

Child Survivors
in Germany
between
Challenge
and
Provocation

by Philipp Sonntag

Impressum

This booklet is a self-portrayal of the Child Survivors Deutschland e. V. (CSD) and their activities in the German as well as the overall international context with special reference to the global conference of Child Survivors, August 24th – 27th 2014 in Berlin

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Summary and introduction

We survived the persecution of Jews by the Nazis as children. Ever since we have carried the tension into our everyday lives in many forms. We feel the tension as individuals, in our families and as members of our Association of Child Survivors. In spite of everything, we decided to stay in Germany. We have many problems. For all that, we keep learning to be tenacious, also in our old age.

It is our impression, that Child Survivors worldwide have to cope with similar challenges and provocations. Therefore, we hope that our text may trigger Associations worldwide to re-assess their own identity, their political role and their – often modest – strategies.

It seems to be a characteristic for Child Survivors and their groups to endure ongoing mental stress, to have only a weak lobby amidst powerful pressure groups which goes hand-in-hand with a feeble financial basis, and with old age to have to cope with dwindling energy. An example: Phoenix, the group of Child Survivors who were invited to come to Germany from the former Soviet Union, our sisters and brothers in fate, have been put on the lowest possible level of social welfare. Some public servants treat "such people" as work-shy riffraff. As an Association, Phoenix lacks the minimal financial means to promote its own basic interests.

Such immediate concerns of Associations are quite distinct from other relevant issues, such as the amount of medical support given by the Claims Conference and related agencies, a fine service for any receiver. The ongoing discussion about what is appropriate is not the focus of this text. This text focusses on the need for our Child Survivor Associations to gain control over the satisfaction of our interests, where groups are able to achieve it by their own honorary office. A comparison: handicapped people prefer to be in control of their situation wherever possible – and best within their own group.

In our groups we find fellow sufferers. But what can we achieve as companions in misfortune? The first step is to start with our common awareness. Most of us are active for our families – if we are not totally alone, as is often the case.

We were active on the job and wanted to be independent. Here in Germany, however, many had a limited education and progressed on the job only little by little – and accordingly many have a limited retirement pension.

As a result, some Child Survivors have applied for a monthly compensation of about 300 €, and some get it. That is welcome – as long as we “forget” the fact, that all top Nazi officers, civilian as well as military, receive a monthly pension of more than € 3,000. This paid automatically as a consequence of the civil servant status (Beamtenstatus).

An ability to “forget” is necessary, because on the one hand, we cannot survive now, if we brood over the Shoah day and night. On the other hand, any disposition to forget must be controlled: As disaster victims we are extremely alert to possible future disasters. Former Federal President Theodor Heuss put it this way, ten years after the Shoah:

“To forget is both, a mercy and a danger at the same time.”

We are hypersensitive, often vulnerable, and that can be quite a challenge, because we often perceive reactions from society as provocations. There are real provocations all over Europe, such as anti-Semitic threats, such as exclusion of immigrants – and Jews may be excluded although the family has lived in Germany for many generations. At the same time there are clear signs of inclusion, of friendship. There is a lot of understanding and of misunderstanding in German society for all kinds of minorities.

We are mostly accepted as time witnesses and as former victims. We feel a lot of sympathy from others, even love. From 1945 up to now we are still victims in many ways. Day-to-day we experience psychological as well as practical deprivations. That is less known in society. It is hard to assert oneself against the public impression, that we are very old, peaceful, and well supplied with medical care.

Altogether, the attitude toward us Child Survivors and Jews in general, including official as well as public reaction in Germany, is: **Ambivalent!**

For us it is “easy” to understand and hard to accept, that we are perceived as a kind of alien. We are aware, that in quite a few others we trigger vague guilt feelings, perhaps aggressiveness and even denial of our experiences.

What we would prefer to be is a messenger, a preparer for peace. After experiencing the utmost evil and the long-term impact thereof, we would like to let everybody feel the value of a globally peaceful society. We eagerly use opportunities, to warn in public about imminent dangers, most of all to point to all forms of anti-Semitism as a menace to society, which threatens not only Jews, but also other minorities, for instance, right now in Iraq. We feel a deep sympathy for all victims and refugees. At least some of us can understand Israel and at the same time feel with Palestinians. We all long for a fundamentally peaceful future. We see the global conference of Child Survivors in August 2014 in Germany as a marvellous opportunity to speak to the world.

Global WFJCSHD and German CSD in joint action

Child Survivors Deutschland e. V. (CSD)

www.child-survivors-deutschland.de

is the German section of the



World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants (WFJCSHD)

www.wfjcs.org

Both WFJCSHD and CSD agreed that the 26th global conference of Child Survivors be held in Berlin in August 2014. See the conference homepage:

<http://wfbc2014.com/>



It is organized by the European president of WFJCSHD, Max Arpels Lezer, from Amsterdam and Philipp Sonntag / CSD. The program is being planned by a committee coordinated by Rene Lichtman/USA.

The annual conference is taking place in Germany for the first time, after many years of considering the arguments for and against. How will

German society react to the challenge? We Child Survivors, the victims of Nazi persecution, now finally "try to trust" Germany to be a sufficiently democratic state, able to curtail anti-Semitism to an appropriate extent. We hope to feel and to be safe in Germany. We hope that German society will welcome the Child Survivors from all over the world, including for instance those who went to school in Berlin before 1945.

Promotion and sponsorship

Basic social and medical support for Child Survivors has been provided globally by the "Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany" (abbrev.: Claims Conference). We much appreciate the way in which the Claims Conference very professionally managed the administration of the programs. That success has been established during extensive negotiations with the German government since 1951.

On that background, our foundation as an association of Child Survivors is a late arrival. The reason is that many of us needed a long time after 1945 to stop continually seeing ourselves as victims. Still today some of us are rather shy and modest. Several Associations of Child Survivors worldwide were founded at a late date, many decades after the Shoah, and the members are very old. Thus, it has not been easy to find recognition and to maintain Child Survivor groups either within the general or in the Jewish society.

In Germany, after quite some cumbersome response time, now July 2014 we can announce a positive message:

There is remarkable understanding and support for the global conference 2014 in Berlin.

The WFJCSHD and we as the German section would like to thank all the public promoters and private sponsors, who with their contributions, opened the door to our 26th conference in Berlin 2014:

- ZdJ, Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland, Central Council of Jews in Germany

- Lotto Stiftung Berlin (Lotto foundation)



- EVZ – Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung, Zukunft = Foundation for Remembrance, Responsibility and Future



- Claims Conference – The Socialization ("Cafe Europa") programs for Nazi victims have been supported by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany



- GDV, Gesamtverband der Deutschen Versicherungswirtschaft e.V., the Berlin-based German Insurance Association, as the federation of private insurers in Germany



- DB Bahn, Deutsche Bundesbahn, German Federal Railway company.
- and various private sponsors.



Another positive message:

A Convention of the local German CSD is held twice a year, usually at the Max Willner Institute in Bad Sobernheim. For this, our most important activity, we receive friendly support every year: As a social program for coping with post-traumatic stress disorders caused by the impact of the Shoah, our meetings have repeatedly been supported by public institutions.

It is by no means easy, given the administrative regulations and our age, but it is well meant and very welcome. CSD has received grants from

Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

Federal Ministry for Health, as a result of a decision taken by the Federal German Parliament

Gefördert durch:



Bundesministerium
für Gesundheit

aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

Central Welfare Agency for Jews in Germany (ZWST)

Jewish Community in Frankfurt/Main

and from private sponsors.

Preliminaries: Tough Child Survivors in action

Child Survivors lived through fascist persecution as children until 1945. They are now scattered all over the world, organized in 54 Associations in 18 countries, most of them are in Israel and the USA.

After 1945 it seemed weird to stay in Germany and indeed, only a few remained here. In the meantime, there are about 300,000 Jews in Germany, two thirds of whom came within the last 20 years from the former Soviet union. The number of Child Survivors in Germany is unknown, mainly because many are reluctant to admit they are Jews, while some hide it or even deny being Jews - no wonder after the Shoah.

Our group of German Child Survivors has decided: There will be no competition among our members as to who had the worst fate. It is obvious that every fate suffered, is an individual one and, of course, there were and are varying intensities of suffering, both before 1945 and since then until today. The essential issues are the characteristics which we share. It may be wise for the global Child Survivors to agree not to compete with each other on this point. At the same time it may be helpful to understand that the intensity of social and political engagement can vary greatly. Therefore this text, unavoidably, is a personal one. It can neither represent an official opinion of our CSD nor, of course, that of the WFJCSHD. It may well be, however, that there are basic common or at least similar experiences.

German society is distinct from any other society worldwide. There is a strong general agreement to avoid war. The attitude towards Jewish life varies between a warm welcome and violent anti-Semitism. As a result, the distinguishing mark of Jewish life in Germany is ambivalence. Both support and rejection manifest themselves in many different ways. Anti-Semitic provocations are widespread throughout Europe, including Germany. Public support in Germany, politically and practically, is above the average in European countries. As the Child Survivors are at least 70 years old, the situation is a basic challenge, and it takes a lot of guts, strength and diplomatic skill, to manage life in Germany.

In most Associations of Child Survivors worldwide, the outstanding feature is the unique understanding and mutual support of the members. Many survivors lost most of, or even their entire family, and meeting other members provides a distinct feeling of solidarity. This is especially true for the bi-annual local meetings of Child Survivors in Bad Sobernheim/Germany, and for the annual meetings of the global World Federation. Also common before and in 2014 is a basic feature: the ambivalence of reactions toward Jews, and especially how we Child Survivors feel about it.

German Members and activities

Traumatic liability

Child Survivors often have a feeling of fundamental deprivation and deep loss: "We miss the natural quality of life". Remarkably enough, many Child Survivors manage their lives quite well as regards their jobs and private relationships with their children. Partly, they also manage to participate in social and even political activities.

However, many are haunted by an irrational feeling of guilt: "Why have I survived, while others have not?" This imposes an obligation on them which is hard to live up to in view of the accompanying permanent feeling of helplessness caused by the extremely traumatic situations they endured.

While some actually retreat inside themselves, others feel a strong obligation to engage in politically effective projects against fascism or, in general, against violence in all its forms. Quite a few would prefer to retreat, but still force themselves to participate in public activities. All of them have had traumatic experiences which make it difficult to enjoy a normal life.

Of course, their lives are influenced by a great many factors. Like everyone else, Child survivors also experience the universal joys of life, happy marriages, success in professional work, the rewards that derive from ecstatic art – but all this can collapse at a moment's notice. The burden of the past manifests itself in varying forms, such as a constant restlessness, lack of confidence, permanent depression and a feeling of anxiety that can be triggered by minute causes.

Many Jews have decided to conceal their Jewish origins in the society in which they live. They hope, for instance, to shield their children from difficult situations in schools; all this tends to make them very tense.

In some schools, groups with a fascist or Moslem orientation, some of them more or less illiterate, go in for mobbing Jews as a kind of sport. In such a context, the nervous alertness of the first generation may well affect future generations. Another unwelcome consequence is often a nervous tension between the generations. This happens even though in most cases goodwill and sympathy prevails.

The first generation of Child Survivors were unable to bring up their children in a normal way. The second generation ((2G) has similar problems with their children (3G). Accusations are suddenly made such as: "Not even you understand how we of the first generation suffered...". This can explode in the midst of joyful events. This happens because child survivors had very little opportunity to learn how to achieve a sane balance between emotional intimacy and the necessary distance towards other persons.

How then could they have recourse to it when bringing up their own children? The challenge is a real one, and exists worldwide. Within the CSD, it has led to the exclusion of 2nd and 3rd generation members from the association altogether. "Let the younger ones establish groups of their own, if they want to." Nevertheless, a great many local groups based on special interests exist (focusing on social meetings, art, sport, religion, etc.), and the different generations can and do mix in a relaxed fashion in these groups. And now 2014 we within CSD reconsider including 2Gs and 3Gs.

Activities and recognition

Although presently CSD members have often known happiness, they have also suffered from a rapid succession of dramatic events. Ambivalence is our companion. An example is Cilly Peiser, who for many years presided over our association with a mixture of Jewish wisdom and diplomacy. She surprised and shocked us when she died two days after a happy celebration for her 80th birthday, at which she had danced, sung and enjoyed herself with more than a hundred friends – as she had also done at a CSD meeting three weeks earlier. She had been a very active, strong-minded and tenacious contemporary witness who testified in public and in many schools and also produced remarkable documents. Thus, she was often exhausted and we felt that the effort had been just too much.

We were happy when she was awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit by Federal President Horst Koehler during a ceremony held on October 5th, 2008 in Berlin. She also received recognition with some 8000 other persons when she was honored for exemplary engagement in society by the Pope on 25th November 2009. Only one photo appeared in the report on the event

published by the Vatican's L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, and that showed Cilly Peiser and Father Norbert Hoffmann.

Whilst the award was welcomed by members of the CSD, it is remarkable that our association accepted it considering the destructive role of Pope Pius Xth, who might and ought to have done much more to oppose the murderous activities of the Nazis. Indeed, the CSD homepage published an official letter of protest from the German Coordination Committee, an umbrella organization for more than 80 societies who work for Christian-Jewish co-operation in Germany, a letter which pointed to the dubious role played by Pius Xth as an argument against his sanctification.



Sara Bialas and Cilly Peiser

Another member who is tremendously committed and dedicated to our cause is Sara Bialas. In March 2011 she was also awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit for her work as a contemporary witness. For instance, as a concentration camp survivor, she accompanied German adolescents to Treblinka because her parents were probably murdered there. For many years she has visited schools in order to tell her story and the dramatic circumstances of her survival. And she is also keen to express feelings for

what is joyful in life; for instance, she introduced us to a musician, Karsten Troyke, a well-known singer of Yiddish songs, who delighted us with hilarious, long forgotten ditties. Sara Bialas was struck by his potential at a performance in 1987, and she enlarged his repertoire by teaching him Yiddish songs which had been practically forgotten.



Karsten Troyke presenting Yiddish songs. See also www.karsten-troyke.de

As a result, Karsten Troyke was able to produce a unique CD "Vergessene Lieder" (Forgotten Songs) with texts printed both in Yiddish and German. Examples are: Surele, Budapesht, Tshishn Goldene Zangen, Neshumele, Azo miss es zany, Ayn Balade fin tserisne Shikh, Brinele, Mamenyo oy Mamenyu.

Sara Bialas had learned these songs during her childhood in Poland, then later in Paris, during her stay in a DP camp in Bavaria and also after she settled in Israel. After the Holocaust, when all the members of her large family were murdered, these Yiddish songs had "stayed alive in her heart". In the booklet that accompanies the CD, she says that the songs "helped her

to overcome her sadness". Until he met Sara, Karsten Troyke, with a family history of anti-Nazi resistance, rarely came across people who spoke or understood Yiddish. And yet he had started arranging, collecting and performing Yiddish songs out of love for the music and the language. He discovered that many of Sara's songs had not been published anywhere else. Now we have an impressive number of old Jewish songs, often in Polish or German, all with accurate harmonies and sheet music, so that it has been possible to preserve them for future generations. For a CD with Jewish songs sung by Karsten Troyke, see www.karsten-troyke.de.

At the same time, the political environment in many cases has subjected our contemporary witnesses to challenging and very exacting pressure. For instance, an initiative taken by our member, Peter Paul Klinger, to install "Stumbling stones" (Stolpersteine) in a small German town in which there was much conservative "political correctness" provoked a great many objections, negative arguments and delaying actions on the political level. Our member, Horst Selbiger, succeeded in having "Stumbling Stones" (Stolpersteine) laid for his family.



"Stumbling Stones" for the Selbiger family

In his book "Verweigerte Rueckkehr" (Denied Return) child survivor, Hans Frankenthal, described forms of deliberate suppression of the experiences of the few survivors, as if the Nazi ideology were still valid. He described how officials use all kinds of restrictive regulations in order to avoid granting compensation payments. During the first decades, psychic suffering was not recognized and these diagnoses were confirmed by superficial, irresponsible psychiatric experts.

At the same time, German Child Survivors get support and understanding in other places, and this is, of course, very important and is appreciated, because it lightens the burden of some of our victims. However, it would be misleading to regard this as compensation for former sufferings. It is more an alleviation of current stress. Restrictions by administrations often prevail in absurd forms. On some issues, the CSD has tried to fight for at least some form of modest justice.

In the course of their lives our members have had to cope with dramatically different circumstances; most of them survived because they are children from mixed marriages. In many cases they lost all other family members and were the only ones to survive. Many of us eagerly take to networking, whether on a professional level or otherwise and get involved in many varied issues.

Given our age (nearly all of us are over 70 years old, some over 80), this can be impressive. Exhibits were shown at the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt and in Wismar (Children in the CONCENTRATION CAMP Theresienstadt). Horst Selbiger contributed documents about the persecution of his family under the Nazi regime to the exhibition "Legalized Robbery", which was shown from March – October 2010 at the Study Centre for Financial Administration and the Judiciary at Rotenburg a.d. Fulda and was organized by the "Fritz Bauer Institute – History and Impact of the Holocaust" and by Radio Hessen.

Professor Gerhard Baader of CSD, our "senior statesman", aged 83, is still teaching at the Free University in Berlin on the history of medicine, and continues to do active research on anti-fascism and on the role of medicine under the Nazi regime, whilst also working on medicine in the Talmud and its relation to Greek medicine; his research on emigration concentrates on the influence of German medical organizations on the creation of similar

structures in the health system of Palestine/Israel. At the same time, Professor Baader volunteers as a gabbai, assisting in the running of a synagogue, and he represents the Masorti group of Jewish organizations in Europe which has formed a partnership in order to share the experiences made in working with volunteers. See www.masorti.eu/.

Chajim Grosser has a ceramics workshop that brings young people from different religious backgrounds together.



Master Chajim Grosser in his ceramics workshop "Yad Chanah"

CSD also works with institutions such as the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation (see www.deutscher-koordinierungsrat.de) and has supplied a description of the former "Juedischer Kulturverein Berlin" (Jewish Cultural Association in Berlin) to Wikipedia.

As contemporary witnesses, several CSD members visit schools where they describe their sufferings under the Nazi regime. In addition, our members help to produce books, videos, photos, and articles for educational purposes.

Eva Szepesi, another time witness, published a report in 2010:

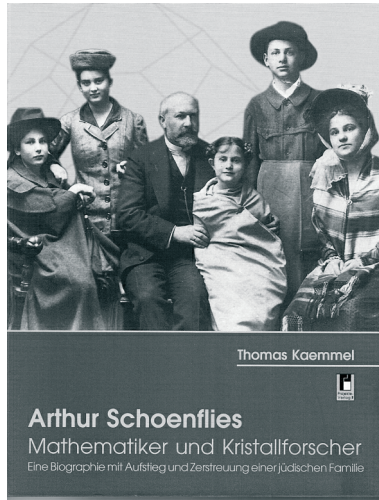


"A Girl's Flight All Alone" by Eva Szepesi

When the German army occupied Hungary in 1944, the persecution and murder of Jews started immediately. Eva Szepesi was eleven years old and was sent by her mother to Slovakia. Whilst she was on the run, kind families helped to hide her, but finally she was caught and brought to Austria. She needed 50 years before she was able to talk and write about her experiences.

CSD founding member, Thomas Kaemmel (died 2013), wrote a book covering about 300 years of history of the extended family "Schoenflies", relating the dramatic fate of several family members up to the present, with special attention being given to events under the Nazi regime*.

* Thomas Kaemmel: Arthur Schoenflies – Mathematiker und Kristallforscher. Eine Biographie mit Aufstieg und Zerstreuung einer jüdischen Familie. Projekte Verlag, Halle, 2006. (Thomas Kaemmel: Arthur Schoenflies – Mathematician and Expert on Crystals. A biography depicting the rise and dispersal of a Jewish family. Published by the Projekte Verlag, Halle, 2006)



Thomas Kaemmel about 300 years of extended family Schoenflies

The intensive networking of the Schoenflies family led to a large number of links to other famous families. A great number of documents which are reproduced in this book are an invitation to do further research.

Salomea Genin had contributed to the basic social engagement in the GDR, and was then increasingly frustrated with the police state attitude and practice. Her books show her as an authentic time witness for societal features in East and West Germany, she indeed "Followed the Wrong Gods"

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We have provided DVDs on which several of our time witnesses give interviews for the public, see

www.child-survivors-deutschland.de/video

We are engaged in intense networking. It provides a broad range of experiences. Here are a few examples.

** Salomea Genin: Ich folgte den falschen Göttern – Eine australische Jüdin in der DDR. Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, Berlin (2009)
Salomea Genin: Scheindl und Salomea. Fischer Taschenbuch (1992)

Phoenix out of the Ashes – Post-Soviet Child Survivors

Our networking reveals how the Jewish spirit prevails under the most adverse circumstances. We share this experience with "Phoenix", which is the "other" group in Germany, the Association for Post-Soviet Child Survivors.

Only in fairy tales does it look easy to "rise like a phoenix out of the ashes". Very few Jewish children survived the persecution of the Nazis in Eastern Europe, and those who finally managed to come as immigrants to Germany have adopted "Phoenix" as part of their name to cope with and try to overcome the impacts of the disaster.

Since 2009 CSD has been cooperating with Phoenix and the "Bundesassoziation der Holocaust - Überlebenden, Immigranten aus dem postsowjetischen Raum e.V.", the association of Holocaust survivors, who emigrated from the post-Soviet region. See

www.holocaustonline.de

post@holocaustonline.de

with president Dr. Alexej Heistver in Wismar. At Bad Sobernheim he contributed an impressive report on the persecution by the Nazis and about ensuing difficult times in the former Soviet Union, and finally about the limited support now given in Germany to post-Soviet immigrants.

Phoenix 2014 has more than 300 Child Survivors as fully documented members, 120 of them have provided startling reports about their three-fold difficult fate. Starting with Nazi persecution, continuing with often demanding challenges in the Soviet Union and, finally, as immigrants in Germany, to where they had been invited, but were immediately put on welfare status, with all kinds of strict administrative limitations. Conditions which in Germany are perceived as unworthy, as undeserving, given the background of the very bad circumstances of life in the Soviet Union caused by Nazi Germany, has, nevertheless, been welcomed by many post-Soviet immigrants as an essential improvement of their lives.

CSD has tried repeatedly to help Phoenix in its clash with the German authorities, for instance, with appeals to the German parliament (Bundestag).

The underlying problems are caused because the immigrants arriving are seen as a kind of "Jewish alien". They have, however, unavoidably become a majority in the Jewish communities. Tensions and friendly encounters are legend, but integration, especially through 2Gs and 3Gs, is making progress.

The immigrants are important time witnesses, whose experiences, by and large, are unknown to German society. Excerpt from a project appeal by Phoenix *:

"The collection of the memories of the Jewish children imprisoned in the concentration camps and ghettos is a reflection of the tragedy experienced by most Jewish children from the very first days of the Nazi Wehrmacht's invasion of the Soviet Union. This tragedy was also caused by the fact, that a large Jewish population was concentrated on the territories of Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Right-Bank Ukraine and Moldova which were occupied during the first three weeks of the war as the result of the rapid advance of Nazi troops. It is evident from the published material, archival documents and oral narrations, that the Jewish population often did not realize that mortal danger was coming from the Nazi invaders."

What is still more important, the people who survived the Holocaust nowadays visit the countries (Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Moldova, Russia) where Nazis and their local accomplices put the "Final solution of the Jewish Question" into practice. They visit these places together with young Germans. There in the East, thousands of kilometers from Germany, many the Jewish children parted from their childhood forever

Through such visits with survivors to the places of mass extermination of Jews, places, about which there is no (or almost no) information in German

school books, young Germans comprehend the magnitude of the crimes of their forefathers. By narrating their experiences, the former child prisoners take part in the important process of providing for an anti-fascist upbringing of today's youth in Germany.

* Stolen Childhood - Memories of children, having survived the hell of Holocaust. A project by the Phoenix association, 2012.

Terezín Initiative

Liesel Binzer and Pavel Hoffmann of the Terezín Initiative are also members of our CSD Association. As time witnesses in Germany they report a lot to schools and on other occasions. Through them, the contact is kept up to date.

Michaela Vidlakova is the official delegate from Prague at the WFJCSHD conference 2014 in Berlin. In June 2014 she wrote about the initiative:

The Terezín Initiative – International Terezin Association is the union of the Shoah survivors of ghettos and concentration camps living in or coming from the Czech Republic and their direct off-springs. The name of the Union originates from the fact that under Nazi rule, almost all Jews were first deported to the assembling camp "Ghetto Theresienstadt" in what was known as the "Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia", (the former garrison town Terezín) before being deported to the extermination camps.

The aims of the TI, formulated when the TI was founded in 1990, are threefold:

- to educate the young about the Shoah. Our suffering is given meaning if we, who happened to survive, do our share to help prevent a recurrence. Our activities in this field are directed at an audience, mostly school classes, both at home and abroad. Our members meet these groups in Terezín, Prague or other places here or abroad and hold lectures and discussions with them. We collaborate with several interested organizations here and abroad, especially in Germany:

- to keep alive the memory of those who did not survive. Usually, whole families were exterminated, so there is often nobody to remember them. We, therefore, organize or participate in memorial days, see to it that memorials or memorial plaques are installed on special sites connected with the Shoah. We have also facilitated the publishing of the Terezín Memorial Book (an exhaustive list of those deported), and cooperate in regularly

publishing works of historians dealing with various aspects of the Shoah in our country.

- to take care of the present social, medical and material wellbeing of the survivors in our country. Often having lost most or all of their family, the Shoah still gravely influences their present situation. Many live in isolation, and often on a living standard just above the poverty line. The funds for the social and medical programs come mostly, but not exclusively, from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the American Joint Distribution Committee. Both these bodies acknowledge our position and use us as a channel for their social programs in the Czech Republic. By far not all survivors are our members, but the programs we manage, endeavor to help all.

We publish a Bulletin, Terezínská iniciativa, which appears mostly 3 to 4 times a year, and send it out free to our members. Every spring we hold a convention of our members, which is also a social occasion.

International Networking

Our Association as the German section of the overall WFJCSHD has tried to participate in global activities. At several annual meetings since our foundation in 2001 we have had delegates at the global meetings, starting with our board members Cilly Peiser, Prof. Gerhard Baader and Thomas Kaemmel. Often, we could not join in, because of a lack of money. We are old and our lobbying is weak and late. We deplore that the immediate needs of our Association are hardly recognized, and rarely fulfilled.

Beside networking with groups, individuals from outside of Germany feel attracted by our mood of togetherness, and are members, such as Marie-Claire Genestier from France and Eve Rider from the USA.

Child Survivor's ambivalent experiences

The motto: Justice, Respect and Peace

How is the motto of the WFJCSHD 2014 conference in Berlin: "Justice, Respect and Peace" be perceived in Germany? This question is by no means easy to answer. There are ambivalent feelings connected with such basic terms. Especially Jews in Germany are aware: Justice, Respect and Peace all are loaded terms, with meanings that differ depending on the context. The widespread range between being made welcome to being rejected covers many possibilities.

Today still, Jews often feel rejected, excluded, treated as if they are not German citizens. It can happen that a Jew, whose family has lived in Germany for several generations, is told that Israel is his homeland.

The WFJCSHD 2014 conference is the first time that the Child Survivors living in Germany have dared to hold their own conference with attendees from all over the world. That is not easy, because the systematic persecution by the Nazis, the Shoah, was established on German initiative. It is not easy, because throughout Europe there are ongoing reports about rejection of, and in a few cases, even violence against Jews, also in Germany. And, of course, many features in Germany trigger the Child Survivors' memories of sufferings. At the same time, overall and in the worldwide context, Germany is seen as a civilized state with a culture of justice, respect and peace.

Is this also true of the attitude towards Jews in Germany? There is an abundance of positive and negative examples. Official public perception, and the inclination of the major political parties is positive. Jews are supported, although not in every way, and not on every issue. Many Jews, have had negative experiences. In the case of the Child Survivors this can be catastrophic because two major causes coincide: a really bad experience plus a high degree sensitivity and vulnerability, which are characteristic for Child Survivors.

Child Survivors and 2Gs in Germany are very sensitive to all kinds of indirect violence in the form of arbitrary administrative acts, and all kinds of direct violence, violation of laws, and imminent warfare. Again and again, Child

Survivors as time witnesses pass on their message that it is important to avoid violence in all its forms. I know many fragile Child Survivors, who do their utmost, to visit schools as time witnesses, and thus help to create a more promising future.

The 26th annual conference of WFJCSHD, the first to be held in Germany, is a challenge for both the Child Survivors and German society. The outcome is open. Our intention is straightforward. The conference aims to build better relations for Jews in German society and an understanding for the fate of Child Survivors – that means for the extreme sufferings until 1945, also after 1945 and especially right now. The "post-traumatic stress disorder", a long-term impact caused by the Shoah, with visible damage now in old age, is a challenge way beyond former expectations, and has now been thoroughly investigated by psychologists.

In general, the conference aims to give the old Child Survivors who are living globally and locally, a new confidence and hopefully even some solace. The best precondition would be through a responsible and sensitive German society today.

We had a similar situation at the 23rd WFJCSHD conference 2011 in Warsaw. In the past, the WFJCSHD noticed ambivalent attitudes towards Jews in Poland, including open anti-Semitism. However, in the years before 2011 the attitude improved, and finally at the conference, the Polish government sincerely and cordially welcomed the participants. At the same time it was important to discuss the challenges in a realistic way. An example: At the conference in Warsaw on 21st August 2011, the German CSD took part in the Panel: "Anti-Semitism and Other Issues in Today's Europe" with the contribution by Philipp Sonntag: "Anti-Semitism in Germany – a Permanent Challenge".

Tasks, demands and networking of the German CSD

Projects of the German section focus on

- life and group dynamics at CSD meetings and events organized by the Association
- the social needs of members
- the public impact of members who act as contemporary witnesses of the Shoah.

Several thousand first generation Child Survivors live in Germany. Many are, however, reluctant to join. Many Jews, especially older Jews in Germany, are cautious and reticent to reveal their origins, because, in numbers of cases they have experienced exclusion in German society, partly even in an aggressive form. A public act of deliberate inclusion may ensue, after such a "coming out" or not.

Of course, the second generation is also familiar with this problem. CSD is linked to the organization "Der halbe Stern" (Half a Star), which in 2009 held a conference centered on the mental stress of the second generation. It was held under the title

"Never say you are Jewish!"

We Jews, especially we Child Survivors in Germany, have become hypersensitive to the ambivalences we experience so often. What varies is the individual amount of sensitivity, the extent of the impact of being hurt as child, and the potential of fear that may be stirred up, partly all the way up until present time.

A characteristic consequence is that we long to belong to our own group, where we can feel safe like everyone else around us. Naturally, for us, that may well be a Jewish alliance, where we are understood and accepted. At rare events, such as the Limmud meetings, we have this feeling and then feel great! Some Child Survivors find what they need in a religious community. In many cases, the last positive impression a Jewish child had before persecution was the family, the synagogue, or both in harmony. Even secular Child Survivors, who reject strict forms of religion as leading to

violence in many forms, may respect and cherish this kind of harmonious and basic experience...

Manifold positive Jewish feelings may occur in many forms, on many occasions. I first enjoyed this during a sabbatical in 1972 at the Lithauer Center for International Affairs at Harvard, where I met a group of Jewish academics. For the first time I had the feeling of belonging to an elite. There was not the slightest doubt that being Jewish meant top performance was expected and achieved over and over again, and that it was an abundant pleasure to be Jewish. The educational program of the Zentralrat in Berlin, modest in appearance while highly effective in some top achievements, triggered a similar feeling for me. And then, there is the Jewish family. I had never been part of one, until I accompanied our board member Liesel Binzer to her daughter's family in Haifa in April 2014. I was marvellously integrated into the Pessach festivities and got a fabulous impression of a modern Israeli family and a modern Israel where every Jew can feel at home, safe and future oriented.

Specific strain and stress of Child Survivors

Background investigations* and various reports** have revealed, that causes and consequences of the posttraumatic sufferings of Child Survivors in Germany are much the same as those that have been repeatedly described in the newsletters of WFJCSHD.

When they appear in public as contemporary witnesses, Child Survivors in most cases manage to secure some understanding, or even a large degree of empathy for the desperate situations experienced in a concentration camp, or the ongoing anxiety and frustration in insecure hiding places, such as have been described in the diary of Anne Frank and in the book "Zu niemand ein Wort" (Not a word to anybody) by our former president Cilly Peiser, who

* Among others: Alexandra Rossberg / Johan Lansen (eds.): Das Schweigen brechen – Berliner Lektionen zu Spätfolgen der Shoah; Peter Lang Verlag, 2003, 388 p.

** Yearly conferences of ZWST, including Jan. 2011 in Frankfurt/Main, official report upcoming. See also: "Jewish effort", the report for Jan. 2010: Trauma und Intervention. Zum professionellen Umgang mit Ueberlebenden der Shoah und ihren Familienangehörigen.

died in 2010. She repeatedly represented the German CSD at conferences of WFJCSHD.

Even though the experiences of Child Survivors in Germany and elsewhere are similar, the German situation has special connotations.

In Germany, any Jewish action meets with both friendly and unfriendly reactions. And reactions to Jewish initiatives are frequently distorted and difficult to deal with:

- Friendly reactions can be marred by an inhibited, depressed attitude caused by a guilty conscience and by an attempt to avoid the issue altogether. Often, Jews are not accepted as Germans; this was deplored by Ignatz Bubis in his last interview:

"I have achieved almost nothing as President of the Central Jewish Council in Germany: Jewish and non-Jewish citizens of Germany have remained estranged from each other..."

- Unfriendly up to aggressive reactions range from tacit to open anti-Semitism.

As time witnesses before a virulent background

The task of combating fascism and similar forms of terrorism is still an ongoing challenge. In the public political debate neo-Nazi groups are currently considered "under control" in Germany. But they remain a nasty threat that is permanently present, and violent actions by such groups are always possible.

Some fascist-oriented people in Germany today vociferously demand, that the public debate about German guilt be ended. Archbishop Joseph Frings of Cologne demanded an end to the investigation of Nazi crimes as early as March 1948* :

* Frings, Joseph: Macht endlich Schluss!. In: Die Welt, March 2nd, 1948, p. 3 („Die Welt" was the supra-regional journal of the British Zone at that time)

"As necessary as it was, to punish the real culprits, it is now just as necessary to at last end it."

So notwendig es gewesen ist, die wirklich Schuldigen zu bestrafen, so notwendig sei es nunmehr, endlich Schluss zu machen:"

The general, official position of German politicians is to refuse to end such discussions. In a speech delivered by the former President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Horst Koehler, at the ceremony commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of the war on 8th May 2005, he said clearly that "There cannot be an end" [to such a discussion], and pointed out that in future German citizens had a special responsibility to prevent crimes, such as those committed under the Nazi regime. Another issue is that over the decades the prosecution or even investigation of Nazis were rare.

This was due to the influence of right-wing politicians. While §131 of the German Constitution, introduced by the Adenauer government in 1951, put the former Nazis back into their civil servant status (Beamtenstatus) so that they did not lose their jobs, while emigrants coming home to Germany were "kept out" and had to work on a lower level of the official hierarchy, so that many child survivors received a smaller pension when they retired. This law protected almost all former Nazis of the upper hierarchy, both in the military and civil area. And it protected the upper administrative staff.

This right-wing influence also made itself felt in the Ministries of education, responsible at a Federal level for the 17 German States. They partly provided schoolbooks which avoided or even denied German responsibility for Nazi warfare, mass murder and other crimes. It is a well known fact, that in the past, history lessons at school often started in the Stone Age and ended with Bismarck, before World War I. A current change: At least in recent years, school classes have increasingly visited the memorial sites at the concentration camps.

It is against this background that witnesses of the Holocaust talk in public about their experiences. This can be quite a challenge. In some cases, schoolchildren have said that they are not very interested in hearing about the crimes of the fascists, which, as far as they are concerned, happened a

"very long time ago". While some teachers are willing to deal with such reactions, others hesitate or drop the issue altogether.

Usually, when our child survivors are invited to testify as witnesses, teachers will indeed brief the children beforehand. Nevertheless, against the general German background, our witnesses may have to confront and handle difficult situations on such occasions. Altogether, results are encouraging, because many young people are grateful to receive first-hand information from witnesses in an objective and committed way. Thus, some students realize that an important task in society is to fight fascism. In this context, witnesses have a unique role to play. But with the passage of time, only a few witnesses remain strong and eloquent enough to stand up publicly to meet these challenges.

Some initiatives are encouraging. In 2005, our group was very happy to learn of projects which give us hope for the future. Young non-Jewish German women presented "YAD-RUTH", a private club in Hamburg, whose members visit the poorest Child Survivors in European countries such as Moldova and Lithuania. They bring welcome gifts and give much needed encouragement.

Another project is the "Kreuzberger Initiative against Antisemitism", which organizes events with time witnesses; they concentrate their activities on informing Turkish and Arab schoolchildren about Fascism.

There are many similar initiatives. We, in particular our members Andrée Leusink and Horst Selbiger, are busy networking anti-fascist initiatives. For instance, in April 2005, I attended a conference on

"NS-Opfer entschädigen – NS-Taeter bestrafen" (Compensating Victims of German Fascism – Punishing National-Socialist Culprits)

which was held at the Humboldt University, Berlin. The organizing committee included institutions such as "Support for Survivors of Nazi Persecution International" (Baltimore/Cologne) and also 26 mostly left-wing institutions and groups; they bitterly denounced the niggardly German policy on compensation – in particular compensation for forced labourers –, as well as the reluctance of the German authorities to prosecute the culprits.

In addition, at a meeting of the Child Survivors of Germany an impressive scientific organization was presented, the "Zentrum fuer Antisemitismus-Forschung der TU Berlin" (Center for Research on Anti-Semitism, of the Technical University Berlin) which publishes reports in English, for instance in its "Studies on Modern Anti-Semitism". It regards itself not only as a research institute, but also commits itself to inform the wider public of the manifold aspects and dangers of anti-Semitism. An empirical study which can be seen as part of research on resistance, deals with the German helpers who hid Jews in order to save them. Between six and ten non-Jews were needed to save only one Jew. While, in many cases they succeeded, often their protégés were not able to escape, and, of course the helpers themselves were also in great danger. 900 dossiers were put together about the lives of Jews in Berlin alone. Similarly, people who helped the Jews to survive may number more than ten thousand throughout Europe, an impressive figure in view of the fact that every single fate was a dramatic one, and involved huge danger. At the same time, this number is low, if one thinks of the millions of people involved, cases in which Jews were murdered without any attempt being made to save them.

Dealing with anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism in Germany manifests itself in many ways. Interpretation both of its extent and of its character is controversial.

Much has been written about Nazi provocations and the lack of governmental responsibility. The actions in the legislative, judiciary and administrative fields and their comments depend a lot upon the initiative taken by individuals. These might be former Nazis and neo-Nazis, while right-wing conservatives often make the greatest impact. Altogether there is much official support for Jews, but a lot depends on the attitude of responsible officials. In general society, while many do not accept murder, but may feel it to be "normal", that Nazis today

- demand that Jews and immigrants be killed,
- that they actually kill them. Since 1989, about as many per year have been killed as were shot dead at the East/West Wall in Germany

- that they uphold the tradition of Hitler
- and that they are protected on their provocative demos ("Auschwitz is a lie ..." etc.) against protesters. Sometimes one has the impression, that police would rather put protesters in prison than Nazis.

A comparison would be, if rowdy pedophiles demonstrated to be allowed to seduce and murder children, while the police fight against screaming mothers, who are trying to protect their children. The treatment of the National Socialist Underground (NSU) by the secret service and police has brought about a greater awareness in German and European societies that "something" is wrong in both institutions which covered up NSU crimes and allowed them to get away with murdering ten people over eleven years simply because they were not German.

The actions and policies of the Federal Government, of the Regional States and of smaller communities are contradictory and vary, depending on many factors, such as the number of Nazis and sympathizers in legislative, executive and judiciary areas, such as the amount of stubbornness in the official administration, or simply a fluke or a mischance.

A typical example: I was a poor student at the university and could hardly afford the basic books. A monthly 100 dollars would have helped a lot. However, my application for financial help was rejected, and after my protest, it was made complicated and delayed. Finally, it was granted in 1964, a few months after I had received my academic degree and had started to earn money. I was 25 years old. I almost refused it, but then put it into a new firm and soon lost it.

The ambivalence in Germany is enormous, and the mood of the country is nervous. Guilt feelings as regards Hitler and Nazi warfare are strong. They weaken own current military ambitions – with a remarkable side effect: they increase protests against Israel's military actions. In some cases, this may be a hidden anti-Semitism, hidden also from their own consciousness. Throughout Europe anti-Semitism is becoming more militant again. In Germany, due to the awareness of its own role and its impact in World War II, there is perhaps more awareness about the dangers and evils of anti-Semitism. This, however, can add up to a lot of ambivalence in attitudes and deeds.

There is little inhibition about exporting huge amounts of weapons, even to Saudi Arabia. Some politicians feel bad because of their guilt feelings towards Jews, but not bad enough to prevent the export of weapons. Some of them go so far as to criticize Israel's attitude towards Palestine as "fascist".

Many anti-Semites, whether of German and/or Muslim or any other background have never had any contact to Jews. Many Germans see us as foreigners, regardless of whether we hold a German passport or not.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the government, institutions, Associations and groups of all kinds manage to avoid the subject, or try to be "neutral", i.e. neither pro- nor anti-Jewish:

Officially the government supports Jews, and this takes many pragmatic forms. Police is provided for the protection of all public Jewish buildings, important memorials and documentations. Funds exist for the compensation of Holocaust victims, which partly come from the Claims Conference.

On the other hand, in many cases, compensation has been refused, sometimes in tragic fashion, when the judges or officials were the same persons who had served under the Nazi regime. It may seem hard to believe, but an analysis of German society will reveal injustices and the existence of strong traces of fascist ideology, without any consequences whatsoever being felt by the protagonists.

The astonishing features of communist regimes often were, that it was forbidden to mention evident failures, arbitrary decisions, all the way up to despotism such as under Stalin. The astonishing features of western democracy in Germany were, that there is no inhibition to telling facts, truth, evidence of injustice, BUT nothing much happens to correct the scandals.

A masterpiece of this kind of common German practice was revealed in the 879 pages of DAS AMT*. They disclose that 40% of the staff at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs were former Nazis, 20% came from the group of the victims. Covering up former crimes was a matter of routine, old comrades

* Eckart Conze, Norbert Frei, Peter Hayes and Moshe Zimmermann: DAS AMT UND DIE VERGANGENHEIT. Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik. Blessing Verlag, 2010.

would help each other. This has been documented in detail. The well-cultivated legend that the Foreign Office had been a center of resistance against the Nazis was completely exposed. Amazingly enough, this was done from within the Foreign Office. It shows that there are also splendid officials with a deep understanding of and support for Child Survivors and Jews in general.

A basic feature in Germany is, that Jews are often well integrated in general German society – as long as they avoid mentioning, that they are Jewish. As Hans Frankenthal reported**:

He had survived Auschwitz, but nobody wanted to listen to the horrors he had endured. His home town integrated him in local groups such as the sports club, but the friendly and relaxed mood would immediately disappear as soon as he tried to relate any details of his experiences – some listeners even denied that any such horror had really occurred.

Members of our group have told us time and again how physicians, civil servants and others react in an absolutely insensitive way when they are confronted with the traumatic experiences of Child Survivors. For instance, a medical doctor asked whether any other relatives had suffered from the same illness. When the Child Survivor answered "I have no relatives", the doctor would question whether this was possible. When the child survivor answered that he had lost his entire family in Auschwitz, the reply was: "That doesn't interest me".

On the other hand, of course, we find very sensitive, compassionate, caring persons who cultivate a special, positive personal relationship with a Child Survivor. But the general attitude toward anti-Semitism is one of sulkiness, confusion, embarrassment and nervousness.

** Hans Frankenthal: Verweigerte Rückkehr – Erfahrungen nach dem Judenmord. Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999

Safety in Berlin

Violence in every form causes greater alarm and panic among Child Survivors. Ongoing news about the murder of Jews throughout Europe reports real dangers, but Germany is fairly safe. The statistical probability of being attacked is about once in 40 years, and seldom will an offence include violence. And, of course, the conference at Hilton has extra security protection.

And what about Berlin? There is sometimes violence on the S-Bahn (interurban train), sometimes in the U-Bahn (subway, underground railway), and on the outskirts, mostly late at night, and when young aggressive gangs find a carriage with only one or a few travellers. Then it can be important, "not to behave as a victim". Usually the driver will hear assaults and call the police. However, far out of town the response can take some time. In the city, the problem is rare. As soon as an assault does occur, public awareness and support can be powerful.

An example: Rabbi Daniel Alter of the Jewish community in Berlin, was walking on the street with his six-year-old daughter. He was wearing a kippah and was asked by two Arab looking youths, whether he was a Jew. He answered, "Yes". They attacked and injured him. He had to be hospitalized. Even his daughter was threatened. Public support in media was huge. He was appointed "Beauftragter gegen Antisemitismus" (authorized agent against anti-Semitism) by the Jewish Community.

Peace for the Middle East and especially evaluation of Israel are delicate subjects, and among Child Survivors there exist the same manifold complex views as in the German and worldwide debate – while always with the precondition that Israel has "the right of existence".

Impact from the Environment

In the whole, Child Survivors can never really relax in Germany society. The reasons are the repressive elements in the environment and a tendency to act out a trauma, and a subtle combination of both factors.

For years now there have been right-wing movements throughout Europe and this trend has recently grown stronger. Most of these movements, especially those of right-wing demagogues like Geert Wilders (Holland) and in the recent past Joerg Haider (Austria), are basically nationalistic, often frankly xenophobic. They do not see themselves in the tradition of Hitler, of concentration camps, of genocide, just as nobody would describe himself in public as living in a cannibalistic tradition. Some groups in Europe, however, are openly fascist. They are against the presence of immigrants, and consider Jews, whose families have lived in Germany for centuries, as not belonging to the German population, and think, indeed, that they ought to be eliminated.

Beyond that, some fascist movements in Germany, openly adopt the tradition and even the pragmatic aims of the old Nazi ideology. For instance, currently widespread (not occasional or casual) in German schools, is the term of abuse "Du Opfer!" (you victim!) hurled at somebody; this is now a term of abuse, often used by young neo-Nazis and/or by Muslim groups, and it is meant as a direct attack on Jews.

In 2010 at least 13,500 authenticated criminal offenses were committed by neo-Nazis and other fascist offenders; this includes 650 cases of violence in which 600 persons were injured (antifa March/April 2011, p.10). During the last 20 years about 140 persons were murdered in Germany for fascist or xenophobic reasons. However, less than 2% of the German voters elected fascist parties to the European Parliament.

Neo-Nazi groups stage demonstrations which are given police protection to, it is said, ensure freedom of speech. Although neo-Nazis injure and murder people every year, only few groups have been legally banned. Neo-Nazis know very well how to get around official restrictions. For instance, one neo-Nazi argued: "I have a tendency to resort to violence, but not to violence in a rowdyish form: I will not just grab somebody and beat him up – but if I am provoked, for instance, if a person starts arguing against us, then I will beat him up."

The Federal Constitutional Court has ruled that basic rights, namely freedom of opinion and assembly, must be protected. This explicitly includes neo-Fascist groups. Only very specific words and phrases are forbidden and

lead to prosecution, such as the "Auschwitzluege" (the assertion that a death camp at Auschwitz never existed). Therefore, the police and public prosecutors have no choice, they say, are obliged to protect neo-Nazi gatherings against the attempts of many citizens to block them. These "many citizens" include the renowned Wolfgang Thierse (President of the German Federal Parliament). They also include Andrée Leusink, who is a member of our group, the CSD, and she has for many years organized demos against neo-Nazis.

In the GDR (German Democratic Republic, the former socialist East Germany) Nazis definitely had no chances to publicly display Nazi ideology. Immediately after 1945 all Nazi teachers were sacked and "Neulehrer" (new teachers) employed which meant that housewives and other untrained persons had to improvise temporary and later permanent educational courses. The employees in the judiciary were also completely replaced and a new State apparatus built without the former Nazi staff. Nazis in society had a chance to re-establish themselves as valid members of a socialist society, and over time numbers of them attained positions of power in industry and politics. There was a deliberate and largely honest attempt at denazification, distinct from what was being done in West Germany with the §131 of the Constitution and the general amnesty, out of Adenauer's wish to use experienced managers and administrators, whether still fascist, or not.

In the GDR, however, a public discussion of "what is Nazi ideology" or even, "what is anti-Semitism" was taboo. This meant that over the decades the old anti-Semitic prejudices prevailed in many people's thinking. This led to the bizarre situation that someone who had just expressed the conviction that all Jews are rich or have too much power in the world, was indignant when told that he is being anti-Semitic. At the same time, Jews who had suffered under the Nazis were granted the VdN (Verfolgte des Naziregimes – Persecuted by the Nazi Regime) status which gave them financial compensation and other privileges. At the same time, the government refused to restore ownership of Jewish property confiscated by the Nazis, arguing that it had belonged to the capitalists. After reunification, circumstances changed and became more in conformity with the prevailing attitudes and procedures in the Federal Republic of Germany.

As in West Germany, some Jews in the GDR preferred to conceal their Jewish background.

The open actions and murderous activities of neo-Nazis aimed mainly against foreigners, but also Jews since the "Wende" (reunification of Germany) from 1989 until today have been a provocation, indeed a challenge to Jewish existence in Germany. For Jews in Germany life is never free of stress, although basically protected.

The reason is not that the Federal Republic of Germany is fascist. On the contrary, the neo-Nazis are a small group. Most people as well as most politicians are against Nazis and frequently protest against Nazi demonstrations. In a way, the toleration of open Nazi provocations is an encouraging sign of democracy. A democratic society must allow for discussion in manifold forms of free opinion. What are the limits? A society may allow pedophiles, cannibalists, sadomasochists and other groups to promote and live their ideas, as long as their activities are well-controlled and do not create victims. Transgressing this limit is openly supporting such activities, which is unbearable for former victims.

In an official handbook against Fascism we find* :

"Neo-Nazism and Fascism are not an opinion, but demonstrably a crime".

Public responsibility as a difficult endeavor

The government on all levels, public and private companies and institutions, can all display the best and the worst sense of responsibility. They can provide or deny compensation to Jewish victims, can seek or deny contact. Often this will occur within one institution in schizophrenic forms.

The basic responsibility lies with the government, as the competent supervisory authority. For instance, the Ministry for traffic supervises all

* Schröter, Albrecht: Sind Sitzblockaden eigentlich strafbar? (Are sit-ins a punishable offense?) p. 173 in Kulick, Holger and Toralf Staud (Eds.): Das Buch gegen Nazis, Rechtsextremismus – Was man wissen muss und wie man sich wehren kann. (The book against Nazis , right-wing extremism – what one should know, and how to fight it.)

forms of travel agencies and institutions. The easiest way to avoid scandals is to ignore the subject and try to keep the media away. Thus, the ambivalence is the dominant feature in Germany.

Against this background a positive solution is not easy: The Deutsche Bahn AG (Federal German Railway Corporation) refers to the fact that it was founded in 1949, after the end of the Nazi regime. Its predecessor was the Reichsbahn. On the one hand, the DB Bahn has established a traveling exhibition about the Reichsbahn and the many crimes it supported until 1945. On the other hand, the DB Bahn does not support the citizens' initiative "Train of Commemoration", see www.zugdererinnerung.de, but demands fees for the use of its tracks, quite distinct from the attitude of the railway companies in Poland and the Netherlands. A clear political regulation and/or financial support by the German government is needed.

The basic scandals are on the political level, with an impact on the business level. Restitution is a matter of politics, not business. The owner of the Deutsche Bahn AG is the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Ministry for Transport, Building and Urban Affairs. The victims of the Reichsbahn's crimes, their heirs and their international representative bodies have only the Claims Conference to turn to for compensation, and the focus is limited to specific themes.

Given the habits of the German administration, the chances are poor: An administrator will instinctively avoid expenditure. In that way he will have no problems on his job. A very common feature. Even soldiers of the German Federal Armed Forces (Bundeswehr), coming home with severe handicaps from active military involvement, have had their demands for rehabilitation denied. They experience the characteristic fate of many victims. In contrast, those responsible for the damage often have a powerful lobby, which achieves that their interests are legally protected. It is important to know that administrations follow these tendencies and reflexes even within respected and well-established agencies.

Many Child Survivors are poor, last but not least, through the limited education possibilities under the Nazis which has negatively affected their careers.

In Berlin, the 2013 program "Diversity Destroyed" has been a marvellous example of combined friendship, sensitivity and powerful public support. It tells a lot about Jewish life in Berlin before and during the Nazi regime.

For our future, this "diversity" implies, what we want to re-establish for ourselves, in the sense of what Dieter Graumann, described in his book: "Nachgeboren – Vorbelastet? Die Zukunft des Judentums in Deutschland" (Born later – handicapped? The future of Jews in Germany). The word „Nachgeboren“ points to our second and third generations, and „Vorbelastet“ (disadvantaged, underprivileged in the early stages)) to their feelings of being under stress through the manifold disastrous impacts and starting conditions of their lives. 2G and 3G suffer from the stress they were exposed to by their parents, who are the still (!) traumatized Child Survivors. They unavoidably suffer stress from a challenging and complex Jewish identity in transition. Graumann tries to provide mental and spiritual guidelines for this kind of difficult situation. Beyond that, he emphasizes a common Jewish future as a brilliant option, urging us to establish our chuzpe. Our 2Gs and 3Gs carry a societal awareness about both violent and peaceful societies. That can be of basic value for an, indeed, brilliant future.

Altogether, there is a lot of evidence that both Child Survivors and their descendants are suffering right now. It is an impact, caused by the crimes of the Nazis a long time ago. It needs care, social awareness and understanding, such as often provided best and cheapest by the Associations themselves. Compensation has been given mainly for suffering until 1945. But the impact thereafter with less health, minor jobs, poverty and disturbed communication was and is a heavy load.

Ongoing challenges after survival

We suffer from the long-term impact right now. How should we deal today with this overwhelming impact caused by past dangers and current threats? In view of the current problems and dangers, a constructive effort is needed for better survival. On the scientific level, there is much awareness – while not yet on the political level. ZWST, the Central Welfare Agency for Jews in

Jews. Police effectively protect all official public Jewish sites. In Germany, where a demand is recognized, the financial means will be provided. Strangely enough, that may perhaps be easier, if the overall sum is high, because the care-takers also want to be taken care of. In contrast, there is no global lobby, for the low demands of a non-profit-making association like that of the Child Survivors. All they want is a decent support for a few social needs. That would be by far the cheapest way complementary our own unsalaried activity. It would be under our own control and we would be independent – by far the best of all options.

2Gs and 3Gs as example for specific needs

A further special concern are our second and third generations, our children and grandchildren. Many of them have intense problems both with us as their parents or grandparents, and with themselves. Within our Association, tensions became dramatic and we had to separate so now, up to July 2014, no 2G or 3G is a member in our association, but we are in contact, and indeed, we intend to come closer to them. Perhaps they will become a distinct group within our organization as Child Survivors or outside. There can be a lot of interaction between Child Survivors and their descendants.

Perhaps the tensions between the generations are more dramatic and widespread in Germany, than in other countries. There is little public recognition of 2Gs or even 3Gs and there is almost no awareness of their situation. In promoting their specific needs, the characteristics of 2G and 3G must be recognized.

In Germany, honest and friendly remarks toward Jews are common. This is well-established in both political and general public spheres, such as official Christian agencies. To serve a specific need, the usual answer comes from administrations, who do their best in the context of official regulations and bureaucratic habits.

Official governmental policy clearly displays the intention to present impressions of justice, respect and peace towards Jews. Beyond that, manifold personal engagement and friendship is important for us – for both Jews in general, and for Child Survivors and their descendants in particular.

Missing regulations can have strange consequences. The Deutsche Bahn AG displays "humanitarian gestures", such as paying a one-time sum of an average of about 5.- € (five Euros) to surviving victims from the Ukraine and other East European countries. But the same company paid 250.- € compensation to train passengers who in 2010 had suffered from a defective air conditioning system, because the compartments had been "unbearable" for a short time in the summer heat. Most powerful politicians are structurally incompetent to compare such sufferings – an inconvenience amidst luxury as against inhuman transport conditions until 1945 immediately before murder. They create no regulation. The impact in many areas of business and public office administrations is broad, see for example the basic dangers of climatic changes:

For nuances of luxury we risk existential threats.

The result is that companies, agencies, public voices in society, the media, everybody gets used to the wrong decisions. Lawyers serve the common mainstream. Thus political compensation is limited to some areas, such as medical care for specific victims. The support is often more declamatory than real. Neither the media, nor the public, nor politicians notice the disproportionality in the core of administrative habits, which are always "legal", while often not legitimate.

Another consequence is that top Nazis under Hitler, civil as well as military, now get monthly pensions of 3000.- and more: The gigantic personal benefit for public servants (Beamte) has been established, while some Child Survivors get a monthly sum of about €300.-, if they are lucky to get through the difficult administrative procedures. Many administrators on all levels instinctively attempt to deny support – unless it is legally evident and in his own interest. That is a very basic feature in Germany. It goes beyond ambivalence., but creates injustice, a recent example is the ghetto-pensions which are often not paid out, although granted! Again: It takes strenuous political commitment to overcome the administrative dead ends.

This phenomenon should not be confused with a completely different public phenomenon: Violence must be avoided! After two World Wars the attitude is to avoid any kind of war – and fascists are definitely seen as the cause of mass murder. That includes avoiding crimes such as those committed against

Germany organized an international conference from 23rd-26th January 2011 in Frankfurt/Main on:

"After Survival – Psycho-Social and Medical Consequences for Shoah-Traumatized Children"

Six members of CSD participated, contributed information and shared experiences from their work. About a hundred participants came from regions in which the Nazi terror had had the greatest impact; they came all the way from France and from many East European countries, from Israel and the USA. In addition, Jean de Dieu Mucyo from Ruanda drew a parallel to current disasters when he gave a graphic "Report on Genocide in Ruanda".

The dramatic experiences described by survivors from Eastern Europe were particularly moving. On the one hand, Communist and especially Soviet societies saved a great many Jewish children in frequently dramatic circumstances, including members of our CSD group. On the other hand, Soviet treatment of Jews, especially under Stalin, had its own horrors. During the last decades, the survival of many very poor former Nazi victims was beset with great difficulties. In respectful silence the entire conference listened to the reports given by Aviva Goldschmidt from Poland. She was assisted by therapist Dr. Karin Gaessler, a known therapeutic supporter of CSD. As a child, after she had been saved, Aviva Goldschmidt was struck silent, for months she was only able to whisper. Later, even in Israel, she found that it was much better for her to avoid speaking Polish or Yiddish, if she wanted to be integrated in mainstream society.

Other victims who came from Israel reported that for the first time in their lives they were at last able to enjoy the marvellous experience of being accepted and of belonging unrestrictedly to a society. Another moving biographical report was given by Bronja Vernikova from Bessarabia now a part of Moldavia, once part of the Soviet Union. As a child she learned that a person could be shot at the slightest "provocation". Later, when the Communists were in power, historical facts were only given in a truncated form or suppressed altogether. Jewish minorities had no rights. When Glasnost came in the eighties, some facts were accepted. Bronja concluded: "All my life I have never managed to be whole-hearted about anything".

Prof. Ilka Quindeau/Germany gave a systematic outline: "Children of the Shoah - concepts of extreme trauma endured by children and youth".

Her main conclusion was that there is no such thing as a "post-traumatic" problem. It is a process that never ends and encompasses all parts of life. A distinction must be made between

- a limited impact in comparison, such as is caused by a car accident or after a disaster like a flood, but in which the parents survive. After a traumatic shock and a stay in a hospital, the child can go home and will have a feeling that security has been restored.
- and a never ending impact suffered in the context of an encompassing catastrophe, in which a child loses its parents, the entire family and its familiar environment, and then lives in acute danger for a long time, frequently without hope that its suffering will ever come to an end. Then the whole process of forming an identity will remain in permanent turmoil.

The basic experience of ongoing, never-ending stress has turned out to be much the same throughout Europe. It is most severe when the child was endangered very early in life. Thus David Pelcovitz/USA has evolved an approach for dealing with such problems: "Understanding the impact of trauma. Jewish and psychological perspectives."

No wonder that those who try to help have a hard task, as Professor Christian Pross has pointed out in "Injured Helpers". Victims who are now trying to help their own children - a lifelong challenge - have had the similar experience that there are limits to what they can achieve. This was made clear by Miriam V. Spiegel /Switzerland in her publication "Aged parents without a childhood. Older child survivors and their grown-up children". Dr. Jens Hoppe has shown how difficult it was for anyone, victim, neighbor, etc. to manage and improve their chances to survive. About ten non-Jews were required to try and save a single Jew. Tasks and challenges included effective (!) help to hide victims, to forge identity cards and other documents, to escort children, to arrange coordination with families who took in children, to assist such families to secure additional food, medicine, etc.

On a personal level, child survivors were usually competent in quickly detecting immediate dangers, they were able to work hard for a longer period of time, to maintain effective contacts with efficient and courageous networks, and they often "did not look Jewish". Traumatic experiences in some regions, e.g. in the Ukraine were common and included an anti-Semitism that persisted after the Nazis had left. Many helpers have come from Eastern Europe in order get better data for their work which is done with very limited resources and deserves to get much more help.

Two of the representatives from East European organisations are Dr. Darina Sedlackova of "Living Memory, Public Beneficial Organisation" /Prague, Czech Republic, and Dr. Boris Zabarko, chairman of the "Ukrainian Association of Jews – Former Prisoners of Ghetto and Nazi Concentration Camps."

Dr. Martin Auerbach/Israel reported on "Multiple Trauma", in particular on cases who suffered from additional trauma undergone after 1945. Nonetheless, whilst child survivors are often unusually sensitive and easily wounded, many of them have also managed to be very resilient; they even claim that they are able to exercise an above-average control over their lives. Some of them acknowledge that they have had unusual luck and are aware of the fact that this is very valuable. Thus, in some cases we see extraordinary achievements, although many hopes have also been shattered.

It takes courage to achieve such successes, and it takes human angels in action who dare to stand up against many odds: a formidable example is judge Dr. Jan-Robert von Renesse/Germany, who reported on "Child Survivors who testify in court as Shoah witnesses. "A Judge's experience with so-called ghetto pensions". In Germany, 97% of ghetto survivors who applied for a pension on the strength of a new law passed expressly for such cases, met with refusal. Before court, they were asked whether they had worked of their own free will for pay (low as that had been) and, of course, they had answered truthfully that they had been forced to work. Before German courts, they were not even allowed to explain that this had been the case. It was only after Dr. von Renesse took up the issue that appeals were successful. It is a disgrace for Germany that he has since been mobbed in the fatal tradition of jurisprudence which goes back to Adenauer and Globke. In 2014 the Federal Government started a new initiative to help the ghetto victims by ordering the correct application of existing laws. In Germany, it

needs such steps, in order to overcome the attitude of some administrations to automatically deny costly requests, and "save money for the society".

Further training for medical staff and other helpers of child survivors which has been provided at the annual conferences of the ZWST has been useful and should be continued in future. In general, we can draw on abundant experiences showing how to relieve, alleviate and calm post-traumatic stress disorders.

Another approach might be to stress positive orientations, such as behavioral therapy and "post-traumatic growth" as described and promoted by Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun. I am thinking here of Enrico Quarantelli in his Disaster Research Center (DRC) at Columbus, Ohio, and his social science approach to the impact of catastrophes; more than 30 years ago he was well aware of how these disasters injured the mind of victims.

Whilst remaining very sensitive, survivors have gained strength and exhibit an enhanced appreciation of what life has to offer, as well as striving to develop their spirituality.

Immediate needs, disappointments and options

Respect as measured by financial support

As far as immediate support through grants is concerned, there is an evident lack of respect for Child Survivors who try to help themselves. When we look at how much money is spent on what purpose, we deplore the order of magnitude, and are frustrated because we have no control over our basic needs. We Child Survivors often display tremendous mental awareness and use enormous energy to cope with life. However, it can still happen today, that we slip into the shy and modest behavior we learned as children as soon as our old wounds are touched. In today's world that means we lack control over our own lives in important spheres, both as individuals and as Associations.

Over decades, all the control we have been given is much less than one percent of one percent of what we need and should control. We may believe, for good reasons or not, that our caretakers are diligent, powerful, friendly and nice people. At the same time our Associations do not have the money that they need at their disposal. In addition, given that we grow older each year, we find it more and more difficult to apply for the support, that we need. By and large, our German association and the 60 worldwide groups have the same problem. As our members grow older, they have increasing problems, organizing themselves.

Who gets what:

1. Care agencies including the Claims Conference get billions of Euros from the German government. Care is given for some social and medical needs of some Child Survivors. Recently 770.- million Euros were provided for Child Survivors from 2014 to 2017. Ok, it is for us, and some agencies look after us. While they are friendly and well-meaning, it is also true that we are not included in the decision- making. The officials treat us like condescending "uncles and aunts", as though we were still children. And we are expected to be grateful! However, as soon as we ask for only "one percent of one percent ... " under own control, the answer is: "No way!"

2. Professional agencies get millions of Euros in order to erect, protect, and polish stone monuments for the dead, and for us living Child Survivors. Again, ok. This is in line with our intentions. We want school classes to be informed. We accept the museums, etc. Now and in future these will pass on our message to the public. However, a closer look reveals, that it is not always our message. At least basic historical facts are right in most cases. We, as living people, have had to learn that we are often less important than the pictures of us or the stone monuments. And beyond that?

3. We are uneasy, because it is often difficult to get minimum support for our voluntary activities. For instance, as time witnesses some of us go public with our stories and thereby integrate the past, the present and the future. However, when we Child Survivors as an association apply for a few thousand Euros, we are made to feel by the typical German administrations that we are begging. They are, of course, friendly, well-meaning officials, but when they refuse our applications they always argue that they have to strictly keep to the regulations. Another example of our lack of control: In 2013 we applied for 2.000 Euros to pay for badly needed therapeutic help in 2014. It was refused because of a fiscal household blockade. We have now re-applied for the fifth time for autumn 2014. In 2009 another agency guaranteed in writing to give us financial support "annually"; but from the next year onward it was refused without any explanation, let alone any expression of regret. There are many such examples. In view of the fact that we are growing older and weaker, this situation causes us under undue stress. My two predecessors as treasurers resigned with a nervous breakdown. In the meantime, I have literally become allergic to filling out forms and to coping with regulations.

The salary of every single employee of both the caring and the administrative agencies, including the lowest paid ones, is higher than what we need annually, namely, about €20,000. That would cover everything which our Association needs for all (!) our

voluntary work. There are 54 Associations of Child Survivors worldwide. All the 54 association need for all their activities (20.000.- annually), would add up to about a million each year. This sum does not cover a salary or an office, let alone the equipment for it. It does cover a few essential events, travel expenditures or other items, all "serving the public good" (gemeinnuetzig). Our global non-profit-making Associations are very effective in their work.

We have to keep in mind that such facts are extremely hard for any established agency to understand and are instinctively and effectively avoided by politicians.

This is not just an opinion, or some sort of theory: For instance, my work as board member and treasurer of the German section needs a diligence and stress often beyond that of a standard normally paid administrator. I cannot even pay a student to help me. I have to provide my own PC for free and much, much more. The bitter political fact is, that our frustration could be easily avoided. It would just take a tenth of a percent of a percent ... of what the agencies receive from the German government to look after us.

Feasible support for Associations

German culture of administration abhors "institutional support". A convincing form of practical respect would be to grant our voluntary work the well defined German "charitable" (gemeinnuetzig) status which is checked by official government offices and would be much easier to administer. On this basis we could work out new programs that include "group needs", such as meetings, documentation, support for activity in society, e.g. speaking as time witnesses, etc. We ask the Claims Conference to support such demands in dealing with the German government.

Then the Claims Conference – and the Child Survivor groups – both would have less and easier administrative work to distribute the funds to the 54 groups and control them – at least to those, which have such a "charitable" status. For such control, it is sufficient to have an annual report of activities,

do book-keeping in accordance with the status and provide an overview of the main expenditures. An administrator such as from the Claims Conference would find it easier to check.

Such a solution would also put an end to a common nuisance: While the very existence of helping agencies is derived 100% from us and our tragic fate, by administrative instinct they flatly refuse to give us control over "a tenth of one percent of one percent of ..." of the resources from which they profit. At the same time they are well aware, who we are – without hesitation they include us officially, in order to forward their demands toward the German money-givers. Ok, fine, it is essential help for us. All we claim, is a very modest and not even a fair share.

These are very real problems, and will get worse with our increasing age. I am tenacious, but for how long, given my age of 75, will I be able to keep this up? The bitter political fact is, that our frustration is not respected. Only a tenth of a percent of a percent ...could lift that frustration. Governmental agencies in Germany all respond to demands for "institutional support" (an annually guaranteed "lump sum"), by saying that that is impossible. It is good to know, that this is not correct: Established organisations, such as the Max Planck Society, the Zentralrat der Juden, opera houses, sports academies and many others receive institutional financial support on a routine basis. Other agencies, such as the Claims Conference receive a part of these sums to administer their work. They certainly have a regular, de facto institutional budget. We, as Associations, have not received such support. On the contrary, much money is spent for fascist monuments. E.g. 70 million euros have been planned for the renovation of the Nuremberg Rally Area alone. Why was it not destroyed in 1946? After all, there were already enough photos available for documentation and museums. The order of magnitude (see above, billions for service agencies, millions for monuments, hardly a few thousands for the living Child Survivors) may well be extended – not to thousands of billions perhaps, but to hundreds of billions: Top Nazis get high pensions, ten times more than what Child Survivors may perhaps get: a simple calculation reveals that hundreds of billions are spent for the wrong receivers. At least the argument, that there is "no money", is ridiculous to the extreme, and neither the WFJCSHD nor its group members have the slightest reason to be shy, to omit their modest interests.

It is unbelievable, that the civilized needs of groups of Child Survivors are not subsidized by a few thousand dollars or euros. Instead we are forced to go through tedious begging applications, even just to get a few thousand euros.

The statutes (Satzung) of our German association could well serve as a workable paradigm in order to set up a program, that serves de facto institutional support, and will be very easy to administrate in a fair way.

Perspectives

Global disasters happen all the time. In order to survive, it will be important to try to prevent them and to limit their consequences. One difficulty that besets all attempts to prevent future disasters similar to the Holocaust, is that they tend to occur in a completely different form to that anticipated, and it will, therefore, not be easy to detect or control them. This can make the sensitive alertness shown by the traumatized members of a society such as Child Survivors particularly valuable and important for future survival.

On the one hand, child survivors feel acutely insecure as a result of the severe wounds they have suffered. On the other hand, they know that they possess a unique sensitivity towards intolerance and dangers which can beset a society. Our principal aim should be to prevent imminent future holocausts while remaining alert to the fact that circumstances might well be different to what we experienced.

An example: In a somewhat desperate attempt, I have tried to apply the rules governing arms control which proved successful in Europe's efforts to overcome the Cold War and limit the dangers of atomic warfare, to the imminent arms race in the Middle East.

Therefore, I wrote an article about "Confidence-Building Measures in the Middle East – with special emphasis on avoiding a nuclear holocaust", which was published in February 2011 in the Juedische Zeitung. It is a difficult task in view of the current upheavals in the Arab states, and of possible later shifts of policy in Iran.

In the meantime, Jews remain tenacious. I have a feeling that Jews might well be the only people who would be able to survive on the planet Mars, where the average temperature is 35 degrees lower than here, and where there is no air to breathe. It would take guts, expertise, diplomacy and luck, four important factors which may add up to survival. However, a better task awaits the Jews right down here on earth!

During our entire lives, we Child Survivors will remain alert for future survival and this will, hopefully, help to create a friendlier mankind.

The author:

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The main issues of his English publications were

1. 1964-1980 the dangers of atomic warfare
2. 1982-1988 the transition to the information society
3. 1962-2006 technology and innovation.
4. since 2005 articles and essays, mainly for Child Survivors

Whilst on the staff of VDI/VDE-IT (Association of German Engineers / Association of German Electro-Technicians) in Berlin from 1986 to 2000, he published several studies dealing with key technologies, the assessment of technology and impact assessment for the EU.

2001-2005 business publications in the field of technology and innovation, e.g. about 100 presentations in English of commercial offers of Microsystems and MEMS. From 1995-2005, as partner in several firms, he drafted various business plans, applications for the funding of technical innovations such as Bionic Saw, wire-stretcher, forklift. He published numerous articles and reports on sensitive social issues and political essays on general innovation. Three examples that can be viewed per Link at

www.philipp-sonntag.de/e-sachbuecher.html

are "Hi Care for FAST/EC" (1993); a report on "Museums for Peace in Berlin" for the Japanese MUSE newsletter (2005); and since 2005 several reports about Child Survivors.

He is treasurer of Child Survivors Deutschland since 2008.

