

Svarc.Film presents

2 or 3 Things I Know About Him

A documentary by
Malte Ludin

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Synopsis

The stuff of a German family's memories. The central figure is Hanns Elard Ludin – a dedicated Nazi and SA-leader, an ambitious functionary in the Hitler state, but also a kind of larger-than-life axis on which the family turned. Hanns Ludin was sent to Slovakia by Hitler in 1941 as his ambassador and minister representing the Greater German Reich. On December 9, 1947 Hanns Ludin was sentenced to death as a war criminal in Bratislava and executed.

Malte Ludin, director of the film *2 or 3 Things I Know About Him*, is Hanns Ludin's youngest son. Born in 1942, he hardly knew his father. His father's story was a repressed and therefore ever-present shadow on him, his mother, his four sisters, his brother, and even the third generation of his nieces and nephews. A kind of unquestioned oath of silence had built up around this dark spot. And yet, in their own very different ways, each of the family members relate to their father, husband, grandfather and thus to his historical role.

The subject of the father could never be a neutral thing within the family, whose own fictions contradicted the documented proof all too clearly; cognitive processes clashed too violently with emotional ones; the friction between family loyalty and general historical attitudes proved all too unpleasant.

Malte Ludin's film is a document as well as a monument. It takes the silence, the glossing-over and repression which marked the family history for 60 years, and turns it into something productive by pursuing the subject offensively, working out and contrasting its differences. Malte Ludin neither can nor wants to be, a neutral, let alone a self-righteous, observer; he rather introduces himself as a protagonist in the project he initiated. It is a project which stirs up conflicts, injuries, and pain in all those affected, including himself, even after all this time.

In this context, face-to-face meetings with his father's victims seem like self-imposed tests. They are key moments in the film. *2 or 3 Things I Know About Him* is a counterpoint and many-voiced debate on historical and family truth. This is the first time the entire family of a prominent Nazi has been prepared to deal with the past in this way.

A highly emotional testimony from those born after the war, the second and third generation. Private and yet a telling example. For how many other German families are there in which the postwar processes of memory would have been any different?

The Family

Hanns Elard Ludin

Friedrich, his father, a senior grammar school teacher

Johanna, his mother, a painter

Erla, nee. von Jordan, his wife (1905 – 1997)

Erika (Eri), his eldest daughter, a photographer (1933 - 1998)

Barbara (Barbel), his second daughter, a book dealer (* 1935)

Ellen, his third daughter, a journalist (*1937)

Tilman (Tille), his eldest son, a businessman (1939 – 1999)

Malte, his youngest son, a filmmaker (* 1942)

Andrea (Dreli), his youngest daughter, a gallery owner (* 1943)

Heiner, Eri's husband, (divorced)

Alexandra, daughter of Eri and Heiner

Heiner jun., son of Eri und Heiner

Astrid, daughter of Tilman und his wife Esther

Fedor, Ellen's husband

Fabian, son of Ellen and Fedor

Ada, daughter of Ellen and Fedor

Elmar, Barbel's husband

Benita, daughter of Barbel and Elmar

Garan, her husband

Malte jun., son of Barbel and Elmar

Who was Hanns Ludin? (I)

Ludin, Hanns Elard (1905 – 1947), German diplomat in Slovakia.

"Ludin [who had served as an officer in the German army until 1930,] joined the Nazi party in 1930 and the SA (Sturmabteilung; Storm Troopers) in 1931. He was among a group of prominent SA men who survived the "Night of the Long Knives" of June 1934 and were appointed ambassadors to Germany's eastern European allies and satellites during World War II.

[Ludin became Germany's ambassador to Slovakia on September 13, 1941.] ... before his appointment a system of German advisers had already been established. These German advisers, such as Dieter Wisliceny for Jewish affairs, received their instructions and salaries from their superiors in Berlin, and used the German embassy as little more than a convenient postbox.

In February 1942, however, Ludin conveyed to the Slovak government Heinrich Himmler's request for 20,000 strong, young Jews to work in the east ... In late March he again relayed a German request, for the deportation of all the remaining Slovak Jews, and reported back that the Slovak government had agreed "without any German pressure." [In April 1942, Ludin headed negotiations on the whereabouts of Jewish property. When growing Slovak reluctance brought the deportations to a near standstill that June, Ludin expressly called for the removal of all Jews.] Further negotiations concerning the deportation of Slovak Jews were left in the hands of the Jewish adviser, Wisliceny, and then of the Foreign Office troubleshooter, Edmund Veesenmayer, in 1943, but without result. Following the Slovak national uprising in 1944, however, the SS carried out further deportations, for which Ludin provided diplomatic support. Ludin was tried in Czechoslovakia in 1946 and executed in Bratislava in 1947."

Extract from:

Israel Gutman (ed.) Encyclopedia of the Holocaust©1990 Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, NY 10022.

Additional details from the German edition:

Christopher Browning. In: Israel Gutman, Eberhard Jäckel, Peter Longerich, Enzyklopädie des Holocaust. Piper Verlag, Munich 1998. Four volumes. p. 908. (Special edition available through 2001 Buchversand).

Malte Ludin, director

Born 1942 in Bratislava (CSR).

Finished school at Schloss Salem/Lake Constance.

Studied political studies in Tübingen and at the Otto Suhr Institut, FU Berlin.

1968 diploma in political studies.

1969-1970 work experience at radio station Sender Freies Berlin.

1970-1974 studies at the Deutsche Film und Fernsehakademie Berlin (DFFB).

Diploma film: "Kennen Sie Fernsehen?", which opened the XXIV Internationale Mannheimer Filmwoche 1974.

Since 1976 freelance author and film maker, including:

Producer at Polyphon Film, Studio Hamburg,

Lecturer at the Deutsche Film und Fernsehakademie (DFFB),

FFA scholarship at Pro Video, Berlin and Third Coast Studios Austin, Texas, USA,

Tutor at the DFFB.

Since 1990 managing partner in Svarc.Filmproduktion, Berlin.

Publications:

- Essays on Joris Evens, Luis Bunuel, Charlie Chaplin, Siegfried Kracauer, Leni Riefenstahl (among others).
- Movie, TV, and book reviews for newspapers and magazines (Der Monat, Frankfurter Rundschau, Frankfurter Hefte, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, medium, ZOOM, Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt among others) and radio (SFB, Rias, SWR, WDR).
- Radio features and reports (SFB, SWR, WDR).
- Book: WOLFGANG STAUDTE, Rowohlt Verlag.

Films (selection)

- „2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß" (2 or 3 Things I know About Him)
Documentary, screenplay & directing, Deutschland 2004,
- „1/4 Blues"
Documentary video, screenplay & directing, production 2003.
- „Als Großvater Rita Hayworth liebte" (When Grandpa Loved Rita Hayworth)
Feature, producer, 1999/2000.
Max Ophüls Preis 2001, FIPRESCI 2001, Grand Prix Sochi Prix Europa 2001.
- „Blick aus dem Fenster"
Children's feature, producer, ZDF 1995.
Golden Gate Award, San Francisco 1995 among others.
- „Böhmische Dörfer"
Screenplay & directing, production, short feature, Czech Republic, 1995.
International Documentary Festival Munich 1996, International Documentary Festival Oberhausen 1995, International Film Festival Karlovy Vary 1995.
- „Mulo, eine Zigeunergeschichte"
Children's feature, producer, ZDF 1993.
Prix Futura 1993.

- *„Schalom Tatjana“*
Children's feature, producer, Ukraine, ZDF 1992, repeated: 1993/1994/1995.
- *„Keine Experimente. Filmzensur in der Ära Adenauer“*
Documentary, screenplay & directing, production, ZDF 1989.
- *„Die Frau seines Lebens“*
Short feature, producer, Rom, Villa D'Este 1990.
Bundeskurzfilmpreis 1991, among others.
- *„Karel Capek“*
Short feature, screenplay & directing, Czech Republic, WDR 1990.
LiteraVision, Munich 1991.
- *„John Cheever“*
Literary film portrait, screenplay & directing, WDR 1990.
- *„Witold Gombrowitz“*
Literary film portrait, screenplay & directing, WDR 1990.
- *„Keine Experimente. Filmzensur in der Ära Adenauer“*
Documentary, screenplay & directing, production, ZDF 1989.
- *„Videobrief aus Buenos Aires“*
DokumentarHi-8, screenplay & directing, Argentina, ARD 1987.
XXXVIIIth Berlin International Film Festival Berlin.
- *„Trümmerfilme“*
Documentary, screenplay & directing, ZDF 1986.
- *„Fabrik zum Selbermachen“*
Documentary, screenplay & directing, WDR 1985.
- *„Zoom ins Ungewisse“*
Documentary, screenplay & directing, SFB 1983.
- *„Flusslandschaft und nasses Grab“*
Feature, screenplay & directing, ARD 1983.
- *„Das donnernde Geschäft“*
Feature, screenplay & directing, ARD 1983.
- *„Mayers Traum“ oder das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter
seiner technologischen Reproduzierbarkeit“*
1 inch video, screenplay & directing, ARD 1982.
Preis der Photokina Cologne 1982, 1.Metropoles Film- u. Videofestival
Munich 1983.
- *„Die Revolution findet nicht im Kino statt“*
Film essay, screenplay & directing, WDR 1979.
- *„Stabile Preise“*
Co-Author & Co-director with R. Hoffmeister, ZDF 1978.
Observations on the Adolf-Grimme competition, Feature.
- *„Kein Untertan. Wolfgang Staudte und seine Filme“*
Documentary, screenplay & directing, ZDF 1977.
- *„Energie für Euro 9“*
Documentary, screenplay & directing, ZDF, 1976.
- *„Kennen Sie Fernsehen?“*
Satire, screenplay & directing, DFFB diploma film.
Opening film at the Internationale Mannheimer Filmwoche 1973.
- *„Partnerschaft“*
Satire, screenplay & directing, DFFB 1972.
Internationale Mannheimer Filmwoche 1973.

An interview with Malte Ludin

You introduce the story of 2 or 3 Things I Know About Him with the following commentary: "This is the story of my father, a war criminal, my mother, my brother and sisters, my nieces and nephews. A typical German story." What do you think is typical about it?

I think that keeping silent about a considerable period of their lives is a common thing among the parents of my generation. These historical and biographical omissions are still causing repercussions and uncontrolled dynamics to the present day. With this film I have pursued a very personal project, but the story goes far beyond the private — beyond my family. What I have to tell may be found — perhaps not so extremely — in very many other, perfectly normal German families.

Your mother is no longer alive. Was it an important consideration for you — whether she would have given the film her blessing?

Not for nothing do I say at one point in the film that I would probably not have dared to make this film as long as my mother was alive. It's likely that, had she still been alive, I would have faced some of the conflicts less directly—because there would have been a danger of splitting the family otherwise. The strange thing is: my mother supported the idea of making this film. As we had often argued over this matter, she was well aware what I thought of the questions surrounding my father. But I believe it was unspokenly obvious for her and her view of the world that I would feel obliged — if not to rehabilitate — at least to present a view of things which would conform to the family's interests. Coming from that kind of emotional situation I did not rush to start this project.

It was presumably part of the "unspokenly obvious" for her that the guilty verdict and death sentence on your father by the war crimes court in 1946 was not legitimate and not right.

My mother was absolutely definite that her husband was condemned completely unjustly and that he was a noble, even "true-hearted" Nazi. This is the point of view she put clearly in a television interview with Christian Geissler in 1978 and which I cite in my film. But perhaps she thought that it had not been made clear enough even then. It took me a very long time to realize that my mother all her life tried to protect the image or rather the memory of her husband. In fact she always worked towards cementing the myth first formulated in Ernst von Salomon's "Fragebogen" (Questionnaire): "He told me he took his task as ambassador to Slovakia very seriously. It was a very difficult task, but he had always felt an inclination towards the Slavic peoples—far more than towards the rotten West—and he said he was proud that it was him who had succeeded, as he believed, in protecting the Slovaks to a large degree from all the things that would have led inevitably to ill-will in the course of the occupation and the war."

There is another interview with your mother in the film ...

I recorded it myself, a year before her death.

Did you intend then to use it in the context of a bigger project?

Yes, back then I had the feeling it might be my last opportunity to speak to her about it again. To be honest, I was not very courageous in the way I went about it. And I also suspected that my mother was by far the more political of the people in the relationship.

And you make that suspicion very clear. You let your mother speak three times extensively. Once when she is talking about your father's time in the SA, she tells us that he sometimes had scruples and feelings of doubt; then she finishes by saying that she comforted him by telling him, to make an omelet, you have to break eggs.

I'm pretty sure that she gave him a great deal of strength, and that also means in a way, always brought him back to his senses...

What is the general state of material and archives on your father? Have many significant new facts come out which might be relevant for a revision of the verdict back then, or on the other hand might even serve to support it?

In the late fifties my mother took legal action against the Federal Republic of Germany because she wanted to sue for her civil servant's widow's pension. She only got a modest war widow's pension, and I remember as a young man going to the Foreign Ministry library in Bonn to dig out all they had on my father and his life. It was all there, more or less nothing was missing—everything necessary for a decision in the Ludin case—but in those days I was not particularly interested in it. But because my mother filed all these documents neatly away in folders, I found them much later when I began systematic research for this film. As far as the facts go, I haven't been able to find out much more that was new.

Neither your mother nor your sisters seem to regard the question of guilt as having been adequately answered by documents or the trial. They either see it as a matter still open or they have answered the question for themselves: Not guilty! You portray your sisters as very interested, self-confident, and even critical women. I found that very surprising.

I think that if you try to get anywhere on this subject, you very quickly move into a realm far removed from rational or intellectual considerations. My sisters are all somewhat older than me, and that means they have — unlike me — conscious memories of our father. And on top of that, they were always geographically and emotionally close to my mother. That meant that her idealization strategy thoroughly rubbed off on them despite every possible resistance, whether rational or emotional. I also believe that it was always very important for them to put their own views, attitudes, opinions last, so as to never leave our mother alone with her lifelong lie. This has been and still is a permanently active protective instinct.

You had a fourth sister who has passed away. It seems her attitude was slightly different from your three other sisters.

I think my sister Eri felt her origins to be a burden. She lived in a permanent dilemma, not least because she was the eldest and knew our father best. On the one hand, she loved her father very much, but on the other hand, she had realized more and more that he was someone who was responsible for very bad things. Much of this realization came about through her husband Heiner, because among other things, he had studied at Berkeley and viewed German history very differently from the way it was usually seen in 1950s West Germany. On top of that, she had a lot of Jewish friends, a fact which contributed to her living in a constant dilemma between love and hate, self-castigation and repression. In this dilemma she was caught up more closely than she could bear.

You usually bring yourself in as a counterpoint to your sisters, but in two cases at least, you behave very similarly to them: for instance, when you explain in the commentary to your examination of records in Bratislava: I was silently hoping to find something which would have helped to reduce the burden of proof against him...

... A hope which unfortunately remained unfulfilled...

... and that pattern of behavior is even clearer, when you — as the child of a perpetrator — meet with the child of a victim, the writer Tuvia Rübner. His parents and siblings were deported on the order of your father, the then German ambassador in Bratislava, and he himself only survived because his family had him taken to Israel at the start of 1941.

That sequence and my behavior were the cause of many an argument in the cutting room: it was very unpleasant for me to have to see how I myself use the very excuses and bolt holes I know so well when faced with a former victim. We spent a long time debating whether we should put it in at all, because obviously I am not a very good "actor" in that scene.

But regardless of considerations of the quality of acting the important thing here is surely credibility.

I felt that I could not be allowed to gloss it over, that I could not be allowed to make myself better than I am by leaving out that moment from the film. I am not above it all, as my sister Barbel accuses me at one point. I am in it just as deep as she is. All I had was the good fortune to have a different socialization. But although I left the family's sphere of influence early enough I am still a part of the clan.

What you have done on film, others have done in literature in the past year. To name just two: Monika Jetter's "Mein Kriegsvater" and "In den Augen meines Großvaters" by Thomas Medicus. These works are both somewhere between the poles of an attempted reconciliation and the surveying of the given distance. Where would you put 2 or 3 Things I Know About Him on this scale?

Perhaps it is an attempt to do him justice, somewhat like my nephew Fabian expresses it: "You don't do my grandfather Hanns Ludin any favor by trying to rehabilitate him hastily. He stood by what he did, fair and square."

In the film, you describe different stages of your attitude towards your father. When you were a boy your father was a hero, in the time around 1968 he was simply a Nazi criminal, and, as the last moment on this list, you say: "1989. The fall of the Berlin Wall. I met my future wife." Your wife produced this film. What role did she play in this project?

She was a kind of permanent moral spur. Being Czech she found it perfectly normal for me as a German to be the son of a Nazi, and it was clear to her from the start that this project was not about getting even. She has an ear for wrong notes, and she always noticed when something was askew. She always wanted to face it with her eyes open. We had huge arguments when we talked about my father. For instance, I often exploded when she took the liberty - I felt - of talking badly about him. I was allowed - but was she? It was probably no coincidence that I fell in love with a woman from Czechoslovakia.

What sort of relationship do you have with your sisters now the film is finished, and more importantly, what sort of relationship do they have with you?

They haven't seen the completed film, so I really can't say. There's a tense crackling in the air. Only my sister Barbel, who initially absolutely refused to go on camera, said she would rather not even see the film — so as not to jeopardize our relationship. Maybe there will be a fight. What will happen after that, I can't imagine.

Interview by Ralph Eue

Iva Svarcová, producer

Iva Svarcová was five years old when the Prague Spring ended with the occupation by Warsaw Pact troops. Her parents left southern Bohemia, emigrating to West Germany. After studying languages (Spanish and English) in Munich and Madrid, Iva Svarcová worked as a translator and was accepted at the Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin (DFFB) in 1985. Her teachers included István Szabo and Wim Wenders. Iva Svarcová culminated her studies at the DFFB in 1990 with the short film *DIE FRAU SEINES LEBENS*, from the novel by Herbert Rosendorfer, for which she won the *Bundesfilmpreis*.

The first feature film she directed, *ALS GROßVATER RITA HAYWORTH LIEBTE / KDYZ DEDA MILOVAL RITOU HAYWORTHOVOU* (When Grandpa Loved Rita Hayworth) was shot in Southern Bohemia, Southern Germany, and Italy, using Czech and German actors. It was awarded the *Max-Ophüls-Preis 2001* and won the *Preis der Internationalen Filmkritik* among others. It was shown in Brazil, Australia, and the US and became one of Europe's most successful bilingual films.

Iva Svarcová has been a partner in Svarc.Film private company since 1990.

2 or 3 Things I Know About Him is the first film Iva Svarcová has produced. Filming in Italy, Germany, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, and South Africa was difficult and exhausting. *"Her contribution to the realization of this film goes above and beyond the call of duty for a producer. Without her I might have never even made it..."* says Malte Ludin, who has been married to Iva Svarcová for ten years.

An interview with Iva Svarcová

In "Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern" (The inability to mourn), Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich write: "Of course the attempt to distance oneself from painful memories of guilt and shame is a general human need."

This is one of their fundamental premises on whose basis they examine the function and effects of these defense mechanisms. And that was also our intention in this film. *2 or 3 Things I Know About Him* is a purely emotional film, a family drama. It is not a historical film—it is about what happens emotionally in the small world of a family when it attempts to opt out of history. How do the members of the family deal with it—or fail to deal with it—when their own history and the actions of their father, a condemned and executed war criminal, is glossed over or reinterpreted. To break out of this reflex, to confront himself and his family with these emotional facts, has put a strain on Malte Ludin which is impossible to imagine, because no-one has tried to do it on film before.

You are mentioning confrontation. Was that the motivation for this project?

On the contrary. We were not aiming for a break or a tug, a sudden shift. It was important that the whole family agreed to join in the making of the film. Obviously it wasn't a walk in the park, because it can't be anything but painful for someone to

be forced to confess: I had a father, I loved him, maybe he was good to me; on the other hand, he was a murderer. This film shows us the effort and the courage behind such an admission. I feel that anyone who has a drop of feeling will have at least some respect for the ruthlessness and consistency with which the director also puts himself in the firing line, where there is no longer any safe ground of opinions and statements to walk upon, where one can only reveal one's own ambivalence. In his meeting with Tuvia Rübner, a holocaust survivor, Malte Ludin introduces himself and says: I am the son of Hanns Ludin, who was there and there in 1941 and had such and such a function. And then Tuvia Rübner replies: so he was the one who killed my entire family. Obviously it is very hard to deal with a situation like that. But it is important and right that this scene can be observed in the film, uncut, just as it actually happened. I have never seen anything like this in a film: The child of a perpetrator voluntarily and on his own initiative facing up to the child of a victim, and these two men talking. It is a huge emotional achievement for both of them. They could have shot one another.

How did you fill your three "victim roles"?

I found Professor Stern and Mrs. Alexandrova in Bratislava. It is not easy to find a victim who is prepared to enter into a discussion with a perpetrator. Malte Ludin found Tuvia Rübner himself. The main task we set ourselves in the choice of protagonists was finding people who are still able to report authentically, instead of those who—because they have told the story so often — have created their own reality, which they put up between their feelings and the things they experienced. A few days ago I was asked why we have Tuvia Rübner read the poem he wrote about his little sister. A question I simply can't understand, because — even at age of 75 - he constantly has the image of his little sister in mind. She was too small to go to Palestine with him because it was considered too dangerous, but not too small to be murdered in a gas chamber in Auschwitz. That has followed him all his life.

What considerations went into the setup of pictures for the interviews?

We spent a long time discussing it with the cameraman, Franz Lustig, and then decided to do it the difficult way of filming it all by hand. I find every twitch and every jolt of the camera very important. We couldn't imagine the sisters wrestling and battling with themselves while we watch in beautifully set up pictures. The only exception is the interview with Barbel. That was shot completely from the tripod for one simple, pragmatic reason — she didn't want anyone else in the room but Malte, because she was afraid of losing control of her emotions. So we set up the shot, switched on the camera. Only later did we realize that this static situation matched her very well. She really is very immobile, inside as well as outwardly.

Have you or Malte Ludin had to face the accusation of being unpatriotic, of fouling your own nest?

Such an accusation doesn't really bear any weight, because it is very obvious that Malte's efforts are more about trying to create understanding than spreading poison or accusing anyone of anything. His sisters may have been annoyed by his insistence, but Malte is not an enemy to them.

2 or 3 Things I Know About Him is about how his sisters suffer just the same as he does because of what their father did. But they try to find various forms of negation, reinterpretation, concealment so they can live with it. With this film, we decided to observe these processes, withstand them, and reflect upon them. This film has taught me that there is a huge difference between cognitive and emotional knowledge. You may know something and yet not know it. The film demonstrates that. All the members of the family know everything. They have seen the files, and we ourselves know everything, too; but still, we react in a quite different way.

Observing psychological processes or even setting them in motion appears to be a major concern in this project.

The fact is, that in the Ludin family - and it is just an example of many other families - no-one has been honest enough to face the facts of what grandpa or daddy did during the Nazi regime. Which effect does this omission - which did not happen by chance, but was systematic - do to those who live with it? And because our intention turned the spotlight directly on the emotions of the protagonists, we had a psychological counselor with us.

What was his task?

Support and counseling. For instance, during shooting it sometimes all became emotionally too much — because we weren't just outwardly dealing with a subject; literally everyone — including us, the people working with us, and the protagonists - had to battle with what the film was about. Instinctively, we developed defenses, backed away, or felt fear and aggression. When Barbel said in the film, I'm not the child of a perpetrator, the sound engineer simply wasn't there, that is, we only had the sound the camera picked up. The most insane things happened. Sometimes, the cameraman Franz Lustig simply couldn't stand the way Malte kept insisting because he felt himself under interrogation. It was intensely interesting. And later, in the cutting room, deciding what to leave in and what to take out, we needed supervision as well. Psychological counseling was simply essential for navigation in this crucial test between loyalty to the family and loyalty to the truth.

Why do the sisters fight so hard against calling themselves the children of a perpetrator?

I think the film shows that it is not that simple! Or do you know anyone who would just take that step without thinking? *2 or 3 Things I Know About Him* very clearly reveals the central, key role of mothers. What options did Malte's mother have after 1945 or 1947, after the father had been executed by strangulation? She had two options: to be the widow of either a war criminal or of a hero. And of course, she chose to be the widow of a hero. And she impressed that belief — that he was a hero — deeply on her children, her daughters especially. In the television interview she gave Christian Geisler in 1978 it becomes clear that she had retained her view up until then. She is not really remembering during that interview, instead she wraps the interviewer up in her upper-class charm. For me personally, that was the shocking and at the same time enlightening thing about the material — that even

thirty years later, she cannot show a spark of sympathy or even suggest that perhaps there were things that were not right. No, she remembers that she once thought: "We should have locked up all the Jews because they do us so much damage from abroad," and that attitude always remained current in her.

Would it have been possible for the sisters to go to Bratislava with you?

Of course we tried to convince them to come with us to Bratislava. We wanted to take a little walk through the district where they grew up, and we wanted to go to the cemetery where the father is buried. But that proved to be absolutely impossible. At the end of the film, Malte stands alone by the grave. That is sad, but nevertheless, he has been able to take this step, and he has asked his nieces and nephews, and they all had the chance to have their say. There is an amazing dynamic in the family. Something has been opened up, and the following generations will be able to choose between Barbel's interpretation and Malte's interpretation, and that alone makes it all worthwhile. As Astrid, the daughter of Malte's dead brother says, "I am doing this for my son. I don't want him to spend his whole life trying to find something out and not know where he's at, like I did."

Did you have the feeling that the Ludins are hoping that if this history which happened sixty years ago, a long time ago, should still sound a bit too bad today, we can simply wait another ten years and then the problem hopefully will have solved itself.

It is, of course, a common thing - not just for the Ludin family - to say: Enough already, I don't want anything more to do with it. That sounds as if one had spent years debating it intensely. But the fact is, those who talk like that are usually the ones who have never faced up to the debate at all. I think the extent of the Hitler disaster is also documented in the fact that sixty years after the end of the war, an exemplary fate like that of Hanns Ludin still plays such an acute and extremely controversial role among his children and their children. In Malte's family, nothing has been finished with and no-one has forgotten.

Interview by Ralph Eue

Who was Hanns Ludin? (II)

"Der Fragebogen" (The Questionnaire) by Ernst von Salomon was published by Rowohlt in 1951. The author was a former Free Corps soldier, who had spent five years in prison during the Weimar Republic for his involvement in the assassination of Walther Rathenau. He took the US denazification authority's form and its 131 questions as a basis for an informally written book highlighting events in his life. The more than 600-page tome became one of Rowohlt's first paperback bestsellers of the postwar period and was reprinted many times. The last one hundred pages deal, among other things, with von Salomon's meeting with Hanns Ludin in an American internment camp.

Extracts:

"When Ludin, ambassador to Slovakia, heard the news that the Jews of Slovakia, evacuated on the wishes of the Slovak Tiso government, had been taken instead to a death camp, he shouted out in his native Baden dialect, which he dropped into at emotional moments: "It's a downright disgrace!" I knew Ludin well enough to believe his outrage was genuine, but I was surprised. Unhesitatingly, I had included him in the phalanx of men who, as a consequence of their faith in the National Socialist idea, were willing to methodically and boldly and cold-bloodedly carry out any task in the service of realizing that idea."
(p. 637)

"I said urgently: 'But you were only questioned as a witness!' Ludin looked at me ... He said, without raising his voice: 'I was the Reich's ambassador to Slovakia. The Slovaks trusted the Reich. I have taken the responsibility of everything that happened in Slovakia upon myself.'" ... I said pitifully: 'Ludin, how did it happen?' Ludin said matter-of-factly: 'I made my statement, they read it at once, one handed it on page by page to the other. When they were finished, the lieutenant said: You know that this is your death sentence? What was I supposed to reply? I said nothing. Then I had to wait alone in my room. They brought me coffee and cigarettes, but of course I didn't touch them. Then two officers came, they must have been from some central office of the CIC. They questioned me on the basis of my prior statements. But I couldn't change what I had written.' ... 'I suppose I'll swing,' he said quietly."
(pp 649f.)

Translation from "Der Fragebogen"
German text courtesy of the Rowohlt-Verlag Reinbek

On the history of Slovakia (1938 – 1946)

"In the foreign policy of the Weimar Republic, Czechoslovakia was a subordinate variable; behind the scenes, at least, the arrogance of a state still regarding itself as a Great Power dominated attitudes towards its little neighbor. German interests in Czechoslovakia were limited to the revision of the status quo created by Versailles, the German minority, and economic ties. In German-Czechoslovak relations, Slovak aspects did not even arise.... Seen thus, the word "Tschechei" is a consistent product of German perception: The Slovaks do not get a mention, and the Czechs are stereotyped negatively...."

From: Tatjana Tönsmeier, *Das Dritte Reich und die Slowakei 1939 - 1945. Politischer Alltag zwischen Kooperation und Eigensinn.* Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn et al. 2003

"The Slovak state came into being by proclamation in the Slovakian parliament on March 14, 1939. Soon after that, the Slovak government signed two treaties—the treaty of protection and the secret protocol on economic and financial cooperation—which made Slovakia a 'protectorate' of the German Reich, and which opened up many new forms of influence for the "protecting" country, particularly in the areas of foreign policy and in economics. This kind of foundation led to the Slovak government frequently being referred to as a puppet government, and the state itself as a satellite state...."
ibid.

Further reading:

- Jörg K. Hönsch, *Geschichte der Tschechoslowakischen Republik*, Verlag Kohlhammer 1978 (standard work).
- Leni Yahil, *Die Shoa. Überlebenskampf und Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, Luchterhand Verlag, 1998.

THE MAD DOG OF EUROPE



Graphische Kollage „Der tollwütige Hund Europas“ in der Illustrierten „Life“ (Chicago) vom 27. März 1939



Grafická koláž "Vzteklý evropský pes" v magazíně "Life" (Chicago) ze dne 27. března 1939

Phases of the Project

Research

Research was carried out between 1996 and 2001 in Prague, Bratislava, Banska Bystrica, Berlin, Stuttgart.

Scripts/ Financing

There were several drafts from 1998 onwards; a finished script in 2000, a workable treatment in 2001. Project development funding from the MFG in Stuttgart played a large role in pushing the project. After the treatment was passed by the BKM jury in 2000, Malte Ludin reworked an important aspect of it (the narrator's perspective) in 2001 on the advice of the editors from the Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg 2001. The deciding approval of funds from the Filmboard went through in 2001. Esther Schapira and Georg Hafner ("Die Akte Brunner") of Hessische Rundfunk showed an interest in the project and joined it in 2001 as co-producers. They were able to pull in as consultants Vera Meyer-Matheis of SR and Gudrun El Ghomry of SWR along with financial support from their broadcasting organizations.

The FFA and Filmfonds Wien also supported the project.

Filming

Began in February 2002 and continued, with many interruptions, until June 2002. The film was shot in Munich, Podere Tugliano, Italy, Bratislava and other locations in Slovakia, London, Johannesburg.

In July 2003, filming in Kremsmünster, Austria, which had been postponed a year before, went ahead.

Post-production

Interviews in the film were recorded in video format 16:9 on a DVCAM, as this proved to be the best way of getting the content. Other parts were filmed for formal reasons on 35 mm, 1 : 1.85. This decision caused a lot of problems in post-production. The saying that turning a video-based project into something for the big screen will have post-production costs far exceeding the production costs turned out to be true.

Editing and montage were carried out using FCP 3.X, then work was continued on AVID-Symphony.

The cinema version was copied in several steps onto Digibeta color corrected and projected onto HD or 4 K. The original copy was finished in October 2004.

Franz Lustig (Camera)

German cameraman. Born in Freiburg/Breisgau. After having been given a Super 8 camera at age eleven, he quickly decided to work with cameras when he grew up. In 1991 he was in the first intake of students at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. He finished his studies in 1995. Since 1994 he has been working as director of photography for advertising (including ads for BMW, Pepsi Cola, DHL), music groups (including Die fantastischen Vier), short films, documentaries, and feature films (including *Hommage à Noir*, *Land of Plenty*).

"Malte Ludin's 2 or 3 Things I Know About Him came at a time in my career when I needed to move into a new field different from advertising, for a balance and as a visual training. On every project, regardless which genre, I try to understand the thoughts and the visions of the director. What was interesting about this project was that a filmmaker like Malte takes on his own family history. What a chance. But what courage as well. It meant that, even as a nonmember of the family, I had to fit into the not always easy—sometimes almost hostile — constellations, as an observer. And since you are pretty much in the front row, the cameraman feels the force of the most direct vibrations. We did most of the interviews in long sittings, in which my hand-held camera was able to react quickly to the mood. Usually, one tape ran through, then another, and so on. I sometimes felt like a tai-chi dancer who has worked it all out for himself beforehand. It was rigorous but meditational. A cameraman should join consultations and help development. The decision to do all the interviews on DV (PD 150) and the other parts on 35mm had already been taken. Cinematographically, I thought it was important to give the other components of the film a different aesthetic. Using my contacts with various advertising productions, we were able to do that on 35 mm using an Arri IIB. It was important to me that the film could give other "perpetrator's families" the impulse to address the subject and maybe loosen some tensions. I think documentaries are the most fascinating films of all. They require a very direct, intuitive, creative care. I can only confirm that all the genres should enrich each other, and hope more interesting documentary projects will come my way."

Werner Pirchner (Music)

Austrian composer (1940 – 2001). From 1962 Werner Pirchner worked as a freelance jazz musician (with Harry Pepl, Jack DeJohnette, Steve Swallow, Bobby McFerrin, Albert Mangelsdorff and many more) and composer for theater and film. He also worked as a classical concert artist (e.g., for the Vienna Burgtheater, Salzburg Festival, Jean-Luc Godard, Ernst Kovacic, Wiener Schubert Trio, Vienna Brass, Ensemble Kontrapunkte Wien). His LP *Ein halbes Doppelalbum* (1973) brought accusations of unpatriotic “fouling his own nest,” to which he replied with the lyrics:

"Solang ein vaterländisch' Herz,
schlägt unter deinem Hemde,
besudle nicht das eigne Land,
besudle lieber fremde."

(As long as a patriotic heart/ beats under your shirt/ don't foul your own nest/ foul other people's).

In 1973, his songs were banned at the same broadcaster — Österreichischer Rundfunk — which, twenty years later, invited Werner Pirchner to write all the jingles for the culture station Ö 1.

In the obituary following his death on August 10, 2001, the magazine “Jazzpodium” wrote: “His music was often regarded as direly unpatriotic (particularly in Tyrol). But we should not forget that, strangely, it is not the one who cacked who is denounced as a nest fouler; it is the one who says, it stinks in here.”

Pirchner named another work “EU,” in line with his dilemma. The title succinctly describes what he once called his tightrope walk between the chairs of E-music (classical) and U-music (entertainment). “That puts Pirchner in the fine enlightenment tradition which goes from Karl Kraus to Milan Kundera, and in music from Hans Eisler to Mauricio Kagel” (Thomas Rothschild).

"In my youth I oriented myself towards the latest jazz. Later on, exploring the theories of Schönberg and above all Bach's sonatas for solo violin opened up new paths of expression. Out of respect for the great masters, I didn't dare write a single note for a classical concert until my 42nd year. As a composer, jazz musician and privileged temporary worker, I tried (a) to express my ideas and feelings in dimensions accessible to me (various LPs of compositions, two films, a few texts and drawings, among other things), and (b) to influence the interplay of red and black on my bank statements. One fine morning, the violinist Peter Lefor phoned me up to tell me he had put a piece for solo violin by me on the program of his next ORF concert. Thus, I felt my way gingerly ... down the road I am on today. I try to write music which expresses what I am thinking, feeling ... and what I am right now. Or the opposite."

Staff:

Screenplay, director: Malte Ludin

Camera: Franz Lustig

2nd camera: Birgit Gutjonsdottir
Martin Gressmann

Camera assistants: Jörg Gönner (Berlin)
Martin Ciaran (Bratislava)
Markus Zucker (Berlin)

Lighting: Tom Gork (Stuttgart)

Sound: Pavol Jasovsky (Bern)
Hugh Graham (London)
Jochen Hergersberg (Berlin)
Arthur Koundouris (Johannesburg)
Zoltan Ravasz (Munich)
Oliver Jergis (Munich)
Alexander v. Zündt (Munich)

Rough cut: Hanka Knipper
Amos Ponger

Consultants: Gabriele Draeger
Raimund Barthelmes

Montage: Malte Ludin & Iva Svarcová

Music: Werner Pirchner
Hakim Ludin
Jaroslav Nahovica

Sound design
and -mixing: Matthias Lempert

Title design: Birk Weiberg

Editors: Esther Shapira (HR)
Vera Meyer-Matheis (SR),
Gudrun Hanke-El Ghomry (SWR)
Ulle Schröder (Arte)

Producer: Iva Svarcová

Sponsored by: BKM – Die Bundesbeauftragte für Kultur und Medien
FFA-Filmförderungsanstalt

Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg
Filmfonds Wien
Medien- und Filmgesellschaft Baden-Württemberg

Excerpts from: Die Frau seines Führers (the wife of his führer), directed by
Christian Geissler, NDR 1978

Film by: Svarc. Film GbR

Co-produced by: Hessischer Rundfunk, Esther Schapira
Saarländischer Rundfunk
Südwestrundfunk
in co-operation with ARTE

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