

After the Wall Teaching Materials

My DDR T-Shirt

Resources

My DDR T-Shirt (2008), by Ian Hawkins

General Questions

1. Why did Ian Hawkins decide to make the film?
2. What do the different stories in the film tell you about the differences between political and everyday life in the GDR?
3. Dagmar Lane claims that the GDR pretended to be democratic, but failed completely. What do you think she means?
4. According to Stefan Leide, who works as a Stasi historian, what role did the Stasi play in the GDR? How did it influence people's day-to-day lives?
5. Listen to Ursula Petsch's explanation of a 'Planwirtschaft'. What do you understand it to be? Why does she think that it was better?
6. From the stories in the film, what do you think were the main differences between everyday life in the East and West?
7. Compare how Ursula Petsch, Dagmar Lane and Erika Kammer remember their GDR pasts. What do you learn from the different stories about the past? How do you think their experiences affect the ways that they view unified Germany?
8. Stefan Eix, who is a westerner, explains that the East was seen as a suffering nation by the West. How does this perception compare with those of easterners in the film?
9. Why are some people in the film critical of unified Germany? Listen in particular to Ursula Petsch and Dagmar Lane.

10. Erika Kammer claims that unification would have been better if it had taken the good aspects from each side. What is she referring to here? What do you think were the positive and negative features of the East and West?
11. Did you find anything surprising in the film? What and why?
12. Would you wear a DDR T-Shirt? Why (not)?

Group Discussion Activities

Since unification, GDR products such as the DDR T-Shirt have seen a revival in unified Germany. Some of these are:



The *Ampelmännchen*



DDR clothing



An East German military hat



A hamper of eastern groceries



The *Sandmännchen*

Look on the internet to find out more about these products. After you've researched each of them, discuss the following questions:

- When it comes to remembering the GDR, how do these products differ?
- What do you think the cultural meanings of these products are?
- Do they differ from the DDR T-Shirt? How?
- How do you think the people in the film would react to the products?
- If you could buy one of these products, which one would you choose? Why?