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My mother died this year, on 12 September. She was well into her 97th year. I was sitting beside her bed. From a deep, peaceful sleep, she slowly slipped out of life. She was in a pleasant room - low light, beautiful flowers, all her treasured things around her. Death can be merciful, in spite of the grief felt by the survivors.

I am telling you these personal thoughts because it became painfully clear to me during that last night with my mother that so many of our families have had a very different experience of death. So many people we could not take our leave of, so many people we could not sit beside to mourn their passing. I thought about how deeply this loss is incised in our history and how these wounds keep opening up to hurt us in the present, and how difficult this makes it for us to say our final goodbye, let go and start enjoying life.

Another year has almost passed. This has been a year in which many of you may have experienced a loss, but I hope you have had good experiences as well. Finding a balance between grieving and feeling joy is the art of life.

I wish you all the best for 2014.

Hans Dresden
Chair of the Pension and Benefit Board (Pensioen- en Uitkeringsraad)
‘Don’t let yourself be deluded!’

Former resistance worker, Mirjam Ohringer, speaks out for minority groups.

‘When times are bad, people always look for someone to blame’, warns Mirjam Ohringer. During the Second World War, she and her parents lost almost their entire Polish-Jewish family to the death camps. As a child she had already learnt to fight against social injustice. Even before the war, Mirjam and her parents were helping political refugees from Germany. In 1984 she was co-founder of the Friends of Mauthausen Foundation which arranged for a monument to be set up in memory of the Dutch victims of the former death camp. Every year since 1986, she has spoken at the International Youth Meeting in Dachau, for which she received the ‘Preis für Zivilcourage der Stadt Dachau’ in 2009. Who is this resistance worker who has refused to abandon the struggle?

Brought up with Marx and Mozes
Mirjam Ohringer explains: “I was born in Amsterdam on 26 October 1924 as a stateless immigrant. My parents were descended from pious Jewish families from Galicia, which was then still part of Austria. They had known hunger and believed in a fair distribution of wealth, as Marx had originally intended. That is why I was brought up in the knowledge of the teaching of Marx as well the law of Mozes. My father travelled through Germany to Amsterdam in search of a better life. In 1924 my mother followed him, and was soon pregnant with me. My father went round picking out scraps of fabric from small tailors businesses. In 1933 it was clear that the marriage was not a success and my mother left the family home taking me with her. Eventually, I was assigned to the care of my father, but because he worked during the day, I often had to stay with other families. I found that each house felt they had a monopoly on the truth so I grew up quickly and often thought,

‘You can say what you like.’ My parents and I were members of Anski, a cultural association for Eastern European Jewish immigrants. In 1933 we were already in touch with political refugees from Germany who were in the Netherlands illegally and who needed help to stay alive. We collected money for them. They taught us how to watch out for possible traitors.’

We won’t lie back and let it happen
‘On the night of 10 May 1940, I was woken in my attic room by the sound of anti-aircraft guns. Early the next morning I heard on the radio that we were at war. At the end of May, a small group of us met up at our house to discuss what we should do next. We needed to raise money for people who were in hiding. When we heard that government officials had to fill out a declaration of Aryan descent, my father said, “These Nazis want to get rid of us completely, but we’re not going to just lie back and let it happen!” At the end of 1940, four of us produced a local edition of the illegal communist newspaper ‘The Truth’. We drew up announcements and typed them out. I received a copy of each edition and took it along to as many people as possible to read, and then I asked them to donate money for the resistance.’

The worst shock of my life
‘On 11 June 1941 my friend Ernst Prager came to meet me from school. He had fled from Berlin and was living with a kind family on the Olympiaplein. The mother had given him a two-and-a-half guilder coin. “I’m going to use it to buy a present for their child’s birthday”, he said. After we had bought the present in a stationer’s in Kalverstraat, he told me that he wanted to do a course in mathematics and asked if he could borrow my compass.
We said goodbye by the tram stop. I cycled back to the shop to buy a compass for him, because he was to come and pick me up at ten o’clock that evening. At eight o’clock I arrived at a meeting to hear that they were rounding up Jewish boys from their homes. I cycled as fast as I could to Ernst’s house to warn him. The mother opened the door and said: “Ernst has left.” It turned out later that he had been picked up nearby. As soon as I knew that he was being held in camp Schoorl, I wrote to him to say I hoped to see him again very soon. I have no idea whether he ever got the letter. On 15 October 1941, my first day at the Jewish grammar school, I had just got back home to eat when the doorbell rang. A friend told me that Ernst had been murdered in camp Mauthausen. That was the worst shock of my life.’

I could not let the resistance down
‘In the spring of 1941 a woman who worked for the resistance asked me if I was willing to be the contact person for a friendly Jewish-communist couple who were wanted by the Gestapo. The couple were hiding at separate addresses in Amstelveen, just outside Amsterdam. Later, they were able to go into hiding together at the house of a couple called Henk and Leentje Vierveijzer at Amsteldijk 18.

In the summer of 1942 the mass deportations of the Jews began and my father and I were offered the chance to flee to Switzerland. My father wanted me to go, but I felt I could not let the resistance movement down. So we stayed, changing addresses regularly and seeing little of each other. Through my contact with the Jewish couple, my father was also able to go into hiding at Amsteldijk 18. I felt it was still too early for me to go into hiding, so I would stay with friends wherever I could. I continued doing my round of fixed addresses to see if there was anything that needed arranging.’

‘After the summer holidays of 1942 I stopped going to school. It had become too dangerous because they could come for you there. Instead, I started helping out in a workshop belonging to the Jewish Council, which meant I could continue with my illegal activities.

In November 1942 my father arranged for me to hide out at the address of the Vierveijzers’ daughter in Oudkarspel. I could not refuse because I knew how much effort it must have cost him. I could go outside under the identity of Wientje van Ruiven with my false identity card but I was not allowed to make contact with anyone. I never slept well because I was always afraid we would be raided. I would sing Yiddish and socialist combat songs to keep my spirits up. After the allied landing in Normandy on 6 June 1944, I was brought back to hide out at an address in Amsterdam at my father’s request. In case of an emergency, he had given me the names of tailors to whom he had entrusted expensive pieces of fabric. Now and then, a friendly resistance member would sell the fabrics so we could use the proceeds to pay for our hiding addresses and to help other people who were in hiding.’

Betrayed
‘One day in June 1943, misfortune befell the house at Amsteldijk 18. Mr Vierveijzer was out shopping and his wife, who was cleaning the doorstep, had not warned the other occupants to keep the door closed. Suddenly there were two ‘Jew hunters’ in front of the door. They gave her such a fright that she involuntarily clapped her hand over her mouth and they knew straightaway what the situation was. They were looking for one person who had been betrayed, but they now took seven people prisoner, including Leentje. They were paid seven and a half guilders per Jew. In my father’s coat pocket, they found my identity card marked with a “J”. They asked him, “Who is this?” to which my father replied, “That’s my daughter. She’s dead!” Then they were all taken to the Dutch Schouwburg theatre building.

When Henk Vierveijzer arrived home to an empty house, he got word to me and his daughter as fast as he could that my father and her mother had been arrested. We thought it was the end for them. My father was interrogated by the Gestapo at the office on Euterpestraat because, after finding my papers, they wanted to know where I was. They hit him a few times and then threatened him, saying “We have a lot of other resources at our disposal in the cellar!” My father replied, “My daughter was all I had and that’s not going to bring her back!” My father was taken back to the Dutch Schouwburg theatre, where friends from the resistance helped him to escape.’
An ambulance was waiting on the corner of Plantage Parklaan ready to take him to Ostadestraat. When the Sicherheitsdienst went through his house during a neighbourhood search for people in hiding, they did not find him. He was lying under the bed of the sick grandmother of the house.

Liberated
‘On 4 May 1945 my father and I were staying at our final hide out on Ceintuurbaan. We had heard rumours that we were about to be liberated. At a friendly house nearby, we heard that the capitulation was to be signed that evening. The following day it was like a dream seeing people on the streets waving Dutch flags. We saw flowers being laid at the place on Eerste Weteringplantsoen where thirty resistance fighters had been executed on 12 March in retaliation for the killing of an SS officer. Gradually, it became clear who had and had not survived the war. Leentje Vierveijzer, who had given my father a place to hide, died in Auschwitz.

Virtually all my parents’ relatives were killed in the death camps. My mother had also spent the duration of the war in hiding, helping the resistance in rural France. She survived and after the war finished, she stayed in Paris. Years later, I saw the official death announcement that had been issued for Ernst. On 17 September 1941, at the age of 24, he was ‘auf der Flucht erschossen’. Later I learned from friends who had survived Mauthausen what that actually meant. The SS liked to see blood on a daily basis. One of the things they did was force someone to step out of line to pick up an empty cigarette packet, after which he would be “shot while attempting to escape”.

Don’t be deluded!
‘Because I have had so much experience of what it means to be illegal, I am always wary. It was important never to let the enemy see what you were feeling. As a survivor of the war, I feel duty bound to inform young people about our history. I went to Mauthausen with a group of survivors for the first time in 1982. According to Red Cross figures, approximately 1,650 Dutch citizens died in Mauthausen. Three quarters of them were Jewish. We found monuments to victims from other countries, but no monument for victims from the Netherlands. I felt even more personally involved because of Ernst and became a co-founder of the Friends of Mauthausen. In 1986 we arranged for the Netherlands monument to be erected in Mauthausen.

When times are bad, we like to put the blame on others. That is what the Nazi regime did to the Jews, the Gypsies and the communists, so that almost the entire families of both my parents were killed in the death camps. That is why I also feel a connection with all these camps and with all the victims whose memory we must continue to honour. Don’t let yourself be deluded by present-day politicians who like to put the blame on minorities. We must keep refuting their arguments! As a survivor, it is my duty to continue this struggle.”

Interview: Ellen Lock
‘Don’t get bitter. Take action!’

Japanese camp survivor Berthe Korvinus, ‘It was my mother’s fighting spirit that saved us.’

On 25 August 2013, Berthe Korvinus addressed those present at the Women’s Camps Commemoration at Bronbeek. In 1996 she received the prestigious Harriet Freezer Ring, followed in 2011 by a royal award in recognition of the many years she has spent combatting the trafficking of women and forced prostitution. Her motives can be found in her own past. With her mother and two sisters, she survived the Japanese camps of Muntilan and Banyubiru 9. “Since that time I have refused to accept that women and children should be trampled on and humiliated”. She spoke to Aanspraak about her personal experiences.

Plundered by gangs
I was born in Kebumen on Middle-Java on 6 June 1938, a year and a half after my older sister Tineke and a year and a half before my younger sister Dien. My three brothers were all born after the war. My father was a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church and a missionary, first in Kebumen and then for the native Javanese in Palembang on South Sumatra from the beginning of 1940 to 1942. After that we fled back to his base in Kebumen. My mother was a violinist and always played us to sleep. Just before the Japanese invaded Java, our house was completely plundered by a gang of rampokkers. We lost our clothes and furniture, but the worst was that they took my mother’s violin. My mother’s sister-in-law, aunt Hinke, was the head of a domestic science school and she got her students to make new clothes for us because we had nothing left.

Time to escape
In the night of the 10th to 11th January 1942, the Japanese attacked Menado and Celebes. My parents thought it best to give their youngest daughter Dien to a childless couple who were moving back to Java. On a Sunday morning at the end of January, the Japanese invaded South Sumatra. My father was in the pulpit when we heard the sound of gunshots and everyone ran out of the church in fear. That night, we fled into the jungle with the rucksacks we had already prepared weeks before. First we drove for a while and then at midnight we boarded a ship and sailed across the Sunda Strait to Java, zig-zagging our way between the gunfire and the explosions. The oil refineries were ablaze. The noise and chaos of that night, the searchlights and the tarpaulin still come back to me in nightmares. We travelled for weeks, eventually arriving back in our parish in Kebumen where we were reunited with our baby sister.

Stay out of sight
On 8 March 1942, the Dutch East Indies capitulated. A couple of months later, our whole family was interned in Muntilan, which lies between Yogyakarta and the Borobudur. Opposite the camp was the convent of the Franciscan Sisters. The camp was closed off by a grid made of straw matting and barbed wire. For the first few weeks, my father stayed with us and gave spiritual help to the sick. My sisters and I slept with my mother on a wooden bed in a schoolroom. The Franciscan nuns gave us our lessons by drawing in the sand with sticks. As that was forbidden, we would wipe everything out as quickly as we could when the Japanese guards walked by. Everyday we had to stand for hours in the hot sun in the central square and be counted. If as a child you did anything wrong, your mother was punished with the whip. As exactly what was forbidden was never the same from one day to the next, the trick was to keep out of sight so that your mother would not get beaten. Many people were tortured and killed in the empty swimming pool.
I would hide from the screams. Some images will stay with me forever, such as the sight of a Japanese soldier with a whip, or army boots kicking and trampling down women in front of your eyes, or the woman in the dog kennel, who was always being picked on.

Balanced between life and death
During the day, my mother had to carry rocks over the river next to the camp. After my father left, my mother always tended to the sick in the evenings after she returned from doing forced labour. We caught fireflies so that we could have some light after six when it became pitch dark. Every day, Tineke and I would catch big snails for the people who were sick. One day, my mother was standing guard and talking to another prisoner about music when she forgot to bow to a passing Japanese officer. She was punished severely, and her arms beaten so badly that afterwards she was never able to play the violin again. Her greatest fear was that she would lose me. I got a high fever and was lying in my own faeces. My sister Tineke would not touch me because of the danger of contamination. My mother told her to give me water every day so that I would not suffer from dehydration. My mother said later “Only your eyes were still alive, we had already given up on the rest!” On her deathbed, she told me that she had got medicine for me from a woman who had managed to keep hold of some secretly. It was thanks to that medicine that I survived.”

Don’t get bitter, take action
Every so often, there would be a lottery. My happiest time was when I won a big goose egg. We always shared everything and my small portion of the fried egg tasted wonderful. The Japanese kept us on a starvation diet. We were never given enough of the starch paste they fed us with. My mother refused to believe the rumour that my father had died. She had a steadfast belief in a better world and drew a lot of strength from her faith. She would say “Whatever the situation is, we nearly always have a choice. You can turn your bad experiences around and make something positive out of them. Don’t get bitter, but take action and fight to improve things wherever you can!” For many people in the camps, a combative attitude was a means to survival. During my travels in my own fight against women trafficking and violence against women, I came across the same strong attitude in the women I saw fighting for their children in the Third World.

At the end of January 1944, the Kempetai, the Japanese military police, rounded up fourteen young women for the army brothel in Magelang. Because two of them were only fourteen and fifteen, the women reacted in protest. The insurrection was put down violently with the aid of samurai swords. I saw women falling to the ground wounded, so I hid immediately. The girls were saved by two former prostitutes in the camp from Semarang, who offered to take their places. My mother told me later that she felt great respect for those women.

Keep moving
At the beginning of June 1945 we were made to walk to trains with blacked-out windows in the burning sun of Muntilan. Seriously weakened, emaciated from hunger and indifferent to what was happening because of the heat, all we wanted to do was to sit down, but then you could lose consciousness. My mother said, “Keep walking, don’t sit down, you have to keep moving if you want to stay alive!” That became my life’s motto, because it actually applies to all aspects of life. We were taken to camp Ambarawa 6, where we were reunited with aunt Hinke. It was good to see her again. As it turned out, we got out of there just in time because the day after we left, a hand grenade landed on the place where we had slept. At the beginning of August 1945, we arrived at camp Banjubiru 9 on the edge of a large marsh. It wasn’t until the end of August that we heard the war was over.

Seeing each other again
The Bersiap violence made our journey to find my father in the men’s camp in Bandung particularly difficult. Although our convoy was escorted by British-Nepalese Gurkhas, we often had to take cover as Indonesian freedom fighters fired at us from out of the trees. My mother remained strong and in spite of the danger she even managed to mend our clothes so that we would look presentable for my father. On 12 November 1945, we entered the camp in Bandung in open army trucks, immediately driving right past my father. A woman in our truck said,
“Isn’t that your husband?” We hardly recognized him and I will never forget the surprise in his face when he saw me again, “You’re still alive?!” While he had been in prison he had heard a rumour that I had died. We stayed in the camp with my father until May 1946. During that time, he gave spiritual support to the boys. It was there that I fell in love for the first time at the age of seven with a boy called Cor Sand, whom I liked talking to. I wonder if he’s still alive.

At least you had the sun!
On board the SS Boissevain it didn’t feel safe because we had regular practice sessions on deck on what to do if we collided with sea mines. My mother was in the sick bay with malaria and my father was always taking care of others in his role as ship’s preacher. When we arrived in IJmuiden, we were horrified to see people with their hands stuck through the fences, waving. Both my sisters and I turned away immediately. It reminded us too much of the outstretched hands reaching through the prison fences in the camp. We were taken to lodge with relatives in Haarlem, where we found aunt Hinke again. Our visitors there would complain about the Hunger Winter and say, “At least it was sunny where you were!” The idea that even the sun could be an instrument of torture had not occurred to them. None of their comparisons made any sense at all and when my mother had had enough of it she would say, “Come on Hinke, let’s go for a walk!” For the rest, they never talked about it. On my first day at school in Haarlem, I realised how wonderful it was to be able to walk freely through the park without having to be afraid of Indonesian freedom fighters hiding behind the trees.

The war is always implicitly present
It wasn’t until 1996, when I was awarded the Harriet Freezer Ring for my contribution to the fight against women trafficking and forced prostitution, that I felt that my survival and my work for others had been worthwhile. I refuse to accept that women and children should be trampled on and humiliated. In the post-war period, the Netherlands has always acted as though the Dutch East Indies was a separate issue. Everyone was blind to the fact that the situation in the Dutch East Indies had also created victims of war. It was a long time before I was able to shake off the feelings of worthlessness inculcated into us in the camp. The war was always implicitly but never openly present because it was never spoken about. But that didn’t mean it didn’t exist and on a daily basis the tension was palpable. My mother kept silent about it because she was determined to look to the future for the boys’ sake. As she was dying, it was the anxiety of the war that returned to haunt her. She had apparently been terrified that she would lose me in the camp.

Letting go
I wanted to make sure that I didn’t suffer those fears as well in my last hours on earth. I joined up for a three-month course of therapy at Center ‘45, but even that was not enough. Years after my mother’s death I could still feel the weight of responsibility in my shoulders and arms. It was absurd that I still wanted to protect her from the violence of the Japanese when she wasn’t even alive anymore. In the end, a haptotherapist was able to massage this pain out of me over a period of eight years. It was only in 2007 in Zandvoort-on-Sea that I finally got rid of the last of my aggression by thrashing the water until I was totally physically exhausted. Letting go of everything in the sea like that gave me a huge feeling of liberation. I am proud of the children I have given birth to, Jeannette and Wilrik, and of my gift from heaven: my adopted son Robert from Semarang. To feel new life in my almost broken body was like a triumph over all the death and destruction of the camps, like a leap or somersault into life*.

Interview: Ellen Lock

This lecture is being held for the eleventh time by the Dutch Auschwitz Committee in cooperation with the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Sociale Verzekeringsbank (SVB). This year’s guest speaker is Luis Moreno Ocampo, the first chief prosecutor of the permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague from June 2003 to June 2012. The lecture will take place on Thursday 23 January 2014 at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam.

Luis Moreno Ocampo will also be presented with the Annetje Fels-Kupferschmidt Award. Ten years after surviving the Auschwitz death camp, Annetje Fels-Kupferschmidt set up the Dutch Auschwitz Committee, together with other survivors of the camps, with the objective ‘Auschwitz Never Again’. Below is an interview with Luis Moreno Ocampo as an introduction to his lecture.

What is the source of the driving passion behind all your work regarding war crimes and crimes against humanity?
‘I was born in a violent dictatorship which cost many people their lives. As prosecutor in the trial against the military junta in my country, I once heard a female witness who had lost her parents in Auschwitz. She thought she would be safe in Argentina, and then her daughter was murdered during the dictatorship. Her story made an indelible impression on me. Argentina was a challenging place to learn the job of public prosecutor. Dictators get a lot of support in conflicts like these; even my own mother was a supporter of Videla…’

Did I understand you correctly? Did you say your mother was a supporter of Videla?
‘Yes, my grandfather on my mother’s side was a general. During my investigation into the junta, my mother told me, “You have the wrong end of the stick! I like general Videla. He is a good man, just like my father. He protected us against the guerrillas, and I have done church work with him.” I had not only a jury to convince, but my own mother as well. Two weeks after the trial had begun, my mother phoned me and said, “I still like general Videla, but you are right. Now that I have heard the witness statements, I believe he should go to prison.” This brought home to me how important the role and influence of the media was in this trial. To change minds, we not only had to justify ourselves in court but also before the people.’

You must have had some interesting discussions in the family home...
‘Our family was indeed divided. My father’s father was a senator, a liberal and an advocate of democracy. My mother was from a military family, almost pro-fascist, but they were kind, loyal and family-oriented people. When I was fourteen, I had discussions with both sides of the family about the coup of 1966, and decided to study law to get a better understanding of what was going on. At that point, my life changed. In Argentina, my generation was murdered, my classmates were murdered. I did indeed grow up between the two parties. My uncle stopped talking to me when I was prosecuting Videla. He went to apologise to Videla personally, telling him “I am so sorry. I have to accept that he is my nephew, and I cannot stop him, but I promise you that I will never speak to him again.” My uncle did indeed die without having ever spoken to me again. Strangely enough, I do respect his loyalty.’

The trial against the dictatorship in Argentina in 1985 was the first large-scale war crimes trial since the Nuremberg trials in Germany, and the first that would be held by a civil court. And you were only 32 at the time...
‘The chief prosecutor in Nuremberg was only 26...
To be honest, I had only just begun at the office of...
the advocate general. When one of the assistants for criminal law resigned, I became assistant prosecutor. I learnt to concentrate fully on the case and to be impervious to criticism.’

Did the successful trial of Videla and others give you the feeling that you could now achieve anything?
‘I felt indeed that I had nothing left to prove because I had done all that at the age of 32. There would never again be such a big case on this subject in my country. I continued to work for another seven years as prosecutor for complex cases concerning government corruption. After that, I opened a law office that focused on criminal law and international human rights. I was also given a visiting lectureship at the universities of Stanford and Harvard, and thoroughly enjoyed teaching there.’

The Nuremberg trials were unique in history. There was no precedent for the litigation or sentencing. Did they do the job properly?
‘Mostly, yes, but crimes against humanity had not been clearly defined in international law, and were therefore controversial. Very impressive work was done, particularly in view of the widely disparate ideologies of the Americans, Russians, French and British. Nuremberg was a prelude to the foundation of the International Criminal Court in 1998 via the Rome Statute.’

In 2003, you were unanimously elected chief prosecutor of the new International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague. You started investigations into eight situations in Africa, including Libya, Darfur, Uganda, Joseph Kony and the Lord’s Resistance Army and the Congolese militia leader Thomas Lubanga. Did you ever think you would get the mandate and authority to bring these cases to court?
‘I was happily teaching when I heard that I had been nominated as a candidate for this position at the new Criminal Court. The position seemed interesting, but I never thought they would appoint me. It had taken 130 years to get the International Criminal Court (ICC) set up, and it was up to me to get things moving. When I arrived at the ICC, eighteen judges who had been appointed shortly before me were awaiting my cases. The Bush government was strongly opposed to the foundation of the ICC, and many people thought the ICC would collapse within two years without American support.

How difficult was it to start your work in the face of resistance from the United States?
‘The United States is an interesting dichotomy. On the one hand, they are founded on universal values, but on the other, they fought as a colony against the British Empire. Historically, they believe in nationalism and isolationalism, not in worldwide sovereignty, and that is understandable. The position of the ICC would definitely be stronger with the US on our side, but as I have always said, we can manage without them. With my background, I have learnt that you are not likely to make many friends in this line of work. I had a job to do. We had to set up an international criminal court, and I thought it was best to do this via the UN Security Council. A friend told me, “They will curse you, too.” And she was right. But two years later, we had the Darfur situation, and 11 members voted in favour. Eight years later, there was the case against Libya, and we got all 15 of the votes. When I look back on what we did, we were able to realize a dream thanks to a very strong idea, and we are still making progress.’

What can you tell us about your nine years as prosecutor at the ICC?
‘We started with eight investigations. Two of these (Darfur and Libya) had been put forward by the United Nations Security Council, four by the States concerned themselves, and two were started on my own initiative, as I was authorized to do. We brought charges against 32 people, including three heads of state: Bashir of Sudan, Khadaffi of Libya, and Gbabgo of Ivory Coast, as well as military leaders such as Kony from Uganda and Ntaganda from Congo. One of the most difficult tasks was to arrest these people, and ultimately, six of them managed to avoid arrest, including Bashir, Khadaffi and Kony. All the others have been arrested and have appeared before our judges. The ICC not only had the job of bringing these people to trial, it was also set up to help humanity using law. But we still have a long way to go, because I am aiming at full independence for the ICC.’
It sounds as if you are as motivated as ever.
What will you do afterwards?
'At present, I cannot imagine a better job. I am working on a book about the role of the ICC and the obstacles to independence. I am giving a series of lectures about this at the university of New York. Education is my main concern. If we are to communicate our ideas across the world, we need to make young people aware of these ideas via the internet. Together with the city of Nuremberg, I am working on a programme in the original courtroom: a competition for teachers all over the world to be able to teach about historical events, including the Holocaust, as well as possible. This programme can also be followed online. As from August 2014, the winning teacher will have the opportunity to teach about the Holocaust based on his or her own programme of lessons. We want to reach two billion young people with this worldwide teaching campaign.'

Interview: David Hammelburg
Questions and Answers

I turned 65 this year, and received a letter from the SVB in October about applying for a bridging benefit. If I get a bridging benefit, will it be deducted from the benefit I receive from you? The bridging benefit is designed to help bridge the period between the date on which an early retirement benefit or other benefit ends and the AOW pension starts. Whether you will qualify for a bridging benefit depends on your income. To apply for a bridging benefit, you have to give details of your income, including your monthly Wuv or Wubo benefit and/or pension for former members of the resistance. You do not have to mention allowances, the Wuv amount for non-measurable incapacity costs (NMIK), a supplement under Article 19 of the Wubo, or a tax-free increment under the Extraordinary Pension Acts. If you are awarded a bridging benefit, we will be obliged to deduct the gross amount of the bridging benefit from your monthly Wuv or Wubo benefit and/or pension as a former member of the resistance. Your pension or benefit will then be reassessed. If you are thinking about applying for a bridging benefit, we would advise you to contact us first to discuss the consequences.

My husband has been admitted to a nursing home permanently. What will happen to my benefit if I apply for us both to receive an AOW pension at the rate for a single person? If you ask the SVB to award you an AOW pension at the rate for a single person, this means that you have declared that you have started living separately on a permanent basis. You will then also have to report this to the Department for Members of the Resistance and Victims of War. Your Wuv or Wubo benefit or Extraordinary Pension (Wbp) will then be reassessed on the basis of your current income. If you receive a benefit, account will be taken of the benefit percentage for a single person and your income, including the AOW pension for a single person. An AOW supplementary allowance and a contribution towards health insurance contributions, if applicable, will also change. In addition, the deduction for income for assets may change.

Further, if you should pass away, your husband will not be entitled to a survivor, benefit, for example. In many cases, opting to receive an AOW pension at the rate for a single person if your partner is admitted to a nursing home will result in a lower Wuv or Wubo benefit. You should also bear in mind that having your pension changed to a pension at the rate for a single person is definitive and cannot be changed back again at a later point in time. We can only let you know whether this choice would be wise or not in your case if we have precise details of your personal and financial circumstances. We therefore advise you to contact us before deciding whether to have your AOW pension changed.

Payment dates for 2014
Below is a list of the dates on which payments will be remitted.* It may take a few days before the payment is credited to your account, depending on your bank.

15 January  15 May  15 September
14 February 16 June  15 October
14 March  15 July  14 November
15 April  15 August  15 December

If you have any questions, please call the number stated on the payment notification.

* Pensions under the Extraordinary Pension Act (Wbp) are paid via Stichting 1940-1945 (the 1940-1945 Foundation).