

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF
PENNSYLVANIA
Friday Film Fest Series



The General

Directed by Stephan Wagner

October 21, 2022

• 6:30 PM •

Film, Food & Discussion

The German Society of Pennsylvania
611 Spring Garden St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Support provided in part by the
Philadelphia Cultural Fund.



The General (2015)

Director: Stephan Wagner
Screenplay: Alex Buresch
Producer: Leif Alexis, Benjamin Benedict, Nico Hofmann
Camera: Torsten Grams
Music: Achim Strommenger
Production: UFA-Fiction
Cast: Ulrich Noethen – Generalstaatsanwalt Fritz Bauer
David Kross – Joachim Hell
Bernhard Schütz – Hans Maria Globke
Dieter Schaad – Konrad Adenauer
Vilmar Bieri – Adolf Eichmann
Manfred Möck – Isser Harel/Mossad Chief



Length: 128 Minutes
Commentary by Karl Moehlmann

“Deutschland ist heute stolz auf sein Wirtschaftswunder, es ist auch stolz, die Heimat Goethes und Beethovens zu sein, aber Deutschland ist auch das Land Hitlers, Eichmanns und ihrer vielen Spießgesellen und Mitläufer. Wie aber der Tag aus Tag und Nacht besteht, hat auch die Geschichte eines jeden Volkes ihre Licht- und Schattenseiten. Ich glaube, dass die junge Generation in Deutschland bereit ist, die ganze Geschichte, die ganze Wahrheit zu erfahren, die zu bewältigen ihren Eltern allerdings mitunter schwer fällt.”

- Generalstaatsanwalt Fritz Bauer (1958)

Fritz Bauer (1903 – 1968)

Born in Stuttgart in 1903 to Jewish parents, Fritz Bauer studied business and law in Heidelberg, Munich, and Tübingen. After having joined the SPD early in his life, Bauer was, together with Kurt Schumacher, one of the leaders of the local *Reichsbanner* chapter in Stuttgart in the early 1930s. When a plan to organize a general strike against the Nazis in Stuttgart failed in May 1933, Schumacher and Bauer were arrested and taken



Fritz Bauer

to the Heuberg concentration camp. But while Schumacher remained defiant and incarcerated for 12 years until 1945, the young and largely unknown Bauer was released after he signed his submission to the Nazis in an open letter (*"Treuebekanntnis einstiger Sozialdemokraten"*). In 1935, Bauer emigrated to Denmark and later to Sweden where he remained during the Second World War.

He returned to Germany in 1949 and once more entered the civil service in the justice system. After becoming District Attorney in Braunschweig, he was appointed in 1956 by Governor Georg August Zinn to the office of District Attorney of Hessen based in Frankfurt, a position he held until his death in 1968.

His relentless drive to bring surviving Nazi perpetrators to justice may go back to his decision to sign that open letter of submission after his arrest. He would confess later: *"Ich habe mir das nie verziehen. Der Schumacher unterwarf sich nicht. Man darf sich der Tyrannei niemals beugen, niemals."* During his lifetime, Bauer's name was mainly associated with the Auschwitz Trial, which started in 1963. For the first time since the Nuremberg Trials of 1945-46, this trial addressed the Nazi past and atrocities. (The 2014 movie *"Labyrinth of Lies"* includes Bauer's role in this important judicial event.) The fact that Bauer was instrumental in the intelligence in finding Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann in Argentina and bringing him to trial and justice in Israel was not known until ten years after his death. This movie is designed to fill that gap.

Fritz Bauer gegen den Staat

In 1957, Fritz Bauer had received information from the German-Jewish emigrant Lothar Hermann that Eichmann was living in Buenos Aires at Calle Chacabuco 4261. Bauer saw a historic opportunity to bring Eichmann to trial in Germany. This would put an end to twelve years of disinterest and even opposition to the pursuit of Nazi criminals like Bormann, Mengele, und Eichmann. This opposition ranged from files disappearing from his own office (*"Meine eigene Behörde ist Feindesland"*) to active surveillance by the official investigating offices like the BKA (*Bundeskriminalamt*), the BND (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*), and the *"Verfassungsschutz"*. *"Es gibt keine Ermittlungsbehörde, die nicht durchsetzt ist mit Nazis"* claims

Bauer, and he also mentions former SS-Commander Schneider, who works *"gemütlich"* for Mercedes-Benz in Stuttgart. But the opposition to a relentless pursuit of Nazi criminals may have gone far beyond the aforementioned institutions. It may have even touched the government of Konrad Adenauer itself and the interests of the US occupation force at the time of the intensifying Cold War.

"Eichmann würde Namen nennen, vielleicht sogar den von Staatssekretär Hans Globke". Globke worked in the *Kanzleramt* of Konrad Adenauer and was considered his right hand. But he was known for his positive judicial assessment of the *Nürnberger Rassegetze (1935)* and could potentially have been linked to Eichmann's logistical organization of the Holocaust. A domino theory could then kick in: If Globke fell, then the Adenauer administration could have conceivably collapsed. If the Adenauer administration collapsed, then the US administration in Germany might have failed to achieve its goal of making West Germany an integral component of NATO and the rest of western Europe. So there seemed to be no appetite for an Eichmann trial in Germany from Bonn to Washington. And the German people themselves were more interested in establishing a normal life again, in obtaining their own house and car instead of confronting their haunting past. As has so often been the case in German history, the inertia of the reestablished status quo had gained the upper hand over the revolutionary impulse to create a new and more just society.

It is against this backdrop of institutional opposition and public disinterest in the late 1950s that Fritz Bauer decided to turn directly to Israel, even though it may have constituted treason. *"Wenn wir etwas für unser Land tun wollen, dann müssen wir es in diesem Fall verraten."* But the Mossad did not consider Eichmann's address valid, stating that such a high ranking official could not live in such a poor neighborhood. The search for a confirmation of this address and therefore a second informant continued.

New revelations

The person who had given the same information about the whereabouts of Adolf Eichmann had been anonymous for over 60 years until a recent article by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* from August 21/22,

2021 revealed his identity. It became known that a former student of the University of Göttingen, Gerhard Klammer, gave the decisive tip about the Eichmann's address in Argentina. Klammer had been one of the 12,000 applicants who were able to start their studies in September 1945 after the university opened its doors again. He studied Geology, Geography, and History and received his PhD in 1949. Since he was unable to find a job that matched his qualifications, he decided to try his luck abroad even though he had recently been married and was the father of a child. As a blind passenger, he managed to travel from Genoa to Buenos Aires and found a job with the Capri company in August 1950. The company had been founded by Horst Carlos Fuldner, a former SS-Officer who wanted to provide an income to former Nazi members. Many of the "Mitarbeiter" had been "NS-Funktionäre" who had escaped to Argentina on the so-called "Rattenlinie", an escape route mainly through Genoa/Italy to South America. Among the employees of Capri were the former NSDAP-Kreisleiter of Braunschweig, Berthold Heilig; the commander of the 12th SS-Division, Herbert Kuhlmann; the "Gauleiter of Steiermark", Siegfried Uiberreither; SS-Engineer Armin Schoklitsch; and a certain "Ricardo Klement", which was the "Tarnname" of Adolf Eichmann. Klammer did not stay long in the remote northern Argentinean province of Tucumán where Capri was located. In September 1953, he took a job with the seismic division of an Argentinean state oil company and a year later with a company in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In 1956, he was offered a job by the German Demag company of Duisburg and was responsible for the development of several mineral deposit sites around the world.



During one of his business trips to Argentina, he saw his former colleague Ricardo Klement stepping out of a bus in Buenos Aires. Klammer knew his true identity and also knew the role that Eichmann had played during the Third Reich. He followed him and discovered his address was Calle Chacabuco 4261, the same ad-

dress Lothar Hermann had indicated. Back in Germany in the fall of 1959, Klammer confided this information to Rosemarie and Giselher Pohl, a German couple that he had known from his time at the University of Göttingen. Klammer wanted Eichmann to be punished, but he did not want to be identified as the informant of Eichmann's whereabouts so that he would not jeopardize his own professional career and interests in South America. Giselher Pohl, who had studied Theology and had become a *Militärpfarrer* in the newly founded Bundeswehr, then turned to his supervisor, *Militärbischof* Hermann Kunst. When Kunst contacted Fritz Bauer, he also gave him an old photo that showed Klammer with several of his coworkers in Tucumán in 1952. To protect Klammer's identity, Bauer ripped the photo in half, only showing Eichmann with two other coworkers, and presented this evidence and thus the confirmation of Eichmann's address to the Israelis. This time the Mossad was convinced. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's president, ordered the operation to capture Eichmann only a few days later. On May 23, 1960 Eichmann was in custody in Israel. Ever since Bauer refused to reveal the identity of Klammer, everybody had kept this agreement, including the Mossad. In the spring of 2011, the children and grandchildren of Klammer discovered his name in a *Spiegel* story about the Eichmann trial. It was the first time that the entire picture was seen publicly, but *Der Spiegel* did not identify Klammer. The revelations about Klammer's role in the apprehension of Eichmann were only possible because Klammer's children and grandchildren allowed access to the family documents under the condition that they themselves would remain anonymous. Fritz Bauer died in 1968 and Gerhard Klammer in 1982. Their legacy lives on.

Upcoming Events



- Oct. 30 "Wister & More" presents the Wister Quartet, 3pm

- Nov. 4 Vor*glühen: A TanzParty, 8pm
- Nov. 5 258th Annual Stiftungsfest, 6pm
- Nov. 6 Gentle Yoga, 11 am
- Nov. 12 Buchclub, *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers* by Stefan Zweig, 1:30pm
- Nov. 18 Friday Film Fest: *Katharina Luther*, 6:30pm
- Nov. 19 Wandern at the Willows, 11 am
- Nov. 19 Library Treasure Tour: "The Mysteries [Secrets] of Philadelphia," 2pm

- Nov. 20 "Wister & More" presents Joyce Chen & Shelby Yamin, 3pm

- Dec. 3 Christkindlmarkt, 12pm
- Dec. 4 Gentle Yoga, 11 am
- Dec. 10 Buchclub, *Hiob* by Joseph Roth, 1:30pm
- Dec. 11 "Wister & More" presents Pyxis Piano Trio, 3pm
- Dec. 17 Wandern at the Willows, 11 am
- Dec 17 Library Treasure Tour: " Archiving German Americana: Oswald Seidensticker and the German Society Library," 2pm