

The entrance to this museum was, however, difficult to find from the street, and the space on the first floor was limited, just as the number of visitors. So on February 14, 2018, the museum "Stille Helden" was reopened at the location of the "Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand" in the Stauffenbergstraße and the exhibition was greatly expanded. Now the location and the space of the museum are commensurate with the importance of the content. Here is the official website:

Gedenkstätte Stille Helden
in der Stiftung Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand
Stauffenbergstr. 13-14
www.gedenkstaette-stille-helden.de

The Silent Heroes Memorial Center commemorates those people who supported persecuted Jews during the Nazi dictatorship. The example set by these helpers – often referred to as "silent heroes" – shows that there was in fact leeway for maneuvering to help people at risk in Nazi Germany and in the German-occupied territories.

The permanent exhibition presents information about the persecution and plight of Jews facing imminent deportation, about how some of them decided to resist the threat to their lives by going underground, and about the actions and motivations of the men and women who helped them. Not only successful rescues are documented, but also failed attempts.

The exhibition on the third floor at Stauffenbergstraße 13-14 is centered around ten stories. Objects, documents, and photographs in the exhibition illustrate both successful and failed rescue attempts by individuals and networks. The varied relationships between those who helped and those who had made the conscious decision to defy the Nazi policies of deportations and murder are presented.

Here visitors also have an opportunity to inform themselves at the media tables about additional rescue stories. Moreover, it is possible to conduct intensive research at computer workstations. There is a database documenting several hundred rescuers and people who were helped; it will be expanded on an ongoing basis.



THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Friday Film Fest Series



Die Unsichtbaren

Directed by Claus Räfle

January 17, 2020

● 6:30 PM ●

Film, Food & Discussion

The German Society of Pennsylvania

611 Spring Garden St.

Philadelphia, PA 19123

Support provided in part by the
Philadelphia Cultural Fund.



Die Unsichtbaren (2018)

Director: Claus Räfle
Screenplay: Claus Räfle, Alejandra Lopez
Music: Matthias Klein
Camera: Jörg Widmer
Editing: Jörg Hauschild, Julia Oehring
Length: 110 minutes
Cast: **Max Mauff** as Cioma Schönhaus
Alice Dwyer as Hanni Lévy
Ruby O. Fee as Ruth Arndt
Aaron Altaras as Eugen Friede
Victoria Schulz as Ellen Lewinsky
Florian Lukas as Werner Scharff
Andreas Schmidt as Hans Winkler
Commentary: Karl Moehlmann

Based on interviews and recollections of Cioma Schönhaus, Hanni Lévy, Ruth Arndt-Gumpel and Eugen Friede.



Cioma Schönhaus (Survivor): *“Für mich gilt das Wort dieses Rabbis: Wer einen Menschen gerettet hat, der hat die ganze Welt gerettet. Und dieser eine Mensch ist die Helene Jacobs. Sie steht für mich für alle Deutschen. Und man hat sie mal gefragt: Warum haben Sie denn das eigentlich gemacht? Dann hat sie gesagt: ‘Wissen Sie, ich wollte mein Vaterland retten.’ Und ich meine, es ist ihr gelungen.”*

Unsichtbar Sichtbar

When Joseph Goebbels declared Berlin *judenfrei* in 1943, about 7,000 Jews had in fact gone underground in the capital. Of these, about 1,500 survived the war. This film tells the story of four of those survivors: Ruth Arndt-Gumpel (1922–2012), Cioma Schönhaus (1922–2015), Eugen Friede (1926–2018) and Hanni Lévy (1924–present). This docudrama that mixes reenacted scenes with interviews of the four survivors as well as being interspersed with footage from various archives. The interviews go back as far as 2012, the year Ruth Arndt-Gumpel died. Only Hanni Lévy was still alive when the movie was released in 2018.

The four protagonists exemplify the other 1,500 surviving Jews in Berlin who become invisible, often by hiding in plain sight. **Hanni Lévy** colors her hair blond to appear Aryan and strolls along the Kudamm without being detected. **Eugen Friede** dons the uniform of the Hitler youth and hides in the closet of a supportive family whenever danger is detected. By night he distributes leaflets for the resistance.



Ruth Arndt and a girlfriend manage to disguise themselves as war widows and find employment as maids for an NS-officer, serving black market food to partying army guests. **Cioma Schönhaus** survives by forging passports in an inconspicuous workshop, buying a sailboat, and eating out at the best restaurants. All four receive the help of Germans who put their own lives and those of their families at risk by defying the Nazi regime. They provide hiding places, food, money, clothing and other support for the persecuted.

These *stille Helden* become part of the network of resistance out of pure moral obligation, without actively joining existing groups. They have long been neglected, perhaps because of the focus of the movie industry upon the more dramatic stories of people and groups such as Georg Elser, Claus von Stauffenberg, the White Rose and Oskar Schindler. By letting Cioma, Ruth, Eugen and Hanni express their love and thankfulness for these German good Samaritans in their powerful interviews, director Räfle succeeds in making this movie a testimony to the heroics of the surviving Jews as well as to their heretofore unsung German helpers. The individuals mentioned in this movie are:

Anni + Max Gehre
Max + Clara Kohler
Victoria Kolzer
Helene Jacobs
Hans + Frida Winkler
Elfriede + Grete Most

When Helene Jacobs said to Cioma that she helped him because she wanted to save Germany, she gave witness to a moral compass within all of the *stille Helden* that would provide crucial guidance for post war Germany. Without the knowledge of such selfless acts of kindness and resistance, my generation would have found it much more difficult to become vitally active members of a post-fascist democratic society. That society is based on the principal that the dignity of mankind is untouchable (*Grundgesetz-Art.1: “Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar.”*).

On October 27, 2008, an unprepossessing museum called “Gedenkstätte Stille Helden” was opened in Berlin-Mitte at the Hackschen Markt in the Rosenthaler Straße 39. It was housed in the building where the workshop of Otto Weidt was located. Weidt had saved Jews from persecution himself. The initial idea for this museum came from the organization “Gegen Vergessen – für Demokratie” and was overseen by the greater “Stiftung Deutscher Widerstand”.



Eugen Friede



Hanni Lévy



Ruth Arndt