

## After the Wall Teaching Materials

### *Das Leben der Anderen*

#### Resources

*Das Leben der Anderen* (2006), directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmark

#### Comprehension Questions

1. What is your impression of the Stasi from the beginning of the film?
2. Why does the Stasi start spying on Dreyman? Do you think this reason is justifiable?
3. How does Frau Meineke (the neighbour) become a part of the story?
4. What are Jerska's experiences of the Stasi? How have these affected him?
5. What is Sieland (Dreyman's partner) hiding from him?
6. Why do you think Wiesler stops accurately recording his observations?
7. What is unusual about Wiesler's relationship with Sieland? Why do you think this was included in the film?
8. How does the direction of Dreyman's work change after Jerska's death? What exactly does he decide to do?
9. What is special about the typewriter that Dreyman receives to write his article for *Der Spiegel*?
10. What reasons does Wiesler give Grubnitz when he asks to 'shrink' the Dreyman case? What do you think his actual reasons are?
11. Why is Sieland arrested?
12. How does Sieland 'save herself' during the interrogation? Do you think this is justified?

13. Why can't the Stasi find the typewriter in Dreyman's apartment?
14. How is Wiesler punished for his actions?
15. What does Dreyman discover when he reads his Stasi file?

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Have your impressions of the Stasi developed or changed while you were watching the film? How?
2. What do you learn about the role of the Stasi in the film? Was it more or less intrusive than you expected?
3. Are you surprised that Dreyman is completely unaware that he was observed until he reads his Stasi file?
4. Based on the reactions of Frau Meineke and the young boy in the lift, how do you think the Stasi was seen by the general population of the GDR?
5. Compare the different characters in the film who work for the Stasi. Why do you think the director included such a range of characters? Think about Weisler, Grubitz and Leye.
6. At the end of his lecture at the beginning of the film, Wiesler claims that the subjects are 'enemies of socialism'. What do you understand by this? Do you think that the subjects should be seen as criminals?
7. While interrogating Sieland, Wiesler talks of 'senseless heroes'. What do you understand by this? Do you think it is an appropriate description?
8. Towards the end of the film, after unification has taken place, Grubnitz says to Dreyman that in the BRD there is, 'nothing to believe in, nothing to rebel against'. What do you think he means by this?
9. How does Wiesler's life change after the fall of the Wall? Do you think that he would regret unification?

10. Choose three characters from the film and think about how their perceptions of and experiences in the GDR differ. Why is this important when it comes to processes of remembering?

### **Group Activity**

Which scene in the film did you find the most striking? Produce a short presentation about this scene for your classmates. Include the following information:

- Why did you find the scene so striking?
- What did you learn about the GDR or the Stasi from the scene?
- Why do you think the director included the scene in his portrayal of the Stasi?
- How has the director used filmic effects to enhance the impact of the scene? Think about music, colour and camera work.