

Adlerian reflections on the Holocaust denial in Lithuania and current refugee crises in Germany: the challenge of power and identity in multicultural context.

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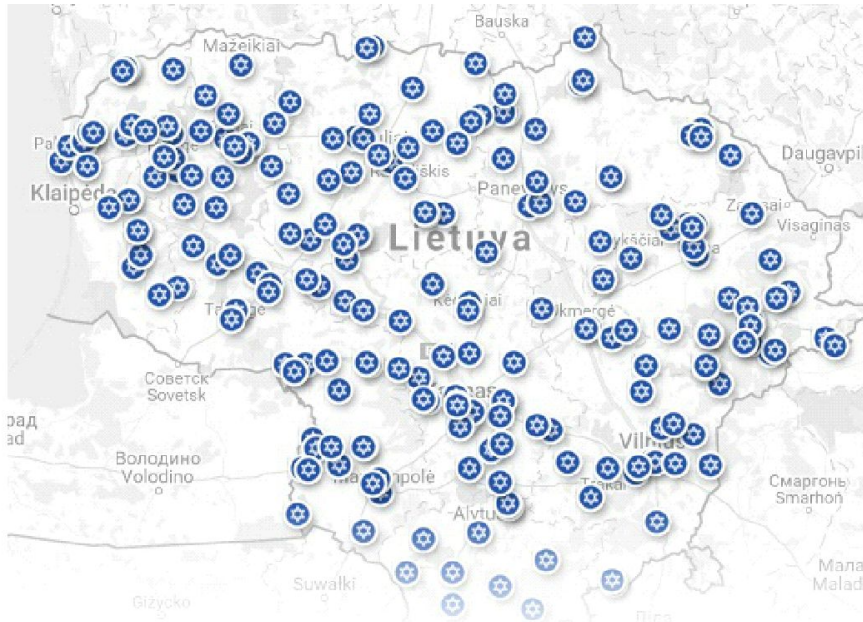
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Rasa Bieliauskaite:

Each country has its own burdens to carry and we should not be competing whose burdens are heavier. We presume that talking considerately and calmly about these emotionally provoking issues is of great importance on social and personal levels.

The Holocaust in Lithuania was especially ferocious – only a small percent of large population of Jews in Lithuania has survived, the mass murders were executed not in camps, but where they lived, at the outskirts of towns and villages; the main part of perpetrators was not punished. Here is the story, which shows how people could be affected by mass killings all over Lithuania. The story about elderly driver of Lithuanian decent, he was living in Washington. On his death bed he asked that Ellen Casedy known for her book about the Holocaust in Lithuania would visit him. When he was 12 years old he was living in small Lithuanian town. With his friend they were playing in the outskirts, close to the river. Suddenly there was noise of coming trucks – Nazis and Lithuanian policemen brought a lot of Jews to be shot in vicinity. The boys could not run away as they were afraid to be seen. Another example: my colleague talks with her mother who lives in another small town. They are looking her mother's old photos. There is the headpiece of the school graduation. Mother looks at her former schoolmates: "This girl was my friend. I saw how they were lead to death. I cried". They never talked about this before or after. ...Thousands of silent witnesses.

The past not heard and talked about can be the root of the problems of today – as Lithuania has the highest rate of suicides in Europe, a high rate of deaths in the roads, early mortality from some medical conditions, high rate of alcohol consumption, European survey shows the lowest positions in happiness of children and highest for bullying behaviors, high rates of emigration, low tolerance for differences in people.

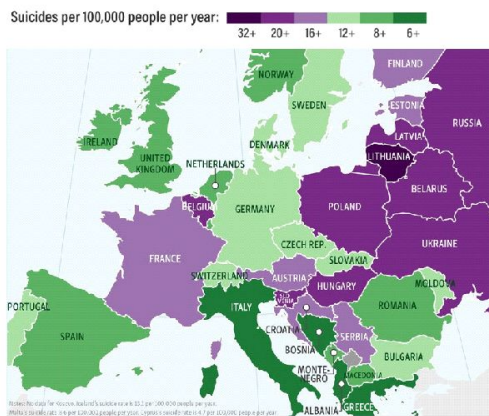


Holocaust Atlas of Lithuania

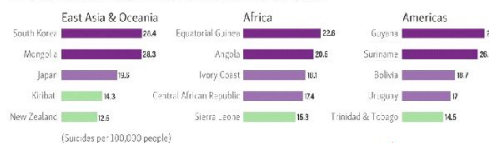
Here we can see two maps: Atlas of Holocaust in Lithuania – places where the Jews were killed (<http://holocaustatlas.lt/EN/>). You can activate every spot to get precise information.

SUICIDE RATES IN EUROPE

Suicide rates in Eastern Europe are among the highest in the world.



Countries with the highest suicide rates in other regions



Source: World Health Organization - World Health Statistics 2017



There is another map in which we see rates of suicide in Europe (<https://www.rferl.org/a/28506553.html>)

I am aware that I am drawing parallels which are rather arbitrarily. But those were the parallels which motivated me to look deeper into the problem. If I see destructive forms of compensation of inferiority feeling it must be the sources of inferiority complex itself. Let us glimpse how those inferiority positions could be formed.

Germany helped the Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) to become independent in 1918. They were successfully developing. Jews had their special place in the Lithuanian life. In small and big towns they constituted from 30 to 50 percent of citizens. They represented all walks of life – teachers, doctors, pharmacists, shop keepers, tailors, barbers, innkeepers; they were rich and poor, they were serving in army, had their synagogues, libraries, schools, sport and culture clubs, theatres, firemen commands. Jewish owners and engineers organized new businesses based on the latest technological innovations. It seems that at that time two parallel worlds - Jewish and Lithuanian – coexisted peacefully enough.

Now I shall try shortly to present the chronology of main historical facts

1939.09.28 = Molotov- Ribbentrop pact



1939.08.23. – Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in which they divided Europe among themselves and the Baltic countries went to dominion of Soviets.

1940.06.15. 15.00 - Soviet Army crosses Lithuanian border (Latvia and Estonia were occupied 06.17)



1940.06.15. 15.00 - Soviet Army crosses Lithuanian border (Latvia and Estonia were occupied 06.17). The state and law system was destroyed.

1941.06. 14. – 18 mass deportations



1941.06. 14.–18 mass deportations to Soviet Gulag. Percentage of deported Jews is in accord with their percent in general population.

1941.06.22 – German Nazi army occupies Lithuania



1941.06.22. – German Nazi army occupies Lithuania. Part of Lithuanians sees it as rescue from the soviet repressions.

What happened then? One of the most shameful acts was the first Jews massacre in Kaunas Lietukio garage where group of Jew men were brutally beaten to death. It was done by Lithuanians, everything was happening openly while people were passing by or standing and looking and no one interfered. It was the first day of Nazi occupation.

Christoph Dieckmann reconstructed acts of Holocaust 1941-1944 (together with international team, after 1991)



Historians were wondering what was the role of Lithuanians and if there were pogroms organized by Lithuanians. It was possible to answer this question only after restitution of independent republic of Lithuania in 1990.03.11. Then archives of all levels were open to researchers. German historian Christoph Dieckmann reconstructed acts of Holocaust in Lithuania. He was working together with Lithuanian historians.



The summarized result is that all mass murders in Lithuania were initiated and organized by Nazis. It does not lessen moral obligations of Lithuanians as many of them took part in the mass murders in organized way – as local police and similar. In the beginning of the war Nazi army was moving forward and they had shortage of human resources. At this point collaboration with local people was very important. Ch. Dieckmann said that from the side of Lithuanians the group of those who collaborated with Nazis was mainly young men angry about their young state who lost independency due to the weakness of their government of that time. Nazis used and elaborated the idea that Jews were those communists who exiled or killed Lithuanians just a week before Nazi occupation.

Vilnius ghetto



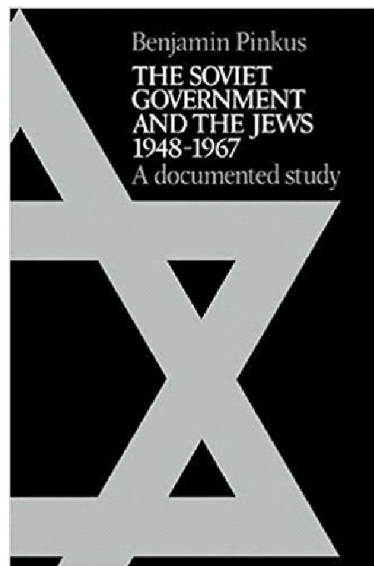
During the years of Holocaust hundreds of thousands were killed – the largest part were Jews absolutely of all ages. Those years were the years of suffering, of unthinkable cruelty, fright, treason. Also those years were of courage, of miraculous salvations, of community feeling.

The second occupation of the Baltic countries 1944



When the Soviets came for the second time it was great turmoil. For some it was salvation. Some run from the soviet army remembering the June of 1941. Partisan war began against the occupation of Lithuania at the end of forties. Partisans were organized, all of them were for independent Lithuania and some of them were those who took part in mass murders of Jews and other people. Many people became refugees and part of them was collaborators with Nazis. Soviet repressions renewed with great force. Many people again were exiled and killed. Most awful thing was that people who were in Nazis prison were treated like traitors and went already to soviet Gulags or had a lot of other constraints.

Anti-semitism after the WWII



Anti-Semitism in Soviet Union was part of state politics. The execution of Jewish Antifascist committee in marked the upheaval of Anti-Semitic politics. It was called the night of murdered poets as this committee consisted of 13 members – writers, poets, directors, doctors. At that time many Jewish enterprises were closed. For example, Jewish museum was closed in Vilnius at 1949, Jewish press and book publishing were closed, the arrests of Jews began all over SU.

The word “Jew” could not be used during Soviet times. In all Soviet monuments for Nazi victims is written “soviet citizens”; another officially used euphemism for Jew was “rootless cosmopolitan”. This strong wave of anti-Semitism was connected with

establishment of Israel state which was allied with Western world and it was unacceptable to the Soviet totalitarian state.

In Soviet Union Jewish names disappeared – they changed first and last names in order to conceal their national identity. And it was easy to understand because for Jewish person was difficult to get good position in job or to get a job at all;

Righteous Among the Nations is an honorific used by the State of Israel to describe non-Jews who risked their lives during the Holocaust to save Jews from extermination by the Nazis. Attitude to them was reserved in SU. As example can be story of pediatrician Petras Baublys who was saving children from the ghetto in 1942-1944. Only in 1993 he got state award and in 1994 the memorial board was established.

Restitution of independent Lithuania 1990.03.11



So this example shows us that when the independence of Lithuania was restituted in 1990.03.11. Jews (as well as other minorities) regained their voice. Lithuanian Jewish Community was restituted in 1991, then Jewish Museum was opened again, the newspaper “Jerusalem of Lithuania” was published, Vilnius Jewish public library was opened in 2011 and Almanac of Jewish history and culture was issued at that time also. Officially everything was as if OK but now I can understand that the subject of the Holocaust still was and is concealed in this silence.

Subject of silence and not talking about the Holocaust and Jewish question in general is of special interest. I have a friend from the first grade in the elementary school. It means that we know one another and our families more than 55 years. She is a Jew and she lives in Israel from 1991. We talked about WWII and Holocaust for the first time only 3 years ago. When I touched the subject her first words were "I never thought that we shall talk with you about it". From her childhood she knew a lot about Holocaust but it was very clear that you should not talk about it with the people who are not Jews. After this first conversation we talked more and more. She supported my idea to think more about this issues and she herself has translated the book from Hebrew. This book is written by a man who was saved by great uncle of our classmate. This man did not hesitate, risked his and his family life and saved 14 Jews and two Russian war prisoners.

When subject of Holocaust is touched automatic defensive reaction comes in positioning myths about double genocide (it says that mass murders of Jews and exiles and murders of Lithuanians are equally genocides.), or that soviet repressions were done by Jews, or that in general Jews are cunning and mean. The fact that Jews want to regain their lost property (due to Lithuanian laws) serves like justification for this distortion. Such reactions are built on fictitious apperception and its goal is to secure oneself from more full perception of the situation.

Litvaks – Lithuanian Jews began to visit Lithuania to find their roots, to take care for the Jew cemeteries, to regain property after 1990. Some of them met with the help of local governments, many had feeling that they alone have to handle this.

Ellen Cassedy. We are here.

With ambassador of Lithuania in USA, 2012
Lithuanian version - 2013



The book by Ellen Cassedy “We are here” reflected this situation – person of Jewish decent comes to Lithuania and tries to understand – what happened and what is happening. For me this book was the first impulse to look more openly to the Holocaust.

Ruta Vanagaite. Ours. 2016.01



Lithuanian author Ruta Vanagaite published the book "Ours" in 2016. She travels through Lithuania with Efraim Zuroff. He is an American-born Israeli historian and Nazi hunter who has played a key role in bringing Nazi and fascist war criminals to trial, the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center office in Jerusalem. You can imagine that in Lithuania he had quite a reputation of being not friendly to Lithuanians. And Ruta Vanagaite writes how they travel in her car from town to town, from one mass murder cemetery to other. At each one they stop, he goes to pray and cries. The book depicts very lively how our own citizen, people of my nation were murdering Jews. It was organized by Nazi regime but Lithuanian people in the municipal or force structures of the regime collaborated. There are document single cases of people who refused to participate in mass murders.

Ruta Vanagaite and Ellen Cassedy books have something in common – they are personally told stories, they are not blaming but just showing the reality as they see it. They tell personal stories and then the reader can connect with the heroes and perceive larger perspective. „Ours“ was scandalous book. It is bestselling until now, it has a lot of enemies and friends. In some way this book was like a litmus which revealed denial of Holocaust in Lithuanian society. May be even not denial but non acceptance, disability to connect with this part of own history or history of the nation.

Marius Ivaškevičius, the writer and one of the organizers of a Holocaust commemoration march in Molėtai, Lithuania, has been named Man of the Year for 2016



The same year Litvaks from Malata (Moletai) were organizing a Holocaust commemoration march in Molėtai– to repeat death procession from the ghetto to mass murder place. Marius Ivaskevicius, Lithuanian writer wrote in social nets that he was afraid that again, like in 1941, Jews will go alone and all other citizens will look cowardly through the windows. This text went viral. There was a kind of war in comments: abundance of anti-Semitic commentaries provoked a lot of pro-Semitic commentaries.



Ruta Vanagaite who was one of organizers too said: „They asked me to take part in organization of this march. I agreed but felt uneasy. I thought, OK, there will come some 30 people“. There came 3-5 thousands of people. Lithuanians, Jews, people of other minorities residing in Lithuania were united together in comemoration of the Holocaust. Such marches already followed in other small towns.

“NAMES”



Civic initiative „Vardai“(names) is going on from 2010. Volunteers in various places of the town read the names of people who lived there and who were executed in most brutal way. Writer G.Kanovichus: „This is our history, our memory, which they tried to destroy along with people. When you say the names of these people who lived here out loud, you can't pretend longer that they didn't exist.

We are in the beginning of acceptance of the Holocaust after 76 years.

Nations are afraid to be imperfect when they have deep knowledge that they have no right to exist unless they are perfect or complying. Looking from Adlerian perspective guilt is like safeguarding cushion – if I know my guilt already I am better. Remorse is what is needed. For me it means to have knowledge about the Holocaust with all feelings – shame for ours, sadness, pain and loss. I want to look with eyes open, I want to know that I can contain my feelings and I do not have to protect myself with the help of false myths. Enormous quantity of sadness is stored in my heart. We need to mourn our Jews and us. We need to embrace sadness in ourselves. We need to embrace reality of Jewish world before WWII and at the same moment to understand our loss of it. Acceptance of the Holocaust is to be aware that all civilization in that geographical space was destroyed – to mourn it, to cry over it and to be aware that sadness remains.

Feeling of assumed (accepted) responsibility nurtures self worth and diminishes inferiority.

Anna Mayer

In 2015, large groups of predominantly Syrian refugees arrived at the central station of my hometown, Munich. On some days as many as 400 refugees would flood in at once. It was the impact of this influx, and the announcement of this upcoming congress which got me thinking about the conflicting reactions triggered around the country. On the one hand, there was a surge of support, leading the New York Times to publish an article on September 22nd, 2015 titled “As Germany Takes in Refugees, It Also Rehabilitates Its Image” from which I would like to share the following:

“But the images of migrants chanting “Germany, Germany” as they weave their way across the continent toward their new promised land have moved many in a country that has for decades been trying to atone for the genocide it committed in World War II. In the words of Chancellor Angela Merkel: the

world sees Germany as a country of hope and opportunity, and that was certainly not always the case.”

On the other hand, the country received news that mass riots were breaking out against refugees, first and foremost in eastern Germany. During these riots emergency shelters were set on fire, refugees were harassed as they stepped off buses into the camps, and some refugees were even beaten. Most notably, in 2016 large protests were held in Dresden every Monday, with participant numbers reaching up to 25,000. The slogan featured on these protestors' banners read "Germany for Germans." To contextualize, Dresden is a city located in the state of Saxony and belonged to the GDR (the German Democratic Republic) up until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Following these recent events in the former GDR state, a new right-wing populist conservative party was founded and managed to win seats in state parliaments around the country.

These two opposing reactions, and the topic of the congress - Inferiority Feelings: New Manifestations and New Approaches – thus led me to pose two questions, the first of which is:

In the case of these opposing reactions, namely the want to help versus rejection of the 'other', is the urge for esteem expressed as an attempt to overcome feelings of inferiority?

According to Alfred Adler's teachings, the urge for esteem not only dictates neurosis, but also all psychological symptoms. In other words, it is the effort to overcome the negative feeling of one's own inferiority which dictates these symptoms. Does this urge for esteem manifest itself in an "excessive", "neurotic" willingness to help in this particular context? Do people drop off a few blankets for refugees in Munich's central station because it makes them feel great? Alternatively, is this urge for esteem manifested in a strong insistence that these foreigners are not even allowed to step foot into the country? After all, confrontation with the 'other', and victims of hunger and war remind us of our own vulnerability (Zigi Baumann).

The second of these two questions is:

Does the difference in how the old and new German states react to the 'other' depend on the differences in how these two sides processed the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust?

I would like to revisit some of the post-World War II cornerstones of German history in order to provide an answer to each of these questions.

In November 1945, five months after the end of the Second World War, major criminals of the war were tried in front of the United States Nuremberg Military Tribunals in what became known as the Nuremberg Trials.



The Military Tribunal indicted representatives of the German Reich and tried to run fair and public trials, and reveal the truth. During these hearings, witnesses gave evidence of horrific persecutions, abuse, killings and torture which took place in the concentration camps. It was the aim of the tribunal to try and expose individual perpetrators and the motivation behind their actions, in order to hold them personally accountable. While doing so, the court also gave the perpetrators the possibility to make personal statements, and express remorse and admit to their actions. However, the accused continuously denied individual blame as the group pressure was too high.

Nevertheless, the introduction of this concept of democracy had a euphoric effect on society. In the case of my father who returned to Germany in 1946 after previously being held a prisoner of war by the U.S., this new democracy was a strong reminder of his student days spent laying in the park with his peers in Munich where they were allowed to openly discuss their ideas for the first time. Some of those discussions may have fallen in line with Alfred Adler's theories.

Back in 1919, after the First World War, Adler introduced the term "mass neurosis". The expression was first published in a "fiery accusation" (Bruder-Bezzel 1994) entitled "Other Side. A Mass-Psychological Study of a Nation's Guilt" (Adler 1919; 1994). Adler interpreted society's

corruptibility for warmongering as a sign of powerlessness of the lower middle class. He suggested that society tried to free itself from humiliation and powerlessness by becoming a self-proclaimed hero. (Quote) "In their ego frenzy, they shrank from the realization that they were only the poor victims of a foreign striving for power" and thus the (quote) "Godly fear of murder" disappeared "in the exhilaration of the rediscovered sense of self-worth and irresponsibility that arises during mass movements" (end quote). I doubt that people were simply "poor victims of a foreign striving for power" in the face of National Socialism, however, Adler's thoughts on the "exhilaration of the rediscovered sense of self-worth" as the cause of this blind following are fundamental.

I will now briefly return to the country's history:

West Germany, known as the Federal Republic of Germany, implemented a democratic constitution which was also acknowledged by the three Western Allied powers, and East Germany became the GDR (the German Democratic Republic) as Soviet control slowly withdrew.

Unfortunately, in August of 1961 Soviet leadership erected the Berlin Wall, thus closing off the nearly 1,400 km long German border.

The Berlin Wall was put into place in order to stop the stream of refugees fleeing from east to west, which at this point already represented the second wave of refugees post-World War II! Dr. Bielauskaite already did a terrific job illustrating the development of the Soviet-occupied zones and the associated approach to Holocaust crimes, so I will not repeat it.



By the time the first wave of enthusiasm for democracy had passed, most West Germans of the 50s and 60s were extremely preoccupied with building up the economy. Only a few isolated individuals occupied themselves with the national socialist past. And finally, in 1968, at the same time the so-called student unrests began, society started becoming emotionally invested in holding the proponents of the war accountable. Vital questions were asked during this time, questions which our patients ask us during therapy in ideal cases:

Where are we from?

What has influenced us? Or from an individual psychology perspective: what is our safety net and what is our aim?

What meaning does this carry for our current relationships?

The existence of this increasingly open society allowed for the election of a Social Democratic German Chancellor whose name was Willy Brandt. It was Brandt's famous 1971 "Warschauer Kniefall", in which he knelt before a memorial site for the victims of National Socialism, which symbolized this change in the nation's internal and external way of processing the past.



Brandt never spoke about what moved him to stray from protocol and kneel in front of the memorial, but I remember how striking I found this image as a teenager. It expresses the deep consternation regarding the Holocaust, and more specifically the remorse felt.

Remorse can be defined as a feeling of pain and regret over one's own wrong-doing and inaction, coupled with the awareness of the injustices caused and the intention to improve in the future. This feeling is essential in order to accept responsibility for past mistakes. In my opinion, remorse is considerably different to the feeling of guilt which is often accompanied by feelings of fear and shame. However, Willy Brandt showed no signs of fear or shame. The regret observed is sincere, not subdued. Looking back, we now know that this was the beginning of a new political era: the start of the opening between East and West Germany guided by the responsibility of a common past.

Twenty-eight years later, in the night of the 22nd of November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. Take a look at this image of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and contrast it to the earlier image of the Wall being erected.



What is it in this image of the fall of the Berlin Wall which makes us feel so affected? It represents an intense encounter between people, a strong sense of community which managed to overcome the divide and bring the entire state structure to crumble. Encounters such as this one enable people to be guilt-free and free of regret. Thus, Alfred Adler was right when he said that what people want is "to live in harmony with society" (according to Eife 2016). He writes extensively

about this community feeling which opposes the striving for power manifested in war and violence, in his essay entitled "Bolshevism and Psychology" (1918).

I would like to add a personal note to this, and draw attention to the fact that Dr. Rasa Bielauskaite and I would not be holding this talk together, were it not for this transformed society. Before 1989 I did not think that something like this would be possible as, for all we knew, Lithuania was trapped behind the Iron Curtain forever.

I would now like to return to my opening questions, starting with the second one:

Does the difference in how the old and new German states react to the 'other' depend on the differences in how these two sides processed the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust?

The statistics speak for themselves: more crimes are committed against asylum seekers in the new states than in the old states. As previously illustrated, it was the old Federal Republic's slowly burgeoning population which confronted National Socialism – its culprits, actions, followers, and mentality – step by step. While we in the west were gradually able to acknowledge that our parents, relatives, and acquaintances were the ones who followed the leadership of a criminal regime (Welt N24).

The Soviet Union had declared the east Nazi-free by 1947, before the GDR was founded, and claimed that the west was fascist. Here, the collective was made to believe that zones of alleged safety existed, which were maintained through the suppression of anything foreign or new. The effect of this was that certain communities – and only these – still view the 'other' as an extreme threat which must be combated.

And now to my first opening question:

In the case of these opposing reactions, namely the want to help versus rejection of the 'other', is the urge for esteem expressed as an attempt to overcome feelings of inferiority?

I would like to answer this question with the help of an image taken in September 2015 at the central station in Munich. The image captures a police officer opposite a young male refugee.

As I previously focused on the idea of the rejection of the 'other', I would now like to draw light on the notion of helping the 'other'. It is my opinion that the random act of providing stranded

refugees with blankets, tea, and food is not an urge for esteem. Rather, it is a sign of a deep need for a sense of community and engagement, as Adler described. It is important for us to draw the connection between encounters in society and those we have with our patients, as we are also fortunate enough to experience these “here and now encounters” (Eife) in our line of work. And it is during these encounters, such as the one between the police officer and the boy, and between us and our patients, that moments of engagement take place. These moments enable patients to understand their feelings of inferiority, the resulting fear and the urge for esteem, thus allowing them to overcome these and the sense of powerlessness.



Finally, these public encounters and therapy sessions help individuals overcome the fear of the unknown. And it is this fear which is the predominant manifestation of feelings of inferiority. It is ultimately these first successful encounters which enable more fearless encounters, as only close proximity with others can heal the hurt caused by knives, weapons, bombs, trucks, and traumas (SZ dated June 10th 2017).

Thank you for your attention!