

VATERLANDSVERRÄTER

(ENEMY OF THE STATE)

a film by Annetkatrin Hendel

credits

DIRECTOR AND AUTHOR ANNEKATRIN HENDEL CAMERA JOHANN FEINDT • JULE KATINKA CRAMER • MARTIN LANGNER
SOUND PAUL OBERLE • NIC NAGEL • LUDWIG BESTEHORN GRAPHICS LEIF HEANZO MUSIC LOUIS RASTIG
EDITOR JÖRG HAUSCHILD NARRATOR STEFAN KOWALSKI MASTER SOUND MIXER MICHAEL KACZMAREK DIGITAL INTERMEDIATE CINEPOSTPRODUCTION
PRINTED MEDIA KAROLINE BOFINGER CREATIVE PRODUCER MARIA WISCHNEWSKI EXECUTIVE PRODUCER HOLLY TISCHMAN COMMISSIONING EDITOR ANNE EVEN

A CO-PRODUCTION OF IT WORKS! MEDIEN GMBH IN COLLABORATION WITH ZDF/ARTE
FUNDED BY DEUTSCHER FILMFÖRDERFONDS • BEAUFTRAGTER DER BUNDESREGIERUNG FÜR KULTUR UND MEDIEN
KULTURELLE FILMFÖRDERUNG MECKLENBURG VORPOMMERN • FILMWERKSTATT DER FILMFÖRDERUNG HAMBURG SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN
DEFA-STIFTUNG • NIPKOW-PROGRAMM • GERMAN FILMS

Synopsis

It is about as difficult to reach him as to get to him. Director Annetkatrin Hendel trudges through a lot of snow in the middle of nowhere in the Uckermark (a region in north-eastern Germany). It is the first day of shooting for a film on 75-year-old writer Paul Gratzik, former Stasi informant, turned apostate, turned dissident. The first thing Gratzik defiantly announces is that there will be no discussion on the Stasi... She will just have to get that out of her head. Full stop.

But now we have the film. On one hand it is a psychological profile of one of an extraordinarily paradoxical figure, a „man of extremes“: satyr, seducer, radical and hermit. On the other hand it tells a story about the GDR, its critics and the Stasi of the kind that has never been told before in all the 20 years since the end of East Germany.

When Gratzik terminated his activities as a confidential informant, because he began to feel the functionaries were betraying the people of the GDR, he came out of the closet in a radical manner. He was ready to put up with the consequences of no longer being able to publish anything and of even being under surveillance himself.

Annetkatrin Hendel has managed to portray a life whose last chapter shows a man whom one can curse and be fond of at the same time. She accompanies him through important stations in his life and experiences the hardships of his daily existence. Appearing in the film are an old flame, his grown children, friends, colleagues, his senior controller and the informant who was later assigned to keep tabs on him.

And then we have Gratzik himself... his memories, his texts and the Stasi reports he drew up himself. The fact that a man, who clearly enjoys reckless talk, is not under pressure to serve any expectations is thanks to the sensitive approach of the filmmaker. And thanks to her unwavering curiosity, he ends up opening up to her at all, while being allowed to remain faithful to himself, his inner conflicts and his obstinacy. From the outset Annetkatrin Hendel has refrained from seeking a „moral to the story“, and she can ultimately live with perpetrator and victim being neutralised and even „humanised“ in one person.

Director's Statement Annetkatrin Hendel

„To know the truth you need a lot of imagination“ HEINER MÜLLER

Because that „State“ that houses my memories bit the dust, my memories have become oddly placeless and depend more on individuals and their fates. With this film I pose questions to a member of my father's generation, the writer Paul Gratzik. The film does not seek to expose or justify anything; it focuses on the inner turmoil of a German literary figure, whose works have had impact on many. Paul Gratzik has always felt at home in contradictions. And any debate with Paul Gratzik represents both a significant intellectual and emotional challenge. He has apparently never experienced harmony in history. But the idea of inducing any harmony has never interested him either. On the contrary, he has always generated energy for his life and his art out of the rupture of things... An intriguing thing indeed, because this notorious catastrophe enthusiast and doomsayer adheres to the utopia of a socialist society still to this day with a remarkable tenacity, even when his convictions are strewn with doubts. He conveys a rhythm of life, an almost archaic linguistic style and subtexts that are no longer to be found in our world today.

My aim is to confront the spectators with the old and new ideas of my unusual protagonist - in the very convoluted, intriguing, passionate and manipulating manner they have struck me for the past twenty years. The film also offers a glimpse of the private person Paul Gratzik, who, far from the typical „nondescript“ Stasi agent we know from history books and films, is someone who is charismatic, pompous, brusque and charming. And fortunately Paul Gratzik is not a wise old gentleman who sums up his life story here; instead he is polemic and defiant... and somehow - despite everything having a greater dimension - ultimately like any other human being.

Annekatrin Hendel - Biography

author/ director/ producer

Annekatrin Hendel was born in Berlin and has 2 children. After finishing her studies in design she began to work as a freelance costume and set designer for film and theatre. In January 1989 she was one of the founders of the Berlin-based „Theater 89“. In 1999 she directed her first film, CHIQUITA FOREVER, a short. In 2004 she founded the production company IT WORKS! Medien GmbH, and became its managing director. The company's very first production ZUR ZEIT VERSTORBEN won numerous festival prizes and was nominated for the 2004 German Short Film Award. Full of zest and commitment for filmmaking and flanked by a steady pool of devoted employees, Annekatrin Hendel has been successfully producing challenging films for mixed audiences. „We grew up in a hermetically sealed microcosm in a failed system and belong to the GDR's last generation. Having found our cultural nourishment in the niches of a real-socialist reality, we possess an unusual creative potential that is now threatened with extinction. Our background and biographies from this particular time and place enable us to offer something unique and distinctive to contemporary German cinema. And that vitality issuing from our roots is something we bank on.“

Paul Gratzik - Biography

Paul Gratzik was born in 1935 in a small village outside the town of Gizycko, Poland, and was the third of six children. At the age of ten he, his mother and his siblings were transported in a cattle car from former Eastern Prussia to Schönberg in the region of Mecklenburg. In Mecklenburg he studied carpentry and coffin-making. Then he went on to slog away at various jobs in the Ruhr area and in Berlin. In Berlin he managed to attend evening courses in an extended secondary school and almost attained A-levels before moving on to Weimar and in Schlabendorf where he worked in an open pit mining brown coal. In 1962, while holding the post of department director at the Walter Ulbricht Youth Facility in Weimar, he began to write. It was at this time that he began to collect information on his community for the Ministry of State Security. From 1963 to 1968 he studied at the Teacher Training Institute in Weimar. After studying one year at the Johannes R. Becher Literary Institute he was expelled by all the students and teachers with one dissenting vote. He went to live in a children's home together with his pupils in Dönschten in the Osterzgebirge region in Saxony. Writing fulltime ever since 1971, he became a member of the Writer's Guild under the direction of Anna Seghers. In 1974 he worked in the „people-owned“ VEB transformer factory in Dresden. The foundation of his poetry became based on his existence among workers and their parasites. His verses conveyed his feelings of hatred and love at the same time. In 1978 he moved to Berlin where he posed as a dramatic adviser at the Berliner Ensemble under the direction of Manfred Wekwerth and wrote the play „Tschekisten“ („Chekists“) (not yet performed). In 1980 he and the painter Tübke were awarded the Heinrich Mann Prize ex-aequo. In 1981 he terminated his activities with the State Security Service on his own volition. Between 1984 and 1989 he became an object of operative surveillance and experienced frequent harassment. Since the mid-1980's Paul Gratzik has been living happily in the Uckermark between Templin and Prenzlau writing poetry and dreading the inevitable passing of his blessed soul.

Works:

UNRUHIGE TAGE drama 1965
MALWA drama 1968
WARTEN AUF MARIA comedy 1969
UMWEGE play 1970
DER KNIEBIST drama 1972
MÄRCHEN VON EINEM DER AUSZOG DAS FÜRCHTEN ZU LERNEN play 1975
LISA play 1976
HANDBETRIEB play 1976
PAUL GRATZIK - PLAYS edition published by Hinstorff-Verlag 1977
TRANSPORTPAULE novel 1978
TSCHEKISTEN play 1980
KOHLENKUTTE novel 1982
DIE AXT IM HAUS play 1984
GABIS ORT unpublished novel 1988
HANS WURST IN MOGADISCHU play 1994
TRIPOLIS feature film script, filmed under the title LANDLEBEN 1996
LITAUISCHE CLAVIERE (novel Johannes Bobrowski) play UA: „Theater 89“, 1997
SIMPLICISSIMUS (novel Grimmelshausen) play UA: „Theater 89“, 1999
DER FÜHRERGEBURTSTAG, drama 2010