all can agree that the children are not – as children – responsible for any [political] conflict, and the children of today are the adults of tomorrow. They will be the society of tomorrow. Therefore I beg you not to teach your children: 'Hate your neighbour because I do'. The cause for your hatred is unimportant for the neighbour's child. He will, as all children do, blame himself because you hate him. When he is a grown-up he will understand that the matter was really not his fault, and he will hate you because you made him suffer in believing that it was. In this way the conflict takes off and lives its own independent life.

I also beg you: 'Please continue to talk about these problems privately and publicly, write about them in your papers and I am certain that your awareness will lead you to the same conclusion that I have found: The human resource is the most valuable resource you have with which to rebuild your society. Individually each one of us is weak and vulnerable. Each one of us depends on others to tell us that we are of no lesser value than others. Children most of all do need that reassurance to become responsible adults. How to manage that must be one of your most important tasks in the near future.

We want every child be given the chance to love its family and to be proud of its members whether they are alive or not. The members of our organisation lost that opportunity as children. We learned that Germans were Nazi torturers and that our mothers were whores and traitors. Only in our secret dreams we did we see them differently.

As a grown woman I met my father and my mother for the first time. My mother was a strong healthy woman who had suffered a lot because of me. She has a wonderful smile and a great sense of humour. She impresses me. She is now 81 years of age. I met my father in Germany. He was paralysed after a stroke. In spite of that he spoke 3 languages fluently. He had a beautiful home and a nice wife. He was a nice, very intelligent and wise man.

Indeed, my parents were neither of them like I had been told they would be. It was not true. They were just human beings who did what their hearts told them to do in a difficult time. It was important for me to learn to know them and in a way to forgive them. It gave me peace at heart. But why was I not allowed to love them when I was a child and needed to?

Please allow your children to know and to love their relatives without shame.

We, the children of World War II are now grandparents. And our search for birth certificates, identities and biological families will soon be over. The bitterness and hatred that have been nursed by many of our members up to this day we cannot do anything about anymore. We started too late.

What we can do is share our experiences and knowledge with you who have your own war children to take care of. With that task I wish you the best of luck.

Many thanks for your attention.

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**Some paragraphs from the  
WAR AND CHILDREN OF THE WORLD REPORT 2-2002**

by Bård Kårtveit

From the INTRODUCTION:

'In most literature on children and war, the term War Children refers to children who are born at times of war, or in some way are deeply affected by warfare. Children who loose their close ones during the war, children who are traumatized by the brutalities of war, children who are forced to take part in such brutalities, children who are forced to take upon themselves the responsibilities of adults lost at war, etc.

The War and Children Identity Project focuses on a specific group of war children, children who are born as an outcome of warfare. Within this group, it can be useful to separate between:

1. Children who are fathered by enemy soldiers, and those fathered by allied soldiers/representatives from foreign nations.
2. Children who are born as a result of mutual relationships, and those born as a result of rape/forced pregnancy at war.

These categories are rarely clear-cut. For instance, German soldiers fathered thousands of Finnish children during WWII. At the time of conception, these soldiers were largely defined as allies, but as the war went on, were regarded as enemy occupiers.

It can also be hard to determine whether a child is born out of rape, or as a result of a mutual affair. Rape-victims often try to conceal what has happened to them, and if they do not, their stories are contested within their own communities, adding more weight to their traumas.

Nevertheless, the difference between being a “rape child” and a child born out of consenting relationships is an important one. This distinction may have crucial importance to the relationship between mother and child, and to how society at large will treat the child in question. At the same time, all war children seem to suffer similar problems of social stigma, discrimination and self-definition.

The issue of war children at large, their existence and the problems they have faced in post-war periods has barely been addressed at an international level. Our ambition is to help raise a general awareness about these issues, to encourage further research on the situation of war children and the problems they face in relation to their background. This report will point out some specific areas where children have been born as a by-product of war, and where there is a need for more information about the situation in which they live.

In recent years, the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war has received a lot of attention, and in the war-zones of today, such as Chechnya, East-Timor and Burma, it appears to be a widely used strategy. War rape is not the topic of this report. However, some general remarks about the issue might be in order’.

The next paragraphs discuss the themes:

War and sexual violence; An all too common phenomenon; Rape as a war strategy; The right to know vs. the right to a family network; Ethnic boundaries and enemy images; An introductory overview; War children in the 20th century; War children and the cold war; sources of information.

From the PREFACE:

‘In our first report released in December 2001, we outlined the background of our project, and our ambitions for the near future. Since then, we have discussed and tried to refine our objectives, and our vision on how to materialize our goals. In the last year, we have reached a fuller understanding of the complex nature of our ambition: on the one hand to provide valuable support to individual war children, and on the other hand, to assure that their identity remains a secret when necessary.

War children often feel much safer if their identities are not revealed to the public. If the secrecy of their background is compromised, they may face the burden of being stigmatized, even decades after war has ended. Therefore, our project is ridden with a special responsibility: when searching for information about war children and their problems, we have to guarantee their anonymity, and secure the confidentiality of necessary to obtain sensitive and personal information.

This situation differs from the one faced by NGOs that provide humanitarian aid in war-torn areas of the world. They often have to directly expose the individual misery in order to attract the necessary resources to help people in need. Humanitarian disasters such as mass famine and draught must be given a human face through the exposure of starving children, in order to provoke a response from the appropriate authorities.

Our project has to be discrete about individual faces, while at the same time recognizing their existence and their need for help and protection in a short term and a long term perspective. However, it is in our interest to counter the social taboos surrounding the issue of war children, and to change that situation. It is important for us to find appropriate ways of addressing the public and the war children themselves in order to counter the intolerance and injustice inflicted upon war children. These children are free of guilt, and cannot be blamed for the horrors of warfare into which they have been born. Thus a major part of our task will be to find ways of countering attitudes within war torn communities which place guilt and responsibility on the war children.

By elaborating a sound long-term oriented plan for the use of political, social and economic instruments to overcome this situation, we can help improve the lives of war children who are socially marginalized as a result of their background.

A second experience from our last year is a realisation of the political implications of our project, and the sensitive nature of our agenda. As this report will show, which is also reflected in the report on 2002, the political powers responsible for the largest number of war children are the big powers on the international arena. This may have implications for a small country like Norway, as our national governments may be reluctant to support us, due to the risk of annoying greater powers. In the future, we will approach the same political regimes asking for information, and support for ‘their’ war children. Judging from the experience of individual war children, and organisations working for them, we are

likely to face some resistance in pursuing further information. When addressing the problems of war children in countries still ridden by warfare, or where war has just ended, great sensibility is required'[] 'A third point coming out of last year's experience is the double nature of our task at hand: On a short term to secure vital information of the individual in order to help the child on the spot, and the second is the long-term project to guarantee a normal and unobtrusive life. These two tasks are intertwined and both depend on the mix of anonymity and knowledge'.

The project intends to make first preliminary investigations into the local situation of war children in Bosnia, Burma, East-Timor, Vietnam and several countries in Africa. The project leaders hope 'that helping hands may reach us and give us the kind of information and help needed to carry out our ambitions'.

The report considers also the situation in the US, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, the Russian Federation and the Balkans and that of war children in war areas today. Moreover, it offers a scala of lectures hold on War Child Conferences in 2002, f. i. the Lysebu Conference in Oslo, and the Historikertreffen in Berlin in 2003.

Issues of the report can be ordered. Please contact:  
admin@warandchildren.org  
Tel.(+) 47 55 56 60 48, fax (+) 47 55 56 64 01

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#### EVACUEES REUNION ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed in 1996 by former evacuee, James Roffey, and officially launched at The Imperial War Museum in London. It exists to provide meeting opportunities for those who, as children, were evacuated from their homes and families in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and other major towns and cities in Britain, that were seen as likely targets for enemy bombing during the Second World War. As that was developed so the southern and eastern coastal areas were also evacuated due to the threat of invasion by Nazi Germany.

In addition to organising meetings The Evacuees Reunion Association (ERA) helps many former evacuees to cope with the long term effects of the evacuation and to share their memories with people who understand.

A major part of the ERA's work is educational, this is to make the true story of what happened to some three million children better known and understood. It has a team of forty trained speakers who give talks to schools, and to a wide variety of other groups of people.

Membership of the ERA is not restricted to former evacuees but open to anyone interested. Its members are scattered all over the UK and in many other countries, its American group is rapidly expanding. Contact with members is maintained by the publication of a monthly newsletter called 'The Evacuee' which is posted to everyone at no extra charge to their annual subscription of £9.50.

The ERA is proud to be a member of INTERFEW, the International Federation of Evacuees and War Children. We are very pleased to create links with other countries in the firm belief that such friendships will help prevent the children of today and the future to suffer as we all did, and worse, in war situations.

Evacuees Reunion Association, James Roffey, General Secretary  
Suite 1, Goodbodys Mill, 17 Albert Road, Retford, Notts. DN22 6JD  
Tel/fax: 01777 71980

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#### **CHILDREN IN WAR, volume 1, number 1, May 2004**

Publisher:DSM Publishing.

**Editor:**

Dr. Martin L. Parsons. Director of the Research Centre for Evacuee and War Child Studies. University of Reading.

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'War Children....The Trauma'.

*Singa Sandelin Benko, Helga Spranger, Martin Parsons*

Issues can be ordered. Please contact: [h.a.e.apted@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.a.e.apted@reading.ac.uk)

Costs:£ 14 (two issues a year)

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***'Precious Commodities'. Civilian Evacuation, War  
Children and Related issues.'***

*A Residential International Conference to be held from  
September 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> 2004 at  
The University of Reading, Bulmershe Court, Earley, Berkshire, UK.*

Over the two days papers will be presented looking at various aspects of evacuation and war-child separation across the UK and Europe in World War Two and the long term effects thereof. Related subjects such as Literature and Propaganda Film will also be covered. It is also our intention to publish all the papers in a special conference journal.

Numbers are limited so requests will be dealt with on a first come first served basis.

The cost of the Conference will be £120 which will be all inclusive. In order to secure your place at the Conference please send a deposit of £20 made payable to The Evacuees Reunion Association to Helen Apted at The Institute of Education, The University of Reading, Bulmershe Court, Earley, Berkshire, RG6 1HY, UK as soon as possible.

Contact:

[m.l.parsons@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.l.parsons@reading.ac.uk) or [h.a.e.apted@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.a.e.apted@reading.ac.uk)

## **PROGRAMME**

### **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

09.00	Registration and admin: Helen Apted
09.45	Welcome: <b>Prof. Michael Fulford.</b> Pro-Vice Chancellor. University of Reading.
	<b>Prof. Singa Sandelin Benko.</b> Karolinska Institute, Stockholm. 'The Child in the Eye of the Storm.' Reflections on how a child's experience influences adult life.'
11.00-11.15	Coffee
	<b>Andy Kempe.</b> University of Reading. Head, Heart and Action. The use of Drama in the development of insight and understanding.
	<b>Professor Steven Trout.</b> Fort Hays State University, Kansas. USA. <i>"Boys will be Boys? Revisiting William Golding's Lord of the Flies."</i>
13.15- 14.00	Lunch
	<b>Pertti Kaven.</b> PhD Student University of Helsinki <i>"The decision-making process of the evacuation of Finnish children to Sweden during the Winter-war (1939-40) and the Continuation-war (1941-44)."</i>
	<b>Dr. Sidney Brown.</b> Retired Associate Professor. University of Maryland. USA <i>Apple for the Teacher'. The role of teachers in the UK Evacuation</i>
16.00 – 16.15	Tea
	<b>Dr Michael Lockwood &amp; Catriona Nicholson.</b> University of Reading. <i>'Reflections of War in Contemporary British Children's Literature</i>
Film:	German Kindertransport.
19.30	Drinks
20.00	Conference Dinner. Speaker. <b>Professor David Malvern.</b>

Head of the Institute of Education. University of Reading. and Patron of the Evacuees Reunion Association (title to be announced)

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September**

- 09.00                    **Professor Bob Rooke.**  
Fort Hays State University, Kansas. USA  
"From Dr. Spock to Dr. Strangelove: American Childhood and the Cold War."
- Dr. Peter Heinel. MD.**  
*Invisible ruins in the unconscious mind. The intuitive discovery of childhood war trauma*
- 11.00-11.15            Coffee
- Dr Simon Flynn.**  
University of Reading  
*'Those Billets': constructions of evacuation in BBC Radio's Children's Hour'.*
- 12.30-13.15            Lunch
- Prof. Erwin Erhardt III.**  
Sir Thomas More University, Kentucky, USA  
*"Children's time to 'Carry On': Images of Children in Workers Newsreels during World War II Britain."*
- Dr Steve Davies**  
University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, UK  
*If Only: The psychological significance of regret in UK older adults who were affected by war as children*
- Dr. Martin Parsons.**  
Director of the Research Centre for Evacuee and War Child Studies, University of Reading  
'Evacuation. Myth and reality'.
- There will be a break for tea between the above session
- 16.30                    Plenary. **James Roffey.**  
Chief Executive of the Evacuees Reunion Association.
- 17.0                      End of conference

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LUONNOS ARTIKKELISTA GONDALLE, VAATII TÄYDENNYSTÄ.

**MANCHESTER "EVACUATION EVENT " AND INTERFEW-MEETING AT THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> AND FRIDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004**

The Imperial War Museum had organised with the help of Evacuees Reunion Association (ERA) an interesting event in Manchester Imperial War Museum North. Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April we had an "Education Day" with Martin Parsons and James Roffey giving talks to groups of teachers, schoolchildren and Museum staff. There were about 700 visitors to this occasion.

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April we had an InterFew-meeting at he museum. Present at the meeting were Helga Spranger (Germany), Kai Rosnell (Sweden), Singa Sandelin-Benkö (Finland), Taisto Vihavainen

(Finland), Pertti Kaven (Finland), Rauni Kemi (Finland), June Knight (UK), Martin Parsons (UK) and James Roffey (UK).

Many things were discussed during this meeting, here are only some fragments. We had the opportunity to see the journal "Children in War". This publication is all encompassing with articles related to the study of the separation of children from their families and homes in war situations and the long-term effects of that. It was very impressive. It is available via InterFew.

Professor Singa Sandelin-Benkö presented her study design of the study "The child in eye of the storm – war child then (1939-1945) and now." The purpose of this project is to describe the historical fact of evacuating 70.000 Finnish children to the Scandinavian countries during World War II from the point of view of the evacuated child. Furthermore, the aim is to analyse what consequences this experience might have had for the mental well being, health and social life for those who grew up with this event as their psychological setting. The experiences of the English evacuees are also included, so the study has an international character including children in Finland, Sweden and UK.

Helga Spranger is planning a study of German children.

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2004 there will be a war-child conference in Reading with lecturers from England, USA, and Finland. The name of this coming conference is "Precious Commodities. Civilian Evacuation, War Children and related issues."

Rauni Kemi, Finland, had got a letter from Holland from Janneke Boesma about the sufferings of Dutch children in Japanese camps. They have an organisation called "Children of the Japanese Occupation and Bersiap 1941-1949" (Bersiap=the Indonesian Revolution). This organisation was welcomed to join InterFew.

It was agreed that after some minor amendments in the Constitution Sweden is now a full member of InterFew.

Pertti Kaven, Finland, had sent a letter to a Russian war-child organisation ( Mrs Galina L. Komarova, Deti blokady 900, Kirochnaia ul. 32/34, 191123 Sankt Petersburg Russia) without answer. It was decided that Martin Parsons/InterFew will make a new try to create a contact also with the Russian children of war.

It was decided that the following meeting of InterFew will take place in border-town Haaparanta Sweden on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2005 during a war-child event. This event is at the same time a national celebration of the ending of the Second World War in Finland 60 years ago. This event includes the unveiling of a war-child statue.

Here are only some notes from the meeting, minutes will be later available. This meeting in Manchester proved once again, how universal are the sufferings of children caused by the war. And also how innocent children are. And still – they pay the bill.

Rauni Kemi

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## WEBSITES

Organisation of Children of Dutch Collaborators:  
[www.werkgroepherkenning.nl](http://www.werkgroepherkenning.nl)

Organisation of Children of the Liberators:  
[www.bevrijdingskinderen.nl](http://www.bevrijdingskinderen.nl)

Organisation of Children of War of different Backgrounds:  
[www.kombi.nl](http://www.kombi.nl)

Organisation of Danish Children of War, Danske Krigsboern Foerening:  
[www.krigsboern.dk](http://www.krigsboern.dk)

Norwegian Children of War Association, Norges Krigsbarnforbund:  
[www.nkbf.no](http://www.nkbf.no)  
Organization of Norwegian NS Children:  
[www.nazichildren.com](http://www.nazichildren.com)  
Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn, Norway:  
<http://home.no.net/lebenorg>  
Organisation of NS-children Vennetreff:  
<http://home.no.net/nsbarn>  
Riskforbundet Finska Krigsbarn: (in swedish)  
[www.immi.se/krigsbarn](http://www.immi.se/krigsbarn)  
Organisation of Finnish Children of War, Seundun Sotalapset:  
[www.ouka.fi/yhdistykset/sotalapset](http://www.ouka.fi/yhdistykset/sotalapset)  
TRT, To Reflect and Trust, Organisation for encounters between descendants of victims and descendants of perpetrators:  
[www.torelectandtrust.org](http://www.torelectandtrust.org)  
Organisation of children of victims and children of the perpetrators:  
[www.one-by-one.org](http://www.one-by-one.org)  
Austrian Encounter, organisation for encounters between children of the victims and children of the perpetrators in Austria:  
[www.nach.ws](http://www.nach.ws)  
The Foundation Trust, international network of organizations and groups of second and third generations children of war:  
[www.thefoundationtrust.org](http://www.thefoundationtrust.org)  
Dachau Institut Psychologie und Pädagogik:  
[www.Dachau-institut.de](http://www.Dachau-institut.de)  
Kriegskind Deutschland:  
[www.kriegskind.de](http://www.kriegskind.de)

Evacuees Reunion Association  
General secretary: James Roffey  
Suite 1, Goodbodys Mill, 17 Albert Road  
Retford, Notts DN 22 6 JD  
United Kingdom

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## **RESEARCH CENTRE FOR EVACUEE AND WAR CHILD STUDIES.**

(Made possible by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded to the Evacuee Reunion Association)

### **Academic Rationale**

#### **Background.**

Since 1992 Dr Martin Parsons has carried out a great deal of research into the area of World War Two civilian evacuation. As a result of his investigations in the UK he has been invited to give a number of key-note addresses at International conferences in Europe and the USA and in 2000 was elected Chairman of the Evacuee Reunion Association. In 2002 he was appointed President of the International Federation of Evacuees and War Children. He is now working with groups of ex-War Children in Finland (Sotalapsi), Sweden (Krigsbarn), Netherlands, Spain, Germany (Kriegskinde) as well as Jewish groups, children of Dutch collaborators, British evacuees from Singapore etc.

In 1998 Dr. Parsons established an evacuee archive in the Bulmershe Library at The University of Reading. This contains research notes and letters (c 1000) and other material associated with evacuation in the UK. However, it became apparent that there was no centre specifically for this area of research anywhere in the world and many of the groups named above are looking for somewhere to deposit their materials and create an international research base that would encompass all present and future cross-discipline research.

## **AIMS**

- To make the Centre the pivotal hub of cross-discipline War Child research in the World and building on existing links with those listed below to enable it to become the major repository of War Child documentation and related materials. It will greatly enhance the University's research profile.
- The collaborative work presently being carried out by Dr Parsons, Professor Sandelin and Barbara Mattsson et al is to inform present and future governments on the treatment and welfare of children in war zones.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **LONG TERM**

- The establishment of a cross-discipline MA in War Child studies.
- The attraction and retention of PhD research students.
- Sponsorship

### **MEDIUM TERM**

- An international journal entitled 'Children in War' is to be published every six months from April 2004.
- An international conference 'Precious Commodities' is to take place at the University of Reading (Bulmershe) on 9/10<sup>th</sup> September 2004. Speakers from Sweden, Finland and the USA have already been invited. A conference journal will be published after the event.
- A two-day international War Child event for Schools and the general public at the Imperial War Museum North in April 2004.
- An International multi-lingual web-site is in the process of being established.
- Cross-discipline research papers.
- Collaborative international articles.

### **SHORT TERM**

- Research notes pertaining to the Evacuee Reunion Association (ERA) and International Federation of Evacuees and War Children (INTERFEW) already exist in the Evacuee Archive in the Bulmershe Library. This will continue to be updated.

### **Potential Collaborations**

- University of Oulu. Finland
- University of Helsinki
- University of Hertfordshire
- Karolinska Institute. Stockholm
- Fort Hays State University. Kansas. USA
- Imperial War Museum. London
- Imperial War Museum North. Manchester

### **Staff Associated with Centre**

**Director:** Dr. Martin Parsons  
Dr. Nick Ashwell  
Dr Steven Davies  
Mr. Doug Badger  
Dr. Ghazala Bhatti  
Dr. Gordon Cox  
Dr. Linnet McMahan  
Dr. Naz Rassool

### **Librarian and Archivist**

Fenella Waugh

**Technical Support**

Dave Marron

**Project Manager and Admin. support**

Helen Apted

**Journal Publisher**

Paul Holness. DSM. Cambridge

**Associates.**

**Dr. Steve Davies.** Psychology Dept. University of Hertfordshire.

**Pertti Kaven.** Helsinki . PhD Research student. Member of the Finnish War-children Research Group

**Barbara Mattsson.** Helsinki. Psychotherapist. Member of the Finnish War-children Research Group

**Prof. Singa Sandelin Benko.** Helsinki, Professor of Education (emerita), from Karolinska Institute

**Gonda Scheffel-Baars.** Tricht, Netherlands, Historian

**Professor Steven Trout.** Fort Hays State Univ. Kansas

***Anyone wishing to deposit archive material, reminiscences etc should contact  
Dr Martin Parsons on 0118 378 8870 or e-mail [m.l.parsons@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.l.parsons@reading.ac.uk) or  
Fenella Waugh 0118 378 5818 or e-mail [c.f.waugh@reading.ac.uk](mailto:c.f.waugh@reading.ac.uk)***

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**Next issue: November 2004  
Reactions and articles till October 1**

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