INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

The Dutch historian J. Presser who wrote a study on the Persecution and Murder of the Dutch Jews, wrote also poems. I translated one of them for the IB.

In December 2015, a symposium was held in Vienna, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of The Austrian Encounter, a group of adult children of either victims of the Holocaust or offspring of Nazi's or bystanders. Samson Munn sent me a short report about the program and he gave me permission to make a summary of one of his presentations. Linked to his story about how The Austrian Encounter was initiated, I present to you some paragraphs of Bobbie Goldman's report on the first two meetings of TAE. Besides, I publish some lines on the start of KOMBI, the Dutch organization of war children of different backgrounds.

I came accross two books which I read with much interest. On the internet I found a couple of book reviews and I chose to publish those which I feel draw best attention to the principal themes of these novels: The Absolutionist by John Boyne and The Seventh Cross by Anna Seghers. Boyne's story presents heroism versus cowardice, right versus wrong, guilt versus forgiveness. Seghers depicts poignantly the impact of dictatorship on the lives of the citizens.

Ruth Barnett, one of the readers of the IB, wrote a book “Love, Hate and Indifference”. In this bulletin some information on the contents and how to acquire it.

One of our readers, Tasha, drew my attention to reviews of the book “Subliminal: How Your Unconscious Mind Rules Your Behaviour” by Leonard Mlodinow. And she gave me the link to a review of the book “What Does'n t Kill Us” written by Stephen Joseph. Joseph presents a new view on trauma, focusing on the positive effects: it can help people reorder their lives, give them a new sense of priorities and help them form new relationships.

Miriam Gebhardt studied the sexual assaults by American, British or French soldiers at the end of the war and the years after. Her book “When the soldiers Came” was published in 2015. Before 2003, when the book “Taken by Force” of J.Robert Lilly was published on the same topic, discussions were merely focused on what the Soviet Troops did in east Germany. Lilly's and Gebhardt' s studies complete the discussion.

Ruth Barnett attended three meetings of people belonging to diaspora people. She wrote for us a report on what was discussed during these meetings.

Please let me know any change in your (email)address so that we can stay in contact. Commentary and suggestions for the next issue, November 2016, are welcome!

Best regards, Gonda Scheffel-Baars

Con Sordino

He came back home
and had to speak again
the language of the quick;
he had to grow
his own late roses
in the undisturbed gardens
of other people;
and ate his bread at tables
in houses not his own,
after the work he did
as diligently as in the past.

After all,
he was less affected
than people supposed him to be;
but people can misjudge situations,
they thought that memories harassed him;
or was he,
after all,
one of those heroes
who jump the fire without being burned?

Maybe, maybe:
he spoke that language,
he did that work,
on the face of it, he was alive.
And, yes, that was correct.
However,
people said,
once when he picked a rose
one word, one sound brought about
the trembling of his hands.
But, even that might be a story.

J.Presser in: Orpheus and Ahasversus

SYMPOSIUM

Escaping the Burden of Silence:
Adult Children and Grandchildren of Victims and of Perpetrators of the Shoah/Holocaust in Dialogue

***The Austrian Encounter*: 20 Years**

4-7 December 2015, there took place in Vienna a symposium, held at the Studios of the Academy of Fine Arts (Ateliers der Akademie der Bildenden Künste). Approximately 35-40 people participated: a few participants of the original group created by Dan Bar-On (To Reflect and Trust), perhaps a dozen or so from various meetings over twenty years of The Austrian Encounter, and the remainder members of the public primarily from Germany, Austria and England (and a few from elsewhere). It was organized primarily by Elenore Fischer, with help from Josef Greiner, Kitty Loewenstein, Esther Fischer-Greiner, Ruth Wolman, Ute Georgeacopol, Lydia Mayr and Jude Stratton. Texts, photos, etc., of the seminar are available at a web site created and maintained by Esther Fischer-Greiner: www.theaustrianencounter.at.

There were a lecture addressing the history and development of Dan Bar-On's dialogue work and of the creation of The Austrian Encounter by Samson Munn, and another by Samson concerning the relationship between identity and responsibility in the post-Holocaust generations (victim and perpetrator "sides"). There were group discussions and short presentations by those who took part in To Reflect and Trust (from Germany and from the U.S.) or in The Austrian Encounter (mostly from Austria) about what it was like for them to experience intensive dialogue concerning the legacy of their parents or grandparents. There were frequent breaks for coffee and meals. There were occasional, interspersed songs in Yiddish by Hans Breuer, which was much appreciated. There were two films presented by Simone Bader & Jo Schmeiser (*Things. Places. Years.* and *Klub Zwei*), which were highly regarded, with ample discussion after each film. And, there were many *open spaces*, extended periods of time filled with discussions in smaller groups (perhaps 3-12 or so in size), regarding topics the participants themselves chose to discuss, analyze or present, in depth.

Discussions (and films) took place in a mixture of German and English, with participants helping other participants in translation -- there were at least two who spoke only German and at least two who spoke only English. This allowed the dynamic to slow sometimes to allow thought, rather than to fly too fast (which is good, of course). The meeting room was excellent for this purpose.

At the symposium, energy developed to create a new dialogue group devoted to descendants of perpetrators and of victims of the Holocaust. It will meet for its first meeting in a small village in western Austria (Bad Aussee) in late August 2016. There are already about 12 participants who wish to take part. If you are reading this and would like to learn more, or perhaps wish also to take part in the dialogue, please soon simply contact Elenore Fischer, Ottakringerstraße 49/2, A-1160 Wien, +43 14033005 oder +43 77178142, e.fischer@experimentier.com . As usual for this mold of dialogue, there will be no fee, no political purpose, no dwelling in historiography, no religious orientation, and no agenda; the participants themselves (including their legacies) compose the agenda. The dialogue will be 4-5 days, private and intensive; what we will discuss is something we will discover together, in the dialogue itself, which begins with our personal introductions.

Summary of the text
To Reflect and Trust* and the beginnings of *The Austrian* *Encounter by Samson Munn

I have been asked to relate Dan Bar-On's intentions and accomplishments in establishing groups of sons and daughters of perpetrators in dialogue with daughters and sons of survivors of the Holocaust, and a bit of what grew thereafter in terms of other groups and projects.
Who am I to speak for Dan? True, Dan and I were very close. We had thousands of e-mails back and forth. We co-facilitated dialogue sessions and even whole meetings. Because of the closeness of our relationship, I am motivated to do the best I possibly can herein on his behalf. Yet, I beg the reader's forgiveness for my inevitable failures.

So, what were Dan's goals? Who was he? What did he do, and why?

Dan Bar-On was born in 1938 in Israel, the second son of two German refugees from Hamburg who arrived in Palestine in 1933. Although born in Haifa and raised there, he spent many years starting at age 16 living on a kibbutz named *Revivim.* He became a renowned expert in grafting certain fruit (known not to be able to grow in Israel) onto the stock of trees that did grow there, grafting that had theretofore been thought impossible, successfully bearing “impossible” fruit. For me, that is a metaphor for the remarkable successes later in his life: fruit borne as accomplishments that should have been impossible, that one would not readily think possible.

He started his studies in behavioral sciences only at the age of 32, in 1970 or so. He received his Ph.D. in 1981 from Hebrew University, Jerusalem. His dissertation concerned first-heart-attack patients and how they dealt with that crisis.

During 1985-1988, he was the first person *systematically* to interview a large number of adult

children of Nazi perpetrators. A self-help group was formed in 1988 in Germany, in part composed of ten of those whom Dan had interviewed and others who had attended a conference in 1988 at the University of Wuppertal. During that conference, the interviewees met and also came to learn of the existence in Holland of a group that had been meeting since 1981 as adult children of Dutch Nazi collaborators. This group, Stichting Werkgroep Herkenning (which might be translated in English as Foundation Workgroup Recognition), offered the opportunity for collaborators' children to meet each other, to exchange experiences, to provide information and advice, to stimulate publication, to stimulate contact with children in the setting of other wars, and so on. It was not politically, philosophically or religiously driven. The group is still very active (p.e. in editing the International Bulletin). Dan noted in the Acknowledgments section of his book *Legacy of Silence* that one member of Herkenning, Gonda Scheffel-Baars, gave him 'valuable insights about the individuals [he] interviewed in Germany. 'Together with Anneliese Groeneveld, also Herkenning member, she was prepared to help to start a self-help group in Germany. The German group continued until 1992.
Together with Konrad Brendler from the Wuppertal University Dan designed a pioneering group of sons and daughters of Holocaust victims meeting with daughters and sons of Nazi perpetrators.

During the spring of 1992, I heard Dan give a talk in Boston. Six weeks later, I was in Wuppertal for the first meeting of a now renowned group of daughters and sons of Holocaust victims and those of Nazi perpetrators. Later, this group came to be known as *To Reflect and Trust.* In 1991 Dan had discussions with Mona Weissmark about the creation of a “mixed” group. Mona was then a *lecturer* at Harvard Medical School. In the end, he elected not to work with Weissmark; they disagreed on premises and on methods. During that academic year, in early 1992, his own views of how best to organize such a group matured and gained confidence. Weissmark went on to create a group of her own, which did indeed meet. Very soon after the start of the first meeting, however, it was reported to me by several sources that the group utterly and effectively mutinied against her and the facilitators. The group evolved in composition and grew, and continued to meet thereafter in one way or another, until this day, without Mona and her facilitators. They form a wonderful large organization known today as *One by One,* with hundred of members/participants in several countries.

A fundamental purpose of dialogue is the revelation of truth, of experience, of perception and so on, toward growing, teaching, learning and experiencing *the Other*, which may in turn have many benefits, including peace. As we learn from Emmanuel levinas (not a quote, but rather a brief abstraction): ...”dialogue becomes the sole medium by means of which **I** say what it is **I** have to say – and hear what it is that *the Other* has to say to me. Dialogue is not a mere means to arrive at a philosophical truth; it is, rather, the fundamental enactment of philosophical truth-as-process.”

Dan's approach was to engage the dialogue, to see what happens, what is discussed, etc., and then to analyze it. He did not abandon theories he might previously have had in mind; rather, he put them aside, only to reconsider them after he had had the opportunity to experience the dialogue itself. He felt a group was usually best understood by looking at the several subgroups – he called them “clusters” - that arose with regard to any particular issue, rather than an abstract, numerical average distillation of a group.
He felt there is tremendous power in the truths arrived at in dialogue by the participants. These truths are quite apart and distinct from historical facts and may occasionally have only little to do with historiography.
He laid great power in the process of story-telling as the fundament of our dialogue process. In one of our TRT-meetings I pointed out the power of story-*listening* as a related but distinct element of importance in dialogue, with which he heartily agreed and kindly included thereafter in his writings.

To be ready for dialogue with “the Other”, he felt the participants had to be somewhere past the silence: that they had to have a constructed narrative as a pre-condition to meaningful dialogue. He wrote....”to use narratives and storytelling in conflict situations, they first of all be reconstructed out of the silencing...Only after these narratives have been established in their separate, relatively safe environments can one attempt to bring them into dialogue. At this second stage, the storytelling and listening become part of a group process. When carried out in an atmosphere that

promotes a sense of trust and relative safety, the process of reconstruction of the narratives will continue, and its impact may go beyond the small group setting."(1)

With respect to those descended of the Holocaust, much has been written about silence, silences of silencing, including such concepts as "conspiracy of silence" and "undiscussability". Dan found it troubling that there were no published studies of families of perpetrators. He wondered why that was so. It took much time until he decided to find out for himself. This led to the interviews with sons and daughters of Nazis. He began grappling with the interviews, and grappling with the experience of the adult children. They themselves had to grapple with the relationships they had with their fathers or grandfathers (and sometimes mothers), relationships which may have involved love, warmth, tenderness, respect and so on, yet these same people at some point learned of what their forebear had done, sometimes very actively done, in some cases taken part willingly or volunteered to do and so on. He saw and heard the sons and daughters faced with the painful task of reconciling obvious incompatibilities.
He discovered that these two opposite sides often – for many – simply cannot be reconciled, cannot be be handled simultaneously, cannot be joined. Therefore, many children and grandchildren of Nazis do not even explore what their fathers and grandfathers had done. Therefore, Dan felt the self-help group meeting 1988 – 1992 was very courageous. However, as Dan noted in *Tell Your Life Story*, "The idea that this group would also encounter Jewish descendants of Holocaust survivors came up only in 1992. it was not even originally my idea, perhaps I could not have imagined such an encounter."
Gonda Scheffel-Baars (active in Herkenning and in KOMBI, an organization of children of war of different backgrounds) noted as far back as 1989 that Dan had expressed criticism of the mixed discussions and meetings in Holland. She wrote he thought that too much was being asked of the Jewish participants. With their own problems, why should they bear the added burden of aiding other war children, particularly the children of collaborators? Dan remained hesitant, during the 1991-1992 academic year about how to conduct a 'mixed' group, whether he himself was prepared to be centrally involved, and if so, how.
After seeing that his approach would certainly to be quite different from what had been or what was being undertaken by others, such as Weissmark and those in Holland, he asked those in the German self-help group if they would be interested to meet with their counterparts from the victim side. Many said, "yes".

Dan formulated a few questions central to the project.
- Will they be able to face each other in a genuine way?
- Will they be able to help each other go ahead with issues every one of them did not confront fully until now?'
- If all this will happen, will some kind of a common agenda evolve which is beyond their own separate struggles?

When we met in Wuppertal in June of 1992, and many times later, we found important similarities in life experience amongst us. They included, amongst others: silence, silences and silencing; secrets; not knowing; trust; after-effects; feeling estranged or marginalized in one's own setting; rootlessness and/or poisoned roots; and the linking of the above elements (in various combinations) to each other.

Dan came to appreciate deeply the courage of the sons and daughters of Nazi perpetrators who were willing to meet and discuss these matters openly, personally and in detail, with sons and daughters of Holocaust victims, knowing poignantly what the Germans' own fathers and/or grandfathers had indeed done to those or similar victims' families. These Germans took responsibility in a way that their fathers never did.

In 1998, TRT received a generous grant from Körber Stiftung. The grant was linked to our including individuals from other conflicts. We decided that six people from each of three conflict areas would join us. We chose Palestine-Israel, South-Africa and Northern Ireland.
This work became the subject of the book, published by the Körber Stiftung, written by Dan, *Bridging the Gap*.

In a speech Dan said about these meetings: “What I learned through this process was that, actually, good and evil can reside in the same person, that we have potential for both, and actually many times they reside very closely to each other. And, before that, I had some very simplistic ideas, like, many Israelis had, that we are the good ones, because we are the survivors; and they are the evil ones; and that it had to do with a national personality, kind of. And, many times it is the situation that actually determines which part of you is coming out, and sometimes both come out, in one situation after the other. I mean, then you learn how life is complicated.”(2)

At TRT's second meeting, in 1993 in Israel, I began to feel that merely to continue to enjoy and benefit from the phenomenal experience of the dialogue was too selfish. My observation was that monumental lessons can be learned from ordinary people in the midst of extraordinary communication. I decided immediately right in the midst of TRT's meeting to proceed with the project and start a group in Austria. I related my decision to those in TRT, within a session. The response was amazing. All or almost all of the Jewish participants, particularly the American ones (with one possible exception), were against my undertaking such a project. They were certain it was wrong, primarily because I was not a psychotherapist; they were worried that I could not handle a participant who might break down during the dialogue's dynamic.
The Germans pretty much agreed with the others, as I remember, although less vociferously. Certainly none said, “Good idea, go ahead!” Dan had not spoken, yet. He said that he thought it was a good idea. He went on to say that motivation or the energy to accomplish the project, combines with an element of knack or instinct, would likely be much more important than fancy degrees, particularly in this setting, and he felt I had both motivation and knack, and should proceed.

I traveled to Vienna five times between that April 1993 TRT meeting and the first meeting of *The Austrian Encounter* in 1995.

The *Introduction* of *Legacy of Silence,* (Dan's book about the interviews with children of German Nazis) reveals a core of his intention in doing such work, which is at bottom peace work, peace of a variety of types, personal and societal, intellectual and constructive. I will pick and choose key sentences here, leaving parts out.
“As an Israeli I live in a victims' culture. The Holocaust is still an open wound for many of the people around me.....
Within this culture, the perpetrators of the Holocaust are still synonymous with evil. Many believe that one should not relate to them as one human being to another, because of “what they did to us.” Like other children of my generation, I inherited this “black and white” view of the world: the inhumane versus the humane, the victimizer versus the victim.
I have learned not to underestimate the minds that planned and executed the murder of so many of my people, perhaps because I draw on personal experience: the struggle with my own potential for evil.
In the years since the war, psychologists have tried to identify a clear-cut psychological typology or sociocultural profile for each of these categories: perpetrators were defined as pathological sadists, a personality type traced to their Germanic heritage. Bystanders or followers were supposed to have an “authoritarian personality”, and rescuers an “altruistic personality”. But these labels have proved to be too simplistic.
Newer approaches have suggested a psychology of “ordinary people”. ….psychologists have no way of identifying mass murderers, because many would probably score within the normal range on all existing psychopathological scales...there is no simple way humanity can defend itself, psychologically, from similar future calamities.

In the summer of 1984, I began my search for answers. In August 1985, I arrived in Germany for the first time. Yariv, my wife's eldest fifteen-year-old son, had been diagnosed with lymphoma. During one of my last conversations with him, Yariv wanted to hear about the people I had met in Germany. He asked: 'Why is it so important to you?” ….I groped for an answer, but suddenly his face lit up in a wide smile. “I know why, you are looking for hope, for them and for yourself.” “What do you mean by that?” I said, surprised by his directness. “Because you told me once that, for you,

the quest for hope has to do with confronting the truth."

Martha Minow asked: "Can and should there be alternatives to traditional institutional responses? Should working through the emotions of victims and survivors figure prominently in the goals for the nation or the world, or instead find a place as by-products of fact-finding, guilt-finding, and punishment?....for nations recovering from periods of massive atrocity, the stakes are high, the dangers enormous....they need to ask, what would it take, and what do our current or imagined institutions need to do, to come to terms with the past, to help heal the victims, the bystanders, and even the perpetrators. What would promote reconstruction of a society devastated by atrocities?" (3)

The simplicity of Bar-On's approach was stunning: it was non religious, not deliberately therapeutic, cost-free and apolitical. The goals were to compose a private, secure, small group of earnest individuals whose life experiences stemmed from opposite sides of genocide but who agreed on historical fundamentals; to facilitate respectful but serious and sometimes hard-nosed engagement all day for several days (well beyond the merely polite), often in the countries or cities of the genocidal events; and, for a trusted facilitator briefly to inject poignant perspective and constructive analysis, but only rarely.

My view of the motivation of such work is captured well by the words of Emmanuel Levinas (the French, Jewish philosopher):
"Since the Other looks at me, I am responsible for him, without even having taken on responsibilities in his regard....Responsibility is the essential, primary and fundamental structure of subjectivity....Responsibility in fact is not a simple attribute of subjectivity, as if the latter already existed in itself, before the ethical relationship."(4)

In summary, such work represents a very personal effort to help to achieve peace through a cultural consciousness of genocide and of *agenocide* via dialogue and educational public meetings. There are many models of dialogue, and many groups in many countries. Just how pervasive such a slow but important attitudinal shift is to become world-wide will in part be reflected someday by how often, how long, where and when there will be peace.

Great opportunities for dialogue remain!

Notes:
1. Dan Bar-On: *Tell Your Life Story - Creating Dialogue Among Jews and Germans, Israelis and Palestinians*, Central European Press, 2006.
2. audiorecording of a speech in U.S. Holocaust Museum *Voices on Antisemitism,*available at http://www.ushmm.org/m/audio/VOA 200080214.mp3)
3. Martha Minow *Between Vengeance and Forgivenss: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence.*
4. Levinas, E. (1985), *Ethics and infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*.

Some paragraphs of a report on the first meetings of the Austrian Encounter, selected by GSB

The First Austrian Encounter
by Bobbie Goldman

The Austrian encounter is a unique intensive dialogue between children of Austrian victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust. Our first meeting took place on Saturday-Tuesday, July 1-4, 1995, after 2 years of recruiting by Samson Munn, a Boston radiologist. We had no support from the

Austrian government for this project. The Austrian group was an outgrowth of Samson's participation in another group of children of high-ranking Nazis and children of concentration camp survivors created and facilitated by an Israeli professor of behavioral sciences, Dan Bar-On. Our group consisted of 4 Jews, 3 from North America, and one currently living in Vienna, 6 Austrian non-Jews, Samson as facilitator, and 2 interpreters.

We met at the Literatur Haus for 2 days, and at the bookstore of one of the participants for the other 2 days. The meeting place was secret until one hour before the meeting, because of the fears of some Sinti and Romani (gypsies) we had hoped would join us. They still face intense discrimination to this day, were mistrustful, and feared for their safety if this knowledge were public. Unfortunately, they decided at the last minute not to join us.

We Jews were excited but somewhat nervous before the meeting. We were not sure what to expect, or what feelings would be unleashed. To prepare for this encounter, I had done some reading about Austria, and had interviewed my father about his memories. I wanted to get a better understanding of my family history, and of my father's responses to what had happened. He still felt strongly that he had no desire to return to Vienna. He felt it would be a betrayal to his parents and other family members who were killed, and he did not want to meet a contemporary he might have known during that time.

The children of Nazis were also anxious. They, at least, were in their own country, but they did not know what to expect from the Jews, especially those of us from North America. They thought we would yell and scream at them and make them feel guilty. Some said they never expected the Jews would want to talk with them or trust them. While there are about 12,000 Jews currently in Vienna, this was the first opportunity for many to knowingly connect with Jews in a meaningful way.

We told our stories, asked each other questions, and really listened to the answers. The 4 days flew by. We started tentatively with some mistrust, but we were all curious and read to share and confront the issues. As we talked and listened, we found we had a lot in common. We had compassion for each other as we made connections and heard about the others' struggles. We realized that they and our parents had both been victims of their Nazi fathers. As we shared our hopes and our grief, we started to feel warmth and compassion and real caring towards all of the participants in the group.

I was personally fascinated by the stories of the children of Nazis. I had worked through many of my own issues as a child of refugees and granddaughter of victims of the Holocaust, but had not knowingly encountered and openly talked with children of Austrians on the other side of this story.

It was very meaningful for the North American Jews to have this encounter in Vienna, where these historical events that would effect us all had happened. Most of us were quite ambivalent about being in Austria, and specifically, Vienna, and were a bit nervous about encountering some anti-Semitism. One of us was mostly excited to be there, the other had a very difficult time being there, and I was pulled in both directions. It was powerful for us, also, to visit our parents' former homes together. I was actually able to get into my father's last home with 2 other members, one of whom lived a few blocks away. We also went to Friday night services at the Synagogue and went to the Jewish Museum and the Resistance Museum.

We participants noticed a number of common themes. One was silence and secrets. While their parents dealt with more shame and denial, our parents often tried to protect themselves and us from the pain of dealing with the losses. Another was mistrust and betrayal. Many of them felt they could not trust or count on their own families, especially their fathers. We seemed to trust our families more, and had a close circle we trusted more deeply, but were often afraid to trust others and feel safe. Guilt was another common thread. Some of the Austrians felt guilty of their fathers' and grandfathers' participation in the Nazi effort, and even felt some guilt themselves. Some of our parents and other family members dealt with survivor's guilt, or guilt that they did not try hard enough to get family out.

Another common theme was terror. Some of the Austrians had been terrified of their fathers, and were scared that their families would learn that they were participating in this encounter. Many of us felt a sense of terror in our daily lives; one example was feeling that we have to do "it" right, or "they" will come and get us. We joked about our difficulty in making the right decisions, for example, around restaurants. While they spoke of hurt or damaged roots, and worried about future generations, we spoke of missing or scattered relatives, and sometimes not having a sense of home, or of belonging. They felt this isolation from their own families, since they were often the only ones in their families to question their parents' roles in the Holocaust, and rarely had the opportunity to discuss their parents' past with anyone. We often felt like outsiders, different from mainstream Americans, and not part of the main culture, with our European and Jewish identities.

Our families seemed to be quite different. Some of the Austrians spoke of absent or dreadful fathers who were often cold and distant. Many of these fathers used silence or their authority to intimidate them as they were growing up. Many of us had lost extended family, but our families of origin were warm and close. We were often seen as hope for the future, and sometimes we felt the burden of living for those who had died. They also experienced losses during the war. Many parents had Jewish relatives and/or friends who lost their lives. Many had family members who were soldiers who were killed in battle. We had family members who were killed, or who were scattered on various continents, wherever they had found safe havens. For us Jews, issues around our survival were always present, and our parents had often been overprotective, worried about our own safety. The Austrians mostly loved their fathers, and were struggling with whether and how to learn more about their Nazi past, and how to deal with whatever they learned. We all felt the importance of ethics in our lives, and had issues with forgiveness, guilt, revenge, and letting go of hate.

After I returned home, I spoke with my father a lot about my experiences. He was eager to hear all about my experiences, and was very supportive of my involvement in this encounter. He feels it is an important project, and is proud of my involvement in it. He asks about the Austrians and sends greetings to them, especially to G.,
whom he met. He is still not ready to go back to Vienna, but he is considering it for the first time, especially if he would know that he would meet people like these new friends. I dream of going to Vienna together with him in the future.

The second meeting, September 1997

The first day we met from 9 AM (well, 9:30) until 10+ PM, when we finally finished introducing each member of the group. The previous participants brought openness, trust, and enthusiasm, which seemed to help the newcomers to also share their stories and issues honestly and, sometimes, quite painfully. One of the clear themes for everyone was feeling like an outsider, and not belonging. Last time it was mostly the Jews who had talked of feeling like outsiders, as children of refugees who had been forced to leave their homeland and adapt to a new way of life.

This experience affected the participants in many different ways. For some of the Austrians, it was the first time they actually took a close look at these issues, and explored how the Holocaust had affected their own families. Our personal connection was an important part of the process. For some of the non-Jews, it was their first opportunity to get to know Jews in a direct and meaningful way, and to demystify any stereotypes or myths about Jews in general. We all came with a curiosity about the other side, and then felt drawn into the connections we shared as children of the Third Reich. By sharing and listening to each others' stories and struggles, we got a better understanding of each other and of ourselves, but also shared a powerful emotional experience that drew us closer together. It was important that this dialogue took place in Vienna, where our families had lived, and that we managed to speak mostly in German, without outside translators. It certainly helped to break down the walls between "them" and "us", and to work through some of our fears and feelings about the other side. As we got to know and care for each other, we realized that we were all victims of our shared legacy and, at least symbolically, of their Nazi fathers.

On a more personal note, before my participation in these encounters, my father had adamantly

refused to return to Vienna, where he might meet a contemporary he had known during those times. He also felt strongly that he would be betraying his parents and other family members who were killed by the Nazis. However, as a result of these connections I have made, my father may not only return to Vienna after 60 years next July, but also give a piano recital there, hopefully with the Jewish participant who is a renowned professional violist.

Our group meetings were intense, and there were many deeply touching personal stories. But we also enjoyed laughing and joking together, and really like each other as individuals. We want to meet again next June, probably for 5 days. Everyone was rather enthusiastic about participating again next year. There was some discussion and disagreement about whether we would invite others to join us (Sinti and Romani? Slovenians?). We decided on a maximum of 14 participants, in order to preserve the quality of our group interaction. Priority will be given to anyone who has already participated in either encounter. At the end, we each shared what the 3 days had meant for us. Since we met, I have been in touch with everyone, and hope to continue to be in frequent contact. The participants living in Austria will have meetings on their own over the next year, which will probably include participants from both years, as well as both sides. I am looking forward to our next gathering in June and to deepening our connections in the years to come.

KOMBI: Dialogue in The Netherlands
by Gonda Scheffel-Baars

Introduction
In 1988 and 1989 two weekendmeetings were organized where children of war of different backgrounds met each other for the first time in the history of the Netherlands. It was an experiment to explore whether it was possible to meet as children of victims and children of collaborators or Nazis. One small self-help group of seven participants was set up and had nine afternoon meetings and a weekend meeting as the last session.

The experiences of the participants in both the weekend meetings and in the small group showed that these kinds of encounters were very important for the discussion partners. It was a logical consequence to continue the work and to found an organization of volunteers, ‘KOMBI’, in English: Children of War for Mutual Societal Help and Integration.

Self-help groups
In 1980 some women who, as children, spent the war years in Japanese internment-camps started a self-help group (kongsi) where they could tell their stories.

In 1981 the Dutch reverend Alje Klamer, known from radio-programs, and the psychologist Mario Montessori started a self-help organization for children of collaborators, members of NSB or SS, ‘Herkenning’ (Recognition). Children born from a relationship between a Dutch mother and a (sometimes unknown) German father could also become members of this organization.

At the end of the 1980s some children of resistance fighters started to organize small groups. It was difficult to talk about these meetings with their parents, because children of the resistance fighters, the heroes, were not supposed to suffer from psychic problems!

In the 1980s the Jewish Organization for Social Work started meetings for children who had been in hiding, who survived the camps or who were born after the war.

First 'mixed' meetings
The first meeting of children of different backgrounds was initiated by some kongsi leaders. They wanted to explore the possibility of co-operation between the different self-help groups through the exchange of experiences.

In April 1988, 25 women of 5 different backgrounds met each other, I was among them. Step by

step, we cautiously made acquaintance. Gradually it became clear that we all had many things in common. Recognition of one's story in that of another, regardless the background, was one of the exciting experiences of the first day.

We never knew that most of us wrestled with feelings of loneliness, that we all had to take far too much responsibility at a very young age and that we were confronted with the mechanism of parentification. Because of the war situation we did not grow up in an atmosphere of safety, shelter and warmth. Our parents and other adults were convinced that the children did not suffer because they were too young and therefore could not know.

We talked about the family secret in most of our families, a secret nobody speaks about, but one that is always present as a hidden stressing factor. In other families where people often talk about the war, the discussions are focused on the experiences of the parents, but mostly they tell only the funny stories. The 'real' story is silenced.
We learned from each other about the problems with relationships. As young children we witnessed the vulnerability of our parents and other adults who could not protect us. We learned to distrust any adult or authority. One needs trust to engage in a relationship.

Many children witnessed atrocities and lost any feeling of hope, having seen what people are capable of and afraid of becoming a victim themselves. Many lost their innocence at a very young age.

We spoke about positive experiences as well. Many of us managed to cope with the past more or less successfully. At least we did not give up. We acquired feelings of compassion for the suffering of others, we became fighters for human rights and justice and critical towards authorities. We believe that life is important and that one should make something good out of it.

The more we became aware of the similarities in our stories, the more we became excited and we wanted to become allies. The experiences of our parents during and after the war had separated us from each other: 'Maybe we could become friends in our generation'.

A new weekend was planned centered around the theme of confrontation. It is difficult or maybe impossible to be real allies when so many prejudices and so much distrust, anger and pain inherited from the past still influence our lives. It was decided upon that our words should not attack other participants: our difficulties were against groups, not against the individuals present. This was the goal, but in practice it was different. Emotions were aroused and the facilitators were no longer able to mediate the confrontation since they were also part of the game. History was repeated.

We were the pioneers, making the mistakes of all beginners. I am convinced that we should have taken more time to become closer to each other, to find trust and strength in the similarities and should have delayed the discussions about our prejudices. The facilitators were not yet able to keep sufficient distance and quickly fell back into their 'role' as a victim. We still had a long way to go together and we had to learn to be more patient with ourselves and others. Nevertheless, these meetings formed the starting point of what became the organization Kombi. (in 1990)

Small encounter group
We started a small meeting group with members of different backgrounds, six women and one man. We started with telling our own stories. That enabled us to feel empathy with each other because we recognized so many similar experiences.

We discussed also the role of the partners of children of war, how patient they have to be and how difficult it is to let the relationship be (or become) one between two equally responsible partners.

We became aware of the difference between p.e. those who lost one of the parents in the war and those who had to grow up with traumatized and frustrated parents. And again, we were aware of the similar problems for all backgrounds.

Of course, there are also differences which have to do with our varied backgrounds. Some of them were more difficult to cope with. For instance, children of resistance fathers can be proud of their parents, whereas children of German parents or collaborators feel ashamed and often even guilty. We discussed in detail the differences between feelings of guilt and actual guilt.
We learned how deep-rooted the distrust towards collaborators' children still is. Some members of our group felt ashamed about this feeling, but facing it and trying to get rid of it is an important step. One cannot expect to be at the end of the process when it has just started.

In the last session each member expressed in drawing or painting what had been the most important experience and we added some words or drawings on the sheets of the others. We made one big sheet of all the drawings and after discussing our work, we saw that we could not separate the sheets, unless we destroyed the whole! We felt that this expressed exactly what had happened in our group: our stories had become so interwoven that we did not go home as the 'loners' we were at the start.

Our conversations had sometimes been very difficult and distrust had not yet disappeared totally, but we felt satisfied. We faced the difficulties and did not give in. We 'proved' in our group that it IS possible to meet the children of the 'enemy' or children ot 'the other side' as human beings in their own right and to feel close to each other.

In 2010 we had to make the decision of stopping the KOMBI-activities. People who were able and ready to continue had fallen ill or had died. The veterans wanted to focus on other items than the past, the younger members still had their jobs and families and lacked time and energy for a leading role in the organization.
KOMBI stopped, but the impact of its activities still is important in the lives of its members

RUTH BARNETT: LOVE, HATE AND INDIFFERENCE. The Slide Into Genocide

Who actually owns Planet Earth?
Ruth Barnett argues that we are all temporary tenants for the biblical three score years and ten (or modern four score years and twenty!) and therefore nobody can be illegal or illegitimate; but discrimination persists to an unacceptable and dangerous extent and it is the first step down the slippery slope that ends in genocide. In the book, 'Love, Hate and Indifference: The Slide Into Genocide' she explores how this comes about.

We are still far from learning the two major lessons of the Holocaust: to treat all people as equal human beings and to protest at what is clearly unacceptable violence early enough to prevent its escalating. If we don't master these two problems, the one human race (what people often call 'races' are ethnic/cultural groups) is in danger of self-destructing.
Stockpiles of nuclear weapons are now available to do this, but we have hardly yet considered the internal damage to the collective human psyche of repeated violent atrocities faster than the trauma they cause can be processed to closure.

Barnett argues that denial and indifference are worse than overt expression of prejudice and racism because they operate mostly below the radar. It is time to open our eyes, wake up from indifference, open our minds and hearts to the whole issue of genocide and the transmission of victims' trauma to subsequent generations. Barnett maintains, there have been enough people with the courage to care and the will to act to preserve the human race until now, therefore there is hope the there will be enough decent tenants to maintain the stock on Planet Earth and improve it.

The book is currently stocked at The National Holocaust Centre and Museum. To order your copy please visit:
www.nationalholocaustcentre.net £ 10.00 (Plus postage and packaging)

JOHN BOYNE: THE ABSOLUTIONIST Some paragraphs from a review by Stephen O' Shea in The Globe and Mail

The Great War pioneered many things, both hideous and humanitarian, but one in particular retains Boyne's attention: the conscientious objector. The men who said no to the war implicitly posed a threefold – and timeless – question: What is bravery? What is cowardice? And how does one remain good in a world of evil?

Boyne's narrator is a homosexual Londoner, Tristan Sadler, whom we meet as a teenager in 1916 at a boot camp in Aldershot and in the trenches of Picardy, and again in 1919, when, now a 20-year-old veteran, he visits the town of Norwich to console the grieving sister of a former comrade-in-arms, Will Bancroft, who was court-martialed for cowardice and executed on the battlefield in 1916.

The two times of the novel – 1916 and 1919, war and peace, action and reflection – receive markedly different narrative treatments, but Boyne takes the reader back and forth seamlessly, revealing information precisely when it is most effective.

Told in the present tense, the war scenes are brutal, descriptive, gory, over the top in both senses of that phrase. The friendship of Tristan and Will, homoerotic and complex, strains in the madness of their surroundings, with violent death a daily visitor and the lunacy of superior officers a given.

As the reader senses with dread where all this is heading, the story shifts ahead to placid Norwich, and to a conventional past-tense exposition that nonetheless seems tinged with a dreamlike unreality as seen through Tristan's war-weary eyes.

Boyne's powers are best displayed here, the characters' awkward silences mixing with bursts of overwhelming fluency about the changing times, as if straight out of Ibsen. The extended conversation between Tristan and Will's family deftly evokes the social upheaval wrought by the war, from the emancipation of women to what Will's father sees as the biggest change, saying, "Things are rather out of kilter now, aren't they? It is your generation who understands the inhumanity of man, not ours. It's boys like you who have to live with what you have seen and what you have done."

Throughout his dual narratives, Boyne has intimated just that – what Tristan has seen and done matters most to this morality play. When the reader finally sees the shocking truth, in a stunningly crafted finale, all that has come before makes perfect sense. As if to comfort, Boyne then takes us six decades ahead for a coda reminiscent of Ian McEwan's Atonement. Only in The Absolutist, with its constant questioning of cowardice and bravery, the device makes perfect, satisfying sense. In it, the 80-year-old Tristan at last accomplishes the sole brave act of his entire life.

Stephen O'Shea's most recent book is The Friar of Carcassonne: Revolt Against the Inquisition in the Last Days of the Cathars.

ANNA SEGHERS: Das Siebte Kreuz – The Seventh Cross
Some paragraphs from a review by Maureen Young

Written in exile in France in 1938 and first published in English in 1942, *The Seventh Cross* tells the story of the communist, Georg Heisler, who along with six other inmates manages to escape from Westhofen Concentration Camp. Fahrenberg, the camp commandant, has seven crosses built where he intends to place each of the escapees as punishment once they have been recaptured. All the escapees with the exception of Georg are either caught or killed. Only The Seventh Cross remains as a sign both to the prisoners and their Nazi jailors that at least one victim of the Nazis has managed to escape their clutches.
The seventh cross symbolises too that the Nazi regime is neither infallible nor omnipotent. That as long as the human spirit exists and that there is a sense of fraternity between individuals engendered either by political beliefs (as in the novel) or otherwise, and there are people who continue to embody this spirit and sense of fraternity, there is still hope that the regime will ultimately fail. Fahrenberg finally comes to that conclusion himself. With Georg still on the run, towards the end of the novel, he consoles himself with the thought that Georg may be dead and that someday his body will be fished out of the Rhine or the Main. He then realises this is wishful thinking. He knows Georg is alive and will remain so. "*For the first time since the escape, Fahrenberg sensed that he was not pursuing an individual whose features he knew, whose strength could be worn down but rather a faceless, incalculable power*". ("*Fahrenberg fühlte zu erstenmal seit der Flucht, daß er nicht hinter einem einzelnen her war, dessen Züge er kannte, dessen Kraft erschöpfbar war, sondern eine gesichtslosen, unabschätzbren Macht*.")
A communist herself, Seghers' novel is no polemic but is imbued with a great understanding of the human condition and human frailty. The book depicts with keen insight why people collaborate with such regimes, whether it be from rapacious motives such as seeking political power to the more prosaic ones such as just wanting an easy life.

The novel also clearly depicts the strain and uncertainty of living under a police state where no one can trust anyone – in some cases even family members or neighbours– and helping your fellow man or trusting the wrong person can lead not only to your demise but also to that of your loved ones. The fact that people are still willing to risk all to help their friends and former colleagues and comrades makes their courage even more awe-inspiring and this is placed in sharp relief to the oppressive circumstances they find themselves in.

Victimised as he is in the camp, Georg knows that only death can free him from the torture and suffering he is enduring. Georg is only too aware of the terrible power that the Nazis have over his life but ironically this has also made him only too aware of his own power. "*He now knew who he was."* For his former friends, such as Franz, Georg's act of resistance is a beacon for their own conscience. Franz admits to his friend Hermann that from an early age he always felt the desire for justice and that ever since his life has only seemed to be peaceful on the surface. It is this sense of justice that is awakened by Georg's escape and spurns Franz on to try and assist in Georg's flight. One of the first things that strikes Georg on his escape is that whilst he has been enduring the hell of a Nazi concentration camp, everyday life for everyone else seems to have been going on regardless – apart of course for families such as the Jewish family in the Miquelstraße forced to move out of their home or the Katzensteins forced to decamp from their shop. And in order for those outside the camp to live these everyday lives, they have to normalise what is happening around them including the camps.

However despite everything, simple acts of resistance still exist. When questioned by police, the young Fritz Helwig denies that the jacket that the police have found is his. This is despite the fact he knows full well it is his jacket, the one stolen by Georg while on the run. However, by lying to the police, he helps put the police off Georg's trail. There are also more overt acts of resistance such as Wallau's refusal to speak at what he knows will be his final interrogation. Resistance of a passive if touching kind can be seen by Mettenheimer's fellow workers when Mettenheimer inadvertently sees a wanted poster of Georg Heisler in a discarded newspaper. He now realises that everyone knows about Georg's escape. Apart from his Nazi co-worker Stimbert, the faces of

the others are etched with grief and reverence. "*He was not stranded in hell – he was still a man among men*.("*Er war nicht in die Hölle verschlagen – er war noch immer ein Mensch unter Menschen*.")

Paul Röder likewise resists the regime by helping his childhood friend, Georg, unquestioningly, not really understanding the situation nor interested in the politics. As Georg's childhood friend, for Paul it goes without saying that he should help Georg. Georg then gives Paul the name of two former comrades – Schenk and Sauer – that might be able to help him. From this point on, all three men, Georg, Schenk and Sauer are in Paul Röder's hands. Schenk however has already been arrested, denounced by a neighbour for listing to an illegal radio station and ironically is now himself in Westhofen concentration camp.

And despite the fact that the escape of the seven inmates had serious repercussions for the rest of the prisoners, they nonetheless feel that a part of them has escaped along with the escapees, and that something significant has occurred. Until that point many of the prisoners had felt that the enemy was omnipotent. But as the novel points out, if you claim to be all-powerful, you aren't allowed to make mistakes. Therefore if even such a small incident as this escape succeeds, cracks start to appear in the regime's veneer of infallibility. However, this glimmer of hope begins to fade as one by one the prisoners are brought back or killed while on the run. For the prisoners the breaking point is almost reached when word gets round the camp that Wallau has been captured. For the prisoners, seeing Wallau being brought back into the camp is likened to the fall of Barcelona or Franco's entry into Madrid. They now feel they are maybe all lost after all.

Fear is another theme of the novel. The fear for oneself, the fear of what may happen to others, the fear of resisting, the fear of reprisals. In Zillich, it's a pathological fear of people or human company that has led him to do the most terrible things. Fear is also very human. Georg is reassured when he realises Kreß, who is hiding him, is scared. "*He poured, whereby his hand shook a little, so that it spilt. It was precisely this shaky pouring which completely reassured Georg. A decent man, it has cost him a great deal to put me up. He has put me up nonetheless*."

The sense of unbroken comradeship is the net that finally surrounds Georg and prevents him from being recaptured. Fellow comrades willing to risk their lives in order to help him, the network of seamen and harbour workers willing to ship wanted men out of the country and comrades providing money for these men from contributions to the local committee.

The final sentence sums up the message of the novel: "*All of us felt how profoundly and terribly the external powers are able to encroach to one's very core, but we also felt that at our core was something that was unassailable and inviolable*". This novel is a wonderful testament to that spirit.

STEPHEN JOSEPH: WHAT DOES'NT KILL US. **The New Psychology of Post-traumatic Growth,** review by Brian Boyd in The Irish Times, April 2, 2013.

Can trauma be good for us? Can a truly distressing and devastating life episode actually be a powerful force for growth? It does seem to be a counterintuitive argument but an Irish professor of psychology – and a leading expert in the study of the effects of trauma – is receiving a lot of attention for the idea that traumatic events can, if handled correctly, be the triggers for or positive change.

"This is not about 'looking on the bright side' or some ridiculous idea of treating a serious illness or

similar as a ‘gift’,” says Prof. Stephen Joseph. In his current book, 'What Doesn’t Kill Us – The New Psychology of Post-traumatic Growth', he argues, with no little skill, for a new definition of post-traumatic stress disorder, one that allows an understanding of how personal growth can occur even in the midst of severe distress.

Traumatic life events – which include serious illness, divorce, bereavement, violent assault, as well as involvement in acts of natural disasters/terrorist events – have a psychological hangover long after any physical damage may have healed.

“People who have suffered from these events report persistent nightmares, upsetting thoughts, avoidance of anything that reminds them of the event. Even a particular song playing on the radio or the sound of a car back-firing can greatly upset people if it triggers some awful memory of the event,” Joseph says.
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was recognized by the American Psychiatric Association in the 1980s as an umbrella term for the understanding of the lingering mental after-effects of a traumatic episode.

“PTSD has become a very widespread diagnosis but over 20 years of research into the field, I have become increasingly aware of the amount of subjects who while displaying symptoms of PTSD also report how they have become better people since the damaging event,” Joseph says. “What I’ve been finding, and consistently so, is that people don’t have a disorder in terms of an illness or a brain dysfunction. What they are experiencing is a normal and natural reaction to a devastating episode in their lives. It is similar in a sense to the grieving process.”

“My argument is that there is too much focus on the negative effects of PTSD, whereas if handled properly, PTSD can help people reorder their lives, become more compassionate, give them a new sense of priorities and help form new relationships and strengthen existing ones. In some cases, there can even be a new relish for life that simply wasn’t there before and people can become stronger as a result of what happened to them.”

Joseph, from Belfast, was part of the team of psychiatrists in the early 1990s who were employed by lawyers acting for the survivors of the 'Herald of Free Enterprise'. When the passenger ship sank in the North Sea in 1987, almost 200 passengers lost their lives as 300 survivors watched helplessly as family members died.

In interviewing the survivors, he was surprised to find that almost 50 per cent of them – despite still being traumatised by what they had gone through – reported that their lives were now actually better than they had been before the event.
“In fact 70 per cent of the survivors reported some sense of ‘positive growth’ in that they felt they had become stronger, more resilient, were a lot less materialistic than before and now attached more value to their relationships with family and friends,” he says.
Intrigued by these seemingly contradictory findings, he researched further.

In his book he talks about meeting an ex-RUC officer, Michael Patterson, who was blown up by an IRA bomb, losing both his arms and receiving horrific injuries to his legs. Patterson suffered from PTSD – he was unable to talk about the event and had constant nightmares – but after therapy, he went back to college to earn two doctoral degrees. He now works in Belfast as a clinical psychologist with a unique insight into how to cope with trauma. In 2008, he was awarded an OBE.

While Joseph does refer to a “trauma industry”, he is careful to balance his argument. “The amount of studies and interviews with survivors I’ve carried out over the years show that the diagnosis of PTSD can be a self-fulfilling prophesy, in that it can negatively shape people’s expectations of having any form of ‘normal’ life after a traumatic episode. My point is, we need to look at PTSD in a different way and we need to help people shape their own recovery.”

“As much emphasis needs to be placed on the idea of post-traumatic growth. I’ve heard people say

‘my cancer diagnosis was the best thing that ever happened to me’, which may sound a strange and extreme opinion to many, but these people are referring to how they reordered their lives and their relationships in the wake of such a devastating event.”

A professor of psychology at the University of Northampton and co-director of the Centre for Trauma, Resilience and Growth in the same city, Joseph has spent the last 20 years studying and researching why and how some people really struggle in the aftermath of trauma, while others use it to build a better life.

“It still surprises to me to find that people, generally, are a more resilient to traumatic events that one would think – and all the studies carried out in the aftermath of 9/11, the London 7/7 bombings and the Madrid train station bombings bear this out.”
He adds: “My belief is that when trauma happens it shatters the assumptions we all have about the world.”

“People basically believe that the world is more or less a just place but when something dreadful happens to them – a cancer diagnosis, for example – those assumptions are profoundly shattered and there is need to rebuild our view not just of the world but of ourselves.”

“The expression I keep hearing in this regard is ‘I am wiser now’ and almost all report increased feelings of compassion.”
“It is important to understand that no amount of wishful thinking will help with post-traumatic stress,” Joseph adds.
“Those symptoms you experience will not go away if you stick a smile on your face, they will persist depending on the severity of the trauma but they can be managed.”

What Doesn’ t Kill Us: The New Psychology of Post-traumatic Growth, by Prof Stephen Joseph.
whatdoesntkillus.com
Prof Joseph’s blog is at psychologytoday. com/experts/stephen-joseph-phd

Leonard Mlodinow: Subliminal: How Your Unconscious Mind Rules Your Behaviour.
ed.Pantheon.

Ask someone to name a famous psychologist, and chances are they will pick Sigmund Freud, the bearded Austrian academic who came up with the idea of psychoanalysis. His ideas about the unconscious - a sort of shadowy basement of the mind that is inaccessible to rational thought, but which nevertheless influences people's behaviour, are part of popular folklore.

Although it remained popular at dinner parties, the idea of the unconscious fell out of favour among the 20th-century psychologists, thanks to the rise of more scientific approaches to psychology. These focused purely on studying behaviour and refrained from theorizing about the inner workings of the mind.

In his latest book, “Subliminal”, Leonard Mlodinow, a theoretical physicist who has been developing a nice sideline in popular science writing, shows how the idea of the unconscious has become respectable again over the past couple of decades. This development has been helped by rigorous experimental evidence of the effects of the subconscious and, especially, by real-time brain-scanning technology that allows researchers to examine what is going on in their subjects' heads.

That experimental evidence suggests that, as Freud suspected, conscious reasoning makes up a comparatively small part of the activity in our brains, with most of the work taking place where we can't tap into it. However, unlike Freud's unconscious (a hot, claustrophobic place full of repressed memories and inappropriate sexual fantasies about one's parents) the modern unconscious is a place of super-fast data processing, useful survival mechanisms and rules of thumb about the world that have been honed by millions of years of evolution.

It is the unconscious, for instance, that stitches together data on colour, shape, movement and perspective to create the sight enjoyed by the conscious part of the mind. Experiments on people with certain specific forms of brain damage, which remove the ability to perform some of these tasks, can reveal something about what is going on underneath. People with “blindsight” can respond to some visual stimuli even when they are not conscious of being able to see. Asked to walk down an obstacle-strewn corridor, they will dodge and weave and arrive at their destination unharmed because some residual data is still making its way into their brains—although at a level that is beneath the notice of their conscious minds.

The modern view of the unconscious mind may be more benign than Freud's, but it can still generate unwelcome impulses. Psychologists theorise that the well-documented tendency of humans to categorise almost every piece of information they come across is a survival mechanism that evolved to aid quick decision making. Yet it may also lie behind the tendency for human beings to group people into races, genders, creeds and the like, and then to apply certain characteristics —unjustifiably—to every member of that group.

The insights offered by modern science into the workings of the human mind are fascinating in their own right. But they also suggest that plenty of conventional wisdom about how humans behave may need rethinking. Mr Mlodinow notes that economic models, for instance, are built “on the assumption that people make decisions…by consciously weighing the relevant factors”, whereas the psychological research suggests that, most of the time, they do no such thing. Instead, they act on the basis of simple, unconscious rules that can sometimes produce completely irrational results. Mr Mlodinow's chapters on courts and the law are disturbing, in particular on how unreliable eyewitness evidence can be. This has been widely documented elsewhere. But there is good news in the book, as well: people informed of the biases and pitfalls of their unconscious brains are better at using their conscious minds to overrule them.

ALLIES RAPED ALMOST 1M Germans:
Tom Barfield reports, March 2, 2015 in: The Local

A German historian estimates in a new book that French, British and American soldiers raped 860,000 Germans at and after the end of the Second World War, including 190,000 sexual assaults by American soldiers.

Professor **Miriam Gebhardt**'s book **'When the soldiers Came',** published this week, includes interviews with victims, stories of the children of rape and research that she conducted over the course of a year and a half into birth records in Allied-occupied West Germany and West Berlin.

'Now, 70 years after the war, it's long past the time when one could be suspected of dealing with German victimhood', Gebhardt, an author and lecturer at the University of Konstanz, told The Local.
'There is no longer the question that one might want to relativize the responsibility of the Germans for the Second World War and the Holocaust.'
Gebhardt said she arrived at that number of sexual assaults by estimating that of the so-called 'war-children' born to unmarried German women by the 1950s, five percent were products of rape. She also estimates that for each birth, there were 100 rapes, including of men and boys.
Gebhardt's numbers are higher than previous estimates. A well-received 2003 book by American professor of criminology **J. Robert Lilly**, **'Taken by Force'**, estimated that American soldiers committed around 11.000 rapes in Germany.
While an article published by Der Spiegel on Monday raises questions about whether Gebhardt's figures accurately reflected the incidence of sexual assault in post-war Germany, Lilly told The Local that her estimates were certainly reasonable.
'Gebhardt's numbers are plausible, but her work is not a definitive account', said Lilly in an

interview with The Local, explaining that no exact number could ever be known because of a lack of records. 'It is confirmation of research that I have done and it adds to this ongoing discussion of what happens in the underbelly of war. What goes on that we haven´t talked about.'

Much of the discussion of sexual assaults against Germans had focused on the Soviet troops in east Germany, who are estimated to have committed between one to two million rapes during the time.
Gebhardt said she wanted to challenge the assumption that it was only the Red Army that was responsible for such acts.
'Goebbels warned that the Red Army would rampage through Germany, would rape German women and commit atrocities against civilians...People hoped that they would be occupied by Western troops and not the Soviets', she said. 'But the course of the events was the same. Both sides plundered valuables and mementoes, and soldiers often committed gang rapes against women.'

Gebhardt´s research also included records from Bavarian priests recording the Allied advance in 1945, including one description that reads 'the saddest event during the advance were three rapes, one on a married woman, one on a single women and one on a spotless girl of 16-and-a- half. They were committed by heavily drunken Americans.'

The book paints a much darker picture that what is often seen in cinema and literature of the Allied troops who liberated Germans from the Nazi regime and thus could take time for people to fully absorb, Lilly said.
'I don't think it will minimize what the Germans did at all. It will add another dimension to what war is like and it will not diminish that the Allies won.' That chimes with Gebhardt´s attitude to her work, which she says aims simply to expose the horror of such actions in war.
'War actions that led to the defeat of Germany, the defeat of the Nazi regime, are a different question than the rapes, which were more personal and served no military purpose, Gebhardt said. 'Rapes can't decide a war. The rapes lasted for years, not just at the moment of the conquest', she added. 'They weren´t just part of the violence that took place in the last weeks and days of the war, but continued for years.'

A NEW NARRATIVE FOR EUROPE: A EUROPE OF DIASPORAS

This report is an account of my experience as a member of a project, sponsored mainly by IUJS (International Union of Jewish Students), AGBU (Armenian General benevolent Union), Phiren Amenca and ERGO (European Roma Grassroots Organisations) with extra finance from Brussels, bringing together Roma, Armenians and Jews from a wide range of countries to work together in exchanging ideas and views. The aim was to raise awareness of the potential of diaspora, the positive enriching role they might play in the development of 'a new narrative for Europe' in response to the issues and problems of the current narrative of 'Nation-States'.

As a Jew who was rescued from almost certain death at the hands of the Nazis (I came to England on the Kindertransport at age four in 1939) I have always been concerned about other people needing to be rescued. For many years I have been saying that the Jewish community, which has achieved recognition for survivors of the Holocaust and gained general respect, should reach out to support the Armenian and Roma communities, which are still struggling for respect and acknowledgement of the injustices they have suffered. On the whole I have met polite agreement or not so polite indifference but little spirit for active support. Now at last it is happening.

Approximately fifty participants altogether met for three conferences in Paris in June 2015,

Budapest in October 2015 and Sofia in January 2016. The first meeting was to meet and engage with each other to address identity and meaning of diaspora; the second explored diaspora cultural heritage and commemoration; the third explored education in and about diaspora and prepared a report for the fourth meeting in May 2016 in Brussels to address the European Parliament.

For the purposes of this project, a diaspora is a transnational community, comprising a number of communities in different nation-states, sharing the same cultural heritage transmitted through many generations and with no plans to return to the homeland from which they originated (Jews that have relocated to Israel are no longer part of the Jewish Diaspora). Cultural heritage includes language, self-identification, stories of origins and handed-down traditions around food, music, family life and beliefs. A fuller definition of diasporas was developed during the project and is appended to this report. It is also on the website developed as part of the project: europeofdiasporas.eu that has details of the project and information gathered through it, particularly about educational material and venues of cultural sites and archives.

Armenians, Roma and Jews were chosen for the project as they are three peoples that existed as distinct diaspora long before the emergence of nation-states. All three have made positive contributions to humanity in spite of hostility towards them; and they have survived repeated pogroms, including genocide. Through this,they have developed valuable forms of adaptability in the face of religious intolerance and the racist persecution that is currently still toxic. An Assyrian joined in the third conference. Further diaspora may apply to join as the project continues and defines the the terms under which each diaspora is committed to working with the others.

Bearing in mind that education to the highest possible standard, appropriate to their cultural as well as local and national backgrounds, is an inalienable human right of every child in Europe, the reality for these four diaspora falls far short of what it could and should be. Relatively few people in Europe have detailed knowledge or understanding of the culture and heritage of Jews, Roma, Armenians and Assyrians and, consequently, an unacceptable proportion of the innate potential of these diaspora is not being developed. This is a serious loss to the whole European community.

Therefore, education about diaspora needs to figure in the education provided by main-stream schools and adult education programmes across the European nation-states. As well as a basic knowledge of diaspora cultures, understanding is necessary of the function of diaspora before the emergence of nation-states around 1800 in response to the French Revolution, and the effects of this on the four diaspora since. Commemoration of their murdered ancestors cannot be left solely to the diaspora themselves, as the losses are a loss to the whole of humanity. The whole European community needs to support the diaspora by taking part in the actions and events that commemorate these losses to Humanity. All cultural celebrations of the European community should include members of the diaspora and also include celebration of their separate cultures. The media need to focus on the positive contributions diaspora have made instead of focusing on 'bad news' about them, thereby encouraging negative stereotypes.

This project is particularly import in that raising awareness of these four long-existing diaspora could contribute much to understanding the issue of the vast increase over the last few decades in the movement of large groups of people across the world. New diaspora are in the making and cannot be ignored. Widespread benefit to people and governments could result from greater understanding of the phenomena of diaspora development so as to utilise their potential for the common good.

The conclusions of project were presented in the EU Parliament on May 2nd 2016 to invited MEPs and other interested people in a whole day consisting of three panels. Members of the project presented the project conclusions and invited panellists included representatives of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), the European Remembrance Programme, the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO), Lifelong Learning Platform, the Armenian Virtual College, European Commission for Education and Culture, International Roma Youth Network, MEP in the Intergroup on National Minorities, MEP on the committee for Civil Liberties, MEP on the Intergroup on Anti-racism and

Diversity. In each session the panellists presentations were followed by questions and discussion comments from the floor.

It was tremendously encouraging to hear from the invited panellists and MEP how much positive thought and action is being given to remembrance, education and cultural inheritance of minorities. As was perhaps to be expected, one of the large number of invited speakers displayed a lack of awareness of the effects of racist hostility and stereotyping on Roma communities by claiming it to be a problem that Roma parents refuse education for their children. This attitude of 'blaming the victim' was calmly and sensitively but firmly countered by a Romany member of the audience – a learning experience for all present. The conference included the joyful acknowledgement and rewarding of the three finalists of the competition to present diaspora identity through photography. In fact, the whole day was an inspiring and forward looking experience, particularly as the project will continue to develop the website and arrange more conferences.

Ruth Barnett, May 2016

A EUROPE OF DIASPORAS

The Charter

We are diasporas of Europe. We are dispersed over several countries, yet we share a common, durable identity across borders. Our transnational communities share a common cultural heritage transmitted through generations. The Roma, the Assyrians, the Jews and the Armenians are examples of diasporas in Europe. Our cultural heritage includes language, stories of origin, self-identification and traditions.

We are a product of Europe's history, we are part of the European tapestry, we have contributed to making European civilization what it is today, and we will continue to do so in the future. Diasporas are an asset and an opportunity for Europe, not a hindrance: they have helped circulate ideas and techniques and helped connect Europe.

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It is a characteristic of diasporas that they have no center and no periphery. Each of their members is part of their country's society and each community and organization is autonomous and a master of its destiny. Diaspora leaders and organizations, furthermore, have a role to play in the development of European society. Yet they are also faced with considerable challenges linked, *inter alia*, to a lack of resources, to their voluntary character and to the dispersion of their members. We commend the remarkable commitment of countless **Diasporsas** volunteers and leaders who dedicate their time to humanitarian causes, culture, education and advocacy. We encourage these **Diasporas** organizations to work together, between diasporas, and to innovate to meet the challenges of our time.

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As members of Diasporas, we are deeply committed to the European values of tolerance, inclusiveness and valuing diversity. We have a profound interest in the pursuit of peaceful cooperation and open exchange between all the nations of Europe. Together, we will work for tolerance and understanding, and for the social recognition of diasporas.

History has also created a legacy of domination and discrimination which has left deep marks: we have learned that even if slavery, oppression and genocide are long past, their legacy of domination **and unprocessed trauma** remains unless it is addressed. It is the common responsibility of all Europeans, including public authorities, to explore, acknowledge and address these legacies in order to help overcome them.

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We believe that the public authorities of the countries where we live, in Europe, have a responsibility to support the promotion and development of cultures associated with diasporas,

their educational needs and the preservation and promotion of their heritage. Children affiliated with a diaspora, in particular, should have an opportunity to learn of their background and heritage, including access to (such education as) **appropriate** language (or) **and** religious education.

We believe that Europe's and each **member** nation's history includes the story of their diasporas. In the future, they should be part of new, inclusive narratives. It is important for us all, including in particular those in positions of authority, to be educated about the reality and legitimacy of Europe's diasporas.

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Diasporas, like most of Europe's nations, are the product of historical migration: some of their members arrived many centuries ago; others very recently. Migration continues today in Europe, and many of those arriving will form the diasporas of the future. Europe must look constructively and with lucidity to its past to draw lessons for the harmonious integration of new Europeans. Diasporas often provide considerable experience in this field, and may offer successful models, which we must examine and share.

Next issue: November 2016
Reactions, texts and suggestions until October 15

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.finskakrigsbarn.se
Tapani Ross on Finnish War Children (blog)
www.krigsbarn.com
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
Kriegskind Deutschland:
www.kriegskind.de
Website for the postwar-generation:
www.Forumkriegsenkel.com
Evacuees Reunion Association
www.evacuees.org.uk
Researchproject 'War and Children Identity Project', Bergen, Norway
www.warandchildren.org

Researchproject University München ‘Kriegskindheit’
www.warchildhood.net
Coeurs Sans Frontières – Herzen Ohne Grenzen
www.coeurssansfrontières.biz
Organisation d’enfants de guerre
www.nésdelalibération.fr
Organisation of Us-descendants in Belgium
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
International Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Children born of War (INIRC)
www.childrenbornofwar.org
Organisation Genocide Prevention Now
www.genocidepreventionnow.org
Basque Children of ’37 Association UK
www.basquechildren.org
International Study of the Organized Persecution of Children
www.holocaustchildren.org
Partners in Confronting Collective Atrocities
www.p-cca.org
War Love Child – Oorlogsliefdekind
www.oorlogsliefdekind.nl/en
Children of Soviet Army soldiers
www.russenkinder.de
Stichting Oorlogsgetroffenen in de Oost
www.s-o-o.nl
Philippine Nikkei-Jin Legal Support Center
www.pnlsc.com
Austrian children of Afroamerican soldier-fathers
www.afroaustria.at
Organisation tracing American GI fathers
www.gitrace.org