

28th CIF Conference 3rd-8th August 2009
Kiljava, Finland

ABSTRACTS FOR WORKSHOPS

K. Dialogue and understanding questions of peace and war

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Japan's War – Renouncing Constitution

After the end of the Second World War, Japan promulgated new Constitution, in which there was the Article 9 expressing renunciation of war for eternal. In the paper it would be reported in which process the Constitution was established, the essential points of the Article 9, and what Japanese people had got as a result of the Constitution.

Introducing the result of the public opinion on the people_s attitude to the Constitution and the movement of its amendment, the speaker would present some materials to discuss about the War and Peace of our Globe in the 21st century.

CHAPTER II. RENUNCIATION OF WAR

Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

---- Excerpted from the Constitution of Japan---

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Finnish War Children as Adults – What happened later?

During the Winter War in 1939-40 Swedes had a great wish to help the Finnish people after the Soviet invasion of Finland 30.11.1939. An initiative for child transports came from Sweden. The humanitarian help suited very well the Swedish policy of neutrality,

especially the help offered to innocent children. About 8,000 children were evacuated, the smallest ones with their mothers. My estimation is that, including private arrangements, altogether about 10,000 children aged 0-12 years were evacuated during 1939-40. During the Continuation War in 1941-44 a new initiative was taken by Sweden in September 1941. The Minister of Social Affairs in Finland (Karl August Fagerholm) accepted the offer at once, and a committee was founded to plan the transports to Sweden. During 1941-43 67,000 children aged 0-14 years were transported to Sweden and 4,000 to Denmark; mothers were no longer allowed to follow. The transports thus total to about 80,000 children making 2.9% of the Finnish population of 3.7 millions and 8.6 % of all Finnish children. There is no other country in the world that should have sent such a large portion of its children to another country during a war. - The basic goal of the evacuation was to take the children away from the bombings and horrors of war, especially from the big cities, and also to ensure their physical and mental health. There was also the fear of a Russian occupation. However, the repatriation of the children after the war was very difficult. About 7,000 children stayed in Sweden, 500 in Denmark. In those years the understanding of the psychology of small children was very poor in Finland.

A study on the occurrence of juvenile delinquency among war children has been done. Out of 1,182 boys who were condemned 1.9.1953-31.12.1958 to imprisonment of at least 6 months or hard labour of at the most 4 years 18.1% (214) were war children, whereas the war children made up for only 8.6% of the whole population. The prolonged stay in a foreign country has had negative effects. The basic problems were the bad experiences during repatriation back to Finland. Many of the boys did not have a good, normal relationship with their Finnish family any more and felt they were outsiders. The separation and long stay in a foreign country increased the risks of juvenile delinquency.

Another study was done by a research-group (Räikkönen & Pesonen et al), who has published an article in the American Journal of Epidemiology, September 17, 2007. This so-called Helsinki Birth Cohort Study consists of 13,345 children born in Helsinki in 1934-44. 1,778 of these were war children. The separation from parents during a crisis may have far-reaching psychological consequences for the children. The children in the study had about 20% more depressive symptoms at the age of 60 than did the control group who stayed with their parents. The rejection of the child's experiences and feelings of distress is probably one reason for the depressive symptoms. War children paid a psychological price for their increased safety during the war. Still, there are also many happy experiences, every story is individual.

Conclusions: For many reasons the separation of children from their families during crisis can NOT be recommended, this despite the physical risks involved. The family as a whole should be evacuated. The question is: How do we stop the wars and the killing?

The author was himself, at the age of 2.5 years, evacuated from Finland to Sweden in 1944 after the heavy bombings of Helsinki and he was sent back to Finland after a year. He had a very good Swedish family but a painful repatriation in 1945. - Literary production: "70.000 small destinies" 1985, 1994, 2003 (translated into Swedish 1994),

ISBN 951-9016-26-0. History and evaluation of the Finnish-Swedish war-child operation during WWII. Several articles regarding the evacuation of Finnish children to Sweden and Denmark during WWII.

Experiences of a refugee of war