

From trauma to a new power of responsibility

The „Healing Event“ April 24 in Berlin looked for a new approach towards the time of National Socialism

He sits in his wheelchair with a frozen face and follows the trial. His trial. John Demjanjuk is accused of aid to murder in at least 27,900 cases during National Socialism. A number as unimaginable and abstract as 55 million, the number of people who died during WWII. How can a trial against so-called “war criminals” like John Demjanjuk contribute to healing the wounds the war caused in countless families?

Almost every person in Germany could tell a story about the war. About their own grandfather, who was in Russia and witnessed people dying. Maybe even has killed himself. About the grandmother, who huddled in dark bunkers during nights of bombings, in desperate fear of losing everything. The problem is that many of these stories were never told. Maybe for fear of burdening their own children: “Whom would it have served?”

Over the years many taboos were formed, a collective shadow that the next generation could only reflect on with cynicism. Even without an education through reading essays on Freud's or Jung's Psychoanalysis, we all know: what is repressed will continue to live. Indirectly it will find its way and will suddenly and unexpectedly reappear as contraction - hindering us in taking the next step, again and again, individually and collectively.

The American philosopher Ken Wilber has created an Integral Theory, combining the different strands of contemporary research on evolution of consciousness. The Integral Theory unites all different kinds of perspectives on reality; the introspection of eastern philosophies; the knowledge of physical contexts of western research. The basic understanding was, that no-one has as an exclusive access to complete reality. But if one combines the different findings into one unified system one will find the most precise map of reality possible at this moment in time, provided that the researcher also devotes himself to the so-called shadow work in order to become more and more conscious of his own viewpoint.

In his seminars and teachings Thomas Hübl has been working with the evolution of human consciousness for many years. He too has chosen an integral approach. He keeps coming across the same point over and over again: “In every seminar longer than a

weekend the issue of WWII keeps coming up”, says Hübl. This inspired him to organize an event to lift the guilt block and to allow a unimpeded view of the collective wound: “The Healing Event”. The Kamphausen Media group and the “Global Awareness” Organization both cooperated. “The courage to have a direct look and to allow the pain, is the most important precondition to overcoming the layers of denial and strategies of avoidance, and to move forward in evolution”, says the Austrian Hübl.

On April 24th 2010, 900 people came together in the auditorium of the Free University, Berlin under the motto “Truth will heal”. They came to face the German past, not just through the mind as in history classes in school when facts and dates are listed, but by using a more integral approach. This meant perceiving ones own inner life and feelings together as a group that first tunes into the collective dynamics of the past and then follows the questions: How could this happen? What inner need made the German society susceptible to National Socialism? What does WWII have to do with my present life? Do I know the energy arising when people align to a common goal, and become part of a greater plan? Do I know the joy that lies in the power of the perpetrator, freely deciding upon the fate of someone else? How do I deal with authority, and what does that mean for my spiritual path? And: Could this happen again?

One of the leaders in the evolutionary perspective, Andrew Cohen, came to the point: “Our Self consists of culture, of shared values.” And whoever pursues a spiritual path cannot avoid a personal confrontation with the German past. “ In the absence of a healthy fear, the high standard of living and education in the Western world easily seduces us to being sleepy”, says Cohen. It is different in Germany. “One of the outcomes of this collective catastrophe in Germany is a unique urgency to move on.” A central issue throughout the day was Germany's contribution to the evolution of global consciousness. Tom Steininger, editor of the magazine “EnlightenNext”, pointed out the tradition of the German Idealism: “We will not be able to free ourselves from the shadow, if we don't look at the idealistic part and the role of longing in National Socialism.”

Günther Wieland saw Adolf Hitler closeup when he was a child. He was fascinated, as well as hypnotized by the we-feeling, that grew in this euphoria. He participated in the war as a soldier and lost his eyesight in a bomb attack on January 3rd 1945. He became

a psychotherapist. Today he sits in front of 900 people and shares extracts from Hitler's biography. About the boy Adolf, who is whistled for by his father like a dog, and, when he dares to break out at the age of eleven, his father hits him unconscious. Soon it becomes clear to the listeners that it is too easy to give the sole responsibility for everything that happened to a single man. Hitler was like a symptom of his time and his culture. His rise was through a wave of euphoria, that became self supporting in time, then cut off compassion and presence, and perverted them into their negative opposites. The shock about what had happened can still be felt by the participants of the Healing Event even 65 years after the end of WWII: Someone shares his "childhood in the ice cellar". Someone else speaks about the pain of not being able to value "the good about Germany".

The integral approach includes all perspectives to reality. This also includes Israeli people. "It is not possible that the energy of the Holocaust just disappeared today. It is within us - as a cut in the roots", says Hübl. Efrat Sar-Shalom Hanegbi, who co-organized the parallel event in Israel, agrees: "As a child I was always afraid of being suddenly attacked ", she says. To feel safe many Israelis would try to look strong on the outside. "We carry the responsibility for our rage and will only be able to solve the conflict with the Palestinians, when we have healed our wound", says the Israeli woman. Eva Kor, who is connected live with Berlin, describes it in a similar way. As a child she was abused for medical experiments by the concentration camp doctor Josef Mengele, together with her twin sister. "It was my free will to forgive the Nazis - and we all have the right and the power to do so." To consciously decide to forgive Mengele in 1995 gave her back her feelings in life. The event becomes touching when in Israel and Germany people show, with a shared meditation, how bridges between the Jewish and German culture remain strong despite all the wounds.

Suddenly the focus changes to personal responsibility. The perspective moves from the trauma work to the responsibility that needs to be taken right now to create a new and different future. "Being consumed by guilt and pain can easily become a sofa to rest upon as a kind of excuse to not move on", says Hübl. It is about indifference - the feeling of not being able to change anything about the present conditions. And about the necessity to remain present in all situations of life, attentively connected with ones own convictions, able to step in when injustice happens. "The future is not tomorrow, but

here now as a potential between all of us”, says Steininger. “There is an evolutionary pressure to stop repeating the same mistakes and to make things different today.”

In 1998 the author Martin Walser criticized the “instrumentation of Auschwitz” and called the constant use of the Holocaust issue as a “moral club”. This caused major confrontations with the former president of the Jewish Central Council in Germany, Ignatz Bubis - but in the end both agreed that the proper language to deal with the German past had not been found yet.

Twelve years later this “culture of silence” seems to have started moving again: the WWII generation is slowly dying. Some leave diaries, love letters from the war and other writings, that enable families to review their own family histories, relieved by the distance in time. The last living war criminals like John Demjanjuk are tried, the media are turning towards the issue of National Socialism again and use a different language: more direct, authentic, with less taboos. Slowly the shadow can dissolve. Events like the “Healing Event” can be a strong contribution. They show the German culture developing remembrance beyond devotion. Towards a future of the yet to unfold human potential.