

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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

Sponsor: Stichting Werkgroep Herkenning
www.werkgroepherkenning.nl

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INTRODUCTION

Fifteen years ago, in November 1995, the first issue of the International Bulletin was published. It was sent to 32 people belonging to the targetgroup: children of collaborators or Nazis in the Netherlands, Germany, France and Norway. Very soon another category of war children joined the platform, the children of German soldiers in several West-European countries. Evacuated children in Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom and children born of relationships with the Liberators were next welcomed in the circle of readers, as well as people carrying out research on war-related problems. At present about 180 people all over the world receive the International Bulletin and it is nice that people now and then inform me that it meets their expectations.

As an editor I have never a dull moment, because I come across many interesting issues which I would like to share with you. To be honest, I guess I will not do this work another 15 years, but the moment to say goodbye is not yet there. Without the help of Uta Allers in the past and of Erna Gille at present, - supervising my writing of English and my translations,- I would not have been able to do this work. I would like to thank them for their support.

In this issue three articles focus on myths.

Martin Parsons tackles the myth of the successful evacuation in the UK, Chris van der Heijden describes people's need to cling to the myth of black and white, whereas Jan Beijk tries to explain how the myth of the righteous world can generate injustice.

The Dutch organisation Kombi where all war children are welcome celebrated its 20th anniversary, but at the end of this year it will stop its activities.

An exhibition in the Dutch village of Vught focused on the role of bystanders. I wrote an impression after my visit.

I would like to draw your attention to two interesting websites. It is worthwhile to visit them and learn about the activities of Prevention Genocide Now and BornOf War.

Children are dependent on their parents' choices and in particular in periods of war and persecution these choices have effects nobody would be able to foresee or aim at. It is up to the children to come to terms with them. The story of Trijneke Blom-Post shows how her father's choice influenced her life.

Stephan Marks' book 'Die Würde des Menschen oder: der blinde Fleck in unserer Gesellschaft' appeared begin November; a short text will give you some information.

Your reactions, commentaries and information are very welcome to me!

I lost contact with some of the readers of this Bulletin because they did not inform me of a change in their (e-mail) address. If you want to stay in contact, please let me know any change!

All the best,
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

SELF-HELP GROUP

What you tell us

I know what it's all about,
what you've felt and feel,
I feel it just like you,
I lived in similar situations.
Now we're here together,
we know: I'm not the only one
with this particular burden,
we are not crazy.
No longer alone
w've become allies
in dealing with the past.

WHY BOTHER....THEY ARE ONLY CHILDREN?

Martin L.Parsons

The academic study of children in war has only really come to the forefront of War Studies and general social history in the past two decades. Very few historians until the 1990s, with the notable exception of Ruth Inglis (The Children's War), investigated the role children played in conflict, as a specific topic. Until that time, school textbooks, related novels, comics and the media were regurgitating the same stereotypical view of the working class child from the slums of the cities being looked after by kind middle class hosts in the country.

Where did these views come from, and how has this affected the perception and opinions of the general population in the 21st Century? In addition, as Britain was on the side which won the war and was not invaded, how has it understood the concept of conquest and how such an event played a significant role in the development of the long-term effects of the war child generation within the previously axis-occupied territories.

One of the greatest successes of the British Home Front, during the world war two, was the propaganda. Why? Simply because people still believe it today. It is often said that children were removed from danger to safety, but in truth some were taken to locations which were more dangerous than the ones they had left. How have these myths been perpetuated?

Basically, the images of smiling, happy and excited evacuees leaving the cities to go to the country have been used in all forms of publications and documentaries ever since the

original journeys were made in September 1939 simply to sell a story, one which has only recently begun to be seen in a different light.

There was a firm belief held by the relevant Government agencies at the time, that the notion that all children were being well looked after outside of the cities had to be maintained. This was necessary for two very basic reasons. First, that the mothers would be more likely to allow their children to go, - the scheme was not compulsory- , and second it was thought the soldiers on the front line needed to be reassured that their children were safe. The last line of a famous propaganda film made in 1940 called 'Westwood Ho!', said by a soldier: 'And if we know our children are safe, we will fight better'.

The same messages were being perpetuated last year when the UK witnessed a plethora of celebrations and anniversaries relating to the 70th Anniversary of the outbreak of war in September 1939. Not only did this include a service of Thanksgiving at St Pauls Cathedral in London, and the opening of the new 'Evacuee in the Countryside' exhibition based on my archive and research, but also a great deal of interest from the media, not all of which would be considered as entirely fair reporting. As usual, we were subjected to some production companies jumping on the popular bandwagon and requiring information on war-time child abuse in all its forms.

To some extent, having been given carte blanche to curate the Evacuee Exhibition, I was able to decide what the public had access to in terms of documents, evidence and oral testimony. By so doing I was able to show the true nature of evacuation and war-child trauma, warts and all. However, for the majority of the time the media are not interested in the story of war-children until it becomes newsworthy and sensationalist (hence the abuse angle) resulting in the sale of more papers or getting a few more viewers or listeners to boost the ratings.

Although last August some newspapers such as The Times carried stories related specifically to the evacuation experience worthy of note, not all followed the same line. Headlines in The Mail on the 13th August 2009....'*Royals snub Reunion of Wartime Evacuees*' is one such item where the non-attendance of the Queen at the service at St Paul's became in some way an attack on the government.

Although some of my colleagues in the ERA thought this had been excellent exposure and publicity I was not so sure. At the time, the staff in the ERA office received numerous phone calls asking for a comment or reaction....*not* about evacuation, but about the Royals and members of the Government not attending.

The media are able to take this tangential stance because they assume that the population at large already has a visual understanding of what the evacuation process was all about and does not have to describe it in detail. Indeed, many people still harbour the cosy thought of Britain taking care of its working class children during the war. They are unaware that almost 50% of these children came from middle-class backgrounds, and that the responsibility for looking after them often fell on the working/agricultural classes in the rural communities and not on the middle or upper echelons of society.

What has not been told until recently, is the fact that the lives of many children, once they had been removed to safety and were living with strangers, would never be the same again. Much research has been carried out by the likes of Dr Peter Heinl and Steve Davies on the long-term effects of war-child separation and it is apparent that for some the evacuation process was to be a complex interplay of emotional and psychological issues which were to affect their health, relationships and self-esteem until the present day.

Long-term effects of the war is a phenomenon which has no geographical borders and is not restricted to those seen as being on the 'right 'side and therefore the innocent victims of unprovoked aggression. It is one which transcends both the physical and emotional boundaries. It still exists, and continues to be present, in many of the 30 war zones in the world today.

One of the dangers of the media representation of children in war, both at the time and now, is that the individual stories are lost in the generalisations. It is too easy to talk about the 1.5 million British evacuees, or the German children in the Volksturm, or the Dutch children whose parents were in the NSB, as a whole group with the attendant labels that go with

them. Few journalists took, or indeed take the trouble to investigate some of the personal circumstances behind the headline-making actions.

It is understandable that many children's war-time experiences are tied into the memories of bombing, movement, upheaval, and the loss of family, possessions and accommodation. This in turn led to intolerance, narrow-mindedness and in some cases bigotry which has been passed onto the subsequent generations, often unknowingly and without foundation. As a result this has left some of those in the now 3rd post-war generation, unaware of why they hold the beliefs that they have. What is perhaps less explicable is the fact that within the 1st generation, some people are unable to see beyond their own personal knowledge of events, and remain in total ignorance of the plight of others. Let me give you two examples of how this has become apparent to me.

First, in 2005 I organised an exchange of British and Finnish war children. This resulted in twelve evacuees from both countries having a great time enjoying the hospitality provided for them in both legs of their journey. No questions were ever asked by the British contingent about the fact that Finns had been on the German side during the war, nor was it ever mentioned. However, when I attempted to organise a similar venture with German war-children only two British evacuees applied.

Second, when I was still Chairman of the Evacuee Reunion Association, I was invited to take part in a war-child conference in Frankfurt in 2005 and I began to work with colleagues dealing with the German Kriegskinde, notably Dr Helga Spranger. As a result I received a number of e-mails and letters, some of them very vitriolic, threatening that if I worked with these children (who were still being perceived as the enemy) the correspondents would resign from the association. It is also interesting to note that in response to my recent resignation as Chairman of the ERA, I was accused of spending too much time working with overseas war children and losing sight of the British experience.

This demonstrates not only a naivety on the part of a minority of the members, but also an unwillingness and intransigent attitude which is not only selfish and inward looking, but inadvertently perpetuating the stereotypical view of their opinion of a war-child always being British. They dismiss my comments about the children in Germany and other areas of war-time Europe not being able to affect the decisions of their parents, by simple retorts such as 'That is not the point.....they are still German' etc. These are serious issues which transcend the notion of the rights and the wrongs. They forget that some of the people we are working with now, were, like them, children during the war, and as such suffered the same long and short term problems that they have faced. However, the one big difference is that they have not had to cope with the social stigmas, the discrimination, and the hatred that collaborators' children in the Netherlands or Norway have had to deal with throughout your lives. The fact that some of these people or those who were part of the Lebensborn programme, still fear that their past lives will come back to haunt them, is something that few British evacuees have to face, or are able to comprehend.

Little was done to help the Germans who were children during the war to deal with the knowledge of the country's history and few questions were asked. A research project by H. Radebold demonstrates that up to twenty five percent of German people over sixty years old have suffered from traumatic disorders as a result of the fate of their war experiences or the familial deprivation of the immediate post-war years.(1)

What concerns me most is that in the UK in particular, and I would suggest in some other countries as well, the plight of the war child is forgotten between 'Anniversaries' and we as a group of interested parties are subjected to the usual criticisms of: '*Why research war children*' or: '*They were only children; they'll grow out of it*' or: '*....they weren't affected, but those of us who were left behind were*'

And particularly in my case: '*You don't know, you weren't there*' and other comments on similar lines. It doesn't matter which country we do our research in the reaction is often the same.

There has to come a time when the war-child experience in both previously occupied and unoccupied Europe can be studied in schools in an objective and unemotional way. Unfortunately, this is not going to happen while the curricula does not look at the plight of

war-children in general, but in the case of the British text books, continues to promote the romantic, idealised impression of the evacuation experience. Neither will we get away from the jingoistic approach to the war while whole TV channels seem to be devoted to the retelling of how the allies won World War Two, without ever considering the effects that such wars have on the non-combatants on both sides.

It is significant that organisations such as the Kriegskinde in Germany, the Herkenning in the Netherlands, and the Sotalapsi in Finland have all developed strategies to help 'children' who were affected by the war. They have provided support networks which have allowed some of their members to come to terms with their past. They have allowed them to realise that they are not alone and, to quote a well used cliché, '*come out of the closet*'.

To end on a positive note, much of the research carried out on children in World War Two can now be used to inform governments in present-day war zones how their children will react, both now and in the future. New cross-disciplined studies into War Children are being developed in Universities around the world which are no longer the preserve of the Historian but now include colleagues from Psychology, Law, Art, Medicine (age-studies) and Literature to name but a few. Modern students are now choosing dissertation topics which relate to the impact of war beyond the notion of 'sides' or 'allies'.

Together we are a somewhat distinctive group within the academic world....perhaps that is why some people question where our research actually fits. There can be few areas of study where academics, some of whom are ex-war children themselves, work in very close proximity to those who are the subject of the research.

In a strange way we have an advantage, as such a situation allows us to view the topic from a number of inter-related angles. Those of us, like me, who were born after World War II can sometimes offer a more objective perspective to those friends and colleagues who lived through it and were affected by their experience. However, the latter provide the much needed human side to the academic, theoretical and sometimes ethereal research that goes on in the depths of record offices and libraries.

Many present day governments have learned little from history and are still viewing the plight of war children in the world today in the same way as their political forebears. Had they listened, observed and evaluated the various European evacuation schemes at the end of World War II, the children in present-day war zones perhaps would not be suffering, would not be ignored and we would not be researching into the effects that conflict is having on a new generation of young people. But while armed insurgents see children as young as 6 as easily replaceable cannon-fodder, and little attention is being paid to those witnessing the death of friends and relatives, the situation will continue.

We cannot hope to change or influence the decision-making overnight, but we have come a long way in a very short time and, if nothing else, we have all left a legacy for our students and future generations to build upon and extend. Perhaps the time is coming, when the uninformed will not continue to demean our work by simply saying: '*Why bother...they were children, they'll grow out of it.....*', but realise instead that in fact there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that they don't..... and ask what can be done about it!

1. Roberts,G, in Parsons, M. '*Children the invisible Victims of War*', p.139

International Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Children Born of War (INIRC)

Throughout history there have probably always been children born during and after conflicts and wars where the father has been a member of an enemy, allied or peacekeeping force and the mother a local citizen.

Although, information exists from research teams, organisations, individuals etc. who have been concerned with this topic there is still a big gap in information and knowledge.

The aim of this interdisciplinary and international research network on children born of war thus aims at bridging this gap by:

- ***Collecting data and information on children born of war across time and nations and thereby expanding the evidence base.***
- ***Gathering research results, literature and on-going research on children born of war and promote collaborative research projects on the topic.***
- ***Developing recommendations of best practices to secure the rights of children born of war in co-operation with NGO's and governmental organisations.***
- ***Developing medical therapies focusing on the special needs of children born of war***

It is our hope that by addressing this issue at all societal and political levels and advice national and international organisations we can promote the needs and rights of children born of war.

www.childrenbornofwar.org

DEALING WITH EVIL

Three years ago the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington received an album with pictures made by Karl Höcker, the adjudant of the last Auschwitz commander. The pictures do not show us the scenes we are used to. Instead of miserable victims we see laughing perpetrators. We see soldiers relaxing in the sunshine, making fun on a small bridge, women showing to the camera empty baskets that had been filled with the bilberries they had collected in the woods and that they had finished, nurses at the opening ceremony of the hospital. The pictures show scenes of everyday life, but the normalcy is false, as soon as one realizes that those pictures were made in Auschwitz.

They show how easily we can be tricked. Without our knowledge of the origins of these pictures we would have welcomed those young people for a cup of tea – just as we would have invited a young woman who looks innocently in the camera, but who we recognize later in pictures made in a not so innocent situation.

The Dutch historian Chris van der Heijden published a book in 2001 titled 'Grijs Verleden' (The Gray Past) that received a lot of media attention and still evokes reactions. These reactions are in general more negative than positive. In 2001 the author was attacked by historians and opinionmakers, accused of either being a communist, or a fascist and antisemite. Since his father collaborated with the German occupiers during the Second World War, people easily say: as the tree, so the fruit. So, those who do not agree with Van der Heijden's vision, feel they can save themselves the trouble of reflecting on their objections, because a genuine discussion with a collaborator's son is not what they are obliged to do. Thus, the world stays put, right is right and wrong is wrong and they feel reassured because their parents were on the 'good' side and so are they as well....

What arouses the objections, the irritations and sometimes actually the rage of his colleague-historians is Van der Heijden's alternative vision on World War II, the sceptic picture he paints. By presenting an alternative view he implicitly criticizes the dominant Dutch vision on

the war, that was first launched by the historian L. de Jong. This historian wrote a series of 20 volumes on World War II, considered to be the standard study of the twentieth century on this issue. This vision was on its way back at the end of the century, but at present it is picked up again by young historians associated with the NIOD (the Institute in the Netherlands that is specialized in war studies).

The dominant vision is based on a world view, a very simple one that divides the world into two opposite sides: day and night, devil and angels, protestants and Roman catholics, heretics, rebels, capitalists, outcasts and the icons of the movies. It is not strange that in the Netherlands, which was until far into the twentieth century imbued with religious views, this world view is very persistent. Life is a constant fight between right and wrong, black and white. This vision helps to understand the past and the present but pretends to influence the future as well. Knowing what evil is all about, does not only give a deeper understanding, it is also a means to create a better life in future. The idea that tomorrow will be better than today is a comforting one and is of course cherished by many people. The historian Hans Blom wrote in one of his articles: 'What benefit do we have from a truth that bothers us?' and many people might answer: 'nothing' and would try to get of rid of it as soon as possible. But Van der Heijden emphasizes that in his opinion bothering truths are the only ones which in fact matter.

In the public debate on war-related issues which was based on this vision and which was influenced by the anti-authoritarian revolt of the sixties people tried to make a distinction between the bad leaders of e.g. the Joodse Raad (Jewish Council) and the good rank and file. But such a distinction is an over-simplification of a complex reality. Only few people are able to see the nuances, the scantiness of the myth of black and white and have the strength and the courage to live with the disquieting complexity of life.

Besides, the mythical vision was one of the foundations of modern post-war society and taking leave of this vision would have undermined its strength. Moreover, there was the issue of the Holocaust and who would have had the courage to assume responsibility however small, for his contribution to this genocide? So, the responsibility is laid down on others. People who tenaciously cling to the myth of black and white always belong to the 'good' side and this is easy to understand. Without this soothing vision the war and in particular the phenomenon of the Shoah would be an unbearable burden.

In the first post-war years nobody questioned the dichotomy of black and white. Collaborators were punished, governemental and social institutes were purged and how could it have been otherwise. In a war and in the aftermath there are but two sides: winners and losers. The military fight was continued in a social one. But soon people realized that the majority of the population had just tried to survive, had not been heroes, had needed all their energy to cope with the difficult circumstances. Those who had been active in the resistance movement, collaborators and the war victims, had had their own experiences, but the majority of the Dutch knew all too well how they had adjusted to the authority of the German Occupiers and had avoided anything that would have aroused their anger. They remembered how they had zigzagged between giving and taking – and until 1965 nobody was blamed for his cowardice or adjustment. Jan de Quai, one of the leaders of the movement Nederlandse Unie, a group of prominent politicians willing to co-operate with the Germans under certain conditions, became prime minister in 1959 and nobody protested his appointment. Only in the late sixties the historian L. de Jong labelled him with the terms 'collaborator' or 'half-collaborator' – and since that period the appointment of De Quai has become viewed as a questionable one.

The year 1965 was, for several reasons, a turning point in Dutch society. First, there was the fact that only until then the extent of the Shoah could be picked up by the man in the street. In commemoration ceremonies people had focused until then on the infamous attack of the Germans, the heroic deeds of the resistance fighters and the treachery of the collaborators, Jews as the particular victims of the

Nazis were never mentioned. This changed, among other reasons because of the success of the TV movie 'The Holocaust'. From then on collaboration became synonymous with guilty of genocide and the old myth of black and white, the good and the bad guys, had a glorious come-back. This is shown in the appointment, in 1979, of a special civil servant charged with the tracing of collaborators and war criminals who did not serve their sentence. For thirty years nobody had got excited about those people being free, but from then on people wanted them arrested and taken to court.

This is, however, an international phenomenon, since people like Klaus Barbie, Kurt Waldheim and John Demjanjuk were traced and sentenced. Demjanjuk was accused of war crimes in Treblinka, but the definite proof could not be given, so he was released. Now he is summoned to court again, this time for his crimes in Sobibor.

In this period of new 'pureness' people were fed with the glorious stories of the resistance heroes, and with the view on the human being as basically good, except for a couple of people who are bad guys – with emphasis on ARE. They do not do wrong things, they themselves are wrong, as if it is a kind of genetical condition, in the same way that the resistance fighters were from their start in life wrapped in holiness.

Each human being has to ask himself these questions: could I eat bilberries while at the other side of the wall people are murdered, more or less in my responsibility? It has to be said: this is what millions of people all over the world accuse the western world of: you are rich because your wealth is based on our poverty.

We know little about Höcker and his comrades, but we know a lot about that woman Van der Heijden mentioned in the beginning of his paper. It is Lynndie England, notorious for her violence used in the Abu Graib prison we became informed of through the pictures who were made there. One could argue that she is different than those people who served in Auschwitz. Van der Heijden presumes Lynndie to be able of throwing Zykon B in closed rooms, because she was able to torture prisoners in Abu Graib.

Many people have tried to explain why she, apparently without any problem, could torture people, but nobody has found any clue in her childhood or youth. She was a totally normal, ordinary girl, with the standard problems of all girls. Psychologists did not find out other things than what she mentioned herself before court: she had been a member of a group in which these kind of things occurred, everybody did it. The leader of the group, Charles Graner, was the mental authority of the group, Lynndie adored him and she gave even birth to his child. She did simply what the others did, it just happened.

In the first post-war years some psychologists and psychiatrists tried to find answers to their questions how Nazis and their accomplices could have done the things they did. One of them, the Dutchman Stouten, director of a re-education institute for young Dutch SS members, carried out research: spoke with relatives, explored the economic, political and social circumstances of the boys in his care, and just like his colleagues abroad he found out that there is no proto-type of the Nazi, or the collaborator, or the SS man. Those people were very normal, ordinary men. But this was a result the Dutch society was not able to accept in the first post-war years and so Stouten decided to publish his reports only forty years later.... We all know about the Milgram experiences and the willingness of the participants to inflict pain on people in the context of the experiment. We know the results of what was done in the Stanford prison where people were divided in groups, assuming the roles of people in charge or prisoners and how they played these roles with alarming eagerness. We know the movie The Wave and the German remake Die Welle, in which a teacher succeeded in having his pupils engaged in playing Third Reich, almost all of them participating in a very committed way.....

Unfortunately we know next to nothing about the people we see in the pictures of the Höcker-album. We would like to ask them: how could you be so cheerful while at the same moment,

at only a small distance, people were killed in an incomparable way, with in fact your co-operation? How could your conscience be quiet? These questions are important and we cannot withdraw from them, because they concern also ourselves – although those who cling to the right and wrong myth will disagree.

One of the points in the book 'Grijs Verleden' that was often attacked was the author's conviction that chance is a far more important factor than we would like to accept. He illustrated this conviction with the story of two well-known Dutch authors, who as adolescents of 17 and 18 years old got the idea to enroll in the SS and planned to visit the SS-Ersatz office in Amsterdam. But when they arrived one of them withdrew, the other enrolled. After the war the one was labelled 'good' and the other 'bad'. But were they that different in intention and conviction? As far as is known now, both friends had no special interest in politics and in their bohemian view of the world 'fascism' was the equivalent of 'vitality'. Were they fascists, did they make a deliberate choice or was it above all a question of chance? Of course, there were people who made a deliberate choice, not everything can be seen as chance. There are so many factors leading to a decision or to avoiding a decision, each story is unique.

What will always be the core of Van der Heijden's study is his conviction that the stories of the war and the collaboration showed us an ancient truth: the human being in general is not good, is not bad, is black nor white, just gray. Only a few can raise to the top of their courage and become heroes. The great majority will always try just to survive, give and take in a landscape between the heroic deeds of resistance and the destructiveness of the tyrants and sometimes they suddenly become aware of the fact that they live in a landscape of only one colour. Escape is no longer possible.

For that reason it is better to take into account, in advance, that all of us we are able to take on this attitude of looking away and even to the crossing over to the position we had never wanted to be found ourselves in.

In his opinion this is the very lesson to be learned from the war, but as the torturing by 'normal' people in the Abu Graib prison shows, this lesson has had until now less influence than we would hope.

A woman in the audience asked after the presentation of a paper by the wise Jewish author Abel Herzberg: 'What can we do to prevent our children becoming victims again?'. Herzberg answered: 'The question that really matter is a different one: 'how can we prevent our children becoming perpetrators?'

We are very pleased to inform you that Issue 3 of **GPN GENOCIDE PREVENTION NOW** has been published.

You can access it at our website below. And quite amazingly you can already Google to it – and to the first two issues—under "genocidepreventionnow."

In fact you can also access it by Googling the separate words "genocide prevention now," and we're not that buried even if you go to just "genocide prevention."

As soon as you open the site you will see the Table of Contents and be able to choose materials that are of greatest importance and interest to you quickly and get to them with an easy click.

My Editor's Introduction says it briefly: The old journalist in me—going back to the elementary school paper, camp newspaper, and high school paper and more throughout my life ---is having so much fun. The contemporary grumpy old man that is me is reluctantly yielding to

learning the new technologies and communication tools of blogs and websites and whatnot – and enjoying the challenge and learning, even if I am suspicious as can be of the qualities of the reading experiences that are possible unless you print something out on real holdable paper. But altogether there is only one real purpose to *GPN* and that is to contribute meaningfully to the development of genocide studies and prevention in our very murderous world.

Best,

Israel W. Charney, Executive Director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, Jerusalem.

www.genocidepreventionnow.org

THE MYTH OF THE RIGHTEOUS WORLD

In an article published in the journal 'Psychology', issue December 1986, the psychologist Jan Beijk explained how the brains of the human being can trick him by distorting his perception of reality. People see or hear things that are not said or that are not present, or don't notice what is said or can be seen. Beijk argues that the schemata theory can throw a light on this noticeable phenomenon. In the human brain an image or schema is put in storage at the moment people see e.g. a woman, a clown or a teacher for the first time. This image comes back in mind as soon as people meet a woman, or a clown or a teacher. The new information is added to the first image and with each new encounter the schema will become more complex and differentiated. Schemes become intertwined and the image of e.g. the woman becomes connected with that of the teacher. For that reason people that watch the same things, actually see different things because of their unique personal network of intertwined schemata. People specialized in some field of knowledge, e.g. arts or wine, notice far more details in a piece of art or in a glass of wine than people lacking this special knowledge. We need these networks of schemata for the acquiring and the storing of new knowledge, all the same they influence our perception and can even trick us.

In the 80's one of the schemata that predominated in social psychology was the topic of the *righteous world*. In our upbringing and education we acquire norms and values and we deduce from them the notions about what is right or wrong, what is righteous and what is not. Religions and folklore offer people a couple of exemplary stories in which good prevails over evil and the diligent people are rewarded whereas the lazy ones are not. We raise our children with the idea that 'doing their best' will help them to find a good job and to get professional chances. 'Freewheelers' get simply what they deserve by not investing in their future.

In religions, the notion that God or the gods will judge human beings and give them what they deserve, reward or punishment, plays an important role. In fairy tales the good guy is rewarded, although often after needing to overcome a lot of problems, whereas the bad guy gets suffering.

Development psychology argues that children at some moment learn the lesson that immediate fulfillment of their desires and wishes is impossible. They learn to accept the need of postponing fulfillment to another moment and they experience that indeed very often the need is fulfilled later. So, we all learn in our childhood that one gets what one deserves, that patient waiting for the certain reward is a mature attitude that pays off.

These schemata are deeply rooted in our brains and each evidence that things actually happen not according to this schema, that for instance the good have to suffer and the bad

guys live in wealth and good health, puts us into trouble. As soon as injustice is done to us or to someone we know or feel connected with, we feel outraged.

As one of our relatives or friends meet injustice or has to suffer without any plausible cause our feeling of certainty, of being safe, is undermined. We cannot avoid thinking that what happened to our friend can happen to us as well, that apparently the investment in doing good and being rewarded afterwards can be questioned. We try to get rid of this unpleasant feeling of uncertainty and will try to help the victim or to give him compensation, so that the effects of the injustice or the suffering are lessened. Very often, however, we are not in a position to give compensation, support cannot be given and we feel overwhelmed by feelings of powerlessness. And we don't like those feelings either!

Lerner, together with some colleagues, led experiments in which he showed to his students videos registering that people received electric shocks. The students thought it had to do with an experiment in which those people got the shocks as soon as they gave wrong answers to questions. After this experiment some students were told they could compensate the victims by sending them to a group that would be rewarded for every good answer. All of them seized this opportunity. The others did not get the opportunity to compensate the victims and their judgment of those people was and stayed very negative, whereas the other students changed their view of these persons in a positive way. Lerner concluded that people tend to see victims in a negative way as long as they have themselves no opportunity to give them support or compensation. They tend to hold the victims more or less responsible for the misfortune they went through. They tend to see a causal relation where in fact there is none, just because they want to avoid admitting to themselves that it was mere fate that played a role and that fate could hit them as well. In an adapted experiment Lerner gave the 'victims' the opportunity to take revenge – and after this experiment no student had a negative opinion of the victims. Once the powerlessness is eliminated, our judgment can be more realistic again, is Lerners conclusion.

We know that criminals defend their deeds by pointing to the worthlessness of their victims – 'Untermenschen' 'ask' to become victimized...

Jones and Aronson played court scenes with their students in which the judges gave men that had raped a virgin a more severe sentence than men that had raped married or divorced women. It is not logical to hold the virgins more responsible for their fate than the married and divorced women, (none of the women were responsible), but this was what actually happened! Lerner and Simmons explain this irrationality by emphasizing that we consider the rape of a virgin as a more objectionable crime and it tackles more our idea of a righteous world than in the case of a married or divorced woman – and for that reason we feel the need to 'correction'.

In the same way women that had been raped by a friend or a person they knew rather well were seen as more responsible than women raped by people they did not know; again a totally unlogical consideration!

In the case of a well-known person being attacked or murdered the idea of his or her being the victim of a complot emerges immediately. The idea that he is the victim of just some crazy person is unbearable to most of us.

In his book 'The defence never rests' Bailey describes how air-pilots reacted to the news that one of their comrades had not come back from his mission. Their first explanation was always: "he will have had difficulties with the plane, there will have been a mechanical problem." They could not admit that the mission had been too risky....Mechanical problems let their ability and that of their colleague unimpaired, the admission of an impossible mission would have uncovered their powerlessness and vulnerability.

Chodoff described how parents of sick children who were to die assumed responsibility for their suffering, whereas, of course, they were not responsible at all. But in this way they

could maintain the illusion that they could prevent a new disaster occurring in their families in future.

Victims of all categories are a threat to all those who want to cling to the myth of the righteous world. The human being in general will try to save his idea of the righteous world even at the cost of holding victims responsible for at least part of their suffering. The myth of the righteous world often entails blaming the victim and many people have no problem in behaving that way. For abandoning the myth will force them to face the fact that life is full of risks, that doing one's best is no guarantee, that suffering can hit every one, that there is basically no safety in this world. Only the most courageous people are able to live with these uncertainties.

So victims see themselves placed before a double task: they have to recover from their suffering and they will get hardly any help from their social context, because people don't like to hear about the traumatising events people have had to live through.

In our judicial system the victims are hardly present (this has been the case since the Enlightenment; before that period there were many places where victimizers and victims could discuss things and could agree on compensation). The focus is on the perpetrators and when the verdict is heard, the case is closed...Justice is done....If the focus should be on the victims, we would hear the message we don't like to hear: this time they were the victims, next time it could be you.

The myth of the righteous world can lead, paradoxically, to blatant injustice, and this only because many of us lack the courage to see what really is at stake.

GSB

STEPHAN MARKS: DIE WÜRDE DES MENSCHEN oder: Der blinde Fleck in unserer Gesellschaft

ISBN 978-3-579-06755-1, Gütersloher Verlagshaus

The first article of the German constitution reads: 'The dignity of the human being is inviolable'. But in everyday life old people are often designated as 'scrap', jobless people are labelled 'prosperity rubbish', teachers are described as 'half-day jobbers' and people from the former East-Germany as 'backward Ossies'. These examples show that there is something very fundamentally wrong in German society.

Stephan Marks argues that the devaluation of the human dignity in everyday life has become so omnipresent that we often have become used to it and don't notice it.

The consequences are various: the potential of many pupils and students is not recognized and remains undeveloped, ruining the chances of young people; young academics leave Germany in search of better chances in other countries; countless young people take refuge in drugs or addiction, in street gangs, in violence, in extremist rightwing movements, or have depressive feelings and see no other way than to commit suicide.

The author analyses this devaluation in everyday life and suggests constructive ways for bringing back human dignity in society.

Stephan Marks has been educated in social studies, is a board member of an international network 'Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies of the Columbia University in New York. He organises seminars, workshops and presentations on the issue of shame and dignity. More information: marks@ph-freiburg.de and www.scham-anerkennung.de

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Reactions and articles till the 1st of March 2011

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE DECISION OF ONE'S PARENTS

As a daughter of a Dutch collaborator with the Nazi Occupiers I have always felt it would be far easier to be a resistancefighter's child than that of a collaborator. Until, in the encounters of the organisation Kombi, I met people of whom the father and/or mother had been members of the resistance movement, I had never imagined those people speaking in a negative way of their parents. I had thought they would be proud of their parents' choice and would therefore speak about them only in exalted terms, whereas most of the collaborators children would feel ashamed and would have to struggle with feelings of guilt.

To my astonishment some of the resistance fighters' children were not that happy with their parents' choice. Their resistance activities had brought them into traumatising situations, saddling them with psychic problems that manifested themselves after the war. Their children were proud of their parents, yes, but at the same time they suffered from their outbursts of rage, their depressive feelings, their unpredictable changes of mood and their inability to give their children warmth and protection. They struggled with the two so different sides of their parents and felt it nearly impossible to find a balance between their pride and their feelings of being left alone.

Some people were angry with their parents and accused them of ignoring the interests of their family and giving priority to the rescue of air-pilots whose planes had crashed or to the seeking for hiding addresses for the persecuted Jews. They wondered: 'Were those people more important than we, their children? Why did not they keep silent like 90% of the Dutch population and simply strive to survive?'

Others suffered from their parents' arrogance which implied their 'good' choice would do for the rest of their lives and which gave them an argument to rest on their laurels.

Just like several Dutch collaborators' children fearing their parents had used violence, had been involved in the rounding-up of resistance fighters or in one of the stages of the Holocaust, some resistance fighter children feared that their parents had used violence and had caused blood shed. They hated the term 'liquidation' because it concealed that it meant the killing of collaborators. They were upset that their parents had killed people although they knew that it was 'for the sake of liberation'.

For decades, these resistance fighters' children kept silent, because people around them expected them to be proud of their parents and did not accept critical statements about their behaviour towards their children. Many of them felt the need to make a choice: continuing to notice what they noticed and felt and to 'disobey' the expectations of their social context, or giving in to those expectations and giving up feeling what they actually felt and witnessed.

Children in the United Kingdom and Finland, and to a lesser extent in France, had to come to terms with their parents' decision to send their children to the safe country-side or to the safety of an other country. Of course they were grateful that their evacuation had brought them survival, but they also felt grief and pain because of the psychological problems they had had to cope with later on in their lives. At the time in particular the younger children had not understood why they had been sent away and had felt abandoned. Several children had met with indifference or exploitation in their adoption families. When back home after the war, these children had another story than the rest of their family and they often felt being outsiders. The parents had been convinced they had made the right choice and in terms of physical survival of their children, they had done so. Nobody at the time could have foreseen the psychological problems that would manifest themselves later on.

When reading Ruth Barnett's chapter in the book 'Children: the Invisible Victims of War' I was rather shocked to read: 'Later, each grows into an adult who then has to come to terms with the decision their parents made and the other possibilities the parents did not choose.' My first emotional reaction was: these children taken to safety in England in the context of the Kindertransporte, escaping the ordeal of the Holocaust, should not they be grateful! But, immediately after, I saw how ridiculously shortsighted this reaction was. Just like the resistance fighters' children the saved children of the Kindertransporte had gone through traumatising events of which they never had the right to speak openly. Just like them they had grounds to question the wisdom and the correctness of their parents' decision.

Of course there is a difference between the choices the parents made: some deciding to send their children to safe places, ignoring their own agonizing feelings, focusing on the well-being of their children, others deciding to bring liberation closer, ignoring the interests of their own families. But all of them made a choice for the 'good', whereas the collaborators made a choice for the 'bad'. But I know that many collaborators thought they were serving their family's and country's interests by joining the Dutch National Socialist party. My father often said so and for a long time I was rather cynical about his statements. At present I am more inclined to think, that he seriously believed he was making the right decision, although, of course, it proved to be all wrong. But just like many collaborators' children I am astonished that he could not see what the consequences would be of the Nazi ideas about the super Aryan race, that he was so blind for the inevitable effects, although he was a clever and critical person.

I had often wondered if children of people partisans of other ideologies had to struggle with the same feelings of shame about their parents' blindness to the ideology's effects as we had as collaborators' children. In 1996 a daughter of communist parents, Anita van Ommeren, wrote an article in which she described her feeling of being at a loss when facing the stubbornness of their parents who had not been able to see the lack of freedom and the oppression in the so called countries of 'the socialist paradise'. She wrote she felt the same shame as collaborators' children and wondered why her parents and their comrades condemned those collaborators ignoring the fact that to some extent they had made the same wrong choice by following a destructive ideology. I recently came across a book written by Hans Fels 'In het landschap van mijn ouders' (In my parents' landscape) in which this son of Holocaust survivors travels around the world to find answers to his question why his parents, against all evidence, had stuck to their belief in the benedictions of communism and had not seen that in practice the system had made millions of victims. In his quest for insight he almost collapses and perishes in a destructive cynism, but manages to recover and to accept that their loyalty to communism may have been the only way to cope with what they had suffered from that other ideology of the 20th century, fascism.

All those stories show how children are dependent on their parents' decisions in which they don't have a share. If anywhere, children's vulnerability is shown in these stories, appealing to the responsibility of adults to give their decisions a serious consideration. But we know, that even then, 'good' decisions can have 'bad' consequences.

GSB

THE STORY OF MY LIFE by Trijneke Blom-Post

I was almost 7 years old and lived at a farm in the north-east of the Netherlands, when our country was dragged into the war. I remember this day in May 1940 very well. All around us was a tension that lasted till the end of the war.

My father could not accept that a foreign regime would rule in the Netherlands. Shortly after the taking over he refused to do things of which he was sure they would damage Dutch interests. When the German influence grew, he became a resistance fighter.

We, as children (I am the second of eight) were aware of what took place at our farm.

Nobody spoke about it, but we witnessed the persons who came to speak with our father, noticed that some stayed in our home for several days. We understood that all those events had an air of danger about them. We were told to keep silent.

In the Summer of 1943 someone betrayed my father and he was arrested. Some days later someone liberated him out of his cell in the police office. From that day on, we too, as members of the family, were no longer safe. Without preparation and explanation we were taken to different hidingplaces. My mother joined my father, became a member of the resistance movement herself. They travelled from place to place as uprooted people.

While hiding I stayed in three different houses. People took care of me very well, but I missed my home, my parents, my sisters and brothers.

In the Summer of 1944 my father led an attack on the jail of the Weteringsschans in Amsterdam. The raid failed and the attackers and the men whom they intended to liberate were put to death. When people told me that my father was dead, I had no idea of what that meant. In those last years I had seen him only a few times. He did not play an important role in my everyday life. I remember that I thought: 'When your father is dead, you have to weep.' And I wept, not so much for myself as for the people around me. I was not deeply sad. Some time after his death I became severely ill. Fortunately, my mother was with me and took care of me, till the house where we stayed was attacked. My mother fled and we followed some days later. At the second home, I stayed till January 1945 when I had recovered sufficiently to make a long trip by bicycle to the third place.

In May 1945 the Germans capitulated and the Netherlands were free again, but I was not happy. I concealed my feelings deep inside. We returned to our farm, lived there for some time, then moved to the west of the Netherlands.

It did not take long before it dawned upon us, that the resistance activities of my father would have important consequences for our life. After the war the government decided to put some outstanding resistance fighters in the centre and to honour in them the others as well. My father became a symbol. A novel was published about my father's life; this transformed him into a myth.

My mother received many awards of honour for my father from Dutch organisations and from abroad. But we were unable to mourn him because he lived on as a dead hero. Our mother emphasized always the fact that others suffered more than we did. The attention we received was not the attention we needed. As a result, I denied having any problem related to the war.

In Rijnsburg where we lived after the war, I met the man I would marry some years later. He was a Jew, who as a child had found a hiding place and when it was evident that his parents had been put to death, the family gave him a home. We felt safe with each other, because we both had learned not to speak about all that happened to us in the war. In my marriage I put my experiences and pain aside. My husband lost everything in the war, but I did not. He had hermetically sealed the door to the past and we lived as if there never had been a war. Of course we did not speak with our children about this subject. Occasionnally, however, they participated in ceremonies in which my father was honoured posthumously.

In 1984 my husband was seriously injured in a road accident. After his recovery we were no longer able to reach each other emotionnally, thus we looked for therapeutic help. It seemed to me as if all that had been important to me, that had given me a hold in my life, like my Christian faith, had disappeared. I had no ground under my feet, the light was extinguished and in fact I did no longer want to live. Fortunately though, I decided to stay alife.

I stopped therapy after 4 years when the therapist could not help me to move forward. We never spoke about the war and its aftermath. I had enough self confidence to leave therapy, even though I knew there were some problems I did not work through. At the time, however, I lacked the energy to cope with them. I was convinced that something would lead me to the next step when I would be strong enough to do so.

In 1991 my mother died and when preparing the funeral speech I realized that we had never buried our father. He had been buried at the Cemetery of Honour in Overloon, for his service as a resistance fighter. But as family we never were given the chance to say goodbye to him. At my mother's funeral we buried symbolically my father as well. That gave me relief.

More than one year later I again had psychological problems caused by my work as a volunteer. I took up therapy once again. In the intake session the psychologist explained to me that I needed special help for those problems which were related to the war. I was speechless: did I have a war trauma? Eventually I realized that she was right and I knew immediately where I could get help. A year ago I had read an article about Kombi. Their aim interested me and I had kept the text. In Kombi children of war meet, share their grief and pain, despite their different backgrounds.

I had learned to see that I could not take a pride in the heroic acts of my parents. If this was true for me, it was applicable for all other children of the war. One cannot hold the children responsible for the choices of their parents.

I contacted Kombi. I participated in two weekends and then I became a member of a little self help group. We took turns telling our stories of life. When it was my turn, I still wondered whether my experiences were important enough to be told. Others suffered far more than I did, didn't they? I preferred listening to the others, so telling my own story was not easy. Was it right to attract the attention of the others to my problems? Like my mother, I had accepted the hierarchy of suffering as a matter of fact.

In 1994 the IKON (Oecumenical Broadcasting Company of the Netherlands) planned a documentary film presenting the stories of children of the war from various backgrounds. They were looking for four children who would agree to be filmed during the year of the commemoration ceremonies of the Liberation. Kombi suggested to me to participate.

Together with a collaborator's daughter, with a daughter of a Jewish family and a man, who as a child, passed the war in a Japanese internmentcamp in Indonesia, I took part in the film entitled 'One year later'. It was broadcast in the Spring of 1996.

Participating in this program aroused many emotions. We went back to the village where I was born and which I did not visit since the 1940s. We not only went back, physically, with the cameras, but I also returned psychologically to the pain of the past. The most important fact was, that 50 years after the war, not the parents, but the child was at the centre of interest. Finally I was given the permission to exist with my pain and my sorrow. My role in this program gave me relief, some of my repressed feelings came up and I could work through them. Unfortunately, most of my sisters and brothers experienced the film in a totally different way. Some of them objected to my having brought to light the effects that the choices of our parents had on us, their children. Some former resistance fighters reacted negatively: 'You actually don't understand what was going on in the war....' Fortunately, I also received positive reactions from some former resistance fighters.

In the Fall of 1996 a biography about my father's life appeared. Some years earlier I met the author at a meeting. He asked me about the consequences of the fact that my father was so well known in the country. My answer gave him the conviction he had to write this book about my father Johannes Post. The mythology of my father had spread throughout the country. This book is doing justice to him. He appears as an ordinary man with good and with less good qualities, as a man who could make mistakes. All the attention people had given to him, had been a barrier between him and me. This book helps me to come closer to him, as a person and as a father. It enables me to bid him, finally, a farewell.

KOMBI

In September 2008 we 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,
travelling 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 centre 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

BYSTANDERS

Some weeks ago I visited an exhibition in one of the musea in the village of Vught, situated in one of the southern provinces of the Netherlands. Vught is known because of the

internment and transit camp the Nazi's have founded here in 1941 and in which Jews and resistance fighters had been imprisoned.

The exhibition focused on the reactions of the people living in Vught who to their surprise had been confronted with the foundation of a camp of which, in first instance, they did not know what its function would be. Men of the village had been enrolled for the erection of the camp, often put before the choice: co-operation in the camp building or being sent to Germany for forced labour.

In the first few weeks the building activity attracted many villagers who at Sunday afternoon went to the woods where trees had been cut and barracks were taking shape. But when the first transport of prisoners arrived at the small railway station, they suddenly realised what the real character of the camp would be. Nobody spoke a word when they saw the human load 'tumbling down' from the wagons and being beaten to stand up and to march into the direction of the camp. The silence was full of fears, of disgust, of rage, but none of these emotions could have been better expressed than through this silence.

The villagers immediately sensed their helplessness and in their testimonies, more than 65 years later, this is the refrain, in all kinds of varieties: 'what could we have done'; 'we could not do anything'. All the same, some did something: they gave the prisoners bread or potatoes, they accepted the request of the prisoners to send a letter to the address they handed the villagers on small pieces of paper. One man who delivered each day vegetables and fuel to the camp dropped carrots or corn aside the paths to be picked up by the prisoners.

One of the eight people interviewed in the framework of this exhibition emphasized that he had not given any help to the prisoners because he had not wanted to risk his own life to end behind the barbed wire. Most of these interviewees were children, between 10 and 15; two of them were somewhat older because they were enrolled in the building activities. One of them described his rage when he witnessed force and torture and how his parents had discussed the need to have him go into hiding because they feared that, some day, he would no longer be able to stop himself and would interfere.

The interviewees admitted that in the long run people became used to the presence of the camp and to the violence used against the inmates. They witnessed the arrival of new groups of prisoners, but the perplexed reactions of the first times did not come up. The camp had become a part of their everyday life.

Still, they said that they had rarely spoke with other people of the camp and about what they had witnessed, even among friends and relatives the issue had been ignored. Some interviewees emphasized that this silence had been caused by the general mistrust of those years, people not knowing who could be trusted and who not because of his possible co-operation with the Germans.

I guess there was another reason and this idea was forced on me when at the end of the interviews people spoke about the night and the morning in which the prisoners were evacuated from the camp, in September 1944.

It was said that the Allied Forces were approaching and the Nazis became afraid that the camp would be caught by surprise, revealing what had happened in it. So the camp inmates were taken to the railway station, where children cried all night long, women were beaten and chaos reigned. All of the interviewees who spoke about these scenes started to stumble in their speech, overwhelmed by emotions, they could not describe what they saw and experienced.

I am sure that the knowledge that those prisoners were sent to concentration camps where the majority of them have perished blocked the ability and the readiness of the interviewees to speak. There was but one way to describe the indescribable: silence. Remembering the

departure of the prisoners and their destination brought back in mind the complete helplessness of the villagers. One of the hardest emotions to cope with and to admit, also to oneself, is helplessness (see also the article on the myth of the righteous world).

If these villagers felt helpless with respect to the fate of the prisoners, whereas Vught was only an internment and transit camp, not a camp in which people have been murdered, how much more would have felt helpless the people living in the surroundings of Auschwitz, Treblinka or Dachau, when the truth of what had happened in the camp came out after the end of war?

I never trusted their testimonies that ‘they had not known what was going on in the camps’, but now I tend to understand that they actually meant what they said. How can one live in a constant awareness of helplessness? It is not possible and people will try to find ways to get rid of this feeling. Ignoring is one of that ways, I guess.

The villagers of Vught had never spoken of the camp, not until they had been asked to give their testimonies in the context of the exhibition. I am quite sure that such an exhibition could not have been organised 10 years ago, because people would not have been interested in bystanders or would have had their simple and direct condemnation at hand: why did not they resist the Occupiers? I am quite sure that the interviewees would not have been ready to give their testimony 10 years ago, fearing to be labelled as cowards or collaborators.

In spite of a tendency to revive the old black and white myth in the Netherlands as a way to understand the history of World War II, there is another tendency towards more openness and realism in the study of the war events. Fifteen years after the speech of Queen Beatrix in the Knesset in Jerusalem in which she admitted that the majority of the Dutch people had not played any role in the resistance movement, but had focused on survival, ten years after the publishing of Van der Heijden's book about the extensive gray terrain between the black and the white, the Dutch people accepted the idea that heroism was not in the luggage of most of them. Judith Herzberg, a Jewish poetess, commented on Queen Beatrix' speech by saying: ‘Most human beings are not courageous, let us accept this condition. Why blame them for this lack of courage? Why save our unrealistic view of what a human being is all about at the cost of people trying to make the best of the hardship of their lives?’

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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>

Riskförbundet Finska Krigsbarn: (in swedish)

www.krigsbarn.se

Organisation of Finnish Children of War, Seundun Sotalapset:

www.sotalapset.fi

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

www.toreflectandtrust.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

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.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 Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste

www.asf-ev.de

Organisation of German Lebensbornkinder

www.lebensspuren-deutschland.eu

