

The Teachers' Protest

How Norwegian teachers defeated Nazi education – documentary

Press Release

UK film release - Monday 28th October
Gathering Light Films



UK Teacher to Tour Arctic Norway with Film about a World War Two Teachers' Resistance.

UK filmmaker and teacher Jon Seal will launch his documentary, *The Teachers' Protest* with a premiere screening in Kirkenes, a town three hundred miles above the Arctic Circle, followed by six screenings in northern Norway. At the same time, the film will be released in the UK.

The Teachers' Protest tells the incredible story of how Norwegian teachers refused to teach a Nazi curriculum in their schools in World War Two. They were arrested and sent to concentration camps in the far north of Norway. With the overwhelming support of most Norwegian people they held out. Eventually they were released and a Nazi curriculum was never introduced into Norwegian schools.

Three years in the making, the feature length documentary weaves together archive footage and first-hand testimony. 'We were so fortunate to be given

the use of drawings by Herlov Åmland made in the prison camps,' says Jon. 'The drawings are exquisite and all the more powerful for the conditions in which they were created. We've used them as the basis for animation, whilst trying to honour and maintain their integrity.'

Some of the main prison camps were in and around Kirkenes. 'I filmed in the town on several occasions and interviewed local people about their memories. We also used the local, community choir who provide a wonderful musical backdrop for the film - singing songs sung by the teachers in the prisons.'

Kirkenes teacher, Robert Nesje, has worked on the film. 'There is a lot of excitement here about the film and people are really looking forward to seeing it. There have already been some previews in Oslo and Norwegian audiences have been fascinated. It seems strange that it takes a British filmmaker to do this but I think this makes us realise the international appeal of the story.'

Previews in the UK, Norway and the USA have had tremendous responses from audiences. 'The story really touches people's hearts and resonates – ultimately it's a story of triumph and optimism,' says Jon. As Sigurd Aartun, whose father was arrested, puts it, 'They can tell us that we can fight without weapons and still win.'

Steffen Handal, the leader of the Norwegian teachers' union has been a big supporter of the film since the beginning, 'It's a gift to the teaching profession and the Norwegian people,' he says.

We would be delighted to answer more questions about the film.
Director/Producer Jon Seal is available for interview.

A trailer for the film can be seen here
<https://vimeo.com/333308626>

More details and background can be found on the website.
<https://theteachersprotest.com>

Contact info.

Direct contact with producer/director jonseal@me.com Tel. 07881027880

Project Partners

National Education Union, UK
Utdanningsforbundet, Union for Education Norway
Education International

Audience reaction

'A perfect and moving mix of storytelling, real life and drama.'
'A wonderful portrayal of a story hardly anybody knows about.'
'Way more artistic and impactful than any documentaries I've seen.'
'It was gripping from beginning to end. You could hear a pin drop!'

Stills



