



by Lukas Bärfuss
Wallstein
March 2008 / 198pp
Fiction

🏆 Long-listed for the
German Book Prize.

This book is outside of the five-year window for guaranteed assistance with English language translation. We suggest getting in touch with the relevant funding body for an informal conversation about the possibility of support. Please refer to our recommendations page for

One Hundred Days

Hundert Tage

review

Hundert Tage is set in Rwanda in the years leading up to and during the Rwandan civil war in 1994 and the genocidal massacre of between 500,000 Tutsis ('the tall people') by the ruling Hutus ('the short people'). It is narrated by the main character, David Hohl, a Swiss citizen sent to Rwanda on his first posting as an official of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, generally referred to simply as 'the Agency'. A key event that will trigger his future reactions happens at the airport in Brussels when a young black woman in front of him in the queue is called negro by a Belgian official. He protests, is hauled off by security guards and misses his plane. But he remembers the young woman.

As he settles down to his work in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, he finds that it is mainly clerical. All the Agency's aid and efforts are directed into the channels of the local political structures and are therefore helping to maintain a dictatorial racist power. Personal aid and helpfulness, such as David would like to give, is regarded as sentimentality.

Soon after his arrival David meets the girl from the airport again. Her name is Agathe, and she works as a volunteer in the hospital where David is taken when, thanks to another lapse into 'sentimentality', he has been crushed while attending a meeting given by the Pope. The couple start an affair, the details of which are described in the crudest terms. The point of this is not pornographic. It is simply to make clear that for Agathe sex is purely functional, has no connection with

books that are currently covered by our funding guarantee.

emotions, is not an expression of love. It will later occur to David that the genocidal troops regard killing in the same way. It has no moral dimension for them. When the rebel army approaches Kigali the Europeans are evacuated but David stays behind. He feels revulsion that the aid workers, for all their declarations that they are there to help the Africans, can simply cut and run.

This is an extremely powerful novel, a devastating denunciation of the inadequacies of the Western powers through the actions of their agencies. As such, it demands to be read.

press quotes

'What an incredible book! A highly political novel that doesn't serve up ready-made verdicts of guilt. Deeply unsettling.' – *Die Welt*

'Bärfuss stares deep into the heart of darkness. A major, stirring novel.' – *Tages-Anzeiger*

about the author

Lukas Bärfuss, born in Thun, Switzerland, in 1971, is one of the most successful dramatists to emerge in recent years and his plays are staged all over the world. Bärfuss was voted playwright of the year in 2005 in a poll of reviewers featured by the magazine Theater heute. Amongst many other awards is the important Mühlheim Dramatist Prize. Most recently he received the Anna Seghers Prize, an international prize for emerging authors. He lives with his wife and two children in Zurich.

Previous works include:

Meierbergs Tod – Die sexuellen Neurosen der Eltern – Der Bus (2005); *Alices Reise in die Schweiz – Die Probe – Amygdala* (2007). Both Wallstein.

Translations of literary works include:

The Sexual Neuroses of Our Parents (Nick Hearn Books, UK); other works sold to Bulgaria: (Pygmalion Press); France (L'Arche Editeur); Poland (Ksiegarnia Akademicka).

Translations and performances of dramatic works also in:

The Czech Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, all the

Scandinavian countries, Slovenia and Turkey.

rights information

Wallstein Verlag GmbH

Geiststraße 11

37073 Göttingen, Germany

Tel: +49 551 54898-24

sfelsberg@wallstein-verlag.de

Contact: Sabine Felsberg

www.wallstein-verlag.de

Wallstein Verlag was founded as a desktop publishing company but by 1988 had grown into a full-scale book publisher. The firm publishes about 130 titles a year, ranging from contemporary literature to history and cultural studies. Its authors include Ruth Kluger, Gottfried Benn, Golo Mann, Fred Wander, Gregor Sander and Ulf Erdmann Ziegler.