

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

I would like to thank Frans and Loes who from the very beginning of this International Bulletin, in November 1995, have taken care of the printing of the IB. In May they will stop their business and therefore this is the last issue that will be printed by them. Now only for 12 readers, in top years the number was much higher: 150 – 160; before I started the email version.

Baard Borge from Norway sent me an interesting article titled 'Transitional Victimization'. I asked him to make a summary of it for this issue of the IB. He was willing to do that, thank you Beard!

Inger Stridsklev sent me an article about the National Unification in Norway.

I came across an interesting book, written by Bessel van der Kolk, 'The body keeps the score'. In this issue I quote two passages of his book and I can recommend you to read it yourself. No easy reading, but very interesting!

Irene Glausiusz sent me the story of Chia Richter and the very special way in which she managed to survive the war.

One of the big issues about WWII in the Netherlands is the Famine Winter. I wrote a text on it, adding topics which are not yet researched but deserve to be studied in more detail

A policeman kindled in me an old fear, unfounded for that moment, but based on events of the past. I recollected two other stories of unfounded, nevertheless, very real fear which I publish in this bulletin.

In a brochure announcing commemoration ceremonies on behalf of the Liberation of 75 years ago, I found a translated poem of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, resistance fighter shot some days before the end of the war. In the internet I found some moving sentences of letters sent to Bonhoeffer's twin sister by one of the inmates of the same prison.

Nicholas Winton saved a couple of hundreds of Jewish children living in Czechoslovakia. His rescue activity became not known until 1988 when his efforts to save these children were revealed in a BBC program.

Www.russenkinder.de helps children of soldiers of the Red Army to find their relatives. In their newsletter of February they published two letters from people who had been given help. Anatoly Rothe, the chairman, gave me permission to translate these letters for this bulletin.

Rutger Bregman has written a book about the influence of negative news. It is not yet published in English, but it deserves to be translated in other languages!

In this year of commemoration I would like to tell you how my Liberation day was wronged by the arrest of my mother, me and my sister. The issues freedom, safety and liberation play an important role in my life, I like to share some stories with you.

Please let me know any change in (email)address, so that we can stay in contact. The next issue is planned for October 2020. Commentaries, new articles or other contributions are welcome until October 1.

Warm regards to you all,

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

“TRANSITIONAL VICTIMIZATION - Collaborators’ Offspring as Children at Risk.” (Excerpt from an article published in “Children & Society” volume 33, 2019, pp 213-22.)

by Baard Herman Borge

Using transition theory from political science, this paper analyzes how the lives of children of Norwegians punished for collaboration with the German occupant were adversely influenced by transitional justice after the return to democracy in 1945. The paper highlights how the complexity and hectic character of such regime changes are associated with a high risk for unintended social outcomes, a risk that has received little attention in the study of transition processes. Findings indicate that in order to avoid harmful consequences for children, careful and long-term thinking is essential when new democracies select a transitional justice-strategy.

The empirical case is taken from mid-20th century Norwegian history. During Germany’s occupation of Norway 1940-45 around 55 000 joined Vidkun Quisling’s collaborationist movement «Nasjonal Samling» (NS). As a result, they were commonly seen as traitors and in the post-war judicial settlement collectively penalized for treachery. As will be shown, transitional justice can be carried out in a number of ways, out of which each tendentially is associated with certain unintended outcomes. In this article, I demonstrate how the children of ex-collaborators in many ways and through various phases of their lives were negatively influenced by their family background. The empirical analysis is based on quantitative data collected through a survey in 2001 among 3761 Norwegians whose parents once were penalized for treason.

By and large, the findings as anticipated suggested that a large share of the children have become victims of harmful side effects of the transitional justice process after the liberation. All the specific problems studied seemed to have persevered for many years after the war, but while concrete discrimination of the children in due course decreased, their background continued to adversely affect their mental well being and emotional bond with their fathers.

Hence, many of the individuals in question have lived more difficult lives as a result of something they themselves were neither responsible for nor had any control over. Almost certainly, some of the children were hit even harder than their parents, who as adults probably were more able to cope with negative social consequences. Seen as an example of a general phenomenon whereby transitional justice affects others than those penalized for their own actions, the experiences of the NS-members’ children can be termed transitional victimization.

Case studies of regime transitions teach us that they always create winners and losers, but also that who fills the respective roles will vary, depending on the nature of the transition and the contents of pacts closed between key actors. My reason for studying the children of NS-collaborators has been that they as a group, together with children fathered by German soldiers (Mochmann and Larsen 2008), in all likelihood were among the most adversely affected by the transition in Norway. Their experiences therefore offer insight into how transitional justice under certain circumstances affects individuals not targeted.

A good illustration of long-term social outcomes of the transition is to compare how selected categories within the war generation's offspring have fared in life. On that subject previous research points to a contrast between the children studied here and the offspring of individuals who were active in the resistance movement or sent to concentration camps during the war. Unlike the children of NS-members, Norwegians whose parents had stood on the 'right side' during the years of occupation overall appeared psychologically healthy and described good parental relations. Most also reported a general content with life (Major 1996). With parents hailed and respected by society, their family background in all probability was an advantage that I with another new term will characterize as transitional empowerment. Thus, while the social status of former resisters almost certainly had beneficial effects for their children, the traitor stigma of ex-collaborators, who were subjected to what I refer to as transitional depowerment, had detrimental effects on their offspring.

This study has a series of theoretical implications. First, it shows the limitations of transition theory, which tends to overlook social repercussions of transitional justice-decisions. Originally developed in the late 1980s based on the so-called third wave transitions of that era, i.e. the (re)birth of fragile democracies through negotiated settlements with authoritarian regimes, some of the theory's underlying assumptions do not necessarily fit all transitions to democracy (Hazan 2017). For example, the magnitude of a post-transitional criminal justice process, i.e. how many should be trialed, seldom is problematized, other than the observation that in many countries, owing to the power balance or other restricting conditions, too few are punished for crimes against humanity (Elster 2004-b).

However, the strong state authority needed to prosecute all human rights violations as well as any other offence also constitutes a potential source of power abuse (Zalaquett 1995; Huyse 1995). If new democracies that are not particularly restrained by circumstances choose to punish unreasonably many or breach legal principles, a transitional justice process even may create new unfairness that can be labeled transitional injustice (Borge 2012).

Another problem inherent in standard transition theory, also linked to the scope of transitional justice-processes, is a tendency to oversimplify the concept of collaboration under the old regime. In general, the field of transitional justice is replete with categorical dichotomies, of which resistance vs. collaboration, a typical 'good-vs.-bad' dichotomy, is but one example (Turner 2013). In real cases the boundary between the two choices of action seldom is clear-cut or easy to draw. An all-inclusive form of transitional justice that targets individuals far beyond the circle of individuals who are directly responsible for human rights abuses must handle a variety of borderline cases, which makes it problematic to find the right yardstick to impose sanctions (Kirchheimer 1995; Schwartz 1995).

Finally, this case study also has implications for political practice. After the downfall of an undemocratic regime some form of punitive process may be necessary to bring persons responsible for crimes to justice. Nevertheless, the question is how unintended consequences, above all transitional victimization of children and other innocent third parties, can be avoided or at least limited even under such circumstances. Post-transition situations in their very nature are complex or even chaotic and emotions tend to run high, as often expressed by demands for revenge against individuals identified with the old regime. Still, political leaders have a responsibility to think rationally and consider likely short- and long term consequences of each transitional justice-option carefully, even though decisions of this kind always are made under uncertainty (Borge 2012).

Based on the survey, and presuming that a different kind of judicial settlement with the NS after the transition in 1945 would have led to other consequences for the children, three pieces of advice seem appropriate for future transitions to democracy. First, transitional justice ought to focus on political leaders and actual perpetrators. Mass criminal processes as well as broad uses of lustration should be avoided, since both schemes have wide ranging destructive social ramifications. Second, governments should not attempt to depower individuals affected by transitional justice since that will also adversely impacts their nearest, including children. Instead, policies should further social reintegration once sentences are served. Third, the offspring of ex-collaborators are children at risk and may therefore need protection in the form of special measures in schools and elsewhere.

On all three counts, new or reborn democracies should distance themselves from the repressive practices of authoritarian regimes in their handling of alleged internal enemies. A contemporary example is Erdogan's Turkey, where 115 000 citizens have been banned from society as traitors after a failed military coup d'état on July 15 in 2016 (Puchot 2018). As always, a government-controlled stigmatization and depowerment of targeted citizens amount to transitional injustice and leads to victimization of families and children.

DECENDANTS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL UNIFICATION, NORWAY

This autumn, I wanted to publish a book about my family history in my home town Skien, Norway. I did not want anybody to interfere with what I wrote, so I published it at my own expense. There are two printing offices in town. From the one I had got an offer, which I wanted to accept. Then the chief contacted me, being in doubt whether he wanted to print my book. I gave him the text, and asked for a speedy answer, which has not yet come. The book is now printed at the other printing office.

For about 40 years I have been a member of the Christian Medical Association in Norway, I even have been on the board. In their last magazine, there was an article by professor Hans Fredrik Dahl, also known for having written a two volume biography of Vidkun Quisling. The article was called «The contempt of weakness», which he did not only associate with the German Nazis, but also with the Norwegian members of the National Unification (NS). I asked the leader if I might post a comment. It was refused. Here is what I tried to express:

Professor Hans Fredrik Dahl had the article «Our contempt of weakness, to live with war and Nazism. He asked why the story of WWII is so tenacious. My attempt of an answer, at least in the example of Norway, is that there never has been given the possibility of asking basic questions of the official and dominating black and white story about the war and the occupation of Norway, a story which is never allowed to be forgotten. The members of the National Unification were told they were Nazis, even if they had no more «contempt of weakness» than most Norwegians. National Unification introduced child benefits, unemployment benefits, war harm benefits, and provided for the families of sailors who sailed for the allies. The Norwegian-German Blehr-Backe-agreement provided that there was no hunger in Norway in spite of the allied blockade like it was during the war 1807-14 and in the «Hungerwinter» in Holland 1944-45. The National Unification was the first beside «The Christian Peoples Party» with a paragraph for Christianity.

After 1940, there has never been given any real possibility of a dialogue between the two views in Norway. The experiences, not least after the liberation made all accusations reciprocal. To defend the weak part after the war was named «defending Nazism» or evil itself. When members of the National Unification did not tell their children, it was more often in shame concerning the Norwegian society than of themselves. They did not experience post-war-Norway as «a society practising a tolerance accepting rather than expelling others», which Dahl thinks characteristic of democracy. The descendants often have never heard other versions than the official black and

white story, and they associate the National Unification with Nazism, inhumanity and treason. Dahl mentions two descendants who have written books. The grandfather of one of them, was one of the few Nazis in the National Unification. The father of the other one fought on the Eastern Front, and the son probably still believes that his father «certainly took part in the persecution of the Jews», no matter how much his father denied it. A third such author wrote about his grandfather who fought honourably as well in spring 1940 and on the Eastern Front. In spite of having a spouse who had studied languages, he was not able to understand the greeting «Heil og sæl». This is the greeting of the members of the National Unification, so that he could not imagine it meant anything positive. It is Norwegian and means «May you be a whole and a blessed person». A fourth author «saw» to her utter dismay the Swastika in her grandfather's papers from the time Norway was occupied. In fact, there were no swastikas. What was really there, was the sign of the National Unification, the cross of the eternal king of Norway, the Saint Olav. It is taken directly from the shield of St. Olav, as depicted in a medieval painting in the oldest part of the medieval cathedral of Trondheim. To be heard in post-war Norway it is compulsory to denounce the members of the National Unification.

In a meeting of descendants, «Vennetreff» was a grandchild, who had not known his grandfather. His grandfather was a widower, with 5 children. In 1945 his youngest child was 5 years old. He tried, in vain, not to be arrested. Thus he also lost his children. They were placed with other people, telling the children what a terrible criminal their father was. The grandchild had sympathy with this grandfather, and did not know any other way of knowing about his grandfather, than to associate with the neo Nazis, as what he had heard about his grandfather, was that he was a Nazi. The real Norwegian Nazi party, the NNSAP, was conveniently forgotten in 1945, to make National Unification count as a Nazi-party. Later, many possibilities have been closed this grandson as well professionally as privately. He has not felt welcome anywhere. The descendants of the members of the National Unification should have the right to keep the fourth and the eighth commandment. To learn by WWII, the experiences of everyone should be heard.

IC Stridsklev

Ida Jackson: Morfar, Hitler og jeg. Aschehoug Oslo 2014

Bjørn Westlie: Fars krig. Aschehoug Oslo 2008

Olav Jørgenvåg: Fra fenrik til fører. Pax Oslo 2017

Tone B. Bergflødt: Farfars skrin - i skyggen av NS - Prego Mobile Bærum 2018

Inger Cecilie Stridsklev: Det sunkne land – En historie om en NS-familie, en fabrikk og et gravsted. Eget forlag. Skien 2019

These are the books I refer to. Five of the authors have been speakers at «Vennetreff for NS-barn».

BESSEL VAN DER KOLK THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE

Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma

Penquin Random House UK

Quotes from chapter 13, **Healing from trauma: owning your self**

“Nobody can 'treat' a war, or abuse, rape, molestation, or any horrendous event, for that matter: what has happened cannot be undone. But what *can* be dealt with are the imprints of the trauma on body, mind, and soul: the crushing sensations in your chest that you may label as anxiety or depression; the fear of losing control; always being on alert for danger or rejection; the self-loathing; the nightmares and flashbacks; the fog that keeps you from staying on task and from engaging fully in what you are doing: being unable to fully open your heart to another human being.

Trauma robs you of the feeling that you are in charge of yourself, of what I will call self-leadership in the chapters to come. The challenge of recovery is to reestablish ownership of your body and your mind – of your self. This means feeling free to know what you know and to feel what you feel without becoming overwhelmed, enraged, ashamed, or collapsed. For most people this involves (1) finding a way to become calm and focused, (2) learning to maintain that calm in response to images, thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations that remind you of the past, (3) finding a way to be fully alive in the present and engaged with the people around you, (4) not having to keep secrets from your self including secrets about the ways that you have managed to survive. These goals are not steps to be achieved one by one, in some fixed sequence. They overlap, and some may be more difficult than others, depending on individual circumstances. In each of the chapters that follow, I'll talk about specific methods or approaches to accomplish them. I have tried to make these chapters useful both to trauma survivors and to the therapists who are treating them. People under temporary stress may also find them useful.”

“As the previous parts of this book have shown, the engines of post traumatic reactions are located in the emotional brain. In contrast with the rational brain, which expresses itself in thoughts, the emotional brain manifests itself in physical reactions: gut-wrenching sensations, heart pounding, breathing becoming fast and shallow, feelings of heartbreak, speaking with an uptight and reedy voice, and the characteristic body movements that signify collapse, rigidity, rage, or defensiveness. Why can't we just be reasonable? And can understanding help? The rational, executive brain is good in helping understand where feelings come from.[..] However, the rational brain cannot *abolish* emotions, sensations, or thoughts.[..] Understanding *why* you feel a certain way does not change *how* you feel.[..]

The fundamental issue in resolving traumatic stress is to restore the proper balance between the rational and emotional brains, so that you can feel in charge of how you respond and how you conduct your life.”

From the Epilogue, **Choices to be made:**

“Trauma constantly confronts us with our fragility and with man's inhumanity to man but also with our extraordinary resilience. I have been able to do this work for so long because it drew me to explore our sources of joy, creativity, meaning, and connection – all the things that make life worth living. I can't begin to imagine how I would have coped with what many of my patients have endured, and I see their symptoms as part of their strength – the ways they learned to survive. And despite all their suffering many have gone on to become loving partners and parents, exemplary teachers, nurses, scientists, and artists.”

Irene Glausiusz in Conversation with CHIA EVE RICHTER (nee Metzger)

My conversation with Chia Richter started when we shared a taxi travelling to and from the “**We are Here Survivors' Club**”, that meets twice weekly for social activities in the town of Shaare Tikveh, half an hour's drive from Tel Aviv. Gradually I learned about her early life in the small Polish town of Zarnok.

So the story unfolded. Chia was born on 13th May 1930 to parents Malka (Langsam) and Yacov Metzger. Chia's father owned a shop selling dress material.

The small town of Zardok had a certain percentage of Jewish people. There were several synagogues that maintained study groups and children's classes for Hebrew biblical study.

On 1st September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. On Rosh haShanah, the date of the Jewish New Year, many synagogues were burnt and nobody dared go out at night, because it was fraught with danger. By then, Chia was 9 year old.

To escape to this menace, three families hired a wagon and traveled across the Zan River to the Ukrainian town of Kliashpow (under Russian control) where Chia's father thought it would be safer.

They stayed with their grandparents and an uncle plus his eight children in a big house that included a shop that sold nearly everything; there was a bakery, where the women made bread and cakes for sale. They all worked very hard, including Chia. In 1940, Chia's mother gave birth to a baby boy and named him Meir Moshe. The family stayed in Kliashpow for half a year.

At some point the Germans obtained a list of names (including the Metzgers) and told everyone to return home. However, the Russians intervened, accused them of being spies, and at gunpoint said: '*You have half an hour to get ready and to take your possessions*'. They were about to be deported to Siberia. The family gathered together whatever they could, before being taken to a railway station where 30 cattle wagons lay in wait. There they met many people from their home town who had also sought refuge, including relatives who wanted to save their children from deportation. Some children escaped (*It's not exactly sure where to? Perhaps they were hidden or fostered by Polish families?*)

They boarded the train and en-route, stayed two days in the town of Dobromil – it was impossible to escape from the train. Then they traveled thousands of kilometers and came to a port to take ship and were stuck there for about two months. They had brought with them special hard biscuits that could be preserved and people managed to get some water, and other types of food such as bread and milk. After a long time, the voyage ended, they disembarked and another train took them further – Chia thought by now they were in Irkutsk, Siberia. From there they were put onto trucks and ultimately arrived at a hilltop where families were allocated a place in a huge room that was very primitive, like a prison. It was extremely cold, by now winter, the outside temperature nearly - 50 degrees C. Despite this terrible hardship, the men went to the forest to cut wood for the kitchen.

By and by, their group moved to a nearby village where Russian families lived and fortunately as Chis recollected "*We had picked up some Russian language*". Chia's father had taken some of his stock, which he bartered for food, like onions and eggs. Father was very smart and he obtained a grinder to sieve maize, so they could make flour, which they shared with other people. They also had oatmeal which was made into porridge and they were allocated a very heavy type of bread. They found a way of managing; nevertheless her father's legs became very swollen and he needed hospital treatment. There was no medicine and no school!

Luckily, news circulated clandestinely, so they knew about the progress of the war and that sooner or later it would end. Of course they had no word of their families. All the time in the Russian exile, their dream was to journey back to their Polish hometown.

They left Siberia in 1945, when Chia's brother Meir Moshe was five years old and did return briefly to Poland. By then it was very dangerous, for the Poles were again creating pogroms. People wanted to reclaim their homes, but it was too risky, actually impossible.

Leaving Poland, they traveled to Czechoslovakia, then onwards to a Displaced Person's Camp (DP Camp) in the British Sector of Germany. At that stage, Meir Moshe became ill, but Chia's parents didn't want him to go to hospital, so they bought medicine and he seemed to improve, but to no avail. Later he was admitted to a medical center. Meir Moshe was crying and told them he didn't feel well and tragically, after one month, he died. They felt sure that he was not properly cared for. This was the worst time of their lives, and sadly they had no photos of him.

After the traditional thirty days of mourning for the child, Chia's father went to look for relatives in other DP Camps and found three cousins.

Now wonderfully, representatives came from Israel to the camps together with ORT (An American Organisation for the Promotion of Skilled Trades) and other welfare groups sent supplies. Chia went to school and learned Hebrew and English and also took sewing classes. Sometimes, Chia went to an aunt and uncle (Moshe and Mina Metzger) who had no children and they took her to see her first movie. Chia said: "*I still have the programme*".

Some families in the DP Camps were given the choice of leaving Europe to settle in either America or Israel and despite the attractions of the USA, Chia's parents chose Israel (her aunt and uncle

made the choice to go to the USA and wanted her to go with them, but she refused). In 1949, the Richter family sailed from the port of Marseille, landing in Haifa – welcomed in the newborn State of Israel.

What a miraculous tale of survival!

THE FAMINE WINTER

If someone says: the winter of 1944-1945, everyone in the Netherlands will react with: the Famine Winter.

It is easy to understand why there is a consensus of opinion about this special topic of World War II's history, because at least 20.000 people died from starvation. The pictures taken in that period show us people thin like skeletons, families all day in bed because there was no electricity or gas to warm the houses because the wood had become scarce. The trees in the gardens and in the public parks had been cut down, people used wood from doors and cupboards to lit the stove for a couple of hours and to warm the food they got from the soup kitchen.

There is no consensus about the causes of the disastrous food conditions. Some historians lay the full responsibility for this catastrophe with the Dutch government in exile, which ordered a general strike of the railways in September 1944, with the aim of upsetting the German strategies. The provinces in the south of the Netherlands had been liberated by the Allied Armies, but above the rivers - dividing the country in north and south - the Germans still had the overhand. There was paid too few attention to the effects of the general strike for the transport of food and fuel. These transports stopped and the inhabitants in the big cities in the west of the Netherlands very soon saw the consequences for their daily life. Why did the Dutch government in exile pay so few attention to the fate of their citizens?

Others put the responsibility fully with the Occupiers who, on purpose, stopped the transport of food and fuel. This, however, is not true, because the Germans feared rebellion when the people became too hungry. So at least some transports continued, despite the strike, but it was far too few.

In the liberated cities and villages in the south, moreover, the food and fuel conditions were hardly better than in the west. Only in the east and the north the people still had enough food, coals and wood. Famous are the journeys, children, young people and whole families organised to travel by bike (on wooden wheels) or to walk to the east in order to get food in change for clothes, jewelry or furniture. In fact, because of these journeys, the people in the east and the north experienced the consequences of war for the first time in 4 years. In some way, only then 'started' the war for them.

There are some myths about the food droppings which have even at present many adherents, although the facts show that the events have been different than people remember them. In November 1944, the Dutch government in exile in London asked Churchill to send airplanes to the western provinces of the Netherlands and to drop food for the starving population. He refused, because he did not want that those food rations should fall in the hands of the Germans. Strategic motives were more important than a gesture of humanity.

The Swedish government learned about the dramatic situation in the Netherlands and sent bags with flour to be dropped in the coast regions. People remember how 'the Swedish white loaves' fell from the sky, they saw them themselves! However, what was dropped were only bags, no loaves! Then, finally, in the end of April 1945, the English government gave permission to drop food in the starving regions. The loads consisted of canned food, bags with flour, sugar and salt. For some people this food came just in time, they survived. Others died some days after Liberation Day, May 5, 1945, because their bodies simply did not function any longer.

The overall picture of the Famine Winter is that of apathetic people waiting for their death. This is far too simple. The food journeys show the injustice of this picture. Moreover, in many villages and

towns people organised transports to villages in the east of the Netherlands for children who were underfed. Members of churches had contacts with people in the rest of the country, parents sent their children to family members or friends. Their history is not studied seriously until now. The starving population showed a lot of inventiveness to overcome the problems, e.g. by 'dry-biking' in the room and produce electricity with the dynamo. They discovered that one could eat tulip bulbs, that chicory gave some kind of coffee.

Because of the overall attention to the Famine Winter, for decades until now, the suffering of the people in other regions of the Netherlands have been quipped. The liberated people saw themselves suddenly in the front line between Allied Armies and the Germans. Inhabitants of villages and cities alongside the rivers were forced to leave their homes and to look for shelter in other regions. When, at the end of the war, they could return to their domiciles, they found their villages and cities destroyed, houses had been plundered, not only by the Germans but also by the soldiers of the Allied Armies. Until now, the story of their evacuation and the bitter coming home did not find a serious researcher to write it down.

There is another event that did not get the attention it deserved in the decades that came after the war. After the Allied Armies had reached the Dutch border and the Germans resisted with unexpected power, the staff of the Allied Armies thought it necessary to bomb the dykes of several Dutch islands in the south-west of the Netherlands. The civil population had not got a warning about what the bombers intended and the seawater pouring in through the bombed dykes struck people and cattle. Many died in the cold water. Those who could reach safe places were evacuated to other regions of the Netherlands. It took months before they could go home, because the dykes had to be fetched and the water had to be pumped out into the sea. This story is a striking example of the all-importance of the military strategies and how civilians have been seen as 'collateral damage'. It is a shame.

The water flood of 1944/1945 disappeared in oblivion when in February 1953 a north-west storm flooded the islands in this province again. More than 1800 people disappeared in the waves. The whole nation helped the inhabitants who lost everything they had. This flood became THE Water Flood – the man-made water flood in the Famine Winter became a relic no one ever spoke about. Until now, 75 years later,

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

UNFOUNDED FEAR, NEVERTHELESS REAL

In front of our door stands a policeman. We ask him to come in, so that speaking with each other is more comfortable. He says he have got an anonymous call from someone who was concerned about the fact that my husband, walking with a stick for blind people, nevertheless was driving a car. We can very soon convince him that there is a misinterpretation at stake: my husband used to walk with a Nordic walking stick, not with a stick used by blind people. But since September, when he had fallen on the street, he is using a normal walking stick or a walker. It is strange that the anonymous call came in November, 2 months after the last day that my husband used the Nordic walking stick! We show the policeman my husband's drivers license, renewed in August, after a medical check by a special physician. The policeman makes a picture of the stick and things are cleared.

Three days later, there is a policeman standing in front of our door. He has got an anonymous call from someone.....and he tells the same story as his colleague three days earlier. We invite him to come in and tell him about our conversation with his colleague. It is strange, this policeman has got the call the day after his colleague's visit.... So now we have two anonymous calls with the same contents: someone is concerned for the security on the street because a blind person is driving a car....A couple of times this policeman underlines the real concern of this man or woman – and the

more he underlines that fact, the less I believe that this is the truth. I point to the fact that real concerned people don't wait 2 months before calling if they feel security is at stake. Again, we show him my husband's drivers license, add that even two doctors have given permission to renew the license, he makes a picture and adds then: 'I will control the data, but maybe this can lead to the necessity for an extra drivers' test'.

When he is away I am puzzled. Why didn't he know that one of his colleagues had visited us? Why don't he see that it is more than likely that the calls have come from the same person? And if it is not because of concern, whatever is then the reason? Why mentioning the extra drivers' test? I feel afraid, threatened by an anonymous evil, stressed and in danger. I call my youngest son and he says after I have told everything: 'Don't worry, this is a crazy story, nothing can happen to you, forget it'. But I cannot forget it. And then suddenly comes the insight that I feel now like I felt in the past, in the years I had to conceal the fact that my father had been a member of the Dutch Nazi Party. In those years I felt the threatening from all sides, which could strike me at any moment. What I feel now, is the old feeling of the past. However, it is not at all compatible with the actual situation. And then I can let it go.

Then I remember two events of a similar fear. Gunild and I were members of an encounter group in Remscheid, Germany. An English journalist had interviewed our group and published her article in a well-known magazine. She had sent to us a copy. Suddenly Gunild became terribly afraid and said: 'Why did I give her my real name, why did I not use a pseudonym and give her the name of another town as domicile?' At first I did not understand what the problem was, and did not take it serious, but then I saw that she was really terrified. Her fear now was an echo of some fear in the past and that fear was real. So I asked her: 'Gunild, how many Gunilds will live in Bonn and how can people identify you as the Gunild mentioned in the magazine? Even if you had given your family name, there will be a hundred of Gunilds with exactly the same name, so there is no danger to you now.' She thought for a while, looked at me and said: 'You are right. How stupid to be afraid!' No, it was not stupid, it was the real fear of the past that appeared suddenly in an actual situation. The fear was unfounded in the present, but it was rooted in the events of the past and had been in that period very real.

In 1989 we had a small encounter group of children of war from different backgrounds in the Netherlands. One afternoon, Edith entered and said: 'I am at loss, I did not take my bag with me when I parked my car at the railway station, it is awful'. We, the members of the group, asked her if her purse or her credit cards were in the bag. No, she had her purse and cards with her. But there was a notebook in the bag with our names and addresses – and that was the problem! We understood immediately how terrifying this situation was to her as a Jewess. Lists with names had played such a crucial role during the war in the framework of the Holocaust, we recognized her agony. But, it was almost 45 years after the war. The real fear of the past did not fit the actual situation.

Someone asked her if she had a radio in her car; she had. Another asked her if there were precious objects in her bag. No, apart from a special pen she had received from her children. Then we said to her: 'Edith, if (young) people break into your car, it is more than likely that they will take your radio. And if they take your bag and see there is no purse in it, they will smash it away or eventually will take out the beautiful pencil. But why should they be interested in names and addresses? Do you think they will lay themselves out to phone us?' Then Edith sighted and said: 'You are right, it is no war time, at present lists with names and addresses are just that and no longer a danger like in the past.'

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

SHUT DOWN THE DOORS OF WOE

I'm waiting very patiently
For the moment that my eyes can see
The long awaited change of times
A new daybreak - the end of night
Darkness changing into light
I want to hear those freedom chimes.

I want to hear them ring out loud
High above a gathering crowd
Their joyful message to mankind
Connecting every one on earth
With peace and banning all the hurt
Just leaving these uncertain times behind.

Shut down the doors of woe
In every place let flow
The stream of joy and peace
That bloodshed now may cease
Let the evil ones be filled with fear
with every clock's chime they will hear
While the righteous ones cast off their chains
And finally feel free again.

I' m waiting very patiently
For the moment that my eyes can see
The long awaited change of times
A new daybreak – the end of night
Darkness changing into light
Oh let me hear those freedom chimes.

Sjef Hermans

a free interpretation of one of the songs written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer during his captivity

POSTSCRIPT from the book “**DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, REALITY AND RESISTANCE**”, written by Larry L. Rasmussen
Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 2005 (first published in 1972 by Abingdon Press)

Portions of letters from an Italian resistance fighter to Bonhoeffer's twin sister and brother-in-law form a fitting close to the treatment of Bonhoeffer's own commentary on his resistance activity and the theology and ethics that lie behind and run through it with formative force. That precisely these recollections are most vivid to a fellow inmate who had known Dietrich Bonhoeffer only a very short while may well be an index of their importance to Bonhoeffer himself.

....When we had our walk together, half an hour or longer every day, we talked of political, religious and scientific problems....He explained to me the meaning of many passages in the Gospel and told me that he was writing a poem on the death of Moses, when Moses climbed Mount Nebo and God showed him, before he died, the land that would one day belong to his people, but that he would never enter. He loved this theme....He also spoke of the tragic fate of the German people, whose qualities and shortcomings he knew. He told me that it was very difficult to desire its defeat, but that it was necessary. He said he had little hope that a German government could save Germany from the worst consequences of defeat by making a sensible capitulation. The Nazis had

a fanatically tragic will to involve everyone in the catastrophe. He observed that Wagner's music was, for him an expression of this barbarous pagan psychology. He stated that, as a pastor, it was his duty, not only to comfort the victims of the man who drove in a busy street like a maniac, but also to try to stop him. The leading German families had in part expiated their guilt by trying to remove Hitler, though far too late. He said that he was not sure that he would see the end, for he feared that he would be then taken to a concentration camp, where he would be killed along with other political prisoners. In that case he hoped that he would be able to accept death without fear, in the belief that it was in a just cause....He was always so interesting and good-humoured. He was the best and most gifted man I have ever met.

But now, with both freedom and honour denied,
before men we can hold up our heads in pride.
And if we are brought into evil fame,
we ourselves before men can clear our name.
Man against man, our ground we choose,
and we the accused will in turn accuse.

Brother, till after the long night
our own dawn rises,
let us withstand.
(From "Prison", quoted earlier, pp 127-28)

Excerpts from the letters of March 6 and April 2, 1946, to Dr. and Mrs. Gerhard Leibholz from Professor Gaetano Latmiral as quoted from the *Biography*, pp. 754-55

SIR NICHOLAS GEORGE WINTON MBE (born Wertheim: 19 May 1909 – 1 July 2015) was a British humanitarian who rescued children from Nazi Germany.

Shortly before Christmas 1938, Winton was planning to travel to Switzerland for a skiing holiday. He decided instead to visit [Prague](#) and help Martin Blake, who was in Prague as an associate of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia then in the process of being occupied by Germany, and had called Winton to ask him to assist in Jewish welfare work. Winton established an organization to aid children from Jewish families at risk from the [Nazis](#). He set up his office at a dining room table in his hotel in Wenceslas Square In November 1938, following *Kristallnacht* in Nazi-ruled Germany. The House of Commons approved a measure to allow the entry into Britain of refugees younger than 17, provided they had a place to stay and a warranty of £50 was deposited for their eventual return to their own country.

The Netherlands

An important obstacle was getting official permission to cross into the Netherlands, as the children were to embark on the ferry at Hook of Holland. After *Kristallnacht* the Dutch government officially closed its borders to any Jewish refugees. The border guards, *marechaussees*, searched for them and returned any found to Germany, despite the horrors of *Kristallnacht* being well known.

Winton succeeded, thanks to the guarantees he had obtained from Britain. After the first train, the process of crossing the Netherlands went smoothly. Winton ultimately found homes in Britain for 669 children, many of whose parents would perish in the Auschwitz concentration camp. His mother worked with him to place the children in homes and later hostels. Throughout the summer of 1939, he placed photographs of the children in *Picture Post* seeking families to accept them.

He also wrote to US politicians such as Roosevelt, asking them to take more children. He said that two thousand more might have been saved if they had helped, but only Sweden took any besides those sent to Britain. The last group of 250, scheduled to leave Prague on 1 September 1939,

were unable to depart. With Hitler's Invasion of Poland on the same day, the Second World War had begun. Of the children due to leave on that train, only two survived the war.

Winton acknowledged the vital roles in Prague of Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick, Nicholas Stopford, Beatrice Wellington (born 15 June 1907), Josephine Pike, and Bill Barazetti (1914–2000) who also worked to evacuate children from Europe. Winton was in Prague for only about three weeks before the Nazis occupied the country. He never set foot in Prague Station. As he later wrote, "Chadwick did the more difficult and dangerous work after the Nazis invaded... he deserves all praise".

Winton kept silent about his humanitarian activities. In 1988, however, his wife Grete found in the loft a scrapbook containing lists of children, mentioning their names, data about their parents and the names and addresses of the families who had welcomed the children in their homes. Eighty of these 'Winton children' were found in Great Britain after there had been sent letters to the old addresses.

His work went unnoticed by the world for over 50 years, until 1988 when he was invited to the BBC television programme '*That's Life!*' where he was reunited with several of the children that he had saved. The British press celebrated him and dubbed him the "British Schindler". In 2003, Winston was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for "services to humanity, in saving Jewish children from Nazi Germany occupied Czechoslovakia". On 28 October 2014, he was awarded the highest honour of the Czech Republic, the Order of the White Lion (1st class), by Czech president Milos Zeman. He died in 2015 at the age of 106.

Of the 669 children saved from the Holocaust through Winston's efforts, more than 370 have never been traced. BBC News suggested in 2015 that they may not know the full story of how they survived the war.

Some of these children spoke about their experiences.

"There was a long queue and at the end of the queue was a small office, and we got some forms to fill in," said Ruth Halova, who was born in Prague. "Within three months we got the names of foster parents who were prepared to take us in, and mine were a Mr and Mrs Jones from Birmingham."

The 90-year-old added: "There was a steam engine, the old wagons were made of wooden planks. Everybody got this label on cardboard with a piece of string with a number [on it], and then we were shoved into the carriages."

Mrs Maresova said: "We were rather excited because we thought it was some kind of adventure." However, she added the image of all the parents' "pressed faces to the windows and tears running down their faces, and wondering why they're crying", had remained with her all her life.

Mrs Lesser said: "The only thing I had was a pendant with a picture of Moses on one side, and on the other were the Ten Commandments, and that's the only piece of jewelry that I brought with me. Apart from that I had a Czech storybook... I had no dolls, teddy bears or anything like that. I just had two suitcases with clothes in."

WWW.RUSSENKINDER.DE

Dear Mr Rothe,

With much interest I read your article in the Freien Presse Chemnitz. Until now I did not know that there was such an informative and well written website giving information about the issue Russenkinder. I am very much impressed by the committed way in which you deal with this theme. I was impressed by the number of Russenkinder who live in Germany. It is overwhelming.

Your words have given me the courage to start my own journey to find my father, a step I considered to do year after year, but did not. But I feel this need to be done at the right moment in one's life and with the right intention and need to found out one's roots. Now, I have that age and your article and the existence of your organisation helped me to take the decision to go in search of my father.

I am one of the 'younger' people (born in 1967). My father was a Russian soldier and you know all the consequences this have had for children of soldiers of the Red Army.

Even when my research will not give me the information I need and I will not be successful in my efforts, I will thank you for the wonderful work you are doing and I will contact you whenever I have information to share with you.

Yours sincerely,

Dear Mr Rothe,

I would like to thank you for your newsletter which gives so much useful information and which I read always with interest. I am very glad that you solved the big problem with incorrect information, that you are now accepted and that ignorance has stopped.

I reached the point that I found my father (alas, he died four months before I got his address) and a half-brother. Moreover, I have now a family with many members. In the past I had the intention to write down my story, but I do not manage to do it, it is too emotional to me. I have a daily mail contact with my half-brother, that is the best gift I ever received. It takes a lot of time – one and a half to two hours – but this gives me the opportunity to improve my knowledge of the Russian language. I use a dictionary, an old custom, because I don't like the translation programmes in the internet.

In October 2019 we met him and his wife in Moscow for the first time and in May they will visit us. We are looking forward to see them again.

Some weeks ago I have read the book written by Ulrich Schacht 'Auf der Suche nach meinem russischen Vater' (In Search Of My Russian Father). It made my flesh creep, because there were so many similarities between his and my story. This book certainly is interesting for all the Russian war children.

I wish you all the best and I hope that your activities I like to thank you for, will have much success.

Yours sincerely,

THE INFLUENCE OF NEGATIVE NEWS

I came across a book written by Rutger Bregman which is not yet translated into English, but I guess this will soon happen. In Dutch its title is: 'De meeste mensen deugen'. I cannot translate it easily into English, because the Dutch verb 'deugen' does not exist in English! In English it exists only in the negative form: to be good for nothing, or to be no good. Interesting issue! So I guess the most correct translation will be: 'Most people are OK'.

Bregman is a member of a group of young independent researchers and writers who have the courage to make statements which are rather unusual and often not 'political correct'. I like the message of Bregman's book, that we, living in these days, are flooded by negative news, in papers, radio or television. The image we have of the human being as a person and as a kind is very often not positive, because we read about people who did wrong, about criminals and people who with nonchalance do their work. For some reason we are fond of bad news – see the successes of detective books and movies. But there is more news than only about crime and shortcomings, is Bregman's opinion and we should focus on that.

After the war we learned the stories of the heroes in the armies and the resistance movements and those of the perpetrators, who were sadists and in fact inhuman. Black and white, no nuances. In the seventies however, there was a change in view. The well known experiments of Milgram and Zimbardo showed that very ordinary people could do atrocities on command and civilisation was but a very thin layer on the human nature, which still was full of aggression and the wish to kill enemies. In that period the Eichmann tribunal drew all attention to the question: how can people commit crimes like the Nazi's did? Hannah Ahrendt gave her opinion on Eichmann: he was just a bureaucrat, a very ordinary person, no fanatic or idealist. The message was clear: we all, ordinary people, could become an Eichmann, because of 'the banality of evil' as Ahrendt said.

Bregman shows in his book that the Zimbardo and Milgram experiments were later on analysed in more detail which resulted in far more nuanced outcomes. There had been actually a lot of participants in the Milgram experiment who very soon protested and were not willing to continue to give electric shocks to the person in the other room at any wrong answer. But the experiment leader convinced them to continue 'for the sake of science', and many did, but not all. In the Zimbardo experiment the students who got the role of guards had been instructed in advance to make the lives of the prisoners as 'uneasy as possible', even with using pressure and violence. The outbreak of sadism amongst the guards was therefore not unexpected and the fear that 'ordinary people' could suddenly become sadists when placed in the role of guard was not correct. Biographies on Eichmann described him in very different words than Ahrendt: they saw in him a fully convinced Nazi who did his task fanatically.

Bregman describes the murder of a young woman, witnessed, as the media said, by 38 persons: nobody came to the forth to help the assaulted woman. It became common knowledge: bystanders don't help people in danger. The more bystanders, the less help. In this case, however, there were only 2 witnesses who saw the event from some distance and were not sure about what happened. The other 36 were people interrogated by the police, none of them had witnessed the murder. Bregman describes how in Amsterdam 5 people sprung in the canal when they saw that a car with a woman and a child rolled into the water. One of them took an iron bar and smashed the glasses of the car. Together they managed to save mother and child. One other example: The movie 'The Lord of the Flies' was very successful. Who did not watch it and became impressed by the fight between the two groups of boys who had landed on an inhabited island and who soon after they started to cooperate with each other, became enemies! The message was clear: even children in an extraordinary setting can become aggressive and act with violence and hate to each other. Bregman tells us the story of another group of young boys stranded on an island, Ata, south of Tonga and saved by a seaman, Peter Warner, one year later. People interviewed the seaman and one of the boys and they told a story very different from that of the movie. They had formed two groups, but they had discussed some rules which should be respected by everyone, among them to keep the fire going on as a task for all of them. In case of quarrel or clashing opinions, they send the fighting boys each in another direction alongside the sea, till they had calmed down and could discuss the issue. The message: it is not necessary that such a group is split into competitive parties and use violence in times of misunderstanding. These boys behaved well, civilised, in an adult way.

I agree with Bregman that we need to develop a realistic image of man as an antidote to all the stories in which men and women commit crimes, do awful and stupid things and arouse in us mistrust towards other people. Some time ago there was a lot of fuss about fake news – I guess we should consider all those negative stories as a kind of fake news as well. There are so many stories about people doing good, committed to their village or town and neighbours, helping people without thinking about the costs.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

FREEDOM, LIBERATION, SAFETY

This year, we commemorate that in Spring 1945 the Second World War ended in the West and in the East in August 1945. We celebrate in Western and Northern Europe 75 years of peace, of freedom and remember in thankfulness the commitment of hundreds of thousands of (young) people to end the aggression of Germany, Italy and Japan.

On Liberation day my mother, my sister and I have been arrested and taken to an internment camp. No liberation or freedom for us, but imprisonment.

As a child I made drawings of houses adorned with the national colours. My schoolmistress said to my mother: 'Gonda let us know that every day is a feast'. I am quite sure that, in fact, I have been drawing Liberation Day with the flags representing the joy that was withheld from us, the relatives of the Dutch Nazi Party members.

The concepts of freedom, liberation, safety are linked to each other, although illustrating different aspects. The events that arouse in me the deepest emotions are all connected with one of these themes.

In 1953 a north-western storm struck the coast of Holland and Sealand, one of the provinces in the south of our country. The dykes broke, the sea water poured in and people and animals tried to find a place that could protect them against the towering high waves. Families sat in the night, in the cold and the storm, on the roof of their houses, waiting for help. Whoever became tired, disappeared in the water. The whole country was chained to the radio where all the latest news was broadcast and we were in shock. Then a woman who was interviewed by a reporter said in the microphone: 'Dad and Mum in Ewijk, we are safe'. Ewijk was the village next to ours and suddenly the catastrophe of 100 kilometers away was as close as possible. I will never forget those words and the tone of terror and in the same time of relief of this young woman sending her parents the message that they were safe.

In the seventies Moluccan youngsters kidnapped a train in the northern province of Drenthe and took over the power in an elementary school, making the pupils and teachers their hostages. Again, we were chained to the radio and followed the procedures. Discussions between the terrorists, members of the government and representatives of the Moluccan people were held and reporters informed us if there was progress or status-quo. My husband, our two sons and I had been to the dentist and were on our way back home. The radio was on and suddenly the music stopped and a reporter said with a voice full of emotion: 'They have released the children, because they were ill. The teachers stay in the school and there are no changes in the situation of the people in the train.' I burst out in tears: they were free, they were safe. Later on we saw on television how the children, wrapped in blankets left the school. It never has been explained why suddenly some of the children had become ill, but we all guessed that, with intention, some ingredient had been hidden in the food to unsettle the stomach of the children.

In the movie 'The Inn of the Sixth Happiness' we follow a young English woman, Gladys Aylward, traveling with a group of a hundred children through the mountains from the place where the Japanese army attacked the Chinese villages (1937) to a place where they would be safe. She had come to China to be a protestant missionary but the officials of the British Missions thought she was not competent. She was, however, successful in the small village where she had landed after some time and impressed the Chinese leader of the community by her strong belief. To her it was only her duty to take the children and bring them to safer places. It was a long and dangerous trip and when she entered with her children the village where the office of the British Mission was situated, the children sang an English song: they were safe. It is an emotional end of the movie although romanticised and different from that in the book. These children protected by Gladys reaching safety symbolise to me what freedom and liberation are all about. Their story helps me to imagine how safety could have felt to me at Liberation Day in 1945.

I remember well the day, in 1986, that at the Glienicke Bridge in Berlin-Potsdam spies were to be exchanged from East to West and from West to East. Among them the well known Anatoli Sharanski. There were armed soldiers at both sides, the climate was grim. I thought: 'Oh, if

someone loses his mind and start firing...'But the exchange of spies took place without any incident. I still see Anatoli walking on the bridge crossing the border, the small man with his extraordinary mental strength, unbroken, notwithstanding his stay in camps for so many years. I was in tears: free at last.

In 1991 we visited Berlin and my husband suggested us to go to the Glienicker Bridge. The Wall had disappeared in 1989, there were no more obstacles between East and West. At the footpaths aside the street of the bridge a white chalk line still marked the former border. I stepped over the line and I stepped back, and again I stepped over it and back, again and again, up to twenty times. This was feeling in body and soul what freedom is all about. Yes, by then I knew myself, from my own experience, how people feel when they reach safety and freedom.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

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.nsborn.no>

Risikoforbundet 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>

Stichting Sakura (Dutch/Indonesian/Japanese children)

<https://stichting-sakura.nl>

Stichting JIN (Indonesian/Japanese children)

<http://www.jin-info.nl>