

LOVE IN THE TIME OF RESISTANCE – FREYA

GESCHICHTE EINER LIEBE – FREYA

a film by Antje Starost & Hans Helmut Grotjahn



1929 and 18-year-old Freya Deichmann from Cologne meets Helmuth James von Moltke. He is the love of her life. After a first visit to Helmuth at the Moltke estate in Kreisau, Freya's mother asks about the Silesian countryside. Freya's reply: "On the journey there I'm so happy I don't see a thing. And on the journey back I'm so sad I don't see anything either."

Two years later, marriage and a move to Kreisau. Helmuth James von Moltke is not your stereotypical country squire. He has nurtured a social conscience and sense of community from an early age. Hence his nickname: the Red Count. The estate is in dire straits and only his skill and hard work avoid bankruptcy. Freya lives with Helmuth in Kreisau and Berlin where she graduates in law. He becomes a lawyer and specialist in international law. This enables him to make contacts abroad when, at the beginning of the war, he is drafted into the High Command of the Armed Forces. This way Helmuth can also forge links for the German resistance with other European countries.

Kreisau must be kept going and this task falls mainly to Freya. In contrast to Helmuth, who cannot see any future for children in these dark times, Freya has other ideas. Two sons are born. "I wrested them out of him", says Freya. Political circumstances force a physical separation, with Helmuth in Berlin and Freya in Kreisau, but they pursue a daily correspondence which eventually results in over 1,600 letters. Unique witnesses to an era and, above all, an expression of their deep bond.

Kreisau becomes an epicentre of the German resistance against the dictatorship. Von Moltke is founder of the "Kreisau Circle". Freya is confidante, witness and supporter of the political ideas which are focusing upon the future of Europe.

Their lives reach a dramatic climax with Helmuth's imprisonment. On 18 January 1944 von Moltke is arrested. It is a time wavering between hope and a final separation. Every day could be their last. Their greatest happiness: almost every day they write each other letters which are smuggled by the prison chaplain Harald Poelchau. Shortly before the end of the war, in January 1945, Helmuth James von Moltke is executed in Plötzensee. He is 38 years old.

As Freya had decreed, the prison letters have only been published now, following her death. They are heart-piercing glimpses into an extraordinary existential situation of life and death.

Freya's is a story which has not yet been told. The film revolves around excerpts from previously undisclosed conversations with Freya von Moltke which we recorded with the then 90-year-old in her house in Vermont (USA), her second home. Her vitality, Rhineland humour and clarity of speech allow us to gain an immediate sense of her personality and give the audience a strong impression of her dramatic life story.

We want to give shape to these striking and moving moments in her life in a filmic story told by Freya herself and selected passages from the correspondence. Without reconstructions. Without voiceover and explanation "This correspondence is unparalleled. Two people are writing for their lives." (DIE ZEIT) "You cannot get any closer to death than this. Nor any closer to love." (Die Welt)

In this way, a collage and a dialogue emerge, spanning an entire life and pointing towards the future.