

# FRANCO'S SETTLERS

## LOS COLONOS DEL CAUDILLO

A documentary film by Lucía Palacios & Dietmar Post



2013 | 113 min | Germany, Spain | HD

*"...Our goal is to provide our poorest with land, and to create the new man, fascist, anti-urban and anti-socialist, a man who will devote himself to his land and to the regime, and who will live under the party's control."*

National Settlement Institute (Spain, 1955)

## SYNOPSIS

Somewhere on the high plains of La Mancha in Spain resides a village that carries the name of its creator, Francisco Franco. The translation for the village's name *Llanos del Caudillo* is *The High Plains of the Caudillo*. Caudillo is the equivalent to the German *Fuehrer* (Hitler) or the Italian *Duce* (Mussolini). *Llanos del Caudillo* was one of over 300 settlement villages built during the dictatorship of General Franco between 1939 and 1975. The ideological goal of these communities was to create the new fascist man.

The film portrays this unordinary small town as if we were looking through a magnifying glass, reviewing the Spanish history since Franco took power until the present days, when judge Baltasar Garzón, famous for having prosecuted Augusto Pinochet, has been convicted by the Spanish Supreme Court and banned from office for 11 years because of his attempt to investigate the crimes committed during Franco's dictatorship.

*Franco's Settlers* is a contemporary evaluation of the figure of the dictator Franco; a discreet and calm attempt to dissect recent Spanish history and to review how some Spaniards deal with the cruel heritage of their past.



## GLOBAL RELEVANCE AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES ADDRESSED

How can a village still carry the name of its country's former dictator? When we first visited the village Llanos del Caudillo in 1999, this was a forbidden question and we had a hard time convincing residents to speak with us about the history of their own town. The relevance of this film goes far beyond just telling a local story within Spain. It is a painful universal story of how after a long dictatorship the historic remembrance of that cruel period is still controlled by the perpetrators. In the current political landscape, the question of how a country transitions from a dictatorship towards a democracy remains one of the most important political and social issues. The fall of the Berlin Wall meant the extinction of many former communist dictatorships. Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, and Russia, all visited Spain, a country that in the opinion of many experts successfully transformed after Franco's death in 1975 into a stable democracy. Recently though, Spanish historians and foreign Hispanists, such as, Paul Preston and Walther L. Bernecker have questioned the "Spanish Transition" and openly addressed that Spain has never really come to terms with its own painful past.

Current upheavals in the Arab and African world ensure that more countries will be attempting this transition in the future. Ultimately the huge undertaking of shifting an entire government from one model to another is global as Felipe González, former leader of the opposition to Franco and later elected four times Prime Minister of the new democratic Spain expresses in our film: *"When Franco died there was this excitement, the same I recently saw in Tunisia. Some things are just universal"*.

The global relevance of this story cannot be stressed enough. A small village that carries the name of a dictator seems like a clear indicator that undemocratic values and a lack of historic information still exist in Spain and elsewhere in the world. How can it be that in our film the majority of school children defend the dictator? Why is it that Judge Baltasar Garzón who arrested the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet has been convicted and banned from office for investigating the crimes committed by the Franco regime?

These internationally relevant questions are discussed democratically in our film, which combines with equal weight the commentaries by the villagers of *Llanos del Caudillo* with those of famous politicians and experts, confirmed fascists and old opposition leaders.

## THE IMAGE CONCEPT

As in our film *Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback* (Grimme-Award 2008, German TV Oscar) *Franco's Settlers* dialectically interweaves current interviews with rare archival photographs and films to re-create a time and place in history that reflects the current lives of the protagonists and an entire nation. Conceptually, we are inspired by the work of Paul Preston, Errol Morris, Eberhard Fechner or Claude Lanzman who explore the flux created in history by the different viewpoints of many individual experiences. By putting these experiences together into a documentary, we can get closer to what history was truly like.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*"My German husband and I were driving south on the highway from Madrid to my hometown in La Mancha. It was him who paid attention to the sign with the name Llanos del Caudillo. I knew of the existence of Llanos but its name never shocked me. After all I grew up in a country where streets still were named after General Franco and other criminals. Dietmar however found it very surprising that so many years after the dictator's death there were still so many places named after him. That would be unthinkable in Germany. We were intrigued and wanted to know more, so we started our research."*

Lucía Palacios

*"Having studied, worked and lived for many years in Spain, I am sympathetic to the country and its people. Lucía was born in La Mancha, very close to the village Llanos del Caudillo. Her flat acceptance of the name of the town made me realize that there was a story to be told."*

Dietmar Post

As a German-Spanish couple, we have each experienced how it is to grow up with and reconcile our countries' fascist past. Until the mid 1960s Germany also resisted coming to terms with its own horrendous past. Only after the Auschwitz and Eichmann trials was the nation able to fully reject Hitler and his atrocious political views. In Spain, Franco is still not considered a fascist ruler because in recent Spanish history there was never a trial or official condemnation of the dictatorship. Needless to say, there has never been a reparation for the millions of victims.

We as filmmakers have asked simple questions and refrained from judgment. The village *Llanos del Caudillo* is a reminder of the worldwide phenomenon of how bad education, misinformation, ignorance and also a political system that never broke with the past are responsible for the fact that anti-democratic thinking prevails. Our rough cut screenings in Germany have left viewers shocked at how little they know about the effects of former totalitarian regimes on the current political policies of those countries. As documentary filmmakers we both recognize that this film is only possible because Spain and Germany are now democracies.



## THE FILMMAKERS

Critics have called Dietmar Post and Lucía Palacios the German counterpart to the American direct cinema directors D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. Like Pennebaker and Hegedus, Post and Palacios shoot and produce their own films, which are acclaimed worldwide. In 2008 they received the prestigious Adolf-Grimme Award (The German TV Oscar). Post and Palacios founded the production company play loud! productions in New York in 1997. They are currently based in Berlin.

Their films are distributed in Germany by Alive, in the UK by Cargo and in Spain by Filmin. In the US the prestigious home video distributor New Video carries *Reverend Billy & The Church of Stop Shopping*. Educational market distribution includes Filmsortiment in Germany and Kanopy in Australia. Some of the major festivals that have screened their films are: Rotterdam, Munich, Goteborg, CPH:dox Denmark, Belfast, Leeds, Munich, Oslo, Gijón, etc.... They have also been broadcast on these channels: ZDF/3sat (Germany), SF1 (Swiss TV), Sundance Film Channel (USA), Planete Doc (Poland), Docufilms (Switzerland), among others.

### Filmography

- 1996 - *Bowl of Oatmeal* (USA)
- 1998 - *Cloven Hoofed* (USA, Germany, Spain)
- 2002 - *Reverend Billy & The Church of Stop Shopping* (USA, Germany, Spain)
- 2006 - *Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback* (USA, Germany, Spain)
- 2009 - *Klangbad: Avant-garde in the Meadows* (Germany, Spain, USA)
- 2010 - *Faust: Live at Klangbad Festival* (Germany, Spain, USA)
- 2013 - *Franco's Settlers* (Germany, Spain)
- 2013 - *Donna Summer – Hot Stuff* (Germany, Spain)
- 2014 - *Felipe González* (Germany, Spain, Argentina) (in development)

**Dietmar Post** (director & producer, Germany, 1962) worked as an off set printer before obtaining a master's degree in Theatre and Film Studies and Spanish Language at Free University in Berlin and at Complutense University in Madrid. Between 1995–2003 he lived and worked in New York. He attended film school at NYU, where he made his first short film, the award-winning *Bowl of Oatmeal*. His second short *Cloven Hoofed* had its premiere at the Rotterdam Film Festival in 1998. Post assisted renowned documentary filmmakers Thomas Schadt (*Wall Street*), Reiner Holzemer (*Walker Evans*) and Lutz Dammbeck (*The Net*). Since 1997, together with Lucía Palacios, he has directed and produced numerous documentary films and runs the production company and record label play loud! productions.

**Lucía Palacios** (director & producer, Spain, 1972) obtained her master's degree in Cinema Studies at Complutense University in Madrid. Between 1996–2003 she studied (NYU) and worked in New York as a TV producer for Canal+ and TVE. She has collaborated as service producer and production manager on films, such as *The Nomi Song* (Andrew Horn) and *La Espalda del Mundo* (Javier Corcuera). Lucía also runs her own film production company in Spain.

## THE NARRATOR

**Juan Diego Botto** is one of the best known and most popular film and theatre actors in Spain and Argentina. He debuted in film at the early age of 8 with Fausto Canel's *Juego de poder* (1983), and a few years later played Columbus' son in Ridley Scott's *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (1992). His first major success arrived with his part in Montxo Armendáriz' *Historias del Kronen* (1995), thanks to which he landed the first of his three Goya nominations.

Thus began a meteoric career, working under the orders of directors like Mariano Barroso (*Éxtasis*, 1996), Gerardo Vera (*La Celestina*, 1996), Miguel Bardem (*Más que amor, frenesí*, 1996), Manolo Lombardero (*En brazos de la mujer madura*, 1997), Adolfo Aristarain (*Martín Hache*, 1997), and Imanol Uribe (*Plenilunio*, 1999), bringing Juan Diego Botto his second Goya Best Actor nomination. He garnered his third Goya nomination with Víctor García León's *Vete de mí* (2006), having formerly collaborated another twice with Montxo Armendáriz (*Silencio roto*, 2001, and *Obaba*, 2005), John Malkovich (*The Dancer Upstairs*, 2001), Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón (*El caballero Don Quijote*, 2002), Adolfo Aristarain yet again (*Roma*, 2004) and Luis Llosa (*La fiesta del chivo*, 2005). Among his latest films as an actor are Gregory Nava's *Bordertown* (2006) and *La ciudad del silencio* (2007); Joaquín Oristrell's *Va a ser que nadie es perfecto* (2006); Yannis Smaragdis' *El Greco* (2007), for which he won the Best Actor Award at Cairo Festival; Peter Sehr and Marie Noëlle's *The Anarchist's Wife* (2008); Marcelo Piñeyro's *Las viudas de los jueves* (2009); and Achero Mañas' *Todo lo que tú quieras* (2010). He was last year's San Sebastian Film Festival jury president.

Juan Diego Botto is also very active in politics, currently taking part in a support group for Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón.

Juan Diego has been very supportive of *Franco's Settlers*.

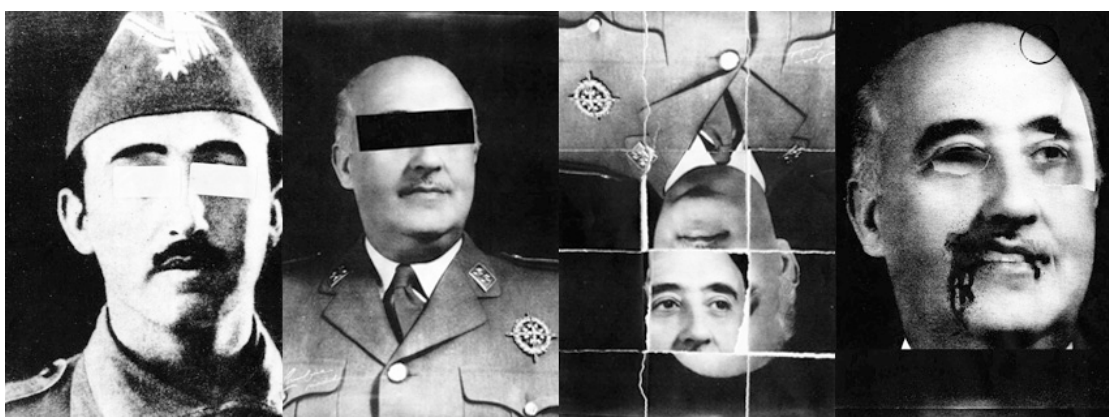
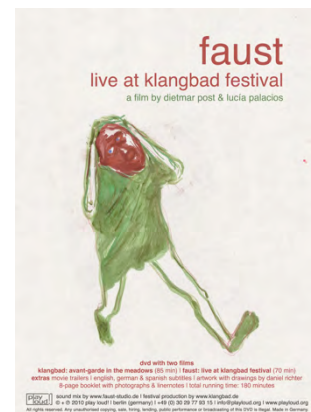
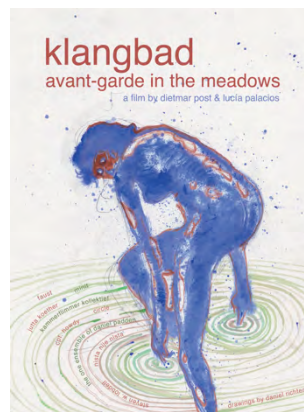
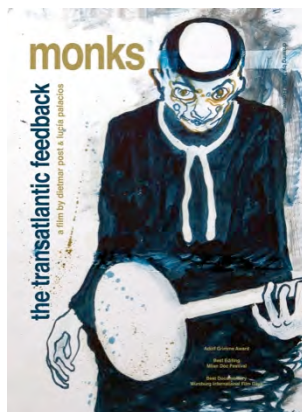


## ARTWORK

**Daniel Richter** has contributed the artwork for the poster, cover art and graphics for *Franco's Settlers*, as he did for our previous films *Monks – The Transatlantic Feedback*, *Klangbad: Avant-garde in the Meadows* and *Faust: Live at Klangbad Festival*.

Richter is one of the most renowned contemporary German painters of today. His work is closely linked to society and shows an extremely high awareness of history and contemporary political events. Richter's paintings have been considered a "rebirth of historical painting".

Daniel Richter specially designed four collages for an online auction as part of a crowd funding campaign to finish the film.





## CREDITS

Directed & produced by Lucía Palacios & Dietmar Post, edited & sound designed by Karl-W. Huelsenbeck, narrated by Juan Diego Botto, sound mix by André Bendocchi-Alves, artwork by Daniel Richter

### With

Felipe González Former Prime Minister of Spain (1982-1996), José Utrera Molina Minister under Franco and member of the fascist organization Falange, Isidro Sánchez and Esther Almarcha Historians, Cristobal Benito Sociologist and expert on the settlement projects Francisco Goberna Lawyer, Santiago Sánchez (settler's son and current mayor of Llanos del Caudillo), Juan Aranda (first fascist mayor of Llanos del Caudillo), Wenceslao Chamero and Eugenio Bascuñana (settlers), Cleofé Serrano (settler's daughter), Joaquín Romano (settler's son), Ana María Parrilla (first teacher in Llanos del Caudillo), Natalio González (first priest), Antonio Delgado (agronomy engineer from the National Settlement Institute), Ana Romano (settler's daughter and former municipal councilwoman), Antonio Rubio (former director of the village's school), Manuel Romano (settler's brother, emigrated to Germany in the 60's) Karin Romano-Brandt (Manuel's German wife)

### Supported by

MEDIA Programme, MEDIA Antenne Berlin-Brandenburg, Castile-La Mancha University, Centro de Estudios de Castilla-La Mancha, Nipkow Programm, Fundación Cultura y Deporte CLM, 40 Grad, Aha GmbH, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural y Marino, Goethe-Institut Madrid, Instituto Cervantes Berlin, Spanische Botschaft Berlin.

[www.playloud.org/francosettlers.html](http://www.playloud.org/francosettlers.html)

<https://www.facebook.com/loscolonosdelcaudillo>

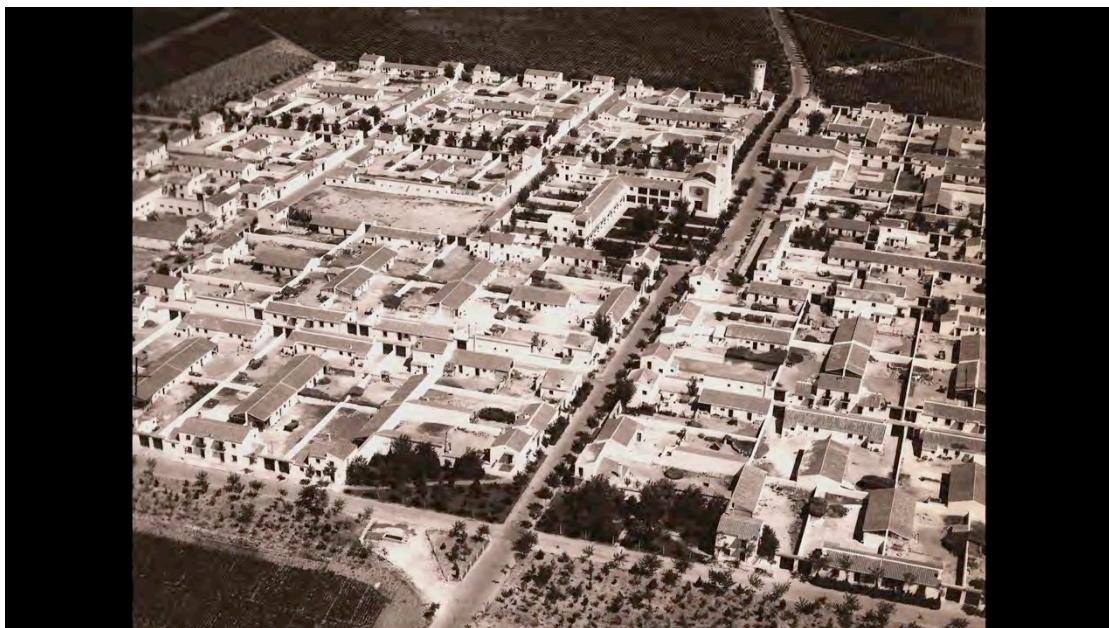


"These documents tell the (hi-)story of a village without history".





Settlers arriving at their new home in 1955



Llanos del Caudillo in 1956



Felipe González – Former Prime Minister of Spain (1982-1996)



José Utrera Molina – Minister under Franco and member of the fascist organization Falange





Protest march in support of Baltasar Garzón in 2010



Rally by the fascist organization Falange in 2010. Their supporters attacking the filmmakers.

## QUOTES

### **Andreas Fanizadeh (TAZ – die tageszeitung)**

Palacios and Post have closely inspected a huge amount of old photographs and films and included them in their film, interviewed former high-ranking cadres of the fascist Falange and met with the Social Democratic prime minister during the transition years. Their film doesn't comment too much, instead the protagonists and the material get to talk. A convincing method. Franco's Settlers could be an important contribution to how Spaniards deal with their dictatorship.

### **Emilio Silva (Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory)**

Franco's Settlers is an exact x-ray of current Spain.

### **Felipe González (President of Spain between 1982-1996)**

Franco's Settlers will surprise many people in Spain.

### **Rafael Poch (La Vanguardia)**

With their documentary the filmmakers hold a mirror up to Spanish society. And this at a time when Spain is walking through a thunderstorm within the European crisis, at the same time facing at home social cutbacks, a debate about regional separations, the general question of how to live together within the monarchy and the discussion about the legacy of Spain's dramatic historic past. Rarely a movie has been so much in sync with its times. Maybe that is the reason why this seminal film at the moment has been excluded from all important Spanish film festivals. In Germany, on the contrary, the event was sold out to the last seat. It was a predominately young audience, among them many Spaniards, at the Babylon Cinema in the center of Berlin. (...) With "Franco's Settlers" Post and Palacios put the finger on the sore spot.

### **Enrique Müller (El País)**

The screening provoked a spontaneous ovation to honor a rigorous and humorous film.

### **Carlos Castresana (Prosecutor of the Spanish Supreme Court)**

I invite the filmmakers to Strasbourg to show it to the court as evidence.

### **Sergi Doladé (Director of the MEDIMED DocsMarket)**

I watched Franco's Settlers and I have to congratulate you on a rigorous and emotional film, not only because of the story but also because of how this story is told. In Spain this revision of history never has been made and like someone states in the movie "maybe it is already too late". Even if some people might think that, I believe it is never too late to revise history. It is you as filmmakers who do it from the ground up, from life itself, from reality. What happens here is that this place called Spain we as people keep ignoring what really occurred. And that is the best achievement of the film how you unveil this ignorance, an ignorance we Spaniards have fully accepted and take for granted. You unveil the big truth! Spanish public TV has to broadcast this film so that people know about it. And the film should be nominated for a GOYA (Spain's Oscar).

### **Noemi Argerich (Spanish Teacher)**

"Spain is different" was Franco's Spain touristic slogan in the 60s. And it is indeed. This beautifully photographed and brilliantly researched work shows us an example of Spain's peculiarity. With their very relevant selection of archival footage, interviews and printed



materials, the authors bring us into a coherently narrated time-travel to the hardest times of post-war Spain while, at the same time, we get through the interposed interviews the contradicting perspectives that some of the still living protagonists have nowadays. The documentary presents the opinions not only of the citizens of the small village Llanos del Caudillo, but also of a very prominent francoist ministry and of socialist ex prime minister Felipe González, the leader of post-francoist Spain in the 80s and early 90s. The documentary "Los Colonos del Caudillo" is a very important document for those interested in understanding the very complex relationship of Spain with its fascist past and the present difficulties in dealing with it and repairing its victims.

#### **Frank Kammerzell (Spectator)**

To wish you lots of luck with this film wouldn't be necessary if you only considered its extraordinary quality because the film is of such unagitated forcefulness (unaufgeregte Eindringlichkeit) that it would take a lot of time to find something as good as this documentary.

#### **Two Spectators / Zwei Zuschauer**

Wir möchten Sie zu Ihrem Film beglückwünschen. Er hat uns sehr berührt. Wir fanden, dass Sie einen schönen Bogen durch die Geschichte geschlagen haben. Auch der Rahmen, die Bilder von der Autobahn, war sehr gelungen, insbesondere die Schlußeinstellung. Das Wechseln zwischen den Zeiten hat den Film spannend gemacht. Sie hatten wirklich ein glückliches Händchen mit den Menschen. Herrlich war der Schuljunge, der auf eine sehr schlichte Art den Nagel der Geschichte auf den Kopf getroffen hat. Die Stelle wurde ja auch beklatscht. Toll war auch der aufrechte Anwalt zum Schluß. Welch Glück, dass er sich hat interviewen und filmen lassen. War das spontan, nach dem Aufmarsch der Neofaschisten in Madrid? Bei der Kundgebung konnte man Ihre Anspannung und auch Angst förmlich greifen. Wir waren sehr ergriffen von der Thematik. Schade, dass wir der Podiumsdiskussion nicht mehr beiwohnen konnten. Wir haben uns sehr für Sie gefreut, dass Sie Felipe González für Ihren Film gewonnen haben, und dass er gestern dabei war. Welch Ehre! Wir wünschen Ihnen maximale Erfolge mit diesem Film! Hoffentlich kann er etwas anschubsen in der Geschichte Spaniens. Sie haben damit großen Mut bewiesen. Und hoffentlich erleben Sie keine Bedrohungen von fanatischen Franco-Verehrern!

#### **André Bendocchi-Alves (Sound engineer for, among others, Wim Wenders)**

"Die Siedler Francos" ist hart, kantig, schmutzig und mit allen Fehlern und Ungereimtheiten, die es eben braucht, um Dinge in aller Deutlichkeit zu sagen. Nicht einmal Musik kann man zu dem Film einfügen. Zu hart geschnitten, zu harte Töne. Er ist wie das echte Leben.

#### **Marcus Vetter (Documentary filmmaker of Hunger, The Heart of Jenin, etc.)**

"Die Siedler Francos" ist ein klassischer Dokumentarfilm, der ein Thema behandelt, dass man so nicht kennt. Ein sehr gut recherchierter Geschichtsfilm mit tollem Archivmaterial. Er ist ästhetisch schön, klar und ohne Schnörkel gefilmt. Auch die Protagonisten sind sehr gut gewählt. Es ist einfach eine hervorragend erzählte Geschichte.

#### **Óscar Rodríguez (Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory)**

A magnificent work, serious and objective. This is the kind of film which truly democratic citizens need to watch. Thank you for your effort.

#### **Walter Haubrich (Foreign correspondent in Spain for Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung)**

Franco's Settlers is an important and highly recommendable film.

**APIMED (Association of Independent Mediterranean Producers)**

We proudly announce that Franco's Settlers is nominated to the V Ahmed Attia Award for the Dialogue of Cultures given by the to the best documentary pitched at MEDIMED Pitching Forum. Result: A MUST SEE DOCUMENTARY.

**Juan Diego Botto (Actor)**

I really enjoyed the film. It will be an honor to be the narrator of this fascinating documentary.

**Dominik Wessely (Professor of documentary filmmaking at Cologne Film School)**

Franco's Settlers is a fabulous film. I saw it last night and had to watch it until the very end. To me it was an eye opener and a first class history lesson. The little I had learned in school and the little I knew from the media (the military coup in 1981 was on German TV) gave me only a small glimpse of Spanish history. The film brilliantly fills this lack of information. And it is absolutely amazing how the film at the end takes us right to the current political situation in Spain. Very creepy.

**Bob Flynn (Film Journalist, The Times)**

Franco's Settlers is a splendid, beautifully constructed and important film about a vital subject matter, one of the best on the previously unspoken, or hidden, modern history of Spain. I've researched Spain's post Civil War period myself but Franco's settlements were new to me, as were many stories in the film, and this appalling experiment in social engineering came as a shock. Yet the film is well balanced and, most importantly, allows all sides speak for themselves. The archive footage, much of which not seen for decades, and the numerous contemporary interviews only confirms how heavily Franco's shadow still hangs over Spain. This fine and disturbing documentary needs to be seen worldwide, but especially in Spain.

**Manual P. Muñoz (Literary investigator)**

Franco's Settlers has many similarities with the work by Spanish novelist Rafael Chirbes.