

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

Red: Gonda Scheffel-Baars, Nieuwsteeg 12, 4196 AM Tricht
The Netherlands Tel: (+) 345 573190
e-mail: scheffelbaars@planet.nl
gonda.scheffel-baars@werkgroepherkenning.nl
Sponsor: Stichting Werkgroep Herkenning
www.werkgroepherkenning.nl

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INTRODUCTION

Although I cannot present to you the reports about the commemoration ceremonies in London and Stockholm on November 20, 2017, it is worthwhile to publish the announcement of these events, sent to me by Sinikka and Martin. Their words might inspire you to organise this year a remembrance ceremony in your own country.

Professor Israël W. Charny sent me information about two of his books which recently have been published. People interested in these books can contact him to acquire them with a price allowance.

Svetlana Alexiyevich has written a book 'The last witnesses' about the fate of the war children in Byelorussia. I suddenly realised that the generation of those who were children during the war or were born during the war, all having experienced traumatic events in these years, are indeed the last witnesses.

Gertrud Kauderer who wrote an impressive In Memoriam about Otto Duscheleit, published in issue 44, asked me to inform you of the fact that Uta Allers, one of her friends from One-by-One, had translated her text. She wrote some interesting things about Uta's job and I would like to present to you Gertrud's and Uta's mails.

One of our Dutch readers, Petra Aarts whom I know since the eighties when we studied in Amsterdam, have written a family story, in which very existential questions are raised: fate and choice, guilt and innocence, the complexity of factors influencing people's lives. I wrote a review of this novel.

Irene Glausiusz met Esta Tzaig who told her about her experiences during the war period in The Netherlands. She was willing to share her story with the readers of this Bulletin.

Samson Munn and Júlia Vajda have developed plans for encounters in Hungary in 2018 or 2019. They sent me some information to forward to you.

I found Josie Brandt's story on the Herkenning website and I publish here the first part of it. Fleeing Aachen, her birth city, she and her family ended up in Czechoslovakia where they stayed until the end of war. Her trip through Germany in war is stunning.

Katja Happe, one of the readers of the IB, has written a study on the persecution and murder of the Jews in The Netherlands, 'Viele falsche Hoffnungen' (Many false expectations). I made a summarised translation of a review of her book published in the Süddeutsche Zeitung.

I hope that you will appreciate the articles in this issue. Comments, texts and other suggestions are welcome! Please send to me any change of (e-mail) address, so that we can remain in contact with each other.

My best wishes,
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

Vaclac Havel about **Hope**

The kind of hope that I often think about...I understand above all as a state of mind, not a state of the world.

Either we have hope within us, or we don't. It is a dimension of the soul.

It is not essentially dependent upon some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation.

Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

A Day for the Children of War: 20th November

The Day for War Children is taking place for the fifth year in the **Finnish Church** and at the **Finnish Embassy**, Stockholm. It take's place sixth year in Westminster Abbey, in London.

We – war children evacuated from Finland to Sweden during World War II – will commemorate all innocent children who have suffered from war. We have chosen that date because the United Nation's Children Convention was signed on November 20, 1989. We ask you to spread this information.

Everyone can work for **A day for the Children of War**, arrange programs in your organizations, encourage school teachers to invite Refugee Children to spread knowledge about their own experience in foreign countries, their culture and language. Libraries and various associations can take up the situation of children on November 20.

This year we will take up, together with Finland's Embassy, Swedish Church and Save our Children in Sweden, the importance of language for the young refugee children who come to Sweden.

We want to contribute to a better understanding of the circumstances refugee children live in and facilitate their life in a new society, a new culture and with a new language. But we also want to listen to their stories and learn from them, and support them when they try to feel at home in a new country. At the same time, we would like to remind them of the value of maintaining one's own culture and one's own mother tongue.

We want A Day for the Children of War to be internationally recognized!

The National Association of Finnish War Children: Project team: A day for the Children of War

Sinikka Ortmark Stymne, Team leader. Sinikka.stymne@bredband.net.

October 2017

Hi all,

We will be having our annual service at Westminster Abbey on the 22nd Nov. as they cannot accommodate us on the 20th. You will all be in our thoughts and prayers. I am hoping that Britta will be able to attend and lay a wreath on behalf of the Sotalapsi. I will be laying a wreath for ALL children affected by war. This year Baroness Winterbourne will lay a wreath for the Yazedi children caught up in the Genocide.

My work in this field continues. I have just returned from Italy where I have been advising on how to deal with the reception of Migrant children. Week after next Spain, and then Romania. Unfortunately the work never ends.

Very best wishes to you all
Martin Parsons

Gonda

As always many thanks for this latest edition of the Bulletin. The work you continue to do in this field is not only remarkable, but highly respected among your peers and a wider 'audience'. It is also great that these 'bulletins' bring us all together.

As always I am participating in various Remembrance Day events on Sunday. I am laying a wreath for War Children at a large Civic ceremony in High Wycombe in the morning, and then another one at the Memorial in our village in the afternoon. My 4 grandchildren will also be laying crosses on behalf of war children. My youngest grandson (Oliver, 3) will be representing Pre-school children at Westminster Abbey on the 22nd and will lay a wreath on their behalf.

You will notice that I am trying to tie in the next 2 generations. I still think it is shortsighted that many Universities are not encouraging students to take this topic seriously. We have all put a great deal of effort into bringing the needs of past and present war children into the public domain, and it would be a great shame if this was all lost. I am looking very carefully at succession planning, and hoping that one of my daughters will take over the organisation of the Abbey event. This year the Dean of the Abbey has agreed to my suggestion that this will be a multi-faith service so we will have a Rabbi and an Iman taking part. We are all in this together. As always you and your various organisations will be in our thoughts and prayers.

I am still very busy. I recently attended a high-level 3 day conference at Windsor Castle on the plight of the children in Afghanistan, and have recently been appointed a Trustee of a charity working in Iraq with those suffering the long-term effects of war. I was asked to go there, but joked that my days of running around a war-zone in a Kevlar jacket are over because I cannot run as fast as I once could. I will let you know when our new website comes on stream.

Very best wishes to you all.....I will be thinking of you on Sunday and the 22nd.
Martin Parsons
October 2017

ISRAEL W. CHARNY: Psychotherapy for a Democratic Mind: Treatment of Intimacy, Tragedy, Violence and Evil. ed. Lexington Books

A Democratic Mind: Psychology and Psychiatry with Fewer Meds and More Soul
ed. Lexington Books

To Family, Friends, and Colleagues,

I am very, very pleased to share with you the publication of *Psychotherapy for a Democratic Mind: Treatment of Intimacy, Tragedy, Violence and Evil* at the end of this month – January 2018.

This book is the continuation of the recently published book, *A Democratic Mind: Psychology and Psychiatry with Fewer Meds and More Soul*. As you will see, both books have earned unusually strong reviews.

The newest book is much more a Hands On text that applies the concepts of a Democratic Mind (and a Fascist Mind) to actual clinical diagnosis of a wide variety of traditional psychiatric conditions, but then too to an intriguing selection of new unrecognized syndromes in our time. These include adult children who do not leave their parents' homes, outrageous 'Columbine killers,' suicide bombers of our era, "Sudden Death Syndrome," and more.

They have not yet made it into the *DSM* 'bible' which is so focused on classical symptoms of mental illness that it misses new forms of the pathological processes of doing harm to either oneself or others – or both. At the same time there is an extensive treatment also of relationship disorders in marriage and the family, and it is argued that these are cut from the very same cloth as psychiatric disorders – in both cases they are conditions that derive for the most part from the ways in which people hurt life rather than from "illnesses" that arise mysteriously.

Psychotherapy for a Democratic Mind goes on to offer unusual recommendations for how to conduct treatment in situations of major tragedies, emotionally based interpersonal violence (not including ideological violence or drug-induced violence), and how to confront and to some extent treat evil.

To my very great regret, my publisher – like so many others in our time – has made the books quite expensive. I am happy at least to be able to send you now a flyer for either or both books which will give you a 30% reduction if you are interested in purchasing books.

Israel W. Charny
encygeno@gmail.com

SVETLANA ALEXIYEVICH: THE LAST WITNESSES
(from the book 'Unchildlike Stories')

FROM THE AUTHOR

"On the morning of the twenty-second June, 1941, on one of the streets in Brest, lay a dead little girl with small unplaited pigtails and her doll.

Many people remembered this girl. They remembered her forever.

What is dearer to us than our children?

What is dearer to any nation?

To any mother?

To any father?

But who counts how many children are killed by war, which kills them twice? It kills those that had been born. And it kills those that could, that ought to have come into this world. In "Requiem" by the Byelorussian poet Anatoli Vertinsky a children's choir is heard across the field where the dead soldiers lay – the unborn children scream and cry over every common grave.

Is a child going through the horrors of war still a child? Who gives him back his childhood? Once Dostoevsky posed the problem of general happiness in relation to the suffering of a single child. Yet there were thousands like this during the years 1941 to 1945...

What will they remember? What can they retell? They must retell! Because even today in some places bombs are exploding, bullets are whistling, missiles reduce houses to crumbs and dust and children's beds burn. Because even today someone wants widespread war, a universal Hiroshima, in whose atomic fire children would evaporate like drops of water, wither like terrible flowers.

We can ask what is heroic in five-ten-twelve-year olds going through war?

What can children understand, see, remember?

A lot!

What do they remember about their mother? About their father? Only their death: "A button from mother's jacket remained on the pieces of coal. And in the stove there were two small loaves of warm bread" (Anya Tochitskaya – 5 years old)

"As father was being torn to pieces by Alsations he shouted: "Take my son away...Take my son away so he doesn't see it." (Sasha Khvalei — 7 years old).

Moreover they can tell how they died of hunger and fear. How they ran away to the front, how other people adopted them. How, even now, it is difficult to ask them about mummy.

Today they are the last witnesses of those tragic days. After them there is no one else. But they are forty years older than their memory. And when I asked them, to remember it was not easy for them. For them to go back to that state, to those concrete sensations of childhood would seem impossible. But an amazing thing happened. One could suddenly see in a woman with graying hair a small girl imploring a soldier: "Don't hide my mummy in a hole, she will wake up and then we will walk on"(Katya Shepelyevich – 4 years old).

Blessed is our lack of defense against our memory. What would we be without it! A man without a memory is only capable of doing evil, nothing else but evil.

In answer to the question "Who then is the hero of this book?" I would say: childhood which was burnt, shot, and killed by bombs, bullets, hunger, fear and by fatherlessness. For the record: in children's homes in Byelorussia in 1945, twenty-six thousand nine hundred orphans were brought up. And one more figure – about thirteen million children perished during the Second World War.

Who can now say how many of them were Russian children, how many Byelorussian, how many Polish, or French. Children died – citizens of the world.

The children of my Byelorussia were saved by the whole country and brought up by the whole country. In the big children's choir I hear their voices.

Tamara Tomashevich remembers to this day how in the children's home in Khvalynsk on the Volga, not one of the grown-ups raised their voice to the children until the time that their hair had grown after the journey. And Zhenya Korpachev, evacuated from Minsk to Tashkent, has not forgotten the old Uzbek woman who brought a blanket to the station, for him and his mother.

The first Soviet soldier in liberated Minsk picked up four-year-old Galya Zabavchik in his arms and she called him "daddy". Nelly Vershok recalls how our soldiers, walked about their village and children looked at them and shouted: "Our daddies are coming. Our daddies."

Children are very best people on earth. How can we protect them in this troubled twentieth century? How can we preserve their souls and their lives? And both our past and our future with them?"

From a **review** on this book in One-hundred-and-eightysecond-asic:

"I thought my reading *War Does Not Have a Woman's Face*" would have prepared me for every surprising of somewhat appalling detail in *The Last Witnesses: the Book of Unchildlike Stories*" but the fact is, I could not anticipate the way Alexievich had made the interviewed adults share so many exclusive moments from the past, filled with pain, horror and fear. Many of the children had been left behind by their parents who either went to fight the enemy in the front army or in partisan groups and left their children with relatives. Many children were still in orphanages at the end of the war. Many parents never came back and their children still miss them.

"I am already fifty-one, I am a mother myself, but I really do want a mother!" says one of the surviving children when interviewed by Alexievich.

What makes the book extraordinary is the way the author let short excerpts of longer interviews carry a few main topics that together form a war narrative we have never ever read before. The main topics of course: "What happened in Belarus during the war?" however from a child's point of view we rather see topics such as "What happened to me when I lost my parents in the war?" of "How could I survive although I didn't have anything to eat except potato peels and grass?" and "How could I survive and become an ordinary citizen after what I endured during the war?" What is even more interesting is that the reader is moved to read between the lines and make sense of the narratives.

The Last Witnesses: the Book of Unchildlike Stories is close to the limit of what is bearable to read. One of the reasons why it gets under your skin might be that Alexievich has told the interviewed narrators to try and remember the way they thought when they were children. Obviously Alexievich succeeded since the narratives all seem to be told by children and not by adults remembering their childhood! From each narrator, Alexievich has found a central quote and the story is in a way interrupted by those quotes, changes topic quite often, but since the quotes are followed by the names of the narrator and their occupation as adults, the structure of the novel makes sense and the reader has a chance to a short glimpse of the adult reflection, too, since many of them end their narrative with a short comment about "now".

When reading the book, I think a lot of the many cups of tea that Alexievich must have had in the homes of the war veterans...and I also marvel about the way she has found something special in each narrative to tell us, however never repeating herself. Actually each narrator tells a completely unique story. They all share memories from the war from the point of view of a child, however the focus differ and thus a kind of quilt of stories takes form in my imagination. I read about personal loss, of fear, hunger, famine, children joining the army. I read about children who cannot go to school because they have to work in a factory or about children who don't recognise their parents when they (if lucky enough!) meet them again after the war. But underneath the sad and depressing surface I also read about patriotism and pride, about never giving up and never revealing secrets to the enemy. The post war Belarus was completely destroyed and needed to be built up again and some of the narratives shared experiences from the postwar building up period when every survivor was needed, even the children.

But why would this book be necessary to read? The children suffered in so many different ways, but without the adult mind it was impossible for them to fully comprehend why there had to be a war. They needed to grow up in order to do so. We owe it to them to pass it on to the next generation what a great loss they experienced when losing their parents, their childhood, their health and their innocence. Again, like when I wrote my previous book review: This is a book that has to be read and spread!.

PETRA G.H. AARTS OMZIEN IN TEGENLICHT (Looking Back Against the Light)

ed. boekscout.nl

In this family story the father plays a particular role. His character, his ideas, his laziness and carelessness have an enormous impact on all the members of the family. As soon as he is married with Mam and with her money has bought a mill, one can feel in one's bones that there lies a path of misery in front of this family. For weeks and sometimes months, father is not at home, dismissed from one of the many, many jobs he try to earn his living with, but always rebellious and therefore dumped by his bosses. When he is absent, Mam has no money to buy food and clothes for her children and it is the Jewish family doctor who takes care of them. There is no place for feelings and gestures of care, of love, of solidarity, although, in some way, the members of the family depend on each other in their hopeless fate. That creates a kind of a bond between them.

When the Dutch Nazi party is founded, father sees an occasion to become an important man, adored and obeyed by others. He very soon is a convinced Nazi man. Convinced or just opportunist? All his children are pulled in his footsteps, they become member of the Nazi Youth Movement, are forced to sign up for service in the German army and during the war, all of them, sooner or later, travel to Germany. His eldest daughter Len, is the most convinced of the children, she even marries a Dutch SS man stationed in Berlin. But is she really a genuine adept or was her decision to become a Party member just an effort to come closer to her father? The only child that manages to resist her father's influence is Anna. She opens again and again the discussions when sitting round the table and eating their meals, always in opposition of her father. She rejects his convictions and him as a person, or is it the other way around? When she stays in Germany as an assistant nurse, she is able to see what is really going on, she witnesses the labor hands in Dachau, their slavery, the violence used to the Jews, the lies of the Third Reich. She is the only one in her family not blinded by the propaganda and still able to have feelings of compassion, hope and sorrow.

After the war all members are sentenced because of their support of the enemy, two brothers have died at the East front. Each of them has his or her own experiences and memories, but the war is never an issue once the family is reunited. It is again Anna who tries to ask her mother why she became a Nazi, but she is ordered to shut up.

In the next part of the book we follow Len in her own family, with her husband and children. She cannot kiss and hug her children and in the rare moments that one of them tries to touch her and give her a sign of love, Len draws back. They live in the same house, but they are like ships on the ocean, each of them following their own course. The relationship between Len and her respective husbands is cold and estranged. Her eldest son Harm, born in Berlin, is the apple of her eyes, and develops into a person loving to command other people, his brothers and sisters first of all. Although he becomes a medical specialist, his character remains that of a spoiled adolescent. Len does never interfere in her children's quarrels and discussions, and if she comes into action, she supports Harm.

In the third part of the book we meet Len as an old woman, suffering more and more of the damage in her brains due to Alzheimer. Her youngest daughter, Helen, tries to find the best solution for her mother and her friend Mark and tries to prevent them from being placed in an ordinary old people home. Finally she finds a home where there is more personal care than in other homes, but the rest of the family members and the two sons of Mark are against all her suggestions, denying to see how the actual situation of their mother and father is. Now in her new position of a woman loosing contact with the real world, Len is able to leave her defensive attitude and to accept the hugs and kisses and the loving care of Helen. Even when preparing Len's cremation, the children cannot accept each others suggestions, so that one of Mark's sons proposes to have two cremations...

The story evokes a lot of questions: could there be no one able to bend the course of their path and lead them to a better road? What would have happened if the father of the first part of the story had been able to hold his job and to take care of his family?

All children of war will recognize in this book the themes of loneliness, the fragmentation, the inability to feel and express emotions. They experienced them themselves. And then there are the items of guilt and impact, the complexity of decisions and choices. In fact only Helen is able to leave behind her the doom of the past and can build a life for herself in which there is place for emotions and care, for friendship and love.

GSB

ESTA TZAIG (nee Gobes)

In conversation with Irene Glausiusz

I met Esta Tzaig at the first gathering of the Holocaust Survivors' Club meeting in Shaare Tivah, a small town located near the Israeli city of Petach Tikvah. Whilst getting to know all the members, Esta and I came face to face and we shared some details about our backgrounds – Esta from Holland and me from England, each of us war children.

Subsequently we arranged to have a conversation about Esta's childhood, concentrating on the war years between 1939 – 1945.

Esta's father, Andries Gobes, was born in 1909 and her mother Sara (nee Celien) born in 1910. Esta was an only child, her birthday 17th June 1939. Her father worked in the textile industry with Germans so he was well aware of what was going to happen - and the necessity of preparing a place to hide.

Holland was swiftly overrun by the Germans – invaded on 10th May 1940. For the time being life went on as best it could, but young men were conscripted to work for Germany. As the situation grew worse, in April 1942 until 10th June 1943, Esta was sent to live with her grandparents. Friends came every day to see how they were until one day, someone came and took her away – ultimately to safe houses. Meantime, Esta's cousin, an older boy named Joop, was placed in a hospital where his father worked. He had to pretend to be ill, whenever there was an inspection.

Esta continued: "From September 1943, I moved from one family to another, (I was told 17 families!). I remember staying with a book store owner in a place called Zamdam [I guess: Zaandam, GSB] and later he was shot for hiding me. Then I went to a farmer with six children and was concealed in a trench and told '*Be quiet and don't cry*'. A few hours later, I heard the Germans coming, but they didn't find me. Then I traveled to another region in the North of Holland, Sneek, to live with a family named Wierdsma. They had twelve children, 6 boys and 6 girls. The father was a sailor who worked along the canals transporting various goods, until the Germans took his boat."

"*What happened next?*" and Esta replied: "By this stage, I decided that my name was Betty (I had an aunt with that name, who I liked) and I forgot my real parents.

Esta continued: "The family asked me how old I was, but I couldn't remember, so they lined up their children and matched me to the child nearest to my size. I had blue eyes and black hair, the same as one of their daughters, so I didn't look different. One of the older boys in the family was instructed that if the Germans came, I was to be thrown over the wall to hide. The Wierdsmas didn't know if my parents would survive and come to claim me but if not, my 'family' decided they were sure I was intelligent and would give me a good education, even if they couldn't do that for their own children. The family were strong Christians who went to church twice on Sundays, me as well, and I also went to Sunday School.

Whilst staying with them, Esta suffered from a skin irritation and had to have bandages changed every day. She was taken to a doctor to be examined and from there went to hospital. The doctor and one or two nurses knew she was a Jewish child. Then one of the nurses started asking questions and those who knew Esta's background, realized she was in danger – the husband of

one particular nurse was in the SS. Esta was put into a baby carriage, covered with a blanket and wheeled away.

And so the war came to an end. On 5th June 1945 [in fact in April 1945, the capitulation document was signed by the Germans, 5th May 1945 GSB], the Canadian tanks rolled into Holland – the country finally liberated, and at this stage she suddenly remembered her real name was Esta, *she was not called Betty!*

Everyone knows the story of Anne Frank family, but few people know the details of how others survived.

“At the time that I was hidden, my parents survived in a room measuring one metre x one-and-a-half metres located in West Amsterdam – given sanctuary with loyal friends. My parents' lives were in great danger, they could not move about, or turn on a tap, in case they were heard and their hiding place revealed.”

Next question: “How did your parents find you?”

When the war ended, Esta's parents went to the Red Cross trying to trace their family members. They discovered that from a total of 157 relatives, only five survived - Esta's parents, Esta and two cousins. Her parents tried everywhere to find Esta. On 10th June 1945 the first freedom newspapers in Amsterdam went on sale and her parents put advertisements in them. Happily some acquaintances saw the advert and knew about a Jewish child, discovering Esta's address. Without delay her father went by boat to North Holland to reclaim his daughter. By a strange chance, Esta happened to see a stranger on a boat and was scared. That man was her real father. Then Esta and her parents were re-united but she hardly remembered them. Fortunately, the Red Cross also knew the address of her cousin Joop and he came to live with them.

By now Esta's father was working for an organization helping to find Jewish children placed with Christian families.

Esta added: “During 1942, another cousin - a baby boy was born named Ger (a brother for Joop) who was fostered by a young childless couple; post war they wanted to formally adopt him. The parents of Joop and Ger didn't survive and Esta's parents wanted the brothers to be united with them. However, because of the love of the foster parents, the court decided that they could keep Ger. That was the ruling.”

So the life went on, Esta's one-time foster mother Mrs Wierdsma visited the Gobes family occasionally, and Esta resumed her education, later pursuing a career working with children in the town of Apeldoorn.

In the course of time. Esta made up her mind to leave Holland and to immigrate to Israel. She found romance, leading to marriage with her husband to be, Ezra Tzaig, an immigrant from Iraq. Children were born to them and they now are enjoying teenage grandchildren.

Esta recently returned to Holland for a ceremony, to lay a remembrance stone – a Stolperstein, a Stumbling Stone – outside the house where her maternal grandparents once lived.

Footnote: These stumbling stones (Stolperstein) are slightly raised above the pavement, measuring 10 x 10 centimetres, placed in front of or near the last known house/place of work of the person to be memorialised. They consist of a concrete cube bearing a brass plate inscribed with the name and life dates of victims of transportation to death camps.

To date, it is estimated that 50,000 Stolpersteine, each costing 120 euros, have been laid, appearing in many European countries, including Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Belgium [and the Netherlands GSB].

The Holocaust and Afterward in Hungary

Barbara Heimannsberg wrote, "Probably a *knowledge* of history in and of itself makes up a comparatively small part of one's sense of identity. More relevant is one's *relationship* to history."

Planning is now underway for a dialogue project related to Hungary. It is to be composed of daughters and sons (and/or grandsons and granddaughters):

- of Holocaust victims/survivors/escapees/émigrés/resisters (Jewish, Roma, Sinti, euthanasia, political, etc.); and,
- of Holocaust perpetrators/collaborators (Hungarian, German, Austrian, etc.);

related to to the Holocaust period in Hungary.

This will be an intensive, interpersonal dialogue. This will not – not – be a scientific research project. The duration will be several days. The location will be Hungary. The likely time frame is 2018–2019. Languages will probably be mixed/varied (e.g., Hungarian, English, German, etc.), with translation as necessary.

There will be:

- no fee;
- no religiosity (although religion may be a theme);
- no historiography (although personal historical events and narratives may be a theme);
- no presumption of psychopathology;
- no attempt to provide clinical psychotherapy (although some may perceive a benefit);
- no political orientation or bias.

There will be:

- basic, common agreement on just a few historical fundamentals (the Holocaust occurred, millions were murdered, a component occurred in Hungary, etc.);
- a private, secure, small group of earnest individuals whose family legacies stemmed from varied sides/aspects/elements of genocide; and,
- participants who can both listen and speak.

The organizers are:

- Júlia Vajda: born (1960) and raised in Budapest; master degrees in mathematics, sociology and psychology; Ph.D. in sociology; Senior Researcher and formerly Professor of Sociology, Eötvös Lorán University (Budapest); participant in many projects related to identity, the Shoah, empirical methods in sociology; author of ~ 100 articles (and more); and,
- Samson Munn: born (1952) and raised in the U.S.; M.D.; Professor (radiology), University of California (Los Angeles), and Adjunct Associate Professor, Tufts University (Boston), Schools of Medicine; Fulbright *Specialist* in Peace and Reconciliation Studies; founder and long-time facilitator of *The Austrian Encounter*; participant, *To Reflect and Trust* (founded by Dan Bar-On).

If interested, please contact:

- Júlia Vajda: h13073vaj@ella.hu
- Samson Munn: 02467@earthlink.net

JOSIE'S JOURNEY TRAINS AND TRAVELS

Whenever I hear the word 'train' it evokes a wide range of memories in my mind. Some of these memories are sad, some are happy, some humorous, some adventures and some are just plain scary.

I grew up with the sights and sounds of trains all around me; and they have always fascinated me. The city where I was born is a border town and a railway center. Three countries, Holland, Belgium and Germany, come together near Aachen, a city that was already used by the Romans as a spa because of its natural hot springs. The exact spot where these three countries meet is called "The Three Land Point". Trains come and stop at Bad Aachen from Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and many other cities in Europe. The famous 'Orient Express' starts in London on its way to Istanbul (formerly Constantinople), making its first stop in Germany in Aachen, after crossing the border between Holland and Germany.

Even as a child the lonely, eerie sound of a train whistle gave me a feeling of longing, a longing to go to far-away places. Where, I wondered as a child, did these trains come from, and where were they going? The foreign writing on some of the trains was more food to my imagination. Little did I know at the time that all this dreaming and wondering about traveling to foreign places would turn into reality sooner than I expected and take me to so many foreign and far-away places.

My first memorable trip by train was sad. It was 1943. the trip itself was uneventful and I don't remember too much about it, except that my father and two older sisters had to stay behind. They were not allowed to leave their jobs. Nobody was allowed to leave a job because it was war time and labor was scarce. We, my mother, two younger brothers, a younger sister and I were to be evacuated because our city, being a major rail-way center, was bombed almost from the beginning of World War II. The train took us clear across Germany, close to the eastern border. My family and I ended up in a small town in Silesia.

Life was quiet again, after living with air-raids for close to four years, getting and out of bed and into bomb shelters almost every night. At first during the air-raids we went down to our own basement, listening to the whistling sounds of the bombs as they came down, hoping and praying to hear the ensuing sound of the explosion and knowing that this time at least we would be spared. Later on the government built bunkers for the people. These bunkers were made out of steel and concrete and they were several stories high. They could withstand any bomb that was produced at that time. I was in a bunker when it was hit by bombs. The bombs would shake the bunker and the people in it quite vigorously; you might fall out of your bed or off you chair, but otherwise you were safe. To this day these bunkers are still standing as a sad reminder of a terrible war. Here, however, in this little town with its romantic name (Rosenthal) we needed no bomb shelter. It was almost too quiet for us, and it took some time for us to be able to sleep through the night without waking up in fear of air-raids. The only excitement in this sleepy farm community was an occasional trip by train to a nearby city.

Many people of this friendly town had taken each ones family into their home. Families as we were, who had fled from the constant bombings in the west of Germany. The kindness of these people, to whom we were strangers, was heart-warming. When we left home, we were not sure what fate would await us, because the government had arranged as to where we would stay. I soon felt at home on the farm where my family and I came to live. I didn't take long for me to make new friends. The one room country school, to which my brothers and I went, was a great change from our school in the city. After a little while it seemed as if I had lived in this small town all my life.

However, this quiet, tranquil life did not last very long. It was January 1945. The Russian army had broken through the eastern border of Germany, and the front was closing in on us fast. Once again we were forced to leave a place; a place where we were beginning to feel at home. We all had made many new friends and it was sad to say goodbye. In the meantime my father and one of my sisters as well as some other members of our family had caught up with us. In fact, most of the family from both sides were now in different parts of Silesia. We, here in Rosenthal, packed our belongings, which had to shrink down to what each member of the family could carry, and went to the railway station.

At the station we found chaos, people and soldiers were waiting for trains. The people to go west and the soldiers to go east. There were no schedules. When a train came, as many people as possible would get on, and the others had to wait for the next train. Nobody was sure whether there would ever be a next train, because we could already hear the sounds of the big guns in the distance. The signs of war close at hand were everywhere, soldiers digging trenches; army trucks, tanks and guns moving in the area. A road block had been set up by the military to make sure that no civilians would go back towards the war zone. Most people wanted to get out of there in a hurry.

My family and I finally boarded a train. To me, a young girl, this trip felt like an adventure at first. I knew we could not go home at this time. Where would we end up? This train trip did not take us very far. We stopped in Górlitz, which is a city in Silesia. There were refugees everywhere, and it was obvious that we could not stay in Górlitz for long. We stayed only long enough to meet with my grandmother, my oldest sister, and my mother's sister and her family. They all fled to Górlitz the previous fall, when the Allied Forces marched into Germany in the west. But these family members to were getting ready to flee once again.

After a short visit with my family in Górlitz, we went back to the railway station. Things were really chaotic now. More and more refugees arrived in the station from every corner of East Germany. The biggest worry I had then was to be separated from my family. There were so many people at the station that one had no hope of finding anybody again, once you lost them. Many children were lost and separated from their families at that time. Some, especially the little ones, were never again united with their family; because they did not know their family names or what town they had come from. Many of the people who were fleeing then were never again to see their home town.

The part of Silesia where we stayed, belongs to Poland now. Every time a train came into the station, the people shoved and pushed to get on the train. Everybody were afraid of being left behind. There were too many rumors of rape and abduction, connected with the Russian army. People were ready to leave at any cost. Somehow, we managed to get onto a train which took us to Dresden in Saxony.

I have never seen so many people and their belongings in one place as I did in Dresden. Refugees had come there by any means of transportation one could think of. In fact, the place was so crowded, we had no hope of finding a place to stay, not even a floor to sleep. Every inch of the railway station, as well as the streets outside were covered with people and their belongings. Leaning against their bundles, laying on benches or on the floor, some people were sleeping from sheer exhaustion. Children were crying. Men and women trying to find somebody in charge who could tell them what to do, where to go. It was bedlam. My father decided that we should leave Dresden.

We somehow found our way out of Dresden and ended up about twenty miles away from there, which was lucky for us. That night Dresden was bombed. To this day nobody knows for sure how many people died in that one night, because there were countless refugees, and not only German people. Many of them staying, were also there during that air-raid. I stayed up most of that night watching the ominous fireworks and listening to the booming sounds of bombs exploding a safe distance away. But I kept thinking about all those poor people who were right in the middle of this blazing inferno. I had lost my earlier taste for adventure. Everything seemed so hopeless and sad. I had to say goodbye to friends and relatives not knowing whether I would ever see them again.

There was no safe place anywhere for any of us. Where could we go?

We could not go west, there was a war going on; we certainly could not go back east. My parents decided to go south. As far as we knew there was no fighting going on in the south of Germany. Once again, we boarded an overcrowded train, making sure everybody got on, especially my two younger brothers and my little sister. Trains never went very far in those troubled times. The government always needed the trains for more important transportation, than to bring the people to safety. We would simply be told to get off and wait for another train.

Our next stop was Zwickau, a small city near the Czech border. Here, my father decided, we could stay for a little while and take stock of our situation. We all needed a rest desperately. In fact I became very ill with some kind of nervous disorder, probably from sheer exhaustion. My parents had given up on the authorities, telling us what to do, or where to go. My father wanted us to go to Bavaria to wait for the end of the war. For all we knew Bavaria was the most peaceful place in Germany at that time. But we were not sure of anything anymore. We heard little official news, and official news we did hear, we soon learned to mistrust. It sounded more like propaganda all the time. By this time, unofficially, we all knew that the war was almost over. The authorities still tried to tell the people that there would be victory for Germany, but nobody was fooled any longer. We could see chaos all around. The signs of a defeated people were everywhere. The war was obviously lost for Germany. By now we could see Hitler for what he was, a raving maniac. People were not sure anymore if a victory for Germany was what they wanted. What they were sure of was the wish to have this terrible war end, so that they might go home. The people were tired and confused, tired of running, tired of not knowing what to do, where to go. Many were ill, everybody was exhausted.

One day in Zwickau, my father came back from one of his daily excursions, to the place we called home for the time being, to tell us that there was some official organizing people to take a train straight to Bavaria. This turned out to be the most frightening train trip I was ever on. The trip lasted five long days and nights and we only covered a distance of about three hundred kilometers. The train headed straight south in to Czechoslovakia. This was the last place German people wanted to go. But our official, who accompanied this trip as our leader, assured us that we were taking a shortcut to Bavaria. We had no choice but to believe him. We had to leave East Germany.

Almost from the start of this trip, the train was attacked by low flying aircraft, shooting at us with machine-guns. Every time the planes came down on us, the train would stop and everybody ran out to take cover as best as they could. Usually there was not too much cover and we ended up in a field or on the banks of the railway tracks. I would lie face down, flat on the ground, covering my head with my arms and hands. Whenever we were attacked, I, like everybody else, was scared to death. I hoped and prayed that we would all get out of this alive. Bullets were flying right and left, mostly hitting the ground, covering everybody with dirt and debris. Somehow, my family and I were not hurt in these encounters.

When our train was not stopped by the attacking planes, it would be stopped by the officials and put on a sidetrack to let more important trains go first. These were trains loaded with the last reserves Hitler could muster. These reserves were mostly old men and teenage boys. Most of these boys were not much older that I was at that time. I was 13 years old.

Once our train was put on a sidetrack for several hours in Prague. We did not object to this stop; it gave us a chance to walk and see the beautiful city. One day, I would like to go and see Prague again under more peaceful conditions.

After five long nights and days our train stopped in a small city (Pisek) in Czechoslovakia. We hardly slept during those five nights and days. No such luxury as sleeping cars. Our food was supplied from army soup kitchens along the way; or we would buy something if we had a chance, along the way. We were tired and hungry for a decent meal. All that time we had no warm water to wash, not to mention a hot bath.

When the train stopped in Pisek, we thought this would be just another stop-over. All too soon we

found out that the train would go no farther. The official, who had travelled with us, told us: "This is the end of the line. Everybody has to get off the train". After telling us this unwelcome news, he quickly disappeared. This was just as well for him, because the people on the train were in an angry mood. No telling what they might have done to him. They felt betrayed. The train was supposed to take us to Bavaria, and here we were in a country where we did not speak the language. Somehow I had the feeling that everybody knew they were not welcome as Germans here in Czechoslovakia. Nobody had any desire to be there at the end of the war. A war we surely knew was lost.

However, there was nothing we could do but obey. Some other German official took over and herded us to an already over-crowded building. I believe it was a school. The condition there was terrible. There were no beds to sleep on. There were no proper facilities where one could wash in privacy. The food was cooked in giant proportions, and tasted accordingly. We were all crowded together in large rooms. There was no place to be alone, in short there was no privacy for anybody. Some children were always crying. Old people were lamenting, they could not understand what was happening to them. Most of the old people who were there, had lived all their lives in some small village in Germany and probably never left it before. Now, suddenly they were in a foreign country, herded together with an untold number of strangers. These old people were afraid to go outside because nobody could understand them out there. My family and I stayed in that inhospitable place for about a week, when my father once again took the initiative and ventured out on his own.

I do not know how, but he found this empty, deserted villa; and he persuaded the authorities to give us permission to move into this house. It was a two-story building with white exterior, whoever build the house had built it very solidly. The big garden, which surrounded the house, was in a state of neglect. At one time this might have been a summer retreat, or even a permanent home for some people. But now, completely devoid of any furniture and decoration of any kind, this house gave me an absolute eerie feeling. Secret passages only heightened this feeling. There was no light in the house, therefore we went to sleep when night came. By this time we were used to sleeping on the floor. At night, the house and the forest behind it came alive with all sorts of strange noises, including gunshots. The rumor that there were partisans in the forest did not help to dispel the feeling of fear and mystery this house gave me. We stayed in this house until the war ended.

As soon as the war ended. Czechoslovakian people, armed with rifles and angry at the German people, came to arrest us. We were first taken to a small country school. Our belongings were searched, then we had to stand with our faces to the wall while these men held their guns in our backs. They searched us for weapons. Of course we had no weapons. I thought: "This is it, we won't get out of this place alive." There was a lot of screaming and shouting and crying. We were asked a lot of questions. I was so scared, I could not stop shaking. But nobody came to any bodily harm. After what seemed like an eternity, these men led us outside. Once outside, they put our belongings in some kind of wagon, then we were led for a long distance through the streets of Pisek, a great big fenced in place, which might have been an army training ground. As we were walking through the streets of Pisek, people looked on and I felt like a criminal, except I didn't know what crime I was guilty of. Here, at this fenced in place, they gathered all the Germans who had been in the surrounding area; it seemed to me there were thousands of people. There was only one building in the whole place and it was used for administration of the intern camp. We had to camp outside.

So far Josie's story that continues with the long trip back home, through the Russian and American zone, and all the difficulties to cope with during that journey. I will end with some lines she wrote and which impressed me a lot:

In retrospect it is easy for me to understand the hostility the Czech people showed towards us. They had suffered much at the hands of the Germans. Sad to say, it has always been this way. You do something to us and we will get back at you. Because of the experience during my stay in Czechoslovakia, and my encounter with the Russian soldiers, I have learned that there must be an end to war and hate. There will always be somebody with grievances. But we have to learn to sit

down and discuss our differences in a peaceful manner, especially today, when we have such terrible weapons. Besides all this, I have come to the conclusion that hate is a self-destructive emotion. For my own sake I had to come to terms with the hate and the hurt I felt after I came back home. At the time, when I was just a young girl of 14 years old, it was hard for me to understand why people would treat me and others poorly when we, personally, had done nothing to them. I have since come to the conclusion that war and its violence makes ordinary people do things they would not normally do. The capability to do good or evil is in all of humans. We can never, with a clear conscience, say: "I would not do such a thing" until we have been placed in a similar circumstance.[..]

I realised then that we have a choice in life. We can go on hating and become a bitter person or we change the other way and become a tolerant and caring person. I chose the better way and it helped me throughout my life.

By Josie Brandt

typed by Ann Hucke March 17, 2016 from Josie's manuscript

KATJA HAPPE: VIELE FALSCHHE HOFFNUNGEN (Many False Hopes)

ed. Schoeningh Ferdinand GmbH

review by Barbara Distel in Süddeutsche Zeitung 19-02-2018

(summarised translation by GSB)

The author depicts the fate of the Dutch Jews between 1940 and 1945 and tries to find out why those people has been given so few help. She discusses not only the attitude of the Dutch people, but also that of the Occupiers, the Germans.

So many years after the war, there are not many people alive who experienced the Occupation themselves. But in the majority of the Dutch families there are stories which show how painful and stressful the war period has been.

Katja Happe is the first German contemporary historian who studied this specific topic. She had a lot of documents and information she could make use of for her study.

In 9 chapters the author pictures the fate of the Jews, those who were Dutch citizens and thousands of Jews fled to the Netherlands, between 1933 and 1940, to find a shelter against the Nazi regime in Germany and Austria.

The central question in her study is why such a high percentage of the Dutch Jews – 75 % - became victims of the Nazis, more than 10,000 Jews, whereas in France, collaborating with the Nazis, 'only' 24%, 76,000 Jews on a total of 320,000 have been killed by the Germans.

From 1933 on German and Austrian Jews did not meet many problems when seeking refuge in The Netherlands. Well known is the family Frank and especially Anne whose diary is known all over the world. They belonged to the lucky German-Jewish families to settle in The Netherlands before the war started. In May 1938 new Jewish refugees were housed in a camp in the north-east of the Netherlands, planned by the Dutch government and funded by the money of the Dutch Jews who were more or less forced to do so. This camp, Westerbork, became an internment camp during the Occupation, from which Jews were transported by trains to concentration camps in Germany and Poland.

When, in May 1940, the Germans attacked the country, they were in fact captives, lacking a way to escape. From the total of 50,000 Jewish refugees finding a place in The Netherlands before the war, about 25,000 went to other countries seeking more safety than The Netherlands could give them. After the German attack, the royal family and government had fled to London, the Germans found collaborators in the Netherlands to have their measures implemented. They set up a civil government led by the Austrian Seyss-Inquart. The Nazis aimed to behave in such a way that the Dutch population voluntary would choose to follow the Nazi ideology. They held in mind to use The Netherlands for an attack on the United Kingdom and to use the Dutch resources for their war waging.

The special measures to isolate the Jewish citizens and refugees started in the autumn of 1940.

Many Jews tried to escape through Belgium to France or to England, but the right moment to succeed had already gone. For the majority of the Dutch population the beginning of the Occupation did not have much influence on their lives. But after the arrest of 400 Jews in February 1941 a more or less spontaneous general strike in Amsterdam and some other cities gave the Germans the signal that the self-nazification of the Dutch people they had aimed at would not take place. And from that moment on, the German measures against the Dutch citizens became more oppressive.

The 'Jüdische Rat', ordered by the Germans to assume responsibility for the Jewish citizens and refugees, tried to fulfill this task with the less harm to the Jews, and they thought it the best way to obey the German orders very strictly. The Germans turned these leaders into accomplices, who could only save some special important men and women from deportation, whereas the majority of the Jews could not be given any protection. Even the international Jewish organisations were not much interested in the fate of the Dutch Jews. The Dutch government in exile, as much as the Allies, knew as early as autumn 1942 about what was done to the Jews 'sent to the East', but the Dutch queen, in exile in London, never has mentioned the special dramatic fate of the Jew in her broadcast speeches. The war waging topics had priority and intervention on behalf of the Jews could be hamper those strategical aims.

In the summer of 1942 the deportation of the Jews had started, under the title of relocation and labor help. The Dutch police was ready to help the Germans with arresting the Jews and set them on transport to Westerbork. The different church modalities protested against the deportation of baptised Jews, but did not plea the deportations to be stopped.

When the resistance movement became more and better organised during 1943, most of the Dutch Jews had already been transported to Germany or Poland and most of them had already died. The last big razzia took place in September 1943 and Himmler could declare, begin 1944, that the 'Endlösung of the Dutch Jews' had been successful. 6,000 children survived in hiding, an unknown number of adults as well. Those who after the German capitulation came back to the Netherlands were few in number and were not at all welcomed by the Dutch population.

Katja Happe draws regularly the attention to the fact that without the German Occupation this drama of the Dutch Jews would never had taken place. Criticism can be given to several authorities, political or religious, to the Dutch police, to Dutch collaborators or to the general indifference of the people, trying for themselves to cope with their own problems. But the murder of the Jews was a German project for whose execution they very intelligently turned many good willing people into accomplices.

A translation in Dutch of Katja's book has been presented on April 18, 2018, titled 'Veel valse hoop', uitg. Atlas Contact.

Next International Bulletin: October/November 2018
Deadline reactions and articles: October 1, 2018

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://www.nsbarn.no>

Riskforbundet Finska Krigsbarn: (in swedish)

www.finskakrigsbarn.se

Tapani Ross on Finnish War Children (blog)

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www.sotalapset.fi

Organisation of children of victims and children of the perpetrators:

www.one-by-one.org

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Dachau Institut Psychologie und Pädagogik:

www.Dachau-institut.de

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www.evacuees.org.uk

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www.warandchildren.org

Researchproject University München 'Kriegskindheit'

www.warchildhood.net

Coeurs Sans Frontières – Herzen Ohne Grenzen

www.coeurssansfrontières.biz

Organisation d'enfants de guerre

www.nésdelalibération.fr

Organisation of Us-descendants in Belgium

www.usad-ww2.be

Childsurvivors of the Holocaust in Australië

www.paulvalent.com

International organisation for educational and professional development focused on themes like racism, prejudices and antisemitism

www.facinghistory.org

Aktion Sühnezeigen Friedensdienste

www.asf-ev.de

Organisation of German Lebensbornkinder

www.lebensspuren-deutschland.eu

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

www.childrenbornofwar.org

Organisation Genocide Prevention Now

www.genocidepreventionnow.org

Basque Children of '37 Association UK

www.basquechildren.org

International Study of the Organized Persecution of Children

www.holocaustchildren.org

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www.p-cca.org

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www.oorlogsliefdekind.nl/en

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www.russenkinder.de

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Philippine Nikkei-Jin Legal Support Center

www.pnlsc.com

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www.afroaustria.at

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www.gitrace.org

Children in War Memorial

blog: <http://childreninwarmemorial.wordpress.com>