



Moments of Resistance

A documentary film by Jo Schmeiser

Moments of Resistance

Running time: 98 min
 Format: digital
 Screen ratio: 1:1.85
 Language spoken: German,
 French, Dari
 Subtitles: English
 Austria 2019

Featuring

Ana Antić
 María Cristina Boidi
 Marie Paul
 Rúbia Salgado
 Judith Umathum
 Ines Mahmoud
 Gergana Mineva
 Alia Malik
 Leyla Ariz*
 Zahra Khan*
 *chosen pseudonyms

Archive recordings of

Anna Čadia
 Gisèle Guillemot
 Helene Pawlik
 Edith Gadawits
 Gertrude Hausner
 Elfriede Hartmann
 Walter Kämpf
 Rosa Hofmann
 Anna Gräf

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Credits

Written and directed by
 Jo Schmeiser

Cinematography
 Sophie Maintigneux

Editing
 Michael Palm

Dramaturgical consulting
 Karin Berger

Sound
 Nora Czamler

Graphic design
 Richard Ferkl

Production
 Peter Janecek
 Jo Schmeiser

Photography
 Jasmin Trabichler,
 stills
 Octavian Trauttmansdorff,
 portrait of Jo Schmeiser
 Leni Deinhardstein,
 “The Soldiers’ Council” newspaper

Translation
 Nicholas Grindell

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Self-defense course run by Muslim Civil Society Network (NMZ), Vienna

Logline

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Widerstandsmomente (Moments of Resistance) carries voices, writings and objects from the anti-Nazi resistance into the present. Politically engaged women of today respond to historical resistance and make links to current events. A line is drawn from what was before and what is today to what might be: a society based on solidarity without discrimination or exclusion.

Front and back cover:

Cleaning staff and students in the main lecture hall,
University of Vienna

Present voices

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You can keep quiet about injustice, once, twice or three times. But at some point you have to do something about it.

Leyla Ariz, Linz

I wasn't born to look the other way. I was born to help shape the world, based on a specific ethical position.

Rúbia Salgado, Linz

If you stand 100% behind the fight against injustice, then the cause itself must be more important than the price you pay for it.

Ines Mahmoud, Vienna

Rather than heroic figures, I think we need to look more at what they do.

Marie Paul, Berlin



Marie Paul with one of Elfriede Hartmann's
secret messages from 1943
Rúbia Salgado, das kollektiv

Past voices

Not being active under a dictatorial regime was something I couldn't justify to my child.

Anna Čadia, Graz

Practicing solidarity was tough.

Gisèle Guillemot, Caen

I have always known that if I'm caught, there will be no saving me.

Elfriede Hartmann, Vienna

So many people are dying without knowing why, that's what you must tell yourself.

Rosa Hofmann, Berlin



Workers at Umathum Vineyard in Jois

Graffiti series "Will you join us?" by Marie Paul based on photos of women from the "Soldiers' Council Group" of the 1940s

Synopsis

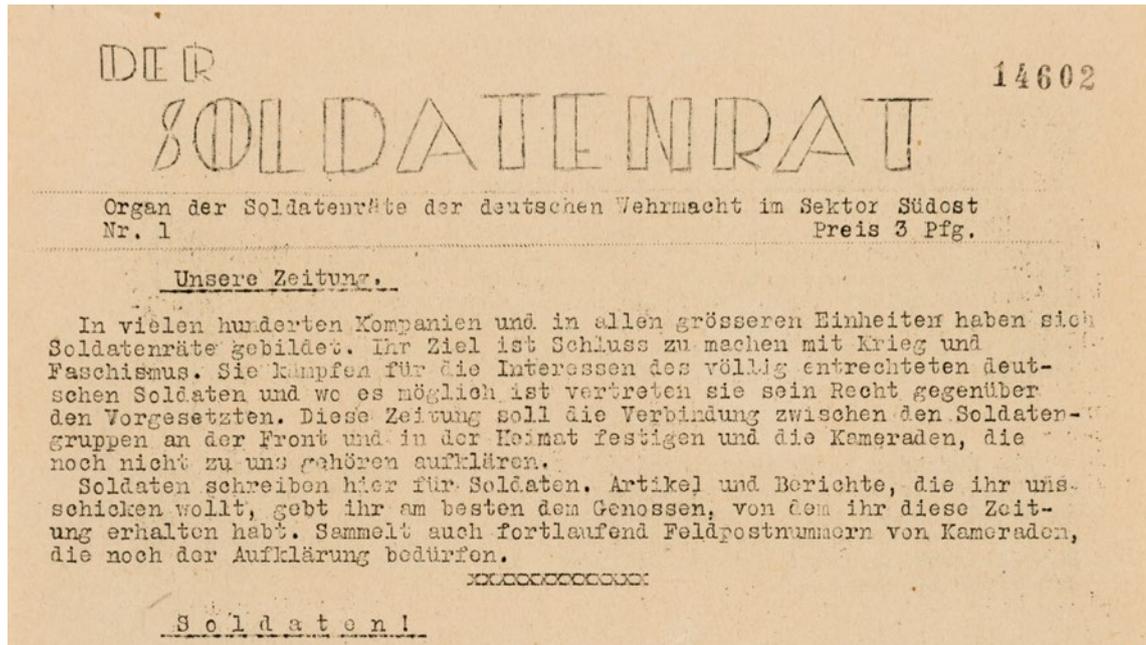
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Widerstandsmomente (Moments of Resistance) is a film about civil courage shown by women in the past and in the present. It begins with small but sustained acts of disobedience by women against the Nazi regime. With Anna Čadia who refused to watch as Jews were beaten and humiliated in Leoben. With Helene Pawlik who as a forced farm laborer fought off her brutal boss. With Edith Gadawits and the “Soldiers’ Council Group” who produced flyers calling on soldiers to desert from the German Army.

People at work. Working landscapes. Today. At a printing works, robots load rolls of paper into the machine, a newspaper is printed. In a vineyard, the vinestocks are pruned back, the seasons change. Cleaners clean a university lecture hall, students attend a lecture. The voices of Anna Čadia, Helene Pawlik, and Edith Gadawits in these landscapes. Speaking about their resistance against the Nazi regime, resistance by working women. Organized, political, spontaneous, in keeping with their worldview, as self-defense.

In these working landscapes, periods of time overlap. The film does not remain in the past. The courage of the past is transferred to our present. Judith Umathum works with refugees. Together with Ana Antić, she protests against deportation. Having fled political persecution herself, María Cristina Boidi campaigns for women’s rights. Rúbia Salgado and Gergana Mineva found “das kollektiv”. Ines Mahmoud is active in the Muslim Civil Society Network. Support, education, critique. Collectivity as a way of shifting borders.

Mementoes from resistance against the Nazis. A cardigan for a daughter, knitted in prison. A flyer exhorting people to work as slowly as possible. A secret message from prison to those in freedom outside. No heroism. Motivation and inspiration to do something against injustice. The women featured in the film pick up on this history, take what they think they can use, think about it. *Will you join us?* The women of the “Soldiers’ Council Group” in Marie Paul’s graffiti. The Yiddish song in the poem by Rúbia Salgado. *It’s Burning!* Timeless moments, for resistance, now or tomorrow.



“The Soldiers’ Council” newspaper, 1941

Set photo from shoot with historical objects at mumok,
Museum moderner Kunst, Vienna

It's burning, brothers, it's burning!
The moment may come, God forbid,
When our town, and us along with it,
Will be reduced to ash by the flames.
What will remain, like after a battle,
Will be bare and blackened walls!
And you stand there watching with folded arms,
And you stand there watching as our town burns!

Strike! Strike all the bells of no god. Strike!
Proclaim the arrival of the new justice.
In the dance, among us the corpses.
In the choir of anonymity
thousands of corpses detune the song
and scramble fences mountains oceans walls towers
to strike the bells of the town.

Yiddish song "It's burning" by Mordechai Gebirtig
from 1938

Rúbia Salgado's poem "Strike!" that references
Gebirtig's song

Director's note

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Authoritarian politics are on the rise again. In Austria, in Europe, and around the world. Governments are passing laws that override human and employment rights. Democratic achievements like the European Convention on Human Rights or the eight-hour day are being called into question. But at the same time, resistance is being organized from below: migrants and refugees are fighting back, workers are striking, women are insisting on their right to self-determination. Practical solidarity is emerging between groups affected in different ways.

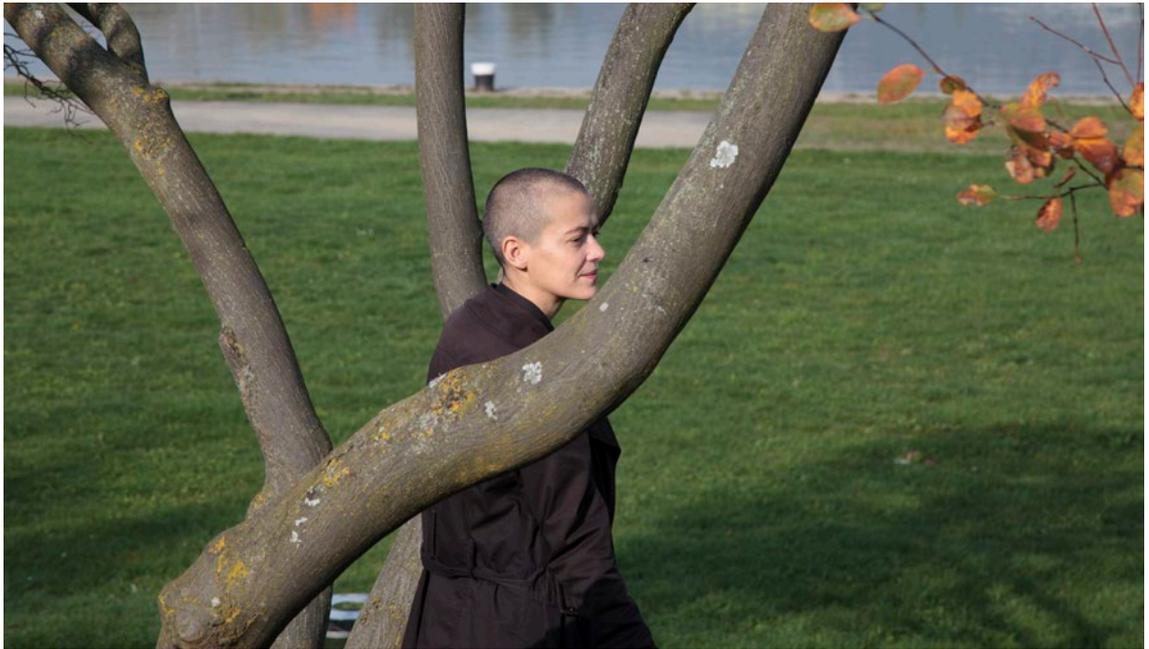
In my family there were active Nazis and passive followers. There was also a resistance fighter who survived the camps. When I began working on this film in 2014, I wanted to make something about resistance by women, in the past and in the present. I listened to recordings of my great-grandmother Anna Čadia made in 1988. Recordings in which she speaks about the Communist resistance and Ravensbrück concentration camp. The ongoing impact of the Nazi period in the present, on the lives of women with different histories, was something I had already dealt with in earlier films (*Things. Places. Years*, 2004 and *Love History*, 2010, with Simone Bader).

Something felt wrong as I began with footage in which I hold mementoes of my great-grandmother in my hands: a cardigan she knitted in prison; a tiny Red Triangle made of bone given to her as a present by a fellow prisoner in Ravensbrück. Was this woman, the grandmother of my stepmother, actually my great-grandmother at all? And what would it say if I presented myself as the great-granddaughter of a resistance fighter? Highlighting the less awkward aspects of my story? I realized I didn't want to make a film about her or about myself. Turning an individual eye on a story that concerns everyone, even if one's own perceptions are colored by biography. I wanted a collective angle. Looking less at individuals and more at what they did in the past, what they are doing today, and what they might do in the future. A virtual collective. Resistance in everyday life, together, as a form of possibility.

So I expanded the film's viewpoint to include women who resisted and who did not survive the Nazi period. Who were unable to speak about it after the liberation. The women of the "Soldiers' Council Group" who encouraged soldiers to desert from the German army. I worked with the little that remains of their resistance: pamphlets, photographs, secret messages. I expanded the frame further still to include women who are engaged in resistance today, who speak out, in their thinking and in their actions, or who start out quietly, in little moments. Women young and old. What do they make of anti-Nazi resistance? How do they recall it? Where does it help them to fight against injustice today? In view of the political developments in Austria, in Europe, and around the world, I am interested in how resistance takes shape and proliferates. As a possibility in the face of the impossible.

Vienna, March 2019





Gergana Mineva, das kollektiv

Set photo from shoot with Gergana Mineva at her favorite place at the Danube in Linz

