INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

As girlscouts we liked to sing the song "No man is an island" performed by Joan Baez.
The text is rather idealistic: every man is seen as a brother, as a friend. In the reality of every day life it is a testimony of open-mindedness when people accept each other as fellow human beings and show no fears for the "otherness" of people not belonging to their own "ingroup".
"We need one another" is a more realistic sentence in this song and it can be seen as the motto of this International Bulletin, intended to be a platform where people can share their experiences and views.

Charlotte Kahn described in her Afterword of the book "Children Surviving Persecution" how we have to overcome our natural tendency to devide the world in "we" and "they". We need one another if we are to survive in a world full of destructive weaponry.

One of our readers, Natasha-Maria Meyerberg, drew my attention to an interesting report on the internet that Silke Denker wrote on the meetings of people belonging to different backgrounds, even opposing or "enemy" groups. They shared their experiences and worked on issues like coping with aggression, mistrust and fears.
Three months ago I asked permission to publish a summary of this text in the IB, as requested on the site, but I did not get any reaction. Since the integral text is on the internet I feel free to present to you an abridged text – especially to those readers who don't have access to the internet.

In an interview (de Volkskrant, January, 24 2014) Marjoleine Oppenheim-Spangenberg described how her mother's experiences in Auschwitz influenced her life.

Martin Parsons dedicated one chapter of his book "War Child; Children Caught in Conflict" to the Kinderlandverschickung, the German programme of evacuating children to the countryside for their safety. In the background there was another motive: removing children from the influence of their parents and the church and educating them in the ideology of the Hitler Jugend and the Bund Deutscher Mädel.

Ann Nehlin wrote a dissertation on the organisation "Save The Children Fund" and its struggle to become the number one in Sweden in the domain of children's assistance. Besides helping children in stressful and poor situations due to war and its aftermath, its activities focused on promoting the Swedish democratic values as well as Swedish products,

thus improving Swedish image on the international stage.

From September 1944 until March 1945 my mother, my sister and I lived in a small village in Northen Germany. Forty-nine years later I visited the place and had an unexpected and emotional meeting that linked the past with the present.

Reactions to this issue are welcome and, of course, I appreciate very much new articles or suggestions. Please inform me of any change in (e-mail)address so that we don't lose contact.

Warm regards,
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND Joan Baez

No man is an island,
no man stands alone.
Each man's joy is joy to me,
each man's grief is my own.
We need one another,
so I will defend
each man as my brother,
each man as my friend.

I saw the people gather,
I heard the music start,
the song that they were singing
Is singing in my heart.

No man is an island,
way out in the blue,
we all look to the One above
for our strength to renew.
When I help my brother,
then I know that I
plant the seed of friendship
that will never die.

Afterword by Charlotte Kahn in 'Children Surviving Persecution; An International Study of Trauma and Healing' edited by Judith S. Kestenberg and Charlotte Kahn (Praeger, ISBN 0-275-96261-X, 1988)

'We cannot – we will not – succumb to the dark impulses that lurk in the far regions of the soul, everywhere. We shall overcome them, and we shall replace them…'

-President William Clinton(1)

The "dark impulses that lurk in the far regions of the soul" are difficult to contain and to control. Hostile aggression is impossible to eradicate and only the greatest vigilance and empathy will replace prejudice, xenophobia, and contempt with humane concern. Clearly threat, fear, humiliation, competition, and primordial strivings for survival all arouse hostility in the human animal. The accounts in this anthology demonstrate the intense cruelty of its expression. If ever proof were needed that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, it could be found in the organized persecutions of this century. In street gangs and fraternities, in political oppression and tribal warfare, and in the administration of the "final solution" (the extermination of the Jewish people), group action has immeasurably magnified the power of individual sadism.

Individual group members function in a recursive relationship with the group as a whole; that is, as members choose groups and their own places within them, in accordance with personal needs and motivations, group systems "assign" role functions to each member in accordance with current group goals. As members work to achieve their own and the group's goals, their mutual support empowers and also changes them.(2) That is the dynamic meaning of "strength in numbers."

Power is intoxicating, the more so when it is enhanced by a feeling of security; security based, on the one hand, in the unity and enchantment with one's fellows, and on the other hand, on the idealization of the leader.(3) The reassuring power shared in the group and the comforting cohesion of fellowship are accompanied by the fear of being ostracized: ceasing to be one of "us" and becoming one of "them"-the others, out in the cold. Idealization of the eader implicitly devalues the members, who experience themselves as less in direct proportion to their overvaluation of the leader. From this it follows that members set aside their personal values in deference to group values promulgated by the leader.(4) Is it any wonder, then that so many German citizens- by tradition molded to an authoritarian familial, national and religious pattern- became "Hitler's Willing Executioners"? (5) Germans strove to achieve group ideals whilst also expressing personal fears and animosities, bolstered by the full power of the group intensifying personal sadism.

It is natural for the Hutu and the Tutsi tribes, the Croats and the Serbs, the Slavs and the Czechs, the Moslems and the Christians, the Amerindians and Caucasians to define their separate groups, banding together to protect their ideals, to empower themselves and their leaders in the full belief that they *are* right and that they *have* the right. The boundaries around each community have been drawn. Goodness is perceived to reside within, evil to belong outside. These boundaries are almost impermeable, and any communication across them threatens the purity of the ingroup with contamination by "evil" from the outgroup. And with this, humanity has divided itself in quasi-angels and devils – thereby justifying their scapegoating and torturing of the designated "devils", "vermin", "infidels", and "exploiters". The pleasure of relieving oneself of fears and anger with the approval of the group, coupled with a conviction that such outrageous behavior promotes the common weal, reinforces both individual and group sadism. As Robert Prince put it, "One murder and a little blood just doesn't do it anymore'. (6) However, social systems (families, clans, tribes, nations, and small groups) can also exert a degree of control over individual and collective expressions of hostile impulses. The great difficulty of containing hostile impulses rests in the natural fear of not getting enough amplified into greed. And much of the power of the group over the individual derives from the human need for acceptance – which translated into being "good" by confirming. Compliance with group norms and similarity among group members are the

conditions of acceptance, based on the (presumptive) operation of the "selfish gene" and "meme".(7)
While fear, and sometimes, anger, are responses to *difference*, human empathy is an emotional response to a perceived *similarity* – the internal echo of another's condition. Accommodating oneself simultaneously to difference and similarity is the prerequisite for maintaining empathy for others in the context of restraining one's own sadistic acting-out of fear and anger. Given that the rewards for restraint and empathy usually are not immediate and, therefore, not as reinforcing as the relief obtained from discharging feelings, how can we hope to overcome "the dark impulses that lurk in the far regions of the soul, everywhere"?(8)
Today's potential for mass destruction threatens not only the groups at war, but also endangers humanity as a whole. Splitting the ingroup from the outgroup, the "good-us" from the "bad-you", is no longer self-preservative. Uncontrolled, unmodulated hostile aggression expressed with modern weaponry puts everyone's survival at risk. In other words, the probability of humanity's annihilation as a result of the instinctual protection of a family or tribal gene, or a national or societal "meme", is greater than the possibility of extinction by dilution of the gene-pool or the obliteration of a culture. (9) Freud was correct in recognizing that civilized man might overcome his instinctual aggression; he was far too optimistic in thinking that cognitive and moral processes alone would achieve that aim. Yet, cognition is involved: a *recognition* of the realistic *fear of annihilation* by modern warfare and oppression. Ultimately, however, we have to fight fire with fire, to rely on our primitive instincts. The impulse to aggress must be controlled by the instinct to survive, and the fear of annihilation likewise recognized and contained within each of us and within each group – not displaced (10) and enacted viciously against another – if anyone is to survive.
If the human power to act is magnified in groups, so is the potential to contain fear and hostility - as well as to restrain hostile enactments. Of course, group ideals, goals, and leadership are all important in determining the course traveled. And individual members – of families, clans, tribes, and nations - have much to learn about "sublimating" (11) their aggressive energies, into negotiating skills, for example. Is it possible? I have heard it said that "It takes two to keep the peace and only one to make war." Streetwise teenagers are certain that fists and weapons - not talk or walking away - will save their lives. On the other hand, after a couple of protected, precocious three-year olds were told to stop hitting each other, one of them stopped, thought and declared to his friend: "We can disagree and still love each other".
Which path will be taken?

The chapters in this book have described some effects on children of the trauma inflicted by societally organized hostility and persecution. The traumatic consequences of physical and verbal abuse in families are no less severe, lasting, or costly. The resulting painful memories, enervating apprehensiveness, and constricting self-consciousness are often quite invisible to outside observers, yet restrain even apparently well-adjusted survivors from fully potentiating their talents. The direct and transmitted effects of the trauma of oppression, prejudice, and untimely, forced separation from parents afflict not just the survivor, but generations. Jucovy's survivor in the barber shop, Judith Kestenberg's *Kindertransport* refugees, Godorowski's *musulman*, Milton Kestenberg's case of the mute husband, Kahn's and Fogelman's children with confused identities, Scheffel-Baars' ailments, Fried's and Valent's now-aging survivors who continue struggling to integrate their pasts, and even the Germans who still shudder when reflecting on their unstable lives – all are the victims of these organized "dark impulses". In one way of or another, they have faced their experiences and were willing to speak of them. Most of the victims managed to heal themselves sufficiently to function in the world. They work, find partners and raise families. In short, they cope. So did innumerable others who still decline to speak of their past, who try hard not to think of horrors, and strenuously avoid telling their children – communicating instead through silence. Although survivors may live a "normal" life like "everyone else", deep within them, the encapsulated poison may continue to corrode body and spirit. (12)

They suffer from a variety of physical, psychosomatic, and psychological symptoms. Black moods becloud their lives.
The mere fact of surviving persecution is attributed by many of the oppressed to sheer luck. Psychologists and sociologists believe that, beyond luck, the pre-traumatic personality and social supports are to be credited. For example, those ascribing their survival to "luck" tend to be resigned and despairing, and find it difficult to "give any sense or purpose to their lives". Others believe that their personal discipline, self-control, and social skills were significant in helping them survive. Personality attributes such as "cunning maneuvering and skillful adaptation to the mentality of the guards...could get [the persecutee] assigned to perform easier types of work" and perhaps assigned to kitchen duties where food could be obtained. However, an isolated prisoner could not gain a foothold, as was the case for a German Jew assigned to a barracks with only Ukrainian prisoners. In this alien environment "he rapidly lost weight and died'. (13)

Group power is not confined to the management of aggression; it extends to "social support and emotional involvements" facilitated by group cohesion, which is critical for survival (14). Research shows that social support reduces the anxiety in youngsters exposed to military ground- and air-attacks. An Israeli study of children and adolescents living in "exposed" environments- *kibbutzim ("*socialist collectives characterized by a high degree of community organization...[and] communal rearing of children), *moshavim* (agricultural cooperative, private enterprises where children are reared at home), and development towns (characterized by a "lower level of community organization and a weaker ideological commitment") revealed "less personal anxiety and less behavior disturbance", and fewer concomitant symptoms among *kibbutz* members. This was attributed to the cohesive structure of the *kibbutz*: its "close-knit and ideologically committed group" and well-adapted adults who "serve as good role models" generally and "in stressful situations".(15)
The support of the parental relationship is crucial for young children. This was vividly demonstrated by the children who (unlike the "separated" children (showed "no signs of traumatic shock...[while] in the care of their mothers or a familiar mother substitute" during the German bombings of Great Britain in WWII. Indeed, London children were reportedly more upset by evacuation than they were by the Blitz and the war was less significant to them when it "only" threatened their lives, but it became "enormously significant the moment it breaks up family life. (16)

Family relationships continue to be extremely important even for older children and adolescents. One survivor was deported together with his parents from Germany to a French internment camp. Men and women were separated and, at age fifteen, he lived in the men's section with his father. His father was selected to be the barracks chief and was, therefore, entitled to a separate room, which he shared with his son. After some time, the father was transferred out of the camp while his son, who remained alone, had to vacate the room and move to what was called the "rabbit warren", a large space with double-decker bunks in the center of the barracks. The young man recalls feeling utterly lost and dejected without his father. He wandered about aimlessly and was not sufficiently focused to hide when the Germans came to round up a complement of men to be assigned to forced labor at a different location. Once there, the stiff discipline, the back-breaking work, and the danger of being shot by the Germans aroused him out of his depressive stupor. Soon he contracted hepatitis and survived only as a result of a series of fortuitous events, one involving an SS officer who appeared at a critical juncture and secretly came to his aid. Finally, he found the strength to tell an audacious lie during a life-threatening moment. Weeks, later, the laborers were returned to the internment camp, where they remained a cohesive group, supporting each other sufficiently so that the adolescent was prevented from relapsing into his depression. Years later, when asked to what he attributes his survival, he answered "Luck!". Yes, he had some luck, some of it in the form of social support. It was luck that he was at home when his family was picked up for deportation and for a while in the camp he had the benefit of his father's protection; it was luck again that a compassionate

person from among the oppressors happened to be near when he needed protection; and it was lucky that he was returned to the original camp in the company of his peers. But, in the final analysis, the supportive emotional and social involvements sustained him sufficiently to prevent him from succumbing to the debilitating forces of disease and from yielding to the passivity of the *musulman.*

Scheffel-Baars, too, was comforted by her social involvements. Like the adolescent boy in the concentration camp, she found help from some unlikely sources: her initiative in publicly confessing to her Nazi-collaborator father's guilt was rewarded by the response of the good quasi-father – another victim, a Jew in Israel, who helped her to make peace with her Nazi father. A trusting relationship with her pastor and her husband's support have enabled her to achieve a semblance of internal tranquility.
The Swedish schools opened for child and adolescent survivors immediately after the war, and the Café 84 in Stockholm, as well as the survivor groups in Australia, have also provided healing social support and emotional connections. In contrast, East Germans suffered anguish after the collapse of the communist state precisely because they lacked the supportive social structures. No patterns for initiating groups (outside of the politically-mandated organizations) had been established. Indeed, the pervasive mistrust and suspicion made any but the most superficial and stylized group activities all but impossible. Religion had been devalued, if not totally outlawed by communism, so that only occasionally would a parishioner seek personal comfort from a priest or perhaps from an inner connection to God. But supportive cohesion among a community of parishioners was beyond the realm of experience in communist East Germany. Only when this regime began to crumble did protesters find sufficient courage to risk banding together in order to empower themselves and each other. It was then that the churches became meeting places – but by no means always safe places, since many pastors violated the confidentiality to which they were bound by their vocation: They acted as informers for the Communist Party and the state.
There is little doubt that the stress imposed by the agony of the extermination camps, the limitless horror of genocide, and the paranoia induced by totalitarian societies can override even a normal pretraumatic personality. Later re-experiencing (in contrast to recalling) of the traumatic experience is a manifestation of a failure of symbolization and integration. This cognitive deterioration might be explained by constricted functioning, perhaps due to regression to earlier developmental levels in response to extreme stress. There is also evidence that the great fluctuations in vulnerability both during and after incarceration are related to the pretraumatic personality. These are the "strands of influence".(17) One survivor had attributed his sensitivity and suspicion, his irritability and depressed moods to his suffering as a Jewish schoolboy taunted and attacked by gentile schoolmates), compounded by the subsequent concentration-camp experience. In the course of psychotherapy he became aware that he had had bouts of depression even as a young boy and sad feelings as early as age five. A considerable depression torments him into his retirement age. To an outside observer it would seem that he has overcome his ordeals, healed, and leads a normal professional and family life. Yet he and his therapist know that the Holocaust, prejudice and persecution are in his consciousness – daily, hourly - intensifying the childhood depressive feelings that, like uninvited guests, have resided within him throughout the years of his life.

Much about people's varying ability to cope despite adversity is still a mystery, though it appears to have its foundation in genetically-determined temperamental factors, including "high intelligence, physical resilience, and capacity for rapid and effective physical learning." (18) These attributes may help a survivor of social trauma to defend against an unacknowledged sense of weakness or shame and to go on with life despite feelings of rejection. However, true "invulnerability" is not defensive. (19) It manifests itself as "resiliency" in the face of life demands, and requires a full integration of personal feelings and past experiences; this leads, then toward an authentic, stable sense of identity.
An integrated individual, equipped with resiliency and stability is prepared to be empathic

even with strangers and is less vulnerable to capitulation to a leader and far less likely to act-out hostile impulses. The task for mental health professionals, educators, politicians, cultural leaders, and for the society at large is to devise supportive social structures on which parents can depend, so that they, in turn, will be enabled to create a non-traumatic climate of acceptance, respect, and "emotional involvement." These are the conditions permitting a benign dependence of children on adults, promoting an expansion of a child's psyche, including full cognitive development in the direction of symbolization and sublimation.""

Notes:

1. William Clinton, Second Inaugural Address, *New York Times*, January 21, 1997
2. Helen Durkin, "Analytic Group Therapy and General Systems Theory", in *Progress in Group and Family Therapy,* ed. C. Sager and H. Kaplan (New York: Bruner Mazel, 1972
3. Sigmund Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" (1921) in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London, The Hogarth Press, 1955), 18: 69-143
4. Ibid.
5. Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (New York: alfred A. Knopf, 1996)
6. Robert Prince, chapter 2, this volume.
7. Richard Dawkins, *The Selfisch Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976)
8. Clinton, "Second Inaugural Address".
9. Dawkins, *Selfish Gene*.
10. Heinz Hartman, "Notes on the Theory of Sublimation", *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 10 (1955): 9-29
11. Ernst Kris, "Neutralization and Sublimation", *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 10(1955): 30-46
12. Paul Matussek, *Internment in Concentration Camps and Its Consequences* (1971); New York: Springer Verlag, 1975)
13. L.Eitinger, "Concentration Camp survivors in Norway and Israel", in: *Uprooting and After*, ed. Maria Pfister-Amende and Charles Zwingman (New York: Springer Verlag, 1973), 15, 114, and 191
14. Miles E.Simpson, "Societal Support and Education", in *Handbook on Stress and Anxiety*, ed. Irwin Kutash et al. (San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), 451-62, quote cited on 457
15. Norman Milgram, "War Related Stress in Israeli Children and Youth", in *Handbook of Stress: Theorethical and Clinical Aspects*, ed. Leo Goldberger and Shlomo Breznitz (New York: Free Press, 1982), 658, 657.
16. Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham, *War and Children* (New York: Ernst Williard, 1943), 21,37.
17. See Milton Jucovy, chapter 1, this volume
18. Edwin C.Peck, "The Traits of True Invulnerability and Posttraumatic Stress in Psychoanalyzed Men of Action", in *The Invulnerable Child*, ed. E. James Anthony and Bertram J.Cohler (New York: The Guilford Press, 1987), 357
19. Anthony and Cohler, *The Invulnerable Child*

PEACEBUILDING AROUND WORLD WAR II: AN APPROACH TO EMOTIONAL HEALING AND SOCIAL CHANGE

By Silke Denker, May 2006

This piece was written while the author was completing a Master of Arts degree in Peace Studies at the Joan B.Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

It has been sixty years since the formal end of world War II (WWI2). For many, however, it has not ended in their minds and hearts. Some who have had traumatic experiences during the war may be aware of this. Others may notice the effects in

more subtle ways, for example through an uneasiness in their family about the war. This may stem from things that are not talked about, like missing family members or avoidance of questions such as,'Where was Grandpa, exactly, during the war?' Yet another way to be affected by WW2 is through the larger society, where, for example, there is a prevalent idea in the culture such as"We Finnish people don't like Russians'.

For several years, I have been engaged in efforts to end these effects of WW2 by healing the underlying hurts. I decided to do that because, as a German national, not only was my family affected by the war, but while growing up in Germany, I also felt like there was something not good about being a German. In this article, I will illustrate the principles and perspectives of the work through a report about a workshop I attended, together with almost 90 other people, from Europe, Eastern Europe, Israel, the US, Africa, and Australia/New Zealand. Among the participants were survivors of concentration camps, children of survivors and children of Nazis, people from groups whose experiences in WW2 have been listened to, and from groups who have not really been given attention, people from perpetrator groups as well as victim groups, and people from different generations.

Each participant had experience with the healing technique used at the workshop, had found it useful and had achieved a level of proficiency with it. The motivation to come to this workshop was to apply the technique to the topic of WW2. The workshop was open to everybody who felt affected by WW2. Because the stresses of WW2 forced the relocation of many people before, during and after the war, people came from a large diversity of places.

The picture of the human being that underlies this model assumes that we are all born with the potential to be cooperative, loving, zestful and intelligent human beings. If this working assumption is true, we are left with the question: Why do some people act in vicious ways? The answer we are working with is that they had hurtful experiences that they have not healed from. In other words, the working theory is that people are good, even if they do bad things.
Through distressing experiences in our lives, such as fear, pain, embarrassment, etc., our original qualities can become obscured. Our initial natural response to the hurt was what we call in this model, 'discharge'. For example crying or shaking. However, our surroundings typically discouraged us from using this natural emotional recovery process ('don't cry'), because people mistake the discharge for the hurt. The situations where we could not discharge the hurt lead to inhibitions to our healing. Over time, we get stuck in recordings of the past that have nothing to do with the present, but that limit our perceptions, our thinking and our behavioral patterns. For example, if the bombs in my village fell on a sunny day and I do not discharge the fear, I might not be able to enjoy sunshine ten years later, even though it is safe now, because my mind still connects the bombs with a certain weather condition. The discharge process heals our hurt while at the same time freeing the experience from associated memories. After discharge, I will still remember the bombs, but I may not be afraid anymore today. Some of these distressing incidents may not even have been personally experienced, but passed on from earlier generations, through stories or behaviors. These can be discharged in the same way as the direct experiences.

Externally, discharge shows as crying or sobbing, trembling, warm or cold perspiration, laughter, angry noises, vigorous movement, non-repetitive talking, or yawning. A typical form of arrangement to achieve this discharge is a session.
In a session, two or more people come together as a group and split time equally between them. During her time, one group member gets the full attention from the other people that she can use to talk or discharge about anything she wants to, with the explicit understanding that any upcoming feelings are welcome. The other people listen with active attention. This means that they do not talk much or follow their own thoughts or feelings, but instead have

their full attention on the main person. After the agreed time is up, the next person gets to be the main person until everybody has had their turn.

Because we have learned to avoid sharing our strongest feelings with most people, it often takes time for enough trust to build up for discharge to occur. It seems that hurts from the past often persist when we could not notice that anybody was able to listen to us. Feeling these feelings while somebody pays relaxed attention is one of the most important ingredients towards reaching a point where we do not feel powerless against these feelings anymore. We questioned whether re-experiencing the old feelings is a new hurt and found that people feel better, even with the strongest, most terrible feelings, after they could show the feelings in a situation where they trusted that they were not alone.

We can accept that discharge has occurred when a person is able to think more clearly about how to solve problems, has new and fresh ideas about situations in life, can act more rationally and decisively, and feels more connected to the world around him.

Sharing personal stories about how we were affected by WW2 was a central element in the workshop. Many people shared that they could never talk about their experiences because nobody wanted to hear them. For example, the Jews said this because their families wanted to leave the Holocaust behind and the children of Nazis didn't talk because they were so ashamed. By creating a space where everyone agreed not to blame or judge, many people expressed a great relief at finally talking. This was especially true because people from the former 'enemy' side listened with compassion. It was also educational for the people to listen and get a broader perspective of what happened during WW2.

The workshop leader was aware of the dominance of English in the world and that language is a form of oppression. In order to counterbalance English as the main workshop language, the presentations were translated into one of the fifteen represented languages, rotating every fifteen minutes. This helped especially the English-speaking people to appreciate the beauty of diversity, and it gave a message to people who were not native English speakers that their language is important.

As the topic of war is, by nature, very heavy, we placed emphasis on having breaks to be outside in nature, to play games and to have fun. This was very helpful in bringing our minds back into the present and to notice that the war is over and we were there together. For me, this was an important proof that our discussions during the workshop were not only theoretical and that discharge actually enabled us to cross the lines and do fun things together.

One basic idea for the workshop was, 'We are all in this together'. It does not make sense to feel guilty or to blame each other for what our ancestors did. We were there to heal. Our hurts may stem from experiences on opposite sides of the war, and each group has to do their respective work. However, coming together from former enemy sides challenged to reach deeper levels of healing. I got a glimpse of what that could feel like as a German when, at one point in the workshop, the Germans received warm applause form the other participants.

It is important to notice how much progress has already been made. Our ancestors probably struggled with survival and getting their lives back together after the war. Many may not have been in a position to challenge their feelings of anger, hopelessness or fear. It would have been great if we had had a parent who had said to us: 'I am acting strangely because of the war'. But that probably did not happen. We had to make sense of their behavior by ourselves, because we did not have enough information about the war. However, it is our ancestors' efforts that made it possible for us now to do this work.

The work requires discipline and organization, leadership, hopefulness, and alliances across national lines. In order to overcome the divisions between us, we have to take risks. In doing this, we will not be able to avoid making a mess, stirring up emotions and making mistakes. What is important is to make sure that we have the resources to clean up after wards.

Below, I outline some of the essential issues we addressed at the workshop.
Nationalism and patriotism have been instilled in most of us. Pride in our cultural heritage is positive until we are manipulated into feeling better than other people because of our nationality.
Because of our Nazi history, in Germany I struggle to feel proud of my national heritage. I realized that in order to do effective work, I have to go on the journey towards feeling good about being German.
An illustration of how nationalism separates people was a session with two middle aged women, one from the US and the other from Russia. Sharing what they had learned about each other as children, they realized that they had not been able to see how wonderful the people in the other country were, and how pointless it seemed that their governments had engaged for so long in building weapons against each other.

As people from the US may be prone to some form of imperialism, the direction US citizens were given for the workshop was to try to hold back and give others a chance to take leadership. A sentence they used to get a better perspective on this was: 'I am an ordinary person, no better than other people, but probably a lot more ignorant.' This provided access to discharging feelings of superiority by using humor and laughter.

In many places throughout history, efforts have been made to create anti-Jewish feelings with the intention to make people agree to do harm to Jews. Most gentiles (non-Jewish people) have been exposed to such stories about Jews. At the workshop, we were asked to notice what effects these stories have had on us, especially the stories we had heard in our childhood, and how they had shaped our thinking and feelings about Jews. We were encouraged to not feel bad about the negative thoughts and feelings we had about Jews, because we did not choose to have them. What matters now is to change these harmful attitudes.

Likewise, if we had learned to feel bad about ourselves because of what our ancestors did to Jews, we were encouraged to remember that we are good people and 'we are all in this together'. Feeling guilty separates us from Jews. For example, if my family or my country supported the Holocaust, and I avoid contact with Jews today, because I feel bad about myself or because Jews resent me, this is neither helpful for myself nor for the greater goal of peace building.

The goal here was to not let people separate themselves from German people because of what happened during the war. We learned that the actions of the Germans were related to the oppression they experienced after WW1. There is nothing inherently bad about Germans. The participants were asked to explore their negative feelings about Germans and to make a commitment to pass as little of these feelings as possible on to others.

Several people shared what their families had taught them about Germans and they showed the group where they struggled in not even wanting to overcome these beliefs. Getting to know some German people at the workshop in this environment helped to contradict the stereotypes and to begin the healing process. A challenge for me as a German was to try not to prove that Germans are actually good, but to be my true self and show my struggles and imperfections. I came to understand that whenever we are separated, both sides get hurt.

Strengths and challenges of this work.

Holding up certain perspectives such as 'everybody is good' is central to the work, but may be challenging because people in conflict settings, I guess, typically do not think of 'the other'' as inherently good. However, even if one cannot hold up the perspective that everybody is good, one can achieve some healing by sharing stories and actively using discharge within one's group. Another implication of questioning the assumption of universal inherent goodness of people may be that one may not be motivated in the same way to work towards connection with other people to end conflict, or interfere with other people's efforts towards peace.

Discharge is a natural human healing process. Babies and small children do it all over the world. However, as we grow up, we learn to suppress discharge because most cultures discourage it to varying extents. Likewise, gender conditioning influences one's ease at discharging. It seems that, in general, men have more difficulty accessing feelings of grief, while women find it more difficult to discharge anger. The good news is that everybody can re-learn it if they persist.

Social change follows from individual change and vice versa. Therefore, individual healing is part of a larger change process and valuable as such. Clear thinking on the part of an individual or a small group sometimes makes a big difference in how a community deals with a conflict. Even if a change in the bigger context does not happen, the healing has a positive effect on the life of this individual.

After many years of using this healing process, I still worry that I will be viewed by other people as mentally unstable when I discharge. However, I experience that difficult feelings change when I discharge, so I am committed to the process. I notice that I can think more clearly and flexibly, and have new ideas. This has helped me to accomplish things that felt too difficult to me at first sight. I have also been able to establish relationships with people who previously did not seem available to me, because of our differences.

It is not easy to maintain hope that peace is possible. However, the progress we made during the four days of the workshop, albeit small compared to the big picture, has helped me to believe that perhaps human beings are able to overcome longstanding animosities.

Read the integral text on:
http://www/beyondintractability.org/reflection/denker-peacebuilding

THE KZ INSIDE ME

Marjoleine Oppenheim-Spangenberg (1979), daughter of an Auschwitz-survivor,
spoke with Nell Westerlaken about the influence of the never discussed memories of her mother, Riel van Duren. (de Volkskrant, January 24, 2014).
Throughout her life Marjoleine refused to subscribe to organizations, meetings or clubs. She mistrusted any list, unaware of her mother’s conviction that being registered in whatever way would make you vulnerable to being traced and caught. There was always the fear in the background that ‘they’ could come to take you to the camp and put an end to your life. Marjoleine’s mother was not aware of the influence her fears and nightmares had on her daughter; how several patterns in her behaviour were so dominant that Marjoleine copied them unwittingly. In their house no cupboard was ever locked, no doors were ever closed, even the bathroom door was ajar. The fridge was always full with food, the cellar crowded with food preserves, the tank of the car was always full: in case of need they could stay inside the house and live on for weeks, in case of a sudden flight, they could leave the house in no time…

Marjoleine’s mother hated cold winters with snow and only as an adult Marjoleine learned why: at the approach of the Russian army, her mother and the other prisoners in Auschwitz had to leave the camp, setting out for Bergen-Belsen, walking through the snow since transport possibilities failed.
Marjoleine was fond of a frock she had bought as a teenager: black with white dots. Her mother disliked this dress, but never explained why. Only much later did Marjoleine see a picture of her mother’s wedding in the concentration camp of Westerbork in the Netherlands. By marrying a young man she had hoped to escape being put on transport to Germany. In the picture her mother wears a black dress with white dots…
One year, at the occasion of Mothering Sunday, Marjoleine bought a red pelargonium as a present for her mother. Her mother tried to look grateful and said how much she appreciated this gesture; nonetheless, Marjoleine sensed that in fact she did not like the plant at all. Only much later did her mother tell her that there had been baskets with red pelargoniums on the wall of one of the gas chambers in Auschwitz.
Her mother was proud she had stolen a knife from the officers mess in Bergen-Belsen and she used it year after year as a simple form of triumph and revenge.

After her divorce, her mother became the partner of the historian Loe de Jong. He was renowned because of the series of books he wrote about WWII in the Netherlands. He knew very well what his wife had gone through in Auschwitz since she had been one of the women selected for medical experiences. Thanks to his studies and his occupations, Marjoleine's mother learned to speak more openly about the past. She accompanied her husband when he visited the former queen Beatrix. She felt empathy with prince Claus, who as a German had not been able to withdraw from military service in the Wehrmacht. Claus suffered from deep rooted feelings of guilt, but thanks to the openness of Marjoleine's mother he could overcome part of them. She accepted him as an ordinary German convinced that he was no Nazi and never had been. One day he asked her to accompany his sons to Auschwitz and to tell them her story. Of course they had learned at school about WWII and had discussed issues at home, but he wanted them to experience at the spot what had occurred in the past. Willem-Alexander, his eldest son – now the king – happened to have obtained his pilot's licence and was co-pilot on the flight. Before the departure Marjoleine's mother said to him: 'Listen boy, please be careful. You may understand that I did my utmost to leave Auschwitz alive, it would be a shame to perish in a plane crash on my way back to the camp.'

Although her relationship with her mother had beenrather good, Marjoleine felt relieved when she had passed away. It was as if she was only now set at liberty and could leave the camp in which her mother had kept her unwittingly for years.
When Marjoleine asked her son what influences of the past had hampered his life, he answered: 'I don't like the colour red, but that is the only thing, I feel'.

(summary: GSB)

KINDERLANDVERSCHICKUNG
(summary of chapter 8 of WAR CHILD, Children Caught in Conflict by Martin L. Parsons)

The official German policy regarding the protection of children, and in some cases non-combattants, was to avoid wholesale evacuation at the outbreak of hostilities. Instead, the plan was to implement a gradual dispersal of the population away from towns and cities in order to cut down the possibility of panic, which could obstruct vital communication networks. The German High Command also felt that the effect of any air attack on civilians might be overestimated and that during the first week or two after the war started, the situation might become clearer.
As early as 1935-6, a series of articles appeared in Gasschutz & Luftschutz (Gas Protection and Air Protection), the official magazine of the Reich Air Protection League, discussing the difficulties of evacuation. In October 1936, Colonel Teacher, stated in this publication that the practicality of evacuation would depend on three considerations:
the number of people to be moved
the time the movement was to take place
the means of transport involved in the movement.
It was thought that government officials and businessmen would remain, as well as the old and infirm who would be unable to travel. Prisoners should also be evacuated, not for any humanitarian reason but because of the danger they would cause if the prisons were bombed and they escaped. Some people should be allowed to find their own accommodation, however, they would need to obtain written permission from the police in order to move, as it was felt that too much voluntary evacuation would develop into panic flight.

Despite these initial suggestions, it was only at the beginning of 1938 that the German government developed concrete plans for the evacuation of children under the age of fifteen to the countryside as a precautionary measure against enemy air attacks.
On 5 September 1939, the federal minister gave instructions to prepare for the evacuation of school-aged children by local ‘air-raid protection leaders’, in cooperation with local school authorities, so that any such scheme could be implemented as soon as it might become necessary.
The evacuation scheme, known as Ewertite Kinderlandverschickung (KLV) was not a new idea. In the nineteenth century churches had organised country holidays for children from the poorest city areas and during the Weimar Republic the same practice was carried out by the Workers’ Welfare organisation. Under this latter scheme children stayed with industrial workers or in KLV Camps.
In September 1940, Hitler ordered the voluntary evacuation of all children from those areas that were being targeted by the RAF, and on 26 September gave Baldur von Schirach the responsibility for organising it. Von Schirach took the opportunity to marginalise the education authorities and increase the influence of the Hitler Youth.(HJ) Hitler insisted that evacuation should be voluntary and, as a consequence, ordered that the number of teachers should be cut by 50 per cent. Although Schirach pointed out that in these circumstances regular instruction could not be absolutely guaranteed, the Führer said that one would have to put up with that…He also ordered that the label ‘Verschickung’ should not be used and the scheme should retain the appearance of simply moving the children into the country.
Although the numbers of teachers were to be reduced, those remaining in the profession were still expected to take a lot of responsibility for ensuring that some semblance of an education continued.
The evacuation of German children was voluntary and free (the costs were borne by the NSDAP and partly by central government), nevertheless a great deal of pressure was applied to parents to send their children away. On a simple level, warnings stating that if they didn't go children would be without friends and would have to move schools, were common. The children who were sent would have the best possible education from their own teachers,

those who remained behind would have to expect to be transferred to a class containing a collection of children from other classes or to another school.
As the intensity of the war on the Home Front increased, so too did the need for removing the children. In 1942, the authorities in Hamburg sent letters to parents explaining the scheme. Reasons for going were not given on the ground of escaping the bombing, but as protecting the children against health risks during the winter. The authorities wrote that carefully selected efficient HJ and League of German Girls leaders (BDM) would support the teachers in their work and ensure that Hitler Youth duties would be carried out in an exemplary manner. This latter situation created a great deal of conflict between the teachers, who were responsible for the education of the evacuees, and the Camp Team leader and his HJ subordinates, who organised youth activities outside the classroom.

The first batch of children left Berlin on 3 October 1940 and traveled to Saxony. At first only Berlin and Hamburg were involved, and by the beginning of December 189,543 children had been moved to either KLV camps or private homes. The reception areas were mainly in the north and the east of the Greater German Reich, there were, however, KLV camps in regions that had been annexed, e.g. Hungary and Poland.
The ‘evacuees’ were given official help with clothes and basic necessities (toothpaste, first aid kits, musical instruments, suits and wooden shoes). Officials were appointed from the HJ with specific responsibility to ensure that the reception of the children went as smoothly as possible, requiring them to liaise closely with the local administrators. Initially, an attempt was made to place children of a specific social and economic background with equivalent hosts and for that reason the domestic circumstances of the children were listed on their register. However, as more children arrived in the reception areas this became unworkable.
The German billeting officer had the responsibility of not only visiting the children on a regular basis in order to make sure that all was going well, but also of organising at least two games sessions a week, or excursions, in order to take the pressure of the hosts. For their part, the hosts had to make sure that the children kept in contact with their own families.
Despite the planning, there were problems relating to class divisions. This resulted in some Berliners complaining that there was too much official concern for the welfare and safety of the middle class. Those working in offices had evacuation priority over those working in the factories and figures show that more people were moved from the middle-class areas west of Berlin than from the more working-class north.
After a while there was a drift back from the reception areas to their home towns. This caused a great deal of concern. The numbers coming back from South Westphalia were so large that the ‘home’ authorities canceled the returnees’ ration cards, an ill-planned move that resulted in food-riots. In many areas the situation was not helped by the fact that many evacuees were billeted with farmers who, because they were registered as ‘self-suppliers’ were excluded from any rationing schemes. From the hosts’ point of view there were also complaints that their ‘guests sat around and did nothing except….’In some areas hosts were forced to take in people from towns further afield, and were not allowed to take in those nearer to them geographically.
Religion also played a part in the discord within the reception areas. Some evacuees from the Rhineland, who had been used to the National Socialist neo-paganism, were sent to villages in the Alpine regions still practising fundamental Catholicism. However, the KLV were anxious not to alienate parents too much and allowed children to attend church and other religious groups if they wanted to. But, since their teachers as members of the NSLB were discouraged from having anything to do with churches, a lot of pressure was applied to children in some areas making it difficult for them to practice their religion. This was a point taken up by some parents. The author of a report on the progress of the KLV, issued in September 1943, commented: ’Churchgoers express the view that the whole point of evacuation is to separate the young people from their parents in order to teach them to become heretics in the camps’.
In February 1939, the Youth Service Day was introduced, and implemented for the first time in 1940. The HJ set out to challenge the role of the Church by creating an elaborate induction

ceremony for his fourteen-year-old members, to compete with the Confirmation and First Communion services of the Protestant and Catholic Churches.

In July 1943, the Burgomeisters of the major cities in the reception areas were ordered to organise the enrolment of individual evacuated children and whole schools and their teachers within existing establishments. It was easier to assimilate whole schools because the children would be with their friends and it made the supervision of National Socialist policies through the auspices of the HJ and BDM members, easier to control. As many school buildings had already being taken over for other purposes, teachers and pupils alike had to cope with extremely difficult and cramped conditions. In some areas authorities had to resort to double-shift schooling, with the effect that the education of both evacuee and indigenous pupils was affected. There was an additional problem since there was little shelter accommodation for the children, a situation which was to become very serious in February 1945. Some areas became so saturated with incomers that the authorities could not take any more. A local party official commented in April 1944: '..It is always the people who've been bombed out who are responsible for the general mood.[..]Big city people and country people don't suit each other'.

Because of the closer proximity of the allied air raids, the authorities in the 'safe areas', during the latter months of 1943, had been making secret preparations to evacuate the children again, to the surrounding countryside. Secret documents had been sent to head teachers outlining the plans, but the population was kept in the dark in order to avoid panic. A few days after Leipzig, only 60 miles away from Dresden, was bombed, on 6 December, head teachers were permitted to inform their staff of the plans, but were specifically ordered not to use the word 'Evacuation' but the phrase 'Country Vacation'. On 9 December the Gauleiter issued an Address to Dresden parents explaining the planning to transfer school children from the most at risk cities to less threatened places. School meetings were held to encourage parents to either send their children to friends or relatives in the countryside, or join the Government Scheme. Few did and only 30 per cent of the children in Dresden became involved. The success of persuading parents to send their children away depended very much on the skills of the speakers involved. In order to allay parental fears, the ministry of Goebbels produced propaganda films such as *Hands Up*, which showed a rather romanticised view of camp life.

The movement of children from the Ruhr started in January 1941, but was met with strong parental resistance. According to Gerhard Brock only 40 per cent of the school children were evacuated. Approximately 16,000 school children were moved on their parents' initiative to relatives and friends. In the summer of 1943, this evacuation increased as a direct reaction to the four months' continual bombing of the Ruhr by the allies. Schools in areas that were in particular danger had to be closed, that was another reason. Despite the dangers it was obvious that some parents were keeping their children at home and 20 per cent of the total remained in the area throughout the war, even though Bochum was very heavily bombed.
In the Saxony area the Gauleiter issued an order forbidding mothers to travel with their offspring. The order suggested that there would not be enough accommodation for the mothers, but his hidden agenda was that as these children were to be the future of the Reich, the Party wanted control of them without undue interference from parents, and in some areas, from religious influences. However, the State still needed support from the parents and there was a genuine concern that some parents did not quite believe the humanitarian intentions of the authorities and were beginning to see that perhaps there could be other motives. A directive being issued in 1943 told parents that they should not believe the rumours that the evacuation was intended to place children under the exclusive influence of the State and the Party.
By mid-January 1944, the authorities issued a statement saying that if children remained in the cities they would not be entitled to schooling. Despite the pressure, parents refused to

send their children to the countryside. In fact a gradual drift back to the cities began because of homesickness of the children.
In September a message from Berlin to Dresden and other areas informed the authorities that the concept of 'total war' had been redefined and that no longer resources were available to help in the protection of the civilian population. Despite these measures, people poured into Saxony in search of a safe haven, many of them were in Dresden on the fateful night of 13/14 February…

During 1945, as the Allies drew closer, the KLV camps in the east were becoming particularly vulnerable. The camp leaders were sent a communiqué giving them orders to protect the children in their charge. Detailed orders were given how to act if the children should have to move to another KLV camp: destruction of all documents that might give away any information about the KLV, lists of clothes and food that was to be taken with, transport during the night, if no transport was available they were to march. If the English/American forces arrived they were to keep the children in the camp, making sure that all Nazi insignia were removed. If the Russians arrived first they were to leave quickly: 'No child in the hands of the barbarous Soviets'.
Many of the children sent to the so-called safety now found themselves facing the onslaught of the advancing armies. Many were killed, many were raped and many of those captured were sent back east and never saw their homeland again until the 'Wall' came down in 1989. Lack of actual numbers make it difficult to be specific about how many children were involved in the whole process. Gerhard Dabel estimates that 2.8 million girls and boys were sent to 9,000 KLV camps. A most recent study suggests a lower total, around 2 million.

The life in the camps was strictly regulated, even down to the amount of allocated dormitory space for each individual. During their stay the children were to receive instruction and take part in recreational facilities. But there were also punishments for those who stepped out of line, usually in the form of beatings or extra drill, even though the former was officially banned within the camps.
The length of the stay was never discussed and this caused a great deal of anxiety for the parents. Eventually the duration was technically limited to six months, but in practice the KLV authorities could extend the length of time at will by simply saying that 'war conditions' made it necessary.
The management of the school was the responsibility of the teachers, the responsibility for delivering the education was that of the Camp Leaders. The coordination of all other elements of camp life was carried out by a member of the HJ, previously trained in a special school. While in 1944 and 1945 more and more HJ members and teachers were called up, younger members and retired teachers replacing them lacked the special skills.
Hitler stated: 'I want my youth strong and ready. I want an athletic youth. I don't want any intellectual education. With knowing, I spoil my youth'. The life of the girls was determined by his desire to make them good German mothers.
As the philosophy was one of the survival of the fittest, children who were weaker in terms of sport and physical prowess etc. found the life in the camps very hard. The hierarchical 'pecking' order meant that the strong could dominate the weak. According to Hermand, gaining the approval of one's peers governed one's behaviour. Added to all of this pressure was the uncertainty of what was going on at home. Many suffered from homesickness, considered to be a sign of weakness. Moreover, there were the lice, scabies and impetigo inherent in some of the camps. One of the worst things that could happen to a boy was to have a visit from his mother. In some camps there was no contact with life beyond the gates at all.

The experience of the KLV children depended very much on individual circumstances and despite the problems it is apparent that the KLV scheme did save lives. For some children it was an adventure, one that their working-class parents would otherwise not have been able to provide. But there was also the pain of homesickness, the unfriendliness of some hosts,

the neglect and the often brutal treatment meted out by the HJ and BDM leaders. The camps would provide the political and ideological education thought necessary to maintain the National socialist state.

It is impossible to overlook the fact that the war that had been unleashed by the Nazi regime was the very same one it now wanted to protect its children from. All the children within the greater Reich were intrinsically linked under the overarching power of the totalitarian state, be they German Nationals, Jews, Sinti, Sudeten or subjugated children. They were linked together, despite their different experiences, within the same system of rule in which officials badgered some parents to let their children be evacuated to the safety of the countryside, while at the same time logging the transports that took others to be killed….

Exporting visions and saving children- the Swedish Save the Chidren Fund

That children should be exempted from war and political conflicts, regardless of nationality and religious affiliation, is something that by most countries' governments and non-governmental organizations is considered self-evident. The number of nations that ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989 is a clear sign of this. However, looking back historically, we can see, that this in many cases has been a difficult task to fulfil. During the aftermath of the two world wars when nationalistic currents and political conflicts in Europe were strong, politics appears to have played an important part in decisions on how relief activities for children were performed.
In the shaping of Swedish international relief activities directed towards children during and after WWII this became increasingly visible. To not let nationality, politics, religion or background influence how, where and towards which children relief was directed, was hampered by the politics of neutrality that was enforced by the Swedish government during this time. However, philanthropic organisations such as Save the Children Fund (SCF)have played an important role in bringing attention to, and dealing with such issues in Sweden. The organisation has had a large impact in shaping politics and policies in questions concerning children's welfare.
At the outbreak of WWII the Swedish Government stipulated a politics of neutrality which in brief meant that it did not participate in any armed conflicts or side with any of the war-faring countries in Europe. When it concerned the reception of refugees, the Swedish government followed the so called "Nordic prerogative", meaning that ethnic Nordic neighbours were prioritized. This was also the case when it concerned Swedish international relief-work. Swedish relief was mainly directed towards the Nordic countries and the bulk of that was directed to Finland. The Swedish SCF choose to work alongside the government's outlined politics and thereby gained the government's trust. The organisation expanded rapidly and from having a modest 260 members in 1937, the organisation had by 1947 47,000 members. Apart from an enormous increase in members, it gained a position as an informal advisor to the Swedish government on where and to whom Swedish relief were going to be provided.

The close cooperation with the Swedish government enabled the organisation's growth, but it did come at a cost. It was a member of the international Save the Children Fund which required that it took part in international relief-activities. A requirement that became complicated to take into account at the same time as working alongside the Swedish governments politics of neutrality. The international SCF did forward requests to the Swedish branch of support for relief-actions in Europe during WWII, but these were mostly declined. The Swedish SCF did not want to go against the Swedish government's politics. Even if Sweden did not directly participate in the war, it was still affected. After the decision to enforce a politics of neutrality was taken, a juggling, which was going to remain throughout

the war started on how this was going to be upheld. Towards the end of the war, concerns of what consequences this politics was going to have after the war, started to surface and the Swedish government decided to try and counteract possible international critique, by an increasing Swedish international relief-work. A substantial amount of money was allocated for this and a government committee, which was going to be in charge of all Swedish international relief, was established. This decision triggered a "turf-war" amongst Swedish NGOs and the Swedish government. One of the outcomes of this struggle was that the Swedish SCF managed to further enhance its position.

At this time, even if put on hold during the war years the Swedish welfare state was under development and the Swedish government implemented a lot of welfare measures. But even so, the Swedish government did not reach everywhere and this created a vacuum within which the Swedish SCF became indispensable. It not only provided relief for needy Swedish families, it also functioned as an advisor to the Swedish Aliens commission in deciding which children should be allowed entry into the country.
A consequence of the Swedish government's changing standpoint in international questions towards the end of the war was that relief was provided to non-Nordic countries as well. This was mainly carried out by the Swedish SCF and the Swedish Red Cross, but was supported by the Swedish government. To increase Swedish international relief-work did not only provide an opportunity to redeem Sweden's dented reputation. It also provided an opportunity to export Sweden and Swedish visions. Next some examples of this will be given.

In France, Germany and in the early fifties in Israel children's homes and apprentice homes were established by the Swedish SCF and the Swedish Red Cross. Locations were carefully chosen and concentration of the relief-work to specific areas were made, to ensure that the relief-work was made as visible as possible. One example of this was when a children's home was established in Normandy in France. A reason to pick this particular area was, apart from a need to care for children, that Swedish industry was well-established in the region. The establishment of a children's home was going to "complement and give life' to this. The region was geographically close to Sweden which made transports of supplies and different kinds of materials, such as prefabricated Swedish houses, easy and not too costly. The children's homes were decorated with Swedish textiles, Swedish equipment, and were staffed by Swedish personnel who were trained in modern Swedish childcare. The establishment of the children's homes created great interest and received many prominent visitors who were interested in modern Swedish childcare and according to the Swedish SCF this generated the much needed goodwill for Sweden.

Another place where Swedish relief work was going to be directed and thereby given an opportunity to yet again demonstrate Swedish welfare was Germany. In Germany opportunities to not only export Swedish welfare surfaced, it also became possible to export a Swedish model of society. After the war, it was not only considered important to demilitarize the Germans, it was also important to de-nazify or re-orientate them. This, to turn them into citizens that could live and function in democratic societies. A task the Swedish SCF actively participated in. Children's homes and apprentice homes were set up, and the interior was carefully planned. The aim was to make the homes as homely as possible, also here using the best of what Swedish industry could offer.

The establishment of apprentice homes and children's homes was considered to be a success. Pompous inaugurations were held both in France and Germany and prominent people from the UN, ministers from the countries, members of press and radio were all invited to celebrate the Swedish contributions. The idea was that the running of the different homes was going to be handed over to local authorities. However, this did not always work out as wished for. A Swedish SCF representative, after touring Germany in 1954, did point out that the running of some of the homes had been neglected, which was unfortunate since it created a negative image of Sweden.

The Swedish SCF had very modestly contributed to Jewish children, both during and after the war. As late as 1947, the organisation declined a request from the Jewish World Congress to support transports of Jewish children from east to west, arguing that this could be considered as a political action. In the early fifties the organisation did however carry out extensive relief-work in Israel in conjunction with the Swedish government. The Swedish village Kfar Achim was established, mainly by the Swedish SCF. 75 prefabricated houses were transported from Sweden and constructed on site. This, together with a fully equipped nursery, yet again with all the best Swedish industry had to offer. Also here pompous inaugurations were held to celebrate the Swedish gifts and contributions.

At this time, there existed a pride among Swedish politicians of the emerging Swedish welfare state. Among them, it was generally considered that the Swedish democratic model of society could work as a model for other countries. The Swedish SCF eagerly assisted in exporting Sweden and Swedish visions. However, by doing this it had to, on several occasions, compromise its utilitarian founding principle, to help as many children in as many places as possible. The organisation repeatedly declined to participate in or subordinate to its international union in carrying out relief-work to children in places where it was most needed. To restore Sweden's international reputation and create goodwill for the country did many times overshadow humanitarian goals.

TANGENDORF

My mother did not speak very often about the war and her experiences in and after the war. But sometimes, she suddenly told us some details about our flight from Holland to Germany in September 1944, the dangerous trip in a train that often stopped because of shootings and our stay in a small village near the town of Lüneburg. She told us that we were housed in the attic of the village inn, together with some 50 other Dutch refugees.

For years I was not interested in the war, but in 1974 I became aware of the fact that my father’s political choice for the Dutch Nazi Party, our flight, our return to Holland in February 1945 and the aftermath of all our experiences had influenced my life quite a lot. It was only in the 1990s that I felt the need to go back to that small German village. For a long time, however, my mother could not remember the name of that village. But one day she phoned me and said: ‘Now I remember, it was Tangendorf’.

Tangendorf is situated in Northern Germany, to the south of Hamburg and at the edge of the Lüneburgerheide (a big area of heath and forest). My husband and I booked a Bed and Breakfast arrangement in one of the villages in that area. The day after our arrival we went to Tangendorf. Since I was only one-and-a-half years old when we fled to Germany, I don’t have memories of our stay there. Could the landscape trigger subconscious memories? Tangendorf still was a small village, not more than a number of farms in the typical style of Northern Germany, very quiet, there were just a handful of people in the streets. We stopped in front of a rather big hotel in the centre of the village and made a short walk through the streets. At several houses I saw nameplates with the family name my mother had mentioned to me over and again. Then we entered the hotel’s restaurant to have a cup of coffee. A young woman greeted us and took our orders. When she came back I asked her if she had known a man called Peter Fik, who should have been the inn keeper in the 1940s and 1950s. She answered: ‘Yes, of course, I know him, it was my grandfather’.

I was speechless. Never could I have imagined meeting the granddaughter of the man who had given us shelter, forced by the authorities or out of his own decision. The story of our flight to Germany had always been to me a story of which I knew it was no fiction, but which I did not feel to be a real part of my own life. But now, here in the restaurant, history became almost tangible because of this woman connecting the past of her grandfather with the present of herself and my visiting the village. She waited for my reaction, watching my face that showed indefinable emotions. Then I told her about my stay here in the attic and about her grandfather's care of the Dutch refugees. Then it was her turn to look flustered and she said she had never known this story: 'I have an old picture of the inn taken during the war. Would you like to see it?' And away she was to come back with an old envelope containing the picture. I watched the image closely, but I did not recognize the building as something I had seen before.

After leaving the restaurant we walked to where the railway had been, a railway that still figured on the map but had been out of service for decades. The iron rails had been taken away, except there where they crossed the road. We saw what had probably been the platform and I could imagine my mother, sister and me leaving the train right at this place. I did not feel any emotion, however. In the bed of gravel the imprint of the rails was still visible. And then I saw a young green tree growing in the middle of the bed. That moved me, because this tree expressed in some way my life, marked by the traumatic experiences of my early childhood. Because I had found people who supported me, I had acquired maturity, and now I was like that small tree, catching the sunshine, housing birds with their songs of resilience and life.

The next day we visited Lüneburg where, in January 1945, I spent a couple of days in a hospital. How can a child understand that it is 'for her own good' that she has to stay all alone in a hospital in a place where people speak another language, 'abandoned' by her mother? Some days later I was allowed to go back to Tangendorf and to join my mother and sister. The hospital in Lüneburg is at present housed in a new building. Some old villas that might have been the hospital in the 1940s and 1950s were now old people's homes and a children's clinic. Was it important to know the exact place where I had stayed? Back home I wrote a letter to the hospital's administration and asked if they could give me evidence that I had been there in December 1944. The reaction came by return of post: data were kept only for 30 years, moreover many documents had been lost at the end of war.

On our way to Tangendorf we had passed a sign on which was written: KZ Bergen-Belsen. I had never known that this camp was only 50 kilometers away from the small village where I spent some months. It was the camp in which Anne Frank and her sister died. The landscape they had seen was identical with that which I had seen in Tangendorf – but how different had their circumstances been from mine. They had suffered hunger and disease through the bad circumstances created by the Germans, and they were to die there, whereas other German people had allowed me to recover in a hospital. How can I ever combine these so different events in one logical image of the war? There is no logic, just confusion.

Back in Holland, in the internment camp with my mother and sister after Liberation day April 13, 1945, I again fell ill. The Dutch guards did not call for a doctor. Had not one of my aunts visiting the camp taken away my sister and me, I am not sure I had survived. It is not far-fetched to think that I would have been one of the tens of small children that died in the internment camps.
Germans, the enemy, the 'bad ones' gave me medical care, whereas my own people, who saw themselves as 'the good ones' did not take care of me. These different attitudes are contrary, no way to put them together in one logical picture. I just have to live with the confusion.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

WEBSITES

Organisation of Children of Dutch Collaborators:
www.werkgroepherkenning.nl
Organisation of Children of War of different Backgrounds:
www.stichting-kombi.nl
Organisation of Danish Children of War, Danske Krigsboern Foerening:
www.krigsboern.dk
Norwegian Children of War Association, Norges Krigsbarnforbund:
www.nkbf.no
Organization of Norwegian NS Children:
www.nazichildren.com
Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn, Norway:
http://home.no.net/lebenorg
Organisation of NS-children Vennetreff:
http://www.nsbarn.no
Riskforbundet Finska Krigsbarn: (in swedish)
www.krigsbarn.se
Organisation of Finnish Children of War, Seundun Sotalapset:
www.sotalapset.fi
Organisation of children of victims and children of the perpetrators:
www.one-by-one.org
Austrian Encounter, organisation for encounters between children of the victims and children of the perpetrators in Austria:
www.nach.ws
Dachau Institut Psychologie und Pägogik:
www.Dachau-institut.de
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www.kriegskind.de
Website for the postwar-generation:
www.Forumkriegsenkel.com
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www.warandchildren.org
Researchproject University München 'Kriegskindheit'
www.warchildhood.net
Coeurs Sans Frontières – Herzen Ohne Grenzen
www.coeurssansfrontières.biz
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www.nésdelalibération.fr
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www.usad-ww2.be
Childsurvivors of the Holocaust in Australië
www.paulvalent.com
International organisation for educational and professional development focused on themes like racism, prejudices and antisemitism
www.facinghistory.org
Aktion Sühnezeigen Friedensdienste
www.asf-ev.de
Organisation of German Lebensbornkinder
www.lebensspuren-deutschland.eu
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www.childrenbornofwar.org
Organisation Genocide Prevention Now
www.genocidepreventionnow.org
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www.basquechildren.org

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www.holocaustchildren.org
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www.p-cca.org

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