

How can I improve my communication with my sister, so that I can lead a more loving, consistent and harmonious life with her? A personal action research inquiry into family-displacement in the former eastern zone and as a symbol of the reunification of Germany

Anke Jauch*

Anke Jauch

Korschenbroich, Germany

* Translated by Moira Laidlaw

Copyright: © 2010 Jauch.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License, which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Abstract

In this report I want to make a contribution to action research literature and practice and link them to the theme of the reunification of Germany. Through this largely chronologically-presented enquiry I show the connections between the time of my political imprisonment from 1980-1981 and its consequences today. I reveal how I have helped to improve the relationship with my sister through love and respect despite the years of difficulty between us. The growing harmony of our relationship I offer you as a symbol of my relationship with my own country and the world at large and I depict how the external form of the action research enquiry illuminates my own inner growth as a process, leading to greater fulfilment. I utilise many forms of data-collection and methods of validation throughout the research. That my development isn't simply a personal achievement - but may betoken a better world and resonate with the reader – is my hope for the context in which you will approach my report.

Keywords: The negative aspects of the Stasi state system; Pollution of family dynamics; Personal worth; Educational development.

Introduction

Context and Background for this Inquiry

With this action research I want to show you how my difficulties with personal communication, particularly in relation to my sister, are connected to the State Security Office (Stasi) during the time of disunity in Germany's past.¹ Our relationship has been fractured for a long time. I will take you through the stages of making connections again with her and refer their parallels to the growth in a united Germany. I will do this chronologically to show the complexities of the process, rather than thematically, as this will, I believe, offer a more authentic and compelling narrative-picture of the development.

I wish to begin with a metaphor. I refer you to a Grimm fairytale ("The Blue Fairy Book/Snow-White and Rose-Red", 2010). In the story, *Snow White and Rose Red*, the characters represent two innocent sisters, and the dwarf can be seen as the Stasi in our own unfolding drama. This parallel-depiction, of me and my sister, and the fairy-tale's inner truths, symbolise differing development. In both narratives, the children approach life differently. People and nature, guilt and innocence, and devotion and integrity, are symbolised clearly. In the fictional story, the dwarf's struggle with the earth, water and the air can be seen as symbolic of living under the Stasi, which itself distorted natural elements of human nature, like love, trust, loyalty and hope.

Both sisters - in both tales - are good; they live in a just world until the dwarf (Stasi) arrives. In *my* tale I didn't want to portray one as bad and the other good. This telling helps me to emphasise the contradictory values my sister and I experienced. I want to portray our conflicting values honestly, but also to attend to my own "I" as it makes the transition to a more mature love.

The aim of my research has been to heal the relationship between myself and my sister, which was badly affected by my imprisonment during the Stasi regime. By confiscating individual freedoms and causing injuries to personal space, the Stasi split families and violated people's individuality:

Their commitment to democracy, freedom and human rights was paid for not only by the loss of their own personal freedoms. For many of them after their arrest until 1989, they were still subject to close monitoring, bullying, and exclusion from some aspects of everyday life. (Freyberger, 2003, p. 4)

I believe in valuing individuals. By focusing on love for my sister as both a goal and a process I aim to improve my relationship with her. I recognise within my own research a resonance with transformational work going on at Liverpool Hope University in England (Whitehead, 2010; see <http://www.ejolts.net/node/37>) in terms of working towards a public good. I also write this account for my country and in celebration of the value of humanitarianism that crosses geographical boundaries.

¹ I invite you to read the full story of my capture, imprisonment and subsequent life in the Appendices to this paper, in order that the research will be more comprehensible.

Critical consciousness is something I have been developing systematically over the years through reading and reflection, and as part of the process of this research. I have found particular resonance in the work of Freire (1996); in my reflections and actions I substitute his “pupil-teacher” formulation of a key-relationship to the designation, “sister-sister”. For it is only through a mutual dialogue, coming from a deep love of the world and its peoples, that truth and harmony can result for us. Practice in my research-terms consists of reflective perseverance and action as cycle and renewal.

Illuminating as well has been Bettelheim’s work (1980) in which he writes that from his own experience as a prisoner he suffered psychological traumas from isolation and the abruption of any protective mechanisms against the fear he experienced. You will see how relevant this is in the following account.

Sociodemographic Context

I was born as the second daughter in Leipzig, (East) Germany in 1959. My only sister was seven at the time. I spent my childhood and youth there after the second world war, the city famous for Handel and Bach. It was declared a Soviet zone. Because of the large age-difference between my sister and myself we didn’t have a lot in common and spent our free time in the German Red Cross, my sister in the Youth-Red-Cross and I in the Health for Youth group for seven years. This meant I did various voluntary hospital jobs when not at the polytechnical school I attended until 1977. My parents weren’t politically active, so I was ineligible for higher education. I had an apprenticeship as a State-registered beauty-specialist and worked until my attempted escape in 1980. In 1979 I got married and became a Roman Catholic. After the West had paid for our freedom, our daughter was born in 1982. Since 1983 I have been working as an independent beautician with great pleasure to this day.

In order to show the far-reaching effects of Stasi-might on my own personal situation, given my own imprisonment during the regime from 1980 – 1981, I have evidence that after my release I was supposed to be guarded, observed and victimised until 1999; indeed I would have been, had the Wall not fallen in 1989.² I believed at the start of this research that if I could learn to recognise the deep connections between then and now, I might be in a position to grasp the causes of any problems and thereby solve them.

After experiencing a political arrest in 1980, I still believed in peace, freedom and democracy. My ordered world was yet to fracture: “We still didn’t believe in our internment, and we certainly didn’t realise what was still before us in terms of that imprisonment, isolation, the cruel process of it all, the prison itself” (Jauch, 2007, p. 27). In order to maintain any harmony I had to will myself to succeed. I also believe it has been and remains my duty to make the world just a little better for my presence in it. Through my own experience, together with a love towards other people, I wanted finally to resolve my past in a way that generated support for them. I believe world-peace begins with the self.

² Have a look at Appendix One, which shows the steps that would have been taken to suppress my freedom.

I am only one of probably 200,000 explicitly-identified damaged souls from the GDR. But a number isn't eloquent. Behind this mute number are human destinies that are daily acted out under a unified Germany:

It is impossible to define the number of invisible sufferers of political oppression in terms of the effects on the psyche, for example, of the traumatising of parents and families even to the second and third generations. Results from research into the Holocaust suggest that it is likely that the children of such victims are themselves often prone to great vulnerability and have to deal with psychological illnesses and conspicuously unhealthy modes of behaviour (Freyberger, 2003, p. 28).

So, I write this in the name of all the heroes who were victimised by the Stasi. It is important to mention that torture was a common aspect of imprisonment that many of us continue to suffer from to this day. In Appendix B you can read more about this aspect of my past.

My Introduction to Action Research

Moira Laidlaw (<http://ejolts.net/node/36>) introduced me to Action Research. Through it I believe I have been largely successful, which you can judge as you read through this account. By reading Tian & Laidlaw's (2004) guide to action research, and Whitehead's (1985) 5-point action plan³ I continue to find a way to come to terms with the past. These questions have led to learning that has broadened my competencies and my ability to take responsibility for my own learning.

During this research I have worked with my sister, discussed ideas with her and my family, entered into structured discussions with Moira as my critical friend, in order to achieve triangulation and thus some validity for my methods (Whitehead, 1985). So that I could achieve greater harmony, I needed to evolve standards of judgement that would attest to the validity of my research and any proof I collected. I needed to ensure that these standards included concern for fairness and respect for the other, and it must be noted that my sister has had at all times the power of veto in the compiling and publication of this report.

I wrote a journal and created a carefully-compiled questionnaire that would reveal the degree to which my sister felt respect and fairness were being shown her. I thought this would show some of the psychological ramifications of the research itself. Literature by C. G. Jung, Scott Peck, Lao-tz, Knabe and others have been my spiritual companions in this journey of regeneration, which I will allude to throughout this report. MacIntyre (1995) wrote that "injustice and unjustifiable suffering must be eradicated, generosity has to be exercised and freedoms defended" (p. 339). These words give me hope, that the reunification of east and west Germany is more fully possible, and that my sister and myself can be reunited. MacIntyre writes about a significant personal influence on freedom, as well as seeing how one might have a role to play in the world. He writes from within a tradition of competing

³ 1) What do I want to improve? 2) Why am I concerned about it? 3) How can I improve it? 4) Who can help me and how? 5) How will I know that my practice has improved?

conflicts. He suggests that only moral actions in a society can lead to understanding of the competing traditions surrounding us in ways that might avoid this crisis. This makes me feel obliged to take up my own dialogues in a more constructive and universalising way.

I learned to look at the processes of my own learning and found motivation and insight in the words of Fromm, who writes about inner strength, staying-power, joy and critical reason:

Being active means to confer one's abilities to the enrichment of human gifts, in order to renew oneself, to grow, to radiate, to love, to transform the prison of one's own self, to be interested, to harken, to give. (Fromm, 1979, p. 89)

Through these writers I wanted to learn about flexibility in reaching out from my own self into living dialogue with my sister towards a better quality of mutual understanding.

Commentaries, conversations and interviews with family members and Moira, gave me the requisite feedback to my questions, so that I might find the solutions to the problems. Through a study of various research-texts by Moira, Jack Whitehead (1985, 1989), and Jean McNiff (1993; see <http://ejolts.net/node/38>), I learned a lot. My research has now become connected to increases in self-knowledge, and recognition, respect and an acceptance of my sister, the processing of my own destiny and a greater valuing of all people. I am convinced that this kind of work can influence others in a society for the good of all (McNiff et al, 1992), which speaks in opposition to the values of my incarceration. (In order to understand these debilitating Communist influences look at Appendix C and Appendix D)

With the arrest on 14th July 1980, my trust in people was broken. I had to reach for the stronger aspects of myself to keep going, and remain healthy, have hope, and above all keep my mind active. I learnt to focus on a future lived in freedom, love and justice. I had to take personal responsibility for my state of being. (For more details about my imprisonment and the beginnings of this pathway, see Appendix E, with its pictures of Hoheneck Prison.)

Background to my learning about questioning, research, standards and methods

After 25 years of spiritual turmoil, I wrote a book, *The Stasi Takes Hold* (Jauch, 2007), which told the story of my attempted escape, arrest and incarceration. With this autobiography my sister began to acknowledge how she resented my previous actions. We had never discussed her suffering at losing me during my captivity. I acknowledged the mistake at not having spoken of it for twenty-five years.

I needed to enhance my capacity for empathy. It came as a shock to my sister, something I might have prepared her for. We had evolved two ways of seeing the world, two ways of relating to our country, and suddenly they were hugely in conflict. For a year after publication I knew there was something dreadfully wrong between us, but I was too traumatised to see anyone's pain but my own. The geographical distance between us was also a problem (she lives some way away), and our political perspectives another alienating factor. I wanted to find answers, but looked for them in literature about loss, stoicism and wisdom, finding such authors as Lao-tz, Kübler-Ross, Brunton, Dalai Lama and Podvoll. I

found some consolation with Lao-zi's words: "Strengths can emerge from dreams, and through the pain you will arrive at peace" (as cited in Borel, 1974, p. 65).

The crisis after the publication of my book made my sense of responsibility more acute, and enabled me to see my own shortcomings. My sister said she wanted me to feel what I had done: I had betrayed the family; I had left them all in the lurch, alone, comfortless. They could not accept the path I had taken. These reproaches devastated me. I knew my sister's political insights had always been different to my own: through our six years' age-difference, she had lived under the Communist regime for longer, and was, she says herself, more imbued with their ideologies. I, on the other hand, lived in the more liberal stage of East Germany's aspirations, and had tried to make up my own mind and go my own way. We were already travelling two entirely different paths before I left for the West in 1980. I couldn't find a way out. I couldn't see that it was very much down to me. It felt like a game of politics, in which the odds were firmly stacked against me.

I did love my sister, but couldn't express it. This contradictory stance is one that Whitehead (1989) describes so clearly in terms of "living contradiction" and which resonates with me so helpfully. I had to find means to help myself, mired as I was in my own contradictory emotions. The poem in Appendix F (Jauch, 2006) shows you how I felt about her before this research-enquiry.

My Action Research Project

a) Early Days

On 15th March 2009 an e-mail arrived for me from Moira Laidlaw in England. She wrote:

I wanted to thank you for your wonderful but shocking book, *Die Stasi Packt Zu...* Recently I have been reading a lot about the Stasi, but nothing that has moved me to this extent... When I read something like this I know that there is still hope in the world because people like you exist. (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, March 15, 2009)

That this email came from a complete stranger made me so happy. I wrote back immediately to thank her for her heartfelt words. I think from the beginning we recognised the same values in each other: a respect for truth and justice. Moira's dedication towards improving situations through values like freedom and justice is combined with an interest in German Studies. Since then I have benefited daily from her, and we have evolved a deep friendship. Moira is a well-known researcher in action research practice and theory, who has devoted her life and her love to the betterment of others in the world (see <http://www.actionresearch.net/moira.shtml> for details).

Moira has supported me with her professional experience in action research, on the journey to truth. I would say that our friendship is based upon unfailing honesty, respect and

consideration, love and friendliness, with a sprinkling of English humour!⁴ Her devotion to truth and fairness have really helped me to express some of my most deeply-held values.

b) My Living Contradiction:

A desire for honesty, a sense of responsibility, openness, acceptance, tolerance, self-discipline and the search for truth, I believe are the characteristics I try to bring with me to my everyday life. But am I *really* living out these values? As I conducted my research, and as I write now, I doubt my own self-knowledge, and I believe this is a continuing state for human beings. I want to live out my values more fully, but am I doing so? As a living contradiction I embrace the responsibility that comes from trying to resolve it. As Whitehead (1989) writes: "If I attempt to describe my development in a purely propositional form I will fail to communicate my meaning because of the existence of 'I' as a living contradiction" (p. 45). I hope you will bear this contradictory state in mind as the report into my research develops.

c) Beginnings of the Research: Understanding my Dreams

I realised this research couldn't be achieved alone. Only in collaboration - with Moira as a learning partner, my sister and my family as respondents in this process – would I be able to tease out my perceptions and be able to set myself questions to take me closer to the truth. I decided, because of my lifelong fascination with dreams and their possible meanings, to corral their insights in order to show me how my unconscious was dealing with the situation. And this moment marks the beginning of the processes of research. At the same time as I was thinking this, I had a catastrophic telephone-call with my sister, which ended in the old feelings of hopelessness, guilt, anger and frustration.

And on January 19, 2010 I wrote about a dream in my journal, which I believe stemmed from this conversation:

My family was sitting at a long table in a restaurant. I sat beside my niece, with my sister opposite. At that both of them pushed back their chairs away from me, and continued talking as if nothing had happened, and ignored me completely. (A. Jauch, personal communication, January 19, 2010)

I wrote to Moira about the dream and she responded:

I think where the dream took place is significant. The restaurant was a public stage, and both people did this in front of witnesses. You spoke of *my* table, no one looked at you or spoke to

⁴ Whatever I told her, Moira treated with respect. She showed consideration for my ideas, my work, my thinking, and always responded positively to anything I might have to say. As a symbol of her valuing me, she sent me a picture of a Chinese dragon with the words: "In China, the dragon is seen as a symbol of creativity and strength. I wanted to give you something that would say what I see in your mind and spirit." In a draft of the report, I wrote: Moira, my critical friend (N.B. male use of the German word for friend). Moira wrote, in red typing: "I'm a WOMAN!" The works of Peck, Jung and Stein I received from her as gifts. In her words: the goal of research is surely learning and not power. This motivated me a lot. We have managed to combine our growing friendship with research through commitment, understanding, love and humour. Moira and action research have led me home.

you. I think that's significant too. Did you feel ignored and pushed aside? You were a victim of her action: you didn't do anything. You sat there with your own feelings as if you were alone. I know you know all this intellectually, but I wonder if this dream shows us that you are sad and that you are trying to accept this difficult truth. (A. Jauch, personal communication, January 19, 2010)

This reworking had a resonance for me. I thought long and hard about the way in which I had seen myself in the dream, and began to see other aspects. That convinced me that I could research this process. In Jung's (1971) words: "The dream is nature's insight into the objective truths of the psyche, which one can pay heed to...and access fundamental tendencies of our spiritual processes" (p. 15). I found further important aspects of the research in Jung's work:

According to Jung, the "I" grows through confrontation, in other words through conflicts, anger, dilemma, striving and suffering...The "I" as a real emanation of consciousness is born, its structure the genuinely functioning centre of the struggle between body and spirit, together with an environment that demands reaction and adjustment...A middling amount of friction and frustration with one's environment are, according to Jung, the best conditions for the inner "I" to flourish. (Stein, 2009, p. 40)

d) First Steps

My research was built on five activities for the improvement of communication between my sister and myself.

- 1) To have an initial telephone conversation, whose purpose would be to set up regular conversations;
- 2) To test out whether a better relationship is what she really wanted;
- 3) Weekly, timetabled telephone-contact;
- 4) To write reflections, contexts, feelings and ideas for the conversations down before and after each call;
- 5) To find out how we might awaken a mutual interest and trust in the other.

On January 21, 2010 I made preparations for our first conversation. I am proceeding from the belief that my time in prison damaged my ability to understand my emotions and relationships very well, and that they had a deleterious effect on my relationship with my sister. I felt my reactions to her were exaggerated. Therefore, this preparation felt very significant to me. It seemed to me that she knew my vulnerable spots and which buttons to press. And I always overreacted to these spurs. I realised that I needed to be in control of my reactions instead of being their victim.

I began to analyse the processes of my complexes, in which I would systematically and meticulously research and reflect upon our words in order to see what it was that seemed to set her off in anger and bitterness. I came to realise that there were things she said that upset me, rather than the other way round as I had understood before. When she accused me of something, my reaction was bitterly defensive. I felt cornered and claustrophobic, as if I were back in the cells again. I blamed her for that. Her comments

seemed like death-knells, filling me full of dread and darkness. When she didn't respond to what I felt were good motives, I felt aggrieved. During the imprisonment I'd had to endure taunts against my character in a continuous stream of abuse and now my reactions were impacting on my relationship with my sister nearly thirty years later. I felt vulnerable again and it was making me overreact. I was still a prisoner.

I began to realise I was probably projecting many of my own fears and doubts onto my sister, so that I couldn't see her for my past. I can't prove this, but I feel it is right, and this belief is strengthened because when I started to act on this belief my relationship with her began to improve. This first conversation was vital for a new relationship between us. I was afraid before the first conversation, I don't mind admitting it. I wondered what might happen if she didn't want to work with me. I had learned, however, to act despite the doubts. I had to take this risk in order to begin the process of recovery. The risk as I perceived it lay in a cold reaction, a pitying laughter about my idea, general lack of interest, a repetition of the past. As I dialled her number I was shaking. I steeled myself to sound confident. I had prepared two questions:

Anke: Hi, it's me. Have you got some time now, or am I interrupting something?

Sister: Oh, it's you. That's unexpected. What's the matter? I'm surprised. Is there something wrong?

Anke: I've got two questions for you.

Sister: What's this about?

Anke: How would you feel about having regular conversations with me over the phone, you know, about things in our lives, what's going on?

Sister: Well of course! I'd be delighted, but I'm a bit wary as well.

Anke: I'm glad you want to talk to me. My aim is to be friendlier, so that we can talk together about things that matter to us.

Sister: Great! That's a nice suggestion.

Anke: And secondly, which day and what time would suit you? I'd thought once a week, and for half an hour. What do you think?

Sister: Yes, that seems a good idea. I'll look forward to it. (A. Jauch, personal communication, January 21, 2010.)

e) Early Results

The first step seemed to be successful. I was so relieved. Her positive response gave me courage. My desire to become involved in her life more I hoped would convince her of my sincerity and help us to build a more harmonious relationship. For the first time in years I had no trouble getting to sleep that night, and was without nightmares, because I had taken this step in a healthy direction. I felt I had achieved something really worthwhile. I had overcome myself, brought myself under control, and communicated, I hoped, a friendly optimistic manner. I felt that my self-possession had risen from the deepest cellar to the basement!

This experience of learning from the research was something I could give to my sister. I don't mean I wanted to change her: we can only change ourselves, but I wanted her to reap some of the benefits of my research by being more alive to her and showing her greater understanding.

Moirra wrote me an email the next day after I had sent her a description of our conversation the previous evening:

Congratulations on your success! I am so pleased that you managed to stay calm... it's her reaction I find so fascinating. I think she's afraid of you. Look what she said after you asked her. She wanted to, but she was afraid as well. Perhaps she knows she's hurt you too. Perhaps she's afraid of what might arise out of this new situation... I think the first step has been taken now and has been successful largely because of your presence of mind. You know you can do this now. You have evidence. (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, January 1, 2010.)

On that basis I built up regular telephone contact with her, feeling reassured that I could handle it. This was about taking responsibility for my own conduct and my own problems of communication. Peck (1978) writes: "Life is difficult...a series of problems to solve. Do we want to complain about them, or solve them?" (p. 15).

I reminded myself of my moral aspirations: love, truth, and a responsibility for the growth of my spiritual horizons. Jung said: "[We seek] to assimilate the unconscious self and behave consciously. Whoever steps on to this path of self-actualisation has to bring the contents of the unconscious into the conscious sphere, thereby extending the scope of the personality" (p. 20).

His words helped me to broaden the scope of my emotions and look over the top of the parapet, and subsequently enabled me to analyse myself more critically and constructively. As I opened myself more to my sister, I found more of myself emerging that seemed new to me too. This made me feel more cohesive and I realised the research was having unforeseen consequences. I had expected to enrich my personal relationship with my sister, but I was also enriching my relationship with myself. This led to an increase in self-esteem, and consequently to a greater sense of security in our telephone conversations. Inevitably this stronger sense of self constituted a firmer basis to our conversations, because I wasn't so afraid of any negative reactions. Through consciously pushing through past barriers I felt a greater respect for her, more fellow-feeling and acceptance. To her as a unique person I paid more attention, greater respect, so I wouldn't fall into the trap of judging her because she wasn't me.

I believe that this change in me effected a change in our relationship. It's difficult to find evidence for this other than citing my feelings and the harmonious atmosphere in our telephone conversations, to which my husband was witness (see later for further comments about his comments on the processes between us). I made a concerted effort not to deride her politics; indeed I asked her about her ideas. I needed to respect and love her for the person she was and not the person I might want her to be.

Moirra wrote to me: "I think it's a strength...to be able to help yourself and take responsibility for it, but beware of just accommodating [sister's] needs and not any of your own" (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, January 22, 2010). I was learning to challenge

myself constantly, to drive my own personal development, to free myself from the fear of reproach and to present myself confidently.

Through Moira's supportive words, it's become clear to me that I have a distance to go, in order to protect myself, and not present myself as a willing victim. I realise that I have often allowed myself to take the brunt of her ire, rather than talking things through. It's up to me, though, to change, because I want to. I am realising, gradually, that I am my own worst enemy, and I have been standing in the way of our better relationship. (A. Jauch, personal communication, January 24, 2010)

I was becoming aware that I was blocking my own strength, energy, goals and progress, as I had not followed through any method that would take into account my sister's needs as well as my own. Keeping a diary constantly, as well as daily emails with Moira, comments from my husband, all had the effect of making the world seem clearer and removing years of sedimentation. My imprisonment had been grafted onto my inner self into a sense of powerlessness, suppression of free-agency, feeling like a victim – a puppet played with by malicious overseers. These months of incarceration had brought me here. Only I could escape from myself. It wasn't only my right to change this situation it was my duty as a responsible human being. I had been spiritually ill and wanted to be well again. I felt confident that through the research I was beginning to see things more as they really were. One significant aspect had to change inside before I could understand more deeply what processes I was going through. I had previously thought love was simply something one felt or didn't feel. Peck (1978) convinced me otherwise: "I define love as the will to extend oneself for one's own or others' spiritual growth" (p. 79).

I love myself, and that's why I want to be in a position to be able to be more outward-looking, to consider more the world around me, and in particular, to be able to distinguish between the damage of my past and how I can control more of the present with love. I now believe, with Peck, that only through love can the development of a personality take place, and contribute to peace outside the self. I believe love to be available to us all, and on that basis we can make decisions and take responsibility. I think self-love is necessary before loving others is truly possible.

As I improved upon my ability to reflect on, and enrich, this connection with my sister, I felt more peaceful in myself, and began to sense trust in us both. I wanted to be in the position to quell the negatives, to give love a chance. In further conversations with my sister, I realised I could divert any negative feelings between us, by looking at the bigger picture and what it was I wanted to achieve.

f) Journal Entries

I wrote the following after one of our telephone conversations:

Today [during our conversation] I asked my sister what she felt about the essential moral status of people. I said I felt we were equal in good and evil, but that our actions decided who we really were. She listened to me, which felt wonderful, and then we had a conversation about it without rancour or reproaches, as might usually be the case. (A. Jauch, personal communication, February 1, 2010)

After our third weekly conversation, I perceived a greater sense of peace in myself and greater ease in our dialogue. I began to trust more in my own ability to maintain this better relationship. However, I also began to experience some doubts.

I'm worried that this seems rather easy... Mightn't it be better to forge a deeper question and bring some historical aspects of this situation to bear on our current relationship, as I am sure they are relevant? I feel this would make the research more significant and telling. I want to suggest that every ending can be seen in my life to have a new beginning, because that's what it's been like for me (A. Jauch, personal communication, February 1, 2010).

Then I wrote to Moira about my ideas. She replied: "I see your action research as extremely important. A symbol of a unified Germany, if you like. That seems the perfect motivation for your research, and it gives your work an even higher status."

In the following telephone conversations I challenged myself to achieve a more rigorous self-insight about the qualities and meanings of our conversations and the way I handled myself. I needed to know precisely what she wanted from these times together, so that we might become more collaborative about our aims. I wrote about her responses to the end of one of the conversations in my journal:

I've really enjoyed talking to you tonight, Anke. You've changed, you know. What you said about me choosing what responsibilities I want to take in my life, I found that very compassionate and gentle. You're being so nice to me. (A. Jauch, personal communication, February 1, 2010)

My sister began to confirm what I thought was happening in her weekly emails as well. She showed me her trust by listening to what I was saying, by referring to my ideas, rather than simply ignoring them. Proof that she seemed happier to be in touch can be seen in her preparedness to use the computer, something she had always resisted before. Letters I had sent her prior to this research had gone unanswered for months. Now she would reply within days.

This stage of the research showed me that by having the courage to have faith in her was resulting in a warmer, more harmonious relationship with my sister. I felt I was living more truly to my espoused values of love and trust, and that I wasn't now acting just in accordance with a victim-mentality. I was in the process of freeing myself from the imprisonment of my psyche by seeing myself as a *worthwhile* person. I felt I was behaving in a way that made me proud of my ability to break old patterns of behaviour.

The proof of the success of this research lies largely within me and my sense of a new life. I rarely suffer disturbed sleep now, which had been a problem for thirty years. Freeing my sense of guilt and powerlessness seemed to render me capable of greater fulfilment in my life. Friendly letters and postcards arrived through the post for me from her, in which she spoke words of love and rapprochement⁵.

In my diary I wrote, after telling Moira about the postcards and an email from my sister, about my feelings:

⁵ One postcard reads: "I am here and you are there. Each of us in her place. I am near and you are far. Ah, I'd rather be with you now. In case you're missing me too, here's this note from me to you."

I was so pleased Moira phoned me. I'd sent her the email from my sister and my response. I wanted her to comment on it as a form of triangulation, as her commentary is always so encouraging and supportive. She shows such concerns for the things I care about, and nudges me towards progress in my research. She always responds to my questions straightaway and gives me hints as to how I might widen the scope or improve validity. (Jauch, Journal, January 31, 2010)

On 31st January Moira wrote:

The letter to your sister is lovely. I am so happy for you, and see in your letter a genuine invitation to her to write freely and to be in touch a lot. I think you've couched it very elegantly as well. You've placed the ball in her court, so that she has a determining influence in this relationship and not just you. You ask her questions, show interest in her world and her ideas and do it in a very friendly style. You're showing her respect. (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, January 31, 2010)

In addition Moira wrote about my action plan, giving me helpful advice about how to collect data and evidence, and pointing me towards her internet-book (Laidlaw, 1991). This further stimulated me to continue with the rigour of the research and not simply become embroiled in descriptive detail. Then on the same day I received this unsolicited letter from my sister:

Thank you for your reflective letter. Yes, do let's continue with our Monday evening conversations. I look forward to them as well. You wrote to me something about knowledge and experience. That one can only find happiness within oneself. I will search for that my whole life. (Sister, personal communication, January 31, 2010)

These lines made me happy, because I could discern from her style that she was taking me seriously and that she was looking forward to any time we had together. So although the research was punctuated at times with doubt, I also recognised this as a normal aspect of any research, which relies on hypothesis and trial and error just as action research does (Laidlaw, 2008).

g) Other methods of data-collection

My action research was being conducted at a distance. It wasn't possible to meet face-to-face with most people I was working with, including my sister. These circumstances made the use of the telephone and email mandatory. This kind of data-collection seems inevitable in a world in which technology often substitutes for face-to-face encounters. I did feel it incumbent on me, therefore, to ensure that how I collected data was rigorous so that any shortfall because of geographical distance would be limited.

One of the forms of data-collection I used was a questionnaire, although Moira's (1991) chapter in her booklet on Action Research warned against its over-use, as it was prone to unwieldiness and invalid results if not handled carefully: "questionnaires are as slippery as snakes!" (p.38) I thought a questionnaire might yield some significant information if I wrote it skilfully enough with Moira's help. I realised the questions had to be open enough to enable authentic answers, but precise enough so I could elicit evidence. Moira

scrutinised all the questions and sharpened them like knives, by which I could anatomise truth! (See section headed “Questionnaire” later for more details.)

On 10.2.10 I wrote to my sister:

Our Monday conversations and now the regular email during the week mean such a lot to me: they make me happy and help me understand you. If you’ve nothing against it...in order to help me understand you better, could I send a questionnaire I’ve written, in the hope that you would fill it out in detail? I think this would have consequences for us both, perhaps help both of us to develop our personalities. Of course say no, if you want. You have to have the choice. I don’t want to force anything. (A. Jauch, personal communication, February 10, 2010)

The same day Moira wrote to me:

I really think it’s great how you’re writing to her. You’re facilitating her to somewhere you want her to be, but it’s clearly somewhere she wants to be as well. You remind her of the initial purpose of the conversations, show her enormous respect, remind her how important it is that sisters come to an understanding if possible. (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, February 10, 2010)

This response from Moira gave me confidence and boosted my self-esteem, which is what I believe enabled me to push the research to a deeper level. Whilst writing up this report, I received an email from a former friend and co-prisoner (see Appendix G, Correspondence), which bears on the way in which I began to write to others in order to offer a hand of friendship. It bears on the next section, as the empathy I needed to use with my friend was similar to how I was trying to respond to my sister.

h) A breakthrough

I am showing now an example which I believe to be significant, with an email from my sister, because it shows my sister beginning to trust me more.

Hi, Anke. It’s great that the sun’s shining again. I’ve missed it... [Then a description of an incident]... I feel, though, as if I’ve fallen into a deep black hole. I knew it was there, but I went ahead anyway. I feel really sad. Can you understand my sorrow, dear Anke? Am I just being hypersensitive, do you think? Am I expecting too much of people? I can’t feel happy about this. Until Monday, same time. I’m really looking forward to our conversation. (Sister, personal communication, February 21, 2010)

I then wrote to Moira, giving her some details of the letter.

I think the letter is significant for my research, and it gives me something to discuss with her in our conversations. She’s opening up to me now. I feel I have a way in to discuss with her her sorrow and where these feelings of sadness are coming from. I would like to think we can both come to a place where we can control the expression of our feelings and be more at home with them. (A. Jauch, personal communication, February 21, 2010)

Moira wrote back to me immediately:

Her letter is interesting, and very open. She is showing trust in you, it seems. She is revealing her vulnerability, and that she's showing you that seems highly relevant for your action research. (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, February 21, 2010)

From that sequence of correspondence I then wrote in my diary after our next conversation:

At the beginning my sister was somewhat depressed, but which seemed to change during the conversation to greater buoyancy and optimism. We laughed about everyday things. We also spoke about our childhood. I asked a lot of questions, stayed calm... and was really interested in what she was saying. I hadn't listened like that before, at least I don't believe I had. She liked my response to her letter as well. I apologised nevertheless if I had encroached on her too closely, or whether I had asked her things too abruptly. She seemed to take my ideas and responses as friendly and helpful. She didn't feel threatened, she said. I was delighted when she told me she'd filled in the questionnaire already and put it in the post to me. I really hadn't anticipated that she'd have done it so quickly. I had actually been rather sceptical, to be honest. I asked her if it had been difficult to fill in. Answer: no, not at all. Her voice seemed cheerful as she spoke. I could hear her smiling. It all seemed to go a lot better than I'd thought it would. She wasn't at all defensive as I might have expected. She seemed to trust me. I am really happy today, and now know I can sleep well. (A. Jauch, Journal, February 22, 2010)

I had asked my husband if he would act as a critical observer of my behaviour, tone of voice, general demeanour, as I spoke to my sister. She had in the past accused me of being negative towards her. I wanted to ensure that I didn't give her any false impressions. He told me the following:

You were friendly and open. You both seemed to be laughing a lot. It was nice to listen in, to be honest. You were straightforward, like a good teacher, but not a bit bossy. You were clearly after the truth, but not to gain power over her. You wanted to find out how things really are with her. It seemed to be about whether money was more important than trust, your discussion. You were putting forward the idea that trust is more important. I think you really led a creative and responsible conversation. (A. Jauch, personal communication, February 22, 2010)

I recognised a sense of moral regeneration in me. During the conversation I hadn't been aware of any awkwardness, or nervousness. Indeed I had felt relaxed and peaceful the whole time. I was pleased with this level of improvement and this gave me the inner strength to be more pro-active with my action research. As I entered more seriously into the realities of my sister's life, I found myself more able to empathise with her. I needed to develop my listening skills so that I could understand her even more and enter into her life more. Through this orientation, our relationship was beginning to change. I was beginning to heal the fragmentation between us, and within myself. By concentrating on her and not on what I was feeling, I was beginning to heal the breach. And this seemed to be having an effect on my ability to fall asleep more easily and also on my dreams.

i) More Dreams

Jung (1971) writes: "To an extent I take into account the inner curtains of any backdrop, and that gives me a kind of security. If one doesn't see anything, there is no security, and there can be no keys to it" (p. 357). As I began to take my inner landscape more seriously, I could see more of the context of my problems and distinguish the finer folds of concealed negative feelings within, so that I could push them aside and see more of the truth. Jung continues: "the dream is a small... door into the innermost regions of the soul... In a dream, however, we are entering into a deeper, more universal, truer and enduring person" (Jung, p. 417). That night, I dreamt, "I was dead, clear and unequivocal, without regret, indeed somehow full of hope" (A. Jauch, personal communication, January 28, 2010). Through the telephone conversations with my sister now, I was utilising these dreams to shed light on the progress I was making towards building a more harmonious relationship with my sister, because that involved making a more harmonious relationship with myself; I felt my dreams could highlight this trend more subtly than I could.

I realised that the analysis of the questionnaire would reveal more detail of the growing relationship, as it needed some time to fill it in and a lot of discussion to ensure I was understanding the responses sufficiently.

I need to help her to trust me, differentiate the questions, weigh up each word carefully with her, in peace and understanding. I need to show more empathy than I usually do. Instead of blundering in, I need to ask her her opinion of the questions themselves, ask her if she can think of any better ones to facilitate greater understanding between us. I did that this evening, asked her for suggestions and she laughed, said we don't have to do everything tonight, let's just enjoy the time together. I laughed as well. She was right, of course. Let's spend time just being together, she said. I was so happy because this felt so easy, lighthearted, as if we could trust each other at last.

She said: "I am really glad we are talking again, and that we can trust each other. I feel taken seriously and understood, but I have to tell you, I am still afraid that you could hurt me."

I replied: "You can trust me. I will overcome your doubt of me and deepen my trust towards you as well. I want to understand where you're coming from."

She said: "I am so pleased to get your post, the lovely cards, the emails and our regular conversations. Please don't disappoint me again. You have been so nice recently. I really want this to continue." (A. Jauch, personal communication, March 1, 2010)

I then wrote to Moira straightaway:

I listened to her problems, and to one aspect I was able to make a few comments that she seemed happy to hear. She said I had become more sensitive to her, said she'd told her daughter that. She liked the tone of the questionnaire, said it was interesting. She'd gone through it rigorously. I thanked her for her encouragement. We laughed. I cheered her up, she said, and was happy to write more in response to the questions on the questionnaire. She also mentioned a personal problem about a particular person about which she had a bad conscience. We talked it through. She said she felt better for it. It seemed to be a very constructive, friendly and harmonious conversation. (A. Jauch, personal communication, March 1, 2010)

That evening I was able to sleep deeply. I felt another goal had been reached. (See Appendix H, Poem from 1978, Jauch, 2009)

Moira wrote to me:

You have achieved so much, suffered, struggled, proved, tried out, believed, despaired, and now you are coming home. I think it's fantastic what you are achieving with your sister; you're doing everything carefully and with consideration. Only through our relationships can we learn, that destiny belongs to us all. (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, March 2, 2010)

j) Benefits of the Research

I was becoming aware of the fact that on this path towards betterment, by trying to improve my relationship with my sister my deeper spiritual self felt better. It did me good to express myself through this research. I was able, for the first time in 30 years, to hold conversations with my sister that didn't end in tears. When I was able to see through my superficial responses of annoyance at a flippant remark and glimpse the connections between my responses and the past, I began to be able to see the bigger picture. My inner boundaries were dissolving and I believe this was enabling me to see my sister as a real person and not as a projection of my own problems. The freedom to be myself, truly myself, able to express my true opinion without blame, respecting her opinions at the same time, enabled me to access more sources of love for her. Whitehead (2010) describes this orientation as energy-flowing values, which contribute to hope for humanity.

I was now making progress towards my own individuation (Jung, 1971) and concentrating on the more positive qualities of my personality. My processes had transmuted from controlling others' behaviour to controlling my own. I had arrived at the place where I could say that the *Stasi* and their values were my enemy and not my sister. I had confused the two. Now I realised that the past was the past and I could control its effects in the present. I was setting myself free at last.

k) Moira's influence on my research-progress

I have gained great challenge and mental support during my research from Moira, with her constructive and friendly help. I worked through each of the five questions on the action plan in great detail (Moira would write back and tell me how to expand on some responses to become clearer). I recognised in the way she responded to my ideas that I needed to become more transparent in the way I wrote, and I believe this helped me to become more self-reflective. Moira held a mirror up to my writing and asked me to look at particular aspects, so that I could develop the skills to self-appraise. For example, early in the research:

Anke: Can we start with something?

Moira: Of course!

Anke: My sister is causing me to lose motivation, liveliness. I'm not sleeping well.

Moira: That may be so, but I wonder if you need to view this from a different angle. What about: "I've let her drain me of energy?" Being uncomfortable, is unfortunately an aspect of doing action research. (A. Jauch and M. Laidlaw, personal communication)

In a response to the fifth action research question on January 28, 2010, Moira wrote, "That's really great, Anke, a testament to your industriousness and humanity. You have written fantastically, honestly. I have rarely read something like this at the beginning of a research process." All these positive thoughts gave me courage and caution and strength, when I realised that Moira would always be there for me, day or night. It was like hauling a dull weight from the depths into the sun. Before a talk with my sister Moira wrote me an email: "I'm keeping my fingers crossed for tonight for you. I think it's great how thoroughly you're doing everything" (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, 2010). That's the kind of inspiration I value from Moira. I feel it had an effect on my whole personality, giving it strength and coherence that can be transmuted into something for others to benefit from as well.

I) Questionnaire.

By the above methods of monitoring and evaluation I felt I was on the right lines with my sister in terms of determining a more harmonious and fruitful relationship with her. I was also taking more responsibility than in the past for how the conversations were going. With the results of the questionnaire (see Appendix I) I tried to pin down particular aspects for me to work on. The validity of this form of data-collection will only be proved in terms of the long-term outcomes for our relationship, however.

The questionnaire contains thirteen different questions (see Appendix I), which were explicitly targeted at particular aspects. All answers were expanded on, apparently openly and honestly as far as I can see. My sister's response to question 12, for example, about whether she feels wounded by anything I have said, is telling. She writes: "No, not yet, but I'm waiting for the axe to fall" (Appendix I, question 12). All the questions were focused, however, on one point: the possible fault-lines in our relationship. Anything I gleaned in terms of her emotions and thoughts would be helpful in order to facilitate our communications. They seem to point towards the fact that something was improving, that I was paying more attention to our psychological and emotional needs. We also seem to have a vested interest in a search for the truth of our situation, which is evidenced by her response to the 13th question: "How would you characterise our conversations in a few words?" She writes: "As a great beginning towards a worthy end. I look forward to our Monday conversations" (Appendix I, question 13). A journal entry reads thus: "Our conversations are running harmoniously, it seems to me, a joy, with a genuine concern for the other. I am really grateful for her answers to the questionnaire." I included the following conversation:

Sister: Yes, I've completed it, because it's something for both of us, so that we can get closer to each other.

Anke: I'm really pleased that you see it that way too. Your answers will really help us to clear up the misunderstandings we've had over years and years.

Sister: Do you know, I've really wanted to talk to you again. It's a good start.

Anke: Yes, it's a chance for us, isn't it? We've come to a resolution that is really difficult: we've agreed to talk over the past. Question 4 on the questionnaire shows that. What do you think is the most important aspect for us to work on, about these lost years? Is it our childhood? Is it my attempted escape, imprisonment?

Sister: You never wanted to talk about your flight and imprisonment. Whenever I asked you, well it was principally, because I wanted to understand what it was like for you, why you became like this, I mean how you are now.

Anke: I'm so moved that you really want to know. Yes, of course we can talk about it. You can ask me anything you want.

Sister: And maybe after that we can talk about our childhood, why you felt rejected by me.

Anke: Gladly. What do you think about meeting somewhere in person, somewhere neutral to talk about our past problems? A halfway meeting-point, perhaps?

Sister: I'd really like that. I've wanted that for so long. (A. Jauch, personal communication, March 22, 2010)

I wrote to Moira:

The conversation with my sister was absolutely positive. I am really surprised how well it went. Her answers really got to me. She was genuinely pleased at the idea of meeting me somewhere neutral. Moira, her voice was so full of joy; if it had been up to her I see that she would have been at peace with me a lot earlier; it was me standing in the way, not her. This action research was the only truthful alternative for me to see what has really been going on. I'm really grateful for it all. I hope you can sense my real pleasure. I will go along with what she wants. If I'm strong enough to answer her questions about my past and not get upset or defensive, then I'll do it for us both. I think this is a really important goal. This is the tangible success of action research. This, now. Fantastic! (A. Jauch, personal communication, March 22, 2010)

Moira wrote back: "That's great news from your sister. It seems to me that she's taking your new relationship seriously. It sounds really optimistic to me. Great!" (M. Laidlaw, personal communication, March 22, 2010). My husband said to me after the telephone conversation: "You can really be pleased with yourself, because you've reached your goal – that you can talk in peace and not discord all the time" (A. Jauch, personal communication, March 22, 2010).

A response from my sister about the 11th question about how far her quality of life has improved since our relationship improved, went thus: "It makes me happier, because I love and need my sister. It makes me stronger knowing that my sister will love and understand me again." This statement shows we seemed to be reaching a mutual agreement that suggested longevity as long as we continued to be open with each other.

With question 6, I wanted to look at the differences between before and after the action research. Her answer reads thus:

Yes, there really is a big difference! Before 2010 I didn't really trust you. Today I have this real belief that we both have a chance to have a loving and sisterly relationship again. We are exchanging love and suffering.

In previous years it hadn't been possible for us to hold serious conversations about anything. They merely consisted of contradictions, anger, despair, not listening and half-truths. This situation has radically altered now. I am satisfied with the results of this aspect of the research as I believe it bodes well for our shared futures.

On March 24, 2010 I received, unexpectedly, a postcard-note from my sister, in which she says how much she is enjoying our communication, but the next day, however, I received an email from her, which seemed to be in complete contrast to what had just happened between us. She wrote:

Anke, in our Monday conversations it's just occurred to me that my old fears rose up again, that my trust could be exploited again. When I answered your questionnaire, my fears were suddenly there again, without your being able to do anything about it. But trust is more quickly extinguished than built up. Perhaps it's normal to feel like this at first. We just have to be patient (A. Jauch, personal communication, March 25, 2010).

As I've mentioned before, Whitehead (1989) says this about the experience of being a living contradiction "in which I live out particular values and their contradiction simultaneously" (p. 17). In this situation I discovered the jagged phases of development arising from our exploration of our relationship. I recognised this living contradiction. I understood the parameters of trust more profoundly. The lack of trust my sister felt towards me showed me the depth and scope of the work we still needed to do. If I had been with her I would have given her a hug, but I wrote her the following email the same evening: "Thanks for being open with me. You've helped me to understand things better. I promise you I won't disappoint you again and I await the day when you feel you can really trust me" (A. Jauch, personal communication, March, 25, 2010).

I realised our sisterly relationship was still undermined by the publication of my book (Jauch, 2007). In it I had written:

It's really good that she had no idea [I was leaving] otherwise our parting would have been unbearable. I said to her: "If we don't come back from holiday, it means we've left!" She laughed and said: "You wouldn't do that, leave us in the lurch. Anke, don't talk crap!" I smiled ironically and replied that I wouldn't do that, but in fact I did that. I couldn't stand living in our prison-country anymore. I hugged her and she wished us God speed. Indeed our parting has been for years and years (p. 17).

The fact that I did, in fact, leave her shook her trust in me fundamentally. How was she supposed to trust me again? I am going to continue to work hard to earn her trust. The circumstances around my escape forbade me from taking her into my confidence before our planned escape. If she had been an accomplice, then she would have landed in prison exactly the same as me. I wasn't going to do that to her: I had wanted to protect her. The processes of the questionnaire amongst others had helped to bring things more clearly into focus.

m) Summing up so far

During the course of this research two aspects have come to light:

First, my duplicity with her about my escape gave her a shock, I believe, that she didn't get over. Her implicit trust in me was gone.

Secondly, the oppressive regime of the GDR brought people up to lie and deceive and betray; it corrupted feelings and thought-processes, denied and twisted values and norms, and called them democratic freedom and humanist values. I hadn't realised how much we were both implicated in that truth. Brainwashing tactics over a lifetime tainted us both. The destruction of families on political grounds was sanctioned by the government. Feelings of hate, envy, anger, ignorance, lack of respect for individuality and intolerance were engendered in people as children and fostered carefully through state control over all organisations and facilities. It was institutionalised terror. And its links with our present lives were becoming ever clearer.

In the founding laws of the BRD under article one, clause one: "The value of people is inviolable." Amnesty International writes: "Although the formation of the GDR promises its citizens fundamental freedoms of expression or of mobility, these rights exist only on paper" (<http://www.jugendopposition.de/index.php?id=191>).

My sister and I represent a living example of the oppression, dichotomies and legacy of a disunited Germany as both witnesses and mementos. Through this Action Research I was able to begin the process of freeing myself from this victim-role and overcome my own feelings of trauma.

I believe that it was through my desire to improve something and my unearthing what was really going on inside me, that I learned how to approach my sister with integrity. I developed different feelings for my sister, or rather recaptured those I had felt much earlier in my life. I believe that there is some evidence here to show how far I have come in my aim to have a much more harmonious and fruitful relationship with my sister. The answers to the questionnaire reveal the motivation to learn and challenge myself. My own strengths and weaknesses became more apparent from the responses to the questionnaire and give me hints as to how I can help the situation further.

I believe I can close this phase of my research at this point with a few comments about my sister's responses to it. In order to go further with the research I went to see my sister from 12th – 14th July in Hannover. I wanted us to be able to talk face to face, with respect and tolerance about the report amongst other things. We talked about the publication of the book, I showed her the report, we sat together and drank coffee. On the way home I found a note from her:

Dear Anke, I want to thank you so much for having the idea about the Monday conversations, and about how we could work on our relationship. Everything takes time... We're knitting our souls together, slowly and thoroughly. (Sister, personal communication)

These are strong words and express a sense of mutuality in the outcomes. I believe her words suggest a confluence with my own values of harmony and friendliness, about trust and hope. To me this outcome represents a movement from disharmony to harmony. I believe I have found a pathway through psychotherapeutic processes, attention to dreams,

keeping a journal, triangulating data, reading (especially latterly, and thanks to the EJOLTS reviewers) such writers of humanistic psychology as Moustakis (1990), and the fascinating work of Berne (1983), to what it was I wanted from the research. I believe I have shown a rigour in my methods, reflections and actions, which have improved over time.

Now I want to make a point that feels significant at this stage of the research. In England at <http://www.actionresearch.net> and in Austria's University of Linz at <http://paedpsych.jk.uni-linz.ac.at/mitarbeiter/altrichter.shtml> the academic traditions continue to explore ways forward. I am particularly interested by any tradition of action research in German-speaking countries that might extend learning and add to the political and media-discourses relating to greater unification in my own country, but as yet I don't know a lot about it. This, however, is ripe for future research. I love my native country and feel a personal responsibility in the search for truth and justice in coming to terms with Germany's past, as well as with its present and future. My goal is to meld my own personality with that of my research-self, in order to make my outcomes socially as well as personally relevant. This report might then be of use in uncovering the difficulties of personal and political conflict for the good of human communities more generally.

I draw now on insights from the mystic Meister Eckhardt in his views on ethics, that the measure of ethical behaviour, attitude and insight come from God, but we must take the responsibility for fulfilling these aspects by ourselves. In that sense, love of others and love of justice need to play a more significant role in our societies, for the basis of the love of others, in my opinion rests upon justice. This is seminal to my coherence as a human being. If my report is perceived even tangentially to be a symbol of an improvement in relationships with others, then it serves as a signpost to the future. My hope would then be entirely fulfilled.

Conclusion

It was a real privilege working with Moira on my Action Research. She gave me a lot of her time and lots of encouragement on this pathway towards improvement, trust and strength that I might begin to heal my spiritually chaotic situation and to find ways to move forward. For her commitment to this process I really want to thank her. On March 1, 2010, she wrote to me: "My job isn't about teaching, but helping you to find the best way you can learn." This has been so true and it is a stance which she has kept to in her facilitation of this process with me.

I am enthusiastic about the outcome of this research, because I've been able to shake off the mind-shackles the Stasi fettered in me. I have learned how to free myself somewhat from my past and to reappraise it. Through the action plan cycle and its five questions I have been able to make my own ways more visible to myself, and this has resulted in greater energy. I am using some of this renewed energy to be with my sister. I want to love her and show her the respect that she deserves. I believe as well that the future contains the possibility of further improvements between us.

I find myself more aware of the preciousness of my life, my family, myself and the world. I believe this is called consciousness-raising! With Moira's and my family's constant

feedback some of the blocks in my unconscious seem to have dissolved. This action research has impacted on the quality of my life as a whole.

To all those people living under dictators and tyrannous regimes I would like to dedicate this action research paper. I want this particularly to apply to those who are political prisoners, whose only “crimes” are the desire for freedom, equality and self-determination. I believe that this research can be done by so many more people in a bid to improve the quality of their lives. It is a great challenge. It is a painful process, but the price is well-worth paying. It offers the opportunity to become more realistic about the world and oneself; to show respect to oneself and others and to grasp in moments a meaning and significance in the struggle. I believe we can learn from the past and indeed we need to, if we are to live peaceably in the present and the future.

I am only a guest on this earth, and I would like to leave something positive behind as a mark of my gratitude for this hospitality. It is with this in mind that I set myself the task of being of service to the friend I mentioned earlier, whose daughter was forcibly adopted (see Appendix G). Through our daily emails, I hope to help her become more at peace with herself and the world.

The individual stands as medium between individuality and society and I think that gives everyone a chance to make a difference. I want to learn. I want to help.

References

- Altrichter, H. (2010). Website at Kepler University. Retrieved August 15, 2010, from <http://paedpsych.jk.unilinz.ac.at/mitarbeiter/altrichter.shtml>
- Amnesty International. (2010). Amnesty International and East Germany. Retrieved on April 3, 2010, from <http://www.jugendopposition.de/index.php?id=191>
- Berne, E. (1983). *Psychology of Human Behaviour*. Frankfurt: Fischer.
- Bettelheim, B. (1980). *Erziehung zum Überleben*. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Publishers.
- Borel, H. (1974). *WU-WEI Laotse als Wegweiser*. München: Drei-Eichen Publications.
- Clark Moustakas. (2010). Retrieved October 27, 2010, from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clark_Moustakas
- Freire, P. (1984). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Stuttgart: Kreuz Publishers.
- Freyberger, H., Frommer, J., Maercker, A., & Steil, R. (2003). *Gesundheitliche Folgen politischer Haft in der DDR*. Der Landesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR. Retrieved November 15, 2010, from http://www.landesbeauftragter.de/pics/Publikationen/LSTU_BR_Haftfolgeschaeden.pdf
- Fromm, E. (1979). *Haben oder Sein*. Munich: DTV Publishers.
- Grimm, J. & Grimm W. (1999). *Fairy Tales*. Düsseldorf: Patmos Publishers.
- Grimm, J. & Grimm. W. (2010). *Snow White and Rose Red*. Retrieved November 15, 2010, from http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Blue_Fairy_Book/Snow-White_and_Rose-Red
- Häftlingsfreikauf. (2010). Retrieved April 3, 2010, from Wikipedia, Die freie Enzyklopädie: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%A4ftlingsfreikauf>
- Jaffe, A. (Ed.). (1971). *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken von C.G. Jung*. Munich: Walter-Publishers.
- Jauch, A. (2007). *Die Stasi packt zu*. Frankfurt: August von Goethe Literaturverlag.
- Jauch, A. (2009). *Wachsen*. Korschenbroich: Jauch Publications.
- Jung, C.G. (2009). *Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Ich und dem Unbewußten*. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Publishers.
- Knabe, H. (2009). *Die vergessenen Opfer der Mauer*. Berlin: Ullstein Publishers.
- Laidlaw, M. (1991). A Guide to Action Research. Retrieved November 15, 2010, from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/preserve.shtml>
- Laidlaw, M. (2008). In Pursuit of counterpoint: An educational journey. *Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS)*. Retrieved April 15, 2010, from <http://ejolts.net/node/76>
- Laidlaw, M. (2010) *Moirai Laidlaw's Homepage*. Retrieved May 4, 2009, from <http://www.spanglefish.com/moiralaidlawshomepage/index.asp?pageid=118103>

- Liverpool Hope University. (2010). Retrieved July 11, 2010, from <http://www.hope.ac.uk/ifres>
- McNiff, J., Whitehead, J., & Laidlaw, M. (1992). *Creating a Good Social Order through Action Research*. Dorset: Hyde Publications.
- McNiff, J. (1993). *Teachers as Learners*. Dorset: Hyde Publications,
- MacIntyre, A. (1995). *Die Verlust der Tugend*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Publications.
- Moustakis, C. (1990). *Design, methodology and application*. California: Sage Publications.
- Peck, S. (1978). *Der Wunderbare Weg*. München: Goldmann Publishers.
- Politische Haft (DDR). (n.d.). Retrieved March 14, 2010, from Wikipedia, Die freie Enzyklopädie: [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politische Haft \(DDR\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politische_Haft_(DDR))
- Stasiopfer. (n.d.). Retrieved March 14, 2010, from Wikipedia, Die freie Enzyklopädie: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stasiopfer>
- Stein, M. (2009). *C. G. Jungs Landkarte der Seele*. Düsseldorf: Patmos Publishers Ltd.
- Stollberg State Council. (2002). *Vergittertes Schloß Hoheneck im Wandel der Zeit*. Stollberg: Stollberg Publications.
- The Blue Fairy Book/Snow-White and Rose-Red. (n.d.). Retrieved December 19, 2010, from Wikisource: [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The Blue Fairy Book/Snow-White and Rose-Red](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Blue_Fairy_Book/Snow-White_and_Rose-Red)
- Tian F. & Laidlaw, M. (2004). *Doing your action research*. Retrieved February 7, 2010, from <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/moira/mlarguide.htm>
- Whitehead, J. (1985). An analysis of an individual's educational development - the basis for personally orientated action research. In M. Shipman (Ed.), *Educational research: Principles, policies and practice* (pp. 97-108). London: Falmer.
- Whitehead, J. (1989). Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, how can I improve my practice? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 19(1), pp. 41-52.
- Whitehead, J. (2010, November). *How do I contribute to enhancing the flow of values that carry hope for humanity in personal, professional, local and global contexts and generate educational knowledge?* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association, Cambridge.

Appendix A

Details of surveillance

*Lpz. zMA BV-Lpz. 00716
KD Leipzig - Land*

HAUPTABTEILUNG VI/ ABTEILUNG FAHNDUNG

30.09.86

LPZ LEIPZIG LAND

MA: 3205

BStU

990075

IHRE FAHNDUNGSMASZNAHME IST ORDNUNGSGEMAESZ REGISTRIERT
UNTER DER VERWALTUNGSNUMMER : LYA 2580

NAME : JAUCH

VORN: ANKE

GEB. : 02.02.59

DIE FAHNDUNGSMASZNAHME IST WIRKSAM IM/BIS:

VERLAENGERUNGEN SIND UNTER AN-	TRANSIT-DRITTSTAATEN	31.12.99
GABE DER VERWALTUNGSNUMMER, DER	EINREISEVERKEHR-NICHT ANTRAGSPFL.	31.12.99
VERKEHRSART UND DER NEUEN LAUF-	EINREISEVERKEHR-ANTRAGSPFLICHTIG	31.12.99
ZEIT DURCH HA/SELBST.ABT. 15	TRANSIT-FLGHFN.SCHOENEFELD-RUD.CH.	31.12.99
TAGE VOR ABLAUF DER FRISTEN BEI	ANTR./PRUEF.U.ENTSCHEID.VERF./EINR.	31.12.99
DER HAVI BZW.DURCH DE DER BV 20		
TAGE VORHER BEI DER ZUSTAEND.		
ABT.VI ZU VERANLASSEN.		

LEITER DER ABTEILUNG

GEZ. [Signature]

OBERSTLEUTNANT

E

Figure 1. Surveillance Form.

Appendix B

Socio-historical and legal contexts

To understand the socio-political situation more clearly, you can read about the intentions for my continuing surveillance in context here. German victim organisations, amongst them, The Union for Victims of Communist Tyranny, for example, demands the necessity of an open atmosphere leading to the re-integration of traumatised former prisoners of the regime, through sensitive decisions about how best to tackle this on a national, local and individual level. I can certainly vouch for the vital nature of recognising and taking responsibility for the damage caused to us all. Goodwill isn't enough from our government. My legal applications to date for recognition of the damage done to me by my imprisonment have been rejected on flimsy grounds (Jauch, 2009). Before the Düsseldorf courts my suit has been running from 2007 to the present day, despite five assessments, a specialist lawyer, and the television documentary I took part in in October 2009.

It remains to be seen where these legalistic judgements are coming from, when lawyers are bringing up circumstances that pertained to an earlier state-justice system...We can gather that at least 100,000 people continue to suffer from psychological disturbances in the sense that they relate closely to post-traumatic stress disorders. (Freyberger, 2003, p. 26)

I particularly wish to note that this desired reparation isn't just about money. Instead it's about giving us recognition for real suffering; indeed it's also about seeking just emotional and spiritual recompense and the chance for re-education, because these chances have been consistently denied us and have blighted lives. A word of apology from the perpetrators would gain the respect of, "17,000,000 East Germans, whose freedoms were denied them" (Knabe, 2009, p.22). Social intercourse of any kind between myself and the family, and especially between myself and my sister, was ripped asunder, and by the Stasi aggressively curtailed when I was arrested as I made to flee the state across the Bulgarian border.

It's a political and widely acknowledged truth nowadays, that the rift between East and West mirrors the schism in individual minds, shown by the fact that: "about 37,000 people dared to attempt an escape to the West after the building of the Berlin Wall on 13th August 1961" (Knabe, 2009, p. 7). I am conscious of the fact that only through intensive work, courage and understanding will I be able again to build up a trust between myself and the world, and a sense of peace at German reunification, rather than being an observer of ceremonies designed to impress the world (viz. in Berlin on November 9, 2009⁶). My personal freedom begins in my purified, liberated and loving heart. It's of considerable significance to me what's in my own heart, and what has left barbs in my soul. This clarity is necessary for me for my personal growth, and in a small way, this research is about the moral regeneration of a nation. This is the basis of my action research: it's a process of self-

⁶ This was the 20th anniversary of the coming down of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.

clarification in order to take responsibility for my own life at long last, as I see myself as a part of the lives of others.

Before my political imprisonment I believe we were an average and traditional family. After my imprisonment:

...only when I thought of my family, did my world fall apart. What would they think and say, when they found out, that their daughter had ended up in prison? They wouldn't be able to grasp it, or indeed understand it. They would see my actions as absurd (Jauch, 2007, p. 31).

Yes, I felt guilty about having divided the family but need now to rid myself of this guilt, because I believe we all have a right to freedom, and with this action research I mean finally and for good, to ease my conscience towards my family and learn how to engage in a healthier relationship with them all. A deep and painful rift has existed between us from the time of my imprisonment in the early eighties, which is in turn symptomatic of the division of Germany itself. This division tore apart trust, love and joy, separated us for years from verbal communication, warped the fabric of our lives with sadness, anger, mutual incomprehension and injustice. Over the years I have tried to understand what I went through and what my family went through, and to uncover all the causes of the deep-lying, disturbed communication with my sister in particular. "To all those who were psychologically affected, provable and specific traumas ensued...and this gives us cause to ensure that we make adequate provision for such people" (Freyberger, 2003, p. 28).

My own moral sense guides me to the belief that a sisterly bond has more than personal significance. The communication I want to build with my sister speaks also to a sense of what I hold human communication to be about. My values lead me to place an emphasis in my own relationships on justice, harmony and validity, which demand of me a striving towards improving my actions and insights. My sense of what constitutes a good state and system of justice, is similar to my sense of what constitutes a good relationship with my sister. Both necessitate taking responsibility for personal and public actions and a regard for the truth. I believe that without citizens willing to take responsibility for their actions, there is no fair state. Without willingness for me to take responsibility for my actions with my sister, there is no sisterly bond between us that can help each of us to grow and flourish. When states behave dishonourably, I believe that makes it more difficult for citizens to behave with integrity. My ethical responsibility drives me to seek well-being through love for my sister and with a sense of the general good, to care about the fate of my own country.

Appendix C

Attempts to escape, casualties and imprisonment during the Stasi years with pictures from readings of my book

In order to give you the background to this action research enquiry, I am giving you a look at my imprisonment. I was one of 250,000 people condemned unjustly as a political prisoner.

7x/Pr. Ausfertigung 82

Kreisgericht Leipzig
- Stadtbezirk West -

Az.: 1339 S 158/80
221-466/80-1

ESTU
000110

U R T E I L
IM NAMEN DES VOLKES!

KOPFE
aus Akte LPE. A. 514/80

In der Strafsache

gegen 1. den BMSR-Mechaniker Matthias J a u c h
geb. am 10. Juni 1956 in Leipzig
wohn.: 7033 Leipzig, Apostelstraße 24
in Untersuchungshaft seit 14.7.1980

2. die Kosmetikerin Anke J a u c h, geb. Zaremba
geb. am 2. Februar 1959 in Leipzig
wohn.: 7030 Leipzig, Bernhard-Göring-Straße 129
in Untersuchungshaft seit 14.7.1980

wegen Vergehens gemäß § 213 StGB

hat die Strafkammer des Kreisgerichtes Leipzig, Stadtbezirk West,
in der Hauptverhandlung vom 14. und 15. Oktober 1980, an der teil-
genommen haben

Frau Direktor Brandes
als Vorsitzende

Ingenieur Herr Schütz,
Leiter der Pressestelle Herr Seidel
als Schöffen

Frau Staatsanwalt Dörfer
als Vertreter der Staatsanwaltschaft

Herr Rechtsanwalt Jarosch
als Verteidiger der beiden Angeklagten

Just.-Angest. Franke
als Protokollführer

für Recht erkannt:

1.) Die Angeklagten Anke und Matthias J a u c h
werden wegen versuchten ungesetzlichen Grenz-
übertritts im schweren Fall gemäß § 213, Absatz
2 und 3, Ziffer 5, Abs. 4 StGB zu einer
F r e i h e i t s s t r a f e von je
1 -einem- Jahr und 6 -sechs- Monaten
verurteilt.

2.) Gemäß § 56 StGB werden e i n g e z o g e n t:
ein Brief vom 30.6.1980, zwei Reiseanlagen,
zwei Erklärungen über Zahlungsmittel, zwei
Flugscheine, zwei Zählkarten, eine Umtausch-
bescheinigung vom 30.6.1980 und eine Zugfahr-
karte.

3.) Die Angeklagten haben als Gesamtschuldner die
Auslagen des Verfahrens zu tragen.

Figure 2. Judgement.

From 1963 until 1989 about 33,755 people were sold by East Germany to the West. During my attempted escape in 1980 across the border from Bulgaria to West Germany, I was arrested by the Stasi, according to Statute 213, declaring any such flight or attempted flight illegal. For a year and a half I was sentenced, and served my sentence in the women's prison, Hoheneck (for more information on this prison, take a look at the pictures later), until I was bought by the Federal Republic of Germany in July, 1981, where all charges against me were overturned (Stasi Records, 1981). I was subsequently told by a BBC journalist that I had been very lucky, as in fact many such would-be escapees were shot at the border, and such an act had a high kudos for the perpetrators. Indeed such soldiers were *rewarded* by a two-day holiday.

Kopfprämien für Tötung von DDR-Flüchtlingen in Bulgarien

Politologe beruft sich auf Aussagen von Botschaftspersonal

BERLIN. Für DDR-Flüchtlinge, die an der bulgarischen Grenze erschossen wurden, sollen nach einem Bericht der Zeitschrift *Super Illu* Kopfprämien von jeweils 8 000 Ost-Mark gezahlt worden sein. Er schätze, dass etwa 100 Menschen an der Grenze im DDR-„Bruderland“ Bulgarien getötet wurden, sagte der Politologe Stefan Appelius von der Universität Oldenburg der Zeitschrift. Mindestens 4 800 Ost-deutsche hätten während der DDR-Zeit versucht, von Bulgarien aus zu fliehen, so in die Türkei oder nach Griechenland. Drei bis 3,5 Prozent dieser Fluchten seien geglückt, sagte der Professor. Für tausende DDR-Bürger endete, laut Appelius, der Fluchtversuch über Bulgarien mit einer Freiheitsstrafe. Sie wurden mit Sonderflugzeugen von Bulgarien in die DDR zurückgebracht und dort verurteilt. Viele wurden später von der Bundesregierung freigekauft und konnten in die Bundesrepublik übersiedeln.

Appelius sagte unter Berufung auf Aussagen ehemaliger bulgarischer Botschaftsmitarbeiter, dass die DDR-Botschaft in Sofia für jeden an den bulgarischen Grenze Getöteten eine Prämie in Höhe von 2 000 Lewa gezahlt habe. Die bulga-

rische Regierung halte bis heute Unterlagen zurück, sagte Appelius der Zeitschrift. Es gebe dort kein Interesse, die Staatsverbrechen kommunistischer Regimes aufzuklären. Ein früherer bulgarischer Minister habe jedoch 1992 berichtet, dass 36 Ausländer von bulgarischen Grenzsoldaten erschossen worden seien. „Das waren überwiegend DDR-Bürger“, sagte der Professor.

„Opfer nicht anerkannt“

Appelius warf der Bundesregierung wegen „wirtschaftlicher Gründe“ wenig Interesse an der Aufklärung der Todesfälle vor. „Man will keinen Ärger mit dem EU-Partner Bulgarien. Deutsche Unternehmen machen dort unten ganz gute Geschäfte“, zitierte die Zeitschrift den Politikwissenschaftler. Diese Toten würden bis heute nicht als Opfer totalitärer Gewaltherrschaft gelten, sondern nur als im Ausland verstorbene DDR-Bürger.

In der Bundesbehörde für die Stasi-Unterlagen hieß es, es werde zwar die Flucht von DDR-Bürgern seit längerem erforscht. Den Forschern der Behörde sei aber die Zahlung von Prämien für Tote in Bulgarien nicht geläufig, sagte Sprecher Andreas Schulze der dpa. (dpa)

Andreas Schulze 26.03.05

Figure 3. Bounty, Berlin Times, 26 March, 2005.

Every flight-attempt was a wager with death. Such was the pronouncement of Dr. Hildebrandt, chairperson of the registered association of Charitable Foundations, speaking on behalf of the Berlin-Wall Museum's contingent, from documents in 1953, pronouncing the eastern State as perpetrating crimes against humanity.

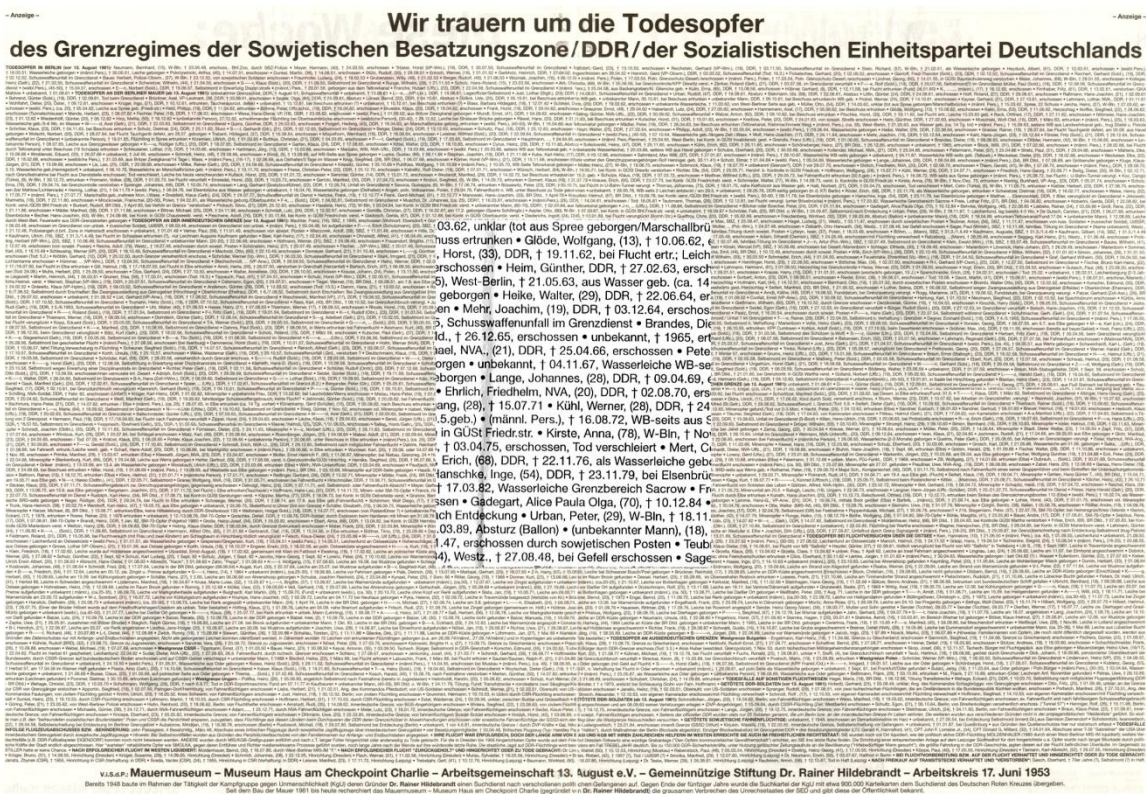


Figure 4. Victims' Names.

The museum documents altogether 1303 fatalities. The principal arrest-location documents reported that up to 1990, 4444 cases were recorded of attempts to shoot and kill or those attacks which were “successful”. This is the draconian regime, criminal, inhuman, that leaves behind it a symbol of what the GDR really stood for. The murdered heroes of this dictatorship are due our respect and honour, our commemoration and attestation to the world for their suffering and sacrifice. I want to take the trouble and responsibility to ensure that not a single person who gave their lives for peace, freedom and democracy is forgotten or silenced. I see this as my moral purpose, for example, to talk about our past in schools, to educate young people from a witness’ perspective, what happened to us all.

Der hohe Preis der Freiheit

Anders als viele andere Städte feiert Korschenbroich weiterhin den **Tag der Deutschen Einheit** mit einem **Festakt**. In der Alten Schule erinnerten zwei Kleinenbroicher an ihre **Flucht aus der DDR** und ihre Zeit im Gefängnis.

VON SASCHA WICHMANN

KORSCHENBROICH Ständige Ungewissheit, Angst, Gedanken an die Verwandten, die man zu Hause zurück gelassen hatte. Noch heute sind die Erinnerungen an die ersten Tage nach ihrer Verhaftung in Bulgarien im Jahre 1980 für Anke Jauch schmerzhaft. „Ich konnte nicht schlafen, nicht verstehen, warum ich plötzlich, ohne etwas getan zu haben, in einer schmutzigen, fensterlosen Zelle saß“, so die 1959 in Leipzig geborene Referentin vor etwa 120 Gästen, die sich anlässlich des Tages der Deutschen Einheit gestern im Vortragssaal der Alten Schule versammelt hatten.

Schon in seiner Begrüßungsrede stellte der stellvertretende Bürgermeister Hans-Willi Türks klar, dass der Entschluss zur Flucht oder zur öffentlichen Demonstration wie im Jahre 1989 in Leipzig mehr als nur Mut benötigte. „Dennoch waren es damals ganz normale Menschen, die sich um der Freiheit willen zusammmentaten und den friedlichen Umbruch forderten“, so Türks in seiner Rede, die auch Kreisdirektor Hans-Jürgen Petrauschke interessiert verfolgte.

Im Leben von Anke und Matthias Jauch stellen die Ereignisse am Ende des Jahres 1980 noch heute eine bedeutende Zäsur dar: Von den Machthabern des DDR-Regimes zu einem Jahr und sechs Monaten verurteilt, begann für die beiden jungen Menschen, die damals kaum älter als zwanzig Jahre alt waren, eine Tortur, deren Narben noch heute nicht ganz verheilt sind. „Während meine Frau nach Hoheneck gebracht wurde, sperrte man mich in einem Gefängnis in Cottbus ein“, erinnerte sich Matthias Jauch, der sichtlich mit den Tränen kämpfte. Auch nach 26 Jahren ist seine Frau nicht in der Lage, über ihre schrecklichen Erleb-



Korschenbroichs Vize-Bürgermeister Hans-Willi Türks mit den in Kleinenbroich lebenden Referenten **Anke** und **Matthias Jauch**, die gestern bei der Feierstunde zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit von der Zeit ihrer **Inhaftierung** in der DDR erzählten. NGZ-FOTO: H. JAZYK

nisse in dem Frauen- und Mädchengefängnis am Rande des Erzgebirges zu sprechen.

Doch auch wenn die Erinnerungen an die Zeit der Trennung, der Schüsse an der 1961 errichteten Mauer und die Isolation der DDR schmerzen – darüber zu sprechen und nicht zu vergessen, ist auch für Hans-Willi Türks oberstes Gebot: „Vielerorts sind die Festlichkeiten anlässlich des Tages der Deutschen Einheit inzwischen eingeschlafen. Doch Freiheit und Demokratie werden heute zu schnell als Selbstverständlichkeit hingenommen. Wir in Korschenbroich halten die Erinnerung lebendig.“

Anke Jauch kann dies aus eigener Erfahrung nur bestätigen. „In den ersten Tagen meiner Haft ist mir bewusst geworden, wie teuer ich den

Wunsch nach Freiheit bezahlen musste“, sagt sie im Rückblick auf die von Entbehrungen gezeichnete Zeit in Zelle „Nummer 5“, in der nicht mehr als ein Eimer, ein Plastikkanister mit abgestandenem Wasser und eine Pritsche standen.

Wenn sich das Ehepaar, das seit seinem Freikauf durch die Bundesrepublik im Jahre 1981 in Kleinenbroich lebt, an die Flucht und das Elend nach der Verhaftung erinnert, spielt dennoch die Zuversicht eine große Rolle: „Auch wenn das Erlebte uns noch heute beschäftigt, so bereuen wir unseren Entschluss zur Flucht nicht im Geringsten“, so Matthias Jauch auf Anfrage aus dem Publikum. Zur Diskussion um Sinn und Nutzen der Wiedervereinigung findet er klare Worte: „Ein vereintes Land lohnt sich immer.“

INFO

Ort des Schreckens

Die Geschichte des ehemaligen, wohl bekanntesten und berüchtigsten Frauengefängnisses Schloss Hoheneck reicht bis in das 13. Jahrhundert zurück. Doch erst seit 1861 wird die als Schloss konzipierte Anlage tatsächlich als Gefängnis und Zuchthaus verwendet. Nach der Einrichtung der Abteilung für weibliche Strafgefangene 1949, werden schon ein Jahr später 1119 zunächst im Lager Sachsenhausen internierte Mütter und Kinder nach Hoheneck verlegt. Mit der Schließung im Jahre 2001 endet die traurige Geschichte Hohenecks.

Figure 5. Neuss-Grevenbroich Newspaper, “The Day of German Unity”, October 3, 2008.



Figure 6. Myself at a Book-discussion and round-table exploration in the memorial site of the Stasi Detention Centre, Magdeburg, 2008.



Figure 7. Düsseldorf High School, Lecture and Discussion with a Year 13 group, organised by the Institute for German Studies at the University of Bochum and the Association for the Victims of Stalinism, 2009.

In order to let you know just how diseased this regime was, the words of Knabe (2009) are helpful here:

The shoot-to-kill policy was valid until 1989. Erich Honecker, Party Chairman and Chief of Defence from 1971, enabled this policy three years after his rise to power. Therefore an “unobjectionable” shooting zone needed to be set up. As before, the escapees had to dodge bullets, but now it was their comrades who were shooting to kill. (p. 15)

Those who weren’t shot, risked imprisonment and treatment as a serious criminal by the Stasi. There was no mercy for such prisoners, given over as they were to the ruthless mob of Stasi officials. I know personally of ten former comrades, whose destinies are still coloured heavily by what happened to them during this period. The organisation, Women’s from Hoheneck Group, of which I am a member, set up this site at: <http://www.frauenkreis-hoheneckerinnen.de/start.htm>, and Knabe, Scientific Director of the Institute of Berlin’s Hohenschönhausen⁷ in his book about the forgotten victims of the Wall, together with experts on Stasi-research, chronicle fifteen authors, including my article, “Home-made Flower” about the unjust imprisonments and their corrosive consequences.

The large number of confined people corresponded to the “improvements” of a dictatorship: the powerful knew that shooting unarmed escapees would damage their international reputation. Breakthroughs – most serious when under the gaze of the world – should be kept out of the limelight. The authorities continued to improve the hinterland of the Wall, such that fleeing criminals could be kept away from the prying eyes of the western world. Captured fleers were designated as the State’s most dangerous criminals, and disappeared often for years, in prisons or concentration-camps. (Knabe, 2009, p. 9)

⁷ Hohenschönhausen was a prison in Berlin during the Stasi-period.

Appendix D

Arrest

On July 14, 1980, I was arrested at the Bulgarian border with my husband. Because I grew up protected and closeted from the political contexts I hadn't a clue about the way power operated in my country. My youthful belief in justice and truth were to make my final realisation of the unjust realities traumatic in the extreme.

"Halt! Passport!" My hands began to shake, my heart beat rapidly. What was going on? We'd never taken seriously the idea of being caught, and neither of us had a clue about what was awaiting us. I wanted to cry, but the tears wouldn't come. Only anger, unspoken anger, rose up in me (Jauch, 2007, p. 27).

On the 14th July, as my husband and I had looked across the Bulgarian-Yugoslav border, we were lost and hesitated, as our maps gave us nothing explicit on which to base an escape-route. And soon, I was reduced to this:

Cell no. 5. Bang! The door clanged shut. Solitary-confinement: the hole was 2.60m by 1m in size; wooden slats for a bed; a toilet-bucket; a canister of water. Just like a film, standing in front of the cell-door, it could only be a dream, and I was dumbstruck. Full of despair and fear I asked myself: What have I done to be treated like this? Imprisoned like a common-criminal. I only want to be free. Everyone has that right. It became clear to me in the months that followed, how dear was the cost of our freedom. These thoughts became crystal clear to me. (Jauch, 2007, p. 31)

My understanding began to fragment on account of this denial of freedom, being arrested on the open road, without being read our rights or anything comparable. Our presence there was all the evidence they needed to take us hostage. We never actually got as far as crossing the borderland, indeed we were simply walking along the road towards the border when we were arrested. In actual fact, we had not by then done anything illegal at all, yet still we were arrested and treated as criminals. This distinction is probably difficult for anyone to understand who hasn't gone through it. It was this fact that began the split in my personality.

Despair, naked fear and unconsciousness overcame me. When I came to, I pleaded the whereabouts of my husband, who had been torn from me. I perceived my own powerlessness: all I could ask, but all answers were denied me. I wondered what would become of us, when we could be incarcerated for such an offence. From that day I can date my own loss of confidence in the world. Questions of freedom, justice, truth, peace and freedom took on whole new dimensions in my conscious mind. And now I had the time to contemplate them, and to develop my strength of character, which I would need to do in order to survive. It was the only way I knew how to ensure that I remained life-affirming and respectful of myself. My trust in others was broken, thus I had to trust in myself. Thoughts of the truth and goodness I could stand for kept me somewhat physically, as well as psychologically, healthy. My belief that one day I might be reunited with my husband, lead a normal life and have a child, born in freedom, justice and peace, kept me sane.

Appendix E

Hoheneck Prison

The Bulgarian State-prison's transportation took effect by a Stasi-hired plane to Berlin. From there Stasi-officials drove me in a prisoner-coach, disguised as a small network bus to an unknown destination. The inside of the bus was compartmentalised into small cells for prisoners. I sat for hours squashed cheek-by-jowl with others, forbidden to talk, in pitch blackness. I later learned that I had been taken to my hometown, Leipzig, to their Interrogation-Centre at Stasi Central Office.

A chart shows how many political prisoners per plane-load made the return-journey from the socialist countries back to the GDR.

76

Tabelle 1: Rückführungen per Flugzeug aus dem sozialistischen Ausland durch das MfS 1963–1988²⁸²

Land/ Jahr	ČSSR	Ungarn	Bulgarien	Rumänien	Polen	Sowjetunion	gesamt
1963	25	41	50	16*	22	2	156
1964	67	39	47	11*	19		183
1965	71	76	63	17*	23		250
1966	52	114	81	4	8		259
1967	41	103	48	6	11		209
1968		67	31				98
1969	386	104	44				534
1970	278	107	76	45	6	1	513
1971	424	125	66	43	7	1	666
1972	918	168	128	40	15		1.269
1973	827	143	100	65	46	2	1.183
1974	496	116	45	31	37	6	731
1975	384	118	77	18	7	1	605
1976	402	79	25	15	4	1	537
1977	492	140	65	11	38	3	749
1978	375	178	31	9	11		607
1979	296	202	49	21	18	4	590
1980	359	201	80	42	17		699
1981	338	159	100	24	10		631
1982	406	232	86	5	8	2	739
1983	288	159	58	11			516
1984	283	153	65	12	11	1	525
1985	197	106	50	2	14		369
1986	162	201	20				383
1987	ca. 360	236	51	4	2	1	ca. 654
1988	568	402	96	9	7		1.082

* zusammen mit Jugoslawien

²⁸² Angaben von 1963–1982 aus Tabelle der Hauptabteilung IX; BStU, ZA, HA IX 2303, Bl. 17. Ergänzende Zahlen aus verschiedenen Unterlagen der Zentralen Koordinierungsgruppe und der Hauptabteilung IX.

⇒ M. Tantzsch: Die verlängerte Mauer
BStU, B+F, Reihe B, Nr. 1/98

Figure 8. Repatriation Table

Contact with my family was brutally curtailed, which was a source of suffering to them all, and I believe now, to my sister in particular. This result fractured our family-dynamics, traces of which can be seen to this day in our relationships (Jauch, 2009). About these night-time interrogations I wrote in Knabe's book:

...The interrogator pressed the start-switch of the recording device, pointed the microphone at me, after which many hours elapsed, the interrogator drank liberally, and arrogantly fragrant cup after cup of coffee. My throat was as dry as dust after hours of answering his questions, the air in the room was torpid, my hair was stiff with grease and grime, since I hadn't been able to freshen up at all from the time when I was arrested. I was hungry and thirsty, drained by this unfamiliar situation. At 12.30 am he switched off the recorder, picked up the telephone-receiver. "Number 2 to Cell 28 to be fetched now." (p. 275)

...I was without a name now, I was X. In front of the cell-door, the uniformed officer said to me in a grating voice, "Don't sleep. I'm coming to get you soon." During this free half-hour I brushed my teeth and washed my hair with curd-soap. Only thoughts of my husband kept me going through the next six hours. I was exhausted, and at the end of my physical and psychological strength. (p. 276)

In order to reveal the processes of a hearing, I'm directing you to an original Stasi-document (Figure 9).

These hearings weren't recorded and led, apparently spontaneously by the interlocutor. I was during my imprisonment permitted to send a weekly written A-5 "newssheet" to my parents, and because I wanted to say so much I developed extremely small handwriting, which I have to this day. I wanted to inspire in them courage and offer consolation for what they were also going through. Once a month I was permitted to receive one side of A-5, as more wasn't allowed to reach me. At least we had contact, even though it was under extremely stressful circumstances. It goes without saying that it was utterly forbidden to offer any background details of our confinement.

In our cells, we learned how to communicate covertly as well. The days were gruelling, and through a series of alphabetical knocks on the thick walls, I had conversations with other inmates, and learned something of their fates, so I never felt entirely alone, then this building was chocker-block with people similarly longing for freedom and justice. That all my knuckles bled because of the communication meant nothing to me, then there was great displacement-value in hearing how other people were getting along. When my peers were being interrogated, I walked up and down the cell, head held high, and recited to myself out loud poems by Goethe, Schiller, Erich Kästner and even my own poems. Those moments seemed to me the most peaceful I spent in Hoheneck, when the spirits of the poets seemed nearest to me. I felt their words as living documents, my thoughts were free, even though my physical self was imprisoned.

Despite the fact that I was in miserable circumstances, it was a key discovery: to sense a strength in myself, an emotion akin to gratitude at having chosen this path, even though that might sound macabre. I realised that the course of my life lay within myself, that my will and sense of self were themselves worthy goals, that I could trust myself, love myself and respect myself because I truly wanted freedom and peace for myself and others. I would take responsibility for my life and get through this ordeal, regardless of how long it

lasted, regardless of what would happen to me. I was going to cope. Those were also the words I spoke to myself at that time.

43

Die Bundesanwaltschaft
Leipzig
KOPIE
aus Akte Lpz. Au 94/81

Leipzig, den 1. 9. 1980
Beginn: 17.00 Uhr
Ende: 17.45 Uhr
2 Exemplare ... Ausf./Hu

Vernehmungsprotokoll

000098

der Beschuldigten

J a u c h , Anke
geb. am/in: 2. 2. 1959/Leipzig
Beruf: Kosmetikerin
zuletzt: Kosmetikerin im Haus "Exklusiv"
Leipzig,
7010 Leipzig, Petersstr. 48
wohnhalt: 7030 Leipzig,

Frage: Ihnen wird am heutigen Tage mitgeteilt, daß das gegen Sie am 17. 7. 1980 eingeleitete Ermittlungsverfahren zum Abschluß gelangt. Sie erhalten nochmals die Möglichkeit, sich mit den Beweismitteln vertraut zu machen. Des weiteren werden Sie nochmals gemäß § 61 und 91 StPO über Ihre Rechte im Rahmen des Ermittlungsverfahrens belehrt. Äußern Sie sich dazu!

Antwort: Mir wurden die Beweismittel, welche mir bereits in Vernehmungen vorgelegt wurden, heute nochmals zur Kenntnis gebracht. Als Sachbeweise wurden mir vorgelegt:

1. 1 Autokarte der VR Bulgarien
2. 1 Brief vom 30. 6. 1980
3. 2 Reiseanlagen für den visafreien Reiseverkehr Nr. WZ 0701048 und WZ 0701846
4. 2 Flugscheine, Nr. 4508109 und 4508100

Anke Jauch

Figure 9. Hearing Protocol.

Through the enduring physical inactivity I wasn't sleeping well, but I felt rested even though my spirit had constantly to work hard. The evenings and nights seemed endless, but I used them for contemplation. Every evening I trawled through my memory and brought forth memories from my childhood, my parents and my sister, and worked them through with great pleasure. I believe it brought me some insight to go through distant experiences and join them up with the present. It's true to say I never had such time for reflection after I was freed. In vivid primary colours I painted my future, which revived my fighting spirit and which I used as a springboard to freedom of the spirit.

In order to show you something more of the rationale of the Stasi, you'll see from the following document about being taken into custody on 14th July 1980 in Bulgaria, and taken to the Leipzig Interrogation Centre on 17th - my arrest wasn't made public until 19th August.

3

Dienst Einheit BV Leipzig, Abteilung VI Vertrauliche Dienstsache!

Leipzig, den 19. 8. 19 80

Haftbeschluss

BSU
000008

☒ Die

Name J a u c h Vorname Anke

Geburtstag und -ort 2. 2. 1959 in Leipzig

Berufliche Tätigkeit Kosmetikerin Familienstand verheiratet

Wohnungsanschrift 7030 Leipzig,

i as den unten angeführten Gründen in Haft zu nehmen.

Gegen die J. wurde am 17.7.80 wegen des dringenden
Tatverdachts des ungesetzlichen Grenzübertritts ge-
gründe der Inhaftierung
folgendlich gesetzliche Bestimmungen, rechtliche Einschätzung, Beweise, Voraussetzung für U-Haft gem. StPO)
mäs § 213 (2) (3) 5 (4) StGB ein Ermittlungsverfahren mit Haft einge-
leitet. Die J. plante, gemeinsam mit ihrem Ehemann, Jauch, Matthias,
ihre Urlaubsreise in die VR Bulgarien 1980 für einen ungesetzlichen
Grenzübertritt zu nutzen, um von der VR Bulgarien nach der SFRJ und
weiter über Österreich nach der BRD zu gelangen, wo sie ihren ständi-
gen Wohnsitz nehmen wollten.
Am 1.7.80 reiste die Fam. J. in die VR Bulgarien und hielt sich bis
13.7.1980 auf dem Campingplatz "Akutino" auf. Am 14.7.1980 wollten
sie bei der Ortschaft Kalotina den ungesetzlichen Grenzübertritt nach
Jugoslawien durchführen. Bei einer Straßenkontrolle, beide befanden
sich zu Fuß auf der Europastr. 5, wurden sie gegen 18.00 Uhr am
gleichen Tag bei der Ortschaft Dragoma durch bulgarische Grenzsiche-
rungskräfte festgenommen.

Der Mitarbeiter _____

Der Leiter der Abteilung Kriminalstraf _____ nt

Bestätigt 25.8.1980 Datum _____ Unterschrift _____

Festgenommen am 14. 7. 1980

Festgenommen von SO der VRB
Dienst Einheit _____

Von anderen Organen übergeben SO der VRB
VP - NVA - befreundete Länder usw. _____

Bisher erfaßt im Vorgang _____

Registriernummer _____

Form 501 807 1175 20.0

Figure 10. Arrest Documentation.

For five weeks, therefore, I was kept without any formal charges and thus without any due process. After months of interrogation my indictment was presented for signature by the authorities. Trial was set for 14th October 1980.

I was nervous. What happened during such a process? I was the accused. I'd see Matthias [husband] again and I wouldn't be allowed to talk to him. And my parents and my sister. What was it going to be like? What would they accuse me of? That I wanted to lead my own life? That was why I was being condemned? What utter nonsense! What injustice! Matthias had to sit behind me and with horror I realised he'd been made to wear heavy, clanking handcuffs. My eyes were full of tears, as I saw my mother, father and sister as well. They looked so sad that I felt I couldn't bear it either. But I smiled at them bravely, waved at them, wanted to show them that I was all right, wanted to give them courage and hope. As often as possible, I smiled at them and tried to make eye-contact with them. The High Court officials entered the room, a judge who wasn't representing our right to freedom *he judged according to the state-laws of course, which had nothing to do with truth). It seems to me that we should have been the judges, the court-officials, because we knew more about the truth than they did. I despaired about the regime that had overtaken us. Everyone present in the gallery was asked to leave as this trial wasn't to be conducted under the eyes of the people! (Jauch, 2007, p. 85)

Hoheneck Prison and my Creativity.

My emotions on the demeaning twelve-hour train-journey were subsequently expressed in poetry. The feeling of pure terror, a sense of being at the mercy of others, of worthlessness as well took its toll on my already battered spirit. Only through rigorous self-discipline and belief in myself did I manage not to give in to insanity and despair. Determination of purpose and a love of self gave me the strength to keep the monsters of chicanery at bay. But I wasn't left untouched by it!

November

Today is the day
When creatures are sent to slaughter
Not pigs
Not deer
No
It's people.

It's snowing
We're freezing
Heavy chains at our ankles
Guarded by people
Ice-cold in countenance
How this day
Twitches no muscle.

In the train, it's cold
We travel long
A way no one knows
A way shrouded in misery.
(Jauch, 1981)

The women's prison, Hoheneck, the barbed-wire castle, stands on a mountain on the edge of the Erz-Mountains, south west of Chemnitz. For 140 years it had already been a place of physical and psychological torture for thousands of girls, women and mothers. It served for forty years under the Stasi as a place of detention and torture of women whom the State considered undesirable elements in their political structure, and whose inmates worked for them in a treble-shift system. And this was a lucrative business for the GDR, as their work brought in about 1.4 million D-Marks. At each shift I was expected to sew a contingent of 1200 stockings. After a preliminary training session, we were all expected to fulfil the quota. Failure to do so resulted in punishment, like loss of post, no monthly visits and up to 21 days in solitary confinement.



Figure 11. Outside Hoheneck Prison.



Figure 12. Safety-net.



Figure 13. Water Chamber.



Figure 14. Inner courtyard. Photo taken on family visit in 2006 after 25 years. My daughter was appalled. There were no seats in 1980. They were added later.



Figure 15. “Water-Cell”. The Hoheneck Society lay white roses as a remembrance at this site every year.



Figure 16. In this forbidden area, trained Alsatian dogs barked night and day.

After the work-shift we followed the military contingent to the mess, and then wandered about in the courtyard. Then we were locked in our cells again. With 24 other prisoners I found myself in a courtyard of 25 square metres cells with by-day proscribed three-tiered bunk-beds, two tables and shelves. Next to this space was a metre-wide washing wing with five basins and two toilets.



Figure 17. 2009. I show the television crew, ZDF, the cell in which from 1980-1981 I was held.



Figure 18. The washroom for 24 women.

Almost two thirds of the long day was spent vegetating in this room under inhumane and humiliating conditions. The only rays of light were created through out conversations, dreams with like-minded people. A quarter to a third of us were political prisoners. We were at the bottom of the same category as murderers, war-criminals, dangerous maniacs and a-socials. In my cell I found myself with three other political prisoners. For my compulsory work activities in the first month I had to work in searingly hot conditions, standing up the whole time, and on a conveyor belt keep to my quota. Later on I switched to working with a sewing machine, which was easier.

It was particularly difficult when the roll-call incurred all our possessions being strewn about the floor, as we arrived back from the nightshift to an inspection, and saw, for example, how all my carefully-hidden poems had been found and destroyed. As the guard watched over me in the freezing cold shower-room, she crumbled cakes and biscuits from my parents into the flowing water, or ate an apple that my sister had brought with her, exaggerating her enjoyment of it. She told me how any contact with my husband was now impossible; sometimes I was punched in the face by a hard fist, trained for the purpose, or winded in the stomach by well-aimed kicks until I fell unconscious. These left not only physical bruising, but psychological consequences of nervousness and night-fears that I have since had to work out of my system.

I tried to concentrate on ethical questions in my mind. First, what kind of people could behave like this? Brutally violate another in these ways? Secondly, when did these guards stop having a conscience, and believe that what they were doing was in the cause of right? And thirdly, what exorbitant power must this illegal state possess to be able to treat people like subordinated puppets? The fourth question that I pondered upon was this: can brainwashed people be exonerated from their actions?

Today, as I write my action research inquiry, I can honestly say that I didn't feel like a victim, who looks back on her actions then and doubts what she did. However, I don't believe that some of the perpetrators have sufficiently examined their consciences, because these people haven't publically asked for forgiveness for their actions. When I look back on these events I still feel the pain of them, and the reels of horrors play in my mind still. By researching into my past, and into my country's divided past, I have begun the painful process of laying some of these unruly ghosts to rest.

The town of Stollberg, where the prison is situated, published an important document, a collection of dates from 1244 up to 2001 with their related events: "Prisoners' ashes were retained for six years before burial in the Chemnity Cemetery" (Stollberg, 2002, p. 170).

Elke L., one of the victims, entered the following in the records:

In 1973 captured whilst trying to escape, put on trial, convicted, Hoheneck, departure, crowded cell with 56 other women, 6 attempted escapees, fifty criminals, beatings, harsh words, waist-high water dug-outs, wooden beds on stilts, prisoners' clothes cut from old uniforms, watched like criminals, eavesdropped, everything relayed to the guards, religious services difficult to attend, scanty nourishment, hair-loss, dental decay. (L. Elke, personal communication)

The most important learning I gained from my imprisonment was the ability to distinguish between what is and what is not important, and an incisive insight into what truth and justice mean to my life and to my personality. It stems from that time, my desire to enjoy friendship and a good relationship with my sister, and also to help those who were similarly incarcerated to cope with the legacy of abuse and captivity.

The University of Bochum, through its German History programme, runs witness programmes, of which I am a member, and takes oral and visual history into schools. By taking my ideas and values into schools, by showing them through my living example, what it meant to be the victim of a rogue-state, I aim to bring issues of justice into the forefront of

young people's lives. This is another reason why this action research inquiry is important to me: it enables me to understand more about what happened and its impact on myself and others, and to put those things right that are my responsibility. I want, in other words, to find ways to heal the relationship with my sister that was so damaged by my imprisonment. I believe only love will eventually heal the breaches that were caused at that time.

On 2nd July 1981, I was sold through Dr. Vogel, a Berlin lawyer, to the West⁸. It was probably the most significant day of my life. I held a Certificate of Freedom from the State's Citizenry in my hands (see next photograph). As I received back my old clothes in exchange for my prisoner's uniform, I cried as my husband was returned to me as well, and I could hold him in my arms again. I had survived. We had both survived. We were now free. The psychological price we had paid for this was the last thing on our minds. As the prison-doors opened we clung to each other and entered the bus already waiting for us, and journeyed to our new lives in the West.

⁸ The number of political prisoners was reckoned to be between 150,000 and 250,000 people, an estimation by a former State-secretary A. Relinger who was involved on behalf of West Germany in negotiating the freedom between 1963 and 1989 of about 33,755 prisoners at a cost of 3,5 billion marks. Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_German_border gives more details about this. The price per head was about 90,000 marks. A confidante of Honecker and a handler for the state in this so-called humanitarian matter, was Professor Wolfgang Vogel.

URKUNDE

Anke Jauch geb. Zaremba

geboren am 02.02.1959 in Leipzig

wohnhaft in Leipzig, Bernhard-Göring-Str. 129

wird gemäß § 10 des Gesetzes vom 20. Februar 1967 über die Staatsbürgerschaft der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (GBl. I S. 3) aus der Staatsbürgerschaft der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik entlassen. Die Entlassung erstreckt sich auf folgende kraft elterlichen Erziehungsrechts vertretene Kinder:

—

geboren am in

—

geboren am in

—

geboren am in

Die Entlassung aus der Staatsbürgerschaft der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik wird gemäß § 15 Abs. 3 des Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetzes mit der Aushändigung dieser Urkunde wirksam.

Berlin

den 22.06.1981

Ausgehändigt am 02.07.81


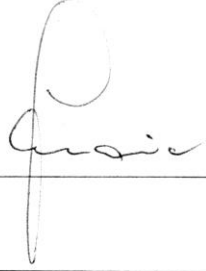



Figure 19. Discharge paper.

On this day 80 other prisoners were being conveyed to West Germany, in part-exchange for the spy Günter Guillaume. We had been sold, but we didn't want to think about that on that momentous day. These inhuman trafficking gave the State 3.5 billion marks and the perpetrators still have fat pensions on the proceeds, while their victims get on as best they can.

The years melt away. Yet there are still grandmothers, mother, daughters and granddaughters who cannot forget the spiritual and physical torments, which they weren't allowed to squirrel away for a later date. The Stasi didn't just incarcerate escapees, no, whole families were arrested to prevent possible escape. So it happened that mothers, daughters, granddaughters and even grandmothers were thrown into Hoheneck women's prison. And it isn't just political prisoners who suffer to this day from the excesses of the Stasi regime, but my own relatives, parents, sister and my daughter are implicated in it all as well. They suffered with me as I relive the tortures of those days and have, God forgive me, brought them into the family home.

As a result people were betrayed, prevented from certain jobs, or any job at all, curtailing of their human rights, refused education, matriculation, travel, became victims of the "justice" system, had their personal and professional relationships destroyed; parents had their children forcibly adopted, suffered social isolation, harassed even to suicide. ("Stasiopfer," 2010)

In order to lead a life with personal responsibility, which is what I aspire to, I want to end this section with a quotation from the psychologist, Carl Jung, as it sums up for me one of the facets of the abuse of power and what I experienced myself:

A big society, consisting of many splendid people, compares, however, in terms of morality and intelligence rather well to a stupid and brutal animal. The bigger the organisation, the more unavoidable it is that it can be awarded a prize for immorality and blind stupidity, and one's individuality goes to the wall. This process begins at school and becomes a universalising principle. It rules everything that the state has a hand in. Without freedom, there is no morality. (Jung, 2009)

Appendix F

Poem

Sister

Sister,
I'd like to
take you in my arms
relieve you of
your troubles
your tears
cheer you up
in your soul
Lighten your burden
things
that worry you
release them
regardless
of how much
regardless
how heavy.
Let me hold you
in my arms.
(Jauch, 2006)

Appendix G

Correspondence about and with my friend, a fellow-sufferer at Hoheneck

A letter from my friend about my writing.

I want to wish you all the best for your writing. I'd really love to read what you're doing, so that I might understand more how you put so much energy into it. This must be so difficult, given that it arises out of great suffering. (friend, personal communication)

I replied the same day.

The strength to continue with this research isn't coming from anger or despair, rather from an interest in being open and searching for explanations of the truth. Several students from Berlin, Bochum and Canada are writing their dissertations about the Stasi-dictatorship. There still aren't really any coherent academic publications, though, from witnesses and victims of the horrors to life and limb and mind and soul of those times, and especially not in any detail of the degradations to which so many were put. (A. Jauch, personal communication)

My friend is a victim of the Stasi-machine. She was arrested during the seventies, during a botched attempt to flee the country; her year-old daughter was taken away from her and given up forcibly for adoption. To this day she receives no constructive help from the government in her predicament as she attempts to make reparations to her daughter for a mother's loss. That's a very telling example of the might of the Stasi-regime and its long-lasting effects. Despite 20 years since the fall of the Wall, no help has been forthcoming to her, and the psychological effects on her have been devastating. Since 2007 I have been corresponding with her on a daily basis by email, in which we support each other, particularly in relation to our shared past. It seems to me to be an ontological responsibility for me to support her, and that has become more the case since I began my action research. I believe it also deepens the significance of the work I am doing with my sister. Each facet of the research seems to highlight each of the other aspects – our Stasi past, our dissolved relationships, our warped lives, our struggle for health and security and fulfilment.

Appendix H

Poem from 1978 (Jauch, 2009)

Alone

The way is long
Grey are the stones.

Stone for stone
Like a big family
They all belong together.
And yet –
Each stone is alone.

It's separated
By the earth.
And only destiny
Brings them together.

It cries
when it rains.
It laughs
when the sun shines.

When it's dark,
It's empty and lonely
On the street –
They're all alone.

Appendix I

Questionnaire, issued on February 10, 2010

- 1) **Can you tell me whether our communication in the last few weeks has improved, and if so, how and in what ways?**

Sister: Yes, of course it has. We're talking to each other for a start!

Anke: Big improvements, more friendly, preparedness to listen to, and empathise with the other.

- 2) **What has changed in concrete terms in the communication?**

Sister: We're talking without shouting at each other, without reproaches, or trying to wound the other. We're listening. We're interested in each other again.

Anke: Mutual understanding, more peaceful, harmonious, no aggression detectable, more trusting, happier, more tolerant.

- 3) **What sorts of feelings do you experience during the telephone conversations? Can you describe them closely?**

Sister: I'm slowly beginning to feel that I have a sister, and detect her interest in me. Warmth, trust, I'm beginning to feel these things again.

Anke: Feelings of respect and acceptance, mutual consideration, trust and feelings of happiness at coming closer to my sister.

- 4) **What could be improved still in your opinion? (Topics for discussion – could you suggest some? length of the conversations, mood, atmosphere)**

Sister: I'd like to learn again that I can trust my sister, but I still have nagging doubts. I'd also like to work together through the years we were separated. A slow return to our past. Insights into our shared childhood interest me as well, and then all the stuff about the attempted escape, the arrest and prison.

Anke: To go into more depth together about our childhood experiences, talk about what it was like for her in 1980 after my arrest, her divorce, everything I don't know, because I want to know everything.

- 5) **What do you think about the way we're communicating?**

Sister: It's more open, honest, considerate and friendlier. I can really sense she's interested in me.

Anke: More relaxed, friendlier, more contented, balanced, more honest, greater engagement, nicer, more focused.

6) Are there differences between 2009 and now. What differences between then and now?

Sister: Yes clear differences! Before 2009 I didn't really trust my sister at all. How I have a firm belief that we have a chance now to have a loving, sisterly relationship if we work at it. We're trying to share our sorrows and our joys.

Anke: There wasn't really any communication between us before. We didn't listen, couldn't talk anything through, always at odds. Now, there's friendliness, understanding, listening, talking something out, accepting of opinions, showing interest, honesty, openness, respect and joy.

7) Which feelings did you have during our communication in 2006 until 2009? Which feelings were the most unpleasant for you? Could you elaborate?

Sister: Feelings of sadness, disappointment, anger, fury, sometimes blind hatred, when my spirit felt betrayed and wounded again. I often felt misunderstood, BETRAYED. There was a lot of misunderstanding there. I was sometimes pleased when I didn't hear anything from her. 1000 times better than being hurt.

Anke: Confusion, pushed into a corner, feelings trampled on, no support, unhappy, defenceless, speechless, perpetuating lies, misrepresented, no time for me, telephone calls without importance, squeezed between shopping, work, life. Words twisted, falsified, never listened to, despised, complained at, abused.

8) What positive or negative outcomes have arisen for the family as a result of our renewed communication? Examples, please.

Sister: It's easier for Mum now. She's not standing between two daughters anymore. It's a joy for her, for all the family. People on the fringes of a strained relationship always suffer. We have for their sake to make the most of this opportunity to put our relationship right again.

Anke: Building family unity is very important. Matthias (husband) finds it easier to get on with both of us together now. There are no arguments about her anymore. I'm not so worried about everything. S. (daughter) seems more secure about the situation as well. K. (niece) is pleased that she doesn't have to defend her mother to me anymore, and there seems more respect across the family. For Mum there's a calmer relationship with her two daughters, as we are demonstrating that we are a united family, despite past differences.

9) What do you see as the point of our continued endeavours?

Sister: Of course it's important "to keep the ball rolling". We're not there yet, at a loving, understanding, accepting sisterhood, but we're working on it. There's still a way to go. I have been longing for years for a relationship with my sister that is relaxed, meaningful, loving and respectful – somehow, somewhere, it went astray.

Anke: The development of our personalities has enabled greater understanding between the two of us. We're getting at the roots of the problem and turning them to the light of day. After a while, if we manage it, we'll have a more

meaningful relationship, one that rewards everyone. Joy and happiness engender health.

10) What would you still like to see improved in our communication?

Sister: Further interest in the other, listening, not interrupting. Working through our pasts. An honest participation in the life of the other.

Anke: More relaxed and deeper conversations, lasting seriousness and comprehension for each other. Exercising respectful ways of communicating, making conscious what it is we like about the other. Trying to put ourselves in each other's shoes. Openness.

11) Can you say how far your quality of life has improved through a more friendly, consistent and harmonious communication between us?

Sister: Yes, it simply makes things happier, because I love and need my "little" sister. It matters a lot to me to know and to sense that I have a sister who loves me and wants to understand me.

Anke: My sleep-disturbances and nightmares have gone, reactions to being incarcerated are waning, I feel stronger, braver, more self-aware, happier, more open, more relaxed, calmer. Negative thoughts from unjustified reproaches are gone. Real pleasure in the Monday conversations. Feelings of genuine interest and pleasure during the conversations.

12) Have you felt yourself to have been hurt by me since the beginning of the conversations? Give instances.

Sister: No, not up to now. But I'm still afraid of the knife!

Anke: I sense respect from her, and acceptance, honesty and a serious interest about what matters to both of us. No, my feelings haven't been hurt since 21.1.10, our first conversation.

13) How would you characterise these conversations in simple words?

Sister: A good beginning towards a good end. I look forward to our conversations.

Anke: Clearer, brighter, friendlier, more interesting and honest.