



D
E
U
T
S
C
H
E
N
S
C
H
E
S
E
E
L
E
N

LEBEN NACH DER COLONIA DIGNIDAD

CONTENT

SYNOPSIS

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTORS

MOTIVATION OF WRITER

CREDITS

BIOGRAPHY MARTIN FARKAS

BIOGRAPHY MATTHIAS ZUBER

BIOGRAPHY BRITTA BUCHHOLZ

BIOGRAPHY NINA ERGANG

BIOGRAPHY PHILIP VOGT

HISTORY OF COLONIA DIGNIDAD



SYNOPSIS

Rüdiger was a child. Aki two months old and Kurt the deputy of the pedophile leader of the sect. In 1961 they came to Chile together with 500 other German sect members and for over 40 years they lived secluded from the rest of the world. The film tells about the attempt to survive as a collective after decades of crimes such as torture and murder. This film depicts the effort to survive as a community after an extreme human tragedy—showing different ways in which the individual copes with the history of the community. These are German stories of displacement, desire, romantic enthusiasm and despair. It is a film about guilt, victimization and coming to terms with them.



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTORS

How did you come up with the theme “Colonia Dignidad”?

Matthias Zuber: I knew the author Britta Buchholz from the Berlin School of Journalism where I taught. She was in Chile in 2005 when Paul Schäfer, then the head of the sect, was arrested in Argentina. Britta travelled to the former Colonia Dignidad hoping to write a story for “Die Zeit” [a well-known weekly paper in Germany]. She was one of the first free journalists allowed access to the sect after decades of isolation. She got to know, in addition to others, the family Schnellenkamp. After completing her research, she called me from Chile and asked me if I was interested in making a film with her about the situation there. Late in 2005, I was there for the first time with Britta and met some of the people involved in the former Colonia Dignidad.

Martin Farkas: I heard about the Colonia Dignidad for the first time in the mid-1980s. Since then, I have been strongly interested in the reports about it. In it I saw parallels with my own personal history. I grew up in a very engaged religious community, whose strict values and rules we could not question as children or even adolescents. We saw ourselves as commissioned and chosen ones. For me, the way out of this movement as a young adult was extremely difficult; really, it still accompanies me today. When Matthias suggested this theme, it quickly became clear to me that I had more to contribute than “only” as cameraman. So we came to the decision to direct the film together, Matthias with his more theoretical starting point and me with my personal one. Most of the people we see in the film were socialized as children into a system they weren’t allowed to question. Because the mere questioning had brutal punishment as its consequence, a punishment that was not only physical but also psychological torture. And today these people still live together with their torturers. The perpetrators were also parental surrogates. The victims didn’t know anything else. And only recently, since Paul Schäfer is in prison, do

they begin little by little to understand what has happened to them. We consciously don’t tell the stories of those who managed to get out. These people do exist and they have cut off “their roots” through their escape. It’s strange, but there doesn’t seem to be healing in simply getting away. The wounds run too deep. And that’s why we wanted to examine how it works when a person slowly looks for answers inside the old community. It’s unbelievably difficult and painful.

What caused you to want to make a film about this topic?

Martin Farkas: To carry a thought further, the constellation in Villa Baviera reminds me of the time after 1945 in Germany. Here the perpetrators, there the victims. The wish to engage oneself in a better world and sacrificing so much for it, joining a community, becoming part of the hierarchical religious structures, without questioning them, for the sake of shared ideal. Searching for the points where this breaks down, describing them, understanding them, seemed to me a very fitting topic for a documentary film.

Matthias Zuber: I was fascinated by the phenomenon that people were shut up in a parallel world for 40 years, in a—for us—absurd and perverse parallel system of values that were normal for these people. A huge, perverse experiment on people. Because of this phenomenon we can ask a whole collection of exciting questions: Are ethical systems simply a matter of education? Is resistance even possible? Looking at this question in the context of the Third Reich, the question is particularly interesting in respect to the responsibility of the individual in a dictatorship. The people of the former Colonia Dignidad thought—at least many of them did—that they were doing the right thing, the “good” thing. That they were even the “bridal community of Christ”. In this conviction, they created a regime of terror. A phenomenon that we see in many countries and groups that establish religiously governed communities or simply want a radically manifested social structure of another ideology. At another less theoretical level, I was simply touched by the fates and the suffering of some of the people in the former Colonia Dignidad. And I asked myself how is it possible after the experience of being the victim, to go on living with the perpetrators. I was very interested to discover that.

Martin Farkas: For me, it was also always about the journey to the “heart of darkness”. Looking back, perhaps also whether I could hold out on this journey, make it

through...Maybe a fearful desire to look “evil” in the eye. Yes, and it was about a foundational topic that interested me: the individual in society. The dependencies and the individual possibilities. In Villa Baviera, as the Colonia calls itself today, everything is extremer, because there is no outside. Even today there isn't, because no one else has a share this extreme experience.

Do you also have a personal connection to this complex of topics?

Matthias Zuber: Naturally this sort of topic doesn't “find” you arbitrarily. Inside me, there is on the one hand a strong distaste for physical, governmental or institutional repression in all of its forms. On the other hand, violence as a topic often has a strong draw on a fictional level. Even in the few moments in my life where I was confronted with real violence, I experienced these moments, however painful they were for me, as strong. I had the impression, that they made a part of my existence accessible, one that is usually buried under a pile of social and ethical mechanisms. Only much later and after the fact did I recognize the connection between the fascination and the distaste. For one thing, I experienced violence that belongs to people, to me, but is rejected in my personal as well as my social upbringing, pushed into the realm of the asocial. In this area it eats on itself—in me and in society. On the other hand, I experienced implicit as well as explicit violence in societies that were somehow ethical and based on rules, but in reality this was only pretext for personal sadistic conditions and actions. A sentence from Slavoj Žižek first made me aware of the connections: “The unknown is not a secret resistance to authority, but rather the authority itself!” Socially legitimized violence never only serves the professed purpose, such as punishment, prevention or order, but is always also and in large part psychological effect. The distaste results—as I see it today—from the discrepancy that a society outlaws violence on one side and monopolizes it on the other, giving people inside the system the possibility to exercise excessive violence, physical as well as institutional. And this although these people have never dealt with their own potential for violence. That's why they sometimes become horrible monsters.

Describe, please, how you experienced the first few days in the former Colonia Dignidad, how you felt and how the people there reacted to you.

Martin Farkas: We came to this unendingly sprawling, surprisingly open area. We were given rooms in a hospital building that the Chilean government had shut down. We were careful, even a little fearful. That didn't ever entirely go away. When we heard shots for the first time in the night, we turned out the lights in the room. The next day, it turned out that someone had shot at a rabbit. But at the same time, this openness, the unbelievable beauty of the landscape, the pioneer spirit and this living-in-another-time also affected and touched us. It made the ability of the residents to live there more understandable. We were very worried about whether it would be possible to really come into meaningful contact with the people and then to be able to film them. At the beginning we were given a separate dining room, so as not to “disturb”. The first people that we encountered seemed very careful and intimidated. If someone was there, then no one else dared to approach us. The conversations often ran as follows: Our guests explained that everything wasn't so bad. Much to the contrary. And then they suddenly began to tell new horror stories. From the beginning, our focus wasn't investigational. We didn't come to uncover horrible secrets or sensational abysses. Much of the information from the stories was already known, and we wanted to try to understand some things better. What are the social and personal mechanisms that lead to such disasters? What does that do to the people involved? And how do people deal with it today?

Matthias Zuber: I went there with a lot of stories inside myself. I figured we would be listened in on in our accommodations. We slept in the old hospital, where people were supposedly also tortured and killed. I slept badly the first night and had strange nightmares. During our first contact with the residents, they ranged from politely distant to rejecting. We were in a strange position. On the one hand, we wanted to make our film, but on the other it was clear to us that if we were too critical, too aggressive in our approach, then the people wouldn't accept us and would throw us out. We were very self-controlled in the first days and weeks, tried to see every sentence and gesture we made as our hosts would interpret them. We made our way into a similar situation to the one the inhabitants of the former Colonia Dignidad were in themselves. Through this absolute spy system of the sect, the residents learned an extremely self-reflective behaviour on a certain level. Many people that we met had an unbelievable ability to gauge our mood and react

to it. On the other hand, they also had the ability to tell things as one expected to hear them. One former sect member told us that this lifestyle kills your own personality. We could suspect through this small piece of experience how that might work.

How did you begin working with your protagonists?

Martin Farkas: It began very simply. We had agreed during our first walks about the place that the unusual topography of the area wouldn't allow itself to be statically captured. So we began to build a dolly for the camera. We bought the materials in the provincial capital and let Kurt Schnellenkamp, the once second-in-command to Schäfer, as well as the person responsible for finances, help us. That's how we got to know him better. And while we did the manual labour in the 1960s-era workshop, Mr Spatz and Rüdiger Schmidke helped us, allowing us to form the first friendly contact with them as we worked together. We started filming these people as they worked, as well as during their daily activities, and allowed ourselves lots of time for this. There were lots of discussions without the camera. More and more people opened up. Maybe the people had the idea that we had a deeper interest in them than they had ever experienced from the general world public. Maybe that's why some of them got involved with our project.

Matthias Zuber: As Martin said, we took a lot of time. Also so that the people could get to know us. During this time we developed relationships to one or the other person—to some, very friendly ones. With Aki and Rüdiger we developed something like a friendship. We talked with them very openly about impressions and feelings. We even celebrated New Year's Eve with Aki's family. Completely privately without the camera. Aki came to us—I think—out of the fear that we wouldn't be able to break down the wall of silence that still surrounded the Colonia. I found Rüdiger—especially because of his own story—to be extremely open and warm. We quickly entered into discussions, and the contact intensified. With Kurt Schnellenkamp, who belonged more to the perpetrators, contact was difficult. We met with him often and began interviewing him more quickly in front of the camera. We placed great emphasis with him in not judging him, which was more difficult for some members of our team than others. We didn't want to present him as “the guilty”. As the so-called “evil one” who took responsibility from all the others. We wanted to know what had motivated him. We hit our limits with Kurt Schnellen-

kamp. And even so, I feel that I learned a lot from my talks with him. The construction of a consistent self-image under the conditions of absoluteness, dictatorship or fundamentalist religion eats away at the actual person and all of his or her emotions.

You were in the former Colonia Dignidad for over two months. You lived side-by-side with the people there. Did you ever have any worries about living with potential murderers, torturers or weapons handlers?

Matthias Zuber: If I had had those worries, I wouldn't have made this film. In your question, there is something like moral judgement. Like you are asking: How could you!?! The exciting part of this project was exactly that, to live side-by-side with potential murderers, weapons and drug dealers, and paedophiles. I live in Berlin Kreuzberg and I'm sure that I live with significantly more criminals of every description. The exceptional and interesting about Villa Baviera is the context. These people all have a common story that not only binds them together but chains them to each other, makes them prisoners. When we came to them, they already knew this. They knew—at least most of them did—that they had been used, that they had made themselves guilty. How does one deal with oneself, with being the victim, with being the perpetrator, in such a situation? It's a moment of extreme inner turmoil. A dramatic moment. In Kreuzberg, I sense around me no significant inner turmoil. There the relationships are defined. But in Villa Baviera—when we were filming—there was a lot going on emotionally under the frozen surface. And making something of this turmoil tangible, that's what we're trying to do with “German Souls”.

Martin Farkas: Naturally we had big fears and scruples. We knew for example that all the rooms used to be monitored over the loudspeaker system and also partially through hidden microphones. We didn't know how much that system might still be functional and in use. That's why we half-heartedly held “conspiratorial” discussions at the beginning. We went walking if we wanted to talk about our impressions of Villa Baviera. There were strange, hidden threats—we felt. One time one person asked if we weren't afraid that tomorrow the doors of the community would be shut and we wouldn't be able to get out. Maybe it was a joke, but we took it as somehow threatening. But most of all, the people were very reserved, very careful. Beyond personal sympathy or antipathy, feelings that have much less than expected to do

with individual moral and legal guilt, we wanted to get to know these people. Of course there was the ever-present question: To what extent do you qualify what happened here by asking questions out of interest or sharing the everyday lives of these people? That means, eating and even laughing with them. And naturally there was also the question after a long, nocturnal talk where someone told us about disgusting sufferings and absolutely despicable practices, isn't it better to leave all these things to the courts and just go? On the other side of this, there was the wish of the people that we slowly and very tediously came into discussion with to be seen as complex people, not just "victims" and "perpetrators".

Do you still have contact to people from the former Colonia Dignidad now that production has finished?

Martin Farkas: Yes, I telephone and exchange e-mail with a few regularly. I formed some personally surprising relationships. To some people more, to others less. We're going to go back with the film soon and show it to them.

Matthias Zuber: A few months ago, Aki was in Germany. It was the first time in over 40 years, since he had been brought as a baby to the Colonia, that he was in Germany. It was—I think—very exciting for him. In addition to other things, he visited me in Berlin and stayed for a few days. I took a bike tour with him and my son through our capital city. He also visited Martin in Munich.

The film begins very quietly—metaphorically as well. Only as it continues does it describe the horrors of Colonia Dignidad. You hardly go into some of the documented horrible deeds and crimes. Why?

Matthias Zuber: That's a good observation. It's true; we don't aim for the horror nerve right from the beginning. That's because our focus wasn't the documentation of the horrors that happened there. There's already an impressive film from Gero Gemballa made in 1989 with the title "Colonia Dignidad—The Villiage of Dignity." We were interested in the question: What does a violent, totalitarian regime do to people? And how do these people deal with their history, their trauma, their involvement as perpetrator or victim after it ends? That's why we only involved the crimes committed in the Colonia in the film as far as they describe the situation of the people that we follow. It wasn't about making a complete picture of the horrors or

compiling a list of the crimes. For us, the people—the victims as well as the perpetrators—are the centre of the story. Work on the film shook my own self-image in more than one respect. For one thing, I now believe that I could actively be a part of an unjust system. For another—I think—it's very difficult to recover from this kind of human catastrophe by dividing everyone up into the "good guys" and the "bad guys". "Victims" are in such a system sometimes also "perpetrators" and many "perpetrators" are also "victims". That doesn't mean that people shouldn't work through the history and the question of guilt, but rather that the future can't exist without this process. And that, as Hannah Arendt wrote, doesn't work without forgiveness. Because forgiveness requires atrocities and actions to each be named and addressed. That the guilt that rested on the shoulders of individuals be recognized and understood. That's a very painful process—for a society as well as an individual.

Martin Farkas: As Matthias just said, it's not about painting a complete historical, legalistic picture of Colonia Dignidad. It's not about the sensation. Rather it's about the attempt to better understand the individual actions of the people who suffered through but also helped to create this sort of story and to observe how they attempt to master their present circumstances—in many ways in a "typically German" fashion.

The Chilean victims for example are almost ignored. Don't this telling of the story and this omission downplay the political and criminal phenomenon "Colonia Dignidad"?

Matthias Zuber: Again, it wasn't our aim to trace the political and criminal phenomenon. There are other films, other projects that do that. On the concrete level of our film, it also wasn't about phenomena, but rather about people and fates in a historically unique, yet transferable situation.

Martin Farkas: Of course I see the danger that our focus brings with it. The danger of downplay is always there. We dealt with the people who live in the Villa today and we tried through the film to release the responsibility for the crimes, including those against the Chilean people, from the unbelievable repression that reigns there. But there is another aspect: We didn't want to present the sensation with righteous anger and even satisfaction, out of the belief that we are "better". We wanted instead to try to get inside the being, into the inner workings of the so-

called “evil ones”.—And maybe to find ourselves there. That is of course at first unsatisfying, because it is confusing and because, after the film is over, it’s not so easy to find inner peace again. But this process of recognition is necessary, is even the starting point for development and for healing, when and however it comes. And I hope that through these aims, the film makes a deeper sense of the political and criminal phenomenon of Colonia Dignidad possible. And through this, that it gives justice to the Chilean victims.

Your protagonists are all “victims”, at least as they are presented in the film, with the exception of Kurt Schnellenkamp, who served for a time the second-in-command to Schäfer. Aki says in one interview: “It’s not my fault. It’s their fault!” How realistic is this picture in a sect that is proven to have tortured and murdered?

Martin Farkas: I think that exactly this rebellion you describe in Aki is the necessary beginning to ever developing a moral system, one which was systematically erased there. His rebellion exists in a context. He doesn’t accept that the perpetrators want to write off the past with a collective declaration of guilt. But I see it differently, that everyone was portrayed as a victim. We took the risk of showing all our protagonists as characters, in hopes of showing our assessment of how near the “evil” is us all.

Matthias Zuber: It would be fatal if the film would function as you just described it. I see the film differently. I get to know people in “German Souls” who come from a totalitarian system and who fight to live again after the system has broken down. Certainly Aki and Rüdiger are more “victims” than Kurt. For us it’s about the moments like the one where Kurt says that his oaths mean more to him than the sexual inviolacy of his children. Or when Rüdiger says that he’s become a bit more of a man. It’s these moments that—in my opinion—make the essence and the consequences of the totalitarian system emotionally tangible and accessible. That’s where—I hope—the quality of the film lies.

The former sect and the mass of the crimes committed there seem enormous and historically unique. To take such a phenomenon on as the topic for a 90-minute documentary, isn’t the failure almost guaranteed...?

Martin Farkas: Of course!

Matthias Zuber: As I already said: For me, the story of the Colonia is a canvas on which “German Souls” makes the essence and consequences of a totalitarian system emotionally tangible and accessible through quiet little moments. For me, it’s about developing empathy for the protagonists. Even for Kurt Schnellenkamp. I get cold shivers down my spine when I see how Kurt Schnellenkamp looks at his grandson at the family picnic. The coldness gives me the creeps, but at the same time I see everything that must have died in that man. I see this sinister loss of humanity in that gaze and a deep sadness for this old man mixes with my discomfort.

What can a documentary achieve in the face of such a topic?

Martin Farkas: Maybe it can bring the monstrousness which we can’t describe nearer in small steps, down from the mountain where it was created, until we don’t have to look at the things that remind us of ourselves. Matthias Zuber: To me, this film is about this ambivalence, this discarding of certainty and clichés. When I go from being creeped out to feeling empathy, as I just described. The author Dieter Welleshoff once said that the assignment of literature is to make experiences approachable to people who usually wouldn’t have them in their lives. That broadens their horizons. I have the same expectation of a film. A film should open up my experiential horizon. It should—at least partially—make these experiences something I can relate to, even those like this case that I’ve luckily never had to deal with. I think this film has those moments in which I can make such revelations and that, when that happens, is its achievement.

How transferable do you think the mechanisms are that were used in Colonia Dignidad to make the people obedient and to motivate them to take part in torture?

Matthias Zuber: Very—I’m afraid. People are rather easy to convince that they should torture and kill others. Knowing this with all certainty—even about myself—and the consciousness of it, that I’m a violent creature, and the active, conscious

handling of it can maybe keep me safe from that sort of behaviour—maybe. As I said in the beginning: “The unknown is not a secret resistance to authority, but rather the authority itself.”

Martin Farkas: In the hermetic of this system, Colonia Dignidad is certainly very unique and there are surely many horrible, historically and politically “favourable” conditions that must exist so that such a thing can come into being. But in the mechanics of the whole, it’s really made of small steps that are unfortunately deeply human and even current!

What is the “German” aspect of the “Colonia Dignidad” phenomenon?

Martin Farkas: I myself am a German and certainly too close to the situation to answer that question. However, I have found certain attitudes towards the fulfilment of obligations, order, work, fitting in, that I see more in Germany than in other countries. These attitudes can be great strengths, but they can also contribute negatively to the formation of such a closed, extremely destructive system, as one sees in large mass in the example of the Third Reich.

Matthias Zuber: For me, the German aspect of the “Colonia Dignidad” phenomenon is the romantic, the enthusiastic, the philosophy of the popular ideology that turned toward horror, murder and torture. This darkness behind all the thoughts that float so brazenly over the world, that construct something august from profits and to which blood finally sticks. This is a world that horrifies but is still familiar. The German is for me in this case the “eerie” as Freud meant it: the once well-known familiar that has been repressed.

Your film deals indirectly with the question of “evil” and to what extent it fits into the description of historical and social practices. Have you yourselves found an answer to this question, or rather has your answer to this question changed through your work on this film?

Martin Farkas: Even before beginning this project, my concept of evil wasn’t something identifiable on a person’s exterior. A quotation from the play “La muerte y la doncella” by Ariel Dorfman, which Matthias brought into one of our many discussions, haunts me. In it, an Argentine doctor who tortured someone responds to the

question of why he tortured and raped by simply saying: because it was possible. Matthias Zuber: That seems trivial, but really it’s a profound basis. People do terrible things to other people when it’s possible.

How do you think the inhabitants of the former Colonia Dignidad will react to the film?

Martin Farkas: First of all, they will be disappointed. Angry with the people who talked. But maybe they’ll see this as their chance to discuss further what has happened to them. Dr Schwember, the Chilean government official, talks about the “Black Box” in his interview. Maybe they’ll slowly, slowly be able to open that box someday in order to make a forensic rehabilitation possible and to learn discernment again.

MOTIVATION OF WRITER

When one travels to Chile as a German journalist, there are really only two relevant “German” themes: Margot Honecker and Colonia Dignidad. One of them hit me with full force: Colonia Dignidad. Just as I happened to be on holiday in South America, Paul Schäfer was arrested after an eight-year flight from authorities in Argentina. Up until that point, no German journalist had ever been on the grounds of Colonia Dignidad—I went there anyway.

Several broadcast vans from Chilean television networks were waiting in front of the gate of the notorious sect. I signed in at the “registration area”, where an older woman reluctantly let me in. A committee of four men came to meet me. The conversation ran much differently than I’d expected. They were very shy toward me, seemed not to know the ways of the world. When I spoke to one of them alone, the 44-year-old man told me of his extensive abuse by Paul Schäfer. He claimed never to have spoken about it to anyone else. His childhood full of beatings and work, he lived apart from his parents and siblings.

It became clear to me: The picture of this horrifying sect Colonia Dignidad has many more facets than anyone had suspected before. Up until that point, there had been mostly stories from the “outside perspective”, but no one had looked inside. And many of the inhabitants, stigmatized as perpetrators, were—also—victims.

I wrote a page 3 report for the Tagesspiegel [daily news] and then began work on my story for Die Zeit [one of the leading newspapers in Germany], writing the story “It stays in the family” about the family Schnellenkamp—the father once Schäfer’s right hand, his children born into the sect. I wrote portraits of the parents and five of the seven siblings.

At the end, many questions remained after many discussions had been held. It wasn’t easy to grasp their past—and even more difficult to understand their present. I talked to Matthias Zuber and the script of the film “German Souls” was born. As we worked on the research, we flew to Chile together twice. Getting close to the former sect members was very difficult. For decades, they had let no strangers onto their land, nor had they left it. To receive us there, to talk to us, was a huge step for them.

Then came the actual filming. We slept on the grounds of Colonia Dignidad, now renamed Villa Baviera. In this way, we got very close to the inhabitants—but this closeness sometimes became simply unbearable for both sides. We were watched, avoided, pressured. Sometimes we were showered with friendliness, sometimes handled with extreme abrasiveness. “Normal” working conditions weren’t possible; we felt our way slowly forward. How traumatized many of these people were became more apparent daily.

I personally lived intensely with Colonia Dignidad for two solid years. Sometimes with ever-changing emotions, I fluctuated between understanding, empathy and also abhorrence. Their fates didn’t allow themselves to be laid aside. Even today I still have contact to several of the one-time sect members. The time I spent with the German souls in Chile was an extreme one.



CREDITS

DIRECTOR MARTIN FARKAS AND MATTHIAS ZUBER

WRITER BRITTA BUCHHOLZ

PRODUCER MATTHIAS ZUBER

CO-PRODUCER MARKUS KAMPP

EDITOR NINA ERGANG ^{BVS}

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MARTIN FARKAS ^{BVK}

SOUND PHILIP VOGT

RE-RECORDING MIXER MATHIS B. NITSCHKE

COLOR GRADING MICHAEL HARTL

COMMISSIONING EDITOR ZDF/DAS KLEINE FERNSEHSPIEL: CHRISTIAN CLOOS

INTERN: JESSIKA KNAUER, KLAUS KRANEWITTER, KLAUS MULZER,

JANA FITZNER, NANCY BRANDT, THOMAS DOBERITZSCH, SVENIA KLÜH

POSTPRODUCTION MSM STUDIOS MÜNCHEN

POST PRODUCTION COORDINATOR JULIA EISENBERG

TRANSLATION BRITTA BUCHHOLZ, KLAUS MULZER

TRANSCRIPT SILKE SCHROTT

FUNDED BY

KURATORIUM JUNGER DEUTSCHER FILM

FILMSTIFTUNG NORDRHEIN WESTFALEN

PRODUCED BY

POLYEIDES MEDIENKONTOR MÜNCHEN BERLIN

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH

ZDF/DAS KLEINE FERNSEHSPIEL

© ZDF / POLYEIDES MEDIENKONTOR BERLIN 2009



MARTIN FARKAS



Martin Farkas (born 1964) worked on several documentaries in Asia, South America, Africa and Europe after his graduation from secondary school. After that, he studied the social sciences with a concentration on sociology and psychology and worked as a gaffer. He directed award-winning video art and commercials. Since 1994 he has done the camera work for feature documentaries and films which are shown around the world at film festivals and have won international prizes. As a cameraman, he has worked on many television movies and miniseries, such as „Tatort“.

Filmography (selected):

2009

German Souls
Production: Polyeidés, Berlin
ZDF, Kuratorium, NRW Filmstiftung
Director: Martin Farkas and Matthias Zuber
Camera: Martin Farkas

2007

DRAUSSEN BLEIBEN
Production: HFF / Pelle Film
Director: Alexander Riedel
Camera: Martin Farkas
Festival Hof, Leipzig, Duisburg
The film opened in theaters in May 2008

2006

TÜRKISCH FÜR ANFÄNGER (21-28)
Production: Hofmann & Voges
Director: Christian Ditter
Camera: Martin Farkas
Adolf Grimme Award

2005

BOROWSKI IN DER UNTERWELT
Tatort
Production: Studio Hamburg
Director: Claudia Garde
Camera: Martin Farkas

2004

STIRB UND WERDE
Tatort
Production: Studio Hamburg
Director: Claudia Garde
Camera: Martin Farkas
Film Festival Hamburg

2005

DIE GELEGENHEIT
Production: Ostlicht Film
Director: Benjamin Heisenberg
Camera: Martin Farkas
Short film 35 mm Scope
Grand Prix from the jury in Angers (France)
International Film Festival Athens

2003

GEORGISCHES LIEBESLIED
Production: Egoli Tossel
Director: Tatiana Brandrup
Camera: Martin Farkas
Festival Saarbrücken, Tiflis

2001

A WOMAN AND A HALF
Production: @Lounge Entertainment
Director: Clarissa Ruge
Camera: Martin Farkas
Movie-Documentary about Hildegard Knef
Nominated for the Deutsche Filmpreis 2002
Nominated for the Deutsche Kamerapreis 2002
Theater analysis

2000

MÜNCHEN, GEHEIMNISSE EINER STADT
Directors: Dominik Graf, Michael Althen
Camera: Martin Farkas
Berlinale, numerous international festivals
Nominated for the Deutsche Fernsehpreis

1999

MARTIN
Director: Ra'anan Alexandrowicz
Camera: Martin Farkas
Winner of Jerusalem Filmfestival
Invitation to Permanent Collection of MOMA, New York

MATTHIAS ZUBER



Matthias Zuber (born 1965) graduated from the German School of Journalism in 1998. He founded polyeidés medienkontor in 1999. Since then he has been working as a freelance writer for Stern, die Zeit, and Süddeutsche Zeitung, amongst others. In the area of broadcasting he has created several long features for stations such as Deutschland Radio, SWR II and WDR III. He has worked freelance as a writer, director, cameraman, cutter and producer television not only with magazine format but also for longer films (30' - 120'), broadcasting stations he worked for include i.a. BR, DW TV, MDR, SFB/RBB, ARD, ZDF, 3sat and arte. In 2000 he was co-writer of the movie-documentary "A Woman And A Half" about Hildegard Knef that received a nomination for the Deutscher Filmpreis in 2002. As a university lecturer he teaches i.a. at the German School of Journalism. At the moment he is working on the documentary "Der Bergfürst" in Albania by Philip Vogt in Albania for the BR. At the same time two further half-hour projects (for MDR and RBB) are in preparation as well as several documentaries and a feature.

Filmography (selected):

2009 Deutsche Seelen – Leben nach der Colonia Dignidad (HDCam / DVC Pro HD, 92') A co-production with ZDF/DAS KLEINE FERNSEHSPIEL (commissioning editor: Christian Cloos), director (together with Martin Farkas), production, funded by the curatorship for young German film and the Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen

2008 Sprachlos mit einem Schlag – Jutta muß neue Worte finden (XD CAM HD, 30') RBB; first broadcasting: 13. December 2008, writer, director, camera, cut, production

Beginning of the shooting to the documentary "Der Bergfürst" by Philip Vogt. (DVC PRO HD) in Co-Production with Bayerisches Fernsehen (editor: Petra Felber) and HFF München; estimated completion date: summer 2009; producer

2007 Shooting for the documentary Meerkampf – Watt in Brunsbüttel. Director: Frank D. Müller; funded by Filmförderung Schleswig-Holstein, co-camera

2006 Beginning of the Shooting for the documentary Der Ewige Onkel (At) in Chile. A co-production with ZDF/ KLEINES FERNSEHSPIEL (editor: Christian Cloos), director, production, funded by the curatorship for young German film and the Filmstiftung Nordrhein Westfalen

2005 Draußen – Alleinerziehende auf Partnersuche (IMX und DV Cam, 30') RBB; first broadcasting: 29. January 2005; writer, director and co-camera

2004 „Liebe tut weh“ – Sexueller Missbrauch an geistig Behinderten (Digibeta, 30') ARD; first broadcasting: 15. March 2004; writer, director and camera

2003 Bauen für Gott – Was steckt hinter moderner Kirchenarchitektur (Digibeta, 30') RBB; first broadcasting: 20. September 2003; writer and director

2002 Tod vor der Geburt (Beta SP; 30') Sender Freies Berlin, first broadcasting: 26. October 2002; writer and director

Unter Druck – Mitch Frankes Traum vom Baseball (Digi-Beta, 25') Deutsche Welle TV, first broadcasting: 10. June 2002; writer, director and camera

2001 Hinter Kirchenmauern – Flüchtlinge suchen Asyl (Beta SP; 30') Sender Freies Berlin; first broadcasting: 22. December 2001; writer and director

Illegale Kinder (Beta SP; 30') Sender Freies Berlin; first broadcasting: 24. March 2001; writer and director

2000 That's a Woman and a Half - Hildegard Knef movie-documentary 90'; director: Clarissa Ruge, Berlinale 2001, Nomination Deutscher Filmpreis 2001, co-writer and directing consultant for Berlin, Munich, New York, Los Angeles

1999 Im Schatten der verbotenen Stadt - Beobachtungen in Wunsdorf; Sender Freies Berlin (Digi-Beta und Beta SP; 30'); first broadcasting: 2. October 1999; writer, director and production

BRITTA BUCHHOLZ



Britta Buchholz, born in 1977 in Nienburg, in Lower Saxony, Germany, is the ZDF editor for domestic, social and educational policy with a focus on elections and political conventions. From 1998 until 2004 she studied German linguistics, Spanish and business studies in Berlin, Barcelona and Bielefeld. She completed her internship at the Berlin School of Journalism in 2005, followed by further work experience at SPIEGEL, Focus and ZDF. After her internship Britta Buchholz worked as a freelance writer in Berlin for a year. During this time she published reportages about Colonia Dignidad in Chile in the Tagesspiegel and DIE ZEIT. The idea and script for the documentary “German Souls” originate from this work.

NINA ERGANG



Alongside her studies in Theatre Science at Ludwig-Maximilian-University, Nina Ergang works with students at the School for Television and Film in Munich on the set and in the cutting room. In the 1980s, she was co-director for more than 60 episodes of Hans W. Geissendörfer’s „Lindenstraße“. Since then, she has been cutting movies, television shows, and documentaries, and supervises the cutting room at the HFF.

Some of her most important early works include: “Adios al Odio” and “Lani und Seinen” with Werner Penzel and Nicolas Humbert; “Von Gewalt keine Rede” with Theodor Kotulla in 1990; and “Donnerstag auf Kanal 4”, a compilation programm that received the 1991 Grimme Prize. Then came evening-filling documentaries: in 1991 “Celibidache” under the direction of Jan Schmidt-Garre, in 1992 “Celibidache—The triumphant return” under the direction of Wolfgang Becker, in 1992 also “La Musica é Quattro” directed by Rolaie Schweitzer, and television and theatre films with such people as Theodor Kotulla: “Nacht der Frauen”, a three-part miniseries for ZDF, and “Tot auf Halde”, as well as “Küss mich!” in 1995 and “Die Liebesdienerin” in 1997 with Maris Pfeiffer (director). Nina Ergang cut “Tatorte” with Markus Fischer (1995 and 1996); Niki Stein’s theatre film “Still Movin” and Thomas Freundner’s “Traumfrau mit Nebenwirkungen” (1998); “Up and Dancing—the Magic Stilts of Trinidad” and “Akini”, both directed by Harald Rumpf. Together with Alexander Adolpf, she created the 2006 documentary “Die Hochstapler” as co-director and cutter.

PHILIP VOGT



Born 1977 in Heidelberg, lives in Berlin.

Philip Vogt is a filmmaker, camera operator and sound mixer. He began studying documentary films and television publication at the School for Television and Film in Munich in 1999. At the moment, he is busy with post-production work on his graduation film "Der Bergfürst" (produced by polyeides medienkontor and HFF München for the BR, sponsored by FFF). He was responsible for the sound in such films as "Draußen bleiben" by Alexander Riedel (which won the prize of a youth panel from the film school in Leipzig e. V., 2007 FFF Developmental Prize) and "Cosmic Station" (also lighting, awarded many prizes including the German Short Film Prize in 2008), both directed by Bettina Timm.

As a camera operator, he worked on "Castells" directed by Gereon Wetzels (second camera, HFF/BR, won the 2006 Main Prize at the International Documentary Film Festival in Munich), "Wiedergeboren in Westfalen" by Melanie Liebheit (90 minutes, HFF/WDR) and "Nemashim" (directed by David Vogel, in post-production), as well as other films.



HISTORY OF COLONIA DIGNIDAD

1956

Paul Schäfer founded the “Private Social Mission”, a home and school for children of sect members, in Siegburg near Bonn. In Lohmar-Heide, the developing sect built its community building. To the outside world, they appeared to be a happy congregation that officially ran a youth home. But appearances and facts began to diverge. Slowly but surely, Schäfer’s followers had to give up their family ties completely. A “free Christian” could serve God better, according to Schäfer. Here as it had already been in the youth group, the most intimate “confessions” were required. As sect leader, Schäfer required sexual asceticism from his believers; as a dominant paedophile, he sexually abused young boys. The group showed itself early as capable of turning a profit. Grocery stores were founded. The members of the sect had to work hard without earning wages for their work.

1961

After the beginning of an investigation by the public attorney’s office on suspicion of sexual abuse, the members of the sect fled to Chile, where the Colonia Dignidad was founded in 1961. Schäfer drew people to him with his “return to the roots of a Christian life in the promised land” and scared many other hesitant or fearful followers with rumours of a threatening Russian invasion into Germany. In just a few years, a “model community” of about 15,000 hectares of fenced-in land was formed through untiringly driven work. The German settlers built roads and bridges and dug a gold mine and a titanium mine. Early on, a hospital was opened as the figurehead of the community, in order to provide residents with free medical care. The children of Chilean farmers were the ones who wound up paying for it. Colonia Dignidad offered young boys food and education through the Colonia’s boarding school. If the parents accepted, then the best-looking boys landed in Schäfer’s bed.

1966

The first two Germans fled the Colonia. They told tales of forced labour and child abuse. No one believed them.

1973

After the Chilean coups of 1973, the German National Socialist Hans-Ulrich Rudel settled there. The Colonia was outfitted as the operational basis of Pinochet's secret service DINA. It was also the base for the ANDREA project (Alianza Nacionalista de Repúblicas Americanas, English: National Alliance of American Republics). This project was aimed at the cooperation of Latin American national socialists, secret service agents, and anti-Semites with extreme right tendencies.

1977

UNICEF and Amnesty International began tracking the "settlement" of about 350 people in 1977. Escaped occupants reported believably that the Colonia was used as a torture centre for decades by the Chilean secret service during the Pinochet regime. Later, it came out that Chilean citizens were held captive and used as forced labourers in Colonia Dignidad. In the "tradition" of German concentration camps, medical experiments were performed on captives. Children of the sect community were regularly abused.

1990

In the 1990s, there were several court trials that appeared up to the level of the fourth Senate of the German Social Court. Expatriate German sect members claimed retirement benefits, which the Retirement Insurance Carrier had trouble paying out. This led to the on-going suspicion that the inhabitants were not allowed control over their own earnings, rather that any money brought in lined the pockets of the Colonial leadership.

1996

81-year-old Paul Schäfer disappeared. All attempts to this point by the now democratic Chile to bring the enclave under control had failed. Claimed reasons for this included the complexity and loyalty of the old secret services, the local police and other important powers, and the lack of overview caused by the huge area of the Colonia. Near Talca, the Colonia ran a German restaurant in order to acquire foreign currency. Photographs of police actions against the sect were displayed there as well.

2004

On 17 November 2004, a Chilean court found Schäfer, the once "Master of Life and Death", guilty of the sexual abuse of 27 children, though he was not present. 22 other Chilean and German members of the Colonia were found guilty of keeping the abuse secret and obstructing justice. They were sentenced to up to five years in prison. In addition, the Colonia had to pay 549 million pesos (691,000 euro) in damages to the victims and their families. The lawyer for the defendants declared that they would appeal.

2005

On 10 May 2005, Paul Schäfer was arrested in Argentina. Two days later, Schäfer was extradited to Chile. During the night of 28 August 2005, the Colonia was put under state control by Chilean authorities. Lawyer Herman Chadwick took over the running of their companies. Colonia Dignidad exists today under the name "Villa Baviera". About 200 members of the sect still live there on a roughly 140-square-kilometre, strictly enclosed area. Many of them are now aged German expatriates who don't speak Spanish and live fully isolated in Chile.



GERMAN SOULS – LIFE AFTER THE COLONIA DIGNIDAD

DOCUMENTARY 2009

BY MARTIN FARKAS AND MATTHIAS ZUBER

92 MINUTES / COLOR / 1:1.85 / STEREO / HD

A PRODUCTION BY

POLYEIDES MEDIENKONTOR MÜNCHEN BERLIN

© 2009

www.deutsche-seelen.de

polyeides medienkontor münchen berlin

Matthias Zuber

Lausitzer Platz 11

10997 Berlin

Tel.: 030 - 26 55 36 20

Fax: 030 - 26 55 36 21

mail@polyeides.de

www.polyeides.de

