

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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Issue 53, Spring 2022

INTRODUCTION

When I bought Lee Harris' book 'Civilisation and its enemies' in December I could not know that within two months I would see how well he described the dangers embodied in ruthless men wanting to undermine our freedom and norms and values.

At the beginning of the war in Ukraine I wrote a text about what this war aroused in me.

I came across an article about the Winter War and the Continuation War in Finland. When you read it you will understand why it fits in this issue of the IB

The war in Ukraine reminded me of the organised famine in this country in 1933, the Holodomor. I found an interesting article in the internet.

In a book about the war in Guernsey I found a nice text, impressive because of the modest tone.

David Nasaw wrote a book about Displaced Persons after WWII. In the internet I found an interesting review.

Werkgroep Herkenning celebrated its 40th anniversary. I wrote an impression about the festive event.

The generation of people who experienced the war during their childhood or youth has become old and many of them have passed away. The grand children of the war make up now for the majority in our organisations. That is why I thought it worthwhile to insert an article about transgenerational transfer of trauma I wrote in 2009.

Anneruth Wibaut sent me her nice poem and gave me permission to publish it in this issue.

I insert a text of Waclav Havel, Hope. That is what we need in these turbulent days, hope, although the Ukrainian people is still under fire what touches our hearts deeply.

Please send to me any change in your e-mail address so that we will stay in contact

Best regards,

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

WAR CHILDREN.

Since 1945 there have been millions of children in war regions and many of them had to cope with problems far too heavy for their age. One cannot cry because of all those children, the 24 hours a natural day would be insufficient. One cannot help all of them, their number is too high. Some children receive help, e.g. by organisations like Beyond Conflict. Other children have to overcome their problems all alone.

There have been a number of wars, the war in Ukraine hurts more than the other wars. Why? Because it started unexpected, it is close to our country? I guess the reason is that the fears of the Cold War are revived because of the threatening words, the possibility of a nuclear attack. We sympathize with the Ukrainian people attacked without any reason, like the Hungarians in 1956 and the Czechs in 1968.

For me and the community of our church there is another link as well, because the eldest son of our minister, André, lived with his wife and two children in a village near Kiev. Our minister had anticipated on their eventual coming to the Netherlands so that there would be a place for them. We stayed in contact with him to support him in this tense situation. and he appreciated it very much.

The plans of André changed a couple of times. At first he wanted to stay in the fatherland of his wife, but was then convinced that there were too many risks for him and his wife and their twin-daughters of almost one year old and his mother-in-law. They packed their car and set out first to the border of Rumania, but then changed their direction and came some days later in Lviv, 80 kilometers from the Polish border. They had went through two nights in their car, and then asked room to sleep knocking at the door of someone they did not know. They were welcome. The file before the border was long, but they felt relieved when they were in Poland. Then followed the long route through Poland and Germany. Six days after their departure they arrived at his parents'. The whole community sighed relieved and relaxed: at least this family had arrived in order. In the service of Sunday morning André spoke about his journey, very moved, and when he said: 'a week ago we were citizens of a country and now we are refugees' his voice broke. In the afternoon he and his wife spoke at a demonstration in Amsterdam, telling their story and asking for help for their countrymen.

This is just one story and one which ended well. Did it? I have cried because of these two children. They never will remember their journey, but the danger and the fears of their parents will be somewhere stored in their mind and body.

I had worked through a lot of war related problems, but in the aftermath of my operation last year, all the demons of the last half year of the war overwhelmed me, more than 75 years later. It is good to know that people now are more alert to traumas. Our minister has served in Afghanistan as army-officer, he has been in very dangerous situations. As a minister he has spoken with a lot of soldiers who could not overcome the memories of shocking actions. This is also a good factor for his son and his family. Nevertheless...

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

impotence breeds rage
or defencelessness
when I sympathize with you
you suffer less
if you hear me
I soften my shouting
the higher we stand
the wider we see
measureless
compassion

Anneruth Wibaut

LEE HARRIS: CIVILISATION AND ITS ENNEMIES; The Next Stage of History

Free Press, ISBN978-1-4516-5533-9

Forgetfulness occurs when those who have been long inured to civilized order can no longer remember a time in which they had to wonder whether their crops would grow to maturity without being stolen or their children sold into slavery by a victorious foe....They forget that in time of danger, in the face of the enemy, they must trust and confide in each other, or perish....They forget, in short, that there has ever been a category of human experience called the enemy. That, before 9/11, was what had happened to us. The very concept of the enemy had been banished from our moral and political vocabulary. An enemy was just a friend we hadn't done enough for yet. Or perhaps there had been a misunderstanding, or an oversight on our part--something that we could correct.... Our first task is therefore to try to grasp what the concept of the enemy really means. The enemy is someone who is willing to die in order to kill you. And while it is true that the enemy always hates us for a reason, it is his reason, and not ours. So begins Civilization and Its Enemies, an extraordinary tour de force by America's reigning philosopher of 9/11, Lee Harris. What Francis Fukuyama did for the end of the Cold War, Lee Harris has now done for the next great conflict: the war between the civilized world and the international terrorists who wish to destroy it. Each major turning point in our history has produced one great thinker who has been able to step back from petty disagreements and see the bigger picture--and Lee Harris has emerged as that man for our time. He is the one who has

helped make sense of the terrorists' fantasies and who forces us most strongly to confront the fact that our enemy--for the first time in centuries--refuses to play by any of our rules, or to think in any of our categories. We are all naturally reluctant to face a true enemy. Most of us cannot give up the myth that tolerance is the greatest of virtues and that we can somehow convert the enemy to our beliefs. Yet, as Harris' brilliant tour through the stages of civilization demonstrates, from Sparta to the French Revolution to the present, civilization depends upon brute force, properly wielded by a sovereign. Today, only America can play the role of sovereign on the world stage, by the use of force when necessary. Lee Harris' articles have been hailed by thinkers from across the spectrum. His message is an enduring one that will change the way readers think--about the war with Iraq, about terrorism, and about our future.

A couple of personal notices about Harris' book.

Harris makes clear that in the aftermath of the first World War ideologies such as fascism, national-socialism and communism could inspire multitudes of people eager to have an ideal to strive for while the implosion of four empires made life unstable and vulnerable. The Czar empire, the Ottoman empire and the Austrian-Hungarian empire had been the home of very different peoples. They had to find a new national identity. Harris characterises fascism, national-socialism and communism as 'fantasy' ideologies, because they were based on principles which had no roots in the reality of the world. The communistic world empire was a dream, like the Aryan empire Hitler wanted to found. Mussoloni tried to revive the old Roman empire. In order to convince the members of his party that this was a reachable aim, he invaded Ethiopia in East-Africa, since the Roman empire had conquered a lot of peoples and countries. Ethiopia was poor, the conquest did not give any profit, there was only a propaganda profit. It is known that at the end of the war Hitler decided that the dearly wanted trains for transport of the army were used for the deportation of the Jews. These are but two of the examples Harris gave to explain why he called the three leading ideologies or the twentieth century 'fantasy' ideologies, irrational ideas strived for to no positive end.

Harris describes in details the roots of the actual Western culture with its liberal, social and moral principles. It is his opinion that we have to defend these norms and values. The enemy we have to fear is the ruthless man who stands up and succeeds in having adepts who, like him, have no conscience but are tended to destroy and to kill.

Although I guess that he pointed to fanatic terrorist leaders, I feel we now see such a ruthless man attacking a country without any cause (in our eyes, not in his) The overwhelming activities to help the Ukraine people shows, in my opinion, that we, may it be consciously, may it be intuitively, understand that they defend our Western civilisation. Since our governments are bound by political rules (interference of the NAVO could easily lead to Putin pushing the button), the citizens express in their activities how eager they are to support the Ukrainians.

INVASION

'On a winter day the Soviet army invaded with an overwhelming quantity of men and material its neighbour country. The defenders had a fraction of the number of soldiers, tanks and airplanes that the Russians launched at their invasion. But thanks to their knowledge of the terrains, modern tactics and a superior moral level - they knew they fought for their fatherland and their families - the defenders succeeded in damaging

seriously the enemy and their invasion troops came to a stand still.'

These are the sentences of an article Bart Schut wrote in the NIW (the New Israelite Weekly) of March 10, 2022. One guesses that the text has to do with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But this is not the case!

They described the Soviet invasion in November 1939 of Finland, it was the start of the Winter War. In 1919 Finland had become an independent state, but Stalin could not forget that it had been for centuries a part of Russia. He thought he could easily conquer it and let it be again an integral part of Russia. Stalin had miscalculated the invasion although he got some parts of Finland back at the Peace Conference of Moscow in May 1940. The agreement between the two countries was in fact a temporal cease-fire covenant. At June 19, 1941, the Russians attacked Finland from the air, not knowing that three days later Hitler started Operation Barbarossa by invading the Soviet Union. Finland took immediately sides with the Germans against their common enemy

President Ryti and commander in chief Mannerheim did not sympathize with the Nazi ideology. The cooperation with the Germans was formally and military based. They could imagine what Stalin intended to do if he would win the fight: the annexation of Finland. To be able to survive as an independent country they had no choice than to help the Germans to gain victory over the Soviets. For three years Fins and Germans fought side by side. The Fins government did not accept the German laws with regard to the Jews. Heinrich Himmler himself visited Finland in 1942 in order to convince the Fins of the necessity of following the Nuremberg laws. They refused to do so. The Jews of Finland and some 500 Jews who had fled to Finland all survived the war. There was a rather big number of Jewish soldiers in the Fin army. They met German soldiers and SS men and they lived together in camps. Whereas the Germans murdered their family in Germany, the Jews in Finland could live together with Germans in cooperation. Three Jews received the Iron Cross because of their courageous behaviour in the clashes with Soviet soldiers. However, they did not accept the recognition. How difficult it will have been to cooperate with an army of a country that had the intention to kill all the Jews! This might be the reason that there is so few known about the Fin-German cooperation against the Soviet Union.

It is ironic that the Jews of Finland could survive exactly because the government had sought cooperation with the Germans. The cooperation ended in 1944 and suddenly the German soldiers saw themselves surrounded by Fin and Soviet soldiers. They had to fight against their former collaborators. The Germans had difficulties in saving their troops and sending them to Germany.

Should we blame the Fins for their cooperation with the Nazis? There is no reason to do so. They saved the independence of their country.

There is a parallel with the history of Ukraine. In 1933 Stalin organised a famine in this country that produced so much grain that it was called the 'grain barn of Europe'. Stalin wanted the independent Ukraine farmers to leave their properties and join the collective agrarian entities (See the article Holodomor).

When the Germans entered Ukraine in 1941 the Ukrainian people saw in them their liberators. The memories of the four million people who succumbed in the famine were still fresh. Who can blame them for their enthusiasm? Very soon they saw that the German government was as oppressive as the Soviet's. Indeed, there was a percentage of Ukraine people who became adepts of the Nazis, but the majority did not adopt the Nazi ideology.

There was a rather big number of Ukrainian people involved in the Holocaust and for that reason the public opinion holds all the Ukrainian citizens of that period as Nazis. This is far too simple, reality is always more complicated. If one forgets the circumstances in which the Ukrainians sided with the Germans any judgments is unjust. A recent historical research made clear that many Ukrainians joined the resistance movement. Among others Putin's motives to invade Ukraine, one argument was to liberate the Ukrainian people of the Nazis, he intended denazification! As if we do not live almost 80 years after the disappearance of the Third Reich. Moreover, the Ukrainian government is not based on liberal, social, moral and democratic principles. We hope that the Ukrainians can save their independence like the Finns did in 1945.(Summary of Bart Schut's article)

HOLODOMOR

"In the case of the Holodomor, this was the first genocide that was methodically planned out and perpetrated by depriving the very people who were producers of food of their nourishment (for survival). What is especially horrific is that the withholding of food was used as a weapon of genocide and that it was done in a region of the world known as the 'breadbasket of Europe'." – Prof. Andrea Graziosi, University of Naples.

An Introduction

In 1932 and 1933, millions of Ukrainians were killed in the Holodomor, a man-made famine engineered by the Soviet government of Joseph Stalin. The primary victims of the Holodomor (literally "death inflicted by starvation") were rural farmers and villagers, who made up roughly 80 percent of Ukraine's population in the 1930s. While it is impossible to determine the precise number of victims of the Ukrainian genocide, most estimates by scholars range from roughly 3.5 million to 7 million (with some estimates going higher). The most detailed demographic studies estimate the death toll at 3.9 million. Historians agree that, as with other genocides, the precise number will never be known. Through a study of the Holodomor (which has been referred to as the Great Famine), students can come to understand that the Holodomor is an example of how prejudice and a desire to dominate and control a particular ethnic group can lead to the misuse of power, mass oppression, and genocide.

Ukraine Before the Holodomor

Beginning in the 18th century, Ukrainian territories were divided between the Austrian and Russian Empires. In the aftermath of World War I and the overthrow of the Russian monarchy in February 1917, Ukraine set up a provisional government, declaring itself the independent Ukrainian People's Republic in January 1918. The Ukrainian People's Republic fought the Bolshevik Red Army for three years (1918-1921) but lost its fight for independence.

The bulk of Ukrainian territory was forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union, or USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), and by 1922 Ukraine became the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkrSSR). Then the USSR sanctioned the requisition of all surplus agricultural products from the rural population, resulting in economic collapse.

Discontent among the farmers forced Lenin to halt the requisitions and bring in the New Economic Policy (NEP) in March of 1921. The NEP was intended to provide greater economic freedom and permit private enterprise, mainly for independent farms and small businesses. Beginning in 1923, the Soviet authorities also pursued a policy of indigenization, which in the Ukrainian SSR took the form of Ukrainization, a policy of

national and cultural liberalization that promoted Ukrainian language use in education, mass media, and government. The goal for the introduction of both NEP and Ukrainization was to increase support for the Soviet regime in Ukraine. Video: [Timothy Snyder: Ukrainian History as World History: 1917-2017](#)

Causes of the Holodomor

By the end of the 1920s, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin consolidated his control over the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Feeling threatened by Ukraine's strengthening cultural autonomy, Stalin took measures to destroy the Ukrainian peasantry and the Ukrainian intellectual and cultural elites to prevent them from seeking independence for Ukraine.

To prevent "Ukrainian national counterrevolution," Stalin initiated mass-scale political repressions through widespread intimidation, arrests, and imprisonment. Thousands of Ukrainian intellectuals, church leaders, and Ukrainian Communist Party functionaries who had supported pro-Ukrainian policies were executed by the Soviet regime.

At the same time, Stalin decreed the First Five Year Plan, which included the collectivization of agriculture, effectively ending the NEP. Collectivization gave the Soviet state direct control over Ukraine's rich agricultural resources and allowed the state to control the supply of grain for export. Grain exports would be used to fund the USSR's transformation into an industrial power.

The majority of rural Ukrainians, who were independent small-scale or subsistence farmers, resisted collectivization. They were forced to surrender their land, livestock and farming tools, and work on government collective farms (kolhosps) as laborers. Historians have recorded about 4,000 local rebellions against collectivization, taxation, terror, and violence by Soviet authorities in the early 1930s. The Soviet secret police (GPU) and the Red Army ruthlessly suppressed these protests. Tens of thousands of farmers were arrested for participating in anti-Soviet activities, shot, or deported to labor camps. The wealthy and successful farmers who opposed collectivization were labeled "kulaks" by Soviet propaganda ("kulak" literally means "a fist"). They were declared enemies of the state, to be eliminated as a class. The elimination of the so-called "kulaks" was an integral part of collectivization. It served three purposes: as a warning to those who opposed collectivization, as a means to transfer confiscated land to the collective farms, and as a means to eliminate village leadership. Thus, the secret police and the militia brutally stripped "kulaks" not only of their lands but also their homes and personal belongings, systematically deporting them to the far regions of the USSR or executing them.

These mass repressions, along with manipulation of state-controlled grain purchases and collectivization through the destruction of Ukrainian rural community life, set the stage for the total terror – a terror by hunger, the Holodomor.

The Holodomor

Ukraine, with its history of resistance to the Soviet rule, was a threat to the Soviet regime. Fearing that opposition to his policies in Ukraine could intensify and possibly lead to Ukraine's secession from the Soviet Union, Stalin set unrealistically high grain procurement quotas. Those quotas were accompanied by other Draconian measures intended to wipe out a significant part of the Ukrainian nation.

In August of 1932, the decree of "Five Stalks of Grain," stated that anyone, even a child, caught taking any produce from a collective field, could be shot or imprisoned for stealing "socialist property." At the beginning of 1933, about 54,645 people were tried and sentenced; of those, 2,000 were executed.

As famine escalated, growing numbers of farmers left their villages in search of food outside of Ukraine. Directives sent by Stalin and Molotov (Stalin's closest collaborator) in January of 1933 prevented them from leaving, effectively sealing the borders of Ukraine. To further ensure that Ukrainian farmers did not leave their villages to seek food in the cities, the Soviet government started a system of internal passports, which were denied to farmers so they could not travel or obtain a train ticket without official permission. These same restrictions applied to the Kuban region of Russia, which borders Ukraine, and in which Ukrainians made up the largest portion of the Kuban population - 67 percent. At the time of the Holodomor, over one-third of the villages in Ukraine were put on "blacklists" for failing to meet grain quotas. Blacklisted villages were encircled by troops and residents were blockaded from leaving or receiving any supplies; it was essentially a collective death sentence.

To ensure these new laws were strictly enforced, groups of "activists" organized by the Communist Party were dispatched to the countryside. As described by historian Clarence Manning:

"The work of these special 'commissions' and 'brigades' was marked by the utmost severity. They entered the villages and made the most thorough searches of the houses and barns of every peasant. They dug up the earth and broke into the walls of buildings and stoves in which the peasants tried to hide their last handfuls of food."

To escape death by starvation, people in the villages ate anything that was edible: grass, acorns, even cats and dogs. Contemporary Soviet police archives contain descriptions of the immense suffering and despair of Ukrainian farmers, including instances of lawlessness, theft, lynching, and even cannibalism.

This Famine, the Holodomor, resulted in widespread deaths and mass graves dug across the countryside. The official registers did not give a full accounting of what was happening across Ukraine - deaths often remained unregistered, cause of death was missing - to conceal the true situation.

At the height of the Holodomor in June of 1933, Ukrainians were dying at a rate of 28,000 people per day. Around 3.9 million Ukrainians died during the Holodomor of 1932-33 (as established in a 2015 study by a team of demographers from the Ukrainian Institute of Demographic and Social Studies, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill).

While Ukrainians were dying, the Soviet state extracted 4.27 million tons of grain from Ukraine in 1932, enough to feed at least 12 million people for an entire year. Soviet records show that in January of 1933, there were enough grain reserves in the USSR to feed well over 10 million people. The government could have organized famine relief and could have accepted help from outside of the USSR. Moscow rejected foreign aid and denounced those who offered it, instead exporting Ukraine's grain and other foodstuffs abroad for cash.

Most historians, who have studied this period in Ukrainian history, have concluded that the Famine was deliberate and linked to a broader Soviet policy to subjugate the Ukrainian people. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the opening of Soviet government archives (including archives of the security services), researchers have been able to demonstrate that Soviet authorities undertook measures specifically in Ukraine with the knowledge that the result would be the deaths of millions of Ukrainians by starvation.

"The Terror-Famine of 1932-33 was a dual-purpose by-product of collectivization, designed to suppress Ukrainian nationalism and the most important concentration of prosperous peasants at one throw." –Norman Davies, *Europe, A History*.

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The 40th anniversary of Werkgroep Herkenning

It was a memorable day, November 20, 2022, when Herkenning celebrated its 40th anniversary. The meeting was held in the building of the National Archives where the court reports of our parents are preserved. Chairman of the day was Mr Dick Mulder, former director of the Commemoration Center Westerbork. Westerbork was between 1940 and 1945 the assemble point for the Jews before their deportation to Germany or Poland. After the war it served as internment camp for collaborators.

We had three special guests: our former queen Princess Beatrix, the Mayor of The Hague where the archives are situated and the Governor of the province Zuid-Holland. When one realises how difficult our efforts have been to be gradually accepted by the Dutch people, it is almost unbelievable that our meeting was held there and in the presence of so many prominent people! We have to pay high tribute to Princess Beatrix who in her Christmas speech in December 1994 said that it is easy to know in retrospect what is good and what is wrong, but that this was in the past far more difficult. And she added 'that later generations still suffer from the consequences of the choice between good and wrong'.

An employee of the National Archives described shortly which tasks the Archives fulfill. A lecture was given by an employee of the camp Westerbork and another lecture described the tasks of the organisation Arq, institute for help to people who have become victims of war or other violence.

The most impressive of the day were the encounters of members of Herkenning with the three prominent guests. The dialogues were held in openness and with great interest. In the evening the television showed some spots of the day and a couple of papers made room for a short report on our anniversary. In the afternoon member of the board Mrs Jeanne Diele-Staal was knighted and became a member in the Order of Oranje Nassau for her commitment to war children, in particular collaborators' children in the Netherlands.
GSB



DAVID NASAW THE LAST MILLION

Europe's Displaced Persons from World War Two to Cold War Penquin Press

They survived World War II — but were left stranded in Germany

Review in the Washington Post by Steven V. Robert, October 30, 2020

‘They were, as a group, defined by their resiliency, their refusal to surrender,’ write historian David Nasaw. “If one path forward closed, they would find another.” That group was “the last million” — survivors of World War II who were “marooned” in Germany but could not or would not return to their native countries. They were stateless and homeless, crowded into makeshift camps, often for as long as five years, until they could resettle in a new land.

The diplomatic and political side of this story is marked by monumental incompetence and indecency — Gen. George Patton described Jewish refugees as “lower than animals” — but the survivors simply refused to die or disappear, and demanded that the world deal with them.

In “The Last Million,” Nasaw has done a real service in resurrecting this history, but what’s often missing are the personal narratives of the individuals who lived through this period. One has to turn to other forms — novels, plays, memoirs — to grasp the full human drama. When Nasaw does quote from a short story by Flannery O’Connor, a character is asked to define a “displaced person.” Her reply is memorable: “It means they ain’t where they were born at and there’s nowhere for them to go — like if you was run out of here and wouldn’t nobody have you.”

A primary group with “nowhere to go” was the Jews who survived the Nazis’ extermination efforts. Hadassah Rosensaft describes the reactions in one death camp on May 8, 1945, as people were celebrating the Allied victory around the world: “We in Belsen did not dance that day. We had nothing to be hopeful for. Nobody was waiting for us anywhere. We were alone and abandoned.”

“The last million” included many other groups as well — slave laborers from Poland and Ukraine; Balts who fled advancing Soviet armies in Lithuania and Latvia; German soldiers who buried their uniforms and

burned off their tattoos that marked them as Waffen-SS veterans. Still, it was the Jews who had suffered the most. The young and the old were “the first to be killed” because they could not work, reported Judah Nadich, a U.S. Army consultant in 1945. In one camp with 944 registered Jews, only three were over 60, and almost everyone was between 16 and 44. “The absence of children among the survivors was striking — and heartbreaking,” he wrote.

Returning home was out of the question, back to “the nations, and the peoples who had murdered their families.” Europe was “a dead zone” that they yearned to leave. But they couldn’t. The British, who ruled Palestine under a League of Nations mandate, were particularly perfidious. They feared antagonizing Arab nations and jeopardizing their supply of Mideast oil; or even worse, driving the Arabs toward the Soviets, who “coveted” the same energy reserves. So London, with Washington’s backing, opposed virtually all Jewish immigration into the Holy Land. “If this meant the sacrifice of the Jewish dreams of a ‘homeland’ in Palestine, so be it,” writes Nasaw.

The Americans were not much better, maintaining a law from 1924 that imposed harsh limits on virtually all forms of immigration. The new president, Harry Truman, “feared — and rightly” that if he tried to loosen the rigid quotas, the effort would backfire and provoke even “more restrictive legislation.”

Anyone who thinks President Trump’s demonization of foreigners is an aberration should read this history. In Europe anti-Semitism and anti-Communism had long fused into a single fierce hatred — “It was assumed that every Jew was a subversive, a Bolshevik,” writes Nasaw — and congressional opponents of immigration adopted the same vile prejudice.

During one legislative debate in 1948, Rep. Eugene “Goober” Cox of Georgia stated, “These camps are hotbeds of revolutionists who, if they came here, would join those who are gnawing away night and day like termites at the foundation of our constitutional government.” When Congress finally did amend the immigration statute, Truman conceded that the measure “discriminates in callous fashion” against Jewish refugees — but he signed it anyway.

In the end, however, the resilience and resourcefulness of those refugees won out. Zionist organizers started recruiting and training potential fighters back in the German camps and infiltrating them illegally into Palestine. Truman recognized the state of Israel in May 1948; the Israeli army, bolstered by the recent arrivals, repelled an Arab invasion; and within a year, almost 100,000 Jewish displaced persons had fled to the new nation. Many refugees also found ways to evade the “callous” new nation. Many refugees also found ways to evade the “callous” American laws. “We all lied about where we came from,” recalled Ella Schneider Hilton. As one U.S. Army officer observed, “The [displaced persons] are clever; they have lived by their wits for many years, and to detect something that they don’t want you to know, is very difficult.”

There is a dark side to this story. Some exiles who used their wits to enter America were collaborators, even war criminals. Every refugee suffered through the same searing experience, “leaving countrymen behind and entering foreign lands where few understood your language, knew your recent history, or could locate your birthplace on a map of the world.” And they dragged behind them a suitcase full of emotional scars. As the death camp survivor Elie Wiesel wrote, “A tortured person remains tortured. . . . There are wounds that don’t heal.” But it’s also true that a free person remains free. And because these refugees found “a path forward,” their descendants have been able to fulfill the commandment in Genesis: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth.”

EVEN THOUGH

An epilogue written for the Guernsey Evening Press, May 9th 1945 describes in short what has been experienced by the people who stayed on the islands instead of evacuating to England or Cornwall.

'Even though we have experienced a few air-raids; even though we have seen streets of shattered shops fronts and some homes blasted and ruined; even though two old couples and a grower were murdered by the Germans and a few others met violent deaths; even though our crops have been pillaged and plundered and our cattle filched from us; even though many of our fellows have suffered at the hand of the Gestapo and been flung into goal; even though we saw many loved ones torn away and transported to internment camps at Biberach and Laufen; even though, for months, we have hovered on the very borderland of starvation; even though we have seen the matchless beauties of our coast and countryside gashed and scarred and disfigured for a decade by hideous fortifications;

and even thought property everywhere has been wrecked and furniture stolen; even though remembering all these things, and many more which we have witnessed under the trampling heel of the Nazis, we must still admit that we have been the most fortunate people in all Europe.

Unlike the European peoples - and our own people in England - we have not had to cower in cellars for night after night awaiting a cataclysm from the skies. We have slept comfortably in our beds tranquil and undisturbed, for years on end.'

(quoted in: 'Reflections of Guernsey' by Molly Bihet; 1993, 1999, 2004 and 2007)

'As regards to André and his family returning - his brother John like many others islanders was still abroad in the Army (in the Greek Islands), his sister Therese had met a Wolverhampton boy, married and had naturally wanted to stay - so it was only André and his mum and dad returning. They had originally left their home at 5 Contree Mansell and on returning found no-one living there and the rooms completely bare of furniture. Their old friends and neighbours from before the evacuation immediately got in touch with them and told them where all their furniture and belongings were. They had been used and taken by a local, but to be fair - after seeing this family most of the furniture was returned the next day with no arguments. The blame could not always be on the 'others'. - the Enemy. Because of instances like this feelings between islanders sometimes were not at all pleasant at first. I'm sure some islanders must have wondered if perhaps they had done the right thing in returning. Would they have been better off staying? in work? in surroundings they had got used to? with their new friends? and now returning it perhaps nothing except resentment like André came up against when trying to make new friends. Perhaps these one or two were in a minority but like characters everywhere, some can be so unkind. With André arriving back with many hundreds of others - a new life with new friends had to begin again. I expect difficult at the age of 17 ½. He joined the St. Peter Port Boys' Club and it was not long before he came up against some nasty remarks with very strong language, 'you left us and was a yellow bellied.... etc.etc. (Remembering the 'don't be yellow - STAY' posters at the harbour in 1940) André felt he had to put up with enough bullying with being thought as a 'froggie' whilst in Wolverhampton - not a happy time; and he really couldn't understand the strong feelings of these two particular young chaps. Enough was enough and one day André spoke out and reminded him that it hadn't be easy for his family coming home to find little of their furniture. André also at the time felt priority was given to those who stayed when applying for jobs and he had no choice whatsoever, and on the mainland life had been very hard for his family with many shortages too and raids to content with, mentioning life here was more safe than the continentals had who were also under the Nazis - finishing up with 'if we had all stayed, more of you would have starved...etc...etc..Heated words between the two and an invitation from André to meet with bare fists apparently did not come to anything. They did not (pleased to say) finish up in the St. Peter Port's Boxing Ring at the club! But I think this highlights some of the feelings at the time. I just remember and know how mum and dad were very happy to see everyone home again and the vast majority were thrilled to be back, but the rehabilitation period was not plain sailing for many. The authorities stored and collected a great deal of furniture and allowed families to see if they could find the furniture they had left behind - not an easy task for anyone, nor for the authorities in charge plus some resentment and grievances amongst a few. It must have been for some a difficult time. A time for adjustment in some cases even had to be made within families too. I know and had heard of brothers and sisters, some had stayed, some went away (especially with those young people coming up to teenage years and a little older) who had to learn to live together once more with different ideas and a totally different outlook on life after so long apart. Not easy and much patience was needed. I'm sure the Germans split up many a family home through the long separation.' (p.48/49)

PEACE

A little girl
Is sitting in the garden
Around her fresh green plants
She sits on the ground
Her hand grasps the earth
Far away are houses
No single noise breaks through
Silence all around
The sun caresses her head
Her arms and legs

No bombs, no shooting
No cries, no screams
No crowded trains
No crowded refugee camp
No internment camp

She sits there all alone
Her uncle digs in the corner.
Peace

Gonda

TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMATISATION

(this article is based on a literature study I did on behalf of the board of Kombi, the Dutch foundation that organised meetings open to war children of different background groups and the board of Herkenning, the self-help organisation of children of Dutch collaborators)

The concept and its mechanisms

In the 1980s, transgenerational traumatization (or: indirect or secondary traumatization) was a hot issue and many publications at the time focused on this subject. The psychiatrist E. de Wind (1) introduced the concept in the Netherlands. In his papers and articles he over and over again made clear that it is not a law of the Medes and the Persians that children of traumatized people become traumatized themselves. If there is a certain openness in the family allowing people to speak about the past, if the parents have managed to work through some of their psychological problems, the children may be influenced by their parents' behaviour and views, but not in a pathological way. If the children have the opportunity to discuss their problems with their parents or friends, this often suffices to prevent them from getting psychological problems that require professional help. Although they may have feelings of unsteadiness or of vague anguish, they will manage to function in their professional and personal contacts quite normally. De Wind illustrated the mechanism of indirect traumatization by the story of the chickens, not at all afraid of a snake, until their mother started to give the alarm and ran away. They did not understand why their mother was afraid, but felt her agony and followed her in her flight.

Willem Heuves (2) describes the non-verbal interaction between a mother and her baby. The mother notices the movements and emotions of her child and reacts to them in an adequate way. The baby experiences that his mother understands his needs and wants to comply with them, while accepting his emotions and giving him the feeling: you are OK. A depressed mother, however, is more or less absorbed in her own thoughts and not alert enough to recognize the signals her baby is giving to her. She does not actually see what her baby wants to tell, she does not respond to his needs and leaves him with frustration and uncertainty.

Heuves set forth that, normally, parents know how to handle their child's fear of a 'weird animal' beneath his bed, and help him to overcome his anguish. Parents who in their childhood or youth experienced serious terrors and threats may feel overwhelmed by the recurrence of these emotions at the moment they witness their child's fear. The child notices the terror in the eyes of the parents and his own childish fear for the non-existing animal is linked with the realistic anguish the parents experienced in very real dangerous situations.

Moreover, Heuves states, depressed or traumatised parents often interpret their child's behaviour not on the basis of this behaviour, but on the basis of their own experiences. A mother who stumbled almost over her baby creeping on the floor said to her guest: 'That is how this child always behaves when there are guests. He is always in my way, just because he is jealous that I speak with you.'

Petra Aarts (3) put to the fore that depressed and traumatised parents often do not know how to react to their children

s interest in questions of death and birth and their experiments with food and excrements. At a certain age all children become interested in these subjects, but they may remind their parents of painful childhood experiences that may overwhelm them. Even if they don't express their emotions, the children will experience how troubled their parents are and will feel uncertain, inclined to avoid in future such outbursts of emotions, even unexpressed.

D. J. De Levita (4), for years professor in the field of war-related problems of the post-war generation, noted that in general children want to have happy parents and will do their best to make them happy by being a 'good child'. Children of traumatised parents see that all their efforts to improve their parents' well-being are in vain. They may experience their unsuccessful efforts as their own failure, or may feel guilty, assuming that they are the source of their parents' depression. The failure of their efforts thus becomes a traumatising factor.

Normally children are able to accommodate to whatever circumstances. If those circumstances are actually pathogenic in nature, they develop pathogenical manners of behaviour, and children, who in their own constitution don't have clues for developing depressions or other psychological problems, nevertheless end needing therapeutic help.

The psychoanalyst Mrs J. Groen-Prakken (5) makes a distinction between traumatising and development interference. She describes trauma as a mental damage that cannot be dealt with with the normal coping strategies people use to overcome problems. She identifies the latter concept as the effects on human beings caused by events or circumstances that prevent the fulfillment of basic needs at the age those needs need to be fulfilled to guarantee a normal development. She describes the case of a four months old baby who needs to be put in a plaster corset in order to prevent his hips to dislocate. It is, however, the age that normally babies start to roll from their back to their belly and the corset impedes him in this normal development. The physical hindrance may result in a psychological problem.

Groen-Prakken explains that people living under constant stress or living in situations in which their very existence is at stake (concentration camp, hiding, persecution, flight)

develop a trauma. Some people more than others run the risk of becoming traumatised. She points in particular to people who lack, for some reason or another, the necessary 'ego-strength'. There are periods in life that ego-strength is rather weak: in childhood, adolescence and old age.

According to Groen-Prakken, all people living during a war are affected by development interference, adults and children alike; to children the consequences are, however, more dramatic.

Interference of the war have often had as a result that people could not be 'good enough' parents to their children, whereupon their failing parenting interfered with the normal development of their children. They in their turn may influence the development of their children and in this way the effects of development interference are handed over to the next generations. The only way to stop this process is by becoming aware of where it started and working through it.

The silence of the parents

As was said before, E. de Wind underlined that a certain openness about the past between parents and children will prevent children becoming indirectly traumatised. In many families, however, the parents kept silent about the past. They did not find words for what they had experienced in camps or in hiding or they did not dare to recollect the past afraid of becoming overwhelmed by unmanageable emotions in front of their children.

Many were convinced that not speaking about their experiences would spare their children a lot of pain, not aware of the fact that silence was actually more burdensome than speaking up. Many post-war children blame their parents for their silence, because they see it as their right to know what happened. But above all they feel they need to know about the past in order to be able to understand the behaviour and views of their parents and of themselves. The need of the parents to keep silent is contrary to the need of the children to know and in fact there is no way out of this dilemma.

Tamarah Benima (6), born after the war in a Jewish family, stands up for her silent parents by putting to the fore that two essential motives for sharing experiences are absent in the parents-children relationship. First of all, sharing experiences aims at sharing emotions, but the relationship between parents and children is by definition an asymmetric one, so a genuine exchange of emotions is not possible. The second motive, the transfer of 'lessons for life', does not apply either, because the war experiences of the parents are of no use in periods of peace. Tamarah relates how her father used to tell his daughters how important it is to have a fur coat when a war breaks out: the coat is warm, can be used as a blanket, you can put a lot of things in the pockets and if necessary you can sell it for food.... Such an advice does not make sense to children who attend school, visit a disco or fitness club and enjoy life with their friends.

The psychiatrist Judith Kestenberg (7) who conducted a research project (1974-1984) among war children and the post-war generation, described how these people were affected by their travelling to and fro between two worlds: the world of the past, their parents' world in which the war is still not over or in which they are preparing for a possible new war to break out and their own world, the world of the present, the world of friends, colleagues, sport and holidays. Achieving a well-defined identity is impeded by this constant 'shuttle trip' between two different worlds.

Confusion in terminology, differences of view

In search of information on the typical problems of the post-war generation (if any at all) came across the term 'second generation' that researchers use either to define the post-war generation, or the people who were children during the war, (so the war children), or

both categories. It was often not evident which category they had in mind when writing their articles.

According to the psychiatrist P.C.Blom (8), the watershed between the war children and the post-war generation is not so much defined by the date of birth (before and in the war or after), but by being directly or indirectly traumatised. He noted, that children of Dutch collaborators born in internment camps or children in Indonesia born in the chaotic period after Liberation day because of the civil war and returning to the Japanese camps for safety, were traumatised themselves, although born after the war, because the war situation continued for them.

We also have to keep in mind that not only the post-war generation grew up with traumatised parents and were affected by their depressions and anguish. War children lived also with parents who were so absorbed in dealing with their own sorrow that they lacked the energy to be the 'good enough' parents children need for a normal development. So war children have their indirect traumatising in common with the post-war generation, but differ from them because of their being directly traumatised during the war. In only two of the about 40 articles I consulted, the authors referred to this fact!

According to De Levita, the crucial factor for both categories is the attitudes and the mental well-being of the parents. He thinks that they count for more than the possible traumatising of the war children themselves.

Judith Kestenberg, however, found distinct differences between the categories. (The summary I give here does not do to any extent justice to the elaborate article she wrote about this issue, which was in its turn a summary of her research).

War children, in general, try to forget the past, whereas the post-war generation wants to know what happened in the past.

The post war generation cling to their parents (and the parents to their children) in such a way that saying goodbye in whatever form is always difficult for both, whereas many war children have problems entering into relationships with other people.

War children have been humiliated or at least overlooked, which impeded the development of a strong and healthy identity, whereas the post-war generation is affected by the damaged identity of their parents caused by the humiliation they have suffered.

The post-war generation did not dare to express their feelings of aggression towards their parents at the moments this would be normal in a child's development, whereas war children often directed their aggression to their parents instead of to the people responsible for the misery they all went through.

The post-war generation suffers from psychosomatic diseases like bulimia or anorexia, whereas war children suffer from the long-term effects of hunger and deprivation, revealing itself in lack of energy and vitality and digestion problems.

The therapist, B. Filet (9) put to the fore the aspect of elusiveness of the problems of both categories: 'Many war children and those belonging to the post-war generation suffer from psychological pains that can hardly be defined and they are so common in the context in which they live that nobody recognizes them as symptoms of war-related damages.'[.]

'These are symptoms of an inner configuration rather than clear-cut psychological problems'. The expert, nevertheless, notices the historical context in which the client or his family have been traumatised, on the basis of emotions typical of their background group or on the basis of the characteristics of the emotional pains. Children of resistance fighters show often bitterness and deception, people who were children in the Japanese internment camps in Indonesia often find symbolic ways to express their grief about the loss of their mother country and their traumatic immigration to the Netherlands and show their distrust of authorities. People from Jewish families often show to be afraid of loss of control and of discrimination and the majority of collaborators' children suffer from feelings

of guilt and of shame.

The concept under attack

In the late 1990s some scholars stated that transgenerational traumatising does not exist.

In 1995, a couple of researchers took on the (governmentally financed) task to study the problems of people born after the war in families who experienced the war in the Japanese internment camps in Indonesia. In the opening paragraph of their report they stated frankly that they dissociated themselves from the results of studies conducted by therapists or psychiatrists, who 'of course found problems – they need clients, don't they!' They declared their target group 'free from problems', at least not suffering from more psychological troubles than their peers. Petra Aarts (10) commenting on this report found, however, that the researchers had overlooked an important fact, viz. the composition of the control group. More than 50 per cent of the people of this control group was faced with war-related problems in their families, although they belonged to different background groups than the 'Indonesian' one. No wonder that the researchers did not find differences between the study group and their peers... Aarts assumed, that the researchers probably found what suited the government: no problems, no need to continue granting financial support to the post-war generation for psychological help or other types of care.

In 2002, the therapist IJzendoorn (11) reported on the three generations research he conducted in Israel together with two colleagues. He interviewed fifty grandmothers who were Holocaust survivors and their daughters and granddaughters and fifty grandmothers who lived already in Israel before 1939 and their daughters and granddaughters. They focused on the issue of attachment and separation, one of the issues often discussed in reports on war-related problems. His conclusion: 'In general we did not find clues that justify the use of the term secondary traumatising. To put it briefly: intergenerational transfer of traumas does not exist, at least not when children and grandchildren are living in normal circumstances. This proves how resilient the Holocaust generation was and how successful in keeping away from their children the effects of their traumatising.' He leaves us with some questions: What are 'normal' circumstances – the situation in Israel where Jews constitute the majority in society or do his results also apply to other countries where Jews constitute a minority group in society and often are the target of discrimination? Why did he focus only on one issue, however important in itself, and not on others as well? Why did he use this research to proclaim his opinion that Holocaust survivors are not the pitiful victims as they often are portrayed?

The 'hidden agenda' of those scholars could prove to be very costly to war children and the post-war generation. Therapists reading their reports might be tempted to accept that transgenerational traumatising actually does not exist and might feel permitted to stop asking questions on war experiences in the family during intake encounters or during therapy sessions.

The Institute for Documentation and Coordination of Help for War Victims, Icod, organised meetings for the post-war generation open to all different background groups in the Netherlands in 1996, 1998 and 2000. One of Icod's employees was charged with the care of these people. Since Icod merged with two other institutes into the organisation Cogis, no initiative has been taken on behalf of the post-war generation. Has this lack of activity had anything to do with the new trend of denying transgenerational traumatising? Besides, in the magazine of the new organisation the articles focus less on war-related problems and more and more on the problems of asylum seekers, members of NGO teams and veterans of peace missions. War as an issue of interest is evidently 'out'.

The actual situation

The psychological problems children of war-traumatized parents are not basically different from those of their peers, is the conclusion of several research-studies. In 1990 a study among people belonging to the Jewish post-war generation proved, however, that children of survivors claim significantly more psychological and medical help than their peers.(12)

The following cases show the impact of their parents' war experiences on the lives of their children.

During a professional training Rien learnt that his father, a convict for some years during the war, belonged to one of the accepted categories of war victims. His relationship with his father had been very tense and he had seen his father as the perpetrator and himself as his victim. It was an eye-opener that the 'perpetrator' was himself a victim; this insight gave Rien the opportunity to re-consider his relationship with his father, even more than a decade after his death. He managed to find a new and balanced view on him and could leave behind the negative feelings that had always accompanied him.(13)

The therapist M.J.M. Coopmans (14) presented the case of a teacher caught in a conflict with his colleagues, driving him into a depression. The therapist could not find any clue in the personal development of his client and even the troublesome relationship with his father could not account for his misery of the moment. Nevertheless, the key was found in his father's experiences as a convict. The therapist advised his client to find out more details of his father's stay in Germany. The client learnt about the high ambitions his father had had before the war, the war preventing them to be fulfilled, while after the war his father lacked the energy and vitality to realise his ideals. The client, a very dedicated teacher trying to reach the highest possible level and therefore criticised by his less dedicated colleagues, had to find out whether his ambitions were really his own or actually his father's which he tried to fulfill in his place, to 'make good' the failure caused by the war. This cleared the sky and it did not take long before he accepted a job at another school.

A young woman, born after the war in a Jewish family, participated in a self help group, focusing on the topics of loneliness and communication problems.(15) Soon she learnt that underneath these problems lay the sadness about the fact that she did not have any children. Thereupon she recognised that underneath this problem lay the despair of her 'betrayal of her family': if she did not give her family offspring, the family would cease to exist, because almost all the members had been murdered in the context of the Shoah. If she did not give children to her family, 'Hitler would have the final victory'. It is evident that if this topic had been ignored by herself or a therapist, any therapy would have stucked.

According to me, it is not important to know whether these cases can be defined as examples of indirect traumatising or of development interference. What counts is the impact of the war throughout the generations and the importance of becoming aware of this influence.

Reaching out to the post-war generation

On 31 May 2008, Kombi organised a meeting where the participants discussed the similarities and differences between the problems of war children and the post-war generation on the basis of six interviews. The four people born after the war had not been aware of the possible link between their problems and the war experiences of their (grand) parents until other people drew attention to this connection or until they happened to come across a publication on this issue. They raised the question: how can we reach other

people who don't know that their problems are probably linked to their family's war experiences?

This meeting was to be the last one before Kombi would stop its activities at the end of this year, but the participants felt that there was still a task to take on, in particular on behalf of the post-war generation. So they decided to continue the organisation's activities, although in a somewhat different way. The discussion groups will have to yield their central position to the interactive website to be set up. Kombi will start a 'knowledge centre', gathering scientific knowledge alongside stories which will elucidate the problems of the post-war generation. The PR team, aware of the various different views with respect to transgenerational traumatisation, will contact therapists and psychological magazines asking their renewed attention to the plight of the war children and the post-war generation. They will also contact magazines of different types and ask them to publish stories that may help readers to see how their problems might be linked to the war experiences in their families.

Today, many publications recommend therapists to go into the social, ethnic, cultural and historical context of their 'new' clients (asylum seekers or foreign employees). The members of Kombi want them to be informed of and to take into account their 'social, ethnic, cultural and historical context': the war (of their (grand)parents). And if institutes like Cogis cannot be convinced of the need to resume their activities on behalf of the post-war generation, the members of Kombi will reach out to them.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

Note: Cogis invited representatives of all the war children organisations in the Netherlands to a brainstorm meeting with respect to a 'knowledge center' as a joint initiative. But after a couple of meetings, the interest dropped off because the contact person of Cogis left her job. Now, 2022, the board of Herkenning will try to pick up the line, aware of the fact how dearly needed is such a data center.

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HOPE

Waclav Havel

First of all I have to say that I consider hope especially, originally and principally as a quality of the spirit, not as a condition of the world.

We have hope in ourselves or we don't have it at all; it is a dimension of our soul and essentially independent of how we see the world or how we judge situations.

Hope is an orientation of the soul, an orientation of the heart, which exceeds the concrete world and is anchored somewhere in the distance, beyond its limits.

It seems to me that we cannot explain hope as a pure consequence of something of the present time and space, or generated by special developments in the world or by positive omen.

Her deepest roots, I feel them in the transcendence, like the roots of our responsibility, although I cannot – in contrast with e.g. Christians – say something concrete about this transcendence.

This conviction – in fact it is more than a conviction, it is an inner experience – can not be influenced by the measure in which other people admit or on the contrary dispute it: the most fervent materialist or atheist can find support in this inner, real and in the transcendence rooted hope (in my opinion, not in his) than ten metaphysically inspired people together.

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www.krigsboern.dk

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www.nazichildren.com

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

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