

Polis – Lives of others

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2007/05/07/lives-of-others/

2007-5-7

Anyone interested in the history of freedom of expression in Europe must see the German film [Lives of Others](#). It is a fantastic piece of cinema with great acting from a wonderful ensemble of convincing and moving performers. The pace and plot is like a spy thriller and there's a heart-rendering romantic core to what is one of the best political films for the last ten years. At the centre of the story is the dramatic attempt by an East German author in the Communist DDR to publish an article exposing the moral terror of the state. I won't spoil the plot but it reminds us of

lives of others star

a world before the internet and before digital broadcasting when repressive regimes could block the free flow of information in a way that is still possible, but much harder now. The sheer clunkiness of the secret police in the DDR only worked because of the complicity population who became a nation of informers. Ironically, today's new technology may have served the surveillance purposes of the regime. But that same technology would also have made free expression easier as well.

I am amazed there haven't been more films like this that show the dark history of the bits of our continent that fell under Communism. I suppose our heavily subsidised film-makers are too busy making movies condemning the capitalism that pays for their lovely lifestyles.



- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science