

CARL LUTZ

THE FORGOTTEN HERO

a movie documentary by
Daniel von Aarburg

MEDIA DOSSIER

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■ SHORT SYNOPSIS

Carl Lutz, an Appenzell diplomat and second-in-command at the Swiss Embassy in Budapest, saved tens of thousands of persecuted Hungarian Jews from death during World War II. His humanitarian action is considered the greatest civil rescue operation of Jews during the Holocaust. Lutz negotiated directly and shrewdly with Adolf Eichmann, the deviser of the Holocaust. During this rescue operation, the married Vice-Consul fell in love with one of his protégés. After the end of the war, he divorced his wife, married his beloved in Budapest and moved with her and her daughter to Berne. Instead of being thanked by his country, he was chided for excess of authority and splashing out on his expense account. Until his death, Lutz fought bitterly and vainly for his “rehabilitation”.

Agnes Hirschi, his “Hungarian” stepdaughter, tells the incredible story of Carl Lutz at the original locations in Budapest. The story is complemented by statements of contemporary witnesses from all around the world, who survived the Holocaust thanks to Carl Lutz’s help. Photographs and 16mm films made by Carl Lutz in those years confer visual authenticity to the film.

■ SYNOPSIS

During World War II, Swiss diplomat Carl Lutz saved tens of thousands of persecuted Jews in Budapest. Lutz negotiated directly and skilfully with Adolf Eichmann, the deviser of the Holocaust. He invoked an alleged British mandate to enable 8,000 Jews to emigrate to Palestine. To everyone's surprise, the Führer's headquarters in Berlin granted Lutz this quota, because he had rendered the Germans in Palestine good service during his stay there as a diplomat. On his own initiative, Lutz devised a system of protective letters which put the people seeking help under the diplomatic protection of Switzerland and which was subsequently copied by other countries. Lutz exceeded the quota granted by the Führer several times the number. In addition, Zionist organizations started massively counterfeiting the Swiss letters of protection. It did not take the Nazis long to realize what was going on. Infuriated, they summoned the Swiss Vice-Consul to sort the real Swiss letters of protection from the fake ones in person. An experience that traumatized Lutz for the rest of his life. The last war year changed Lutz's personal life completely. The upright and rather shy Vice-Consul fell in love with beautiful Magda Grausz, one of his Jewish protégés. After the war, he divorced his wife, married his beloved in Budapest and moved with her and her daughter to Berne. But Switzerland did not recognize his humanitarian action. Instead, Lutz was chided for excess of authority and missing expense receipts and relegated to a subaltern position. He suffered a nervous breakdown and had to go to a sanatorium. Carl Lutz fought bitterly and vainly for his "rehabilitation" until his death.

Agnes Hirschi, Carl Lutz's "Hungarian" stepdaughter, tells the story of this "Swiss Schindler" at the original locations in Budapest. Her account is complemented by the interviews of contemporary witnesses from all around the world who survived the Holocaust thanks to Lutz's help. Among them are well-known names, such as György Konrád, the holder of the peace prize of the German Book Trade, Ágnes Heller, philosopher and Hannah Arendt successor, or Paul Lendvai, the Austrian television legend.

Carl Lutz himself appears in a movie for the first time: in a hitherto lost interview, he remembered his rescue operation in Budapest shortly before his death. The film's visual design is also greatly influenced by Carl Lutz: the photos of this passionate and ambitious photographer enhance the movie with authentic images of those war years.

■ THE STORY

Youngest son of a Methodist family, Carl Lutz (1895-1975) was born in Walzenhausen, Ausserrhod. At the age of 18 he emigrates to the USA on his own, without speaking English, to become a pastor. He lives by diverse jobs, starts taking photos and filming enthusiastically, and studies law and history at the famous George Washington University. Due to a summer job at the Swiss Embassy in Washington he slips into diplomatic service. At the St. Louis consulate he meets his first wife, Gertrud Fankhauser. The freshly married are placed to Palestine, where Lutz faces the problems of the Zionist project of the Jewish state. Along with his wife he witnesses the lapidation of Jewish immigrants by a Palestinian mob.

After a brief stay in Berlin, in 1942 he is placed to Budapest as vice-consul. As head of the Department of Foreign Interests, he represents the interests of 12 allied states at war with Nazi Germany and its ally, Hungary. Always in a tailored, dandy-like suit, using a luxury car with chauffeur, Lutz has now arrived at the summit of his so far rather modest diplomatic career. All of a sudden he finds himself the most important diplomat of the country. He is ceaselessly in duty, and for the first time in his career he heads dozens of employees and several embassies. He sets up his offices at the American Embassy at Szabadság square in the center of the city. The British Embassy, situated in the idyllic environments of the Buda Hills, will be his private residence. Once a week he must report to his boss, the ambassador Maximilian Jaeger, residing in the more modest Swiss Embassy at the Grand Boulevard. The first two years of his stay he enjoys with his first wife Trudi in the Paris of the East, as Budapest is sometimes called. So far the war has spared the Hungarian capital, the supply situation is better than in Switzerland. A multitude of photos and a 16 mm-reel made by Lutz at this time witness his happy life far from the front lines. This changes all at once when the Germans invade Hungary on 19 March 1944. Although their defeat is at hand, the Nazis want to reach at least one of their goals: "the final solution" of the Jewish question. Adolf Eichmann travels to Budapest in person, in order to meet the logistical challenge of deporting 750,000 Hungarian Jews.

In this dramatic situation his miraculous transformation takes place: the bureaucratic and shy Carl Lutz is to become a rescuer of the Jews.

Lutz gathers all his courage and talks to Eichmann in person at the SS-headquarters about the fate of the Hungarian Jews. He refers to an alleged British mandate enabling 8,000 Jews to emigrate to Palestine. Eichmann derides Lutz comparing him with Moses who wants to save the Israelites. As a surprise to everybody, at the Berlin headquarters of the Fuehrer the quota of Lutz gets approved of, since recently he rendered good service to the Germans as a diplomat in Palestine. Subsequently, Lutz starts to issue so-called „Swiss letters of protection”. This is an „innovative” document, placing its owner under the diplomatic protection of Switzerland to enable him or her to emigrate to Palestine. The document is based on shaky legal grounds, and Berne has never passed an official approval of it.

The news of the life-saving Swiss document spreads like wildfire about Budapest: seeking protection, thousands of people keep besieging the offices of Lutz's Office of Foreign Interests. Lutz won't turn down anyone. He exceeds the quota by several times, numbering the passes always from 1 to 7,999. To the protests of Eichmann he replies with shrewdness that by units you obviously have to take families and not individuals. Due to the crowds outside his offices, Lutz is unable to cope with his daily diplomatic tasks. For this reason, he rents the empty showroom of a glass factory, the so-called glasshouse and declares it the outpost of the Swiss Embassy. In the Glass House 100 Jewish volunteers keep producing protective letters in several shifts. With his Leica, Carl Lutz takes fascinating photos of the crowds gathering outside the glasshouse. During the escalation of events in fall 1944, the glasshouse turns even physically into a refuge for a lot of Jews. Altogether 72 houses in the center of Budapest are placed under the protection of the Swiss Embassy. 17,000 people shelter in them. By skill, impertinence and courage they manage to reach that the Swiss Letters of Protection and protected houses should be respected more or less by the Nazis and their Hungarian followers, the so-called arrow-cross, until the end of the war, and thus 50-70,000 people could be saved from deportation and extermination.

If still his protégées are hit by atrocities, then Carl Lutz leaves his safe offices to face the gunpoint of the fascist thugs, in order to add extra impetus to his diplomatic authority.

Lutz's activity ever more irritates the Nazis. Adolf Eichmann, in cooperation with the local commander of the arrow-cross, devised a particularly sadistic method of punishing Carl Lutz: since ever more Swiss letters of protection were circulating in Budapest - with dilettantish forgings among them - Eichmann cites Lutz in person to make him see the real protective letters from obvious counterfeits (blunders in spelling, etc.). This resulted in a sieving which for those excluded meant certain death and traumatized the pious Lutz for the rest of his life.

Lutz informed his superiors in Berne selectively and by the slow means of mailing. He never received any answers, but he was not explicitly called off, either.

He spends the last two months of the war in the cellar of the British Embassy, which is his and his wife Gertud's private residence. Along with them about two dozens of other people were staying in the cellar: servants and neighbors bombed out of their houses. Although the house was hit by more than 20 bombs and was completely burned out, the nearly 30 people in the cellar survived the final battle for the Hungarian capital.

Out of the more than 750,000 Hungarian Jews only somewhat more than 200,000 survived the war. According to estimations, though they contradict each other, about one third of them profited directly or indirectly from the help of the brave Swiss vice-consul. Lutz's activity is said to be the largest rescue operation for the sake of Jews in World War II.

The last year of the war turns Carl Lutz's private life upside down, as well. In June 1944 an elegant Jewish woman, along with her daughter of six, turns up in Lutz's Office of Foreign Interests asking for protection. Little Agnes was born in London, and thus she is a British subject, with privileged access to the Swiss vice-consul, who is also representing the British interests. Lutz personally looks after them, and offers a housekeeping job to Magda Grausz at his private residence. It must have been love at first sight.

Agnes Hirschi remembers today her first and crucial encounter with her stepfather. Until the official divorce after the war and the wedding there must have been some platonic "crazy love" between them, which, however, could not have remained a secret to Lutz's wife Gertrud, either, Agnes recalls. She remembers tender touches, but nothing more. Lutz was too pious and puritanical for that. In the cellar of the residence, amidst

ceaseless bombings, the triangle relationship arrives at its peak: the lover's bed was immediately next to the marital bed of the Lutzes, only separated by a thin curtain.

After the capitulation of Budapest, the victorious Soviets expel all diplomats of neutral countries from the country, on the grounds of branding them Nazi collaborators. Arriving in Berne on the day after Hitler's suicide, Lutz expects his country's gratitude and recognition. A fatal misapprehension: his courageous attitude receives reprimands from the official Switzerland for excess of authority and missing proofs of costs. Lutz suffers a nervous breakdown and moves to a sanatorium for a few weeks. Abroad he is celebrated as a hero, but in his native country he fights in vain for his recognition for the rest of his life. By way of mediators he even lets nominate himself for the Peace Nobel Prize.

Shortly after his return home, he divorces his first wife Gertrud, and in 1949 he marries his one-time housekeeper Magda Grausz in Budapest. Along with her daughter Agnes they settle down in Berne. The restricting circumstances, Lutz's isolated social position and bitterness weigh on their family life and the bliss of the Hungarian love soon vanishes into oblivion. Lutz dies in 1975, lonely and embittered, without having ever been recognized by official Switzerland. Only 20 years after his death, in 1995, when Switzerland is severely criticized due to Jewish fortunes hiding in its banks, the federal council officially "rehabilitates" him along with the St. Gallen police commander Paul Grüninger.

■ THE DIRECTOR'S REMARKS

In Hungary, in Germany, in Israel and in the USA Carl Lutz is considered a hero, adorned with medals, monuments and awards. In Switzerland he is almost unknown. I was no exception. Years ago a female student gave an Italian pocket book to my wife, entitled "La casa di vetro" (The Glass House). For a long time it lay on the table of the living-room, and I didn't take notice of it. One day, I learned from the blurb with amazement that Swiss Carl Lutz should have saved ten-thousands of Jews in Budapest in World War II. For me it was a discovery. Then I read the whole book to come across ever more interesting details: like the deportation of the Hungarian Jews in record time, like Lutz's direct and shrewd negotiations with Adolf Eichmann, or his love for Magda, the Budapest Jewess with her daughter, and lots of other things.

All highly dramatic moments, ideal for a film adaptation.

Yet there has not been made one – not at least in any German-speaking country. The projects of several big documentaries faded away in the research phase (the projects of Theo Rais (CH/seventies) and Bernhard Frankfurter (AU/1989-90)) or did not have a sufficient financial background (Felix Karrer's movie project in the eighties). Also a big feature film project initiated by Alfi Sinniger "died" in the mid-nineties, still in the script phase.

It is high time then to make the story of Carl Lutz known to the wider public. Originally we planned a two-part docu-fiction, but its financing turned out impossible in Switzerland. Therefore we came to the decision to tell the story at first in a documentary manner, by making a longer (90 minutes) movie version for festivals and for the international market and a shortened version, which is to be broadcast by SRG/SSR/idée suisse early in fall as a so-called National Project on all three national channels within a week in prime time. Along with the documentaries a so-called videobook is also to be published, that is, an electronic book to be downloaded on a tablet, with texts, animated graphics and the most important interviews of the film. A movie film is also envisaged, the script of which is in progress.

The making of a documentary version was also urged by the high age of all the participants of the story. Lutz's stepdaughter, Agnes Hirschi, who in the film acts as narrator at the original sites, represents youth with her 76 years. All other holocaust-survivors are older and partly at a very high age. This important oral history source will disappear in the coming years in a natural way. That's why it was very important for us to record the stories told by the eye-witnesses as long as it is possible. By developing funds and private support we recorded two dozens of interviews all over the world in the years 2012/13, with Hungarian holocaust-survivors, who due to the help of Carl Lutz, among others, are still alive and are able to give witness. The quality, the dramatic air and diversity of the Budapest CVs – as well as the alertness with which they are told – have surpassed all our expectations. On evaluating the interviews we got aware of being in possession of a great treasure in terms of oral history, which now needs an optimum realization in filming.

The interviews with the survivors were designed to be in the center of the documentary. This is followed up by the visitation of the original sites with Lutz's stepdaughter, Agnes Hirschi. She is the person among those still living who was closest to Lutz in his Budapest period. She relates Lutz's story from the view point of Agi, herself aged 7 back then, who along with her beautiful mum was seeking refuge at the Swiss vice-consul's, to get immediately employed by him – virtually not without self-interest – in his private household: the story of a positive Swiss hero in what is likely to be the darkest chapter of the history of mankind. The vice-consul of little neutral Switzerland negotiated directly and without complexes with one of the most important Nazi figures: with Adolf Eichmann, in whom „the banality of the evil” (Hannah Arendt) was to model the central attribute of Nazi ideology. Basically shy and over-correct, suffering from irresistible stage fright whenever he had to talk in public, Lutz grew beyond himself in a single year of his inconspicuous existence, doing what he had to in an existential ordeal, defying formal instructions, and saving thereby the lives of many people. Agnes is the only one entitled to talk about Lutz as a private person. Because in Lutz's Budapest period world politics gets linked with a private drama: in this historically crucial year the vice-consul falls fatally in love with Agnes' mother Magda, and thus besides his humanitarian activities he must also cope with this highly intricate love story. In the works about Carl Lutz the changes in his private life are only hinted at, like in the legends of photos, mentioning his alternating female companions. In the documentary, too, these

“private conflicts” are just touched at, yet they are designed to play a central role in the feature film.

We wanted to apply another “present” of Lutz for posterity as widely as possible. Since his years in America he had been an enthusiastic – and gifted – hobby photographer and filmmaker. Besides his beloved LEICA, to which he even wrote a poem, later on he purchased a 16mm camera, by which he mainly documented the landscape and the people. In the ETH archive of the history of the period, where his estate is harbored, there are more than 1,200 photos and 85 films of his. Impressive images, made mostly by using a delayed-action shutter release, with an evident sense of staging: e.g. Lutz, very elegant on a bridge, with a wonderful view of Budapest before the war. Then, some years later the same view, Lutz again in a tailored suit standing on a stair, but this time with the view of the destroyed city. Or the famous photo of Lutz looking into the shutter release of his camera from the cellar door of the destroyed building of the embassy, standing beside a Russian grenade. It must have been due to Lutz’s being extremely busy and to the lack of supplies, that only too reels (10 minutes each) have emerged from his time in Hungary. On one of them happy Budapest life is to be seen before the German invasion, while on the other reel, also colored, the staff of the embassy is featured heading for home on board of a Swedish vessel. The other films belong to his life in America, Palestine and Switzerland. Fantastic shots: skiing in Switzerland, camel caravans in Palestine. And interspersed, always very briefly and shyly: short private shots with his two wives and little Agnes.

I hope nothing is amiss now to give Carl Lutz the film he deserves, one which will make known his historical feat to the general public also in his native country.

Daniel von Aarburg

■ THE PRODUCER'S REMARKS

Carl Lutz is a story behind which there are 50,000 stories or even more. These are stories of Budapest Jews who survived the holocaust due to the help of Carl Lutz. Daniel von Aarburg has found more than two dozens of such stories, and he met the old survivors in Hungary, in Israel, in the USA, in Austria and in Switzerland in order to make interviews with them. There are prominent survivors among them, like the writer György Konrád, the one-time director of the Salzburger Festspiele Hans Landesmann, and the philosopher Ágnes Heller, or unknown ones who are living their deserved years of pension as grand- or even great-grandparents in the country or in their cities.

Our most eager expectations were surpassed by the fates we met during the production. These present Carl Lutz in an even more dazzling light in midst of the dark chronicle of World War II, but at the same time they once again raise the big unanswered main question: What was this man driven by?

With Agnes Hirschi, Carl Lutz's stepdaughter, Daniel von Aarburg looked for an answer to this question at many sites.

Next year will be the 70th anniversary of the end of Word War II. Then the end of Lutz's Hungarian story will be arriving at its anniversary, too, a man's story who for his supportive engagement earned no praise from his employer, the Swiss federal state, but was reprimanded instead for going beyond his competence. Due to the primate of legality over legitimacy, Carl Lutz at last turned embittered - which must make us brood over these things even after 70 years and in spite of his later rehabilitation.

The world premier of the film "Carl Lutz - the Forgotten Hero" will be on 20 June 2014 in Budapest. This event is supported and organized by the Swiss Embassy, which to this purpose has booked the Budapest Urania National Film Theater.

In Switzerland we plan a premier event along with SRG, the film distributors and selected organizations and media partners immediately before the August TV premier.

Besides the TV-shows we will adapt the complex story of Carl Lutz in a so-called videobook. Videobooks unite diverse medial sources like videos, graphics, texts and images into a single information stream on tablets (like iPad). In the videobook there will also be material not contained in the film.

Immediately before the TV premier the film will be touring the Swiss cinemas. With guests – Daniel von Aarburg, Agnes Hirschi – participating in the diverse shows together or in turns.

Patrick Müller

■ WITNESSES OF THE AGE

SWITZERLAND

AGNES HIRSCHI GRAUSZ (1938), JOURNALIST, MÜNCHENBUCHSEE

Agnes Hirschi is Carl Lutz's stepdaughter. Magda Grausz, Agnes' mother, asked the Swiss vice-consul for diplomatic protection for herself and for her daughter. Lutz employed Magda as a housekeeper, and thus Magda and little Agnes survived the war at Carl Lutz's private residence. At the same time, Carl Lutz fell in love with Agnes' mother, divorced his wife after the world war and took Magda and Agnes with him to Switzerland. After initial difficulties Agnes quickly integrated in her new home country, got married, had two sons, worked as a journalist, and now she lives as a grandmother in the neighborhood of Berne.

ANDRÉ SIRTES SHARON (1935), CARTOGRAPHER, LUZERNE

André Sirtes had to hide with his little brother in Budapest on his own, since his father as a human mine detector had been "fired" at the Russian front, while his mother had been deported. At the last moment André managed to escape with his brother from a camp for orphans. All other children put up there were deported to Auschwitz on the next day and sent to the gas chamber. His father's Christian employees take the two boys to an uncle. He has a Swiss letter of protection for the whole family, and the siblings get refuge in a Swiss protected house. This, however, is seized by the arrow-cross in the last days of the war and its inhabitants are taken to the Danube bank to be executed. While the victims are killed by neck shots, an air-raid alarm sets off, which André and his brother take advantage of to run away. Till the end of the war they hide in a shoe-box factory.

AUSTRIA

HANS LANDESMANN (1932-2013), PATRON OF ARTS, ENTREPRENEUR, VIENNA
Austrian entrepreneur, director of music festivals and music manager. He was among others long-time art director of the Wiener Festwochen and of the Salzburger Festspiele. Hans Landesmann was born into a bourgeois family in Vienna. After the annexing of Austria by the Third Reich his family flees to Budapest, because the situation for Jews is better there. After the German invasion of Hungary, father Landesmann sends his wife and children to the very hotel where Adolf Eichmann is going to set up his SS headquarters. After being stuck in the lobby for days, the father at last manages to get out his family, and takes them to the largest Swiss protected house, to the so-called Glass House at 28 Vadász utca. There the whole family survives the war. Hans Landesmann died in September last year after a long disease.

PAUL LENDVAI (1929), PUBLICIST, VIENNA

Hungarian-born publicist and journalist. He is still continuing his publicist activity as political commentator of the Austrian daily Der Standard, and by contributing to Hungarian and English media. From 1982 to 1987 he was in charge of the East Europe department of the ORF. Now he leads the talk-show Europastudio, and is considered one of the greatest experts of East and South-East Europe. As a son of Jewish parents he was forced from his place along with his father in 1944. They survived the war in Budapest with the help of a Swiss letter of protection.

HUNGARY

KONRÁD GYÖRGY (1933), WRITER, BUDAPEST

György Konrád was born in 1933 into a Jewish family in Debrecen. In 1944 Eichmann's commando and the arrow-cross nearly deported him to Auschwitz. With his brother he hid at Budapest relatives', and he lived there in a flat under the protection of the Swiss vice-consul Carl Lutz. The events of these years he related in several novels of his. As an essayist he has been pleading for a peaceful and federative Central Europe. As a writer he regularly reiterated National Socialism, the revolution of 1956 and his own family history. György Konrád was awarded the Herder Prize, the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, the Karlspreis in 2001 and the Franz Werfel Peace Prize.

ÁGNES HELLER (1929), PHILOSOPHER, BUDAPEST

Along with her mother she several times managed to escape being deported and murdered partly due to a great presence of mind, partly due to mere luck. Although she owned a (forged) Swiss letter of protection, she was taken to the Danube with her mother several times to be executed. However, in contrast to her father and many other relatives she survived the holocaust. After the war she took her degrees in philosophy in Budapest. After several decades of political oppression in Hungary, in 1977 she emigrated to Australia, where in Melbourne she was a professor of sociology from 1978 to 1983. In 1986 she succeeded Hannah Arendt at her philosophy department at the New York New School for Social Research. Since her being made an emerita professor she has been commuting between Budapest and New York staying half a year in both.

IVÁN SÁNDOR (1930), WRITER, BUDAPEST

Sándor grew up in Budapest. Together with his mother he was taken into an old brick factory, in order to be deported from there. Upon the intervention of Carl Lutz those aged under 16 and over 60 were released. Subsequently, Sándor hid in diverse places together with his girl cousin, also in Swiss protected houses. After Christmas he was seized by the arrow-cross and taken to the Danube, but he managed to escape from the execution at the last moment. In his autobiographical novel Path-Seeking he writes about this time. After the war he worked as a journalist and writer. Besides his activity as a journalist he published thirteen novels and was awarded significant Hungarian literary prizes.

RABBI JOZSEF SCHWEITZER (1920), CHIEF RABBI, BUDAPEST

Schweitzer survived the war in the so-called Glass House in Vadász utca. In face of the ordeal he was still able to continue his rabbinic studies there. After the war he was the chief rabbi of Budapest for decades.

ZSÓKA JÁMBOR (1922), TAILOR, BUDAPEST

She survived the war in the Glass House, which was under Swiss protection. In this period she got seriously ill, was quarantined, and was the last one to leave the Glass House on the Russians' liberation of the city in January 1945.

GYÖRGY VÁMOS (1934), HISTORIAN, PUBLICIST BUDAPEST

György Vámos is a historian und publicist. His family had a Swiss letter of protection issued by the Swiss vice-consul. He has been leading the Lutz memorial room in the Glass House in Vadász utca for several years. Last year in spring his new book about Lutz was published, the title of which is “Carl Lutz: The Hero from Switzerland”.

ISRAEL

DAVID GUR (1926), ENGINEER, TEL AVIV

David Gur was one of the leaders of the Zionist youth organizations which after the Nazi invasion went underground, and from there were trying to save lives in permanent danger of death. He coordinated the forging and distribution of Swiss letters of protection from the Glass House. By his estimate his organization must have issued 100,000 forged documents. After a secret printing house had been spotted by accident, Gur was freed from prison by his companions by way of a thrilling action.

LASZLO MORDECHAY KREMER (1930), PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY, JERUSALEM
Along with his friends from the Zionist youth movement, Laszlo Kremer also participated in the underground movement in Budapest. He had several forged documents, also a Swiss letter of protection. Kremer's group, which acted in an autonomous way, wanted to get among the Zionist organizations hiding in the Glass House. On seeing the conditions in the house with their own eyes, after a few hours they decided to return to their former hiding place. Decades after the war, when he was a professor of chemistry at the Jerusalem Hebrew University, he learned about the disregard Carl Lutz was inflicted to by the Swiss government. Therefore he sent him a check, which Lutz thanked for in person.

PAL MORDECHAY FLEISCHER (1930), INTERIOR ARCHITECT, TEL AVIV

Pal Fleischer was born into a German-speaking family in Bratislava. The family fled from the Nazis to Budapest. Fleischer's parents were deported: his father to forced labor service, his mother on foot to one of the so-called death marches towards Vienna. Fleischer managed to get a Swiss letter of protection for his mother and thus to bring her back. Subsequently they were allowed into the Glass House and there they survived the war.

USA

ALEX SCHLESINGER (1928), ENGINEER, HOUSTON TEXAS

Alex Schlesinger performed forced labor at the age of 16, and in bitter frost he had to dig trenches in the outskirts of Budapest. On the edge of starving, heading back to the camp, crossing a harvested field together with his companion, he “steals” a miserable carrot lying there. His torturers get hold of them and ceremonially sentence them to death by shooting. When Alex and his friend work at digging out their own grave, Carl Lutz turns up in his black Limousine, threatens the arrow-cross people with breaking off diplomatic relations and saves the two boys from death.

PAUL FABRY (1919), ENTREPRENEUR, NEW ORLEANS

Fabry, a lawyer and son of Hungarian great land owners, was a press officer in the Hungarian army. After the German invasion on March 19, he went underground. Incognito, he commanded the uniformed protecting unit outside the glass house. Dressed in Hungarian police uniforms, to be adorned with German merits of war if needed, they protected those in the glass house against the attacks of the arrow-cross. Their true identity was known to very few people only, because every involved person meant extra danger of being discovered. The inventor of the brand “World Trade Center”, a rich man today, Fabry says, the more impudent a lie was in those days, the more protection it provided.

ELISABETH RIEDER (1930), PSYCHIATRIST, NEW YORK

Elisabeth Rieder survived the war as a little girl in the glass house. After the war she got her doctor degrees in psychiatry and worked for years at a Berne psychiatric clinic. Then she married an orthodox Jew from New York, she had four children and lives now in Brooklyn.

LESLIE BLAU (1926), TAILOR, NEW YORK

Leslie Blau was a forced laborer in a textile factory. He managed to get to the glass house and to get Swiss letters of protection for all his working brigade numbering 240 people. According to his report, a great many of them managed to escape. In the chaos of the last days of the war he fled the forced labor service, got to the glasshouse and experienced the Russian liberation there.

JEHUDA, ROBERT AND GEORG LINDENBLATT (1935, 1937, 1940), BUSINESSMEN,
NEW YORK

Aged nine, seven and four, the Lindenblatt-brothers spent some time in the glass house and subsequently in another Swiss protected house. Their memories partly contradict each other. They too are in possession of contemporary 16 mm film material. Today all three live in Brooklyn, in midst of their big Jewish clan.

■ TECHNICAL INFORMATION

GENRE movie documentary |
length: 90 minutes

■ LIST OF STAFF

SCRIPT AND DIRECTOR	DANIEL VON AARBURG
PRODUCER	PATRICK M. MÜLLER
CAMERA	MARCO BARBERI
EDITOR	FABIAN C. MEIER
MUSIC	DOMENICO FERRARI & BÁLINT DOBOZI
SOUND	DIETER MEYER TAMÁS DÉVÉNYI MICHAEL JELLASITZ MOTI ELIMELECH SCOTT SZABO JERRY STEIN
PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT	NINETTA ROGLI
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	MOIRA REHSCHE
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT	SARAH BORN
SOUND EDITOR, MIX	MARTIN STÄHELI
COLOR EXPERT	ROGER SOMM
RECORDING MANAGER	OREN ROSENFIELD ANNA MAROS IVAN GERO

■ CV / DANIEL VON AARBURG'S FILMOGRAPHY

He was born and raised in Chur (GR). He studied German and philosophy at Zurich University. Subsequently, he was made Réalisateur en audiovisuel at the Lausanne School of Film (DAVI). He worked as an editor, producer and author at the cultural department of Swiss Television. Since 2000 he has been a free filmmaker.

Movie documentaries: „Letters to Srebrenica“, „Marco Camenisch“, „Si pensava di restare poco“, „Hugo Koblet - Pédaleur de charme“, TV films: „Romeo und Julia in der Stadt“ (Romeo and Juliet in the City), „Nebenwirkungen“ (Side Effects). In progress: „Der Verdacht“ (Suspicion), „Blutkugeln“ (Blood balls), both TV films; “Lutz und Eichmann”, movie feature film. He is married with three children.

■ THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

Residing in Zurich and Munich, DOCMINE is a production company specializing in high level documentaries for movie and television. Apart from this, due to its videobooks the company has earned international reputation in the field new narrative forms.

www.docmine.com

www.videobooks.com

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

2012

GENERATION TELEBOY | a movie documentary (80') by Hannes Hug.

***Nomination PRIX DU PUBLIC, Solothurn Film Festival

2011

DAS GEHEIMNIS UNSERES WALDES (The Secret of our Forest) | a documentary (90') by Heikko Böhm. | narrated by Bruno Ganz

2011

HUNGER – GENUG IST NICHT GENUG | (Hunger - Enough is not enough) |

a documentary (70') by David Syz and Christian Neu.

2010

GOODNIGHT NOBODY | a movie documentary (77') by Jacqueline Zünd.

***Awards: „Best Newcomer“ Visions du Réel 2010, „Lobende Erwähnung“ Dok Leipzig 2010, „Zürcher Filmpreis“ Stadt Zürich, „Schweizer Filmpreis“ Best Film Music 2010, „Grand Jury Prize“ Sebastopol Intern. Film Festival 2010, „Documentary“ 33ème Festival Intern. de Films de Femmes, „ACID Cannes Official Selection - Cannes, France, „Cinematography Award 2011“ - Planete Doc Film Festival

BEYOND THIS PLACE | a movie documentary (95') by Kaleo La Belle.

***Awards: „Prix Crédit“ Visions du Réel 2019, „Grand Jury Prize“ in Cracau; Poland

Co-producer **DER SCHNELLSTE MANN AM BERG |**

(The fastest man at the mountain) | (a V-documentation (50') by Jacqueline Schwerzmann.

2009

BEYOND A DOLLAR A DAY | a documentary (52') by David Syz and Mark Galloway.

2008

FREMDE FREUNDE | (Friends a strangers) | a documentary (35') by Simon Koller.

2007

MICHELLE – ZWISCHEN WUNDEN UND WUNDER | (Michelle - between wounds and wonders) | a documentary (52') by Gabrielle Antosiewicz.

2005

ROGER FEDERER – REPLAY | a documentary (52') by Christian Neu.

In sales: due to DVD Warner Bros. (CH) und b-motions (Benelux): more than 10,000 sold DVDs all over the world.

IN PROGRESS

ANDERMATT | Producer ANDERMATT | A movie documentary (90') by Leonidas Bieri. Co-production partners: Megaherz München, Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR) and Südwestrundfunk (SWR). To be completed in 2014.