

Edinburgh International Film Festival 2016 Under the Sun (V luchakh solna)***



[tweet_box design="default"]Disturbing documentary of life in North Korea as illustrated by following an 'ordinary' family in Pyongyang for one year.[/tweet_box]

The North Korean authorities carefully scripted and supervised Vitaly Mansky's presentation but the director has chosen to show repeated takes, close-ups and edited the film in such a way that the strain, particularly on the central character, only child and daughter of the family who is around seven years old, is shown.

We are treated to a session in Zin-Mi's class, where the young teacher reads a morality tale around Glorious Leader Kim Il-Sung's stoning of the Japanese and greedy landowners, and goes on to talk about the children's duty to repel the Japanese, the Americans and their puppets who will come with their military might to destroy Korea.

The indoctrination is explicit. There is no opportunity for either asking questions or forming an opinion other than that of the state.

The last telling scene shows Zin-Mi crying under the strain of remember her lines. 'Get her to stop crying,' the translator says. 'Think of something happy,' the mother says. 'What?' says Zin-Mi. 'Recite a happy poem?' mother suggests. And Zin-Mi chants some political propaganda about the glorious leader. Scary stuff.