

# DER ANSTÄNDIGE THE DECENT ONE



A Film by Vanessa Lapa

Israel, Austria 2014 / 96'

**World Sales**  
**Cinephil**  
**Philippa Kowarsky**  
**Mob: +972 54 496 1114**  
**[philippa@cinephil.co.il](mailto:philippa@cinephil.co.il)**

**Production**  
**Realworks Ltd.**  
**Mor Tregger**  
**Mob: +972 52 2605023**  
**[info@realworks.bz](mailto:info@realworks.bz)**

**[www.thedecentone.de](http://www.thedecentone.de)**

**Director and Producer:**

Vanessa Lapa  
Realworks Ltd.  
43 Yehuda Halevi Street  
Tel Aviv, 65157, Israel  
+972 544 317006  
[vanessa@realworks.bz](mailto:vanessa@realworks.bz)

**Co-Producer:**

Felix Breisach  
Medienwerkstatt GmbH  
Uchatiusgasse 5/5  
1030 Wien, Austria  
+43 1 20 82 004  
[office.breisach@chello.at](mailto:office.breisach@chello.at)

**Cast**

Tobias Moretti  
Sophie Rois  
Florentin Groll  
Lotte Ledl

Antonia Moretti  
Pauline Knof  
Lenz Moretti  
Markus Riexinge

Alexander Riemann  
Thomas Zerck  
Martin Lalis  
Florian Wandel

**Credits****Script:**

Vanessa Lapa  
Ori Weisbrod

**Archive Image:**

Hermann Poelking-Eiken

**Editors:**

Sharon Brook  
Noam Amit

**Artistic Consultant:**

Erez Laufer

**Sound Designer:**

Tomer Eliav

**Original Score:**

Jonathan Sheffer  
Daniel Salomon  
Gil Feldman

**Grading:**

Yoav Raz

**Documents DOP:**

Jeremy Portnoi

**Picture Animation:**

Miklos Falvay

**Research:**

Dorothea Otto  
Sarah Strebelow  
Oriana Almasi

**Production Supervisor:**

Mor Tregger

## Der Anständige

*"The best political weapon is the weapon of terror. Cruelty demands respect. Men may hate us, but we don't ask for their love; only for their fear and their submission."*

Heinrich Himmler

### Synopsis

On May 6th 1945, soldiers of the US Army occupied the Himmler family home in Gmund Germany where they discovered hundreds of private letters, documents, diaries and photographs. The film makes use of these materials to sketch the biography and expose the inner mind, ideals, plans and secrets of SS commander, the architect of the Final Solution - Heinrich Himmler.

How did this Catholic nationalistic middle-class young man become Hitler's henchman responsible for master minding, developing and executing the strategies that led to the murder of millions of Jews, homosexuals, Communists and Romany people? Where did his ideology originate? How did he see himself and how was he perceived in private by his wife Margarete, his daughter Gudrun and his mistress Hedwig? How could the man who often referred to so-called German virtues such as order, decency and goodness also write home in the midst of the war and Holocaust: 'Despite all the work I am doing fine and I sleep well'? How can a man become a hero in his own eyes but a mass murderer in the eyes of the world?

*"In life, one must always be decent, courageous and kind-hearted."*  
(Himmler to his daughter, 1941, Poesie Album, Private Collection.)

### Short Synopsis

Through previously undiscovered private letters, photos and diaries that were found in the Himmler family house in 1945, the **"The Decent One"** exposes a unique and at times uncomfortable access to the life and mind of the merciless "Architect of the Final Solution" Heinrich Himmler. Himmler writes, "In life one must always be decent, courageous and kind-hearted". How can a man be a hero in his own eyes and a mass murderer in the eyes of the world? A unique portrait of one the most prominent figures of the Third Reich: The Reichsfuhrer-SS: Heinrich Himmler.

## About the director

Born and raised in Belgium, **Vanessa Lapa** has been living in Israel since 1995. An accomplished journalist, she produced and directed over a hundred factual reportages for Israeli television. Her documentary film "OLMERT – CONCEALED DOCUMENTARY" (Israel, 2009) was hailed as a unique cinéma vérité achievement, revealing the behind-the-scenes of the government and the private life of Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Vanessa was also on the Israeli side of the production and content for the 52-minute documentary "Straddling the Fence" (USA, 2003) directed by New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, which aired worldwide. In 2007, she founded the Tel Aviv-based independent documentary film production company Realworks Ltd.

## Director's Note

***The Decent One*** attempts to expose a previously unseen perspective on an often-approached subject. The film juxtaposes personal writings and photographs from the private lives of one of the highest-ranking Nazis and his family with the reality of the time, which Himmler himself relentlessly shaped in the background. The audience is thus granted personal access to the mind of the private man Heinrich Himmler and to the experiences, ideas, and emotions that turned him into the merciless "Architect of the Holocaust". Since the film is told from the prism of Himmler and his family – first his parents and brothers, later his wife, daughter and lover – the audience experience the world during WWI and in the Weimar Republic from an average German middle class perspective, and later on from the privileged vantage point of a high ranking Nazi family. In this film, Himmler's subjective perceptions of the outside world and his personal involvement with political and societal developments are what drives and shapes the viewer's cinematic experience and reveals how cruelty and evil can grow out of apparent normalcy. The audience is left with the discomfort of struggling in between the two poles of emotional closeness to the characters' very personal writings and the appalling deeds committed on their orders.

With a dramatic script based on carefully selected pieces of true personal history and political reality, brought to life by exclusively using actors' off voices and archival footage, ***The Decent One*** mixes documentary and fiction conventions to create a new post-documentary form. This allows the viewer to "think with" and "feel with" the film instead of simply consuming it. It strives to uncover the deepest psycho-cultural reality of the most atrocious cruelty. The fiction is as real as the horror it constructively comes to document.

We witness how cruelty can grow from an apparent normality, and when fueled by ideology, economical reality, a Fuehrer, a whole people and a state of the art technology, an individual who lacks self-confidence can become a hero in his own eyes and one of the biggest mass murderers in History.

At the core of this film there is an appeal for a cinema of insistent questioning instead of rapid foreclosure, clarifying distance in place of violating closeness, provocation and dialogue instead of consumption and consensus. Although there is no apparent guide of taking sides and making judgment, it projects a moral frame of reference urgent to our day and age: a multidimensional critical perspective as the audience's guide for empathy and individual responsibility.

**Film Festivals**

***Berlinale – Berlin Film Festival (WP)***

Official Selection Panorama – February 2014

***DocumentaMadrid 14 – Madrid Documentary Film Festival***

Official Selection - Competition - May 2014

***DOK. Fest – Munich International Documentary Film Festival***

Special Screening – May 2014

***Planete Doc Film Festival, Warsaw***

Official Selection – Competition – May 2014

***Jerusalem International Film Festival, Jerusalem***

Winner – Best Documentary – July 2014

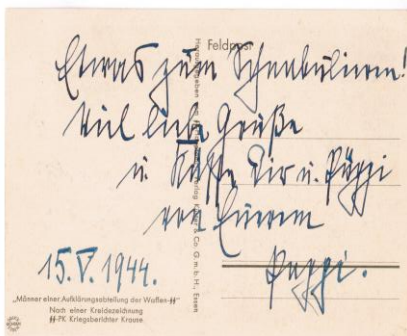
**Selected Stills (Original high quality will be supplied on demand)**



1928 Marga Himmler's Nazi Party Membership Card.



1944 Himmler with his daughter Gudrun and his adopted son Gerhard.



1944 Himmler's Postcard



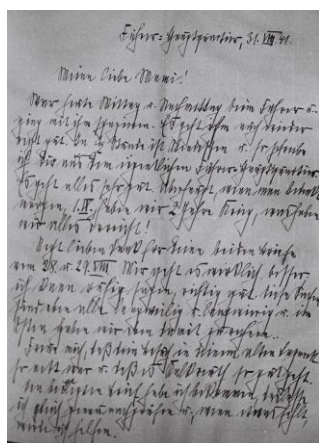
1936 Heinrich Himmler in Kiel.



Heinrich Himmler playing tennis



1932 Marga Himmler's Diary



1941 A letter from Heinrich Himmler  
to his wife Marga.



1939 The Himmler family at the Valepp.



1941 Himmler and his daughter Gudrun in Gmund, Germany.