

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

Red: **Gonda Scheffel-Baars**,
Nieuwsteeg 12, 4196 AM Tricht
The Netherlands Tel: (+) 345 573190
e-mail: scheffelbaars@planet.nl

Sponsor: **Stichting Werkgroep Herkenning**
<https://www.werkgroepherkenning.nl/>

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INTRODUCTION

In our days grandchildren and great-grandchildren are interested in their family story, in particular when they come across a secret or an ignored family member. Lenie Degen started a research about her grandfather when she became aware of the fact that nobody ever spoke about him.

The method Focusing was a big help to her during her journey. I never heard about it, but it is rather interesting.

Ruth Burnett wrote a review of the book 'The problem of genocide' written by Dirk Moses.

The performance of the song 1915 by the group Celtic Thunder impressed me a lot. Although what happened did not occur in 1915 but one year earlier, the text is moving.

Our prime minister, Mark Rutte, held a speech at the commemoration Ceremony paying tribute to all those people who lived during the war in the former Dutch colony of East-indies, many of them in Japanese internment camps.

Eva Weiss and Karin Gemmeker visit schools in the Netherlands and in Germany and tell about their relationship with WWII. Eva and her parents were taken to the assembling camp Westerbork, but was so fortunately not to be put on the weekly departing train that took the selected Jews to Auschwitz or Sobibor. Karin is the granddaughter of the commander in chief of Westerbork. Their common commitment to speak to school pupils about their personal story is an example of courage and hope.

In the 20 th issue of the International Bulletin I published an article written by Nathan Durst about child survivors. I would have liked to insert this essay in the jubilee issue, but it was too long. Therefore I give it now a place in this issue. (Sorry for the not so correct layout)

I reread two books of my bookshelves which gave me much information about the lives of the ordinary Germans after the coming to power of Hitler till the end of the war in 1945.

The Austrian Encounter sent me information about a conference they have planned for August 2022.

Please send to me any change in your (email)address.

Feedback is welcome and new articles or suggestions as well.

Best regards,
Gonda Scheffel- Baars

LENIE DEGEN: VERSTEENDE STILTE (Stonehard Silence)

In her book Lenie describes her journey to find out who her grandfather was. During a therapy session she was asked to present her family by putting small puppets in a logic and actual position with regard to each other. She was amazed to see that her grandfather stood outside the family relationships. Her therapist asked her if she could explain his outsider position. Lenie became aware of the silences that occurred in her family gatherings as soon as the word 'grandfather' was pronounced by some person. These silences were loaded with negative and strong feelings no one uttered but which filled the room. She asked her mother who her grandfather had been and why he was ignored in the family. Her mother had difficulty in answering her, but decided that her daughter deserved an honest and right answer. She told her that her grandfather had been a member of the National Socialist Party in the Netherlands and had been for some months during the war a mayor in a small town. As the members of this Party, the NSB, were seen by the Dutch people as traitors, nobody wanted to speak about that period and the many events in which they had become isolated and had been overloaded with negative utterances of their neighbours and friends.

Lenie decided to set out on a journey to understand why her grandfather had taken the decisions he had taken and wanted to place him not only in the context of the family, but in that of society and the historical circumstances as well. Therefore she started not only with her great-grandparents from her mother's family but also from those of her father. These people lived in Drenthe, one of the provinces of the Netherlands, in the north-east. It was the less developed and the poorest province. Farmers run a small farm, others run a small store or were artisans and they had difficulties in earning enough money for their household. In their villages there was a system of 'goed naoberschap', in which people supported and helped each other mutually. There were strong feelings of belonging to the community of the village. Moreover they found a 'home' in the religious community to which they belonged. And after a reverend, Abraham Kuyper, had founded the very first political party in the Netherlands, ARP, its members had again a community in which they felt accepted. This feeling of belonging was one of the rare sources of wealth they had. The ARP was dedicated to the circumstances of the 'kleyne luyden', the poor farmers, storekeepers and artisans, and focused on improvement of their fate.

Typical for the inhabitants of that province and in that period, end of the 19th and begin 20th century, was their attitude towards their poverty. There was a climate of silence, nobody spoke about problems or about the pain when again one of their youngest children died before the age of 5. Especially the women had the attitude of being in the background, giving free way to their husbands to act in society and church.

Lenie's grandfather was a carpenter, was active in his religious community and in the ARP. For this party he was chosen to a member of the village community board. His income was low so that when he heard of a big project in Hilversum, the building of a new church, he inscribed and was chosen to do the job. Therefore the family had to move to that big village in the western part of the Netherlands, not far from Amsterdam. He had to leave his position in the village board, the whole family had to adjust to the other social climate in their new location. There was nothing like the 'noaberschap' and it was not easy to cope with that loss. Grandfather enjoyed his job and the income rose, moreover he became active in the local department of the ARP. He was disillusioned when he could not become a board member. The church was finished in 1924 and a special memory stone was put in the wall as remembrance of the first stone laid at the beginning of the job. Very soon, however, there was an issue between him and the church board because of a financial problem. They accused him more or less of fraud and he denied any accusation. He left the community, another loss in the series after their moving to Hilversum: the noaberschap, the political activity in the ARP, the home of the church. By then he had become interested in a new Dutch political party, the NSB. It was a party that followed more or less the fascist ideology of Mussolini. Later on it focused more on Hitler's ideas. Lenie's grandmother confronted with her husband's interest and his joining that party, did not agree with his choice and asked for divorce. That was revolutionary, divorce was 'not done' in their social class. This was another loss to him. He found an outlet for his feelings by becoming more active in the NBS. He thought that in this party he could follow his deep felt wish to improve the

fate of the 'kleyne luyden'. He did not consider the party's main objects. His eldest daughter lived in Hilversum and he found a home in her house. The rest of the family had no contact with him. At least one took care of him. During the war the NSB was the only political party recognised by the Germans and he got the job of mayor in one of the villages in Drenthe. So he went back to his roots and promoted as much as he could the welfare of the inhabitants.

After the war, after he had been arrested, like all the members of the NSB, he was sent to an internment camp. In the documents about his lawsuit Lenie found several letters of people who described her grandfather as a social man. He knew that there were several people in hiding in the community, but he denounced neither them neither the people who gave shelter to them. He got a verdict of imprisonment for one and a half year, loss of the Dutch nationality for 10 years and loss of his right to vote, also for 10 years. After his release he went again to his daughter and lived there, whereas, ironically, his wife cleaned her house! They never met, however.

Lenie started her research in Hilversum where she visited the church her grandfather had build. The verger told about the history of the church and could announce with excitement that the first stone that had been lost, had been found and would be replaced in the wall. The stone had been removed in 1994 when the church stopped to be a church. Someone had taken the stone with him and laid it in his garden cabin. He moved to another place, the stone was still in the cabin. Soon nobody knew where it was, till a new owner of the house placed a picture of it on facebook asking for information. One member of the

former church board recognised the stone and since the church was used as a church again people planned the replacing of the stone. The verger asked if Lenie wanted to be present and of course she was. In some way the circle was round now.

Lenie broke the negative silence in her family, she wanted to know who her grandfather had been and to give him back his place in the family. The man who lost so many 'homes' and found one, alas, a new in the Dutch Nazi party, has been done justice by Lenie's research. Moreover she found a new family, since she contacted several cousins who became also interested in their family history. A very successful research!

FOCUSING

Gendlin developed an approach to Focusing based on these six steps.

1. Clearing a space

When clearing a space we take a moment to pay attention inward, into our body and see what is there when you ask: How is my life going? What is the main thing/s for me now? We sense these things within your body and then we let the answers come slowly. When some concerns come we do not go inside "it".

We stand back and say 'yes that's there, I can feel that there'. Then you find a little space or distance between you and that "something", for example you may be worried about an exams coming up or an assignment that is due or the fight you had with your partner, sibling, parent or friend. We can put these "somethings" outside

of ourselves. For example we can put these “somethings” on the floor in front of us or across the room or on an island in the middle of the ocean. You can find the right distance between you and “it” as you start to put the things you want to deal with outside of yourself. Then you ask again what do you feel. Wait again and sense. Usually, there are several things. Do this until you think/feel all your issues are acknowledged and you have put them at the right distance from you. Please note: If you prefer you can just go inside to focus, without clearing a space. After a gentle guide in just wait and see what comes and let yourself feel the unclear sense of all that comes.

2. Felt sense

From what came, select one personal problem to focus on. Do not go inside it and try to deal with it or fix it. Stand back from it and consider it from the distance you have created between you and it. This enables you to come into relationship with “it”. Now there is “it”, the issue, and you (the “I”). Pay attention to where you usually feel things in your body and let yourself get a sense of what the whole of that problem or issue feels like. Let yourself feel the unclear sense of all that or, in other words, allow yourself to accept what you are feeling and seeing. It might not be immediately clear or straight forward but just wait and see what comes. There may be a physical sensation: for example a tightness in your chest, or a word/s, for example “tight” or an image: for example, the image of a band around your chest. There is no wrong or right answer so just allow and acknowledge what ever comes.

3. Handle

Now you are sensing if there is a distinct quality of this unclear felt sense that you can describe. You are sensing into your body and letting your body talk. Just be with this felt sense, this bodily sensation and wait and see what comes.

Some people can think of a word or phrase to describe what they are feeling. Others find it easier to reach for an image or metaphor. It might be a quality word like "tight", "stuck", "heavy", "fluttery" or words like "I am sensing a lump in my throat" or "butterflies in my stomach" or an "ache below my hip" or "something in my groin that I quite find words for". It may come like a phrase eg "like water falling", or "like a waterfall", or "something surging up" or "rolling down". Stay with the quality of the felt sense till something fits it just right.

4. Resonating

If you are in a partnership with a listener they will repeat what you say (if you are on your own you can do this yourself). Go back and forth between the "felt sense" and the word or phrase or image and check how they resonate with one another. See if there is a little bodily signal (a shift – e.g. a big breathe or sigh, a changed sensation internally, a "aha yes that's right").

To do this you have to have both the "felt sense" there and the word and that can sometimes take a while to come or feel comfortable or appropriate. The key is not to force an answer or rush to a response, but often just to be with it and let the felt sense change, until they feel just right in capturing the quality of the felt sense. Be accepting if there is still something unclear. Accept that too.

5. Asking

Now ask “what is in this sense – the whole of it?” What makes it so tight or heavy or however you have described it?. What does this thing that we've identified and put outside of you seem to need from you? How does it want you to be with it? Be with the felt sense until something comes along with a slight shift or give or release.

6. Receiving

Next we receive what ever comes in a friendly gentle way. Stay with it for a little while. Something else may come but stay here and show your body empathy and gratitude for its wisdom (Gendlin (1978) p 49=57). Friedman, who was a student and client of Gendlin, adds two more things at either end of Gendlin's 6 steps to create an 8 step process. One is saying hello which is really a gentle lead in and which is covered in the handout materials I have prepared. This allows the person to get settled and go inside. The second additional step is coming back into the room. He felt it is important to bring the person back and ground them and ask them how they are and whether they want to say anything (Friedman, 2007, p 182 – 184)

This website contains other people's versions of Gendlin's steps. You can look at these to see which way of outlining Gendlin's Focusing Steps suits you best. You will also find a handout sheet called “Focusing guiding sheet” which may also help you get an understanding of focusing.

"THE PROBLEMS OF GENOCIDE" by Dirk Moses,
2021 Cambridge University Press.

Dirk Moses (University of North Carolina) has produced a very important book with a new approach to genocide, focusing on the roots of this intractable problem and why this destructive menace is still toxic and active three quarters of a century after the world was shocked by the Holocaust and vowed "Never Again!" It is an extremely well researched and carefully argued text of 511 pages and another 87 pages of index. The rich historical details presented and the fascinating argument make for a very dense text so that it is not an easy read but definitely worthwhile. Moses starts by going backwards to review the history of what he calls "the language of Transgression" before the word genocide was coined by Raphael Lemkin. In accordance with Modern Turkey's insistence that the Ottoman genocide against its Christians was not a genocide, which the British and other governments give in to, Moses states that Lemkin coined the word 'genocide' during the Holocaust, whereas he coined it in relation to the Armenian genocide, but it was only taken up at an official level in 1948 after WWII.

What is particularly interesting in the book is that Moses explores the reasons for genocide occurring and being allowed to proceed unstopped even in the 21st century. He sees the frame of mind of insecure leaders of countries becoming so fearful

that they reach a paranoid state of mind. The imagined paranoid threat is then projected onto a suitable scapegoat group that can be wiped out to dispose of the imagined threat and relieve the paranoia and the fear behind it. Thus it is just those international leaders that could create the legal structure to prevent genocide who do not do so, as they have a powerful, if only unconscious sense of needing the possibility of perpetrating genocide at some future time to rid themselves of an unwanted group they might perceive as a threat. The willing allowance of genocide by the main population can be relied on through effective propaganda. These features of genocide continuing into the 21st century unstopped, can be seen arising in every past case of genocide.

A little clear-minded thought establishes that humanity would be much better off without genocide and we need to consider how to make this happen. We need to give attention to how much wanton killing of humans, not only through genocide, actually does happen and is tolerated. 'Collateral damage' of drone strikes and in war scenarios killing innocent civilians must be taken into account and all other deliberate killing of innocent people. Any humans thought to be guilty of something should never be killed but brought to justice, which should not be retributive or vengeful but reparative. We have tolerated so much killing to build up that it will take considerable effort to change our frame of mind and then our systems. No other Primate or Mammalian species than humans indulges in so much deliberate slaughter of its own members - a

sign of how far we still have to go to become civilised!

Moses neglects the very important final stage of genocide - Denial. As passive bystanders, most of us prefer not to think about genocide while we are not personally threatened. We need to become upstanders and learn how to recognise the early stages of emerging genocide (See Greg Stanton's analysis on the internet) and intervene while it can be stopped. Moreover, the duty to intervene as soon as the signs of emerging genocide become visible, should be built into international law with heavy penalties on countries failing to do so. Genocide denial creates impunity for more genocide. The Holocaust might have been prevented if the denial of the Armenian Genocide (claimed by the Ottoman Turks to be a mere suppression of insurrection) had not been accepted. China, right now, is following this pattern by claiming its genocide against the Uyghurs is merely suppression of insurrection.

Ruth Barnett, August 2021

CHRISTMAS DAY 1915

song performed by Celtic Thunder

1915 on Christmas Day

On the western front the guns all died away
And living in the mud on bags of sand
We heard a German sing from no man's land.

He had a tenor voice so pure and true
The words were strange but every note we knew
Soaring on the living dead and damned
The German sang of peace from no man's land.

They left their trenches and we left ours
Beneath tin hats smiles bloomed like wild flowers
With photos, cigarettes, and pots of wine
We built a soldier's truce on the front line.

Their singer was a lad of twenty one
We begged another song before the dawn
And sitting in the mud and blood and fear
He sang again the song all longed to hear.

Silent night, no canons roar
A King is born of peace for evermore
All's calm, all's bright
All brothers hand in hand
In 1915 in no man's land.

And in the morning all the guns boomed in the rain
And we killed them and they killed us again
At night they charged we fought them hand to hand
And I killed the boy that sang in no man's land.

Silent night no canons roar
A King is born of peace for evermore
All's calm all's bright
All brothers hand in hand

And that young soldier sings
And the song of peace still rings
Though the captains and all the kings
Built no man's land
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Source: LyricFind

By chance I came across this song on Youtube. The event the song describes happened indeed, although in 1914, and in 1915 but on a far big scale.. By then the politicians and commanders prevented the soldiers to go across to the soldiers in the other trenches. In 1914 the soldiers discovered that the enemy were ordinary human beings like themselves, but in wartime this is a not allowed truth. If there is no enemy you cannot wedge war.....

The Celtic Thunder sing this song in a scenery of the trench the soldiers lived in for such a long time in WWI. Very moving. GSB

Some translated paragraphs from **the speech of prime minister Rutte**, on August 15, 2020

This day we celebrate the liberation of WOII and the positive circumstances to live in peace and liberty. Today, August 15, is a key moment, because on this date in 1945 the war ended in the former Dutch colony of the East-Indies, whereas the European part of our country had already been liberated in May. One monarchy, but two different stories.

Today we focus on the stories of those who spent the war years, either in the Japanese internment camps, either outside them in poverty. Their stories were not listened to, especially in the first years after the war.

Eleven years ago, Marion Bloem said at this site that her parents had been silenced with sentences like 'you don't know what a war is all about, you did not suffer'. And her

parents, like many other people trying to find a place in their fatherland, thought by themselves: 'maybe our war was indeed nothing compared to that in Europe'. And they shut their mouths and silence reigned in the families.

My parental house was soaked with Indië: memories of my parents and brothers and sisters. The smells and flavours filled the house, the Saturday evening 'nasi' with self prepared vegetables was a hit. They used also special Indian words like obat (medication), kree (sunscreen), mataglap (crazy) or soebatten (discuss). The Indian world seemed to be very close, with all the positive and negative aspects. But actually it was not close, because so many things were kept hidden. Marion Bloem described it: 'Our parents kept silent and put all their memories in a cabin trunk'. Fortunately, my father opened regularly the trunk and told me about the family life in Indië and some of their experiences throughout the war. But sometimes I felt that he told not everything and that I should not ask questions. There were no questioning of his arguments for silence, because the war was a black page in his life. He had been made a P.O.W., far away from his wife and children who were imprisoned in the internment camp Tjideng. His wife did not survive the war, she died two months after the liberation of the Netherlands, and one month before the capitulation of the Japanese. When his father left the camp his only belongings were the clothing he wore.

About his experiences in the P.O.W. camp he spoke with reservedness. In 1983 the movie 'Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence' was launched, a typical Hollywood interpretation of the Japanese camps. I asked my father to watch it together with me, but he refused. He did not

want to go back to those hidden places in his heart full of pain. He unveiled in a rhythm he himself decided upon several of his experiences. They moved me far more than the movie.

His stories belong now to my heritage, I learned a lot from them. He told me about the thousands of people who had not been sent to internment camps, but lived in poverty and were not safe. About the Chinese who had always been considered to be enemies of the Japanese. About the Moluccans whose pro-Holland feelings made them to outlaws. And about ten thousands of the Indonesian civilians forced to labour. Stories about violence, exploitation, pain. About the loss of everything and the will to start anew. The mourning about all those who did not survive.

Today we focus on all these stories. Here, at this site dedicated to the people who spent the war years under Japanese Occupation. Here, where the monument expresses the horrors of that period. A monument that reflects how the Dutch people thought about the war in the far East: it has been ignored for a long time. Only 40 years after the war this monument was planned and built. I remember that they were building it. By then the public opinion was that a separate commemoration day and ceremony for the far East was not necessary or opportune. The stories of the 350.000 people repatriated were not welcome. But for more than 2 millions of Dutch citizens these stories belong to the history of their family. For that reason it is important that this monument has been built, the memories expressed in bronze and the awareness of what happened cut in stone. The commemoration ceremony on this site is important, not for looking back, but for recognition. It is worthwhile to

recognise each year the pain and the losses of the people who went through the war in the East.

Recognition of their experiences, pain and traumas of all people belonging to different groups in society, military and civilians alike. Recognition of the fact that this chapter of the WWII is indissolubly linked with the history of our country.

That is why we are here today, 75 after the capitulation of the Japanese. We hand over the stories, from generation to generation in the coming 75 years.

Thank you

Mark Rutte

TWO WOMEN WITH A MISSION

Eva Weyl, now 85 years old, visited in 1950 her grandfather who was living in Germany. In his village she met a handsome boy who had the same age as she had, 17, and who liked her much. She had also positive feelings towards him, but her grandfather was shocked: it was the son of people who had been very active in the Nazi party. It was better to break off their friendship, he said. Eva revolted and said to him: 'One cannot blame a child for the deeds and thoughts of its parents'. And throughout her life this has been her conviction.

In the 80s of the former century she stepped in a programma of the commemoration camp Westerbork where survivors of the war could receive a short training before they went to schools, ready and competent to tell their life story and in particular the experiences during the war and the after effects of them. Eva went to schools in

the Netherlands as well as to schools in Germany. The children listened breathless to her story and were often, though, free enough to ask her questions like: What is your opinion about Hitler? Did you wear a rifle? Why did the Nazis hate the Jews?

Before continuing this story I have to give some details about Westerbork. This camp was built before the war for the Jewish refugees seeking shelter in the Netherlands. So at the outbreak of the war, in May 1940, the Germans found a couple of hundreds Jews in the camp. Very soon they sent Jews caught during raids in all parts of the Netherlands to this camp. The commander, Alfred Gemmeker, built the camp up as a fancy world: there was a school for the children, a synagogue for the religious Jews, a theater for music and theater productions, a hospital, and people received enough food to stay healthy. But, each week, there departed a train loaded with some hundreds of Jews, old, adult and children, to Auschwitz or Sobibor. Gemmeker visited the camp almost only at the departure of the train. He lived outside the camp in a house, he and his mistress. Eva Weyl and her parents have been so fortunate to stay in the camp till the end of the war.

At one of Eva's visits to a school, a boy remained in the classroom after her presentation and told her that his grand-grandfather had been in Westerbork as well. She thought immediately that he was a Jewish boy, but the truth was very different. His great-grandfather had been the commander of camp Westerbork, Gemmeker. The boy was the great-grandchild of a murderer. She asked him to introduce her in his family and she met one of the three daughters of Gemmeker. This woman suffered from

feelings of shame and guilt, but Eva was so open minded, that she had the courage to talk about her life 'in hiding', with few relationships, in order to keep the family secret safe. The friendship between those two women became deep and pure. Eva asked her to accompany her in her school sessions and to talk about her life. But that step was one too far. But her daughter, Anke, was ready to visit schools together with Eva. They have become friends as well. At the end of their duo presentation, Eva shows the children always a ring with diamonds. These diamonds Eva's mother had sewn in the textile buttons of Eva's coat and were never found by the Nazis. After the war she had them placed in a ring, a gem very loved by Eva.

Telling stories about that what happened at both sides, that of the victim and that of the perpetrator, gives the children and the youngsters listening to the two women a deep insight in how the war influenced the lives of people. Eva and Anke explain them that they are not responsible for the past, but indeed responsible for the way in which the stories of the past are listened to and remembered and passed on to the next generation. They hope that the right listening will find an expression in the way of thinking and acting of these children and youngsters, now and in the future.

GSB

(translated summary of an article published in the NIW, New Israelite Week magazine of December 4, 2020)

Some paragraphs of the article:

Child-Survivors of the Holocaust: Age-specific Traumatization and the Consequences for Therapy.

Nathan Durst.

Ph.D.*

**Published in: American Journal
of Psychotherapy. Vol 57(4) 2003**

Introduction.

Some time after the end of the terrible fratricide in Rwanda, we received an important and somewhat unusual visitor in the offices of AMCHA* (The National Israeli Center for Psychosocial Support of Holocaust survivors and the Second Generation): the Ambassador of Rwanda who wanted to learn about our work with Holocaust survivors.[]

His question was the following: “What should we do with the[se] traumatized children now, in order to prevent the situation that you at Amcha are struggling with, 50 years after the Holocaust?”

It became then very clear to me, that the experience that we have gathered with child survivors of the Holocaust has universal lessons.

Wherever there is war, children are the most injured and the most silent; therefore, they easily become the most forgotten victims.

My personal interest in this subject stems firstly from the fact that I myself am a child survivor. I was born in Germany, and was saved when in hiding in Holland. As a

clinical psychologist, I have seen many child survivors in my practice and at Amcha, where I work as Clinical Director.

The case of child-survivors.

For many years, children were subsumed under the global group of survivors and it was not even clear that they should be seen as a separate group. In fact, the German authorities, who were responsible for the restitution laws (“Wiedergutmachung”) objected to the assumption that childhood experiences could leave any scar or would result in physical or mental difficulties. They claimed that since young children would not remember the details of suffering, they could not have been permanently damaged (1).

There are only a few articles that deal with the immediate impact of the Holocaust on children.

Anna Freud and Sophie Dann (2) described the suffering of six orphans, who had survived Theresienstadt, and were at liberation between three and four-and-a-half years old. These clinicians recorded the behavior of these toddlers, who had no memory of their past, since they had been separated at such an early age from their families. Up until the time of their arrival at the nursery home at Bulldog Bank, England, where Freud and Dann were working, the children had been passed from one hand to another, living in different places between their second and third year. The children did not know what it meant to have a family, and they had no experience of normal life outside a camp or institution.

During the year they stayed in the nursery home, they created their own social structure, clung to each other and

developed strong group identification. The children showed much sensitivity and responsibility towards one another's needs (like offering comfort), whereas towards the adults they were found to be very aggressive and hostile.

In the beginning the children were difficult to handle, because of their hypersensitivity, restlessness and aggressive behavior. During their stay in the nursery, they learned to master some of their anxieties and acquire English as a new language. Slowly they developed adaptive social attitudes in the interaction with the caregivers. When this group of child-survivors was interviewed 30 years later (3) they brought up basic questions about their past: they wanted to know what had been the fate of their parents and whether anyone knew who had been in their original family. They had no knowledge or memories about them, and these questions about their identity and feelings of belonging, haunted them still, so many years later.[]

Keilson (4) undertook the only systematic (but uncontrolled) longitudinal study that researched the age-specific traumatization of Jewish war orphans, who were of different ages, living in the Netherlands. Out of 2041 non clinical orphans, he took a random sample of 204 who were born between 1925 and 1944. Most of these youngsters had survived the war in hiding, and a small number had been incarcerated in concentration camps. Keilson investigated the relationship between stressful traumatic situations and the permanent personality changes they evoked in the children. He was the first to draw attention to the fact that the post war period could have traumatic effects: children who found a favorable emotional environment after the war coped better

emotionally than those who had not, even if their suffering during the period of persecution had been great. He found that the children's new surroundings after the war either mitigated or intensified the traumatization process. In his study, published 25 years after the end of the Holocaust, he concluded that the child-survivors, who were no older than 4 years at liberation, tended to suffer from neurotic character developments. Children who were between the ages of 11 to 14 years tended to suffer from anxiety, and those who were above the age of 14 suffered from chronic reactive depressive symptoms.

Based on his classification of the children, according to the age at which they were separated from their mother, the data showed that the younger the child was, the more harmful the effect on his/her later development. []

It was only in the 1980s, several years after Keilson's research, that professional articles about child-survivors as a sub-group and as a new term in Holocaust literature and research began to appear. According to Krell (5), a child-survivor was defined as a person who was no older than 16 years of age at the end of the war, in 1945. He pointed out the differences between "adult-" and "child-" survivors in respect to the role of memory, methods of coping, and long-term adaptation. He proposed to reexamine theoretical considerations about early development and losses.[]

Psychotherapeutic approaches

Most of the child survivors lived for many years in the shadow of their fragmented self, in a kind of double reality. Life was split between the past and the present, between outward successful adaptation, and the scarred inner core. The early

separations, traumatic persecution, and losses afflicted the children's capability to build new rewarding attachments; they showed a reluctance to seek treatment for the inflicted pain. The small amount of literature that has been undertaken on this topic points to a number of important insights.

Krell (5) mentions the therapeutic experience inherent in the documentation of the child survivors' histories. Being able to tell one's story gives the survivor the opportunity to integrate traumatic fragments into a "whole" narrative and to undertake an act of remembrance and preservation. The story also becomes a legacy for the future generations. Giving personal testimony of collective traumatic experiences makes the reconstruction of the historical sequence possible. The awareness that is gained by the witnesses telling their own story, also has important therapeutic value.[]

Therapeutic interventions in Amcha.[]

During the 15 years that Amcha has offered its services, we have gathered vast experience and have learned to be modest in our expectations. We cannot change the reality of the past. We can, however, alleviate some of the pain. We cannot fill the void of the past of the group of younger children nor can we take away the traumatic memories of the older child-survivors. We can, however, provide a holding environment where these survivors can experience belonging to a new group and find some relief for their sense of existential loneliness.

An approach that we have found useful is the combination of group and individual psychotherapy. The rationale for combining these approaches is based on the finding that many child survivors derive a sense of security from

communal sharing, being accepted as survivors without shame or guilt, and being part of a group with a common background.. This feeling of understanding and being understood is even stronger when these groups are formed on the basis of equal ages (e.g. survivors born between 1929-1933). The group then becomes a peer group with common past experiences.

Risk-taking, confronting, giving and receiving feedback like in sibling interactions in a family, mutual empowerment, and the touching upon very painful memories, are all issues that can better be handled in a group setting than in individual therapy. The individual and group therapist cooperation gives the necessary holding basis, in order to process the traumatic past.

Tauber and van der Hal (6) reported on their experiences as co-facilitators in group psychotherapy with adult child survivors. They aimed to transform the children's arrested perceptions into the current adult's needs. The process of transformation went through three stages: the emotional aspects of their lives (e.g., longing, fear, anger etc.), the cognitive aspect of their past, and the integration of past and present. The theoretical idea behind the second stage is based on Tauber's (7) concept of "compound personality", which asserts that within the child- survivor's personality, the traumatized child-self and the chronologically appropriate adult-self coexist with one another. Often a contradiction is found between the inner expectations.

Psychotherapy with child-survivors: a challenge.

My psychotherapeutic insights are based on the experience of many years with child survivors, who asked for assistance.

Therefore, the knowledge I was able to gather is based on my clinical impressions and experience, and should not be generalized to the whole population of Holocaust child survivors. Based on the ideas of Keilson (4), who divided his research group according to developmental stages, and Raphael (8), who described the different responses of younger children to the death of a significant figure, I will present some case vignettes from various age groups.

The sequel of the losses incurred by the survivor, and the continuous adaptations during the war are different for each category. As a result, the therapist must be aware of these differences and adjust his/her therapy to the specific needs of the deprived inner child residing within the survivor.

0 – 3 Years.

Toddlers are at first passive and totally dependent on their caregiver (mother).

They need a person who is permanently available. In this object relationship they find basic security and learn to trust and attach themselves to others. Slowly they start to discover the world around them, but are still very much in need of confirmation by a parent. Children react emotionally to object-loss, but the meaning of death is not grasped.

When in this stage, the child is separated and brought into hiding, the traumatic experience will last briefly and a regression might occur. More lasting traces are signal anxiety, distrust, anxious attachment, like clinging or rejection, and craving for unmet need satisfaction. There will be no memories of the earliest years.[]

3 - 5 Years.

The importance of the dyadic relationship and dependency lessens, but the need for security is strong. By using language, children learn to express themselves; there is also more self-control in relationship with others than there was at a younger age. In play and fantasy, many anxieties are acted out, as they are not always distinct from reality. Separation will elicit strong reactions.

Children of this age bracket who survived were mostly in hiding. They might have vague memories from the past and possess some pre verbal signs such as smells, sounds or images. These children tended to develop chameleonlike features that were connected to the continuing demands of having to adapt to ever new frightening situations. Separation at this stage of the development of identification will evoke ambivalence and a stronger need for dependency. Throughout life, many forms of anxieties, feelings of helplessness, and/or psychosomatic complaints could be expected, whereby expressions of grief, such as anger, sadness or denial are the reactions to the losses. Memories of their lost ones are mostly not available.[]

5 – 8 Years.

Children in this stage like to socialize with others and, with the ripening of the cognitive abilities they can accept death. At this age children want close companions, but at the same time, achieve increasing detachment. They have a growing sense of justice, based on regards for rules of the game and are more aware of the opposing forces of good and bad.

Although the majority of children between these ages survived by hiding, a certain number of children lived in ghettos or concentration camps. Whereas in this age- group more memories are secured than they are in the younger age

groups, psychological defenses against remembering the unbearable are strong and situations or affects will often be dissociated, forgotten or repressed. Childhood amnesia is experienced as a breach in one's life history. Feelings, such as sadness, loneliness, and lack of belonging, are expressions of masked depression.[]

8 – 12 Years.

In the latency phase, children detach from their parents. Validation through others becomes more important than it had previously been, together with the need for approval and admiration to establish self-evaluation as well as self-esteem. The concept of time, the intrinsic sense of order and causality, conscience growth, and guilt feelings become part of one's identity. The development of social skills and the first differentiation between the sexual groups occur. This is accompanied by feelings of shame.

An interference in this stage can result in the reawakening of helplessness, feelings of insecurity and inferiority, with difficulties in socializing and confusion about the identity. It is Important to show normalcy and well-adjusted coping towards the surroundings. At this stage in life, the meaning of danger and also of death is understood; fearful experiences can become somatized.[]

12 – 15 Years.

During these years, many bio-psycho-social changes take place; features like maturing, ambivalence, and striving for independence and autonomy are central. But there also arises the need for figures to idealize and identify with. Youngsters can take more responsibility, not only for themselves but sometimes also for others, who are weaker. They have a better understanding of moral conflicts and the complexities of life and search for norms, values and the

meaning of life.

Young adolescents, who went through war experiences, understood exactly what happened; their striving for independence and achievement could become accelerated or decelerated; they were forced to take on too much responsibility and, after going through devastating experiences, often lost faith in mankind.[]

Concluding remarks

During the Holocaust, most of the children kept longing and thinking about their relatives, and kept them alive, at least in fantasy. The continuous fight for survival, demanded being on constant alert and to adapt to new circumstances, which prevented expected grief reactions or mourning.[]

Altogether, child-survivors were left alone and many of them still complain about loneliness. As they reach old age, they want to reconnect to the remnants of their past.

These remnants, in general, are painful and sad memories about the many losses, they had to endure. They lived with them alone for many years, and do need now a significant other, a partner, who can contain their pain.

Many of these survivors do not come to therapy, and those who do, often do not dare to touch the painful scars that lie within them.

This is a challenge for the therapist, as she/he might feel that she/he should not touch or open Pandora's box.

According to my experiences, this box is filled with tears, which have never been cried in the presence of an empathic other. We should strive to be this empathic other.

In the introduction to this article, I mentioned that the Ambassador of Rwanda visited the offices of Amcha: This was my answer to his question:

Dear Mr. Ambassador.

In modern war, the real losers are the children.

After they come back to society, there is no home anymore and they have the need to feel wanted and protected, their feelings to be respected and understood, the stories of their experiences and memories to be heard, even when they have no voice. When they only shout in anger, please understand that they have lost their tears and have forgotten the words to express their inner pain.

In order to become who they really are, they need help to learn and accept what has happened to them, in a surrounding that respects the individual differences and recognizes their losses and traumatic experiences from then and the sequels now.

Thank you; by asking this question I understand that you will not forget them.

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*Nathan Durst, Clinical Psychologist, Clinical Director AMCHA

'ORDINARY' GERMANS BETWEEN 1933 AND 1945

In the foreword of his book 'The Legacy of Silence' Dan Bar-On tells the story of André. In November 1939 he asked his parents what he had to do being summoned by his HJ leader to take part in an activity, next day, in which synagogues and Jewish properties would be attacked. His parents did not give him advice, but told him that he should come to a decision himself and that they would respect any decision. After some time he came back in the salon and told them that he did not want to go, but that this decision could have consequences, not only for him, but also for his parents. They reacted by saying that they, for months, had made preparations for leaving the country. Living in Nazi Germany had become unbearable to them.

A very special story because, I guess, that there have not been many parents, accepting the decision of their son. It is also a very exceptional story because of the underlying message: far more Germans should have acted like

André's parents.

Here I want to ask some questions: did these ordinary people have international contacts like André's parents, did they have the money? Moreover, where should all those thousand of hundreds or hundreds of thousands Germans have traveled to? The Netherlands and Switzerland barred their frontiers even for Jews looking for shelter, would these two countries have accepted ordinary Germans?

What do we know about the lives of so many ordinary Germans, who did not vote for the Nazi party, but had to cope with the situation created by Hitler's coming to power?

In two books the authors describe the life of every day of these ordinary Germans and it is good to see how they were negatively influenced by the indoctrination and the fear created by the Nazis as an instrument to have and hold a grip on society and the German people.

Tessa de Loo tells us in her book 'Twins' the story of two German sisters who become orphans when their mother died. One of them, Anna, stayed in Germany, the other, Lotte, was taken to the Netherlands. Their contact is more or less wrecked and they loose contact.

By chance they meet each other when they booked a Spa arrangement in Belgium. Anna tells a lot about her life in the countryside before and during the war. She describes in details, how there was a lack of food, of clothing and shoes, how the laws and orders of the Nazis dictated their lives. Lotte does not want to hear her sisters story about suffering. Time and again she reacts with the words: it was your own fault, you started the war and inflicted a nightmare on the defeated countries, there is no reason to complain, because we suffered more.'

This reaction withholds her sister not for continuing her story of the German suffering. When she dies unexpectedly, Lotte feels guilty, because she now has the courage to see what her sister tried to obtain: her recognition of the pain her sister and so many ordinary German had to live with during the war and thereafter. People who had not given their vote to Hitler and tried to live in the country with a government they never wanted to have, without the opportunity to escape to a place abroad.

In Anna Seghers book 'The seventh Cross' the author paints the social, political and emotional climate in 1937, only three years after the founding of the third Reich. This detailed and heart wrenching description has in the center the case of the escape of seven inmates from the concentration camp Westhofen. The camp commander swears that all seven will be back within a week and he erects seven crosses to have the escapees shown to the other inmates and to torture them. Five escapees are found and taken to Westhofen. One, after a couple of days, cannot bear the tension caused by his flight and surrenders himself to the authorities. But Georg Heisler, the most wanted escapee, manages to be in hiding outside the hands and the power of the Nazis. A farmer who visited a doctor, the same Georg consulted for his wounded hand, claims to have seen him and the hunting continues. As Georg fears, former friends and colleagues are summoned to the Gestapo office for a sharp interrogation, but they keep silent about the meetings with Georg in these days. Georg feels guilty that his former friends have become in danger, and not all of them help him. When he finds a place on a Dutch transport ship he is at last in safety. The camp

commander is furious, he lost his honour and his imago. It is painful for him to become aware of the fact that it is not only that one fugitive who have get clear of the Nazis, but there will have been a couple of people who have helped and by doing that have violated the Nazi orders. Some of those people have helped Georg in the full awareness of the risk they have taken, others guessed that he was the fugitive but did not hand him over in the Gestapo hands.

Three years after the installation of Hitlers government and two years before the war burst out, the German society was filled with fears and mistrust. Nobody knew what his former friends were thinking, or if his colleagues could be trusted. How could an 'ordinary' German man or woman who did not vote for Hitler in 1933 escape his power?

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

Please be so kind as to pass this announcement along to those groups and individuals whom you feel may be interested. *Thank you.*

ANNOUNCEMENT

A private, subsequent Generations Post-Holocaust Encounter and Dialogue
venue: a suburb of Paris, early August 2022

Background: Since 1995, an encounter-dialogue group has (or had) been meeting once per year, most years since 1995, including the past two summers online via Zoom. Composed of earnest adults descended from perpetrators and from victims of the Holocaust related to Austria, *The Austrian Encounter* has been a subject of a well-received documentary film, a psychology peer-reviewed scientific journal article, and occasional pieces in newspapers, radio, etc. It was founded and for many years facilitated by Samson Munn, not a psychologist yet an informal protégé of the Israeli psychologist Dan Bar-On, the pioneer of such intensive dialogue held by those descended of both “sides” meeting together.(1)

Bar-On died 13 years ago, and his ground-breaking encounter, *To Reflect and Trust*, ceased meeting, too. Munn was a participant in *To Reflect and Trust* from the start (1992) and in 1995 founded *The Austrian Encounter* (with Bar-On's endorsement). Munn went on to organise and chair the first *International Conference of Jewish-German Intensive Dialogue Groups* in Boston in 1996, to take part in the invited *Goldner/Weinstein Symposium on the Holocaust and Genocide* at all its meetings since 1996 (still meeting), and to become a Fullbright *Specialist* (in Peace and Reconciliation Studies) in 2017.

After meeting, evolving and changing over the past 26 years, a core of remaining participants in *The Austrian Encounter* decided this year to create a similar, future group in its place, but open widely to participants regardless of their forebear's country.

Participants: If your parent or grandparent was
* a Holocaust perpetrator (male or female), active and/or

passive, including Nazis, their collaborators, and in the view of some, bystanders.

and/or

- * a Holocaust survivor (male or female), including
- * survivors of any of a death march;
- * living in hiding;
- * rape by a Nazi or Nazi-collaborator;
- * underground or resistance work;
- * refuge-emigration to another country;
- * a Nazi or collaborator murder camp (like Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen);
- * a Nazi or collaborator concentration camp (like Westerbork or Compiègne);
- * police arrest by Nazis or their collaborators;
- * beating or torture by Nazis or their collaborators;
- * forced religious conversion;
- * adoption-to-survive;
- * loss of assets to Nazis or their collaborators;
- * and/or more or other,

AND

- * if you are open to consider speaking about and exploring themes related to your background; and,
- * if you are interested and open to consider listening to others speak about themes that they explore related to their backgrounds; and
- * if you are open to query and to the possibility of being queried;

AND

- * if you grant as fundamental facts that:
- * the Nazi-perpetrated Holocaust of Jews and others actually occurred;
- * the primary perpetrators of the Holocaust were

Germans and Austrians (acknowledging collaborators);
* the primary victims of the Holocaust were Jews and others (e.g. Roma and Sinti; and
* millions of those victims were murdered;

THEN we would certainly be pleased to hear from you!

The Encounter: the encounter will be very much à la Dan Bar-On's approach:

- * dialogues will be conducted as the group decides;
- * it will be intensive, in the senses of meeting:
 - for approximately 6-10 (perhaps more) hours each day, for approximately four consecutive days;
 - * in private;
 - personal and in person (not virtual);
 - with only the interruptions that the group chooses; and,
 - with open discussion;
- * there is no presumption of psychopathology amongst participants;
- * the dynamic is not designed deliberately nor conventionally psychotherapeutically in purpose, acknowledging that it may be beneficial for some;
- * the encounter is not didactic nor does it dwell on historiography; when historical aspects arise, they will focus on the Holocaust (rather than on military aspects of World War II);
- * the encounter is neither an experiment nor research project;
- * the only fixed agenda item is how the dialogue begins:
 - with participants' own introductions (personal story-telling and story-listening);
 - beyond that, the agenda (if there is one) would be the choice of the group;

- * the dialogue is not fundamentally; primarily or exclusively of religious or ethnic basis, acknowledging that religion and/or ethnicity may arise in discussion and may be deeply held by some one who take part; and
- * there is no fee.

Although several participants will have had extensive experience in this sort of setting and can help guide should it become desires, they will be no formal, designated facilitator/leader. At its core, dialogue will be honest, which includes that at some times it may be difficult, hard-felt, or grueling, just as it may at times be comfortable, surprising, pleasant or enlightening.

Some Encounter Details:

- English will likely be the language often utilized, acknowledging that at times an individual may speak amply in another language, such as French, German, Hungarian, etc. and we will help each other to translate as needed or desire.
- There is no financial grant nor funding institution; each person must arrange her or his own transportation to and from Paris.
- A site is being arranged to meet and to live in a suburb of Paris, with modest cost for a single-room lodging at the site (a spare facility) is estimated to be 43 euros (includes breakfast and one meal), or 55 euros (includes breakfast and two meals) per night.
- As of now, expect to meet four days, somewhere in the 1-10 August 2022 time-frame.
- It is anticipated that the encounter will compromise 14 – 24 persons.

Contact: to participate_or to learn more, e-mail:
Paris2022@nach.ws

For Reference:

* The Austrian Encounter:

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247719398>

Dialogue toward a Genocide Encountering the Other in
the context of

Genocide/link/5ad51373458515c6Of546826/download

* <http://www.theaustrianencounter.at>

For information on tv programs or movies , please
contact Samson Munn: www.nach.ws/radiologycv.pdf

Note1.

In 1988 a couple of Dutch women (among them Gelske van der Vlugt) organised an encounter between Children of the War from Jewish families, resistance fighters, German parents, collaborators or families who lived in the East in Japanese internment camps. I participated in the first meetings and was a member until the end of the organisation we founded but which stopped, alas, in 2000. I spoke with Dan Bar-On about our positive experiences. He disagreed with me as for the Jewish participants: we could not load our burden on them. To my surprise he organised 4 years later a dialogue group with descendants of victims and of perpetrators.

Apparently his criticism was gone.

This group was successful and many people recognize the worth of this initiative, I do as well. But Bar-On was not the pioneer as to 'mixed' groups.

I have to give honour to those women who started 'mixed' dialogues in the Netherlands and their commitment to our organisation KOMBI.
GSB

WEBSITES

Organisation of Children of Dutch Collaborators:

www.werkgroepherkenning.nl

Organisation of Danish Children of War, Danske Krigsboern Foerening:

www.krigsboern.dk

Organization of Norwegian NS Children:

www.nazichildren.com

Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn, Norway:

priveadres: k.e.papendorf@jus.uio.no

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.com

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>

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