



History Rewritten

The truth about the youth of the Commander of Auschwitz and his handwritten memories in prison – meticulously researched and presented in a book and impressively captured on celluloid. On 15th April Footsteps members, Rainer, Guisepe and Inga were invited as a guest at the premiere of the Mannheim City Archive 'Marchivum'. The Documentation was presented with the title:

“The Commander’s Cook – Two Ways to Auschwitz”

A film by Karen Strobel & Christina Stihler and the Friends of “MARCHIVUM” Mannheim.

The story is told by Sophie Stippel, a so-called Bible student, and the Commander of Auschwitz. Sophie Stippel was one of the persecuted minorities under National Socialism because of her faith (Jehovah's Witnesses). After denunciation by a neighbor, Sophie was arrested and after a short time transferred to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. In the Ravensbrück concentration camp she had to do hard labour under barbaric and inhumane living and housing conditions, together with thousands of other prisoners from the entire Reich and the occupied territories.

In 1942, the Nazi regime decided to deal with the Bible Students differently because of their intransigence in faith, as well as the fact that they were always reliable and rarely questioned the work they were asked to do. Sophie Stippel was transferred to the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp a short time later as a result of this decision. Here she met her childhood friend Rudolf Höß, who had meanwhile risen from a lean, inconspicuous little boy to commandant of Auschwitz. Rudolf recognized Sophie and immediately brought her to his villa. This was geographically within the outer fence and with a direct view of the main camp and its crematorium on the edge of the river Sola.

But what is special about this film that we don't already know from various books and documentaries? The handwritten Höß records made in Warsaw and Krakow serve as the basis for research into the industrially planned and executed mass murder under National Socialism. But have these records, or indeed the person Rudolf Höß ever been scientifically examined in more detail?



Unfortunately no!

"The Commander of Auschwitz - Martin Broszat/DVA 1958" was the former director of the IFZ Munich and editor of the book, which made history worldwide. It has been quoted and even rewritten several times by renowned historians and journalists. But the team of Professor Nieß from Mannheim has meticulously researched the life of Rudolf Höß. The result is clear: Höß invented himself in his biography until 1924. No service with the Dragons in World War I, no coal-black pony or even kidnapping by gypsies. Höß came up with all this and maintained it at his place of work at the inhuman and barbaric concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz, until his end of 1947. But the documents and images found in various archives tell a different story, the only true one in this case! Gerald Sander, the grandson of Sophie Stippel, followed the paths of his grandmother's past, and shows when and how the ways of lives of Rudolf Höß and Sophie Stippel crossed. The story is embedded in the historical context until the end of the Nazi era. Gerald Sander, grandson of Sophie Stippel, has played a major role in clarifying the Höß biography. Through the estate of his grandmother, the cook von Höß, made available to the Marchivum, it was possible to research Höß in more detail. But this research raises further questions. Can we really believe his notes written down in Polish prison? Or would it not make sense to examine them more closely?

An impressive film on the one hand and an excellent book on the other. The truth about the career of the former butcher of

Auschwitz....**to be continued!**