

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

Ruth Barnett sent to me information about the theatre piece "What Price for Justice?" she wrote about her father's experiences during and after the war. It was her intention to give him the honour that had been refused to him in after-the-war Germany where he hoped to help to found a real democratic regime.

Eleonore Dupuis started to go in search of her father after her mother had revealed her that he was a Russian soldier. In an interview by Haris Hurmagic in December 2016 we learn more about her life and her efforts to find her Russian family.

Beyond Conflict is an organisation that intends to tackle the unseen psychological suffering of victims of war and displacement. Martin Parsons drew my attention to it and I feel the people who assumed this task deserve our support.

Israël W. Charny's book "Psychotherapy for a Democratic Mind" met with positive reactions, some of them I like to present to you.

Claus Bryld, a Danish historian who dedicated his studies to the Occupation had been interviewed by Ekstra Bladet when his book "My Occupation – 50 Years of Life with History" appeared in 2015. He sent me a copy of it and it is a pity that I cannot read Danish although I can understand some sentences and words. Therefore I borrow the words of Christina Ehrenskjöld who did the interview with Claus.

Julie Lindahl has written the book "The Pendulum" in which she describes her search for her grandfather and his thoughts and actions during the war. It was a six-year journey and shows how silencing the truth can generate many problems. This book attests to our right to seek and know.

I came across an interesting text describing the advice rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo gave to Vietnam veterans longing for getting back their lost feelings of compassion, the feelings of those friendly boys they had been, before they had become murderers in the war circumstances.

Labeling is a useful instrument, how could we otherwise know the difference between warm and cold water? But sometimes it can have disastrous consequences like I experienced during my stay in hospital.

Mai Maddison sent me a text in which she reacts to friendly words from family members, friends and colleagues sent to her in order to support her in her suffering from c. In a personal mail to her I added the redemptive words of a rabbi during a study trip in Israel which meant to me emotional

and mental liberation. I add those lines to Mai's text.

I hope that you will read the articles with interest. Comments and suggestions are welcome! Please inform me of any change in your post – or email address so that we can remain in contact with each other.

All the best,
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

BOXES

Because they said during the war
that people before the war
had been that unsuspecting,
I have become very careful.
If I throw away something
as ordinary as a cardboard box,
I hope that this box never will
reconquest me in the form of self reproach:
do you remember how careless we were,
we carelessly threw away cardboard boxes!
If we had kept only one,
had kept only one.....

Judith Herzberg, from: Zoals,
uitg. De Harmonie, 1992
(translation GSB)

WHAT PRICE FOR JUSTICE?

Dear Gonda,

What a lot of very moving letters and articles in this bulletin. Many thanks for putting it all together and sending to us.

I attach a press release for a play, "What Price for Justice?", I have written about the war time experience of my family and the flyer for a book of the play script. My son is producing the play May 9th to 13th 2018 in Liverpool with his amateur drama society and I hope it will stimulate interest and be taken up by more producers to reach wider audiences, as it treats some universal themes about the devastation, destruction and injustice of war.

My need to write this play was triggered by the German novel "Landgericht" by Ursula Krechel, which won the 2012 Frankfurt Book Prize and is a fictionalised account of my father's fight for justice, on his return to Germany after eight years in Shanghai during WWII. This novel told so much I did not know about my family (we could never talk about the past in my parents life time) that I had to explore what was factual by contacting the court in Berlin from which my father was frog-marched out by the Nazis in 1933. The president and two colleague judges researched the real story of my father and held a very moving event in his honour in that court in 2015. The prize-winning novel then became a film "Landgericht", commissioned by the ZDF TV company in Germany, and was broadcast in two parts with a documentary (in which I was interviewed) between in January 2017 and again in February 2018. I was invited several times in 2017 and

2018 to talk about my book, "Person of No Nationality", published in German translation as "Nationalitaet Statenlos". Large audiences wanted me to talk about the film, particularly parts that were fiction and this determined me to write the real story in a different genre - a play to bring out universal messages about the injustices of war, especially the effects on children and families.

If you consider it suitable, you are welcome to include this letter and the two attachments in your next bulletin and give my name and email if you wish for anyone interested to contact me.

Warmest wishes

Ruth

PRESS RELEASE: What Price for Justice?

A new play, "What Price for Justice?", challenges audiences to reflect on the effect of war on ordinary people, thousands of families who are split up and flee when their homes become too dangerous to stay in or are bombed flat. It is happening now: Yazidis, Rohingya, Syrians, Afghans are fleeing from today's war zones. What is seen 'a problem of immigration' is one of the injustices of war. War lasts longer and is more brutal and devastating than many people realise beforehand. Above all, few people are fully aware of how, when the fighting stops, the poison generated by war continues overtly for several decades and subliminally even longer. How can justice be restored after war crimes and crimes against humanity have distorted and desecrated it, and when the perpetrators have not been held to account? Like violence breeds only more violence, injustice creates impunity for more injustice. What price are we prepared to pay for justice and a just world in which no-one has to flee their unsafe home?

The play presents the story of one family that represents thousands of families caught up in WWII and wars before and since. Robert Michaelis, a Jewish judge in Berlin, his non-Jewish wife and two children are persecuted by the Nazis' obsession with racial purity. The children are sent to England on the Kindertransport and Robert flees to Shanghai. His wife, intending to follow when she can get the necessary documents to collect the children from England and take them to Shanghai, is trapped in Berlin when war begins. In spite of hardship and disease, Robert teaches himself British law, English and Chinese in order to practice as an attorney in Shanghai, his one aim being to return home to reunite his family and help to restore justice. Returning to Germany after eight years, he finds jobs are only for German citizens while he is treated contemptuously as a non-German stateless displaced person and a traitor for abandoning Germany to escape the bombs for a long holiday in an exotic resort. He fights for justice and finds himself up against eighty percent of posts in the legal profession occupied by former Nazis who continue to practice with the same approach as during the war. His hopes of reuniting his family are dashed as his children are now precocious teenagers and their childhood lost both to themselves and their parents. The price of injustice is heavy indeed when even Wiedergutmachen (compensation: literally 'making good again') is withheld.

Robert Michaelis died in 1971, a disappointed man who never achieved the justice and recognition he fought for. His daughter has written this play to give him posthumous literary justice.

The text of the flyer

A Play in two acts by Ruth Barnett

What Price for Justice? presents the story of a real family, Robert Michaelis, his wife and two children, who represent the thousands of families separated and traumatised in World War Two and wars before and since. Robert, a judge in Berlin, and Louise, head of a cinema advertising business, have a golden future before them – until the Nazis take power and systematically strip them of everything. Their only hope of survival is to flee.

When the fighting stops, the poisonous hatred and injustice of war continues in the chaos of the aftermath. Back to normalcy is not an option. A new and better future may only be won through a long and hard struggle.

Robert returns from eight years exile in Shanghai, eager to reclaim what had been his home for several generations and to help rebuild a genuinely democratic Germany. He finds former Nazi judges sitting in judgement over former Nazi victims returning to claim the wherewithal to live, let alone the dignity status and property stolen by brutal Nazi laws. He pays a heavy price for fighting this system with his unceasing attempts to restore justice.

This play written by his daughter, gives Robert and Louise posthumously the honour and recognition they never achieved in their lifetime. To order your copy please email Ruth on rutheclb@gmail.com

AN AUSTRIAN WOMAN WITH A FRENCH FAMILY IS DRINKING A SOVIET CHAMPAGNE

By Haris Huremagic on 22 December 2016

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Iron Curtain not only had immense political implications for Europe, but for many also on a personal level. For Eleonore Dupuis it meant to eventually get the chance to search for her father, a former Soviet soldier in occupied Austria.

“I was always proud to have a Russian father“, Eleonore told me when I met her in her flat in Vienna. Born in 1946 in the Austrian city of St.Pölten, Eleonore Dupuis had a normal childhood until 1955. In that year the last occupying forces left Austria and her mother revealed to her that her father was a Soviet soldier. “My mother told me that his name was Michail and that he was from the city of Tver. She could not exactly remember his surname, but something like Groman or Grossman.”



Eleonore Dupuis shortly before the interview.

“My silent heroine”

Growing up as a child with a Soviet military father was very much connected with social exclusion. Those children were treated as “enemy’s children”, as “bastards”, some, however, but also as beloved children. It depends on how the direct surroundings coped with this phenomenon. Eleonore Dupuis was never the victim of any discrimination or bullying and never felt different in any way. That is why she refuses to be called “occupation-child” and prefers the term “liberation-child”. “I think the main reason for that was my mother. She was always friendly towards our neighbours and treated them with the utmost respect. In return they supported us and did not let us feel the stigma of me being an occupation-child.”

The search begins...

Eleonore got married in Australia, lived in Argentina and France with her three children, she had a fulfilled and busy life. But eventually, 40 years after she got to know the truth about her father, Eleonore began with the search. "I started immediately to study Russian in order to be able to talk to him". In 2002 Eleonore came in contact with the Russian broadcast "Ždi Menja" (transl. "Wait for me"), which aim it is to search publicly for missing people in almost every country of the former Soviet Union. This broadcast soon became a very important platform for Austrian occupation children in order to find their father's family in the former Soviet Union. However, no serious traces were discovered until a Russian woman, Valentina, contacted her. She stated that she had seen the photo of Eleonore's mother in her father's stuff ten years ago and hence she believed that Eleonore might be her half-sister. Although Eleonore had been rather skeptical about this trace, she nevertheless decided to visit Valentina in Russia to perform a DNA-test. "When I arrived in Valentina's home town and got off the train a crowd of people including Russian TV reporters were waiting to welcome me and made a reportage on the 'Austrian women with a French family finding her way to Russia to drink Soviet champagne.' I guess I am somehow as well a child of globalization, which already began after the Second World War." Eventually the DNA-test turned out to be negative but both still feel very connected to each other and communicate on a regularly basis.

Building bridges

Eleonore Dupuis still has not ascertained who her father is. However, over the years she has broadened her horizon tremendously through the searching process and hence regards it as a success. Almost every year she travels to Russia in order to visit beloved friends and to discover new aspects of the Russian culture, which she admires so greatly. When I asked her about today's relation between Europe and Russia, she just waived her hand in the air as if it didn't matter. "That is just politics. Since I have been travelling to Russia I see myself as bridge-builder between Austria and Russia. I always tell my Austrian friends and families about how warmly I was welcomed and how unbelievable polite and helpful the Russians are."



In 2016 Eleonore's book "[Liberation Child](#)" about her ongoing search was translated into Russian. "I had the honour to present it at the Russian State University for the Humanities. I had never expected such a great interest for the destiny of an occupation-child." In the last years more and more occupation children go public with their stories. Since they have been meeting each other on a regularly basis, they experience a sort of a self-empowerment process and develop a sense of belonging. In addition, Eleonore is still full of hope, as many "occupation-grandchildren" are more and more interested in ascertaining who their grandfather is. "It is very delighting to know that once we – the occupation children – are gone that there are still some left who will continue to search. I am convinced that it is immensely important to know his own roots."

from: History Campus

OUR MISSION

Beyond Conflict's mission is to tackle the unseen psychological suffering of victims of war and displacement. While many governments and NGOs are committed to easing the physical impact of conflict on civilians, there is an urgent need to address the severe psychological damage. We intend to offer free remote counselling by trained therapists to people in refugee camps and build up long term capacity by training therapists in situ, starting with Iraq.

Decades of war, oppression, sanctions, violence and terrorism have wreaked grave damage on the mental health of millions of refugees in Iraq. The vast majority of Iraqi people are severely distressed, suffering from depression & PTSD. At least 12 million Iraqi and Syrian civilians were displaced as a result of the war against Islamic State. Many are children or young people who were exposed to torture, rape, execution and the brutal ideology of ISIS. Beyond Conflict believes there can be no lasting peace, economic rehabilitation and defeat of this ideology without addressing the psychological fallout. At present, there is no organisation on the ground to address the most severe levels of acute trauma of these people. So Beyond Conflict is asking for your help.

SOME COMMENTS on the book of Israël W. Charny "Psychotherapy for a Democratic Mind"

Summary

"Psychotherapy for a Democratic Mind" proposes that the optimal goal of psychotherapy lies in cultivating a free mind with integrity that will not seek to do major harm to one's life or to the lives of others. This book looks at a wide range of psychiatric disorders including classic conditions of neurosis, personality disorders and psychoses through a different lens than simply enumerating symptoms, namely how a person is addressing the opportunity of his/her life and the lives of others and whether a person is doing harm to themselves and/or others. This book proceeds to grapple with several critical life experiences and styles: tragedy, violence and evil, all of which often have posed insurmountable problems in therapy.

Reviews

Psychotherapy for a Democratic Mind presents a creative focusing of Israel W. Charny's general concept of democratic and fascistic minds to a crucial field of application. An unusual blend of material from clinical psychology, personality theory, and political psychology, its core terms symbolize broad personality types. The result is a set of novel and thought-provoking ideas for clinical theory, diagnosis, and treatment. -- Peter Suedfeld, University of British Columbia

Psychotherapy for a Democratic Mind concludes with a brilliant summation of an extraordinary life spent grappling with the human condition. Truth is in essence dialectical, and this book is a twenty-first century embodiment of the rabbinic concept of yetzer hara/yetzer tov, the good impulse and the bad impulse. Israel W. Charny offers a profound understanding of the human story. There is so much substance, depth, and truth in Charny's life perspective. -- Samuel Karff, University of Texas Medical School

Israel W. Charny provides a captivating journey exploring a framework for therapy that charts a course for today's and tomorrow's mental health professionals. Charny's therapeutic wisdom and existential insight into the human condition, combined with his pioneering work on the Holocaust and genocide studies, informs his courageous approach to perplexing issues. He provides essential truths, including a prescription for therapists and patients alike, to achieve a free mind' that does no harm to one's own life or that of others. This book provides approaches to diagnosis and therapy that must be studied, savored, and implemented. -- Robert Krell, MD, University of British Columbia

This is one of

the most original psychotherapy books I have ever read. Israel W. Charny does not flinch when describing evil in the human experience. He calls on therapists to see psychological health as inclusive of how personal behaviour affects the well-being of others, and to make the connection between political democracy and democracy in the mind and heart. There is an ethical consciousness at work on every page, which is much needed in today's world. -- Bill Doherty, University of Minnesota

“CLAUS BRYLD'S FAMILY DISSOLVED after the occupation but he still loves his mother and father” by Christina Ehrenskjöld in Ekstra Bladet (April 9, 2015)

"I remember May 5, better than April 9, and strangely like a happy day. Everyone was happy. It was beautiful weather, the flag went to top and I had a sense of happiness. I did not know what happened to my parents", Claus Bryld told Ekstra Bladet.

He was born a month and a half after the Germans had occupied Denmark, and he especially remembered clearly what followed after the war.

Claus Bryld is named after the well-known Danish Nazi Party leader Frits Clausen. His father, Børge, was one of the famous and notorious brothers Bryld, all of whom were members of the Danish National Socialist Labor Party DNSAP and among the most influential next to Frits Clausen.

Today he is a professor and historian - specialized in occupation, but as a child of Danish Nazis, this successful career path was not exactly in the cards.

In 1945, then the five-year-old boy's sense of happiness over the liberation quickly became relieved of sadness. The parents reported themselves to the police and were detained - the mother for three months. Børge Bryld was sentenced to eight years in prison - among other things, because he had been the leader of DNSAP's legal council.

Parents did not hide anything

While the father and the oldest uncle Hans Carl Bryld were in prison, Claus Bryld started at school: "At that time you should be right and tell what your father did. I could not say that he was in prison, so I said he was a lawyer", says Claus Bryld, who also had to go through some bullies so that the mother got complaints from their parents.

"A teacher, however, held my hand a little over me. She had been a member of DNSAP and was terribly sweet, but otherwise a pretty bad teacher", remembers Claus Bryld, who in the older classes met a teacher's abusive skills:

"There was a perfidious geography teacher who, as he pulled the German map down, always pointed at me and said something like 'what the heart is full of'. There was a satanic smile about his lips and he was an unpleasant man".

Nevertheless, Claus Bryld believes that he has been "well-integrated" thanks to the good schools he has visited.. And even though his entire family dissolved, he remembers that they never "regretted the fate they received".

"My parents did not hide anything. That made others in the family. My uncle's children were not told anything. They were told that the father was in hospital or studying in England when the fathers were in prison.

Love them still

"My parents crossed the chalk line, and it became destructive. They were not Nazis of opportunism, but of conviction or idealism, if you would. They lost, among other things all their money for that reason. Nevertheless, the children received a good education and they were good parents. They have made mistakes, but they stopped being Nazis.

"They were critical of the Germans and very much so about the SS line. It caused Himmler to declare that they were to be sent out of Denmark.. My one uncle was sent to Germany - my father escaped saying that he was ill. My third uncle, who had signed up at the eastern front of the Waffen SS in 1941, was sent home after a year and a half because he criticized SS.

But once you had entered the wrong side, nobody forgot about it.

"The society continued to pursue them. My dad could not get a readership in the newspaper, did not dare to order movie tickets in his own name and was afraid to be recognized. And that affected us then. But as people, I still love them".

Personal occupation

Claus Bryld has had a strained relationship with both April 9 and the liberation evening in the years after the war:

"It was a little difficult for the liberation evening. My father and uncle had been in prison, and they were not so happy about the liberation that they would actually light the windows like almost everybody else did. And I had a hard time swallowing the big pathos in the years after the war, where it was pretended that the whole people had been against the Germans and we had assembled every man so that Denmark won the war. It's clean sludge. The population was much divided until 1945. Only in 1942-43 there was a little active resistance from one percent of the population".

Even though he was a little boy during the war, as an adult the wartime has become Claus Bryld's almost own occupation. He was one of the first to publish a personal account of how life was shaped for those who had been on the wrong side.

He described the family history extensively in 1995 in his book 'What Liberation', which has subsequently been expanded (2008).

May 4, Claus Bryld's new book 'My Occupation - 50 Years of Life with History' is published.

Short Pitch: THE PENDULUM BY JULIE LINDAHL

A memoir about making the choice to look back into a hidden family history and to walk the difficult, often elusive path of truth-seeking. A paradigm-shifting read about the legacy of the perpetrators of World War II and the Holocaust within their own families.

One-page synopsis: The Pendulum by Julie Lindahl

"Yes, he screamed like everyone else. He only beat them," she said, regaining her composure.

"Those were the times! People did that type of thing and we just did the same as everyone else."

In the spring of 2010 Brazilian-born Julie Lindahl visited the German Federal Archives in Berlin in desperation. The past had cast a shadow over her family and asphyxiated relationships, leaving suffering in its trail. Lindahl suspected the worst, and her fears were confirmed as she learned that

her grandparents had been SS in occupied Poland throughout the duration of World War II, fleeing to Latin America in 1960, shortly before the trial of Adolf Eichmann. This discovery led to a six-year journey through Germany, Poland, Paraguay and Brazil, and transformed her world and the way that she saw the key figures in it, including herself.

In her memoir, *The Pendulum*, the reader accompanies her through a dramatic terrain of humanity. In the character of Oma who adores fine literature and music, but who cannot renounce her old ideological traps, she explores the thin line that exists between civilization and barbarism, and the chill that descends when that line fades. In the exploration of her grandparents' radicalization she wanders into the realm of the unanswerable that nevertheless must continue to be asked: what is evil, where does it come from and how does it grow? In the traumas of the later generations she learns of the distortion that shame inflicts when silence and lies are used to blanket the realities of war and genocide.

As Lindahl walks through the dark valleys, many torch-bearers light up the way. At its zenith, *The Pendulum* attests to the existence of truth, our right to seek and know it, and to the unswerving commitment of the many to justice. It offers the hope that when strangers join hands, nothing is impossible.

The Pendulum will be published by Rowman & Littlefield (US) and Norstedts (Sweden) in October 2018. A shorter version was originally published by Papilio Stockholm.

About Julie Lindahl

Julie Lindahl is an author and educator living in Sweden. In support of her research, she was named Stevens Traveling Fellow by Wellesley College in 2015-16 and Honorary Research Associate, University College London 2013-15 in connection with their ongoing project concerning reverberations of war and genocide in later generations.

Julie writes and speaks widely about her experiences at schools and other learning institutions such as The London School of Economics and Hamburg University, and is a contributor to WBUR Cognoscenti (National Public Radio Boston). An extensive conversation between her and journalist Rachael Cerrotti was aired in a three-part series by NPR Boston in November-December 2017, and an amalgamated program was aired by NPR national in January 2018. The writing of her memoir about her experiences was supported by the Swedish Author's Fund. The short version of the memoir was made compulsory reading in two schools in the US, and Julie developed an online learning program to support teachers in using the book in the classroom.

Julie holds a Bachelor of Arts (Magna cum Laude) in English Literature from Wellesley College and an M.Phil. in International Relations (awarded an Overseas Research Scholarship) from Oxford University. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Frankfurt, Germany. She was raised in ten countries on three continents, and worked in many countries during her years as a consultant in the developing world.

She is the founder of [Stories for Society](#), a non-profit organization for renewing the art of story-making among youth for social transformation. She has worked with Stories' method in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina and in the world's largest youth center in Sweden concerning the topic of social inclusion.

She currently serves as President of The American Club of Sweden. For further information about her see www.julielindahl.com.

SPIRITUAL CHANGE THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTION

Once, on a visit to America, I was sitting in my hotel lobby minding my own business when I was approached by two men who wanted to know if I was a rabbi. When I told them that I was, without asking for any further credentials, they proceeded to tell me their story. The two men were Vietnam War veterans and they had a question that they specifically wanted to ask a rabbi, because so far no one else had been able to help them.

Both men had been raised in America with strong Christian values, particularly as regards the sanctity of human life. As they were growing up, they had never thought of hurting a fellow human being. Certainly they never imagined ever killing anyone. So you can imagine their terror when, upon being sent into battle in Vietnam, they were given orders to kill the enemy. Nothing could have been so incongruous with their upbringing or so repulsive to their very natures.

At first they resisted their orders. But under the duress of their commanding officers, they were eventually forced to comply. The first time, it was a torture for their souls. The contradiction between their beliefs and their actions was almost physically painful. They felt they would never be able to live with themselves again. But after a short while, the killing got easier. Too easy. Even enjoyable. Things deteriorated to the point that murder became a game to them. They would even compete to see who could kill the most; so far had they fallen.

As they stood before me, they admitted with heavy hearts that they had lost all feeling for the sanctity of human life. The sensitivity they had felt in their youth toward others had not returned to them once they had re-entered civilization. They admitted to me that they felt as though they could kill anybody on the street and not feel an ounce of regret. What they wanted me to teach them was how to get that feeling back; the feeling that life is holy and not to be violated. Their spiritual leaders and psychologists had not been able to help them – could I?

I did not give them Socrates' advice.⁽¹⁾ All the books on philosophy, psychology, and poetry would not help them regain that lost feeling of compassion. Neither did I tell them that their mission was hopeless. I gave them, rather, the advice that Judaism offers. I told them to get involved with helping others, to do *acts* of lovingkindness - what we call *chesed*, "Volunteer in a hospital or an old age home," I advised. "Just start *doing* things for others and you will slowly begin to recognize life's sanctity once more. The deeds will create a new mentality and bring out the thoughts and emotions that you did not even know were hiding there."

In this way I could offer these men a means to try to reverse the process that they had already undergone. Actions had desensitized them, and only by action could they regain what was lost.

From: Jewish Law as Rebellion by Nathan Lopes Cardozo, ed. Urim Publications. (Pages 125, 126)

Note:

The method Socrates taught to resolve the body/soul conflict is a two-step process. The first step is to follow a path of intellectual discovery in search of the "good life" - the proper way by which all are supposed to live. Once the mind, the seat of the soul, has discovered this truth, all that remains to be done, is to inform the body about it. [...] Imagine someone who wanted to become a gold-medal Olympic swimmer but had never before set a foot in a pool. [...] Now imagine that our friend proceeds to follow Socrates' advice. [...] He has a doctorate in swimming, but what would happen when our professor actually gets in the pool? He is more likely to drown than he is to win any race! (Page 123).

LABELING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

When I was taken to hospital to have a scan made of my hip, the scan showed it had not been broken and so, the doctor said, after a superficial examination, that I could go home. My friend who accompanied me and my husband said to her that we could not go back home, because I could not stand on my right leg. 'We don't have a bed for her', was the doctor's first reaction. Aware of the dullness of this reaction she said she would do her best to find somewhere a place to me. She did and I was taken to a room of the department cardiology and neurology, although I should have

been housed in the orthopaedic department.

The nurse of the room told me that I could eat my meal at the table. I answered that I could not stand on my right leg, and therefore could not walk. 'Okay, this evening you can have your meal sitting in your bed, but tomorrow you have to come into action! Because you are here to be re-mobilized, to stand and to walk.' I had been labeled as a case of 'social indication' (that means: no danger, the person cannot be at home but in fact a stay in the hospital is not necessary) and 're-mobilization'.

Next morning, at 6 o' clock, I woke up and felt that I could not move my left leg. Now I had two paralyzed legs! I pushed the button to call a nurse and I told her that I was terribly afraid, because of the fact that I was not able to move my legs, yesterday only the right leg was 'out of use' and now both legs were paralyzed. I did not say: I guess I have a spinal cord injury, because I thought by then that such an injury causes an immediate paralysis and I would not irritate her with giving a possible diagnosis – nurses and doctors don't like that. She told me she would inform the day team that would start their work within half an hour of my situation.

Later on I learned that she did not had had the courage to phone one of the orthopaedists responsible for my health, because the one in service is an arrogant person (I knew him very well from a consult years ago and I disliked him totally!) So I can understand she had not the courage. At the other side: paralysis is a case of urgency, she should have phoned a doctor whatever would have been the consequences of anger or other negative reactions of his side. Later on I learned that at 8 o' clock the two orthopaedists had discussed the question whether one of them would go to see and examine me. But, since in that hospital, there is no obligation to visit a patient who is housed at another department, they decided not to visit me. Moreover, I was there on 'social indication'! Was the word 'paralysis' in my dossier or not? If they had examined me they would have seen immediately that the label was totally wrong and that my health was in great danger. But why go and see me?

At half past 10 a physiotherapist visited me and ordered me to sit at the edge of my bed. I told her that I could not move my legs and that first of all, it was important to find out why my legs did not function. She disagreed with me, we could do some exercises to re-mobilize me. She had a lot of difficulties before she had me at the edge of my bed and there I whirled around, from right to left, from back to front with a total lack of body stability. She should have diagnosed that as a typical symptom of a spinal cord injury, but she had in mind the label 'social indication' and could not see beyond that. However, she was convinced that exercises were to be postponed and she told me she would be back in the afternoon together with on of her colleagues.

At 3 o'clock they asked me to sit at the edge of the bed. Again I suggested to find out first of all why I could not use my legs, but again they did not see a need for such an examination. After a couple of efforts of both physiotherapists, I was again at the edge of my bed, whirling around in all directions. 'This will not work', they said. And left me alone.

A nurse of the new shift had seen their efforts and became alarmed: she was used to work in this department of neurology and she had recognized symptoms of a neurological injury. (But the other nurses were used to work there as well and none of them had been alarmed!). She phoned one of the orthopaedists, who came to my room and declared that he had 'given the order' that a neurologist would come to examine me. And that was that. He had been responsible for my health because I belonged to his department, but he did not more than announcing the examination by one of his colleagues. That is an easy way to earn one's money!

At 5 o' clock arrived doctor W. who started to examine me respectfully and carefully. I thought: now I am safe. Not physically, but emotionally and mentally, because I felt that she was moved by seeing me, a human being struck by a catastrophe and a long road of recovery in front of her and she felt sorry for me. I felt that she was with me not only with her knowledge, but also with her emotions. After her examination entered doctor R. the neurologist I know very well because my husband is one of her clients. I saw how she was shocked to see me laying there in the bed and I could 'read' her thoughts: goodness, how will things go on at home, because her husband depends on her taking care of him. I felt so supported by her emotion, although she immediately went on in a professional way to have made a scan and later on with finding a hospital where I could get a MRI-scan under supervision of a pacemaker-expert. The third neurologist who took care of me the

week before I could go to the rehabilitation center said: 'We felt so sad to see you there in the bed with your paralyzed legs.'

I have written a book about the catastrophe that struck me (a medical mistake that could have been avoided very easily!) and I have dedicated it to these three doctors.

Doctor R. phoned me and said: 'But we did only our work, why that honour to have your book dedicated to us?' And then I told her: because you gave me back my dignity of human being. More than 26 hours I had been ignored and neglected by doctors, nurses and physiotherapists, I could have been a block of concrete in a bed. All of them – apart from that one nurse – had been blind for what they should have seen, but did not see, deaf for what they should have heard but did not hear, because they could not see beyond the label given to me: 'social indication'. What the three neurologists did to me was in fact at that moment far more important to me than the medical help they gave me. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote in his weekly page in the internet: "To be listened to, to be heard, is to know that someone else takes me seriously. That is a redemptive act."

What terrifies me is the fact that it is, as shown in this story, so simple to become blinded and deafened by a (wrong) label. One does not see what is at stake, but sees only that what the label suggests that is to be seen. One does not hear what can be heard, but hear only what the labels suggests that shall be heard. I am terrified, because this is how discrimination, segregation, persecution, and killing begins. So simple, so at the everyday level.

Making mistakes is inherent in being a human being, I accept that. But indifference (of the doctor) and denial (by the directorate of the hospital who with the most friendly faces told me lies), I will never accept. That is why I have written this book, for me and other people who have become victims of medical blunders and suffer double because of the indifference of those people who are supposed to take care of their patients. In this book I praise the good doctors, nurses and therapists who helped me to recover and I describe how intense and long the way of rehabilitation is. Alas, the book is written in Dutch: "Van longontsteking naar rolstoel", in English title: "From pneumonia to wheelchair".

C STANDS FOR.....

Well, it indeed can stand for an infinite number of words in an infinite number of languages.

In our English language it has assumed a colloquially separate meaning as it anchors itself to the prefix "Big" to generate a word of dread in all but the naivest of mankind. And yet it is but one of a range of Catastrophes which confront us in our journey through our lives.

And each of those catastrophes in turn can arrange themselves within an enclaved hierarchical system which at times can bewilder us as we try to locate our personal occurrence within such.

And each such enclaved catastrophe within itself has a hierarchy of penetrating another's emotions. It can bewilder us and those around as we try to share that same event.

Events are just that: They are sequences of steps which we tread to reach a hoped-for destination. The steps chosen by each of us determined by previous experiences on such a road: None, some or all, of which we may or may not have trodden before.

Among the positive responses of bystanders is to offer Condolence and/or Commiseration.

Condolence can be offered without a clear comprehension of the event, merely a generic knowledge that such events have negative impacts on those affected. Nor is it necessary to understand what those impacts might be. Perhaps a simplistic vignette is the notion of war. Few would see such an event as anything but destructive, and all but those few would find inconceivable that anything positive could exist in such a morass. Indeed, they would respond with utter disdain should anyone suggest that even a minuscule grain of truth could be engrained there. What greater truth is there; that war is so ugly that to have endured one, one could only conclude that such an experience would have to be the greatest deterrent to mankind impulsively igniting another.

Commiseration requires an extra dimension. The other would be sharing the akin emotions while

not necessarily at that time enduring them. They know just what the index person is enduring. And perhaps even then, can one be certain that the experience is sufficiently akin to qualify as a shared endurance experience: What nuances might exist!

How simple it all seems to have offered the humane response. But how very complex it can be to ensure that one has recognised that a humane response is in order, and more so to classify it under condolence versus commiseration. The latter at the minimal requires both parties to have walked a road with a range of experiences simulating each other or at the very least hand in hand with such.

The more diverse the demographic we live among, the less chance of our finding occasion to commiserate with an afflicted person. Cultural diversity has many positives but the access to offering commiseration definitely recedes regardless of our intrinsic ability to offer warmth. Perhaps one could say that we cannot be sure that we have recognised the right blanket or the time to instigate its use.

After working all but half a century as a family physician that "Big C" was not new to my vocabulary. I have met it at all depths of penetration and among endless demographics. Each had a commonality in producing angst in the patient and their loved ones, not to mention my yet again needing to deliver unwished for news. Each had a medical ritual which one was now cast to follow up while carefully scrutinising the impact on all concerned: Remembering that the patient was my primary concern, but not omitting to remember that the referral of the overwhelmed relatives to their clinicians was an integral part of my task. More commonly I did not know these people and what Cs had passed their lives. To use the one size fits all was not what these distressed patients wanted or needed.

Despite all this clinical experience I had no idea of the enormity of such a task, be it applied to the Big C or any other C. It was only when I personally met that big C face to face that the voids in my knowledge began to exponentially escalate. Nor did my experience with complex past demographics, which I had ridden to retirement lighten that burden.

While heart-warming to meet again, this time for more than a coffee chat, it was to prove a major enigma when all those past chickens thronged home to roost all too fast for me to integrate their individuations: A vast array of wonderful intentions with positive intent, each with their individual programming firmly entrenched: Each with their nuances equally so. Somehow what once was logical had ceased to be so. All that my friends knew about me now generated conversational glitches. In times gone by that glitch was generated as an integral part of the dialogue, now its obliteration had become an urgent necessity.

I had struck a brick wall. My intent to acknowledge my friends' warmth reaching out to me was beyond my resources. They were the same people and I was the same Mai. That seemingly simple task of saying thank you had become a mammoth task.

They were saying the very same things I had said to patients and friends. I had shared the very same feelings as I had shared elsewhere. But doing so now felt hollow. It was not what I was not trying to convey.

One of the axioms of life, especially of friendship and camaraderie is to not distress those around. That includes those who have caused one past angst. And it includes our loved ones, as many of our lives have passed epochs which would, needlessly disclosed only generate distress which cannot be reversed, and even clarification would consume time better used for sharing more positive epochs which would improve the quality of the decades to follow

We all become chameleons at times and find ways of bypassing concerns which would leave those around feeling helpless. Indeed, we become very adept at such, and mask all manner of realities to ensure others' comfort. It is not something we consciously think about. It is something we have each done since the dawn of time instinctively.

Until we need to use a given tool we fail to recognise that it has unique properties. The chameleon is such a tool. While all requisites to blend with our environment are in situ we just continue with our dialogue oblivious that there are glitches in its utility.

The more diverse our journeys in life, and the more widely disseminated the locales of some of the epochs, the more difficult it becomes to translate our narrative coherently to those around. Should those epochs be of unlikely totally pleasurable content it would not matter if what one conveyed was misconstrued. Those around would be content to accept such enigmas.

Inevitably we all remain enigmas to even those dear to us and who have been assumed to know us best. Only the extent and significance of the enigma would vary.

The axiom of the Hippocratic oath must continue to underpin any further dialogue. One should still do no harm.

But who is one? The body remains such, but the brain while remaining the same physically at times loses the facility to continue the chameleon role. At times this occurs through degenerative or disease induced change: At others it is induced by medication where inhibition of hitherto suppressed narrative fails to occur. I well recall the last days of a friend who had been a POW in Changi. Given I have lived in a war zone I had been privy to some of what was now emerging in his fragmented distressed narrative and was able to fill in the voids to generate a coherent, while tragic account of the time.

Not so for his unfortunate wife whom he has spared such narrative. After a long happy marriage, she was left feeling bereft: How she wished that she had not been deprived of the opportunity to offer him that special brand of warmth. Yes, he had shared enough for her to offer condolences but too little to allow even minimal commiseration. Indeed, would that have even been possible?

Decades passed before television became available to permit any simulation of such times.

Perhaps one could say that limited commiseration may have become possible had he shared such narrative.

Among my Jewish colleagues are many who regret that their families had with kind intent deprived them of more substantial narrative permitting at least limited commiseration. How haunting it must be for them to live on with memories of such fragmented narrative, and no resources to clarify it.

Worse still lies the other pole. Europe during WW II was an epoch where the ugliest of human behaviour was rife. For this to occur sine qua non, were people who generated such. The degrees and cues to such we can never know, nor is it relevant to this discourse. However sufficient literature exists to indicate that some of their children were to become cognisant of such and had opportunity to attempt to clarify the circumstances to some degree and find peace with their own place in this world.

And of course, there were parents who offered no disclosure, nor opportunity for closure for their child. My mind conjures up the imagery of such a child overhearing hideous fragmented narrative, one where for the prefix "I didn't", or the name of the perpetrator with a similar name was missed/misheard due to voice volume or the suddenly overwhelmed loving audience. What must it be like to have said goodbye to what they now believed to be a monster, in lieu of the person they really were, or to attribute the actions of a namesake forever to whom they did not rightfully belong. Among my cohort are many elderly people who have seen the ravages of WW II. Most of our children have but TV simulations of some epochs; likewise, for most of our friends who were born where we were to arrive as proverbial suitcases our parents carried. Given even those simulations perplex them, it becomes a daunting task for them to generate sufficient coherency should there not be enough time before inhibition of narrative, beyond their control occurs against their lifelong wishes. I would doubt that among us there is anyone whose fragmented narrative could does not risk leaving distressed loved ones and friends in their wake, and with the fast attrition of that cohort an inevitability that clarification by another who has walked that road can never be their privilege. The angst of pain and mutilation as a legacy of illness is something we all understand. We have all endured some degree of such, only the extent varying. We can offer condolences and naturally read of the gratitude of the recipients of such.

But perhaps that is the far lesser pain. Everyday gained before such inhibition of narrative occurs becomes a huge blessing. Each such day allows one to complete a missing chapter with the glitches decreasing in frequency. How does one share such angst and uncertainty with one's friends: It is a struggle enough to share where one feels the imperative for disclosure!

I am glad that there has been time for sufficient disclosure to allow my children to recognise any future fragmented narrative should it occur; to know that they can walk tall: To know that my failure of any past disclosure, was to avert the fallout upon them of a time which is a painful regret all children of German soldiers. That their fathers, like my father were in high probability reluctant puppets of a small number of puppeteers: That the formers' road was not for them to choose.

How hard I have found to write thank you emails to my caring friends. I could not find the words to say that while I knew that my sunset would not be pretty it did not daunt me magnitude-wise. That the angst which daunted me was that time would obstruct my opportunity to ensure that storm clouds would not follow my sons for the rest of time. Sadly the mores of the Old Testament where one's children will inherit the sins of their forefathers will never die.

Mai Madisson

PS from Gonda

I sent a mail to Mai in which I told her what I experienced during my first study trip to Israel. Since it has to do with the last sentence of her text, I would like to say what happened. After a presentation of the former Dutch head rabbi, one of our group asked him about the sins of the fathers. I panicked immediately, because this was the question I had feared and that had almost pushed me to the decision not to take part in this trip. These were the words Dutch people cursed collaborator's children with.... My friends who had organised the study trip and who saw my reaction, gave me a sign: calm down, listen....

The old, tall rabbi stretched his back and said: 'Sir, you only quote one part of the text and the second part, which is the most important, you leave it out. There it is said: and I (God) will give a blessing to thousands of those who follow my commandments and fulfil them with love.

Thousands, that is far more than the third and the fourth generation, Sir. Of course, children become influenced by their parents, but they have their own free will. And if the parents have chosen a wrong way of life, the children have their own choice. And if they decide to choose the way which God laid down in the Scripts, {or in not-religious terms: compassion, carefulness, responsibility GSB} they receive a blessing and they become themselves a blessing for their children, grandchildren, friends and others. There are some of our sages who state that the blessing will even stretch back to the parents who left the good path.'

Ironically, these words of the rabbi gave me, the collaborator's daughter, finally the liberation which had been withheld from me till then by my own people. He told me that I could do something, that I could DO something and that I even could do something GOOD. That I had been given a blessing and had become myself a blessing for those around me.

Of course, people will continue to hate children of the "enemy", but they are wrong. It is not the fate, not the evil which will dictate the future, but it will be the blessing. I feel that Mai has made in her life the right choices and has become a blessing to her family, friends and patients and that is what I wrote to her, hoping that they can integrate the warmth of this blessing in the last part of her life.

WEBSITES

Organisation of Children of Dutch Collaborators:

www.werkgroepherkenning.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 Pädagogik:

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

Children in War Memorial

blog: <http://childreninwarmemorial.wordpress.com>

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