

SCREENING OF *IN THE SHADOW OF POWER*

Screenings of the ARD/German Television film *Im Schatten der Macht* at the Goethe-Institut, Washington, June 10 and 23, 2004. Co-sponsored by ARD, the Goethe-Institut, and the GHI.

ARD's 180-minute reconstruction of the maneuvers and intrigue surrounding the resignation of Willy Brandt as Chancellor in May 1974, one of the most dramatic moments of postwar German history, was a highlight of the 2003 television season in the Federal Republic. Thanks to the generosity of ARD's Washington bureau, the production in its original German was made available for a screening in Washington on June 10. Because of popular demand, a second screening was arranged thirteen days later. Over two hundred people came to the showings.

The film traces the final twelve days of Brandt's chancellorship. His son, the actor Mathias Brandt, plays the East German spy Günter Guillaume, whose exposure led to Brandt's downfall. His close friends, loyalists, pseudo-friends, rivals, and enemies all appear in this partly fictionalized film history: Egon Bahr, Horst Ehmke, Herbert Wehner, Helmut Schmidt, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Walter Scheel, and many others, such as Günther Nollau, head of West Germany's counter-intelligence office, the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, whom the film depicts as a key figure. Structured on actual events and using actual statements by the historical figures involved, the filmwriters had to make up some decisive conversations, such as that between Brandt and Wehner in Münsteriefel, when Wehner let Brandt know that he would not support him against his detractors. Fictionalized though it is, the film nevertheless seems as a whole very close to the historical facts, as some of those portrayed in it have testified.

Commenting on the film was Ambassador Jonathan Dean, who served as an American diplomat in Bonn during Brandt's chancellorship. He called the film a "remarkably good historical drama" about a great figure of the Cold War, one who did more than any single individual to diminish the dangerous East-West confrontation in Europe. As Dean noted, the film movingly depicts the tragedy of human weakness as well as the fragility of political power in a democracy and of the public trust that must lie at the base of that power.

Robert Gerald Livingston