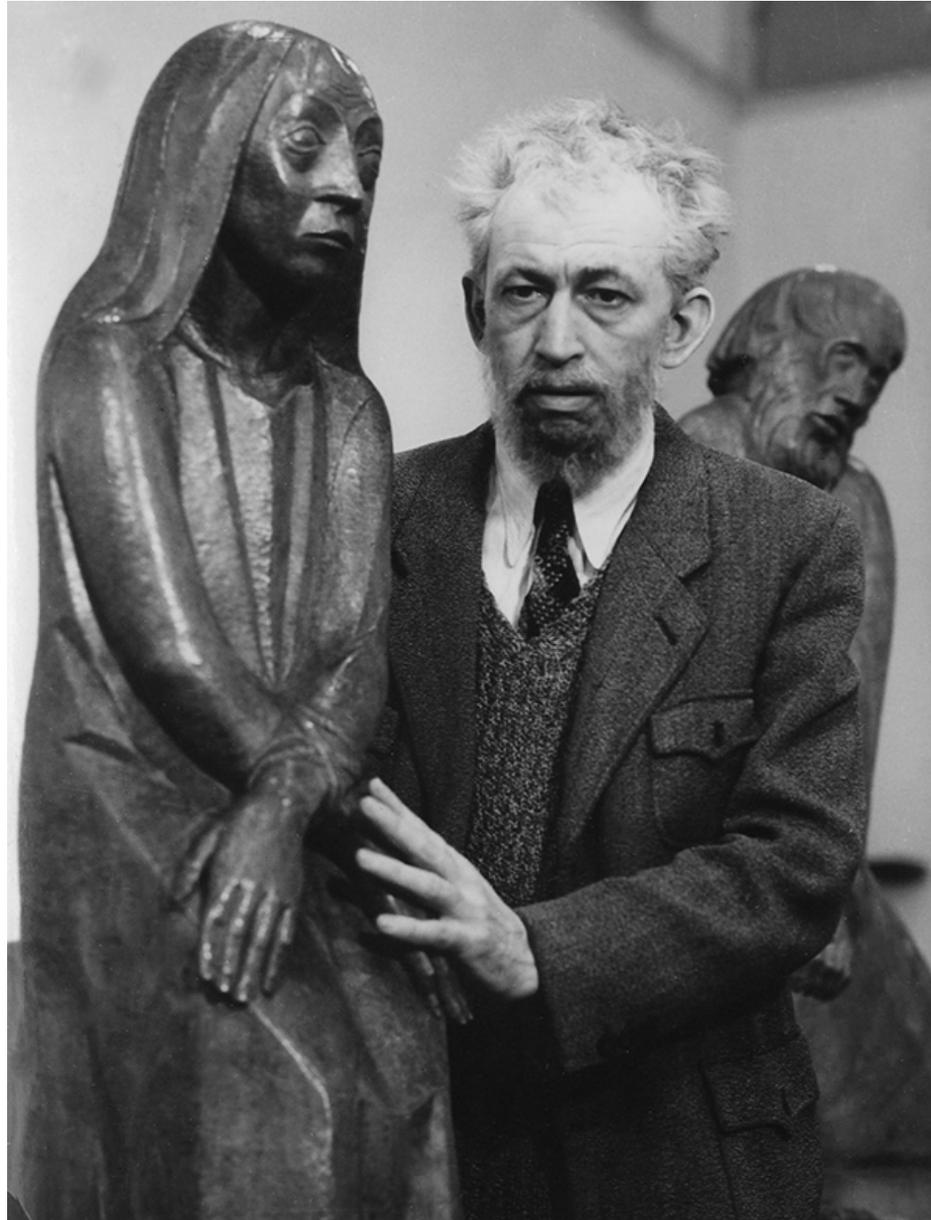




# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

By Barbara Barlet



Censored: *The Lost Angel* • *The Lost Angel* • A DVD Release by the DEFA Film Library



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## Content

<b>History of <i>The Lost Angel</i> .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A Song by Wolf Biermann for <i>The Lost Angel</i> .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Sources .....	19
Glossary & Abbreviations .....	20
People Involved in the Story .....	21

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She writes: I would like to thank the staff of the DEFA Film Library at UMass Amherst for their editorial help and English translation.



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

## History of *The Lost Angel*

While adjustments and accommodations in the face of possible censorship were not uncommon in the East German film industry, censorship was not always equally immanent and, as a rule, only struck individual or a handful of films. The exception to this generalization was the great *Kahlschlag* (lit. razing, clear-cutting) visited upon East German feature film production in 1965-66, following the 11<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee (ZK) of the country's Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED).

In August 1966, when the rough cut of *The Lost Angel* was screened for representatives of the Film Production Department at HV Film, PROGRESS and DEFA-Außenhandel,<sup>1</sup> approval to complete the film was denied. After the many meetings and written exchanges that ensued, all materials for the film were put into storage at the GDR's State Film Archive. Unlike most of the other films banned in 1965-66, however, a request from the Soviet Union brought the film materials out of storage only three years later. After the final edit, *The Lost Angel* was 400 meters shorter than the rough cut had been. An investigation into the whereabouts of these 400 meters, conducted by the DEFA Foundation in March 2014, was inconclusive, and they are presumed to have been lost. *The Lost Angel* premiered in tandem with the opening of a Barlach exhibition at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow on December 22, 1970; the exhibition was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the German expressionist artist Ernst Barlach. On April 22, 1971, the film was officially released into GDR movie theaters—although with a run of only five prints.

This chronology brings together materials from hundreds of reports, minutes, documents and contracts for the first time.<sup>2</sup> In addition to tracing the history of *The Lost Angel*, it yields insight into the structures and ideologies governing film production in the GDR.

Texts that appear in boxes present information on discussions that took place at the GDR Academy of Arts—especially those concerning the Ernst Barlach Societies in Güstrow (East Germany) and Hamburg (West Germany)—and are based on documents in the Ernst Barlach Estate archived at the the Academy of Arts. The other entries present debates that took place at the GDR Ministry of Culture and the DEFA Studio for Feature Films, and are based on documents at the Federal Archive and DEFA Foundation in Berlin, Germany.

## **Production and Banning of the Film: 1965 - 1966**

### **June 8, 1965**

Production contract signed by the DEFA Studio for Feature Films and the PROGRESS-Filmverleih distribution company for a feature film entitled *The Lost Angel*, with a length of 2443 meters. Production is to begin on May 6, 1965, and wrap on August 3, 1965. The target date to deliver the completed film is October 31, 1965.<sup>3</sup>



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

## September 27, 1965

From Günter Rücker, associated member of the Academy of Arts, to Dr. Karl Hossinger, Director of the Academy of Arts regarding Barlach Society, call from Herr Bastian, Güstrow:<sup>4</sup>

"Herr Kirsten from DEFA was to notify the general meeting of the concerns raised about the Barlach film. Herr Kirsten is not able to appear due to illness. Comrade Dr. Hossinger is asked to contact DEFA about assigning a representative for Herr Kirsten, as the Barlach Society places a great deal of importance on the Barlach film." In addition, a handwritten note from Rücker: "In the meanwhile I have spoken with [Joachim] Mückenberger [director of the DEFA Studio for Feature Films], who suggested Klaus Wischnewski. He declined to speak about the Barlach film, however, out of consideration for Kirsten."

## September 28, 1965

From Mückenberger to Hossinger:<sup>5</sup>

"I regret to inform you that Herr Ralf Kirsten will not be able to give his lecture at the general meeting of the Barlach Society. Herr Kirsten had to interrupt work on *The Lost Angel* because of a serious, long-term illness and is currently hospitalized at the Charité. With kind regards, Mückenberger"

## November 20, 1965

Report from DEFA to HV Film at the Ministry of Culture<sup>6</sup> on the progress of production notes that shooting was put on hold due to the director's illness. "Our hope... that the film—though delayed—would still be delivered this year was not fulfilled. I request that the studio, in view of unforeseen circumstances, admit completion of the project upon delivery."

## March 1966

Shooting resumes; the DEFA Studio is under new management. In the end, shooting lasts May 10, 1965 to March 28, 1966.<sup>7</sup>

## April 5, 1966

Meeting minutes, Barlach Society Board of Trustees, in Güstrow:<sup>8</sup>

"(...) Ralf Kirsten, director of the DEFA feature film *The Lost Angel* who was invited to this meeting cannot join us 'due to urgent professional obligations that cannot be cancelled.' His telegram dated April 4 continues: 'I hope to be able to invite you to a discussion of the finished film at your next meeting.' (...)"

"Regarding 1: Report of Friedrich Schult [administrator of the Barlach Estate and Historical Site] on the activities of the Estate concerning the premises:

Following hearing about Herr Kirsten's telegram, Schult reported on the DEFA film, whose script is now complete. Fred Düren, the leading actor, had a car accident shortly after shooting the film. The production was interrupted several times due to Kirsten's serious illness and surgery. (...) The film, whose plot is loosely based on Fühmann's book, includes a lot of documentary material of landscapes, the cathedral, the old atelier and Barlach's last home. Shooting also brought some surprises for the citizens of Güstrow—for example, when suddenly a huge flag with a swastika was flying above the town hall.



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

It is estimated that the film will be finished in September or October. The premiere is to take place in Güstrow. Herr Hossinger proposes that board members of the Barlach Society also be invited. He thinks that the film might possibly be shown in West Germany, for example at an annual conference.”

## **June 21, 1966**

Presentation of the rough cut of the film with suggested changes, which were subsequently incorporated.<sup>9</sup>

## **July 5, 1966**

Memo from Heinrich Greif KAG to DEFA Studio director, preparing for approval screening for studio management: “The artistic team succeeded in convincingly recreating an important day in the life of Barlach, on which one of his most beloved works was removed from the Güstrow Cathedral and destroyed. (...) The film recounts this most bitter day of his life. (...) Through the conflict between despair, self-sacrifice and the desire for self-assertion, it depicts the artist’s positive decision for social responsibility. Through this issue the film presents questions of national importance and helps to extend the base of our national responsibility, especially in the area of film. The intense imagery (...) and the excellent representation of the Barlach character (...) bring our ideas to fruition. We request that the film *The Lost Angel* receive the rating ‘valuable.’ This film is demanding of its audience. We will discuss the distribution of this film with the PROGRESS-Filmvertrieb directorate in a separate meeting.”<sup>10</sup>

## **July 5, 1966**

The studio’s management accepts the version.

## **July 12, 1966**

Minutes, meeting of the directorate with Franz Bruk, Director of the DEFA Studio. Point 2, Rating: “The suggestion to bestow the rating ‘valuable’ upon the film is accepted. The reasoning behind this will be reworked by the KAG.”<sup>11</sup>

## **July 18, 1966**

Request for approval, submitted by DEFA to HV Film. Length of film 2067 meters.<sup>12</sup>

## **August 10, 1966**

Film screening for representatives of the Film Production Department at HV Film, PROGRESS and DEFA-Außenhandel:

“All those present agreed that for ideological and artistic reasons the film is not suitable for export or use in the GDR.”<sup>13</sup>

## **August 16, 1966**

Assessment of the film by Dr. Jahrow, head of HV Film’s Film Production Department:<sup>14</sup>

“The assessment given by Heinrich Greif KAG is not critical. It misestimates the ideological value of the film and judges the political effectiveness of the film inaccurately. The film is not based on a Marxist conception.



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

It is subject to a washed-out ideological position that cannot be clearly identified and does not show a clear commitment in the sense of socialist art. The basic conflict that was to be presented was that between the fascist state and a humanistic artist. The filmmakers' lack of commitment is evident in that they presented the conflict as being between the state and the arts in general. (...) Furthermore, the film was produced with no regard for any public appeal whatsoever. (...) As a result, they abdicated any attempt to appeal to the principle of popularity. (...) All the characters in the film remain more or less anonymous—even Barlach's thoughts and inner musings remain unclear. The film illustrates the errors of recent feature film production. It has nothing in common with socialist-realist art. Screening the film would alienate the people of our Republic. At best, it is suited to foster elite thoughts among a few artists. (...) The film also cannot be sold for export, because its false ideological conception would awaken erroneous ideas about intellectual life in our Republic. I (...) therefore propose that the state not approve the film. Current proposals to amend the film and resubmit it for approval, should not be granted."

## September 29, 1966

Report of the Film Production Department of HV Film,<sup>15</sup> in which Dr. Jahrow elaborates upon and sharpens the reasons for rejection outlined in his August 16 report:

"The film criticizes the opposition between art and dictatorship (totalitarianism) in general. It can therefore also be seen as a general indictment of state power (also including socialist state power). The film irritates, rather than educating through a clear antifascist commitment in keeping with historical legitimacy. Given this position, this film could have just as easily been produced in any imperialist state. (...) Of course, in his lifetime Barlach only arrived at limited, class-neutral realizations. This does not, however, give socialist filmmakers permission to work within these limits, let alone below them. Yet essentially this is what happened."

## October 6, 1966

Report of the Film Production Department to the Deputy Minister of Culture and the head of HV Film, about the situation and responsibilities of the Department with respect to the political-ideological guidance and supervision of national film production.<sup>16</sup>

—Presented as one of the Department's first successes:

"Here the comrades of the department have represented clear viewpoints and contributed to the unavoidable decision of the directorate to retire the films: *Hände hoch oder ich schiesse* (*Hands Up or I'll Shoot*); *The Lost Angel*; (...)"<sup>17</sup>

—Under "retired or discontinued film projects," regarding *The Lost Angel*:

"The film was not accepted by HV Film; the position of the Film Production Department has since been expanded and clarified. Based on this position, [director] Ralf Kirsten must now be spoken with, so that he can get a clear idea of the decision and its reasons. This conversation has to be assigned to the DEFA leadership. Comrade Bruk has already been spoken to about this matter. The report will be delivered to Comrade Bruk in the coming weeks. In this context, Comrade Bruk must be spoken with again, because at this time he does not recognize that this film (which he considers bad, but still screenable) must not be permitted to play in theaters. The intention is for this not to result in a wider debate about this film in the studio."<sup>18</sup>

—Later the film is addressed once more under the rubric "measures:"



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

"The Film Production Department was to work out a position paper. This has been done. The report will be given to the studio leadership as a basis for discussion. The discussion is to be led by the Studio, because HV Film did not approve the film. Beforehand, the position is to be discussed with Comrades Bruk and Schröder once more. However, it is suggested that Comrade Dr. Jahrow participate in the discussion with Ralf Kirsten."<sup>19</sup>

## October 13, 1966

Minutes of the DEFA directorate meeting with Studio Director Bruk, item 2:<sup>20</sup>

"The directorate revokes its decision to recommend the film *The Lost Angel* for state approval and concurs as a matter of principle with the opinion worked out by Dr. Jahrow. Special archiving of all the negative and positive film materials is to begin immediately. These materials may only be released with the consent of the studio director. The members of the directorate will interpret these decisions for their areas of responsibility. (...) Comrade D[ieter] Wolf [chief dramaturg] will carry out the discussion with the creative collective of *The Lost Angel*. He will report the results to the studio director personally. Deadline: 11/15/66."

## October 21, 1966

Letter from author Franz Fühmann to the head of HV Film, Ministry of Culture:<sup>21</sup>

"I hear rumors from various sources that the film that Ralf Kirsten adapted from my Barlach novella is aesthetically failed and also politically objectionable. Since I have not seen the film, I respectfully request that you allow me and my publisher, Konrad Reich, the opportunity to see it, so that we can form our own judgment."

## November 4, 1966

Minutes of the staff discussion at the Film Production Department, HV Film:<sup>22</sup>

"Item 3.4: Screening the film for administration of the Association of Visual Artists: As shared by Comrade Westermann, the Association suggests the date and restricted group of viewers for the screening. At Comrade Fühmann's request, the screening for him will take place after 12/12/66. Screening organized by the director of the Feature Film Studio."

## November 9, 1966

Letter from Ralf Kirsten to Siegfried Wagner, head of the Culture section of the ZK of the SED:<sup>23</sup>

In reference to a brief meeting on August 17 with Dr. Jahrow, who shared with him "...that [the film] could not be approved in its current version, but they would discuss it thoroughly. Since then, no one has officially mentioned the film, its errors, and the reasons for its rejection. On October 23rd, fifteen weeks after the approval screening at the studio, I then received notification of the rejection from my group manager. (...) So far, the studio directorate has not spoken with me about the HV Film ruling. Among other things, this ruling states: the educational impact of the film is negative and deeply un-socialist. If one is to take membership in our party seriously, it is impossible to live with such an unexpected accusation and with no opportunity to confront or justify it—let alone concentrate on the difficult and important work to be done at the studio."



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

## December 5, 1966

Report from Dr. Jahrow to Wagner about his discussion with Fühmann and Kirsten after viewing the film:<sup>24</sup>

"I set up the meeting in such a way that it functioned simultaneously as a reply and settlement of the letters written to you by Franz Fühmann and Comrade Kirsten.

The discussion mainly dealt with the comparison of Fühmann's novella *Das schlimme Jahr* (*The Terrible Year*) to the film. I was able to demonstrate to Comrade Kirsten that he did not deliver the clear Marxist message of the novella in his film. Franz Fühmann was also of this opinion.

No complete agreement could be reached regarding why this film was not approved. Kirsten and Fühmann defended the film as a humanistic contribution to preserving the cultural heritage of the German people and a film with a clear antifascist tendency. The others did not agree with my argument that socialist artists must fundamentally rise above a generally humanistic position (as is done in exemplary fashion in Fühmann's novella). They doubted that this is possible in principle. That Fühmann achieved this was not enough to get him on my side. (...)

When asked, Ralf Kirsten agreed that his letter to you need not be specially answered. However, he does ask for your support in making sure that the discussion is continued among wider groups of people (such as the film directors) in the studio. I would suggest you support this and send Comrade Bruk a corresponding directive."

## January 13, 1967

Memo, Ernst Barlach Society, Hamburg, West Germany:

About an informal talk with Karl Hossinger, director of the GDR Academy of Arts, held at the Academy, Robert Koch Square 7, in the late morning of January 13, 1967:<sup>25</sup>

"(...) We were informed that the DEFA film on Barlach, *The Lost Angel*—to whose premiere Herr Hossinger had proposed inviting members of the board of the Barlach Society—could not be finished."

## Re-evaluation, Editing & Re-Release: 1969 – 1971

### May 7, 1969

PROGRESS submits an application to HV Film, requesting that representatives of the DEFA Studio and PROGRESS re-evaluate the film in view of the 100th anniversary of Ernst Barlach's birth.<sup>26</sup>

### August 1969

Note from DEFA-Außenhandel: There is pressure to arrive at a decision on this film with the help of Comrade Günter Klein, Deputy Minister of Culture and Head of HV Film. "Ralf Kirsten has agreed to undertake changes." In addition, the Deutsche Kulturbund (German Cultural Association) is urging a speedy decision because the working group preparing the 100th anniversary of Ernst Barlach, chaired by sculptor Theo Balden, places great importance on the film.<sup>27</sup>



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

## August 19, 1969

Viewing of the film by Minister Comrade Klein.<sup>28</sup>

Permission for a special screening by the Barlach Society is granted:

"The cost of making a theatrical print must be borne by the Barlach Society. The Society must be informed that as of yet the mixed version has been recorded only on magnetic tape and no negative cut has been made. The production of a theatrical print presupposes audio mixing. The likelihood of exporting this film is so low that completing the film for this purpose is not worth it."

## December 5, 1969

The screening date.

The question was addressed whether it would not be useful—with little cost or work, after changes to the unfinished film—to produce a print for organized events, such as of the German Cultural Association, the GDR Barlach Society, in the Barlach Archive in Güstrow, etc. "... even in light of upcoming tributes in West Germany and mindful of the correct, completed division of the formerly all-German Barlach Society."

The results of the consultation—including all critical references—were communicated to the director in a personal conversation by secretary Wera Küchenmeister, on December 10, 1969.<sup>29</sup>

In a separate HV Film memorandum on this discussion, the three changes it was suggested be made to the film are briefly summarized:

1. The film would have to be cut by a running time of 25-35 minutes.
2. Sufficient information about the life of Barlach and his work must be given at the beginning of the film.
3. The film could be released for use in conjunction with lectures on Barlach after these changes."<sup>30</sup>

## December 17, 1969

Werner Deckers, Head of Film Admission at HV Film, is informed internally that Comrade Edith Wäscher, the personal assistant to Deputy Minister Klein, will take over the matter.<sup>31</sup>

## December 23, 1969

Another meeting of the Film Advisory Council, including: Theo Balden; Wito Eichel; dramaturg Werner Beck; director Ralf Kirsten; Wera Küchenmeister. Küchenmeister clarifies that in his draft of the new concept Kirsten wrote: "The development of a new version is based on the premise that it is to be done with as little expense as possible."

The Film Advisory Board recommends the following procedure:

"As dictated by the novel, the film is primarily reflective, commenting in the first person, in alternating monologue and dialogue. This also yields the economically favorable option of fleshing out the initial outline of Barlach's positions and confrontations with fascism through reworking:

1. The monologues and dialogues
2. The editing sequences
3. The montage rhythm



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

4. The use of an opening (and perhaps closing) section to put Barlach's works and the destruction of the *Angel* in historical context.
5. The creation of the necessary historical substantiation."<sup>32</sup>

## February 11, 1970

This renewed activity around the film in 1969 may have been initiated by one of the first working groups of the Film Advisory Council, which included members Ruth Herlinghaus, Horst Knietzsch and Wera Küchenmeister, established in 1966 at HV Film:<sup>33</sup>

"...with the goal of finding a possible solution for altering the film in the year 1970, the 100th anniversary of Barlach and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of liberation from fascism. The comrades of the working group agreed to show the film in its unfinished form to a group of art historians and experts. This took place."

Ralf Kirsten, supported by Chief Dramaturg Werner Beck, works "on a concrete detailed proposal to be brought, along with a budget, to the Minister of Culture, Comrade Klaus Gysi."<sup>34</sup>

## May 11, 1970

Scriptwriters Manfred Freitag and Jochen Nestler arrive at an agreement with the studio to undertake a "conceptual revision of the textual commentary, as well as various sections of dialogue, in order to submit the film for approval. In addition to the efforts of the authors, in order to reshape the current montages in the film the director must be present during work at the editing table."<sup>35</sup>

## October 26, 1970

Note written by Director Hossinger about a call from Comrade Konrad Wolf (film director, president of the GDR Academy of Arts):<sup>36</sup>

"Comrade Wolf learned that a final decision about DEFA's Ernst Barlach film will be made in the next few days and that thereafter it will be quickly completed.

He asked me to follow up on this matter and make sure that we will be able to take the film with us to the opening of the Ernst Barlach exhibition in Moscow in mid-December. He recommended I get in contact with Comrade Wäscher, the personal assistant of Comrade Minister Klein (HV Film), and subsequently with the Minister himself. We may want to address an official letter to HV Film.

Furthermore, Comrade Wolf suggested that perhaps Franz Fühmann—upon whose Barlach novella the film is based—should travel to Moscow as well. I drew his attention to the fact that I had already tried to get Franz Fühmann interested in giving the keynote talk for our Ernst Barlach exhibition in January, but that he had declined, saying that his relationship to Barlach has changed."

## October 27, 1970

Note written by Director Hossinger regarding a telephone conversation with Comrade Wäscher about the Ernst Barlach film:<sup>37</sup>

"Comrade Wäscher informed me that Comrade Klein gave instructions to immediately implement the changes



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

necessary to finish the film. It will require approximately two days of shooting and another four days for further work.

I told her that our deadline for taking the film to Moscow is December 12, 1970. She reassured me that this date is entirely possible. In answer to my question as to whether further steps at our end are necessary—an official letter, for example—she answered that, after telephone conversations with Comrade Wolf and myself, she and Comrade Klein have all the information they need. Should additional support be required, up to and including a letter from the president of the Academy, she will get in touch with me.”

## October 30, 1970

The new version of the monologue text and montage suggestions of Manfred Freitag and Jochen Nestler are presented to the Ministry of Culture.<sup>38</sup>

## November 2, 1970

From production manager Irene Ikker, to actor Fred Düren:

“At the direction of the Minister of Culture, *The Lost Angel* is to be completed in time for the Barlach exhibition in Moscow in December 1970. The monologue, rewritten by Freitag and Nestler, must now be recorded.”<sup>39</sup>

## November 5, 1970

Screening of the newly-edited film for Deputy Minister Klein, with the following results:<sup>40</sup>

1. The film is to be completed in November.
2. The film is approved for the negative cut.
3. The State Film Archive to receive the directive to deliver the material stored there in 1966 (Note from Ikker: We have received the material in the meantime).”

## November 5, 1970

Letter to the Deutsches Theater requesting leave for actors:<sup>41</sup>

“It is no longer necessary to shoot with these actors ([Fred] Düren, Erik S. Klein, [Walter] Lendrich), but the film must be partially re-dubbed. Herr Düren will be required for approximately 2 days of dubbing; Herr Lendrich and Herr Klein for about 2 hours.”

## November 10, 1970

Excerpt from a memo about a Nov 10 conversation with Comrade Konrad Wolf about the Barlach film, written by Herlinghaus on November 24, 1970, with an additional handwritten note:<sup>42</sup>

“We must ensure we receive the dialogue list in time, so we can translate it for the reading version. Comrade Herlinghaus should speak with director Ralph [sic!] Kirsten about this matter as soon as possible.”  
—Handwritten note: “Screening on Friday, December 4 at 11am.”



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

## November 19, 1970

Letter addressed to the Performing Arts Section, Academy of Arts, Berlin:<sup>43</sup>

“Dear Comrade Dr. Hossinger,

I am enclosing the Barlach film’s dialogue list for the translation. Director Ralf Kirsten requests the return of the list, when it is no longer needed.

With kind regards,

Senior Staff Member Ruth Herlinghaus”

## November 23, 1970

Memo (author unknown) to Dr. Hossinger, Academy of the Arts, about colleague Seeger’s call on behalf of colleague Herlinghaus:<sup>44</sup>

“Director Kirsten needs answers to the following questions:

1. In which Moscow theater will the film be screened? The place of screening is important because of the lighting level (40 or 60 lux); we must select the film print accordingly.
2. For how long would you need the print?
3. Will the print remain in Moscow? If so, Herr Kirsten would get an e-tape.

Frau Herlinghaus has informed us that the Barlach film will be screened at HV Film, Otto Nuschke Strasse, tomorrow evening at 6 pm.

She asked that we return the dialogue list quickly in the event she must find a translator, who should be a native Russian speaker. The text must be done by December 8 because the print is to be transported on December 12.”

—Handwritten note: “New date for the Berlin screening. Screening at the [GDR] Embassy in Moscow on December 17 or 18, 1970: [Participants:] K[onrad] Wolf / H[ans] Rodenberg [vice president, Academy of Arts] / F[ranz] Fühmann ? (not confirmed) / W[erner] Klemke / [Professor for Book Design and Typography] / [Theo] Balden [sculptor and graphic artist] / [Eberhard] Meisner [head, International Relations Department, Academy of Arts] / [Harri] Nündel [curator, publicist, Academy of Arts]”

## December 15, 1970

License agreement between the DEFA Studio for Feature Films and PROGRESS for exploitation of the feature film; transfer date for the original negative is December 31, 1970.<sup>45</sup>

## December 22, 1970

Barlach exhibition opens at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow

## January 15, 1971

Production Manager Ikker on the amended final report:<sup>46</sup>

“A revision has been undertaken. In addition to two days of shooting for retakes of sculptures—without actors—a new synchronization, new sound, and a crucial recut, practically a new post production was required. The film is now 1695 meters long.” (...) “There is no information about the number of re-shot scenes, because there was no shooting schedule or the like, and the retakes (sculptures) were not subdivided into scenes.”



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

## January 26, 1971

Application for approval submitted by PROGRESS to HV Film: "The film is being submitted for approval due to its antifascist and humanistic position."<sup>47</sup>

## March 17, 1971

Application for approval submitted by the DEFA Studio for Feature Films to HV Film; length of the film is 1695 meters.

## April 1, 1971

The film, with a length of 1695 meters, is approved by HV Film for viewers 14 and up.<sup>48</sup>

## April 22, 1971

Premiere of the film at the Colosseum Cinema in Berlin.

## May 20, 1971

By shortening the film to a length of less than 1800 meters, it could no longer be distributed as a feature film, but rather only as a short film; this meant no large revenues for either the DEFA Studio or DEFA-Außenhandel. Earlier the studio's finance department had tried without success to change the negative so that it would reach the 1800 meters length.<sup>49</sup>

## Postscript

### November 18, 1980

Dr. Gerhard Weise, Director of the Potsdam Film Museum, State Castles and Gardens, Potsdam-Sanssouci, to colleague Elmar Jansen, Visual Arts Department, Academy of Arts:<sup>50</sup>

"(...) We would like to add two or three of the castings of Barlach sculptures that played a role in the DEFA Barlach film to our permanent exhibition at the GDR Film Museum, slated to open in April 1981. We would, of course, be sure to indicate their provenance. All security measures are a given.

Could you help us to get permission to obtain these castings? If so, we would then select and indicate the particular sculptures (for example, *Tilla Durieux*).

I would appreciate hearing from you soon in this urgent matter."

### December 22, 1980

Response from Dr. Elmar Jansen to Weise:<sup>51</sup>

"The copyright arrangements between DEFA and the then-administration of the Güstrow Barlach Estate concerning the film *The Lost Angel* provided that the castings produced for the film be returned to Güstrow. We discovered some of these castings in the atelier when we took over the Barlach Estate in 1976. At the time, it was clear that castings—I believe of the *Güstrow Memorial (The Hovering Angel)* and the *Hamburg Memorial (Relief of Mother and Child)*—did not make it back to Güstrow, for reasons unbeknownst to me.



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

It is probably also in connection with this that plaster castings of works were made that now are in private hands; if the heirs were to become aware of this, it could result in some unpleasant copyright problems. Please first try to get the pieces that must still be in the DEFA props room. Please send us an update on this. After that, we would be happy to help get the permission for a temporary loan of the film models that belong to the Estate. At that point, please let us know which works you would like to borrow. (By the way, did the portrait of Tilla Durieux you mention appear in the film?) The loan itself must be insured through DARAG and requires a contractual arrangement between you and the Barlach Historical Site. However, please take into account that in spring we here and those at the Historical Site will be under pressure because of a huge Barlach exhibition to open in Berlin in spring 1981.<sup>52</sup>

With kind regards, Elmar Jansen”

## March 27, 1990

After the fall of the Wall:

The report on the restoration of the “banned films,” drafted by the DEFA Studio for Feature Films and Renger Production, includes an overview and estimate of the costs. On page 6:<sup>53</sup>

“*The Lost Angel*: In 1971, five copies were made of the severely shortened version of this film. As the search for surviving materials was unsuccessful, a reproduction of the original version is no longer possible.”

<sup>1</sup> For abbreviations and names of institutions, please see Glossary.

<sup>2</sup> This chronology represents documents from several sources. Records found at the German Federal Archive and the DEFA Foundation primarily deal with events and exchanges at the Ministry of Culture and the DEFA Studio for Feature Films. Records found in the archive of the Academy of Arts document discussions that took place at East Germany’s Academy of Arts and the Ernst Barlach Societies in Güstrow (East Germany) and Hamburg (West Germany).

<sup>3</sup> License Agreement. DEFA Foundation, Rights’ Documentation.

<sup>4</sup> Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Historisches Archiv, AdK-O 817, fol. 2

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> BArch DR 117/33189

<sup>7</sup> See daily shooting reports. BArch DR 117/32685

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> BArch DR 1/4249, Note by Ralf Kirsten, dated Nov 9, 1966.

<sup>10</sup> Requesting the rating, revised text from the Heinrich Greif KAG, BArch DR 117/33821, fol.186, fol. 160f, fol. 258

<sup>11</sup> BArch DR 117/21614

<sup>12</sup> BArch DR 1/Z/163, fol. 2

<sup>13</sup> Memo from Dr. Jahrow, 12/9/1969. See BArch DR 1-Z/163, fol. 15

<sup>14</sup> BArch DR 1/Z/163, fol. 15

<sup>15</sup> BArch DR 1/4559

<sup>16</sup> Report submitted by Dr. Hermann Schauer, BArch DR 1/4213, (fol. 102 - 128)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.5 (fol.106)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 14 (fol.115)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 17 (fol.118)

<sup>20</sup> BArch DR 117/21614. Also compare BArch DR 1/4552, overview of the films retired since the 11th Plenum, Fol. 297. *The Lost Angel*: “The film was presented for the approval process; not approved by the Film Production Department and, after viewing by Comrade Gysi and Dr. Mass, rejected. The directorate meeting held on October 13, 1966 corrected their opinion of the film and retired it.”

<sup>21</sup> BArch DR 1/4249

<sup>22</sup> BArch DR 1/4275

<sup>23</sup> BArch DR 1/4249

<sup>24</sup> BArch DR 1/4249. Dr. Jahrow’s 12/10/66 report to manager Siegfried Wagner; producer Liebscher also participated.

<sup>25</sup> Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Historisches Archiv, AdK-O 817, fol. 3



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

- <sup>26</sup> BArch DR 1/Z/163, fol. 9
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., handwritten note, fol. 11
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., fol.12. Memorandum from Kirsch (HV Film); others in attendance: Jahrow, Edith Wäscher (Minister Klein's personal assistant), Kirsch und Kurt Jordan (Director, DEFA-Außenhandel)
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> BArch DR 1/Z/163, fol. 15f
- <sup>31</sup> BArch DR 1/Z/163, fol. 19
- <sup>32</sup> BArch DR 1/14927
- <sup>33</sup> BArch DR 1/14927. Wera Küchenmeister: Report on the activities of the Film Advisory Council, February 11, 1970. In addition to the Film Advisory Council, the following people participated in the Council's meeting: Jutta Schmidt (*Bildende Kunst* magazine); Pades (Institute for Social Sciences at the Central Committee; Janzen (Academy of Science); Theo Balden (sculptor, chairman of the Barlach Society); Wolf Kaiser (President of the Central Club of the Union of Arts); Gerhard Hallmann (Academy of Arts); Wolf (HV Film section cinemas & screening places); Wolm (district council of Güstrow)..
- <sup>34</sup> BArch DR 1/14857. As of February 11, 1970 according to Küchenmeister.
- <sup>35</sup> BArch DR 117/22662. Contract with Joachim Nestler.
- <sup>36</sup> Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Historisches Archiv, AdK-O 5667
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> BArch DR 1/14856 a. The 15 pages of this new version of the script are preserved here.
- <sup>39</sup> BArch DR 117/29031
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Historisches Archiv, AdK-O 5667
- <sup>43</sup> Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Historisches Archiv, AdK-O 5667
- <sup>44</sup> Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Historisches Archiv, AdK-O 5667
- <sup>45</sup> License Agreement (DEFA Foundation, Rights' Documentation)
- <sup>46</sup> BArch DR 117/29031
- <sup>47</sup> BArch DR 1/Z/163, fol. 21
- <sup>48</sup> BArch DR/1-Z/163, fol. 24. Authorization protocol of HV Film
- <sup>49</sup> BArch DR 117/29417, page 6
- <sup>50</sup> Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Historisches Archiv, AdK-O 5675
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> An extensive and noteworthy East German Barlach exhibition, *Ernst Barlach: Works and Sketches of Works from Five Decades*, took place at the Old Museum in East Berlin, April-June 1981. It was curated by Elmar Jansen, who also published on Barlach.
- <sup>53</sup> BArch DR 117/23391



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

## A Song by Wolf Biermann for *The Lost Angel*

Director Ralf Kirsten originally planned to open *The Lost Angel* with a song by the controversial East German singer-songwriter Wolf Biermann.

The DEFA Studio for Feature Films concluded an agreement with Biermann—signed by the parties on April 21 and 27, 1965, respectively. Biermann was contracted to compose and write the lyrics for a *Friedenslied* (a „peace song“) of three to four stanzas, based on the script of *The Lost Angel*.<sup>1</sup> A version of the film script dated March 1965 reads at the very beginning of the first scene: “1. Long shot (helicopter), natural fade-in. Coming from the darkness: Mecklenburg scenery. (...) The lyrics of the song start with the fade-in, a boy’s voice sings the song, the song expresses the longing for peace. / Opening song.”<sup>2</sup> The film’s music cue sheet, created shortly after wrapping the production in 1970-71, included all pieces of music used in the film except a composition by Biermann, however.<sup>3</sup>

To this day, no documentation has been found that explains why the plan to open the film with a song by Biermann was waived; the same holds true for the termination of Biermann’s contract. There is a poem, however—*Das Barlach-Lied* (*The Barlach Song*)—that Wolf Biermann published in *Die Drahtarfe* (transl. *The Wire Harp*), with Verlag Klaus Wagenbach in West Berlin, in October 1965. It is interesting that Biermann created a poem at exactly the time the film was made, and, although the poem is not entitled „Peace Song,“ it can be interpreted as such. Perhaps the poem published in *Die Drahtarfe* is the lyrics that Biermann wrote for Kirsten’s *The Lost Angel*.

### Das Barlach-Lied

Ach Mutter mach die Fenster zu  
Ich glaub es kommt ein Regen  
Da drüben steht die Wolkenwand  
Die will sich auf uns legen

Was soll aus uns nur werden  
Uns droht so groß Not  
Vom Himmel auf die Erden  
Falln sich die Engel tot

Ach Mutter mach die Türe zu  
Da kommen tausend Ratten  
Die hungrigen sind vorne weg  
Dahinter sind die satten

### The Barlach Song

Oh Mother, shut the window please  
I think the rain is coming  
O’er yonder is a bank of clouds  
To cover us they’re swelling

What shall become of us  
So threatened by such dread  
From heaven down to earth  
The angels falling dead

Oh Mother, close the doors please  
Thousands of rats are coming  
The hungry ones are at the front  
The full ones are back lagging



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

Was soll aus uns nur werden  
 Uns droht so groß Not  
 Vom Himmel auf die Erden  
 Falln sich die Engel tot

What shall become of us  
 So threatened by such dread  
 From heaven down to earth  
 The angels falling dead

Ach Mutter mach die Augen zu  
 Der Regen und die Ratten  
 Jetzt dringt es durch die Ritzen ein  
 Die wir vergessen hatten

Oh Mother, close your eyes, please do  
 The rain and rats are sodden  
 They're squeezing through the little cracks  
 Which we had since forgotten

Was soll aus uns nur werden  
 Uns droht so groß Not  
 Vom Himmel auf die Erden  
 Falln sich die Engel tot

What shall become of us  
 So threatened by such dread  
 From heaven down to earth  
 The angels falling dead

—*Translation by Christopher Hench*

Judging by events surrounding the artist Wolf Biermann at the time of the film's production, it seems that officials were trying to keep Biermann out of the public eye in the GDR. Already in 1963, after a two-year wait, Biermann's application to join the SED (the leading party of the GDR) was rejected. His performance together with West German cabaret artist Wolfgang Neuss in the *Ost-West-Revue (East West Revue)*, during the West German Ostermarsch (Easter March) in April 1965, raised the hackles of East German officials.

On November 1, 1965, the Central Council of the FDJ (Free German Youth) informed the secretaries of all district branches, members of the Central Council and the editors in chief of all the organization's daily paper and magazines in a top secret letter signed by First Secretary of the FDJ Organization Horst Schumann, that "Wolf Biermann is not allowed to perform at any of our organization's meetings, including any events organized for the public. We are to refrain from words—whether written or audio—that might help promote his poems, songs or chansons."<sup>4</sup> This was the official beginning of Biermann's ban from profession and stage.

The situation escalated when the East German press started a campaign against Biermann in November and December 1965. In open letters, articles and commentaries, Biermann was vilified with terms such as "anarchic," "politically perverse" and "obscene." He was also accused of "sullyng the Party of the working class."<sup>5</sup> Apparently an official January 1966 GDR press release, leveled at Biermann and his publisher, asserted that the title of *Die Drahtarfe* and the use of graphic designs by GDR artist Ronald Paris were provocations against the "national border of the GDR;" it also accused the publisher of "being a henchman of revanchism."<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, at its 11th Plenary held in December 1965, the Central Committee of the SED accused Biermann of being a "class traitor" and blacklisted him from performing and publishing.<sup>7</sup>

Erich Honecker, who gave SED Politburo's main report at the Plenary, singled out Biermann in his speech: "The orientation toward an aggregation of mistakes, deficiencies and weaknesses is nurtured by circles that are interested in creating doubts about GDR policies and the ideology of skepticism. Wolf Biermann is a part of



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

these circles.”<sup>8</sup> Parallel to such open accusations, the Stasi set in motion detailed plans to discredit Biermann as an artist and individual, and, in summer 1966, cultural officials suggested expelling Biermann from the city of Berlin.<sup>9</sup>

The management of the DEFA Studio for Feature Films also distanced itself from Biermann. On August 9, 1966, in an internal memo to the studio’s security department, Studio Director Franz Bruk wrote, “As a result of recent events, I point out that Wolfgang [sic!] Biermann has no contractual relationship with DEFA. That’s why there is no reason for him to trespass on DEFA Studio grounds. Should W. Biermann wish to visit the DEFA Studio for Feature Films, I must be informed immediately. Signed: Bruk (8/9/1966).”<sup>10</sup>

As Ehrhart Neubert writes in his history of opposition in the GDR:

Even before Biermann became known to a larger East German audience, he had already been banned. At the Central Committee’s 11th Plenum in 1965, Honecker just summarized what had already been decided. Biermann had been in the crosshairs of official criticism ever since his first performance in the late 1950s. (...) Until 1965, the Ministry of Culture allowed him to travel to West Germany, because the Minister of Culture feared that a travel restriction would not be understood abroad. Already in May 1965, Hager reported on the Biermann case to Ulbricht. The singer-songwriter was invited to discussions at the Ministry of Culture and party offices, as well as with officials of the Writer’s Association, in order to convince him to exert restraint. (...) When it became clear that he refused to be disciplined, and *Die Drahtarfe*—a little book of songs—was even published in West Berlin, an extensive series of measures against him was set in motion.<sup>11</sup>

Although he was banned in his own country for the next eleven years, GDR officials allowed Biermann to live in East Germany and perform and be published in West Germany. But on November 16, 1976, on his way back from an officially sanctioned concert tour in West Germany, he was not allowed to re-enter East Germany. At this point, he was deprived of his East German citizenship and expelled from the GDR.

<sup>1</sup> BArch DR 117/17530

<sup>2</sup> Compare BArch DR 117/488. P. 2.

<sup>3</sup> DEFA Foundation Archive

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder\\_dokumente/02783/index-4.html](http://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder_dokumente/02783/index-4.html). Retrieved on May 26, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> See articles in *Neues Deutschland*, dated: Dec 5, 1965; Dec 14, 1965; and Dec. 23, 1965.

<sup>6</sup> See article: “Drahtarfe und Staatsgrenze”, *Die Zeit*, Jan 14, 1966. This article, published in a West German weekly, refers to the press release. The article includes an official statement written by Klaus Wagenbach in which he rejects the allegations by East German officials against him and Biermann.

<sup>7</sup> See: Agde, Günter. *Kahlschlag Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965*. Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> *Neue Zeit* December 17, 1965. 4. “Die Orientierung auf die Summierung von Fehlern, Mängeln und Schwächen werde von Kreisen genährt, die daran interessiert sind, gegenüber der Politik der DDR Zweifel zu erwecken und die Ideologie des Skeptizismus zu verbreiten. Zu diesen Kreisen gehören z. B. Wolf Biermann.”

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder\\_dokumente/02783/index-17.html](http://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder_dokumente/02783/index-17.html). Retrieved May 26, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> BArch DR 117/33134, internal memo by Studio Director Bruk to security office of the DEFA Studio, dated August 9, 1966.

<sup>11</sup> Ehrhart Neubert. *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949 – 1989*. Berlin: Ch. Links. 1997. 154.



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

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BArch DR 117/29031 Ikker-Produktionsakte „Der verlorene Engel“, 1970/71 (Folder with Production Files *The Lost Angel*, Producer Ikker, 1970-71)

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BArch DR 1/14856a HV Film– Stellvertreter des Ministers und Leiter der HV Film: Schriftwechsel mit Institutionen und Personen 1969-1972 (HVFilm: Deputy Minister and Head of HVFilm; Correspondence with Institutions and People, 1969-1972)

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Ernst-Barlach-Nachlaß: Korrespondenz mit Institutionen und Personen 1980 – 1984

(Ernst Barlach Estate: Correspondence with Institutions and People, 1980 – 1984)



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

## GLOSSARY & ABBREVIATIONS

### **Abteilung Filmproduktion der HV Film**

Film Production Department at HV Film

### **Akademie der Künste der DDR**

GDR Academy of Arts

*This Academy—successor of the Prussian Academy of Arts—was the central arts academy in East Germany from 1950 to 1993. Its name went through several permutations: German Academy of Arts (1950-62); German Academy of Arts in Berlin (1962-1972); GDR Academy of Arts (1972-90); Berlin Academy of Arts (1990-92). A parallel Academy of Arts was founded in West Berlin in 1954. In 1993, both Academies merged.*

### **Bundesarchiv**

German Federal Archive

*The history of the Bundesarchiv goes back to 1919. However, several former GDR archives were integrated into the German Federal Archive after the fall of the Wall. For example: In 1990, the state Film Archive of the GDR was integrated into the film section of the German Federal Archive. The German Federal Archive also houses production documents, stills, film negatives of DEFA productions.*

### **BArch**

### **DEFA-Außenhandel**

*This state-owned company handled the international distribution of DEFA films, supervised by HV Film, but reporting to the Ministries of Culture and of Foreign Trade.*

### **Deutsche Demokratische Republik**

German Democratic Republic (East Germany)

### **GDR**

### **Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft**

DEFA Studios, including the DEFA Feature Film Studio

### **DEFA**

### **Deutscher Kulturbund**

German Cultural Association

*The Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands (Cultural Association for Democratic Reform in Germany) was a mass organization founded in the Soviet occupied zone on August 8, 1945. The name of the organization changed into Deutscher Kulturbund in 1959 and into Kulturbund der DDR (Cultural Association of the GDR) in 1974.*

### **Filmrat beim Minister für Kultur**

Film Advisory Council at HV Film

*The Film Advisory Council was part of HV Film and was established in 1969. It replaced the wissenschaftlich-künstlerische Beirat (scientific-artistic council) that had been founded in 1966.*

### **Hauptverwaltung Film**

Central Administration for Film in the GDR, at the Ministry of Culture

### **HV Film**

### **Künstlerische Arbeitsgruppe**

Artistic Production Group, at DEFA

*Film production at the DEFA Studio was officially decentralized and organized in Artistic Production Groups in the mid-1950s. Each production group included an artistic director, directors, dramaturgs, production and unit managers, and other technical personnel. However, these groups were supervised by the studio management and their autonomy was ended after the 11th Plenum of the SED in 1965.*

### **KAG**



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

**Kulturabteilung des ZK der SED**

Culture Section of the ZK of the SED

**Ministerium für Kultur**

Ministry of Culture of the GDR

**PROGRESS Film-Verleih**

PROGRESS Film Distribution Company

**Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands**

German Socialist Unity Party, main party of the GDR

SED

**Staatliche Filmarchiv der DDR**

GDR State Film Archive

**Verband Bildender Künstler der DDR**

Association of Visual Artists

**Zentralkomitee der SED**

Central Committee of the SED

ZK

**PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE STORY**

*This list includes names and the positions held by people at the time*

**Balden, Theo**

*Sculptor & graphic artist*

**Beck, Werner**

*Chief dramaturg, DEFA Studio for Feature Film, 1964-89*

**Bruk, Franz**

*Director, DEFA Studio for Feature Film, 1966-71*

**Deckers, Werner**

*Head of Film Admission at HV Film*

**Düren, Fred**

Actor

**Eichel, Wito**

*Director for film production, DEFA Studio for Feature Films, 1966-68*

*Artistic director, DEFA Studio for Feature Films, 1968*

*Professor at the Academy for Film and Television, 1970-81*

**Fühmann, Franz**

*Author*

**Gysi, Klaus**

*GDR Minister of Culture, 1966-73*

**Hallmann, Gerhard**

*Deputy director of the visual arts department, Academy of Arts, GDR*



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

**Herlinghaus, Ruth**

*Senior staff member, HV Film*

**Hossinger, Karl**

*Director, GDR Academy of Arts*

**Jahrow, Franz**

*Head of Film Production Department, HV Film*

**Jansen, Elmar**

*Art historian, Visual arts department, Academy of Arts, GDR*

**Jordan, Kurt**

*Director, DEFA-Außenhandel, 1969-73*

**Kaiser, Wolf**

*Actor & President of Die Möwe, the Central Club of the Union of Arts*

**Kirsten, Ralf**

*Director of The Lost Angel, DEFA Studio for Feature Films*

**Klein, Günter**

*Deputy Minister of Culture and Head of HV Film*

**Klemke, Werner**

*Illustrator and Graphic artist, Professor for Book Design and Typography*

**Knietzsch, Horst**

*Film critic, Neues Deutschland newspaper*

**Küchenmeister, Wera**

*Dramaturg, author, scriptwriter; Secretary, Film Advisory Council, 1969-73*

**Meisner, Eberhard**

*Head of the Department for International Relations, Academy of Arts*

**Mückenberger, Jochen**

*Director, DEFA Studio for Feature Films, 1961-66*

**Nündel, Harri**

*Curator, publicist, Academy of Arts*

**Rodenberg, Hans**

*Vice President of the Academy of Arts, 1969-74*

**Rücker, Günter**

*Writer, film director, associated member of the Academy of Arts*

**Schmidt, Jutta**

*Chief editor of the art magazine Bildende Kunst, 1964-72*

**Schröder, Günter**

*Head dramaturg, DEFA Studio for Feature Films, 1966-77*



# Censored: *The Lost Angel*

**Schult, Friedrich**

*Administrator, Barlach Estate and Historical Site, Güstrow*

**Wäscher, Edith**

*Personal assistant to Deputy Minister of Culture Klein*

**Weise, Gerhard**

*Director, Potsdam Film Museum, State Castles and Gardens in Potsdam-Sanssouci*

**Wischnewski, Klaus**

*Head dramaturg, 1960-64*

*Chief dramaturg, Heinrich Greif KAG at DEFA, 1964-65*

**Wolf, Dieter**

*Chief dramaturg, Babelsberg KAG at DEFA, 1964-90*