

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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VORWORT

Diese Nummer des internationalen Bulletins erscheint auch in einer deutsch-englischen Auflage, weil ich einige Artikel, auf Deutsch geschrieben, mit Zustimmung des Hauptredakteurs dem Newsletter von One by One entnommen habe: ich wollte die deutschsprachigen Leser nicht mit einer Übersetzung abspeisen.

Es handelt sich um die folgenden Artikel: Wolfgang J. Graeser hat das Grab seines Vaters besucht, das sich auf dem größten deutschen Soldatenfriedhof in Nordfrankreich befindet. Gideon Behrendt besuchte im Rahmen des offenen Haus Festivals das frühere jüdische Waisenhaus in der Fehrbellinerstrasse wo er einige Jahren gelebt hat und von dem er 1938 Abschied nahm, um mit der ersten Gruppe der "Kindertransporte" als Flüchtling vor der Naziverfolgung in die Freiheit zu gelangen. Tilmann Moser besprach in der Zeitschrift 'Psychologie heute' das Buch von Stephan Marks 'Warum folgten sie Hitler?'

Vor fünfzig Jahren sprach Lothar Kreyssig in der Synodesitzung der Evangelischen Kirche und präsentierte sein Vorhaben eine Organisation zu gründen als ein Zeichen von Sühne und Versöhnung. Ich habe den Internetseiten der Organisation Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste einige Paragraphen entnommen.

Sabine Bode schrieb 'Die vergessene Generation', in dem sie die Geschichte einiger deutscher Kriegskinder erzählt und diesen bis heute schweigenden Leute eine Stimme gibt. Ihr Buch bietet außerdem Themen zur Reflektion über z.B. das Recht und die Notwendigkeit für Deutsche, sich mit dem eigenen Leid infolge des Krieges zu beschäftigen.

Ich war eingeladen, das fünfte Jahrestreffen der Organisation 'Lebensspuren' (Lebensbornkinder) mit zu machen und ich möchte gerne einige meiner Erfahrungen mit den Lesern teilen.

Schwester Simplicitas, die jahzehntelang in Kinderhäusern in Finland arbeitete, schickte mir die Geschichte von Raimo Painio, einem der Kinder die sie versorgt hat und mit dem sie immer noch Kontakte unterhält.

Martin Parsons schrieb 'War Child; Children Caught in Conflict' (Kriegskinder; Kinder verstrickt in Konfliktsituationen) in dem er die Probleme der englischen und finnischen evakuierten Kriegskinder, der norwegischen und holländischen Kollaborateurekindern, der deutschen Kriegskinder und der heutigen Kindsoldaten in afrikanischen Ländern beschreibt.

Außerdem spricht er über 'Mythe und Geschichte der englischen Evakuaton', 'Wie der Krieg in Kinderbilderbüchern dargestellt wird' und 'Die psychischen Folgen von Kriegserfahrungen'.

Samson Munn schickte mir eine Einladung für ein Treffen im Mai mit dem Thema 'Fields of Conflict, Fields of Wisdom' ('Bereiche des Konflikts, Bereiche der Weisheit') in dem Kongress Zentrum in Würzburg.

Als eine meiner Freundinnen das Lied 'Spielplatz' von dem holländischen Sänger Marco Borsato hörte, 'erinnerte' sie sich auf einmal einige bis dann verdrängte Kriegserfahrungen. Dies wurde der Beginn ihrer Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit. Daher möchte ich diese Nummer des Bulletins mit der Übersetzung dieses Lieds anfangen.

Reaktionen und Artikel sind, wie immer, sehr willkommen und ich möchte die LeserInnen bitten mir jede Änderung in Adresse (Post oder e-amil) mit zu teilen.

Herzliche Grüße
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

SPIELPLATZ

Marco Borsato

Durch zerstörte Straßen gehen,
Vater weg, das Land verloren,
ohne Hilfe, ganz alleine,
neben Mutter die, müde, schweigt.

Lämmchen in einer Wölfenwelt,
wohin führt dein Weg?
Niemand sieht wie klein du bist,
wie verwundbar, wie verletzt.

Morgen wird Frieden sein,
Sonnenschein streichelt dein Haar.
Die Welt wird wieder Spielplatz sein
und du wirst lachen, weil nichts dich bedroht.

Der Winter ging, der Frühling kam.
Der graue Himmel ist wieder blau.
Der Krieg nahm ein Ende, doch wird je
der Krieg im Herzen zu Ende gehen?

Schöne Augen sind vergiftet,
sahen zuviel Gewalt und Leid.
Darum nehmen sie nicht war
wie klein du bist und wie verletzt.

AKTION SUHNEZEICHEN FRIEDENSDIENSTE (ASF) **Action Reconciliation Services for Peace**

The history of the ASF began with the failure of the protestant church in Germany during the Nazi period on the one hand and the resistance against the Nazi regime inside of the church on the other hand. Two of the most important founders of the ASF, Lothar Kreyssig and Franz von Hammerstein, belonged to the small resistance within the church. These two as well as Martin Niemöller and Gustav Heinemann spoke after World War II to the failure of the German Protestant Church. These persons also pointed to failures of the German Protestant Church even before World War II, for example the century-long anti-Semitism in the church.

In the period after World War II there was little desire in the German churches and society to really understand what they had done and how they needed to change directions. The Stuttgart Confession of Guilt (*Stuttgarter Schuldbekennnis*) in October 1945 did not mention either the murder of the Jews, Sinti, or Romany, or the systematical murder of many other population groups in Middle, Central and Eastern Europe.

Even the *Bruderräte*, the successor to the German Confessing Church, could not distance themselves from the thought that the Jews were somehow responsible for their persecution and death because they refused to accept Jesus Christ, as stated in the Darmstadt *Wort zur Judenfrage* (Statement to the Questions of the Jews) in 1948.

Lothar Kreyssig wished to speak to this situation – but his appeal found little support at the Kirchentag (Church Congress) in Leipzig in 1954. The synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany met on april 26-30, 1958 in Berlin-Spandau. Even if Germany was split into two parts, representatives of the church in West Germany and East Germany met together. On the last day of this synod the praeses, Lothar Kreyssig, read in the plenum the appeal to found Action Reconciliation. He wanted to set a sign against the “self-justification, bitterness, and hate..”. However, in many publications one could find at that time impenitent self-justification. Kreyssig spoke words which showed not only an admission of guilt, but also a demand for concrete consequences. His intention was not to offer help, but to ask that he would be allowed to give help. These modest steps were a rejection of all paternalistic types of atonement and had not been seen before in church history. This shows the readiness to learn by discussing and doing – because the request for permission to give help is based on dialogue, answering and doing something new. It is moving the focus from oneself to others, stop doing something for oneself and searching for truth. In this time many contemporaries thought the appeal was centered on others and not enough on themselves. They saw the explosive political force of this appeal which dedicates people coming together and goes against the interest of those Germans who saw fault with those outside of Germany.

Appeal (Berlin 1958)

We Germans began the Second World War and more than others we are guilty for causing unmeasurable suffering. Germans have in sinful revolt against the will of God exterminated millions of Jews. Who from us survivors did not want this to happen, did not do enough to prevent it.

Above all, we do not yet today have peace because there has been so little reconciliation. We have had thirteen years of muffled silence followed by a frightening self-assertion. It could become too late. We can still counter the self-justification, the bitterness, and the hate when we really forgive, are forgiven, and when we practice these convictions, regardless of the necessity to make conscientiously purely political decisions.

As a sign we plead that the other nations, who suffered because of us, will allow us with our hands and with our means to do something good. A village, a settlement, a church, a

hospital, or what else can be used for charitable purposes to achieve as a sign of reconciliation.

Let us begin with Poland, Russia and Israel where we had done the most harm.

We plead that Germans, men of all confessions and social status, who are prepared to do so, to go to Poland, Russia or Israel. There one can set a sign of peace. Women are also needed for the work. When someone is not capable, he or she can make a donation for his or her deed of reconciliation. This enables materials to be procured, the living costs of the workers to be paid, and other expenses to be financed. An account number will be made public in the printed press, radio and in television, after the approval of the assembly. Every participant shall receive the necessary compensation for travel and living expenses. When the work is not finished in a year, then others shall be called to serve for an additional year. The minimum age is seventeen. The application is to be completed with a doctor certificate certifying good health and fitness to work. Minors are allowed to apply only with the assent of the legal representatives of the organisation.

The service should unite the Germans from the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic.

We ask that the governments of Poland, of the Soviet Union and Israel not to accept the service as in some way considerable help or as a rectification, from which many are prepared to do so. The service is to be accepted as a plea for peace and forgiveness. We ask those countries to help us that this service can be achieved. We ask the governments of the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic to permit and to support the action.

Action Reconciliation in the West from 1959 to 1991

Volunteer Peace Service

The work of ASF began in 1959 in the Netherlands and in Norway. Young volunteers helped with the building of a vacation camping place for workers in Outdorp, a social academy in Rotterdam as well as a church and a home for the handicapped in Norway. Volunteers from East Germany also applied for an exit visa to take part in the work in the Netherlands, but the authorities would not allow them to leave East Germany. After long deliberations and waiting the West German organization decided to work on the project without the East Germans. Two organizations were founded, with the same goals but focusing on different aspects of the work to be achieved.

Soon projects started in other countries. Volunteers helped with the building of a synagogue in Villeurbanne and on the reconciliation church of Taizé in France, with the building of a kindergarten in Skopje in Yugoslavia, with the installation of an irrigating system in Kreta, with the building of a meeting center in the destroyed cathedral of Coventry in Great Britain, and with the opening of a school for the blind in Jerusalem. The work in Israel could be started in 1961 after the Eichmann court case.

Also in the beginning of the 1970s ASF could make contacts with people in the Soviet Union and organize study trips. The first volunteers went in 1967 to Poland to work in former concentration camps. The first volunteers were invited by the American peace churches to come to the United States.

In 1972 Action Reconciliation became Action Reconciliation Services for Peace.

Social peace services replaced construction projects in the middle of the 1960s. The work with people in social institutions, with survivors of the Holocaust, and with minorities and other disadvantaged people became the central focus.

The peace movement

Service with ASF in foreign countries has been recognized as alternative service to military service since 1974. This goes along with the peace service explicitly stressed in Kreyssig's appeal. The phases of this development are many; this includes the peace festivals, which

were held every year from 1974 until in the 1980s. Therefore, ASF took a leading roll in the peace movement in the later 1970s and early 1980s. Especially due to the influence of the Cold War a dialogue with the Central and Eastern European neighbours was quite important. A result of this dialogue was the planning, beginning in 1971, for an international meeting center in Auschwitz/Oswiecim, which could be finished in 1986.

The ASF continued to work in the wide spectrum of countries and therefore stayed away from almost all dogmatic positions due to the various work in Israel, the United States, Western Europe and the communist countries of Eastern Europe. This polyphony prevented ASF from taking the position of having West Germany withdrawing from the NAVO alliance as many inside of the peace movement wished.

After the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Unifying the programs and organizations

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the changes in Germany and Europe new possibilities came to the *Sommerlager* (work camp) program. Due to the political changes in former East Germany and the unification of both organizations in East and West in 1991 many more work camps could be set up, including in Russia, the Ukraine and in France. Additionally, the main focus of work became contacts with the Jewish community and work in Jewish cemeteries, in memorial centers, and in social institutions. These projects are still lead by people working in their free time and the central planning is lead by a voluntary leadership council and a paid employee.

In addition long-term volunteers could work in countries from the former communist Europe. Work began with social projects in Russia in 1991 and in the Czech Republic in 1993. Today around 140 volunteers of ASF are active for a period of 18 months in Israel, Poland, the Czech Republic, Russia, Belarus, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Great Britain and the United States.

With the development in the last few years a further internationalization has taken place. Due to interest of partner organizations from other project countries ASF has offered since 1996 volunteers from outside Germany the chance to participate in a long-term volunteer service in Germany. A pilot project was begun in Great Britain with volunteers from various countries who work as a two-nation volunteer pair together in a project and who work through the Nazi past and the present from their different perspectives.

The projects work with the care of Holocaust survivors, disadvantaged children and youth, drug addicts, ethnic minorities and refugees, with community work in slums, in Jewish-Arab reconciliation activities in Israel and in educational and remembrance work.

Since 2001 some of the volunteer seminars in the host countries have had adults from these countries as participants. Before this the seminars only had ASF volunteers to reflect on their service themselves. We believed this reflection should be expanded and the volunteers should be confronted with other perspectives, memories and relevant current issues. Therefore, everyone is introduced to different perspectives and new impulses can be found.

In this way ASF achieve a political aspect of each and everyone's individual experience, a self-reflexive and inter-cultural competence and an understanding of political issues. The ASF activities can be viewed in the light of the Hebrew expression 'tikkun olam': healing the world, fixing-up things in the best biblical tradition.

DAS OFFENE HAUS IN BERLIN, FEHRBELLINER STRAÙE 92

Mein Flug nach Berlin war für den 3. September 2007 gebucht, doch die Vorfreude auf diesen Besuch begleitete mich schon längere Zeit zuvor. In Gedanken sah ich nicht meine graue, düstere Geburtsstadt, die ich vor Jahrzehnten verlassen musste, sondern das Berlin mit den neuen Freunden, welche ich in den letzten Jahren kennen gelernt hatte.

Bei diesem Berlinbesuch stand jedoch das Haus in der Fehrbelliner Straße im Mittelpunkt, das frühere jüdische Waisenhaus, von dem ich am 1. Dezember 1938 Abschied nahm, um mit der ersten Gruppe der "Kindertransporte" als Flüchtling vor der Naziverfolgung in die Freiheit gelangte.

Schon vor meiner Ankunft am Flugplatz Berlin –Tegel waren meine wenigen Tage in Berlin vollkommen geplant, gebucht, also total gefüllt. Der gute Ulrich begrüßte mich ganz brüderlich in Tegel während Inge in ihrer Küche die Mahlzeit und den Empfang für mich vorbereitete. Wie schon angedeutet, es ist doch wunderschön bei Freunden willkommen zu sein!

Bevor die Feierlichkeiten in der Fehrbelliner Straße starteten, blieb mir noch ein Tag an dem ich meine Cousine Gretchen noch schnell besuchen konnte. Gretchen ist die einzig gebliebene nahe Verwandte vom Behrendt- Clan in Berlin. Leider war unsere Begegnung dieses mal nur recht kurz, sowie auch mein Besuch bei meinem Großcousin Wolfgang und Familie. Bei all diesen Familientreffen war das Wiedersehen aber ein freudiges Ereignis, wenn auch nur ein kurzes. Dann aber reichte es noch zu dem längst fälligen Freundschaftsabend bei meinem Freund Frank Geisler, einem guten Berliner Freund aus der "neuen Berliner Zeit" stammend, der mir aber so nahe am Herzen liegt, als kenne ich ihn bereits mein Leben lang. Der Abend bei Frank & Paula und die gemütliche Stimmung wird mir sicher noch lange im Gedächtnis bleiben. Alle diese Begegnungen helfen mir auch weiterhin mit Berlin in freundlicher Verbindung zu bleiben.

Ein weiterer Abend wurde zu einem 'Milestone': Zvi Steinitz sprach in der Blindenwerkstatt Otto Weidt am Hackeschen Markt über sein vor kurzem herausgebrachtes Buch und seine Erlebnisse während des Holocausts. Der kleine Raum war natürlich überfüllt, die Fenstern aber verschlossen, so dass wir tief und lange atmeten, als wir wieder an die frische Luft kamen.

Ich weiß nicht, ob es reiner Zufall war, dass die Tage des "Offenen Hauses" in der Fehrbelliner Straße mit der "Wiedereinweihung" der restaurierten Synagoge in der Rykestraße (auch Bezirk Prenzlauer Berg) zusammen fielen. Vielleicht stellte letztere Begebenheit das "Offene Haus" sogar etwas in den Schatten? Es ist nur so ein Gedankengang meinerseits, denn im Jahr 1938 ging ich in der Rykestraße zur Schule, also auf demselben Grundstück auf dem die Synagoge steht.

Natürlich besuchten wir drei (Inge, Ulrich und ich) das 'altneue' Gotteshaus in der Rykestraße schon vor der Eröffnung. Das schmiedeeiserne Tor war geschlossen und einige Polizisten bewachten den Eingang. Doch als ich bekannt gab, dass ich vor langer, langer Zeit hier zur Schule ging (nein, ich sagte nicht, dass ich ein Musterschüler war) kam der Hausmeister, öffnete das Tor und führte uns wie VIPs ins Bethaus und erklärte uns die Geschichte der Synagoge aus der DDR-Zeit bis zur Gegenwart.

Im Jahr 2003 ehrten die heutigen Nutzer des Hauses in Berlin Prenzlauer Berg das ehemalige jüdische Kinderheim, mit der Anbringung einer Gedenktafel am Hauseingang zur Erinnerung an die Kinder des Heims und deren Pflegepersonal, die von dort aus von den Nazis verschleppt und ermordet wurden. Mir wurde damals die Ehre zuteil, diese Gedenktafel feierlich zu enthüllen.

Beim Betreten des Hauses Fehrbelliner Straße 92 war ich nun überrascht, aber auch sehr zufrieden, dass diese Gedenktafel am Hauseingang heute noch in genau so einem Zustand zu sehen ist, wie sie vor vier Jahre war, als ich sie enthüllt hatte.

Ich stieg am Freitag, den 7.9.2007 dieselben Treppen hinauf, die ich in meiner Kindheit so oft hinauf gelaufen war und wurde von den liebevollen, freiwilligen Mitarbeiterinnen des Hauses

ganz herzlich empfangen. Es folgten Kaffee und Kuchen, wie konnte es anders sein? Dann Erzählungen und Erinnerungen aus diesem Haus – als wenn die Wände sprechen würden, dann der Rundgang mit Erklärungen der wenigen überlebenden Zeitzeugen. Letztere waren leicht (dem Alter nach) von den heutigen Damen des Hauses zu erkennen, es waren Regina Steinitz, Ruth Malin Toska Kempler und ich, die Ausnahme ... Gideon Behrendt .

Während der nächsten zwei Tage füllte sich das Haus mit Besuchern, (es waren die Tage des Offenen Denkmals) es wurden Erklärungen über die Vergangenheit der Kinder gegeben, über den Tagesverlauf der damaligen Waisenkinder, Rundgänge unter Führung vom Hauspersonal und zwei der Zeitzeugen mit weiteren Erläuterungen, Kommentare, Erzählungen, und schließlich wurde auch der jeweilige Lebenslauf der Zeitzeugen gezeigt, beginnend mit dem Verlassen des Kinderheims.

Einmal saßen wir, "die einstigen Kinder", zusammen und wurden gebeten, unsere Lebensgeschichte in großen Zügen dem versammelten Publikum zu erzählen. Dabei lernte natürlich ein jeder die Geschichte des anderen näher kennen, das war ein besonderes Gefühl. Ich lernte davon, dass es keiner von uns leicht im Leben hatte.

Die zwei Zwillingsschwestern Regina Steinitz und Ruth Malin, die beide in Ramat Aviv (Israel) leben, kannte ich schon aber Tosca Kempler die aus den USA angereist war, kannte ich noch nicht; auch nur flüchtig kannte ich Dr. Ruth Gross, die Tochter des Fotografen Abraham Pisarek, dessen wunderbare Bilder heute noch das Gebäude des einstigen jüdischen Kinderheims in der Fehrbelliner Straße schmücken. So also führte das "Offene Haus" in der Fehrbellinerstrasse 92 zu einer Art "Reunion" der Betroffenen wie auch der freiwilligen Damen und Herren, die so hingebungsvoll gearbeitet und gewirkt haben damit das "Offene Haus" zum Erfolg gelange.

Hier möchte ich natürlich auch allen anderen Beteiligten zum Erfolg gratulieren, denn ohne das Mitwirken so vieler wäre das Resultat wahrscheinlich etwas weniger zufriedenstellend ausgefallen.

Als ich über meine interessanten Tage in Berlin zu schreiben begann, war ich nicht überzeugt, dass ich mehr als eine Seite zu berichten hatte, denn ich weilte doch nur 4 Tage in der Metropole. Doch, zurückblickend, waren es gut verbrachte, interessante und schöne Tage. Bevor ich hier schließe, möchte ich meinen Gastgebern, insbesondere Inge Franken, Ulrich Herrlitz und all den netten Leute von Herzen für ihre Gastfreundlichkeit und ihre freundliche Aufnahme in Berlin danken.

Gideon Behrendt,

Netanya, Israel

GIDEON BEHRENDT

Mit dem Kindertransport in die Freiheit

Vom jüdischer Flüchtling zum Corporal O'Brian

S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2002

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DER ERSTE BESUCH AM GRAB MEINES VATERS

Im Jahr seines hundersten Geburtstages (1907-2007) wurde es mir aus den verschiedensten Gründen möglich, nun endlich einmal an das Grab meines Vaters zu fahren, in Begleitung meiner Lebensgefährtin Brigitte.

Das Grab befindet sich auf dem größten deutschen Soldatenfriedhof des zweiten Weltkrieges in der Region Picardie/Nordfrankreich (ein Teil der Ile de France/der Wiege Frankreichs), benachbart Fort de Malmaison (hier haben sich Deutsche und Franzosen seit Generationen erbitterte Schlachten geliefert: 1870-71; 1914-18; 1939/40-44/45). Es ist eines von 11.808 Gräbern.

Soweit es mir bekannt ist, war ich der erste meiner Familie, der das Grab besuchte. Meine Mutter hat bis an ihr Lebensende im Jahr 2002 (im 90. Lebensjahr) nicht wirklich den Tod ihres Mannes/meines Vaters angenommen und dies auf uns Kinder übertragen. Meine beiden Schwestern haben immer Vorwände gefunden, diesen Weg nicht zu gehen.

Seit der Begegnung mit One by one 1997 und der damit einhergehenden intensiveren Beschäftigung mit meiner Familiengeschichte, und hier besonders mit dem Leben meines Vaters (1907-1944), wurde der Wunsch immer stärker, einmal sein Grab zu besuchen.

Ich nahm die Einladung zu einer Familienfeier im Spessart bei meiner Tochter Heike zum Anlass, von dort aus weiter nach Frankreich zu fahren.

Am 20. Juli (!) verließen wir Berlin, und nach Zwischenhalten im Spessart und in Karlsruhe, kamen wir am 24. in Frankreich an und nahmen Quartier in Laon.

Am nächsten Tag fuhren wir zuerst nach Noyon (der Geburtsstadt des Reformators Calvin und Krönungsstadt Karls des Großen), an den Ort, an dem mein Vater am 1. September 1944, beim Rückzug der deutschen Truppen aus Paris in einer Wagenkolonne durch Tieffliegerangriff getötet wurde (Er war vier Jahre als Unteroffizier im Schreibdienst beim Militärbefehlshaber Frankreich in Paris tätig).

Er wurde in der Nähe der Straße auf einem Grundstück begraben und später auf den örtlichen Friedhof umgebettet. Beide Orte fanden wir.

Später wurde er nochmals umgebettet, auf den deutschen Soldatenfriedhof Fort de Malmaison. Wir kehrten am Abend nach Laon zurück, um am nächsten Tag zum Friedhof zu fahren.

Am Vormittag machten wir uns auf den Weg. Ich war sehr aufgeregt und aufgewühlt. Wie würde ich den Ort erleben, den ich von Fotos, durch Informationen des Volksbundes deutscher Kriegsgräberfürsorge und in meinen Vorstellungen schon kannte. Ich stellte mir vor, alleine oder nur mit wenigen Besuchern dort zu sein. Es kam alles ganz anders !

Vor dem Eingang zum Friedhof stand ein Bundeswehrbus. Aus Berichten wusste ich, dass auch die Bundeswehr sich um die Pflege der deutschen Soldatenfriedhöfe kümmert und erwartete nun einen Trupp Soldaten.

Im Eingangsgebäude nahmen wir Einblick in das Totenbuch. Die Lage des Grabes kannte ich schon aus einem mir zugestellten Plan. Mit zitternden Beinen ging ich auf Suche in Begleitung von Brigitte.

Auf dem Weg dorthin sahen wir viele junge Menschen zwischen den Gräbern bei der Pflegearbeit. Schließlich fanden wir das Grab. Nun stand ich endlich an der Stelle, an der der Mensch, der Mann der mein Vater war und den ich zuletzt in Ostpreußen im Sommer 1944 in meinem siebenten Lebensjahr als heiteren, liebevollen Vater erlebte, seine letzte Ruhestätte gefunden hatte (Meine Mutter war mit uns drei Kindern im Februar 1944 wegen der Bombenangriffe von Berlin aus nach Ostpreußen evakuiert worden).

Es erfasste mich ein Weinkrampf (In Beziehung zu unseren Eltern bleiben wir doch ewig die Kinder). Lange stand ich in Gedanken versunken an seinem Grab.

Irgendwann kam aus der Jugendgruppe eine Betreuerin zu uns. Nachdem sie sich über den Grund unseres Besuches informiert hatte, fragte sie, ob die Jugendlichen das Grabkreuz reinigen dürften. Ich bejahte es und die Jugendlichen kamen und taten es. Dann kam auch der Friedhofswärter hinzu, ein Franzose, der diesen wertvollen Dienst übernommen hat, und fragte, ob er den erhabenen Schriftzug auf dem schwarzen gusseisernen Kreuz mit Kreide lesbar machen dürfte und tat es dann, nachdem ich es bejaht hatte.

In zwei Grabvasen brachten wir elf Rosen ans Grab, die wir in Noyon besorgt hatten. Die elf Rosen, versehen jeweils mit einem Namensband, sollten meinen eigenen realen Besuch, sowie symbolhaft den imaginären Besuch meiner Mutter und den meiner vier Töchter und fünf Enkelinnen/Enkel versinnbildlichen.

Die Betreuerin fragte uns nach einiger Zeit, ob wir an von den Jugendlichen vorbereiteten Totengedenken an einzelnen Gräbern teilnehmen wollen, und ob ich am Grab meines Vaters etwas über sein Leben berichten könnte. So geschah es dann. Die Jugendlichen versammelten sich nach Zwischenstationen am Grab meines Vaters und ich erzählte unter Tränen aus seinem Leben. Nun geschah das Unerwartete und es traf mich völlig unvorbereitet. Alle fingen nacheinander an zu weinen und umarmten sich und teilten auf diese Weise meine Trauer. So standen wir minutenlang sprachlos beieinander und weinten. Zum Schluss kamen alle Jugendlichen und drückten mir die Hand.

Die Betreuerinnen berichteten mir später, dass die Jugendlichen noch nie so einen authentischen Bericht über einen der Toten erlebt hatten. Sie bedankten sich bei mir dafür. Die Jugendgruppe kam aus Bremen und nahm an einem zweiwöchigen Sommerlager mit französischen Jugendlichen teil und war nur an diesem Tag zur Grabpflege auf diesen Friedhof gekommen. So trafen wir durch „Zufall“ zusammen und hatten auf beiden Seiten dieses tiefbewegende Erlebnis, wie es nur das Leben herbeiführen kann.

Am nächsten Tag fuhren wir, mit einem Zwischenhalt im Rheingau, wieder nach Berlin zurück. Wir nahmen ein unvergleichliches Erlebnis mit nach Hause.

Nachwort:

Als Kind des Nationalsozialistischen Deutschlands-geboren 1938- ist es mir in jedem Moment bewusst, dass mein Vater, der 1933 Mitglied der NSDAP geworden war, ein Rädchen im Getriebe der Mordmaschine war, die soviel Unheil und Unglück über die Menschen dieser Zeit gebracht hat. Er hat es mit seinem Leben bezahlt.

Als Folge hatte ich keinen Vater, meine Kinder keinen Großvater und meine Enkel keinen Urgroßvater. Darum war es mir wichtig, einmal an seinem Grab zu stehen, um meiner Trauer vor Ort Ausdruck geben zu können. Die Trauer um den Verlust meines Vaters begleitet mich mein ganzes Leben und hat mich tief geprägt. Dies hat dazu geführt, alles mir Mögliche zu tun, damit niemals mehr solch ein Unheil aus unserem Land hervorgehen soll.

Berlin, im August 2007
Wolfgang J. Graeser

STEPHAN MARKS: WARUM FOLGTEN SIE HITLER? Die Psychologie des Nationalsozialismus

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Rausch der Begeisterung

Fast gleichen die Interviews mit Mitläufern des Nationalsozialismus einer Reise in ein fernes Land. Aus demokratisch gesonnenen Staatsbürgern werden noch einmal begeisterte Erzähler, die beschreiben, welche Motive sie in die Arme der Bewegung und zum gottgleichen Führer Adolf Hitler geleitet haben. Die Faszination wird spürbar, und sie hat sich in der so genannten Gegenübertragung, also den seelischen Reaktionen der Interviewer auf die Gespräche, in einer gewaltsamen Weise niedergeschlagen: „Oft fühlten wir... uns im Laufe eines Gespräches wie totgeredet, überrollt oder mundtot gemacht. Verwirrt, müde, passiv, dumm, unklar, wie hypnotisiert oder ‚besoffen‘ geredet.“

Marks analysiert mit weit ausgreifenden Überlegungen, in die viel Psychoanalyse und Gruppendynamik mit eingingen, die Wirkungen der NS-Propaganda: „Sie appellierte an die regressiven Wünsche der Menschen, von der Anstrengung erlöst zu werden, ein immerwährend waches, bewusstes, verantwortungsbewusstes Ich sein zu müssen - und bot stattdessen an, im großen, bewusstlosen Wir-Gefühl der ‚Volksgemeinschaft‘ zu verschmelzen.“

Nahezu alle Interviews sind durchzogen vom Rausch der Begeisterung, sodass immer wieder deutlich wird, wie kindliche frühe Erfahrungen in diesen magischen Kult des „Führers“ und des „Dritten Reiches“ eingegangen sind.

In sechs eindrucksvollen, forschungsgetränkten Kapiteln untersucht Marks die wichtigsten Mechanismen des „ganz anderen Bewusstseinszustandes“, in die die „Verführten“, gerne Verführten, gerieten und sich hineinmanipulieren ließen:

Im ersten Kapitel zeigt er, wie das „magische Bewusstsein“ produziert wurde, etwa mittels Schweigetabus.

Anschließend macht er deutlich, wie eine „hypnotische Trance“ die Kritikfähigkeit außer Kraft setzte.

Zentral ist das Kapitel über „Schamabwehr“: Der Nationalsozialismus half seinen Anhängern, zum einen das Trauma des verlorenen Weltkriegs umzuwandeln in einen erhebenden Kampf um die Ehre des deutschen Volkes, das aus der Demütigung heraus zu neuem Aufstieg gelangte. Zum anderen half das elitäre Bewusstsein vieler Gliederungen des Dritten Reiches, allen voran der SS, auch private Schmach umzuwandeln in den Triumph eines neuen Wertgefühls, aus dem heraus man auf die vielen als minderwertig definierten Menschen herunterschauen konnte.

„Narzissmus und narzisstische Kollusion“ bilden einen weiteren wichtigen Abschnitt: Gemeint ist die Identifizierung und Verschmelzung mit der Grandiosität der Selbstdefinition der NS-Zeit, durch die „das Loch im Selbstwertgefühl“ gestopft werden konnte. Die Herrenrasse-Moral brachte die kollektive Selbstaufwertung, an der die Menschen in Gruppen eingeteilt, partizipieren konnten.

Ebenso bedeutsam sind die „Traumata früherer Generationen“: Die Frontgeneration des 1. Weltkriegs konnte ihre Traumata nicht verarbeiten, sondern gab sie weiter an die nächste Generation sodass man von einer unbewussten Präparierung der Nachwachsenden auf Begriffe von Ehre, Härte, Gehorsam, Treue sprechen kann.

Schließlich charakterisiert Marks überzeugend den Nationalsozialismus als kollektiven Rauschzustand, der durch das Phänomen der suchtartigen Abhängigkeit geprägt war. So lässt sich auch das „schwarze Loch“ erklären, in das die Berauschten nach der Niederlage fielen, und wie sie jahrelang gelähmt waren, weil keine echte Trauer möglich war, sondern nur ein zum Teil depressives, zum Teil arbeitswütiges „Beschweigen“.

Erschüttert bilanzieren die Interviewer: „Generell fielen bei den Interviews . . . die Abwesenheit von Mitgefühl sowie eine emotionale Flachheit auf. Ein erstes Indiz dafür ist, dass in den rund 1200 Seiten Interviewtranskripten ... Begriffe wie Trauer, Weinen, Tränen, Schmerz, Mitleid, Empathie oder Mitgefühl so gut wie nicht vorkommen.“

Stephan Marks ist mit dem Buch *Warum folgten sie Hitler?* ein großer Wurf gelungen, der unser Verständnis des Nationalsozialismus vertieft, indem viele verstreute psychologische Kategorien mit neuer Klarheit gefüllt werden.

THE FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF 'LEBENSSPUREN'

The board of the German organisation 'Lebensspuren' (Life Traces) invited me to be their guest at their annual meeting. In 2002 people who were born in one of the Lebensborn children's homes or lived there for some weeks or years met for the first time. Gradually they felt the need to have their own organisation, because more and more people joined their group. 'Lebensspuren' was founded in 2005.

The backdrop of the meeting was the beautiful small town of Wernigerode in former East-Germany. It is proud of its robust castle, its splendid city hall and its many very old timber framed houses. Imagine the town covered with snow and you have the perfect Christmas greeting card Charles Dickens style. But the past was not only good and brilliant. Wernigerode housed also a Lebensborn home and an annexe of the Buchenwald camp. The mayor stated in his speech that people in his town are aware of the black pages of its history. They know that one cannot deny them, seeing the need to learn from the past in order to prevent new disasters. They have taken on the responsibility of explaining to young people that freedom and democracy need to be defended against new tendencies of extremism.

There exist a number of definitions of what the Lebensborn organisation intended to be. This varies from the supposition of an American military judge in the Neurenburg trials that Lebensborn was 'a charitable institution' to an 'organisation of baby farms and breeding factories' where SS men begot 'Aryan' babies. Lebensborn offered pregnant women a range of services, that is true. They could stay in one of the homes before and after the delivery, there was strict secrecy if requested, the baby could stay in the home for 2 years and the organisation could if necessary support the finding of adoptive parents. So far, so good. But there were three conditions applying to the mother as well as to the father: they should be of the 'Aryan' race, should have a healthy constitution and there should not be any hereditary illnesses in their families. In fact, Lebensborn offered 'Aryan' foetuses protection by preventing their abortion, but the organisation did not assume responsibility for the 'non-Aryan' foetuses.

It is rumoured that in the days before the capitulation the registration books in all the Lebensborn homes were destroyed in an effort to wipe out all traces. This does not apply to all the homes, e.g. in Wernigerode 16 books have been preserved. Since one of the buildings belonging to the Lebensborn block is still in the original condition a committee is trying to transform it into a new documentation centre with an exhibition room. Registration books of other Lebensborn homes can be transferred to Wernigerode and people assuming that they were born in a Lebensborn home and who are in search of the truth could consult the data in the new centre.

Edna, born in the Wernigerode home, told us her story. As a young girl she went with her mother to Denmark, where her stepfather taught her the Danish language before she was

sent to school. He did not want the children to tease his step daughter because of her speaking German. The ties with the German family loosened throughout the years, but Edna's mother wanted to be present at her mother's 80th birthday. Edna accompanied her. Since she was now in the region of her origins, she got the idea to visit the house where she was born. Her mother found some pretext not to go along with her, so Edna went alone. On the spot she wanted to have a look in the garden and she rang the bell. A friendly woman invited her in, ready to show her the house as well. She asked when Edna was born and exclaimed: 'Then you are a Lebensborn child', shutting up immediately noticing that Edna did not know what Lebensborn represented. 'In fact, it is a secret', the woman said, whereupon Edna answered: 'If so, then I surely have to know'. Later on she found in the registration books her name and birthday and the names of her parents. Back in grandmother's house she could not withhold herself from saying what she had learned about her origins. The whole family reacted unanimously: there was no connection whatsoever between Edna's birth and Lebensborn.

Edna's story is typical of the Lebensborn children's story. Many don't know and will never know that they were born in a Lebensborn home. Some come across the truth, by chance. The mothers, confronted with the facts they always concealed, deny them vehemently. Others see no other way than to admit, justifying their silence by telling their children that they wanted to protect them. One could wonder: who did they protect after all, was it not above all themselves?

Gisela Heidenreich, chairwoman of the organisation, presented a paper in which she explained how destructive the silence of the mother, her lies or half-truths are for her child's identity. All her love and care do not undo the negative effect of the concealing of the secret, there is a wall between mother and child which hampers the full development of a trustworthy and emotional relationship. Her words showed that although the actual circumstances for the different categories of children of war may differ strikingly, the psychological effects of the war and the aftermath are often similar for all of them.

A representative of the WAST (an organisation specialised in tracing lost or unknown relatives) spoke with me about the international network he intends to set up. He was eager to join the group of readers of the International Bulletin. We both felt that international co-operation is important: we could exchange experiences and support each other in specific actions.

Many Lebensborn children spend much time and energy in the search for their origins. It is important to them to have the support of people who are willing and are able to help them. One of the officials of the Berlin Archives and a functionary of the WAST gave useful information in their presentations.

For the next day the documentary film about Ingrid's life was scheduled but it could not be displayed because of technical problems. Instead, people involved in Ingrid's search, among them the film maker, elucidated their role in the enterprise. Their reports impressed me a lot. Their explanations made it clear to me how crucial it is that people commit themselves wholeheartedly. Detailed knowledge of the past and a brilliant memory combined with the willingness to use one's intuition and to follow traces one generally does not pay attention to are indispensable. Those people need the disposition of a terrier and a dedication that surpasses the ordinary.

At last, Ingrid's story could be reconstructed. She proved to be from Slovenia and is one of the so called 'Verschleppte Kinder' ('stolen children') who from several countries were sent to Germany where they were subjected to 'germanisation' ('Eindeutschung'). The SS organised 5 razzias in Slovenia in which families were caught suspected of having connections with the Partisans. Many adults were shot on the spot, but not all. Ingrid's family was caught in the

first raid. Her mother was released three days later, together with two of her three children. In the meantime Ingrid had already been taken to Germany. What could Ingrid's mother have done? She was still alive, unlike other mothers, and protests could have ended in new imprisonment or even death. It is to be assumed that she accepted to take another child home, maybe the daughter of a neighbour, a friend or a cousin, or just a baby who had lost its parents.

An eye-witness remembered the little carry-cots on the railway platform in which the babies were transported. In one of the Archives the report was found written by the man who accompanied the transport and which contained also some pictures. In Archives of another Institute the film maker found pictures taken during the raids, probably to be shown in Berlin as a demonstration of the 'good work' the SS did in Slovenia, but evidently not sent. Another dossier contained pictures of all the families caught in the razzia's, among them also of Ingrid's family.

Ingrid stayed in a children's home in Austria for some days and arrived in a Lebensborn home in Bavaria later on. The home managers found adoptive parents and Ingrid grew up in a caring and loving family. At the age that she was expected to understand, her adoptive parents told her the truth about her adoption and handed her a notelet with the name Erika M. and a date – in all likelihood her true name and her birthdate. Investigations of the Red Cross yielded no results.

Then Ingrid came into contact with Georg Lilienthal, a historian specialised in Lebensborn issues. This contact was the beginning of a search that ended successfully. Josef Focks, expert in tracing lost relatives, found her supposed family in Slovenia and some members were willing to be subjected to a DNA-test. The match gave 93%, a high percentage, implying that it is almost certain that Ingrid and those people are relatives. Another family of the same name refused any contact. Moreover it turned out that there lives another Erika M. in the same region and of Ingrid's age. Who is she? Is she the child that Ingrid's/Erika's mother brought home instead of her vanished daughter? Frank Berger, the film maker, is willing to do more research, for it is heartwrenching, that at the moment that Ingrid found her true identity, the other Erika lost hers. But as long as she refuses any contacts he cannot do anything for her.

Ingrid found her biological roots in Slovenia, but feels that her social roots lie in Germany.

These were intensive and moving days in Wernigerode. I am grateful that I could participate in this Lebensspuren meeting.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

SABINE BODE: DIE VERGESSENE GENERATION. Die Kriegskinder brechen ihr Schweigen (**The Forgotten Generation.** Children of War break their Silence)
Ed. Piper, München/Zürich
ISBN-13: 978-3-492-24403-9

Sabine Bode interviewed a number of Germans who were children during World War II. She characterizes the generation of war children as the forgotten generation; in the rare studies of the 70s they were called 'the silent generation'. One could wonder why they kept silent for such a long time! One of the reasons is that the majority of the interviewees did not regard the events they went through as extraordinary, but as just normal. But, what is normalcy?

It is undeniable that many German children lived through events that frightened them, in which they felt vulnerable, left alone, without help and support. Since this was the fate of so many others of their age, they did not feel the need to speak about it. One of the

interviewees said to his mother, several years after the war: 'The next time that we have to flee, I hope that I will be allowed to keep my bag with toys and personal belongings and am not forced to leave it behind'. His words showed that he had still not overcome the sorrow about the loss of his bag, but moreover they characterized the vision he had of the world: an alternation of being settled and the need to flee. This vision is not 'normal' although it may be typical of his generation. In peaceful periods children have other notions of what the world and life are all about.

In the first years after the war some studies were published about the German children of war, but little attention was paid to them. In the 60s research focused on the experiences of the victims of the Nazi regime and especially of those subjected to the holocaust. In the 70s some publications focused on the 'Flak generation' (the young people in charge of the air defence). In the 80s children of high ranked Nazis and their experiences were brought to the attention of German society. It was only after the fall of the Wall and Germany's reunification that the vicissitudes of those who had to flee the eastern German provinces and those who were expelled were placed on the agenda. And with them, at long last, the fate of the German children of war became an issue deserving public attention.

But, still, attention to the suffering of the German children of war is not unchallenged. Tilmann Moser, publishing himself about this 'forgotten generation', attacked the therapist Peter Heintz for not mentioning in his books the suffering of the victims of the Nazi regime but focusing solely on the German children. Sabine Bode wonders why the axiom of all care givers is suddenly put aside or is called in question by people like Moser, this mandate dictating to give help to everyone in need, irrespective of party. She presumes that many social helpers still feel that, in fact, Germans need the world's consent for turning at last to the traumas of the German children of war, let alone to those of the Germans who were adults during the war. The right of the German children of war, who had no responsibility whatsoever for the deeds of their (grand)parents, to mourn their losses and to work through their pain is beyond dispute – it should have been so long ago. The issue at stake is if perpetrators and bystanders have the right to focus on their own suffering.

Sabine Bode spoke with Micha Brumlik, a Jewish therapist, who is an advocate of the right and the need of the Germans to work through their own psychological problems. His support is, however, conditional, I feel. He observed that many Germans pay attention to the victims of the Nazi period, very dutifully and conscientiously, but often without empathy. Over the years the burden of the commemoration of the victims has become heavier and heavier, and people want, in fact, to get rid of it. This is shown by simple slips of the tongue, by expressing sometimes unconscious anti-semitic feelings. According to Brumlik, it is because the Germans could not and cannot feel their own pain, that they cannot genuinely feel the pain of the victims and fail to empathize with people. Therefore they need to face their own traumas and work through them.

The paradox is that Germans often were/are accused of being preoccupied with their own suffering instead of being compassionate towards the victims. If Brumlik is right, however, they should have been granted the right of focusing on their own losses a long time ago, so that they could have acquired over the years the ability to feel compassion with the victims. The question remains: is their right principally a conditional one, because of their responsibility and guilt, and so dependent on the actual guilt of individuals? Or is there a right to mourn their losses for their own healing even for perpetrators?

Sabine Bode refers to the book of the Mitscherlings in which they described the lack of the ability of the Germans to mourn. And she refers to the reports the philosopher Hannah Arendt wrote after her visit to Germany in the 50s. In these reports Arendt mentions that she noticed in the people she met and observed the lack of emotions, the obsessive and passionated building up of the country, the addicted work ethic. Seen from a distance in time

and supported by the knowledge of our days, it is not difficult to identify the symptoms Arendt described as typical of people suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

A people that did not work through its traumas is vulnerable, explains Sabine Bode, hold explosive material which could lead to outbursts of ethnic violence (Kosovo, Bosnia, Ruanda) or to new anti-democratic tendencies.

She differentiates between 'wailing' and 'lamenting', the former being of no benefit to anybody because of the lack of genuine working through. Lamenting entails mourning and opens the way to work through the pain and free the energy which was bound to the diffuse feelings of suffering.

Sabine Bode's book does not only contain reflections on the more theoretical issues mentioned above, - often between the lines - it depicts the pedagogical convictions of Johanna Haarer as well. This woman continued in her books the methods of the 'black pedagogy'. She was the beloved pedagogue of the Nazi regime and her instructions were followed in the majority of German families. Likewise Sabine Bode dedicates a chapter to several theories about trauma and stress damaging the brain.

And, indeed, she relates the stories of a couple of German children of war. There is the story of Gudrun whose memory was bad throughout her life. Only at present she assumes that there is a link with her mother's continuous exhortations not to look, not to hear, not to feel. Another kind of failing attentiveness is shown in Ruth's story, who never perceived her weak health until a medical report told her so. During her flight from East-Prussia she suffered from unbearable pains in her back, most likely due to a kidney pelvis infection. Had she had fever, she would have been left behind. Her body 'understood' the situation and did not develop a fever and had not ever since, even when she was seriously ill.

Marianne shows another kind of unawareness: she cannot perceive her professional and social skills which are so evident to everyone who knows her.

Kurt experienced himself for years as the 'little sunbeam in the house' as his mother was used to call him, until he became aware of a hidden truth. Confronted with serious heart problems, he asked his mother about the war period. Fortunately she was willing to tell him how scared he had been in the air-raid shelter and she was willing too to admit that she had always suppressed this memory and cherished that other, that of her bright little boy.

There is the story of Kaspar, born after the war, a brilliant actor, in so many ways the opposite of his decent, withdrawn parents. But some day he collapsed and suffered from the never worked through traumas of his parents.

The small children who had to flee the eastern provinces often lost their relatives. Some, like Margot, do not know their actual identity and wonder how one can die in peace without knowing who one actually is.

Horst met a woman who is most likely his sister, but they refuse to do a DNA test, afraid of a possible negative result: they like each other and feel good together, why taking the risk to lose their small foothold?

Christina organises trips to former orphanages in East-Prussia. To her this is the utmost she can do to draw near to her unknown past.

Sabine Bode wrote an impressive book in which she gave German children of war a voice and in which she gave some impetus for stimulating a public discussion about the German war traumas.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

IN THE CARE OF MANY MOTHERS, BUT WHO WAS EVENTUALLY THE BEST ONE?

This is the story of Raimo Painio, one of the 70 000 Finnish children who were evacuated to Sweden and Denmark to escape the damage of the war.

When the town where he lived, Helsinki, again and again was the target of bombings, Raimo, three years old, and his sister, seven years old, were evacuated. He found a shelter in Sweden and stayed with people who after the war were ready to perpetuate their care for him and wished to keep him in Sweden. But Raimo's mother insisted on his coming back home and so he did. Helsinki was a damaged city, the bombings had left behind their traces. Foodstuffs, clothing, shoes, furniture, all the provisions for the basic needs, were in short supply and were therefore rationed. Life in post-war Finland was very difficult and Raimo's mother did not know how to provide their children with the things they needed. She saw but one solution to her problems: to bring Raimo to a children's home in Viborg. It was run by Roman Catholic nuns.

One of them, sister Sofia, was a warm, motherly woman, understanding children's souls, their wishes and needs. Nevertheless she maintained a positive discipline. She supported the children by listening to their stories, answering their questions and taking them seriously. Raimo was allowed to do his homework in her room (for 2 years he was a pupil of the elementary school in the Tektaankatu in Helsinki). Sister Sofia spoke Swedish and could help Raimo in writing letters to his Swedish 'mammy'.

In 1949 the Roman Catholic parish in Turku finished a new building which would take in the children's home and the Kindergarten. So the nuns and the children moved to Turku. The name of the new building was 'Children's home of the Sisters of the Holy Heart'. The move to Turku was no problem to Raimo since he still had the nuns and his comrades around him and very soon he felt at home in his new place of residence.

He recalls that he did not suffer from homesickness; he loved his mother and his sister, but he felt at ease amidst his friends. Life in the children's home was to the residents not that different from the life of other children although they lived with 30 children together. The parish organised all kinds of activities for them: theatre, sports, hobby clubs. Father Brügeman, a friendly man, full of humour, was the beloved leader of those events. In the summer-holidays the children went to Stella Maris in Espo, a country-house of the church. Roman Catholic children from all the regions of Finland spent some weeks there. For all of them it was a feast from the beginning till the end. Raimo recalls the long trip with the bus, the children playing in the woods and swimming in the sea. Those summer-holidays were unforgettable.

One day a young, brave nun from the Netherlands, sister Simplicitas, arrived in the new Turku home. She managed to learn the difficult Finnish language in no time and very soon she had good relationships with the children she took care of. Her (Latin) name means 'simplicity'. To the children 'Simplicitas' sounded much too serious for this charming and loving sister and therefore they nick-named her 'Simmpi'. Sister Simplicitas found inspiration for her work with the kids in God's love to mankind and she committed herself totally to her fellow-creatures and above all to the children. She had especially an open eye for positive things and gave warmth and love to everybody. It was, however, her conviction that children need to know what people expect from them, that children need distinct orders and limits, a solid framework in which they can develop their abilities and passions. A lack of guidelines turn children into restless people, she felt, and although she loved the kids deeply, she was not always permissive. She followed with empathy the development of the children under her care. To Raimo the arrival of 'Simmpi' meant the arrival of a new 'mother'. He loved her very much and they became friends for the rest of their lives. Raimo is still in contact with her, although she went back to the Netherlands after her retirement.

After he left school, Raimo found a job in Turku, but continued to live in the children's home. In 1956, however, he moved to Helsinki and lived with his grandmother. He enjoyed the job he found there, but he had problems adjusting to the new 'home', to the new circumstances outside the children's home. He missed its supporting system of regulations. The 'freedom' of this new life burdened him in the first months of his stay in Helsinki. As soon as he became a soldier he felt relieved; the new context helped him to come to grips with his life again. In that period he met the girl that was to become his wife and after their marriage he had at long last a house of his own and his own family. His son is a source of joy to him and his wife.

Raimo enjoys life, he likes sports, the theatre, cardriving and travelling throughout the country. He cherishes the contacts with all his different 'mothers', in Finland, in Sweden, in the Netherlands, amongst them sister Sofia and sister Simplicitas. He likes to tell the story of his life, that was in many ways so different from that of ordinary children. It is his conviction, however, that life is meaningful to everybody, in whatever way it develops.

MARTIN PARSONS: WAR CHILD, Children Caught in Conflict

Tempus Publishing, Stroud, ISBN 978 0 7524 4293 8

Some paragraphs of the Preface.

In 2003, I was invited to give a key-note address at a War Child conference in Oulu, Northern Finland. I had just got out of my car when a stranger came up to me and introduced herself. She then said, 'I have come a day early to meet you, because if you don't want me here I will go home to Germany'.

I asked: 'Why should I not want you here?'

'Because', she said, 'my father was in the German Army and I am a German war child.'

This encounter quite simply sums up the problems that many war children across Europe have had since 1945, problems which can also be observed in children in modern-day war zones.

Many have taken on the sins of their fathers, many have witnessed scenes and suffered trauma that young children should never encounter. The vast majority experienced the sadness of separation, first from their own parents and relatives and second from the hosts who had looked after them. In many instances they have failed to come to terms with the short- and long-term effects of war-child separation and have passed their concerns and anxieties onto subsequent generations within their families.

Other war children have problems which are very complex ...few escaped. Manifestations can be as simple as not wishing to say goodbye, to the other extreme of being unable to form long-term relationships, having a long history of alcohol addiction, and reclusive behaviour. And let us not forget those children in present-day war zones who are separated from families, ostracised from their communities and have little hope for the future.

I often get asked why I research into War Children. The reasons given by my interrogators as to why I shouldn't are usually the same. One ex-government minister asked me, 'Why waste your time researching into war children? You won't get compensation for them you know'. I don't consider it to be a waste of time. For too long the effects of war on children have been neglected and I am not seeking compensation for their trauma, nor would the war children I have interviewed over the years expect me to do so.

Many times I have been told, 'But they were only children and there were more important things going on at the time', forgetting of course that these children were to be the next generation.

Another: 'They were only children, they'll grow out of it!' Sorry to disappoint...but they don't. There is enough interdisciplinary evidence to suggest that War Trauma goes through three generations. So my grandchildren will be the last generation affected by the war. That's fine if

the Second World War was the last war to take place. But as you are reading this there are thirty-one major conflicts going on in the world. All of these war zones contain children and it they are passing on the effects for three generations then that will take us into the twenty-second century.

As with my other works on war children, I could not have done this without the help and co-operation of ex-war children and researchers around the world, some of whom have become good friends: James Roffey in England, Perri Kaven in Finland, Dr Helga Spranger in Germany, Gonda Scheffel-Baars in the Netherlands, Prof. Baard Borge in Norway, Kai Rosnell in Sweden, Prof. Steven Trout and Prof. Sue Saffle in the the USA and Prof. Marina Gulina in Russia. It has not only been a privilege to work with them over the years and be able to contribute to each other's research, but also to share some of their experiences, both as war children and in their ensuing years as adults.

The late prof. Singa Sandelin-Benko, herself a war-child, persuaded me to work with her and widen my personal research brief by incorporating children in other European war zones. As a result, we collaborated on a pilot study and were about to develop a very detailed comparative research programme on the long-term effects of Finnish and British war children, when her untimely death in 2006 halted proceedings, temporarily I hope.

As one of the few historians working in this field, it soon became apparent that in order to fully understand the problems that war children have gone through, and are indeed going through, I needed a better understanding of the psychological effects of their experience. Therefore, I am truly indebted to Dr Peter Heini, who as the world's leading expert on war-related trauma in children, has guided me through the complexities of psychotherapy techniques, not only through his groundbreaking book *Splintered Innocence*, but also in observing his practical support sessions with ex-war children.

You will notice that within the book I have not looked at the Jewish children of the Second World War. This is a huge topic in its own right and it has been ably covered by eminent historians.

Remember when reading this book that the main characters were, at the time, children, and in those chapters dealing with modern war zones...the victims *still are* children.

The first chapter deals with myth and history, with memories and their reliance.

Four chapters focus on the British Evacuation.

Chapter 7 and 8 set forth the problems of the German War Children.

In the next three the Sotalapsi, the Finnish War Children, and the children of Dutch and Norwegian collaborators and today child-soldiers are the main characters. Chapter 12 shows the ways in which war is depicted in children's picture books, novels and textbooks.

The last chapter goes into the matter of the long-term effects of war experiences.

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The conference focus

The individual and collective images of ourselves and of “the Other” determine how we try to heal our personal suffering, which politicians we elect and which other persons and groups we consider as friends or as enemies. The constantly surprising findings particularly in quantum physics brings science ever closer to spirituality, i.e. the consciousness of our deep interconnectedness and of love being our original quality and our essence. Quantum physics and spirituality are teaching us that we are deeply connected (“entangled” in quantum language) to all and everything: what happens to others happens equally to us in a very concrete and at times even measurable way. What we reject, fight and destroy, that we are inflicting upon ourselves. And the practice of compassion, loving kindness, and reconciliation with ourselves, with “the Other” and with the opponent are the most intelligent expressions of our very own self-interest.

Speakers among many others are:

Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, Palestinian National Authorities

Dr. Hunter Beaumont, USA/Germany

Prof. Hans-Peer Dürr, Germany

Prof. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, South Africa

Prof. Amit Goswami, USA

Prof. Arno Grün, Switzerland

Willigis Jäger, Zenmaster, Germany

Dr. Albrecht Mahr, Germany

Dr. Samson Munn and colleagues, USA, Germany, Israel and South Africa

Prof. Nicanor Perlas, Philipines

Samih-Al Qassim, Palestinian National Authority

Guruji Sri Vast, India

Dr. Otto Scharmer, USA/Germany

Tshinag Galsan, Mongolia

Claude Anshin Thomas, USA

Prof. Vamik Volkan, USA

The organizers:

ISAIL - Institut für Systemaufstellungen und Integrative Lösungen

IFPA - Internationales Forum Politische Aufstellungen

FAB - Friendship Across Borders – NGO, Peace Carrier Programme for German, Israeli and Palestinian youth

WEBSITES

Organisation of Children of Dutch Collaborators:

www.werkgroepherkenning.nl

Organisation of Children of War of different Backgrounds:

www.stichting-kombi.nl

Organisation of Danish Children of War, Danske Krigsboern Foerening:

www.krigsboern.dk

Norwegian Children of War Association, Norges Krigsbarnforbund:

www.nkbf.no

Organization of Norwegian NS Children:

www.nazichildren.com

Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn, Norway:

<http://home.no.net/lebenorg>

Organisation of NS-children Vennetreff:

<http://home.no.net/nsbarn>

Risikoförbundet Finska Krigsbarn: (in swedish)

www.krigsbarn.se

Organisation of Finnish Children of War, Seundun Sotalapset:

www.edu.ouka.fi/sotalapset

TRT, To Reflect and Trust, Organisation for encounters between descendants of victims and descendants of perpetrators:

www.torelectandtrust.org

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

The Foundation Trust, international network of organizations and groups of second and third generations children of war:

www.thefoundationtrust.org

Dachau Institut Psychologie und Pädagogik:

www.Dachau-institut.de

Kriegskind Deutschland:

www.kriegskind.de

Evacuees Reunion Association

www.evacuees.ndonet.com

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.coeurssansfrontieres.biz

Organisation d'enfants de guerre

www.nesdelaliberation.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

(in preparation; in Vorbereitung)

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Reaktionen und Artikel bis den 1.Oktober 2008
