

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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Issue 56, Autumn 2023

INTRODUCTION

I cannot open this issue without referring to the Hamas' attack on 7/10. My heart is still with the ongoing war in Ukraine and now there is suddenly another place of mourning and violence. It is heavy, it brings back old fears and tensions.

The book 'The sunflower' of Simon Wiesenthal is still of great importance. I publish three passages of this book.

In one commentary Yossi Klein relates how difficult it had been to him to contact Germans. I continue with a text of a Dutch rabbi and his encounter with German theologians and a former Wehrmacht officer.

Nowadays 'One by One' is still active in organising meetings between Germans and Jews.

In the past we had the organisations KOMBI and TRT focusing on dialogue and storytelling. They were bridging the gap between the descendants of the former perpetrators and their victims. I would like to remember them here and now.

I insert a well known poem in the Netherlands about a bridge (although most people know only the first four sentences and forget that the main theme is actually the woman on the ship).

I would like to thank Irene Glausowitz for allowing me to publish her husband's reaction at the article about the lost train in the last issue.

Organisations which stop their activities, take not easily that decision. In the organisation JIN the board met with a number of members round the question: stop or continue. The after-war members decided to take over the lead, so that their archives should not be lost.

In my organisation Herkenning, the sponsor of this bulletin, the grandchildren generation took over and the club is flourishing. Two members wrote an article about the value of an encounter group.

Dorothee Schmitz-Köster sent me a message about her blog.

The Kriegsenkel.de started as a website encounter group, but now they have groups at several places in Germany and one in the USA. I take over two articles of their websites.

Lebensspuren, the organisation of of and for children involved in the Lebensborn history, sends me regularly their newsletter. I took over some passages.

In the last issue I spoke about Jan Zwartendijk. Now I can complete his story.

The article Franklin Littell wrote in the 'Sunflower' proves to be very actual these days.

The next issue will appear in May 2024. If there is a change in your address, please let me know.

Best regards,
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

THE SUNFLOWER by Simon Wiesenthal

While imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, Simon Wiesenthal worked alongside his friends Arthur, Adam, and Josek. Throughout their time, the group of friends would often argue over the existence of God. While Josek remained faithful and believed that God was testing their strength through this horrible time, the others questioned how God could allow them to suffer so greatly. Soon, however, Simon would be met with an even bigger dilemma.

One morning, Simon becomes separated from his friends and is selected to work in a hospital. Simon arrives at the hospital where a nurse pulls him aside to ask him if he is a Jew. The nurse brings Simon to the room of a fatally wounded Nazi soldier named Karl Seidl.

Simon sat with Karl as he told the story of his life. Karl explains that he was born in Stuttgart in a Catholic household. His father, a Social Democrat, opposed Hitler and the Nazi party and pleaded with Karl not to join the Hitler Youth [] In a small Ukrainian village, Karl and his fellow soldiers were ordered to gather 300 Jews, mainly women and children, into a house that was then set on fire.

A mother, father, and small boy then tried to jump from the house that was now blazing; however, Karl and other Nazis were armed outside ready to shoot anyone who dared try to escape. Karl is haunted by the memory of the eyes of the boy. Karl knew he would die soon and asked Simon to forgive him for his crimes so that he could die in peace. Faced with a dilemma beyond comprehension, Simon didn't know how to respond

Once Karl finished his story and asked Simon for his forgiveness, Simon doesn't say anything and simply walks out of the room. While disgusted by what Karl had done, Simon showed respect for the man by staying and listening to his story and holding his hand. He even shooed away a fly that was bothering the dying man.

After Simon leaves the hospital, he reunites with his friends and explains to them what just happened to him. All three are glad to hear that Simon didn't allow Karl to experience forgiveness, and Josek expresses that Simon didn't have the power to forgive him on behalf of other people anyway. Simon is still haunted by the situation and returns to the hospital the following day. He arrived to find that Karl had died that night and left Simon his possessions, including a name and address for his mother; however, Simon refused to take it.

In 1945, Simon is liberated from the Mauthausen camp and is reminded of Karl when he sees the sight of a sunflower. Despite refusing Karl's belongings, he has remembered Karl's mother's name and address even after all these years. He decides to travel to Germany and visit his mother. While there, Simon listens as Karl's mother laments the loss of her son and husband who also died in the war. However, she describes Karl as a kind young man and chooses to believe that Karl would've never harmed the Jews. At this moment, Simon chose silence once again. He decided against telling Karl's mother the full extent of their conversation, allowing her to keep the image of her son a positive one.

(Source: quickread)

COMMENT of Yossi Klein Halevi

In responding to Wiesenthal's story, there, I begin where I have the right to begin: with his encounter with Karl's mother in 1946. Here, there is no moral ambiguity. Rather than tell her the truth about Karl, Wiesenthal allows the woman who has lost everything to at least retain a mother's pride in her son. He rejects his opportunity for vicarious vengeance against the innocent; whatever happened 'there' cannot justify cruelty 'here'. Refusal to forgive belongs to that time and place, not ours...

That simple message took me a long time to learn. Though born after the war, I was one of those Jews who tried to isolate Germany in a cordon of untouchability. I refused to visit Germany or buy German products. When I'd meet Germans my age, I related to them with blatant distaste, delighting in their discomfort. I wanted the Germans - all Germans who identified with that poisoned culture - to be exiled from humanity.

Finally, I traveled to Germany in November 1989 as a journalist. The Berlin Wall had just been breached. In the frozen evenings I joined the dense crowds moving in slow motion along the Ku'damm, West Berlin's main avenue, and was reminded to my dismay, of Jerusalem in the weeks after the Six Day War: the same dazed joy, the same incredulous sense of crossing inviolate borders. To exclude myself from the Germans' celebration, I felt, I was to deny myself an essential human experience, exiling myself from humanity.

During the same trip I visited a Protestant Youth Club in West Berlin, "Meerbaum House", named for a German Jew killed in the Holocaust. A poster on a wall announced a trip to Poland, to help clean the sites of a former death camp; other posters supported various liberal and fringe radical causes, from apartheid rallies to Amnesty International to the Sandinistas. One felt that the dead Jew Meerbaum was the dominant presence of this place. that the young people here were offering their notion of altruistic politics to his memory.

I asked those teenagers whether they felt any pride in being German. They laughed. Did they feel excitement when the Wall fell? Blank stares. I thought of the enthusiasm with which Israelis their age react to a national triumph - the rescue of an endangered Diaspora community, a successful attack against a terrorist leader, and it seemed to me

that, as a people, we had emerged from the Holocaust with our life force more intact than had the Germans. The young people of Meerbaum House appeared so intimidated by the Holocaust that they couldn't allow themselves to share their people's celebration. But instead of taking a grim pleasure in their shame, I felt the emptiness of revenge against the guiltless. And I felt myself actually urging them not to allow the past to distort the present, not to allow Auschwitz to deny them a moment of well-earned self-respect.

Certainly I don't believe that Germans or Jews should obscure the memory of the past. But since that encounter in Berlin I have become increasingly committed to German-Jewish reconciliation. Wiesenthal's humane gesture toward Karl's mother reinforces for me the sense that, just as we are commanded to remember all our Egypts, there are times when we must also transcend them. For Wiesenthal the survivor, behaving graciously toward the mother of an SS officer required moral courage; for the rest of us, treating a new generation with decency requires only moral common sense.

RECONCILIATION

I read an interesting article written by rabbi Lody van de Kamp in the magazine 'Heilig Spel', a magazine for rituals, liturgy and spirituality. The article is rather long, so I made a translated summary.

He begins to refer to an encounter he had, more than 25 years ago, with four participants of a conference about reconciliation in which Van der Kamp participated himself as well. They told him they could not leave Amsterdam without a meeting with him in order to confess the guilt of the German people and to ask him for reconciliation. They could not go away before he had helped them to get insight in their dilemma of Germans being born after the war and just feeling almost broken under the heavy weight of their fathers sins during the war. They met the next day and the discussion was at a level much higher than the actual trend of our 'excuses society', (2023) in which Holocaust, racial colonialism, slavery, excesses in the former colony of East Indies are put in the same bowl. The meeting should not be restricted to confession of guilt and forgiveness, but should explore the possibilities of reconciliation between the German people and the Jewish community. The basis should be the texts of the Bible as guide in the encounter, since they all were theologians.

Rabbi van de Kamp explained to the four theologians that in Judaism guilt and forgiveness is always a matter between the perpetrator and his victim. No one can ask forgiveness in the name of someone else, no one can give forgiveness for someone else. [[In Christianity, in contrast, replacement is an important issue, so Christians feel often quite at unease with this different Jewish opinion, so unknown and therefore strange to them GSB]. The four pastors looked desperate, could they never have a possibility to get rid of the burden of Germany's guilt?

Was the encounter going to a failing experiment? They had expected that the Dutch rabbi would accept their excuses. But, indeed, in whose name? Of his father who survived a couple of camps? Of a number of family members who were murdered?

There was, however, another concept that could link them together, that of assuming responsibility. Van de Kamp's responsibility was to be an empathic listener who could help them to see that they could not neglect these items and that their children and grandchildren would have to cope with these events as well. For themselves, they should assume responsibility for the present and the future of their own lives and behaviour and

for the society in which they live and for the country they live in as a citizen.

It was not the rabbi's first encounter with a German. Not long after the unification of the two states of Germany Van de Kamp participated in a conference in Berlin organised by the Deutsche Evangelische Kirche. (the German Evangelical Church) The subject of the conference was the relationship between the Jewish community and the German people. He had a pause and set at a terrace to have a drink. An old man sitting at a nearby table asked if Van de Kamp could give him the permission to share his table with him. He told the rabbi how his son struggled to get rid of the heavy burden of the Nazi Germany. "This is a meeting my son should have be part of", he said. Then he told what he himself had done under the Nazi regime and he said that the 4 years of imprisonment were far less than he had deserved. Then the rabbi sighed and said: "This encounter, my father should have had to participate in it."

In the Netherlands he had some meetings with collaborator's children, feeling guilty because of their father's guilt. The step to organise such a meeting is not easy, but it is necessary to meet and by doing that to bridge the gap. We need such meetings if we want to be serious in our discussions about guilt, forgiveness, responsibility and reconciliation. He had bad feelings about a trend in the Dutch society, that of polarisation. The authorities permit themselves to fraud and to tell lies, these activities have to stop. Citizens need role models showing justice and integrity.

The war in Ukraine shows us how the ghosts of hatred and power politics came back. How can we react, how to stop this war? We have an example that may inspire us. After the war politicians of the two big countries who were enemies in two world wars,[and in the past some other wars], namely Germany and France, met in order to take new steps. They brought their coal and steel under a new supranational foundation, that would develop into the European Union. We hope that the Ukrainians and the Russians will once shake hands again. But there is a long way to go. Our role now is to step over our gaps, to meet each other, listen emphatically and take care of the vulnerable people in our countries. We have to learn our own lessons in seeking the best fate for ourselves and the others, for all of us.

From. Heilig Spel (Holy game), first edition, January 2023.

GSB

ONE BY ONE: MEETING ON THE BRIDGE

We are the descendants of those who endured and survived the atrocities of the Nazi Regime.

We are the descendants of the perpetrators and bystanders from one of the most evil chapters in human history.

One by One is a non-profit organization founded by people whose lives have been deeply affected by the Holocaust and the Nazi Regime. Our membership is multi-generational and over time, One by One has been helpful to people whose lives have been impacted by genocide, war and conflict in other parts of the world.

One by one we seek out the humanity in each other as we listen with compassion to one other's stories of pain, guilt, anguish, loss and fear. As the stories resonate within us, the burdens are lightened and we begin to transform the impact of our legacies, offering hope to future generations.

Our book is nearing completion and we're looking forward to publishing soon.

TRANSFORMING THE LEGACIES OF CONFLICT, WAR AND GENOCIDE

This book reminds us that if we value the ideals of justice, compassion, and democracy, we need to be its guardians.

One by One, Inc. was created 50 years after the end of WWII to try to grapple with its fallout. Due to the honesty and courage of a small group of people from both sides whose lives were deeply affected, a path was paved to assist not only those who suffered from the fallout of the Holocaust and the Nazi Regime, but also for those in other parts of the world who wish to transform their own legacies of war and genocide.

Introduction (excerpt)

This book, "Transforming the Legacies of Conflict, War, and Genocide through Dialogue," reminds us that if we value the ideals of justice, compassion and democracy, we need to be its guardians.

One by One, Inc. was created 50 years after the end of WWII to try to grapple with its fallout. Due to the honesty and courage of a small group of people from both sides whose lives were deeply affected, a path was paved to assist not only those who suffered from the fallout of the Holocaust and the Nazi Regime, but for those in other parts of the world who wish to transform their own legacies of war and genocide.

Chapter 3: We are their children (excerpt)

"At the end of the seminar, I had the feeling of having climbed a high mountain. With clear eyes, I could recognize the abyss that separated us, created through the terrible deeds of the Nazis. I could also recognize the suffering that connected us as descendants. We must not close up this abyss. We can, however, build bridges across it on which we can meet each other and walk together. In that way we can contribute to dismantling hatred and stopping the hatred from being sown anew."

– R.W., German Child during the Nazi Regime

"...amidst my fear, I have reason for hope. The day I arrived in Germany, there was a Neo-Nazi demonstration in Berlin. Alongside, there were members of One-By-One present as demonstrators for the other side. With education and dialogue as our most important tools, One-By-One is truly making a difference.

"When someone like me is touched by this experience, I am able to impact other lives. In the months since I have returned from Germany, I have spoken about my experience to groups of teachers, to groups of students, to the Florida Governor's Council on Education, to the enlisted men and women at MacDill Air Force Base, to many friends and acquaintances, and of course to the juveniles convicted of hate crimes.

"If children of Holocaust Survivors and children of the perpetrator side can come together and listen, respect, and learn from each other, can't we offer great hope to the world?"

— B.S. Daughter of Shoah Survivors

Chapter 6: Ripples (excerpt)

One by One's participants have been multi-generational consisting of Holocaust survivors and their descendants; Nazi perpetrators, bystanders, resisters and their descendants; as well as those who served in the armed forces of the United States and Germany during this period in history. Members of these groups have inspired many in Europe and in the USA by bearing witness to their experiences in schools, synagogues, churches and universities; by creating works of art and by standing up for social justice. One by One has also impacted people from other countries who have suffered from war and genocide. For example:

Africa

From Joseph Sebarenzi, former Speaker of the Parliament of Rwanda and a victim of the genocide

"I first came to know One by One in the summer of 2001 at the School for International Training. ...After listening to their stories and efforts..., I thought to myself, if these people can do it, then my people, the people of Rwanda, can do it too. If these people, as descendants of those caught up on both sides of the Holocaust, can undertake voluntarily without a push from their governments, the process of grappling with such vicious hatred, then my fellow countrymen, the Hutu and Tutsi communities, can surely benefit from this model of transformative dialogue. This first encounter with One by One reinforced my growing commitment..."

Bosnia

From Paula Green Director, Project Diacom, after having One by One members speak with a group of educators in Bosnia in 2001

"We learned the value of multi-partiality in dialogue, remembering that there is no life without suffering, especially in war and that the journey to healing may begin with a single phrase, "yes, this tragedy happened, I acknowledge your experience, I accept your truth... Muslims, Serbs, Jews and Germans...weave a new story from their intertwined histories, this one committed to honesty, introspection, civic responsibility and compassion."

KOMBI

In September 2008 we [the encounter leaders and members] decided to go on with the activities of our organisation Kombi, but soon we had to face the fact that a couple of persons who were preparing to assume tasks had to invest all their energy in coping with illness and troubles in their personal lives. Then, in November 2009, we were alarmed by the news that our board's secretary passed away in his sleep. We could no longer avoid the conclusion that continuing activities in these circumstances had become impossible. So, in May 2010 we celebrated our 20th anniversary, but at the end of this year we will have to 'switch off the light'. A small group presented a 'look back show' and one of their songs summarizes the process we went through:

This is what the war has saddled us with:
confusion, pain, terror and grief,
problems emerging unexpectedly
out of nowhere, time and again.
But, over the years, we have acquired
trust, self-confidence, wisdom and strength
by facing the past, acknowledging our pain,
finding freedom and breathing fresh air.

This is what the war has thrown on our hands:
uprootedness, agony, loss,
without a basis in life, no ground to stand on,
no place to be carefree and play.
But by telling our stories and listening to others,
recognizing our similar legacy,
we learned to switch from survival to life,
traveling from darkness to light.

Is this what the war has wrought on us:
being victims and nothing else than that?
Still bound to what happened,
imprisoned for good in sorrow and helplessness?
No, we stimulated each other and helped all those
who set out to work through grief and pain.
And look how we face, with firmness and pride,
the challenges of life, here and now!

The legacy of Kombi has been published in the book 'Dialogue as a helping-hand' and we will continue to help set up a knowledge center on the Internet together with the other Dutch organisations of war children.
In these ways the positive experiences we had in Kombi and the hope we acquired there will not be lost but will be passed on to the generations to come.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

TRT Dan Bar-On, ed.: **BRIDGING THE GAP**
Körber Stiftung, Hamburg 2000
ISBN 3-89684-030-4

In August 1998 the group TRT (To Reflect and Trust) held a seminar in Hamburg to which they invited people from Northern Ireland, South Africa and Israel (Palestinians and Israelis), with the aim of finding out whether the model of dialogue developed in their encounters could be useful for other conflict situations. In the seventh issue of our Bulletin Professor Dan Bar-On wrote an article about it.
The above mentioned book is the result of this seminar.

From the preface, Dan Bar-On:
'We decided to provide you with a multitude of voices, rather than tell you about this seminar through a monolithic single one.() Perhaps one solid account could provide more coherence, give a theory or a model of how to work with past and current conflicts, of how to manage the victims' and victimizers' aftereffects. During the seminar there were also requests for such uniformity (and simplicity). I do not believe, however, that we are at a stage in our "state of the art" in which we can provide such a model or theory. I truly believe that each of the voices heard here is some contribution towards building such a theory, but none of us has, at present, achieved a total perspective of all the various contexts and agendas.'

Thuli Mpshe, South Africa:
'I believe that sharing honestly is the true way forward to reconciliation. Knowledge and understanding of others' pain is definitely the way to understanding which leads to

reconciliation. The process of learning from each other allows people to overcome conflict. It encourages empathy and the will to forgive. The reality that no matter how different we are, pain and hurt is similar suddenly hit me.'

Maureen Hetherington, Northern Ireland:

'I was allowed to tell my story in a room with people who wanted to listen without interruption - here in Northern Ireland "listening" sometimes means waiting for the chance to "dive" in when the opportunity arises. It was a privilege to sit and listen while others shared their story. () The trip also turned out to be a very personal and important journey for a number of reasons but most importantly I felt empowered through validation of my story.'

Fatma Kassem, Israel:

'The second or third day, I was asked to speak about Palestinian lives in Israel. I felt that I spoke clearly about how, even though I am Israeli, I don't enjoy the same privileges that Jewish Israelis enjoy. I spoke about how many people are oppressed in our own land. Immediately after I spoke I felt my friends, the other Israelis in this group, withdrawing from me. They were angry that I exposed their behavior to the rest of the world, and maybe especially to themselves. () Later we talked about what happened between us. I think that the road in front of us is still long, and it will take a long time to build up trust on both sides, but this is our responsibility if we want our children's lives to be different than ours.'

Dirk Wegner, Germany, Körber Stiftung:

'Sadly, it is still mostly the blare of worldwide conflicts which produce the greatest response in the media. Reporting concentrates mainly on bombs and airstrikes. The quiet determination of people whose dedication and openness contribute to bringing the solution of such conflicts a step further, too frequently remains unheard –, one more reason for us to publish this book'.

Nitai Keren, Israel

Poem

The short way is the long one,
and there are no shortcuts this way.
While walking this way you must talk, and talk a lot,
and while you are talking,
 the most important thing is to listen
and you must listen a lot and think.

The furthest destination is the closest to your heart,
and there are no way stations.
To get there you must do, and do a lot,
and while you are doing,
 the most important thing is to think,
and you must think a lot, and watch.

The impossible dream is the only one you really need

to fulfill,
and there is no need to deny.
To fulfill a dream you must awaken and be alert,
and while you are awake and alert,
the most important thing is to watch,
and you must watch a lot, and feel.

The highest hope is found in the depth of despair,
and you must never give up.
To keep hope you must believe, and believe strongly,
and when you believe the most important thing is to feel,
and you must feel a lot and give.

The strongest connection of all is the connection to oneself
and you can't afford to depend on another.
To connect to himself a man must meet with the others,
and when you meet with the others,
the most important thing is to give,
and you must give a lot and listen.

The short way is the long one,
and there are no shortcuts this way.
while walking this way you must talk, and talk a lot,
and while you are talking,
the most important thing is to listen,
and you must listen a lot and think.

THE MOTHER, THE WOMAN

I went to Bommel for watching the bridge.
I saw the new bridge. Two opposite banks
used to avoiding each other
become neighbours. The ten minutes
I laid down in the grass, after a cup of tea,
my head full impressions of the wide landscape,
in this space of endlessness
a voice entered my ears.

It was a woman. The ship she run
came slowly downstream under the bridge.
She was alone at deck, behind the wheel.
I recognised she was singing psalms
I thought oh, if this singing woman were my mother:
Praise the Lord, she sang, His hand will protect you.

Martinus Nijhoff

Message of Irene Glausiusz

The paragraphs on **THE LOST TRAIN** caught my attention particularly because my (Hungarian) husband Gershon Gabor Glausiusz together with his mother and three brothers were on the lost train. Most of those on board were either Dutch or Hungarian.

Gershon recalls how it all began:-

"My mother with me and my four brothers had been deported to Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp (my baby brother died in Belsen from disease and malnutrition). As WW2 was drawing to an end, trucks arrived at Belsen with people who were then marched to the camp with many killed on the way, if they couldn't walk and fell down, some moved and were hit on the head with rifle butts. The gutters were full of dead bodies in front of beautiful gardens and nice houses.

Groups of Hungarian and Dutch Jewish prisoners were taken out of Belsen on the 9th April, put on trains that left on 10th April. (with me, my mother and three brothers). We had no food, except that before being loaded, some boys had scrounged potato peelings, and these we chewed slowly on the train - these peelings were rationed. We were just surviving a little bit. After some days, with the train stopping and starting, at one of the stops, some boys managed to lift the train floorboards and got onto another immobilised train that had been strafed, where they found some maize. My eldest brother got a small bag and we chewed this maize. We did get some water and refuse was taken out once a day.

Meanwhile people were dying, including a friend of my grandfather, who asked to put his head on my legs as I was sitting on the floor. His name was Fekete Schwarz, a one time Bank Manager. He died and was taken out on the 16th April.

Then a Mr Garfinkle who managed to see out of the barbed wire windows, shouted to my mother "Frau Glausiusz, the Russians are already here". My mother had felt sure we would survive. The German train drivers disconnected the engine and escaped. I was told that two Russian scouts on white horses appeared. We were at the edge of a forest clearing. The

Russians broke the locks and we were released from the train. My mother found some stones, made a fire and boiled some water. My brother Laszlo caught a chicken which my mother exchanged for flour and made a sort of soup. Of course we couldn't eat too much.

We found a place to stay in the Mayor's office in Schildau. Apart from office equipment, there were three boxes of grenades stored there. Some Russian nurses came to help us and gave us medication to heal our skin. The grenades were taken away by Russian soldiers. My mother also found some suitcases containing alcohol and clothing and she managed to exchange some engine parts that she found, for shoes. Then we moved to Trobitz, staying in a rich farmer's house and then moved again to a tailor's shop. Some time after that, we received a letter and small parcel from my father and a bus came to take us back home. *The rest, as they say, is history.*

A point of interest to all War Children

Amongst the Dutch Jews on the Lost Train was a 4(?) year old boy named Maurice Blik who later aged 6 came with his mother and sister to England. He studied Art and became a renowned Sculptor. The Evacuees' Reunion Association was seeking an artist who could design a memorial to evacuation. I came to know Maurice Blik, who I then introduced to the Memorial Committee. Over the course of time, Maurice Blik designed the Evacuees' Memorial, money was raised, and the sculpture named "**Every Which Way**" was erected and can be seen at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire, northern England.

JIN

In the former Dutch colony of Nederlands Indië (now: Indonesia), between 1943 and 1946, a number of Dutch children was born with two different origins. Their fathers were Japanese military service men, most of the mothers were 'Indisch' or Indo-European', some mothers had Dutch parents. After the war, these mothers went to the Netherlands. In 1983 a couple of their children founded the encounter group 'Japanese Roots'; in 1991 the organisation JIN was founded. JIN has a website with information about their activities. In 1995, some former members of JIN founded another organisation, named Sakura. This organisation is responsible for their own website.

March 19, 2023, a general yearly meeting was held to discuss the present situation of JIN. Because of the restrictions during the corona period and the personal situation of the board members, few activities found place. Numbers of the members decreased because of aging. In 2012 the activities of finding the fathers of members of JIN were handed over to the Foundation of War Victims in the East (S.O.O.). Moreover, almost all the JIN members had participated in the Japan Peace and Friendship Program. These journeys were organised by the Japanese government and were beneficial for members to come to

terms with their background. In the meeting the central question was: what to do, should they stop the organisation?

Votes

The members present at the meeting accepted the financial report and the majority did not like to stop their activities. They would not be happy without contact with their peers and suggested to organise at least one yearly meeting. Moreover, the organisation needed a form of juridical incorporation, in order to be able to qualify for support, for example regarding funds for collective recognition of the 'Indische gemeenschap' (those who lived in the former colony).

Sansei

The third generation members present feared that ending the organisation would mean the loss of information, network, representation, asking attention for their stories, history about the period of the war and the year after, the story of their parents and where they went through and information about the grandparents and great grandparents. This discussion item was put forward by four sansei.

Basis for continuation

When they decide upon making a new start, an active role of the sansei will be absolute necessary, contacts between the members should be restarted, their need at least one meeting a year with a program that is also interesting for people outside their organisation, financial support for contacts and cooperation with the other organisation of people with a Japanese father, Sakura.

There will be formed a small group of sansei who will explore the basis for a restart, and will seek (new) contacts with other war children organisations and with peers.

ENCOUNTER GROUP

We live almost 80 years in peace (in Europe), but the war is not 'over'. Many people are damaged by the aftereffects of war or persecution.

People who decided to participate in an encounter group often have the feeling that something is missing in their family history. The main lines are known, but some puzzle pieces are absent. When the facts are known, there is still the question: but why happened all this?

The absent pieces generate frustration, irritation, uncertainty, confusion and these emotions cost much energy. A basis and a framework is missing, badly needed to make plans for their own future. The goal is more or less known, but they don't know why and how they will reach these goals.

An important aspect is that there is no direct relationship with the war. They see themselves in the role of one who has to defend himself time and again and moreover, their problems are so unimportant compared to those of others.

In an encounter group the story of the participant is the starting point of the story telling, the emotions and the quest to the truth are important. When telling one's story to people with the same background or at least with people who are able to share their feelings and thoughts the group becomes the basis of confidence. Confidence is needed to find

answers in your own way. The participants do not judge the stories, no one interrupts the story telling, no one gives an evaluation or compares it with other stories. The personal stories are the core. Participants are allowed to ask questions after the story is told, or to give more information on the absent piece.

After some meetings most of the participants have acquired more self confidence or have found information that add important knowledge. Sharing feelings, questions and problems is often the door leading to completing the family narrative. The group itself takes responsibility for organising the frequency of the meetings, how to cope with the costs, and when the group will stop.

Martijn Groenveld and Lenie Degen
(translation GSB)

BLOG of Dorothee Schmitz-Köster

Dear friends who are in some way involved in the Theme of 'Lebensborn' ,as a victim,as partner or friend of a victim, or interested at a personal item of interest, researcher or author.

The story of 'Lebensborn' I cannot say goodbye to it although I handed the number of some hundreds of my documents over to the Arolsen Archives.

When someone who was unknown as a 'Lebensborn' child ask me help for exploring some blank pages of the family history, of course I help him/her with some advices.

When I receive information about a radioprogramma or tv emission, about a movie or a book, of course I try to listen, look or read the stuff.

When some exposition about 'Lebensborn' is organised, I go to the place to watch it.

Even my choice of a roman to read in my free time, it is often connected to 'Lebensborn'.

I would like to share this information and my positive or more negative experiences with other people interested in this special aspect of the Nazi regime. For that reason I opened on my website www.schmitz-koester.de a 'Lebensborn'-blog on which I post all the information that might interest you. Since the posts will not be placed in a regular space, I will inform you about new tidings. I guess this will work. So contact Dorothee if you are interested in receiving messages about the blog. And of course, I would very pleased when you hand the information to others. There is still so much to explore, look better to some topics and to discover!

Yours sincerely,

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Her new book has the title 'Unbrauchbare Väter' (Fathers one can't use)
Wallstein Verlag

It tells the story of fathers in the showmap. Fathers who sprung aside and witnesses of 'Lebensborn' practices who fled to be safe from investigation.

LEBENSSPUREN

The Nazi organisation 'Lebensborn' gave married or unmarried pregnant women, in need of hiding their situation, the opportunity to give birth in special clinics. The mother and her husband or lover had to conform to several racial and political conditions. Children who were involved in these clinics founded their organisation 'Lebensspuren'.

I regularly receive their Newsletter. I summarize some paragraphs of the fore-last issue.

This spring they held their yearly meeting in Wernigerode, one of the places where a Lebensborn home has existed. Although the time between the announcement of the meeting and the event was rather short, the participants met for two days and accepted wholeheartedly some improvisations.

The board had sent information about the meeting to papers and to TV and radio broadcast organisations. Alas, there was no report in the local press. Fortunately, the Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk made an audio reportage and also the Neutral Sender made a video which the organisation can add to its archives.

Unfortunately the forum with students and pupils could not take place this year, because the participants could not include them in their agenda. Hopefully they will be on the program again next year.

The lecture on NAPOLA which supervised the homes in the Harz, Ballenstedt and Ilfeld gave new information and especially gave a view on the ideas of the teachers and pupils, the study books and study methods. The author of the book, 'Napola', Wolfgang Schilling, described on basis of the testimonies of a couple of children of this home what happened to them after the war.

Mrs Prof. Angela Moré, member of the advice committee gave a review of the book 'Nicht in meiner Familie' (Not in My Family) written by Roger Frie. She spoke about his youth and the family in which he was born, his relationship with family and society.

There was a book table where books could be purchased but the interest in it suffered from the short time of preparations. The next general meeting is planned for May or June 2024

The board could welcome two new members. Shortly before their meeting in Wernigerode, Dr. Joanna Bednerska contacted the board and asked to be invited for the event. She is a young woman, a researcher connected to the Philologischen Institut of the university in Lodz. She does research on the several aspects of 'Lebensborn'.

An other young woman, Berte Willems from Düsseldorf, contacted the board as well. Since her youth she is interested in Nazism in general and 'Lebensborn' in particular. At present she is doing again research on the theme, since she will write a book about Patrick Lasch, one of the 'Lebensborn' children.

The Austrian 'Lebensborn'.

The home 'Wiener Wald' is well known in Austria. It was situated in Pernitz, about 60 kilometer from Vienna. Some of the members of 'Lebensspuren' are born in that home. Dr. Lukas Schretter connected to the Ludwig Boltzman Institut for human rights had a couple of contacts with 'Lebensspuren'. Last year there was a first meeting with a number of Austrian 'Lebensborn' children. Dr. Schretter is doing research on the Austrian 'Lebensborn'. Since the topic has so many different aspects, Dr. Schretter has found researchers ready to co-operate with him. They come from the fields of society studies, study of law and political science, the basic human rights and are committed to human values and public safety, responsibility, economics and sociology, citizenship and reformation of the public

sectors and anti discrimination He is also co-operating with the university of Vienna.

Dr. Schretter would like to register a video reportage about 'Lebensborn' and the home in Pernitz. Therefore he contacted already several members of the organisation 'Lebensspuren'. They are willing to contribute to his study. He is planning also an advice committee of people with expertise in this topic. A first general meeting about his plans took place in July.

I was twice a participant of the yearly meeting in Wernigerode. I feel glad that they are still thus active although they are growing older. The co-operation with broadcast companies and researchers of universities and institutes is very important.

GSB

*The past is never dead. It's not even past.
(William Faulkner)*

What's a Kriegsenkel?

Although this site is aimed at an English-speaking audience, I've chosen to keep the word "Kriegsenkel" because there is no succinct equivalent expression in English. Kriegsenkel literally means "war grandchild."

From the German website Kriegsenkel.de:

The term "Kriegsenkel" refers to the relatives of the high birthrate years in Germany, the so-called Babyboomers, who were born from 1960 to 1975. They are often the children of the so-called "war children" who were born between 1928 and 1946, and who had been children during the Nazi era, the Second World War, and the immediate post-war period. The parents of the Kriegsenkel were not soldiers or military auxiliaries, and thus were not actively involved in fighting.

For some years it has been known that traumatization in connection with war and violence can radiate and damage the successor generations. People sometimes carry within themselves fragments of events that took place years and decades before their birth.

The term "Kriegsenkel" was probably used for the first time in the autobiographical narrative "Ich, Rabentochter" by the author Katharina Ohana, which appeared in 2006. The term found wider usage in the publication of "We children of Wars" (2008) by Anne-Ev Ustorf and "Kriegsenkel" (2009) by Sabine Bode.

Vergangenheitsbewältigung

Another German term to know: Vergangenheitsbewältigung (hear pronunciation). Broken down:

- Die Vergangenheit = the past
- Die Bewältigung =(The process of) Coming to terms with, overcoming, coping with (verb bewältigen – to cope with/overcome)

Together, it is the process of coming to terms with the past. From Wikipedia:

Vergangenheitsbewältigung (German: "struggle to overcome the [negatives of the] past") is a German term describing processes that since the late 20th century have become key in the study of post-1945 German literature, society, and culture. *The German Duden lexicon defines Vergangenheitsbewältigung as "public debate within a country on a problematic period of its recent history—in Germany on National Socialism, in particular"—where "problematic" refers to traumatic events that raise sensitive questions of collective culpability. In Germany, and originally, the term refers to embarrassment about and often remorse for Germans' complicity in the war crimes of the Wehrmacht, Holocaust, and related events of the early and mid-20th century, including World War II. In this sense, the word can refer to the psychic process of denazification.*

On another website of a grandchild of the war I found more information. The text emphasises, that in the encounters they

have the opportunity to lift up the legacy of silence from their soul

The events of the First and the Second world war influenced not only the children in body and soul, but also the grandchildren and their children.

Grandchildren of the war grew up with traumatised parents or parents who had to flee unwillingly. Their parents were indoctrinated by the Nazi's or grew up with the 'black pedagogical ideals'. They were victims or perpetrators. They lost members of the family, neighbours or friends and they could not speak about them, because they did not have had the opportunity to say goodbye to them and did not find a place or words for their mourning. Many people became rigid, they had just the energy to survive, they could not bear the burden of what had happened.

The war grandchildren were raised in families of silence, not able to manage emotions. They seek love and recognition, they long for being appreciated because of their own abilities and respect and appreciation for their choices of lifestyle. They want to develop their own personalities, to set bounds, to live without feeling guilty. They long for living with joy. But how can they reach this, what are the resources to be used? How can they reach their source of energy? How can they as children of a traumatised generation develop their own life and where to find the courage to do so?

There are encounter groups in several cities. They speak about the silence and the lack of emotions of their parents, about their fears, the lack of basic trust and of self confidence. They speak about broken contacts in the family, about not having children and the lack of a strong feeling to chose a profession. Flight, persecution, dislodging and the lost of their fatherland are also on the agenda. It is difficult to set bounds and very often they feel guilty, because they had to take over the role of their parents. Gradually they learn how to cope with shame and feelings of guilt and mourning and have the courage to show them openly.

They regularly read books and other publications, watch movies about the topics they have to cope with. The encounters help to see connections and to recognise them. They learn to draw attention to their strength and resilience. They explore their identity and the journey they have had the courage to begin.

....who don't know the past, can't understand the present.

Who don't understand the present can't shape the future. (proverb)

The encounters take place each month for two hours and subscribing by phone is appreciated.

JAN ZWARTENDIJK

In the issue of this spring I published the story of Zwartendijk and the request that all the Dutch political party's sent to the King asking him to grant him, posthumously, a high rank in one of the orders of Knighthood because of his saving the lives of thousands of Jews. At the time, I did not yet know whether the King would knight him or not. At the King's birthday, each year, several Dutch people are put in the spotlight when receiving a place in the Knighthood because of their volunteer work on behalf of social and humanitarian projects. Jan Zwartendijk received this year a high rank for his lifesaving activities. At last!

GSB

COMMENT of Franklin H. Littell

During the more than four decades since Rafael Lemkin coined the term "genocide", progress on both fronts – political and moral – has been slow. But to date the scholars and statesmen have moved further in creating the structures to inhibit and punish the slaughter of targeted ethnic, religious, and cultural groups than the religionists have to moved to create the moral and religious energy to outlaw genocide and enforce the laws against it.

The political leaders seem less afraid of exercising the power to restrain the incidence of genocide than the religious leaders are to proclaim the sin and guilt of the perpetrators *and* the bystanders. Perhaps this is because – again - the leaders of the churches of "Christendom" have not yet allowed their imagination to transport them to the SS man' s deathbed moment of crystal clarity.

In the meantime the civilized world is struggling to find legal ways, insulated by the process of law, to punish criminals guilty of genocide. The principle was staked out at Nuremberg, and it became part of international law with the Genocide Convention. Now the first efforts are being made to punish perpetrators of genocidal acts in the ruins of Yugoslavia.

Many feel despair that the way is so difficult. But there are always time lags between the several stages in translating moral and religious guilt into civil and juridical guilt. First there is the realization that some wickedness is not like an earthquake or a flood: it is wrong, and someone did it. Then there is the time lag until the thought penetrates the communal mind that if someone did it, that person can be punished (and others so inclined be discouraged). There follows the time lag until the crime is defined and punishment decreed for perpetrators. Finally, there is a time lag until the laws that are on the books generally can be enforced.

This has been the sequence in the history of murder, polygamy, dueling, infanticide, slavery, and a dozen other greater or lesser evils that were sins before they were seen as crimes and treated as matters of criminal law. Rather than being discouraged by our seeming impotence in the face of great genocidal evils in Rwanda, Burundi, "Bosnia" and elsewhere, we might take courage in the thought that everyone is miserable about it. We are in the time of the last 'lag', when the law is written down but enforcement is partial and sporadic.

In earlier times there was neither hesitation nor embarrassment on the part of rulers. The makers and shakers of primitive societies piled the skulls high to vaunt their power over others. Then came the stage when civilized peoples didn't like what they heard but felt

unable to do anything to limit and/or punish the crime. "That's the way things are" was the general and fatalistic expression, and a few generations ago it would have been applied to the horrendous crimes committed by all sides in the ruins of Yugoslavia. Now the spectators are all miserable, and that is a sign of progress.

In the not too distant future the last gap will be closed, and the murder of peoples - widespread before the word "genocide" was even invented - will be inhibited by law and criminals who breach the law in this sector will be punished.

On the moral and religious front progress is less evident.[..] Only in a rare case, such as the January 1980 Declaration of the Protestant Church of the Rhineland, have the Christian social and/or legal establishments in Europe and America dug deeper than pious expressions of regret for "anti-Judaic teaching" and sometime anti-Jewish "race prejudice". [..]

We are returned, willing or unwilling, to the most fundamental factor in law and order: even the most ruthless despot or dictator cannot rule without at least passive complicity of his subjects. On the other face of law and order: no crime can be inhibited or punished unless there is a strong conviction that to commit it is sinful. To achieve a higher level of human interaction and concern, progress must be made on two fronts: one, in the enforcement of law by reliable stewards of public power; two, through deepening of individual and group awareness of the earnest nature of the choice between good and evil, between innocence and guilt.

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>

