

C O N F E R E N C E

Remembrance and Responsibility

One by One's Bi-Annual Conference took place at the Wannsee Forum in Berlin from November 8-12, 2004. The theme of the conference was "Remembrance and Responsibility." The conference was very successful. Over 60 participants from Germany and the U.S. attended the various workshops and events.

Martina Emme welcomed us on Monday afternoon and introduced Hilde Schramm who opened the conference with her presentation.

Hilde Schramm is an educator and has served as the vice president of the Berlin Parliament. In the fall of 2004 Hilde Schramm received the Moses Mendelssohn Award from the State of Berlin for her work promoting tolerance and reconciliation. Schramm's confrontation with the past has translated into concrete action: She has fought for compensation for former slave laborers, promoted the establishment of the Topography of Terror documentation center on the Gestapo, and established the Zuruckgeben foundation - the name means "giving back" in German - to help Jewish women in the arts. Schramm said she would donate part of the Mendelssohn prize to her foundation, which marks its 10th year in October. The rest will go to the Kontakt foundation, which helps Nazi victims in Eastern Europe not covered by the German government fund for former slave laborers; and the Berlin-based Center for Victims of Terror, on whose board Schramm sits.

That evening Robert Hilliard, Professor at Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts, spoke about his experiences as a 19-year-old soldier who took action against the abusive conditions in which the displaced Jews were kept after WWII. Conditions for the displaced Jews at St. Ottilien in Bavaria were desperate. There was inadequate food, clothing and medicine, and liberated Jews were dying. To help alleviate the suffering, Robert and his friend Edward Herman stole food from their own mess and smuggled it into the camp. Robert and Edward also started a letter writing campaign to raise awareness and encourage donations of food and other supplies from Americans back home. The campaign caught the attention of President Harry Truman, who had commissioned an investigation of the displaced persons situation. He ultimately ordered an end to the abuse.

During Robert's talk it became clear how important it is to take responsibility in society, to show civil courage when human rights are at stake and when society shows its indifference. People can make a difference and Robert Hilliard, along with his comrades, is a humanitarian who exemplifies courage.

To round out the evening Zella Brown, who was born in 1947 in a Displaced Person Camp in Heidenheim, reported on her experiences upon returning to her place of birth a few years back.

The Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning sessions consisted of "mini dialogue groups." Two groups were formed and three intense mornings were spent dialoguing using the conference theme as a starting point. These mini dialogues were patterned after the Berlin Sunday Meeting model and were led by our One by One facilitators.

There were numerous workshops and events during the afternoons and evenings:

Szabine Adamek

In Search of Mourning - The Political Relevance of a Feeling

For nearly sixty years hasn't the life force of many survivors been consumed by their never ending pain, is sorrow their prevailing feeling, innumerable human disasters happen today - almost unseen. The theme of this workshop was to sensitize and to open the door for a "Politik der Anerkennung" (A Policy of Acknowledgment.)

Eugen Kahl and Frank Goehrlich

Dangerous Help - Experiences in Frankfurt in 1938-1945

Eugen Kahl witnessed his parents, Dr. Fritz Kahl and Margarete Kahl, help numerous Jewish patients by hiding them and also helping them flee. Frank Goerlich spoke about his research project on this subject.

Petra Schneiderheinze, Regine Sarstedt

Our History in East and West - what are the Implications for Coexistence?

Sometimes in discussions between East and West Germans different characteristics of two political systems become apparent in the language, in the disappointments and in the way we are offended. Do these differences divide us or can they enrich us when we bring them into the conversation. This workshop was essentially a continuation of two previous workshops that had taken place in the spring (See previous newsletters.) During this

workshop it became clear that this difficulty remains a very important topic for many.

Felicitas von Aretein

"Die Enkel des 20. Juli 1944" (The Grandchildren of July 20, 1944.)

Marking the 60th anniversary of the most famous plot to assassinate Hitler Felicitas von Aretein's book, Die Enkel des 20. Juli 1944, was published. It contains interviews with the grandchildren of many members of the Resistance who were condemned and executed by the "Volksgerichtshof" (People's Court.) Much of this information made public for the first time. F. v. Aretein is the granddaughter of the general major, Henning von Tresckow, who played an important role in the attempt to assassinate Hitler. She provides insight into the story of members of the resistance and their families and into the silence around the topic of the Resistance in postwar Germany.

Beate Bormann

A Virtual City Tour to the Sites of the Resistance.

The theme of this workshop was "Witnesses of the Resistance and their Stories." Using the district in Berlin called the Prenzlauer Berg as an example we "visited" some memorials. It would be great if in the summer an actual tour could be organized to the places of the resistance and thereby to again touch upon this topic from another perspective.

Wolfgang Graeser

Topography of Terror - a Tour.

Between 1933 and 1945, the central institutions responsible for the repressive and criminal policies of National Socialism were located on the terrain of the Topography of Terror, situated between Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse (today Niederkirchnerstrasse), Wilhelmstrasse and Anhalter Strasse. Twelve conference attendees signed up for the tour of this "open air" museum. The group was guided by an extremely engaged and competent woman, Andrea Dech, who works for the foundation "Topography of Terror."

Beate Niemann

"The Good Father" - Film and Discussion.

Beate Niemann was born in 1942 while her father was away in the war. In 1953 there was suddenly a great deal of excitement in the family when she found out that her father was alive, but imprisoned in a GDR-penitentiary. He was never released even though he had been "denazified" twice and had his sentence abolished in West Berlin. Her mother even received payments until his death in 1972 from his service as a policeman.

Beate Niemann wanted to find out why he was never released. In 1997, 17 years after her mother died, she went in search of the truth. She hoped to find a man she could be proud of, but instead uncovered a truth that lay hidden for so long under family lies and deception.

At one point in her research she found a book "Serbia is free of Jews" by W. Manoschek. She was interested in this book because she knew that her father had at one point been in Belgrade. The book recounted unimaginable horrors, which she believed her father had a role in. Thereafter she continued her research in Europe, America and Israel. What she found was a father who was a mass murderer with the blood of hundreds of thousands of Jews on his hands. He had joined the Nazi party, become a policeman and took the fast track to promotion with the Gestapo. Then he went into the SS security service, the SD, and then into the ranks of the Einsatzgruppen.

Her story became public through this film, "Der Gute Vater" (The Good Father) by Yoash Tatari. The film won the Gold World Medal at a New York film festival on January 30, 2004.

Elisa Medina

One by One in Peru

Elisa Medina spoke about the civil war that ravaged Peru from 1980-2000. She described the cycle of violence that erupted in her country, which caused such great suffering. Elisa was a member of the September 2003 Dialogue Group in Berlin. She was inspired by One by One. Her goal is to introduce the One by One Dialogue Group concept in Peru: to help alleviate the suffering and trauma of victims and perpetrators who were affected by the internal Peruvian armed conflict, to create Dialogue Groups for national Reconciliation, to interrupt the intergenerational transmissions of trauma to the second and future generations. She has a very personal stake in that the issues that divide Peru's society also divide her family.

"....und die Schuld, die bleibt" (...and blame remains)

On Thursday some of us saw a film that was broadcast on television on November 9th. The film was about a young person, a former right-wing extremist who, for political reasons, was condemned to 6 ½ years in prison. Back in 1988 Frank Lehmann along with 4 others climbed over the wall of a Jewish cemetery in (East) Berlin. They knocked over gravestones and screamed anti-Semitic slogans. They were arrested and sent to prison. Salomea Genin, who is Jewish and who emigrated during the Nazi period, read about this event in the newspaper and became frightened. Her concern

was that these teenagers will not be cured of their Anti-Semitism by being thrown in prison, quite the contrary, when they come out of prison they will truly be Anti-Semitic, whereas before they might simply be labeled stupid kids. Salomea Genin advocated for these boys and she played a role in Frank's introspection about his crime, but she also set him on the path to discovering his family history. Frank reported about this at the One by One Sunday meeting.

Inge Franken, Martina Emme

Discussion group: Reflections on School Visits

There has been a One by One School Visit program since 1966. In the U.S. it is called the Speakers Bureau. Dialogue Group participants have volunteered their time to talk to students, to relate their experiences by relating pieces of their own, their parent's or their grandparent's life story. There is always a representative of the victim's side as well as a representative of the perpetrator's side present and they speak together, this is a principle of One by One. Both sides belong together, the experience of one rounds out the experience of the other.

In our workshop our goal was to create a balance sheet, to measure the value of our school visits and determine if this "practical" offshoot of our work functions satisfactorily. Questions were raised: Does it serve to talk about our experiences in the National Socialist time? What do the students learn? What do the teachers learn? How do the One by One speakers experience their conversations with these young people? What moves the speakers to discuss their personal experiences in these educational institutions over and over again, experiences that are sometimes very painful.? Students, as well as teachers, from the Protestant High School Neuruppin, the Protestant secondary school Frohnau, the Stephan-school Moabit and the 1. National Educator Vocational School responded to One by One's invitation to come to the conference and report from their perspective. One by One Speakers also took part in the discussion.

Our Party

On Thursday evening we had our traditional conference party. Salomea Genin began the evening by reading some passages out of her soon to be appearing book. She was accompanied musically and spiritually by Karsten Troyke and Jens-Peter Kruse. Everyone had a wonderful time. The audience would not let them leave without at least one curtain call. This performance filled with thoughtful and cheerful words and songs was a wonderful lead in to the party. The party was a great way to unwind and relax, particularly after so many

strenuous days filled with One by One work.

Our Last Day

We began Friday morning by remembering three One by One members who passed away in 2004. It was a very moving hour in which we remembered Bina Gibson, Carola Domar and Marjorie Cohen. They were the center of our spiritual circle that morning and we reminisced, laughed and cried with these 3 extraordinary women.

Bina Gibson
7/4/1920 - 1/22/2004

Carola Domar
12/17/1919 - 9/24/2004

Marjorie Cohen
8/29/1951 - 9/24/2004

Auschwitz - The Wound of the Knowledge by Bina Gibson

Father, dearest, dearest Father
I've come to thank you
For giving me life, for loving me when I was small
I remember your lap
And I remember your wounds of the war
Which used to frighten me so much.
You played with me and my brother and you read us poetry
But then you went away
And the pain and the hurt began.
I couldn't write to you, I couldn't imagine
How you lived without us.
When I heard that they had killed you
I could not speak of it for thirty, for years.
This hurt was too deep for words
The wound of the knowledge of how you die.
This wound is shared by the whole mankind. -
They stripped you, held your naked body
The wound in your spine and the hole in your arm

For these wounds you had your German Cross of Honour
And then they forced you into the gas Chamber
Like long ago the witch in the children's fairy tale
Was pushed into the oven. - You, "Vati", with your blue, blue eyes
And you're high fore head.
This is not possible - I want to scream out load
This can't be true, it simply can't be true.
You never knew me fully grown
Could not be proud of us -
Did not know of your grandchildren
Never lifted them, with your smile, onto your lap.
Now I am here to Thank you
To honour you and to love you.
I pray with others for those of good will
For, after all, we are part of each other.
Together, here, we have to say:
I forgive you; May God forgive you and me.
Forgive you what you did to them
Forgive me, for having hated you.
Here we have to learn to become man and woman,
People, who can love, who can forgive
People who will pray, who will work
So that we may become as God wanted us -
As he, His Image, made us.

Following the memorial we shared our thoughts about the conference. It was unanimous that we spent very intense, hardworking, rewarding days and that everyone could go home feeling they had benefited from the week. The next conference will take place in New York in 2006. The theme of the conference is

"Dialogue around the World."

The preparation committee of this year's conference handed over the baton, so to speak, in the form of a neatly wrapped package, filled with good thoughts and support to the American group and wished them the best of luck in their preparation of the next conference.

At this point in the newsletter it is appropriate to extend One by One's immense gratitude to the Berlin based organizing committee for this year's conference: Martina Emme, Petra Schneiderheinze and Gottfried Leich, for the immense amount of work it took to prepare this conference. Without them

the conference would not have become such a success. At the same time we would like to use this opportunity to wish Gottfried Leich, who is in the hospital, a speedy recovery. Shortly before the beginning of the conference he had to check into the hospital to undergo tests and treatment and could not share in the fruits of his organizing efforts, an extraordinary conference!