



Research Centre for Evacuee and War Child Studies

Children in War

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‘Children in War’ The International Journal of Evacuee and War Child Studies

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Preface

Preface This is the 6th edition of the Children in War journal which is now becoming well known as a conduit through which up to date research on various aspects of War Child research is channelled. This edition contains contributions from both established researchers in the field and post-graduate students who are embarking on their research careers. In addition, many of the contributors to this and previous editions recently got together to produce a new interdisciplinary book entitled "Children: The Invisible Victims of War" published by DSM (ISBN 9780954722944). September 9-11th 2009 the 3rd Interdisciplinary War Child conference will take place at the University of Reading. For full details please contact the Conference Administrator Dr Carol Fuller on c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk.

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‘Partez Partez’, Again And Again: The Efficacy of Evacuation as a Means of Protecting Children from Bombing in France 1939-45

Lindsey Dodd ¹

In March 1939, The Times reported that ‘evacuation is still looked upon in France as the surest refuge from air attacks for the urban population’,² reflecting the view widely disseminated to the French population in civil defence literature just before the outbreak of war. The brochure ‘How to protect yourself in case of aerial attack’ informed readers that ‘no part of French territory is safe from aerial attack and the big urban centres will probably be the most sought after objectives’. It wanted to reassure readers: ‘First of all, the Administration has established plans to distance the population in case of aerial attack’. While the air threat was elaborated in educative brochures, citizens were assured that their departure from ‘particularly threatened zones’ was planned. However, little detail was given concerning what to do when the moment came; ‘Do not wait. Leave, leave’ (partez, partez) was, at this stage, the extent of practical advice.³

Yet the evacuation of the civilian population of France, a key means of protection against aerial attack, features very little in historical discussion on the period. Henri Amouroux treats the civilian evacuation from Alsace and Lorraine at the invasion of France, and evacuees’ ensuing difficulties in rural south-west France.⁴ Other works examining the 1940 exodus have understandably concentrated on events of 1940 and their aftermath, with reference to pre-war plans thrown into disarray by the rapidity of invasion.⁵ These too tend to be regionally focussed, again with emphasis on Alsace and Lorraine or, more briefly, Paris. Dombrowski deals with the weakness of official evacuation policy, and experiences of evacuees, but largely confines her research to those civilians from the north-east who became refugees during 1940, and their subsequent history.⁶ This is evacuation as a response to invasion rather than to bombing. In his study of children in wartime France, Gilles Ragache touches on the effects of bombing mostly in connection with the Allied landings, and his comments on evacuation are limited to Normandy and extremely brief.⁷

One explanation for this lacuna is suggested by Laura Lee Downs in her comparative study of childrearing in France and Britain. The ‘far more dramatic events that soon followed’ invasion – exodus, occupation, survival, persecution, resistance – have obscured the 1939 evacuation in national memory: ‘it is perhaps not surprising that evacuation has disappeared from popular memory, that French people today are surprised to learn that tens of thousands of urban children were evacuated in September of 1939, and again in the spring of 1940, and again and again throughout the Occupation’. And yet it is the words ‘again and again’ which reveal evacuation as an ongoing response to the air offensive, and make a wider study worthwhile to understand its success in application and acceptance by a population which may not remember dislocation as ‘evacuation’, but which nonetheless included a growing number of refugees – children and adults – seeking shelter from bombing. Downs comments that the long tradition of the colonies de vacances meant that parting with children presented ‘no sharp rupture with past practice’.⁸ French parents were used to entrusting their children to collective centres or rural families, and rural

1 This research forms part of a doctoral thesis on children under the Allied bombs in France, 1940-45, part of the AHRC-funded project ‘Bombing, States and Peoples in Western Europe, 1939-1945’. The author would like to thank Dr Martin Parsons, Professor Andrew Knapp and an anonymous reviewer for their comments on a draft. All translations are by the author.

2 *The Times*, ‘A.R.P. abroad. Policies on the continent’, 25 Mar. 1939.

3 ‘Ce qu’il faut faire pour vous protéger en cas d’attaque aérienne’ (Secrétariat général permanent de la défense passive, undated), A(rchives) M(unicipales de) B(oulogne-)B(illancourt), 6H 3, pp. 1, 12.

4 Henri Amouroux, *La Grande Histoire des Français sous l’Occupation*, vol. i, *Le peuple du désastre, 1939-40* (Robert Laffont, Paris, 1976), pp. 161-168.

5 For example, Jean Vidalenc, *L’exode de mai-juin 1940* (PUF, Paris, 1957); Hanna Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler: France 1940* (OUP, Oxford, 2007).

6 N. A. Dombrowski, ‘Beyond the battlefield: the French civilian exodus of May-June 1940’, unpublished PhD thesis, New York University, 1995 (UMI, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1996).

7 Gilles Ragache, *Les Enfants de la Guerre: Vivre, Survivre, Lire et Jouer en France 1939-1949* (Perrin, Paris, 1997), pp. 174-181.

8 *Colonies de vacances* were summer camps in the countryside, originally set up by charitable organisations in the late nineteenth century to reward the most successful urban schoolchildren for their scholastic achievement, and later developing into a means of ‘preventative hygiene’ to boost the health of poor working-class children. In the early twentieth century, many municipal administrations took over from charities in the running of the colonies. Some colonies were based on collective placements, where the children lived together in a communal building, or on family placements, where individuals or smaller groups of children lodged with peasant families in the same district (Laura Lee Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960* (Duke University Press, Durham NC, 2002).

families were used to looking after urban children. She writes that the difference from this annual summer ‘mass migration’ was that now it took place ‘under the shadow of war’. But this shadow altered its purpose, timing, participants and meaning, giving it significantly different characteristics and outcomes.⁹

Nomenclature could provide further explanation for evacuation’s low profile in French collective memory. ‘Evacuation’ referred to one specific situation: the compulsory retreat of civilians, on military order, from ground combat zones. Thus évacuation was not the protection of the population from air attack, but protection from the encroachment of armed combat more generally. This explains why previous studies discussing ‘evacuation’ focus on those evacuated from the north-east. Several other forms of evacuation were envisaged between the wars. The government ‘Instruction’ of 4 February 1930 projected the evacuation of factories vital for wartime production, the short-distance evacuation of workers (and their families) who would commute into more dangerous locations, and the ‘long distance retreat’ of part of the non-active population. Repliment (retreat), affecting frontier regions only, would provide protection in case of invasion. Reception departments were allocated, and discreet surveys of potential placements took place. A further government ‘Instruction’ of 25 November 1931 fixed the principles of dispersion (dispersal) – reducing the density of an urban population by moving people out of the centre, but within a limited periphery – and éloignement (distancing) – transporting to less exposed regions the populations of urban centres for which measures of dispersion would be insufficient. The government ‘Instruction’ of 18 June 1935 detailed with more precision the repliment of the non-active population, stretching from the Pas-de-Calais, along the eastern frontier, down to the Var. Therefore under a broad heading of ‘evacuation’ came four distinct activities, two conceived for frontier regions (évacuation and repliment), and two protecting people and resources from aerial attack (dispersion and éloignement).¹⁰

These four activities reflected widely held ideas about the shape of future war, as well as the military attitude towards civil defence planning. In the first place, restricting évacuation and repliment to the north and east fixed the anticipated provenance of attack, and foresaw any invasion as limited, on the static lines of World War One. The only urban centres for which dispersion and éloignement had been planned by September 1939 were Paris, Lyon and Marseilles, suggesting a restricted conception of possible aerial targets, and indicating the confidence placed in the French Air Force to prevent enemy incursions. The faith in frontier fortifications and the celebrated strength of the French army precluded public discourse on civilian evacuation: to plan would be to admit the potential failure of the Maginot line. Discussion could sow dangerous seeds of defeatism. Vidalenc comments that deeper, and more public, planning was thought to be ‘systematically alarmist, or even defeatist’.¹¹ As long as it remained psychologically important to uphold the idea of unbreachable borders, and a confident front in the face of the enemy, open discussion of evacuation was untenable. Thus planning was constrained by a narrow vision of future warfare, and by what it was possible to communicate. This contributed to the confusion of summer 1940, but likewise hindered a coherent nationwide pre-war plan, well publicised and well researched.¹²

At the outbreak of war in September 1939, such measures as had been planned were put into action. Paris, Lyon and Marseilles experienced the dispersion and éloignement of part of their populations, and citizens in border regions were evacuated under official schemes; many more took part in the enormous self-evacuation of the exodus as the German army advanced in summer 1940. Yet pre-war plans saw the Germans as the only potential assailant, and took for granted that they would not penetrate far beyond the border. Defeat and armistice changed everything: assault now came from another direction as the RAF became the Allies’ sole means of offensive warfare on the continent. Occupied France, with factories, communications and military installations in German use, came under attack. Evacuation evolved with the evolution of targets, now ranging from the big cities to a wider array of ‘strategic points’ than had been conceived in pre-war planning. The schemes of the 1930s were now inadequate, the safe havens of the reception departments – such as Finistère for people from the Nord-Pas-de-Calais – becoming dangerous themselves, or forbidden zones. The principles of évacuation, repliment, dispersion and éloignement endured, but had to adapt to the consequences of occupation and collaboration. As one of those consequences was exposure to bombing, dispersion and éloignement became more significant and, to be successful, necessitated – although did not always engender – the cooperation of central, local and occupying authorities, and the people themselves.

9 Laura Lee Downs, ‘Milieu social ou milieu familial? Theories and practices of childrearing among the popular classes in twentieth-century France and Britain: the case of evacuation (1939-45)’, *Family and Community History*, 8.1, May 2005, pp. 49-65, 57. Doctors in the immediate post-war period also seemed more concerned with the effects of malnutrition, interrupted schooling and moral issues resulting from leading ‘double lives’ in resistant or blackmarketeering families or than of family separation or bomb trauma (Alfred Brauner, *Ces enfants ont vécu la guerre* (Les Éditions Sociales Françaises, Paris, 1946); Robert Debré, ‘Conditions of children in France under the Occupation’, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, vol. 38, 1945, pp. 447-9).

10 Vidalenc, *L’exode*, pp. 15-20; Minister of National Defence and War (Civil Defence) to all Prefects, ministers and military commanders, ‘Dispersion et éloignement’, 30 Jan. 1939, A(rchives) M(unicipales et) C(ommunautaires de) B(rest), 4H 4.35. In this paper I will use the word English word ‘evacuation’ as an umbrella term, although according to contemporary official terminology, I am frequently talking about *dispersion* and *éloignement*.

11 Vidalenc, *L’exode*, pp. 17, 25.

12 Limited evacuation was tested during the Munich crisis, and its poor functioning was re-examined in the months that followed (M. Parsons, *War Child: Children Caught in Conflict* (Tempus, Stroud, 2008), p. 188).

Evacuation should have afforded protection to that part of the population which did not have, or did not easily have, access to secure bomb shelters. This paper examines the efficacy of evacuation in France as a measure of civil defence against bombing, with particular reference to children, using as case studies the towns of Boulogne-Billancourt and Brest. The success of evacuation depended on whether, and when, civilians left a dangerous place, whether they stayed away and were therefore absent at later dangerous moments, and whether lives were spared as a result. This paper will briefly outline evacuation from both towns during the war. It will then consider the methods used to encourage departures. Finally it will analyse whether evacuation was successful in reducing the potential for child casualties.

I) THE COURSE OF EVACUATION

Changing patterns of Allied bombing led to waves of evacuation at different moments in the war in the two case study towns. (See tables A and B for bombing casualties in each town.) For the Parisian suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt, home of the main Renault plant, waves of evacuation occurred in autumn 1939, spring 1940, following the raid on the Renault factory in March 1942, and again after the raid in April 1943, through until summer 1944. In the Breton naval port of Brest, the population did not start to move until autumn 1940. A child evacuation was encouraged from late 1941, and two further waves of evacuation occurred in spring 1943 and August 1944.

Table A: Bombing casualties in Brest, June 1940-September 1944¹³

Date	Civilians killed	Civilians injured
June-December 1940	28	60
January 1941	10	23
February 1941	9	28
March 1941	13	30
April 1941	75	52
May 1941	11	21
June 1941	7	12
July 1941	102	146
September 1941	1	18
October 1941	0	1
November 1941	0	3
December 1941	9	47
January 1942	6	11
February 1942	2	5
November 1942	13	18
January 1943	4	7
February 1943	46	28
March 1943	34	22
April 1943	39	23
August-September 1944	83	Not available

NB: months during which no casualties from bombing were recorded are not listed.

¹³ 'Victimes des bombardements' (18 June 1940-5 Jan.1941), 8 Jan. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (9-5 Feb. 1941), 5 Feb. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (5 Feb.-5 Mar. 1941), 5 Mar. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (5 Mar.-5 Apr. 1941), 5 Apr. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (5-30 Apr. 1941), 3 May 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (1-31 May 1941), 3 June 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (1-30 June 1941), 1 July 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (1-31 July 1941), 31 July 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (Sept. 1941), 3 Oct. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (Nov. 1941), 6 Dec. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (Dec. 1941), 2 Jan. 1942; 'Victimes des bombardements' (Jan. 1942), 2 Feb. 1942; lists of bombing victims for St-Pierre Quilbignon, Brest, Lambézellac and St-Marc, for raids up to 16 Apr. 1943 (untitled and undated), AMCB, 4H 4.25.

Table B: Bombing casualties in Boulogne-Billancourt during the four air raids suffered by the town¹⁴

Date	Civilians killed	Civilians injured
3/4 March 1942	371	317
4 April 1943	327	527
4 September 1943	4	10
15 September 1943	5	31

a) Evacuation from Boulogne-Billancourt

When war broke out, the municipality of Boulogne-Billancourt set about implementing the evacuation plans for children which had been communicated to parents since early 1939.¹⁵ About 15,000 Parisian children were already in the countryside on holiday, and 30,000 more were due to join them.¹⁶ A number of the extra contingent left Boulogne-Billancourt in convoys organised by the Prefecture of the Seine on 30 August and headed to the Loire-Inférieure, accompanied by their teachers. The majority of Boulogne's 8,500-strong school population left the town (either on state-sponsored schemes or through family connections), and schools were closed. However, many child evacuees to the Loire-Inférieure could not be adequately housed, and an angry protest from the Mayors of the Seine enabled the children to be moved to the Nièvre where several Parisian suburbs had a well-rooted *colonie de vacances* based on a network of family placements.¹⁷ Yet the scandal of original conditions and the calmness of the Phoney War led many parents to collect their children, forcing schools to reopen in Boulogne-Billancourt.¹⁸ In spring 1940, Morizet again attempted to persuade parents to evacuate children in advance of any attack: around 11 per cent of children were evacuated to the Nièvre by the municipality. The remainder would either be sent to friends or relatives in the country, or would stay at home.¹⁹ In June 1940 the pace of events and weight of frightened people fleeing the capital following the invasion upset many plans to move to safety the children left to their parents' care. After the Armistice was signed, the civilian population of Boulogne-Billancourt expanded as refugees were repatriated.²⁰ The next wave of evacuation followed the Allied bombing of the Renault factory in March 1942; areas of the town were declared 'threatened zones', and all children were obliged to leave, evacuated under the auspices of the Prefecture to one of seven departments.²¹ When Boulogne-Billancourt's most deadly raid occurred in April 1943 it was estimated that 8,108 children under fifteen were present in the town.²² The voluntary evacuation of children was then stepped up a gear, but not made compulsory. By 5 May, 2,000 children had left the Parisian suburbs bound for the Creuse, 800 of them from Boulogne-Billancourt.²³ At the end of July, the Mayor estimated the child population of Boulogne to be around 3,000.²⁴ The final municipal convoy left for the Yonne in July 1944 and by September planning was underway to bring the children home.²⁵

b) Evacuation from Brest

Brest's evacuation experience concerned adults as much as children, and was firmly controlled, from June 1940, by the occupiers. Finistère, initially chosen as a reception department, was told in April 1939 to expect refugees to swell its population by 75 to 100 per cent.²⁶ The naval port of Brest was designated a 'sensitive point', and some planning was done by local authorities for the dispersal of part of the population into the surrounding

14 Slight differences in death and injury tolls are found in different documentation and publications. For consistency within this article, only those published immediately post-war by the town's municipal authorities are used, found in Mairie de Boulogne-Billancourt, 'Réponse aux renseignements demandés par Melle Levenez (Préfecture de la Seine – poste 247) sur les bombardements subis par la Ville de Boulogne-Billancourt', 26 Jan. 1945, AMBB, 6H 72.

15 Masbou (Inspector General of Public Education for the Seine) to all headteachers in the Seine, 3 Feb. 1939, AMBB, 6H 17.

16 *The Times*, 'School children leave Paris', 30 Aug. 1939.

17 Henri Sellier (Mayor of Suresnes) to Marx Dormoy (Minister of the Interior), 4 Sept. 1939, AMBB, 6H 17; Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land*, p. 149.

18 See, for example, the complaint of Dufaut, a teacher evacuated to the Loire-Inférieure, to André Morizet (Mayor of Boulogne-Billancourt), 31 Aug. 1939, AMBB, 6H 17; Hanna Diamond mentions two other 'scandals' of this evacuation: the neglected orphans at La Pommeraiie and the parental outrage at the mixing of working-class and middle-class children (Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, p. 24).

19 Union Amicale des Maires de la Seine, 'Enquête en vue de l'évacuation des enfants', undated (probably March 1940), AMBB, 6H 18. Twenty per cent of parents opted to keep their children at home.

20 It is estimated that the population of Boulogne-Billancourt fell from 72,306 people in March 1940 to around 25,000 by June 1940. It increased in August to 45,000, climbing to 83,000 in November (Albert Bezançon (with André Gaye and Gérard Caillet), *Histoire de Boulogne-Billancourt*, (Ville de Boulogne-Billancourt and Éditions Joël Cuénot, Boulogne-Billancourt, 1984, p. 80).

21 Groupement d'action des services sociaux de la Seine, 'Instructions pour l'évacuation des enfants de zones menacées', 1 June 1942, 6H 19.

22 Robert Colmar (Mayor of Boulogne-Billancourt) to René Bouffet (Prefect of the Seine), 18 Sept. 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

23 Bouffet to Mayors of the Seine, 14 May 1943, AMBB, 6H18; Mairie de Boulogne-Billancourt, 'Statistique du nombre d'enfants de Boulogne-Billancourt évacués par la Mairie et la Préfecture de la Seine depuis le 3 Mars 1943', undated (after July 1944), AMBB, 6H 19.

24 Colmar to Camille Giraud (Director of Departmental Affairs for the Seine), 18 Sept. 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

25 Notice to families from Alphonse Le Gallo (President of the Special Delegation for Boulogne-Billancourt), 6 Nov. 1944, AMBB, 6H 18.

26 Angeli (Prefect of Finistère) to Mayors of Finistère, 25 Apr. 1939, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

countryside.²⁷ The outbreak of war saw no decrease in the town's population, but when the Allied bombing began in September 1940, civilians ebbed away of their own accord: orders to evacuate were forbidden by the Germans, who needed to maintain economic activity in the town to support troops and the large workforce of the Todt organisation. About 30,000 people had left by July 1941, leaving a population of around 35,000 in Brest.²⁸ Air raids intensified during spring 1941; in February, following a hit on a hospital, the non-active population were strongly advised to leave.²⁹ A particularly deadly raid in July led the Mayor to request that the order be given for the non-active population to evacuate. His request was denied by the Germans.³⁰ To encourage more parents to send their children away, it was announced in autumn 1941 that schools in Brest would not reopen, and from January 1942 small convoys of children began to leave, bound for the Sarthe.³¹ The city of Lyon 'adopted' Brest in December 1941, offering family placements for 400 petits brestois (children from Brest). Take-up was poor: 28 children left in March, and another 15 in May, leading to recriminations against parents who were 'selfishly' keeping their children in Brest.³² From late 1942, increasing losses in Allied shipping led the RAF to begin a heavy bombing campaign against the U-boat bases in the French Atlantic ports. The unprecedented step of area bombing French towns was agreed by the War Cabinet and Lorient took the first onslaught. Fearing the same fate would befall Brest, the evacuation of 12,000 inutiles ('useless' people) was ordered on 9 February, and regular convoys of children and adults began to leave for the Sarthe and the Loir-et-Cher.³³ The population fell from 41,191 in February 1943 to 26,995 in April.³⁴ The next wave of evacuation took place before the intense military action of the siege of Brest, in which 90 per cent of buildings in the town were destroyed. Platskommandant Habermann ordered the total evacuation of Brest on 3 August, and until 17 September the population was fewer than 3,000 people.³⁵ Repatriation began after Brest's liberation, but it would be months, sometimes years, before many evacuees returned to a city that had changed beyond recognition.

II) GETTING PEOPLE TO LEAVE AND STAY AWAY

The great reluctance of the population to evacuate is evident in both towns: despite opportunities and assistance, even under orders, civilians chose, wherever possible, to remain. Judging the efficacy of evacuation to protect children depends on two broad factors: did they leave and stay away? Were they out of the danger area during key moments of threat? Part II considers how the authorities encouraged people to leave and stay away, why departures were restricted, and why many drifted home. Part III analyses the consequences of having a proactive or reactive evacuation policy at particularly dangerous moments.

a) Encouraging departure

The health benefits of the countryside were put to use by the authorities to encourage urban parents to send children away. They drew on a familiar theme of the colonies de vacances, echoed in Vichy's 'return to the land' policy which idealised peasant life;³⁶ yet now there was an additional incentive: protection from bombing. Assistants sociaux (social workers, often, during evacuation, teachers) looking after evacuated children emphasised gains in height and weight, the availability of meat, eggs, milk and butter, and food in general, compared to the increasingly undernourished cities. Dr Bezançon, reporting on children from Boulogne-Billancourt in the Creuse, noted that they had 'more abundant and substantial rations' than at home, and consequently 'most children are putting on weight, some very obviously, and those who were anaemic or weak are definitely improving'.³⁷ Regular reports were passed on to parents. Time spent in the country would benefit children's physical health, but also their psychological health and development. Attempting to persuade mothers to evacuate their children in spring 1940, Mayor André Morizet wrote: 'During the early years, the organisms which control the nervous system are developing. In the very young, repeated alerts are a terrible disturbance, which could have the most serious consequences for their future development.'³⁸ Evacuating your child, claimed the authorities, was to put the child's health and wellbeing first.

27 Daudin (Head of Civil Defence at the Ministry of War and National Defence) to Angeli, transmitted to Victor Le Gorgeu (Senator-Mayor of Brest), 19 May 1939, AMCB, 4H 4.35; 'Ville de Brest. Plan de dispersion', undated, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

28 'Incidences des principaux bombardements subis par la Ville de Brest au cours de la guerre', 10 Apr. 1946, AMCB, 4H 4.25.

29 Draft 'Avis à la population', signed Bolten (Kreiskommandant of Brest) and Le Gorgeu, 24 Apr. 1941, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

30 Le Gorgeu to Georges (Prefect of Finistère), 1 Aug. 1941, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

31 *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 9 Sept 1941, AMCB, 4H 4.36; *La Dépêche de Brest et de l'Ouest*, 22 Jan. 1942, AMCB, 4H 4.36. Thirty-four little boys left for Château-du-Loir on 21 Jan.

32 *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 2 June 1942, AMCB, 4H 4.29.

33 *La Dépêche de Brest et de l'Ouest*, 12 Feb. 1943, 4 H 4.36; Mairie of Brest to M. l'abbé de Petitcorps, 4 Oct. 1963, AMCB, 4H 4.36.

34 'Incidences des principaux bombardements subis par la Ville de Brest au cours de la guerre', 10 Apr. 1946, AMCB, 4H 4.25.

35 Habermann to Victor Eusen (President of the Special Delegation for Brest), 3 Sept. 1944, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

36 Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1972), pp. 201-210.

37 'Note du Docteur Bezançon. Visite en Creuse', 17 Aug. 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

38 Morizet to mothers of Boulogne-Billancourt, 'Circulaire concernant l'organisation de l'éloignement des enfants', 8 Mar. 1940, AMBB, 6H 17.

Pressure to evacuate was increased by playing on other parental emotions. Following the poor take up of placements in Lyon, the newspaper *L'Ouest-Éclair* ran a forceful campaign to persuade more families to avail their children of 'all the advantages that this generous Lyonnais welcome will bring them'.³⁹ In June 1942, the newspaper published letters from foster mothers in Lyon, one of whom praised the mother of her well-behaved charge: 'I congratulate you', she wrote, 'on how he has been raised.' This linked 'good' mothering with evacuation; mothers who kept their children at home were associated with being a 'bad' mother who preferred to 'keep her child close, in an unhealthy atmosphere, than send him to shelter... [she] would rather make him work in the house, so she can do nothing herself, and it is noted that, without exception, it is the least moral families who hide themselves behind false excuses of morality to disguise their selfish obstruction.'⁴⁰ Labelling parents selfish, ungrateful or less moral played on guilt and shame.

Another means of encouragement was the assurance of quality of care. When children from Boulogne-Billancourt were moved from the Loire-Inférieure to the Nièvre in 1939, and evacuation recommenced in spring 1940, parents were told their child could be housed with a former foster mother, or with 'brothers, sisters or friends with whom he would like to live', in an attempt to reduce disorientation and homesickness.⁴¹ When the bretois authorities and press were campaigning to encourage parents to send children to Lyon, the family welcome was emphasised as safe and familiar for a lonely child: 'a family just like yours will welcome each of your children. Leaving your home where there may not be comfort or safety, but where there is a mother's tenderness and a father's vigilance, it is a father, a mother, that they will find in Lyon'.⁴² It was intended for the children from Boulogne-Billancourt that their teachers would remain with them: acting as assistants sociaux, teachers were charged with daily inspections of health and welfare, keeping the Mayor of Boulogne informed, and through him, the children's families. The assistant social was also to maintain contact between children: every Thursday afternoon, he or she would 'assemble at the local school children from the same place, talk with them, ask after their health, their needs, help with writing their letters home, organise games and walks together'.⁴³ Familiar contact and frequent communication with home intended to give the children psychological security and assure parents of their wellbeing.⁴⁴

While appeals concerning health and living conditions sought to promote the voluntary evacuation of children, parental reluctance endured, and the authorities were forced towards compulsion. One means of forcefully promoting the evacuation of children – still voluntary – from dangerous urban centres was to close schools. If the child was to be schooled, or at least supervised during the day, evacuation was the only option. All Boulogne-Billancourt's schools were closed indefinitely in September 1943, while in Brest most did not reopen in autumn 1941. Parents were informed that 'no school age children must be found in the streets'; if they were apprehended, parents would be punished.⁴⁵ Yet the failure of voluntary evacuation led most of Brest's schools to reopen in 1942; following the heavier bombing of winter 1942/3, it took a new tactic to ensure the departure of the inutile population. Not only were schools closed, this time permanently, but the population were advised that from 25 February only ration cards for E, J3, A, T and C would be renewed; rations for J1, J2 and V categories (children aged three to 13 and the elderly over 70 years) could only be obtained with an evacuation form indicating their imminent departure.⁴⁶ The denial of rations to the part of the population obliged to leave certainly precipitated more departures. However, as the instruction was repeated in May 1943, and again in March 1944, it cannot have cleared the unwanted population as effectively as intended.⁴⁷

b) Restricting departure

In the face of strong encouragement, on the part of municipal authorities, for adults and children to evacuate dangerous areas, the fact that many refused to leave, even after evacuation became compulsory, created a battle between those concerned for public safety, and a public prepared to take the risk. There were genuine concerns

39 *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 3 Apr. 1942, AMCB, 4H 4.29.

40 *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 2 June 1942, AMCB, 4H 4.29.

41 Wagner (Assistant Mayor of Boulogne-Billancourt) to Dufaut, 20 Sept. 1939, AMBB, 6H 17.

42 *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 18 Feb. 1942, AMCB, 4 H 4.29.

43 Ozouf (Primary Education Inspector for the Seine), 'Note destinée aux instituteurs et institutrices de la Seine faisant fonction d'assistants sociaux' près des enfants évacués', 4 May 1943, AMBB, 6H 18.

44 In many cases, the intention to house children from the same schools in the same commune, with their teachers, failed. Complaints were made to the Mayor during later evacuations that placements organised by the Red Cross had not taken account of children's attachments (for example, Courivaud to Colmar, 27 Aug. 1943, and Chauveau to Colmar, 27 Sept. 1943, AMBB, 6H 19).

45 *Le Télégramme*, 8 Nov. 1941, AMCB, 4H 4.36.

46 *La Dépêche de Brest et de l'Ouest*, 19 Feb. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.36; category E referred to infants younger than 3 years old, the J3 group were young people aged between 13 and 21, A referred to adults from 21 to 70, category T was for workers in physically demanding jobs, and C was for agricultural workers aged over 21 (Alfred Sauvy, *La Vie Économique des Français de 1939 à 1945* (Flammarion, Paris, 1978), p. 121).

47 Mairie de Brest, 'Avis important aux personnes évacuées de l'agglomération bretoise', 16 May 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.35, and draft note to the press, 17 Mar. 1944, 4H 4.35.

about evacuation: this was not a case of perversity in the face of the authorities. Other restrictions on evacuation emanated from Vichy and from the occupiers.

Financial reasons preventing the departure of children were often paramount. Following the first daylight attack on Brest in July 1941, the Mayor told the Prefect of the 'marked reluctance of the population towards using the facilities on offer', noting in particular that the 'financial question often arises'. The loss of ration cards, were the child to be evacuated, could have a marked impact on a family budget: 'modest households that can barely survive when the family is together are afraid they will not be able to when separated.'⁴⁸ A similar letter from the Mayor of Boulogne-Billancourt to his Prefect related parents' reasons for not evacuating their children, citing a shortage of food 'due to the reduced number of ration cards in the family' as a major concern.⁴⁹ These mayors were sensitive to the financial restrictions which prevented poorer families from evacuating their children, and wanted to help overcome them.

The thought of sending a child away was fraught with anxiety, and families feared 'a total separation of the family', particularly as reception departments were distant and regular contact could not be maintained.⁵⁰ Mayor Robert Colmar of Boulogne-Billancourt cited the 'desire to keep children close' and 'fears that the child will be unhappy, ill, or will not receive the same care as if he were at home' as key to parents' non-compliance.⁵¹ This was not only a concern over separation, but a concern about quality of life. Despite positive propaganda and reported improved health, rumours acted to restrain parents. Stories circulating about the conditions of the 1940 exodus did nothing to encourage voluntary evacuation. More than that, however, particularly in the Seine, the administrative mess surrounding the evacuation of September 1939, and its 'deplorable sleeping and hygiene conditions',⁵² increased reluctance, despite assurances that the situation would not be replicated. The colonies de vacances may have made sending children away a familiar part of French family life, but did not diminish parental anxiety, particularly in the heightened climate of wartime dangers.

French administrators faced a battle not only with parents but with restrictions placed on who could be evacuated. Children's health could affect their chance of being accepted on evacuation schemes. In practice, this was more likely to affect poorer families. The conditions of acceptance for a child onto the evacuation programme run by the Factories' Social Committee in Boulogne-Billancourt were echoed elsewhere: 'Children showing symptoms of contagious diseases or afflicted with urinary incontinence cannot be accepted.'⁵³ It would be impossible to estimate how many parents did not register their child because he or she was a bedwetter, had headlice or an illness which reflected shamefully on the household. However, indignant protests from the reception departments indicate that many children slipped through this net and were evacuated in spite of their problems.⁵⁴ A similar consideration, again more likely to affect poorer families, was the restriction on children leaving for the countryside with incomplete trousseaux (required clothing, shoes, towels etc) and ration cards. The Mayors of the Seine were informed that a child 'will be refused if his ration cards are incomplete'.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, as with bedwetting, lice and diseases, restrictions may have discouraged but did not prevent children from leaving. In fact, regulations were so widely ignored that the refugee service at the Ministry of the Interior addressed a letter to all Prefects in the Occupied Zone, pointing out that 'over 50 per cent of children have arrived in their place of refuge without the least trousseau. Furthermore, many are without clothing or food ration cards or only have cards from which the tickets have already been detached'.⁵⁶ In response, tighter checks were demanded, the departmental vestiaire (store of second-hand clothing) supplemented incomplete trousseaux, and ration tickets were taken from other family members to make up a full complement.⁵⁷

A strong and coherent national policy emanating from the Vichy would have helped to promote evacuation; as it was, policy evolution was slow and ad hoc, reacting to rather than anticipating events. In November 1941, a government circular instructed Prefects of coastal departments to plan the evacuation of children and pregnant women, a 'simple precaution' at that stage: 'No other measure of evacuation is envisaged'.⁵⁸ The Mayors of the bombed coastal towns demanded in February 1942 that the government put together a comprehensive programme

48 Le Gorgeu to Georges, 1 Aug. 1941, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

49 Colmar to Bouffet, 20 May 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

50 Le Gorgeu to Georges, 1 Aug. 1941, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

51 Colmar to Bouffet, 20 May 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

52 Letter of protest from seven *boulonnais* teachers to Morizet, 9 Sept. 1939, AMBB, 6H 17.

53 Comité Sociale des Usines de Boulogne-Billancourt, undated, AMBB, 6H 18.

54 Bertrand (Primary Education Inspector for the Seine) to Colmar, 1 May 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

55 Bouffet to Mayors of the Seine, 16 July 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

56 Dobler (Director of Refugee Services at Ministry of Interior) to all Prefects in the Occupied Zone, 16 July 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

57 Bouffet to Mayors of the Seine, 16 July 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

58 J.-P. Ingrand (Prefect-delegate for the Ministry of the Interior in the Occupied Zone) to Prefects of the coastal departments, 27 Nov. 1941, A(rchives) D(épartementales) N(ord), 1W 1482.

of evacuation – the November circular had made little impact.⁵⁹ It took the bombing of Boulogne-Billancourt in March 1942 to move policy forward, now widening its scope to include a number of inland ‘threatened sectors’. A circular of 3 April 1942 strongly advised the coordination of effort between municipalities, the Red Cross and Secours National, but no structure was established to unite disparate bodies,⁶⁰ and a month later the Mayors of the coastal towns complained that they felt abandoned by the central government.⁶¹ By summer 1942, Prefects were being told by Vichy to prepare for ‘massive’ evacuations ‘à froid’ (cold), meaning in advance of serious attack.⁶² Again it is clear that planning did not necessarily lead to activity: the destruction of Lorient, for example, in January 1943, was followed by a difficult large-scale evacuation ‘à chaud’ (hot), that is, a posteriori.⁶³ The events of January 1943 prompted the creation of the Service Interministériel de Protection contre les Événements de Guerre (SIPEG), a single government service uniting different public bodies to coordinate activity, evidence that piecemeal preparations were starting to cohere.⁶⁴ Yet the Mayors’ complaint in April that the government needed to take responsibility for evacuation shows that this coordination remained to be felt on the ground; Ingrand, representing the Ministry of the Interior, admitted that there was no ‘coordinated leadership’ from either French government or German authorities.⁶⁵ By February 1944, a national policy was starting to take shape: extending across the country, the principles of ‘*évacuation à froid*’ and ‘*évacuation à chaud*’ were elaborated to impose order on population movement, and to pull together the work of different organisations.⁶⁶ Yet German reluctance to order large scale evacuations meant that, however better informed the planning had become, actively removing a population to safety remained dependent on the occupiers’ orders.

The German authorities prevented large numbers of citizens from leaving towns at risk from sustained bombing in the areas where they exerted direct military control, in spite of pleas from the French municipal authorities. In some places, such as Saint-Nazaire, public discourse on potential evacuation was impossible, the Mayor writing in May 1942 that ‘the German authorities do not want evacuation discussed, and censor the smallest allusion, whatever it may be, to such a measure’.⁶⁷ While some coastal towns were able to organise voluntary evacuations and exert pressure on parents, this was not possible in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, controlled directly by Germany from Brussels. In February 1943, the Mayor of Dunkirk feared for his citizens: over 2,000 children still remained ‘in the town which does not have any shelter’.⁶⁸ Two months later, the Mayors of Calais, Dunkirk and Boulogne-sur-Mer complained that, although they wanted people to depart, ‘the French Administration cannot give them any instructions and the Belgian Administration does not seem to envisage any evacuation’. The Mayor of Dunkirk commented that ‘nothing can be done to prepare the evacuation of children and of the population’, and thus he saw the future ‘with a great deal of pessimism’.⁶⁹ In Brest the category of people forbidden to leave the city was so broad as to maintain a large population of adults exposed to bombing.⁷⁰ While good news for a population reluctant to leave, this was extremely trying for the French administrators with a duty of protection towards their citizens.

German resistance to ordering evacuation stemmed from several concerns. First, there was a need to maintain economic life in towns where large numbers of soldiers and essential workers were based; evacuating the ‘active’ population would reduce the facilities available. Concerning the evacuation of children, and adults more generally, the order to evacuate would send a dangerous message to civilians that Allied incursions were beyond the control of the occupiers. Retaining a population in a target location also provided a wealth of opportunities for anti-Allied German and collaborationist propaganda. Practically, large-scale population movement was difficult to administer or control, and potentially threatening to internal security. No collective movement of children was possible without the prior agreement of the occupying authorities, and destination departments were strictly controlled.⁷¹ However, policy altered as the war progressed, raids intensified and pressure on resources in urban areas increased. Forced evacuation of non-active parts of the population would ‘guarantee provisions for the remaining population’ that was obliged to stay;⁷² the occupiers would also be protecting – and be seen to be protecting – the part of the population perceived to be most vulnerable. Total evacuation was ordered when it became necessary to clear the

59 ‘Procès-verbal de la réunion des maires des villes côtières bombardées’, 28 Feb. 1942, AMCB, 4H 4.34.

60 Rivalland (Secretary-General of Police) to Prefects, 3 Apr. 1942, AND, 1W 123.

61 ‘Mémoire présenté à Monsieur le Maréchal Pétain, Chef de l’État Français, et à Monsieur Pierre Laval, Président du Conseil, par Monsieur Pierre Courant, Maire du Havre, au nom des Maires des Villes côtières bombardées du Nord et de l’Ouest’, 16 May 1942, AMCB, 4H 4.34.

62 Laval (Minister of the Interior) to Prefects, 1 Feb. 1944 gives details of circular 123 of 29 July 1942, A(rchives) D(épartementales) du C(alvados), 9W 99.

63 ‘Procès-verbal de la réunion des maires des villes côtières bombardées’, 10 Apr. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.34. See Paul Le Melleo, *Lorient à l’heure de l’évacuation: Itinéraire d’un Gavroche lorientais*, vol. ii (Liv’éditions, La Faouët, 2004) for a personal account of the civilian exodus from Lorient experienced as a boy in January 1943.

64 Laval to Prefects, 15 Feb. 1943, ADN, 1W 1482

65 ‘Procès-verbal de la réunion des maires des villes côtières bombardées’, 10 Apr. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.34.

66 Laval to Prefects, 1 Feb. 1944, ADC, 9W 99.

67 ‘Évacuation totale ou partielle des villes menacées: rapport du Maire de Saint-Nazaire’, 11 May 1942, AMBC, 4H 4.34.

68 ‘Procès-verbal de la réunion des maires des villes côtières bombardées’, 20 Feb. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.34.

69 ‘Procès-verbal de la réunion des maires des villes côtières bombardées’, 10 Apr. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.34.

70 Trouille (Sub-Prefect for Brest) to chiefs of public services in Brest, 16 Feb. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

71 Bouffet to Mayors of Paris and the suburbs, 15 Jul. 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

72 Trouille to Mayors of *bretoise* agglomeration, communication from Kreiskommandant, 17 Mar. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

'battlefield' for combat, as in advance of the siege of Brest, and to free up important resources and medical services for military use. It would also rid the towns of potentially insurgent residents. A humanitarian concern is perhaps suggested by Major Habermann's comment that the total evacuation of Brest was necessary 'to avoid inestimable losses'.⁷³

c) Drifting home

After the battle to evacuate children, it was necessary to ensure that they remained away. The effort to distance them from dangerous areas was continually undermined by the drift back to the towns. One way to encourage parents not to retrieve their children was through widespread publicity testifying to their wellbeing and happiness. Positive propaganda focused on how well received the children had been by local populations, and children's thoughts on their new homes. The number of local dignitaries greeting the petits brestois on the platform in Lyon, including the French Primate Cardinal Gerlier, showed parents that the town was taking its responsibilities very seriously. The kindness and comforts children experienced on their journey – soup, coffee, cakes, dinner, and a warm greeting at each rest break – was time and again remarked upon, while reports on their first meetings with their adoptive families in Lyon glowed – 'it's like I'm in paradise', one little boy was reported as saying.⁷⁴ The words of happy children, safe from danger, were transmitted through the press to parents back home. The *Bulletin Officiel de Boulogne-Billancourt* published a letter from 14 year-old Denise Gardet to the Prefect of the Creuse, thanking host families for their kindness: 'we've received a great deal of affection from our foster mothers who are replacing our own mums who are so far away.'⁷⁵ Children's words were also used to reassert reasons for their departure. The booklet 'Les bras ouverts' ('Open Arms'), published by the refugee service in the Lot, quoted an evacuated child's grateful words: 'We can't hear the cannons or the bombs here.' A child from Brest staying in Maine-et-Loire enthusiastically commented: 'We really eat well here!'⁷⁶ By easing parents' minds about the care that young evacuees were receiving, and reinforcing reasons for evacuation, such reports attempted to prevent children drifting back home.

Despite assurances of happiness broadcast in the press, some parents brought children home through justifiable concern for their welfare. Some parents whose children had left in the ill-prepared evacuation of 1939 not only collected their children, but refused to send them away again. The Mayor of Boulogne-Billancourt was forced on 12 September to issue a notice to parents in the town advising them 'not to pay too much attention to letters they might receive' in order to stem the retrieval: children, he said, would exaggerate.⁷⁷ Gossip and rumour played their role, and when Boulogne-Billancourt sought to recommence evacuation in 1940, parents were told 'don't lend your ears to any "tall tales"'.⁷⁸ In 1943 Mme Guerin addressed an angry letter to Mayor Colmar on the subject of her recently returned son: 'It's shameful to send a child home in such a sorry state, his socks rotten and his feet covered with sores which have now stuck to his socks. It's been three weeks since he changed his underwear and in six months they only changed the bedsheets once; all his things are in pieces and none of them clean. That's the kind of hygiene they have down there!'⁷⁹ Adults visiting children brought back stories which contributed to the negative image: in one case the Mayor had to intervene to prevent a furious mother collecting her child who was, she had learnt, being forced to attend church services by his host family.⁸⁰ The constant sending and returning of children meant that at dangerous moments, many who could have been distant were at the heart of a raid.

While some children were brought home, others were sent home. The Lyon-Brest Committee returned to Brest several children whose behaviour had exasperated a succession of host families. Joseph Le Bec, described as 'turbulent and undisciplined', after staying with three families, was sent to a preventorium, but as he was not ill the Committee saw itself 'obliged to take him back to his family'.⁸¹ Francine Glidic upset two families and, after a verbal warning delivered personally by the Mayor of Brest, was sent home. Her second host family found her full of 'insufferable pretensions without any relation to her origins or the type of life which she will have', evidence of a clash between a poor urban girl and her middle-class host family whose lifestyle, her foster mother commented, was 'very rich, too rich' for the girl. Francine was collected by her father, a poor worker, whose wife had recently

73 Habermann to Victor Eusen (President of the Special Delegation for Brest), 3 Sept. 1944, AMCB, 4H 4.35.

74 *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 3 Apr. 1942, AMCB, 4H 4.29; *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 2 June 1942, AMCB, 4H 4.29.

75 *Bulletin Officiel de Boulogne-Billancourt*, 11 Jan. 1944, AMBB, 6H 19.

76 'Les bras ouverts: bulletin d'information de l'œuvre départementale des petits réfugiés du Lot', Dec. 1943, AMBB, 6H 19; *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 15 Mar. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.36.

77 Morizet, 'Nouvelles des enfants évacués en Loire-Inférieure', 12 Sept. 1939, 6H 17.

78 Mairie de Boulogne-Billancourt, 'Recensement des enfants et des futures mamans', 7 Mar. 1940, AMBB, 6H 17.

79 Guerin to Colmar, 16 Dec. 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

80 See correspondence concerning Jacques Gallais, evacuee in the Creuse (all undated), AMBB, 6H 18.

81 General Secretary of the Lyon-Brest Committee Section of the Lyon Entr'aide (mutual assistance) Committee to Eusen, 22 June 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.33.

left him.⁸² Francine's sister Simone fared little better. She was found by her host Mme Verjus to be 'very backward', and gave her foster mother 'little satisfaction' because of her 'mental deficiency'. Thus the Committee was 'obliged to send her back to Brest'.⁸³ These isolated cases demonstrate that character, class and disability could jeopardise a child's safety. Getting parents to evacuate their children was not the whole battle; some of those who complied still saw their child returned to a dangerous location.

III) THE EFFICACY OF EVACUATION

It is difficult to apply a formula to demonstrate that evacuation did or did not save lives during bombing. However, suggestions can be made concerning the risks to which populations were exposed, physically and psychologically. It cannot, of course, be said that had they moved away, risks definitively disappeared. As bombing targets evolved, new targets, previously safe havens, became threatened. Thus the petits brestois were to be re-evacuated along with their new 'brothers and sisters' from Lyon in January 1944.⁸⁴ Furthermore, while life in a bombed town was hard, it must be remembered that evacuation and separation could traumatise in their own way.

In the attack on Boulogne-Billancourt of 3/4 March 1942, 305 adults and 66 children were killed. The child component comprises 17.8 per cent of total fatalities. Before the raid, the population stood at 80,844; during the year that followed the attack, it fell to 72,873, indicating that the raid may have precipitated some departures. When the USAAF raided Boulogne-Billancourt in April 1943, of the 327 people killed, 52 were children (15.9 per cent of deaths), and children made up 13.7 per cent of those who were seriously injured. Again following a raid, the town's population fell from 72,873 to 67,787 at the end of May 1943, and to its lowest point at 61,246 in August. The percentage of child victims had fallen a little. Yet despite evacuations during 1942, the vulnerability of the many children remaining in Boulogne-Billancourt endured. In March 1943, before the second raid, there were 8,108 children under 15 in Boulogne-Billancourt, comprising 11.1 per cent of the total population. It is therefore possible to suggest that children, comprising 15.9 per cent of fatalities, were comparatively more at risk than adults. This is borne out by a comparison of the proportion of the adult and child population either killed or injured during the April 1943 raid: 1.5 per cent of the total child population was killed or seriously injured, next to 1.1 per cent of the total adult population. Children remained vulnerable, and more vulnerable than adults, to death and injury during air raids.⁸⁵

A different picture emerges in Brest. The child component of fatalities examined at three moments during the war remains relatively stable: between June 1940 and June 1941, children comprised 15.6 per cent of all those killed by bombing; during January 1942, 16.7 per cent were children, and during February and March 1943, they were 15.0 per cent of fatalities. As in Boulogne-Billancourt, children remained vulnerable: there is little diminution in the proportion of children killed which a reduction in the schoolchild population – through evacuation – may have entailed. However, the proportion of the child population killed during January 1942 is the same as the proportion of the adult population killed during the same period, at 0.02 per cent, and likewise in February 1943, the proportions of children and adults killed relative to their population size are equal at 0.1 per cent. This suggests that in Brest, children do not appear to be more likely than adults to die during a raid.⁸⁶ One reason for this may be the habituation of the brestois to taking precautions during an air raid; another could be the nature of the target. The Renault factory in Boulogne-Billancourt was surrounded by workers' housing: bombs that missed targets would fall on homes. In Brest, the targets were warships and U-boat pens. Although some bombs that missed did fall on residential areas, others fell in the sea, or onto the buildings around the harbour, docks and ports. Children, perhaps, were less likely to be found in these military and tightly controlled areas. Furthermore, if children did not appear to be dying in noticeably large proportions, there was less incentive for parents to evacuate them.

The danger that faced children – and adults – living in bombed towns was not just death or injury during bombing. The aftermath could be equally traumatic, and living with the memory of cataclysmic events has a lasting impact.⁸⁷ Far greater numerically than those dead or injured were those made homeless. After the April 1943 raid in

82 Boniface (Director of Services for the Lyon-Brest Committee Section of the Lyon Entr'aide Committee) to Eusen, 8 Nov. 1943; Gaillot to Eusen, 5 Dec. 1943; Giidic to Gaillot, 1 Jan. 1944; Boniface to Eusen, 8 Feb. 1944, AMCB, 4H 4.33.

83 Verjus to Boniface, 2 Apr. 1943; Boniface to Eusen, 7 May 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.33.

84 Boniface to Eusen, 3 Jan. 1944, AMCB, 4H 4.33.

85 For statistics on population, deaths and injuries, see Mairie de Boulogne-Billancourt, 'Réponse aux renseignements demandés par Melle Levenez (Préfecture de la Seine – poste 247) sur les bombardements subis par la Ville de Boulogne-Billancourt', 26 Jan. 1945, AMBB, 6H 72; for numbers of children killed or injured, see Colmar to Bouffet, 7 July 1943, AMBB, 6H 72; for the schoolchild population, see 'Enfants d'âge scolaire encore présents à Boulogne-Billancourt', 24 May 1943, AMBB, 6H 18; and Colmar to Bouffet, 20 May 1943, AMBB, 6H 19.

86 'Incidences des principaux bombardements subis par la Ville de Brest au cours de la guerre', 10 Apr. 1946, AMCB, 4H 4.25; *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 5 Feb. 1942, 4H 4.36; Eusen to Trouille, 4 Feb. 1944, 4H 4.35; 'Victimes des bombardements' (18 June 1940-5 Jan. 1941), 8 Jan. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (9-5 Feb. 1941), 5 Feb. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (5 Feb.-5 Mar. 1941), 5 Mar. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (5 Mar.-5 Apr. 1941), 5 Apr. 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (5-30 Apr. 1941), 3 May 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (1-31 May 1941), 3 June 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (1-30 June 1941), 1 July 1941; 'Victimes des bombardements' (Jan. 1942), 2 Feb. 1942; lists of victims for St-Pierre Quilbignon, Brest, Lambézellac and St-Marc, for raids up to 16 Apr. 1943 (untitled and undated), AMCB, 4H 4.25.

87 Peter Heintz, *Splintered Innocence: An Intuitive Approach to Treating War Trauma* (Brunner-Routledge, New York and Hove, 2001).

Boulogne-Billancourt, 1,190 children were declared 'bombed-out, whose dwelling is uninhabitable', comprising 20 per cent of the total number left entirely homeless after the raid.⁸⁸ With lost possessions, unfamiliar surroundings and tumultuous living conditions, perhaps without gas, electricity or water, life was disorganised and disorientating. Contemporary studies on children bombed during the Blitz in the United Kingdom found symptoms entirely consistent with what is now understood as post-traumatic stress disorder.⁸⁹ Children had to cope with parents' distress, or suffer the pain of losing a relative or the guilt of surviving one. An eyewitness to the April 1943 raid in Boulogne-Billancourt described his experience; injured in the blast, he writes that in hospital 'I learnt that my parents had been killed on the spot...I was between them, clutched tightly...and I'm still here'.⁹⁰ Many witnessed sights or overheard conversations unsuitable for children. One woman from Boulogne-Billancourt, remembering the aftermath of the April raid, commented 'I heard my father say that there were pieces of brain stuck to the trees'.⁹¹ For those who escaped unscathed, there was still the fear of raids, and the sleepless nights in the shelters. Fifteen-year old brestois Jean Dréo's diary entries repeatedly comment on alerts and sleep, too many of the former, not enough of the latter.⁹² Between September 1941 and August 1944, Brest suffered 165 raids and 480 alerts: the disruption took its toll on inhabitants' health, sleep deprivation having a damaging impact on growth and development.⁹³

Risks remained high in target areas. Despite attempts to move people, a proactive evacuation policy faltered. Evacuations of populations before heavy raids occurred were less successful as people were so reluctant to leave and stay away. Restrictions imposed by higher authorities equally impeded the establishment of systematic, and necessarily compulsory (given popular reluctance), movement of civilians. It is clear that many evacuations happened a posteriori – in Brest and Boulogne-Billancourt after particularly deadly air raids, but also, for example, in Lorient, Nantes and La Rochelle. Lorient and its surrounding communes evacuated 75,000 people 'à chaud' in January 1943, causing chaos following the area bombing of the town. In Saint-Nazaire during the same period, however, the Mayor did not report significant child losses following heavy raids: total evacuation was ordered after the raids, but a successful a priori evacuation of the child population had already taken place.⁹⁴ It took the shock and suffering of heavy raids to alter opinion. Compulsory total evacuation took place before the biggest military campaigns – such as in Brest in advance of the siege of August-September 1944. Had the civilian population remained, losses would have been high. As it was, around 3 per cent of the population who stayed were killed, in comparison with Brest's worst previous months, July 1941 and February 1943, during each of which 0.1 per cent of the total population died.⁹⁵

Yet evacuation created a new set of traumas. The conditions of the 1939 evacuations to the Loire-Inférieure were marked by distressing living conditions for children and their guardians. Children sometimes had difficult relations with host families, or were separated from siblings, friends and familiar teachers. Indeed, separation looms large among the traumas experienced by children during wartime; for the adults they become, 'feelings of loneliness persist, which are due to separations enforced by the ruthlessness of war'.⁹⁶ According to research conducted in Britain during and after the war, the combination – and sequence – of bombing and evacuation had particular consequences for mental health. Bombing left the characteristic signs of post-traumatic stress disorder on children, such as increased anxiety and fear, night terrors and regressive behaviours like the re-emergence of bedwetting. Yet it was noticed that children who were not evacuated after bombing 'stood up to the war strain very well'; Bodman commented on the extraordinary 'toughness of the child', noticing that the symptoms of stress following raids were not long lasting.⁹⁷ Mons's investigation into 'bombed' and 'unbombed' evacuees noted that children evacuated after being bombed were more disturbed than those evacuated beforehand, and Carey-Trefzer's post-war analysis of 'war damaged children' suggested that 'deeper and more persisting' psychological problems

88 'Statistique des victimes du bombardement du 4 avril 43', 16 Apr. 1943, AMBB, 6H 72.

89 For example, 'War strain in children', report of meeting held at Tavistock Clinic, London 12 Jan. 1941, *British Medical Journal*, 25 Jan., 1941, p. 124; Frank Bodman, 'War conditions and the mental health of the child', *British Medical Journal*, 4 Oct. 1941, pp. 486-488; Spencer Eth and Robert S. Pynoos, 'Developmental perspective on psychic trauma in childhood', in ed. Charles R. Figley, *Trauma and its Wake*, vol. i, *The Study and Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (Bruner/Mazel, New York, 1985), pp. 36-52.

90 Anonymous eyewitness statement in the 'Livres d'or' of the exhibition 'Les bombardements 1942-1943' organised by the Archives Municipales de Boulogne-Billancourt, 8 May-22 June 2002, AMBB, unclassified document.

91 Anonymous eyewitness statement collected for the exhibition 'Les bombardements 1942-1943' organised by the Archives Municipales de Boulogne-Billancourt, 8 May-22 June, 2002, AMBB, unclassified document.

92 Jean Dréo, *Un gamin dans la guerre. Camets et croquis de Brest* (Éditions Le Télégramme, Brest, 2002).

93 One physiological effect of sleep deprivation is the suppression of the secretion of the nocturnal growth hormone, which requires *uninterrupted* deep sleep (Richard Gross, *Psychology: the Science of Mind and Behaviour* (Hodder, London, 2005), p. 99).

94 'Procès-verbal de la réunion des maires des villes côtières bombardées', 10 Apr. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.34.

95 'Incidences des principaux bombardements subis par la Ville de Brest au cours de la guerre', 10 Apr. 1946, AMCB, 4H 4.25; 'Victimes des bombardements' (1-31 July 1941), 31 Jul. 1941, AMCB, 4H 4.25; lists of victims for St-Pierre Quilbignon, Brest, Lambézellac and St-Marc, for raids up to 16 Apr. 1943 (untitled and undated), AMCB, 4H 4.25.

96 Heini, *Splintered Innocence*, p. 84. A recent study of Finnish adults evacuated as children during the war strongly suggested the 'increased severity of depressive symptoms in late adulthood' as a result of 'attachment discontinuity' during childhood (Anu-Katriina Pesonen et al., 'Depressive symptoms in adults separated from their parents as children: a natural experiment during World War II', *American Journal of Epidemiology*, vol. 166, no. 10, pp.1126-1133).

97 'War strain', p. 214; Bodman, 'War conditions', p. 487.

were found in children who had been evacuated immediately after undergoing a raid.⁹⁸ Bombing could traumatise children, as could separation from parents; however, contemporary psychological studies indicated that the worst conditions for lasting trauma were generated by a posteriori evacuation.

‘The Government wishes to protect the future of France, and thus protect childhood, to keep children as far as possible from the dangers of bombing, and, therefore, to take the necessary steps to evacuate them.’⁹⁹ This statement demonstrates how behindhand was the organisation of evacuation of children in France: it was made in April 1943. Blinded by an inability to conceive of the shape of modern warfare, caught off guard by the provenance of later attack, restricted by the occupiers and hampered by a population reluctant to move, evacuation occurred largely as a reactive measure, following the attacks most costly in lives. Certainly as a proactive measure, in preparation for the onslaught of 1944, there was more success – people who went away stayed away in extremely dangerous periods – but only when it became compulsory, a forced and resented measure. Evacuation as protection against bombing protected populations only to the degree that it could be implemented; and its consequences remain ambiguous: ‘again and again’ writes Laura Lee Downs, were children evacuated; ‘again and again’, writes Peter Heintz, ‘sadness of loss, sadness about long and painful separation’¹⁰⁰ echoes through memory and lives on in the present.

98 W. E. R. Mons, ‘Air raids and the child’, *British Medical Journal*, 1 Nov. 1941, pp. 625-6; Charlotte Carey-Trefzer, ‘The results of a clinical study of war-damaged children who attended the child guidance clinic, The Hospital For Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London’, *Journal of Mental Science*, July 1949, pp. 536-559. Alfred Brauner noticed similar psychological symptoms among child refugees during the Spanish Civil War who had been bombed and evacuated (Brauner, *Ces enfants ont vécu la guerre*, pp. 52-8). While a child’s reaction to war trauma will depend on a number of variables (including whether the trauma is acute or chronic, whether the child is directly or indirectly exposed to it, the child’s developmental stage, cultural coping mechanisms), there is little reason to believe that the British children of the wartime psychological studies, the Spanish children of Brauner’s study or the French children discussed here (but not subjected to psychological investigation) – all Western Europeans exposed directly during a similar era to a similar type of bombing and then to family separation through evacuation – would react differently to each other.

99 ‘Procès-verbal de la réunion des maires des villes côtières bombardées’, 10 Apr. 1943, AMCB, 4H 4.34.

100 Heintz, *Splintered Innocence*, p. 84.

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Memories

Dr Eva Roman

If I was asked to recall memories of my early childhood, I could undoubtedly conjure up many episodes, situations and one or two occurrences with great clarity. However, ask me to recall what I had for supper a week ago and I would probably have problems, which clearly indicates that I have reached the stage in my life where memory assistance in the shape of vitamins and minerals do help in recalling incidents more clearly.

My professional life brings me into contact with people who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and, over the years, I have found that their experiences have somehow triggered off incidents in my life which have long lain dormant. Unfortunately once these are dragged back into consciousness, it is almost impossible to make them disappear back into the depth of the sub or unconscious mind. Past trauma has a habit of surfacing when you least expect it and my awareness of uncomfortable emotional triggers became more and more intrusive.

I knew that the time had come to look more closely into my past and examine the reasons which had helped to shape me into the person I have become. In order to do that, thoughts turned back into how far back I could return to my early childhood and remember the first clear incident.

The country I was born and lived in until I was almost thirteen was in the company of my mother and grandmother. The absence of a father figure was due to my parent's divorce when I was four years old and, apart from one occasion, I never saw my father again. However, this visit remains firmly in my mind. I can remember my mother hovering while I sat on my Dad's lap and cuddled up to him. He had brought me a large bar of chocolate which I clutched closely to my body during the whole visit. I opened it after he had left only to find that the whole bar was covered in white mould. This produced an adverse reaction which was increased tenfold by my mother when she pointed out that this was typical of my father who could even produce a decent present for his little girl.

The first seed of my own worth was thus planted. Maybe I wasn't good enough to receive anything perfect and perhaps I didn't deserve a Daddy, otherwise he would not have left me.

My mother continued to instil the fact in my mind that there was no need for my father to see me again and, in any case, he had another family now so we need play no further part in his life.

This entire event and information was duly stored in my sub-conscious mind, to be recalled at some much later time in my life, however, soon after this meeting I was told that my schooling would commence and preparations would have to be made. This of course meant for the first time in my young life I would be under the supervision of a total stranger who would control my day. The cherry on the cake was to be the traditional present which every new pupil would receive at the end of the first day's attendance. As the children were picked up by their parent at the school gate, they were presented with a large colourful cone, filled with chocolate and other tasty goods. Every mother, father or both stood outside the school and every child rushed toward them to be handed this gift. Except me! My mother stood there, empty handed, and quickly led me away, homeward bound. She had decided that it would be more of a surprise for me to receive my goody-bag at home. To this day I am still puzzled and unable to understand how a mother could cause such a disappointment in a five year old child who, when reaching the street found herself surrounded by her entire class of new school-mates, each holding their traditional school-cone. I believe it was at this moment that I developed a hate towards my mother and transferred strong feelings of love for my grandmother who took over my daily care.

I recall that I never formed friendships with my fellow pupils at school, mainly since I developed a reluctance to get too close to anyone in case of rejection. The one incident I recall was when one of the pupils dropped a glass marble which everyone collected at that time and it rolled to the front of the class, stopping near our teacher's shoes, a portly, middle-aged man with a constantly stern expression on his face. My first thought had been that if he tripped

over the marble, he might fall and hurt himself so, without further thought about a possible reprimand, I got up and picked the marble up. Before I had a chance to explain my action, he grabbed hold of my arm and gave me a sharp slap on my backside. In those days smacking was permitted and, once more I was left feeling at fault. I never disclosed this incident to anyone and, of course, the marble was confiscated.

During the later part of my early school days I overheard discussions about a move to another area since my mother was planning to open a school for dress cutting and designing. This meant that we would require more space so I was taken round with my mother to 'view' other apartments. She finally decided on a new, spacious living accommodation with very large rooms, one of which would be turned into a school area, since it was quite isolated from the rest of the family's living quarters.

The move is hazy in my mind; the apartment was ready to occupy but I don't remember who helped with the transfer. A maid was employed to take over the domestic duties who I became very close to and who stayed with us until she married many years later. A Nanny was also engaged to look after me when I came home from my new school at lunchtime. I took a violent dislike to her and made her life hell. She was followed by several other similar young women who received the same fate. Eventually my mother realised that I getting a bit old to have a Nanny and decided to enrol me in the Jewish Day School where I started my secondary education and remained until all Jewish schools were forcibly closed by the Nazis.

My years at Lessler School were very happy and I developed friendships with a number of girls in my year. My confidence grew and my athletic skills won me many medals and diplomas, not only at my own school but in competitions with others in the area.

Eventually the second building belonging to the school estate was made available for boys who joined us but, apart from the initial curiosity by the girls, we were kept fairly separate.

Unfortunately, as the years went by, our school and others nearby were often targeted by abuse for our religion and we all learned to avoid these episodes whenever possible. Sometime in the late 1930s, this abuse took on a physical dimension and I received several kicks in my spinal region which eventually prevented me from continuing my nursing career after qualifying in my early twenties.

Life continued after our move and became a weekly routine of get-togethers every Friday evening. The only person who was invariably absent from these dinners was my mother who preferred to spend her time with her friend. This caused frequent ructions between the friend and my grandmother who refused to speak to her. I often looked after my grandmother who suffered from gall-bladder trouble and provided hot compresses when an attack took place. No-one ever came to my aid and eventually she had to be taken into hospital. During this time I was sent to stay with our maid and her family who looked after me.

I began to feel that the only safe haven was Lessler school and arranged to stay for as many evening activities as possible in order to avoid going home. Weekends were usually spent walking around the city on my own, except on Saturday mornings when my mother took me out for refreshments for about two hours as a kind of duty. I was allowed to choose one dish from the menu, never more, and was returned to our apartment as soon as was decently possible.

My life, apart from my school attendance, became rather lonely since gradually Jewish people were forbidden to take part in any public demonstrations or displays. We were also prevented from entering places like the Zoo which I had often visited and thoroughly enjoyed so, apart from visiting school friends who lived near my home, going for walks or spending time with my aunt and uncle who lived fairly near, there was little to stimulate my mind. Books and the radio became my friends and I developed a passion for classical music. I became the proud owner of a wind-up gramophone and started to collect records whenever possible. I also tried my hand at writing short stories into which I poured my secret thoughts and dreams. Although I was never good at art, I started to design quite elaborate doodles which, I am sure if analysed now, would provide a mine of psychological information about my inner self. The memory of me stretched out in the living room on the carpet, full length on my stomach with my drawing pad and pencil still remains very vividly in my mind.

I have always had an affinity with animals and was allowed to keep a bird, first a canary and then a budgie which I taught to speak a few words. A frog came next and I was heartbroken when the long sleep was not the usual winter

one but the demise of a friend. A tortoise was then installed which kept climbing out of the confines of its box and wandering into my mother's school room. However, I cannot remember what eventually happened to it.

Religious practices were not encouraged and my visits to our local synagogue became very scarce, apart from celebrations involving children and the only one in our family who kept the Sabbath alive was my grandmother who regularly stood by our bay windows on the Saturday morning with her prayer shawl draped over her head and read from her prayer book.

During school holidays I was invariably sent to Jewish holiday homes. I tended to become very homesick as soon as I arrived at my destination and it took several weeks for me to settle down and enjoy the activities but not before the staff were on the point of retuning me to my home. One of these homes was also attended by several of my school friends and we also recognised several of the male students from Lessler School. Since we all recognised each other and had our school uniform in common, we soon formed play circles and actually teamed up in pairs, forming our own group and since these holidays usually lasted for six weeks, our group became very close so the friendships continued after we all returned to school.

No-one ever made us aware that a boy-girl friendship could lead to problems, we were just a happy group, and this lack of important guidance, usually provided by the parents, was never given by anyone in my family which eventually led to an incident which later caused many problems in my life.

However, during these carefree holidays my memories go back to our Friday evening after-dinner sing-songs when everyone sat on the large curved staircase and joined in singing Jewish and Hebrew songs, many of which I can still remember. Although I was not very conscious of following my religion too closely, I was proud to belong to my faith and being in these holiday homes gave me the opportunity to take part in these weekly activities. During these six weeks I never had any contact with my mother, either by personal visit or by telephone, and always had to make my own way home at the end of the holidays once I reached my home town.

It was only on one occasion, when I stayed at the holiday home in the mountains of Silesia that my mother arrived without my prior knowledge a few days before we were due to go home, right in the middle of the farewell celebrations which had taken days to prepare and insisted that we leave immediately for another destination for a further week. Although I made friends while there, I saw little of my mother who followed her own interests. At least I had my own room and didn't have to share her bedroom.

Childish pranks were the order of the day during that extra holiday and one of my playmates locked me in my bedroom after the evening meal and I spent several hours by a half-open window screaming to be allowed out. This episode made me all the more aware of the consequences of too much trust placed in others.

As my birthdays came round every year, my mother took great delight in giving me misleading hints of what my presents would be. The clues I received in one of these so called question and answer games, made me think that I was about to be given a dog, which I had really set my heart on. However, when the birthday finally arrived all I could see on the birthday table was a child's watch and various other presents which I could hardly make out due to the tears which I shed. I never did get a dog and had to make do with the animal belonging to a family living near us who knew how much I loved their dog. Needless to say, once I reached adulthood, I was never without a dog again except when I chose a puppy from a litter and tried hard to train it. My mother then decided that the dog made too much mess and, without so much as a mention, she gave the animal away while I was out of the house.

Life became more and more difficult in the late thirties and people began to disappear from their homes. Many of my mother's students had to give up their studies and leave the country and plans were made for us to join my mother's sister and her family in the UK. They had left the country in the early thirties and were able to guarantee for us to stay with them. In the meantime, the destruction of many Jewish shops and particularly synagogues, took place and eventually all Jewish schools were closed down and as a result of a great deal of vandalism, many buildings were destroyed, including a lot of educational material.

Families attempted to organise small groups for children to receive private tuition at their homes, employing the teachers who had lost their jobs when their schools were demolished. But many children were left without any education.

The period between November 1938 and the first few months of 1939, finally brought home the fact to the younger generation that the Jewish community were, in general, not accepted or tolerated. The closure of the Jewish schools virtually meant that education ceased for the majority of those who had lost their places, as there were no alternatives in non-Jewish schools.

Most young people by then had experienced both physical and mental rough treatment from the non-Jewish youth groups which were being formed and avoided being on the streets and could therefore not maintain social contacts with friends. However, since I lived close to some of my friends, I managed to visit them during times when there were few dangers on the streets and I could slip through without any undue problems.

During this period my mother had made contact with all necessary official offices in order to set our departure from our home town in motion. Many other families were fortunate to obtain help from various Jewish organisations to find families in the UK who were willing to allow Jewish children into their homes and look after them. Many parents now concentrated on preparing their children for the journey out of Germany which required permission from the German Government or other official bodies. In addition, Nazi officers insisted on being present during the packing of personal belongings. Some valuables went into the pockets of the officers, instead of into the suitcases of the rightful owners. However, before anything was allowed into the packing cases, Jewish families were forced to take items such as jewellery, ornaments, gold and silver to specific handling places and give up anything of value. Anyone caught smuggling was immediately taken to unknown places and many were never seen again. Needless to say, there were many people who were able to claim secret assistance in order to send valued items out of the country, to be collected later. Many people were able to share the packing space and it was known that if the Nazi officers were not looking, valuables were quickly stuffed into the cases without them being aware. This trick included banknotes, which were easily slid through the spaces once the packed boxes had been checked and sealed. Some of the Nazi inspectors could even be bribed with money to ignore this practice.

Once the packing had been completed and sent to whatever destination was a safe one, the apartment took on the look of a sad half-empty place which, until that moment, had been a comfortable and well looked after living accommodation. Wardrobes contained only the barest necessities which would probably be left behind when our move finally took place. From time to time people knocked on the door in order to view some of our furniture which, if not sold would stay behind, available for anyone to help themselves to for free.

The arrangement for our departure was to be split into two separate episodes. My mother had managed to obtain all the various official papers required for our exit to the UK and I was to leave Germany in March 1939, followed by my mother and grandmother two months later.

Once all the official paperwork was in order, after hours of waiting in queues to sign forms and provide proof that the hosts had agreed to take over the responsibility for the travellers, parents now concentrated on preparing their children for the journey out of the country which, in most cases involved joining the so called 'Kinder Transport', which allowed approximately a hundred children to board a liner, specially made available for those who had the right papers and were joining families in the UK. Usually these transports were supervised by families who were emigrating and had agreed to look after the children during the journey.

One of these, an American ship, the 'Manhattan', had agreed to take 86 children from Hamburg to Southampton and was the one which my family had been lucky enough to obtain a place for me when I travelled to a new home with my relatives in London.

During all the preparations for our final departure from our home in Berlin, a strange silence developed in our apartment and, apart from the questions about food, the location of personal belongings or any other relevant information, conversation was held to a minimum. My aunt and uncle helped us during those last weeks before I left by supplying us with some food which they shared with us and spending valuable time at our apartment. They had decided to remain in Berlin for a while, despite the advice to start their own preparations to leave. However, they remained in Berlin throughout the war and contacted us again in 1945, but unfortunately never managed to join us.

By this time I had reached the age of thirteen and, with hindsight, it would have been advisable for my mother to have explained at least the rudiments of the facts of life about which I had never received any explanation, either from my mother or anyone else. I never did find out the reason for her reluctance and, had she realised, what damage she would be causing by omitting to prepare me for my teenage years.

The day finally arrived when I had to say goodbye to my Grandmother, at least for the time being, and make my way, supervised by my mother, to the main line station in Berlin where the train would take me and 85 other children to Hamburg where we would board the Manhattan.

Having said goodbye to our parents, a young couple who agreed to supervise the journey, since they were also emigrating, saw all of us safely on the train. I have yet to experience such an emotional sight with the floods of tears being shed at the thought of having to leave their parents behind. Many of those children were actually never to see their parents again, but luckily, most were too young to realise this at the time.

The journey to Hamburg was relatively uneventful since our supervisors kept walking from compartment to compartment to make sure that everyone had settled down and eventually we arrived at our destination.

A short walk took us to the quay where we saw an enormous ship moored alongside, waiting for the new passengers to join it. Our group of 86 children, varying in age from four to early teens, now queued up to have their belongings searched, which was a long, drawn-out process since trust was not a word Nazi officers were familiar with so, they checked and rechecked in case someone had overlooked something which to them looked suspicious.

When eventually all belongings had been double and treble checked and we thought it was time to board, we were asked to form several lines, boys and girls separately and wait for further instructions. After another hold-up, we saw two German Officers in uniform with a swastika on their arms, walk towards our group and proceed to walk slowly along our lines looking at each child. Once they reached the end of the each line, they turned round and walked back, again repeating the visual examination of each child.

Once their choice had been made, they picked five girls and five boys out of the lines and told them to move forward, away from the remaining group. To my surprise, I was one of the girls chosen. All ten of us were led onto the ship and taken down endless corridors at which point we were separated and asked to follow the officers into one room for the girls and another for the boys. The rest of the group remained on the quay.

At this point the male officers left the girls' cabin and made their way to the boys. We were left with two women officers, one of whom started to give instructions. We were told to put our cases against the wall and then ordered to remove all our clothes which had to be put on the top of our cases.

The cabin was not heated and we were all beginning to get very cold. We soon started shivering and by now most of us were crying. The officers now began to examine our clothes in minute detail while we were still standing in line, completely naked. Again, no-one told us what they expected to find, but the next stage was for all of us a most frightening experience and a completely senseless procedure.

Once the clothes had almost been taken apart to make sure that nothing was found, we were pushed forward one by one, and subjected to intimate questioning. For example, the older girls were about the start of the menstrual flow; had it started, did they have towels to use, where were these kept. Again I could not see the relevance of this question, since they had examined every inch of our luggage several times.

The officers began pressing our bodies from the waist downwards and even the lower parts of our backs received attention. Just to feel their hands on my body made me feel nauseous and even more frightened.

Since I had turned thirteen at the end of 1938, intimate questions or information had not been forthcoming and my mother had not seen fit to inform me about the most basic facts, which meant that I was unable to answer the simple questions and comments which were being fired at me. I found myself starting to shake violently and eventually started to cry. The questions persisted for a while and, in hindsight, I believe this was their method of breaking down our resistance and eventually they must have realised that I really was much uninformed. The other girls were also very frightened and perturbed. Eventually, we were told to get dressed again and were led back to join the rest of the group and finally able to board the ship.

This episode had a very negative reaction for most of my teenage years and I developed a fear of anything remotely connected with sexual subjects in fact, I did not learn about the facts of life until I was almost out of my teens and started my nursing training. I was able to work through this experience during my Psychology training which included information about psychological trauma and its after effects.

The Acceleration of Social Policies in Education and Social Welfare

Sharon Natt

"Evacuation in the UK was not the cause of post-war social change, but nonetheless may be seen as the trigger which encouraged the acceleration of social policies in areas such as education and social welfare".

As waves of evacuated town children washed into the countryside from September 1939, the rippling effects upon education and healthcare were felt, and across the nation class divisions were disrupted. There is no denying the catalytic influence of evacuation over post-war social change on both a macro and micro level, yet just how significant was it? ¹ Some historians argue that evacuation 'marked the end of an old Britain'; by mixing classes together and dissolving boundaries it moved the UK forwards towards the 'goals of welfare'.²³ However, others believe that it actually acted to hinder change, confirming stereotypes and promoting a conservative analysis of poverty. ⁴ For the last fifty years the historiography has been largely dominated by Richard Titmuss's thesis - *Problems of Social Policy* (London, 1950), but more recently has been subject to revision. This essay will seek to examine the social effects of evacuation upon education, the welfare state and class in particular, and question how the 1944 Education Act and the 1946 National Health Service were shaped as a result. It will consider whether evacuation acted more to accelerate pre-war social policies, or disrupt them⁵. Furthermore, as the war helped to carve Britain into a more democratic society and sculpt a new political consciousness, its effect upon the Labour victory will be looked at. Throughout this social analysis, the ever-evolving historiography will also be considered in detail.

Richard Titmuss leads the debate on evacuation and its impact on social change. From 1950 following the publication of his thesis *Problems of Social Policy*, Titmuss has had unprecedented influence on historians interested in the theory of post-war social development. He recognises the significance of evacuation, arguing that by effectively mixing classes together it 'aroused the conscious of the nation' and tightened the sense of national community.⁶ This vein of the Titmuss-thesis attracted historians such as Travis Crosby, who argues that the frenzied backdrop of the evacuation helped create a political climate favourable to Labour⁷, and also P.H.J.H Gosden, who refers to Titmuss as the authoritative source on evacuation's social impact.⁸ However, during the 1980s a revisionist group emerged, which criticised Titmuss's theories in three main ways. Firstly, Arthur Marwick argues that Titmuss overly simplified the comparisons between the inter- and post-war years, and his social solidarity was far too basic an explanation of the war's social effects⁹. Secondly, Anne Digby criticises Titmuss by stating that primarily evacuation actually reinforced class prejudices¹⁰ rather than breaking the social constructions, and Virginia Berridge agrees with her that it promoted class antagonism.¹¹ Thirdly, Macnicol highlights the distinctly new conservative attitude to the working-class that came about, borne from a rural, middle-class superiority, illustrating a shift in class snobbery against social problem 'groups' to problem 'families'. Most recently, both John Welshman's and Roy Lowe's

1 Macnicol, J., 'The Evacuation of School Children', in Smith, H.L. (ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (Manchester, 1986) p.8

2 Cited in: Lowe, R. (ed.), *Education and The Second World War: Studies in Schooling and Social Change*, (London, 1992)p.2

3 Titmuss, R.M., *Problems of Social Policy*, (London, 1950) p.507

4 Macnicol, op cit p.22

5 Smith, H.L. (ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (Manchester, 1986) p.viii

6 Titmuss, p.104

7 Crosby, Travis L., *The impact of civilian evacuation in the Second World War*, (London, 1986) p.145

8 Macnicol, p.9

9 Marwick, A., cited in: Smith, H.L. (ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (Manchester, 1986) p.viii

10 Digby, A., *British welfare policy: workhouse to workfare* (London, 1989), p. 55

11 Cited in: Welshman, J., 'Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy: The Our Towns Report of 1943' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3. (Sep., 1999) p.783

work readdresses the whole “Titmuss-thesis”; incorporating the revisionist views with the thesis itself, they support both lines of argument for a much more balanced conclusion.^{12 13}

Why, then, was evacuation such a milestone for social change? For the war-torn families of Britain, evacuation was the second most upsetting aspect of the whole experience, only after direct bombing. Completely disrupting everyday life, the bloodhound of war snatched children from parents at an appallingly early age.¹⁴ Thousands of evacuees’ accounts can be found in diaries and letters and all pay eloquent homage to war’s lasting effects,¹⁵ where it is clear to see that experiences extend beyond wartime social disruption. Evacuation also indirectly led to the 1940s Welfare State legislation, accentuated by the middle-class disbelief at the state of city children. The 1943 *Our Towns Report* described evacuation as a ‘window’ through which town-life was vividly seen from a fascinating ‘new angle’.¹⁶ Social services were completely disrupted by war, and it had a noteworthy impact on ‘educational standards’.¹⁷ In a radio broadcast in December 1939, Margaret Bondfield used evacuation to raise awareness of child destitution and to reinforce her call for social reform. The evacuation had brought to light the inaccuracy of pre-war official reports and its neglect of child poverty; as she writes: ‘we have not cared enough about the poverty, unemployment, and ill health’.¹⁸ Titmuss demonstrates therefore that educational reformation owed a lot to the evacuation which exposed ‘social evils’ and ‘stimulated public support’.¹⁹ In effect, the ‘elevating experience’²⁰ acted to magnify the so-called ‘black spots’ of society.²¹ Whether welcomed or not, the evacuation acted like a cyclone, blending the middle and lower-classes together in a whirlwind of social disruption.

Experiences of schooling for evacuees varied from place to place. In some areas the environment opened a new curriculum centred on ‘forays’²² into the countryside, with an emphasis on practical activities, such as farming.²³ Some educational historians have even noted that there was a shift from heavy and dated rote methods to a more modern doctrine. However, the bleeding of male teachers into the armed services resulted in many married, elderly or retired teachers being called back into service. Whilst some consider war’s effects to be shattering upon traditional and old-fashioned modes of teaching,²⁴ for those that were recalled to duty, exercising new teaching methods were certainly not the priority. Additionally, suffering from financial neglect, the education system was long overdue redevelopment, yet the outbreak of war halted set plans for its restructuring.²⁵ It left schools in chaos. A shortage of materials strained the curriculum, resulting in a national academic fall in achievement.²⁶ A 1940 National Union of Teachers survey approximated that 750,000 children were not receiving formal education due to the heavy disruption of evacuation and school closure.²⁷ Long-term effects surfaced three years on, when high levels of illiteracy among school leavers were revealed in a different survey by the Board of Education.²⁸ Furthermore, the educational ‘New Deal’ was actually nothing of the sort. The disruption, as Lowe explains, created a ‘widespread will’ for a return to the pre-war establishment, and essentially the 1930s approach and curriculum was renamed and repackaged, under the glossy title of the ‘1944 Education Act’.²⁹ The upheaval in 1939 terminated any immediate potential for the education overhaul, such as the extension of the school age that the past four years had tantalisingly promised. The arrangements in place for extending school age from September 1939 to fifteen years were sadly halted due to the impact of evacuation on closing schools and requisitioning the buildings in towns.³⁰ In August 1940, the *Times Educational Supplement* commented that the whole system simply ‘stunted the mind ... with its dreary academic hammering’.³¹ Regardless of ‘reform’, education was letting down children and long-term society.³²

12 Lowe, R., ‘Education in England During the Second World War’, in Lowe, R. (ed.), *Education and The Second World War: Studies in Schooling and Social Change*, (London, 1992) p.8

13 Welshman, J., ‘Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy: The *Our Towns Report of 1943*’ *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3. (Sep., 1999)

14 Macnicol, pp.7-8

15 For example such evacuee accounts can be found in: Smith, L., *Young Voices: British Children Remember the Second World War*, (London, 2007)

16 Women’s Group on Public Welfare, *Our Towns, A Close-Up* (London, 1943) p.34

17 Lowe, p.15

18 Cited in: Welshman, p.790

19 Smith, *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, p.viii

20 Leinster-Mackay, D., *Alleyn’s and Rossall Schools: The Second World War, Experience and Status*, (Leeds, 1990) p.8

21 *Our Towns*, p.111

22 Simon, B., *Education and the Social Order, 1940-1990* (London, 1991) p.35

23 Lowe, R, p.11

24 Parsons, M.L., *I’ll take that one: dispelling the myths of civilian evacuation, 1939-45*, (Peterborough, 1998) p.81

25 Lowe, p.4

26 Gosden, P.H.J.H., *Education in the Second World War: a Study in Policy and Administration*, (London, 1976) p.73

27 Figures from: Macnicol, p.14

28 Lowe, p.9

29 Ibid.

30 Gosden, p.207

31 Ibid. p.207

32 Fenton, C.B., ‘PLAN: A Student Journal of Ambition and Anxiety’, in Whyte, I.B. (ed.), *Man-made Future: Planning, Education and Design in Mid-20th century Britain*, (London, 2006) p.185

It is perhaps with surprise, then, that we learn that the 1944 Education Act was in fact greeted with great enthusiasm at the time. In 1944 Dent hyperbolically claimed it to be the ‘greatest measure of educational advance ... probably the greatest ever known’.³³ Contemporaries believed it to be a ‘complete recasting of the entire educational set-up’ finally unifying the curriculum.³⁴ Perceived as a ‘landmark’ in English schooling, the legislation was to universalise the school age to fifteen and open Grammar schools for all pupils regardless of financial status.³⁵ The statute reflected the notion that educational power would transform society and the economy.³⁶ Dent saw the Act as a skeleton, with our part clearly ‘to clothe it with flesh’.³⁷ Yet when Simon strips the same Act down fifty years later, he determines that it is simply ‘the old order in disguise’.³⁸ With the powerful tool of hindsight at his aid, Simon chips away at the ‘clever exercise in manipulating politics’ he calls the Act.³⁹ Really, he argues, it just worked to codify existing practice.

It can be argued that evacuation effectively mingled the middle and working-classes together. However, middle-class culture bred the dirty, louse-ridden evacuee stereotype of the ‘foul-mouthed urchin’ who ‘wet the bed with monotonous regularity’.⁴⁰ Increasing social tensions between the classes encouraged the conservative belief of ‘poor parenting’, completely ignoring the more crucial environmental and cultural factors at hand. Thoughts of social decay stirred in the middle-class consciousness as multitudes of noisy, ‘dirty’ town children materialised in small villages; and so by embracing social welfare and a ‘new’ education system, it was actually able to keep the social classes apart.⁴¹ The belief of this ‘problem family’ seeped into the next two decades. Yet in contrast, the evacuation actually demonstrated ‘solidarity of working class’.⁴² Indeed the ebb-flow drift back of evacuation was explained by homesickness and worried parents. The Oxford Survey revealed that eighty-seven per cent of evacuees received at least one weekly letter from home.⁴³ This evidence utterly distorts conservative views of class held by many groups such as the Women’s Group on Public Welfare. However, of course, each individual experience was completely different, and circumstances were uniquely dependent upon sex, class or place of birth. Whether it was the journey, detachment from family, or staying with hosts from very different social circles, the experience was often traumatic.⁴⁴ In winter, city children staying in the countryside often had inadequate clothing, and the Women’s Group proposed needlework lessons for parents.⁴⁵ Without intending to, this very proposal tarred the city children with conservative stereotypical doctrine, linking the poorly-clad child with ‘poor parenting’. Lord Geddes however, praised the report, and consented with these ideas, pigeonholing all evacuee mothers as devoid of effective social traditions.⁴⁶ This, in itself, is highly interesting, as it is one of the many examples of aristocracy making judgements on the classes below them, as if by right. Another case that also illustrates this is the appointment of Lady Reading and Lady Denham as ‘experts’ in childcare by the Anderson Committee, yet the only form of qualification they had for the position was the nobility of their title, which obviously proved to be more than enough.

It was of course the well-dressed and healthy-looking child that was chosen first by the hosts – ‘safety was, in a sense, means tested’.⁴⁷ However in the Titmuss-thesis it is stated that mass war usually results in a ‘levelling in social class differences’,⁴⁸ and there is some evidence of this if we look briefly at employment. Increasing from 19,473,000 in 1938, to a climax of 22,285,000 in 1943,⁴⁹ the high levels of employment in the labour force allowed three million people better standards of living. This was what Titmuss coined as a working-class ‘levelling up’, with war resulting in the shake-up of social stratification.⁵⁰

33 Dent, H.C., *The New Education Bill* (London, 1944)

34 Dent, H.C., *Education in Transition: A Sociological Study of the Impact of War on English Education 1939-1944*, 5th ed. (London, 1948) p.223

35 *Ibid.*, p.226

36 Lowe, p.4

37 Dent, p.223

38 Simon, p.43

39 *Ibid.*, pp.31-43

40 Macnicol, p.15

41 Lowe, p.8

42 Macnicol, p.26

43 *Ibid.*, p.27

44 Thom, p.109

45 *Our Towns*, p.65

46 Macnicol, p.25

47 Cited in: Lowe, p.6

48 Titmuss, p.86

49 Summerfield, P., ‘The “levelling of class”’, in Smith, H.L. (ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (Manchester, 1986) p.186

50 Titmuss, p.201

Just as it had with education, evacuation also exposed ‘school welfare’ to the nation. The number of school meals taken doubled after July 1940, and the number of children taking milk rose by half.⁵¹ In Birmingham the number of school meals taken increased by six times.⁵² Titmuss suggests that the meals and milk provided would be ‘free of social discrimination’.⁵³ The evacuation made school meals imperative, as it was hoped that the promise of one staple meal a day would calm the ebb-flow of children in and out of towns,⁵⁴ However it is important to note that, much like the Education Act, the 1939 Milk Industry Act was planned in pre-war times, and in light of this, milk expansion in schools suddenly becomes not-so radical.⁵⁵

A.J.P. Taylor’s metaphor of the Luftwaffe as a ‘powerful missionary for the welfare state’⁵⁶ is a profound image that neatly sums up the influence of war. Evacuation brought to light the state of working-class poverty. The malnourished city child acted as the ‘messenger’ to the rural middle-class, burdened with carrying the ‘evidence of deprivation’ on their weak, bony shoulders.⁵⁷ The 1940s Welfare State policies such as the National Insurance Act, the National Assistance Act, and the National Health Service Act, all owed their existence to the 1942 Beveridge Report – which of course itself a by-product of the war. On 5th July 1948 when all these ‘fruits of compromise’⁵⁸ ripened into full existence, the modern British Welfare State was born, and regardless of wealth or class, all were entitled to taste it. Yet, rather than evolving in the direction of a fairer and more efficient Welfare System, it was comparatively moderate; attitudes barely changed towards the urban poor. Rather than reducing problems, it seemed that raising issues like malnourishment and head lice further divided the social classes,⁵⁹ as once again the conservative-wing blamed poor parenting. The housing programmes proved to be ‘inadequate in scale’ and ‘uneconomical’.⁶⁰ Interestingly also, the NHS was formed with the focus on correcting, rather than preventing, illness. In fact, the Welfare State had a muddled start, being brought in without any clearly defined perception of welfare, and absolutely ‘no coherent theory of the State’.⁶¹ The origins of the welfare scheme pressure actually began in 1930s but much like other social reforms such as education, it was halted by the war.⁶² The policies merely proved that they were not drastic enough to fall under as radical social change.

The war tried and tested the existing institutions, and found that the British Medical System needed a thorough reworking. At the outbreak, it was already agreed that there was a real urgency for a national health care system, and much like education and welfare, the government indeed had plans in 1939 to create a national hospital system after the war. The emergence of a national hospital policy from 1939-42 was greeted with much enthusiasm, and the Minister of War commented: ‘we now had for the first time in our history a hospital service sufficient to meet the needs of a population as a whole’.⁶³

However, as can be imagined, the idea of a wholly state-financed, ‘free-for-all’ health service was greeted with some very mixed reviews. Some members from the Group Medical Planning Research fully supported the idea, and argued that such a medical service ought to be ‘available for everyone’.⁶⁴ The Beveridge Report was inconsistent on this issue however, and is full of somewhat anecdotal anomalies. For example, on the one hand it wants to offer everyone a health service for free, yet simultaneously demands that people must take out ‘compulsory insurance’.⁶⁵ Yet in 1944 after several decades of deliberation, the White Paper on post-war health policy was finally published, stating that the new health service would ‘provide for everyone all the medical advice, treatment and care they may require’.⁶⁶

Indeed, the national condition of children’s health overall was a key motivator for social reform. Evacuation is very crudely described in The Cambridge Evacuation Survey as producing a ‘Niagara all over English and Scottish

51 Macnicol, p.9

52 Lowe, ‘Education in England During the Second World War’, p.10

53 Welshman, p.782

54 Gosden, p.186

55 Macnicol, p.22

56 Taylor, A.J.P., *English History, 1914-1945* (Oxford, 1965) p.455

57 Fraser, D., *The evolution of the British welfare state* (London, 1973), p. 19

58 Harris, J., ‘Political Ideas and the Debate on State Welfare, 1940-45’ in Smith, H.L. (ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (Manchester, 1986) p.234

59 Ibid.

60 Fenton, C.B., ‘PLAN: A Student Journal of Ambition and Anxiety’, in Whyte, I.B. (ed.), *Man-made Future: Planning, Education and Design in Mid-20th century Britain*, p.185

61 Harris, p.257

62 Ibid., p.236

63 Fox, D.M., ‘The National Health Service and the Second World War: the elaboration of consensus’, in Smith, H.L. (ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (Manchester, 1986), p.42

64 Ibid., p.44

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., p.46

country beds',⁶⁷ and whilst this somewhat over-exaggerated metaphor would most likely conjure up nightmares for many parents, bedwetting was a real problem. This physical manifestation of emotional homesickness came to be a common trouble for many host families, but it is interesting to examine this in its broader historical context. Fierce debates over children's health had raged the previous decade. For example, it was not uncommon to find the heads of evacuees riddled with lice as children tended to be packed together very tightly on the trains to the country, and this proved to be a hot topic. Yet, it is worth remembering that many of the evacuees picked up the lice in the country areas soon after arrival. There is a lot of evidence in record offices and school log books to suggest that many of the diseases and complaints that the evacuees were blamed for were actually already present in the reception areas. However, on the surface of things it seemed that the sheer extent of lice-infected city children was a 'sudden and unexpected revelation'⁶⁸ to the countryside hosts, sparking 'hair raids', especially as the school medical service held inaccurate records over the previous few years. This further emphasised the resentment towards the influx of these 'unclean', bedwetting children, which were a 'reflection of working-class parenthood'.⁶⁹ The louse became symbolic of town-countryside class conflicts. Furthermore, the true extent of pediculosis also was crawling proof that school medical services records were in poor health, a fact highlighted even further when it was revealed that two out of three school girls 'in one city were lousy'.⁷⁰

Evacuation had such influence that it even affected the political sphere. Organised by the Ministry of Health, rather than the Board of Education, it brought both sectors together and hastened the education system's upheaval. Evacuation kept education at the forefront of government decisions. The disordered chaos of the British education system against the backdrop of war invoked a frenzied political atmosphere, which raised concerns about post-war social policies. In fact, evacuation may have unwittingly primed the voting public in favour of Labour's more radical manifesto. The sufferings and negative experiences of the working-class politicised and spurred them into 'uncharacteristically active political behaviour'.⁷¹ In an ironic twist, Labour actually benefited from the conservative attitudes surrounding the poor. Labour's success over the Tories indicated a striking shift in public attitudes and the desire for social change.

A Labour Britain marked the end of the 1940s boasting a National Health Service, a unified education system and low inflation – with a strong economy to boot. Yet, had much really changed? On the one hand, social policies in education and welfare are indebted to the wartime experience. Evacuation forced different peoples of social stratospheres – poles apart – to mix, and therefore issues on children's health, education and general well-being were brought into the spotlight, gripping the nation's attention. On the other, evacuation and the general disruptive wartime milieu halted the ready-proposed social reform, heightened intense class boundaries, and upset schooling in general. The 'post-war landscape of the Welfare State'⁷² is ambiguous territory. The secondary education 'for-all' still witnessed class selection, the social security system turned out to be no more progressive in the 1940s than the pre-war years, and prejudice was still rife. Therefore, we must return to the micro-sociological argument, and conclude that the most significant effect of evacuation on society was at a micro-level; it essentially shook up class divides and shaped how groups of people viewed one another – whether with sympathy, condescension or outright disdain.

67 Isaacs, S. (ed.), *The Cambridge Evacuation Survey: A Wartime Study in Social Welfare and Education* (London, 1941) p.47

68 Ibid., p.17

69 Ibid.

70 *Our Towns*, p.8

71 Crosby, p.148

72 Darling, E., "Into the World of Conscious Expression: Modernist Revolutionaries at the Architectural Association, 1933-39, in: Whyte, I.B. (ed.), *Man-made Future: Planning, Education and Design in Mid-20th century Britain*, (London, 2006) p.157

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Transgenerational Traumatization

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

This article is based on a literature study I did on behalf of the board of Kombi, the Dutch foundation that organises meetings which are open to war children of different background groups, and the board of Herkenning, the self-help organisation of children of Dutch collaborators.

The concept and its mechanisms

In the 1980s, transgenerational traumatization (or: indirect or secondary traumatization) was a hot issue and many publications at the time focused on this subject. The psychiatrist E. de Wind¹ introduced the concept in the Netherlands. In his papers and articles he made clear over and over again, that it is not a law of the Medes and the Persians that children of traumatised people become traumatised themselves. If there is an openness in the family allowing people to speak about the past, and if the parents have managed to work through some of their own psychological problems, the children may be influenced by their parents' behaviour and views, but not in a pathological way. If the children have the opportunity to discuss their problems with their parents or friends, this is often enough to prevent them from getting psychological problems that require professional help. Although they may have feelings of unsteadiness or of vague anguish, they will manage to function in their professional and personal contacts quite normally.

De Wind illustrated the mechanism of indirect traumatization by the story of the chickens which were not at all afraid of a snake, until their mother started to give the alarm and ran away. They did not understand why their mother was afraid, but felt her agony and followed her in her flight.

Willem Heuves² describes the non-verbal interaction between a mother and her baby. The mother notices the movements and emotions of her child and reacts to them in an adequate way. The baby experiences that his mother understands his needs and wants to comply with them, while accepting his emotions and giving him the feeling that everything is alright. However, a depressed mother is more or less absorbed in her own thoughts and not alert enough to recognize the signals her baby is giving to her. She does not actually see what her baby wants to tell, she does not respond to his needs and leaves him with frustration and uncertainty.

Heuves set forth that, normally, parents know how to handle their child's fear of a 'weird animal' beneath his bed, and help him to overcome his anguish. Parents who in their childhood or youth experienced serious terrors and threats may feel overwhelmed by the recurrence of these emotions at the moment they witness their child's fear. The child notices the terror in the eyes of the parents and his own childish fear for the non-existing animal is linked with the realistic anguish the parents experienced in very real dangerous situations.

Moreover, Heuves states, depressed or traumatised parents often interpret their child's behaviour not on the basis of this behaviour, but on the basis of their own experiences. A mother who almost stumbled over her baby creeping on the floor said to her guest: 'That is how this child always behaves when there are guests. He is always in my way, just because he is jealous that I speak with you.'

1 E. de Wind, Transgenerationale overdracht. In: *Kinderen van de oorlog*, uitg. Icodoc e.a., april 1987, p. 9-22

2 Willem Heuves, Herhaling in de interactie tussen ouder en kind. In: *Icodoc-info*, 20ejrg, nr.1, 2003, p. 68-74

Petra Aarts³ put to the fore that depressed and traumatised parents often do not know how to react to their children's interest in questions of death and birth, and their experiments with food and excrements. At a certain age all children become interested in these subjects, but they may remind their parents of painful childhood experiences that may overwhelm them. Even if they don't express their emotions, the children will experience how troubled their parents are and will feel uncertain, inclined in the future to avoid such outbursts of emotions, even unexpressed.

D. J. De Levita⁴, for years a professor in the field of war-related problems of the post-war generation, noted that, in general, children want to have happy parents and will do their best to make them happy by being a 'good child'. Children of traumatised parents see that all their efforts to improve their parents' well-being are in vain. They may experience their unsuccessful efforts as their own failure, or may feel guilty, assuming that they are the source of their parents' depression. The failure of their efforts thus becomes a traumatising factor.

Normally children are able to accommodate to whatever circumstances. If those circumstances are actually pathogenic in nature, they develop pathological manners of behaviour, and children, who in their own constitution don't have clues for developing depressions or other psychological problems, nevertheless end up by needing therapeutic help.

The psychoanalyst Mrs J. Groen-Prakken⁵ makes a distinction between traumatisation and development interference. She describes trauma as a mental damage that cannot be dealt with by implementing the normal coping strategies people use to overcome problems. She identifies the latter concept as the effects on human beings caused by events or circumstances that prevent the fulfilment of basic needs at the age those needs need to be fulfilled to guarantee a normal development. She describes the case of a four months old baby who needs to be put in a plaster corset in order to prevent his hips dislocating. It is, however, the age that normally babies start to roll from their back to their belly and the corset impedes him in this normal development. The physical hindrance may result in a psychological problem.

Groen-Prakken explains that people living under constant stress or living in situations in which their very existence is at stake (concentration camp, hiding, persecution, flight) develop a trauma. Some people more than others run the risk of being traumatised. She points in particular to people who lack, for some reason or another, the necessary 'ego-strength' and indicates that there are periods in life that ego-strength is rather weak: in childhood, adolescence and old age.

According to Groen-Prakken, all people living during a war are affected by development interference, adults and children alike. However in the case of the children the consequences are more dramatic.

Interference of the war has often resulted in people who could not be 'good enough' parents to their children. As a result, their failing parenting interfered with the normal development of their children. They in their turn may influence the development of their children and in this way the effects of development interference are handed over to the next generations. The only way to stop this process is by becoming aware of where it started and working through it.

The silence of the parents

As was said before, E. de Wind stated that an openness about the past between parents and children will prevent the latter from becoming indirectly traumatised. However, in many families, the parents kept silent about the past. Either they could not find words for what they had experienced in camps or in hiding, or they did not dare to recollect the past, afraid of becoming overwhelmed by unmanageable emotions in front of their children. Many were convinced that not speaking about their experiences would spare their children a lot of pain, not aware of the fact that silence was actually more burdensome than speaking up. Many post-war children blame their parents for their silence, because they see it as their right to know what happened. But above all they feel they need to know about the past in order to be able to understand the behaviour and views of their parents and of themselves. The

3 Petra G.H. Aarts, Nakomelingen van joodse oorlogsgetroffenen en vluchtelingen: doorbroken continuïteit? In: *Icodo-info*, 10e jrg, nr.1, 1993, p.4-16

4 Petra Aarts, Transgenerationale oorlogsgevolgen. In: *Icodo-info*, 8e jrg, nr.2, 1991, p.18-27

5 J. Groen-Prakken, Trauma en ontwikkelingsinterferentie. In: *Icodo-info*, 8e jrg, nr.3, 1991, p.14-29

need of the parents to keep silent is contrary to the need of the children to know and in fact there is no way out of this dilemma.

Tamarah Benima⁶, born after the war in a Jewish family, stands up for her silent parents by putting to the fore that two essential motives for sharing experiences are absent in the parents-children relationship. First of all, sharing experiences aims at sharing emotions, but the relationship between parents and children is by definition an asymmetric one, so a genuine exchange of emotions is not possible. The second motive, the transfer of 'lessons for life', does not apply either, because the war experiences of the parents are of no use in periods of peace. Tamarah relates how her father used to tell his daughters how important it is to have a fur coat when a war breaks out: the coat is warm, can be used as a blanket, you can put a lot of things in the pockets and if necessary you can sell it for food. . . . Such an advice does not make sense to children who attend school, visit a disco or fitness club and enjoy life with their friends.

The psychiatrist Judith Kestenberg⁷ who conducted a research project between 1974-1984 among war children and the post-war generation, described how these people were affected by their travelling to and fro between two worlds: the world of the past, their parents' world in which the war is still not over or in which they are preparing for a possible new war to break out; and their own world, the world of the present, the world of friends, colleagues, sport and holidays. Achieving a well-defined identity is impeded by this constant 'shuttle trip' between two different worlds.

Confusion in terminology, differences of view

In search of information on the typical problems of the post-war generation, if any at all, one comes across the term 'second generation' that researchers use either to define the post-war generation, or the people who were children during the war, i.e. the war children, or both categories. It was often not evident which category they had in mind when writing their articles.

According to the psychiatrist P.C.Blom⁸, the watershed between the war children and the post-war generation is not so much defined by the date of birth (before, in the war, or after), but by being directly or indirectly traumatised. He noted, that children of Dutch collaborators born in internment camps, or children in Indonesia born in the chaotic period after Liberation Day because of the civil war and returning to the Japanese camps for safety, were traumatised themselves, even though they born after the war, because the war situation continued for them.

We also have to keep in mind that not only the post-war generation grew up with traumatised parents and were affected by their depressions and anguish. War children also lived with parents who were so absorbed in dealing with their own sorrow that they lacked the energy to be the 'good enough' parents children need for a normal development. So war children have their indirect traumatization in common with the post-war generation, but differ from them because of being directly traumatised during the war. In only two of the forty articles I consulted, the authors referred to this fact!

According to De Levita, the crucial factor for both categories is the attitude and the mental well-being of the parents. He thinks that they count for more than the possible traumatization of the war children themselves.

However, Judith Kestenberg, found distinct differences between the categories. The summary I give here does not do justice to the elaborate article she wrote about this issue, which was in its turn a summary of her research. She states that, in general, War children try to forget the past, whereas the post-war generation wants to know what happened in the past. The post war generation cling to their parents (and the parents to their children) in such a way that saying goodbye in whatever form is always difficult for both, whereas many war children have problems entering into relationships with other people. War children have been humiliated or at least overlooked, which impeded the development of a strong and healthy identity, whereas the post-war generation is affected by the damaged identity of their parents caused by the humiliation they have suffered.

6 Tamarah Benima, De lege sociale ruimte van joden in Nederland. In: *Icodo-info*, 11e jrg, nr.1, 1994, p. 55-63

7 Judith S.Kestenberg, Kinderen die de oorlog overleefden en kinderen van overlevenden. In: *Icodo-info*, 10e jrg, nr.2, 1993, p.5-27

8 P.C. Blom, De behandeling van naoorlogse kinderen van foute ouders; enkele notities en overwegingen. In: *Icodo-info*, 13e jrg, nr.3/4, 1996, p.86-90

The post-war generation did not dare express their feelings of aggression towards their parents at the moments this would be normal in a child's development, whereas war children often directed their aggression to their parents instead of to the people responsible for the misery they all went through.

The post-war generation suffers from psychosomatic diseases like bulimia or anorexia, whereas war children suffer from the long-term effects of hunger and deprivation, revealing itself in lack of energy and vitality and digestion problems.

The therapist, B. Filet⁹ raised the issue of the problems of both categories: 'Many war children and those belonging to the post-war generation, suffer from psychological pains that can hardly be defined and they are so common in the context in which they live that nobody recognizes them as symptoms of war-related damage.....These are symptoms of an inner configuration rather than clear-cut psychological problems'. The expert, nevertheless, notices the historical context in which the client or his family has been traumatised, on the basis of emotions typical of their background group or on the basis of the characteristics of the emotional pains. Children of resistance fighters often show bitterness and deception, people who were children in the Japanese internment camps in Indonesia often find symbolic ways to express their grief about the loss of their mother country and their traumatic immigration to the Netherlands, and show their distrust of authorities. People from Jewish families often demonstrate a fear of loss of control and of discrimination, while the majority of collaborators' children suffer from feelings of guilt and of shame.

The concept under attack

In the late 1990s some scholars stated that transgenerational traumatising does not exist.

In 1995, a couple of researchers took on the governmentally financed task of studying the problems of people born after the war in families who experienced the war in the Japanese internment camps in Indonesia. In the opening paragraph of their report they stated frankly that they dissociated themselves from the results of studies conducted by therapists or psychiatrists, who 'of course found problems – they need clients, don't they!' They declared their target group 'free from problems', at least not suffering from more psychological troubles than their peers. Petra Aarts¹⁰ commenting on this report found that the researchers had overlooked an important fact, viz. the composition of the control group. More than 50 per cent of the people of this control group were faced with war-related problems in their families, although they belonged to different background groups than the 'Indonesian' one. No wonder that the researchers did not find differences between the study group and their peers....Aarts assumed, that the researchers probably reported on what suited the government: that there were no problems and as a result there was no need to continue granting financial support to the post-war generation for psychological help or other types of care.

In 2002, the therapist IJzendoorn¹¹ reported on the three generations research he, together with two colleagues, conducted in Israel. He interviewed fifty grandmothers who were Holocaust survivors and their daughters and granddaughters, and fifty grandmothers who lived already in the Middle East before 1939 and their daughters and granddaughters. They focused on the matter of attachment and separation, one of the issues often discussed in reports on war-related problems. His conclusion: 'In general we did not find clues that justify the use of the term secondary traumatising. To put it briefly: intergenerational transfer of traumas does not exist, at least not when children and grandchildren are living in normal circumstances. This proves how resilient the Holocaust generation was and how successful they were in keeping their children away from the effects of their traumatising.'

He leaves us with some important questions: What are 'normal' circumstances – the situation in Israel where Jews constitute the majority in society, or do his results also apply to other countries where Jews constitute a minority group in society and often are the target of discrimination? Why did he focus on only one issue, however important in itself, and not on others as well? Why did he use this research to proclaim his opinion that Holocaust survivors are not the pitiful victims as they often are portrayed?

9 B.C. Filet, Enkele gedachten over hulp aan latere-generatie-oorlogsgetroffenen. In: *Icodo-info*, 13e jrg, nr.3/4, 1996, p. 78-85

10 Petra Aarts, De Indische naoorlogse generatie gezond verklaard! Van kille feiten en verhitte gemoederen. In: *Icodo-info*, 12e jrg. Nr.1, 1995, p.54-61

11 M.H. van IJzendoorn, Overdracht van traumatische ervaringen op kinderen en kleinkinderen? In: *Icodo-info*, 21e jrg, nr.2, 2004, p. 2-9

The 'hidden agenda' of those scholars could prove to be very costly to war children and the post-war generation. Therapists reading their reports might be tempted to accept that transgenerational traumatization actually does not exist and might feel permitted to stop asking questions on war experiences in the family during intake encounters or during therapy sessions.

The Institute for Documentation and Coordination of Help for War Victims, 'ICODO', organised meetings in 1996, 1998 and 2000 for the post-war generation which were open to groups from different background in the Netherlands. One of ICODO's employees was charged with the care of these people. Since ICODO has merged with two other institutes in the organisation 'COGIS', no initiative has been taken on behalf of the post-war generation. Has this lack of activity had anything to do with the new trend of denying transgenerational traumatization?

It is interesting to note that in the magazine of the new organisation the articles focus less on war-related problems and more and more on the problems of asylum seekers, members of NGO teams and veterans of peace missions. War as an issue of interest is evidently 'out'.

The actual situation

The conclusion of several research studies is that the psychological problems of children of war-traumatized parents are basically not different from those of their peers. However, in 1990 a study among people belonging to the Jewish post-war generation, proved that children of survivors claim significantly more psychological and medical help than their peers.¹²

The following cases show the impact of their parents' war experiences on the lives of their children.

During a professional training Rien learnt that his father, a convict for some years during the war, belonged to one of the accepted categories of war victims. His relationship with his father had been very tense and he had seen his father as the perpetrator and himself as his victim. It was an eye-opener that the 'perpetrator' was himself a victim. This insight gave Rien the opportunity to re-consider his relationship with his father, even more than a decade after his death. He managed to find a new and balanced view of him and could leave behind the negative feelings that had always accompanied him.¹³

The therapist M.J.M. Coopmans¹⁴ presented the case of a teacher caught in a conflict with his colleagues, which was driving him into a depression. The therapist could not find any clue in the personal development of his client and even the troublesome relationship with his father could not account for his misery of the moment. Nevertheless, the key was found in his father's experiences as a convict. The therapist advised his client to find out more details of his father's stay in Germany. The client learned about the high ambitions his father had had before the war, the war preventing them from being fulfilled, while after the war his father lacked the energy and vitality to realise his ideals. The client, a very dedicated teacher trying to reach the highest possible level and therefore criticised by his less dedicated colleagues, had to find out whether his ambitions were really his own or actually his father's which he tried to fulfil in his place in order to 'make good' the failure caused by the war. This cleared the air and it did not take long before he accepted a job at another school.

A young woman, born after the war in a Jewish family, participated in a self help group, focusing on the topics of loneliness and communication problems.¹⁵ Soon she learnt that underneath these problems lay the sadness about the fact that she did not have any children. Thereupon she recognised that underneath this problem lay the despair of her 'betrayal of her family': if she did not give her family offspring, the family would cease to exist, because almost all the members had been murdered in the context of the Shoah. If she did not give children to her family, 'Hitler would have the final victory'. It is evident that if this topic had been ignored by herself or a therapist, any subsequent help would have been of limited value.

12 Petra Aarts, Jeannette Eland e.a.: Tweede generatie Joodse Nederlanders. In: *Icodo-info*, 7e jrg, nr.2, 1990, p.26-42

13 H.J. Scheffel-Baars, *Dialog als handreiking*, 2007, p.102-109

14 M.J.M. Coopmans, De na-oorlogse generatie oorlogsslachtoffers, een casus. In: *Icodo-info*, 3e jrg, nr.2, 1986, p.41-44

15 Reynoud van Ginkel, De joodse naoorlogse generatie aan zet. In: *Icodo-info*, 13e jrg, nr.3/4, 1996, p.33-38

I would suggest that it is not important to know whether these cases can be defined as examples of indirect traumatisation or of development interference. What counts is the impact of the war throughout the generations and the importance of becoming aware of this influence.

Reaching out to the post-war generation

On 31 May, Kombi organised a meeting where the participants discussed the similarities and differences between the problems of war children and the post-war generation on the basis of six interviews. The four people born after the war had not been aware of the possible link between their problems and the war experiences of their (grand) parents until other people drew attention to this connection or until they happened to come across a publication on this issue. They raised the question: how can we reach other people who don't know that their problems are probably linked to their family's war experiences?

This meeting was to be the last one before Kombi would stop its activities at the end of this year, but the participants felt that there was still a task to take on, in particular on behalf of the post-war generation. So they decided to continue the organisation's activities, although in a somewhat different way. The discussion groups will have to yield their central position to the interactive website to be set up. Kombi will start a 'knowledge centre', gathering scientific data alongside stories which will elucidate the problems of the post-war generation. The PR team, aware of the various different views with respect to transgenerational traumatisation, will contact therapists and psychological magazines asking their renewed attention to the plight of the war children and the post-war generation. They will also contact magazines of different types and ask them to publish stories that may help readers to see how their problems might be linked to the war experiences in their families.

Today, many publications recommend therapists to go into the social, ethnic, cultural and historical context of their 'new' clients (asylum seekers or foreign employees). The members of Kombi want them to be informed of and to take into account their 'social, ethnic, cultural and historical context': the war (of their (grand)parents).

And if institutes like COGIS cannot be convinced of the need to resume their activities on behalf of the post-war generation, the members of Kombi will reach out to them.

There is Always a Danger that the Young Witnesses of War Will Develop a Strong Desire to Perpetuate It

Jeenann Yousif

This paper will argue that not all witnesses of war will have a strong desire to perpetuate it. However, it will acknowledge that some children will commit violent acts, not only as a form of revenge, but also as a form in their eyes at least, of normality. The geographical areas in this paper are limited to some countries in Africa and parts of the Middle East, however I do make references to other countries such as Bosnia.

Human beings have been waging war against one another for millennia, and therefore it is sadly without doubt that children have, as a consequence, been exposed to the violent realities of warfare. What is perhaps most disconcerting is that those children who witness war may feel the need to perpetuate it, as they ultimately view war as a normal part of human life. The great number of wars that have raged in the past, and that are still raging today across the globe do not help in preventing the innocents from seeing all the death and destruction that they cause. It is perhaps this constant exposure to violence and war that lead children into repeating such acts, but one must ask why a child would emulate such an act when they themselves were exposed to its horrors? Ultimately why would they want to force another innocent being into witnessing what they themselves have witnessed?

It is with great disdain that I quote the common catchphrase of the 1960's, 'War is not good for children and other living things'¹. This statement portrays great naivety and innocence, as it seems fairly obvious, to me at least, that war is 'not good' full stop. The main reason may be that it causes everything that a human being should, within moral realms at least, abstain from causing. I believe it is essential that when analysing a child or a young witness of war, one needs to firstly fully understand what war actually means to them. It is only after such an analysis has been made that one can offer an explanation, or at least try to provide an answer as to why any young witnesses of war would wish to commit such acts.

From a study by Rodd about how children think of war, it was found that many of the children asked said that it was 'bad', however although this is positive, as it portrays at least that children believe war to be unacceptable, further questions seemed to give a different perception. On the whole it was stated that boys at least saw war as 'an intrinsic part of human nature and wanted an increase in armament spending'². From this piece of evidence alone we must acknowledge that those children at least, have begun to accept war as part of human nature, although this analysis may seem quite general. The previous statement however needs to be put in context to the boys' ages, as age particularly within childhood is significant. As Hall states, children's 'thinking and feeling about peace and war vary systematically with age'³. The significance of age is a factor which has been examined by a number of writes. Rodd concluded that although 'very young children have difficulties in verbalizing their images or war',⁴ they did adopt a negative opinion on it. Age as a factor is crucial, Alvik and Cooper both emphasise the point that young children do not have the maturity to think of consequence that could arise from warfare.⁵ It is only with maturity that children are able to replace 'the concrete dimensions of warfare such as military hardware... (with) recognition of the consequences and causes of war'.⁶ It is only as they begin to grow up that they develop the ability. In Cooper's 1965 study on, 'The development of the concept of war' it was generally concluded that, 'acceptance and justification of war increases with age'⁷. This may be what the evidence tells us, but it still does not explain why children begin to accept and even in some cases justify war as they grow up. Are we as adults who are supposed to set an example to our children and in doing so the future generations, to blame for this thought

1 http://www.thepeacecompany.com/store/prod_cards_warnothealthy.php, accessed on 27/02/08 via home laptop.

2 Hall, R., 'How children think and feel about war and peace: An Australian study', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 30, no.2 (1993), p.184.

3 *Ibid.* p. 182.

4 Cited in Hall, R. op.cit. p.182

5 Cited in Hall, R. op.cit. p.186

6 *Ibid.* p.186.

7 *Ibid.* p. 182.

process? Is it our acceptance, and in some cases justification or approval of certain wars, that has led children to such beliefs?

Having already established that some children have begun to see war as an intrinsic part of human nature; then in general it is possible to say that they will perpetuate it as they have already begun to accept it as a part of human life. The danger that young witnesses of war will propagate it stems from what is occurring around them. It is more probable that having witnessed war, as an everyday occurrence a child will be more willing to perpetuate it, as they see it as a normal and regular almost routine part of life. The reason why young witnesses of war begin to see war as part of human nature is that they see adults who they are taught to respect and follow around, commit such acts. Therefore it is more likely that they themselves will emulate these acts, as the adults around them act as a role model.

Having seen war, the children have seen atrocities that they should never have witnessed. One Bosnian girl stated that 'It is very difficult to live in war. You just wait for the moment you will die'.⁸ The lack of hope and fear can lead one to suggest why a child may be in danger of committing acts of violence. The feeling of hopelessness and despair and above all fear will leave the child with 'emotional scars that last a lifetime'.⁹ These emotional scars may explain why a child will perpetuate war as they see that by re-enacting it on others, what they themselves went through they may be able to find some sort of inner peace. Although to those of us who have not experienced war and therefore have not been made witness to its despicable crimes this seems to be completely illogical. However we must attempt to look at its basest of forms; revenge.

The above paragraph gives a possible motive as to why any child would commit a crime that they had been a victim of, upon another human being. This desire for revenge stems from the helplessness and the children's lack of power during the atrocities that they witnessed. A particular example relates to the Palestinian children in Gaza City. Under the Israeli occupation children have witnessed, 'the near- complete decimation of... society in the violence over the last two decades'.¹⁰ This violence has occurred over two generations and, as such, resentment and bitterness have grown and have resulted into what Singer terms 'youth rage'. By participating in violent acts children are able to establish a measure of 'control over their lives',¹¹ which to them is essential especially in view that they were unable to control anything in their lives when they were growing up. By perpetuating the acts that they themselves had been forced to witness as children they believe that in one way they are coming to terms and facing their past 'head on'. It is a desire to prove to themselves, and perhaps to others, that they are stronger now by committing the acts that they witnessed. One child stated that, 'killing a person is not a crime, not a bad thing',¹² from this statement it can be assumed that the child's thoughts centred over the issue of power; the fact that they are no longer the victim. The emotional trauma that young witnesses of war have suffered is vast and, as we can never fully understand the ordeal that these children have gone through, we will never be able to fully understand why they would wish to re-enact such horrors.

A survey in 1996 in Rwanda, found that '96 per cent of children interviewed had witnessed violence'.¹³ This staggering figure cannot tell us if one or any of these children themselves decided to perpetuate what they had seen but it does help to portray how common war and violence is around the world. The commonality of war may be one of the main reasons why the innocent witnesses decide to propagate it. It is more likely that the more times a child is exposed to war that it becomes a common part of their life, therefore in the child's mind at least they are merely repeating what they themselves have witnessed. They initially see war and violence as a negative aspect of human life and associate it with fear 'knew something was wrong when he found his father's gun. His father was a teacher and had nothing to do with guns'.¹⁴ This quote acknowledges a child's fear when seeing a weapon that causes death; it is not the weapon itself that is important, but the fact that the child is associating the weapon with his father. This association serves to portray the acceptance of such a weapon by a child as it is their father that is holding it and it is their father that will potentially use it. Children look towards their parents as protectors as a natural and biological part of human life, therefore it is logical to assume that the acts of a child stem from the teachings of the adults around them. If a child witnesses an adult, in particular a member of their family, using a weapon even though it may be for defence, they will almost subconsciously want to imitate this act. The imitation,

8 Machel, G., *The Impact of War on Children*, (Hurst & Company, 2001), p. 80.

9 Machel, G., *op cit*, p 80.

10 Singer, P., *Children At War*, (University of California Press, 2006), p. 123.

11 Singer, P., *op cit*, p. 123.

12 Bass, L., *Child Labour in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 166.

13 Machel, G., *op. cit*, p.80.

14 Jones, L., *They Started Shooting. Growing up in wartime Bosnia*, (Harvard, 2004), p. 17.

whether moral or not, is first and foremost, to the child at least, purely an act of imitation, therefore how can we as adults judge it, when fundamentally we are the teachers?

The desire to imitate what a child has witnessed is a natural part of learning, for it is only by imitation that one can learn how to become an adult. The fact that some children do desire to repeat what they have seen stems from this desire of imitation. One German boy protected his mother and sister from a Russian soldier, his protection was 'modelled... what he thought his father would have done',¹⁵ it is easy therefore to see the importance of imitation in the eyes of a child. However in contrast to this line of thought there are those innocent victims of war who do not have the slightest inclination to ever see let alone repeat what they have seen. Children in war zones see war as a continuum, something that happens day after day and year after year, they see it as a never ending aspect of their lives, 'I was born in war, war is all my wealth'.¹⁶ The quote summarises the utter helplessness and desperation that many children endure during war and it does seem to suggest that rather than perpetuating it, children wish to forget it. These children however can no longer be deemed as 'innocent', although they are still children they have experienced war and are thus more attuned to and in touch 'with the precious heartbeat of life'.¹⁷ I do not believe that all young witnesses of war would wish to perpetuate it, although it must be acknowledged that having seen with their own eyes the horrors, war will be 'clearly and constantly in the children's minds'.¹⁸ We must acknowledge that having been made witnesses to war that those children will without doubt think about war to a much greater degree than children who have not shared this traumatic experience. The numbers of children who have seen war is horrific, Jane Schaller found that over '10 million children have been psychologically traumatized by war'.¹⁹ This does not necessarily mean that they will be in danger of perpetuating it; I believe that in many ways it is the young witnesses of war who will be more outspoken in preventing future wars. A study of war children showed that many become 'emotionally involved with war'²⁰ but even though they suffer this emotional linkage with such atrocities they still want 'war to stop'.²¹

The reasons why there is always a danger that young witnesses of war will develop a strong desire to perpetuate it, is not only because of the emotional trauma that they have suffered but the plain fact that their childhood was disrupted. Childhood is the most important part of a human beings life; for the majority of humans it is the stage where they are influenced the most by what is happening around them. Machel suggests that when children do join armed forces or groups they do so not necessarily out of choice, but as a result of the economic, cultural, social and political pressures around them.²² One of the major problems with war children is the psychological effects that they have and will endure for the rest of their lives. The biggest of these is that they are as Heini says 'likely to have role model problems'²³, the reason being because they have witnessed their parents being either humiliated or, more importantly, having their authority undermined. By witnessing their parents being humiliated and treated like children, the children themselves are at a loss. They cannot understand their parent's failure to stay strong, they can no longer see them as their protectors and thus this feeling of helplessness could give way to revenge. It is this desire for vengeance that could lead to them perpetuating the acts that were committed against themselves and their family.

By experiencing violence one of the biggest problems is the child's reaction to a number of situations. It has been acknowledged that 'conflicts expose children to a culture of violence, and most children in such conditions grow up not having learnt how to respond to situations peacefully',²⁴ therefore it can be said that it is not necessarily their desire to perpetuate violence but moreover that the children have not been taught or shown the ways of peace, and therefore have no hope of imitating such acts.

The fact that the mere suggestion that young witnesses of war will develop a strong desire to perpetuate it seems to already, whether subconsciously or not suggest that they will perpetuate it. One war child who was actually physically maimed by war states in 'The Impact of War on Children' that 'It is very difficult to live in war; you just wait for the moment you die'.²⁵ Not only does this statement show how close children associate with death, but also the utter calmness that seems to resonate from it. There seems to almost be an acceptance to the war that is

15 Stargardt, N., *Witnesses of War. Children's lives under the Nazis*, (Pimlico, 2006), p. 323.

16 Heini, P., *Splintered Innocence*, (Brunner Routledge, 2001), p. 133.

17 *Ibid* p. 135.

18 *Ibid* p. 134.

19 Cited in Singer, P., p. 6.

20 Heini, P., *op.cit*, p135.

21 *Ibid*. p.135.

22 Machel, G., p. 11.

23 Heini, P., p. 137.

24 Heini, P., *op.cit*, p. 137.

25 Machel, G., *op. cit*, p. 80.

raging around them, it also alludes to the quick adaptation that children undergo when forced into such circumstances. It must be made clear that all children are affected by armed conflicts however not in the same way or to the same extent. We can not say that all children who have witnessed war will have a strong desire to perpetuate it, since children who have not witnessed war have in the past, and still today display violent tendencies. The growing gang and knife culture in Britain is a clear example of children of this. One of the main issues regarding young witnesses of war is their 'internalization of the culture of violence'.²⁶ If children see the adult's around them acting violent then they are more likely to act in a violent manner in the future as their initial perception of it came from a figure of authority. This 'internalization of violence', stems from the children witnessing the vulnerability of their parents and how they themselves are exposed to that vulnerability. This exposure can lead them to become 'more fearful and insecure'²⁷ and thus this can be seen as another reason why innocent witnesses of war may perpetuate it.

A young witness of war is not necessarily a child; it could also refer to an adolescent who has been exposed to warfare. It may be that those exposed to the harsh realities of warfare as adolescents have more of a desire to perpetuate it, as the psychosocial effects are in some ways greater to them at this age than if they were younger. The psychosocial effects are those that affect 'emotion, behaviour, thoughts, memory, learning ability, perceptions and understandings',²⁸ the problem with adolescents is that are expected to deal with responsibilities that they necessary are not able to cope with. The main reason why they may not be able to cope is that they have been forced to grow up to quickly to clarify, 'they have not had sufficient time to develop adult coping mechanisms'²⁹ and thus in stressful situations they are unsure how to act as they do not have the ability to cope. This may lead to them having a strong desire to perpetuate war as they have been forced to act as an adult and have had adult responsibilities thrust upon them and therefore see themselves as adults. Adolescents is a period in which a child is more susceptible to acts of violence, they crave for a sense of power, in countries such as South Africa where carrying deadly weapons is seen as such an act it is easier to understand why armed groups become attractive.³⁰ It is perhaps this reason why some war children go into the military; they ultimately do not know how to cope in any other situation and thus must perpetuate war as this is the only way that they can carry on with their life. Furthermore it is important to emphasise the fact that an adolescent is in many ways similar to an adult, they are attracted to specific ideologies, Machel notes that these ideologies help adolescents to form some sort of identity. It is not therefore that adolescence that join armed groups do so because they wish to commit violent acts, it is the sense of identity that is gained by joining.³¹ Fundamentally all human beings wish to belong and at a stage where one is neither an adult nor a child this belonging becomes an even more crucial factor. This may also help to explain why adolescents may commit acts of warfare even if they had previously been the victims of such acts. It is only by committing such acts either by choice or force that they can stay in the group, this manipulation of adolescence occurs on a world wide scale and throughout the whole of history. One of the most common of these manipulations was during world war two, the Hitler Youth were forced to take an oath to 'render unconditional Obedience to the Fuhrer... and will be ready as a brave soldier, to stake my life at any time'.³² This oath in many ways rendered the children as puppets to Hitler, as by the terms of the oath they were forced to commit acts of violence as their refusal in their minds at least could not even be thought of.

In conclusion I do not believe that all witnesses of war have a strong desire to perpetuate it, 'adults go to war, but they don't realise what damage they are doing to children'.³³ Most, if not all of the studies show that even though children have become more aware of war they still 'want it to stop'.³⁴ The reason perhaps why some do desire and will perpetuate it is that they see it as a form of normality and in some cases a form of revenge. They can not understand that war is something to be avoided as they believe it to be an intrinsic part of human nature and thus something to be repeated, as they have not witnessed anything else during their childhood.

26 Machel, G., *The Impact of War on Children*, p. 82.

27 *Ibid*, p. 82.

28 *Ibid*, p. 80.

29 *Ibid*, p. 83.

30 *Ibid*, p. 12.

31 *Ibid*, p. 12.

32 Singer, P., p. 15.

33 Machel, G., p. 9.

34 Heintz, P., *opt.cit*, p.135.

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Media: Strategies Used to Construct and Re-Construct Identities of British Evacuated Children During World War Two and Polish Migrants to Britain 2008

Mattie Turnbull

'The media's job is to enable persuasion to a particular point of view or a call to action'

The Evacuation of citizens in Britain during World War Two involved the movement of 3 million people from their homes in the major cities to country areas. This undertaking's aim was to protect them from the anticipated German heavy bombing raids after declaration of war. Mass evacuation was an integral component of the overall Civil Defence planning prior to the advent of war (declared September 3, 1939).

Although the exercise was voluntary, the media was used to great advantage to persuade parents to allow their children to leave home for distant parts. The media utilised by the government, played a very important and powerful role in the success of the endeavour. My paper compares the role of the traditional media as the creator and re-creator of the identity of the evacuees in wartime Britain, with the contemporary media as it constructs and re-constructs the Polish community in 2008 Britain. The paper faces the challenge that it is difficult to discern any profound difference between the strategies and ultimate 'success' used by these media in the creation of identity and imagined community of evacuated children in 1939 and the migrant Polish community in Britain in 2008.

Introduction and Background

What constitutes old media and new media is hotly contested and debates flow freely and frequently within academic and journalist discourses. For purposes of my paper, I have chosen the nomenclature: Traditional Media for the 1939 British Evacuation component and Contemporary Media for the 2008 component. Traditional Media refers to newspapers, magazines, radio and cinema. It cannot of course include television in 1939 but I would argue that the medium of television, had it been available, would have been used much as cinema newsreels and advertising were during the war period. Due to its ubiquitous appearance during the 1950s, long before the internet, it sits more legitimately as an important element of Traditional Media. Contemporary Media, by contrast, includes the Internet, mobile phones, blogs and social networks (MySpace, FaceBook): essentially the electronic media. However, relative to the 2008 component of this paper – representation and identity construction of Polish migrants to Britain from 2004 – components of Traditional Media are incorporated because they are integral to Media in general.

Part One: British Evacuated Children During World War Two

History of the Evacuation – 1939

At this juncture, I offer a synopsis of the history of the evacuation policy and processes, because I believe it is helpful – call it an aide memoire. To this end, I have also drawn from some of the work done by Dr Martin Parsons' Research Centre for Evacuees and War Child Studies¹.

The British evacuation of World War Two was planned, it was voluntary and involved over three million people. Even when compared with the recent evacuations and displacements of people in Africa: Darfur and Sierra Leone, it can still have a claim to be the most ambitious and advanced planned evacuation in recent history. In the British evacuation process, children, including children under school age (five), mothers, expectant mothers, teachers and people with disabilities were voluntarily moved to the country from the cities. This undertaking's aim was to protect them from the anticipated German heavy bombing raids². Mass evacuation was an integral component of the overall Civil Defence planning prior to the advent of war (declared September 3, 1939). By July 1939, the evacuation's operational responsibilities were formalised³. To confirm the magnitude of this undertaking in the first evacuation which took place, one and a half million people across mainland Britain, were safely removed from the cities to country areas between June and September 1939, as well as two million private evacuees⁴.

Identity Construction and re-construction of British evacuees by Traditional Media during World War Two

How did the government manage to implement this policy which would have huge social ramifications for children and others who were separated from their families? Not only did policy impact greatly on the children of the evacuation, those who housed or billeted the evacuees also encountered considerable disruption as their homes became lodging houses with the resultant physical and social responsibilities quite unforeseen, and with little time to prepare for the sudden human influx.

The answer is that without the traditional media, the government's strategies bolstered by a level of propaganda, would have been limited. That is, to 'sell' the idea of voluntarily separating children from their homes and families and moving them to distant parts and unknown cultures was a difficult task, particularly due to, or perhaps aided by, the uncertain and dangerous times of 1939. The media was used to exhort parents and guardians through the use of posters, newspapers, cinema newsreels and advertising, to allow their children to leave their homes and be placed with strangers who would look after them for an unspecified time. The notion that it was all 'for their own good' was paramount to the persuasion of the parents. The children accepted this exhortation, as did their parents. Many of the evacuees I have interviewed during my doctoral study are incredulous that the evacuation took place at all, arguing that it could not happen in 2008. In other words, they contend that the social enlightenment which occurred in Britain post World War Two would not sanction even the notion of such a strange proposition. However, my participants all agreed that the principles and social mores of the time conspired to persuade the evacuees and their parents that it was indeed 'for their own good'. But the key to the acceptance of the call to action was the ability of the government to sell the legitimacy of the call which required the support of the media.

Of course, not all parents and guardians chose the evacuation path, but many, many did. This choice was certainly assisted by the prevailing British attitude to the notion of 'the child'. As Rose notes: the journey of understanding and acceptance of children's rights was a long one manifested only in the middle of the 20th century by some lessening of the absolute authority which adults held over them. This is not to suggest that the intentions of the parents of the evacuated children were dishonourable; rather they were also captive to the prevailing notion of 'authority' and 'the child'⁵.

Strategies

What then were the strategies utilised by the traditional media of the years of World War Two to construct the imagined community and to persuade parents to relinquish their children sometimes against their own interests? In other words, both 'persuasion to a particular point of view and a call to action'.

1 University of Reading, England

2 M L Parsons, *I'll take that one: dispelling the myths of civilian evacuation 1939-1945*, Beckett Karlson, Peterborough, 1998.

3 T L Crosby, *The impact of civilian evacuation in the Second World War*, Croom Helm, Sydney

4 B Holman, *The Evacuation: A very British Revolution*, Lion Publishing, Oxford, 1995.

5 L Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood*, Routledge, London.

As war approached, newspapers and radio illustrated and carried stories of invasion and atrocities which were taking place in Europe; and newsreels in cinemas presented graphic images of massing armies with sophisticated killing equipment such as tanks, aircraft and bombs. These representations and imagery ensured that the population was primed for the inevitability of war and that the times ahead would be uncertain and precarious. The Guardian advised: 'We are now at war and there is no further room for argument. Quiet living has ended; we are plunged into a new world of desperate hopes and fears'.⁶

An edition of the West Australian newspaper in September 1939 copied an example of war propaganda from the British Daily Mirror which had several illustrations of Adolf Hitler with the alarmist caption 'Wanted for Murder, Kidnapping theft and arson'⁷; and in common with most national newspapers of the Allied countries, reporting was imbued with stories of the enemy. These stories were laden with doom and disaster and the horrors being perpetrated in Europe. The threat of conflict arriving on the shores of Britain was promoted as inevitable. The Pathe Pictorial newsreels were a valuable source of propaganda for wartime Britain and as well as carrying stories of the power of 'the Hun', offered constant updates by showing the more favourable events to convince visually and verbally that despite all the Hun could throw, Britain was holding fast⁸. But it was the print media which ultimately prevailed as the most effective tool of persuasion.

The British government was the beneficiary of the print media's reflection of the build up to war – the emotive and harrowing accounts of events in Europe. As the Evacuation policy moved towards fruition, the government capitalised on the symbolism of war utilised by the print media by developing poster campaigns which aligned with the newspapers' and newsreels' powerful images. This poster campaign, directed often at mothers, included those such as 'Mothers Send them out of London'⁹ and 'Don't do it, Mother, leave the children where they are'.¹⁰ This poster was particularly effective since it portrayed a mother wistfully considering bringing her children back from their billets. In the background is a shadowy figure of Hitler urging her to bring them back. Such symbolism conceptualised and propounded the notion of parental guilt – to bring their children home was to expose them to severe danger. Against this powerful media discourse and that of the government's propaganda machine, the evacuation undertaking can be judged to be 'successful' due to the numbers who took part, in the event, 1.9m people.¹¹

In due course, the media portrayed many reflections of happy children excited at train stations, billeted in country locations tending animals or picking fruit. The initial construction of the evacuee child subscribed to a common theme: they were forever smiling!¹² They were represented as excited, adventurous and charmed, with the ubiquitous identity label hung around their necks – the initial construction. Although the label was accepted as somehow endearing, it could be argued that this was the harbinger of their anonymity over the course of their exile. Indeed, the reality on taking up their billets presented quite a different outcome because as a social experiment, albeit unintended, it is now remembered as an unqualified failure. Over time, due to the now acknowledged value of the oral history, it has emerged that many evacuees have troubled recollections of their experiences. Because many of the evacuees came from the lower socio-economic stratum, perhaps inevitably, the print media began to re-construct them often as 'urchins', 'misfits', 'bedwetters' who were also 'dirty and verminous'.¹³ Indeed they were ultimately pejoratively stereotyped by the popular press – the re-construction.

It needs to be remembered of course that Britain was then a nation of significant class differentiation which no doubt influenced the prevailing perception of the poorer classes. The print media was instrumental in enabling the successful persuasion of parents and guardians to participate in the evacuation process – the call to action – and to construct the happy evacuee, excited at the prospect of adventure and new experiences. Soon, however, with the help of various state agencies, information and statistics regarding referrals from those who billeted the children, were soon the province of the popular press: 48 percent of the referrals concerned bedwetting; 16 percent stealing; 8 percent quarrelsome behaviour. These damaging images ensured the re-construction of the evacuee child as rather undesirable and obviously from the lower stratum of a class-ridden society¹⁴. The media had now constructed and re-constructed the evacuee – from being represented as a sympathetic group of innocent youngsters to a group of disagreeable and unattractive 'others'.

6 *The Guardian*, 1991. Retrieved: 3 June 2008 from: <http://century.guardian.co.uk/year/0,,128338,00.html>

7 *One hundred and fifty years of the West Australian, 1833 – 1993*, Adrian Savvas Publishing, South Australia.

8 BBC 'World War Two Rambblings'. Retrieved: 10 June 2008 from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/72/a8977972.shtml>

9 M Brown, *Evacuation in Wartime Britain 1939 - 1945*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 2000, p. 8.

10 *Ibid* p. 35.

11 General Register office for Scotland.: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/library/index.html> Retrieved: 9 June 2008

12 'Why they marched the children away', *The Herald Flashback*, 2005, 24 September, p.25.

13 R Adam, *A woman's place: 1919 - 1973*, Chatto & Windus, London 1975.

14 B Holman, *The Evacuation: a very British revolution*, Lion Publishing, Oxford 1995, p. 121.

Conclusion to Part One

The foregoing confirms the power of the traditional media at the time of the British evacuation during World War Two. These media included particular newspapers, magazines, radio and cinema. But the power of the print media, harnessed by the government in order to facilitate the evacuation was by far the most effective. The media also constructed and re-constructed the evacuee resulting in the sometime marginalisation, silencing and stereotyping of a societal group who had no power to speak for themselves. The significance and effectiveness of the traditional media cannot be underestimated when related to the success of the British Evacuation policy undertaken during World War Two. A sad outcome of the evacuation story is that the media, having constructed and re-constructed the evacuees promptly forgot about them when war was over and they went home.

Part Two: Polish Migration to Britain 2008

Introduction and Background

By the time Poland joined the European Union on 5 March 2004, the ability to communicate 'news' had changed dramatically. Poland joined the EU to great acclaim and in due course to a great exodus. Poland's population in 2004 was then 38m¹⁵. From May 2004, estimates are that around 325,000 Poles have registered to work in Britain, many more than the government expected¹⁶.

By 2004, a vast range of multi-media tools was available. Before the advent of the electronic media, the available media included the localised print, radio and television. Electronic media comprises the classic print, the internet which includes blogging, email, and the recent electronic social networks such as Face Book, U-Tube and My Space. The internet offers a global perspective on any item and can be translated immediately from one language to another. It also has a penetration to parts of the world which paradoxically would otherwise be bereft of even unsophisticated means of information. In other words, access to the electronic media ensures that information and knowledge have immediate global reach. However, all information is offered at a price and the electronic information industry also has its masters who have their motives, just as does the print media or the so-called infotainment industry.

My paper now suggests that although the electronic or contemporary media tools are of a level of sophistication impossible to imagine in 1939, in this age of knowledge acquisition, the strategies utilised to construct and re-construct groups or individuals are simply an extension of the strategies of information transference used in 'the olden days'. In Part 2, this focus is on the Polish migrant community in the UK since 2004.

Identity construction and re-construction by Contemporary Media: Polish Migrants to Britain from 2004 to 2008

It could be argued that an influx of 325,000 people of a different cultural background represents a sizeable demographic to a country which is often described as over crowded. The population of the United Kingdom in 2004 was 59,834¹⁷. It is unsurprising, that a level of xenophobia arose occasioned by the arrival of such a large cohort of Eastern Europeans which was reflected in the popular press with alacrity. Examples include an opportunity to respond in 2006 to a Daily Mail headline 'Migration: the Shocking Figures'. This article encourages its readers to indicate their reactions to fears and prejudices evoked by headlines such as '308,000 Poles at least 16 times higher than the Government's woeful estimate'¹⁸ and again the Daily Mail: 'UK lets in more Poles than there are in Warsaw'¹⁹. Even in the more considered publication, The Spectator, its writer Anthony Browne used the inflammatory title 'Invasion of the New Europeans'²⁰. Central to the outpourings from print and electronic media was the translation of any issues regarding Polish migration to finite numbers which were displayed on a regular basis for the consumption of an eager audience. The broadsheets in 2004-2006 were also rather alarmist in their coverage of these polarising statistics, often concentrating too on quantity rather than quality.

15 Europa.eu. Retrieved: 3 June 2008 from: http://europa.eu/abc/european_countries/eu_members/poland/index_en.htm

16 UK Immigration.com. from: http://www.ukimmigration.com/news/2005_10_24/east_european_immigrants_change_london.htm Retrieved: 3 June 2008

17 Project Britain: <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/questions/population.html> Retrieved: 8 June 2008

18 J Slack, 'Migration: the shocking figures', *Daily Mail*, 2006, 22 November.

19 S Daughy, 'UK lets in more Poles than there are in Warsaw', *The Daily Mail*, 2006, 25 April.

20 A Browne, 'Invasion of the New Europeans', *The Spectator*, 2006, 28 January.

For example The Daily Telegraph in 2004 noted that '4.4 million immigrants will boost population in 2004'²¹ and in 2006: 'Migrants add 4p a week to your pocket'²².

During the initial period between 2004 and 2006, the 'Polish Plumber' entered the lexicon. This symbolic stereotyping of the Eastern European male has been embraced by both sides of the political divide in Britain²³ essentially because although plumbers are rather important members of society due to their much sought after skills, they are also somewhat reminiscent of the bus driver from the Caribbean in the 1950s – necessary, but socially of a different hue. Therefore during the period when Poles arrived in the UK subsequent to EU enlargement, the processes of identity formation were largely the province of the print media aided by reproduction in the electronic versions. The privileging of the Polish migrant was one which invoked apprehension due to an identity which was a consumer of welfare beneficence and at the same time as a usurper of jobs more worthy of the indigenous population.

However, by 2008 much of the print media and television was 'warming' to the Polish migrants on the basis that, among other attributes, they held an admirable work ethic, and they had ambition and a willingness to work in low-paid jobs. They had also chosen to work other than in the London metropolis choosing indeed to travel to the more remote outposts in Britain such as the highlands and islands of Scotland. This is evidenced by the following examples from The Herald²⁴: 'Edinburgh police to be trained in Polish culture' and 'Poles start moving up the economic ladder in Britain'²⁵ and a sympathetic piece 'Poles lured to Scotland and conned out of money'²⁶.

A further, very important emerging factor in this study is that the development of Polish ethnic newspapers and publications has been a powerful tool not only in the creation of a counterpoint to the initial pejorative stereotyping by the popular British media of Polish migrants, but the ethnic publications are also instrumental in developing ties across cultures in their adopted home.

Conclusion to Part Two

There are too many examples of the re-construction of the Polish migrant to highlight in this study. However, suffice to say that sections of the British print media did, over time, assist this re-construction by countering prejudice in all spheres of socialisation and integration of newcomers after the opportunity for Polish citizens to capitalise on EU enlargement in 2004²⁷. In support of the contention of the power of the print media, a recent study has found that Australians are reading newspapers more than ever because they are more 'absorbing, dynamic and reputable' than any other sources' in spite of the omnipresent digital sources²⁸. Although I have reflected examples from the print media, these are often available as electronic versions and as yet I have not alluded to the importance or otherwise of the recently emergent blog. This is due to the inherent problem of authenticity related to internet journalism. As yet, there is no required adherence to any code of practice. Essentially internet journalism is to date simply about opinion. Opinion to date, I argue, cannot replace the 'feel' and power of the print media. No matter the discourses which allege the importance and power of the contemporary media such as the ubiquitous blog, only the print media has the historical endorsement and skill to analyse and promote or otherwise the findings of this new information tool. Until now, this has not been legitimately challenged. However Bai²⁹ suggests that the day is not far away when blogging will indeed decide the political fate of the world...but not yet.

21 J Chapman, '4.4 million immigrants will boost population', *The Daily Telegraph*, 2004, 1 February.

22 P Johnston, 'Migrants add 4p a week to your pocket', *The Daily Telegraph*, 2007, 4 January.

23 M Garapich, 'New patterns of East West migration in Europe'. 2005. Retrieved: 8 June 2008 from Proquest database.

24 R Robertson, 'Edinburgh police to be trained in Polish culture', *The Herald*, 2007, 8 May.

25 J Werdiger, 'Poles start moving up the economic ladder in Britain', *The International Herald Tribune*, 2007, 19 October.

26 A Chiesa, 'Poles lured to Scotland and conned out of money', *The Herald*, 2008, 1 June.

27 M Garapich, 'New patterns of East West migration in Europe, 2005'. Retrieved: 8 June 2008 from Proquest database.

28 'Newspapers Today' in 'Newspapers win in credibility stakes', *The West Australian*, 2 June 2008.

29 M Bai, *The argument: Billionaires Bloggers and the battle to remake democratic politics*, Penguin Press, HC, 2007.

Conclusion

This paper suggests that the dominant narratives and discourses of Traditional or Contemporary media, have played a unique role in the social identity determination of the World War Two Evacuee and the Polish migrant.

Whether the Evacuees or the migrant Polish community contested the identity which had been constructed on their behalf, they had initially no means at their disposal to rebut or oppose this construction. However, due to the authority of the oral history as a research methodology, the evacuees have found their voice. In the case of the Polish migrants, the emergence of the Polish language press in the UK has enabled the development of a powerful counterpoint to the dominant narratives.

I therefore contend that whether identities were socially constructed by the Traditional Media or the Contemporary Media, the same strategies were used to inscribe meaning and identity to both groups – the use of alarmist headlines, veiled approval of xenophobia, patriotism, ‘enemy’, stereotyping, unsubstantiated statistics and appeal to inherent human insecurities.

The print media (Traditional) in 1939 was able to construct and re-construct the World War Two evacuee. Similarly the construction and re-construction of the Polish migrant has been the province of the print media in 2008 (Contemporary). Both media are market driven and their purpose is to enable ‘Persuasion to a particular point of view or call to action’.

Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.

Germany: Meeting the Monsters of My Dreams

Michael Henderson

Zella and Helga are best friends. Two middle-aged women, traveling together, talking about their children and grandchildren, and the pills they each take for migraines; all very normal. But should they be doing this? Some have difficulty accepting their friendship.

They are co-founders of an organization called *One By One*, Inc that takes its name from a book about the Holocaust by Judith Miller. Miller wrote, 'We must remind ourselves that the Holocaust was not six million. It was one, plus one, plus one... Only in understanding that civilized people must defend the one, by one, by one... can the Holocaust, the incomprehensible, be given meaning.'

Members of *One By One* are children of victims of Nazi atrocities who grew up in the shadow of their parents suffering and trauma, and descendants of the Nazi era whose parents or grandparents were perpetrators or bystanders in one of the most evil chapters of human history. They seek out the humanity in each other as they listen with compassion to one another's stories of pain, guilt, anguish, loss and fear. As the stories resound within them, the women say, the burdens are lightened and the impact of their legacies is transformed, offering hope to future generations.

The path of transformation is never easy, and the stories of Zella and Helga are testimony to that.

Zella Brown is the daughter of Wolf and Barbara Kaplansky, two Holocaust survivors. Seventy five members of her family died in the Holocaust. Wolf survived 13 concentration camps and felt that the only reason he had been spared was to bear witness to the truth. Zella, her younger sister, Judy, and their brother, Ely, grew up listening to 'those relentless stories that defy description.' His daily reprimand, 'Don't ever forget what Hitler did to the Jews' resounded in her ears long after stories faded into the night. Fearing the children would forget, Wolf would follow this with the command, 'Write it down so you don't forget.'

Over the years other Jewish children would tell her how lucky she was to have parents who spoke to her about their experiences. But at times she wanted to blurt out: 'You call this 'lucky' when every waking hour you try desperately to erase the image of that yellowed photo of the naked dead bodies piled high like cords of wood. *'Kikh, dos is vos zey ongemakht tsu di Yidden*, (Look, this is what they did to the Jews).' As Wolf spoke these words, he would place the picture inches from her face to make sure she would 'Never Forget.'

She did write it down and she has remembered, but at a cost. It took years of therapy, 12-step recovery programmes, and her new-found Buddhist practice to unburden the heavy load. She and sister Judy joined a Boston-based group of child survivors called 'One Generation After.' One day a peculiar ad in its monthly newsletter caught their attention: 'Descendants of Holocaust survivors wanted for meeting with descendants of Nazis.' With her comfortable, middle class life unravelling because of divorce, the last place she expected to find herself would be in a room full of Germans, whom she called 'the monsters of my dreams.' Her sister, however, responded to the ad for them both.

So on a beautiful fall day in Boston in September 1992, Zella, who had held all Germans responsible for killing her grandparents, aunts and uncles and for the mental and physical abuse of her parents and who had done everything she could to avoid meeting them, suddenly found herself sitting with 11 of them. 'Suddenly I found myself facing the enemy, the descendants of the Third Reich and I was shocked to find that they, too, suffered from Hitler's legacy.'

Meanwhile Helga Mueller, married with two sons and living near Munich, was facing a different challenge. She had been born in 1943 in the midst of the war. Her father had been 'a good man,' an ordinary foot soldier of the Reich 'who had saved lives.' At least that was the family lore.

Later in life, dogged by serious psychological problems she went into psycho-analysis. She was haunted by nightmares filled with images of corpses and skeletons, and her therapist asked her to find out about her father's work in World War II. After a laborious search, she discovered first he had been in a SS unit in White Russia in 1942 and 1943, and then that he had actually been the Gestapo chief in White Russia, responsible for the deaths of 40,000 men, women, Jews, Russians, old people and children, personally participating in murder.

This discovery, in April 1989, shattered her. 'I sank into a deep hole.' She was assailed by awful thoughts and went to pieces. Frightened of death, she locked herself into her room. For weeks she wouldn't dare go out of the house. She felt that the descendants of her father's victims were pursuing her. Throughout her whole life she had feelings of guilt. Now she knew why. She felt she was being suffocated by the horrors she had discovered. After what seemed an eternity to her, and the return to a 'more normal' life, she needed to find out how to live with this new-found awareness. 'When you get divorced you can get a book on how to do it and when someone dies you can get a book on how to deal with it. But there's no book to get on how to deal with a father who is a mass murderer.'

Up to this point she had always shut out World War II from her life. Now she began to read everything she could lay her hands on about the Holocaust. By fanatically immersing herself in the subject she felt she was repenting for her father's guilt. She even went to White Russia, now Belarus, where her father had committed his crimes. She felt a growing desire to meet the descendants of the victims. 'I hoped they would spit on me and clearly express their contempt, that it would lessen my pain if they thrashed me and walked all over me. I wanted to reduce the pain which I, as a daughter of this man, deserved.'

Luckily, while doing her research about her father, she found out about a planned study project whereby children of survivors and of perpetrators would have an opportunity to encounter each other. Asked to be one of the 11 German descendants, she prepared to travel to Boston in September of 1992.

As she got ready to encounter her 'enemies' she developed an irrational fear of those she was to meet. 'I came to Boston, alone and lost, stuffed with fear but also with an inner emptiness. It really was like a lamb for the slaughter. I stood in front of the door of the house where the meeting was to take place. My legs were leaden. I wanted to turn and run.' A woman asked her whether she had come for the research project; together they found their way to the meeting room.

She saw some strangers. A voice called out, 'Honey can you help me cut some bagels.' An elegant middle-aged woman handed her a plastic knife. 'It was my first meeting with a Jew: Zella Brown'. Much later they would often laugh together about this first encounter with a plastic knife.

The session began. The twenty three participants each told their stories. Helga knew little English and had never heard the word Holocaust before. 'I only understand a fraction of what was talked about and noticed with alarm that my time to talk was getting closer.' When it came, she was tongue-tied. 'I couldn't get out a word. I didn't know what to say. I was told I could speak in German and it would be translated. I still couldn't do it.' Zella took her hand and she began.

Zella says, 'This is how I first met Helga. With fear in her eyes she told us that she hoped she would be safe among us and that she suffered right along with us. Bravely she shared with us how her relentless search for the truth had brought her to this conference. I suddenly felt a release of some kind, an opening of my heart which Helga's display of honesty and raw emotions triggered. I had to tell her, 'Helga, I'm here to say to Hitler, 'You failed. You're not going to succeed in getting me to hate Helga anymore.' In my wildest dreams I could never have anticipated her response to me, 'You mean more to me than my mother – and she is still alive – because you said that.'

'A miraculous bond took place during those five, emotionally draining days in Boston,' Zella told me. 'The only word that genuinely describes what transpired is healing. Years of therapy were not able to accomplish what this experience was able to do for me and others.'

In the next weeks, Zella and Helga continued to get acquainted through an exchange of letters, sharing their innermost thoughts. Six months later Helga and Zella were invited to another dialogue, this one in Germany, in the

Black Forest. Unlike the first one in Boston, all the old and new participants would be staying under one roof, and Zella and Helga were excited to be roommates.

Since 1993 Jewish and German members of *One by One* have met annually for week-long retreats to tell their stories and face the terrible legacy they share. They now number in the hundreds. 'Many of us have a dark heavy burden from this horrible past and we need to heal from it and do something positive about it,' says One by One Board member Rosalie Gerut, a cantor and musician whose parents survived Hitler's death camps.

The members of *One by One* do not equate dialogue with forgiveness or understanding with excusing. Zella emailed me: 'The subject of 'forgiveness' is dear to my heart given the long and tedious journey I have had to take as the daughter of two Holocaust survivors. But our organization has avoided the 'forgiveness' topic. For Helga and me it has never come up. I don't need to forgive her for something she didn't commit. It was a dialogue process that brought us to a place of healing, friendship and love. Some did have the need to apologise 'for what their ancestors did' and when I heard such a statement it was gratifying.'

Nor would they ever compare the suffering of the survivors' side with that of the perpetrators. Listening does not blur the differences or what separates them. But listening to descendants of survivors, they say, is an attempt to repair the threads of their common humanity that Nazi Germany sought to irrevocably break, and the dialogues are held in Germany because it is important to reclaim their right to be there in the home of their relatives and ancestors. It gives a chance for many Germans who have never met a Jew to meet one. The first challenge is for facilitators to help everyone feel 'safe' so that 'their story becomes our story' and all suddenly realise that they could easily have experienced what he or she did if they were born in the other's place.

Helga says that talking about her father's crimes to those whose families suffered under the Nazis has helped her to deal with the guilt and shame that she thought she could never escape. Today she is not guilty, she says, but she would be if she were to push away history as some Germans have done. 'I will never forget the way my Jewish friend has helped me survive this horror. Discovering my father was a mass murderer has produced so much that is positive in the people I have met.' Zella finds it 'especially heart-warming that at least for our families the cycle of hate will end with our children.'

In an early exchange of letters Helga had asked Zella, 'Don't you think we can both change the world?' Zella replied much later, 'Yes, I do believe we can change the world. In fact I think we already have.' She recalled the remarkable teens at Carver High School in Plymouth, MA who had bonded with them after their talk and whose teachers begged them never to stop what they were doing; and the congregants from Temple Beth Abraham in Canton who were moved to tears when they told their stories during their Yom Ashoah commemoration? She referred to the grateful soldiers and their families at Fort Sill, OK who had formed a receiving line to thank them individually for telling their stories so courageously; and to the time when the entire staff at The Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC gave them a standing ovation.

'But Helga,' Zella went on, 'you will agree that the most memorable and most emotional experience for both of us was in my parents' home in Holbrook, Maine, when my mother approached you as we were leaving: 'Helga, I want you to know that I don't hate you for what your father did. I am just so happy that you, together with my daughter, will tell the world the truth because it pains me so when I hear people say that it did not happen.'

And then she hugged you, gave you a kiss on the cheek and said, 'Be sure to write, Helga.'

No Space to be a Child

Mohamed Altawil ¹

I am a Palestinian whose family lived for generations in the village of Al-Maghar. Sixty years ago, during the Nakbah (Catastrophe), my grandparents and their whole family were expelled from Al-Maghar, uprooted and sent to the huts and narrow streets of a refugee camp 100 miles away. After sixty years, still they taste the bitterness of that loss and watch helplessly as the flames of that tragedy continue to burn. As a small child I was used to living in one of the huts in the refugee camp, but as I got older and became aware of the discontent inside my family, I would pester my father with questions:

Why do we not have a garden?

Why does the roof always leak in winter?

Why do we go to school without having a breakfast or pocket money?

Why do all ten of us sleep in one room?

Why do we have no heating in our house or school?

Why does our classroom have 50 students in one small space?

Why do we not have a playground?

Where can I get clean water?

Why do we not travel anywhere?

Why do we hear booming sounds throughout the night?

Will the roar of the bulldozer come towards us today?

Who has been killed today?

Why do you let the soldiers humiliate you at the checkpoints?

Do all human beings live like us?

Why has our country been wiped off the map in the library?

Often he would answer me with tears in his eyes. 'We are the victims of a violent occupation. Like a cancer, it spreads over all aspects of our lives. Oh, my son, be careful! Do not provoke the violence to fall upon you.'

I was born in 1973 and gradually became aware of all this suffering in the narrow alleys of the camp. By the time I was fourteen years old, I could not bear the fact that the occupying soldiers were wreaking havoc in my homeland. I would ignore my father's warnings and seek revenge for our humiliation.

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So I used to throw stones at the bulldozers as they rumbled through the streets. With my brothers and my friends we would chase after the armoured cars and soldiers from one place to another, believing we were expelling them all from our land. As soon as we heard the rumble of their engines, we would gather pieces of rubble and pile them in various parts of the camp. Then we hid ourselves and as soon as we saw the soldiers coming we rushed out and pelted them with stones.

This was our favourite game. We had nowhere to play organised games and football in the street was too dangerous. The older members of our family and the neighbours continually warned us that they were unable to protect us from the dangers of the occupation. "We do not have a police or a national army," they said. So in our minds, we became the national army; we were 'The Children of Stones' protecting our camp and resisting the soldiers of occupation. We were Robin Hood fighting for justice, or the American Indians defending the frontier from the white invaders. It was not just a game; it was actually a Death Game – a game which released our anger and gave us the thrill and pride of feeling we were protecting our communities when the older generation could not. I was too young to understand its consequences even though some friends of mine were killed or injured or became disabled for life.

It so happened that during one of these daily activities of throwing stones, the soldiers started to chase me. I had been hurling stones at them and my aim was good through practice. Now I turned and ran, dodging to avoid any bullets and evade capture. Suddenly my shoulder and back were struck in several places at once. They had fired a plastic bullet which, in order to stop me, had broken into several pieces aiming to injure but not kill me. I fell, but immediately got up. I carried on running although I felt my shirt sticking to blood that poured from my back and head. I felt no pain as excitement, fear and pride forced me on and I raced towards the fence of a farm which was located at the edge of our camp. I leapt and climbed, but my leg became stuck in the rough pile of wood, thorns and metal. A hand gripped my shirt and I was pulled out of the fence and thrown to the ground. I yelled and kicked and the soldiers punched me hard. By now my bleeding was serious, but still they punched. I became weaker and my angry protests turned to sobs. I was beginning to lose consciousness, but then my arms were yanked upwards and a soldier pulled me by my hands and dragged me to where the officer in charge was waiting. During all this the people in my camp watched helplessly. Many shouted in outrage over what was happening and this anger helped me stop crying out in pain as my ankles were scratched and battered along the bumpy road. Suddenly, men, women, and children started to throw stones in an attempt to get the soldiers to release me. I was dropped in the middle of the camp and then hit again to deter the people from stone-throwing. But women from my family and then neighbours rushed forward and attacked the soldiers with their bare hands. Some of these women reached the officer and yelled at him: "Release the boy! Release him! If you don't, he will die and it will be your fault." This must have had an effect because the hitting suddenly stopped and soon after I found myself admitted to hospital.

It was some weeks before I recovered and when I returned to the camp my friends treated me like a hero. My father, however, was not pleased. I had ignored his warnings and disobeyed him. When, later, my older brothers went out to throw their stones at the soldiers, my father locked me in a room upstairs. I knew he did this out of love and a real fear for my safety, but even so I climbed out of the window, slithered down the drainpipe and ran to join my brothers in the street. That night forty people were injured and during the curfew I crept through the darkness from street to street to avoid the soldiers who would arrest me. Since I was under-age, my father would be fined if I was caught. When I reached our home, I climbed to the space above our door and dropped quietly inside, hoping everyone was asleep. My father and mother, however, were up waiting for me. They had not been to bed. It was a full time job for them, protecting me and my eight brothers. I had ignored their warnings even during the curfew hours. That night I got a severe final warning. The next time I tried to go out to join in the stone-throwing, my father held onto me and then, for the first and only time in his life he beat me.

As I grew older, I began to get tired of our games. Also, I found that I was doing well at school and as I learnt more I realised that knowledge was another kind of weapon. It made me feel strong. It reinforced my identity. The growth of understanding made me see the possibility of helping our people and resisting occupation in more subtle ways than throwing stones. However, I cannot blame those children who still throw stones. Their anger and their actions constitute some form of therapy and they have become a symbol around the world for innocent revolt against injustice. The root of the problem is not the throwing of stones, but the occupation that has stolen their childhood.

I began to study hard and found a path which would lead to my active role in helping the Palestinians remain steadfast in the face of humiliation and oppression. An understanding of History and the pursuit of knowledge in the Psychological Sciences have already produced results on the ground in Gaza. This work is set to continue for many years to come.

Since I achieved excellent results in high school and because my family had little money, I was given a grant by UNRWA to study to become a teacher. My hope was that I would then have enough money to support my parents. I needed to go to Ramallah on the West Bank to complete my studies, but due to the Occupation I faced obstacles wherever I decided to go. Travelling between Gaza and the West Bank was always difficult and during the first Intifada (the uprising between 1987 and 1993) I was prevented for a while from leaving Gaza.

Travelling has been one of the main restrictions we face in Palestine. Because of the wall, the fences, the checkpoints and the endless paperwork involved to get a pass, there is a barrier between Gaza and our relatives or friends in the West Bank. We can wait for one hour or one day or one week or one month or one year to get permission to travel to another region in our own country. One soldier can stop thousands of people crossing a checkpoint. One soldier is given control over the daily lives of thousands of people who need to get to work or to reach a hospital or go to school. I once saw an old man who was dying at a check point as he waited in the heat to cross through to go back to his family. Another time I saw a pregnant woman give birth beside the road at a check point after a soldier had refused to let anybody pass between the north and the middle zones of the Gaza Strip.

I was not surprised, therefore, to find that my studies were held back by the occupation. Later, when I finished my final exams in Ramallah in 1993, I could not get permission to return home. So I tried travelling through the checkpoint on a friend's ID. The plan failed and I was arrested. When I was taken into custody, they tried to get me to sign something that was written in Hebrew. I told them I could not read Hebrew. They said, 'Sign it anyway'. I said, 'No!' because I thought it was probably a confession statement. Then one of them hit me across the head and told me to sign. I refused and he punched me again and again. Even today, I still have problems in my left ear from this beating. After one month in prison, they said I would be released on payment of \$500. I knew my family would have to sell many possessions to raise this sum. So, I refused to let this happen and stayed another two months in jail.

The period that followed was very hard. I was working as a teacher in UNRWA's schools to earn money for myself and my parents while, at the same time, I was doing my postgraduate studies in mental health at an Egyptian university. I had decided that I must learn more about psychology because the children I was teaching in Gaza were suffering badly from the Occupation and I wanted to be able to help them. During my work as a school counsellor in the Gaza Strip, I saw a lot of the Palestinian children who had been exposed on a daily basis to traumatic experiences since the beginning of the second Intifada which began on 28th October 2000. They clearly suffered from psychological, social and educational disturbances such as: insomnia, fear of the dark, phobias, depression, bedwetting, social withdrawal, negative social-interaction, aggressive behaviour, chronic forgetfulness and truancy from school. These were alarming indicators that having a normal childhood in Palestine was unlikely in the current circumstances and that the future psychological well-being of Palestinian children was being compromised by on-going traumatic experiences.

I began to study for long hours after school and travelled to Egypt to see my supervisor during the summer holidays. Once I had received my Master's degree, I began also to work as a part-time lecturer at a university in Gaza. Life was so busy that I had no time to see my friends and they saw so little of me that they thought I had gone away.

In 2001, I started studying for a PhD. But my family was worried. I was nearly 28 and they thought it was time for me to marry. I tried to tell them that I didn't have time for this. I was still pursuing my long held dream to learn as much as I could so that I could help to heal the wounds caused by the Occupation. It was as if the anger that had made me throw stones had been converted into the need to study. I didn't have time to run a car, let alone get married - it would be too unfair on my wife. Gradually, however, I realised that my life should not be all work and, having found the right person with the help of my family, I got married in August 2002. In September 2003, I walked at midnight - the last two kilometres through gunfire - to the hospital where my daughter was born.

Scholarships from the International Ford Foundation Programme are very few and I was fortunate, after a long and difficult selection period, to be one of the ten people offered a scholarship in 2004. This was to do another PhD, this time in clinical psychology, a qualification which was both rare and very much needed in Gaza. Of course, I now had a difficult decision to make. I would have to go abroad to study, leaving my wife and little daughter at home with my wife's family. Also I knew this would be hard for my parents, particularly for my sick mother. I thought, however, that I should be able to go back regularly to see them and, that, when the time was right, and my wife had completed her degree, my family would be able to join me in England. But developments in Gaza were soon to make this hope seem an impossibility.

From the Nakbah in 1948 until now there have been only nine years in my country without war or conflict or uprising. In 2000, following the attack on the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque by the soldiers of the Occupation, a second Intifada spread through the Palestinian population and caused the Israeli soldiers to create even more obstacles and difficulties. So, although arrangements had been made for three Ford Foundation students to leave Gaza through the America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST), the Israelis refused to allow this. Because of the Intifada, the Gaza Strip was now under blockade. It was a shock for all three of us. The Rafah crossing was the only route for the population of Gaza to the rest of the world. We no longer had an airport. The blockade stopped boats at sea. A wire fence, a high wall and watchtowers caged us in from Israel. At Rafah in 2004 we were kept stranded for three weeks, sleeping on the floor of a deserted, half-built house. It had no roof or doors or windows. To go back to Gaza City meant that we might miss the chance opening of the border crossing, so we slept in this place for 21 days waiting for the moment when, on the whim of a young Israeli soldier, we might be let through. The indignity of that waiting made many of us angry. We were being treated worse than animals. Where was respect or decency? No wonder so many of us became violent in the face of such humiliation. Due to these delays, we almost lost our chance of a scholarship: we should have arrived in London in September 2004, but were actually delayed until November.

At last, however, we were able to travel from Cairo Airport to London. Very little post had been getting through to Gaza and Internet access was limited, so I had little information about the university I was to join. I managed to make my way there, however, and, as soon as I arrived at the University of Hertfordshire, I changed my research topic from the general subject of depression to one which would specifically study the effects of trauma on Palestinian children. This was so that I could go on to design and develop programmes which could be set up immediately to help the children of Gaza.

A shock awaited me when I went to the registration centre at the university: I found that they had registered me as an Israeli citizen with my homeland as Israel. I objected to this and showed them my passport which clearly identified me as Palestinian. They apologized, but all they could do was to replace 'Israeli' with 'Unknown Nationality or Nation'. And so it remains to this day. The reason for this is that the computer system does not include Palestine. I had the same problem when I opened a bank account and found, once again, that there seems to be no such country as Palestine. My country's name and my nationality had been erased. I told a friend at the university about how painful this was and he gave me a map of the world in the form of a globe with the word Palestine clearly written on it. For a short time, I was happy about this, but then he told me, "This is an old map and that is the reason why the name of Palestine is there."

In order to come to England to study I had left my wife and little one-year-old daughter. For a short time, I was able to go back and see them in the holidays. But in June 2006 the Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, was captured by Palestinian militants and the blockade was intensified. I could not get to see them at all. My little son was born in January 2007 but I was unable to see him until over a year later.

Meanwhile, my family was telling me that life in Gaza had become more difficult than it had ever been before and there seemed to be no way of escape: if you went to a pharmacy, you found no medicine even if you could afford to pay for it. You could not find fruit or milk for your children. There were continuous power shortages, often only four hours of electricity a day, sometimes none. Sick people were dying while they waited for permission to pass the Israeli checkpoints to reach a hospital. When someone died, it was often impossible to find them a coffin or cement to construct their grave. Medical services were starved of equipment. Children played on the dangerous rubble of bulldozed houses. They swam in the polluted water near the beaches where untreated sewage flowed into the sea. They mimicked the conflict with real homemade weapons, often injuring each other in these games. The life in Gaza was becoming a slow death.

My wife needed urgent treatment for an eye condition. I submitted a request to get her out of Gaza for humanitarian reasons. Neither the Palestinian Authority nor the Red Cross could persuade the Israelis to grant permission. I then asked UNRWA to help, and they said that I needed to get approval to pass through Jordan. After a two month wait we received Jordanian approval, but once again the Israeli side refused the request. As a last resort we contacted the Israeli Embassy in London explaining my wife's situation but once again help was refused. The situation seemed hopeless.

Then an event occurred which was to change everything. I heard on the news that the anger of the people of Gaza had finally exploded. They could no longer bear the hunger and the deprivation. Nobody was offering any help – not even the neighbouring Arab countries, which were just standing by while people were dying. So in desperation

the people made holes in the border wall between Gaza and Egypt. First they exploded several bombs to make small holes; then bulldozers moved in to enlarge the holes so that people could get through. They made several holes along a twelve kilometre stretch of wall to make it difficult for the Egyptians to reseal the border. Then it was as if a dam had burst. An unstoppable force of tens of thousands of Palestinian people flowed to the Egyptian border cities of Rafah and Al-Arish in order to buy essential goods and medicines.

This happened on the 23rd of January 2008. I was in my office at the University of Hertfordshire working through the night at my computer when the news broke. And suddenly here was my opportunity – I should leave at once and, if all went well, I would see my wife and little daughter for the first time in eighteen months and would have my very first look at my one year old baby son. I listened to the news on Aljazeera throughout the night and, in the morning, I contacted my wife and asked her to move quickly and leave Gaza for Egypt, like all the other people. This was important because America and Israel were insisting that the borders should be closed again.

I was lucky that I had a valid visa and that I quickly found a seat on a flight to Egypt. I contacted my family, who had clambered their way with great difficulty through the rubble of the border and were now starting to walk along with thousands of other people to where they could get a car to take them to Al-Arish.

I arrived at Cairo airport that same evening. I dared not risk telling the authorities the real reason for my journey. I said that I was travelling as a student, but even so they delayed my onward journey for more than two hours. Eventually I was able to get to a hotel in Cairo and contact my family who were now safely in the very crowded house of a relative in Al-Arish. In three hours driving, I could be with them. But it was not going to be that easy.

As soon as the border was breached, more than fifteen checkpoints manned by Egyptian security forces were set up on the road from Cairo to Al-Arish to make sure that the refugees from Gaza could not travel to Cairo. Anyone caught doing this would be imprisoned. And it was equally difficult to travel in the direction I wanted to go. So how would I reach my family? The Palestinian authorities in Cairo told me that there would be no way for me to get through, but I was not going to turn back now.

I thought about various different ways of getting through the checkpoints. I considered using my wife's illness to get an ambulance to go to her, but this proved impossible – no Palestinian was allowed to travel to meet refugee relatives in any circumstances. Three days passed and I was becoming angry and depressed especially when I heard from my wife that conditions were very bad in Al-Arish. There was such serious overcrowding that people were sleeping in the streets even though it was cold winter. Also my baby son was sick and my wife's condition was worsening. She was so unhappy about all this that she wanted to go back to Gaza. I was running out of ideas, but I managed to convince her that she should stay put for one more night – if I hadn't thought of a solution by the following afternoon, she could give up and go back.

Until this point I had been honest and declared my Palestinian nationality. Now I realised I had to try another way: I took the underground to get to a minibus station outside Cairo, calculating that, for my plan to work, I needed to travel on a crowded bus and at night. I was going to pretend to be Egyptian so I needed to talk as little as possible so that my accent would not give me away, and I needed to sit in the middle of many people so that the false ID I was hoping to use (which was actually my University of Hertfordshire staff card) could only be glanced at.

We were stopped at seven of the checkpoints and, miraculously, my plan seemed to be working. The other Palestinian people were identified and taken off the bus, but somehow I got through. Then we reached the last and strictest of the checkpoints and, to my horror, we were asked to get out of the bus so that we could be checked individually. My fake 'Egyptian' ID could not possibly survive a close scrutiny, so I had to change my tactics. Now I would find out if my faithful university card would support my new claim to be a British citizen. The officials seemed reasonably satisfied with this ID, but said that they needed a passport. So I gave them a quick look at my British visa and they accepted it. I was through! Of the original eleven people on the bus, only seven remained, six of whom were genuinely Egyptian.

Arriving in Al-Arish, I could see what had been making my wife so unhappy. The overcrowding was worse than any I had ever seen, even in the refugee camps. So I decided to try to rent a hotel room or a flat before I even tried to contact my family. No-one would rent any rooms to a Palestinian at that time, so I continued to pretend to be British and eventually found somewhere I could bring my family to hide and have a few days of peace while we sorted out all the papers that would be necessary for them to travel. Prices had gone mad since the border was breached. It now cost me as much to rent a flat for one day as it would have done previously to rent for three whole months.

At last I was ready to contact my family. I asked them to walk to the town square and went to meet them there. Like everywhere else, the square was very crowded and I could not see them. I waited. After all the obstacles, I was going to see them at last. How would they look now? How would they greet me? My little daughter had refused to speak to me on the phone all the time I had been away – she couldn't understand why her Daddy had left her for so long. And the son I had never seen - my mind was busy imagining, as in a dream, how it would feel for me to hold him. But for him it would be as if he was being held by a stranger.

Through the crowds, I thought I saw them walking towards me. Then I was sure it was them. I ran to them, full of happiness. I took my little son from my wife's arms and hugged him as I had wanted to do for so long. This was a moment of great happiness but also of sadness and burning anger. I had been unable to travel to see them for eighteen months and now my son did not know me and did not want me to hold him; my little daughter was very shy of being near me and my wife looked tired and ill.

Tradition demanded that we should go back and spend a night in the crowded house of my relatives before going on to our flat. The best thing about that day was that, later on, I was able to go on a little walk with just my children who were beginning to accept me. I talked to them and bought them presents and gradually I could feel them coming back to me. But this reminded me of one more important journey I must make – I had not seen my parents for eighteen months; they were both too frail to travel and this might be my last chance to see them.

My wife and all the relatives were very much against my going into Gaza – getting in would be fairly easy but there were many Egyptian soldiers now massing on the border to prevent any more Palestinians getting out of Gaza. Stories were coming from the border of violence and killing. The situation was very risky but I had to balance the risks. It would be dreadful if my wife and family had escaped from Gaza and I then became a prisoner there, but equally it would be dreadful if I came so near to Gaza without seeing my mother and father.

I had to walk the last two kilometres to the border through the dust and the rubble and amongst crowds of people returning with sheep and food and petrol cans and medicines. At the border, I saw something I had never seen in my whole life: the hole in the wall had been made large enough for cars to pass through in both directions. For the first time since 1967, and for only two days, cars were able to cross the border. I walked through the hole in the wall and put my feet on the land of my home country again. I would have liked to kiss the soil, but there was no time and no space to do this amidst the crowds.

As I travelled on and reached my parents' camp, there were fewer and fewer people – the place was almost deserted – everyone who was young and fit seemed to have gone to Egypt – only the old people were left. The meeting with my parents was very happy and very sad. We had so much to say and such a short time to say it in. Nobody knew how long the border would remain open and every hour I stayed increased the risk that I would not get back to my family. So, after two hours, and with tears in his eyes, my father told me that it was time for me to go. And this time I was lucky: the border was still open and cars were still passing through. So to the great relief of my wife, I was able to get a car and arrive back safely in Al-Arish.

I now went with my wife and children to live in the flat I had rented while I sorted out a way to get them out of Egypt. The border with Gaza, having been open for one week was now closed again, and the security forces were arresting any Palestinian found in the border cities, regardless of circumstances. We were only able to stay in the flat for a day or two because the landlady became suspicious that we were not Egyptian and she feared the police. So she asked us to leave. We moved on to another flat, but, on the first night there, the security forces banged on the door in the middle of the night. This was very frightening for my wife and children and, if they had been discovered, they would have been sent back to Gaza. I quietly prepared to hide them, but as we waited in the dark we heard the police go away having assumed the place was empty. So now we had no choice. We had to move back to hide in the house of my relatives, which was less crowded now as most Palestinians had been forced back to Gaza.

I had registered the names of my wife and my children in the Security Directorate so that their passports could be stamped and they could leave Egypt for Britain. But after three weeks no progress had been made, so I decided to again use my University ID, my UK and Egyptian visas. I adapted my methods depending on who was manning the checkpoints and whether they were likely to understand the English writing on some of the documents. It was another big adventure – sometimes I pretended to be an Egyptian local and at other times I would be a British citizen working in England. We succeeded in reaching Cairo eventually and spent two more weeks there getting approval to travel out of Egypt.

The journey had lasted five weeks from the time I arrived in Egypt to the time the four of us left. We finally left Cairo and journeyed to London at the end of February 2008. We had difficulty getting my little daughter onto the plane. All she knew about aeroplanes was that they dropped bombs and killed people. It was very hard to convince her that this plane carried no bombs. Since she has arrived in England she has often been frightened by things like fireworks and flashing lights on cars and even by the post coming through our letterbox. She is just one of the traumatised children who are the subject of my PhD.

When I left Gaza to come to England to study, I left everything behind me, but the people all remain etched in my heart and my memory. However long I have been away from home, I have never forgotten the flag of my country and the grief of its children, particularly when I see the green spaces and playgrounds in this country where children play without fear of sniper fire or the roar of tanks or the restrictions of the blockade. I do not begrudge the children here the joys they have. I simply wish that the children in my country had something similar to this, or at least half, or anything of it. I am one of Palestine's children, and none of us has had a childhood. We were all born as adults and our childhood has been stolen from us in front of the eyes of the free world. So for how long will this suffering and tragedy continue? Where are the people of conscience? Where is the free world? Where are justice and freedom?

‘We need to love each other’ Constructing a new Rwanda; Child Survivors of the 1994 Genocide

Phillipa Bleach

A thousand hills, beautiful mountains and lakes, energetic dancers and drummers, skilled craftsmen, friendly people and bustling markets – this is Rwanda now and how it has always been, except for one period of History which has cast a dark shadow on this magnificent land. What was once a country of Rwandans became a nation torn apart by segregation, where under colonisation the traditional tribal Rwandan people were no more but instead labelled as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, socio-economic ideas which were turned into racial identities. When communities are split and its citizens categorized, civil rights, mutual respect, love and responsibility disappear overnight and are replaced by jealousy, suspicion and terror. Today, the child survivors of the 1994 genocide are fighting back through education and are regaining their nation’s identity. The survivors aim to create a country where the people are one and love each other without concern for racial background, or political or financial status. For them, ridding the country of the ‘them and us’ mentality is paramount to creating a harmonious society in the future and ensuring that genocide never happens again.

The child survivors of the genocide are able to explore their own experiences and take an active role in educating the international community thanks to the Aegis Trust and Kigali Memorial Centre (KMC). These two organisations are working together to provide support for the survivors and provide them with the resources, methods and audiences to enable their stories to be heard. Having spent the summer interviewing Rwandan survivors in 2008, it was inspiring to hear that they all have the same message. After the Holocaust the international community got together and said ‘never again’ would genocide occur, yet time and time again in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and now Darfur, men, women and children are being slaughtered. Thus the message is to see the impact that genocide has in Rwanda and to tell everyone what effect hatred and division has; ‘today we must promote genocide prevention and learn from the past or the one million killed in Rwanda will have been sacrificed for nothing’.¹

A Centre of Hope

The Aegis Trust was founded in 2000 and has its home at the UK Holocaust Centre which was opened in 1995. Aegis runs worldwide campaigns against genocide and has played a vital part in remembrance, research, policy and education. In 2002, Aegis was asked to join with Kigali City Council in Rwanda to create the Kigali Memorial Centre. This centre (the vision of the then Mayor, Théoneste Mutsindashyaka) was going to be more than a burial site, instead this spot in Gisozi, Kigali would become a place of dignified remembrance and learning.² The exhibition opened in April 2004 to mark the tenth anniversary of the genocide and the permanent exhibition is situated next to the mass graves of 250,000 murder victims and this juxtaposition acts as a stark reminder of the price of ignorance. The Kigali Memorial Centre and Aegis Students Rwanda are manned by survivors, most of whom were children in 1994. Now young adults, they dedicate their time and energy to making the centre work, whether through speaking about their personal experiences, creating education programmes or acting as a guide for school groups – these survivors are the soul of the centre. The KMC is a life line for many child survivors. It has helped hundreds of survivors talk for the first time about their traumatic experiences, it provides a place of work for some, or through their social programme, has enabled the orphans of the genocide to have a place to live and go to school. Most importantly this centre is one of hope; it has given the child survivors meaning and purpose in the aftermath of hell.

1 In conversation with Michel Uwamahoro, School Coordinator, Aegis Students Rwanda

2 Whitworth. 2006. *We Survived - Genocide in Rwanda*. Nottingham. Quill Press. pp 274

Yannick

Yannick Tona was born in the Congo on 24th February 1990, his family having been in exile due to the earlier periods of violence in the 1960s and 1970s following Rwanda's independence. When Yannick and his family returned to Rwanda his father joined the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel army which had formed in Uganda out of the thousands of Tutsi refugees who had been pushed out of Rwanda into the neighbouring countries. In the 100 day storm of mass murder which lasted from the 6th April to July, Yannick, his mother, sister and baby brother were at his grandparent's house when they heard that the militia were coming. At just four years old Yannick was taken by his mother and fled the house, a disabled woman whose leg was in a brace and could not walk unaided without a stick; she carried Yannick for weeks. Hiding from the men with machetes, crawling over dead bodies, they reached the supposed safety of the Congo as hungry refugees. Yannick's sister was left behind and managed to escape but brought with her the horrifying knowledge of what had happened to the rest of the family. Their grandmother was told to kill the baby brother but when she refused he was smashed against the wall, and the grandmother instructed to drink his blood. When the RPF managed to get to Kigali Yannick's father was unable to find any members of his family left alive, it was only after much searching that Yannick, his parents and sister were reunited. Yannick suffered child trauma and was unable to speak immediately after the genocide due to the psychological impact of what he had witnessed. As a refugee Yannick had to repeat a year in school, and when his family returned to Rwanda in 1995, and then Kigali in 1998 he sat side by side in school with the children of the perpetrators.

Yannick is an inspiring young man and a credit to Rwanda. It has been a slow and steady progress but he has found a way to find something good out of his harrowing experiences. He understands and encourages others to view the current child generations, and promotes the children of the survivors and perpetrators to work together to create a new Rwanda. He can see that for those children whose parents were killers also have a legacy to live with and it has left many without confidence and the burden of guilt to carry – 'it is important to distinguish between the children I go to school with and the actions of their parents'.³ For Yannick being a member of Aegis Students Rwanda has given him an opportunity to help others. Although some survivors have specific roles within Aegis, Yannick explained that he is keen to participate in all areas as he has a strong belief that he can contribute and change the world the more he is involved. The KMC has played a vital part in helping Yannick understand the causes of the genocide, particularly the politics of hate. He is a determined youth who wants to become a politician and tell the truth about genocide in memory of his brother. At the moment Yannick is interested in the education of others,

particularly children as ‘they are Rwanda’s future’,⁴ however one day he hopes to become President of Rwanda as he can then ‘help everyone’ as ‘we are all Rwandans, I will not let there be Hutu versus Tutsi again’.⁵

A Divided Society

The permanent exhibition at the Kigali Memorial Centre holds at its core the ideal that Rwanda will once again be united and that eventually the divisions which evolved into hatred and then murder will become extinct.

To the European powers, 19th century Africa was nothing but a commodity. Although slavery was no longer a factor, the desire to establish dominance and control over the African nations came from a feeling of racial superiority, greed and covetousness over the size of the empires. At the Berlin Conference of 1884 the European powers divided Africa between the superpowers and, without consultation, Rwanda was given to Germany. When the Germans first arrived in Rwanda in 1875, they met with resistance from the Rwandan people, however the strength and influence of this major European power meant that the country was quickly subdued and was colonised until 1916. Due to the First World War Belgium occupied Rwanda and in 1923 was given to Belgium under a League of Nations mandate in 1923, to be ruled indirectly. During this time of colonisation Rwandan society prospered in terms of medicine, schooling and infrastructure, and the Christian religion was also introduced and still remains the dominant religion. However, in 1932 the identity card was introduced which officially created distinctions between Hutus, Tutsis and Twa on racial grounds instead of the socio-economic classifications which had been the system in the tribes of Rwanda. Now anyone with ten cows was a Tutsi and anyone with less cows a Hutu. There was no way to change from one to the other as these divisions also applied to the descendants.

In 1957 the Hutu manifesto was published calling for majority rule, following which the UN made the improvident mistake of calling the Belgians to help the downtrodden Hutu. The switch in favouritism from Tutsi to Hutu gave the latter the opportunity to launch the massacres which started in 1959 following the death of King Rudahigwa. During these massacres thousands of Tutsis became refugees in the neighbouring states to which they had been forced to flee. Rwanda gained independence in 1962 and put in place the First Republic, led by President Gregoire Kayibanda who led a Hutu authoritarian government. By 1963 hundreds of thousands of Tutsis were refugees in Burundi, Uganda and the Congo and in November of that year approximately 1,500 Rwandan refugees from Burundi came across the border in a failed attempt to try to oust Kayibanda. Violent retaliation followed. The government organised bands of Hutu killers and encouraged and instructed them to use basic farm equipment to hack the Tutsis to death and between 10,000 and 14,000 were massacred. In 1972 the Tutsis in Rwanda suffered a backlash from the failed Hutu uprising against the Tutsi rulers in Burundi, thus in Rwanda the Tutsis were made to suffer sporadic bouts of torture and killings which spread throughout the country, and intimidation was used to keep children out of school.

When in July 1972 Kayibanda was ousted in a coup and replaced by Juvénal Habyarimana for a short moment the Rwandans lived in hope that their country may be eased of the violence and hatred. Habyarimana had come to power promising to unite the nation and cease the violence. However, life under Habyarimana did not improve the relations in Rwanda, indeed his rule was far more authoritarian. There were restrictions on movement, everyone (even babies) had to be a member of his ‘Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour led Développement’ party (MRND) and any opposition was dealt with brutally. On the surface Habyarimana’s government, at least from the perspective of the international community, was a stable and virtuous regime, particularly in comparison with other dictators,⁶ however despite the economic and administrative systems which gained Habyarimana’s government a respected reputation worldwide, it should have still been obvious that this government was dangerous, as the coup had seen plenty of blood spilt.⁷ Habyarimana was as anti-Tutsi as Kayibanda had been and indeed his own views and policies against the Tutsis were supported by his wife Agathe Kanziga. Together they secretly planned to rid Rwanda of the Tutsis, denying them civil liberties, schooling and jobs and creating a propaganda machine to encourage ordinary Hutu civilians to hate their neighbours and even members of their own families if those people were Tutsi. By the time Habyarimana established his Presidency in 1973 approximately 700,000 people had been exiled as a result of ethnic cleansing. Over the next three decades the regime would work towards conditioning the population to accept and join with the government in getting rid of the ‘cockroaches’ as the Tutsis were characterized.

4 ibid

5 ibid

6 Cohen, 2000. *Intervening in Africa, Superpower peacemaking in a Troubled Continent*. London. Macmillan Press. pp167

7 Melvern. 2006. *Conspiracy to Murder – The Rwandan Genocide*. London. Versenbooks. pp 11.

For the child survivors of the 1994 genocide, many were already too greatly aware of the earlier decades of murder and violence. They had either grown up in refugee camps or had seen the mental and physical scars of their parents. They too grew up in the late 1980s and early 1990s suffering as a result of this divided society.

Build up to genocide

Beatha Uwazaninka was eight years old in 1987 when men burst into her home and killed her grandmother with a hammer, dumping her in a ditch.⁸ Before this point Beatha and her grandmother were planning to move to Uganda to be with family as it was safer there. Until her Grandmother was killed, Beatha had not realised that she was a Tutsi and therefore a target. The event proved to be a shock awakening to the situation that surrounded her, as she was forced to live under the impact of violence from an early age.

In October 1990 the RPF launched an invasion from Uganda in retaliation against the Rwandan government who had refused entry to 900,000 refugees. The RPF believed that they would only be able to return home through military action and demanded an end to the ethnic divide and restoration of Tutsi civil rights. The 4,000-strong RPF army, consisting of second generation Tutsis, were well trained having abandoned their posts in the Uganda National Resistance Army. However, despite this strength the invasion was a failure due to the French government's authorisation of two parachute companies sent to help defend the Rwandan government. There was, unsurprisingly, violent retaliation against the Tutsis which started on 4th October 1990. Habyarimana announced that the RPF were launching attacks on Kigali and that all Tutsis should be viewed as suspects and accomplices. There were arrests and torture, with hundreds of innocent people sent to a military concentration camp run by the vicious Théoneste Bagosora. Some were executed whilst others died of disease and starvation.⁹ Persecution of Tutsis continued. Lines of young men were killed with grenades others with machetes. The government wanted to wipe out any potential Tutsis who may be tempted to join the RPF. On 22nd January 1991 the RPF, now under the command of Paul Kagame, stormed the Rwandan Bastille, releasing prisoners, stealing weapons and humiliating the government. Again, retaliations were launched and areas were sealed off to kill Tutsis. Young Hutu men aged 18-25, who had been trained into a militia (the 'Interhamwe') launched enormous reprisals, arresting, beating, raping, torturing and killing anyone they deemed as the enemy. Many child survivors at this time remember their classmates amongst the bands of Interhamwe, some as young as six.

In 1991, at the age of 11, Beatha was forced to witness the impact of the growing intensity of the persecution when she was sent to get water from the river Nyabarongo which was full of the bodies of the Abagogwe clan who has been killed. The following year, in 1992, the killers again used the rivers as a dumping ground for those murdered at Bugesera.¹⁰ These memories are ingrained on Beatha's mind and she was scared of the area in which she lived.

The child survivors who one meets in Rwanda clearly remember living in fear in their own homes and also in schools. The atrocities in Rwanda developed over decades, 'Hutu' children were indoctrinated not only at home but also at school, and it was these teachers who often took an active role in directing young bands of killers during the times of murder. Beatha recalls her education as a series of lies. 'We were taught bad history about how Tutsis were the enemy, the teachers would tell us in class that Tutsis kill Hutu babies and that the Hutus were slaves to the Tutsis and need to get rid of us. The teacher used to ask the Tutsis in the class to stand up; I remember at one time there were only two of us who stood up. When we did exams and a Tutsi got a better grade than a Hutu, the teacher would switch the grades around and there was nothing that we could do about it'.¹¹

100 Days of hell

On 6th April 1994 President Habyarimana's plane was shot down. As his body plummeted to the ground watched by his family, the orchestrators of the genocide released names, addresses and license plates of Tutsi targets. Soon these details were read out over the radio and roadblocks were set up to check ID cards and to kill on the spot any Tutsi who tried to cross. Although these roadblocks were extremely hard for adults and older children to cross, for younger children they did not prove as risky. Over the next 100 days many children, now wandering by themselves, lost without a parent or guardian, were able to move through roadblocks as many did not carry ID cards stating which group they belonged to.

8 Whitworth. 2006. *We Survived - Genocide in Rwanda*. Nottingham. Quill Press. pp 245.

9 Melvern. op cit. p 15.

10 Whitworth. op cit . p 245

11 In conversation with Beatha Uwazaninka, July/August 2008

Michel Uwamahoro fled from his house following the arrival of the Interhamwe. Over the next few weeks he was able to pass through many areas as he was small enough to hide and had no ID card on him; he believes this is what helped him to survive. However survival often depended entirely on the decisions made by the individual militia on the roadblock; 'I passed a roadblock and the men looked at the lines on the palms of my hands, they decided that the lines did not show that I was a Tutsi and so I was allowed to pass'.¹² Michel was in his fourth year of Primary school during the genocide. His friends from school turned against him and offered no refuge, he lived from day to day and for weeks had no idea where he was. Today Michel is the Schools coordinator with Aegis Students Rwanda and also attends the Kigali Institute of Education where he is in his third year studying Computer Science with Education. Michel is an active member of several survivor groups including the AERG, through which he is chief of a survivor family of 20 students,¹³ Michel has also worked with the 'Voice for Rwanda' which collects and films the testimonies of survivors. Being a member of such organisations has enabled Michel to discuss his experiences and by talking together, survivors are able to support each other. As part of AERG and Aegis Students, Michel visits many schools and is well known amongst the students. He enjoys his role;

'I have knowledge and need to use it, I have experiences of genocide and I use my experiences to work against the ideals that create it. The objectives of Aegis are perfect work for me and the objectives suit my mind. In secondary schools I am able to encourage and help the children, there are many who are alone and I encourage them to shelter each other, this helps to prepare them for the future and to be resourceful and independent, I let them know what help there is available for these young survivors, some who were babies in the genocide'.¹⁴

Unless their parents have died from AIDS, the younger school children are not usually the ones which are affected by the genocide so the primary target for all survivor organisations currently lies with the Secondary schools. The development of Aegis Students Rwanda (started in 2007) has enabled students to get off the ground on a greater scale and forge close links with the Kigali Memorial Centre. In June 2008 the organisation created a focus for Rwandan teenagers to 'import positive values'. This campaign saw 3,000 Secondary school students visit the centre, and has enabled the child survivors and children of perpetrators to discover a place which will act as an anchor for building relations in the wake of the horror of 1994.

Widows and Orphans

'To kill the big rats, you have to kill the little rats'. These were the words uttered over the radio throughout the 100 days of killing, encouraging adults to hunt down children to ensure that there would not be a future generation of Tutsis. Women were targeted for rape and infected with HIV and AIDS, and were mutilated and killed. The perpetrators were willing to do anything to prevent Tutsi women giving birth.

Those concerned with the genocide failed in their attempt to rid Rwanda of all Tutsis. At the end of the murderous rage, it was estimated that approximately 100,000 women had survived but had been left widows. Indeed, five years after the genocide over one third of all survivor households in the country were headed by a lone female.¹⁵ Following the genocide, the rates of abortion went up as the practice became more socially acceptable in the wake of the rapes the women endured. Mentally they were unable to cope with the consequences of sexual humiliation, however there are also women who kept their babies, and also those whose children have been born with HIV and AIDS. The purposeful infection of HIV and AIDS on the women in Rwanda has left a legacy of approximately 500,000 sufferers living with the disease today. The medical care for sufferers is inaccessible to the vast majority as the anti-retroviral medication has not been made available in time to deal with the development of the disease, and even if these medications were available, the vast majority of widows are poor and thus their diet would not be satisfactory enough to deal with the nutritional requirements needed to take the drugs. As a result, women in Rwanda are dying leaving hundreds of orphans, making it clear that the trauma of genocide is far from over.

Ann-Marie lives in Rwanda with her teenage son Patrick. When the genocide started Anne-Marie and her family were living in Kibuye, having already escaped surveillance and threats of violence in Kicukiro. Immediately after hearing the news of Habyarimana's death, soldiers immediately surrounded Anne-Marie's house, her husband was taken and murdered and her baby called Iradukunda (meaning 'God loves us') was taken by a soldier and thrown against a wall, he died from the impact. As Anne-Marie went to pick up the body of her baby, she was told

¹² In conversation with Michel Uwamahoro, School Coordinator, Aegis Students Rwanda

¹³ AERG stands for 'Association des Etudiants et Elèves Rescapés du Génocide'. AERG regroups survivors of the 1994 genocide mainly from schools and universities, it was set up in 1996 at the National University of Rwanda in Butare, and Since 2001 AERG has sections in all Kigali Universities. In 2002 the President of AERG estimated membership at approximately 15,000.

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ J. Smith & S. Smith, Kigali Memorial Centre Exhibition

to lie down, and there she was raped. Over the next few days Anne-Marie was moved from post to post, with the Interhamwe and Hutu neighbours unsure what they would do with her. Eventually she and Patrick went with a Hutu colleague of her husband. Thinking she would be safe she was instead taken to some units of houses which had been taken by the Interhamwe where she was gang raped for several nights in front of Patrick (then four). At this time Anne-Marie was telling the Interhamwe that she was a Hutu and so should not be killed. They decided that if she was found to be a Hutu, then they would only kill her son, but if she was found to be lying then they would both be murdered. They were marched to the area to meet their fate followed by men and women brandishing machetes, as she stood naked and begging to be killed by a bullet and not hacked to death, she was rescued and hidden by an elderly lady who had previously been helped by Anne-Marie, this lady bribed her own daughters to protect Anne-Marie and Patrick.

For Anne-Marie Patrick gave her the strength to fight for life when she was at her most desperate. The desire to protect her son was paramount in giving her a purpose to live. Following the genocide Anne-Marie stayed in an orphanage before returning to Kicukiro to live in a house which had been destroyed. Over the next few years Anne-Marie lived on land near her own property and became depressed recalling her experiences. When she told her friend about her rape ordeal she was encouraged to go to the ARBEF (Association Rwandaise pour le Bien-Etre Familial) for a sexual health test and it was here that she found out that she had contracted HIV/AIDS. Finding out that she would eventually die from a disease which had been forced upon her during the genocide she immediately looked to commit suicide but was unable to find a means to do it. She was forced to deal with the trauma which had been suppressed and was now raised to the surface. Ibuka (Rwanda's National Survivor's Association) searched for those who were worse off and found a house for Anne-Marie and Patrick. Recently she has been able to move to better accommodation thanks to the help of the Kigali Memorial Centre social programme and support from the Aegis Trust. Today Anne-Marie's most important aim is to secure a stable home for Patrick, as she has never received medication she has no chance of survival in the long term but is thankful for help which will leave her safe in the knowledge that Patrick will not end up as a street child.¹⁶

When visitors are told that they will meet with orphans, one's mind quickly switches to the faces of toddlers and school aged children who are suffering from poverty. However the orphans one meets in Rwanda in 2008 are in their twenties, but these survivors are as in need as much now as they were in the aftermath of 1994. Today these children are heads of families. Whether they are actual siblings or were thrown together in solidarity because their experiences; they have been alone to deal with adult responsibilities for fourteen years, an unbearable burden. The genocide ripped children apart from their parents, for weeks they wandered in search of parents they did not know were alive or dead. Boards were erected to help parents and children look for their loved ones. Many didn't expect to find survivors and with the announcement that by the end of 1994 the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNICEF had estimated that 37,000 unaccompanied children had been registered many parents lost hope of reclaiming their children.¹⁷ Hundreds of thousands of children were orphaned overall, with many older siblings left to tell younger siblings that their parents had been murdered.

Following the genocide many new orphanages were established to deal with the vast number of exposed children who had just encountered the most deplorable excesses of human behaviour. Many children were taken in and informally fostered by older survivors who hoped that there would be someone out there who would take care of their children if they were still alive. For teenage survivors who became heads of households they had to play the role of a mother and a father. Many felt they had no support and had no idea how to raise a family as they themselves should still be in school. The toughest job for orphans was to find food. Many left school to find a job and money, so they were left to decide between survival and education. During the genocide Tutsi children saw perpetrators take over their homes and wear the clothes of their dead parents. These children had no shelter to return to and were unable to claim back their family houses. The Fund for Genocide Survivors (FARG) did its best to try and help supply shelter or sponsor children to go to school, however although this was vital support, it did not help the concentration in school when the children were going hungry or were still psychologically traumatised from what they had witnessed.

Jean Pierre became head of the family of four children at the age of nine; before the genocide he was one of eight children. On the 11th April 1994 the Interhamwe and President's guards came to Jean Pierre's house and killed his parents, three sisters and brother. Jean Pierre was beaten himself but not killed. He and his three remaining siblings continued to hide and find refuge but found this an impossible task as all of the extended family was also dead. so they had nowhere to go. Jean Pierre explains; 'we had no food and no time to find it. We were just trying to stay

¹⁶ In conversation with Beatha Uwazaninka, July/August 2008 and Whitworth. op cit pp 14-19.

¹⁷ Extract from the Kigali Memorial Centre Permanent Exhibition

alive, eventually we found the RPF and they took us to safety. After the genocide I had to find supplies to help us survive and to seek shelter, so we went to live in an orphanage. After a while we could not stay at the orphanage together as a family and so we all went to live in a travel station. Eventually we found help through FARG, Kigali Memorial Centre and Aegis Social programme'.¹⁸

The Aegis Social Programme was started in 2004 when Aegis staff in Rwanda started to regularly donate from their wages to help the widows and orphans of genocide. This programme is now a major part of the Aegis trusts 'Fund4Rwanda' campaign. The social programme helps child survivors and the children of survivors to go to school and some to university. In addition, it also helps widows and older orphans to set up small businesses and look towards creating a future for them. The social programme is helping to give hope to those who the nation left abandoned through genocide, the widows and orphans who would otherwise still be living on the streets and living a life of beggary.

Education

Before the genocide, classrooms were places of persecution and humiliation. Hutu classmates called Tutsi children *Inyenzi* (small insect) and *Inyangarwanda* (people who hate Rwanda). Children were encouraged to listen to the radio and sing songs like 'Zinga akarago ugende' (pack your bags and leave), another particular favourite of radio RTLM was 'Let's exterminate the Tutsi'. These children were indoctrinated and hate became a part of their everyday education. As Hutu children grew up hating Tutsis, so Tutsis grew up with great fear and trepidation of their Hutu classmates. Tutsi parents who could remember their own horrors of the 1960s and 1970s warned their children that the Hutus would kill them.

Today the lessons in classrooms in Rwanda could not be further from those on the eve of genocide. The Rwandan government has made a commitment through its Commission on Genocide Prevention, to encourage and promote a climate of trust, and this will be implemented through children in the classroom. The Aegis Trust is working closely with the Rwandan government to create an education in Rwanda which will embrace the lessons of genocide prevention and attempt to avoid the mistakes of which Germany made following the Holocaust where future generations were burdened with the guilt and where the grandchildren of Nazis are still being made to feel responsible for actions which they themselves have not taken. Rwanda is still a fragile nation, learning to embrace the ideal of a unified Rwanda and reject the resentment which is still obvious in some Rwandan communities. There are many teachers and students who are still not ready to talk about their experiences in class and in some areas of Rwanda there is still tension where the perpetrators and their children do not accept responsibility for the horrors of 1994, to the extent that where some memorials have been put up and have acted as a focal point for communal grieving and dignified memorial, others have been torn down or sabotaged in an attempt to bury the past.¹⁹ There are also some survivors who want what they see as the 'truth' about genocide and do not understand why such an important event should take into consideration the feelings of the children of perpetrators.

The current education programme being set up by Aegis at the Kigali Memorial Centre aims to support schools and educators by providing new initiatives and methods to help educate the children of Rwanda. The programme was faced with thousands of children who want to look towards their future but still have so many questions about their pasts, they know what happened in their areas and to their family and friends but have no context in which to explain why. The Rwandan government is persistent in seeking to implement genocide education in schools. Over the years reports to the Rwandan Parliament have enforced the importance of learning from the horrors of those one hundred days. Aegis and KMC which are leading the way in a new education programme stress that if their programme is going to work, then it is important to emphasise that they are not running history lessons. Instead the aim is to rescue the values lost through genocide by using audio visual resources at primarily at secondary school pupils. The programme has to work around the government's strict guidelines on teaching about genocide, and in the past teachers have been fired because they have tried to introduce critical thinking about the genocide. So, in order to make this positive re-education of Rwanda work, it is essential that teachers feel that they have formal support to teach about genocide without focusing on 'victims'.

Important questions have been raised over whether the education programmes have realistic goals. However, both the government and Kigali Memorial Centre explain clearly that the education programme(s) are a work in progress and that it will understandably take decades to break down the factors which caused the genocide. Still it is important to take into consideration that there are teachers who go to the compulsory solidarity camps who hide

¹⁸ In conversation with Jean Pierre (via an interpreter). Aegis Social Programme, summer 2008.

¹⁹ Interview with Dr James Smith, Chief Executive, Aegis Trust – Rwanda, August 2008

their real views so as not to be outcasts, and there are other teachers who have been teaching in Rwanda for so long that it is doubtful that they will be able to change their attitudes so completely. So, the solution is to take no notice of the teachers attitudes and focus on how the children and survivors themselves can take a lead role in education. Rural communities on the whole are also more resistant to learning the lessons of genocide, however the KMC are hoping to reach out to them eventually through a mobile exhibitions and workshops.

The most important aspect of the education programme is that they focus on the positive images of Rwanda and approach the issues in a contemporary style, not just look back and place blame. The Aegis programme does not deal with personal experiences but the wider lessons; it focuses on the similarities and 'good' in society and also on those who rescued others during the genocide, thereby promoting a sense of brotherhood. They aim to avoid approaching the genocide from a purely academic point of view which could undermine the ability to make connections with the issues, but also avoids making the education programme focus on individual grief and experiences. There are opportunities to do this at other times as during workshops it is important to approach experiences from a neutral point of view. Currently the Rwandan government is rushing ahead with a programme of change and not giving people a chance to reflect. The Aegis programme is starting small, with test workshops and experiments and a variety of resources. Those who are organising the education programme at the KMC understand that the methods will have to evolve as time moves on and the country moves further away in time from the genocide. In twenty or thirty years they may be able to look at this dark period of history from a more historical perspective, however at the moment they must tread carefully to find a balance for the generations that come from survivors and perpetrators.

Most importantly the development of the Aegis education programme has enabled dozens of survivors to find an outlet in which they are able to use their experiences to create a new Rwanda. Emery Rutagonya feels that his role in the Aegis education programme meets his own needs as he has the urge to contribute to his country as a survivor of the genocide and to create a brighter future for new generations. The education programme helps the KMC to have an interactive working strategic plan that has an essential input into society. Emery explains; 'the education programme enables me to open up about my experiences, the students and researchers can also do this. Genocide is not the past but the present, and there will always be perpetrators and survivors living side by side for the next few decades so we have to teach people to live together and to be part of one community'.²⁰

The Future is bright

Fourteen years after the genocide, Rwanda is still suffering from the long term impacts of human brutality. Hundreds of thousands are poor, suffering from HIV and AIDS or are alone as widows and orphans. Despite these hardships, many child survivors are leading the way in creating a new positive Rwanda where they are one nation and reject the ideologies which created tyrannical authority and the butchering of their neighbours. The Kigali Memorial Centre and Aegis Trust are providing an essential support network to help these survivors to find a positive way in which to give back to their communities and teach the lessons of genocide prevention. These survivors are able to find hope and brotherhood by sharing their experiences and finding ways to help those survivors who are still struggling with the effects of their experiences. The amazing positivity that the survivors bring to their communities is proving to be an essential element which is healing Rwanda. If you go to Rwanda it is easy to bypass the genocide – you can go shopping, clubbing and climb the mountains to see the gorillas and not hear about those one hundred days of hell, because everyday people don't talk about their experiences as the mental and physical scars are too evident for them to bear. Only if you talk to those brave and remarkable survivors are you able to get a true picture of the people that make up Rwanda. But if these are the people and organisations which will be guiding Rwanda into the next few decades, the nation's future will be bright.

²⁰ Interview with Emery Rutagonya, Kigali Memorial Centre, August 2008

Young Quislings in the Netherlands, 1945-1952

Marianne Reuling

After the Second World War approximately 150,000 quislings were arrested and brought together in internment camps. The living conditions in these camps were very poor: there was not enough food, fuel, beds, blankets, soap etc. Malnutrition, hunger, oedema, dysentery, and death of babies and young children were the result. Camp-guards formed another problem. A lot of them could hardly control their feelings of revenge: prisoners were humiliated, beaten, assaulted and raped. Wild shootings and maltreatment by prison-guards resulted in the death of 31 prisoners in December 1945.

It soon became obvious that it was impossible to bring all these people to justice. A new law made release on parole possible. From January 1946 until December 1949 almost 80 percent of the prisoners were, as a result of this legislation, handed over to the Stichting Toezicht Politieke Delinquenten (STPD), an association for the probation of quislings, founded in September 1945.

Internment camps

Amongst the prisoners in the camps were at least 12,000 adolescents, the so-called young political delinquents. They were born after December 1922, which means they were minors at the outbreak of the war.

The members of the STPD were very concerned with these young quislings, who, contrary to Dutch tradition, were locked up in camps and prisons together with adult nazi's, murderers, traitors and profiteers. They feared a devastating influence on the minds of these youngsters and pleaded in favour of a treatment, according to the tradition of Dutch child welfare legislation. From 1905 on delinquent minors were not punished, but re-educated in special institutions.

The STPD succeeded: at the end of September 1945 three institutions and two camps were founded for the re-education of 360 male young quislings. The managing director of these camps was a psychologist, who started a programme of 'political re-education'. Although the camps were surrounded by walls with barbed wire and guarded by soldiers, armed with stenguns, the idea was to create a democratic community in which the youngsters lived and worked together under the supervision of youth-leaders.

From the beginning the problems were numerous: no work, no money, no equipment, no professionals. The first months the boys built their own barracks, tables, chairs, beds. Later they worked outside the camp: with shovels and wheelbarrows a sand dune was replaced one mile to the north, and later one mile back to the south. Typical Dutch 'family traditions' like Santa Claus, Christmas, Eastern and the Queen's birthday were supposed to bring the quislings 'back to democracy'. Because there was no money these festivities often led to great disappointment or hilarious situations: a piano recital (Beethoven and Mozart) at Christmas on a piano that lacked twelve keys ended in total chaos.

The so-called imitation of family life was supposed to create an atmosphere of trust and understanding in which political re-education could take place. In this atmosphere discussions on political subjects would 'lead the quislings "automatically" back to democracy'. The problem was that most of the boys didn't have any political ideology or understanding at all. They had left for Germany to escape from boredom during the war or to seek adventure. Some of them were promised extra food for their family by the Germans. They didn't understand that their choices were interpreted as political ones so they weren't able to contribute to these discussions. The few boys with a political ideology were trained debaters as they came from Hitler Youth institutions. The youth leaders had little or no answers in the discussions with these die-hards.

The outbreak of the cold war complicated the political re-education, many quislings argued that they had fought against the Russians long before the Dutch people and government had realized the dangers of communism.

One year after the start of these special youth camps it was decided that political re-education could only be successful if all discussions on politics were forbidden.

Release on probation

The young quislings had to wait until January 1947 before a special probation law for them was ready and they could leave the camps and prisons. They were put under the supervision of the STPD: 5337 boys and 2869 girls on October 1st, 7906 boys and 2920 girls on January 1st 1949. The probation always lasted three years and during this time they had to follow the instructions of their probation officer. The aim of the probationary work was political re-education, young quislings had to learn 'to behave as a good Dutch citizen'.

Most of them had to find a job – it was often one of the conditions for their release. Even if this was not the case, they tried to find a job, because they were either too old to go back to school, or their family needed their financial support. 60 % of the young quislings came from collaborator-families, who had lost everything at the end of the war, due to looting or confiscation. Boys worked in factories, shops or on farms. They were not allowed to work in (semi-)government institutions, except for the coal mines. Most girls worked in small companies or were placed in families to assist in the housekeeping, they also lived there.

Often employers, landlords and landladies or 'foster parents' were also probation officers, which made the young quislings dependent and vulnerable. A conflict with their employer could lead to an official complaint at the risk of losing their job, their place to live or even being sent back to the interment camp. 'To behave as a good Dutchman' could be interpreted in many different ways and the resentment against quislings was large and widespread. The best way to 'survive' the three year probation was to work hard, never protest and follow instructions without discussion. Research into the probationary work, shows that the political re-education developed into an 'education in social adjustment'. Industry, thrift, membership of a church, a (non-political) youth-organisation like scouting (!) or communion were regarded as qualities of successfully re-educated boys and girls.

These young quislings kept silent then and they still do. They had and have an important reason to do so. In the Netherlands you can be a lying politician, a corrupt manager, a bank-robber, a drugs-dealer, a white collar thief, after completing sentence you can start with a clean slate. This is not the case with quislings, their children and sometimes even their grandchildren.

The war ended in May 1945; for some it never did.

Review

“Children in Genocide: extreme traumatisation and affect regulation” by Suzanne Kaplan, 2008
International Psychoanalytic Library. (264 pages)

Ruth Barnett

Suzanne Kaplan is a researcher in the field of extreme traumatisation in the Programme for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Uppsala University and was awarded the Hayman prize for Published Work Pertaining to Traumatized Children and Adults in 2001 and again in 2007. Her work focuses on understanding the trauma of children in the camps and in hiding during the Holocaust and child survivors of the Rwandan Genocide. Applying psychoanalytic theory and technique, she has written a scholarly book on understanding extreme trauma in children while at the same time presenting her findings and theories in a style that reads much of the time as a gripping story of discovery.

In my opinion, we are only just beginning to realise the extent to which our current communities have been traumatised by a violent genocidal 20th century. With two world wars, each providing cover for a major genocide, and over fifty genocides across the world since the end of the Holocaust, there can hardly be a family today that does not carry serious scars of trauma in its family history. Much of this trauma is unprocessed and unknown consciously, but passed on in some form generation by generation, through the way that parenting and family dynamics are affected. Not only do communities carry the collective trauma of persecution and genocide, but also the loosening and breakdown of community cohesion and the ‘extended family’ structure has led to an increase in dysfunctional families unable to deal with stress in the face of poverty, lack of support and other problems. One of the outcomes of this is that in spite of doing their best to provide a loving home for their children, many parents today are seriously limited by their own childhood traumas of neglect, abandonment, physical and/or sexual abuse. Widespread violent abuse at a macro-level between ethnic groups or communities and traumatising violence at a micro-level in individual families inevitably feed each other. To turn the tide of trauma we need to harness the findings of researchers like Kaplan.

The title of Kaplan’s book denotes her interest in the experience of children in situations of extreme trauma through the scars persisting in their adult selves. She draws on 40 videoed interviews with child Holocaust survivors in their seventies, 12 videoed interviews with adolescent Rwandan survivors and 17 follow-up interviews. However, her presentation and discussion of the body of theory she is developing are also applicable to current issues of extreme trauma such as child abuse in families and the cumulative trauma of asylum seekers and ‘trafficked’ people, particularly those who are children at the time. This is of particular relevance to situations where national and local government policies are causing or exacerbating the trauma. For workers in such social situations, Kaplan’s book shows that ways of initiating healing are possible, but need to be predicated on a sound understanding of the nature of the traumatising processes involved in general, and individual responses to trauma. She demonstrates how neither memories, nor states of mind resulting from trauma, are static but subject to change and flux. Particularly intriguing is her concept of the ‘affect propeller’ depicting the different affective states as in a rotation like the blades of a propeller.

Kaplan presents her own journey through systematically collecting interviews and analysing them to derive themes and patterns that can help us to understand the stories of traumatised individuals we may encounter in our work and in our community. She makes clear the overwhelming and invasive nature of affects/feelings during the traumatising experience and how psychological or psychic survival depends on some form of ‘affect regulation’. Without this, the affects implode into the mind causing psychotic states like in the ‘walking dead’ described in witness accounts of the concentration camps. Kaplan explores the factors in the mind or inner world that interact with the external circumstances to determine the possibilities for ‘affect regulation’. Perhaps the most usual form this takes is that the invading affects are ‘split off’ and banished from consciousness to clear a space in the mind for the necessary thinking for ‘life to go on’. During the trauma experience, powerful affects perforate the psychic skin

that holds the self together like storm-water leaking in through perforations it makes in an edifice. The invading affects can't be baled out like water but are sealed off in the mind outside the reinstated conscious space. Traumatized people can and do live in this state for long periods or even permanently. As the emotional experience, as distinguished from the factual experience, is banished 'out of mind' it remains undigested (unprocessed) in the present and is liable to re-invade, most commonly in the form of daytime flashbacks or nightmares, which are not memories but 'raw affect'.

The trauma can only be placed where it belongs in the past if the affects are re-connected to reconstruct, as distinct from reliving the experience and make meaning of it. In the face of meaningless, deliberate violence and cruelty meted out by humans, particularly by those who should be in a protective role (parents, friends, neighbours, government), this can be a difficult if possible task. Without a measure of understanding to make the world we live in seem to have meaning, we cannot carry on living. Primitive peoples created meaning out of the potentially traumatizing natural elements by inventing myths and Gods. In a recent musical, "Rue Magique" (music and Lyrics by Brett Kahr, based on a book by Lisa Forrell) a young girl forced into sex in a whore-house on her 13th birthday dissociates and, by creating a space in her mind to imagine a proper birthday party with all the usual paper hats and ice cream, cake etc, survives the trauma. The traumatizing violence created deliberately on a technologically industrial scale by supposedly civilised 'genocidaires' and the cumulative effect of ongoing sexual parental abuse of children are extreme trauma that defies meaning; yet affect regulation to some extent may still be possible. Kaplan's research shows us the way forward.

It is clear to me that not enough attention has been paid so far to understanding trauma and raising awareness of the extent it in our communities. Kaplan has produced a book that is timely, up-to-date and readable. It should be required reading on training courses and for anyone working with distressed adults, children or families.

Understanding Backwards: The Story of Finnish War Child Veijo (Pönniäinen) Paine

Sue Saffle

We look at the world once, in childhood. The rest is memory.

Louise Gluck¹

We have each of us a life story, an inner narrative—whose continuity, whose sense, is our lives. It might be said that each of us constructs and lives ‘a narrative,’ and that this narrative is our identities.

Oliver Sacks²

Veijo Paine, born Veijo Pönniäinen³, is one of an estimated 80,000 Finns who were sent as children to Sweden (and to Norway and Denmark, though in far fewer numbers), during World War II. This massive evacuation, a world record for child migration, was prompted by Soviet attacks on Finland that began on 30 November 1939, when the Russo-Finnish Winter War broke out. In 1939, Finland had enjoyed independence from its two historic oppressors, Sweden and Russia, for only twenty-one years. Of central significance is that the Winter War united the new Finnish nation, a nation that had been bitterly divided during the Civil War between ‘Whites’ and ‘Reds’ in 1917.

Finland at War, 1939-1945

It is important to remember that, for Finland, World War II meant three distinct wars. The first was the fabled Winter War (mentioned above), which lasted from November 1939 to mid-March 1940: three and a half months during which Finns proved themselves ‘Davids’ in their struggles against the Soviet Goliaths. The second war, the so-called ‘Continuation War,’ lasted from July 1941 to September 1944, this time fought in concert with Nazi Germany as a cobelligerent against the Soviet Union.⁴ Finally, the Lapland War which lasted from September 1944 to April 1945. As part of the devastating armistice agreement with the Soviet Union at the conclusion of the Continuation War, Finland was compelled to drive German troops out of Finnish Lapland.

In 1939, Finland did not want to give up its hard-won independence. The Winter War came about because Finland refused to agree to territorial demands made by the Soviet Union for its war against Germany.⁵ As a consequence of Finland’s non-compliance, Russia broke off diplomatic negotiations and began its attack along Finland’s eastern border.⁶

Finns and Russians alike were in for surprises, however. In *The Winter War*, authors Eloise Engle and Lauri Paananen describe how

‘...Finns along the 800-mile-long border found themselves being attacked from every road.... Trees cracked and crashed into the deep snow sending clouds of white ice and slush, black rocks and debris mushrooming into the air. Overhead, airplanes roared low over the treetops, spraying machine-gun fire and dropping bombs. There was no nightmare with which the Finns could compare the scene. Nothing in their memories or wildest imaginations had prepared them for this.’⁷

Meanwhile, over Helsinki and other major cities, Russian planes rained incendiary bombs on helpless civilians. Nevertheless, the Soviet strategy to defeat Finland in two weeks and install a ‘puppet’ government failed. Soviet aggression aroused a unity and determination among Finns that became famous as ‘The Spirit of the Winter War.’

Finland became a magnet for the world press, and even Churchill was moved to declare that ‘Only Finland—superb, nay, sublime.... Finland shows what free men can do.’⁸

Child Transports, 1939-1944, and the Finnish War Children

Finns dreaded further subjugation. At the same time they were terrified that Finland, suffering as it was from shortages in food and weapons, might well be swallowed up by their neighbour to the east.⁹ Meanwhile, in order to protect Finland’s offspring, Sweden encouraged the transportation of young Finnish children to their own country. Initially, Finnish authorities asked instead for weapons and financial aid. But Sweden persisted in its bid for Finnish children, garnering support from influential Finns who feared their failure to consent might jeopardize subsequent war-related assistance.¹⁰ Thus, the first wave of children—some 9,000, in addition to 3,000 mothers and elderly people—were sent to Sweden.¹¹

In the beginning, only handicapped and sick children were transported, but the ‘criteria were... relaxed and more and more children were allowed to go.’ During the ensuing Continuation War, some 68,000 children (including 15,000 transported privately) were evacuated by ship, train, or plane to Sweden; another 4,000 more were sent to Denmark. Evacuation did not save all of these young lives. One ship full of children was attacked by a Soviet submarine in January 1940, and after the Russians began to mine the Gulf of Bothnia, rail transport became more common. Unfortunately, in 1940, the collision of two trains travelling north to Haparanda in Sweden collided, killing eleven children. Finally, as Veijo Paine’s story illustrates, many children grew gravely ill during these transports, ordeals that often lasted ten days. Often too, travel took place only at night ‘because of the possibility of air-raids.’¹²

In retrospect, it is shocking to think that no one seems to have foreseen the emotional, psychological, and (in some cases) physical consequences for these thousands of children. The trauma of separation from parents, followed by the arrival and ordeals in a strange country where virtually no one spoke their language, was almost always devastating. The younger the children, the greater the trauma. Add to this the distress of repatriation many years later, when the majority of these children were forced to return to parents they no longer remembered and a language they no longer spoke, and the impact becomes unimaginable. For those fortunate children sent to upper-class homes, their time in Sweden is often remembered as paradisaical; it was their return to their Finnish parents and homeland that was hellish.

In his Oscar-nominated film *Den bastä av modrar* (‘Mother of Mine’), director Klaus Harö provides two explanations why the child transports and experiences of the Finnish war children only began to be discussed in the mid-1980s and 1990s:

‘When the war was over, there was so much misery to deal with that people felt the war children should keep quiet and be thankful for how good they had it during the war compared to everyone else. Later, when things started going well for Finland during the 1950s, people didn’t want to talk about the war anymore, they wanted to forget, so the war children never got a chance to share their experiences, either the good or the bad ones.’¹³

The story *Den bastä av modrar* tells is based on an autobiographical book of the same title by Heikki Hietamies. In both Hietamies’s book (published in 1992) and Harö’s film (released in 2005), we encounter the story of ‘ten-year-old Heikki,’ who is transported ‘with an address label tied around his neck, together with 600 other children in the cargo hold of the ship Arcturus, to Sweden in 1939. Though it would have been hard to prevent the older children from crying, they were prohibited from crying in order not to ‘infect’ the younger ones.’¹⁴

Veijo Paine’s War-Child Story

Like Hietamies and the vast majority of War Children who have come forward to share their stories in recent years, Veijo Paine maintained public silence until he retired a few years ago. But it wasn’t the luxury of retirement that has prompted Veijo to begin telling his story to people other than his wife. Throughout most of his life the trauma he encountered in childhood was simply too great for him to confront. Until it became overwhelming and unavoidable, as it has for other War Children, Veijo’s story remained ‘under lock and key.’ In his case, it was the events of ‘9/11’ and the televised horrors of that day that compelled him to face his worst memories and, gradually, to put them into words. Like Hietamies, Veijo had bonded with his Swedish foster parents, only to be wrested away

from them by his Finnish mother. He did not return to Finland, however, but emigrated with his mother to the United States.

In addition to this terrible trauma, Veijo suppressed for decades another, even earlier trauma: the memory of his first evacuation experience when he was sent to the Finnish countryside. In 1940, when the Continuation War commenced, six-year-old Veijo and his mother were living in Kotka, at the time Finland's biggest export port. Kotka also marked the beginning of the Kymi Valley, in 1939 the most heavily industrial region in the country. Due to its importance, Kotka was heavily bombed and, according to Veijo, *'the city authorities ordered the evacuation of children between ages one and fourteen.'* Veijo relates how it is he came to be living in terrible and dangerous circumstances at this tender and vulnerable age. In his own words:

I was sent to a primitive farm in east-central Finland, an area called Savo. I am not sure how long I lived at this farm. It may have been six months, perhaps as long as nine months. When my mother came to visit this farm and saw the living conditions there, she made an instant decision to take me back to Kotka. [Savo] was a very primitive place. Poor sanitary conditions. As an example, I was completely covered with lice. When she got me back to Kotka, she shaved my hair off and took all my clothes and boiled them in water to get rid of the lice. But most importantly, she knew she had to get me away from there when she saw the welts all over my body from the whippings I was getting from the family's older son. This son, in his early 20's, [had] suffered severe brain damage from an exploding shell in the early part of the war. He and I shared a bedroom. I had really bad toothaches. At night I would cry or whimper as quietly as possible. If the son heard me, it would send him into a rage. He would grab his soldier's belt and whip me until I stayed quiet. His parents couldn't do anything because he would try to whip them too. I learned to curl myself into a fetal position, so that he couldn't hit my face. I also learned to tolerate pain as quietly as possible. Unfortunately, as a six-year-old, I wasn't always successful.

No wonder Veijo says he still has *'a hard time allowing myself to think about these experiences.'* It is understandable, too, that rather than sending her son away once more, Veijo's mother *'managed to smuggle [him] back into the city, despite the evacuation orders':*

In Kotka, my mother and I lived in a small two-room flat at the back side of an old house. Every morning as my mother had to leave for work, she would lock the outside door so I could not get out. The days seemed, and were, long and boring. One day I managed to get the basement door open and proceeded to explore around. I noticed that a small window up close to the ceiling was cracked open. So I gathered a table, some old chairs and boxes and stacked them up under the window. I managed to climb up and open the window enough for me to crawl out. I think that this window, which was at the ground level, was probably the way the heating coal was brought in, for my clothes were a mess, sooty and dirty. I remember thinking how mad my mother would be when she got home. [Veijo's mother had been trained as a nursery school attendant, but after the war began, women were assigned 'men's' jobs necessary to the war effort. Veijo never knew his father.]

Since I now was outside, I decided to walk around. I hadn't gone more than a couple of blocks when the air raid sirens went off. I saw people running and yelling to each other. I could hear the bombers approaching. I could hear explosions. I was scared. Not knowing what to do, I just stood there and cried. Suddenly this big man was running towards me. That really scared me. The man scooped me up and tucked me under his arm and kept on running. We got to a doorway where I could see a stairway going down below ground. At the bottom of the stairway I could see a number people looking up. The man that picked me up yelled something to the people below and grabbed me with both hands. Just at that moment, there was a terrific explosion right behind us. I remember flying through the air towards the people at the bottom of the stairs. I don't know whether the man threw me or was it the blast that pushed me. The people below caught me and I was safe. My right forearm was bleeding from two shrapnel cuts, but otherwise I was OK. I never learned who my saviour was. I have always wondered what happened to him. He was standing there at the top of the steps with his back to the blast. If I received two minor wounds, how badly did he get hurt?

Veijo explains that it was this incident that decided his mother to send him away again—this time to Sweden in May 1942. At that time he was six and a half years old. Like all the other children transported, save those whose parents had made private arrangements with friends of the family in Sweden, Veijo wore a tag around his neck with his registration number. *'Each child was assigned a number which appeared on the name tags that hung around our necks. My number was 13719. That means that 13,718 children preceded me.'* Swedish families were also given documents when they were preparing to send the child or children back to Finland. Veijo still has *'these original documents because one of my Swedish sisters kept them, including my name tag.'*

'We were packed into a special train that transported hundreds of children to the southwest corner of Finland. There, we were transferred onto a specially modified cargo ship for an overnight trip to Stockholm. It was specially modified, in that the cargo areas below the decks had been converted into huge sleeping areas with hundreds of children just separated from their families, headed into the unknown, forever. At least, that's how I felt. I had no way of knowing if or when I would see my mother again.

It was no vacation cruise. There was a lot of crying. You cried until you couldn't cry any more. After a while, somebody near you started to cry, so you started again. And so it went, on and on. What made this trip even worse was that during the night the ship started to rock. Apparently, we were experiencing some heavy seas. Many, many of the children got seasick. I didn't get any sleep that night. There was so much crying, the kids were throwing up, the nurses and caretakers were running around with pails and towels. The smell all around from vomiting and messy pants was overpowering.'

Veijo adds that he has *'often wondered afterwards how difficult and unpleasant it must have been for these nurses and caretakers.'* These 'nurses' were known as 'Lotti': members of the Lotta Svärd, a Finnish organization that functioned as a women's voluntary national defence group that undertook many wartime duties: operating canteens, caring for wounded soldiers, preparing the bodies of the dead, and caring for the children on child transports.¹⁵ Veijo adds: *'Thankfully, the boat trip lasted less than 24 hours'—an eternity, it would seem to me, under such circumstances!*

'Once we landed in Stockholm, we were loaded on a train. This train, loaded with only Finnish children and their caretakers, proceeded to head southwest from Stockholm. It seemed that the train stopped at every station along the way, I suspect that it did stop at every station. At each station a group of children would get off the train. The Swedish organization, Help Committee for Finland's Children, which arranged this evacuation, had received commitments from families in those communities. Thus they knew exactly how many children to leave off at each station. This same committee also provided instructions to the Swedish families on what to do once they received the child.

'I was selected to live with Johan and Agda Wester, a reasonably well to do farm family in nearby Källeberg. Papa and Mamma Wester had five children of their own. All five were older than me. Their youngest daughter was seven years older than I, so I became the junior of the family. I was very fortunate that I was picked by such a wonderful and caring family.'

Veijo was indeed fortunate; all too often, little girls with blonde curls were chosen over boys. When boys were chosen, it was often to make them into unpaid farmhands. (I have also interviewed female War Children who were also put to work as housemaids and farm hands.¹⁶) Veijo's first stay with the Wester family lasted eleven months, and at the request of his mother, he returned to Finland in April 1943. *'Interestingly,'* he adds, *'I have no recollections about the return trip back to Finland. This trip must have been pretty benign. Certainly, it was not as traumatic as when I first went to Sweden.'*

Veijo does not know his mother's reason for requesting his return, although he has speculated about it:

'I think that my mother felt, at that point in time, the war was going reasonably well for Finland. Probably the main reason was that mother wanted me to be educated in Finland. My mother's older sister was a grade school teacher in west central Finland, in the farm country. This was near the village of Jokipii about 50 kilometres south of the city of Seinäjoki. My aunt had offered to have me live with her family and to go to school there. After spending a few days, maybe a few weeks, my mother brought me to Jokipii. That is where I lived until the spring of 1944.

'By the spring of 1944 the outlook of the war had completely turned around. Russians had intensified their bombing of the cities and the Finnish troops were retreating on the eastern front. My Swedish family wrote to my mother several times, saying that they would more than welcome me back to Sweden. In the spring of 1944, my mother relented. After the school year ended, she came to pick me up from my aunt's home and took me to Riihimäki, a city in south-central Finland. There we intercepted a train full of children headed to Sweden. I was all excited for I knew where I was going. Most of the other children were in the same situation that I had been when I first went there in 1942. In fact, I was counselling the other kids what to expect once they got to Sweden. I was probably somewhat smug, because I didn't have to wear a name tag around my neck, since I was not part of the organized evacuation.

'However, things didn't go quite as planned for me. The second day on the train I started to feel odd, I felt dizzy and I had trouble balancing. By evening I had completely lost my sense of balance. If I tried to open my eyes, everything spun around and I was sick to my stomach. After that, I don't remember anything for a week.'

According to Pertti Kaven, one of first War Children to write about his experience in *70,000 Små öden* ['70,000 Small Destinies'],¹⁷ more than a few War Children died of diphtheria contracted during the transfer. As many as 20% of those who had been well when they left Finland had become so ill by the time they arrived in Sweden that they had to be hospitalized.¹⁸ Veijo found himself in that unfortunate category. He remembers that he

'was supposed to have arrived at my Swedish family's place on the fourth day after I got on the train. When the train arrived, there was no Veijo aboard. My Swedish family sent a telegram to my mother. Mother returned the telegram confirming that she had put me on the train four days ago. Of course my mother and my Swedish family made urgent inquiries to the organizations arranging the train evacuation and the respective authorities in both countries. It was confirmed that I was indeed brought aboard the train at Riihimäki. The Finnish train caregivers even remembered that I had gotten sick the following day. The authorities in both Finland and Sweden contacted local authorities requesting they search both sides of the track. They confessed to my mother that they feared that I had fallen off the train, perhaps, because I was ill and dizzy.'

As a parent of several children, Veijo has a keen appreciation today for what his mother and foster parents must have been going through, though it was all determined and explained later:

'I had contracted a severe inner ear infection in both ears. The infection caused a very high fever. In effect I was delirious for over a week. As it turned out, the train had crossed the border during the middle of the night. As the train crew and all the nurses and caregiver crews were changed [at the Swedish border at Haparanda], somebody made a decision that I should be hospitalized immediately. So, I was taken off the train and rushed to a hospital in Haparanda ... across from the Finnish town of Tornio. The problem was that in the confusion of changing crews somebody forgot to document the transfer. So there I was in a small hospital in northern Sweden, incoherent. So far as the rest of the world was concerned, I had disappeared from the face of the earth.'

The way in which Veijo's mother discovered what had happened to her son and where he was located is, in itself, an interesting story:

'To my recollection, I started to feel better after about a week. One day, a Finnish-speaking nurse stopped by my bedside. I was so glad to talk to her since my Swedish was quite poor after not speaking Swedish for over a year. She asked where I was from and about my family. As we talked, I got the idea that I wanted to write to my mother. She volunteered to get an envelope and mail the letter. I didn't have any writing paper, so I grabbed a sheet of toilet paper and I wrote a very short letter to my mother. I didn't have the sense to even tell my mother where I was. Luckily, the nurse also included a note telling her where I was, what had happened to me and how I was doing. It is hard to imagine how my mother felt, when after two weeks she found out that I was still alive.'

Veijo's mother died in 1974. As he sorted through her belongings shortly after her death, he picked up his mother's *'well-worn Bible. Between its pages were several papers with their corners sticking out. As I pulled out these papers, there was the little letter I had written to her from the hospital. She had saved that letter for all those years.'* And no wonder! Veijo's touching letter to his mother reads, in translation: *'A Letter to my Dear Mother. How are you, Mother. I long for my mother. I cry as I write this letter to my dear mother but this is a very short letter not much! And now I'm too tired to continue. I have to go to sleep. God bless my Mother. Best wishes. Veijo'*

Upon his return to Horred, Veijo remained with the Westers, his foster family, until the end of the war, although he visited his mother intermittently during the war years. Although he remembers crying himself to sleep soon after having been sent to Sweden, his feelings had radically altered eight years later when, in 1950, his mother collected him before sailing on the *MS Stockholm* in Gothenburg for the United States to begin a new life. The trauma of this separation from his Swedish parents haunts him to this day, and he weeps when explaining how that separation came about.¹⁹ Between sobs, Veijo explains that his Swedish 'Mama' and 'Papa' spent the entire evening before he and his mother left begging her to give him to them and promising her that, one day, her son would inherit their Swedish family farm. But Veijo's mother held firm. The following morning, when it was time to say goodbye, Veijo was asked to go to the barn to say goodbye to Johan Wester, his beloved surrogate 'Papa.' (Veijo had never known his biological father; that individual had abandoned Veijo's

mother before he was born.) Usually stoical and undemonstrative, Wester that morning dropped the broom he held when he heard Veijo enter the barn. Then he crushed the fourteen-year-old boy to his chest, weeping, before, with equal force, pushing Veijo toward the door.

For many years, Veijo resented and even ‘hated’ his mother. Today he acknowledges that she meant well; today, as a parent himself, he understands how difficult it would be to lose a child, particularly for his mother, because she had no other intimate family. Yet leaving the Westers, his foster Swedish parents, is a trauma from which Veijo appears never to have fully recovered, a trauma that probably was compounded by his previous ‘abandonment’ in the Finnish countryside.

Unlike many Finnish War Children, however, Veijo doesn’t blame the government or his mother for sending him away. He says about the families who sent children away that they *‘just did not have a choice but to send their children to where they would be safe and have good nutrition. Once the war ended in 1945, most of the children returned back to their homes in Finland.... [But] in many cases, there was simply no home to return to. The father was killed in action and the mother was killed in the bombing raids.’*

Finland’s War Children: Acknowledging the Past

It has been estimated that some 15,000 War Children remained in Sweden and 500 in Denmark after World War II ended in 1945, in spite of efforts on the part of the Finnish government to repatriate them all. Due to the 1931 Treaty on Adoption in Nordic countries, however, a treaty that, in effect, protected the interests of foster parents in participating host countries, the written agreement signed by [biological] parents stating that the child would *under no circumstances* be left in Sweden permanently, had no authority after the war. Had the country withdrawn from the 1931 Treaty on Adoption, which required that all legal procedures relating to adoption were carried out according to the legislation in the host country ... the situation might have been easier. As it was, it became a very difficult process to get them [the War Children] home.²⁰ Surprisingly, the Finnish government to a great extent was also responsible for this state of affairs. Beginning in February 1942, all negative criticism of Sweden was censored, because the Finnish government feared losing Sweden’s good will. In addition, during the post-war period, the Finnish government feared that if it made a formal request to have Finland’s War Children returned, humanitarian aid from Sweden could be jeopardized.²¹

Veijo laments the fact that, after the war, *‘nobody wanted to talk about [the child transports]. The media did not address it. The government remained silent about it. Even the academia avoided it. The children involved were also reluctant to talk about their experiences,’* many of which were, alas, even more traumatic than Veijo’s. In the late 1980s, however, former War Children began to create associations in both Finland and Sweden. There are now dozens of such associations in all the major cities of both countries. A number of memoirs written in Swedish, Finnish, and English have been published; my own work has contributed to their number.²²

Finally, due to growing public awareness of this neglected chapter of Finnish history, the plight of that nation’s War Children was publicly recognized in 2005 when, in acknowledgement of wartime mistakes made by both countries, Sweden’s King and Finland’s President presided jointly over the installation of a bronze statue on the Finnish-Swedish border. The statue stands where the majority of Finnish War Children crossed into an unknown world; for some of the children, a world full of promise and enrichment; for others, a world of inconceivable loneliness, sorrow, and loss. The name of the statue is *Ero*: Finnish for ‘separation.’ It depicts a slender, naked young girl weeping into her own hands.

As early as September 1994, one popular Finnish newspaper ran on its first page a headline printed in bold capital letters: ‘THIS MUST NEVER BE REPEATED.’ The article that followed was written in response to a recently published psychological study, which announced that War Children who had repressed their memories, often for decades, had suffered throughout their lives from disproportionately rates of divorce, suicide, alcoholism, affective disorders of various kinds, and self-punishing guilt. Veijo himself was conflicted for many years about his mother. He both loved and hated her, He blamed her for taking him away from his foster parents and especially his foster father, the only father he had ever known. At the same time he felt sorry for all the anguish she herself had experienced. Watching her play with his own young children, he finally forgave her.

Finnish War Children have written about being ‘confronted with memories that [have] ... been dormant for over fifty years.’ Memories which, once recalled, suddenly seem to ‘create ... an almost unbearable chaos and confusion.’ ... ‘a surreal parallel world’ full of ‘nightmares.’ Despite efforts to ‘push away what [they don’t] want

to see and experience, one painful memory after another roll[s] up like [images in] a movie,' plaguing their victims until the victims have no choice but to 'force ... [themselves] to try to finally understand what all of this mean[s].'²³

For Veijo, on the other hand, memories of his experiences as a War Child have helped him understand what happened:

'In looking back, my going to Sweden turned out to be a very good experience because of the love and respect I received from Westers. I recognize that not all the War Children had such a good experience, however I think that the Finnish government made a correct decision to send the children to Sweden. Think how many children were saved, how many children were spared suffering from famine or wounds from the bombings.'

'As for the trauma that these children have had to live through, the trauma that haunted many of us to old age, I don't think Finnish society, or any society for that matter, really understood the mental/emotional impact on the children back then. I believe that society today is much better prepared to handle this kind of tragedy and hopefully we will apply our knowledge to helping the current generations of children in emotional jeopardy.'

Endnotes

- 1 Louise Gluck, 'Nostos.' Published in a variety of places, including Gluck, *Meadowlands* (Hopewell, NJ 1996).
- 2 Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (New York 1985), 104-05. Quoted by Mary Chamberlain in 'Narrative Theory,' *Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Thomas Lee Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless (Lanham, MD 2006), 391.
- 3 Veijo explains his change of surname as follows: *'In 1956 when I applied for U.S. citizenship, they offered a free chance to change [one's] name. Over my mother's objections, I chose 'Paine.' Please note that when we came to the United States, the umlauts [over the 'ä' and 'ö' in 'Pönniäinen'] had to be dropped, thus we ended up with 'Ponniäinen.' Then I simply dropped the 'o,' 'n,' 'i,' and the last 'n,' producing 'Paine.' I chose this because paine is a Finnish word that means 'pressure.' Thus all my Finnish relatives were able to recognize and pronounce my name. My mother never changed her last name nor did she ever become an American citizen.'*
- 4 The Finnish government signed no treaty of alliance with Nazi Germany, but with Germany's help Finland was able to recapture territories lost in the Winter War.
- 5 The Soviet Union offered Finland military 'assistance' in the event that Germany attacked Russia through Finland. But Finland refused to cede the Hanko Peninsula, the western part of the Karelian Isthmus and islands in the eastern Gulf of Finland.
- 6 Finland had been right not to succumb to Soviet pressure: when the USSR signed a non-aggression pact with Germany, the so-called 'Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact,' within it was 'Secret Additional Protocol,' stating that, like Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Finland was to 'belong to the Soviet Union,' See *Children: The Invisible Victims of War—An Interdisciplinary Study*, ed. Martin Parsons (Denton, Peterborough 2008), pp213-224
- 7 Eloise Engle and Lauri Paananen, *The Winter War: The Soviet Attack on Finland, 1838-1940* (Harrisburg, PA 1992), 16.
- 8 Winston Churchill, in a radio broadcast to the British people, 20 January 1940.
- 9 Parsons M, 'The Finnish War Children: The Sotalapsi,' *War Child. Children Caught in Conflict*. History Press. Stroud. 2008 pp148-170
- 10 *Ibid*, 10.
- 11 Maja Sandler, wife of the then-Swedish Foreign Minister, spearheaded the campaign with the slogan 'Finland's fate is ours!' In December 1939, the Nordic Assistance Center in Finland was formed, and Swedish families were encouraged to take in Finnish children without compensation. See the interview with Klåus Harö published in the *Svenska Dagbladet*, 7 November 2005.
- 12 Parsons, 'The Finnish War Children,' *op cit*
- 13 See the *Svenska Dagbladet* interview with Harö cited above.
- 14 *Ibid*.
- 15 The original Lotta was a character in the poem 'Lotta Svärd' by Finland's national poet, J. L. Runeberg. During the Russo-Swedish War of 1808-1809, the Lotti worked as canteen women for the benefit of soldiers. The Lotti also supported and provided for the 'White' Army during Finland's Civil War, known also as the 'War of Liberation.'
- 16 See Sue Saffle, 'Children, War, and the Rhetoric of Remembrance: The Stories of Finland's War Children.' *Children in War* 1/4 (November 2006): 97-103 *passim*.
- 17 Pertti Kaven, *70,000 små öden: Finlands krigsbarn* (Stockholm 1985; reprinted Ojalampi 1994).
- 18 *Ibid*, 30.
- 19 Veijo is not the only person who weeps over stories of Finnish War Children. As he himself observes: *'As many times as I have given my presentation [on my own experiences], I have never failed to see tears in the eyes of the audience.'* Veijo asked me to mention especially the work of Mona Serenius, which he considers *'the best description of the trauma that War Children experienced.'* See Serenius, 'The Silent Cry: A Finnish Child During World War II and Fifty Years Later,' *Forum Psychoanal* [Stockholm] 4 (1995): 35-47.
- 20 Parsons, 'The Finnish War Children,' *op cit*
- 21 *Ibid*
- 22 See, for example, Saffle, "A Happier War Child Story": One Finnish War Child's Exceptional Memories and Circumstances,' in *Children: The Invisible Victims of War*, 213-24; and 'Toward a Collection of Finnish War-Child Stories: the Reminiscences of Seppo Mälkki,' *Children in War* 1/5 (January 2008): 25-31.
- 23 Ann-Maj Danielsen, *Att inte höra till: en finsk krigsbarn berättar* (Falun 2000), 10-11.

Schooling in an Emergency 1939-1945. The Unsung Heroes of ‘Operation Pied Piper’¹

Sidney Brown

As the end of the World War II approached and the majority of Tottenham’s evacuees had returned, the Times Educational Supplement allowed itself a touch of complacency:

*‘A sort of uniform minimum requirement has been laid down for the Reich, and teachers are reprimanded for not following the plan closely. For decades the schools have been battling against ‘directives in teaching’ and this is the reason for the present aversion of teachers to any and every planning of the method of teaching it....By a parallel with soldiering it has expressed its intention to counteract a growing tendency to individualism by increased regimentation and heavy intellectual pressure’.*²

Some sixty years later the eminent educationalist Professor Ted Wragg was to write an illuminating article in which he provided a useful corrective to the current nostalgia for ‘old fashioned teaching’ making some telling points about corporal punishment and standards. Intriguingly he conceded that, although the present day problem of pupil disruption was acute, a key to its resolution was to restore to teachers the independence that they lost ‘when the government started prescribing what they should do every minute’.³ Interestingly, Alan Bennett’s brilliant play ‘*The History Boys*’ has, as one of its leading characters, an eccentric English teacher, Hector, who scorns this rising tide of centralised bureaucracy which, in his view, has bedevilled education since reforms such as the 1988 ‘Baker Act’ of which Peter Wilby wrote in *The Independent*:

*‘1988 has been an educational watershed as perhaps no other year has been this century....councils will lose control of schools.....The curriculum will be determined by statutory orders made by the Secretary of State for Education’.*⁴

Some of these changes were signalled in the Education Act of 1986 which introduced performance appraisal for teachers. Although the legislation and its implications are chronological outside the terms of reference of this paper unlike its predecessor, the 1944 ‘Butler Act’, it is worth stressing that they may be studied with the assistance of a large number of official and semi-official documents. In each case the increasing government involvement in education inevitably led to a corresponding growth in the volume of official Circulars and the like, together with responses to them. Similarly, the new situation presented by the outbreak of war and the evacuation of schools was to result in an abundance of documents emanating from a wide range of official and semi-official sources.

Despite wartime paper shortages the researcher is confronted with a wealth of such material. The Board of Education and the Ministry of Health, together with local education authorities, education journals, teachers’ unions and individual schools, devoted much of their time and energy to the wider number of issues related to the unfortunately named ‘Operation Pied Piper’. Such records are scattered over a number of locations but, nevertheless, it has proved quite feasible to write academic studies on evacuation and wartime education largely based on them.

1 The title was suggested by Dr Martin Parsons, to whom I am indebted.

2 Times Educational Supplement 15th April 1944. Newspaper clipping in PRO.ED 138/148 National Archives. Kew

3 Ted Wragg, ‘So were we much cleverer in the good old days? That’s just a fantasy’. In *Wise Words. Education Section*. The Guardian, 2nd September 2003. p9

4 Peter Wilby, *The Independent*, 29th December 1988. Quoted by Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945: The Penguin Social History of Britain*. (rev. ed London. Penguin, 1990) pp 360-361

Not surprisingly particular key documents such as the Board of Education's '*Schooling in an Emergency*' (which appeared just before the outbreak of hostilities) are crucial.⁵ Indeed, without some reference to this and a selection of other materials found in the archive collections, it would be impossible to meaningfully examine the circumstances in which an evacuated wartime staff, such as that of the Tottenham County School, was to operate during the period they spent in March from 1939-1942 and their subsequent practice.

On the other hand, it would be unwise to assume the suggestions offered in official sources would be received uncritically by those for whom they were intended, and to conclude that they would be automatically acted upon in the classroom. For this reason, therefore, this section of the study is undertaken with the well-known staffroom adage regarding the gulf between '*those who can teach and those who administer*' firmly in mind. Thus the remarkably enthusiastic tone of the Board of Education and, to a lesser extent, that of the Ministry of Health, pointing out the exciting new opportunities to evacuated teachers which the changed circumstances could offer, must be balanced with other, less sanguine views such as local authorities concerns and teaching unions' anxieties which frequently reflected practical problems experienced by teachers put in an uniquely challenging situation.

The catchment area with which Middlesex County Council was concerned incorporated a variety of schools in greatly contrasting districts. Many of the problems were specifically limited to particular schools during the evacuation which were widely dispersed in not only East Anglia, but also Essex, Bedfordshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland and the unusually named Soke of Peterborough.⁶ The sweeping generalisations drawn from the Middlesex records could be misleading in many cases.

Equally important, a degree of caution is necessary with regard to the reliability of trade union sources in the discussion. Although, according to Joan Hart, the wife of the Tottenham County School's last Head, it was expected that grammar school teachers would join either the National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) or Union of Women Teachers (UWT) the precise number of the County staff who were actually members is not known.⁷ Additionally, on the assumption that at least some were, it remains impossible to know how far such individuals either agreed with their union's views or chose to ignore them.

However, what is clear is that throughout the period these unions took a quite strident and critical stance towards official policies in stark contrast to that of the National Union of Teachers whose members were mainly drawn from the elementary sector. However, it would be an exaggeration to describe the NAS and UWT as militant or confrontational during the evacuation period. This could, perhaps, be due partly to the prevailing spirit of 'all hands to the pump' mentality exemplified by Churchill's stirring speeches or, for those members who recalled the difficult times of the early 1920s and the so-called 'Geddes Axe' (which led to many being unemployed), a fear of recriminations after the conflict was over. Perceptions of what 'professionalism' implied for the teachers who had already spent decades in the classroom, in the particular case of the County School staff, could also have been of importance. Therefore, bearing in mind, the number of reservations which should be made with regard to these archive sources, the necessity of carefully measuring them against the written and oral testimony of those former pupils whose recollections have formed the basis for this research, is clearly vital.

The Board of Education was to make much in the war's first month of the pastoral role which it expected to be so crucial for teachers. In such a view the Board was obviously promoting an inevitable extension of responsibilities and it stressed: '*The importance of maintaining the health and cleanliness of the children is no less than that of securing for them some measure of education*'.⁸ How far such phrases as 'some measure of education' would have raised a few hackles in traditional grammar school staffrooms is of considerable interest. Non-academic matters like health and cleanliness would, perhaps, have seemed more applicable to the elementary sector in Tottenham County's teachers' minds. Perhaps more to their taste would have been

5 Circular 1474 Board of Education. 29th August 1939, PRO.ED 138/148, National Archives. This dealt with *Schooling in an Emergency: Suggestions for the Education of Children Transferred to the Reception Areas*. Such circulars and Ministry of Health documents were printed by HMSO. London. Leading revisionist scholars have convincingly shown the gulf between the official aspirations and the expressed feelings of pupils. On balance the children appeared to be happier with their 'own' teachers who went with them than host school staff. See Penny Starns and Martin Parsons, *Against their Will: The Use and Abuse of British Children during the Second World War*. In James Marten (ed), *Children and War: A Historical Anthology*. London, New York University Press, 2002 pp 275-276.

6 J.C. Wrigley (Middlesex County Council) to A.E.M. Coles (Northants County Council), 19th June 1940, MCC/WE/PA/2/21. London Metropolitan Archives. Because of such variations the writer concentrated on a single school. See Sidney Brown, 'A Transformed Teaching Staff? Tottenham County School's Evacuation to March, Cambridgeshire 1939-42' (M.Phil thesis, University of Reading, 2007). In this and a number of related articles the research indicated that evacuation and wartime conditions increased the teachers' determination to practise in their normal traditional ways. The view contrasts with the findings of scholars in the elementary school sector such as Philip Gardiner and Peter Cunningham, 'Oral History and Teachers'. *Professional Practice: a wartime turning point?* in *Cambridge Journal of Education*. 27:3. Nov 1997. pp331-342.

7 Letter. Joan Hart. 5th July 2003

8 Circular 1474 Board of Education, 29th August 1939, p12 PRO.ED 138/148. National Archives. A thoughtful account is to be found in the chapter 'Classroom Scrambles and Nature Rambles' in Penny Starns, *The Evacuation of Children during World War II* (Peterborough: DSM, 2004.) pp65-82.

the statement of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, as given by M.G.Holmes, who quoted Kenneth Lindsay's words to the Commons on 1st November 1939 in answer to a question from M. Lees Smith:

'Our aim is to provide the maximum amount of education in Evacuation, Neutral and Reception Areas respectively, consistent with reasonable protection for the children if and when required'.⁹

In a more upbeat vein a minute, only identified by its writer's initials 'RHC', attached to a number of Board of Education papers, optimistically notes 'closer acquaintance between children and teachers' was already emerging as a result of evacuation which would probably lead to 'a genuine strengthening of educational influence' to everyone's benefit.¹⁰ Interestingly the material emanating from the Ministry of Health during this period is frequently more realistic than the often cheerful hopes entertained by the Board of Education. A clear recognition of the anticipated sharing of responsibilities implicit in the role of in loco parentis is evident in the following which was to appear two months after the evacuated County School had gone to March:

'Social and recreational activities for the school children out of school hours must primarily be the responsibility of those helpers whose retention in the district is found by the local authority to be essential.....No doubt the helpers will have the willing guidance and cooperation of the teachers....Every effort should be made to arrange communal activities for as many hours each day as possible for the children under the direction of the teachers and helpers which will prevent them from being a continual burden on the householder'.¹¹

Tottenham County School was unusual in that over half of its staff were men who had taught there for decades, of whom some had served in the Great War, so the shortage of male teachers in Middlesex was not to affect this particular school. Elsewhere however, this was so serious that M.G.Holmes of the Board of Education was to anticipate the planned 'revision of the regulations for the training of teachers' where, it was proposed 'the minimum age was to be reduced for men from 18 to 17' and that teaching practice times were to be shorter.¹²

As events transpired, this proposal to lower the age never came to anything and the emergency training scheme, a one year intensive course, was drawn up to meet the teacher shortage crisis. The majority of those who qualified found employment in elementary and secondary modern schools. Grammar schools such as Tottenham County continued to place emphasis on a degree holding staff and success in School and Higher School Certificate examinations, which were usually known as 'matric' by pupils and teachers alike.

The demands on students and staff preparing for these examinations were considerable. The Board of Education, however, was in no mood to compromise standards during the upheavals of evacuation. In a document headed 'Syllabuses and Examination Questions' it took a 'business as usual' stance for the most part.

'In papers in individual subjects various modifications will be made to lessen the burden for the candidates. No general reduction in the standard of difficulty of questions is called for'.¹³

The publishers of school text books faced acute difficulties because of paper scarcity. Tottenham's Director of Education, C.F.Strong and Association of Directors of Education were contacted on this matter:

'A letter was received from Messrs. Robert Gibson and Sons Ltd., Education Publishers, Glasgow, inviting the Association's help in securing a larger quota of paper for school text books'.

The request got short shrift for 'It was resolved that no action be taken by the association on this matter'¹⁴ and so, no doubt, the teachers soldiered on with well thumbed texts which were mainly pre-war vintage and which were still used in the 1950s.

9 *Circ. 1474* op cit. Many works have the same photographs of evacuated children but few of teachers. Exceptions are Martin Parsons *'I'll Take That One'. Dispelling the Myths of Civilian Evacuation 1939-45*. DSM. Peterborough 1999, p91,97,106. The government sponsored film *Village School* (1940) paints an idyllic scene of evacuee pupils and an almost saintly headteacher, Mrs James, which was it seems, made during the holidays according to Parsons in a lecture 'Evacuation the True Story' at the University of Reading 13th Sept. 2003. More realistic photographs can be found in the little used Daily Herald Collection. Box 55, Files B440 and B441, housed in the National Media Archives in Bradford.

10 'RHC' Minute. 13th November 1939 PRO.ED 1362151/5 National Archives.

11 *Circ 1913, Ministry of Health* to Middx County Council, 17th November 1939, MCC/WE/PA/2/30, London Metropolitan Archives.

12 M.G.Holmes to LEAs 28th November 1939, PRO.ED 138/148 National Archives. The public school/Oxford educated Maurice Holmes knew little of the state system first hand.

13 *Administrative Memo no 206. Board of Education to LEAs*, 29th December 1939 PRO.ED 138/148, National Archives. Yet recollections of former wartime pupils at Chigwell Grammar School, Essex were to tell a different story regarding the 1944 School Certificate examinations. Air raids meant that these were interrupted providing a 'golden opportunity to do a bit of revision....this was how we all passed' confessed one boy. See Jonathan Croall, *Don't You Know There's a War On? The People's Voice 1939-45*. Hutchinson, London 1989 p108

14 *Association of Directors and Secretaries for Education. Minutes of 3rd December 1943*. Special Collections. University of Leeds.

However, these problems would not daunt such enterprising teachers as the County School's Mr Harper, who features prominently in recollections, who used his own initiative and money. He bought books such as *'The American Story'* by E.H.Carter, a former chief history examiner with the Board of Education, and G.H.Holroyd. This was published a year after the United States entered the war by E.J.Arnold under the 'Book Production War Economy Standard' restrictions.¹⁵ Evacuated pupils clearly recalled Mr Harper's inspirational approach to contemporary history and current affairs enhanced, no doubt, by such materials.¹⁶

The American Story has a Foreword by Professor Arthur Newell, Director of the Institute of British American Understanding, together with an extract from a speech given on 21st February 1942 by R.A.Butler, President of the Board of Education who said:

*'The coming generation shall and must understand the importance of what follows from the Prime Minister's historic mission to America. Cecil Rhodes always foreshadowed that the destinies of the English-speaking peoples must be linked in order to save the civilisation of the world.'*¹⁷

Allowing for the fact that Mr Butler's speech was very much a product of its time, it is significant that the NAS and UWT had been active throughout the war in organising courses for their members on such themes as 'Education for Effective Democracy' at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford in August 1940¹⁸. On the importance of such ideals it would seem officials and the profession concurred in the stark times in which they were living.

Despite this vogue for democratic idealism, the all male NAS was not prepared, however, to extend such notions to accepting equal pay for women teachers. A bizarre piece from *The Contemporary Review* by Dr Viet Valentin, an American expert, offered the following observation on post-Civil War education in the USA which appeared in the *NAS Bulletin*:

*'The increase of women into the teaching profession..... proved disastrous.....it was not good that boys are mainly educated by a more or less attractive governess type. The sexual immaturity of American men may be partially caused by this fact.'*¹⁹

This was printed without any editorial comment and serves as a useful example of how unrepresentative such a view could be in mixed school staffs like that of Tottenham County School where, as the Staff Register indicates, equal pay, especially for those in positions of responsibility such as Senior Mistress, Miss Westlake, was the norm.²⁰ Indeed towering personalities like the formidable Mrs Bedding, Head of English, made an indelible impression on her intimidated boys without any apparent harmful psychological repercussions!

By 1943, the March evacuation of Tottenham County School was over as its last few senior pupils and a handful of staff had returned to London. However, it appears that the promise of peace and harmony was if anything to encourage spirited union activity at the Easter Conferences:

*'Teachers are protesting that they are now expected to do 'almost everything for children except teach them'. The National Association of Schoolmasters is discussing the matter at the Easter Conference in London. The National Union of Women Teachers is receiving resolutions from many branches on the same subject.'*²¹

Like many subsequent confrontational resolutions proposed and even passed at the union conferences, there is little evidence to suggest that such fiery sentiments were to be translated into action.

No doubt the County School staff, like many others, faced considerable problems of re-adjustment as they returned to Tottenham, as well as the continuing dangers of two more years of conflict. By 1944, with educational reform becoming a priority, the Union to which some of them belonged received a communication from R.A.Butler:

15 This book was given to the author by Mr Harper as a school leaving gift and much treasured. Sidney Brown Diary. 4 July 1958

16 For example Eric Payne, 12 July 2000. Interview. He gained a First at Cambridge in History, yet 1950's pupil Jeanette Insall was less impressed with the older Mr Harper who couldn't care less, according to her letter of 2nd May 2004. Such divergencies reveal the complexities of subjective personal testimony as historical evidence.

17 E.H.Carter and G.H.Holroyd *The American Story*. E.J.Arnold. Glasgow 1942. Foreword. With the entry of the USA and USSR into the conflict in 1941 it has been suggested that it became possible to stress national physical fitness and well-being as an integral part of a planned post-war society based on the *Beveridge Report*. See Penny Starns. *The Evacuation of Children in World War II*. p90

18 *NAS Bulletin* No 7 June 1940. p1. MSS 38A/4/2/1/1. Modern Records Centre. University of Warwick

19 *NAS Bulletin* No 35 May 1945. p1. MSS 38A/4/2/1/1. Modern Records Centre. University of Warwick

20 Tottenham County School Staff Register. 10/TS 34/Box 13. Haringey Archives.

21 *The Evening News* (London) 12 March 1944. n.p clipping MSS 38A/7/4/12. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

*'The demand for educational reform is widely manifest and the Government have sought to fulfil the mandate of public opinion by preparing a comprehensive measure. Thus we are preparing to win the Peace while still engaged in the severest conflict that the world has ever known.'*²²

Thus as Tottenham County School's March evacuation ended, fresh talks were looming on the horizon for its staff. Yet judged by the pupils' memories, the experience was seen in much less high-flown terms than the tone of London County Council's Record of Evacuation:

*'One salient fact should never be forgotten. The evacuation schemes have served the paramount aim of protecting children not only from death, but from the nervous deterioration and even devastation which heavy bombing generates.'*²³

Revisionist historians such as Martin Parsons, have convincingly argued that such an uncritical view smacks of officialdom's customary gloss.²⁴ Nevertheless, the concluding part of the LCC Record of Evacuation neatly encapsulates the understandably high aspirations of the time:

*'The true measure of the success achieved by the evacuation schemes is yet to be gauged by the number of children who have returned to the great cities with better health and unimpaired nerves to face, in due course, the great task in which it will be their privilege and duty to take part in the building of a New Britain in a New World.'*²⁵

As the last of the evacuated Tottenham staff returned from March 'a New Britain in a New World' was, of course, to offer a number of formidable challenges.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Ann Goodman and Cyril Hogarth.

Former pupils of Tottenham County School.

²² NAS Bulletin No 31. January 1944. p1 MSS 38A/4/2/1/1. Modern Records Centre. University of Warwick

²³ *London County Council Record of Evacuation.* nd., p15 PRO.ED/138/149, National Archives. Nearby boroughs to Tottenham such as Bethnal Green, came under the LCC jurisdiction and were even more severely bombed. See George F. Vale, *Bethnal Green's Ordeal 1939-45.* Bethnal Green Council: J.S.Forsyth and S Ltd. 1945.) also Deborah Hedgecock and Robert Waite, *Haringey at War*, Stroud. Tempus 2004, and T.W.Gough, *War-time Letters from the Tottenham Home Front.* London: Haringey Archives/Edmonton Hundred Historical Society, 1994.

²⁴ Martin Parsons. *I'll Take That One.* Op cit pp185-214

²⁵ London County Council Record of Evacuation, p 15 PRO.ED 138/149 National Archives.

War & Peace; A German Boy's Experiences

Geoff Roberts

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

In a contribution to the book on War Childhood, edited by Dr Martin Parsons,¹ I commented on the recollections of a childhood in the Third Reich, written by a man from a small German town. The writer made no secret of his support of the Nazi regime and hoped until the end for a German victory. In this essay I will take a look at three other aspects of his account of his wartime childhood: firstly, his memories of school life in Nazi Germany; secondly, his relationships with foreign workers, drafted to his uncle's farm, and finally, his account of the occupation of the small town by American forces in March 1945.

The primary aim of Nazi ideology was to militarise German life in preparation for the forthcoming struggles². The basic objective was to produce a nation of obedient soldiers for the *Führer*, ready to fight to the death for the Nazi cause. Nazi 'education' demanded unquestioning obedience to orders, the result of drill and discipline, aimed at the eradication of human emotions, as the younger generation grew into an invincible army, ready to conquer the world for their *Führer*.

Klaus Fink relates his daily experiences in the local primary school and tells of the growing hardships of daily life as the end of the war grew closer. Like millions of other young Germans, Fink was a member of the *Jungvolk* before he joined the Hitler Youth at the age of fourteen – an age chosen to corral the boys on the threshold of manhood. He describes the drill, the uniforms, the parades, and the camps with a distance that comes not only from the perspective of age. The reader senses that Fink has made a decision to adopt a dry, objective tone in his descriptions of the comradeship, his patriotism, his belief in the Nazi ideology in order to pre-empt awkward questions from his family. Education forms personality and helps to determine in which ways our lives develop. Schooldays in Nazi Germany were certainly more rigid and militaristic than in other countries at the time (with the possible exception of the Soviet Union) and those years of drill and discipline exercised a baleful influence on a whole male generation. The indoctrination of young girls was no less insidious, but stressed 'traditional' family virtues and hence allowed room for a more humane view of the world in general than the strict adherence to the military code. There are many studies of the Nazi education system; here I will draw on the analysis contained in 'The Legacy of Napola', a study of educational practices in elite schools in the Third Reich³.

The first *Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt* (NPEA, or Napola) was founded in 1933 in order to form a Nazi elite to serve in the party hierarchy, in the professions and to revolutionise the conventional education system. The central objective was to mould individuals into obedient servants and potential leaders of the Nazi regime. The first school was founded near Plön in Schleswig-Holstein; by 1942, there were 33 schools with about 6000 students. Most of the schools were situated in the barracks for military cadets and the daily drill and routine clearly based on the old Reichswehr system. English public schools provided the other role model, which may not be a surprise to some English readers. A daily routine of military drill, harsh competition and unflinching obedience were used to form the boys into creatures 'strong as steel, tough as leather and as fast as greyhounds', as Hitler demanded. The curriculum was purged of all liberal ideas and theories and the study of Race Biology and Eugenics a central part of the daily programme.

¹ Children. The Invisible Victims of War. ed Dr Martin Parsons. pub. DSM. 2008

² ... "these young people learn to think only as Germans, act as Germans." The speech which was met with thunderous applause, ended with the words "and they will never be free for the rest of their lives." Speech of Hitler, on 2 December 1938, in Roberts, U. *Spuren der NS-Zeit im Leben der Kinder und Enkel*. Kösel Verlag München, 1998. P.39.

³ Schneider, Stilke, Leineweber *Das Erbe der Napola* Versuch einer Generationgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus Hamburger Edition HIS Verlagsgesellschaft. MbH. Hamburg 1996. (The Legacy of the Napola An Attempt at History of a Generation, Hamburg 1996)

‘The Legacy of the Napola’ is a study of the long-term psychological effects of this education on sons and daughters of members of the Nazi Party elite. Many of the people interviewed became successful businessmen, lawyers or civil servants in the post-war period, but Schneider and his co-authors show that their experiences in the Napola left many traces in their lives. The conclusion that Nazi beliefs and ideals were deeply embedded in young people’s consciousness is shown by the following extract, in which a Napola ‘old boy’ talks about hearing of the death of Hitler in 1945.

“Na, at first, as I heard the news, I was sure that he had died a hero’s death. It seemed odd that he had killed himself. Then I turned this around into a positive interpretation. I believed that he was a hero who would never have surrendered to the Russians.”

Did you realise at the time that he killed himself?

I know now of course, but more than that I can’t really say.

In the news bulletins, it was stated that the Führer had fallen.

No, no, he was killed, he was killed, of course⁴.

The choice of words here indicates that the Napola inmate has not come to terms with his early belief in Hitler. He would still like to believe that Hitler had been killed in Berlin – at least, Schneider and his co-authors believe that this is the case. The passage shows just how pervasive the Nazi propaganda can be, still active fifty years later. The principle objective of the Nazi regime in the field of education was to militarise German society in preparation for war; his response reveals uncertainty and inner confusion about the events as he tries to recall his emotions from fifty years ago. Nazi education had etched the image of the invincible *Führer* into his mind, but since then he must have read that Hitler had committed suicide and learned about the nature of the regime and its enormous crimes. But there are traces of a schoolboy’s hero worship long after the traumatic experiences of defeat and disillusionment.

It is not my intention to apply Schneider’s analytical framework to the memoirs of Klaus Fink, but his account of his school experiences show that his school used similar principles to the Napola system, albeit in a milder form. Fink joined the *Jungvolk* at the age of ten – the Nazi equivalent of the ‘Cubs’ within the Boy Scout movement. Much of the drill, the uniforms, the hierarchy and the physical exercises were clearly based on the German army rulebook. Parades, adventures during a summer camp and the punishments dished out to boys who turned up late, all helped to create the illusion of a master race, dedicated to achieving the world domination demanded by the dictator. Fink recalls his own experiences in a dry, matter-of-fact tone, as if those memories were of no more significance than the days picking apples or helping with the harvest. Whatever the occasion, the tone does not change – which makes him a useful eye-witness. There are several hints that Fink was not always an enthusiastic follower of the *Führer*. He writes that in order to avoid the rigours of military exercises he decided to learn to play a flute, so that we can presume that he was not the most fanatical of young Nazis.

His account of his school days, the daily life on his uncle’s farm, the memories of the forced labourers in the local workshops and factories, the accounts of the bomb damage caused to houses in the town – all are recounted in the same dry, even tone and one wonders what this boy felt about the growing dangers, shortages and austerity of life as the war went on. Children experience anxiety, fear, uncertainty in the face of danger, whatever age they may be, but the young Klaus Fink has kept all traces of his own emotions out of his booklet. *‘I was there’* is the title, but the impression that he leaves is that here was a bystander, observing the war from a distance.

But the tone of his report changes decisively when he relates an incident entitled ‘An American bomber is shot down.’ On a sunny summer’s day in 1944, the sky was filled with hundreds of US aircraft. His uncle called him out of the cellar to watch, what he describes as, ‘an amazing spectacle’; an American aircraft, heavily damaged descending over the town. The final struggle of the aircraft to stay aloft was ‘a wonderful and terrifying sight’. As the aircraft flew by, Fink heard an explosion and he could clearly see the faces of the crew in the cockpit. The limping aircraft was so low that he was afraid that it might crash on the house, but it staggered on out of sight. “We cheered, in celebration of the destruction of one of the enemy aircraft. Another loud explosion marked the final destruction of the bomber.” He and his uncle grabbed their bikes and rode in the direction of the crash, which was only a short distance from the town.

⁴ Ibid. P 115.

The area in which the crashed aircraft lay had not been cordoned off, so that we could walk around and look at the whole disaster. A pyre of acrid smoke rose above the wreck and we had to hold handkerchiefs over our noses. Pieces of wreckage were strewn all over the field, wheels, pieces of the wings, pieces of the cockpit windows, machine guns, shells, seating, pieces of the propellers, and strewn all over the field, everywhere there were pieces of human flesh, soaked in blood. [. . .] I was amazed when I saw that one of the crew was a woman⁵.

His recollection is probably quite accurate. Over one thousand women were employed as pilots in the United States Air Force during the Second World War, most of whom ferried aircraft from the manufacturer to an air force bases in the United States. Hundreds were posted to bases in England so that it is quite possible that a woman was on board the aircraft. According to an official website, thirty-eight women were killed in action during the war⁶. Fink recalls his feelings of triumph as he watched the immolation of the American bomber, but it must surely have been a traumatic experience to see the remains of human beings burning in that inferno. The stench of burning flesh, fuel, rubber, and other chemicals and must have haunted Fink and the other watchers for a long time after, but no word of this is included in his account. On the contrary, he explicitly states that he has experienced no traumatic flashbacks, has no unpleasant memories or nightmares as a result of his war experiences, a claim that might not stand up to a closer investigation. As Jonathan Shay has shown, the experience of combat and the confrontation with violent death leave indelible scars in the human mind. It would be an unusual result of war experience if the thirteen year-old Klaus Fink did not carry mental scars from his confrontation with destruction and death in July 1944.

Some of his tales reveal a degree of ambiguity in his memories of life in the Third Reich about the forced labour, employed on his uncle's farm during the war. In 1939, 340,000 Polish forced workers were transported for work in Germany. In September 1944, there were over 2,000,000 Polish workers out of over 5 million forced labourers working on farms, in mines and in the factories of the Reich. Growing labour shortages and the incessant demand of the *Wehrmacht* for more soldiers, meant that the Nazi economy was stretched to its limits even with the huge numbers of foreign workers from a dozen occupied countries. By 1942 the control and administration of forced labour brigades was in the hands of the Gestapo. The task of the Gestapo was to keep the *Untermenschen* in their place⁷.

Fink goes to some length to show that the labourers on his uncle's farm were well treated and he claims that they enjoyed a degree of freedom that was very unusual for prisoners at the close of the war. He writes of his friendships with Polish workers, some of whom he taught German and who taught him some words of Polish – 'we had some good times together,' he writes of his days with Taddeusz Paluch, sent to the farm in Autumn 1939. He stresses the good spirits and comradeship that existed with Taddeusz and other labourers, and relates how his uncle intervened on behalf of one worker, who was reported to the police for urinating in a field. The story, as told, is probably intended to show that his uncle had the welfare of his workers at heart, and was even ready to go to the aid of a foreign worker accused of a minor misdemeanour. His uncle bearded the Gestapo in its den, made an incautious joke and was almost placed under arrest himself.

As support for his story, Fink reproduces a letter from the mother of another Polish worker, enquiring two years after the war about the fate of her son. Fink notes laconically that he had been killed 'under tragic circumstances' a few weeks before the war ended but makes no mention of how this news was transmitted to the Polish mother. The intention seems clear. Fink wants his family – and they are his target audience – to know that whatever the rest of the world may think about Nazi Germany, his uncle and the family retained their humanity being when all about them were losing theirs, and were never guilty of mishandling or mistreating the foreign workers on his farm. Other workers are cited who are said to have had a splendid time on the farm so that we are left to draw the conclusion that forced labour in Oberursel was not as inhumane and sadistic as the research would have us believe. Many of the employers, the farmers and factory foremen who made use of forced labour for the good of the Reich were cruel, sadistic or imposed savage punishments for minor misdemeanours. But there were exceptions. It is a pity that Fink never addresses the issue of party membership of his own father or uncles, or whether loyalty to the Nazi state was more than lip service in order to survive in a dictatorship.

5 Fink, Klaus. *Ich war dabei* Verein für Geschichte und Heimatkunde Oberursel, November 2003. S. 97. [*I was there!* The Local History Association, Oberursel, Germany, November 2003, P 97.]

6 *Women Airforce Service Pilots* http://Hlt211262196p_Hlt211262196://en.wikipedia/wiki/Women_Hlt211262193A_Hlt211262193irforce_Hlt211262167_-Hlt211262167_Pilots. Retrieved on October 8, 2008.

7 The figures quoted are taken from the Shoah Resource Center, the International School for Holocaust Studies and from Prof. Ulrich Herbert *Forced Laborers in the 'Third Reich' – an Overview*, in *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 58, Fall 2000, P.192-218 (Retrieved on 27 September 2008)

Professor Herbert describes the Nazi ‘deployment of foreigners’ between 1939 and 1945 as ‘the largest case of use of foreign forced labour on a massive scale in history since the end of slavery in the 19th century.’⁸ Most of the 7.6 million workers in 1945 had been forced to leave their homes and it was always a system based on repression and violence. Fink’s account of his childhood experiences may be completely genuine and his uncle a jovial humane employer, but the reader feels a certain discomfort over a naïve attempt to gloss over the facts of forced labour. On the one hand, he points out that the workers were not allowed to go into bars or restaurants or attend church in the town, then he states that one of the workers married a Polish worker from Frankfurt, failing to explain how their meeting took place.

* * *

One of the key events in his childhood was the experience, and presumably humiliation, of experiencing the defeat of the supposedly invincible German *Wehrmacht* and the occupation by a victorious foreign power. The news that the war was over must have been a challenging experience for every young German who had believed in a Nazi victory, but we can only hazard a guess as to the way that Klaus Fink felt as he saw the American trucks and tanks rumbling into the town. Two weeks of incessant bombing preceded the arrival of the U.S. forces, and there had been tirades of propaganda of the terrible revenge that the enemy would wreak on the unfortunate German civilians. One of the Polish workers showed him a leaflet that he had found, bearing the word ‘Passport’ which had been thrown out of the U.S. aircraft, so interestingly enough, he learned that the war was over from one of farm’s forced workers.

*For the youngsters, the sight of the foreign soldiers was very exciting. We came slowly out of the shelters, but very soon, Oberursel children surrounded the vehicles. The girls (sic!) climbed on to the tanks when they came to a standstill, chatted to the soldiers and were given chocolate. Motorcycle riders headed each column, held the street corners as the tanks rumbled on. [. . .] The equipment that they carried was simply incredible for us Germans. It soon became obvious to one 13-year-old why we (sic) had lost the war. With my three years of English in the secondary school I could make myself understood, and my first words were “have you chewing gum?”. Sometimes I was lucky and a packet was thrown from the vehicle.*⁹

Large houses and other buildings were requisitioned by the U.S. Army and the owners forced to pack their possessions and leave. Fink describes how one of the biggest villas in the town, formerly owned by a Jewish family, then an S.A. schooling centre, was turned into a country club for the US soldiers. Fink disapproves of the local girls who fraternised with the soldiers and took part in big parties in the villa. The tone of his remarks suggests that he believes that their behaviour was in some way a dishonourable activity for a German.

A curfew was imposed, but the presence of the U.S. forces was hardly noticed once weapons, Nazi insignia and propaganda had been confiscated. At first, no more than three people were allowed to gather in the streets; all those who had been members of the Nazi Party, or in the *Wehrmacht*, were to report to the US military police. Souvenirs – cameras, binoculars, old weapons – were very popular and exchanged for C rations or for cigarettes, chocolate or cocoa. The children quickly lost their reserve and many families benefited from food supplies from the American canteens. When summer came, the swimming pool was re-opened but at first only for use by the Americans.

The occupying army soon took on a very different role. Once the local party members had been rounded up, the weapons collected and the uniforms packed away, the US forces moved into the camp which had been a prisoner of war camp since 1939. ‘DULAG LUFT’ became ‘Camp King’ and an interrogation centre for high-ranking officials of the Nazi regime set up. Among those interrogated there were Dönitz, Hans Frank, Goering, Jodl, Keitel and Speer, and they were held there until their trial began in Nuremberg in late 1945.

Once the major debris of the Nazi regime had been dealt with, the American forces turned to peaceful projects, such as repairing roads and restoring water supplies. Within a very short time, they became an accepted part of life in the town. Peace had returned to this small town in the centre of Germany. The unseen traces, the impact of the regime on the lives of the inhabitants were less easy to eradicate.

How did the children react to these rapid changes in political and cultural conditions? Fink and his friends remembered the years before the war, when they were inducted into the martial drills and senseless discipline of the *Jungvolk* and the Hitler Youth. Fink makes little reference to how these years affected him. As we have seen, he

⁸ Ibid. p 193

⁹ Fink, P 108-109

was a reluctant marcher and camper, which means that he probably did not experience pressure from home to succeed in the Hitler Youth, so that we can assume that there were no fanatical Nazis in his family. His farmer-uncle certainly had influence in the town; he eased the foreign workers out of conflicts with the police and, according to Fink, intervened with the Gestapo on behalf of one Polish worker. If this was so, then it means that Farmer Ruppel was in good standing with the powers-that-be. Even if the worker was irreplaceable, he would hardly have made the journey to Frankfurt if he had not enjoyed good relations with the Gestapo. Frequent inspections of the farm and control of the foreign workers was part of the daily routine and Farmer Ruppel must have put his farm produce to good use in his negotiations with the Nazi authorities.

Fink's description of daily life during the war is memorable only for his account of the crashed Flying Fortress in the summer of 1944. Here he tells of his hatred of the Americans, who were bombing Germany day by day, and it would be remarkable if he was suddenly converted to being a democratic German at the age of 14 as the war came to an end. He believed in the propaganda of the Nazis, but the transition from being a member of the HJ to a young democrat receives no attention in his booklet. One senses that his hatred of the 'enemy' became a general dislike as the Americans entered the town and took over control and he expresses his disapproval of the German 'Frolleins' who went dancing with the GIs of an evening. He also disapproved of the way that younger girls quickly overcame their distrust of the Americans (quicker than Klaus and his friends), clambered on to the tanks and begged for chocolate. But he soon remembered that he had learned some English between air raids in the previous three years and overcame his own reservations in the expectation of reward.

Children adapt to drastic changes more rapidly than adults. The collapse of the Nazi system left Fink's family struggling to come to terms with a whole new way of life. Klaus Fink must have felt a sense of loss, when as a fourteen year-old, his worldly co-ordinates toppled and these laid-back GIs, with their rubber-soled boots, endless supplies of trucks and jeeps and huge quantities of packaged food, took over the control of the town. Pictures of children playing among the ruins is a popular illustration in books on the post-war era. This implies that children adapt more readily to a change in circumstances and find ways to create a new world in the ruins of the old. Perhaps Fink was old enough to understand what had happened to Germany and its civilian population, what disasters Hitler and his supporters had vested upon them. But the journey from the dictatorship to democracy has left many traces in his memory that preoccupy him today.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

Publication

'Children in War'

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Acknowledgements

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RESEARCH CENTRE FOR EVACUEE AND WAR CHILD STUDIES

(Made possible by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded to the Evacuee Reunion Association)

Academic Rationale

Background

Since 1992 Dr Martin Parsons has carried out a great deal of research into the area of World War Two civilian evacuation. As a result of his investigations in the UK he has been invited to give a number of key-note addresses at International conferences in Europe and the USA and in 2000 was elected Chairman of the Evacuee Reunion Association. In 2002 he was appointed President of the International Federation of Evacuees and War Children. He is now working with groups of ex-War Children in Finland (Sotolapsi), Sweden (Krigsbarn), Netherlands, Spain, Germany (Kriegskinde) as well as Jewish groups, children of Dutch collaborators, British evacuees from Singapore etc.

In 1998 Dr. Parsons established an evacuee archive in the Bulmershe Library at The University of Reading. This contains research notes and letters (c 1000) and other material associated with evacuation in the UK. However, it became apparent that there was no centre specifically for this area of research anywhere in the world and many of the groups named above are looking for somewhere to deposit their materials and create an international research base that would encompass all present and future cross-discipline research.

Aims

To make the Centre the pivotal hub of cross-discipline War Child research in the World and building on existing links with those listed below to enable it to become the major repository of War Child documentation and related materials. It will greatly enhance the University's research profile.

The collaborative work presently being carried out by Dr Parsons, Professor Sandelin and Barbara Mattsson et al is to inform present and future governments on the treatment and welfare of children in war zones.

Objectives

Long Term

The establishment of a cross-discipline MA in War Child studies.

The attraction and retention of PhD research students.

Sponsorship

Medium Term

An international journal entitled 'Children in War' is to be published every six months from April 2004.

An International multi-lingual web-site is in the process of being established.

Cross-discipline research papers.

Collaborative international articles.

Short Term

Research notes pertaining to the Evacuee Reunion Association (ERA) and International Federation of Evacuees and War Children (INTERFEW) already exist in the Evacuee Archive in the Bulmershe Library. This will continue to be updated.

Potential Collaborations

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Professor Nina Santavirta. Professor of Education. University of Helsinki.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars. Historian. Tricht, Netherlands.

Dr. Erwin Erhardt III. Sir Thomas More University, Kentucky. USA.

Professor Steven Trout. Fort Hays State Univ. Kansas.

Professor Bob Rook. University of Towson. Baltimore USA.

Sue Wheatcroft. University of Leicester.

Lindsay Dodd. University of Reading

Anyone wishing to deposit archive material, reminiscences etc should contact:
Dr Martin Parsons on 0118 378 8870 or e-mail: m.l.parsons@reading.ac.uk
or Jennifer Glanville: j.glanville@reading.ac.uk

ResCEW Archive

The regular work of the Archive is to support the Home Front Recall Project and to answer questions from researchers, ex-evacuees, members of the press and even school children doing projects. These can vary from an evacuee wanting to know if they can be put in contact with a fellow evacuee to requests for specific information on evacuee numbers or particular aspects of the evacuation such as arrangements for the disabled.

Increasingly, correspondents want to write down their experiences as they become older so that their true accounts can be recorded for posterity.

They are often very generous with information, further contacts and memorabilia and are pleased that their particular part in history is being acknowledged. Following the success of the stand at the Living History Museum, St James' Park, London, in July 2005, the Archive is delighted to have received over 1900 Questionnaires to add to the healthy regular mailbag. The data collected is stored in a database. A restricted amount of the information supplied is then published on the website at www.extra.rdg.ac.uk/evacueesarchive. In addition the archive contains recordings taken during the recent SeaVac project carried out jointly with the English Speaking Union, London.

As a result of this success the archive has outgrown its original office and is now housed at... The Museum of English Rural Life University of Reading and is accessible during Museum opening hours.

Researchers may like to contact the archivist, Jennifer Glanville in advance on Email: merl@reading.ac.uk
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