



Open-air cinema on the Von-Melle-Park campus.  
In case of bad weather in the Anna-Siemsen-Hörsaal (Von-Melle-Park 8).

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24.5.2022, starting at 9 pm in front of the Philosophenturm (Von-Melle-Park 6)

# „Official Secrets“

A film by Gavin Hood  
(USA/GB, 2019)

What about the rule of law, democracy and freedom - the much-vaunted, defensible values of the self-proclaimed "West"? In Britain, where a new monarch was recently crowned, to whom German MPs reverently paid homage in the Bundestag, ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair is still at large. He is - along with George W. Bush - mainly responsible for the war of aggression against Iraq, which was launched in 2003 in violation of international law and cost an estimated one million lives and is therefore a war criminal according to international law.

*"Me-Ti said: the confidence of peoples is exhausted by claiming it."*  
Bertolt Brecht, "Me-Ti. Book of Turns", written in exile in the 1930s.

However, the Western community of states recognises the statutes of the International Criminal Court only to the extent that prosecution of its own offences remains excluded.

As a rule, the codified values and norms of enlightened society must be enforced in civically constituted states against the concrete institutions and bodies that were nominally formed to uphold them. This requires humane courage, unwavering commitment and confrontational solidarity as the everyday practice of the many.

The story of whistleblower Katharine Gun, which was filmed in 2019 under the title "Official Secrets", provides strong evidence of this fact.

The 27-year-old British woman (played by Keira Knightley) was working as a Mandarin translator for the GCHQ intelligence service when, in January 2003, her bosses forwarded her a memo from the NSA asking her department to collect incriminating material against the government representatives of six non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. They are to be blackmailed into voting for a UN resolution that would give the USA and Britain a free hand for the planned invasion of Iraq, as the publicly presented legitimations for the war are increasingly proving to be contrived and the population worldwide is beginning to revolt against the planned arms race. Gun, as a hitherto uninformed citizen who is loyal to the state but feels quite humanely, gets into a deep conflict of conscience and finally decides to

leak the highly explosive secret document to the press via a peace-moving acquaintance. After intensive source checking and persistent lobbying of his editor-in-chief, who until then had tried to stay close to the government, journalist Martin Bright of the Observer succeeds in publishing the document and the UN Security Council votes against the resolution. A few days later, the US

and British governments nevertheless start a war and a merciless hunt against GCHQ employees to find the "mole".

Gun, in order to protect her colleagues, admits her violation of the Official Secrets Act. This law, as she later finds out, allows the secret services to prosecute above all laws and almost completely disenfranchises anyone who violates it. However, since Gun, despite all persecution, increasingly reveals and substantiates the anti-war, humanist motivation of her actions, she receives increasing support from sympathetic fellow human beings whom she had initially distrusted. In the end, with the help of the feisty lawyer Emmerson (Ralph Fiennes), who, spurred on by Gun's courage, attacks the legality of the war itself, she succeeds in a spectacular turnaround in court, in which the government with its compliantly mendacious warmongering loses out.

The precise and suspenseful cinematic narrative shows in an exemplary way the far-reaching significance the individual can have for the further course of history and that man grows by consistently following humane convictions and cooperating with his peers for the higher purpose of a humane development of civilisation.

The beautiful pretence is transparent. Governments, the media, the judiciary and state services are only as trustworthy as we, the demos, make them serviceable for the active realisation of the species.

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