

# INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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## INTRODUCTION

Mai Madisson sent me a moving text about the influence of war experiences in the lives of war children and the impotence of so many therapists to give the adequate support to these children wrestling with the traumas of the past.

Azziza Malanda did research on the fate of children born out of a relationships between a German woman and an Afro-American or Moroccan father. She sent me a report on the outcomes of this study.

Helga Lees has studied the fate of the German children who had to flee the Sudetenregion at the end of the war. She has concentrated on one special city, Gablonz.

The organization of Russenkinder send me regularly information about their activities. I feel it is worthwhile to present to you a text of Alexander Latotzky which I published in the 16<sup>th</sup> issue of the International Bulletin. It shows the number of obstacles children of war meet in their search for their unknown fathers.

Ute Bauer-Timmerbrink wrote a book about the fate of war children born out of a relationship between a German or Austrian mother and a soldier of the Allied Armies.

Johannes Dieter Steinert wrote a book about Polish and Russian children who were forced to labour in the by Germans occupied regions.

Sakino Mathilde Sternberg announces the publishing of the German translation of the book 'Learning each other's historical narrative' written by the Israelian professor Dan Bar-On and the Palestinian professor Sami Adwin.

Hans Keilson who died last year at age 101 wrote some impressing novels. I like to quote some passages of his book 'Comedy in a minor key'.

Frits Philips has saved the lives of some hundred Jews, by accepting orders of the German occupiers of the Netherlands and through sabotaging the production.

Henny Granum participated in a seminar in Pracht and in meetings of the BOWin and the Historikertreffen in Berlin. She sent me a detailed report about the two events.

On the occasion of the Day for the Children of War, November 20, commemoration ceremonies have been held in London and Stockholm. Sinikka Ortmark Stymne and Martin Parsons sent me some pictures and a short report.

A couple of new readers joined our circle, welcome! Some readers did not inform me of the change in their (email)addresses, so I lost contact with them. Therefore, please inform me of any change in your address! Commentaries and suggestions for articles for the next issue of this bulletin, April 2016, are welcome. Deadline: March 1, 2016.

Best regards,  
Gonda Scheffel-Baars

## **BIRD OF CONFIDENCE**

Who gave to that annoying line  
through the landscape of my life,  
hampering my view,  
that red colour?

the blue space  
inviting me to roam to endless horizons,  
whose ferocious hand  
carved in it a stroke?

the thin blue mountains  
of my far past,  
I shun them  
because of that scar

in the centre of my landscape  
I see myself, a grudging child,  
angry because of that awful stroke  
that cannot be wiped out

but, flying accross that line,  
with a heart full of confidence,  
a small vulnerable bird  
kept me upright

Ida Kalmijn

## **LIVING WITH A SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD: A REFLECTION**

This piece is a reflection, not the outcome of a research book: Folk with skeletons in their cupboards uncommonly arrive at a place in life where the camaraderie required to work as part of a research team becomes their reality.

The term 'skeleton in the cupboard/closet' has varying connotations; none of them positive.

Basically the term alludes to a person/s having someone in their family who is not 'kosher' to the environment that they live in and at times even just knowing such a person.

Possibly there is no one who cannot claim to have some degree of such association: We all have a black sheep in our cupboards: Their relevance to our lives determined by many variables.

- Is it a tiny frail boned one or a robust one.
- How black is black: All artists know that there are shades of black, some warmer than others. Lamp black is very different to one with a tinge of yellow or red, and yet different again to one with a tinge of blue or grey.
- What else is painted on that canvas: One depicting the scourges of mankind perhaps would render that black sheep less perceptible than one depicting more hallowed themes. And of course ultimately it is in the eyes of the observer: Why did that person approach that canvas.
- How close to the person's reality is that canvas situated. Out of sight, out of mind tends to be the way of life, be it among the rat race or among those who have endless time to ponder their navel.
- In what type of gallery is it situated: What is the aim of the gallery/museum. Some aim to please the hoards, others to draw attention to man's iniquities and yet others ask questions. In my recent trip to Oslo I visited the Munch Museum. It had a wonderful display looking at the lives of two men whom life had battered. Their paintings did little to attract warmth among their peers but those of us who now marvel at them, can only but feel their deep inner pain: Pain which for many, many years remained inexplicable. It has become explicable only of late as their writings have been unearthed. Two brilliant men, not understood by their peers had fallen into the dungeons of despair. They were also brilliant writers: Their writings concealed perhaps to avoid further pain-revealed after their death and of cold comfort to them.
- What impact does that sheep have on those around their relative/friend.
- What impact does it have on the survival resources of those relatives/friends.
- How influential is the gatekeeper to where that cupboard/closet owner wishes to/is cast to live out their life.

But perhaps the one variable it does not depend on is the intrinsic identity of the owner of that cupboard/closet. Be they good, that will be interred with their bones: Be they as a legacy of that connection not so good, their unfortunate programming likewise will be interred with their bones, only the remaining skeleton to survive in the next generation's cupboard.

Such is life in our fickle world.

In many ways, our lives are like climbing up a ladder, each rung consisting of a decade, except for perhaps the first two which consist of half decades: Not far to fall down, but very hard given the limited life skills to climb up again, and added to that, their relative invisibility in the fallen position leaving them vulnerable to being trampled on. In those early years they are truly at the mercy of the world they are cast to live in.

### **The first decades are ones of learning life's basics and practicing them.**

We change from the sign language of smiles, tantrums and cries to those of words and images which can tell our tale. We learn through toys how to practice building our castles and to populate them: Perhaps we should not disregard that the oldies too are perceived to relate with the same language.

Even a small child can relate to the difference between a sincere smile and a shammed one only offered to acknowledge their youth not their worth: The effect of our forefathers has already begun to pervade our world: That skeleton in the cupboard part of the unspoken dialogue: One which initially perplexes the child because they can only translate their world in terms of that which passes before their eyes.

With time they learn to grasp their oldies' bitching, and other displays of disrespect for some part of their identity. That cliché "Walls have ears" may be old hat, but it is a hat which can never date. Yes, small children soon learn that they are in some way considered inferior. They begin to show angst as they try to with futility match their peers: So much for the DSM nomenclature of anxiety state: How can a child who cannot relate or verbalize their angst (or feels unsafe to do so) ever find ways around such obstacles.

Oldies who have walked on rocky roads, as they are wont to have done, with skeletons in their cupboards may not have had the opportunities to learn to verbalize their angst in a coherent way to those around them: Those around them include their children. Amongst people they often throw in a tentative decoyed remark to feel out their safety in that environment. Most people will not recognize that action for what it is and the road of that parent to 'ga-ga' land begins: indeed began long before their child was born.

The child is not stupid and recognizes that transition, and fears for their own journey, which they instinctively know is not safe to clarify. There they remain, at times for decades; at others forever. Such a standstill has many manifestations, among them stammering (fear of further shunning), and perhaps more commonly than conceded damage to Brodman's areas 6 and 8 which in some way interfere with the process of responding to requests, be they to communicate, follow instructions, or participate in physical activities requiring such.

Disturbed families have an increased incidence of violence: What better method for a frustrated adult to vent such frustration, than to BOP the small child on top of the head, each bop insidiously adding to the degree of impaired wiring above its eyes: Each bop not considered relevant as children from dysfunctional systems tend to live among such and would not recognize such bopping amiss. Perhaps it is time that our mental health fraternities began to engage such people as partners in their research, rather than the subjects of their research. I bristle every time I hear that word 'Anxiety state'- one which for me, was relieved sans therapy by spending two relatively small windows of time with folk who understood the journeys of those who had walked my road: I could just speak like anyone else, without feeling the distrust in their body language. How easy it has been during the last decade to speak to an audience: Of course having the insight to not waste my resources where I will forever remain an alien.

The child is not stupid, they begin to role model on their parent/s' coping strategies, knowing that there is a reason for it, but one which remains an abstract for many years to come. Perhaps one can forgive the child for tantrums when they are grappling with a world which is beyond their resources to comprehend. They just want to be treated like others: They want their oldies offered the same respect as others.

Sadly, their oldies are doomed to become an ineffective compass for them: But placing them in a world remote from their folks may not resolve that complexity, because the child will begin to question why they were removed from their native world: And let us not delude ourselves, so will the sticky-beaks of their new world. They thrive on malicious and even exaggerated gossip. Yes, the journey to "Nowhere to go and nowhere to stay" has already begun.

Can anyone truly blame such children, or their oldies for their seeming 'excessive' tears. Mr DSM has yet to resolve that one too. It is only someone who has lost contact with their reality, who can cease to respond to it, and at times completely numb out. Is it possible that this is where the seeds of catatonia are born! I personally find the diagnosis of 'depression' quite unacceptable for that reason; if a person has numbed out to sharing their pain that does not render them a person who cannot feel it.

Maturing to the age, which enables the use of words and images is helpful only if there is another to share such with. That other has to speak the same language of life. That other has to be located: A complex task as they too will be focused on concealing the skeleton in their own cupboard.

Many children prefer silence, rather than to feel constantly misunderstood for their cryptic. In the world of silence, they are free to continue to own their souls: To ponder, reflect, philosophize: Indeed anything which they feel will give their days some kind of meaning. To begin to communicate is to enter the world of ridicule, be it for their cryptic, or their skeleton in the cupboard.

Sadly, they become the challenges of the mental health folk, who begin to search out how to integrate them into a world which has, and can never have a place for them. The DSM comes to the rescue. It removes the need to accept the notion that an adult cannot find their way into a

child's soul. It is comforting for an adult, but is it for the child? Perhaps in our present detached world, it is better to be accepted for a cripple, than someone whom another cannot understand. For some the chronic desolation of isolation can become unbearable: They would concede to any 'band-aid'.

While back in Estonia this year, to launch my two new books, one of my colleagues asked me what I thought present day clinicians may have labeled me as. I was quick to quip that they would have had a field day: They could begin with Asperger's, add ADHD and maybe intellectual impairment as well. What child doesn't act out when they are confused with what is expected of them, and then rebel when being admonished for getting it wrong: Even enterprise to find alternative solutions bringing about more admonishment: As I found out when in kindergarten I substituted a poem I had made up for the very juvenile one which had been given to me in the belief that I was dumb. No, I was not stupid: I was already bilingual aged three, and given that, I absorbed more of the oldies' talk than they were aware of. I was smart enough to navigate around the town where we lived in, in such a way as not to be caught out playing hooky. No, I was not interested in playing with paper dolls and dressing them up in glam clothing, nor was I into playing mum with real dolls: That had not been role modeling I had access to in my journey through the wilderness of war. I would have very enthusiastically joined into a discussion about what was wrong with being a Jew, or what the Russians did differently to some other group (I suspect the Germans in their ignoble camps). The oldies didn't want to discuss such: It may have been too painful for them or it may have been that they felt that was not appropriate conversation for a small child. Whatever their reason, they lost me: I found a way into a world where I was free to be me. Thank goodness that occurred in the good old days, when children did not require labels which would break their spirits even faster than those skeletons in their cupboards. Sine qua non children do learn through their toys how to practice building their castles and populating them. But there are toys and toys. Girls played with dolls and tea sets, boys with makeshift cars, sleds and yes, guns! We all knew what those things were. I too had my toys. I had my castle ruins at the top of the hill: There I could be king of my castle, and try to resolve how it might work better. How peaceful it was to live in that world.

**In the second decade we learn how to use devices to record such experiences to enable the tasks of our next two decades- building those castles and finding people to share them with.**

The three R's have since the year dot been considered the panacea of mankind: The only folk who don't use such visibly are the intelligence of countries. That sure would get them into big strife, together with the world whose welfare they had been entrusted with. Perhaps children with skeletons in their cupboards need to live by the same rules, for their own and their families' protection: A smaller unit of their land.

None the less at school those are the three domains which ensure our forward movement, or at times retard it.

One has to wonder at the teachers: The DSM enamored ones talk of children who have talents in limited fields and detach when connecting with those around. Does that not sound like the story of Aspergoid children! I can well recall my school days. I was always a good navigator: A necessity to play hooky from school successfully. I was always good at mathematics and chess which required logical sequential thinking free from Mr. Skeleton's presence. I too, was top of the French class. Once competent with the English alphabet some six years after our arrival in Oz I represented the school in a spelling tournament. But the English mark had a consistent response. "Improving". It did not match the grades which were mediocre. That lasted until my last year at high school when I became Dux of the English class.

And what had changed? Until then our writing themes required some form of at least diorama/reference to our private lives from which there was much to conceal, and much that I had never met among the 'dregs' of society. There was no way I could write anything but chameleonic material. It sure read as soulless material.

Year 12 brought a change: Our writings were now to be about philosophical material and such like: I could leave that skeleton in the cupboard at home.

I was to write the lead article for the school annual: One of my class mates, who was to become a pillar of our society remarked to me that it had taken him four years to understand what I had written: Before that it was the writing of a geek. Likewise, I was to captain our house debating team: Despite the stammer my ability for lateral and logical thinking allowed me a place in such a world.

If only our well intentioned therapists could engage such children into partnerships, rather than place them into a diagnostic category.

And how does that relate to climbing up life's ladder: I had begun to build the foundations of a castle but had no one to share in such building. No camaraderie had evolved.

### **Our third decade is the decade of finding our vocations, our families and our supportive systems and friendships.**

Perhaps one has to understand the dynamics of one's environment, to begin to understand what makes seeking out supportive systems difficult. For me that was a nigh impossible task. Given that at the age of ten I had been flung into a flaming oil burner, for naively asking what was wrong with being a Nazi bastard, it took me decades to even open a book with the word German on its cover, and until the World trauma conference in Melbourne, in the early 2000s to peek my nose into the Holocaust section, to feel out what all that was about. Fortunately I had ducked and almost missed that burner, and only singed a little bit of hair: What might have been the legacies of a permanently grossly disfigured face: I was certainly not about to find out.

That was perhaps augmented by an event in the operating theatre, when a member of the team who had clearly endured a lot under a regime, which I sensed had wounded him badly, but had no notion of how, lost the plot. Fortunately the patient did not suffer. He had deduced from my selective omissions in conversation that I was concealing something. It was I who finally, despite my youth as a rookie doctor broke that icy tension by remarking. "I did not chose my parents, and you did not chose yours: Can we talk about something else?". Regardless, I was to remain a pariah in that hospital.

With the long working hours (and other legacies of the past) there was no other world to seek out relationships. I was a reliable, responsible intern but I was never to be part of the camaraderie. Camaraderie depends on a shared understanding with those around.

Paul Valent, one of my most admired and treasured colleagues, somewhere wrote the words 'There are no shortcuts to intimacy or friendships. The forging of bonds requires an empathic and altruistic interchange between vulnerable souls.' The vulnerabilities of I, and those around me were too different: Yes, we could mostly empathize with each other should both be brave enough to bare our souls, and the altruism of medicine, too depended on our perception of what rendered another vulnerable.

Our immigration hierarchies carry an onerous responsibility: They need to be both skilled psychologists and historians. They need to recognize that all humans need warmth, and that warmth is conditional on a shared understanding.

A shared understanding depends on a diligent comprehension of history, and the ability to read it from endless perspectives. A commonality of all humankind, is that they are not ready to move on without limping, until their wounds are optimally healed. It is then that they can reconcile the past. During the 1940s Australians received two major wounds:

Many of them lost loved ones to Dunkirk and associated skirmishes: Many others lived on with their wounds to tell that ugly tale: The tale of the Germans who had inflicted those wounds. Legs and arms don't grow back!

Yet others were the survivors, or families of survivors of the Holocaust. The dead lost do not return, but their families' memories of them remain. The shattered nerves of those to arrive here, too remain. I cannot forget the Europe of my youth: I do not have the right to expect them to forget it. Yes, that is the price of a STOLEN TICKET. An adult chose to lie to the authorities about my parentage: Many other adults in positions of authority, while well intentioned did not pick up on the anomalies: My father's name was missing from those documents, and at the time I had a recently paralyzed right arm, the origin which was never questioned.

Germany was certainly not a country with wonderful sociological ideology in those times, but for a child and an adolescent there would have been many others, who shared vulnerable souls of the same genesis. There was camaraderie to be had.

As a young intern I made a decision never to specialize in two domains: One, where one was condemned to work, in teams I could not when communication became such that the life of a patient could be endangered: Anesthetics and surgery were definite no-nos. Even in those days I could feel something intangible about mental health work: two and two did not seem to make four. Yet it would have been in surgery and mental health that I would have been the greatest asset to medicine.

General practice became the default option: It as to become a life where I was never to feel that I truly had a soul of my own, while always heeding the Hippocratic oath.

In youth one does not analyze why one is not part of the camaraderie: One blames oneself for one's insufficiencies. One somehow feels grateful, that someone who was super-kind, would accept such a 'dreg' to be part of their life: With no one to debrief such, the opportunities to explore other options for such 'kindness' were not available, but loneliness and desolation is the arch enemy of the young: For decades, both my children and I, were to pay the price for that step into the wilderness.

#### **The fourth and fifth decades of our lives bring with them the nurturing or our relationships and consolidating our vocations:**

During those decades I lived in the wilderness. Survival was a struggle: The time to ponder on its causes, just not an available commodity. There was not enough mental energy to begin that journey: A journey which was to cost two decades of the entire family's lives. No camaraderie evolved to reminisce about those times.

Perhaps there was a flicker of camaraderie: It was during that time, that the medical ex-service doctors from WW II reached the helm of medicine. My children were young at the time, and the interaction time with colleagues, was limited but it had a quality which could never be reproduced. Those colleagues and I had been vulnerable souls in similar worlds: They could relate to me and assigned me some truly memorable challenges. Sadly time moves on, and they retired, and now live in another world.

#### **The sixth decade is one to feel pride in what one has achieved and for relishing the relationships with our now mature children.**

For me there was no pride to feel: the absence of camaraderie had left me a dark horse. I felt a sense of peace, that I had given significant patients the courage to walk alone and the will to live another day. Out there were many with skeletons in their cupboards, who had struggled to connect with the mental health systems.

My skills to live the life of an amphibian had become an asset. I was able to work with such patients, to allow them to see their plight, through the eyes of those who they perceived as maligning them, and through their own eyes. I was able to help them to find subtle ways of moving between two incompatible worlds. They would never have found true camaraderie, but at least they found a sense of self worth. Such work is time consuming, as ugly disclosures from both domains take patience and time. Without such, forward movement is not possible.

Sadly, medicine too has entered the world of 'time is money': I was never to find camaraderie among my colleagues: I could not reach them to convey the notion, that a person with unreconciled anger remains a danger to those around: The only variable, how many people they might be a danger to; be it one, ten or millions- any of those figures is too many.

And of course relationships with one's children are built over decades, largely in their formative years. When a gate exists between one and them in sharing life's narrative: The aim to protect them from that same skeleton, it is difficult to have sincere discussions. Times are improving, but the years do wend on: One can only hope that there is enough time, to allow serene disclosure of that which may help their journey in life.

Regardless, I am proud of my children: Both have embraced that which has been sharable, and have become serene, useful members of the Australian society.

**The seventh and later decades are times when such dreams of the future become less accessible:**

It is no longer realistic to begin planning castles and begin building them: They may not be relevant to the generation to follow, and their completion, but a burden on them. Nature begins to intervene.

Our time is spent reminiscing and reflecting on what we did well, what we might have done better or differently and what got in the way: How we might pass on that which may help the world that follows us, and is relevant to it.

All these are noble aims, but they are only of comfort to oneself, if one has a culture among which to reminisce. Retirement brings opportunity to return to the world where one's vulnerabilities were generated, and mingle with such folk: It also brings physical limitations which will eventually curtail such movement, and even the modern facilities of e-mail depend on intact eyesight and agile finger mobility for congenial use. The urgency to complete life's tasks, somehow places a damper on the newly gained 'opportunities' of aging.

There is no man for whom life has not presented obstacles: In a world of peace they have been created by accident, illness or nature's wrath and at times by man's own lack of insight: Yes, we have all met them. And yes, we all do have resources to improve the lot for those who follow: However for those of us who have been sequestered from our society, by the skeletons in our cupboards, that hope can only remain a pipe dream. The camaraderie to convert it to reality is in the lap of the Gods. It depends on our ability, and serendipitous opportunities to connect with a receptive world far away, and the will of the Gods, that we all remain intact enough to complete our dreams.

The prerequisite for such reminiscing is a diversity of life's experiences: Such experiences can also become the formula for solitude and desolation. As I retire from medicine people often ask me 'will you miss medicine?' My answer will always remain: "To miss something one has to have met it first: Not enough time remains to do this."

**War creates a very different template: Indeed it created many different templates:**

They depended on who were perceived as the goodies and baddies. It definitely did not depend on who were the winners, for no one wins wars: Everybody loses.

Both we the children, and our elders were driven off nature's path by the vagaries of mankind, by the inappropriate wishes and actions of another. The roads we trod were many and varied.

Perhaps our destinations rarely by our own hand: Our parents were the determinants of where we trod those paths of hell, and how we finally found limbo, and some form of existence within or beyond it.

**Our generation has lots different to ponder on.**

I continue to ponder on how my life might have panned out differently without that stolen ticket. Part of me will always wish that I had been, at the age of about two, allowed to die as the result of the near fatal pneumonia which was the legacy of a WW II induced crushed chest. Its hypoxia to leave its permanent legacies. Its genesis, to in some way to help the skeleton in the cupboard to survive.

Perhaps a second best, would have been to have left me in an Estonian orphanage unidentified. Orphanages do not offer kids much but at least we would all have had to work hard to survive, been too tired to ponder on our fates, and probably we would have drunk ourselves into premature graves. But in the time we had together we would have had a commodity money cannot buy: CAMARADERIE.

A remaining option would have been not to have been given that stolen ticket: I was half German and thus had a right to remain there. A high percentage of my cohort had parents who were soldiers in that ugly war. We might not have been offered the opportunities of a tertiary education, but we would have had each other, to help meet as vulnerable souls of similar genesis.

I would certainly not have had the opportunities to become a clinician: But has that opportunity done anything for me: Would not someone else occupying my seat in clinical school have done the same for my patients?

Resourceful people survive regardless: The Geislingen refugee camp taught me those skills.

Perhaps my greatest contribution to mankind will have been my writings both the travelogues\*\* with their unique flavour, and the narrative relating to the childhood memory of my childhood



cohort. It seems that my newly launched books\*: The culmination of six years of work have met warmth at least in Estonia and among my childhood refugee cohort. Sadly among my colleagues, there has been little more than lip service despite the plight of today's increasing refugees. And perhaps my paintings too have reached some folks: Certainly my recent visit to Estonia validated that.

Perhaps one has to cry out from beneath the daisies, as did Munch and van Gogh, when both their paintings and writings blended, to be considered to be among the worthy of the dead.

**My currently launched books are:\***

- "From here began the journey to far off lands: Hats off to Estonian war parents".
- "Estonia's war children: A fractured generation: Their first five years in their new lands".

They have just been launched at Estonia's Occupations Museum.

Unfinished, is a book which is the result of my exile from the first book: "Signposts to the dark side: Nobody's children, nobody's adults". I am not a child of Estonian war parents!

A forerunner of these, was a co-authored book (with Priit Vesilind) "When the Noise had ended: Geislingen's DP children remember". It was translated into Estonian by their request.

\*\*And lest you are beginning to wonder if I live in Doom Street, could I suggest that "The Soul of Melbourne" and the "Soul of the Outback" tell a very different tale.

Mai Maddisson

**RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE AND INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS in post-war West Germany.**

**A life history analysis of Black German men and women – A short introduction**

My research project *Residential child care and intercountry adoptions in post-war West Germany. A life history analysis of Black German men and women* focuses on illegitimate children who grew up in children's homes in West Germany during the 1950s and 1960s and who are the descendants of German women and Black American soldiers or French soldiers of Moroccan descent.<sup>1</sup> With my project, I intend to give answers to the following questions: what experiences were made by Black German children in care in a post-National Socialist society? Which – compared to White German children – were the main reasons for their institutionalization? Why were Black German children adopted mainly to Denmark in the 1960s? Which responsibility was taken by German and Danish authorities, adoption agencies and welfare organizations? Archival sources aside my project is mostly based on twelve biographic-narrative interviews I conducted with seven men and five women who were born between 1946 and 1957 in the German states of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia.

The generation of Black Germans born after 1945 faced multiple discriminations during their childhood and adolescence. Because their fathers were members of foreign troops, these children were referred to as 'occupation children' ('Besatzungskinder'), a term which aimed to discriminate against the circumstances of their conception. Further discrimination was experienced by being born out of wedlock. Due to their 'different' skin color Black Germans were seen – regardless of their German citizenship – as 'racial others' by the White German citizens. They were also categorized as so-called 'Mischlingskinder', a term which stems from the racist vocabulary of the Third Reich and has been generally used for multiracial people after 1945 to this day. Furthermore, all of my interviewees were former institutionalized children. Without family ties and shielded from the populace, they were considered misfits who had to be disciplined or re-educated. However, discrimination and stigmatization were not confined to Black Germans, but to their

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<sup>1</sup> I'm using the general term Black American, because in the case of my research it can't be clearly said if the fathers were African Americans or of Caribbean or South American descent.

parents as well. Their fathers were not only perceived as an 'occupying force', but primarily defined with regard to their skin color and referred to as 'coloreds' or 'negros'. Nobody cared for their name, nationality, occupation or biography. The mothers regardless of their actual relationship to the men were generally suspected of prostitution and often insulted publicly. Their relationships to Allied soldiers – Black soldiers, even – were seen as a betrayal of the German people as well as loss of moral conventions within the society as well as their own families.

Racism and social exclusion were the main reasons for accommodating Black German children in institutions. Another reason was the financial situation of the generally single mothers. In some cases, the children came from extramarital relationships – the women had had a relationship with an Allied soldier during her marriage to a German man. In these cases, the children often had to be kept secret or the partner insisted on abandoning the child. Sometimes a new White German partner would reject the illegitimate Black German child. Based on the interviews, it can't be detected if children were born of rape, because it was generally doubted by the interviewees that their own mothers were victims of rape. Whichever reason led to the accommodation in a children's home on the part of the mothers their decision was often connected to the hope to act in the best interest of the child.

It cannot be said exactly how many Black German children lived in institutions and/or foster care after 1945. Only one survey from 1956 provides information on the different forms of accommodation on a federal level.<sup>2</sup> Due to the inaccuracies of the data and the lack of surveys in the years to come, however the following numbers can only serve as a rough guideline:

Approximately 65% grew up with their mothers and 10% with the mothers' families. Almost 25% were placed with foreign families or in institutions and 13% given up for adoption. In comparison, almost 73% of White 'occupation children' lived with their mothers, 13% with relatives of the mothers, 14% stayed with foster families or in children's homes and 4.9% were adopted.<sup>3</sup> Despite shortcomings, the data shows that Black German children lived more often in institutions than white children in the first ten years after 1945. The numbers of the adoption of Black children are higher than among White ones, too. This detail is probably due to the fact that Black German children in institutions were often adopted abroad – mainly to the US and Denmark. As a justification for these adoptions you can often find the reason that in Germany there were hardly any families who were willing to take on a 'Mischlingskind'.

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## **NEW RESEARCH – Czechs and Germans up to 1945**

### **PhD: THE FRACTURED LIVES OF GERMAN BOHEMIAN CHILDREN, BORN 1933 – 40 IN THE AREA KNOWN AS SUDETENLAND: A MEMORY STUDY, GABLONZ – NEUGABLONZ**

**Helga Lees**

This thesis has tackled a subject, controversial to this day. Backed up by extensive research, and eyewitness testimonies, it has demonstrated that there is another side to the stereotypes usually connected with Sudeten issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Vgl. „Die unehelichen Kinder von Besatzungsangehörigen im Bundesgebiet und Berlin (West)“, hrsg. v. Statistischen Bundesamt Wiesbaden, Statistische Berichte, 10. 10. 1956.

<sup>3</sup> Vgl. Statistische Berichte 1956, p. 8.

## An Interdisciplinary Study

Part 1, History and Politics: From the late 18th up to the removal (known as expulsion, transfer or odsun) of more than 3 million Czechoslovak Germans (Sudeten Germans) from 1945/46.

Part 2, The War Child Study (Social Research): How did a group of expelled children from northern Bohemia experience their history and how were their lives affected through being suddenly uprooted from their homeland and displaced.

### Abstract

At the Paris Peace Conferences of 1918-1919, new states aspiring to be nation-states were created for 60 million people, but at the same time 25 million people found themselves as ethnic minorities. This change of the old order in Europe had a considerable impact on one such group, more than 3 million Bohemian German-speakers, later referred to as Sudeten Germans. After the demise of the Habsburg Empire In 1918, they became part of the new state of Czechoslovakia. In 1938, the Munich Agreement – prelude to the Second World War – integrated them into Hitler's Reich; in 1945-1946 they were expelled from the reconstituted state of Czechoslovakia.

At the centre of this War Child case study are German children from the Northern Bohemian town and district, formerly known as Gablonz an der Neisse, famous for exquisite glass art, now Jablonec nad Nisou in the Czech Republic. After their expulsion they found new homes in the post-war Federal Republic of Germany. In addition, testimonies have been drawn upon of some Czech eyewitnesses from the same area, who provided their perspective from the other side, as it were. It turned out to be an insightful case study on the fate of these communities, previously studied mainly within the context of the national struggle between Germans and Czechs.

The inter-disciplinary research methodology adopted here combines history and sociological research to demonstrate the effect of larger political and social developments on human lives, not shying away from addressing sensitive political and historical issues, as far as these are relevant within the context of the study. The expellees started new lives in what became Neugablonz in post-war Bavaria where they successfully re-established the industries they had had to leave behind in 1945-1946.

Part 1 of the study sheds light on the complex Czech-German relationship since the late 18th century of this important Central European region, the former Kingdom of Bohemia. Issues addressed are democracy, ethnicity, race, nationalism, geopolitics, economics, human geography and ethnography. It also charts the developments leading to the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia after 1945. What is important in this War Child study is how the expellees remember their history while living as children in Sudetenland and later. The testimony data gained indicate that certain stereotypes often repeated within the context of Sudeten issues such as the confrontational nature of inter-ethnic relations are not reflected in the testimonies of the respondents from Gablonz.

In Part 2 the War Child Study explores the memories of the former Sudeten war children using sociological research methods. It focuses on how they remember life in their Bohemian homeland and coped with the life-long effects of displacement after their expulsion. The study maps how they turned adversity into success by showing a remarkable degree of resilience and ingenuity in the face of testing circumstances due to the abrupt break in their lives. The thesis examines the reasons for the relatively positive outcome to respondents' lives and what transferable lessons can be deduced from the results of this study.

## **GERMANS FATHERED BY ALLIED SOLDIERS SPEAK OUT**

A quarter of a million Germans were fathered by Allied soldiers after the Second World War. Many have spent their lives not knowing their fathers and stigmatized by their own society.

Many faced social stigma and were long kept in the dark about their true parental origins, with birth certificates that usually said 'Father unknown'.

Now, 70 years after the end of World War II, many German children of Allied occupation forces break the silence on what was long a taboo subject.

"My own earliest memories are: I am not wanted, something is wrong with me", writes one of them, Ute Baur-Timmerbrink, in her new book on the subject, 'Wir Besatzungskinder' (We, the Occupation Children).

'I always compared myself with other children and I noticed that they were much more important to their parents than I was to mine,' recalled the 70-year-old woman who only discovered in 1998 that her real father was an American GI.

For most of her life she had been kept ignorant about what the rest of the family considered a shameful secret. When she learned the truth, her mother and the man she had long believed to be her biological father-- a man who was still a prisoner of war when she was born - had died.

It was the daughter of a family friend who finally confirmed what, deep down, Baur-Timmerbrink had long suspected. 'Everyone took the truth to their graves, but I couldn't do it,' the friend tearfully told her.

This set the author off on years of research looking for her father, she told a Berlin press conference. By the time she found his identity, she also discovered that he had died back in 2001.

### **'Psychologically scarred'**

Stories like hers have rarely drawn much attention, given the enormous scale of death and suffering wrought by Germany's war of aggression. But a similar fate affected an estimated 250,000 Germans and 20,000 Austrians who were fathered by soldiers from the United States, Britain, France or Russia, the victorious nations that had split up Germany and Austria in occupation sectors.

Some children were the result of affairs the troops had despite orders not to 'fraternize' with German women. Many of the women were widowed or separated from their interned husbands, and struggling to survive in the war-shattered country. Most of the children grew up without knowing their father, or like Baur-Timmerbrink, without even knowing he existed. Like their mothers, they also faced whispered insults, marginalization and discrimination.

Even today, the 'occupation children' are 'often heavily psychologically scarred', according to a study of 146 of them launched in March 2013 by the universities of Leipzig and Greifswald. 'My mother was a "Tommy whore", said one of the participants, using Germany's wartime term of British soldiers. 'And me, they called me monkey.'

### **'Today I feel no shame'**

The fathers themselves were often unaware of the existence of the child. This was the case with Margot Jung, born in 1954 in then French-occupied Koblenz. When she was seven, she overheard a conversation between her mother and grandmother mentioning 'the Frenchman'. Despite her suspicions, she didn't dig deeper until 2002, when she resumed the search for her origins. She contacted the Red Cross, French foreign ministry and other organizations, without success.

One day she decided to take her mother to the places where they lived at the time of her birth. Once there, Jung told her she was looking for her French father. The mother initially said nothing. But the next morning, Margot was amazed to find a note with her father's address in France. Jung learned that her father, Jean, had died in 2011, but she did meet her half-sister, with whom she developed a family relationship. 'Today I feel no shame, I can speak freely about my father', she says in the book. Her own mother also seemed

relieved, happy to learn more about the man she once loved. Later the old lady dared to show Jung a memento, a crumpled old pack of cigarettes that had belonged to her father, with seven cigarettes and a matchbox still inside, preserved like an icon for decades.

Baur-Timmerbrink now works for the organization Gltrace, which helps children search for fathers who were American GIs, and she has helped facilitate some 200 reunions. But, she said, often the searches by the offspring, now aged in their 60s and 70s, lead nowhere and insisted that 'we can't promise anything'. In many cases, the fathers or their families decline contact, choosing to ignore rather than dig up the past.

## **NEWS FROM RUSSENKINDER.DE**

In October, the yearly meeting of the Russenkinder members was held in the German-Russian Museum in Berlin-Karlshorst. In this house the German Army signed the capitulation document on May 8, 1945.

On November 29, 2014 the organization was founded with the aim to give more information to people wanting to come into contact with their Russian father or his family and to inform the media and the public of the issues children from Soviet-Russian soldiers are confronted with. Since there have been reports in the media a couple of times which have created doubts and confusion, the Russenkinder wished to clarify some of the points raised in the media.

The website ([www.russenkinder.de](http://www.russenkinder.de)) is available in six languages, among them Hebrew, thanks to the efforts of Jürgen Schubert, Thomas Hagen and Elfrun Josiger. The website plays an important role, some 5000 to 6000 visitors each month. From January till October some 100 people have asked support for their efforts to find their family. Around May 8, several journalists asked help in finding people able and ready to tell their stories. In general, the journalists showed much empathy.

To celebrate the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, three activities took place in which the Russenkinder could participate: in the Karlshorst Museum, at the Monument in Berlin-Treptow and at a concert given by Waleri A. Gergijew in the Concerthouse.

Mrs Glaesmer, one of the Leipzig research team, stated in June in public that only the American Archives were available for research, whereas the English and the French Archives were not. This happened to be incorrect.

The organization emphasises that everyone in search of his/her family can get help from the board, even if their ideas about the past do not match those of the organization. Research is done in particular in the Kaliningrad region, in the Ukraine and in Israel.

Russenkinder meet people who cannot get rid of the old view on them. It is a pity, but they have to accept this situation. Younger people are more open to new insights in history writing and research. Searching for one's father can give a boost to the selfconfidence of people, also in that way it is very important.

The stories of the Russenkinder are important to become known. Anatoly, the chairman of the Russenkinder once met a historian who said: the worst thing that can happen to a historian is to meet people who can give testimonies about the period he studies and tell about their experiences.

Until now the psychological aspect of the Russenkinder situation has not been given much attention in the organization. The board would like to welcome people who can take responsibility for this issue. The board has contacts with historians and asks them, if necessary, for (verification of) historical data

Many people think that the Russian Archives are not accessible for research or have been accessible only recently. The truth is that they have been open since 1993! Anatoly started his search in 1996 and received information in 1997.

The orthography of the names very often causes a problems. There are sometimes different ways to spell the name. The archives employees use several versions if the first effort isn't successful.

(From the Newsletter of Russenkinder)

### **Alexander Latotzky**

Discourse at the occasion of the commemoration day for the victims of the Sovjet Speziallager # 3 at the 'Denkort' in Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, October 24, 2002.

First of all I would like to thank the pupils of the Sonderpädagogischen Förderzentrum and their teachers on behalf of the victims of the Sovjet Speziallager for their care for this 'Denkort', a task they adopted from the set-up of this memorial. Their care honours the victims. This way of dialogue with the past is until now not a matter of course and in this form it is a model for others, adults as well.

To-day we commemorate the victims of the Sovjet Speziallager, not only those who were imprisoned in this camp, but those of other camps as well. The official final report of the Department of the Speziallager of 1950 gives a number of 42.889 deceased people. That means a death rate of 36 per cent. The inmates simply died from starvation or from illnesses they could not overcome because of their weak condition.

In this hell there was a group of prisoners which until now hardly is spoken of. Everybody raised in the former DDR knows the story of Jerzy Zweig, the 'child of Buchenwald'. The roman 'Nackt unter Wölfen' (Naked amidst Wolves), written by Bruno Apitz was obligatory lecture on the DDR schools. Who knows, however, that there were also children after the war in Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen and other camps. These children were born there, lived there and many of them died there. They were as innocent as Jerzy Zweig and others in the Nazi concentration camps. To-day I would like to commemorate especially these children.

For more than 10 years I am engaged in research about the fate of these children. This is a difficult enterprise (or: venture?) because of the scarcity of documents. These children did not exist in the bureaucracy of the camps and since they did not appear in the statistics they did not receive food, clothes, diapers, shoes or toys. Especially in the first years the mothers had to share their own small food rations with their children and they sewed clothes from the attires left behind by the dead. In Sachsenhausen the camp leader made only in 1947 one bottle of milk available for five children, that's to say: from Monday till Saturday.

It is not surprising that many babies and young children died. In the Spring of 1949 the last leader of the camps, Ziklajev, asked Moscow the permission to release the children and to send them to relatives. He did not receive an answer.

In my research I found enough data and I got enough information from witnesses to be able to make a reconstruction of the fate of 70 children and their mothers. I would like to present here one

story as a representation of the stories of all the others.

In 1946 Ursula Hoffmann took the risk to lodge a complaint against 'persons who wore Soviet uniforms' who raped and murdered her mother. She was 21 years old then and lived here in Berlin. Shortly after the registration of her complaint she was arrested and accused of being an agent for a foreign intelligence service. The military court gave her a 15 years sentence to be spent in a camp for forced labour. She was placed in Lager #8 in Torgau, where one of the Russian guards fell in love with her. He was her age and was brought to Germany at the age of 17 as a forced labour hand. After Liberation day he escaped the fate of so many others who were shot as 'traitors of the fatherland'. Instead, he was incorporated in the Army, as a guard. His name was Wladimir Brjutschkowski.

Their forbidden relationship came to light when Ursula became pregnant. Ursula was sent to Lager # 4 in Bautzen, whereas Wladimir was deported, after trial before a military court, to one of the correction camps of the Gulag Archipelago. He left Germany one day before the birth of his child. In Bautzen Ursula gave birth to a son, a boy whom everybody called Sascha. Some ten weeks later the mother and her child were transported to the camp in Sachsenhausen where they stayed till 1950.

Ursula and her child were not the exception. In Sachsenhausen alone there lived more than 40 mothers and their children. The youngest of them was 20 years old, the eldest 42. Both of them had a daughter baby of 3 months old, when the mother of 42 died. Witnesses told me that her child was given to a woman who lost her baby a short time before. This was a procedure in other camps as well according to former camp inmates.

When the last camp was closed in 1950 there lived in Sachsenhausen still 40 children, some of whom were deported to the Soviet Union and some of whom were released together with their mothers. 1,119 condemned women and about 30 children were handed to the DDR authorities to have them serve the rest of their sentences. A new period of suffering laid before them, now within the framework of the DDR. The women and their children, among them Ursula Hoffmann and her son, were placed in the StA Hoheneck in Stollberg.

In the detention system of the DDR there was no place for children. Instead of sending them to relatives, according to the repeated requests of the mothers, the authorities took the children away from their mothers and brought them first to Leipzig, as the so-called 'children of the State'. They were considered to be orphans without names or birthdate, recorded only with a number. In the Spring of 1950 they were scattered to several children's homes, where they were inscribed in the registers with their own name. For all the children Leipzig was recorded as their place of birth. The authorities could, of course, never admit that they were born in Soviet camps.

In March 1956 Ursula Hoffmann received pardon and was released. She was very ill and decided to go immediately to West Berlin. From that free city she started her search of her son. With the help of other women she found him and after many requests the DDR authorities allowed him to travel to the West. Without any papers he arrived in West Berlin. The reunion of the mother and her son was unbalanced. Whereas the mother yearned for all those years for his son, she was for him a stranger. He addressed her with the German formal 'Sie', instead of the intimate 'Du'. Only 10 years later Ursula Hoffmann died at the age of 41 after a long illness. She never saw Wladimir Brjutschkowski, the father of her child, again.

On April 10, 1995, Ursula Hoffmann was rehabilitated by the Russian military Governor. In the letter from Moscow, written 28 years after her death, was stated 'that there had not been in the past any justification for her imprisonment.' About 80 per cent of the condemned camp inmates received in that period a similar declaration from Moscow. That means that 80 per cent of the condemned women were innocent according to the contemporary Russian laws.

Ursula Hoffmann was my mother and I am the boy whom everybody called Sascha. That's why I would like to commemorate at this place all the mothers and their children of the former Soviet

camps who are not present to-day.

My father managed to survive the Gulag Archipelago. He is living now in a small village in the vicinity of Kaliningrad. With the help of the Red Cross I found him and in 1999 we met for the first time, more than 50 years after my birth.

To-day I wanted to tell about the Soviet camps, about one of the until now neglected issues of the German history after 1945, about the history of the DDR. About innocent people who became victims of a political system that intended to build up a new, a better and a more just world. The exact number of the victims is unknown until now. Only a small number of the former prisoners are still alive and soon all of them will be dead. That is the way of life and we have to accept it.

But we never will accept that these people will be forgotten again. Commemorating the victims is vital also for ourselves, as a warning to the world in which we live. So often people say nowadays: 'It was not that bad' - but believe me, it was for us, the victims, even worse. That is why it is of the highest importance that the pupils of the Doberauer Straße take care of this 'Denkort'.

Thank you for your attention.

**JOHANNES-DIETER STEINERT: Deportation und Zwangsarbeit Polnische und Sowjetische Kinder im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland und im besetzten Osteuropa 1939-1945**  
Essen, 2013, Klartext Verlag

During the Second World War, a substantial number of children became victims of the National Socialist forced labour system. In National Socialist Germany and German occupied Eastern Europe, Jewish children were forced to work in ghettos, concentration and labour camps, in industry and agriculture. The Wehrmacht and SS deployed children in particular in construction works on fortifications, roads and airfields. Steinert's research project provides the first comprehensive study of Jewish child forced labourers in National Socialist Germany and German occupied countries in Europe by drawing on a wide range of archival documents and former forced labourers' testimonies. By using age and gender as central categories for analysis, the research will identify the historical background of Jewish child forced labour and its place within the Holocaust between 1938 and 1945. Special consideration will be given to the working and living conditions of Jewish children forced to work, their treatment and contacts with the German population as well as with other forced labourers. Finally, the project will discuss the experience of liberation as narrated in published and unpublished testimonies.

## **DIE GESCHICHTE DES ANDEREN KENNEN LERNEN**

The German translation of the Israeli-Palestinian history book 'learning each other's historical narrative' has finally been published.

The German title of the book is "Die Geschichte des Anderen kennen lernen" and was published at Campus in July 2015. ISBN 978-3-593-50281-6.

It can be purchased online and in all bookstores.

This translation project has taken almost 5 years to manifest itself, due to an unlimited number of obstacles. The major obstacle was the wariness of publishers and sponsors because of the flammable subject matter.

In this historybook Israeli and Palestinian historians and teachers, coached by the Palestinian Professor of Pedagogy Sami Adwin and the Israeli Professor of Psychology Dan Bar-On, have written the history of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, seen from both sides and side by side. In the centre of the book there are blank pages on which the pupils can write their own vision on the issue.



The book focus on 9 historical periods, to start with the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and to end with the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000.

It is hardly to understand fully the courage of the teachers at both sides who continued to meet between 2000 and 2009 notwithstanding the conflictuous situation. They had the courage to listen to the stories of the other side and to accept their consequences.

Professor Sami Adwan states in the introduction:

'The aim of this project is to offer pupils and students between 15 to 17 the history of the other side, a story omitted in the current schoolbooks. This story will widen their vision helping them to include the context of the other's life. The histroy is described from different points of view, in contrast to the current visions that are painted in black and white. In stead of indoctrinating the pupils, they are given a range of opinions, urging them to reflect on their personall and familystories.'

The book has been translated into French, English, Italian, Spanish and finally into German.

Schools in Europe, America and Canada use this book in their history lessons.

This book may be useful in other settings than schools as well. The Dan Bar-On International Dialogue Center in Berlin hopes that many additional readers will read the book.

## **COMEDY IN A MINOR KEY**

by Hans Keilson

The story is amazing: Hans Keilson, born in 1909, is a German Jew who, during World War II, became a member of the Dutch resistance, then a novelist and psychiatrist specializing in the war trauma of children, and is still living, at almost 101, near Amsterdam.(He died in 2015) Half a lifetime ago, he gave up fiction for his practice, leaving a few slight books that linger at the edges of the Holocaust literature.

Then, in 2014, he is rediscovered, with the first English translation of his 1947 novel 'Comedy in a Minor Key' and a reissue of his 1959 allegory 'The Death of the Adversary', which was translated in in English in 1962. It's as if, one morning, we were to learn that not only had Anne Frank survived the secret annex but was also still among us.

Frank and Keilson, after all, have more than a little in common, not at least their understanding of the domesticity of displacement, the difficulty of hiding, the little attempts to make the unbearable bearable, even normal. 'What couldn't you find in this world!'notes Keilson in 'comedy in a Minor Key'. "But the doctor was right, children are born everywhere, in bomb shelters, during air raids, and often quicker than you might like. Everywhere, in the grip of death, life goes on too.'

'Comedy in a Minor Key is very much about these issues: the endurance of life in an universe of death. Taking place in the Netherlands during the German occupation, it revolves around Wim and Marie, a couple who agree to hide a Jew in their home, only to end up with an unexpected problem when he gets sick and dies. On the one hand, death is the most natural of processes; on the other, this is one inevitably fraught. How Wim and Marie deal with it, from the practicalities – what to do with the body, how to erase the traces of this man's presence – to the existential questions, forms the substance of this delicately balanced novel, a book of such profound and understated beauty that it almost seems to function as a parable.

That has everything to do with Keilson's language, which (deftly translated by novelist Damion Searls) unfold in a specific nearly offhand way. The sick man's hair hangs fever-soaked 'like the absolute mess after a downpour'; a cup of coffee and a piece of hardtack in the evening offers 'a furtive, sad happiness in the smiling, incomprehensible futility.'Such emotions are at the center of the novel, which aspires to strip away our expectations, our preconceptions of a household in hiding to reveal the more complex subtleties underneath. Even in the midst of occupation, the mail still comes, and the cleaning lady does the floors and makes the bed. Even as the night sky fills with bombers, the most personal interactions still take place. 'consolation! Consolation? Keilson

asks,...Was there such a thing?'

But in some sense, 'comedy in a Minor Key' is a testament to the power of consolation in an inconsolable situation, not to make things better but to allow us to see them as they are.' Marie understood,' Keilson writes in what may be the book's most moving passage, 'that words like 'love your neighbor' or 'national duty' or 'civil disobedience' were only a weak reflection of this deepest feeling that Wim and she had felt back then: wanting to shelter a persecuted human being in their house. Like the way people veil a body in fabric and clothing so that the blaze of its nakedness does not blind too deeply the eyes that see it, people veil life itself with precious garments, behind which, as under ashes, the double-tongued fire of creation smolders. Love, beauty, dignity: all that was only put on, so that whoever approached the glowing embers in reverence would not singe his grasping hand and thirsting lips.'

Los Angeles Times September 26, 2014 by David L. Ulin

## **PHILIPS' LIST**

The story of the German factory owner Schindler has become well-known throughout the world because of the movie Schindler's list. The name Philips is well-known because of the electric apparatus produced by the company, like radio, television and electric bulbs. The courage of Frits Philips who guarded thousands of his workmen against deportation or forced labour is even in the Netherlands hardly known. It is worthwhile to tell his story.

Whereas the members of the board of management of the Philips company fled to England, together with the queen Wilhelmina, Frits Philips, by then 35 years old, decided to stay in Eindhoven where most of the production of the company was executed. He was aware that his position would become a difficult one, since he would have to obey the Occupiers' rules whereas he would have preferred to resist them. But he could not leave his 29.000 workmen and employees and risk that their families would tumble down in financial misery because of unemployment. So his task was to zigzag between obedience to the Occupiers and his own conscience trying to give as less as possible support to the German authorities.

The Philips family were offspring of a Jewish merchant from Westphalia who settled in the Netherlands in the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. One of his grandsons, Lion, married an aunt of Karl Marx, who visited his Dutch family now and then. Most of the times because he was in financial problems. Lion was the great-grandfather of Frits Philips, the hero of this story. At some moment in the course the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the family converted to the protestant version of Christianity. Frits and his wife Sylvia belonged to the Dutch branch of the Oxford Group. This spiritual movement was founded by the American Frank Buchman who believed that the roots of all problems were the personal fear and selfishness of the human being. He was convinced that only Moral Re-Armament could solve the problems of society and individuals. The moral arms: absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and unconditional love.

It is obvious that these guidelines inspired Frits in his decision to stay in the Netherlands and continue the production of his company. They gave him the strength to serve the interests of his employees notwithstanding his 'collaboration' with the German authorities.

The Dutch population had been ordered to hand over their radios to the Germans, so the production of radios diminished drastically. It was time to plan work that would prevent the dismissal of a big part of the workmen. They started to produce among other things wc seats. Frits founded the Sobu, a special order office that was said to produce important items for the German war wagging and in which he placed in particular Jewish workmen. In this way he could prevent them from being transported to concentration camps in Germany.

In the spring of 1943, the German authorities asked Frits Philips to organise a work room for the inmates of the transfer- and concentration camp Vught. He agreed but only on his conditions:

regular work hours, wages and one warm meal a day. To his surprise the Germans accepted the conditions and in the coming years some 3100 enjoyed the comfortable conditions of the work in Vught. A couple of months before the camp was closed, all the Jewish inmates were taken to Auschwitz. The Philips' skilled labourers were given a job in German factories and escaped the gaschambers.

In April 1943, there was all over the Netherlands a general strike because the Germans wanted the war prisoners they released in 1940 to present themselves to the authorities to be imprisoned again. The workmen in the Philips factories joined the strikers. The Germans reacted furiously, shot 7 persons at the Philips' ground and arrested the managers team. They proclaimed that these managers would be shot, if not 80% of the workmen would stop their strike. The workmen resumed their work, all the managers were released, except Frits Philips. He was taken to the monastery Haaren, where he was interned. His wife Sylvia was allowed to visit him once a week. In the mean time she joined the resistance movement and the prisoners of Haaren played their own role in the game. Five months later the Germans released Frits.

During one of his meditations, he got the conviction that the Germans would come back to arrest him. He discussed plans with his secretary to set up an alarm system. Some hours later, she telephoned Frits with the message that an order from Berlin had arrived and that the Germans wanted to discuss the details with him. She used words that gave him the conviction that they were there to arrest him. He jumped out of the window and on his bike, sun spectacle on his nose, he escaped. His journey ended in the house of friends in Zoelen. The Germans were furious and arrested Sylvia and sent her to Vught, where she was not imprisoned in the special Philips section, but in the section for 'ordinary' prisoners. One of the Philips section pleaded her release – in the hope to be awarded afterward with a good position in the management team. Sylvia's release came just in time: one week later the women of Vught were taken to Germany, only 17 from the 97 survived the war.

In the mean time the children were taken to different places, where friends of the family took care of them. The day after the capitulation of the Germans, German bombers threw down their loads in the garden of the Philips' villa. It is a miracle that no real harm was done. Some days later, Frits and the dispersed children could come home and try to organise their lives after so much disturbance.

One could wonder why this story is so unknown, even in the Netherlands. I guess that it has to do with the strongly felt need in Dutch society to consider the war and the events taken place during that war in the context of the categories 'right' or 'wrong'. Seen from that point, Frits Philips cooperated with the Occupiers, and indeed some people have accused him of collaboration. The board members who fled to England because they refused to work for the Germans, were seen as the more ethical persons. But in my opinion, Frits' feeling responsible for his 29.000 workmen and employees and their families, is as ethical as the decision of those going in exile to avoid cooperation with the Germans, or even more. The Israelian Commemoration Museum YadvaShem gave him its award to honour his saving the lives of some thousands of Jews. But most of the Dutch people did not even know about his courage until now.

GSB

**FRAUENVERBAND** im BUND DER VERTRIBENE e.V.  
(*Women group in Federation of Expellees*)  
Seminar in **Pracht**, Germany 18<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
Organized by Dr. Maria Werthan, President of "Frauenverband im BdV e.V."

Extracts from the Seminar commented by Henny V. Granum, Denmark

**Theme of the Seminar: Our fathers -**

- (a) What footprints did they leave in our lives?
- (b) How do we make responsible pan-European action on this background of experience?

**Participants:** Mainly former displaced persons i.e. from East Prussia. Some youngsters from Poland, Rumania, and Czech Republic / Slovakia living in former German areas.  
Also some German "Children of the occupation" (GI fathers).

Introduction (by organizers):

War, flight and expulsion were coursing family scars which profoundly influenced generations. Almost one in four children in Germany grew up after WWII without a father. In the postwar period, the psychological injuries of these children were not addressed. Every child has experienced this loss in its own way and carried it through life. We would like to make this topic available and give the persons concerned an opportunity to deal with this central theme of life and the questions related: Which father-image shaped the lives of children and war orphans? What feelings, injuries and lifelong stress did they experience? How has it affected their self-image and self-confidence? How did they cope with life? Where did they find support and protection? Across borders remains to be asked: What experiences shaped the loss in our European neighbors of being fatherless? What power sources did the child use to cope with life?

*Six extracts from the program (total 9 talks):*

**The consequences of World War II for Germany in the postwar period**

By Prof. Dr. Matthias Stickler, Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Würzburg

12 - 14 million Germans had to flee or were expelled in what could be called an ethnic cleansing. Many people from the lost areas found at last a new home in Germany or Austria after a long and exhausting flight.

Some of the participants, who had been fleeing as children could not understand, that the numbers of displaced persons referred to by historians got smaller and smaller for every decade. And these women were very sad to learn, that the history about flight and expulsion no longer were taught at schools in Germany.

**Education in a dictatorship like "The Third Reich".**

by Dr. Maria Werthan, High School Teacher and assoc. Uni. Bonner Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität was interesting, but rather surprising and depressing to hear what boys and girls had to learn at school in *Hitlerjugend* and *Bund Deutscher Mädel*. We tried to imagine what kind of people it would have shaped in future generations if Hitler had won the war.

The difficult question to answer is what impact such educational systems have on the children?

**My father was a soldier of the German Wehrmacht**

By Henny Granum, vice chairman of War Children Denmark and acting spokeswoman of BORN OF WAR international network

It was acknowledged that the occupation kept Denmark in a relatively "peaceful" situation. Nevertheless, the situation was difficult for a young Danish woman, if she fell in love with a German soldier. The Danes thought that she exhibited her sexuality, that she was acting unpatriotic and that she was a traitor, because of "the horizontal collaboration".

To bear a child out of wedlock and mostly not knowing, if the father was now fighting in Russia or perhaps reported missing, made the situation extremely difficult. Where could the child be born? Who could look after it, while the mother went to work etc?

After Germany's capitulation the women were punished by having their hair cut bald and many other horrible things happened to them. This resulted for many women in getting psychological problems, which later had a bad influence on many of their children - the "Deutsch Bastards" - for several years.

It was interesting to hear from participants of the former Eastern Countries, that the theme of children born during or after the war with German or Russian fathers was suppressed and "did not exist" until after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

After my talk a woman told me, that she had never understood, why war children in Europe wanted to establish associations and find relatives. But after my talk she appreciated having got new insight.

For me personally the seminar was also an important experience and pleasure, as I could share my talk and the whole seminar on this particular theme with my German half-sister. We met in 1997, when she learned about my existence, and we have been in a very positive and fruitful contact since – a contact that has extended to both our families.

### **The image of my father – in front of me - with me - and in me**

By Gertraud Wiggli of Loewenich, physician and astronomer, author from Switzerland

Gertraud Wiggli had never known her father as he was fighting in Russia and fell in the war in 1942 when she was a small child. Before the war he was a priest in a little village, had wife and five children. The father was offered the possibility to return home due to his many children, but the father wanted to stay in the army and do his duty.

A big painting of the father looking very serious was hanging over the piano, and he was steering Gertraud's everyday life. Do not lie, go to church, remember to pray etc.

In the beginning the daughter was very angry with him and spend a lot of time thinking of him. After a long life Gertraud published as a 70 years old lady a book about her impression of the father, "The image of my father", and after all these years she at last came to terms with him.

### **My father is not buried**

By Prof. Dr. Karol Sauerland, former head of German literature at universities Toruń Warsaw and a former member of Solidarnosc

Dr. Sauerland's father fled to Paris from Germany in 1933. Later he immigrated as a communist to Moscow with his wife. Karol Sauerland was born in 1936 in the "famous and infamous" Hotel Lux, and shortly after his birth, the father was arrested. Not until the sixties he and his mother learned that the father was shot in 1937 and nobody could tell, what had happened after the shooting of the father.

Dr. Sauerland tried to give a picture of, what it meant to grow up not knowing anything about the destiny of the father. In the former U.S.S.R there are hundreds of thousands of such cases. These are the countries of "the not died" and "the not buried".

After the talk we all understood how difficult life had been for these children.

### **Missing Parents - How do children of migrant workers cope with the absence of their mothers and fathers?**

By Florica Molnar, a high school teacher at management level in Resita, Romania

More than 2 million Rumanian citizens are currently working abroad. In Italy there are more than 800.000 Rumanians, but many are also working in Germany, England and Spain. The Rumanians are sending money back to relatives in Rumania, which supports the country. But what happens to the children back home, when the parents are abroad for many years?

At the school, where Florica Molnar teaches, she meets many pupils, who are left with the granny or some neighbors. Therefore Monica Molnar decided to start a student project about these "Bereaved" children. Two of her students from the project participated in the seminar and told about four cases. In three of these cases the children suffered very much from missing their parents and they did not do well at school. But in one case the child was happy, because her parents send a lot of money to her.

Sometimes, when a child was about 12 years, so that it had learned to speak a little English, it was taken away from the school and brought to live with the parents abroad. But for most of the bereaved children, the schools were trying to help and did their best to be extra supportive.

### **POSTSCRIPT**

When a lady heard that I came from Denmark, she told me a little story from her grandmother's and mother's flight from East Prussia. On a ship together with many other refugees they arrived in Denmark in one of the last months of the war. All what they owned were the clothes they were wearing and a little dog, which Granny had brought all the way from her home near Königsberg. Mother and daughter ended up in a camp, where the leader told Granny that the dog was not allowed to live in the camp. Granny was heartbroken. She loved the dog - her only memory of her home.

Granny went to the church bringing her little dog, as for praying to God so she could keep her precious dog. Suddenly the hungry little dog spotted a rat, caught it – and ate it on the spot. The Camp Leader learned about this incident and decided that Granny could keep her very useful dog.

While the seminar took place, the theme of refugees in Europa was actualized. This theme was not scheduled, but in one way or the other it related to many of the talks. For several of the participants it appeared very similar to something they had experienced themselves. But there are some important differences.

In the forties, under and after the WWII, the refugees coming to Germany were very poor, but they had the same skin color, spoke the same language, had the same religion and culture, and had eventually no problems finding jobs rebuilding Germany.

Today the refugees have to learn the language, most have a different religion and culture, and many refugees have problems finding a job.

But I felt that generally people were prepared to help refugees coming to Germany now, even that the situation in so many ways is very difficult.

EXTRA: One of the participants invited me to give my talk for the local group of "Frauenverband im BdV e.V." in Berlin in October.

### **Henny Granum**

### **BORN OF WAR international network, <http://www.bowin.eu>**

The international network BOWin comprises representatives of 7 national unions/groups in Europe, and they met in Berlin Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October. The network planned and organized a general meeting the day after at Deutsche Dienststelle 31<sup>th</sup> of October 2015. This was the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting "Kriegskinder Forum" (War Children Forum) to which a wider range of interested people and parties were invited.

The group has been expanded with two persons from the group Diestelblüten – Russenkinder in Germany <http://www.russenkinder-distelblueten.de/>

### **Points of agenda: The future for BOW i.n.**

To get more feedback in the network it was suggested to try to contact scientist i.e. Dr. Ingwill Mochmann, Dr. Sabine Lee, Dr. Heide Glaesmer for a cooperation. As well as inviting the three Dutch / Indonesian Associations Sakura, JIN and SOO into BOW i.n.

Author Gisela Heidenreich had been invited to talk to officers about the Lebensborn-project in the Third Reich at a forum under UN-Human Rights in Dublin. It would be good if this cooperation could be extended.

BOW i.n. will try to be represented at the “Buchmesse” in Leipzig in spring telling about problems with archives and dual citizenship for War Children.

Priorities for the network this coming year will be: Opening of the archives for the French War Children and dual citizenship for War Children.

Due to problems with electing a new spokesman / spokeswoman Henny Granum agreed to step in as acting spokeswoman.

### **20<sup>th</sup> HISTORIKERTREFFEN IN LANDESARCHIV 2<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (Meeting of Historians and history interested people)**

For the past 20 years the “Historikertreffen” has gathered people interested in discussing the different and often horrible consequences of WWII. In the beginning of this Century the theme was for some years closely related to the problem for “Children Born Of War” (and their mothers). This attracted national groups of “War Children” and inspired the annual meetings in Berlin of the “Kriegskinder Forum” as well as the establishment of **BOWin** (mentioned above).

I am very sorry to tell that the association **Fantom e.V.** announced that it will now stop the cooperation with Deutsche Dienststelle (WAST) about Historikertreffen and Fantom e.V. will no longer organize Historikertreffen in Landesarchiv in Berlin.

At the moment I am not able to say what might happen in the future, but I know that Fantom e.V. has some ideas about alternative history arrangements for the coming years.

Henny Granum

Vice president in *War Children Denmark* [www.krigsboern.dk](http://www.krigsboern.dk) and  
acting spokeswoman in *BORN OF WAR i.n.* [www.bowin.eu](http://www.bowin.eu)

### **DAY OF THE CHILDREN OF WAR**

Like last year, on November 20, in London and in Stockholm commemoration ceremonies were held to remember the children who suffered from the war experiences they went through and those who succumbed due to the war waging.

Martin Parsons sent me the following message:

'On November 20<sup>th</sup> we held the annual War child remembrance service at the Memorial of the Innocents at Westminster Abbey. It was led by the Reverend Canon Professor Vernon white and the Reverend Hugh Ellis.

More than 60 people attended, including many children. Wreaths were laid and all war children were remembered in our prayers.



This service is becoming more popular each year, so hopefully it will continue to gather momentum and bring the plight of War Children, past and present, into the public domain.'



Memorial of the Innocents

Sinikka Ortmark Stymne, *Chair of the Finnish War Children's Association* in Stockholm, sent the following report and some photos to illustrate it.

'Also Stockholm observed the third Remembrance Day on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November. The day commenced in the morning with a gathering that almost filled the Finnish Church just across the street from the Royal Palace. Most of the attendees were Finnish war children and their spouses. The service was performed by Vicar Jukka Laarri and colleagues. Hymns were sung and music was played. Then, the assembled gathered outside the church to place flowers around the memorial to those compatriots and volunteers who lost their life in Finland during WWII.



In the afternoon, a seminar with over 100 participants was arranged by the *Embassy of Finland*. The first speaker was Anna Takanen who recently was appointed *Director of Stockholm City Theatre*. During the last few months her play *The Fatherland* has received an overwhelming reception in Gothenburg and Helsinki. She told that her play treats the complicated relationship between her father who fled to Gothenburg during the war and remained there and his brother who stayed in Finland. Päivi Sillanaukee, *Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Social Affairs* presented the Finnish Government's three year 68-point plan for how the municipalities could cope with the inflow of refugee children.

Elisabeth Dahlin, *Secretary General of the organization Save the Children* talked about the some 45 000 alone children at present arriving in Sweden. She emphasized that the children must not be treated as a collective but each one of them has to be seen and met as a fellow human being.



Elisabeth Dahlin



Åsa Regnér, Sweden's *Minister of Children, Elderly and Gender Equality* pointed to the enormous burden put on the local municipalities that have to receive, accommodate and integrate all these children arriving alone. She remarked that the young men, who form the bulk of arrivals, seem to study more purposefully than the young women who come. Peter Hultqvist, Sweden's *Minister of Defense*, himself the son of a war child, made a speech outlining the Government's security policy of cooperation and joint exercises between Sweden, Finland and other countries and organizations in order to avoid future wars in the Baltic area. Jarmo Viinanen, *Ambassador of Finland* confirmed that he agrees with the policy outlined. Also, he gave voice to the feelings of the audience when he said that he finds the commemoration gatherings worth their while and that he will work for that they be continued.'

## WEBSITES

Organisation of Children of Dutch Collaborators:

**[www.werkgroepherkenning.nl](http://www.werkgroepherkenning.nl)**

Organisation of Children of War of different Backgrounds:

**[www.stichting-kombi.nl](http://www.stichting-kombi.nl)**

Organisation of Danish Children of War, Danske Krigsboern Foerening:

**[www.krigsboern.dk](http://www.krigsboern.dk)**

Norwegian Children of War Association, Norges Krigsbarnforbund:

**[www.nkb.no](http://www.nkb.no)**

Organization of Norwegian NS Children:

**[www.nazichildren.com](http://www.nazichildren.com)**

Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn, Norway:

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

Organisation of NS-children Vennetreff:

**<http://www.nsbarn.no>**

Risikforbundet Finska Krigsbarn: (in swedish)

**[www.finskakrigsbarn.se](http://www.finskakrigsbarn.se)**

Tapani Ross on Finnish War Children (blog)

[www.krigsbarn.com](http://www.krigsbarn.com)

Organisation of Finnish Children of War, Seundun Sotalapset:

**[www.sotalapset.fi](http://www.sotalapset.fi)**

Organisation of children of victims and children of the perpetrators:

**[www.one-by-one.org](http://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](http://www.nach.ws)**

Dachau Institut Psychologie und Pädagogik:

**[www.Dachau-institut.de](http://www.Dachau-institut.de)**

Kriegskind Deutschland:

**[www.kriegskind.de](http://www.kriegskind.de)**

Website for the postwar-generation:

**[www.Forumkriegsenkel.com](http://www.Forumkriegsenkel.com)**

Evacuees Reunion Association

**[www.evacuees.org.uk](http://www.evacuees.org.uk)**

Researchproject 'War and Children Identity Project', Bergen, Norway

**[www.warandchildren.org](http://www.warandchildren.org)**

Researchproject University München 'Kriegskindheit'

**[www.warchildhood.net](http://www.warchildhood.net)**

Coeurs Sans Frontières – Herzen Ohne Grenzen

**[www.coeurssansfrontieres.biz](http://www.coeurssansfrontieres.biz)**

Organisation d'enfants de guerre

**[www.nesdelaliberation.fr](http://www.nesdelaliberation.fr)**

Organisation of Us-descendants in Belgium

**[www.usad-ww2.be](http://www.usad-ww2.be)**

Childsurvivors of the Holocaust in Australië

**[www.paulvalent.com](http://www.paulvalent.com)**

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

**[www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)**

Aktion Sühnezeigen Friedensdienste

**[www.asf-ev.de](http://www.asf-ev.de)**

Organisation of German Lebensbornkinder

**[www.lebensspuren-deutschland.eu](http://www.lebensspuren-deutschland.eu)**

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

**[www.childrenbornofwar.org](http://www.childrenbornofwar.org)**

Organisation Genocide Prevention Now

**[www.genocidepreventionnow.org](http://www.genocidepreventionnow.org)**

Basque Children of '37 Association UK

**[www.basquechildren.org](http://www.basquechildren.org)**

International Study of the Organized Persecution of Children

**[www.holocaustchildren.org](http://www.holocaustchildren.org)**

Partners in Confronting Collective Atrocities

**[www.p-cca.org](http://www.p-cca.org)**

War Love Child – Oorlogsliefdekind

**[www.oorlogsliefdekind.nl/en](http://www.oorlogsliefdekind.nl/en)**

Children of Soviet Army soldiers

**[www.russenkinder.de](http://www.russenkinder.de)**

Stichting Oorlogsgetroffenen in de Oost

**[www.s-o-o.nl](http://www.s-o-o.nl)**

Philippine Nikkei-Jin Legal Support Center

**[www.pnlsc.com](http://www.pnlsc.com)**

Austrian children of Afroamerican soldier-fathers

**[www.afroaustria.at](http://www.afroaustria.at)**

Organisation tracing American GI fathers

**[www.gitrace.org](http://www.gitrace.org)**