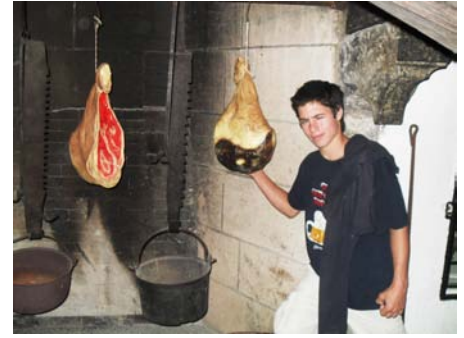


Sunday, Aug. 12

19:00 Dinner, Meeting in Youth Hostel Oberwesel
 20:00 Planning 2nd week
 21:00 Meeting group leaders

Monday 13

8:30-13:00 Men and women in the Middle Ages:
 Visiting Marksburg, Guided tour in English
 Visiting Medieval Oberwesel
 13:00 Lunch
 15-18:00 Interviewing people, writing articles, filming,
 19:00 Dinner
 20:00 Reflexion in groups
 20:30 Reflexion altogether
 21:00 Meeting group leaders



Marksburg, the only castle which was not destroyed in its history.
 Old and new role models? Boys at the cooking pot and women into war?
 Bottom left: A device to prevent women from cheating her husband being away in war. Old leather helmets. Tal and Elena on the ferry over the Rhine.



The torture chamber in the castle.
 Marie - Relaxing on the castle walls (Marksburg) and in cafés in Kastellaun (Tal, Johnny, Barbara, Dieter Wendling).



Tuesday Aug. 14

8:30-15:00 Men and women in politics: Visiting the Parliament of Rheinland-Pfalz, reception and talk to the President, Joachim Mertes
Lecture and discussion:
Dr. Heike Jung: Gender Policy in Rheinland-Pfalz
15-18:00 Interviews, filming, writing articles
19:00 Dinner
20:00 Reflexion ind. groups
20:30 Reflexion altogether
21:00 Meeting group leaders



Don't shut your mouth in the face of human rights violations!

Reception by the Parliament President, Mr Mertes (1), practising democracy (3,4), panoramic view from the Parliament terrace (2), pieces of art in and around the building (5,6), discussion with Dr. Jung (8) about gender equality. John beside an official car (7).



Wednesday, Aug. 15

9:00 Hiking along the Rhine from Oberwesel to Bacharach:
Where antisemitism started,
guided tour through Bacharach
and to the Werner Chapel
15-18:00 Interviews, films, writing
articles
19:00 Dinner
20:00 Lecture Johnny Shahwan:
The situation of Christians in
Palestine (Kastellaun, Protestant
Parish Hall)



A very symbolic place: Bacharach, Werner-Chapel ruins, in memory of Werner, a 16-year-old-Hunsrück boy, whose unexplained death was blamed on the Jews and was the cause for terrible Anti-Judaism Pogroms after 1287. He was worshipped for more than 700 years as a martyr and like a saint. Legends and prejudices have long lives.

We changed the group leaders to discuss this topic.

Meanwhile we know that Werner was not murdered by Jews.



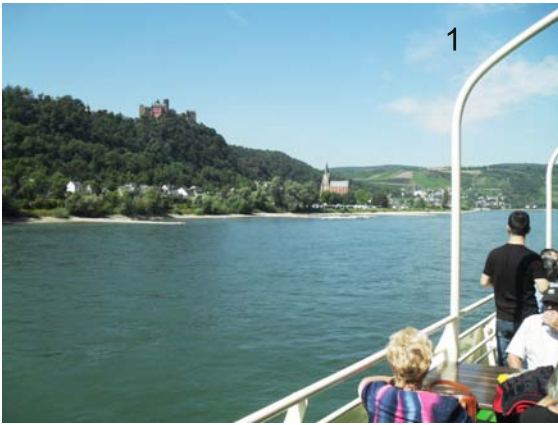
Thursday, Aug. 16

9-13:00 Finishing the topics
13:00 Lunch
15-16:30 Exchange of results of
different groups, preparing the 2nd
meeting in Israel/Palestine
17-18:30 Preparing the evening
event
19:00 Dinner
20:00 Farewell Party: Culture,
results, fun with parents and
guests



"Time to say good bye"!

The farewell-party with angel-like singing (The black Melanie), a Palestinian choir, traditional Klezmer Music and modern dancing with Melanie (blonde, first from right!).



Work
and
travel!



Maybe the atmosphere of the World Heritage Region Romantic Rhine Valley (1,2,4) influenced the atmosphere of the group. In 1 you can see the hostel on the mountain. Intensive work (3,5,7), talking to Volker Boch (9, author, journalist, triathlete - Ironman Hawaii). Slapstick comedians Tamer and Amer (6), entertainer Tal (8) and wild dancers at the end of the farewell party (10).

Wosing - Working and Posing



Friday Aug. 17

5:30 Breakfast

6:00 Transfer of Israelis and
Palestinians to Frankfurt

11:00 Flight to Tel Aviv

Palestinians free time in Frankfurt

20:15 Flight to Amman

Equality of men and women in politics: Dream or reality in Germany?

Interviews:

- a) Christa Wendling (Regional Network for Women)
- b) Dr. Heike Jung (Responsible for women politics, gender policy in Rheinland-Pfalz)
- c) Dr. Marlon Bröhr (Mayor of Kastellaun)
- d) Jutta & Karl-August Dahl (men and women in Germany's society, peace movement)

The human rights were proclaimed in 1948. Now more than 60 years later a group of young Germans, Israelis and Palestine people are sitting together, i.e. many opinions and emotions come together. One part of the declaration of human rights is that all men and women are equal. Is this still a dream or has it become reality?

"I was expected to get married and to be a good wife" In the past it was difficult for women to work, because they often didn't have the chance to get education. Christa Wendling is a member of the „Frauenforum“ in the Rhein-Hunsrück Area, a council of women looking after gender equality. Growing up as a young woman in the 1960ths and 70ths she had to deal with the traditional understanding of the women's roles and what her environment was expecting of her. "My mother expected me to get married and to be a good wife... even my female friends asked me why I wasn't cooking in the kitchen...", Christa Wendling explained. That's one of the reasons why she is active in fighting for gender equality in our days and especially in a local area. She and her organisation are longing for a person in local politics who is responsible for gender equality.

Today in Germany 52% of the population are women.

Many of them, especially women in their 30s and 40s, are struggling how to balance their career and taking care of their children and family at the same time. Today most of the women are well educated, lots of the young ones even better than the men. Why do some of them still not have the chance to have a career?

Many people have the opinion that it is because of different conditions and circumstances. Women don't get a lot of possibilities for jobs in top position. Dr. Heike Jung from the ministry of Integration and Immigration in the state parliament in Mainz says that one reason is the tradition of masculine domain in these jobs. "In school most girls have better grades than the boys and more of them get the Abitur", Dr. Jung said. She works in the department of family, youth and women policy and explains that even if women get the chance to work in the same positions as men, they earn 23 % less than their male colleagues.

Different suggestions are made to improve the situation of women. Could it be a solution to set a quota for the percentage of women in high positions? Then a woman, who has the same qualifications for a job like the man, is preferred. It would definitely increase the chances of women to work in top jobs. On the other side there is a lot of criticism regarding this quota, because a lot of women don't want to get a job just because there is such a proportion, they don't want to feel narrowed down to a number. Women in top jobs can employ a nanny, but the majority has to struggle having a successful carrier and taking care of their children at the same time. To enable women to work in top positions, men have to take more responsibility in family life. Moreover there are not enough possibilities to put children into nurseries. So it is not by accident that German society is regarded to be a hostile society concerning children.

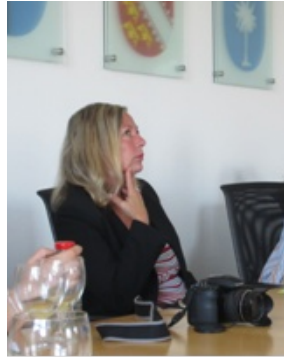
"We can't change the role of the women in our society if the men don't change too", Dr. Jung said.

In our days the attitude of many young and middle-aged men towards gender roles is converting.

A lot of modern men want to take more responsibility in education and raising their children. "For me it's very important to play a big part in my children's life and to see them growing up", youth education worker Uli Suppus said.

Eventually the best way to deal with all this difficulties and dissonances would be if men

"Equality is a matter of men and women" and women support each other and work together concerning their family life and also the individual goals they have in life.



Christa Wendling, Dr. Heike Jung and Dr. Bröhr with Eynat and Amit in front of the town hall Kastellaun.

Thursday, 9th of August, young people from Israel, Palestine and Germany are sitting in the Parliament of Kastellaun.

For some of them it's the first time they are visiting a parliament in their whole life. In front of them on the long table the mayor of Kastellaun is sitting, together with the responsables of our project, Christoph Pies, Johnny Shahwan and Nis Rubin. The young people want to discuss the situation of women in German society and especially in local politics.

Dr. Marlon Bröhr, the mayor of Kastellaun, explains that "most of the political protagonists in the Verbandsgemeinde (District of about 15.000 people) are men, only two out of 30 are women". What could be the reason for this low number?

One of the reason could be that some women would not like to get involved in politics more often, as they are concerned about their families and don't have a person who can take care for the children while the mother is sitting in a village or town parliament. Another explanation for the few female politicians may be the traditional opinion of men about women in politics: "Women have nothing to do in politics, they don't understand it, they should care about their family and children".

"We have more women than men living in our district, but we don't have a single female mayor"

Dr. Bröhr said that, in his opinion, it is very difficult to motivate anybody to get into a political party or to be a candidate for local parliaments, especially women. "There is not one single female mayor in our 32 villages".

"Some women possibly think, politics is a man's job. Maybe they are also afraid of the many men in political positions or the additional days they are off from home", one of the young participants from Germany tried to explain.

The mayor added that "women do have a more indirect influence on politics" and described his wife's position as a mother of two and a dentist at the same time without having time for politics. But she has an own opinion and gives her husband advice.

But how could we motivate them to get more involved and to play a more active and direct role in politics? Could one solution be to create a quota that defines the number of women in public positions, i.e. 50% of parliament members must be female or a quota for supervisory boards of important industrial companies (VW, BMW) to fix the number of women? These problems have been discussed for many years now without a real fundamental change in the roles of men and women. Traditional role models, perpetuated by Christian religions or political parties are sometimes stronger than the real changes in society. Yet there are some hopes: 10% of fathers take a one-year-leave ("Parents' timeout") - paid by the state - to care for the baby. Despite of about 30 state measures to support families, Germany has the lowest fertility rate, 1/3 of the households are single ones, the average child(ren) per woman is/are only 1.24. "Couples often see children as risks and not as something joyful for their lives", the local newspaper "Rhein-Zeitung" reported on December 18, 2012.

The German constitution fixed clearly in 1949 (Grundgesetz, Article 3): "Men and women are equal".

Women have profited from the development in the last 40 years, but it is still a very long way to real emancipation and equality.

PS: In January 2013 the Rheinland-Pfalz Parliament elected the first female Prime Minister, Malu Dreyer. In her cabinet are now four men and seven women. She invited a small delegation of our project for her new year's welcome.

"Women were even treated worse than men" Interviewing a Shoah Survivor



The fateful way of Heinz Hessdörfer.

Sources:

Map: By courtesy of Stepmap.de, Berlin

2 photos: Group 1/9

2 photos (bottom):

Ökumenisches Kinder- und Jugendhaus

Andreas Duhrmann, Bad Kreuznach

2 portraits: Group 1/9

3 photos: www.fuer-vielfalt.de





The now 89-year-old Heinz Hessedörfer, who was persecuted because of his Jewish faith, spent 3 years of his youth in various camps. Today the survivor works with young people on these experiences and published a book, in the hope that these cruel deeds must not be forgotten or repeated.

The day of the seizure of power by Adolf Hitler on January 30, 1933, was at the same time Heinz Hessedörfer's birthday. On this day the small Heinz celebrated his birthday with his Jewish and "Aryan" friends not foreseeing what would happen to him and his family soon afterwards.

The following times were filled with small teasings at school to massive discriminations and persecutions of an entire "race". The violence against Jews reached its first peak when the Nazis raged during the Pogrom Night around November 9, 1938.



Heinz Hessedörfer and his younger brother Ernst were taken to Holland. After spending a few months in a Dutch orphanage, the German army marched into Poland on September 1, 1939, it was the beginning of World War II. From January 1940 onward Mr Hessedörfer's task was to organize the survival of his brother and himself. A little later, the Dutch government established the Westerbork transit camp for German refugees, where Mr. Hessedörfer also was imprisoned. Every Tuesday a freight train from Westerbork started with a group of prisoners towards the East, mainly into the extermination camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sobibor. On February 25, 1944 Heinz Hessedörfer was among the prisoners being transported. His journey ended for the time being in the Jewish ghetto-like settlement area Theresienstadt, where 73,000 people lived, almost under "good

conditions", as international visitors were told by Nazi propaganda.

On May 16, 1944 refugees were pushed in long rows "into cattle cars, driven like a flock of sheep, the number locks around their neck and registered on various lists". From Theresienstadt Heinz went with 70 other people to Auschwitz, where he was given his inmate number, "A-1598", tattooed on his arm, still to be seen today. For Hessedörfer Auschwitz was the worst of all the camps, he had been interned. Here not only the guardsmen (Capos) practised severe violence against the prisoners, but "even Jews became sadists" under these conditions. For example he was once beaten up by a fellow prisoners so hard, that he lost his teeth, only because he was not wearing his prisoner's number at the clothes.

On June 22, 1944, he was registered for a "mobilization" of all men between 18 and 45 years. After a two-day check, Heinz Hessedörfer was among the called. The gas chambers always in mind, Mr Hessedörfer felt now free in some way, when he was allowed to leave Auschwitz after six weeks. "I thanked the Almighty as our train had left the barbed wire fences behind, which separated Auschwitz from the outside world. I could see the enormous two massive watchtowers and the large iron gate with the beautiful words: "The Road to Freedom: Much work, little food and shut your mouth". All that had now disappeared.

The "new" freedom was short-lived: They arrived at camp Schwarzheide on July 3. They had to suffer from temperatures up to 35 ° C, the men from hard forced labor. It was dusty in the factory in which they worked and people collapsed daily. Having health problems, he heard the guards asking, "Are you not able to work or don't you just want to work? If you can not work, just say it, then you go back to Auschwitz into the fireplace. "

Heinz Hessedörfer's condition was so miserable that he went to the hospital and reported to be sick one evening. He stated, "The conditions had attacked my lungs and I couldn't stand the hard slave work any longer. I was so depressed, physically and mentally, that I didn't care about anything. At the daily roll call, I was shown to the SS and the company doctor. His message was: Back to Auschwitz and replacement by a healthy workforce! "

But the Auschwitz administration refused to actually receive this little transport of Schwarzheide. Therefore Hessedörfer now got a new job: potato peeler. By mid-August he had recovered a bit and was strong enough again to work.

The prisoners of the concentration camps suffered also from the Allied air strikes. On August 16, 1944 there was an air alarm. Then: "Everywhere in the camp pieces of wood and parts of walls and roofs were lying around, in-between crying, whining and mutilated people with terrible blood wounds. Limbs were torn off, human beings were no longer viable.

This meant the end of Hessdörfer's potato peeling. He had to help reconstruct the camp again. The production in the factories came to a standstill by September 1944.

From high summer heat, the temperatures in winter dropped down to -30°C . The workers were freezing, starving and suffering from different diseases. November was the month with the highest mortality rate. A supervisor said: "It's just a Jew, more or less, it is not the point." Mr Hessdörfer suffered from diarrhea, jaundice and fever. His permanent hunger made him steal bread wherever and whenever it was possible.

Because of the advance of the Russian offensive in February 1945, the prisoners had to build trenches and tank traps. While working outside it rained incessantly and despite of that the workers had to sleep in the wet stuff and continue working in the same condition the following day.

The hunger increased, "potato skins and beet waste were taken out of the garbage, boiled bones were put into the fire and nibbled."

By the end of February 1945 big streams of refugees from the East passed the camp. With great pain he worked on the tank traps and trenches until he went to the doctor on March 4 to have a puncture under his right arm to operate an abscess. "An operation in the camp was a medieval torture. The hospital was like a slaughterhouse. After this procedure I got a three weeks relief. Even after that I looked miserable."

On April 18, 1945 the "thunder of the guns could clearly be heard", the war front was coming nearer and nearer. The SS put together a group of inmates and took them by truck to Sachsenhausen near Berlin, while the other inmates went on their death march to Theresienstadt.

"Women were even treated worse than men"

On the trip to Sachsenhausen near Oranienburg Hessdörfer first saw the terrible devastation of the war: "The inner city of Berlin no longer existed and was like a rocky desert."

"We were treated like animals - worse than that!"

In the interview Mr. Hessdörfer wanted to show and explain us how terrible the Jews and the other captives were treated by the Nazis. Two persons of each nationality were interested in his life story and asked him about the conditions in the concentration camps in this period. He told the students that the Nazis treated them recklessly. They didn't allow them to have contact neither to their friends nor to their families. They imported the people in little waggons, no matter if they were ill or not. Unfortunately, they took everything away from them - their money, their hair and also their children. Unbelievable but true: The women in the concentration camps were treated worse than the men, although even the conditions of the men weren't human. Apparently thousands of people lived in a small stable. Women and men were working very hard for the Nazis, after all they were slaves who didn't get enough to eat nor to sleep. Only the women with their little children had to go to the gas chamber immediately, the others were used as slave labourers. "12 Years Of Nazi Terror", the name of his book, describes his feelings and bad experiences during this horrible time.

Theresa Volk, Amit Spector, Ofri Lazier, Adel Istefan, Dima Al Mukarker, Melanie Karsten

Heinz Hessdörfer is very active with his foundation "Against Oblivion". He works in schools, for youth groups, wrote a book "12 Years of Nazi Terror". A documentary film was made about his life in Sachsenhausen (photos). He organizes memorial days on November 9, January 27 or the Shoah Remembrance Day.

Thanks for using the material and thanks that we could join the project for some hours.



"Peace needs movement" Equality of men and women in the German Peace Movement in the 1980s.



Amera (Palestine) and Eynat (Israel) with the Dahl couple.

Jutta Dahl, a retired Protestant pastor, an English and Theology teacher, and her husband Karl-August, also a former Protestant pastor, were leading members of the German Peace Movement in the Hunsrück in the 1980s.

Their main goal was it to demonstrate actively against weapons- especially nuclear weapons.

August's parents were survivors of the Second World War and he grew up asking himself "Why didn't people resist?", developing the determination "never again"!

So when in 1979, during the period of the "Cold War", the NATO passed the resolution for additional armament and proclaimed that one deployment would be in the Hunsrück, Jutta and August Dahl among with other like-minded people formed a peace movement called "Peace Initiative Rhein-Hunsrück", initiative for peace. The government planned

to install 96 cruise missiles with nuclear warheads on an American missile basis, one kilometre away from their parish. Due to its history Germany is not allowed to possess nuclear weaponry.

The members of the peace movement spread a lot of information and tried to enlighten the population of the region about the threatening danger.

Their philosophy was to fight without weapons and violence against these nuclear weapons. Many people joined them, especially from the church.

On Sunday afternoons they had a peace service next to the Pydna station, the place where the cruise missiles were positioned. "We were listening to the danger, standing still, just being together", Mrs. Dahl says, "and every time there were more people".

**"In matters of peace
there was no difference
between men and
women"**

In their group they had no differences between gender, religion or nationality.

For them resistance was a matter of democracy and participation. On a field next to the military camp they put up 96 crosses as symbols for the 96 cruise missiles. In 1986 they organized a big demonstration with the slogan: "Peace needs movement".

Around 200.000 people from all over Germany, the USA and even a few from the Soviet Union came to the Hunsrück. It was a big success for such a small local peace group.

Eventually after a lot of resistance from peace movements all over Germany and many discussions between the NATO states, the leading politicians of the West and Eastern Block finally signed a disarmament agreement in 1987 - the INF-contract (Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces).

After the demilitarisation and the extraction of the cruise missiles, the majority of the supporters of the "Peace Initiative Rhein-Hunsrück" went back to their own subjects and interests.

But the Dahls didn't stop their commitment to make a chance and to fight for a more peaceful world.

Today they are campaigning for the termination of arms exports. "We have to stop sending weapons to other states... ", Jutta Dahl says. Right now Germany is the third biggest seller of weapons in the world. "Everybody should invest him- or herself, don't think too much about what your neighbours might say", August Dahl claims, "you'll find out you're never alone with your belief and you can gain a lot from it".

They are especially addressing the young generation to be critical and to reflect the things that are happening in the world.

As the first woman Jutta Dahl was awarded the famous Aachen Peace Prize. It is given to persons who try to overcome enemy images, prejudice and mistrust and help human beings to cooperate despite different opinions and cultures.

Eynat Goldmann, Amara Amar, Marie Wagner, Elena Etges

"Conflict between ethics and obligation" The young Wehrmacht soldier Toni Schwarz



If someone is talking about child soldiers, most people expect a story from Africa. But what if this is not about the continent of Africa, but simply to Europe itself. Looking at Germany in the time of World War II, you discover how many young people were involved, especially in the defence of the borders of Germany.

Not every German was a fighter in the "Wehrmacht" and weakly followed the Nazi commands. Most of the men had to go to the many fronts, as Germany was conquering countries from Norway to North Africa and France to Russia. By the end of the war, even young and old men were used to defend the "Heimat", the different regions. Mr. Schwarz was one of these boys. At the age of 15, he and his former class were obliged "to defend their homeland against the enemies", as the propaganda told them.

In his interview he talks about his experiences and his impressions, some of them are very moving. Mr. Schwarz was born in 1928 in a small village near the Mosel, where he first had contacts with Jews. He was educated as a Catholic and grew up in a family which shared the aims of the Catholic political party "Zentrumspartei". That is one reason why he had not so much experiences with National Socialism in his age. But in school, young people had to learn everything about it. The classes were mixed with combat training and shooting practice. Every morning, there were three hours of instruction, four hours after target practice, and the afternoon was also filled with training as a soldier. In summer 1944, the attacks of the Americans were so massive that most teaching was down. No school education meant more time for weapons training. In December 1944, the school



class went to a small airfield which was located next to Hesse. The airport there cannot be compared with today, it was so small that only four to five aircraft were hidden in a forest clearing. The task was to secure the grid for the German planes.

Two days before Christmas, there was a dramatic event. On 23rd of December, the class shot one American plane down and it was assumed that the Americans would take revenge for the loss. A day later, they were attacked by an entire American flying unit. All students were killed, except three. Mr. Schwarz lost not only his classmates, but also his twin brother. It

was clear that he wanted to escape from war completely. Some time later he received a letter with instructions to report in Frankfurt in order to continue his service at the weapon. He escaped and fled from this obligation of responsibility. Desertion was punishable by death, so his parents hid him for three weeks in the house. In March 1945, the Americans came. In the house they found a photo of the 15-year-old Mr. Schwarz with a uniform from the air force unit. Because of the same symbols, which were also found on the SS uniform, they kept the boy for an SS soldier. He was arrested and taken away. A very long time he was interrogated and detained. When all Americans went out to dinner, Mr. Schwarz took the chance and jumped out of the window. He hid and ensured his survival. In the story of Mr. Schwarz, we cannot find an image of a young man who was a convinced soldier. He was in conflict between morality and obligation. Maybe his interest in art and culture was a good way to resist the Nazi Ideology. There was an enormous pressure on young people, especially on boys. Mr. Schwarz had to serve a criminal state, though he did not agree with the ideas.

Lukas, Omer, Yam



Above: Lukas Linder, Toni Schwarz
Left: Yam Seaon, Toni Schwarz, Omer Meir
Right: One of the many books written by Toni Schwarz. This one is about Oberwesel, where we lived for a week.



People with long traditions, but discriminated Gypsies and human rights

One of the numerous Reinhardt family members, Franz "Schnuckenack" Reinhardt (1921-2006), born in Bad Kreuznach, was a Sinti Jazz musician playing the violin. After he - as one of the few Sinti and Roma - had survived the Holocaust, he made the "Gypsy-Music" popular in Germany and performed his music at the world-famous Waldeck Festivals in 1967/68 near Kastellaun. His descendants live in and around Koblenz and are very active against racism.

Sinti and Roma are people originally from India, because of the "Islamic holy war" they had been driven out towards and into Europe in the Middle Ages. It was formerly believed that they had originated in Egypt, so they were called Gypsies. They are an ethnic group in Germany and many other European countries. Most people in Germany don't know that between 500,000 and 600,000 Gypsies were killed in the holocaust. Gypsies are people with a lot of traditions. For example, the men make music and they are pretty good at playing the guitar. The women prepare the food and take care of the children.

The men are allowed to wear whatever they want and the women need to wear a skirt from the age of 15. We don't really know the truth about the Reinhardt family because Django Reinhardt, the father of the Reinhardt Family, didn't talk about his past. This was, because he wanted to protect his children. Moreover he wanted them to form their own view on German people. Django and his wife were in the concentration camp together. He didn't get hurt because he was a fast runner, so they needed him in the camp. The detainees had a bigger chance to survive if they had the ability to work or special talents, because they were needed and useful in the camps.

But the main question is: Did the Gypsies have human rights before and during the Nazi period?



Interview with Anne Günster, a friend of the Reinhardt family and co-author of a book about the Sinti and Roma. We couldn't visit the family, as there was a family death case during that time.

No, they didn't have human rights. They had a bad education, because they used to change school every three or four days. They used to sit in the back of the class, and the teachers didn't pay any attention on them. Also people used to look at them in a bad way and treated them differently, they had no houses, only tents because they travelled a lot. So they had neither equality, good education nor homes and during Nazi period they were even killed, captured and tortured in concentration camps. Like Jews they were regarded as different races, inferior to Aryans, that is to say as second or third class human beings.

But we have to say that after the Nazi period things got better for them. Now they have homes, they go to school, but still with the rise of nationalism in many of the eastern European nations and unemployment throughout Europe, Sinti and Roma continue to face widespread public prejudices and official discrimination.

In our world there are many violations against the human rights and also in our society. This article is about violations of human rights against gypsies from Germans during Nazi period, but there are also violations of human rights from the gypsy men against their women. For example the girls can't play football or play the guitar. When they get 15 years old, the tradition is that they have to wear long skirts and dresses and if they don't accept this, they normally leave the group and live on their own, because women who don't want to live according to the traditions are no longer part of the community.

Felix Hill, Dina Alaraj, Hila Peleg, Christine Amro

"My mother and a hostile pilot saved my life" Interview with Hubertus Lierow, an expellee from East Germany



Hubertus Lierow was born and raised in Breslau (Silesia, Germany until 1945, now Wroclaw, Poland) in 1931.

He could initially lead a normal life for the prevailing conditions. But also in East Germany, Hitler's propaganda was palpable. Hubertus Lierow was a member of the Young People, an organization of the Nazis for children and adolescents between 10 and 14 years, whose aim was to spend time together and have fun. Of course this was also part of the hidden Nazi incitement against certain groups. The boy was not only part of this group, but also an ardent altar boy of the Catholic Church.

In January 1945 everything changed for the 13-year-old boy.

"Two worlds were colliding - Christianity and Nazi Ideology"

Here he realized for the first time the Nazi unconditional dislike against the church.

A follower of the Nazis delivered a speech in which he damned the institution of the church and all the people who followed it. At this time, it became clear to him that two worlds were colliding.

Human rights played no role for the Nazis. After the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", which was declared only in 1948, every person has the right to decide which religion he practises.

This was completely ignored under Hitler's dictatorship and the victims were of course those who did not follow his ideology.

This disregard for human rights had a climax in January 1945, when during the war the Nazis declared Breslau as a "military fortress", although it had only been slightly destroyed. All the boys and men over 14 had to defend the German Empire as soldiers while the women and children had to leave the city.

Fortunately the 13-year-old Hubert did not have to serve in the army and could leave with his mother. This might have saved his life. The situation of the Germans was hopeless.

Nevertheless, he had to say goodbye to his father, who had to remain as a soldier in Breslau, and fled with his mother, his sister and an aunt towards the West.

This time was hard, there were many obstacles on this way. He had to experience that many Germans did not want to accept the refugees any longer. There was a disregard of the dignity of men and of human rights. All that was a result of Hitler's unconditional policy.

The example Hubertus Lierow shows, that the ideology of the Nazis left no much space for the individual or for opponents.

As a refugee himself, Hubertus Lierow felt as a nobody. But then, in a village in Franconia, Bavaria, the situation changed.

This village, like so many others, was first only one stop on the long road to the West. But a teacher was searched for, and coincidentally, the aunt the family was travelling with, was a trained teacher. They were asked whether they wanted to stay. The aunt agreed, but only on condition that the whole family could stay in the village. So she got the job, found a small apartment available, while Hubertus Lierow had to live with his mother and sister in a stable.

But soon it became boring. During this time he actually missed the Hitler Youth, which had indeed brought much harm on German youth, but for him as a young boy the youth movement meant adventure and joy. So he went to the nearest major town and asked about the "Hitler Jugend". He was given the task to spend his time from now on with interested young people.

Together they sang songs and had fun. His leadership changed his prestige and his role in the society of the village. He was again "someone", as he says today. It shows, how much a person depends on the reputation and the position.

Nobody should be judged only according to his or her position. Is it possible to judge somebody independently and objectively? Is it not exactly what we define as human rights?

What can the case of Hubertus Lierow teach us?

Of course, he shows us on the one hand, how the Nazis put aside all human rights gradually out of the way. Mr. Lierow warns us and tries to tell us that everybody should always be vigilant and we must question everything what we are told. Otherwise it can become dangerous. During the Nazi era, there were winners and losers. Hubertus Lierow could initially lead a more quiet life. Rarely there were attacks on his home town of Breslau. But very quickly the war came nearer. The forced escape, arranged by the Nazis, changed his whole life completely. Human rights played no role for the Nazis. They had only their own ideology and power. Nobody was interested in the suffering of millions of people.

"Nazis put all human rights out of way"

"I had to say goodbye to my father"

Everyone should have the same rights, regardless of race, gender, religion and setting.

If Hubertus Lierow had only been a year older, he would have had to remain in Breslau like the father, separated from his mother and sister. So it was the difficult task of his mother to provide the children alone. Finding something to eat was the most important task.

Only with luck and with the help of a valuable Leica camera, which he gave to a Czech official, the father could find his way back to the family.

But on the other hand, was there any hope?

Yes, even in these difficult times, there were acts of humanity. Today, the now retired teacher Mr. Lierow likes to tell the story of an American pilot who showed strength, courage and in this difficult time even humanity. It was on a day during the run. Hubertus Lierow walked some feet away from his mother in a way when a plane flew very low over him. He thought it was a German, and he waved and smiled kindly at the pilot. But as the plane roared away just over their heads he saw that it was not German, but American. Was the command of this aircraft to kill the Germans enemies?, suspected Hubertus Lierow. Why else did the aircraft precisely target such a small amount of people?

But no shot was fired. Was the pilot not able to fire at the sight of friendly saluting and waving children? Mr. Lierow does not know and he will never do that. But the fact is that Hubertus Lierow was alive and until today very thankful.

It shows us that, in principle, everyone could relate to human rights. The only problem is that this morality can sometimes be switched off by several factors, for example by an extreme, fascist government or by the influence of other people. It is unfortunate that it takes such a picture of a waving child to reactivate human behaviour.

So what is our task, the task of the new German society?



We are responsible for ensuring that stories like that will not be forgotten. They are part of our history and can teach us much. Moreover, it is our duty to ensure more "waving children." Strictly speaking, we must attempt to reactivate the knowledge of human rights, which lie dormant in every human being.

Today, long after this difficult and terrible time, Mr. Lierow lives satisfied with his wife in Emmelshausen, a small city in the

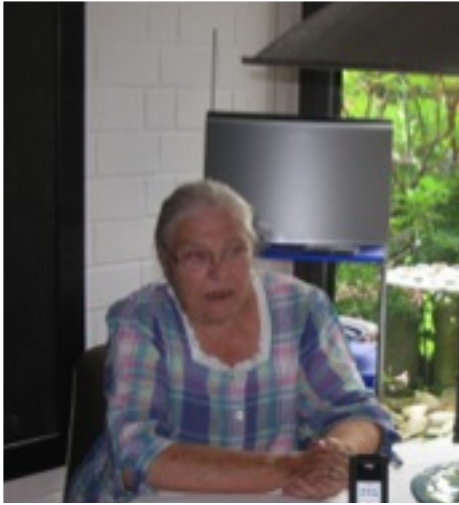
Hunsrück. A lot has changed since his childhood, but one thing he has always remained. As before, he is a convinced Christian. The faith has accompanied him throughout his life, from his days as an altar boy in Breslau until today.

And what has he learned from it personally?

Hubertus Lierow has understood that power is very dangerous. It can easily happen that it will be abused and all human rights are in danger.

Melanie Christ, John Bader, Noam Vider, Jakob Nehls

Women at the cooking pot! Educated according to traditional Nazi-roles. Interview with Gisela Spix



The now 81-year-old Gisela Spix grew up in the time of National Socialism. She developed through all the experiences into a strong, confident woman who goes her own path. She tells us about her experiences in the war and the strong women in her family. Today, Mrs Spix is involved in a peace movement

Gisela Spix was born in 1931 and was 8 years old when the war began. First she didn't perceive much from the war. It was a matter of course that girls went to the young girl group. When Mrs Spix was ten years old she also went there. The young girl group was the predecessor of the BDM, "League of German Girls."

In times of war, there were no news from abroad, only one radio station, "only the voice of the German government." And who received the foreign radio stations and was betrayed, came to the concentration camp which meant death.

Gisela Spix adored the BDM, it was beautiful, they took walks, sang songs, did handicrafts and danced. "Simple things teenagers liked to do." But due to the selected information they got from the radio, they didn't notice the "bad aims" which were hidden behind all these activities and the songs they sang.

At the age of 12, Mrs Spix went to confirmation classes. A member of the party found out about that, he came to the family and said that it was not allowed to be at the young girl group or BDM while being a committed Christian. But her mother told him that it didn't matter to her. That was a very dangerous statement.

"Concentration Camp meant death"

At the time the war became worse, Gisela Spix was sitting with her family in the cellar every night. They heard how the planes flew low and loud, full packed with bombs over their house and they didn't know where the bombs would fall down next, either over them or elsewhere.

They all lived in fear, went to bed dressed and had already packed their suitcase with the names written on it. For hours they sat in the basement and heard the news. They heard the bombs falling nearby. The youngest brother of her grandmother had to go into the city after the attacks to recover the dead bodies and bury them. He came always pale back home without saying a word. It was a hard time for the whole family.

Gisela Spix learned later how easy it is to become manipulated if you don't get any information from abroad. She says if she had a gun she would have shot on the Americans when they came with tanks and drove along the road at the end of the war. They were so affected by the crazy ideas of their "so-called leader."

But many Germans were afraid, also the people who knew maybe more. They were afraid to rebel against Hitler because they were concerned about their family. It was a vicious circle.

After the war was over Gisela Spix often visited an institution called "the bridge", an information centre with many newspapers from different countries, it was founded by the Americans. These newspapers could be read, as well as literature from the U.S. and from everywhere else, for everyone, for free. Mrs Spix was completely shocked when she heard what had happened in the concentration camps and is shocked until today. She heard stories like that they removed the skin from the killed people and produced lampshades out of it.

"We were so much influenced by the crazy ideas of the so-called leader".

In this "bridge" she often had lunch with friends and they read the literature and newspapers like addicts. They said, "that will never come again, never again!"

She married a man who went to war at the age of 16 and had been in captivity. Today it is unbelievable that a 16-year-old boy was "taken" to kill people.

Mrs Spix became a teacher and she had to take an oath of office to "faithfully practicing their profession according to the Constitution". But she refused to swear, because "who knows how the Constitution looks like in ten years." But the principal begged her not to make problems. He said that he just recovered from a heart attack and in a year he would be retired. Mrs Spix finally agreed but today she repents it, because the Constitution has changed very much until today, as she thinks.

"I cannot hear a plane flying low without getting a racing heart."

In the family of Gisela Spix, there were not the traditional gender roles, "Women at the cooking pot. Men into war". No, her family had strong women, she says. Each woman exercised a self-determined profession.

But in other families there were the classic roles.

Also Gisela Spix doesn't give up, her life goes on. She made her graduation and became a teacher.

1974 she became a principal, the only woman among 23 male teachers. In the 1990's about half of the female teachers were in primary schools, but not at "higher" forms of school and it is very unfortunate, says Mrs Spix, that even today, the majority of women get about 1/3 less money than men in the same profession. Even today Gisela Spix often hears older women saying the standard phrase: " First I have to ask my husband." Many women are not able to decide on their own, even the smallest decisions.



Time passed, and the aspiration came up that Germany established an army again in 1955. Then the NATO double-track decision was decided in 1978 and everyone, who was against war, got big problems, especially those who worked in state institutions such as schools, agencies or ministries.

Rearmament began, but because of the experiences how quickly you can be manipulated and how life is shaped by it, and what a trauma you suffer, Gisela Spix

was more alert and critical. She got deeply involved in any resistance against weapons.

Until this day, she cannot hear a plane flying low without getting a racing heart.

For Gisela Spix the "trinity" "peace, justice, integrity of creation" is the main motivation for her commitment.

Alexandra Bogdasarow, Tamar Novoplansky, Isel Badra, Marian Amro

"Hatred is a bad teacher" Education and school during the Third Reich

Educated to hate



The aim of education is to prepare the young ones for their roles in society and to become a full member of it. It is also about getting responsible and to be able to think for themselves. But what if this society's norms and values are based on hatred? Education during the Third Reich exemplifies how humans were taught to obey and educated to hate. With the intention to build a new race, an extensive system of youth organizations and institutions were developed to impart the new generation with the correct models from the very beginning. Autonomous thinking was suppressed for the benefit of obedience and loyalty to the "Führer".

To learn more about childhood and education during the Nazi-period, we met three eye-witnesses, who agreed to share their early memories and experiences with us. It was about finding out how society could be infected with and led by the cruel ideology of the National Socialists. We were especially interested in how the cruel ideals were conveyed and how our interviewees got in touch with these.

Therefore we met Mr. Hauröder, who was born in 1934 and grew up in Andernach on the Rhine. He describes how he was part of the whole net of NS-organizations, which pushed aside other kinds of institutions, like at that time and place the catholic church, to extend their own area of influence. Mr. Hauröder remembers how hatred against Jews and other disliked persons was spread through texts and tasks in school books, which made subtly clear whom to dislike.

Since they never reflected those prejudices together, he only understood long time after the war what had been happening then. Only in his academic years after World War II he started to ask questions about the past and was looking for the answers in books. He is convinced that our topic "Educated to hate" still plays a role in every society and that indoctrination on behalf of a certain set of values can be seen in several places on e



The frog, a fable and Tal's own opinion

Try to imagine that since the day you were born you were taught to hate frogs. In kindergarten you would have been shown pictures of "dirty" frogs and that is why you must keep distance from them. After that the teacher would tell you stories and legends about the horrible crimes the frogs committed and you would start hating them for that. In elementary school you would be taught about the bad genes of the frogs and you and your friends would join clubs against the frogs. Soon you are taking part in demonstrations and marches against the frogs in your city and demanding to throw them out. Your kids are swiped in this hatred quicker than you, because of the talking against frogs that become normal conversation in your home. Is this kind of thing possible? Could our school today teach us to hate so much?

In 1933 Adolf Hitler took the power in Germany and with him the Nazi Party. He changed the way of living in Germany. Schools were transformed by the National Socialist party, new books were written, a new education system was made. Kids were solving questions in math where they needed to figure out how much a handicap would cost the state, and how many houses could have been built for "normal" people with this money. Kids at the age of four and six were taught to sing by heart songs praising the state and the Führer. At the age of ten they would join the Hitler Youth (HJ) and had to take part in marches for the Nazi party. We asked ourselves why? Why kids would join such activities? Where are their parents?



Humorlos

Die Jungen
werfen
zum Spaß
mit Steinen
nach
Fröschen

Die Frösche
sterben
im Ernst

Ernst Fried
(1921-1988)

Hannah Litzenburger, a 14-year-old girl from Büchenbeuren, drew this painting, inspired by Erich Fried's poem "Humorless": Boys are throwing stones at the frog just for fun, the frog is dying deadly serious.

Mr. Hauröder was born in 1934 and was educated in the Nazi's education system. At the age of four he said, he sang songs by heart, that were worshipping Hitler and at the age of seven he was joining the marches of the Hitler Youth. He told us, "We were kids, we can't be blamed, kids who are taught to hate from as young as we were, don't know any better." He continued and said, "We were taught that Hitler - the Führer, was above everything, he should come even before the family. We had to listen to him and only him, even if it was against our family's thoughts". Mr Hauröder shared with us one of the big events he remembers as a kid - their teacher told them that tomorrow they all had to go to the sport stadium and swear to Hitler and the state. We asked Mr Hauröder, "Could it be that once again kids will be taught to hate like that?", he answered that he thinks that it would never happen again, however he can see similarities with the time of the Apartheid in South Africa, and the hatred towards the blacks.

After we thought for long time about the subject we understood that Mr Hauröder was wrong, hatred like that is been taught now in our time to kids in my country. Yes, it is not very pleasant to hear, but this is the truth. Kids in kindergarten are taught about Israeli's wars and they understand in the most extreme way that "we" are the good ones and "they" are the bad ones. In elementary school jokes against Arabs are a normal stage in the growing of the child. And at last in the final exam in history they will be asked "What were the successes of the Israelis in the Six Days War?", but all that will forget that there was another side to the gun, they will forget that behind the words on the paper are real people and real villages and real events. But not only on our side seven-year-old kids are taught to hate in this way. Also on the Palestinian side kids learn to hate the Israelis - the terrorists: To hate without even knowing why.

We believe that every kid has the right to know; to know that there are no good and bad people, to know that the world is complicated, there is no right truth - there are many truths. In a democratic state there are many other opinions that need to be respected and heard. There is a sentence that says, "Democratic government is - even though I don't agree with your opinion - I will do whatever I can to make it be heard by others." The kids deserve to know the other side's opinions. We think it is good that the kids will be taught to be open-minded from young age on and find their own truth.

Maybe the frogs are not as bad as you think?

"We had many Jewish friends" - Interview with two ladies

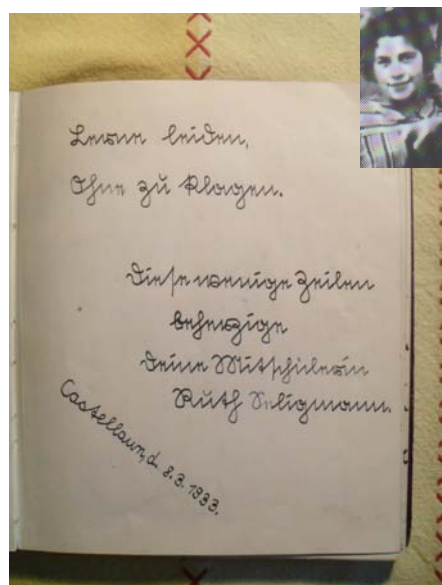


While working on the topic "Education", we also met the two sisters J. Schug and G. Kramb, who were born in 1920 and 1924 in Kastellaun. Both grew up and still live there and experienced a lot of changes. During the Nazi-period they were working in an NSV-kindergarten following the official state ideology. So they could see how the institutions changed slowly and were influenced more and more by the ideology and new rules.

Besides they tell about their close contacts with their Jewish neighbours, who offered them insights into the Jewish religion and way of life, till they rather surprisingly and rapidly left town.

We were most interested in how education and indoctrination in the Nazi-Period was constructed and how this was perceived by the German citizens. We expected these changes to be radical and irritating, but realized that our interviewees did not really experience it as a huge break. The memories of the time after Hitler seized into power, rather seem to be fragments. In the sisters' history appear little peaks that stick out of the everyday life in Kastellaun. Those little peaks they tell us as their story: The sisters remember very well how the 'Hitlergruß' (salute) appeared in their school and that they found the gesture kind of amusing. That the children then all went to a kindergarden, a school and the BDM or the Hitlerjugend, where they took part in a variety of leisure time activities, they kept in good memories. Whenever help was needed in the house or on the fields there was someone of the Reichsarbeitsdienst to support them, an obligatory service for boys and girls from the age of 18.

As very prosperous they describe the relationship with their Jewish neighbours: One minded each others children or younger siblings. Getting together with them is remembered extraordinarily joyful like celebrating Sukkot together, a Jewish tradition which is a kind of harvest festivity. The sisters tell us how they built little huts together and got to eat rare citrus fruits. Very surprising they found them leaving rapidly without saying goodbye. They didn't know anything about their plans of going to the United States. When in the same year the nearby synagogue was devastated, for the first time they could sense the danger their Jewish friends had to bear. Their understanding for the political activities was very basic, explaining that hardly any information made its way to their little and safe hometown, considered far away from all the more important political centres. Now knowing about the ideology and crimes of the National Socialists a little book they present us, becomes a real treasure: Mrs. Schug



puts her little 'Poesiealbum', a reminder of her school days, in front of us on the table. Inside there's hardly five sentences by a Jewish school mate, that nevertheless, is so moving and causing us goose bumps: Written in 'Sütterlin', the old German letters, we can hardly decode, Mrs. Schug reads out to us the little greeting: "Learn how to suffer without moaning." Written in 1933, the year when Hitler seized power, this little sentence already seems to point into the cruel future. Long time after the war the two sisters met some of their old friends again, that managed to flee. They came to visit their former hometown but none of them ever returned to stay in Kastellaun.

Carolyn Manns, Tal Arbel, Amit Harel, Nicola Shaer

"Learn how to suffer without moaning" - Ruth Seligmann (born 1920, small photo) was taken on a children's transport to England, later married a Pole and emigrated to New York. Her father Heinrich, her sister Herta with her small child Ruth and husband Otto Loeb were deported and killed.

Looking at both sides, a commentary by Nicola Shaer

To start things up, I realized that every nation educates its people the way it wants to, in order to make them stand on their side and support them. For example, Hitler turned the education system into teaching German students to hate Jews, even though most of those never harmed them in any way.

Throughout our interviews, we even noted that some Germans had Jewish friends. That brought up questions in German people's minds about why they were taught to hate people that never harmed them. Hitler's excuse - among others - was always, "They killed our Redeemer". That excuse is very confusing, because Christianity is based on love, not hatred. As Jesus said, "Love your enemies". Even if Jews were their enemies, the Bible teaches us to love our enemies, no matter what happens, and also killing others is strictly forbidden for us as believers. The truth behind that was, that Hitler was mentally ill and wanted nothing but his own benefits.

The sad thing now is, that all what Hitler did and all the hatred he taught his people, is nowadays reflecting on us Palestinians in our Palestinian case. You see, we are the victims now. History is repeating itself. Most of the Jews are now teaching their children that Palestinian land is rightfully theirs, because they are the chosen people based on what the Bible says. They are also taught to automatically hate Palestinians because they are supposed to be their enemies. They are interpreting this nowadays by taking Palestinian land by force and killing anyone that gets in their way.

But when I say this I don't include all Jews. I saw this while meeting the Israelis in Germany and I realized that they also look at our side, too. They also tried to feel with us. But then, we used to live peacefully in our land without harming anyone and now Jews are invading our land and taking it by force, claiming that it is theirs. I'm trying to say that in the end everyone should look at both sides of the story before judging or hating anyone just as our group of 'Germans, Israelis and Palestinians' tried to do during our project in Germany. We should never be taught to take sides. Hatred really is a bad teacher.



Barbara, Amera, Eynat and Tamar are sharing a good time on the cultural evening in Kastellaun. 'Taking sides' isn't an issue. It seems that prejudices can be forgotten when having the chance to meet and talk to each other.

Education for tolerance, a commentary by Carolin Manns

We're meeting them everywhere. Anytime. Each day we are asking and answering probably hundreds of them: Questions. Can't be that hard then. Interrogative plus question mark, done! Sometimes even a plain "Eh?" is enough. So some of them are quite easy. For example "How are you?", that doesn't even need to be answered (seriously). Or a decent "We're going for a coffee sometime?" Some questions are annoying, some make us sweat, some make us think and some just stay unanswered... However, to choose the right questions for our interview

turned out not to be that simple. Especially because it was supposed to be about a very sensitive topic: National Socialism and the individual past of our interviewees.

The more time passes by, less witnesses to that history remain to whom we can pose our questions. Fear grows, that some important aspects stay untouched. But haven't all these questions been asked often enough? Is there really anything new we can learn about education and childhood during the Third Reich?

The frame is well known and though they are very personal stories, eyewitnesses' reports often resemble each other. A 'commendable national socialist vita' is without gaps: NSV-Kindergarten, Pimpfe, Jungvolk, Hitlerjugend, Reichsarbeitsdienst, Wehrmacht, war... During the Nazi-period boys as well as girls got integrated into a whole system of organizations, which was easy to join and hard to miss. This system of organizations was a system of control, control of thoughts on behalf of the state.

Our interviews showed clearly how the children, who grew up in the Third Reich, were educated to hate. From very early on they came under rule of the ideology and were influenced systematically.

This made me aware, that education and indoctrination during the Nazi-period played a major role for building up the state's power and leads us to suspect that also today power comes from the institutions that train us. Because they teach us how to think and behave correctly.

„Now I am almost 80, when I was four, I learned this song I still remember completely. Back then I did not know what we were singing,“ resumes Mr. Hauröder his kindergarten time. And still he did it time and time again, every morning. So until today and probably even longer he will be able to recall the lyrics.

Now, if education is such a powerful instrument that could inculcate the young with racial ideology and fidelity to the Fuehrer, can it then be employed as a tool against hatred just as well?

If one can be educated to hate, can you be guided to tolerate? (How) Can we 'learn' to behave with respect? Yet those questions arise quite easily. That doesn't mean that the answers are simple...

Not having known, what was actually happening under control of National Socialism, is what a lot of eyewitnesses indicate. Not having known, what kind of songs one was singing day after day or where all the Jewish families had gone. Our interviewees confirm that a lot of important questions remained without reply, were asked way too late or even not at all.

That's reality! The only way to see Tamer's home is from the fence around Talitha Kumi. Israelis are not allowed to go there.



No, finding answers is probably as hard as to find the right questions. But that should not keep people away from searching for them. Maybe we should add another ten to those hundreds of daily questions, that deal with what really happens around us. Especially our immediate surroundings should be reflected on or they might turn into lost chances.

To really learn about the past and present, one cannot ask enough questions. Maybe we're not always meeting answers, maybe we're not getting them at all. But new questions can help us to see the issue from a new perspective.

So if you can be guided to tolerance? Possibly. First step is probably to be interested in what is going on around you. Maybe the easy questions can be a starting point for more tolerance: Like "How are you?" or "We're going for a coffee some time...?"

Fighting for justice and peace Interview with Elisabeth Bernhard

Elisabeth Bernhard is now 93 years old. "I don't remember everything", she says at the beginning, but in the course of the interview we get another impression. She was 18 years old when World War II began. She was selected from the girl's institutions to study art and science. When on Sept. 1, 1939 the war began, she was afraid of what might come. She lived in "Mühlheim an der Ruhr", a big city. But her family had a farm and agriculture.



Q: What was the youth girl institution exactly?

A: I studied in Munich and I was 16 years old, had no A-Level. We were young girls living together and learning about household and history. I wanted to travel to Italy before I started with art. I continued like that till the bombs fell over Germany and I ran through the burning city. I had to stop the college and after three semesters I was back home. But love was also a reason. Approximately 1942 we moved to the region "Hunsrück". It was a totally different world, no air raid shelter, no air raid warning and enough food. In the city it was the opposite. I tried to apply at an art college - I passed the exam. I can't believe it till today.



96 crosses on field near Bell (see page 60), symbols of 96 nuclear cruise missiles bringing death to mankind.

Q: Who organised the youth girl institution?

A: It was organised by the state.

My mom also went to the youth girl institution. We learned dancing and went dancing. It was a great adolescence. My parents loved us. Those who had a great youth could stand better what was coming later.

Q: Did you also learn to cook? And what else did you learn?

A: Yes, we also learned cooking. And we learned history and we made preparations for our journey to Italy. We were specialized in arts.

Q: Is it hard to make art as a woman?

A: When the war was over I didn't continue art because there was inflation in Germany and everyone just got 30 DM. The people couldn't afford art.

When I met my husband we had to start from nothing to build up a future and I couldn't do two things at the same time. I had to make a decision.

Q: So family was your priority?

A: YES!

Q: What was the worst experience you had in the war?

A: We moved to the "Hunsrück", where the war didn't rage like in the big cities like Mülheim oder Köln. But the first two years of the war there were bomb attacks and our house was damaged, we were not able to live there anymore. So we were "evacuated" to the "Hunsrück" and stayed there. During the last two years of the war I was mobilized to work in a small factory, as nearly all men were at war. I had to make iron sheet drilling but it wasn't too difficult.



Q: How was the situation after the war? What about marriage and children?

A: I opened a clothes shop with my husband. We had to start from scratch. It was really hard.

Q: Did you get help from your parents to make art?

A: Yes, before and during the war. But later the daily routine and the rebuilding was more important.

Q: Did you lose friends or family members in the war?

A: The biggest loss and the worst thing we had, was that my brother was killed 1944 near Leningrad. But that happened less than a year before the war stopped.

His child was just born and he got holidays, but then he died. My parents' household was changed. My mother was in mourning the rest of her life.

Q: Was your family affiliated to the Nazi-party or were they neutral?

A: The war influenced also the next generation. Many fathers came home from captivity, some 10 years after the war. Many children grew up as orphans, others didn't see their father for years.

I spent time in the youth girl institution. We had a farm and I was every time aloof and I had just one brother, so a girl's unit sounded interesting.

The head teacher in school always wore the uniform and the teachers had to be ideals.

Q: Did you know the aims of the party? Do you think there was something good?

A: We were not aware like today. We just had a radio with extra news that showed only the good sides. Important for the workless people was the NS-organisation "Power by pleasure", which organized holiday events and trips. Everything had to seem lovely. We hadn't this sense of forward-looking, but we had family members seeing that everything was going to end in a catastrophe.

Q: Could you tell more about your brother?

A: He was a veterinarian in the war with a state examination. He was five years older than me. I can't tell you more about him.

Q: What was your role in the family?

A: Later I was the only child so I stayed close together with my family in the "Hunsrück". And I took care about my parents.

Q: Was there anything you were not allowed to do because you were a woman?

A: No, not in my situation.

Q: And other women?

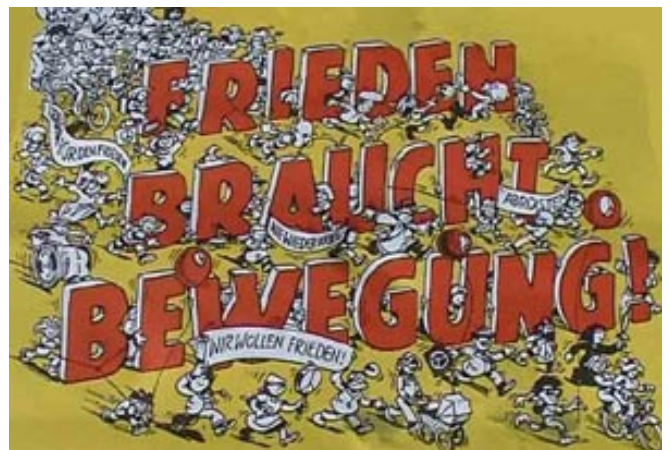
A: Yes, as an employer you weren't allowed to do anything you wanted to.

The women, who had to clear up the cities from the ruins, the so-called "Trümmerfrauen" (debris women) showed what women were able to do. Their husbands and fathers were at war during that time.

Q: What did you personally do after the war?

A: I helped my husband selling in the shop we had.

"Peace needs movement" - a poster for a demonstration



Q: You're very active in a peace movement, could you tell us more?

A: During the "Cold War", around 1980, there was the danger of another nuclear war, the NATO decided to deploy nuclear bombs in our area. The Russians put pressure on Berlin, which was entirely surrounded by the German Democratic Republic.

I'm religious and I read in a newspaper: "Who wants to work for peace?" I witnessed the beginning of the peace movement and I have stayed active there until now. It is the most important thing for me, as I am one of the few persons, who can tell what a war is.

Q: What did you do to make peace possible?

A: I was active with solemn vigil, I talked with people or made and shared flyers. We had a regular round table once a week, later less frequent. In 1986 there was a big demonstration near Bell. We made peace prayers in front of missile areas and placed crosses on churches or streets. We were brought before court and sentenced, but in the end we were satisfied: The Cold War ended, the Eastern Block collapsed, many Warsaw Pact countries now belong to the European Union. Nowadays we are not enough people, but we still protest against American nuclear bombs, stationed not far away from here.

Q: What kind of prayers do you pray?

A: We pray really simple human peace prayers with texts from the bible and we sing songs from songbooks. There came people from far away, many Russians for example. At some days we were standing there with just two or three people, but each time there were more and more.

Three years ago I got the peace award from Rhineland-Palatinate.

Alexandra, Tamar, Isel, Marian

Demonstrators from Düsseldorf painted a cow with a cruise missile on its horns on a barn near the missile station "Pydna". Their wish has come true - Europe has had a period of peace like it had never had before. Young people always paint the cow new.

Source: Photos taken from the Peace Movement Archive, Kastellaun. Thank you!



"I had to take my father's responsibility" Interview with Christel Fey



On August 13 we went to Christel Fey's house in a small village that is called Bell. We talked together about her life in general, about her childhood during the Nazis time and about growing up at that time and becoming a leader in a peace movement in the 1980s.

Today Christel Fey is 71 years old and is living a good and busy life with her sister, sister's children and grandchildren. She was the oldest sister and she had to take care of her younger sisters and to be responsible. When her father went to the „Volkssturm“ (all men between 16 and 60 were forced to defend Germany during the last months of World War II from October 1944 until May 1945), she had to be even more responsible and had to work even harder.

She was born a year before Hitler came into power, her father was against Hitler's ideology.

The referendum in their village was not true, it was faked by the Nazis. Her uncle told her that the counting result was one vote against Hitler, but actually her parents and her uncle had voted against him. She didn't know much about the Nazis, because she was young and she only followed her father's opinion without understanding the reasons behind it and she doesn't know how her life would have been if her father had been a member of the Nazi party.

Christel Fey became a teacher. When she started to apply for a job it was easy to get one, because there was a big need for teachers, and actually there were more woman teachers.

In the 1980s she became a member in the peace movement because a priest made her realise that this is the only way to achieve justice. It was great for her to see how all together worked in a community for a common aim, also children and families.

In our opinion we think women in the past were strong enough to overcome difficulties and to be dependent on their own work and helping their family members. There wasn't equality between women and men like today, but it was fine, they got the chance to do things they wanted and they were important in their society.

She told us how her childhood during the Nazis time was and how she grew up at that time.

It was an interesting interview with Christel Fey, we enjoyed it because she told us a lot of stories about that time and how she worked hard to protect her sisters. So in our opinion she was a strong girl and woman, she grew up having much responsibility for herself and others.

We had never talked to a woman that made the experience of growing up in wartimes. It was really awesome to learn about how women and girls had to become strong in their childhood already in order to survive and be strong during the war. You can't think just about what you want to do or what is the best for you only. The priority at this time was to protect the family, especially the younger brothers or sisters, and that is was Christel Fey did.



Alexandra, Tamar, Isel, Marian

The Fall of the Wall: Migration into Germany - a problem for women or/and men? A visit in a migration help centre in Büchenbeuren

A talk with the staff of the "Begegnungshaus Büchenbeuren", from left: Ingo Noak, Nis, Hanna, Jonas, Oksana, Werner Busch.



On Thursday, August 13, we visited the "Begegnungshaus" in Büchenbeuren to experience something about the past and the history of this place, but also about the history of migration in general. We met the chairman Mr. Busch, Mr. Noack and the Russian-German Oxana. The topic was about the migration of Russians after the fall of the wall, especially in Büchenbeuren.

As the wall fell down in 1989, the borders were now open and everyone could travel through Europe. The Cold War was over and millions of Russians saw better chances here in Germany to live, so they came here and wanted to settle. Many Russians came especially to Büchenbeuren and the villages around it, because there were many flats vacant now, because the Americans with their army had left Germany. The "Russian Germans" could only come, when they could prove that they had German ancestors in the past. According to German law they got a German passport when they wanted to come. In Büchenbeuren alone there were 50% of the population of Russian-German origin.

As everywhere in the world with immigrants, there were now many language and other problems with the locals and the "Russian" people. Mr Busch realized that very early. He had been 20 years in the local city council. He wanted to help and opened the "Begegnungshaus": "They needed assistance with many everyday problems, e.g. with shopping or visiting a doctor". They could contact the house with all their questions and problems. That changed the way of thinking and supported the understanding between locals and immigrants. Of course there were clichés, prejudices and even hatred at first. Many immigrants had a different lifestyle, a different culture or religion. Times went by and people understood each other better and solutions could be found for nearly each problem.

"It is easier to preserve prejudices than to do something against them"

The most difficult problem was that of prejudices on both sides: "It is easier to preserve prejudices than to give them up and to do something against them", Mr Busch says today. The locals were afraid of Vodka-drinking youngsters and gangs, the immigrants thought the petty bourgeois locals didn't accept them at

all in their new homes in Germany. Basically this was not true, but prejudices were still present. Without communication this problem could not be solved.

With the house many problems disappeared. But there was only this kind of meeting place in Büchenbeuren, not in all the villages around the former military airport Hahn. But despite all these measures many Russian-German immigrants had the problem of finding a suitable job. Women normally had better qualifications, but their certificates were not accepted by German companies or the state. They had to start from the beginning, to attend language courses or further education colleges. The women accepted lower-paid jobs, such as cleaning staff or in kitchens of hotels. They got on better with their new surrounding than men. Today we have many girls getting higher grades than boys, going into well-paid jobs. But at the beginning it was not often, that immigrants fell in love or got married with local Germans, this still seems to be a problem. But most of the locals accept the new citizens, as they are also an economic factor.

Airport Hahn used to be the biggest city in the Hunsrück with more than 15.000 American military staff and families. They left an economic gap, which was filled up with the immigrants. Soon they built new homes and got integrated into German society.

Nis, Hanna, Jonas

Educated to resist

A family against the Nazis. Interview with Ellen Kindling



On the left: Ellen Kindling, born 1934 as Ellen Morjan, lived with her grandparents. She couldn't make an interview with us, but wrote her short biography just for us. Thank you!

I spent my childhood in the so-called Third Reich in Erkelenz (near Köln) which back then was a central village with schools, a Protestant Church and a Synagogue. I lived with my grandparents, Anna und Hinrich Morjan, who were really high respected business people.

Many Jewish families lived in my neighbourhood and in the whole town. Next to our house was a synagogue. We kids always liked to go to the synagogue, because we didn't have to be as quiet as in a church. My parents lived with my sister Christel in Neukirchen in the Ruhrgebiet. As often as they could they visited us in Erkelenz. My parents and grandparents lived consciously as reformed Protestant Christians. We read the bible regularly and my grandfather searched for answers to the problems of that time in the New Testament. Jews bought in our shop, although they weren't allowed to do so. My grandfather carried the dead to the Jewish cemetery, despite the ban and his asthma. I played with Jewish kids.

When the synagogue was vandalized during the Pogromnight, my grandfather called me to the window and said: "Look there, you have to tell it to others, when you grow up". In school I had to say "Heil Hitler", but grandfather didn't allow me to say that. When I said "Good Morning" in school, I had to go into a corner. At home, I said "Heil Hitler" to my grandfather, like the teacher wanted it, and I got the first and only slap in my face. He explained that you only find "Heil", that means salvation, with God and that I had to salute everybody with "Good Morning".

On Sundays we went to church. On the schoolyard, near the church, the "Jungschar" and the BDM-girls (state youth organizations) all in the same dresses, danced around. I really wanted a dress like theirs, like ALL the children. The next day my grandfather cycled with me and my grandmother to Wasserberg to the silk factory and bought there silk material, two different ones for me and my little sister and said, "The Dirndl-dresses are all the same, like uniforms! You get an individual dress only for you! You should never do and want the same things that everyone else does and wants."

For this lesson I'm still thankful today.

"Never do what others force you to do!"

One day a picture of Hitler should be fixed in our shop. Grandfather refused to do that for a long time. When "the Browns" came with the pictures, he fixed it reversely above the door and said, "Now you (i.e. Hitler) can look out!" The shops had to hang a flag outside, but my grandmother sewed us aprons out of the cloth, colourfully embroidered.



Her parents' house in Erkelenz



Ellen's grandmother in front of the synagogue with her dog "Stropp"

There were families in our town and relatives in the neighbouring village of Grambusch, who thought and felt the same like my parents and grandparents. I was keen on secrets and heard quite a few of them, but I didn't get what they meant. For example I heard them talk about the "Bekennende Kirche" (Confessing Church) and "Barmer Theologische Erklärung" (A declaration about theology at that time), I couldn't understand that. My grandfather explained, "It's a secret writing from Christians, who don't want to be part of the state church, like the "German Christians" and Hitler imagine it. The "Confessing Christians" believed in the bible and questioned the Third Reich. My grandfather let me bring those letters of the "Confessing Church" to relatives and like-minded people. I put them under my T-shirt and brought them, delivering greetings from my

grandfather, to certain persons and just gave it to them when we were alone in the room. The "Barmen theses" were devoured by the "Confessing Christians". The "Barmer Theological Declaration" is a writing, which also calls the wrong confession, namely the German, the Nazi-Church as wrong. Christians, who took their belief seriously, were very thankful about the writings.

I often heard the bible sentence from the Acts of the Apostles 5, 29: "We ought to obey God, rather than men" and 1. Joh. 4.1: "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God". According to these words my family lead their life. From this point of view we had a clear opinion on the persecution of the Jews: "It couldn't be God's will". More and more Jews left our village, and within one night all Jews in Schwanenberg had disappeared. Nobody in the village noticed in this night, that all of them were taken away. We never knew how this could happen. In the village everyone was appalled by this, but "the Browns" kept silent.

During World War II we had to share our house with soldiers, two of them were from the Gestapo, the secret police. They told us, that the Jews were either deported to Concentration Camps or killed. They also talked to others about what happened to the Jews. That was forbidden, so they were sent back to fighting fields at the border to the Netherlands. Both died in a burning tank.

"Hitler behaves like God, but he is only a monkey"

I usually didn't want to go to bed, so I slept on the sofa, where I just pretended to sleep, because I wanted to hear what the others were talking about.

My grandfather died in autumn 1942. To comfort us, our neighbours said, "Better he is dead now before they could bring him to one of the concentration camps. My Grandmother's life was that of a religious, fair and critical woman. She cooked for the soldiers. In our house were a major and five plain soldiers as they said. Everything was shared. Also the major had to contribute a great part. Everything came into one pot. When we sat at the table we prayed together, also for all persecuted ones. Some soldiers cried during the prayer. In the evening they all sat together in the living room and talked freely. They often said, "Hitler is the Anti-Christ". Grandfather called him "God's monkey" and explained to us, " He acts as if he is God on earth, but he is only a monkey, who tries to imitate everything."

Our living room turned into a military office, unfortunately. We had a wooden floor and all the time soldiers came in, hitting their heels together and greeted with "Heil Hitler". Grandmother, a small, 65-old woman, looked at them for a while and then said, " This is not working. I'm a widow, who should rebuild and clean this floor after the war? Come in, say "Good afternoon", and don't clap your heels!" I was afraid what would happen next, but the soldiers did as they were told to do and didn't complain.

Our town was situated near the Dutch border, it was on the way of the Allied aircraft to central towns in Germany. The nights, we heard the bombs falling, were the worst. We were sitting in the cellar then. Also school lessons took place in the basements of the neighbouring school houses. Till now I don't like to go to basements. We often held services in the basement with water and dry bread. Only the services at religious conferences with South Africans and Latinos were comparably impressive to me.

One day a 17-year-old soldier was shot in our village and buried at the cemetery wall. He had deserted from the Wehrmacht, the German army. This event haunts me till now. My grandmother allowed me to take care of his grave. Later my husband Wolfgang and I advised youths not to become soldiers and go into war. We also told them about the dead soldier and also about my husband's brother, who died during the war when he wasn't only 16.

For our family the "Sermon on the Mount of Beatitudes" was very important. When my grandmother was asked at a court in Monchengladbach in 1946/47, who had vandalized the synagogue, she told the truth, but didn't swear. She cited from the Sermon on the Mount, "And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let, what you say, be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than that is evil". The judge believed her without taking an oath.

After the war my parents and my grandmother kept being attentive. When most of the former Nazis voted for the CDU, we chose another party. Our role models were the Protestant pastor Martin Niemöller, the martyrs in the Third Reich and the brave people from the "Confessing Church".



Ellen (left) and her sister Christel with their new and unique dresses.

Talking and telling stories is very important to me. I call it "Trolley Policy in the Warehouse". I don't want to say to my children and grandchildren, "We didn't know anything about this". I never had to be ashamed of my parents and grandparents and their behaviour during the Third Reich.

We knew a lot about what was happening in the Third Reich and also today we can learn a lot about the reasons if we want to know.

Today we must be more aware of what is going on around us. And all of us can follow Jesus' path. All human beings belong under his "hat", and we have no right to discriminate people, or even whole nations.

I'm endlessly thankful for my grandparents and their living example of faith, bravery and justice. Even though they experienced very hard times during the Third Reich, they became really happy people. I hope that I can pass a lot on to others what I learned from them.

Until today we have to be vigilant towards injustice. A firm belief helps you. I have actively been involved in many topics: The Antiapartheid Movement in South Africa and Namibia, the Anti-Nuclear Power Movement, the worldwide Peace Movement, the struggle of Palestinians for an own independent state, the support to fight against the worldwide injustice of slave labour, the global speculation with food in the third world and underdeveloped countries, the global speculation of international big banks.

That's my lesson from my childhood and the past.

Alexandra, Tamar, Isel, Marian

"Real Christians were treated as second class citizens" Interview with Helmut Wendling, Spesenroth



Helmut Wendling, now 86, was born and raised in the small village Gödenroth near Kastellaun. Only Protestants lived there before World War II. The reason for that is, that after 1555 the territory owners decided which religion their subjects had to take. Those who didn't want to be Catholic or Protestant, could emigrate to another territory. As a small boy he learned how the Nazis came into power and changed village life. We met him in his study - full of old documents we were not able to read, as they were written in writing style, abolished by the Nazis.

Till: When and how did the Nazi period start?

Mr Wendling: We had a protestant pastor, Mr Langensiepen. He belonged to a group of pastors, who opposed the Nazis. They claimed that the Nazis acted against the Christian belief. He cared for the young people, e.g. he built a swimming pool with and for them even before 1933. Jobless people helped him. The Nazis didn't want that any other organization except their Hitlerjugend had any influence on young people. So they attacked him and even painted the Hakenkreuz on his house wall. The town got splitted in two factions: the people that went into church and took their religion seriously. The other faction belonged to the German Christians, the "Deutsche Christen". They were fanatic supporters of Hitler and his party.

Till: What did your family do?

We kept on going to church like nearly half of the village people. Once there were big machines working on the farmers' fields. They wanted to cultivate the land to use every square meter, even in infertile meadows. The people protested against the machines, there were real fights between the two factions. The day after the fight the church faction was brought to court, but only they got punished and no Nazi.

Till: Why did the Nazis not like the Christians?

Mr Wendling: They didn't like them because the Nazis belonged to another kind of Christianity, they worked together with the new "movement". They practiced secular substitutes for religious ceremonies like the "Konfirmation".

"Boys were trained as soldiers and girls educated as mothers and housewives"

Till: How was school at that time?

Mr Wendling: I had a teacher and he was a Nazi and not every student was equal in his class. The Nazi children, who went to the "Hitlerjugend" and whose parents were convinced Nazis were treated better than the Christians. Later the teacher changed and this new teacher was very fair. With my new teacher I was more popular in my class and we had a project to collect potatoes and the teacher put me the first time as a leader in the class in this project

Till: How was the relation to the Nazis in the village?

Mr Wendling: It was very bad, because the Nazis were always better treated than the Christians. My neighbours got a free travel to Scandinavia, but they were only small farmers. After this travel they got a good job in the station of Kastellaun. The station was very important for the Nazis because it was used for trading with wood. The girls of Goedenroth also got travels to Austria and the Alps which was very unusual because most girls and boys at this time only lived in their region and could never leave the Hunsrueck. But the Nazis made it possible, so only the girls, who belonged to the BDM (Bund Deutscher Mädel, Union of German Girls), could make these trips. The others didn't have the chance to do such interesting things. Boys had to be members of the HJ (Hitlerjugend), an organization for boys, where they also could do man exciting things. Only a few saw already that they were trained to serve as soldiers in a war.

Till, Tamer, Ameer



Mutterkreuz und Ritterkreuz
Different education - terrible results

4	5	6
Wert der Beschäftigung (möglichst genau angegeben)	Tag der Beendigung der Beschäftigung	Unterschrift des Unternehmners
Arbeitsbuch am 31. März 1939 wieder eröffnet.		
Arbeitsort <i>Mayen</i>		<i>A. A. Heber</i>

The German "Arbeitsbuch" was a document for nearly everybody. This one was for a maid (Hausmädchen). The state completely controlled the distribution of workers. "Man is material which we have to save", Göring said in 1938. The "Arbeitsbuch" was the basis to register everybody between 14 and 70 to use him/her for war purposes after 1939.



The German "Mutterkreuz" (Mother's Cross) was introduced in 1938 for women with more than four or five children. This golden one was for mothers with more than eight children, it says: "To the German mother". Jewish and other non-aryan mothers were not awarded the mother's cross.



The "Ritterkreuz" was re-introduced on Sept. 1, 1939, the day World War II began. It was awarded to soldiers with outstanding military decisions, personal bravery and success within the German army ("Wehrmacht").

Human rights were not valid for homosexuals, foreigners, Jehovahs Witnesses, handicapped, political and religious opponents, communists ... and for non-aryan "races" like Jews or Sinti and Roma.



Julius Hirsch (1911-1952) from Kastellaun was arrested before the Pogromnight (Nov. 9/10, 1938) and sent to the concentration camp Dachau near Munich. After terrible tortures he was released on February 28, 1939. He wanted to emigrate, but the USA rejected him, so he had to flee via Panama to Bolivia, where he opened a bakery. His two brothers Erich and Richard survived many camps, Richard even Auschwitz. His mother Rosa and his sisters Betty and Irma perished in the Shoah. We found his passport and all the other objects on this page in Kastellaun.



"The Loss of Heimat"

The century of refugees. An unusual interview with Jan Schneider

The 20th century is often called the century of refugees. Two world wars and globalisation have increased the migration movements all over the world. It is always a matter of definition between migration and flight, but around 200-300 million refugees can be counted. In the 19th century most emigrants left their country by their own will, but in the following one most people left it because they had to flee from danger. Today about 85 mio people live outside their original home country, 13 mio refugees and about 20 mio illegal immigrants are additionally estimated. As Germany, Israel and Palestine are extremely affected by this humanitarian catastrophe, we wanted to know more about this problem in our interviews. Jews were forced to leave Germany and the German occupied European and African territories under the Nazi-regime. After the establishment of the state of Israel, Jews had to leave many Arab countries (about 800.000), about the same number of Arabs from the British mandate Palestine fled or were forced to leave their land, which is today Israel. After 1945 in the communist occupied Eastern parts of Germany more than 12 mio Germans fled to the West.

In most of these cases women had to suffer most from the forced flight. Husbands were still in war, children were sent away, as parents still stayed behind and hoped the situation would get better. We must not forget that behind every flight we have to see that there are individual human beings, who suffer from leaving the home country until the rest of their lives. The different narratives within these countries have made the refugee problem a major issue until today, in Middle East politics it is one of the obstacles to find a permanent peace solution.

Jan Schneider, a project member, was playing a major role in the new Edgar Reitz film "Die andere Heimat", a film about emigrants in the 19th century. There is no word for "Heimat" in English, so the English took over the term "Heimat". It means the feeling of warmth when you feel comfortable in your house or area. Jan was film shooting during our project in Germany. He plays the role of a young man (Jakob), who is also thinking about emigration from his village to Brazil. We thought that he was also a person to interview, as he had been thinking about this decision for months and might understand people who had or have to flee from home.



Q: If we had a time machine, we would be now in 1842. Can you introduce yourself.

Jan: I really have to pay attention, that I don't reveal too much of the film. I play the role of Jakob Simon, a 19 year-old boy of a smith in the Hunsrück village Schabbach. I have two older sisters and we live in a small house.

Q: How are the living conditions?

Jan: As a modern human being it's unbelievable to understand the situation of 1842.

The director Edgar Reitz intentionally has chosen the middle of the 19th century.

By the way, I will answer your questions out of the historical context, I leave out the film plot. A German Reich didn't exist, it was split up into 39 territories, the borders were real obstacles if you wanted to travel. The world stopped existing behind the village borders at the rim of the forest, travelling was not common at that time. The Hunsrück

had suffered under French occupation, the south under Palatinate or Bavaria and from 1815 under Prussian rule. A permanent change of conquerors! Famines were a permanent danger, Jews had to suffer as well as the Christians. Crops were devastated, a potato disease made the famine even bigger, many people died of hunger.

Q: What is your daily life?

Jakob: Working, working, working: In the fields, the forge, stable, water, horses, hay, ploughing, sowing, harvesting etc. It's always a matter of surviving!

Q: Are you educated differently from your sister?

Jakob: Religion, work, military service are in the focus of our education. There is no equality between men and women, the work is clearly split up: women have to do the household, in the stable and in the field, the men have to care for agriculture and the manual work.



Jan (Jakob) in front of his forge, where he worked during the film shootings. Now he has gained weight again, he had to loose some kilograms for the film!



Schabbach - the film village. Thousands of tourists came to see the setting every day.
 The pub, a manure heap in front of the house, the "Backes" for the community.
 The real villagers had to live for months with the camouflage.

Q: How is life in Schabbach?

Jakob: The village has some centres: the church, the well, the pub. If there is enough flour, the village community bakes bread together in the baking house ("Backes"), they share the "Backes" to save firewood.

Q: Why do so many inhabitants emigrate?

Jakob: I think occupation is one reason, the Prussians are not really accepted. The French established a net of state services before 1815, people still have to go there, young children have to go to school now. But the feeling of oppression and exploitation is omnipresent.

The people are promised huge pieces of land in Brazil. Emigration is a phenomenon all over Europe: Irish get away from their famine, caused by the potato beetle. The majority of German emigrants move to North America, many people from our area, The Rhineland, prefer Brazil.

Q: What does "Heimat" mean to Jan?



Jan: Heimat is for me the place where I want to be, when I am away, and where I want to let loose, when I am there. So you see, my relation to "Heimat" is double-sided. Maybe it is the magic of the landscape: wild, lonesome, rough, which you have been used to love. My place where I study is completely different, it is the "Other Heimat". Unfortunately my Heimat is being destroyed at the moment by hundreds of wind power plants. That makes me angry in a way, that I don't want to live there any longer. But all that is completely different from Jakob's situation in the 19th century.

Jan in front of a house next to a photo of the scenery builder Toni Gerg, who died during the shooting.

Q: Does Jakob want to emigrate?

Jakob: Yes, as Jakob I can imagine to go away from home, the living conditions are miserable. But I have to leave it open for Jakob, you have to watch the film!! The first night will be on October 3, 2013.

Q: Have you already seen drawings or reports of your new Heimat?

Jakob: Interesting question! Of course there are some paradise-like reports of emigration and ship agents, but you really don't know what is expecting you. In my time emigration is saying good-bye forever! There is no Morse-like communication method via the Atlantic Ocean.

Q: Would you like to emigrate, as Jan now?

Jan: Today it is easier, if you want to leave home by your own will. You can watch TV-reports, read newspapers, go to your destination for some weeks or months and come back and then think about it. Most refugees of our times don't have a choice, they must leave because of political, economic or religious pressure. They want a better life and a new start. I think Edgar Reitz wants to focus on an eternal problem: 150 years ago 300.000 people left the Hunsrück towards Brazil. Even in the 21st century people are forced to flee: e.g. Syria, Somalia, Mexiko. Israel took up millions of immigrants since 1948, but on the other side Palestinians told me that alone in Bethlehem 50.000 have left to Chile, they don't see any progress, no improvement. That makes me thoughtful. But you have to make a clear difference between emigration, flight or expulsion. You have to know the reasons why people leave their home.

Q: What are the feelings of these people?

Jan: Emigration means tearing out roots and taking seeds with you. It takes a long time until you are really ready to leave. But then it is a decision for the rest of your life.

Q: What are the roles of men and women in this process?

Jan: In the past women thought about their children's future. For them the motivation often was to offer a better life at least for the children. Men had to find better jobs to feed the family. I think that is also the motivation of many emigrants today - if they are not forced to leave.

Today equal rights must be seen as something natural, as a matter of course, not only as a problem of industrialized countries. Our society has developed into a modern and open democracy, which has its weak points, but the problems can be discussed. In the Arab world equal opportunities for men and women are the crucial points for a change in society. Without gender equality there will be no change. The "Arab Spring" has not led to what many people hoped.

That's what the Hunsrück looked like only 50 to 70 years ago, when many people left for America or Jews fled to different parts of the world.

In front of the scenes it looked different than behind them!



"In front of God all men are equal" Interviews with different religious persons



A rare meeting in the mosque in Simmern: Tal Pacht, an Israeli Jew, Barbara Barham, a Catholic baptized Palestinian, Imam Recep Kaymakci, the Catholic priest Rainer Vogt, Hülya Bayrakci, responsible for the Muslim-Christian dialogue in her community, Ibrahim Adali, the chairman of the Turkish-Moslem community Simmern, listeners, interpreters. The topic: Equality of men and women in different religions.
Photo in the middle: Hülya and Barbara exchanging their addresses (?) on I-Phone, right: Tal, Hülya and Barbara after their interview.

Two women - two new role models?

Hülya Bayrakci is attending a German college to do her A-Level. She is a convinced Muslim woman and showing that to her Christian surrounding world by wearing a traditional head scarf. For her, religion is a private matter and she even has some struggles with her family, but they accept what she is doing. She is very active in a Christian-Muslim dialogue, presenting her Islam to others, trying to make prejudice and clichés disappear.



Sandra Menzel (left) is expecting us in the library of her Büchenbeuren community of about 2.000 Protestant Christians, where after the fall of the Berlin Wall many immigrants settled with all the problems on their shoulders. She is 39 years old, has got 4 little children (3,5,7,10) and has a full-time pastor's job, whereas her husband works part-time. She is the first female pastor in Büchenbeuren and has had this job for six years now. When she was 14 she felt the vocation to study theology and become a pastor. It was a long way to study in different places, even in Edinburgh. 50% of their fellow students were women. Most colleagues in neighboring communities are men, she didn't have to fight for her job. After World War II the situation changed and more and more parish pastors were women, but most top jobs in church are still done by men. Mrs Menzel points out, that the Catholic Church has had more problems with women doing service at the altar than the Protestant one. She agrees with us that religions had and still have much influence on the roles of men and women. In her private life and with her friends

she doesn't feel any kind of discrimination that she does this job. But of course she feels the pressure of doing housework together with her spiritual work. She doesn't feel uncomfortable in her situation, the problems are in society, i.e. that there are not enough opportunities for women to combine housework and job. As a rule, women still have to struggle more to get all that under one hat. In her situation she sometimes has a feeling of guilt, that she can't spend so much time with her children, but she knows that her husband is a good father and does the housework perfectly, and at least as well as she would have done it. Teamwork between men and women is the keyword for her. She thinks in German society it is still "a long way" to reach equal rights and duties for women. After the interview Barbara told us that she would also like to study theology and be a Protestant pastor. She maybe would be the first female one in Palestine. Good luck!

Tal, Barbara, Christof



Politics and Religion, a commentary by Christof Pies

It is a very relaxed atmosphere, men and women are sitting together and talking about theological problems. Mr Vogt and Mr Kaymakci point out, that according to the bible and the Koran men and women are equal in the face of God, but have different rights and duties in reality, as they are differently created by God. Barbara and Tal wonder why the present situation in both civilizations is not like God meant it to be. Both interviewees explain that in the course of history the situation, the cultural background and consequently the role of men and women have changed.

In all the three monotheistic religions God is seen as a man, feminists sometimes speak of a Goddess. In the holy books the creation of the first woman happened after the man's, therefore women are often seen as an imitation of men. If the religious leaders are right, why not turn back to the original belief and let men and women be equal? The problem is that in all three denominations we have different interpretations by human beings and they can be wrong! Why not decide each individual how to deal with God? Different traditions and interpretations led to inequality. There is e.g. no hint that Jesus was against the same rights of men and women, just the opposite!

You can find arguments supporting your own point of view in all the three holy books (Tora, Old and New Testament, Koran), but many passages contradict each other. So for me a general statement is not really possible. Members of each religion pick out terrible examples of inequality in the other beliefs and blame the corresponding religion for it. We have female rabbis in reform judaism, female pastors in many Christian Churches, but not such movements in Islam. Throughout history you can find many examples of oppression of women and inequality at all times and in all civilizations. It is often argued that women are "weaker" or different from their body and have to be protected against men and their surrounding (e.g. head scarf, burka), as they get the children and therefore guarantee the existence of mankind. That is why many states do not let women serve as soldiers. If you see the problem from a mere secular point of view, the women have to serve in every unit as well as men, e.g. the European High Court forced Germany to allow women serve in the army. Women can join the army now on a voluntary basis, German law quickly added. Thank God we live in peace in Europe and are not dependent on a compulsory military service. Religion is not suitable to solve political, territorial or economic problems. It is meant for individuals, who are searching for help in their spiritual life or need a guideline for their whole life. It is not created to form a whole state with millions of individuals and to force them under a common religious rule. It is not acceptable to justify inequality, oppression, occupation or terrorism with biblical or Koran arguments. Religion always arouses emotions and these are not suitable when rational thinking is needed. One Israeli participant of our group is frustrated, "Israelis and Palestinians only look into the past instead of the future". Religion does not solve every day problems, only if you believe in paradise or hell after death. Religion doesn't create peace, jobs, education and chances. The mainstream of all three religions has told women to stay at home and care for children. The patriarchal system developed in the late classical antiquity, hostility towards body and sexuality became widespread in most religious streams and has influenced the relation between men and women until today. This model from times where wars were omnipresent, is no longer valid for the 21st century.