

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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Issue 22, Spring 2006

INTRODUCTION

In this issue you will find information about three conferences: in May in Germany, in September in England, and in November in the USA.

At present the name of Vught evokes in people the image of a beautiful village with delightful residences and a famous institution for language courses in one of the southern provinces of the Netherlands. In the first decades after the war, however, Vught had a sinister reputation because of the German concentrationcamp in which Jews, Sinti and Roma, Jehova's witnesses and especially many resistance fighters were imprisoned. A triptych of articles in this bulletin deals with 'Vught':

- The daughter of one of the women held in captivity in camp Vught, Anneruth Wibaut, shares her memories with us.

- Tanja van Koppenhagen was born in Vught when it was in use as an internment camp for collaborators from September 1944 till January 1952. She tells us about her experiences.

-After the collaborators left the camp, Vught became one of the places where 13 000 Moluccan people were housed, coming to the Netherlands in 1951. Jossie, one of my school-mates, was one of them.

Marina Gulina and Julia Borossa did research on the after-effects of the blockade of Leningrad on the lives of the children who survived the siege and compared them with those of the evacuation on children who left the town. They allowed me to make a summary of an article that they published in the journal 'Children in War'.

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization: an introduction and two short reports about international meetings.

Janneke Boerma spent three years of the war in Japanese internment camps in the former colony of the Dutch East Indies. She shares with us some of her experiences.

I would like to ask you to send me any change of postal- or e-mail address, so that we can stay in contact.

I hope that you will like the articles of this issue and we will meet again in November.

All the best,
Gonda Scheffel-Baars



TAGUNG 'KANONENFUTTER UND KOLLATERALKINDER'

25. – 28. Mai 2006

Evangelische Akademie Bad Boll

In Kooperation mit:

* Kriegskind.de e.V.

* INTERFEW (International Federation of Evacuees and War Children)

* Förderverein Kriegskinder für den Frieden e.V.

Was *Kanonenfutter* ist, weiß jeder: die im Feld verheizten, meist jungen Soldaten.

Den Begriff *Kollateralschaden* kennen wir seit den Golfkrieg. Er ist die zynische Bezeichnung für die zivilen Kriegesopfer und nimmt – wie der Begriff Kanonenfutter – den Opfern ihre Erkennbarkeit. Wir sprechen darum von **Kollateralkindern**, damit die Kollateralschäden ein Gesicht bekommen. Es gab und gibt sie in allen Kriegen. Beide Begriffe, Kanonenfutter und Kollateralkinder, schmerzen, weil sie die Unmenschlichkeit von Kriegen benennen. Auf unserem Kongreß geht es um Kriegskinder jedweder Art, gestern und heute, nicht nur aus Deutschland, sondern auch aus einigen anderen europäischen Ländern: Großbritannien, Niederlanden, Skandinavien, Tschetschenien.

Kriegfolgen überdauern die Kampfhandlungen. Das gilt nicht nur für die erlebten Schrecken des Krieges, sondern auch für die anhaltenden Feindbilder, die das Leben von Besatzerkindern massiv beeinträchtigen. Das Sippenhaft-Denken hörte mit den Nazis nicht auf, sondern wirkte in den ehemals unterworfenen Gebieten weiter – teilweise bis heute.

Bis in die heutige politischen Auseinandersetzungen reicht die Verdrängung von Greuelthaten direkt bei Kriegsende. Auch die vielfache anzutreffende Zuschreibung eigener Schuld am erlittenen Schrecken, macht es den Opfern und ihren Familien schwer, diesen Geschehnissen einen Platz in ihrer Erinnerung zu geben, der ein Abklingen des Schmerzens erleichtert.

Die Tagung will, wie auch die vorigen Kriegskinder-Tagungen, die dunkle Seite der *conditio humana* bewußt werden lassen: Die Bereitschaft des Menschen, je nach Umständen zu den größten Abscheulichkeiten fähig zu sein, unabhängig von Rasse und Geschlecht, Weltanschauung und Bildung. Dieses Wissen könnte uns vorsichtig werden lassen, auch uns selbst gegenüber.

Kosten:

Tagungsgrundpreis 125 euro

Zusätzliche Kosten für Übernachtung und Verpflegung je nach Wunsch bei Übernachtung im

* 1 Bett-Zimmer/Dusche/WC 218 euro

* 1 Bett-Zimmer/Waschebecken 183,50 euro

* 2 Bett-Zimmer/Dusche/WC 183,50 euro

* 2 Bett-Zimmer/Waschbecken 150,50 euro

Nur Verpflegung ohne Übernachtung und Frühstück 84,50 euro

Ein Rücktritt ist bis 15 Tage vor Tagungsbeginn kostenfrei möglich. Bei späteren Absagen berechnen wir ein Ausfallgeld gemäß unseren AGB, soweit wir Ihren Platz nicht anderweitig besetzen können.

Anreise:

- Bahn: bis Göppingen; von dort ab ZOB (100m links vom Bahnhof) mit dem Bus Linie 20 nach Bad Boll bis zur Haltestelle Kurhaus
- Auto: BAB Stuttgart-Ulm, Ausfahrt Aichelberg

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Vorlesungen:

Donnerstag, 25.Mai

Bischof Dr. Hans C. Knuth: 'Der Krieg der Väter – und ihre Kinder'
Sigrid Chamberlain: 'Die Mütter und die Zurichtung ihrer Kinder für den Krieg'
Dr. Invill C. Mochmann: 'Die Kriegskinder in der UN-Kinderrechte-Konvention'
Dr. Martin Parsons: 'Kriegskinder, ein weites Feld, Versuch einer Definition'
Gespräch mit Bischof Dr. H. C. Knuth: 'Gott mit uns'

Freitag, 26.Mai

Prof. Butollo: 'Kriegskinder im Kosovo, Studie 2003'
Prof. Dr. M. Ermann: 'Erste Forschungsergebnisse'
Perrti Kavén, Ph.Mag.: 'Erste Forschungsergebnisse Finland'
Gonda Scheffel-Baars: 'Das Schicksal von "Kollaborateurs-Familien" in den Niederlanden'
Dr. Martin Parsons: 'Invisible Victims: child evacuees in World War II'
Andreas Bachhofen: 'Der methodische Zugang zur Behandlung von kriegsbedingten Traumatisierungen'
Cordula Gestrich: 'Ein Fall von transgenerationaler Weitergabe des Traumas'
Dr. Helga Spranger und Dr.Herta Betzendahl: 'Bericht über 2 Selbsterfahrungs-Gruppen'

Sonnabend, 27.Mai

Jürgen Rose und Florian Pfaff: 'Kanonenfutter der Globalisierung oder Weltbürger in Uniform?'
Inge Joachim: "Kriegsbeute"- sexualisierte Kriegsgewalt gegen Frauen und Mädchen'
Ausstellung von Zeichnungen tschetschenischer Kinder und Fotodokumentation
Prof. Dr. H. H. Ewers: 'Kriegskinder in der neueren Literatur'
Dr. Robert Krief und Monika Nolte: 'Filmprokekt: Auf Spurensuche'

Sonntag, 28.Mai

Interview mit Beate Niemann über ihren Vater, Bruno Sattler
Dr. Iris Wachsmuth: 'Familiengeschichtlicher Umgang in Ost- und Westdeutschland mit Nationalsozialismus und Krieg im Kontext lebensgeschichtlicher Drei-Generationen-Familien'
Dr. Gisela Perren-Klingler: 'Welchen Nutzen hat die Traumaforschung?'

Workshops

Psychoanalytisch -Dr. Helga Spranger, Dr. Herta Betzendahl; Klang und Rhythmus- Susanne Bachmann; Familienaufstellung -Ilse Maier; Peter Heini



VUGHT

Vught is the name of the worst experience my mother lived through (but just) in the war. We, my brother and I, were never meant to know what happened there. Shame and the protective instinct of the mother forbade her to tell us about it. It figured in our lives as the Big Family Secret. I was about forty when I went to the place for the first time. I drove my own car, had had my drivers licence since my nineteenth, but suddenly it was like I didn't know how to drive. Also, there seemed to be something wrong with my sense of direction. Shouldn't I turn north here? No, I should not, south was the direction and I didn't understand why I was behaving in this strange way. And what was wrong with my bladder?

I stopped at a gas station for the third time to go to the bathroom and consulted a map. Then it hit me: I was bloody nervous. Because all the years of my youth, this biggest of my mothers trauma's had been forbidden ground. We had always known that both our parents had been in the resistance and that they had been in prisons and camps for that reason. They had tried to make it into a sort of "La vita e bello" film for us, only gradually had they allowed the grim aspects of the war to reach us. And there had always been the Big Secret. One day when I was 17, the local paper ran an article about Vught. My mother had hysterics, shouting to my father that he must see to it that we could never read that paper.

Of course we read it and so the secret was out. Later my mother wrote a book about her war, 'Zo ben je daar' (There you are!), then nothing of the secret was left. Or was there? Then why did I feel I was trespassing, now that I was on my way to Vught? About to tread on forbidden ground.

Now that I had admitted as much to myself, there were no obstacles anymore and I arrived safely. Several old but fit looking people were walking towards the entrance of what used to be the camp.

Survivors like my mother? I needed a handkerchief to dry my eyes. I stumbled out of my car and locked it. Still drying my eyes I joined the other visitors.

"All right?" one of them asked.

As if I was one of them and entitled to cry.

There was some sort of ceremony to open the season, but I can't remember anything of that. My attention was pulled towards the camp, the partly resurrected concentration camp. I wanted to walk through it with my mother, but I could hardly reach her, let alone get her to myself. Did every single visitor here want to talk to her?

So I wandered off on my own. Saw and did not see. Was it my imagination, or were there cutting tables? And this nameplate, what did it say?

FOR OUR MOTHERS

A copper plate with ten names. I looked for my mother's name. Oh, no, of course not, her name could not be amongst them, I was born after the war so she could not have died then. Or could she? Was I born off a dead mother? A dead soul?

I tried to hide in a corner.

"It always hits you, doesn't it?"

The same man that had been so kind earlier.

"Was this the place?" I asked.

"No, look, that little room over there. This is the replica of the hallway where they brought the dead women."

I could read it in my mind in the words of my mother: how the survivors had dragged the dead and unconscious women out of their cell when life saving air finally streamed in after the doors had opened. Had opened after they had remained closed for fifteen hours. Ten women out of seventy four had suffocated. The air was so filthy, that the Kapo who initially opened the door threw it back against the putrid air. She could not believe her nose, nor could she believe her ears. The women yelled, had been yelling all night, yelled and yelled, even though there was no air left to yell with. For ten women the air came to late. And for the others? Did they survive, or did part of them die?

I had not planned to go without my mother. But I could not stop myself. Entered the room. Saw a cell of nine square meters. Two and a half meters high. A small window high up against the back wall, through which clean and clear bright air streamed in. So this was the little window they had managed to break with a wooden shoe. Only it had not worked, for behind the glass a plate of wood barred outgoing light. And incoming air.

Ten red roses were placed beneath the window on the ground. Ten candles were lit. I understood that they commemorated the dead. I searched my memory for the story my mother wrote about that night in the small cell. Where she stood on her street tile, fighting for her life. With a friend. Lean on each other in turn. Breathe. Say something encouraging. Fight for breath. Prop up an unknown woman together. Try to breathe. Have to let the woman go. Because she has stopped breathing. Having to let her go, because she is dead. Fight for air from air that holds no oxygen.

I counted seven street tiles wide and twelve long in the cell. Little more than one tile per woman. A tile of thirty by thirty centimetres. I saw that my mother had put daffodils in a vase on her tile. And I realized she must have been responsible for the roses and the candles as well. I had to find her.

I saw her standing in a little group. Talking. I walked towards her. She looked up, smiled her most endearing, loving smile. For me. She walked in my direction. She came to me, I thought. This mistake must have been caused by the prism effect of my tears. For it was not me her comforting arm encircled. The shoulders that received her tender gesture, were those of a woman who had spend her early childhood in Vught. As a prisoner of the Dutch. After the war and through no fault of her own. Solely because her parents had chosen the side of the Germans. I dared not grudge her my mother. Should not feel:

"You're stealing my mother, bitch!"

I am aware that one of the people who spent part of their youths in Vught is interviewed in this periodical. She was not the afore mentioned "bitch". I never blamed the others for "stealing" my mother. Although I must admit that it makes me jealous when I read that Tanja felt safe under my mother's wings. I never did. I could not blame my mother. I had to find other ways of coping with the raw feelings that lay smothering me. One of them was to write a novel in search of my story. The above is part of it. It has not found a publisher and I don't even know whether I'd want it to be

published. The war is over, Vught is over. Going there has helped me find my story: it is the one I am living. I am content with it.

Anneruth Mathilde Wibaut
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MY LIFESTORY

My parents lived in Eindhoven, a manufacturing town in one of the southern provinces of the Netherlands. My father was a member of the Dutch national-socialist Party, NSB, and had an important position in the notorious German Sicherheitsdienst (Intelligence Service). On the 18th of September the allied armies liberated Eindhoven. All the people being suspected of having collaborated with the German Occupiers were arrested by order of the Military Authority, charged with the provisional government on behalf of the Dutch government in exile in London. My father was one of them. A few days later people picked up my mother and her three children, age 1, 3 and 5, were left behind. After my mother's arrest people in our neighbourhood took care of my brothers and sister who, later, were taken to foster parents. The arrested collaborators and other suspected people were imprisoned in makeshift internment camps that were established all over the southern provinces. In Vught the German concentration camp had been evacuated by the 17th of September. It was the ideal place to transfer a lot of prisoners to.

My mother was pregnant when she was arrested. I was born in January 1945. Thus, my life started in the internment camp, behind the barbed wire. When I was some months old, my mother was released. She was glad about her unexpected release, but did not know where to go. Her parents, brothers, sisters and other members of the family did not offer her help refusing any relationship with a person who was connected with the 'wrong' side, with the 'bad guys'. Our house and all our belongings had been confiscated, we had nothing. She decided to go back to Eindhoven and found a job as an living-in housekeeper. She was allowed to have me at her side. When I was one year old, my mother was no longer able to take care of herself or of me because of psychological tensions. She was admitted in an asylum and I was brought to foster parents. They did not hide for me that they were not my biological parents, but for some reason, I did not take it in. My mother came now and then to visit me, but I never realised that she was my biological mother. My foster parents did not understand me, they saw me as a difficult child. They consulted a psychiatrist who advised them to bring me to an asylum, because the mothermilk that fed me had transferred to me also the bad charactertraits of my parents.

In 1952 my father, who got a 13-year sentence, was suddenly released and the family was reunited. I never had met my father and I did not consider my brothers and sister as members of the family, although I knew them. They lived in the same neighbourhood with families who were friends of my foster parents. One of them even visited the same school as I. We were estranged from each other, actually, we did not know each other.

How to be a family again after so many years of separation, after such a deep alienation? It was not easy and we did not succeed in it. My father was released for humanitarian reasons because he suffered from cancer and he died four months later. My mother, again pregnant, was left behind with her four children.

When I visited primary school I started to understand the consequences of the NSB-membership of my father for our family. The mothers of some of my schoolmates did not allow me in their homes to play with their children. My mother forbade us to participate in the yearly festivities celebrating Liberationday: 'That is not the place for us to be seen'.

Some of the teachers of the secondary school snubbed me and insinuated that the political choice of my father had influenced our upbringing. When I applied for my first job as a nurse, I saw the letters NSB written on my dossier...

One of my problems related to the past is the loyalty conflict. I was swung between my feelings for my foster parents and those for my biological parents. As soon as I realised what collaboration had been all about, I had to face the question if I had, after all, the right to love people who made the wrong political choice. I felt guilty because of their support of the German Occupiers and their choice for an ideology which caused the death of millions of people. I felt ashamed because of my parents.

Nowadays I do no longer feel guilty, but I cannot look back with positive feelings to my childhood and youth.

I did not have a safe home to grow up in, I did not receive warmth. I could not express my emotions which, sometimes, came out in uncontrolled outbursts of anger. I could not participate in the festive atmosphere of a feast, I felt always an outsider. I longed for closeness and feared it at the same time. If people came too close to me I rebuffed them. On the other hand, I always feared to be rejected. From my childhood on I was 'the mother of my mother' and this shift of care roles did not work out well, neither for her, nor for me. It is only recently that I gave up that role. As a consequence of my taking care of others, I automatically effaced myself and did not defend my own rights or interests.

In 1984 I came into contact with the self help organisation for collaborators' children Herkenning. From the very first meeting I felt relieved, because I met there people with similar problems who understood and accepted me. For years I was active as the board's secretary and as a facilitator of an encounter group and since January 2005 I have again been a board member.

Thanks to Herkenning and the therapy I took for a while I managed to work through a couple of problems. This gave me self-confidence and in 1986 already I felt strong enough to be interviewed in a TV programme. My eldest brother tried to prevent the telecast, but I did not give in. My only concession was concealing my family name. Nevertheless, the relationships in the family were broken off for a long time. I received, however, many positive reactions to my participation in the programme. They confirmed my conviction that I had made the right decision to break the taboo and come to the forth.

Soon after this programme I was interviewed together with Mrs. Tineke Wibaut-Guillonard, one of the resistance fighters who were held in captivity in camp Vught until September 1944 and transferred from there to Ravensbrück. In the late 1980's she committed herself to the task of convincing people of the innocence of collaborators' children and of putting pressure on them to judge those children on their own merits and not on their parents' political choice or acts. Vught was our 'common denominator'. It took years before I could believe that I had the right to exist and to deserve her friendship. Friends we became, indeed. She intervened for me and Ellen, another woman who was born in the internment camp, to visit the camp before the hospital and some other barracks were demolished in order to make room for the new buildings of the prison, that was established there in the 1950's.

It was strange for us to visit the place where we were born, especially because we had to pass through a doorway with security installations. It was summer then, but we were born in January in a camp covered with snow. All kinds of uncoordinated thoughts and undefinable feelings filled us with confusion. We did not know anything about the circumstances of that period, and the stories which our mothers told us differ in essentials and in numerous details. We tried to find the nurse who went to the Civil Registry to have us registered, but we did not find her. So, what we know about that period is very little. There have been written several books about the concentration camp in Vught till its closing in September 1944, but the story of the internment camp has never been published until now.

Together with Tineke I visited the memorial site several times at the beginning of each new museum season. I felt safe in her presence, protected 'under her wings'. I became a member of the Foundation 'Friends of the camp Vught'. I feel it is important to have a place which remind all of us that such awful things like in the war should not happen again. Some years ago I responded to an add in which the board asked for new members. But I was not accepted: for the former prisoners of the camp it could be too painful that a collaborator's child was a board member.... I have good individual contacts with other 'friends' of the foundation, but the shadow of the political choice of my father still hovers over us.

Tanja van Koppenhagen



JOSSIE IN VUGHT

Jossie was one of my school-mates at my secondary school. She belonged to the people of the Moluccan Archipelago, a part of the former colony of the Dutch East-Indies. There were about 12 Moluccan pupils at our school and we accepted them as our school-mates without questioning their

presence in the Netherlands. Although from papers, broadcasts and discussions at home we learned something about the political aspects of the Moluccan 'Affair', at school we never discussed those issues amongst us. One of our teachers got admonition from our director for his putting up stickers in the school-yard with the slogan: Support free Moluccas. It was school policy that teachers could not show what their political stance was, but all the same our history teacher could discuss the Hungarian uprising with us in the autumn of 1956 and we did respect the two minutes of silence in commemoration of the victims after the intervention of the Russians. Why didn't we ask our teacher about the history of the Moluccas? Nowadays I feel ashamed that we didn't, but, after all, we were children, aged 12 to 17, interested in popmusic, sports, love and our first cigarette.

One day, Jossie invited me to go along with her to her home. I asked my father permission, because I had to buy tickets for the bus and money was a difficult issue in our family. I expected a refusal, but I got both: permission and money

It was about an hour's trip from our school to Vught where she lived. From the busstation we had a long walk and then we arrived at the terrain of what was the former WWII internment camp. I recognized the place: I had been there 8 or 9 years before, while visiting my father who was imprisoned there to serve his sentence for having been a collaborator. I guess that I suppressed my memories immediately, because even in my diary of that period I didn't make any allusion to the past.

Jossie lived in one of the barracks, which was divided in plots, separated by military canvas cloth, in which one family lived. The room was small and the barracks was crowded with people. I don't know how many families lived there together. I remember my first thought: 'How is it possible to do one's homework in this crowded place?' and I admired Jossie for nevertheless managing to learn her lessons and getting good notes. I don't remember much of my visit and I don't know if my parents asked me about my experiences when I came home. With hindsight I wonder if my father knew that Jossie lived in the former internment camp; could that have been the reason why he allowed me to visit her?

When I studied history in Amsterdam I learned the story of the 13 000 Moluccan people, families of soldiers of the KNIL, the Royal Dutch-Indies Army, who had been summoned by military order to come to the Netherlands for a temporary stay, until a fair solution for the problem of their actual status had been found. The families had lived in the former colony on the island of Java. At the end of the war, in 1945, their position was uncertain, because of the war of Independence initiated by the Nationalists under the leadership of Sukarno. The former colony got independence at the end of 1949 as the Federation of Indonesia. But Sukarno immediately attacked other autonomous provinces and annexed them to his own territory. In the Moluccan Archipelago people feared to be subjected by the Javanese and declared in April 1950 independence for their own territory, the Republic of the South Moluccas, RMS. The armies of Sukarno attacked the capital of Ambon; free corpses of Moluccan soldiers found a shelter in the mountains and under the inspired leadership of Chris Soumokil continued their guerilla till 1963.

For the Moluccan soldiers on the island of Java the situation became unbearable: they could not return to the Moluccas and the Indonesian government pressed them more and more to join the Indonesian army. They refused, asked advice from their former Dutch military leaders who answered: come to Holland.

At the very moment that they set foot ashore, they were told that the KNIL was disbanded: they were jobless... Housing was a problem, the authorities took them to the former concentration camps and the internment camps. They changed their names: Westerbork, (from this camp the trains to Sobibor and Auschwitz left) got the new name of 'Schattenberg' and Vught got the name of 'Lunetten'. But what is in a name?

A couple of Dutch former officers of the KNIL committed themselves to having the Moluccan soldiers incorporated in the Dutch army. The uniforms were ready, the welcome-speeches written, but the day before the ceremonies a judge decided that the Dutch army was not obliged to accept them. Thereupon the government felt free to refuse the Moluccan soldiers the right to join the army. General Scholten tendered his resignation, showing solidarity with the Moluccan soldiers, accusing the government of betraying those loyal people, of dishonouring those proud soldiers and creating psychological and social problems for them and their children.

The bitterness of the former KNIL-soldiers was deep: because of their loyalty to the Dutch, serving in the Dutch-Indies Army, they had been accused of collaboration with the colonial oppressors by many inhabitants of the former colony and now the sole reward for their loyalty was an indifferent attitude of the Dutch.

In the 1970's young Moluccan people took hostages in order to attract world's attention to their claims for an independent Moluccan Republic. Their president in exile in the Netherlands said, his face expressing at the same time love and understanding for these young people and sharp rejection of their methods: 'One cannot found one's freedom by robbing the freedom of others.'

Gradually the Moluccan families moved from the camps to towns, where they live close to each other in the same neighbourhood and 'integrated' in Dutch society. In Vught some families refused to leave and fought their case before the High Court.

They still live there, refusing to wipe out the memory of some of the blackest days in their history and keeping alive their humiliation by the Dutch government.

One day, when I was a teacher at a school for adult education, I spoke about my secondary school in Waalwijk and two Moluccan women in my class said: 'A lot of our camp mates attended that school'. After their arrival in 1951 in the Netherlands they had lived for several years in Vught. I remembered the names of a couple of my Moluccan school-mates, the two women were delighted! Then I told them that I had visited Jossie and for one moment they were silent. Then they said, moved by the memory: 'We lived in the same barracks, so you visited us,,,' And I knew perfectly well what they meant: I had seen the bad circumstances in which they had lived, I knew about their humiliation. In their opinion I had shown solidarity with them.

Of course, solidarity was not the reason why I visited Jossie, but as soon as I learned the Moluccan history I swore to myself that I would tell about them in my lessons, even if the issue was not on the programme. And indeed, I have, as a daughter of a collaborator, my own quarrel with the indifference and injustice of the Dutch government that confiscated not only the belongings of the collaborators, but even those of the innocent children, reducing them to a status of poverty that hampered many of them in their development and education.

Jossie went to the USA and found a job at one of the universities as a professor in social geography.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars



CHILDREN IN WAR – A MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

6 – 8 September 2006
University of Reading, England
Bulmershe Court

Bob Kayley Theatre

Fee: £ 195 all-in (participation, refreshments, meals, 2 nights en-suite accommodation
A copy of the conference journal)

Day-tickets: £ 25 (for students and others, including lunch and refreshments)

Information: Helen Apted, e-mail: h.a.e.apted@reading.ac.uk

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

Programme:

Wednesday September 6

09.00 – 09.45 Registration

10.00 Welcome by Prof. Gordon Marshall, CBE, Vice-Chancellor, University

of Reading

Session 1:

Dr. Martin Parsons: *Exposing the reality within the Myth*

Michael Henderson: *The role of patriotism in sustaining the evacuees to North-America in World War II*

Margaret Simmons: *Leaving home: A sociological study of women's experiences as child evacuees in WWII Britain, in light of their subsequent adult emigration to Australia*

Session 2:

Prof. Baard Borge: *Children of German soldiers in Norway: what became of them after 1945?*

Prof. Singa Sandelin-Benko: *Finnish War Children Speak Up. First results from the Project "The Child in the Eye of the Storm"- War Child Then ('29-'45) and Now*

Prof. Erwin Erhardt III

Session 3:

Gonda Scheffel-Baars: *The role of Dutch Society in the Victimization of Collaborators' Children*

Prof. Dr.M.Ermann: *Experiences with interviews in the Munich War Child Project*

Dr. P.Heinl and Teresa von Sommaruga Howard: Reflection and Discussion on the day and experiences of War Children

Thursday September 7

Session 1:

Prof. Marina Gulina: *The Unknown Siege of Leningrad*

Dr. Helga Spranger: *The Amfortas Syndrome. The long lasting interferences in Interaction between mother and child after traumatisation by war*

Steve Davis: *A special Suitcase? The urgent need to develop intelligent health and social Care Provision for people who were evacuated as children in Britain during the Second World War*

Session 2

Chris Shire: *A Lost Generation. The effect of German expansionist policies on Germany's Children 1931 - 1945*

Faye Lawson: *How has children's war literature changed from World War I and developed into the present day? To what extent has this shaped our views on the war child experience?*

Prof. Steve Trout: *The First World War and the Greatest Generation*

Session 3:

Dr. Sidney Brown: *The challenge of Chalkie and Co. The complexities of evaluating the role of evacuees' teachers*

Prof. Bob Rooke: *Rockwell Kent: The Imagery of Childhood and the Cold War World*

Dr. Simon Flynn: *Constructing Cold War Children: Reading John Wyndham, 'The Midwich Cuckoos' and Wolf Rilla's 'The Village of the Damned'*

Dr. P. Heinl and Teresa von Sommaruga Howard: Reflection and Discussion on the day and experiences of War Children and:

Howard Baker (ERA member): *One 5 year old boy, 5 Pleasure Boats, 7 Destroyers and a declaration of war*

Friday September 8

Session 1:

Dr. Lu Seegers: *Being fatherless. War Children and generational memories*

in Germany, England and Poland – an introduction
Dr. Peter Heini: *Superman and the Devil: Decoding the Hieroglyphs of History on the Mind Map*
Pertti Kaven: *The political consequences in Finland of the unexpected results of the vacuation of Finnish children to Sweden during WWII*

Session 2:

Eva Roman: *Psychological First Aid*
Dr. Elizabeth White : *The Evacuation of children from Leningrad during WWII*

Session 3:

Dr. Jura Medi: *The “bambini libici”. The evacuation of Italian children from Libya (1940 – 1943)*
Chris Gittins: *Violence reduction in schools in support of evacuee children*
James Roffey (ERA member): Plenary

16.00 Conference ends



CHILD SURVIVORS OF THE SIEGE OF LENINGRAD:

Notes from a Study on War Trauma and its Long Term Effects on Individuals

Julia Borossa and Marina Gulina

Introduction

The siege of Leningrad lasted 888 days and caused many different kinds of severe deprivation and extreme trauma. There is still a substantial number of survivors alive today, who have experienced the full duration of the siege as children or young adults. The present study was conducted in order to obtain information about the general well being and psychological health of such survivors; to re-collect their memories of their war experience and to gain insight into how they felt that living through the siege had effected their personality. Structured interview were used as the main method of collecting data, complemented by three psychological scales and one drawing task. Seventy elderly people participated in the study. They constituted two groups: those who lived in Leningrad under siege conditions and those small Leningraders, who were evacuated and experienced the war elsewhere. The experimental and control groups were identical in terms of age and gender distribution. The data obtained were subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis, with particular attention to the statistically significant differences between the two groups of participants. Finally, questions were raised as to the relationship between individual and collective memory and the nature of resilience.

The historical record

The siege of Leningrad occurred in 1941 – 1944, as a result of the blockade of the city by advancing German troupes. According to official data 2,8 million people stayed in the city, including 400 000 children. The first winter of the siege was the most difficult time: there was continuous intensive bombing, the electricity supply was cut off and there was no heating. In January 1942 the temperatures reached minus forty, the pipes froze and the city's water supply collapsed. People had to either find a way of melting snow or to walk to the Neva river or the canals and retrieve water from holes hacked in the ice.

The reason why the city was very soon left with only minimal food supplies still remains a matter of historical controversy. As D. Liachiov mentioned: “Germans prepared to blockade Leningrad, and authorities – to surrender” (Liachiov, 1991,p.161) There was uncertainty about even getting rationed bread: the deliveries were not always consistent, and people might queue for hours and getting nothing.

The health care system was affected by the circumstances, people died before being visited by doctors, themselves too weak to climb the ice covered stairs in the dark and the cold. There was social isolation: letters hardly got through. Telephone lines were cut, people were too weak to visit one another.

Many inhabitants of Leningrad had stayed in the city and lasted the almost 900 days of the siege, and suffered to a greater or lesser degree from extreme hunger and other kinds of physical deprivation. They did so, having witnessed the most distressing events on a daily basis as people took whatever steps were required to survive. Corpses were not an uncommon sight on the streets as people collapsed from hunger and hypothermia as they searched for their daily rations. In some cases starving citizens resorted to eating the flesh of cadavers. Many mothers gave their entire bread rations to their children and then died in front of them.

There were individual acts of cruelty. For example: neighbours who wanted to kill a girl for her ration. State oppression continued: even during the siege there were political arrests. Scientists, librarians and other specialists were arbitrarily sacked in order to give additional food rations to the engineers and laborers who worked for military industry in the city. There was bureaucratic chaos that made the life of the citizens more difficult. Blatant injustice had life or death consequences: some people were given two bread coupons, some had none.

There was a dissonance between official propaganda and reality, people depended on despotic authorities. People felt humiliated rather than supported by those in charge.

Possessions were lost as people burnt their books and furniture for fuel, bartered their valuables, left everything behind if they were eventually evacuated. In addition there was a compulsory denial of negative feelings. Fear, protest, depression were not allowed: they could eventually be viewed as expressions of an "anti-soviet" attitude; people risked punishment and denied therefore even individual feelings of grief and loss.

Soviet statistics affirmed that 642 000 people died, although other figures were much higher. From the beginning the exact number of dead was difficult to ascertain. Many of the adult and adolescent workers co-opted to the factories to produce goods for the soviet army, did not return. People from the surrounding areas moved with their families into Leningrad to escape the advancing German army but did not have accomodation or food available as the authorities refused them to register. Most of them died anonymously in the first winter of the siege and were never part of any statistics. Many people who tried to escape the city in lorries over the frozen Lake Ladoga perished. The number of Soviet soldiers who died of starvation became the object of strict censorship, only recently lifted.

After the War, Stalin's government with the help of the Leningrad communist leaders actively endeavored to forclose any vivid memory of the time of the siege. The collective pride of the survivors in their achievement was felt to be a threat to a regime that relied on the centralisation of power in Moscow. After the breaking of the siege, one of the first decrees of the Leningrad leadership, was to return all the main streets and squares to their pre-revolutionary names. It was a sign of independence that a paranoid centralising government such as Stalin's could not abide.

Among many different acts of repression, the attempt to control a city's collective memory stands out. A museum devoted to the siege had been opened immediately after its lifting, where survivors brought many kinds of personal material as testimony to their experience. In 1949, the museum was closed and during the next 4 years step by step its staff was arrested and sent to concentration camps or executed, and much of its content was destroyed or 'disappeared' into the archives of the secret police. The State maintained a strict control over the publication of memoirs and scholarly works detailing the events of the siege: the few books that appeared told a consistent and greatly bowdlerised version of events.

In the last two decades there has been a partial attempt to lift some of that repression and to enlarge the historical record, in Russia as well as in the West. This study is based on a different, individual task of rememoration, albeit one that arguably could not have been attempted without a parallel reinstatement of archives and a greater freedom for survivors to collectively remember their experiences.

Objectives

We set ourselves the following principal objectives for our research:

- to explore the social and historical background of events, but using only the life stories of the research participants as retold to the interviewers, complemented by diaries dating from that time.

- to explore the interface between individual and collective memory about this extra-ordinary historical event (for example, to identify the “myths” common to survivors and to look at their function in their lives).
- to find possible connections between childhood experiences during the siege and post-war values.
- to find some statistically significant psychological consequences of the siege experience in the area of people’s emotions, values, life satisfaction and attitude towards others.
- to use the interview data in order to draw some consequences about human resilience under extreme circumstances.

Apart from the studies dedicated to gathering the memories of holocaust survivors and exploring the long-term effects of trauma on their lives, other work, concentrating on the physiological effects of deprivation also provides a background context for our research. For example, there have been studies on the consequences of long-term deprivation, tracing the effects of the Irish potato famines, the Dutch Famine during World War II and its effects on the children who lived through it and the course of diseases related to malnutrition in African children.

Methods

We gathered the information through semi-structured interviews, conducted as a non-directed conversation with the opportunity to ask additional questions and to seek clarifications, the object being the re-creation of a whole current of thought within which individual episodes recalled would be given the right context.

The basic list of questions concerned a. factual details, b. memories of the blockade period and c. current circumstances.

In addition closed questions were posed in the form of three short scales constructed especially for this research and validated in 1998-1999, a stress scale, a scale of general satisfaction with life and a depression scale.

Finally a drawing task was used to explore the emotional components of the participants’ memories, in which the participants were asked to indicate from what age they remember themselves, what was the most important period, the most tragic and the happiest period in their lives and to mark with colours those different periods.

The participants

Clearly, the group of survivors who are still alive and well 60 years after the event are atypical of the total population that suffered during the siege: they are the long-term survivors, hypothetically a subgroup possessing particular characteristics (e.g. stress hardness) or who experienced personal conditions during the siege (close family, resources) that facilitated their survival while others perished. The participants were at least for no less than 9 months in the city.

As in all studies of this kind, participants were questioned about traumatic events experienced when they were relatively young, but many had excellent and vivid recollections of their experiences, though the extreme difficulty they experienced in recounting such events was evident. Almost half the people who had initially agreed to participate in the study, eventually bowed out, as they did not feel capable of dealing with the emotions associated with the memories.

It is fair to say that the child under siege underwent at least two traumas, each of which was almost more than human beings could stand: his personal pain and fear for himself (extreme hunger and cold, bombing and the destruction of their environment, their direct witnessing of death, and so on) and their fear for the others (as the suffering of their loved ones becomes a daily reality for them and their parents’ death a plausible occurrence instead of, in ‘normal’ circumstances, a feared fantasy).

Discussion

Four of the difficulties that stood during the siege/war were held in common, that is to say, hunger, cold, death of loved ones and bombing. However, a comparison of their ranking within a longer list, shows striking differences between the two groups, pointing to a different lived experience with different effects. The evacuated children were not exposed to the threat of being killed or harmed by other starving people; they didn’t suffer from a constant darkness which, as the interviews showed, was ranked as a major source of suffering. On the other hand, children who stayed in Leningrad didn’t have problems with adjusting to a new place leaving all their friends, books, clothes, potential

resources, personal belongings etc. behind. However, they were often isolated, often staying alone in their flats, waiting for their carers to return with food, and when they did, had little energy left to communicate with the children. As the levels of suffering increased, so did the isolation.

If for the group of evacuated children the challenge was to adjust to the loss of their earlier life and to adjust to new circumstances, for the children under siege, the question was really to survive. Their mother (or in some cases their father) was a central figure in the battle with visible death. In addition, the siege children were exposed to death as a daily occurrence: they saw the corpses of neighbors, family members, classmates, strangers in the streets, lorries full of naked frozen bodies.

In order to survive, they were faced with unique ethical dilemmas, just as the adults on whom they depended. For example, to take or not to take some food that was perceived as being for others.

The levels of responsibility and strength being demanded from these children was extraordinary, as was their levels of attunement to that extraordinary task.

A striking commonality was that half of the participants in each subgroup reported changes in their attitude towards others following the war, but not in relation to themselves. In other words, they did not speak of themselves as either victims or heroes. Neither subgroup reported remembering any strongly negative feelings about the enemy – the Germans. This can be more fully interpreted only through an understanding of the socio-political conditions: the fear of reprisals prompting many families into a state of protective silence, due to an uncertainty about the outcome, the constant fear of arrest under suspicion of an “anti-soviet” attitude, which might have become to light of something the child said.

The siege survivors showed a higher level of depression in their present life, whilst their attitude towards people after war changes in a positive way. None of the siege group mentioned being “disappointed” in people, whereas, five of the other participants did.

Both groups equally rated “cheerfulness” (13 out of 70 people), “kindness” (12 out of 70) and “patience” (11 out of 70) as main personality features which helped them to overcome difficulties during all their life. But there are significant differences between both groups in this regard as well: the siege group mentions more often than the control group “independence”, “self sufficiency” and “responsibility”, but the control group “will-power” and “industry”. It shows, perhaps, two different ways of coping with deprivation: internally active (to be reliable but not to be a burden on others) and externally active (to work “for success”). This could be interpreted as a tendency to accumulate psychic energy inside themselves rather than spending it on external activity. It doesn’t necessarily mean to be introverted: as there is also clear indication that the group of siege survivors are more concerned about external life.

At the same time both groups value “honesty” (19 in the siege group and 23 in the control group) and “responsiveness, sensitivity towards others” (19 in the siege group and 24 in the control group) in themselves and in people generally. Interestingly the most consistent answer to the question “What personality traits got you into difficulty?” was for both groups “a lack of will power” (6 in the siege group and 13 in the control one) and “over-kindness” (6 in the siege group and 7 in the control one), bearing in mind that “will-power” was what that which people from the control group felt had helped them to overcome difficulties in their lives and “kindness”, what people from both groups said they valued in themselves and in other people.

The children under siege had to depend on the adults in their family for their survival, but also felt a direct responsibility towards them. The adults, in turn, felt of course responsible for their children’s survival, but themselves were in a position of powerlessness (against the circumstances) and dependence. They were at the mercy of others, and of random events.

The children show in their stories an ambivalence, a tension between the self-sufficiency and orientation towards the other. We can only suppose that the conditions of the siege itself led to patterns of intersubjectivity that were conflicted for many, particularly, around issues of dependence/being depended upon and this ambivalence continued to resonate in later life.

In majority of the cases, participants of both groups, reported the time of war in terms of “loss”. Many participants talked about something being “stolen” from them – their childhood, their loved ones, their possibility of gaining education etc. Even if a person close to them did not die, they still might have

experienced him or her as “lost”, One interviewee said: ‘My mother got out from the “blockade circle” and had long life.... But psychologically she never got out of that.”

The riddle of survival

According to the interview data, a substantial percentage of those who didn't die regard the fact of their survival as dependent on the great luck of having some external resources, having a tight supportive family, inner resources (sense of duty towards their family etc.), the solidarity of people generally, self-discipline, good health, concentration on the immediate, sleep. But significantly, other than when they answered questions about happy memories of the siege time, the interviewees showed the most positive emotion when recalling times when they were able to have a positive effect on the lives of others, feeling a sense of agency helping their mother to take water from the shelter, bringing a piece of horse meat home, planting lettuce or potatoes, defending their home, helping a teacher. Faces of the participants became more vivid when they described such moments.

Being active, being able to do something for oneself and others, reaching out is preserved as a healthy core which like a seed would flower after the war and enable the many decades of productive life that our subjects ended up leading.

We must bear in mind, however, that all of the effects of trauma are not conscious. The earlier and more severe the traumatic experience, the greater the pressure to drive it from consciousness and thus its relative inaccessibility for the individual and the other. One of the tasks of our research thus becomes the comparison of the subject's conscious vs. his unconscious understanding of events. For example, the “Mirror of Hindsight” drawing task showed that 48 out of 70 participants (27 in the siege group and 21 in the control one) painted the period of their life relating to the war in dark (black or brown) colors despite the fact that verbally only 51% (18 people) in the siege survivors' group and 14% in the control group (5 people) identified that time as “the most difficult time in their life”. This finding suggests that the deeply traumatic experience as a child or adolescent of the wartime blockade remains – because of the profundity of the pathology – largely untouched by later psychological reworking in both groups.

Conclusion: survival and connectness to others

Let us sum up the statistically significant differences found between the two groups in the study. Blockade survivors tend to be more depressed, to be much more likely to see their lives as reflecting their past troubles and to experience greater anxiety about their relatives. At the same time, their levels of stress and general satisfaction with life are no different from the control group, which may be evidence of their adaptability to adjust to contemporary life and their capacity to integrate some part of their traumatic experience and transform psychic pain into personal strength. Moreover, blockade survivors show a higher capacity to tolerate ambivalence with respect to events and people in their lives.

In terms of values, blockade survivors show a particular attitude toward a sense of responsibility (as a quality that they value in themselves and in others); similarly, they see self-reliance as an important factor in their survival. They do not take offence easily. They are usually more strongly drawn into and interested in contemporary political life and events. Aside from the psychosocial data, the history of the later lives of survivors show their capacity to adapt to changing conditions in the society around them and their ability to integrate part of their traumatic experience. At this point, we should again point out that our subjects were those who found in themselves the strength to take part in our research and to share their feelings, memories and experiences.

Finally, according to our observations, as a result of wartime childhood trauma fear for the other prevails over fear for the self during childhood and throughout the rest of their lives. Significant differences turned up with respect to how survivors coped with later difficulties. It is clear from the data that such qualities as “having will-power and being hard-working” helped the non-blockade-survivors. For blockade survivors, however, those are replaced by “self-reliance and a sense of responsibility”. The question remains: “Did the blockade impose self-reliance, and did it not destroy the child's faith in “will-power”? Children need to act and to see the results of their actions, it gives them such important feeling as “experience of agency”, which becomes part of their personalities. Thus, we observed how the survivors were positively transformed when they spoke of how they, as children, were able to help their families and others in their circle during the blockade. The faces of these people, to this day, light

up with joy when they tell such stories. The emotional immediacy of this “historic” experience offers us a chance to learn something and understand the inexplicable.

We were able to observe that the psychological effects of the blockade for them turned out not to be entirely negative. Even this profound and massive trauma is, to some degree, subject to integration and can be put to a positive use. Deprivation of even the most biologically basic necessities, even in very early childhood and for a very long time did not stop these children’s personal development. Moreover, they have been able to transform and sublimate their traumatic experience into something positive and creative, particularly in respect to social connectedness, both at the time of the siege and later. Further research is needed to explore this aspect of their particular resilience.

Summary made by Gonda Scheffel-Baars

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FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES

Founded in 1976, Facing History and Ourselves is an international and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. By studying the historical development and lessons of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide, students make the essential connection between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives.

With over 21,000 teachers in the Facing History network, reaching an estimated 1.6 million students, the program has reached unprecedented numbers and continues to find new and innovative ways to connect with educators and students around the world. More information: www.facinghistory.org

International Seminar 2005

A diverse group of teachers from 13 countries attended the Facing History and Ourselves Seminar 25 – 29 July, which was generously hosted by Deutsche Bank, at their London headquarters. Against the grim backdrop of the London transit bombings in July, teachers in the seminar thought deeply about how to help their students explore issues of tolerance and violence in constructive ways. Participants came from: Belgium, Bosnia, Cameroon, England, Germany, Israel, Morocco, Northern Ireland, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S.

The seminar introduced new strategies and resources for an interdisciplinary approach to history that helps teachers engage students and promote their development into humane, informed international citizens with complex critical thinking skills. Wrote one teacher: ‘[The seminar] had a deep impact on me. I hope that when teaching this method, I will be able to touch my students in the same way and help them become more human. I’m going to speak about my experience to all the teachers I know in Belgium.’

Global Symposium

Facing History’s first Global Symposium convened 40 participants from Bosnia, Canada, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Northern Island, Rwanda, South Africa, Sweden, and the U.S. who immersed themselves in the themes, content and pedagogy of Facing History’s programmes, and its adaptations to diverse cultures.

Teachers, scholars, and our international partners came together with Facing History staff members at our Boston headquarters in August 2005 to share experiences and discuss the best ways to teach history to help students become humane, global citizens.

Over the course of 10 days, participants shared personal stories, the trauma of genocide in different countries, and the challenges of reconciliation. The symposium’s lessons and ideas will inform the development of new practical tools for teachers in classrooms around the globe.

'The helpful thing for me was taking a step back and reflecting why we do what we do. How can we improve our intervention? Are our resources and methodology achieving the desired goals?....learning from Facing History and Ourselves staff and teachers will indeed help in shaping the way we engage learners and teachers,' said Themba Lonzi, Institute for the Healing of Memory in South Africa.

Special thanks to The Goldman Sachs Foundation, a global philanthropic organization dedicated to promoting excellence and innovation in education worldwide, for their support of this Symposium through a substantial grant to expand the global reach of Facing History and Ourselves. Each participant contributed to the building of a meaningful network and support system, which will strengthen Facing History's work in the international arena.

'It was invigorating to find so many people from so many places sharing common goals and hopes', said Eduardo Escallon, Ministry of Education, Colombia, South America.

International Seminar

Deutsche Bank will again generously host next International Seminar in London, 24 – 28 July, 2006.

Please contact: Michal_Shapiro@facing.org for more information



TEENAGER IN A JAPANESE CAMP

Because of World War II I did not attend school for nearly five years, exactly my teenage-life, in the former colony of the Dutch East Indies. We had just moved to Batavia (now Jakarta) on the island of Java. I was in the first year of the grammar -school. As nearly all the men – even the 18-year old boys in their last year of secondary school – had been called up, there were no teachers and our school became a barrack. So no school. After a few weeks we got another school and female teachers, but it rained so heavily that the shelter trenches to protect against bombings were flooded. So again: no school and after the Japanese army defeated the Dutch Indonesian Army, schools were definitely closed on Japanese orders: no more teaching and no Dutch language spoken in public. My father was a mechanical engineer, a civil servant of the State Railways (SS=Staats Sporen), my mother was a chemical engineer and I had a brother who was two years younger. My father worked for a vital service (gas, electricity, water, post) important for the continuity of daily life and the economics. He was not taken prisoner like the other white men, but had to work under Japanese supervision, which wasn't pleasant at all.

All the women and children without husbands and fathers tried to survive without much money. Six months later they were summoned to go to a protected residential district surrounded by a fence and barbed wire and with one main entrance, the gate. It meant that usually one family had one room in a house and shared terrasses, toilets and bathrooms with others.

Because my father was still there, we stayed in our house. It was strange, because all my friends were in the camp and we lived amidst the brown people who did not know to decide on their attitude towards the Dutch and the Japanese. It is so long ago that I don't know exactly how I spent my daily life: no school, no swimming pool, no sports, no clubs. Although it had to be done in secret, lessons were given by mothers who had been teachers, but very often they were cancelled. I sewed a few blouses and played with the small children in our street and I roller-skated till that was no more allowed. I knitted with cotton thread socks and panties with complicated patterns and we played monopoly and mahjongh to kill the time. Of course, we had to bow for every Japanese soldier we met and I tried to avoid them. When my aunt in the camp was very ill, our servant did the 5-persons washing for her family at our house. I had to fetch the basket to the gate and I had to pass the sentry, I made my bow and I hoped that they let me pass with the basket. I was afraid, but I got used to it. After a few months the camp was closed.

Life became boring. No more friends, no boys to fall in love with. Although I was very naive, I lost my heart several times to good-looking boys I loved from a distance and of whom I was dreaming. When my father was not needed any more, our family was taken with fifty other workers and their families to a family camp; not to an internment camp – this as a reward for the work of the fathers. We

left our house, took some furniture and possessions with us, even our dog and cat. Although our camp was surrounded by a fence and the gate was closed, like all the other camps, every family got a house for its own.

What did all those grown-ups do all day long, not working? How was their sex and social life? I was too busy with my own life to notice.

Our family was busy with the household: my father and brother cleaned the floors and the garden, my mother did the washing and the ironing. I helped her and I did all the cooking. I became a good cook with Indonesian food, cooking on a charcoal fire in a red earthenware pot. I still have all the recipes. My parents gave us some lessons and we played all sorts of games (bridge, mahjong, monopoly). I flirted with the boys. I was the only 14-year old girl; there were only a few boys, so there was not much choice and they were of different social levels, sometimes rather insolent and rough. Living in such a small community was not so easy. I was what Dutch people call 'too small for a table-cloth and too big for a napkin'. After six months my father and four colleagues were taken prisoner by the Kempetai (Japanese Gestapo). He was called to the gate where a car was waiting. Without a goodbye-kiss he had to run to the gate, he got in the car and disappeared for ever. We were shocked and hoped for the best, but life must go on. Looking back now, this has been the most heart-breaking moment of my life and I have always problems with saying farewell, especially to my male loved ones, even for a short period. Leave-takings are always difficult for me. So many times in my life they came unexpectedly and and meant a farewell for ever.

After the war it became evident that the Railway engineers and many other subordinates had been accused of sabotage and were therefore punished.

The five wives and their twelve children had to go now to a women camp, where the circumstances were much worse. There lived hundreds of women and children in barracks, there was one big soup-kitchen, three watertaps, open toilets and wash-rooms above a ditch. There was a double fence between which Indonesian young soldiers walked as guards with long pointed bambusticks, supervised by a Japanese commandant. I had to help in the soup-kitchen, although lifting the big soup-pans and doing the fires was in fact a task for adults. When I did the the washing for the three of us and for a baby with diarrhoea, waiting for water, I was again alone. I got dysentery, a very contagious illness. Suddenly I was a kind of 'paria'. Fortunately I got over it, but because I had suffered from it already before the war, my digestive tract had been delicate.

We lived on our beds, keeping to ourselves, on the mattresses we had been able to take with us, under the mosquito-nets and with one suitcase per person. We had left the last camp leaving behind the rest of our possessions and the cat and the dog. Just leaving, no tears, no feelings, just going on and surviving.

Food became insufficient, there were many sick people with tropical ulcers, dysentery, jaundice or beriberi (vitamin-shortage). Immediately my menstruation stopped like it happened to nearly all the women. In a way it was easy, no more messing about with sanitary towels etc. Fortunately, after the war, when the food improved, my menstruation came back, but this happened not to all the women.

One day the boys of 10 year and older had to go to boys' camps. (The Japanese consider boys of 10 years old already as grown-ups. It was safer to have them not so near to women). My 12-year old brother had to leave also. My mother and I felt very, very sad while watching the boys being loaded on an open truck with their mattresses and their suitcases, going through the gate to an unknown destination. My mother became sadder and more silent... and I had to support her. Fortunately she found an old friend of her students' club.

We had to move to another camp in Batavia, called Tjideng. More than 10 000 women and children lived there in houses of 2m x 0,6m; that meant: no privacy, toilets overflowing, very little water, mosquitos, flies, intensive heat and still worse food and moreover a very cruel commandant. My mother's dear friend died very soon and we moved to the house where my mother's sister lived with her three daughters. My mother got a very bad tropical ulcer on her leg; she stayed for many weeks in the camp hospital. At the end of the war, the ulcer was open again, but her leg has been saved. I was glad that I could stay with my aunt, I felt nevertheless very much alone. We got weaker and weaker and at the end of the war I weighed only 37 kgs.

A few women swapped clothes, money or jewels with the help of the Indonesian guards through the fences with the Indonesian people outside the camp. At first, only these women were punished when

they were spotted by the Japanese guards, but not so long before the end of the war, punishment became worse, i.e. the whole camp did not get food for two days and the rice and bread had to be buried by the girls of the gang of the heavy-work. The next time the leaders of the 10 quarters offered their hair and were beaten severely to save the women and children from another hunger-punishment. We had to stand for hours in a roll-call in the sunshine. I was cross: why couldn't those hungry women think of the other thousands of hungry women and children who were also very hungry and nearly dying?

I was too young for the gangs that worked in the kitchen and on the market. So I found myself a job to be useful to others. But being in a group and having fun together would have been much nicer than working on my own. I cleaned chamber-pots in a rest-house, I emptied cesspits, and I called for water to bring to the kitchens, walking through the streets with a tooter. Nobody liked to listen to me because they preferred to be called to the kitchen to get food for the house. With my niece I looked after the washing and cleaning of our two families. I was tired, sometimes sick, but we had to go on, especially because our mothers were much weaker than we were, the young and 'stronger' ones.

We celebrated all the birthdays of the two families as best as we could; often we saved some food or we used one of the rare Red Cross tins we got. There was always an awful rumour that all the women between 12 and 40 would be sent to work in the coal mines of the island of Borneo (now Kalimantan), but the atomic bomb [on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, that ended the war in Asia] saved us from this ordeal!

In August 1945 we got more food and a fortnight after the armistice of the 15th of August we learned that the war had ended. No festivities, just food!! We couldn't understand that it was really the end. But it was not the end of our sufferings. The Indonesian revolution had started on August 17th, which meant the end of the Dutch colony. But that is another story.

A few weeks later, my mother got the news from the Red Cross that my father and his four colleagues had died already a year ago. Of course, we had known all the time that this was going to happen. In a way it was a relief: no more expectations or fantasies. I was now sure that I did not have a father any more. I was very proud of him, he died in prison under terrible circumstances. It felt as if he had died for his country....

Fortunately my uncle, his son and my brother survived, came home together and suddenly we had to live in the small room with nine people. My mother went again to hospital and my brother stayed somewhere else. I was alone in the midst of the united family. I did not like my uncle; I was afraid of him because he could be unreasonably cross with his children and it got worse after the camp. I was very unhappy: I had to work hard in the household and I wanted to have fun and anyway not doing the washing etc.

After a few months we moved to a house where some other widows lived. (In my memory we knew only widows!). As we couldn't go to school because we were going to repatriate (in fact: emigrate) as soon as possible, I survived another 8 months. I wanted to meet young men, but that was difficult in the circumstances of the chaotic post-war revolution. A friend got me a job in a men's wear distribution centre in town which gave me much fun: meeting men, giving them clothes and shoes, hitch-hiking with military jeeps and trucks with Dutch and British drivers through a rather dangerous town. I know that my mother was in permanent panic, but I was enjoying myself.

On the trooping ship to Holland, I worked as an orderly (fatigue-duty). It was hard work in the holds of the ship with hundreds of women and children – separated from the women! -, very hot, but when we were free, we enjoyed ourselves on the decks with the orderly boys. Summer in Holland was cold after the tropical heat we were used to, but the winter of 1946/47 was very cold, long and dark. I went to school, I was the oldest of the class: 17 whereas the other pupils were just 14 and we had totally different experiences. I was very serious and I wanted to finish school as soon as possible. I have had to work very hard, especially because I choose to follow the grammar school.

We lived with the three of us together with my mother's sister in my grandmother's house, which was not always very pleasant. My father's favourite brother, who became our guardian, died after one year and my mother got sadder. Life was not so happy at home. And we never talked together about our experiences, griefs and losses. We were a traumatized family.

It is so long ago and looking back now, I think it is a part of my life that has made me sadder and wiser. I have had a good life and I am in a rather good health, with the help of psychotherapy and psychomotoric exercises. The other day I heard a Vietnamese famous singer sing:

My youth has become a song
The voice flies upward to the sunbeams
Childhood is far away
Pain and worries of the past have become songs
The past is only a voice from the distance
Sunbeams shine above the streets
Love is everywhere
Time flies and is singing

Janneke Boerma



TRANSFORMING THE LEGACIES OF CONFLICT, WAR AND GENOCIDE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Bi-annual Conference of ONE BY ONE

Venue: Riverdale, New York

Date: 13 – 17 November 2006

Fee: \$ 450 (accommodation, meals and refreshments)

Information: Elaine Doll, e-mail: Edoll@cmp.com

Martina Emme : e-mail : martina@emme-berlin.de

On the provisional programme:

- Anie Kalayian: Forgiveness Workshop
- Dan Booth Cohen: Family Constellations
- Christina Braidotti/Elisa Medina: Latin-American point of view
- Petra Schneiderheinze: Resistance against the National Socialism in Germany; the different ways in which the two Germanies coped with the past after 1945 and how this influenced the children of the resistance fighters

Monday, November 13

15.00 Welcome by Suzanne Schecker and Rosalie Gerut

Martina Emme and the Dialogue Committee: Transformation through Dialogue

Discussions

19.30 Introduction of: The Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, Rational Games, The Compassionate Listening Project, Jack Saul, Executive Director of the International Trauma Studies Program at Columbia University, the School for International Training and others
Plenary

Tuesday, November 14

19.30 Stanislas Kamanzi, US-ambassador of Rwanda

Meeting at Fordham University

Friday, November 17

12.00 Conference ends

Next issue: November, 2006

Reactions and articles till the 1st of October, 2006
