Daniela Münkel (ed.)

STATE SECURITY

A READER
ON THE GDR SECRET POLICE

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PREFACE

Roland Jahn

A reader on the State Security – can there be such a thing? The format and subject matter seem ill-suited. After all, we are not interested in telling stories about the secret police in the GDR. So what is the purpose of "light reading material" on a heavy subject? In short: we are interested in encouraging the public to read about this chapter of German history. For this reason, the texts have been kept short and, although they are based on scholarly research, they are easy to read. Our authors have been conducting research on the State Security in the SED dictatorship for decades and our aim is to convey their findings to a broader audience.

Their essays address central aspects of the history of the Ministry for State Security (MfS) and its influence on the GDR between 1950 and 1989. They take readers on a journey into the abyss of a surveillance state, a dictatorship that spied intensely on its own population and persecuted dissidents for forty years.

So how, exactly, did the Stasi function? This essay collection describes the work of the official employees of the Stasi, from the simple workers all the way up to its ministers, and elucidates the impact of its army of informers, referred to by the Stasi as "unofficial collaborators" (IM). It visits the sites where the secret police operated, from the Stasi headquarters in Berlin to its prison facilities. It also explores opposition and resistance, the end of the State Security as a consequence of the Peaceful Revolution of 1989, and the successful efforts to safeguard the Stasi files and make them publicly accessible.

This reader on the State Security contains concise information that makes it easy to understand the ruling mechanisms in the GDR State Security. It provides an opportunity for us to raise awareness: By addressing human rights violations in the GDR, we help society recognize the importance of these rights today.

The better we understand dictatorship, the better we can shape democracy.

Berlin, September 2015
Roland Jahn

THE MINISTRY FOR STATE SECURITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE SED

Helge Heidemeyer

The Ministry for State Security saw itself as the "sword and shield of the Party". Its slogan is significant, as it refers only to the Party and makes no mention of the people, the state or the constitution. Here the "Party" refers to the Socialist Unity Party of Germany [SED], the ruling state party, whose hegemony was additionally established in the GDR constitutional referendum in 1968. Through its work, the State Security strove to secure the SED's power and stabilize the ruling system – whereby the end largely justified the means.

How can the relationship between the SED and the State Security be described in concrete terms? Did the Party function as the employer of the secret police or did the MfS operate largely unchecked, working on its own initiative and according to its own priorities? Was the Stasi a "state within a state, which exerted control over members of the Party as well," as Egon Krenz, the last party head of the SED, described it at the Round Table in 1990?[1]

The State Security's subordination to the highest Party council was clearly established by the statute of 6 October 1953, which stated that "the basis for the work of the State Secretariat for State Security is dictated by the resolutions and directives of the ZK and Politburo".[2] This provision reinforced the newly revised statute of 1969.[3] Given the opening statements here about the SED's position and self-perception, it may no longer come as a surprise to find a state agency subordinate to a party institution. The general political principles of the MfS were indeed decided by the Party.

In the early years, however, the strong presence of Soviet instructors interfered with this relationship. The Soviet occupying power modelled the structure, ideology and practical orientation of the newly established secret police after its own secret police. It also influenced the political-operational work through a large number of instructors, both in the Berlin headquarters and in the German states. The Soviets exerted the greatest pressure on personnel decisions and cadre policies. They also initiated many of the activities carried out by the secret police apparatus. As a result of this influence, the Stasi's own leadership structure remained underdeveloped in the early years. Despite this situation, the German leadership of the MfS was held primarily responsible for having not adequately foreseen and hindered the uprising on 17 June 1953. This event would permanently haunt the GDR leadership and lead to a personnel and structural reorganisation of the secret police. Once again, the State Security's new orientation was dictated by the Soviets, who decided that there should be a stronger focus on the work in the West. They designated their candidate of choice, Ernst Wollweber, Minister for the State Security, and maintained a strong presence in the apparatus by appointing their own advisors to all its units. The political leadership of the GDR, however, knew how to exploit this situation to its own advantage: It had the Politburo, headed by Walter Ulbricht, formally secure direct control of the secret police. Its "big brother" continued to exert a decisive influence on the secret police until 1957, when Ulbricht succeeded in replacing Wollweber with his deputy, Erich Mielke. In 1958 the Soviet Union withdrew a large number of its advisors from the GDR.

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1   See Uwe Thaysen [ed.], *Der Zentrale Runde Tisch. Wortprotokolle und Dokumente,* Vol. 2 [Wiesbaden, 2002], pp. 502 f.

2   Roger Engelmann; Frank Joestel [editing assist.], *Grundsatzdokumente des MfS* [MfS-Handbuch] [Berlin, 2004], Doc.11, pp. 61–63.

3   See ibid., Doc. 29, pp. 183–188.

These two events – the uprising on 17 June 1953 and the replacement of Wollweber with Mielke as head of the Ministry – marked two breaks in the development of relations between the State Security and the SED. During the first years until 1953, Wilhelm Zaisser, the first Minister for State Security, united in office both Party and leadership tasks. The Ministry was subordinate to the highest Party councils. But Zaisser was also a member of the Politburo of the SED in charge of state security, which, in turn, was responsible for the State Security. This construction was thus a manifestation of the self-monitoring exercised by the State Security. Zaisser knew how to exploit the situation to ensure that the Party gained little insight into the operational work of the MfS.

After the uprising on 17 June 1953, the Party expressed its strong displeasure with this structural arrangement and with Zaisser. The minister was removed from office four weeks after the uprising and barred from the Party six months later. The Ministry for State Security was downgraded to a state secretariat and incorporated into the Ministry of Interior for two years. Its new head, State Secretary Wollweber, was not a member of the Politburo. This situation did not change until almost twenty years later, when Mielke, head of the MfS for 14 years by then, was appointed to the Politburo in 1971. Thus, in 1953 the State Security had lost independence and status and was more tightly integrated into the hierarchy of the power apparatus. Two new supervisory bodies were established especially to serve this purpose: the Department for Security Issues within the ZK of the SED and the Security Commission of the Politburo. Both were initially overseen directly by Ulbricht to ensure that the Party leadership controlled both cadre policies and the State Security. This organisational change tied the State Security, a government body, more closely to the SED and to the Party leadership and this was still the case in 1960, when the tasks of the Security Commission were transferred to the National Defence Council (NVR), which oversaw and controlled all armed bodies of the GDR.

Even after this structural change was implemented in 1953, the rivalry between Ulbricht and the Moscow-supported Wollweber was the cause of ongoing friction between Party and State Security.[4] These tensions

Ministry for State Security emblem
BStU

continued even after Erich Mielke, who the Party leader saw as "a congenial state security minister,"[5] was appointed head of State Security. Both the MfS and the SED engaged in a subcutaneous power struggle to enlarge their spheres of influence: For the years 1960-61 it is obvious that the State Security was attempting to permeate the Party and state apparatus in order to expose existing deficiencies and use its influence to eradicate them. To this end, it took independent action and worked without a mandate. Despite these efforts, however, the shortcomings – from the point of view of the MfS – continued to exist. During council meetings on 13 and 20 December 1961, Colonel Herbert Weidauer, head of the MfS Main Department III, expressed his view "that we do not yet adequately control everything".[6] Although he was mainly referring to the national economy, in April 1962, Mielke demanded that cadre policies of the SED be more strongly subject to the control of the MfS.[7] A report from the ZK Department for Security Issues, which was clearly written in reaction to

4   See Walter Süß, *Das Verhältnis von SED und Sicherheitsdienst. Eine Skizze seiner Entwicklung* [Berlin, 1997], p. 9 f.

5   Roger Engelmann, "Diener zweier Herren. Das Verhältnis der Sicherheitsdienst zur SED und den sowjetischen Beratern 1950–1959", in Siegfried Suckut; Walter Süß [eds.], *Staatspartei und Sicherheitsdienst. Zum Verhältnis von SED und MfS* [Berlin, 1997], pp. 51–72, here p. 71.
6   Protokoll; BStU, MfS, SdM, Nr. 1558, p. 28.
7   *See Protokoll der Kollegiums-Sitzung am 26.4.1962*, Anl. 3; BStU, MfS, SdM, Nr. 1560, p. 15–25, here p. 18.

the Stasi leaders' actions, reveals that the Party viewed the situation quite differently and preferred having restrictions put on the activities of the State Security. The report – as well as a speech on which it was based that was held by Politburo member Hermann Matern – strongly criticises the methods of the State Security on two main points: a) that the MfS was overstepping its authority and should observe boundaries, especially in the state apparatus and national economy; the State Security feels responsible for everything, which did not correspond with the actual situation, and b) that in its work, the MfS repeatedly committed legal violations. The list of breaches was long with exception clauses becoming the rule. Arrests were made without judicial arrest warrants, house searches were conducted without orders from the public prosecutor and, as a result of its methods of appointment and informal relations, the public prosecutor was too closely involved with the MfS. Especially after the Wall was erected in 1961, the Party leadership hoped that, by reducing the activities of the secret police, relations with the population would improve. But the MfS appeared unfazed by its employer's criticism and barely reacted to it. Since no concrete suggestions had been made to change its work methods, the secretary of the ZK department found no reason for a fundamental reorientation.[8] Without concrete supervision, the MfS was unable to shift its focus – a characteristic that would become apparent again in 1989.

Thus, a fight over authority ensued. The influence of the Party apparatus on personnel policies within the MfS, in particular from the ZK Department for Security Issues and the Security Commission of the Politburo, or of the NVR, was limited to the leadership level of the MfS.[9] In contrast, in the 1960s, after the State Security had established its blanket controlling presence in GDR plants and factories, it once again expanded its influence upon the state apparatus. It systematically occupied positions in the state control apparatus, i.e. the "organisation and inspection" working group within the Council of Ministers, with its own officers, ensuring its control over a central office of the state leadership.[10] Conversely, however,

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Erich Mielke, minister for state security, Erich Honecker, ZK secretary for security and Walter Ulbricht, head of the SED party, late 1960s
BStU, MfS, SdM/Fo/173

the newly introduced control authorities over the MfS refrained from developing any major activities: Documents show, for example, that during the almost thirty years of its existence, the National Defence Council addressed State Security concerns on only twelve occasions, and these usually concerned cadre issues such as promotions.[11]

It became evident in the 1970s that, despite the limited controls placed on the MfS' work, the ministry continued to adhere to the basic party line. Under East German leader Erich Honecker, the GDR tried to improve its international standing and adopted – not totally voluntarily[12] – the aims of détente policies as their own. But these policies were belied by the more or less openly repressive methods of its secret police, which led the State Security to change its approach to achieving security in the GDR, shifting its focus to prevention and employing above all measures of "Zersetzung", a form of psychological terror. Opposition groups were systematically infiltrated with the aim of causing internal conflict, undermining their plans and rendering their work ineffective. Although expansion of the MfS

8   See Siegfried Suckut, "Generalkontrollbeauftragter der SED oder gewöhnliches Staatsorgan? Probleme der Funktionsbestimmung des MfS in den 1960er Jahren", in Siegfried Suckut; Walter Süß [eds.], *Staatspartei und Sicherheitsdienst*, pp. 151–167, here p. 155.
9   See Walter Süß, "Politische Taktik und institutioneller Zerfall. MfS und SED in der Schlussphase des Regimes", in ibid., pp. 249–269, here p. 253.
10   See ibid., p. 258.

11   www.nationaler-verteidigungsrat.de.
12   See Siegfried Suckut, "Der DDR-Sicherheitsdienst und die Deutschlandpolitik der KPdSU 1969/70", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 58 [2010] 3, pp. 403–439.

apparatus continued during this phase, and was pursued even more rapidly to meet its new and very different needs, the Stasi now operated more in secrecy and remained largely invisible to the public.

Almost without exception, the employees of the State Security continued to be members of the SED. This meant that the employees of the MfS were subjected to a two-fold subordination – naturally, they had to answer to their work supervisors; yet, as members of the Party, they were also a part of the SED hierarchy. If the claim of the State Security is to be taken at its word, then Stasi employees were subordinate to the Party two-fold: as both members and employees.

Its subordination to the structure of the SED was carried out by the MfS' own party organisation, which generally functioned like the party organisations that had been established in factories throughout the GDR.[13] The relationship between the MfS Party leadership and MfS leadership remained without tension as a result of overlapping personnel responsibilities on both levels within the MfS. Over the course of their careers, employees frequently transferred from one area to another, ensuring that these spheres did not come into conflict with one another. Personal union reinforced the interconnections between the two institutions. The informal interlacing of personal relationships existed on all levels.[14] The private discussions Mielke held with Ulbricht, and later with Honecker, who in 1958 was appointed ZK Secretary for Security Issues, a key position at the junction between the Party and State Security, have since become legendary. No written notes of these private talks exist, but they are known to have addressed decisive questions concerning cooperation between the Party and MfS. Mielke reported observations and received instructions from the general secretary. This direct exchange also allowed the head of the State Security to exert influence on the state leadership's political line, at least to the degree that it related to security issues. Mielke acquired greater influence after 1971 when he joined the Politburo. This also provided him access to increased financial resources, evident in the

expansion of his staff and realisation of building projects.[15]

Although, in general, the ZK resolutions and other official party decisions were "evaluated" according to the Leninist tradition and implemented into guidelines of action by the MfS, informal agreements concerning the focus of the State Security's work also played an important role. In many cases, personal contact replaced institutionalised relationships and facilitated unregulated yet effective consensus and influence. Although these findings refer here to the heads of state, Party and the MfS, they were also evident on the regional level. The consequences are two-fold: First, as a result of these connections, the question of subordination and superiority between Party and State Security was less significant than one might presume given the two parallel hierarchies. Secondly, because these connections were not formally regulated, there was room to manoeuvre, to exert influence and to secure resources. They also allowed the MfS leadership to pursue its ongoing interest in keeping the Party from meddling in its operative work.

One aspect of the MfS' informal exercise of power, however, continued to be defensive. It failed to expand its activities within the Party. Spying on the party apparatus had been explicitly prohibited since the mid-1950s[16] and exceptions had to be approved by the chairman

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13   Silke Schumann, *Die Parteiorganisation der SED im MfS 1950–1957* [MfS-Handbuch], 3rd edition [Berlin, 2002].

14   See here Gunter Gerick, *SED und MfS. Das Verhältnis der SED-Bezirksleitung Karl-Marx-Stadt und der Bezirksverwaltung für Sicherheitsdienst 1961 bis 1989* [Berlin, 2013].

15   See Jens Gieseke, *Die DDR-Sicherheitsdienst. Schild und Schwert der Partei* [Bonn, 2001], p. 86, and Jens Gieseke, *Mielke-Konzern. Die Geschichte der Stasi 1945–1990* [Stuttgart, 2006], p. 101 f.

16   This ban applied only to the SED and not to the bloc parties.

of the Security Commission Ulbricht, and later by Honecker. But the MfS' tasks also included guarding Wandlitz, the residential area in which members of the Politburo resided. Whether the housekeepers hired by the MfS to maintain security also fulfilled other functions remains unknown.[17]

It was also decided that party members should not be recruited as IMs – a rule that was often ignored: in 1988, almost half of all unofficial collaborators belonged to the Party.

The State Security tried very hard to expand its authority, even within the party apparatus, and to free itself from the usual control mechanisms. But given its actual influence, its limitations and its self-perception, historian Siegfried Suckut's opinion that "the MfS remained little more than an eager, perhaps overly eager assistant to the SED" seems accurate.[18] Its secret police activities followed a classic pattern: it depicted threatening scenarios derived from its concept of the enemy, which allowed it to respond to these according to its own strategies. It fulfilled the requirements of the Party, with which it was in agreement, but followed its own logic and methods. On the one hand the Party vehemently and consistently resisted assaults on its own apparatus, allowing exceptions only on an individual basis and with its explicit consent. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the MfS' excessive zeal invited disapproval similar to the criticism expressed in 1962. The MfS oriented itself to the political line of the Party and accepted this, but from within this framework it strove to achieve a strong degree of autonomy and independence.

In 1989 it again became strikingly evident that the State Security expected its employer, the Party, to set the general strategy. As the state and Party gradually collapsed, the MfS failed to develop any perspectives of its own. It subordinated itself to the new leader Egon Krenz's new political course without resistance and waited in vain for instructions from the Party on how to respond to the demonstrators. MfS employees became discouraged following Mielke's speech before the *Volkskammer*, the East German parliament, during which he demonstrated his helplessness. He exposed the MfS to ridicule while admitting its omnipresence.

After this, the State Security was unable to offer an alternative to its own dissolution. Yet, even in this situation, the State Security continued to fulfil its role as protector of the Party. It was "the shield and sword of the Party one last time".[19] In the months following the collapse of the GDR, leading party representatives, from Honecker to Gysi, continued to insist that they had been unaware of the Stasi's unethical scheming. In doing so, they succeeded in shifting the focus of the discussion, placing responsibility for the injustices committed in the GDR entirely onto the State Security and detracting attention away from the Party and people in positions of responsibility.

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17   "Ordnung für die Betreuung von ausscheidenden Mitgliedern des Politbüros", Sekretariat des ZK usw. v. 4.4.1983, Punkt 9. Anlage zum ZK-Protokoll 37/83; BStU, MfS, SdM, Nr. 402.
18   Suckut, in: Suckut; Süß [eds.]: *Staatspartei und Sicherheitsdienst*, p. 158.

19   *Märkische Oderzeitung*, 27 July 2010, p. 3.

THE MINISTERS FOR STATE SECURITY

Daniela Münkel

Throughout its existence, the GDR State Security was directed by three ministers: the first two, Wilhelm Zaisser (*1893) and Ernst Wollweber (*1898), were only in charge of the East German secret police for a few years. Erich Mielke (*1907) not only served as minister for 32 years, but also played an important role as Wollweber's "second-in-command". Thus, Mielke's impact on the MfS was significant. The biographies of Zaisser and Wollweber, however, are also characteristic of this apparatus, which the SED used to wage an unofficial civil war on its own population.[1]

Although Erich Mielke was 14 years younger than Wilhelm Zaisser and nine years younger than Ernst Wollweber, the three men belonged to the same political generation, which had been primarily shaped by events before 1945. Their shared experiences would strongly influence their political

activities in the Soviet zone of occupation and, soon after, the GDR. The three ministers for state security were part of the founding generation of the GDR, whose personal experiences of war, battle and persecution left their mark on the GDR – particularly through the MfS' methods of persecution and surveillance.

Wilhelm Zaisser, Ernst Wollweber and Erich Mielke grew up in different social milieus: Zaisser's father was a police officer in Rotthausen near Gelsenkirchen and held German nationalist political views. Zaisser attended a teacher's college, became a teacher and initially shared his father's political views. Ernst Wollweber's father was employed as a carpenter at the municipal train station in Hannoversch Münden and was a committed socialist. His politics eventually cost him his job, which led to the family's social decline. Wollweber grew up under precarious social conditions. He became politically active at an early age and, after finishing grade school at 14, he went to sea.

Erich Mielke grew up in the "Red Wedding" district in Berlin, the son of a wainwright. Because he was younger than Zaisser and Wollweber, he did not share their horrific experiences as front soldiers in World War I. Zaisser, a soldier on the Eastern front, rose to become lieutenant in the Reserves. His war experiences radicalized his political views, leading him to join the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in September 1919; he was also a member of the "Central Leadership of the Ruhr Red Army" in Essen at the time of the anti-republican "Kapp Putsch" in March 1920 for which he was sentenced by a military court to four months in prison in early 1921. Dismissed from the educational system after his release from prison, and no longer permitted to work as a teacher, he took on a full-time position with the KPD in 1921. He filled various functions in the Communist Party, for example in the management of the district office in the Ruhr region in 1923–24.

He also spent time in Moscow, where he attended the military-political school of the Comintern. During the Weimar Republic, he was sent by the Soviet Military Intelligence Agency (GRU) to Morocco and Syria (1926/27) as well as to China (1927–1930). Zaisser moved to Moscow in 1930 and became a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1932. He worked as a teacher at the International Lenin School and Military Political School.

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1   For more biographical information, see Helmut Müller-Enbergs, "Wilhelm Zaisser (1893–1958). Vom königlich-preußischen Reserveoffizier zum ersten Chef des MfS", in Dieter Krüger; Armin Wagner (eds.), *Konspiration als Beruf. Geheimdienstchefs im Kalten Krieg* (Berlin, 2003), pp. 32–60; Roger Engelmann, "Ernst Wollweber (1898–1967). Chefsaboteur der Sowjets und Zuchtmeister der Stasi", in ibid., pp. 179–206; Jens Gieseke, "Erich Mielke (1907–2000). Revolverheld und oberster DDR-Tschekist" in ibid., S. 237–263; Helmut Müller-Enbergs et al. (ed.): *Wer war wer in der DDR. Ein Lexikon ostdeutscher Biographien* (Berlin, 2006); Roger Engelmann, et al. (ed): Das MfS-Lexikon. 3rd printing (Berlin, 2016).

Wilhelm Zaisser, minister
for state security, 1950 to
1953, 22 February 1950
BArch, Bild 285 Bild 04246

Ernst Wollweber,
head of the GDR State
Security, 1953 to 1957,
5 October 1954
*BArch, Bild 183-26755-
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Ernst Wollweber was also radicalized by his experience at the front during the First World War. He was involved in the sailor mutiny in Kiel in November 1918 and in the founding of the KPD in Hannoversch Münden, his hometown, in January 1919. Like Zaisser, Wollweber soon became a full-time KPD functionary: in 1921 he was 1st secretary of the KPD district of Hessen-Waldeck. Wollweber went to Moscow that same year for training in the secret military apparatus of the KPD. Soon after he returned to Germany in 1924, he was sentenced to three years in prison by the Reich Court for activities related to high treason, but was released early in 1926. Wollweber was elected to the Prussian Parliament (Landtag) in 1928 and to the Reichstag on 6 November 1932. In 1932–33, he also became

an organisational leader of the KPD's central committee, as well as the Reich leader of the "United Federation of Seamen, Harbour Workers and Boatmen" in the "Communist International Union of Seamen and Harbour Workers" (ISH). After the National Socialists came to power on 30 January 1933, Wollweber participated for a few months in the KPD's illegal resistance work in Germany before he was sent by Moscow to Copenhagen to head the ISH there.

Erich Mielke received his political education in Berlin and Moscow. The KPD apparatus, the street fights between communists and National Socialists in Berlin and training at the International Lenin School in Moscow (1932–1936) had a strong influence on the young Erich Mielke. Following an apprenticeship as a shipping clerk, he continued to work in this job until 1931. Erich Mielke's life, however, was dominated by his political activities: In 1921 he joined the Communist Youth; in 1924 he became a member of the Youth Organization of the Alliance of Red Front Fighters (RFB); and in 1927 he joined the KPD and became active in the party's "self-defence" wing. It was in this function that he was involved in the murder of two policemen on Bülowplatz in Berlin on 9 August 1931[2], which led Erich Mielke to flee to the Soviet Union in order to avoid arrest.

The KPD's political struggle in the Weimar Republic, the Stalinisation of the party, criminal prosecution by the Weimar government, and training in the Soviet Union were experiences that had a lasting impact on all three later ministers and influenced their actions in the GDR. Their experiences during the Nazi era – flight, persecution, resistance, sabotage, war and constant danger – also had a strong effect on how they lived their lives.

It is significant that Zaisser and Mielke both took part in the Spanish Civil War, albeit in very different functions. Zaisser ("General Gomez") was commander of the XIII International Brigade and later the International Brigade in Albacete. Mielke's role, in contrast, was more subordinate and opaque: As a captain with staff functions, he was probably involved in purging rebellious units. Wollweber was only indirectly involved in this conflict; he organised the delivery of weapons to the Republican side.

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2   Erich Mielke was sentenced to six years' imprisonment in October 1993 for the murder of a
    police officer in 1931. He was released early in 1995.

In 1938, Zaisser returned to Moscow, where he served as editor-in-chief of the German department of the Foreign Languages Publishing House. From 1943 to 1947 he was employed by the Central Committee of the CPSU. In 1947, he returned to the Soviet-occupied part of Germany, where he held several high-level positions, including, minister of interior and deputy premier of the State of Saxony (1948/49). He later became head of the Directorate for Training within the GDR Interior Ministry (MdI). Zaisser, the military expert, was in charge of establishing undercover military units, which would later become the *Kasernierte Volkspolizei* and, in 1956, form the basis for the National People's Army.

Mielke was entrusted with establishing the Directorate for the Protection of the National Economy, the State Security's precursor institution, within the MdI. But when this agency was upgraded to Ministry for State Security in February 1950, the Soviets insisted that Zaisser become its minister. Disappointed, Erich Mielke returned to the second tier and served as state secretary. Zaisser's appointment to minister for state security was accompanied by his co-option into the SED Politburo. But his tenure in office was brief: he was dismissed as minister and expelled from the Politburo in July 1953. A power struggle within the SED leadership, in which he appeared as party-head Walter Ulbricht's main opponent, ended to Zaisser's disadvantage. Ulbricht also needed a scapegoat for the popular uprising on June 17, 1953 and found this in the MfS and its minister. The ministry was blamed for not having foreseen these events.

Although Walter Ulbricht would like to have seen his loyal follower Erich Mielke promoted to the head of the State Security, the Soviets again pushed through their candidate, Ernst Wollweber. In the 1930s, Wollweber had established a sabotage unit on behalf of the Soviet NKVD, which had carried out several attacks on German and German-allied ships. He was arrested in Sweden in 1940 and sentenced to prison. Wollweber's imprisonment became political point of contention and was mired in diplomatic intrigue. Nazi Germany demanded his extradition, which the Soviet Union tried to avoid. After the war turned to Germany's disadvantage, the Soviet embassy in Stockholm was able to get Wollweber released to the USSR.

He returned to Germany in March 1946 and soon became politically active there as head of the Directorate General of Shipping in the Soviet zone (1947 to 1949). After the GDR was founded on 7 October 1949, he

advanced to state secretary of shipping in the Transport Ministry. There is some evidence that Wollweber continued to engage in conspiratorial activities on behalf of the Russians during this time and that seamen under his charge were trained as smugglers, spies and saboteurs. Wollweber, the new head of the State Security, was not only a close friend of the Soviets, but also an experienced resistance fighter who had demonstrated that he would stop at nothing in the fight for communism. Thus, in July 1953, a change both in leadership and in strategy took place. This, in turn, led to the operation "Konzentrierte Schläge" (Concentrated Strikes), during which – from 1953 to 1955 – hundreds of regime opponents working for western secret service agencies or other anti-GDR organisations were

Wilhelm Zaisser and Erich Mielke, early 1950s
BStU, MfS, SdM, Nr. 1917

arrested and sentenced to long prison terms, some even to death. This action was accompanied by a massive propaganda campaign aimed at "exposing" regime opponents while improving the reputation of the MfS in the eyes of GDR citizens. The State Security also created a reporting system to keep the Party informed and up to date on the mood of the population and the current situation in the country.

Prompted by the Soviets, Wollweber embarked on a massive expansion of the State Security's foreign espionage activities in 1955 – for a time at the expense of inner surveillance. Walter Ulbricht, whose political action was strongly influenced by the trauma of the 17th of June uprising, was not pleased about the redistribution of resources, but he had no choice but to accept it. His political differences with Wollweber, who was foremost loyal to the Soviet Union, grew in other areas as well. Two years later, Ulbricht was powerful enough to push through his own security policies and Wollweber was dismissed from his function on 8 October 1957. Ulbricht's man, Erich Mielke, had finally reached his goal: he was now the top man in the MfS.

The leaders in Moscow were distrustful of Mielke, who had spent World War II in southern France and later provided inaccurate information about this period. Jewgeni Pitowranow, the KGB commissioner in East Berlin, called him "devious and insincere". After serving in the Spanish Civil War, Mielke was sent by the Party to Belgium. When the war began, he assumed a false identity in southern France. Unrecognized, he was conscripted in 1944 into "Organisation Todt," which carried out armament production and construction work for the German military. In June 1945, by which point Erich Mielke had already returned to Berlin, the SED immediately assigned the former gunfighter to the police squad as chief of the Berlin-Lichtenberg police precinct. By 1946 he had already risen to 2nd vice president of the German Administration of Interior, where he was responsible for personnel policies in the police sector of the Soviet occupation zone. In late 1948/early 1949, after Stalin gave his approval to have a state security agency created secretly in East Germany, Mielke, whose organisational skills were beyond question, was assigned its head.

The name Erich Mielke has become synonymous with the inhuman apparatus of the GDR State Security. Even in his time as the "second-incommand," Mielke shaped the MfS' development more than any other

Erich Mielke, minister for state security, 1957 to 1989
BStU, MfS, HA PS/Fo/68

individual. He put his personal stamp on the harsh repressive and despotic methods employed by the agency in the early fifties. Later, he continually pushed to have the ministry enlarged, to expand its areas of responsibility, to perfect its system of surveillance and to pursue psychological terror and persecution. He was also responsible for giving credence to the myth of the Stasi's omnipotence and omniscience. Mielke was undoubtedly the most feared functionary in the GDR, which made his embarrassing performance before the *Volkskammer*, the East German parliament, on 13 November 1989, during which his terrifying aura gave way to ridiculousness, all the more shocking. It seemed unbelievable that this man could have evoked so much fear in generations of GDR citizens.

On 7 December 1989, the once powerful Stasi head was arrested by the GDR military public prosecutor and charged with "abuse of confidence". He remained in prison almost without interruption until October 1993, after which he was put on trial, but not for his crimes as minister for GDR state security. He was tried for the murder of policemen in 1931. Erich Mielke was never held accountable for his actions in the GDR.

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO BE A CHEKIST?

Jens Gieseke

The Official Employees of the State Security

In 1953, Wilhelm Zaisser, the first minister for state security, called the employees of the ministry "first class comrades". They viewed themselves as an elite group, serving the "dictatorship of the proletariat". This image was supported by the select criteria for acceptance into the MfS, the high status that MfS employees possessed within the SED state and the fact that their work was shrouded in secrecy. MfS employees enjoyed flaunting their omnipotent image to the outside world. Those they targeted for persecution were confronted by their arrogance and despotism, in particular during interrogations and in the Stasi-run remand prisons. MfS employees were infamous, instilling fear in many people. The MfS' hiring process followed strict guidelines: For one, it had to be instigated by the Stasi. Those who applied on their own initiative were suspected of being enemies of the state or spies. The most important hiring criteria were political loyalty to the Party and an acceptance of the secluded life within the secret police. Membership in the SED was more or less a prerequisite. To ward off infiltration by an opposing secret service, employees were not permitted to have personal connections to the West. They and their

the social circles of their unofficial collaborators [IM]. In the 1980s, they even began a selection process among school children as young as 7th graders. By GDR standards, MfS employees' salaries were considerably higher than average. They also enjoyed special shopping privileges and other advantages.

Unlimited Growth?

The official staff of the Ministry for State Security grew continuously over the years. At the time of the GDR's dissolution [31 October 1989], 91,000 employees worked for the MfS, most likely making it – in proportion to its population – the largest secret service apparatus in the world. There was one official MfS employee for every 180 residents in the GDR. To provide a comparison, in the USSR, the ratio of Soviet KGB employees to citizens was 1 to 600. By 1956, the MfS apparatus already had approximately 16,000 employees. It grew the most rapidly though from 1968 to 1982, when a major defence program was introduced in response to changes created by the new policies of détente: These policies meant that relatives in West Germany were once again allowed to travel to the GDR; western media correspondents could report directly from East Berlin; young people in the East and West became pen pals. Seen from the SED's perspective, these changes meant that the influence of the class enemy – as agents of "political-ideological diversion" – lurked everywhere. The State Security's cure-all tactic to counter this threat was surveillance and persecution. It was expected to control and, if possible, prevent all spontaneous, deviant impulses.

The SED and MfS leadership felt compelled to pursue this unusual expansion of the apparatus as a consequence of the unique situation created by "socialism in half a country". Since the 1960s, the work of only a relatively small number of MfS employees had actually focused on persecuting opponents and monitoring critical authors and church members. But the new mass surveillance, and the bureaucracy set up to support it, demanded increasing personnel needs. From passport control agents at the border to salespeople in the Politburo's secure housing area in Wandlitz: they were all a part of the expansive MfS complex. By 1983, the financial crisis in the GDR also put limits on the MfS' resources and Mielke was forced to minimize the expansion of the apparatus.

◄
Material for enlisting new recruits
BStU, MfS, HA KuSch, Nr. 33038, Tafel 8

families were expected to cut off contact to any relatives they had in the West.

The State Security looked for new recruits mostly in the social surroundings of its own workforce: In the 1950s, many young secret service employees had transferred from the People's Police or had been previously employed by the SED and FDJ. In the 1960s and 1970s, fewer of the new employees, who were hired by the MfS to meet its insatiable hunger for a rapidly growing workforce, came from a "working class" background. More than half of its newly hired recruits were the children of functionaries: their parents had worked for the MfS, the People's Police, the National People's Army or the SED party apparatus. Officers looked for potential candidates in the factories and institutions under their surveillance and in

Chekists

The official employees of the State Security saw themselves as "Chekists". This followed a tradition established by the Bolsheviks in 1917, when they built the Russian secret police named "Cheka" (The Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage). The MfS' revolutionary and glorifying mission statement is attributed to the Cheka's first chairman, Felix E. Dzerzhinsky: "Only he with a cool head, warm heart and clean hands can be a Chekist." Under Stalin, the secret police developed into an instrument of mass terror that accused people of being "enemies of the people" and "fascist spies" and cost millions of lives.

Because the GDR did not provide the status of a lifelong public servant (Beamte), almost all MfS employees had the formal status of professional soldiers with a corresponding military rank. Conscripted soldiers in the MfS guard regiment "Feliks E. Dzierżyński", were subjected to less rigid selection criteria, forming the single important exception to the personnel rules. These MfS soldiers did not perform secret police work and were themselves subjected to surveillance by the MfS during their 3-years of service. Only a small number of those soldiers were absorbed into the MfS agency. The "Officers on a Special Assignment" (OibE) – in the end about 2,200 – formed a special group. They worked undercover in "positions relevant to security policy," for example as security agents in large factories, in pivotal positions within the armed forces, such as the customs administration or People's Police, or as secret service residents in the diplomatic representations of the GDR abroad.

Internal Views

A core group of communist underground cadre had stood at the helm of the apparatus since its founding in 1950. The typical life experiences of these early GDR secret police functionaries included street fights and indoor brawls during the Weimar Republic; underground resistance against

National Socialism; incarceration in prisons and concentration camps; immigration to the Soviet Union; military experience in the Spanish Civil War; and partisan and agent missions in World War II. After 1945 they began creating a police force in the Soviet zone of occupation that was based on their communist ideals. A few of them continued to influence the apparatus in later years, most notably the army general Erich Mielke (1907–2000), who had served as minister since 1957. He had been involved in the shooting of two policemen in Berlin in 1931, after which he fled to the Soviet Union. An internal MfS audio recording from 1984 demonstrates his lifelong commitment to Stalinism: "If I were not in the GDR right now […], and were in the fortunate position of being in the Soviet Union, I would have a few of them shot. Revolutionary law […], not bringing them to trial, is what I mean [by this]."[1]

There were, however, only a few hundred of such older communists in the ministry. Most of the new employees were young men, who had been influenced by the Hitler Youth and the war; after 1945 they joined the Free German Youth (FDJ) and later the People's Police. Most of them came from the "proletariat" and had no more than a basic grade school education. They looked up to the older communists as role models. Mielke's later deputy Rudi Mittig (1925–1994) recalls:

"It was about being a part of the protection of the new republic. That there were plenty of enemies – everyone knew that. […]. For me, recruitment into the Ministry for State Security was a sign of trust. […] Of course there was the question: Who do I subordinate myself to? My supervisors at the time – I like to emphasize military supervisors – were all anti-fascist resistance fighters, who had participated in the Spanish Civil War, been part of the Red Army's struggle against the fascists, and spent time in the concentration camps. All these people who had fought actively against fascism … as far as their lives were concerned, their commitment against fascism, their entire personality; I had total faith in them. […] Unlike me, they had proved themselves during the time of fascism."[2]

The formative experience of this generation was the indoctrination

through Stalin's lessons on the "aggravation of the class struggle" combined with the employees' everyday work in the apparatus: searching for suspected or actual agents of western "enemy organisations," arrests and all-night interrogations that continued until a confession was extracted, and a sense of unlimited power. This allowed them to compensate for their lack of education and criminalistic knowledge. In 1952 Erich Mielke said:

"It seems to me that what is important is that these comrades, who perhaps cannot write, know how to win and know how to destroy the enemy. Let's take a look at how great someone can write and how wonderfully they speak and then we'll examine how many enemies they have destroyed. […] That's why it is necessary to hammer into the people their belief in victory so that they know how to win."[3]

In later years, the world of these Chekists looked a little different to the younger generation, the children of functionaries: Andreas K., who was hired in 1978, recalls:

"I became familiar with the MfS through my father. He was the head of a local office and, I have to say, in his work collective they were all there for each other. This impressed me and motivated me when I was a boy. Families were integrated. We played together as kids. There was a feeling of security, even as a teenager. After my apprenticeship, I started working in the remand prison of the Halle district administration office so that I could really get to know the opponent right away, in person. […] My only problem was that I didn't find the security there that I had experienced in the local office and from my father and his comrades. I encountered conflicts because I met people who were only interested in the money they were getting from the State Security."[4]

The State Security remained a militant men's association. Women made up less than 20 percent of the staff. They mostly worked as secretaries or in similar positions. The only real secret police work they were involved in was information evaluation or postal surveillance. In the 1980s, the willingness of young recruits to accept the MfS' customary contact bans and rules of conduct dwindled, even in SED-oriented milieus.

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1   Cited in Joachim Walther, (ed.): *Mielke – ein deutscher Jäger*. Audio-CD (Munich, 1995).
2   Rudi Mittig, cited in Ariane Riecker; Annett Schwarz; Dirk Schneider, *Stasi intim. Gespräche mit ehemaligen MfS-Angehörigen* (Leipzig, 1990), pp. 166–168.

3   SED-Kreisleitung, Protokoll über die Kreisparteiaktivtagung am 28.1.1953; BStU, MfS, KL-SED, Nr. 570, p. 24.
4   Gisela Karau, *Stasiprotokolle* (Frankfurt/M., 1992), p. 155.

and the accompanying efforts to weaken the prevalent tendency to view the East and West as enemies also exacerbated the sense of insecurity. In 1989, as mass demonstrations were taking place in the GDR, gradual dis-organization grew into obvious powerlessness. Although they were armed to the teeth, MfS employees did not try to prevent the opening of the Berlin Wall. They did not halt the people from occupying their offices. And in the end, they did not take action to stop the complete dissolution of their own ministry.

Opting Out?

Internally, MfS employees had to adhere to the demands of military subor-dination and were under constant pressure to follow instructions. Opting out was only possible in exceptional cases and was followed by lifelong surveillance. Until well into the 1980s, "traitors" who sought contact with the West risked the death sentence. The last time an MfS employee was executed for attempted espionage was in 1981.

But in the 1980s, frustration began to spread among the staff: The crisis in the GDR was deepening; its fear of damaging its image meant that the State Security was no longer free to employ drastic measures against its opponents as it had in the past. Many political prisoners were released from the GDR against payment from the Federal Republic; and the state failed to halt the rising number of applications to emigrate. Re-form policies introduced by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985

17 June

1953

Construction workers at the hospital in Berlin-Friedrichshain went on strike on the morning of 15 June 1953. They called for a retraction of the SED's demand for increased productivity. Ten per cent more work for the same amount of money was just not feasible. The following day, workers on Stalinallee spontaneously joined the protest. The construction workers moved across Strausberger Platz towards the city centre. They intended to confront Ulbricht in front of the SED government building; a national strike was declared.

The workers' uprising in Berlin soon spread across the entire country. Over the following days workers everywhere went on strike; farmers protested; the population revolted. It took Soviet tanks and a summary court martial to save the communist government on the evening of 17 June. Martial law succeeded in stifling the protests that had erupted so suddenly.

The SED was deeply unsettled by the unexpected wave of public outrage and the MfS had been caught completely off guard. Since the SED could not admit the true reasons for the people's desperate situation, other culprits had to be found to take the blame. From within its own ranks, the SED made scapegoats out of Stasi head Wilhelm Zaisser and Rudolf Herrnstadt, head of the Party newspaper Neues Deutschland. Dismissed from their positions and banned from the Party, they were quickly forgotten. The MfS was given the task of identifying the "organisers of the provocation", the official name given to the uprising. But Ernst Wollweber, the new security chief,

had to concede on several occasions that the MfS was unable to fulfil this mission. The claim that an entire population had been drawn into the revolution by Western secret service agencies and broadcasting stations became an obsession without merit. Nevertheless, in 1954, strike leaders in the East along with media and research institute employees and members of political parties, who had been abducted from the West, were convicted in show trials as the "backers" of the uprising of 17 June 1953. They were sentenced to long prison terms. Henceforth the MfS had to report to the SED leadership regularly about what was happening in the country: the information ranged from train accidents, to barns set on fire by angry farmers, to a party secretary getting a bloody nose in a pub fight, to employees refusing to work, to snide jokes about Ulbricht and his consorts.

Bernd Florath

ⵌ
Soviet tank on the Holzmarkt in Jena on 17 June 1953
Stadtarchiv Jena

THE UNOFFICIAL COLLABORATORS

Bernd Florath

When it came to employing metaphors, the MfS seemed sure of itself, at least in this case: The unofficial collaborators (IM), which served as the MfS' "main weapon"[1] in its underground civil war, were also considered the "breathing organs," of the "organ(ism)"[2], that functioned as the link between the MfS and the society it was fighting. The IMs, who were akin to secret agents, cooperated with the secret police, and carefully conspired to hide, conceal and deny the existence of any such connection.

The unofficial collaborators of the Ministry for State Security played more than a marginal role in the work of the secret police, a fact demonstrated by their sheer numbers: at the end of the GDR, the MfS' 91,000 official employees were supported by almost twice as many unofficial informers. They came from all areas of the population – young people and

pensioners, men and women, but they did not represent a cross-section of society. Teenagers, young adults under 25 and pensioners were all underrepresented. Only 17 percent of the IMs were female. About half of all IMs were members of the SED, whereas only 18.5 percent of the GDR population over the age of 18 had joined the party.

An Expression of the State's Fear of Society

IMs were expected to provide the MfS with information, secure its operations, influence society and harass individuals. With their broad presence and listening ears, they were supposed to stretch over the entire country like a spider's web. The SED was deeply disturbed when, on the 17th of June 1953, the East German people – led by workers – rose up unexpectedly in protest against their communist rulers. The unanticipated uprising revealed how powerless and blind the secret police had been: it had given the party leadership no warning and had been unaware of the growing dissatisfaction.

An army of IMs, which continued to expand until well into the 1980s, was supposed to ensure that this kind of event would never happen again: Its job was to report to the authorities even the most minor signs of resentment, protest or resistance. This was based on the idea that it is difficult for a state to collect reliable information in a society without a public sphere. When protest and controversy are regarded as acts of hostility and punishable by law, individuals often become careful about what they say and try to conceal their true thoughts. To find out what was really going on inside the minds of the people, the MfS had to have an anonymous presence at bars, family celebrations, and in public and private places, in order to listen in on the conversations of civilians'.

The IM – Entering into a Secret Pact with the Authorities

In the GDR, as in any society, there were people who had an interest in discrediting others and reporting neighbours, colleagues, and relatives to the authorities; the reasons for informing were various: some hoped to gain benefits, others wanted to protect themselves from real or presumed disadvantages, and there were those who had personal reasons for taking advantage of a third party. These people turned to different representatives of the communist state: to supervisors, trade unionists,

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1 "Richtlinie Nr. 1/79 für die Arbeit mit Inoffiziellen Mitarbeitern (IM) und Gesellschaftlichen Mitarbeitern für Sicherheit (GMS)", in Helmut Müller-Enbergs (ed.), *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit. Richtlinien und Durchführungsbestimmungen*, 2nd printing (Berlin, 1996), p. 305.

2 Ernst Wollweber, "Schlusswort auf der Dienstkonferenz in der Bezirksverwaltung Halle am 15.5.1957", cited in Helmut Müller-Enbergs, *Die Inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter* (MfS-Handbuch), (Berlin, 2008), p. 5.

party secretaries, the police – or to the MfS. But over time, these random denunciations were found to be insubstantial and unreliable and the ministry came to depend on them less and less. The secret police mistrusted everyone, including the incidental informant, whose motives were unclear. The State Security instead preferred "to steer denunciations through professionalisation,"[3] which meant using a network of precise, organised, supervised, examined and instructed informers to infiltrate society.

Information was provided on a regular basis by officials and functionaries who essentially cooperated with the MfS in an official capacity. Some of these reliable informers were additionally conscripted by the MfS as so-called "societal collaborators for security" [GMS]. These were "GDR citizens who were overtly loyal to the state,"[4] but who concealed from the public their relationship with the MfS. In 1988, more than 33,000 GMS helped to assert the MfS' presence in factories and institutions. Yet, because they displayed their political views openly, they had difficulty winning people's confidences. Hence, the MfS strove to recruit IMs whose affinity for the SED was less obvious.

The MfS divided its IM into different categories on the basis of their assigned missions. Almost 90,000 "unofficial collaborators of security" [IMS] were employed to penetrate and secure specific areas, usually in their places of work or areas of responsibility. Approximately 7,000 "expert IMs" [IME] were available for special missions. They were usually highly qualified specialists who investigated or provided expert opinions and specialized knowledge about complex subjects. Through their covert work, they were able to assert the MfS' security policy interests in key social and political circles. Unofficial collaborators were personally instructed by 4,500 IM supervisors [FIM], who served as the link between the official MfS employees and their informers. In the end, the MfS was managing almost 30,000 cases to secure conspiration while maintaining its network of unofficial collaborators. The IMs in these cases [called IMK] made their flats available to case officers to meet secretly with other IMs or allowed their telephones and mailboxes to be used for undercover contact. The

Cover of Guideline 1/79 for working with unofficial collaborators (IM) and societal collaborators for security (GMS), 8 December 1979
BStU, MfS, Richtlinie 1/79, MfS, BdL/Dok., Nr. 7903

smallest group of informers – referred to in secret police jargon as IMBs, consisted of almost 4,000 IMs, who had "contact to the enemy". They were the most highly exposed of the secret informers within the security apparatus. It was their job to penetrate groups identified by the MfS as hostile and to combat them through surveillance and subversion. Most of the best known IMs, such as Harry Schlesing, Manfred Rinke, Ibrahim Böhme, Wolfgang Schnur and Monika Haeger, fell into this category, employed to fight the GDR opposition movement. In addition to reporting in detail for

3   Anita Krätzner, "Zur Anwendbarkeit des Denunziationsbegriffs für die DDR-Forschung" in Anita Krätzner [ed]: *Hinter vorgehaltener Hand. Studien zur historischen Denunziationsforschung* [Göttingen, 2014] [Analysen und Dokumente; 39], p. 157.
4   "Richtlinie Nr. 1/79", in Müller-Enbergs [ed.], *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*, p. 368.

Blatt 11

JME „Waldemar"
Anwendung persönlicher Maskierungsvarianten

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From the MfS "catalogue of changes regarding alibis for persons and vehicles": Various IM disguises, 10 January 1979
BStU, MfS, HA VIII, Nr. 647, p. 12

many years on the activities of oppositional circles, they also took active measures to cripple, divide and paralyse these groups. Although they were highly effective and exceptionally malicious, these IMs made up only "a small minority within the army of informers".[5]

The MfS attempted to establish categories of IMs based on their assignments and importance. These categories, however, do not reveal the degree of their effectiveness, i.e. whether the informers served the MfS with zeal or whether they had reservations or even scruples about fulfilling their assignments, or if they would only go as far as their consciences would allow. Some IMs were eventually found to be "unproductive," "lacking prospects" or "unreliable," in which case they were "discarded" by the MfS and the relationship was dissolved. Other informers found other ways to escape the pressure imposed on them by their case officers. Many more nuances existed between informers than is suggested by the administrative categories established by the MfS. Some IMKs did no more than make their flats available for secret meetings, while others reported on their many neighbours without restraint. The individual IM categories reflect little about the degree of individual initiative displayed. Together, however, they were supposed to build a network which could detect resistance and opposition against the communist dictatorship. The number of registered IMs itself is not an indication of how deeply the State Security penetrated society. The more important questions concern what they actually did and what motivated them.

The Path to Collaboration – Enticing, Blinding, Committing
Why did so many people agree to cooperate secretly with the MfS? Often it was a combination of reasons that led to the decision. Some were convinced that it was the right and necessary thing to do. Others believed that they could gain personal advantages by cooperating. Still others were excited by the idea of having an adventure or playing secret agent. The cases in which the MfS blackmailed someone into cooperating remain the exception. Coerced collaboration had often proven unreliable and precarious. The MfS preferred working with people who acted out of conviction

5   Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Stasi konkret. Überwachung und Repression in der DDR* [Munich, 2013], p. 236.

75

16.01.85

BSTU
0091

Verpflichtung

Auf Grund des heute geführten Gespräches mit dem
Mitarbeiter des M.f.S. verpflichte ich mich,
█████████ geb. am ████ 1927 in Kahbe wohnhaft
Neustadt-Glewe █████████ freiwillig mit dem
Organ des M.f.S. zusammenzuarbeiten.
Ich werde alles um die konspirative
Tätigkeit des M.f.S. durch die Bereitstellung
eines Zimmers zu unterstützen.
Alle mir übertragenen Aufgaben werde ich
pünktlich und gewissenhaft erfüllen.
Ich über alle über
Ich werde über alle mir bekanntwerdenden und
das M.f.S. interessierende Fragen ehrlich berichten
und die inoffizielle Zusammenarbeit vertrauens-
voll gestalten.
Ich bin mir darüber bewußt, daß ich mit der
Realisierung dieser Verpflichtung wesentlich
dazu beitragen, den Schutz unseres sozialistischen
Staates zu gewährleisten.
Zur erfolgreichen Durchführung meiner Tätigkeit im
Auftrage des M.f.S. ist es erforderlich strengstes
Stillschweigen gegenüber jedermann zu wahren.
Ich wurde darüber belehrt, daß ich bei Nichtbeachtung
dieser Schweigepflicht zur Verantwortung gezogen
werden kann. Zur weiteren Gewährleistung der
Geheimhaltung wähle ich mir den Decknamen
"Ueber"

██████████

**Statement of agreement
to cooperate with the MfS,
16 January 1985**
*BStU, MfS, BV Schwerin,
AIM, Nr. 1504/93, p. 91*

because they proved to be more reliable. Yet this posed a separate problem: open supporters of the SED had difficulty getting information from groups that were critical of or opposed to the SED. In the majority of cases, the MfS succeeded in getting someone who at least partially agreed with the issues to work as an informer. It then employed strategies to pull the candidate deeper and deeper into the quagmire of betrayal. Even a person's disgust about the SED regime's administrative despotism could often be re-channelled if the case officer was able to convince the IM candidate that his covert cooperation would help to eradicate those adverse conditions. The MfS also used knowledge it had gathered about an IM-candidate's misconduct to demand compensation from him in the form of collaboration. A person's willingness to help in the investigation of a serious crime or accident was also used to solicit collaboration. Sometimes MfS agents offered to help someone move ahead in his career as an enticement. And finally, many people feared the consequences of their refusal to cooperate. Mielke's ministry was intimidating and standing up to it took a degree of civil courage that not everyone possessed. The people who did say no, without knowing the consequences of their actions, deserve recognition for their courage.

The MfS carefully investigated the personality, interests and social circles of an IM candidate before initiating contact. Today, people who were exposed as IMs often point out that they, too, were under surveillance by the MfS and there is some truth to this: the MfS wanted to build an accurate impression of an informer's reliability, and naturally it employed its usual methods to do this. But the relationship was based primarily on the IM's willingness to cooperate. If the recruitment was successful, the agreement was sealed with a hand-written statement by the IM, his pledge, which included the alias that was used henceforth in interactions with this case officer.

Meetings with IMs usually took place in "conspiratorial flats". The case officer used these rendez-vous to deepen the IM's dependence on the MfS and to dispel any remaining doubts they harboured about their act of betrayal. Once the IM became caught up in this cycle, he often found it difficult to end the relationship. Case officers sometimes threatened severe consequences but IMs were intentionally left in the dark about what would actually happen if they broke off contact. Nevertheless, in the 1980s,

Statement of agreement
signed by Hans-Joachim
Geyer on 31 December 1952.
Geyer worked in various
functions for the Stasi until
his death in 1972; see page
144 f.

*BStU, MfS, HA II/Fo/003,
Bild 10*

many people took this risk: they revealed themselves to friends, pastors and other confidants or took small steps to free themselves from the grip of the State Security.

When an IM disclosed himself to someone, admitting his role as an unofficial collaborator, he ceased to be useful to the MfS as an informer. The MfS subsequently cut off contact and closed and archived the IM's file. Sometimes former IMs became targets of persecution. The MfS even stooped so low as to use its own bad standing in society to denounce someone as a former MfS collaborator and ruin his reputation.

The system of unofficial collaborators involved in foreign espionage was operated primarily by Directorate A (HV A) and differed slightly in a few specific organisational aspects from the informer methods employed within the GDR. Recruiting unofficial collaborators abroad and establishing a pool of assets that spies could use to extract information without the source knowing that it was being used was complicated and required sophisticated conspiratorial methods of contact. Additionally, agents outside of the GDR could not count on the state to protect them from criminal prosecution.

The unofficial collaborators' activities were regulated by the MfS through detailed guidelines that underwent several revisions, in 1950, 1952, 1958, 1968 and 1979. In the updated guidelines the names of IM categories changed and methods were adjusted to reflect shifting conditions. Experiences made during historical upheavals such as the 13th of August 1961 or other important events, such as the OSCE Final Act signed in Helsinki in 1975, were analysed in the context of the conspiratorial struggle against the population.

However, the main principle of using conspiratorial methods to keep GDR society, which was denied an open public sphere, under control, remained unchanged. The unofficial collaborators were expected to function as "breathing organs" in a state that had destroyed the principles of democracy that an open and free society requires. The information provided by IMs could not remedy the ministry's ignorance about the worries, needs and hopes of the people. That was not their job. But the disgraceful act of collaborating with the secret police poisoned the general atmosphere in the GDR. Consequently, many people – fearing unwanted eavesdroppers and informers – chose to remain silent. The IMs knowingly contributed

to destroying the lives of people that the SED and MfS had declared their enemies. The IMs invaded their private lives, sowed mistrust, and orchestrated personal failures. Posing as friends, they were in truth their most perfidious of enemies.

THE GDR STATE SECURITY COMPOUND IN BERLIN–LICHTENBERG

Christian Halbrock

The headquarters of the GDR State Security was located in Berlin-Lichtenberg for almost four decades, from 1950 to 1989. The first property the ministry took over was a former finance office. It later occupied large areas north of Frankfurter Allee and continued to expand until the end of the GDR, when demonstrators occupied the MfS offices on 15 January 1990 and the ministry was ultimately dissolved.[1] The enormous building compound contained the offices of the minister and several main departments, a remand prison, infrastructure facilities and shops. It was divided into three separate areas, which were hermetically sealed and accessible to authorized personnel only. The minister's offices were located in House 1, which was in the "Normanenstrasse" office building compound on Frankfurter Allee; the Gotlindestrasse offices bordered it to the north. The building ensemble on Magdalenenstrasse, which contained the remand prison

and interrogation rooms, was located east of House 1. The front section of Building 12 included a few employee flats for select members of the investigation division. Guards were posted on the adjoining sidewalks and secured the grounds from the outside, ensuring that curious pedestrians did not loiter there. Taking pictures or films of the building compound was prohibited.

The ensemble of MfS buildings has been described in many different ways. It has been referred to as a forbidden area, a concealed site, a Stasi city, a secretive place, even a "non-place". What kind of place was it exactly and how can the grounds be described? The Stasi compound in Berlin-Lichtenberg was certainly a forbidden site; it was a high-security area, like so many in the GDR. But the MfS compound was unusual because it was an extensive restricted area that was situated within a residential neighbourhood. As the MfS expanded, it incorporated neighbouring areas into the compound which meant that the surrounding urban infrastructure was often cut off and streets were blocked. Helmutstrasse disappeared in 1956; Müllerstrasse ceased to exist in 1975. These streets were later taken off the map. As the Stasi headquarters continued to expand, it claimed more and more areas of the city. Its lack of transparency, however, can be described as nothing less than neurotic. Residents were generally not informed of scheduled building measures unless it required them to vacate their homes. Information was even withheld from specialists involved in urban development. Workers assigned to construction sites reported furtively that they were not allowed to speak about what they were building. Was the "Stasi City" in Berlin-Lichtenberg simply one of those many mysterious forgotten places that we find documented on the Web today by people posting their photographs? This was the prevailing view for a long time, but it has recently been revised. The GDR maintained a large number of secret, hidden sites but the MfS headquarters was definitely not one of them. The periphery of the site was accurately marked on the city map of Berlin. Trying to conceal its existence would not have made any sense since the ministry was located in a residential neighbourhood that had been quite lively until the 1970s and generally known to the public. Its address was listed in the telephone book of the German Democratic Republic's capital. Its existence was also confirmed by a sign at Normannenstrasse 22, the ministry's postal address since the 1950s,

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1   For more information on this topic, see Christian Halbrock, *Stasi-Stadt. Die MfS-Zentrale in Berlin-Lichtenberg. Ein historischer Rundgang um das ehemalige Hauptquartier des DDR-Staatssicherheitsdienstes,* 2nd printing [Berlin, 2011]; Christian Halbrock, *Mielkes Revier. Stadtraum und Alltag rund um die MfS-Zentrale in Berlin-Lichtenberg,* 2nd printing [Berlin, 2011].

**Grounds of the MfS
headquarters in Berlin-
Lichtenberg**
*BStU, MfS, HA II/Fo/32,
Bild 13*

House 1

MfS Leadership   Minister
Deputy to the Minister
Minister's Workgroup
Office of the Leadership

House 2

HA II   Counterintelligence
Operative Staff
Abt. X   International Contacts
Legal Office / Photographic Office
BCD   Armaments / Chemical Services
BdL   Office of the Leadership / Postal and Courier
Services / Classified Information

House 3

ZOS   Central Operative Staff

House 4

ZAIG   Central Evaluation and Information Group

House 5

HA II   Counterintelligence

House 6

ZAIG   Central Evaluation and Information Group
(data processing)

House 7

HA XX   State apparatus / mass organisations /
art / culture / church / underground /
sport

House 8 9 11

Dept. XII   Central Registry, File Management (archive)
ZAIG   Central Evaluation and Information Group /
Data Storage

House 12

ZKG   Central Coordination Group (emigration /
departures processing)

House 10 13 23 24 25 26 45

VRD   "Behind the Lines Services" Administration
(building repairs / shop / garages / energy /
water / heat)

House 14 16

HA XVIII   Securing the economy

House 15

HV A   Foreign espionage

House 16

KL SED   SED Leadership Office
KL-FDJ   FDJ Leadership Office

House 17

BdL   Office of the Leadership (reception)
ZAGG   Central Workgroup Protection of Secrecy

House 18

VRD   "Behind the Lines Services" Administration
(staff facilities, supermarket)
ZMD   Central Medical Services
(hygiene inspection)

House 19 20

ZMD   Central Medical Services
(polyclinic)

House 21

BdL   Office of the Leadership
(guard regiment units)

House 22

Cafeteria (for department heads and above)
Conference Room

House 27 28 29

Mass org.   Free Germany Trade Union Federation (FDGB)
German-Soviet Friendship (DSF)
ZMD   Central Medical Services (social affairs)

House 40

HA VII   Securing the Ministry of Interior and People's
Police

House 41

Dept. Finance   Financial Affairs

House 42 43

Dept. N   Communication / Government Contacts,
Operator

House 44

BdL   Office of the Leadership
(guard regiment units)

House 46 47

Dept. M   Postal Inspection

House 48

HA XIX   Securing Traffic / Post and
Telecommunications

House 48 49

HA KuSch   Cadre and Training

which read: "Government of the German Democratic Republic. Ministry for State Security". A visitor's entrance was located on Magdalenenstrasse.

During investigations, the families and friends of MfS opponents who were being held in the remand prison were often summoned to Magdalenenstrasse for questioning. When someone received one of the dreaded summons to "clarify the facts of a case," they knew that the MfS had issued it. Summoning witnesses to this site was part of the MfS' strategy of intimidation and was intended to increase a person's willingness to talk. The MfS often used the information it acquired to open new investigations about other people. More than a few East Berliners, especially in the sixties and seventies, were forced to make statements here. The name "Magdalenenstrasse" became synonymous with the criminal prosecution of political crimes and was closely associated with the State Security in Lichtenberg. The East Berlin songwriter Bettina Wegner was one of many prisoners who had been held here. She was arrested by the State Security when she was 22. It was 1968 and the Warsaw Pact troops had marched into Czechoslovakia two days earlier and used force to suppress the reform movement in Prague. She and her friends had dispersed fliers protesting the invasion. After she was released from prison, she was prohibited by the authorities from performing her music, but she found her own personal way of preserving the memory of Magdalenenstrasse: She wrote "Magdalena" and it became one of her most successful songs. Performing it in churches and at illegal concerts, it helped her to process the experiences she had had in the remand prison. She sang: "How black was Magdalena with her very large hands." Her lyrics[2] continue ambiguously: "The one she loved, she caressed into walls, how white and chalky her dearest became, but it was everyone she loved." Bettina Wegner's song anticipates the famous lines "I love you all, everybody" that Erich Mielke spoke before the *Volkskammer*, the East German parliament, on 13 November 1989. Throughout the song she repeats the name "Magdalena, Magdalena, Magdalena," sometimes an accusation, sometimes a whisper. Later in the

**Magdalenenstrasse:
the embodiment of the
GDR State Security**
*BStU, MfS, BdL/Fo/83,
Bild 261*

song, she sings: "She squeezed to death a thousand lives ...because she always had to love but with every kiss she killed ... impossible to survive four days with her, don't ever take the hand she offers, for Magdalena will love you to death." The song was like a code for this site and for the State Security. For Berliners, Magdalenenstrasse came to epitomize the state's political repression.

How can the building development of the State Security here be described from an urban planning perspective? The complex that emerged in Lichtenberg after 1950 was expansive and unwieldy. Older buildings were torn down and garden allotments destroyed to make room for new structures. The former finance office on Normannenstrasse and the prison on Magdalenenstrasse were the only original buildings to be preserved and integrated into the compound in the fifties. Both buildings had been used after 1945 by the Soviet occupying power. The finance office building had contained an "information ministry," a special Soviet division

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2   http://www.stiftung-hsh.de/curriculum_old/lit_wegner_magdalena.htm, 15.11.2014.
    *"Magdalena war so schwarz und hatte große Hände ... wen sie liebte, streichelte sie in die
    Wände, weiß und kalkig ward ihr Liebster endlich noch, dabei liebte Magdalena jeden doch ...
    tausend Leben hat sie wohl zu Tode gedrückt ..., weil sie immer wieder lieben muß, dabei tötet
    jeden schon ihr Kuß ... doch vier Tage überlebt man mit ihr nie, nimm nie ihre Hand, die sie dir
    gibt, ach, sonst hat dich Magdalena totgeliebt."*

Structure covering the entrance to House 1 and designed to block the view into Mielke's offices, after 1975/76
BStU, MfS, ZAIG/Fo/598, Bild 73

with secret police responsibilities. The Soviet ministry of interior had used Magdalenenstrasse as a remand prison until 1955. The East German State Security ran the prison jointly with its Soviet mentors from 1953 to 1955.

In the 1970s and '80s, several of the older buildings on Magdalenenstrasse and Frankfurter Allee were taken over by the MfS. They had served as residential buildings until the Stasi demanded they be vacated. For the purpose of expanding the compound, the MfS had the residents of a still existing large adjacent neighbourhood evicted in the 1970s. Consequently, Müllerstrasse disappeared in 1975. In 1979 construction squads dynamited an ensemble of houses that had been designed by Bruno Taut in the New Objectivity architectural style. The New Apostolic Church, which had been dedicated in 1931, was also demolished. Most of the buildings that replaced them did not follow an architectural concept or urban development idea. The new buildings had to meet two basic requirements: Firstly, provide more space to accommodate the growing staff and fulfil the minister's wish that all main departments be housed in a single location in Lichtenberg. Secondly, the buildings had to be erected along the outer periphery to prevent curious passers-by from looking into the compound. In the early 1950s, the MfS had already added a wing to the south side of the finance office to create an inner courtyard that was not visible from the outside. When a new housing area on Frankfurter Allee/Süd was completed in 1974, it caused a problematic situation: western journalists and secret service agents soon discovered that the new high-rises on the south side of the avenue provided an excellent view into the inner

courtyard of the Stasi compound. Even the entrance to House 1, where the minister worked, could be seen through a telephoto lens. MfS construction teams worked at high speed to erect a 13-story building that would function as a screen. Previously employees of the State Security evaluated the severity of the situation by placing themselves inside the high-rises with telephoto lenses. Then they had someone from the MfS walk by House 1 wearing a cardboard sign with writing on it. What they saw confirmed that there was no time to waste. By 1978 the completed 13-story building on the southwest side of the compound not only blocked the view from the outside. It was also assured that what was going on inside the offices would not be visible from the street. Before employees turned lights on in their offices at dusk, they closed black curtains that hung in front of the windows. Innovative workers from the MfS building department figured out a way to let fresh air into the offices when the windows were shut: 15-centimetre-wide vertical ventilation slits, which could be opened and closed as needed, were built into the window frames.

The construction carried out on the grounds of the MfS also fulfilled a third purpose: like many other institutions in the GDR, the MfS provided medical and food services to its employees. Given the poor availability of luxury and consumer goods in the GDR, the in-house provision of food was considered an important benefit that would help attract qualified employees. It also deterred MfS employees from leaving the grounds during work hours to run errands, eat out or visit the hairdresser. The giant service and supply building (House 18) that opened in 1982 was conceived of as a privilege and reward to everyone who was serving socialism by combating its opponents. The consumer world here was a far cry from any socialist utopian ideal of equality and no one outside the ministry was supposed to know about it. The MfS' secrets, both large and small, were concealed within the walls of its compound. Not until 15 January 1990 did these excesses and privileges become a cause for anger and a vent for the people's pent-up frustration. When demonstrators stormed the Stasi headquarters and unexpectedly found themselves in the service and supply wing, they were infuriated to find exactly what so many had already imagined existed.

The compound in Lichtenberg was certainly a mysterious site but it is missing something crucial that characterises other such places. It is not

imposing, neither from a city planning perspective, nor from its location. It lacks architectural significance. One would have difficulty dramatically portraying the buildings here as an "architecture of terror". The structures do not command an observer's respect in the way that the Lubjanka secret service headquarters in Moscow does. This strange mix of buildings on Normannenstrasse, through its randomness and banality, bears witness to an inability to create greatness, at least in this respect.

THE MFS AND ITS SOCIALIST "BROTHER ORGANISATIONS"

Roger Engelmann, Georg Herbstritt, Walter Süß

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union began establishing a framework for intelligence operations in its occupation zone at the end of the Second World War. It also created special sectors within the German police force to address secret police tasks. In December 1948, on the insistence of the SED leadership, Josef Stalin acted against the wishes of the Soviet Ministry of State Security (the MGB, precursor to the KGB) and decided to have an independent German secret police established. Created in 1949, it was modelled after the Soviet secret police and initially operated under the umbrella of the GDR Ministry of Interior. The MGB carefully monitored its activities. In February 1950, the secret police department was removed from the Ministry of Interior and re-established as the Ministry for State Security (MfS). The MGB assigned its own instructors to all the MfS' important departmental units. These were Soviet advisors who were authorized to issue directives and who had the power of veto. In the early years of the GDR, the MGB apparatus in Berlin-Karlshorst did not clearly distinguish between its own operations and its supervision of the MfS. The MfS operated primarily as an auxiliary branch of the MGB, whose commissioner in East Berlin acted

as chief advisor to the GDR state security. In spring 1953, 2,200 employees worked for the MGB apparatus in the GDR.

Wilhelm Zaisser served as the first head of the MfS until 1953 and the GDR State Security structures remained weak under his tenure: Soviet advisors enjoyed unlimited operational supervisory control and they personally processed many important cases. After Stalin died in 1953, Lawrenti Berija, the Soviet interior and state security minister, initiated measures to reduce the Soviet secret service apparatus in the GDR. He also strove to eliminate the authority of its advisors to issue directives, but these plans became obsolete following his dismissal in early summer 1953. The new MVD commissioner to East Berlin, Jewgeni Pitowranow, reacted to the uprising in June 1953 by increasing his own operational activities and reinstating strong Soviet supervision of the MfS. His resistance to SED head Walter Ulbricht's attempt to tie the MfS more closely to the SED caused Ulbricht's efforts to fail. Wollweber's appointment as the new head of State Security in July 1953 also bore the signature of the Soviets and did not reflect Ulbricht's interests. The Soviet influence was also evident in the new national security strategy of "Concentrated Strikes", which was developed in early autumn 1953 and called for a more aggressive stance and comprehensive propaganda activities. The decision to end the "Concentrated Strikes" policy and have the GDR State Security focus more on its work in the West is also attributed to the Soviets. Relations between the KGB and MfS changed decisively in 1957. During the power struggle between Ulbricht and Wollweber, Ulbricht succeeded in weakening the position of the Soviet advisors. That the SED leadership henceforth assumed responsibility for its own state security issues was demonstrated by its shift from focusing on work in the West in favour of an increased domestic surveillance. The party apparatus also acquired stronger supervisory authority over the MfS. The last time it had attempted this, in 1953, it had encountered Soviet resistance and failed. The power shift was also evident on the personnel level by the dismissal of Wollweber and the appointment of Ulbricht's confidant Erich Mielke as minister for state security. In late 1958/early 1959, the KGB reduced its number of advisors in the GDR from 76 to 32 and essentially limited their authority to that of liaison officers. Twenty years later, a "Protocol of Cooperation" cites the same number of employees, but it must be assumed that the KGB

staff working in the MfS was much larger since liaison officers also had assistants and technical personnel, such as interpreters, secretaries and drivers. The KGB also maintained a residence in Berlin-Karlshorst, which came to have between 800 and 1,200 employees and was subordinate to the 1st Directorate (espionage) of the KGB. There were additional smaller KGB residences in other districts of the GDR, which were primarily engaged in espionage against the Federal Republic of Germany and worked in cooperation with the MfS.

Agreements made in October 1959 and December 1973 served as the legal basis for the operations of the KGB liaison officers within the MfS. The declared goal in the agreement "On the Committee for State Security Group within the USSR Council of Ministers to Coordinate and Connect with the MfS of the GDR," believe to have been signed on 30 October 1959, was to jointly "fight subversive activities by [Western] secret services, espionage and propaganda agencies and anti-Soviet emigrant organisations that target the Soviet Union and the GDR".[1] The responsibilities of liaison officers were broadly defined: "The liaison officers should have the opportunity to study the operational tasks that relate to actions that are jointly executed. [They are also] to be provided all information pertaining to the general and operational situation in the GDR, West Germany and other capitalist countries."[2] The cooperation agreement between the MfS and KGB of 6 December 1973 did not change the basic goals of cooperation. The KGB liaison officers were assigned to every district administration office of the MfS and to the most important service units of the ministry. They usually had the relatively high military rank of a colonel, which was more or less equivalent with that of a deputy head of a main department in the MfS. In addition to the basic agreement, the individual departments of the MfS and KGB made arrangements or set protocols regarding cooperative work in specific defence and espionage projects. Regular work meetings took place on different levels to intensify cooperation.

The multilateral cooperation between socialist secret service agencies increased in the 1970s. Work meetings were held to discuss issues such as espionage and the fight against "political-ideological diversion".

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1   BStU, MfS, SdM, Nr. 423, p. 13.
2   Ibid., p. 17.

A joint databank containing information on opponents ["SOUD"] was also created in the late seventies. From the MfS' point of view, Soviet reform policies in the late eighties had a negative impact on cooperation. KGB officers made no secret of their loyalty to the Soviet leadership's new course and there is no evidence to suggest that they encouraged their comrades in the MfS to engage in more repressive policies during the decisive final months.

Other European Countries

In the early 1950s, the embassies of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania in East Berlin were already being used by their respective secret services as espionage headquarters. Secret service officers working in the embassies, who were protected by diplomatic immunity, engaged in espionage in West Berlin and West Germany. Their work focused primarily on the ex-citizens of their countries who had emigrated to the West. The MfS provided these "brother institutions" with a wide range of logistic support, including kidnapping missions. The uprising in Hungary in October/November 1956 was regarded as a threat to all socialist countries and led to more intense cooperation. The secret service agencies in the East held emigrant associations partially responsible for the uprising and feared similar uprisings, for example in Romania or Bulgaria. The MfS attended the multilateral secret service conference of socialist states in Moscow in March 1955. It represented the long-awaited formal recognition of the MfS as an equal partner in this circle. At the conference, which was headed by the KGB, the participants established areas of future cross-border cooperation. That same year the MfS leadership finalized written and verbal bilateral cooperation agreements with individual eastern secret services in which it agreed to share information on individuals and investigations. Espionage tasks aimed at the Federal Republic of Germany were also delegated among the different agencies. After the Berlin Wall was erected on 13 August 1961, East Berlin became less important to the other socialist secret services. Since many GDR citizens were trying to flee to the West through a third country, the MfS assigned permanent operational groups in Bulgaria [1962], Hungary [1964] and Czechoslovakia [1965] that were to keep an eye on GDR citizens on holiday in these countries. Relations with Albania evidently broke off in 1961 and

In East Berlin, the head of the KGB, Juri Andropow, and the GDR Minister for State Security Mielke sign an agreement on cooperation between their respective secret services, 6 December 1973
BStU, MfS, Abt. X, Nr. 72, p. 133

from the late 1960s onwards, the MfS had only sporadic contact with the Romanian secret service "Securitate".

Comprehensive written cooperation agreements from the 1960s have been preserved. They represent a continuation of arrangements made in the 1950s. Agreements that the MfS made with the secret services of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria were similar to its past accords with the KGB. They specified the kind of cooperation that would take place and its purpose. In the 1970s, these treaties were renewed and reinforced with bilateral treaties between the separate secret service departments in the same line of work, most specifically, the foreign espionage offices, counterespionage and terror defence departments and offices involved in the fight against opposition and church groups. The ministers and secret service heads met regularly, as did department heads of the

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Telegram sent by the MfS in East Berlin to the Czechoslovakian state security
BStU, MfS, AS, Nr. 4/80, p. 95

same administrative levels. The cooperation between secret services was aimed mainly at the West but was also a response to the growing economic, scientific and tourist connections developing between the socialist states as well as to shared international challenges such as the CSCE process. In this case they focused on securing power relations within the eastern alliance system and establishing a reliable system of surveillance to monitor their respective citizens abroad. In some cases, the secret services worked jointly to persecute critics of the regime.

But there were often differences of opinion within the cooperative work: the MfS generally expected more from its allies than they from it and was consequently found to be both patronizing and demanding. In addition, there was a widespread mutual mistrust among the partners, which is not surprising given the nature of the work and different opinions regarding which security policies should be given priority. Despite these problems, the daily "operational" cooperation was effective. In political crisis situations, the MfS intervened directly in the affairs of the "brother states". It also helped the secret service agencies in Czechoslovakia, as of 1968, and in Poland, as of 1980, to actively combat reformers and opposition groups. The MfS supported the Bulgarian secret service in the 1980s when rumours spread that it had been partially responsible for the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II on 13 May 1981. They used joint disinformation campaigns in an attempt to dispel the suspicion of Bulgaria's involvement. In the 1980s, when the crisis in the socialist states worsened, the MfS directed more attention to its neighbouring states. It observed and analysed the developments taking place in these countries with attentiveness and growing concern.

Non-European Countries

In the 1950s, the MfS maintained sporadic contact with secret service employees from the People's Republic of China. It later developed cooperative partnerships on a regular basis with the secret services of countries whose leaders were closely aligned with the Soviet Union: Cuba, Vietnam, Mongolia and North Korea. Particularly in the 1970s and '80s, they also participated in a few multilateral consultations and projects. In addition, between 1964 and 1989, the MfS engaged in intermittent or continuous support measures and cooperation with the security agencies of Egypt,

Ethiopia, Angola, Grenada, South Yemen, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Namibia [initially: SWAPO], People's Republic of Congo, Laos, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Zambia, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe [initially: ZAPU], Sudan and Tanzania. Relations also existed with Palestinian organizations and the ANC in South Africa. The MfS was present in these countries with operational groups and liaison officers. The cooperative work was either of a general nature or based on concrete plans that had been agreed upon in writing. The MfS helped many of these countries establish their own security apparatus. It offered secret police and intelligence training for leaders and employees, accompanied political-operational work and provided technical equipment and supplies. The HV A, for example, delivered secret service and security technology as well as weapons, ammunition and handcuffs. The purpose of this assistance was to reinforce pro-Soviet governments and groups and to help fight their local political opponents. However, the MfS' AGM/S [Workgroup of the Minister/special task force] was also interested in learning about the Vietnamese war experience in the belief that this information could be useful in training its own deployment groups. The work conducted in non-European countries was organised in coordination with the KGB and in cooperation with the secret services of the other socialist states.

EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE GDR AND THE MFS

Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk

Since the revolution of 1989, which led to the opening of the Stasi files and a 25-year-long debate about GDR history, people have criticised that the MfS has been retrospectively demonised and mythologized. The reasons for this are varied and complex, and include SED dictatorship and MfS apologetics and the legitimate demand for the history of the MfS to be treated as an integral part of research on the communist dictatorship. It is also an expression of the wish that more emphasis be put on the role of the SED leadership and that an analysis of the MfS be conducted within the larger social and political context. This covers a very broad spectrum, but it does not mean that the claim that the MfS has been demonised and mythologized since 1990 is correct. In fact, before the MfS was dissolved, it had intentionally participated in demonising and mythologizing its own activities as part of a ruling principle based on the spread of fear, intimidation and the repression of individualism.

The MfS was present in every phase of GDR history although most people were not necessarily aware of how it operated. ,Due to a lack of reliable sources, little was known about the MfS. The MfS was nevertheless feared by people within every social circle. It is thus not surprising that calls to

abolish the MfS were voiced by opposition and resistance groups as early as the 1950s. This ongoing wish was also expressed many times in autumn 1989, for example in the slogan "Stasi into the factories," in front of MfS offices at the fledgling demonstrations in October 1989 and, finally, in early December 1989, when the MfS offices were occupied and the ministry eventually dissolved.

Today, many people believe and say that they never had any personal contact with the MfS, that it was neither visible nor noticeable, and that it had not played any role in their everyday lives. It is difficult to argue against personal memories. People's recollections of the past are often distorted by years of forgetting, (un)conscious repression, overestimations and underestimations, current experiences, foreign experiences, images, media, film, and finally, by newly acquired knowledge. The ironic saying, "the only statistics you can trust are those you falsified yourself", can be applied in a slightly modified form to memory as well.

The search for evidence of the MfS in the everyday past lives of GDR citizens leads us astray because almost every individual example demands a counter-example. For instance: most people living in the GDR were very careful about what they said on the telephone. They lowered their voices to a whisper when they discussed certain subjects in public. That almost every telephone conversation was tapped is part of a certain GDR "travelling myth". This example is easily countered by pointing out that most people in the GDR did not even have telephones. Although this is true, it is also true that almost everyone made telephone calls – at relatives, friends, from pay telephones or from their workplace. And many people assumed, either consciously or unconsciously, that the State Security was an uninvited eavesdropper listening in on their conversations. Today we know that the secret police were not capable of recording or listening to every telephone call. But, before 1989, it was generally assumed that it could. Similar assumptions about the Stasi at the time help to illustrate how it was mythologized and demonstrate how the belief that it was omnipresent had an impact on everyday life. Students, for example, assumed that in every seminar group there were at least two informers. Conscripts were certain that at least one informer lived in each barrack. When non-conformist teenagers met, most of them assumed there was an informer among them, disguised to look like them – a particularly perfidious act in their eyes. There are an infinite

Observation of people from the opposition at a press party on Alexanderplatz, 1979 or 1980
BStU, MfS, HA XX/Fo/738, Bild 1

Observation of a motorway parking lot on the transit road, undated
BStU, MfS, HA VIII/Fo/38, Bild 37

number of examples to illustrate how people presumed the MfS was everywhere and how they accepted this as part of life.

Language also reflected the assumption within society that the State Security was a part of everyday life and thoughts. The name "Ministry for State Security" was rarely used and never in private conversations. The ministry was usually referred to as the "Stasi", "the firm", "listen and look", "listen and grab", as well as the "red Gestapo", "the pack", or "Mielke's thugs". Almost nobody outside of the MfS knew that informers were called "unofficial collaborators" (IM), but everyone had at least heard of or knew that there were many people acting in secret and unrecognized as "spies", "agents", "traitors"; or "swine", spying on society for the State Security.

Several popular jokes from that time also show that most people were aware that the MfS was out there, watching, monitoring and, when necessary, persecuting its own population. The following joke is a good example of how no one could feel safe from the secret police: "A man in a bar says to the man at the next table: 'Do you know what the difference is between this beer and the party?' – 'No, what?' – 'This beer is fluid, the party is superfluous' [In German the pun is on the similar-sounding words 'flüssig," (liquid) and 'überflüssig' (superfluous)]. The man identifies himself as a Stasi informer; the other man goes to prison. When he gets out a few years later he sees the Stasi informer in the bar again. 'Let's see if you've had time to reflect on your crime while in jail and whether you have developed your socialist character. Tell me: What's the difference between Erich Honecker and a billy goat?' The man is startled: 'Oh no, this time I'm not seeing any differences.'" Jokes also address the fact that the State Security allegedly intercepted postal correspondences and telephones conversations. For example: "In a letter from the GDR to the Federal Republic of Germany: 'Your package has arrived. Hand grenades and machine guns have been buried in the garden.' The second letter arrives the next week: 'The State Security was here. The garden has been dug up. You can send the tulip bulbs now.'" These kinds of jokes functioned on different levels. This last joke, for example, also draws attention to the precarious supply of goods in the GDR.

Several jokes allude to the State Security's bad standing in society and its unpopularity: One popular joke went like this: "Mielke is driving through the countryside with his chauffeur when a chicken suddenly leaps out in front of the car and is run over. Mielke gets out and goes to the farmer. After a while he returns downcast, gets back in the car and tells the chauffeur to drive on. A little bit later they run over a pig. Mielke has had enough. This time he sends his driver in. The driver returns heaped with presents. Mielke asks him how he did it. The driver answers 'I just went in and said that I am Mielke's driver and that I just ran over the swine!'"

Finally, many jokes, like these two final examples, show that people would not put anything past Mielke and his comrades. Many assumed that the functionaries and MfS employees were not very bright: "Mielke and Stoph are travelling incognito to Paris by train to check out the atmosphere in the French capital in preparation of Honecker's visit there. They return to Honecker perturbed. Mielke says to Honecker: 'They exposed our cover as soon as we got to the train station.' Honecker asks with surprise: 'How could you tell?' – 'When we got off the train everyone started calling out 'Bagage, Bagage.'" [The French word for baggage – "bagage" – is also used in German to mean "rabble/riffraff"]. Another joke deals with the brutality of the State Security: "Mielke goes hunting, but all he catches is a rabbit. Angered by his failure, he punches the rabbit, yelling over and over: 'Come on, admit that you're a wild boar.'"

People found these jokes funny. The humour helped them vent their frustration but it also reflected their own experiences, perceptions, assumptions and, not least, their fears. But one should not be left with the impression that people lived in constant fear, or that they constantly looked to the left and right before surreptitiously walking down the street. Everyday life is about habituation, acceptance and routine. Over time, the SED system refined its techniques of power maintenance and the flagrant brutality of the 1950s gave way to a more subtle method of intimidation. This was only possible after the Berlin Wall was erected and the people understood that it was only possible to leave the country at great risk and without the possibility to return. This recognition increased distress within society and the people's willingness to conform to the situation while allowing the rulers to develop a less obvious strategy of repression. Society was based on the assumption that the State Security was ubiquitous and that the people were left without room to form private "niches". It was like the German fairytale about the rabbit and the hedgehog: no matter what the rabbit did, the hedgehog seemed to always beat him to it.

Today we know that, although the State Security had a broad presence, the belief that it was everywhere greatly exaggerates the truth. This misconception, however, reveals not only that the MfS was viewed as an integral part of the ruling apparatus. It also shows how integral it was to societal and often individual developments. The State Security itself primarily contributed to this. The SED and secret police, the functionaries and MfS employees, pretended to know everything and that what they did not know they could find out; that they had total control. Here is an example that related to almost everyone in the GDR as he got older: The cadre departments in the factories and institutions maintained employee files on every worker. These files "accompanied" the workers their entire lives. Even in the GDR, a person had the option to view these files on request. One had to register with the cadre department and was given an appointment a few days later. It was generally assumed that the department head needed the delay to have time to remove documents from the file that the employee was not supposed to see. This made sense since it was also generally believed that the cadre department operated as an extended branch of the State Security. Most people believed that there were actually two files: one that you were allowed to see and one, the important one, which remained inaccessible. Consequently, few people bothered to look at their employee file since they wouldn't be allowed to see what was "important". Most people also assumed that the State Security had the final word when it came to cadre-related political decisions such as acceptance to university, professional promotions or trips to the West. Today we know that the situation was actually much more complicated. The State Security was often, but not always, involved in such decisions. And it was not uncommon for the SED and state leadership to overrule objections from the MfS. But these widespread beliefs show that the State Security played an established role in the people's everyday thinking and that its real or presumed omnipresence led to a spiral of sheer endless speculation and fear.

There were, however, three groups of people, whose daily lives were directly affected by the State Security in a very special way. The first group consisted of MfS employees, IMs and functionaries. The latter group may have included thousands, perhaps even millions, of people who were connected to the MfS professionally, politically, structurally or unofficially, and had regular contact with it. Another group – not identical with the

first – consisted of people who were disappointed by "real-life socialism" and who saw the secret police as "keepers of the grail" upholding the communist idea. They hoped that this apparatus would initiate "decisive" reforms. This group had always existed in the GDR, and at the end in 1989 some of its members were counting on Markus Wolf to save the GDR. A third group, yet completely different from the first two, was made up of people in the political opposition, refugees, people who had applied to emigrate, and those who were a political or social nuisance to the regime or had drawn the attention of the secret police through their non – conformist behaviour. Their perception of the MfS was based not on presumptions and rumours, but on personal experience. Their everyday lives were often strongly altered by their encounters with the Stasi.

Little historical research has been conducted on the role of the MfS in GDR everyday life. Exploring this subject could open up new perspectives on GDR society. There has been almost no attention paid to how people's thinking, their mentalities, were affected by the MfS or about the mid and long-term consequences of presumptions about or experiences with the MfS, which continue to exist into the present. That the past, independent of individual memories, had and continues to have an impact, can hardly be discounted. When explaining people's behaviour in the SED dictatorship – that of a committed party member, an MfS employee or IM, an opponent or bystander, someone who opted out or someone who actively

participated – it is essential that the role of the MfS be taken into consideration. But it is also important not to mythologize or exaggerate the State Security in the same way that it did. Nor should the role of the MfS be trivialised or minimised as former SED functionaries, MfS officers and IMs tend to do today. The truth lies not in the middle, nor is it stored away in the Stasi files or in people's memory. A general authoritative truth about everyday life in the GDR does not exist because everyday life is based on individual experience. But an attempt at reconstruction can be made through social and historical studies that investigate the files and personal memories and that address the topic through scholarship, art and documentary. There is still much to be learned about the history of everyday life and society and many valid questions still need to be addressed by researchers, historical witnesses, journalists and artists. Focusing on the real GDR, the real MfS, and real everyday life in the GDR can help make people who lived through this time, as well as future generations, immune to efforts that stray from the democratic path.

NON-CONFORMITY, REJECTION, PROTEST, RESISTANCE AND OPPOSITION

Christian Halbrock

Anyone who opposed, contradicted, resisted or rebelled against the political system in the GDR was taking a great risk, which could lead to SED state sanctions.[1] Punishment included the denial of an apprenticeship or career advancement, but the state also engaged in subtler forms of social exclusion that went as far as criminal prosecution. Not just the Ministry for State Security was responsible for exclusion and persecution measures: Teachers loyal to the regime also participated in this process by prohibiting their students from expressing objections or by reporting alleged delinquents to the secret police. The People's Police investigated political offences as well. At train stations the Transport Police kept a look out for non-conformist teenagers, who were usually easy to recognize by their long hair and conspicuous western clothing. It also tracked down

1   See, for example, Karl Wilhelm Fricke, *Opposition und Widerstand in der DDR* [Cologne, 1984]; Ehrhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949–1989,* 2nd printing [Berlin, 1998]; Thomas Klein, *"Frieden und Gerechtigkeit!" Die Politisierung der Unabhängigen Friedensbewegung in Ost-Berlin während der 1980er Jahre* [Cologne, Weimar, 2007] [Zeithistorische Studien; 38]; Christian Halbrock, *"Freiheit heißt, die Angst verlieren". Verweigerung, Widerstand und Opposition in der DDR: Der Ostseebezirk Rostock* [Analysen und Dokumente, 40], 2nd printing [Göttingen 2015].

people at stations near the border whom it suspected of trying to flee the GDR. The State Security and police depended on the support of voluntary helpers and informers who could be found everywhere. The Department of Internal Affairs was responsible for reporting on the churches in the GDR, which it did by monitoring its services and work with youth groups. Both areas were viewed as potential trouble-spots by the SED. The efforts were carried out by district, county and local administrations of the Department of Internal Affairs, which eagerly passed on information to the State Security.

Only a small minority in the GDR actually stood up to the regime and expressed its critical views publicly. Although a large segment of GDR society disapproved of the SED system, the majority distanced itself from vocal dissenters who provoked conflict and expressed opposition. The strategies of the SED and the State Security, which initially employed terror openly, only later shifting to more subtle methods of intimidation and control, were effective: much of society refrained from showing solidarity with dissenters for fear of endangering themselves. The power of the SED was based on ubiquitous propaganda, which did not tolerate opposing opinions and which spread lies to suggest widespread approval of SED policies. It also depended on the public's belief that the State Security was both omnipresent and omniscient, making resistance pointless. In truth, however, the State Security was unable to clarify many incidents of resistance. That the MfS could not guarantee total control of the population remained one of the best kept secrets in the GDR and served to ensure domestic security.

People rebelled against the regime in many different ways during the four decades of the GDR's existence. A violation of work regulations, which – according to labour law represented a mere aberration – could be construed by the dictatorship as political disloyalty and lead to punishment. This could also happen, for example, when a person failed to report a violation of work regulations or a political irregularity.

People who lived openly non-conformist lifestyles and who persistently demonstrated their rejection of the norm represented another form of politically deviant behaviour. The State Security collected information, for example, on every farmer and fisherman who continued to conduct business in halfway-privatised production cooperatives although the

Demonstration in Brandenburg, 12 November 1989 [State Security observation photo]
BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, KD Brandenburg, Nr. 687 19/53

collectivisation in the GDR had officially been enforced since the early 1960s. Their rebellion against total collectivisation continued well into the eighties. The SED declared them enemies of socialism although they did nothing more than defend what was left of their property and to continue to employ established work methods. Another example is provided by the pre-military training required at all schools and vocational institutions. Although compulsory, a few students and apprentices refused to take part in target practice. Such students were told they might lose their right to acquire their Abitur, the final high school degree, which qualified them to

go to university. Apprentices who refused to participate in shooting drills risked losing their work training contract.

The SED and MfS were faced with a far greater challenge when people engaged in open protest or opposition, another form of politically deviant conduct subject to criminal prosecution. If someone refused to join or withdrew their membership from one of the GDR's mass organisations and announced their intention publicly, this conduct was categorised as an act of protest. In the work files of the State Security this kind of protest fell under the category of "seditious agitation". Written petitions and letters of protest represented another form of opposition, in varying degrees of explicitness.

People displayed acts of resistance in the more traditional sense when they dispersed fliers or publicised slogans that criticised the SED and GDR policies, vandalised or altered official SED propaganda slogans, tore up flags or created their own anti-regime banners. People had very different

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A minute of silence for world peace: Despite the presence of the Stasi, young peace activists organise a silent demonstration on the Platz der Kosmonauten in Jena on 14 November 1982.
BStU, MfS, BV Gera, Abt. VIII BB 101/82, p. 6, Bild 9

reasons for engaging in protest actions and their fliers and slogans addressed many different issues, but there are four consistent themes of resistance: The SED's lack of legitimacy; the popular uprising of 17 June 1953; the inhuman border regime; and finally, the unpopularity of SED heads Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker.

Opposition and resistance, like the SED measures of repression, evolved over time. After the Soviet zone of occupation was established in 1945, resistance focused on the suppression of non-communist parties, which – for political and tactical reasons – were still tolerated. The "bourgeois" parties and the Social Democrats lost their independence at this time and were forced to subordinate themselves to the KPD/SED. Members of the SPD and other non-communist parties that rejected this, such as the Rostock Liberal Democrats guided by Arno Esch, were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms or even death, the fate which befell Arno Esch in Moscow in 1951. Following the forced merger between the KPD and SPD in the Soviet zone of occupation in 1946, the Social Democrats opened an East Office in West Berlin, which supported people's resistance efforts in East Germany by providing posters and fliers. Many East Germans contacted the East Office and provided its staff with information about the situation in the Soviet zone/GDR. Even the CDU [Christian Democratic] and FDP [Free Democratic] parties established East Offices in the West. The Investigation Committee of Liberal Lawyers, which was established in 1949 in East Germany to provide advice to people who were persecuted, to register legal violations committed in the East and to publicise them in the West, also moved its office to safer West Berlin. Those in East Germany suspected of having contact to one of these offices were arrested by the SED regime and often received long prison sentences.

In the first years following the establishment of the GDR in 1949, the SED and its State Security, which was founded in 1950, imposed draconian measures on political opponents, including the death sentence. These judgments, often delivered in fastidiously prepared show trials with primed witnesses for the prosecution and coerced confessions, were intended to serve as a deterrent. In many places (Werdau, Leipzig, Werder, Eisenberg, Fürstenberg/Oder, Güstrow), high school students who engaged in resistance were also sentenced to death or issued long prison sentences. They were accused of collecting information or distributing

"Liberate us again!":
Opposition slogan on a
Soviet tank monument in
Schwerin, 1988
BStU, MfS, BV Schwerin,
AKG, Nr. 13b, p. 10

fliers. Some of the convicted youths did not survive the inhuman prison conditions or suffered permanent damage to their health.

The situation continued to escalate over many months before protests erupted at 700 different locations in the GDR between 12 and 21 June 1953. Work strikes were followed by demonstrations; protestors stormed prisons and, in some municipalities, even succeeded in disempowering the SED. The protests grew into a national uprising that spread through the country. The rebellion, which was ultimately crushed by Soviet tanks, exposed the weaknesses of the political system. Approximately 15,000 people were arrested and 2,500 were sent to prison. Several protestors were shot and killed; tens of thousands fled to the West. For decades, parts of East German society remained traumatised by the events of 17 June 1953.

In the mid-1950s, people began protesting the increased militarisation of GDR society, the compulsory military service (as of 1962), the forced collectivisation of agriculture in 1960 and the closing of the border to West Berlin on 13 August 1961. Even committed communists and self-proclaimed Marxists came into conflict with the SED state: Songwriter Wolf Biermann, an eloquent, analytical and sharp-witted critic of the political system, inspired many young people in the 1970s. His songs encouraged them to stop accepting the conditions in "real-life socialism". In Grünheide near Berlin, the former SED functionary and chemist

Robert Havemann expressed criticism of the leaders of the GDR regime. He had fallen out of favour with the SED in 1964 after a lecture series and was later banned from Humboldt University. The "Berlin Appeal", which he published with the East Berlin pastor Rainer Eppelmann in 1982, was a milestone in the development of independent peace groups in the GDR.

The peace groups that operated under the protection of the Protestant Church acquired national significance in 1982 following a conflict that erupted in response to the "sword into ploughshares" patches. These circumstances were preceded by a movement of "construction soldiers": since the 1960s, an estimated 15,000 recruits in the GDR had refused to use a weapon in the mandatory military service and were consequently assigned to serve in the construction units of the People's Army. At the same time, the number of "total conscientious objectors" who refused to participate in any kind of military service rose from almost 100 a year in 1964 to approximately 200 a year by the late 1980s.[2] In the 1980s the work of such peace groups expanded to include environmental and human rights groups.

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2   The numbers on this oscillate between ca. 3,000 and 6,000 "total conscientious objectors" from 1964 to 1989.

Head from a toppled statue of Stalin in Budapest on 23 October 1956
ÁBTL 4.1.A-1265

The Political Thaw of 1956

Bewilderment spread among the SED members who had venerated Stalin as their saviour. On stage at the 10th Party Congress in February 1956 in Berlin, the Party's first secretary called the Georgian exactly what he was: a mass murderer. A commission was established to investigate whether the imprisoned victims of Stalinist persecution in the GDR could perhaps be released. It was made up of exactly those SED and MfS members who had been responsible for the persecution in the first place. In addition to Ulbricht, the commission members included Wollweber, Matern and Haid – the GDR head of state security, head of the Party control commission, and the chief public prosecutor. Ulbricht undoubtedly would have preferred forbidding this discussion, but the pressure was too great. The cadres' insecurity was soon mixed up with widespread general discontentment throughout the country. Artists and scholars, students and teachers, SED members and people outside of the Party began discussing philosophy and dogmatism, socialism, freedom and justice.

The crisis set off in Moscow also spread to the other Eastern Bloc countries: Workers went on strike in Poland and demonstrated in front of the Communist Party offices. On 21 October, Władisław Gomułka, the popular activist who had been imprisoned for years, was appointed head of the Party in Poland despite Moscow's objections. Two days later, protesting students and workers in Hungary reinstated Imre Nagy as head of the Hungarian party and government. The Red Army had been forced to withdraw following violent fighting, but it returned on 4 November 1956 to conquer Budapest and suppress the revolution.

Discussions about de-Stalinisation in the GDR also ended that day. The MfS, which had been forced to exercise restraint for a few months, arrested the most prominent critics. Show trials were conducted against Wolfgang Harich, Walter Janka and dozens of others. The defendants received long prison sentences and the spectators, summoned to watch, were sufficiently intimidated.

The State Security, however, bore permanent consequences from these events: The MfS was henceforth prohibited from placing itself above the SED, from persecuting party functionaries or enlisting them as informers on its own initiative. Any questions between the Party and its secret police regarding who was master and who was servant had been clarified.

Bernd Florath

"INFORMAL TEAMMATE" – MIELKE AND SPORT

Jutta Braun

During the Cold War, sports events became the effective stage of symbolic power struggles between the East and West. Track athletes, swimmers and football players were vying not only for meters, seconds, and goals; they were also competing for the reputation of their country and demonstrating the superiority of their respective social and political systems. The GDR took this secondary role of sports especially seriously. In 1971 the political leadership stated:

"The class struggle in the sports arena has reached a point where it no longer differs from the military struggle. Just as the GDR soldier at the state border faces his imperialist enemy in the NATO-Bundeswehr, the GDR athlete also must view the BRD athlete as his political opponent."[1]

The BFC Dynamo, the Berlin football club, gained notoriety because the Minister for State Security Erich Mielke served as its de facto head and guiding spirit. More than any other football club in the GDR, it represented

not only athletic performance but also political entitlement. The unyielding political will to fight, however, was directed not only at the western "class enemy". Mielke's claim to power in football also extended to the fans and to decisions that personally affected the players. At times, Mielke's authority and influence over BFC Dynamo was so great that he was led to believe he could even change the rules of the game.

Dynamo was the sports club organisation of the domestic security agencies in the GDR – the People's Police, State Security and the customs administration – but of these three so-called sponsor associations, the MfS was always the most influential. The structure of the East German sports organisation was modelled after the Soviet "Dinamo Sports Association," which was established on 18 April 1923 in the Moscow headquarters of the Soviet secret police. Initially created to increase the physical fitness of members of the security service, Dinamo soon became an important part of Soviet competitive sports clubs. Feliks E. Dzierżyński served as its honorary chairman, underscoring the exclusive connection to the secret service. This proximity to power quickly evolved into a desire for victory: After the Georgian Lawrenti P. Berija became head of the Soviet secret police in 1939, he demanded that Dinamo assume a dominant role in athletics in the USSR.

In the GDR the Dynamo sports club organisation was established in a similarly confident and high-handed manner: Erich Mielke began informally preparing its establishment in 1952. The sports club made its first public appearance in March 1953. Mielke became chairman of the Dynamo sports club in 1953, before he was appointed minister for state security in 1957, and remained unchallenged in both positions until the end of the GDR in 1989. With 278,000 members and 380 sports associations, Dynamo was the strongest sports club in the GDR. Its financial budget was provided primarily by the Ministry for State Security.

The BFC Dynamo football club was a special showpiece within Mielke's empire. Because it was located in East Berlin, the front line in the Cold War, it stood out among other teams. BFC Dynamo represented the capital of the GDR, which meant that it had to be well-equipped. The players of Dynamo Dresden, who had won the championship in 1953, noticed this difference immediately in 1954 when they were transferred on short notice to East Berlin to join other talented players there. The department head

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1 "Westkommission beim Politbüro des ZK der SED, Westabteilung des ZK, AG 1972 [1971]: Sportpolitische Argumentation für die weitere Vorbereitung unserer Olympiakader auf die Olympischen Spiele in Sapporo und München", cited in Jochen Staadt, "Die SED und die Olympischen Spiele 1972" in Klaus Schroeder [ed.], *Geschichte und Transformation des SED-Staates* [Berlin, 1994], pp. 211–232, here 222.

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Erich Mielke at the 3rd traditional event of BFC Dynamo, moderated by Hans-Georg Ponesky (right), 1969
BStU, MfS, SdM/Fo/158, Bild 5

Stadium in East Berlin. The plan simulated a certain Day X that took place over thirty years ago on 15 September 1982. That was the first day of round one of the European Champion Cup between BFC Dynamo Berlin and Hamburger SV. The high-profile game, to which many fans were looking forward, created several problems for the Stasi. In previous years in the GDR and in Eastern Europe, East German fans had often been seen cheering for West German teams. Given the SED ideology that drew a strict line between the GDR and the FRG, the display of this kind of sympathy was not permitted. Many East German football fans were also fans of West German clubs and the West German national team. A Stasi report from 1971 noted that hundreds of GDR citizens showed "conspicuous" support for Beckenbauer's players during a qualifying game in Warsaw. GDR fans had held up a large banner that read "We welcome the German national eleven and Kaiser Franz" – which no doubt appalled the State Security. After the game the fans who had expressed their enthusiasm with the banner were subjected to various sanctions, including interrogation, expulsion from university and even imprisonment. At future games that West German teams played in the Eastern Bloc, the MfS confiscated all banners and slogans in advance, even ones that contained no more than a friendly greeting, such as the banner found at a European Champions game in Ostrava that read "Suhl greets FC Bayern München". To make sure that this kind of conduct did not repeat itself, the MfS drew up a carefully planned seating arrangement for the European Cup game held in East Berlin between BFC Dynamo and the West German team Hamburger SV (HSV). The game was particularly important because it was held in the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn-Sportpark, a stadium located near the border, which meant it was in view of West Berlin television cameras. Why should the Stasi even let fans with a secret preference for Horst Hrubesch, Felix Magath or Manfred Kaltz into the stadium when there were enough members of the State Security interested in attending the game? Only 2,000 fans – carefully selected on the basis of political criteria – were given tickets to the game. The remaining seats on the bleachers were occupied by Stasi employees, officers of the People's Police and party functionaries. But the Stasi restricted more than just its own fans. It only allowed 300 West Germans to attend the game, a tiny group that sat in Block E, surrounded by more than 1,200 Stasi employees. By creating this human security barrier, the MfS was able

of SV Dynamo simply explained that the eastern part of the city needed a team in the first division to compete against West Berlin teams. After the Dresden Eleven were transplanted by decree to Berlin, a lasting rivalry was sparked between Saxony and Berlin that would last for decades. The Dynamo players in East Berlin also profited from the structural changes implemented in football in the GDR in the mid-1960s. Re-established as "BFC Dynamo" in 1966, it became one of ten training centres created throughout the East Berlin districts for top-level football. Privileges and the successful recruitment of new players made a difference. The BFC Dynamo boasted an impressive record: It was GDR record champion from 1979 to 1988 and GDR cup winner in 1959, 1988 and 1989. Over the years 35 of the team's players played for the GDR national team.

BFC Dynamo's special reputation, which still exists today, has largely to do with its image as a Stasi club. That this also had consequences for the club's fans – both its own and those who rooted for West German teams – is illustrated by a seating plan that the MfS drafted for the Jahn

Caricature (artist unknown), Erfurt, January 1986
BStU, MfS, AOibE 1191-88, Bd. 2, p. 373

MfS sketch of the seating plan in Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn Stadium in East Berlin for the BFC Dynamo game against HSV, 1982. The 300 tourists from West Germany sat in Block E surrounded by 1,284 MfS employees.
BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 1894, p. 57

to prevent the two sides from mingling and made sure that fans from the East and West had absolutely no contact.

A caricature from 1986 pokes fun at another peculiarity of the Stasi Eleven. The picture, drawn by fans of Rot-Weiss Erfurt in early 1986, portrays BFC-Dynamo players in dark red jerseys lifting a referee into the air. It is a clear reference to a situation that escalated in the 1980s after referees made several blatantly wrong calls to the advantage of BFC Dynamo. Football fans from all over the GDR were angered by the ongoing favouritism paid to BFC by the supposedly impartial arbitrators on the field. But

neither the deluge of complaints nor direct protests from football associations and organisations led to a change. There were a number of reasons why the BFC team was favoured. For one, quite a few of the referees had signed on as unofficial collaborators (IM) of the Stasi and this required them to be biased. More importantly, however, Dynamo's employees were well established within the football association and therefore able to effectively block all criticism. Furthermore, the referees who wanted to rise in their careers and be given the opportunity to work internationally were dependent on the MfS. An international career required not only the appropriate classification from the football organisation, but also permission from the MfS to travel. Hence, referees were strongly motivated to show deference to Mielke's empire. By the mid-1980s, however, fans had grown increasingly irate: The caricature shown here was created after Erfurt lost against Dynamo Berlin. Even reporters in the GDR openly discussed the referees' erroneous and questionable calls that clearly favoured BFC. Eventually, with the support of Egon Krenz, the general secretary of the football association, commissioned a study to investigate "The Problem of Referees' Performance … in the 1984/85 Season". The study successfully demonstrated in detail the favouritism paid to Mielke's club and concluded that these circumstances had damaged BFC's reputation, sown "hatred" towards the BFC team and caused tension between the GDR's national players. The "racketeering" had also caused the resignation of other players, and the championship was no longer taken seriously. The situation came to a head the following year on 22 March 1986 due to what would become known as "Leipzig's shameful penalty kick" – a spot kick

that referees granted BFC in the 95th minute of the game, which ended in a 1:1 tie. This time, in addition to a wave of protest letters, Helmut Hackenberg, the 2nd secretary of the SED district leadership of Leipzig, sent a telegram to East Berlin expressing his displeasure and reporting on the anger of Leipzig residents, especially the workers. A scapegoat was found a few days later: Bernd Stumpf, both referee and IM, was permanently expelled from the first league. Fans, local SED politicians and even the regional party press were unified in their outrage over the unfairness to their own clubs and their indignation was directed at Berlin and the Stasi. Defending the honour of one's own football team had thus become part of a regional identity that in the later GDR would drive a wedge between the fans on the periphery and the central headquarters in Berlin.[2]

Mielke's desire for total control even applied to his own players – but at this, the head of the Stasi increasingly failed. In November 1983, the midfielder Falko Götz defected to the West with his teammate Dirk Schlegel. They had been in Belgrade for a BFC game and took advantage of a moment while shopping in a department store to flee to the West German embassy. With diplomatic support they were able to board a night train from Ljubljana to Munich. It was a nerve-wracking journey until they reached "safety" in the West. Yet Falko Götz knew only too well that "safety" was a relative term for a GDR football player who had defected: Lutz Eigendorf, who had also played for BFC Dynamo and fled to the West during a game, had recently died in a car accident. The circumstances of the accident remained unclear and rumours quickly spread that the Stasi had been involved. Eigendorf's death had an intimidating effect: After Falko Götz arrived in the West, he decided that, unlike Eigendorf, he would not give any public interviews or criticise the GDR. But after the Wall fell, he had to concede that these cautionary measures had been of no avail. In the early 1990s, Joachim Gauck, then Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Records, personally informed him that the Stasi had compiled an expansive file containing information about him. The Stasi records concerning Lutz Eigendorf and Falko Götz were eerily similar: the Stasi had spied on both

men intensely and the files contained many details about their living circumstances, travel, favourite restaurants and places of residence. Götz's file contained a sketch showing the fastest route from his new house to the East – an indication that an abduction had been planned. A defected football player was never completely safe from the long reach of Mielke's arm.[3]

As long as they worked with the system, these prominent kickers were coddled and privileged. But as soon as they made a personal decision to leave, they were persecuted as "traitors" and their lives were at risk. Mielke remained an invisible "informal teammate," but he continued to exert influence on the lives of fans and players until the end of the GDR.

2   On the referee problem, see Hanns Leske, *Erich Mielke, die Stasi und das runde Leder. Der Einfluss der SED und des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit auf den Fußballsport der DDR* (Göttingen, 2004).

3   On East German athletes defecting, see "Historische Einführung" in: Jutta Braun; René Wiese, Claudia de la Garza: *ZOV Sportverräter. Spitzenathleten auf der Flucht* (Berlin, 2011), pp. 73–116.

THE STATE SECURITY'S REPORTING SYSTEM, 1953 TO 1989

Daniela Münkel

"We reported on all these inadequacies, sometimes only very minor things but also the very significant ones. We recorded the difficulties that arose with escapes from the Republic, people leaving the Republic. We recorded how many doctors left the Republic, and how many teachers left the Republic. We, comrades, I don't know, should I tell the truth or not? [...] We made suggestions to the offices to which I, as minister for state security, had to report. To the responsible comrades who were in charge of specific work areas, they received the issues they were responsible for. [...] We drew attention to many issues. [...] The only thing is that much of what we reported was not taken into consideration or evaluated."[1] This quote from Erich Mielke, minister for state security, is taken from what by now has become his famous speech before the *Volkskammer*, the East German parliament, on 13 November 1989, in which he provided information about the Stasi intelligence reports. He also expressed astonishment over the fact that Erich Honecker and other members of the Politburo mostly ignored the reports and plans of action prepared by the MfS.

The reports, which were produced in various forms and frequency over the course of 37 years, from 1953 until the end of 1989, reveal the Stasi's particular view of the GDR.[2] They include references to presumed and real oppositional conduct as well as to economic and supply problems. They also include statistics on foreign currency exchange, emigration and escapes. Seemingly trivial items were presented alongside important and more minor "difficulties" that emerged during the process of establishing and maintaining SED rule and developing "real-life socialism". Like a drill boring deep into GDR society, they covered a broad spectrum, but always from the perspective of the secret police, which was mainly concerned with identifying and neutralising politically deviant behaviour and problems related to security.

The independent, institutionalised system of reports provided to the close circle of GDR party and state leadership members was established as a direct response to the national uprising of 17 June 1953. The party leadership held the State Security partially responsible for not having foreseen and hindered the uprising. The party demanded that a regular reporting system be established immediately for the highest political leadership level.[3] The reports were to be based on information gathered from secret service investigations concerning the current situation and unusual incidents. Although the MfS was not prepared for this kind of task and lacked the necessary qualified personnel, it produced its first report on 17 June 1953, at 7:30 p.m. These early reports were extremely unprofessional, both with regard to language and their level of analysis, but the GDR State Security's reports improved considerably over the following decades.

Both the structure and the nature of the MfS reports provided to the SED leadership from 1953 to 1989 changed over time, as did the organisational framework from which they originated.[4] In the early years, dispatches

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1   "Redebeitrag von Erich Mielke während der Sitzung der DDR-Volkskammer am 13. November 1989", in *Volkskammer, Protokolle, 9. Wahlperiode*. Vol. 25, p. 262 f., here p. 263.

2   The secret reports written by the MfS between 1953 and late 1989 for the Party and state leadership are published by the BStU according to year in an annotated edition; see *Die DDR im Blick der Stasi 1953 bis 1989. Die geheimen Berichte an die SED-Führung*, edited by Daniela Münkel for the BStU (Göttingen, 2009 ff).

3   For more information, see Roger Engelmann, [editing assist.], *Die DDR im Blick der Stasi 1953. Die geheimen Berichte an die SED-Führung* (Göttingen, 2013), p. 12 and p. 55 ff.

4   On changes in development and structure of the "Central Evaluation and Information Group" (ZAIG) in the MfS and on the development of the reporting system, see Roger Engelmann; Frank Joestel, *Die Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe* (MfS-Handbuch) (Berlin, 2009).

Berlin , den 19.6.1953

0203

I n f o r m a t i o n Nr 1
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BStU
000208

I. Politische Lage

Der demokratische Sektor Berlins erreicht wieder den nor =
malen Zustand. In den Betrieben wird wieder voll gearbeitet,
bis auf einen Teil der Arbeiter , die im Westsektor wohnen.
Ab heute ist die Partei in den Betrieben wieder aktiv ge -
worden und führt Betriebsversammlungen durch.

In einigen Betrieben wurde durch die Diskussionsredner der
Partei nicht der Arbeitsprozess gefördert , sondern die Ar -
beiter von der Arbeit abgehalten.

Z.B. fasste eine Parteibetriebsgruppe den Beschluss die Sa-
boteure nicht mehr im Betrieb zuzulassen, ohne die Beleg -
schaft für diesen Beschluss zu mobilisieren.

Die Stimmung der Arbeiter ist zum Teil zurückhaltend.

Die Partei wird von einem grossen Teil der Belegschaft in
diesen Betrieben nicht anerkannt.

Ein Teil der Arbeiter , die aufgrund berechtigter wirtschaft-
licher Forderungen glaubten mitstreiken zu müssen, äusserten:
" Niemals wären wir mitgegangen, wenn wir gewusst hätten ,
dass sich ein solches Banditentum entwickeln würde."

Stimmungen aus den Kreisen der Bevölkerung :

Stimmungen und Verhalten der Bevölkerung , die nicht
an den Ausschreitungen teilnahm :

Ein grosser Teil der Bevölkerung verhielt sich passiv.
Konzentrierte Massnahmen von seiten der Partei und der
Jugend wurden nicht sichtbar.

Der posetive Teil der Bevölkerung blieb passiv weil er
die wirtschaftlichen Massnahmen der Regierung nicht gut-
hiess.

Ein anderer Teil der Bevölkerung, der auch die wirt-
schaftlichen Massnahmen nicht gut hiess , hat das Verhal-
ten dieser Streikenden verurteilt.

- 2 -

First issue of the "Information" series from 19 June 1953
BStU, MfS, AS, Nr. 9/57, Bd. 13, p. 208

focused on the general situation in the GDR, the supply situation and public opinion. From late 1956 onwards, however, the bulk of the reports were concerned with special incidents such as accidents and disasters, border violations and political demonstrations. The situation in certain mass organizations, political parties, professional groups, the churches and opposition groups was also extensively covered.

In August 1953, Ernst Wollweber, the new head of the State Security, established a hierarchal information system that was organised from the bottom up – from the county level to the district level to the central headquarters in Berlin. Information groups were established within the MfS headquarters and district administration offices that were to select relevant data from a multitude of individual facts to create a "status assessment". An "information service for situation assessment" with a set arrangement scheme was produced daily until late 1954. Thereafter the frequency with which reports were produced was reduced to twice a week and, in November 1955, to one report every two weeks.

In 1957, the Stasi's information activities became an issue in the conflict between Ernst Wollweber and Walter Ulbricht.[5] Ulbricht was infuriated by reports which analysed the population's attitude. He found them to be "damaging to the Party" and an instrument with which to spread "enemy agitation legally".[6] Ulbricht's annoyance was undoubtedly exacerbated by the fact that the people's hostility towards high-ranking SED party officials was directed primarily at him. The "Information Service" was discontinued in late 1957 and the State Security's analytical and situation reports were strongly restricted. Thereafter, the focus of the reports shifted to "enemy activity" and failures in production. In 1959-1960, the MfS reporting system was re-organised and systematised: the "Central Information Group" [ZIG] was established as the authority responsible for all State Security reports including those of HV A [Directorate A]. In December 1960, Erich Mielke, who became head of the Ministry for State Security in November 1957, issued Order no. 584/60, which provided a new basis for the

5   See Roger Engelmann; Silke Schumann, "Der Ausbau des Überwachungsstaates. Der Konflikt Ulbricht – Wollweber und die Neuausrichtung des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der DDR 1957" *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 43 (1995) 2, pp. 341–378.

6   "Sitzung des Kollegiums des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit v. 7.2.1957", documented in ibid., pp. 356–365, here p. 357.
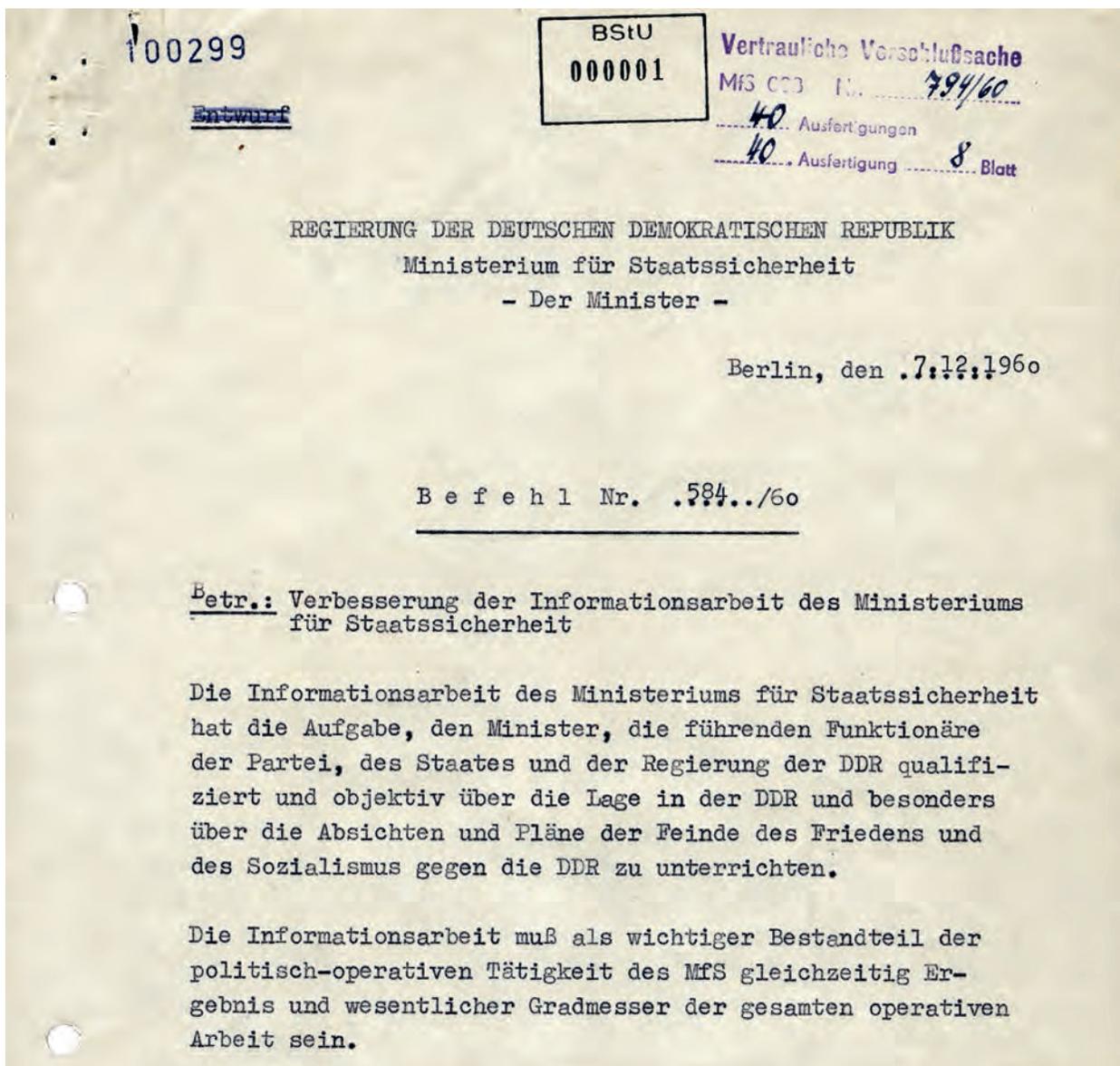
**Order concerning the
reorganisation of the MfS'
information system**
*BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok.,
Nr. 2626, p. 1*

**Werner Irmler,
head of the ZAIG**
BStU

ministry's information activities. "Information work" was re-established as the MfS' central task, which led to an expansion of the ZIG staff. The reports were once again to include an analysis of the population's attitude but they now focused foremost on "enemy activity", "flight from the Republic", and all inadequacies within the GDR economy. Unlike the reports written in the early years of the State Security, greater emphasis was now placed on "analysis" within the framework of "information activity".[7] This restructuring was accompanied by new measures regarding privacy protection. Reports were now generally addressed or delivered to a specific person or his closest assistant and had to be returned with acknowledgment of receipt. Outside the MfS' leadership hierarchy, the information was forwarded to members of the Politburo, the SED Secretariat of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers. A corresponding system of information existed on the district and county levels.

The next important change was introduced in 1965: with the implementation of a uniform evaluation and information system within the MfS, the ZIG was reorganised into the uniform "Central Evaluation and Information Group" (ZAIG), which meant that the service unit acquired more authority and underwent long-term expansion. The evaluation and categorisation of information acquired central importance and the flow of information within the MfS apparatus was more carefully regulated. Additional changes were introduced from 1969 to 1974: the ZAIG was expanded and developed into a permanent "functional agency of the minister". The MfS' information and evaluation system was professionalised over the following years through the use of computer applications. In 1972 the work profile of the

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7   Five different types of reports were established: "Instant report", "Additional report", "Single information", "Report", "Military special information".

MINISTERIUM FÜR STAATSSICHERHEIT

001235

Streng geheim!
Um Rückgabe wird gebeten!

Berlin, den _____   3. Juni 1981

1. Hon
2. Ver
3. Bell
5. Gysi
4. Mittig
6. HA XX, Ltr.
7. Bzr. 1
8. Abl.

Nr. 284 / 81

3   Blatt
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8. Exemplar

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000001
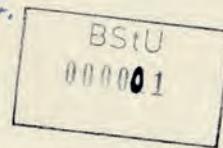
INFORMATION

über

politisch-negative Aktivitäten durch Mitglieder des sogen.
Arbeitskreises "Erziehung zum Frieden" der Evangelischen
Studentengemeinde (ESG) Dresden zum Gesetz über die allge-
meine Wehrpflicht

Streng intern wurde bekannt, daß ca. 9 Mitglieder des sogen.
Arbeitskreises "Erziehung zum Frieden" der ESG Dresden ein
schriftliches Material – eine "Initiative: Sozialer Friedens-
dienst" – erarbeitet haben, das die Forderung nach einer
Veränderung des allgemeinen Wehrpflichtgesetzes erhebt. Es
wird gefordert, an Stelle des Wehrdienstes einen sog. sozialen
Friedensdienst durchführen zu können.

Nach Vorstellungen der Verfasser solle das Papier in allen
Evangelischen Studentengemeinden der DDR sowie in weiteren
kirchlichen Gremien beraten werden mit dem Ziel, eine möglichst
breit diskutierte Vorlage der Volkskammer der DDR zur Beschluß-
fassung vorzulegen.

283 472 3.0

**Cover of an "Information"
issue**
*BStU, MfS, ZAIG, Nr. 3131,
p. 1*

ZAIG was revised and more clearly defined. It continued to be responsible for the ongoing analysis of the "political-operational situation" and providing information to the party and state leadership, but these tasks were now assigned according to subject matter to specialised work groups within Area 1 of the ZAIG. A new group was established in 1981 that focused primarily on subjects relating to the church, culture and political dissidence.[8] This was the final structure of the MfS' information and evaluation system, which remained in place until the country's dissolution in late 1989.

....
8   The work groups' areas of responsibility also included: international themes, espionage and terror defense, national economy and transport, escape, emigration, cross-border traffic and military intelligence.

13th of August

1961

GDR soldiers build border fortifications between East and West Berlin, seen here between the districts of Kreuzberg (West) and Mitte (East), 13 August 1961
BStU, MfS, ZAIG/Fo/0779, Bild 7

On a summer's night, the eve of 13 August 1961, the National People's Army, People's Police and SED worker's militia closed the border to West Berlin. Streets were blocked off, and subways and commuter rails ceased to connect the city's two divergent halves. This time the MfS was not caught off guard as it had been on 17 June 1953. It was intricately involved in the coup d'état that the SED pulled off on its own people. The SED and its secret police were nevertheless apprehensive about how the people would react to this atrocious act.

Thousands of people were suddenly unable to reach the West. They could no longer visit their relatives and more than 50,000 people who commuted to work in West Berlin were prevented from reaching their place of work. MfS employees were positioned at every station and street crossing. They observed the situation and promptly intervened when protests broke out. Those who complained in public soon found themselves behind bars. Most people were shocked by what had happened. They waited, hopeful that the tense situation would ease again. The MfS reported several times a day on the events and the reaction of the people.

Prior to these events the GDR had struggled for months with a seemingly irresolvable dilemma: the economy was booming in the Federal Republic of Germany, offering opportunities to people from the East as well, and the SED's boastful claims that the GDR would soon be outperforming the West had been proved miserably wrong. Tens of thousands of mostly young and educated East Germans moved to the West in search of a better life, which only further exacerbated the situation in the East. The administrative crackdowns on those leaving the GDR or working in West Berlin served to reinforce the people's desire to emigrate rather than to submit. Almost 200,000 people left the GDR in 1960. Another 150,000 had left by mid-August 1961. When the SED built the Berlin Wall, it was pulling the emergency break.

The MfS stood at the ready, analysing the reactions of the people who were now walled in, and taking harsh measures against opposition or voiced objections. Teenagers, who vented their anger and frustration by spraying graffiti with the words "SED – No" or "Down with Nazis and Communists!" were put in prison. The secret police was still traumatised by the events of 17 June 1953, and it was determined to never be caught off guard again.
Bernd Florath

POSTAL INSPECTION, TELEPHONE SURVEILLANCE AND SIGNAL INTELLIGENCE

Arno Polzin

The arsenal of technical and analytical methods employed by the secret police served to control telephone conversations and postal and parcel traffic. Much of the population, however, was aware of this. The cracking sounds heard during telephone calls, the long delays in postal delivery, letters that arrived damaged or were lost in the mail was taken – often mistakenly – as proof of surveillance. People sought different ways to escape this control – with varying degrees of success: they sealed letters with tape, used public telephones – they tried everything. Sometimes people sent an ironic greeting to the uninvited guests they imagined were reading along or listening in. Jokes that poked fun at this situation were common. One of the most popular ones went like this: A GDR resident has his telephone taken away by the authorities. He complains and asks why. "Because you slandered the Ministry for State Security." "Me? How so?" "You claimed several times on the phone that your telephone was being tapped!"

Three technical departments in the MfS were primarily responsible for this area of surveillance in the 1980s. Department M was in charge of postal inspection, Department 26 for domestic telephone calls and Main Department III for international telephone calls (predominantly to the

West].[1] All of these service units had individual responsibilities with a general focus, but they also received special job assignments from other MfS departments that were involved in case-related work focusing on specific individuals.

Whereas the inspection of mail could be ordered in general for specific times and cities regardless of the address posted on the envelope, telephone wiretapping was always linked to a specific person or phone number. A complex set of rules existed to regulate the formal procedures for implementing these controls.

Postal Inspection

Department M was responsible for postal inspection. In 1989, slightly more than 500 employees worked for this department in the Berlin headquarters alone. Three times as many employees worked additionally in the 15 district administration offices. To complete its tasks, Department M implemented conspiratorial access by inserting itself along the regular mail route, usually in rooms or entire floors of buildings used by the official GDR postal service. All letter distribution centres were affected by these measures. In Berlin, Department M had offices in the post office at Nordbahnhof, in the central telegraph office on Oranienburger Strasse and in the railway post office at Ostbahnhof. These rooms used by the MfS were designated "Department 12" of the German Postal Service, both internally and officially. Regular postal workers, however, had no access to such areas. Letters were selected for inspection on the basis of physical traits, certain letter types and handwriting, or specific addresses. Letters

1   Background and in-depth information provided in: Roger Engelmann, et al. [ed.]: *MfS-Lexikon.* 3rd printing [Berlin, 2016]; Wolfgang Jatzlau, *Untersuchung der historischen Entwicklung der Abteilung M in den siebziger Jahren, Diplomarbeit* an der JHS des MfS; BStU, MfS, Abt. M, Nr. 374; Joachim Kallinich; Sylvia de Pasquale [eds.], *Ein offenes Geheimnis: Post- und Telefonkontrolle in der DDR* [Heidelberg, 2002]; Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Stasi konkret* [Munich, 2013], especially pp. 128–130; Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk; Arno Polzin [eds.], *Fasse Dich kurz! Der grenzüberschreitende Telefonverkehr der Opposition in den 1980er Jahren und das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* [Analysen und Dokumente, 41] [Göttingen, 2014]; Hanna Labrenz-Weiß, *Abteilung M* [MfS-Handbuch] [Berlin, 2005]; Klaus Marxen; Gerhard Werle, "Erfolge, Defizite und Möglichkeiten der strafrechtlichen Aufarbeitung des SED-Unrechts in vorwiegend empirischer Hinsicht" in *Materialien der Enquete-Kommission »Überwindung der Folgen der SED-Diktatur im Prozess der deutschen Einheit«.* Vol. II.2 [Deutscher Bundestag, 13. Wahlperiode] [Baden-Baden, 1999], pp. 1064–1303; Andreas Schmidt, *Hauptabteilung III* [MfS-Handbuch] [Berlin, 2010]; Angela Schmole, *Abteilung 26* [MfS-Handbuch] [Berlin, 2006]; Roland Wiedmann, *Die Diensteinheiten des MfS 1950–1989* [MfS-Handbuch] [Berlin, 2012]; www.runde-ecke-leipzig.de/sammlung/Zusatz.php?w=w00054.

Stasi employees inspect-
ing mail
BStU, MfS, Abt. M/Fo/31,
Bild 5

Any questionable content was either transcribed (excerpts) or copied (sometimes onto microfilm) and the findings, along with the copies, were indexed and administrated in a specially designed filing system. To gain

The MfS withheld mail
that was addressed to a
specific recipient such as
the RIAS.
BStU, photo: Marcus
Müller-Witte

traced on the basis of appearance, letter-types or handwriting were part of an ongoing process. Letters selected because of a certain address were part of special investigations of individuals. Every day enormous amounts of mail were removed from the regular postal traffic and handed over to the MfS to be evaluated by Department M. The aim was to return the in-spected items to the postal service within 12 hours – unless it was deter-mined that they should be seized. In inspections, the MfS was seeking to identify intelligence contacts, prevent delivery of publications containing (presumed) seditious content and analyse (possible cross-border) con-tacts that were not merely personal. Postal customs investigations were integrated into Department M in 1984, and parcels were added to the in-spection process as well. The MfS was less concerned with enforcing cus-toms regulations than with preventing the delivery of unsuitable books and other written material. But employees also removed money and other items of value from packages – with an estimated value reaching into the double-digit millions in the 1980s.

Letters and parcels were inspected using x-ray machines. The MfS also created its own machines that used steam to open letters and glue and pressure to reseal them. A letter's content was examined according to predetermined analytical criteria. It was even checked for secret writing.

access to the mail of a specific person, the State Security conducted spe-cial postal collections or emptied private mailboxes. Following the sur-veillance of an individual, the State Security conducted an unscheduled postal collection of a public mailbox to obtain the letter that it had seen being placed in there. When the State Security emptied a private mailbox, it simply removed the mail that had been delivered to a specific individual.

There are varying estimates on how many postal inspections were conducted. An internal MfS diploma thesis states that between 4,000 and

Telephone jacks with and without MfS wiretap equipment, undated
BStU, photo: Marcus Müller-Witte

6,000 letters were examined per shift by an inspector in the 1970s and that a single evaluator was able to handle ca. 800 letters per day. By using automated devices to open and seal letters, the Leipzig district administration office in the 1980s acquired the technical capability to process 1,000 letters per shift. But attempts to use this data to estimate the total number of inspections in all districts and in the capital have come under critical scrutiny. It is difficult to imagine that an employee could, on a regular daily basis, read 800 letters in different handwriting and of varying sizes and evaluate them according to an increasingly comprehensive catalogue of criteria. Even if every district administration office was theoretically able to process up to 1,000 letters per shift, it would not have had enough staff to operate the machinery or to evaluate the content.

Telephone Surveillance within the GDR

Department 26 was in charge of telephone surveillance within the GDR. Slightly more than 1,000 employees worked for this department in 1989. Four hundred of them were employed in the Berlin headquarters in the Johannisthal district. In order to tap telephone lines, Department 26 had to gain access to various telecommunication technical facilities. It did this by establishing a network of bases, which included public telephones, conspiratorial apartments and switchboards. Unofficial collaborators were also used in its operations. An alternative method was to install wiretaps in the private flats or offices of targeted individuals, but because this

was technically more complex and subject to the agency's own regulations, it was less frequently employed. Department 26 received its assignments from other so-called operational MfS departments, which issued the orders and provided the name or telephone number of the individuals in question.

Most of the wiretapping operations – and postal inspections – that were conducted were carried out in violation of the constitution since they were done without a court order and in breach of other laws in the GDR. There were only a very few cases in which telephone surveillance was conducted according to official procedure and by court order. In the case of telephone surveillance, estimates of the maximum number of theoretically possible operations should also be viewed with scepticism. The MfS tried to increase its capacity by using technical equipment, but technology and personnel also had their limits. By the late 1980s, the MfS was at most capable of eavesdropping on 4,000 conversations at once. But it did not have nearly enough staff at its disposal to service the technical equipment or evaluate and analyse the content of the telephone conversations that would have been necessary to achieve this capacity on an ongoing basis. Department 26 was, after all, also in charge of the surveillance of the telex network and telegram traffic as well as the acoustic and visual observation (video surveillance) of private homes, work spaces, hotels and prisons. These assignments were also commissioned by various MfS service units that were targeting a specific person or institution.

**A Stasi "signal intel-
ligence" employee in the
Rhinow control centre,
ca. 1984**
*BStU, MfS, HA III/Fo/334,
Bild 28*

Telephone Surveillance and Signal Intelligence Abroad

Main Department III (HA III) was responsible for tapping cross-border telephone conversations and signal intelligence abroad (usually in Western countries). More than 2,300 employees, working in 25 departments, worked in this main department in 1989. There were an additional 600 workers employed in the subordinate district administration offices. The HA III headquarters in Berlin were located in the Wuhlheide district. The HA III was not only concerned with eavesdropping on individual conversations. It was also responsible for the so-called "signal-electronic struggle," for which it employed various methods to tap a large number of conversations via radio and telex connections in the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin. The MfS targeted not only political institutions and committees, but also the West German postal service, the Bundeswehr, police, secret service, NATO institutions and economic centres, such as the armaments industry. The church and informal groups, which the MfS believed to be involved in subversive activities, were also the targets of MfS eavesdropping operations.

Its target operations included standard cable connections, which were gradually modernised and replaced by fibre optics, signal traffic in

shortwave and high frequency sectors, telephone, satellite and radio relay systems and car phones. Thus it focused not only on cable traffic, but also on wireless signals, which required considerable technical preparation. Because of limits on technical range, the MfS concentrated its control centres along the German-German border and the ring around West Berlin, allowing it to eavesdrop far into enemy territory. This network consisted of approximately 270 bases in 1989. The MfS also worked in cooperation with listening stations of other ministries and with the NVA (East German People's Army). Its operations also included signals counterintelligence and signals counteraction, which prevented signals from entering the territory of the GDR. This was achieved for example through the sporadic use of jamming transmitters in targeted areas that disrupted the unwelcomed radio signal.

The Illegality of Surveillance Operations and the Difficulty of Criminal Prosecution after 1990

According to the GDR constitution, its penal code, and its code of criminal procedure, authorisations to encroach on the privacy of post and telecommunications were strictly regulated. As a general rule, the MfS' mass control of mail and telephone lines was illegal. Although guidelines, orders and administrative procedures regarding post and telephone inspections existed, they had no statutory character. MfS employees adopted a rather bizarre interpretation of the law: in their eyes, their efforts were justified by the demands of the ministry within the framework of the command hierarchy. Moreover, the legal foundations of the GDR contained a loophole that was relevant to their work: The legal paragraph pertaining to violations of post and telecommunications privacy (§ 202 StGB) refers specifically to employees and representatives of the German postal service as potential lawbreakers. Since the law made no mention of MfS employees, they remained legally exempt. After the GDR came to an end, they were rarely tried for their actions because the statute of limitations in these cases was relatively short and because judicial interpretations were ambiguous regarding an individual's accountability in objectively unlawful situations and in cases of unauthorised assumption of authority. Those who were tried were rarely found guilty. In fact, there were a high number of acquittals. Even the act of removing money or other valuables

from letters and packages remained exempt from punishment because the employees' actions did not serve their personal gain. In 1993, the Federal Court of Justice conceded that this criminal liability gap ran strongly counter to the general understanding of justice.

THE STATE SECURITY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Roger Engelmann

The close link between political criminal justice and the State Security was an important pillar of dictatorial rule in the GDR, as it allowed GDR leaders to systematically eliminate political opponents and other individuals who stood in their way. According to the GDR code of criminal procedure, the Ministry for State Security was an official investigative agency. As such, it was responsible for political cases and security concerns. Political justice in the GDR was the domain of the MfS. Legal procedure was thus often merely a facade for political and secret police measures.

In every period of the GDR, the Party and State Security played the dominant role in significant political and security-related cases, thus relegating the judiciary to an executor institution. During the Ulbricht era in particular, the conduct of the public prosecutors and judges is best described using "theatrical language concepts" (Werkentin) rather than judicial terminology.[1] The main goal of both the MfS and the judiciary was to secure the "power of the workers and peasants," i.e. "state security" in the broader sense. Thus, it is appropriate to use the term "state security justice" when describing this judicial sector.

1   See Falco Werkentin, *Politische Justiz in der Ära Ulbricht* (Berlin, 1995), pp. 14–16.

The strong role of the secret police within this system of "state security justice" can also be attributed to the fact that the MfS used its intelligence practices to monitor judicial institutions and to investigate the political reliability of justice department employees. When public prosecutors and judges were appointed to positions that handled MfS investigative cases, the MfS possessed a de facto veto. This affected most directly the public prosecutors of Department I (Department I A as of 1963), who were re-sponsible for political crimes, and the custodial judges in charge of MfS cases. The State Security was thus able to exert a strong influence on personnel policies in the judiciary sectors that it deemed important to its work. The judiciary employees, aware that they were dependent on the goodwill of the MfS, were inclined to comply with its requests.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, the MfS' structural dominance in ju-diciary institutions was a frequent topic of discussion and the object of criticism. In 1952, a review commission appointed by the SED criticised the subservience that some public prosecutors displayed towards the State Security. Pressure exerted on public prosecutors and judges by the MfS had essentially become routine by this time. Only very high-ranking judicial functionaries were able to stand up to the MfS on occasion. For example Hilde Benjamin, who served as GDR minister of justice from 1953 to 1967, tried to actively expose unofficial collaborators in an effort to pre-vent her ministry from being infiltrated by informers. Max Berger, the first

director of the public prosecutor's office of the People's Police (which was re-established as the military prosecutor's office in 1956), and deputy chief public prosecutor Bruno Haid were also known to be critical of the MfS' involvement in the judiciary. During the "political thaw" in the sum-mer of 1956, Haid called for an end to the involvement of the MfS' in the personnel policies of the public prosecutor's office. A few months later, Ulbricht derided these views as "liberal tendencies in the judiciary". Haid was dismissed from his position in April 1958.

In 1962, a second political thaw within the GDR judiciary was triggered by developments in the Soviet Union. Members of the SED leadership even complained that the public prosecutor's office's had insufficient oversight over the work conducted by the MfS in its investigative agencies and that "violations of socialist law" were being tolerated. The Party also expressed concern over the cadre policies, which gave the MfS authority to confirm public prosecutors and custodial judges and to infiltrate the judiciary with unofficial collaborators. In the end, however, no lasting changes were made and the cadre policies that ensured the State Security's confirma-tion rights were never tampered with.[2]

2   Roger Engelmann, "Staatssicherheitsjustiz im Aufbau. Zur Entwicklung geheimpolizeilicher und justizieller Strukturen im Bereich der politischen Strafverfolgung 1950–1963" in Roger Engelmann; Clemens Vollnhals (eds.), *Justiz im Dienste der Parteiherrschaft. Rechtspraxis und Staatssicherheit in der DDR* (Berlin, 1999), pp. 133–164, here pp. 160–164.

It is characteristic of the relationship between the State Security and judiciary that even the "hand-picked" public prosecutors of the political departments had only limited access into MfS investigative proceedings. From the very beginning, the MfS' investigative unit maintained the principle of double files: There was a main file containing the official and legal material pertaining to the criminal proceedings, but the investigative officer also kept a reference file with internal correspondences, documents pertaining to the operations division and reports provided by cellmates who had served as informers and whose reports often played a key role in investigations. According to MfS work regulations, it was absolutely forbidden to show the public prosecutor – who was formally in charge of overseeing the complete investigative proceedings according to criminal procedure – the reference file, although it contained-significant information pertaining to the case.

In accordance with the MfS' hermetic principles, the secret police operated its own remand prisons, ensuring its total control over the remand prisoners until the trial. The accused often suffered traumatic experiences in these prisons. They were generally held in partial or total isolation and often saw their legal counsel for the first time after the investigative proceedings had been concluded, making it essentially impossible to prepare an effective defence. In the early 1950s, MfS interrogators also used physical violence during interrogations – a practice they adopted from their Soviet instructors. Subjecting remand prisoners to ongoing nighttime interrogations was a practice that also continued later. Prisoners' resistance usually broke down under the duress of sleep deprivation.

Until 1953, Soviet security organisations, military prosecutors and military tribunals were strongly involved in judicial repression in the GDR. At the same time, the SED state adopted Stalinist structures, norms and methods within its police and judiciary. The criminal law supplementary act, established in December 1957 and modelled after Soviet political criminal law, included "state crimes" as a statutory offense. Until then, political opponents in the GDR had been convicted on charges of "boycott agitation" – Article 6 of the constitution – a rather speculative judicial practice since neither an adequate definition nor concrete sentencing guidelines existed for this crime. But this did not hinder the GDR judiciary from imposing 50 death sentences on the basis of this offence

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The "Revisionists" Trial of July 1957: Richard Wolf, Heinz Zöger, Gustav Just, Walter Janka (2nd row, left to right)
BStU, MfS, AU, Nr. 89/57, BA, EV, Bd. 70

in political trials conducted during this period. In some cases, documentation shows beyond a doubt that these convictions were determined by the SED leadership outside the courtroom. The judges only announced the sentence.[3] This scandalous practice is particularly demonstrated by two show trials conducted in June 1955 in which Walter Ulbricht commuted prison sentences to death sentences.[4]

The GDR went through varying phases of repression during its 40-year history. In the 1950s and '60s in particular, periods of harsh judicial policy alternated with "thawing phases". These changes had an impact on the relationship between the State Security and the judiciary. During milder periods, the judiciary was intermittently able to assert itself and challenge secret police logic. But these periods were inevitably followed by a political "ice age" during which the process was reversed. Thus following these political climate changes, the system of State Security justice stabilised.

The long-term view also reveals a distinct tendency: Both secret police and judicial justice measures were more strongly influenced by despotism

3   Falco Werkentin, "»Souverän ist, wer über den Tod entscheidet«. Die SED-Führung als Richter und Gnadeninstanz bei Todesurteilen" in ibid., pp. 181–204.
4   See Wilhelm Karl Fricke; Roger Engelmann; *"Konzentrierte Schläge". Staatssicherheitsaktionen und politische Prozesse 1953–1956* (Berlin, 1998), pp. 159–181.

and harshness in the early years. Unlike in the 1970s and '80s, under Ulbricht the State Security's work was focused strongly on criminal prosecution: if a suspicion was confirmed according to MfS criteria, the investigation inevitably led to arrest and criminal proceedings. There were also situations in the 1950s in which the MfS – for political or operational reasons – chose not to open criminal proceedings but this was quite different from the later Honecker era, when it became rare for operational cases, particularly those involving political opposition, to lead to criminal proceedings.

In the 1970s, the détente policies posed a new challenge for the MfS. The treaties signed between the two German states led to greater contact between the East and the West. The MfS responded to these changes by expanding its surveillance structures and enlarging the entire MfS apparatus. After the GDR joined the United Nations in 1973 – thereby accepting the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" – and signed the CSCE Helsinki Final Act in 1975, more and more GDR citizens openly demanded their right to free movement. The number of people requesting permission to emigrate rose exponentially and became the SED leadership's most acute security and political problem. Thereafter, the State Security's main task was to fight this growing problem. In the 1980s, the MfS investigative agencies were primarily concerned with criminal investigations connected to escape and emigration. Of the 2,572 people who were tried in 1988 on the basis of MfS preliminary proceedings, 1,173 (45.6%) were convicted of "crossing the border illegally", 777 (30.2%) of "interfering in state or social activities", 124 (4.8%) of "public slander" and 94 (3.7%) of "illegal contacts". People who were "persistent" in trying to get their emigration applications approved were usually charged with one of the last three crimes.[5]

The State Security developed a very different strategy to deal with the growing opposition movement. Given the political demands of détente policies and the GDR's concern for its international reputation, the MfS was inclined to avoid arrests and criminal proceedings. Instead it fought

its political opponents, especially in the 1980s, using conspiratorial methods that in many cases culminated with "Zersetzungsmassnahmen". These measures of psychological terror listed in the official Stasi guidelines included "systematically undermining a person's public reputation, standing or prestige" and "systematically organising professional and social failures to undermine a person's confidence". These conspiratorial measures, described by the author and psychologist Jürgen Fuchs as a "quiet form of terror"[6] and a broad range of disciplinary measures not listed in the penal code, were often used against the opposition in place of criminal prosecution.

5   See Frank Joestel (ed.), *Strafrechtliche Verfolgung politischer Gegner durch die Staatssicherheit im Jahre 1988. Der letzte Jahresbericht der MfS-Hauptabteilung Untersuchung* (Berlin, 2002), p. 31; extensively addressed in Johannes Raschka, *Justizpolitik im SED-Staat. Anpassung und Wandel des Strafrechts während der Amtszeit Honeckers* (Cologne, 2000).

6   Jürgen Fuchs, *Unter Nutzung der Angst – Die »leise Form« des Terrors. Zersetzungsmaßnahmen des MfS* (Berlin, 1994).

**21
August
1968**

In January 1968, the communists in Czecho-slovakia replaced their Party leadership with younger comrades who were open to reform. The old leadership had steered the country into a dead end. Aleksander Dubček, a down-to-earth Slovakian functionary, personified the country's new democratic awakening. For the first time, governing communists had become popular politicians, even outside the country. Many East Germans watched this development with hopeful anticipation and Wolf Biermann sang, "Der Kommunismus hält wieder im Arme die Freiheit / und macht ihr ein Kind das lacht" (Communism holds freedom in its arms again / and makes her a child who laughs). Thousands travelled to the neighbouring country, eager to get a whiff of freedom. But their hopefulness was mixed with apprehension. In late 1965, the SED had put a harsh end to its own attempt to introduce reform, loosen political restraints and reduce daily governmental paternalism.

As hopes continued to grow among the peo-ple, the rulers in the Eastern Bloc began sum-moning their battalions: They threatened their Czechoslovakian comrades and then, on 21 Au-gust, descended with their troops on the by then surrounded country. The SED ostentatiously participated in this action, but the Politburo in Moscow did not allow GDR soldiers to actively partake in the invasion. The State Security had much to contend with: The positions of the NVA (East German People's Army) had to be kept se-cret, as did what was going on in Prague, Brno, Plzeň, and Karlovy Vary. East German tourists in Czechoslovakia had to be made to return to the GDR. The MfS took harsh action against anyone who expressed sympathy with Dubček's com-rades or protested against the occupation of the neighbouring country. Hundreds of mostly young people were arrested and imprisoned. Many were released conditionally after several months because they were not yet 20 years old, but their lives had been shattered. They were hindered from studying at the university for a long time, sometimes permanently.

The Czechoslovakian state security, with whom the MfS had closely cooperated, had be-come a dubious partner in the operation, and the MfS began spying on the Party, state se-curity and army of its southern ally. Over the following years, the MfS strongly supported the traitors of the Prague Spring in "Operation Genesung" (recovery), a so-called normalisa-tion effort, which entailed purging the country of democrats and reformers.

Bernd Florath

Illegal banner at the May Day demonstration on Marx-Engels-Platz: "Role model for all: Czechoslo-vakia", Berlin 1968
BStU, MfS, WR Berlin 11676

PRISONS IN THE GDR

Tobias Wunschik

There were approximately 250 prisons in the GDR when it was founded. At the time of the Peaceful Revolution, the GDR operated fewer than 100 prison facilities. Shortly before German reunification in October 1990, only 39 prisons remained. Prisons in the GDR served various purposes: they were remand prisons, penal institutions, prison labour camps, youth houses and prison hospitals.[1] Remand prisons, originally referred to as court prisons, were usually located inside a court building. This allowed defendants to be brought before a judge swiftly while reducing their chance of escaping. About one hundred remand prisons were closed or moved to larger penal institutions in the early 1960s in an effort to reduce personnel and operating expenses. Penal institutions tended to be much larger to accommodate sentenced prisoners; many had been been built before the

German Reich was founded (Waldheim), under the German Empire (Bautzen I) or during the Weimar Republic (Brandenburg-Görden). Prison labour camps, which were renamed penal institutions in 1976, were usually established at sites where labour was needed. When construction of the industrial facility or transit route was completed, the camps were closed down. About half a dozen youth houses were established for juvenile delinquents or young men and women who had been prosecuted for criminal or political reasons. Most prison hospitals, with the exception of those in Leipzig-Kleinmeusdorf and Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, which still existed in autumn 1989, were eventually closed down.

The State Security ran a remand prison in every district (three in East Berlin), as well as prison labour camps, until 1974. Additionally, starting in 1982, the Ministry for National Defence ran its own penitentiary and disciplinary facility in Schwedt. However, at the founding of the GDR, the majority of prisons were controlled by the Justice Administration and, beginning in the early 1950s, by the Ministry of the Interior and East German People's Police. This administrative structure had been modelled after the Soviet penal system and provided the SED leadership with a secure basis for establishing its own repressive penal system.

During the national uprising in June 1953, angry citizens also targeted prisons where relatives, neighbours and work colleagues were being held for minor offences. Demonstrators occupied 15 prison facilities and freed more than 1,400 inmates, mostly political prisoners. The majority of the liberated prisoners chose not to flee to the West because they were confident – based on the arbitrariness of their arrest – that they would soon be rehabilitated and officially released. But within two weeks, 90 percent of all the freed prisoners had been caught or turned themselves in. The prison wardens treated them more respectfully for a time, but by autumn 1953 the superior court administration had changed its policy and the atmosphere in the prisons became harsh again.

Most of the people who had been convicted by the Soviet military tribunals or in the Waldheim Trials were released from prison in the mid-1950s. Until then, in a few facilities (such as Bautzen I), political prisoners had been held separately from criminal inmates, but this policy changed and henceforth they were incarcerated together. Most dictatorships follow this policy in the knowledge that criminal inmates will aggravate their

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[1]   On the GDR penal system, see, for example, Birger Dölling, *Strafvollzug zwischen Wende und Wiedervereinigung. Kriminalpolitik und Gefangenenprotest im letzten Jahr der DDR* (Berlin, 2009); Gerhard Finn; Karl Wilhelm Fricke, *Politischer Strafvollzug in der DDR* (Cologne, 1981); Jörg Müller, *Strafvollzugspolitik und Haftregime in der SBZ und in der DDR* (Göttingen, 2012); Klaus-Dieter Müller, *»Die Vergangenheit läßt uns nicht los …«. Haftbedingungen politischer Gefangener in der SBZ/DDR und deren gesundheitliche Folgen* (Berlin, 1997); Johannes Raschka, *Justizpolitik im SED-Staat. Anpassung und Wandel des Strafrechts während der Amtszeit Honeckers* (Cologne, 2000); Falco Werkentin, *Politische Strafjustiz in der Ära Ulbricht* (Berlin, 1995).

fellow political prisoners and because criminal inmates are often willing to serve as informers.

After the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961 and the state council decree on the administration of justice was passed in 1963, the East German penal system began taking a stronger interest in "educating" its inmates. As part of this education process, inmates were more frequently divided into groups based on the number of previous convictions as well as other criteria. The state also tried to influence the political views of the inmates: In the 1950s, prisoners were allowed to read the Party-controlled East German daily newspapers as a special privilege; by the 1960s, however, this was explicitly welcomed and the costs were sometimes even covered by the prison administration. Prisoners also had to listen to lectures on the virtues of the socialist political system, the SED party program and daily politics. Political prisoners referred to these talks as "red light radiation".

They were convinced that their sentences were unjust and their rejection of the SED state increased in response to the arbitrary treatment and deprivations they were subjected to. They were, of course, unable to express their opinions without inviting additional punishment or assaults.

Several measures, such as raising the height of the enclosing walls around the prison facilities, were taken over time to make escapes more difficult. Nevertheless, prisoners did occasionally manage to flee. Using the element of surprise, they usually fled when they were being brought before a judge, working at a labour site or being transported from one facility to another. Occasionally, in the 1950s, prison wardens, who had become acquainted with the inmates in prison and who were unhappy with conditions in the GDR, escaped to the West together with inmates. At least four prisoners managed to escape from prisons and flee to the West even after the Wall was built. Two rather spectacular escapes took

⊙
Rüdersdorf prison labour camp, cement wall and security fence, 1978
BStU, MfS, HA VII-8, ZMA 673/78, p. 161, Bild 6

⊙
MfS remand prison in Hohenschönhausen, 1988
BStU, MfS, HA IX/Fo/2560, Bild 1

Prison facility in Halle, undated
BStU, MfS, ZAIG/Fo/0265, Bild 2

Three major prison uprisings took place in the 1950s. The severe prison conditions in Bautzen I in March 1950 set off a hunger strike, which drew the attention of the free world after an appeal was smuggled to the West. In two other cases, prisoners – in Cottbus in July 1953 and in the Hoheneck prison for women in October 1953 – rebelled when their convictions did not come up for review. There was no large-scale rioting in the later years, but many prisoners curbed their productivity at their work sites on the anniversaries of the national uprising and the day the Wall was built. Prisoners also reacted to the inedible food they were served or to mistreatment by jointly rejecting a meal or refusing to work. Prisoners sometimes began a hunger strike, but when it continued for too long they were brutally force-fed. Between 1953 and 1989, many hundreds of prisoners chose to put an end to their hopeless situation by committing suicide.

Prison conditions moderately improved over the years but remained inhumane until the end. Prominent political prisoners as well as prisoners who had had previous access to confidential information were often held in isolation for years. Their relatives were not informed of their circumstances. Some prisons, such as Bautzen II, the military prison in Schwedt, and the remand prisons of the State Security, were known to be especially harsh. Most of the Stasi remand prisons were housed in new buildings. The cells were not overcrowded, but threats were used to make the prisoners confess. They were told that if they refused, their children would be given up for adoption or that they would be denied legal counsel and their pre-trial confinement would be prolonged. In the Stalinist period, physical violence was often used in remand prisons to get prisoners to admit their guilt, but brutality occurred in the regular prisons in the early years as well. Even in the later years, situations such as an escape attempt or insolence toward the prison staff could result in a physical assault.

Letters sent by family members were carefully censored, visiting hours were strongly monitored and prison cells were fastidiously searched. There was no privacy in the overcrowded prisons. The wardens monitored every area of prison life. The sanitary facilities in most prisons were totally inadequate. The MfS employed doctors to provide medical treatment in the prisons. In some cases, when no other personnel was available, prisoners with medical experience were also assigned to treat other prisoners, but they were strongly limited in what they were permitted to do.

place in the later years: Wolfgang Defort broke out of the Cottbus prison in January 1975. He had been on the run for 14 hours, on his way to the Polish border, when he sought help from three church pastors, one of whom reported him to the People's Police. In another case, four prisoners escaped together from the remand prison in Frankfurt/Oder in 1981. They took hostages and shot a People's Police officer – presumably unintentionally. They ended up surrendering after being surrounded by armed secret police.

Prison cell, undated
BStU, MfS, BV Schwerin,
Abt. XIV, Nr. 473

Their situation was aggravated further by the fact that almost all prisoners had to perform labour while serving time. Prison labour had been organised with military precision by the prison administration since the mid-1950s. A prisoner was assigned to a work area soon after arrival and had to perform hard, dangerous, monotonous and often unhealthy work tasks until his release. Although most prisoners were not experienced in the work areas to which they were assigned, they were expected to meet very high work quotas, which is why the accident rate among prisoners was much higher than among "free" workers. Prisoners were also forced to do work that other people did not want to do – this is what made them so valuable to the East German economy, which suffered a constant labour shortage. The goods that prisoners produced were also exported to the West for hard currency. Through their work, prisoners in the GDR generated at least 200 million DM volume of sales annually for the SED regime in the mid-eighties. An additional 3.4 billion DM was generated through the system of political incarceration. The West German federal government paid that amount to the GDR for the early release of 33,000 political prisoners from 1963 to 1989, for humanitarian reasons.

The State Security was strongly involved in the selling of prisoners to the West and also had a major influence on recurring large-scale amnesties. Its primary task, however, was the secret police surveillance of all prisons in the GDR, especially in the Bautzen II prison for political inmates. Prisoners who spied on their cellmates in remand prisons were indispensable to the State Security. In the Stasi remand prisons they were referred to as "Zelleninformatoren" (cell informants). The MfS knew that remand prisoners who had spent a long time in solitary confinement were usually eager to have someone with whom to talk and were quick to confide in their cellmates. The informer was expected to "tease out" of his fellow prisoner the names of other perpetrators and find out whether he had committed other crimes of which the investigators were not yet aware. The cell informer hoped that, in return for his services, his sentence would be reduced; this rarely happened, however, since an informer was far more useful to the secret police when he was in prison.

Official employees of the State Security were also present in all the major prisons of the Ministry of Interior. They had both guards and prisoners there working for them as informers. Prison informers were also expected to find out which inmates were planning a hunger strike or whose relatives had contacted amnesty international. The prisoners who were denounced were subjected to psychological terror. The State Security, for example, would spread a false rumour about the prisoner to suggest that he was an informer. Prisoner IMs were also used to spread suspicion among the inmates. These methods enabled the East German secret police to create an atmosphere of mutual mistrust within the GDR prisons.

THE STATE SECURITY AND THE BORDER

Daniela Münkel

"Despite both considerable internal efforts, as well as measures to secure the state border, there has been a significant increase in border breaches, including several spectacular actions, which endanger society and reflect a willingness on the part of the perpetrators to take great personal risks. Comprehensive exploitation by the opponent's media has caused considerable political damage to the GDR and disrupted our Party's offensive policies."[1] Minister for State Security Erich Mielke made this statement at an official meeting in April 1989. The problem to which he refers – the GDR's inability to keep its citizens in the country – plagued the GDR throughout its existence. The GDR's survival depended on travel restrictions and border controls. Naturally, the Ministry for State Security played an active role in this existentially important security policy. Its decisive influence, however, was not immediately apparent: From the outside it appeared that other agencies were in charge.

Even before the Wall was erected on 13 August 1961, the MfS had been responsible for fulfilling specific tasks within the "border security" system and for preventing "escapes from the Republic". The SED and the Soviets

decided to close the western border in May 1952. At that time, the border police, which until then had been part of the Ministry of Interior, was made subordinate to the MfS. A "police decree" issued by Minister for State Security Wilhelm Zaisser called for the establishment of a "border regime," which remained in place until 1989. It consisted of a five-kilometre-wide "restricted area" that required a special permit for entry. The residents who lived in this area were subjected to special surveillance measures. The area also contained a 500-metre-wide "protective strip," which was controlled by border security forces, and a ten-metre-wide "security strip" (known colloquially as the "death strip") that was situated directly behind the border and off-limits to everyone. This early decree also contained the following "firing order": "Weapons are to be used in response to non-compliance of the border strip directive."[2] Except for the period from July 1953 to March 1955, the border police remained subordinate to the State Security until early 1957, after which it was reintegrated into the Ministry of Interior. After the Wall was erected in 1961, the border police was reestablished as the border troops and made subordinate to the Ministry for National Defence. Regardless of which institutional body was currently in charge of the border security forces, the MfS always remained responsible for their surveillance. And given that border soldiers were continually found to be politically unreliable, this proved to be a particularly important task.

The MfS increased its escape prevention efforts in the mid-1950s in response to the consistently high numbers of escapes that had taken place thus far. It systematically investigated people's reasons for escaping and, by gathering information through mail inspections, tried to hinder West German companies from headhunting in the GDR. In 1960, the SED brashly implemented its policy of forced collectivisation of agriculture. It also exerted pressure on retailers and tradesmen to collectivise. Together these measures put an additional strain on the supply of goods in the GDR and again led to a mass increase in escape attempts.[3] It was primarily

1 Cited in: Matthias Judt (ed.), *DDR-Geschichte in Dokumenten* (Bonn, 1998), p. 480.

2 "Polizeiverordnung über die Einführung einer besonderen Ordnung an der Demarkationslinie v. 26.5.1952", documented by Inge Bennewitz; Rainer Potratz, *Zwangsaussiedlungen an der innerdeutschen Grenze. Analysen und Dokumente* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 231–235.

3 On numbers, see Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Die Berliner Mauer. Monument des Kalten Krieges* (Berlin, 2007), p. 28.

**Building the Wall on
Lindenstrasse after
13 August 1961**
*Bundesbildstelle, B 145
Bild-00103642*

entire network of unofficial collaborators was now focused on preventing escapes. The aim was, among other things, to identify and process "poaching, planned escapes, deficiencies and grievances, along with their causes and ideological ambiguities," and to "control all connections and contacts to West Berlin, West Germany and other foreign countries in the West". When the situation grew increasingly dramatic the following year, Mielke intensified these efforts by establishing an administrative department within the MfS to coordinate escape prevention.[5] The efforts to prevent "escape from the Republic," however, had limited success. Most people were successful in escaping at the border in Berlin, which was still open.

The GDR leadership reacted to this by sealing the border to West Berlin on 13 August 1961 and intensifying the border regime at the border to the West as well. The situation was similar to 1952, except that this time the operation was managed by the MfS, which evicted politically unreliable citizens from their homes and forced them to resettle in a new area (Operation "Consolidation"). It appeared, at first, as if these measures to fortify the border would reduce demands on the secret police's effort to prevent escapes, but the Stasi succeeded in widely expanding its authority in the subsequent period as well. The "hole in the border" in Berlin had been eliminated, but the border to the Federal Republic of Germany was not yet hermetically sealed. The annual number of "border breaches" remained relatively high until 1973, after which escapes declined rapidly, reaching an all-time low of 160 in 1985.[6] Even after the border was closed, in the 1960s and '70s, the MfS continued to focus on preventing "escapes from the republic," and this remained a central and increasingly important aspect of the MfS' work. Surveillance of the border troops by the MfS' Main Department I (military defence) also acquired a more important role within border security. This service unit had had a major influence on cadre recruitment in all military institutions since the 1950s. It had monitored the political, military and moral reliability of both soldiers and officers. The MfS officers in charge of border troop surveillance were assigned to a specific unit and wore the unit's uniform to conceal their

skilled workers and young people who turned their back on the GDR, further exacerbating the already precarious economic and social situation. In May 1960, Erich Mielke reacted by issuing a directive in which he declared "reducing escapes from the republic" to be "one of the most important tasks in building up socialism". He also declared that all employees and work divisions of the MfS were responsible for achieving this goal.[4] The

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4   Anweisung Nr. 1/60 des Ministers für Staatssicherheit v. 4.5.1960; BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok., Nr. 3499, documented in part in Damian von Melis; Henrik Bispinck [eds.]: »*Republikflucht*«. *Flucht und Abwanderung aus der SBZ/DDR 1945 bis 1961* [Munich, 2006], p. 215 ff.

5   Befehl Nr. 302/61 des Ministers für Staatssicherheit v. 8.7.1961; BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok., Nr. 705.
6   See Hertle, *Berliner Mauer*, p. 57.
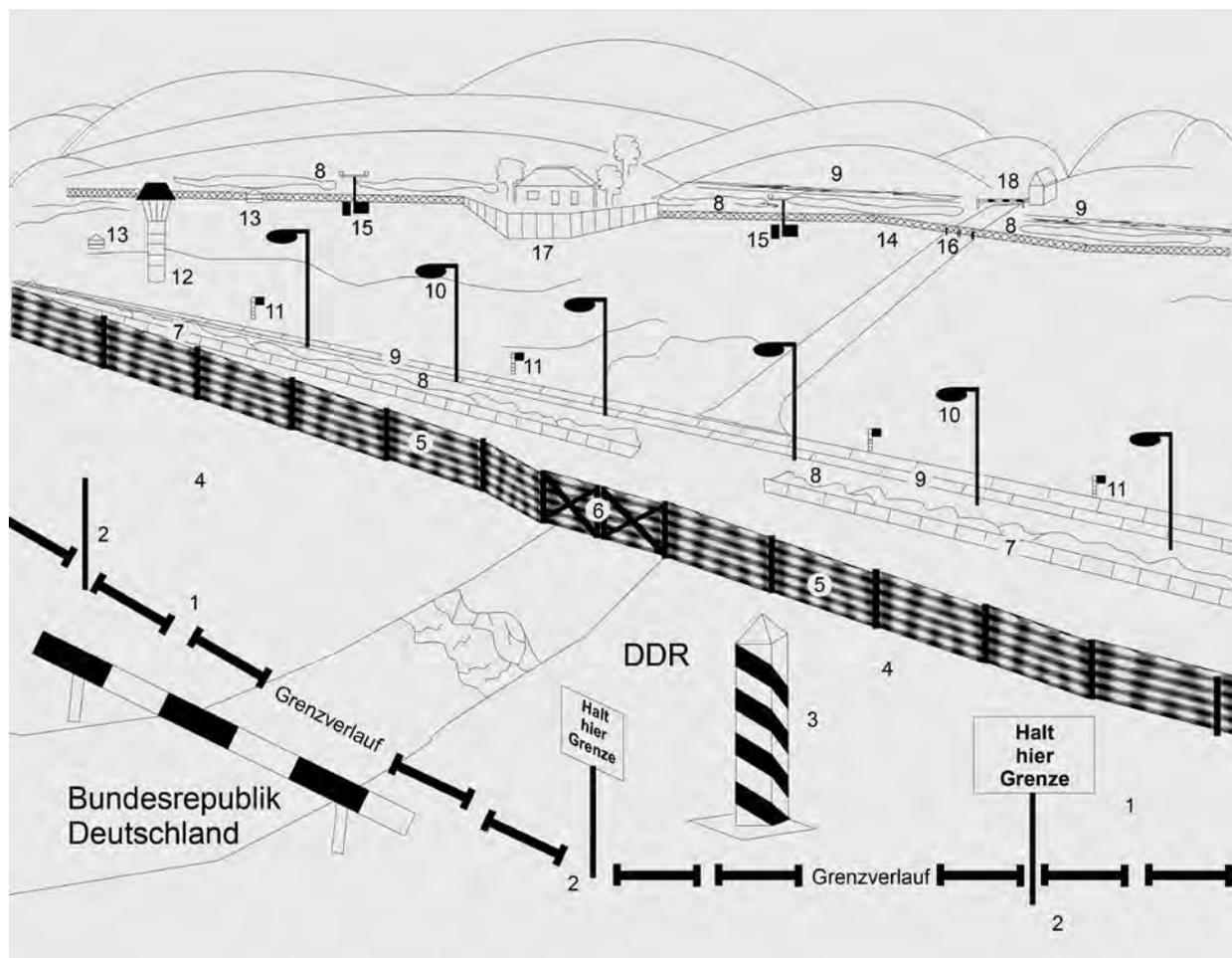
Area between boundary line (1) and checkpoint (18) = restricted area (ø ca. 5 km)
Area between boundary line (1) and "border signal fence"/concrete inner wall (14/17)
= protective strip (ø ca. 100–200 m)

1	Boundary line with boundary markers	10	Light blockers in unclear areas
2	Border warning sign or pole just before the boundary line	11	Connection column for underground cables of border communication system
3	GDR border column (ca. 1.8 m high, black-red-gold with GDR emblem)	12	Concrete observation tower (BT 11)
4	Deforested and cleared land strip	13	Observation bunker
5	Single metal fence (ca. 3.2 m high), equipped with SM 70 spring guns until 1984	14	Border signal fence with electronic and acoustic signal devices
6	Opening in metal fence	15	Power distribution and control unit on the modified protective strip fence
7	Anti-vehicle ditches (reinforced with concrete plates)	16	Gate in protective strip fence with signal wires
8	ca. 6 m or 2 m wide security strip (forensic strip)	17	Concrete inner wall and blocking screens
9	Patrol road with lane marker plates (concrete mesh paving)	18	Checkpoint into restricted area

Sketch of the border forti-
fications between the GDR
and the Federal Republic
of Germany, recon-
structed by the BStU on
the basis of information
from the German Federal
Border Police
BStU

identities as secret police employees. They also ran a dense network of unofficial collaborators within their own troop unit. The ratio of informers to soldiers had been maintained at 1:10 since the 1950s. On average, Main Department I had an IM rate of about 5 % in its entire operational area in the 1980s. It can be assumed that the number of informers in the border troops was even higher.[7]

The precariousness of the "security political" situation within the border security forces is demonstrated best by the period that began just after the Wall was built (13.8.–31.12.1961). During this period, more than 300 border soldiers deserted their ranks and fled the Republic, half of them in Berlin, where the border had just recently been closed.[8] Main Department I faced even greater challenges after the compulsory military service was introduced the following year. Unofficial collaborators had to be recruited from conscripts in advance and soldiers assigned to duty at the border had to be more carefully examined. Deserting border soldiers nevertheless continued to be a major problem for the MfS for many years.[9]

Main Department I of the MfS had maintained a special taskforce within the border troops since 1968 that it used for highly confidential and sensitive operations. Its members, most of whom were graduates recruited from the border troops' non-commissioned officers school, had the status of "full-time unofficial collaborators on a special mission" (HIME). They were assigned both special security and observation tasks as well as undercover military operations at the border. It was members of this unit who shot Michael Gartenschläger when he tried to dismount an SM 70 spring gun at the inner German border in May 1976. But the State Security's responsibility for "border security" was broadly defined and focused primarily on hindering escapes before they took place. Mielke's order of May 1966 "to increase the effectiveness of political operational work to protect the state border"[10] led to a tighter organisation structure and improved coordination with the People's Police, which was officially

7   See, for example, Jens Gieseke, *Der Mielke-Konzern. Die Geschichte der Stasi 1945–1990* (Stuttgart, 2006), p. 140.
8   See Bernd Eisenfeld; Roger Engelmann, *13. August 1961. Fluchtbewegung und Macht-sicherung* (Bremen, 2001), p. 92.
9   See Stephan Wolf, *Hauptabteilung I. NVA und Grenztruppen* (MfS-Handbuch) (Berlin, 1995), p. 69.
10   Befehl Nr. 10/66 des Ministers für Staatssicherheit v. 10.5.1966; BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok., Nr. 1072.

responsible for controlling the territory near the border (outside of the 500-metre "protective strip"). A special "border security" department was established in Main Department VII that was responsible for cooperation with and surveillance of the People's Police department. Its reach extended down the hierarchy to respective special units and sections within the district administration offices and county administration offices near the border.[11]

Thus a dense system of border security developed, consisting of several different bodies: the border troops, who were in charge of border security at the border fortifications and inside the 500-metre protective strip, and who were supported by voluntary helpers; the People's Police, which was responsible for the "depth security" (Tiefensicherung) in the entire area near the border and which also cooperated with voluntary helpers and the State Security; and the State Security, which monitored both the residents in this area, as well as the above-mentioned armed forces, and which also depended on unofficial collaborators. Since the State Security not only cooperated with but also monitored these other two organisations, it adopted a leading and coordinating role and was thus the driving force behind control of the area near the border. This operational area once again received more detailed regulations from Mielke in July 1981 when he announced that "all service units of the MfS [...] bear responsibility for the political-operational security of the state border."

The MfS acquired responsibility for another area of "border security" that had its roots in the period after the Wall was built. In the first months after the border to Berlin was closed, many East Berliners succeeded in reaching West Berlin by using fake or falsified western IDs. Others hid in the empty spaces of vehicles and were smuggled to the West. The office in charge of customs and goods traffic, and also responsible for border checks at that time, was overwhelmed by this problem. The political leadership therefore transferred this responsibility over to the MfS. Beginning in 1964, border checks were conducted solely by the Stasi employees who wore the uniform of the border troops. This work division grew extraordinarily fast over the following years and served as the basis for

11   Dienstanweisung Nr. 10/81 des Ministers für Staatssicherheit v. 4.7.1981; BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok., Nr. 5500.

An MfS employee observes the Autobahn transit road near Magdeburg, ca. 1984
BStU, MfS, HA IX/Fo/1750, Bild 8

Main Department VI, which was founded in 1970 to oversee control of all border traffic.

The prevention of organised escape assistance, which became relevant after the Wall was erected, was implemented almost exclusively through secret police methods and thus the sole domain of the MfS. Department 5 of Main Department XX, which had been responsible for this task from 1964 to 1974, assigned agents to spy on the escape helpers and their organisations in the West. In 1975, this area of responsibility was transferred to another service unit, the Central Coordination Group (ZKG), which was founded that same year to address problems associated with travel between the two Germanys that had increased drastically after the détente policies were introduced and regulating treaties were signed. This new situation created new escape opportunities and led to a sharp increase in escapes in 1972 and 1973. The ZKG was initially supposed to coordinate the effort to stop these escapes from within the MfS, but it was soon confronted with a different and more threatening development: masses

of people were officially applying for permission to emigrate. Beginning in 1977, their numbers rose continually, ultimately reaching 125,000. These numbers show that the closed border and all the efforts to make it impermeable were unsuccessful both in discouraging GDR citizens from leaving the country and in achieving long-term stability of the SED state.

WORK
IN THE WEST

Georg Herbstritt, Elke Stadelmann-Wenz

The Spy in the Chancellery: Myth and Reality

More than anything, the name Günter Guillaume has come to symbolise the success of MfS spying activities in the West.[1] Images of the "chancellery spy" standing at Willy Brandt's side showed the world that the GDR espionage had penetrated the highest echelons of West German power. After Guillaume's identity was exposed, West German Chancellor Brandt resigned from his post, adding to the case's significance. Years before German reunification, a West German secret service expert wrote that, although this may have been the most spectacular case of espionage, it certainly was not the most serious. This was confirmed after the archives opened in 1990. The Guillaume case was, in many ways, typical of the MfS' general espionage work in the West and it was especially symptomatic of the work conducted by Directorate A (HVA-Intelligence), the MfS' foreign espionage department.

1 For more information, see, for example, Georg Herbstritt, *Bundesbürger im Dienst der Westspionage. Eine analytische Studie* (Analysen und Dokumente, 29) (Göttingen 2007); *Der Deutsche Bundestag 1949 bis 1989 in den Akten des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (MfS) der DDR. Gutachten für den Deutschen Bundestag gemäß § 37 (3) des Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetzes* published by the BStU (Berlin, 2013); Daniela Münkel, *Kampagnen, Spione, geheime Kanäle. Die Stasi und Willy Brandt*, 2nd printing (Berlin, 2015).

The MfS' "West work" focused on long-term goals. When the HV A sent Christel and Günter Guillaume to the West in 1956, it did not know how their careers would develop. The couple established their new home in Frankfurt am Main and slowly worked their way up the career ladder in the SPD district of Hessen-Süd. In 1968, Günter Guillaume became a member of the Frankfurt city council. On the recommendation of Georg Leber, then federal transport minister and the Frankfurt SPD's representative in the Bundestag, Guillaume was hired as a chancellery advisor in 1970. In October 1972, he was appointed Willy Brandt's personal advisor, responsible for contact to party and parliamentary groups.

The MfS' patience had paid off and this was not an exception. In the late 1980s, approximately 3,000 West German citizens served as unofficial collaborators for the MfS (West-IMs). Many had been active informers for 15 years or longer and looked back on a decades-long career in espionage. Adolf Kanter of Rheinland-Pfalz probably held the record for the longest "service". MfS files reveal that he had begun collaborating with the forerunner of the MfS' HV A back in 1948. The year 1989 marked his 41st anniversary as an informer. The MfS often used the throng of refugees entering the West to sneak its own agents into West Germany. Sometimes it provided an East German agent with a new West German identity. It was most successful, however, when it took advantage of already-existing family connections. When West German citizens travelled to the GDR to visit relatives, the MfS inconspicuously but systematically examined them to ascertain their suitability as potential West-IMs. Quite a few informers in the West began their careers in spying this way. The West German counterintelligence agencies were generally aware of the GDR's espionage methods, but nevertheless had difficulty discovering and identifying "west agents". As early as 1956, the West Berlin police president had information implicating Günter Guillaume. In December 1969, the West German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (West German domestic intelligence agency) warned against employing Guillaume in the Chancellery. During the hiring process, Chancellery Minister Horst Ehmke questioned Guillaume at length and even confronted him directly with suspicions of espionage. But Guillaume was able to dispel all concerns. It was not until 1973 that the West German federal counterintelligence agency's suspicion was confirmed. Guillaume

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Celebration with the "scouts for peace", Günter and Christel Guillaume after they were released from prison and returned to the GDR, 1981
BStU, MfS, ZAIG/Fo/544, Bild 2

was placed under systematic observation and arrested with his wife in April 1974.

In 1969 the HV A began entering information it received from its agents into a databank called "SIRA" (System der Informationsrecherche der HV A). For the period from 1969 and 1974, the databank contains only 45 information items from "Hansen", Guillaume's codename. Most of the information concerned the SPD's internal affairs, regional politics, negotiations between East and West Germany and trade union issues. The "SIRA" databank does not reveal whether Guillaume reported on Brandt's private life. Forty-five registered data entries over a period of five years is not a lot. Evidently Guillaume exercised restraint in his new position in the chancellery and probably wanted to avoid unnecessary risk. Nevertheless the fact that he reached this position at all was undoubtedly a secret service coup for the MfS. And its "greatest moment" still lay ahead. Even after Guillaume was exposed, the HV A was able to maintain a presence in the chancellery with at least one secretary until 1989. In the end, "IM Fichtel" proved to be a much more useful informer. This was the codename of the HV A's long-standing aforementioned spy Adolf Kanter. As a lobbyist for the Flick company from 1974 to 1981, he had contact to all the political

parties in Bonn and was able to provide the HV A with an annual average of 200 valuable pieces of information from the Bonn political machinery.

The MfS' Spying Activities in the West: Classic Espionage

The Guillaume case represented only one area of the MfS' spying activities in the West. In addition to the political realm, its classic areas of espionage included the economy, the military, and secret services – primarily in the Federal Republic of Germany but also in other western countries – and international organisations such as the NATO. These areas were operated by "West IMs" or by means of signal intelligence, which allowed it to eavesdrop on these areas to an unprecedented degree as part of peacetime espionage. The HV A was regularly informed of internal political procedures, shifts in power and decision-making processes in the Federal Republic of Germany. Economic espionage was, in essence, industrial espionage and technology theft. It acquired greater importance towards the end of the GDR. Whether this information was actually useful to the GDR economy

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Colonel General Markus Wolf (centre) with high-ranking MfS officers at an awards ceremony, 3 October 1983
BStU, MfS, SdM/Fo/36

remains doubtful. When the GDR relied too much on espionage information in the microelectronic industry, for example, it became dependent on western developments. Another difficulty was created by the GDR's rigid secrecy protection doctrine: It isolated its own international development specialists or removed them from their area of specialisation for security reasons, which had its own negative impact on innovation. The HV A was commissioned by the SED's central committee to conduct economic espionage, but it also received assignments directly from GDR combines and businesses. Military espionage also had controversial consequences. It was conducted according to the current military doctrine with the aim of achieving or developing a military advantage. Yet, the knowledge acquired about the opponent's aims and capabilities often had an unintended deescalating effect. The military spies, however, were unaware of how their information was actually used by the political and military leadership.

We know that the HV A played a significant role in all German-German negotiations. It investigated the intentions of the western negotiators in advance and was also covertly represented by several officers and unofficial collaborators in the GDR delegations. This influence extended to the later head of the GDR's Permanent Mission in Bonn, Michael Kohl.

The HV A summarised its espionage findings every day in a brief information sheet which, depending on its content, was forwarded to different people in the SED leadership and GDR government, as well as to the KGB and other communist secret services. The degree to which the GDR leadership was able or willing to apply this information advantage to its policy-making has yet to be researched.

Active Measures

The MfS' espionage activities in the West also included the use of "active measures" and the spread of disinformation to influence public life in the Federal Republic of Germany. The MfS, for example, had a significant influence on the CDU/CSU Bundestag parliamentary group's vote of no confidence against Willy Brandt in 1972. It is believed to have bribed two CDU/CSU representatives – probably with the approval of the GDR leadership – thereby hindering a change in government. The MfS' methods also included publicly discrediting West German politicians by choosing an opportune moment to reveal the transcripts of tapped telephone

conversations, and it undermined confidence in a political trend or insti-tution to limit or eliminate its influence. The MfS' "active measures" also included abductions in the 1950s. In the 1980s the MfS tried to manipu-late the peace movement in the West so that its protest would be focused solely on western armament policies.

"Intelligence and Defence Unity" and the Persecution of GDR Opponents in the West

In general, the MfS followed the principle of "union of intelligence and de-fence". This meant that the HV A cooperated systematically with other MfS service units whose work was focused on internal GDR concerns ("defence" in MfS terminology). It also meant that the MfS was involved in internal repression and that many of the "defence service units" maintained unof-ficial collaborators in the West. Only half of the approximately 3,000 West Germans who spied for the MfS in the West were linked to the HV A. The others belonged to the various "defence service units" and a few spied on behalf of GDR military intelligence within the Ministry of Defence. The HV A cooperated, for example, with other MfS service units in their persecution of Westerners who criticized the GDR or provided escape assistance.

Before the Berlin Wall was built on 13 August 1961, the MfS frequently engaged in kidnappings.[2] Approximately 400 people from the West were abducted to the East and later sentenced to prison in the GDR or Soviet Union; a few were even sentenced to death and executed. Among the ab-duction and execution victims were outspoken critics of the SED system, such as Walter Linse (executed in 1953 in Moscow) and Karl Wilhelm Fricke (imprisoned in the GDR from 1955 to 1959, later released to the West), as well as MfS employees who had fled to the West. They were "retracted" to the East, both for disciplinary reasons and as a deterrent. Markus Wolf, head of the HV A from 1952 to 1986 and long-standing deputy minister for state security, received a two-year suspended sentence in 1997 for his involvement in several cases of kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment and physical abuse.

In the 1970s and '80s, the MfS persecuted former East Germans in the West who openly criticised the SED regime or who had been expatri-ated in an effort to intimidate them and keep them from further voicing their dissent. In the 1980s, for example, the Jena writer and psychologist Jürgen Fuchs was subjected to the MfS' psychological terror and attacks in his new home in West Berlin. West IMs were also commissioned by the MfS to assassinate Westerners who helped people flee to the West. There is court evidence of at least three such attempted murders from later tri-als in the 1990s. The targeted victims survived the attacks – but in some cases just barely.

Secret Service Confrontations during the Cold War

Several different MfS service units were engaged in counterintelligence and counterespionage. The work of Main Department II (HA II) focused explicitly on Western intelligence agencies.[3] The MfS' main opponent was the Gehlen Organisation which became the German Federal Intelligence Service (BND) after April 1956. As part of its "concentrated strikes" policy from 1953 to 1955, Main Department II succeeded in causing consider-able damage to the Gehlen Organisation's espionage efforts. In the early 1950s, the West German intelligence service had begun creating a large network of informants in the GDR who collected and passed on military, economic and political information. With the borders between East and West still open, a war was waged between these secret service agencies that was not limited to espionage and counterespionage – the two sides also exploited the media to achieve their goals.

The aim of the new "concentrated strikes" strategy– which was a re-action to the uprising of 17 June 1953 – was to have regime opponents arrested promptly on charges of having connections to western organisa-tions. These western organisations included the "east offices" operated by West German political parties, the RIAS (the American radio station in West Berlin), the Investigation Committee of Liberal Lawyers, the Task-force against Inhumanity, and the western secret services, such as the

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2   For more information, see Susanne Muhle, *Auftrag: Menschenraub. Entführungen von West-berlinern und Bundesbürgern durch das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der DDR* (Analysen und Dokumente, 42) (Göttingen, 2015).

3   The HA II was created in November 1953 from Departments II and IV. See Hanna Labrenz-Weiß, *Die Hauptabteilung II: Spionageabwehr* (MfS-Handbuch) (Berlin, 1998); Helmut Müller-Enbergs, *Hauptverwaltung A (HV A): Aufgaben. Strukturen. Quellen* (MfS-Handbuch) (Berlin, 2011).

Gehlen Organisation. Several hundred people in the GDR were arrested by the State Security in three carefully planned, large-scale operations: "Fireworks" in 1953, "Arrow" in 1954 and "Lightning" in 1954/55. Most of its targets, not all of whom were GDR citizens, received long prison sentences and some were sentenced to death.[4]

Unofficial collaborators were also assigned to operational cases involving counterintelligence. The State Security was even able to plant its moles in the West German intelligence service offices. Hans-Joachim Geyer, for example, had previously worked for the Gehlen Organisation as a courier and canvasser in the GDR. After his arrest in the GDR in December 1952, he agreed to serve as an unofficial collaborator for the MfS. That spring he was sent by the MfS to West Berlin. Since he could no longer work as courier for the Gehlen Organisation, Geyer was assigned as an office assistant in the West Berlin office "X/9592", officially known as "Filiale Nordland". This position gave him access to all the office's correspondence and personnel files. Geyer worked as a double agent, bringing copies of records to East Berlin bit by bit over the following months. These documents contained the names of the agency's informants in the GDR and also revealed its structure and communication routes. Geyer was pulled out of West Berlin in late October 1953, just as the State Security was embarking on operation "Fireworks". Less than a week later, the GDR presented him to the public at an international press conference as a former agent of the Gehlen Organisation who "deeply regretted his crimes".[5] Other double agents delivered important information as part of the "Arrow" and "Lightning" arrest operations. The MfS conducted comprehensive investigations and trials against suspected and real "enemy agents," both as an instrument of repression and as a disciplinary measure against its own population. In particular, the propagandistic exploitation of these MfS activities reveals a close link between internal repressive mechanisms and counterintelligence activities. Various forms of media were employed to publicly denounce defendants and their families as "enemies of peace". The methods and "tools" used by western intelligence agencies were

Hans-Joachim Geyer, ca. 1961
BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 11553/87, T. I, Bd. 2, p. 68

presented personally by Stasi head Ernst Wollweber at public events.[6] In 1955 the State Security began creating exhibitions to display its "successes" and "superiority" over western intelligence services.

The war between the secret service agencies continued to escalate until the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961. This new situation brought changes that had a fundamental impact on espionage activities on both sides of the Iron Curtain. It became increasingly difficult for both sides to use double agents. The new eastern policies introduced by Willy Brandt in the early 1970s redefined German-German relations. More research is required to determine how these changes also affected the operational practices of eastern and western secret services; it is clear, however, that the GDR's international recognition in the early 1970s led the State Security to expand its areas of counterintelligence: Increased travel between the two Germanys, the East German population's growing desire to travel, the accreditation of Western journalists, the surveillance of the Federal Republic of Germany's newly established Permanent Mission in East Berlin, as well as several newly established Western embassies in East Berlin,

4   See Karl Wilhelm Fricke; Roger Engelmann, *»Konzentrierte Schläge«. Staatssicherheitsaktionen und politische Prozesse in der DDR 1953–1956* [Berlin, 1998].

5   See "Pressekonferenz über amerikanische Agententätigkeit" in *Der Augenzeuge, AZ 47/1953/4. DEFA-Studio für Wochenschau und Dokumentarfilme* [GDR, 1953].

6   See "Neue aufsehenerregende Enthüllungen über die Agenten- und Spionageorganisation Gehlen," Neues Deutschland, Dec. 18, 1953, p. 3; "Prozess gegen Agenten der Spionage-Organisation Gehlen", in D*er Augenzeuge, AZ 1/1954/5. DEFA-Studio für Wochenschau und Dokumentarfilme* [GDR, 1953]; "Im Kampf gegen amerikanische Agenten", Ansprache von Ernst Wollweber, in *Der Augenzeuge, 4/1954/3. DEFA-Studio für Wochenschau und Dokumentarfilme* [GDR, 1954].

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Glienicke Bridge between East and West on 11 February 1986: Soviet dissident Anatoly Shcharansky and three Western spies are exchanged for five Eastern agents.
BStU, ASt Potsdam, AKG 2292, Bild 7

economic contacts and involvement with left-wing extremist groups from West Germany are just a few examples. In the 1980s the MfS exploited the confrontation with the West German intelligence agencies – BND and the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) – especially in regard to the growing opposition movement. It applied its proven strategy of psychological terror by spreading rumours about people to suggest they had contact to the BND. The MfS' aim was to isolate these people within their own social circles.[7]

Summary

From a secret service perspective, the MfS' spying activities against the Federal Republic of Germany were a success. The State Security profited from its combined role as an intelligence agency, secret police and investigative agency with its own prison system. Its military structure, generous budget, aggressive ideological focus, and a lack of parliamentary and public controls gave it an added advantage over the more modestly equipped western counterintelligence agencies. According to the head of the MfS, Minister Erich Mielke, the MfS' work in the West made a "specific contribution to supporting the GDR's policies against the FRG". It can also be viewed as an extension into the West of the SED's efforts to secure its own rule. But distinctions have to be made in evaluating to what extent intelligence and counterintelligence helped stabilize the GDR: The large-scale media campaign against western secret services and the three large waves of arrests in the first half of the 1950s clearly had a stabilizing effect. They also succeeded in limiting the West's future ability to conduct espionage in the GDR. Yet, given the MfS' own aim to have a sustained influence on politics and society in the Federal Republic of Germany, its actual effectiveness was limited. It was not so much institutions and abstract developments that were affected by the MfS. It was specific individuals in the West who suffered the most under the "long arm of the MfS".

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7   Basic research is still required on the period after the Wall was built in order to adequately evaluate MfS counterintelligence.

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HOLT
BIERMANN
IN DIE DDR
ZURÜCK

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**Illegal poster,
November 1976**
*BStU, MfS, AOP,
Nr. 13881/81, p. 7*

**Wolf Biermann's
Expatriation in**

1976

Since 1965, the songwriter Wolf Biermann had been banned from performing publicly in the GDR. The publication of his texts or playing of his songs had been declared illegal. The son of a communist resistance fighter who had opposed the Nazi dictatorship and perished in the Auschwitz concentration camp, Biermann was a bitter disappointment to the SED because he refused to stop speaking the truth about the "comrades as betrayers".

In 1976, the SED sanctimoniously granted him permission to travel to Cologne where he had been invited by trade unionists. SED leaders used his performance, in which he passionately tried to explain the estranged GDR to the West, as a pretence for closing the door behind Biermann and banishing the artist to the West. The State Security had developed several contingency plans in advance so that it would be prepared for any possible backlash.

In 1972, Honecker had stated: "For those whose work is derived from the socialist position, there are no artistic taboos." Five years later, after intellectuals had succeeded in finagling areas of freedom in which they could subtly express criticism, the SED spelled out clearly just what the socialist position was: You shall not mock your rulers in critical songs!

The Politburo and MfS had expected a few people in the opposition to criticise the action taken again Biermann, but they had not anticipated that several prominent and – until then – politically loyal intellectuals would also openly oppose his expulsion. The country was enveloped by an unexpected wave of solidarity with an artist with whom many were not even familiar (his work, after all, had been banned for 11 years). His expatriation disillusioned many who had been generally discontent with the SED's exertion of power, but who were nevertheless convinced that the GDR offered a socialist alternative to capitalism. Whatever support the SED had previously enjoyed from the population was now lost. The unarticulated compromise made between the SED and the population in 1953 – the state would provide for the population sufficiently in return for political calm – unravelled. After 1976, no initiatives were developed by the SED that could have stopped the process of decline. The hourglass had been turned over and the sand had trickled through.

Bernd Florath

THE "COMMERCIAL COORDINATION" DIVISION

Roger Engelmann

On 1 December 1989, angry citizens forced their way into a large warehouse of the Imes Import-Export Company in Kavelstorf near Rostock in the GDR. The building was packed with weapons destined for export. The GDR's involvement in arms trafficking strongly contradicted its official peace rhetoric and the discovery of this arsenal greatly contributed to the SED's rapid decline in legitimacy during that revolutionary autumn.

The Imes Company belonged to the "Commercial Coordination" division (KoKo), a department of the Ministry for Foreign Trade shrouded in secrecy and run by Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski. The press had on occasion reported on its lack of transparency and criminal practices. The day after the arsenal was discovered, Schalck was barred from the SED's Central Committee. He and his wife Sigrid, also a high-level KoKo employee, quickly fled to West Berlin. Schalck was arrested briefly, after which the couple moved to Upper Bavaria. Questioning by the BND, criminal proceedings and a parliamentary investigation committee were carried out in an effort to shed light on the KoKo's activities. The subject lent itself to myths and conspiracy theories, but serious research has since been conducted on KoKo, a conglomeration of institutions and companies that worked to generate hard currency outside the framework of the GDR's planned economy. Hard foreign currency had become very desirable due to the U.S. military law no. 53 of 1949, which required all normal inner-German trade transactions to be conducted in so-called accounting units. KoKo also became involved in the illegal procurement of embargoed goods.[1]

The history of KoKo is inseparably linked to Schalck-Golodkowski. Schalck had been the "wunderkind" of the GDR Ministry for Foreign Trade. At the age of twenty, the trained precision mechanic was hired by the ministry as an administrator. He was sent by the ministry to study at the College of Foreign Trade in Staaken, west of Berlin, and, in 1957, after completing his studies, he was appointed ministry division head. Two years later, at the age of 27, he became head of Main Department for Heavy Machinery and Plant Engineering. He served as the official 1st secretary of the SED district leadership in the Department of Foreign Trade from 1962 to 1966. It was in this position that – through the SED's "party companies" in West Germany – he first became involved in the task of acquiring hard currency.

It was Schalck who first suggested creating the Commercial Coordination division. The idea was for the Foreign Trade Ministry to establish an umbrella structure to oversee various activities and companies involved in generating hard currency in "unconventional" ways. Schalck believed if these different activities were systematically coordinated, their revenues would increase greatly. In late 1965, he expressed his ideas to the SED Politburo member Hermann Matern, who was in charge of the SED's "party companies" in the West. Shortly thereafter, Schalck also spoke with the SED's economic expert Günter Mittag, who was open to innovative ideas at the time and who became a member of the Politburo in 1966. Schalck evidently did not try to conceal his hopes of being put in charge of this new division. He had support from within the Ministry for State Security from Hans Fruck, the influential deputy head of HV A (foreign espionage), and from Heinz Volpert, Mielke's man for special tasks. In 1970 Schalck and Volpert wrote a joint dissertation at the MfS College in Potsdam-Eiche on the subject of generating hard currency. Both Fruck and Volpert

1   Especially Matthias Judt, *Der Bereich Kommerzielle Koordinierung. Das DDR-Wirtschaftsimperium des Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski – Mythos und Realität* [Berlin, 2013]. The dates and numbers cited in this text are primarily based on this study.

knew Schalck from the Leipzig Trade Fairs, where Fruck's MfS staff played an important role.[2] Ulbricht approved the plan and, on 1 April 1966, the Council of Ministers authorized the creation of what would later be called the "Commercial Coordination" division. The minister for foreign trade and inner-German trade was asked to appoint an "authorised representative" who could guarantee the "unified management" of the foreign trade companies "Zentralkommerz", "Intrac", "Transinter" and "Intershop". The goal was "to generate the maximum amount of capitalist value outside of the state plan".[3] The "authorised representative" would also be responsible for overseeing "church business", which referred to financial transactions made between the East German church and the West German church. It also included the deals to release GDR prisoners against payment from the West, which were organised by the Diakonische Werk, a charitable organisation run by the Protestant Church of (West) Germany (EKD). The new KoKo division was also put in charge of the "F. C. Gerlach" and "G. Simon" (later Camet) private foreign trade companies, which were linked to the HV A and which were actively involved in procuring embargoed goods. The new division head was also explicitly authorised to "sporadically use funds from State Reserves B to generate additional hard currency",[4] in other words, to speculate on the world market exchanges with certain goods.

Schalck-Golodkowski informally ran the Commercial Coordination division as it was being created. The MfS officer Horst Roigk became the official acting director after it was officially established on 1 October 1966, but he retreated to the sidelines to become Schalck's deputy after Schalck was formally appointed director. Roigk would soon return to his former position within Main Department XVIII, which was responsible for "securing the national economy". On 15 October 1966, the MfS designated Schalck-Golodkowski an "officer on special assignment" (OibE) with the rank of first lieutenant. This corresponded with the GDR's security policies since the KoKo division was involved in several politically delicate

Erich Mielke awards Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski the "Medal for Weapons Brotherhood" at the completion of the MfS hospital in Berlin-Buch, 1980
BStU, MfS, SdM/Fo/238, Bild 1

assignments. Now there was nothing standing in the way of Schalck officially taking charge. The Council of Ministers' confirmation came on 7 December 1966 and was linked to the appointment of a deputy minister. Schalck's old friend Heinz Volpert, who at the time was nominal deputy head of Main Department XX, was assigned to be his MfS supervisor. Volpert's main responsibility, however, was dealing with delicate, "special tasks" that came directly from Mielke, such as the release of prisoners to the West for payment. A new group of OibEs, most of whom were linked to Volpert, were introduced to all the KoKo operations that were marked classified. Manfred Seidel, who replaced Roigk as Schalck's deputy, also came from Department 7 of the MfS' Main Department XVIII, which was in charge of "securing" foreign trade and where he had served as deputy department head. At KoKo he headed Main Department I, which handled especially delicate operations, in this case embargo deals, antique sales and the provision of "western goods" to the Politburo's residential estate in Wandlitz. In 1983, an independent "commercial coordination workgroup" (AG BKK) headed by Wolfram Meinel was established within the MfS and run by Deputy Minister Rudi Mittig's office. It took over the respective

2   See Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, *Deutsch-deutsche Erinnerungen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 2000), pp. 137–140.
3   "Verfügung Nr. 61/66 des Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates der DDR, 1.4.1966", documented in *Deutscher Bundestag, 12. Wahlperiode*, Drucksache 12/3462, pp. 55–57.
4   Ibid.

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**GDR foreign trade
minister Gerhard Beil,
SED Politburo member
Günter Mittag and Koko
chief Alexander Schalck-
Golodkowski (left to
right) in a meeting with
the president of the West
German Association of
Industry and Commerce
(DIHT), Hans-Peter Stihl,
29 June 1989**
*BArch, Bild 183-1989-
0619-029, Settnik*

security and surveillance tasks of HA XVIII/7 as well as responsibility for Volpert's OibEs within KoKo.[5]

Despite the strong presence of MfS officers – in 1989 almost 20 percent of KoKo's staff had this status – it would be wrong to portray KoKo as a mere branch of the MfS. Institutionally, the sector was a structural unit in the Foreign Trade Ministry and its principle duties were of an economic nature. In November 1976, Schalck, who had advanced to state secretary, answered directly to Günter Mittag, the SED Politburo member in charge of economic affairs. Schalck-Golodkowski, who had been promoted to MfS colonel in 1975, also had to answer directly to the Minister for State Security concerning all security and operational tasks that arose at KoKo. In this respect, the Commercial Coordination division was subordinate to three different supervisors. In the 1980s, when Schalck-Golodkowski was conducting political negotiations for Germany, he became accountable to

a fourth authority: SED General Secretary Erich Honecker. Schalck became a full member of the SED Central Committee in 1986.

The complex network of KoKo companies was not transparent to outsiders. Its largest and economically most significant enterprise was the "Intrac Handelsgesellschaft mbH", a company founded in 1964. It generated foreign currency primarily through the sale of mineral oil products and other raw materials it had purchased using money derived from the sale of prisoners. Waste disposal also played an increasingly important role in Intrac's financial accounts. Initially, the company was only involved in importing refuse from West Berlin, but by the 1980s, it was also importing large quantities of special (toxic) waste from the Federal Republic of Germany and other western countries. A waste disposal site established near Schönberg (Grevesmühlen district) solely to handle imported refuse, continues to be an environmental hazard today. Intrac succeeded in making 12.5 billion West German marks from 1967 to 1989. The "Zentralkommerz GmbH", founded in 1962, was even older and dealt primarily in agricultural products. The "Intershop GmbH", also founded in 1962, was a subsidiary of "Zentralkommerz". It ran the first of the hard currency shops established in border security areas, such as the Friedrichstrasse train station in Berlin; in Rostock, where it catered to western seamen; and in Leipzig, where it catered to western visitors attending the trade fair. By 1966, just shortly after KoKo was founded, 240 Intershops had been established. After restrictions were eased on travel between the two Germanys in the early 1970s, Intershops became one of KoKo's most lucrative foreign currency businesses. The Intershop trade grew further in 1974 when GDR citizens were also allowed to make purchases there with foreign currency. In the early 1970s, the "Zentralkommerz GmbH" adopted a pioneering role in securing loans from West Germany, which became crucial in generating foreign currency in the 1980s. Zentralkommerz was integrated into the Intrac GmbH in 1976, when the Intershop business was merged with Forum GmbH, one of KoKo's new companies. The foreign currency shops grossed almost 9 billion West German marks between 1971 and 1989. In the following years, the Transinter GmbH, which was founded in 1966 – the same year the KoKo division was established – was able to secure contracts with most western companies doing business in the GDR with state-run companies, and it charged a provision for its services.

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5   On the relationship between KoKo and the MfS, see Reinhard Buthmann, *Die Arbeitsgruppe Bereich Kommerzielle Koordinierung* (MfS-Handbuch) (Berlin, 2003).

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Weapons stash of KoKo's Imes Company in Kavelstorf near Rostock, shortly after it was discovered on 2 December 1989

Fotoagentur Nordlicht

Through these business practices, it was able to bring in 3.7 billion West German marks between 1969 and 1983.

A special role was played by the "Genex GmbH," a mail order company founded in 1956 to sell goods that were hard to obtain or unavailable in the GDR for hard currency. The company belonged to the SED and was therefore not subordinate to the Commercial Coordination division, but KoKo provided "trade-policy" guidance. Genex was initially used to provide East German church parishes with goods paid for by the West German Church. Later, citizens of West Germany were also able to use the mail order company to send coveted goods to their relatives in the GDR. In the 1980s, Genex even offered motorcycles, cars, trailers and prefabricated houses. The company sold 3.4 billion West German marks worth of goods between 1966 and 1989.

KoKo also oversaw a number of smaller private companies with front men posing as business owners. These included the SED's "party companies" in the West, which helped finance the DKP [West German Communist Party] party apparatus and the SED's covert political activities. It also included various business enterprises associated with the HV A [F. C. Gerlach, Camet, Asimex, Interport], which were foremost involved in the acquisition of embargoed goods. The "Kunst und Antiquitäten GmbH", an art and antiques company founded in 1973 in East Berlin, was involved in dubious business practices that either skirted the law or manipulated the GDR regulations pertaining to the export of cultural assets. The state used arbitrary tax audits and tax fraud penal proceedings against art dealers and collectors to take possession of art objects and antiques that could later be sold to the West through the KoKo company. The art and antiques company evidently worked closely with both the GDR financial agencies and with MfS offices.[6] The arms deals made by Imes, a company founded by Koko in 1981, are ethically highly problematic. The arsenal, which was discovered in December 1989 and led to Schalck's fleeing the GDR, belonged to the Imes Company. This company's unscrupulous business practices are most obvious in 1982/83, when the GDR delivered arms to both sides in the Iran-Iraq war. These arms deals were conducted through the Imes Company [and another company that did not belong to KoKo]. The Imes Company grossed 700 million West German marks; the "Kunst und Antiquitäten GmbH" brought in 300 million West German marks, and these constituted Koko's smaller business areas. KoKo's companies amassed a total of 28 billion West German marks from 1967 to 1989, money the country used to compensate for the various deficits in its planned economy. In the end, however, even the Commercial Coordination division could not hinder the economic collapse of the GDR.

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6   See Ulf Bischof, *Die Kunst und Antiquitäten GmbH im Bereich Kommerzielle Koordinierung* [Berlin, 2003].

PAYING FOR THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS FROM THE GDR

Jan Philipp Wölbern

Between 1963 and 1989, the Federal Republic of Germany paid for the release of 33,000 political prisoners from GDR prisons. These individuals had been arrested for alleged or actual espionage, resistance and oppositional activities, providing escape assistance, attempting to escape or applying to emigrate; some received long prison sentences.[1] The West German government also paid for 215,000 GDR emigration permits, which allowed family members to be reunited in the West. Together this amounted to 3.4 billion German marks (DM) that West Germany paid to the GDR. The deals in which the GDR agreed to release political prisoners against payment from the West were conducted in strict secrecy. They continued for more than 25 years because they served the interests of both countries: The Federal Republic was able to help German political victims in the GDR and the SED regime profited economically while weakening the opposition movement in the GDR. Erich Mielke, minister for state security, explained in a speech in 1987, "Naturally, we are not foolish enough to fill our prisons

with a bunch of freeloaders that we have no use for. So why shouldn't we drive them out? I'll tell you this: I am thinking about the economic good of our republic!"[2]

The sale of prisoners was negotiated by two Berlin lawyers: Wolfgang Vogel from East Berlin and Jürgen Stange from WestBerlin. They had both, through private negotiations, succeeded in getting political prisoners released for money in 1962. Other lawyers had achieved this in other cases as well. In spring 1963 they signalled to the Federal Republic of Germany that the GDR was willing to release other prisoners if the West was willing to pay. Supported by Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (CDU), Rainer Barzel (CDU), minister of all-German affairs at the time, agreed to their offer. The GDR released eight prisoners by late 1963 for which the West German government paid 205,000 DM in cash. The cash payments took a circuitous path before finding their way to a bank account of the State Security in East Berlin.

Negotiations continued in 1964 when it was agreed that the GDR would release an additional 884 prisoners, many of whom had been sentenced to life, for 37 million DM. The Protestant and Catholic Churches supported the West German government by delivering goods to the GDR in value equal to the agreed payment. The West hoped that, by providing goods instead of cash, the population and not the SED regime would benefit from such deals. The two sides continued to negotiate similar arrangements for the release of prisoners until 1989.

The "special efforts in the humanitarian sector," the official term used to describe the deals to release prisoners and reunite families, was handled by the Federal Ministry for All-German Issues, which became the Ministry for German-German Relations (BMB) in 1969. The legal protection office, a law firm financed by the BMB, also collected data about political prisoners held in the GDR. The BMB used this information to create detailed "wish lists," which the lawyers Vogel and Stange passed on to GDR officials.

The Ministry for State Security carried out the "prisoner action" or "prisoner transfer" on behalf of the SED. Erich Mielke received the political

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1   For detailed information on this, see Jan Philipp Wölbern, *Der Häftlingsfreikauf aus der DDR 1962/63–1989. Zwischen Menschenhandel und humanitären Aktionen* (Analysen und Dokumente, 38) (Göttingen 2014).

2   Redebeitrag Erich Mielkes auf der MfS-Dienstbesprechung v. 12.2.1987; BStU, MfS, ZAIG, Tb 47 rot 1.

Interzonenhandel ... aus eigener Produktion, unbeschränkt lieferbar.

Cartoon in the *Sonntags-blatt*: Wolle, 13 February 1966
Sammlung Jupp-Wolter im HdG

Erich Mielke honouring Stasi officer Heinz Volpert for his handling of the sale of prisoners
BStU, MfS, BdL/Fo/0230

directives directly from the SED general secretary Walter Ulbricht, later Erich Honecker, both of whom treated the issue as a top priority and tended to the business personally. Mielke put Colonel Heinz Volpert in charge of the coordination and practical implementation of all necessary measures. Volpert was also the liaison officer of attorney Vogel, who was registered as a secret collaborator (GM, a precursor to IM) with the MfS under the alias "Georg". Volpert checked the names on West Germany's wish list and determined whether or not to follow through on the release. His decision was made based on criteria such as the amount of prison time served, the severity of the offense and what negative consequences such a release and emigration to the West might have on the East. Negotiations were often long and arduous, but once an agreement was reached about a group of prisoners, the GDR public prosecutor was instructed by the MfS to petition the court to have the sentence commuted to parole.

In the beginning, the deals were restricted to prisoners serving more than five years. The negotiations continued under Herbert Wehner (SPD), minister for all-German issues from 1966 to 1969, and also included prisoners serving shorter sentences. There was an increase in the number of prisoners released, but the "price tag" also changed. A set price of 40,000 DM had been agreed on in the beginning, but three new categories were added by the end of 1969: 10,000 DM for the release of a prisoner to the West after the entire sentence had been served; 20,000 DM when only three months of the sentence remained; and 80,000 DM for prisoners with a very long sentence. Wehner's successor, Egon Franke (SPD, minister from 1969 to 1982), continued this course, but he also agreed to a special payment of up to 200,000 DM per prisoner for "serious cases".

In the 1960s, about 40 percent of the ransomed prisoners – more than 2,000 people – remained in the GDR instead of being released to the West. In many cases, the GDR did not give prisoners a choice in deciding their destination when they were released. In fact, they were often not even aware of the circumstances that had led to their release. Thus, many "chose" to return to their relatives in the GDR without ever knowing that money had been paid for their release. The MfS also duped the West German government by creating "phantom cases," which allowed them to charge the West for prisoners who had already been set free. The West was easily deceived because its information about prisoners was often

Two buses transporting released prisoners across the Wartha/Herleshausen border in summer 1977
© *brunkfoto / giessen*

incomplete and impossible to verify. The sale of prisoners continued even after the Basic Treaty was signed with the GDR in 1972. After the détente policies were introduced, the GDR began to make concessions and henceforth all ransomed prisoners were allowed to emigrate to the West. The number of prisoners being released for money began to rise again: before 1973, less than 1,000 releases were made per year on average, but, beginning in 1974, with one exception, the number of releases was higher. To avoid conflict over the amount of money to be paid, the negotiators agreed on a single lump sum of 95,847 DM.

In 1982, when a new government came to power (CDU/CSU-FDP) under West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the GDR began arresting large numbers of people who had applied to emigrate. The West began to suspect that the MfS was intentionally arresting these people in order to sell them to the West. From the West's point of view, the prisoner release program, which it had conceived of as an aid measure, was threatening to become an unintentional collaboration with the SED. Although the West German government protested to attorney Vogel, it continued to buy the freedom of more than 4,900 prisoners in 1984 and 1985. In spring 1989, the West German federal government changed its course, deciding to pay only for prisoners who had been imprisoned for an attempted escape.

The sale of prisoners brought the GDR significant economic returns, which is one reason why it continued for so long. The goods were initially delivered directly to the GDR, but in 1968 Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski arranged to have the goods converted into foreign currency through the "Commercial Coordination" division in the GDR Foreign Trade Ministry. By 1974, more than 96 percent of the money "raised" through the sale of prisoners and reunion of family members went into a bank account of the Deutsche Handelsbank in East Berlin. The GDR Finance Ministry used almost 77 percent of these funds (3.48 billion DM) to offset the country's debt. Thus, the sale of prisoners also helped the heavily indebted GDR ensure its solvency to its western creditors.

The GDR demanded from the start that the negotiations be conducted in secret and that the West German media not publicise them. It threatened to break off negotiations if these conditions were not met. Under no circumstances should the public, especially in the East, know that the regime was running a flourishing business in human trafficking. The GDR media was not informed about it and the West German government was initially able to convince the press that, in the interest of continuing the deals, it should refrain from reporting on it. But in 1972, information about the prisoner deals began to reach the public. Until 1989, the prisoner sales were reported on regularly in newspapers and on television, to which GDR citizens also had access. Human rights organisations and even communist parties in Western Europe sharply condemned the SED for these practices. Although this angered the SED regime, it did not stop it from selling prisoners. It was only a matter of time before the sale of political prisoners eventually became known of in the GDR as well. In a few extreme cases, people who had applied to emigrate even provoked their own arrests in the hope that the Federal Republic would pay for their release to the West.

Between 1963 and 1989, there were 87,000 political verdicts in the GDR and 33,000 prisoner sales. Thus approximately every third political prisoner was ransomed during this period. MfS documents show that large numbers of political prisoners had been concentrated in prison facilities in Cottbus (men) and Stollberg in the Ore Mountains (women) since the 1960s. When a release was negotiated, the agreed-upon prisoners were transferred by the MfS to the MfS remand prison in Karl-Marx-Stadt (Chemnitz). This prison, with space for 370 inmates, was the largest of

its kind in the GDR and able to accommodate several hundred prisoners. After the prisoners gave up their GDR citizenship, were expropriated or accepted payment obligations, they were released and driven by coach to the reception camp in Giessen by the Arthur Reichert Transport Company of Hanau. The journey along the transit route (today's Bundesautobahn 4), especially the moment of crossing the border into the Federal Republic of Germany, was a highly emotional experience for many prisoners. Once the former political prisoners arrived in Giessen, they went through an emergency reception procedure after which they were given the "refugee identification card C," a status which entitled them to receive special social benefits and integration aid in the West. They were distributed throughout West Germany on the basis of a formula and had to adjust to completely new surroundings. Although most succeeded in setting up a new life, quite a few failed. Many former political prisoners continue to suffer from the long-term psychological effects of their imprisonment.

How should we assess these prisoner sales? They helped liberate many prisoners from a horrible situation and most of them continue to be very grateful to the Federal Republic of Germany for its help. By paying for their release, West Germany was able to pursue its goal of ameliorating the suffering caused by Germany's division and the GDR dictatorship. Although the SED benefitted financially from the sale of prisoners, it discredited itself morally. By releasing its own citizens to the "class enemies" in the West, "the better Germany" continually violated its own principles. This lowered the motivation of Party and MfS employees, which also contributed to the countries internal demise and erosion. This is one of the reasons why the Peaceful Revolution in autumn 1989 was so successful.

THE FINAL PHASE OF THE MFS

Walter Süß

Although MfS analysts were aware of the growing discontent in the population and the critical international situation, the State Security was nevertheless caught off guard by the momentum of the autumn revolution. Liberalisation processes in Hungary, Poland and, in particular, the Soviet Union had already created challenges that were making cooperation with these countries difficult for the GDR, which seemed unclear how best to handle the situation. There was a growing fear that similar trends might spread to the SED. The MfS was less concerned about the growing civil-rights movement, which it regarded as a marginal phenomenon that could be kept under control. The Stasi leadership was convinced that this movement was being steered by the "West," and that the West's interest was to gradually "soften" things, not cause a revolutionary upheaval.

From the Stasi's perspective, the greatest problem it faced in late summer 1989 was the masses of GDR citizens fleeing across Hungary's recently opened border. The SED leadership demanded that the State Security take measures to address the problem without aggravating the situation further by limiting regular tourism. This turned out to be an impossible task. All efforts to restrain the growing public anger were futile.

The police use water cannons against the demonstrators at the main station in Dresden on 4 October 1989
BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, OD TU, H 5137, p. 8, Bild 34

Police and Stasi in front of the Palace of the Republic push back demonstrators in Berlin on 7 October 1989
BStU, MfS, HA XX/Fo/1021, Bild 9

The situation escalated in late September and during the GDR's official 40th anniversary celebration on October 7, when GDR citizens who had yet to draw the Stasi's attention joined a protest demonstration with civil-rights activists and those demanding their right to emigrate. The MfS was unable to control this rebellion using repressive measures as Honecker had demanded. The People's Police and State Security tried to take action in Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin, but there was reluctance, especially within the State Security, to intervene with force, for fear that this might cause the movement to spread to the factory workers.

The MfS leadership believed that a change of leadership in the SED was the only solution, which is why Mielke supported the overthrow of Honecker. After Honecker was replaced by Egon Krenz, the SED leaders hoped to secure their power by avoiding open repression and by reclaiming the political initiative. The State Security agreed with this course of action and used its own methods to contribute to the plan: it monitored civil-rights organisations and used unofficial collaborators to infiltrate their groups. These informers were supposed to intervene in their social circles to prevent a radicalisation of the movement. The State Security employees were in charge of maintaining security at SED-organised events and hindering opposition spokespersons from making appearances. All of these plans failed. When it became obvious that the SED was not able to control the situation through political means, the heads of the State Security, Ministry of Interior and the ZK's security department discussed declaring a state of emergency. But the SED's Politburo refused to even take this option into consideration.

The Stasi leadership was at a loss about how to handle the crisis. The signs of disintegration manifested themselves in early November 1989, when the minister for state security ordered MfS employees to begin removing documents from county administration offices. It was feared that demonstrators might storm the offices, causing the files to fall into the wrong hands. This was the moment when the State Security switched into "self-protection" mode: Employees were ordered to bring important documents from the smaller offices to the district administration offices, where they could be better protected. It was at this point that the MfS began destroying massive amounts of documents. It was an attempt to cover up its past, but it was also extinguishing the agency's recorded memory, and its

use of information as a weapon. The regional service units, responsible for the supervision of more than half of all MfS informers, broke off contact to most of them. The State Security could no longer rely on its most important instrument.

The next shock came when the Berlin Wall fell. MfS employees were as surprised by this as the rest of the population. The chaotic circumstances under which the border had been opened deeply unsettled members of
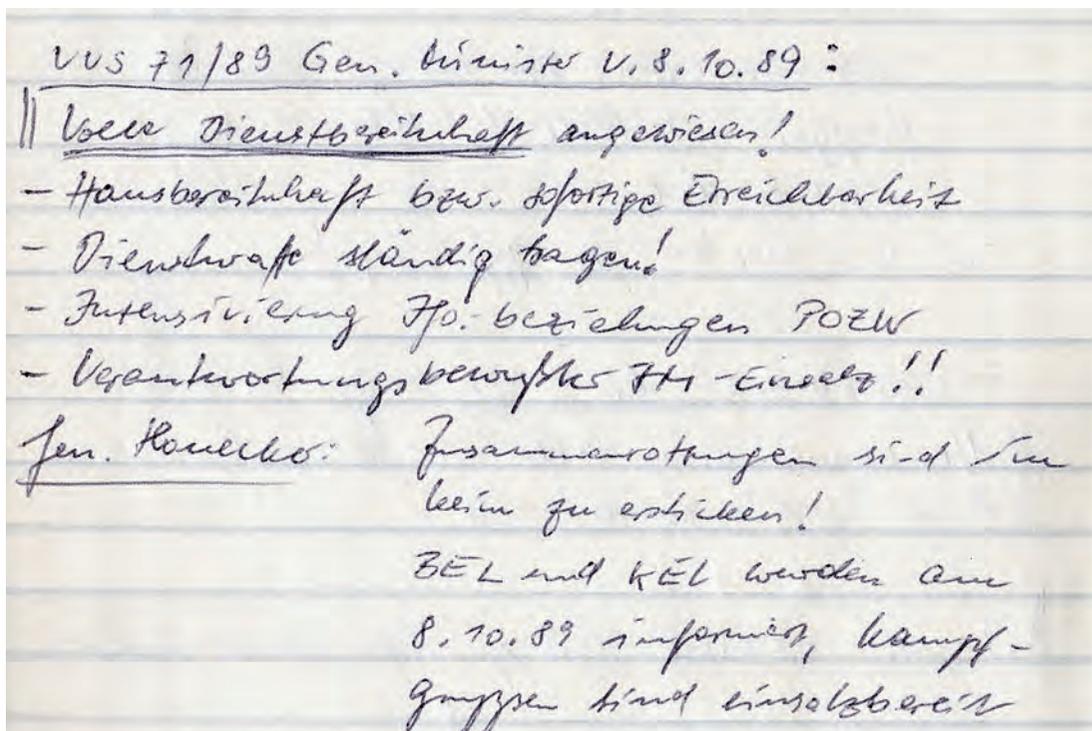
the security agencies. To them, the open border meant an immediate loss of power since their potential victims were now able to elude the authorities. Rumblings could be heard within the State Security: MfS employees were frustrated by the hamstrung party leadership. Low-level employees felt deserted by their generals, who could neither identify past mistakes, nor say how things were to proceed. Conflicts erupted between the Berlin headquarters and the regional administration offices in the counties and districts. The mood hit an all-time low when Erich Mielke, who had

resigned along with the entire cabinet just a week earlier, made his last appearance before the *Volkskammer*, the East German parliament, on 13 November. His helpless attempt to justify himself with his declaration "But I love everyone", evoked shame and anger in his inferiors. The failure of their own leader became the main topic of discussion in the State Security.

In connection with the election of a new government in the *Volkskammer* session on 17 and 18 November 1989, the Ministry for State Security was renamed the Office for National Security [AfNS]. Wolfgang Schwanitz was appointed director of the AfNS. Whereas Mielke, as minister for state security, had been subordinate to the chairman of the National Defence Council and thus de facto to the SED general secretary, Schwanitz had to answer to the chairman of the Council of Ministers. The government declaration demanded "new ways of thinking with regard to public order and security", and it made clear that this applied to the AfNS as well. The government also planned to reduce the size of the apparatus. The specifics were to be regulated in a law that was proposed but never passed.

On the day of his appointment, the new AfNS director informed the State Security employees that he expected them to support the "process of revolutionary renewal" without reservation. Commissions were established to organise the restructuring of the agency and the service units were invited to make their own suggestions. It was an attempt on behalf of the old team of generals to introduce a technocratic reform. It was

announced that 10 per cent of the staff would be cut; two weeks later a 50 per cent reduction was declared. The former "enemy concept" was no longer valid, and "dissenters" were now to be tolerated. The employees were to continue fighting "enemies of the constitution", but now that the constitution itself was up for discussion, it remained unclear exactly who fell into this last category. A number of the agency's work provisions were annulled. At the same time MfS employees continued to destroy files and "deactivated" many of their unofficial collaborators. Official employees became increasingly insecure and their motivation diminished.

The revolutionary upheaval accelerated in early December: On 1 December the *Volkskammer*, which was undergoing a political awakening, abolished the SED's "leading role" from the constitution. The SED Politburo resigned on 3 December and angry citizens occupied the county and district administration offices of the AfNS on 4 and 5 December. The Stasi employees did not try to resist or use violence – most of them recognised the futility of it. The AfNS council stepped down on 5 December and the heads of most of the main departments and district administration officers for national security were discharged over the following days. On 7 December the Central Round Table demanded the dissolution of the AfNS – with the support of the SED delegates. On 14 December the Council of Ministers resolved to dissolve the AfNS. The ministry and its 91,000 employees were to be replaced by a much smaller bureau of investigation (Verfassungsschutz) with approximately 10,000 employees and an intelligence service with ca. 4,000 employees, which would closely resemble the previous espionage department, Main Administration A. It was decided that no former leaders of the State Security would continue working for the "Verfassungsschutz": the "gradual dissolution of the AfNS" was to continue and the directors of the old apparatus would be phased out. This ambivalence served to reinforce a general mistrust and calls grew louder for the total dissolution of the secret police.

As the plans to establish a new governmental intelligence agency became known, a new wave of protest broke out. The plans were fiercely debated at the Central Round Table. Even the coalition government seemed on the brink of collapse. Finally, on 13 January 1990, the Council of Ministers decided that the AfNS would be eliminated without replacement. This decision was backed by action two days later when civil-rights activist, on

the initiative of regional citizens committees, occupied the Stasi headquarters in Berlin-Lichtenberg. On 8 February, the Council of Ministers, which had been expanded to include members of the civil-rights movement as "ministers without an operations area", appointed three civilian government officials, including two representatives of the Central Round Table, to oversee the dissolution of the State Security. A national "committee to dissolve the former AfNS", consisting of both former Stasi members and civil-rights activists, was also established at this time.

An order was issued on 12 January to "deactivate" the last of the unofficial collaborators. The first official MfS employees had been dismissed in November, but the majority, almost 60,000 employees, were still working for the AfNS on 15 January. Now, 22,500 of them were to be transferred to other state offices. But things turned out differently: the entire staff was discharged by 31 March 1990. An exception was made for 200 employees of Main Administration A. The espionage department, which had been allowed to oversee its own dissolution, was granted an additional three months to complete its work. A second exception was made for "Stasi Officers on Special Mission", who had worked undercover as civilians in the state apparatus and the economy. It took until autumn 1990 for them to be exposed and discharged in a process that was accompanied by intense political conflict.

The hourglass had emptied. The buildings were decaying and production faltered. The SED leaders continued to praise the stultifying stagnancy as if it were a success. Hope seemed only to exist beyond the border: The West provided freedom and prosperity; the East offered reform and upheaval, known as Glasnost and Perestroika in the Soviet Union. The SED warded off these tendencies at its borders, but Solidarność won the election in Poland, and designated the head of government. Hungary welcomed democracy and opened its borders. Thousands of East Germans used the opening in the Iron Curtain to flee to the Federal Republic of Germany.

The MfS watched powerlessly as these events unfurled. Its iron fist had lost its potency. As more people left the country, the opposition movement expressed more resolutely its demands for reform in the GDR. Horrified, Mielke asked his generals on 31 August 1989: "Are we to have another 17th of June tomorrow?"

A number of associations were founded by the opposition movement in September. The New Forum, Democracy Now, Unified Left, Democratic Awakening, and the Social Democratic Party gave a voice and organisational structure to the growing desire for change: "The time has come!" A hundred, then a thousand people took to the streets to protest against the SED rulers. On 7 October, Mielke unleashed the State Security and police on the demonstrators in Berlin. Many people were arrested and subjected to humiliating treatment. A breakthrough was finally achieved on 9 October when 70,000 demonstrators gathered in Leipzig and the

rulers no longer dared to use force. The SED was forced to pull back. Honecker stepped down on 17 October; the Politburo, government and Erich Mielke resigned on 7 November; the Wall fell on 9 November; and on 1 December the *Volkskammer* eradicated the "SED'S leading role" from the constitution.

The MfS was also forced to back down. First, it tried to reinvent itself by changing its name to the Office for National Security. Its employees frantically destroyed the evidence of its crimes. In December citizens occupied the former State Security's offices until the government promised the Round Table that the secret police would be dissolved.

On 18 March 1990, after forty years of dictatorship, the citizens of the GDR voted for their first freely elected parliament. This was not a gift. They had fought for and won their struggle for freedom.

Bernd Florath

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With 70,000 people demonstrating on 9 October in Leipzig, the SED no longer dared to use force to stop the protest.
Bundesbildstelle, Bild-Nr. 334474

SAFEGUARDING THE STASI FILES AND MAKING THEM PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE

Roger Engelmann

In mid-October of the autumn revolution of 1989, demonstrators began focusing more strongly on the role of the State Security. As a response to this, on 6 November the minister for state security, Erich Mielke, ordered the destruction of official directives in the county administration offices and the transfer of sensitive operational files to the higher-level district administration offices. There was also talk a few days later of destroying documents that "were no longer operationally significant [...] to the future political operational work".[1] Evidence shows that MfS employees began destroying files in the Berlin headquarters around this time as well. Most of the records selected for destruction concerned postal inspections and telephone wiretapping measures, which were illegal in the GDR, as well as records about unofficial collaborators (IMs). On 22 November, just one day after Wolfgang Schwanitz began in his position as director of the recently renamed Office for National Security (AfNS, formerly the MfS), he stated that "in order to protect the sources and confidentiality of specific operational methods", all material not "required for the future" was to be

destroyed.[2] This proved to be a very ambiguous order that gave his staff a freehand to eliminate all kinds of records. Soon thereafter, the MfS headquarters' "church department" (HA XX/4) began destroying highly sensitive IM files.[3]

It was soon evident to ordinary citizens that large amounts of documents were being destroyed in the MfS offices. An AfNS employee even openly admitted this in a radio interview on 4 December. The public expressed concern that the Stasi was covering up its crimes. That same day courageous citizens obtained access to several Stasi offices and by the following evening, 5 December, almost all the district administration offices had been occupied. Public prosecutors were called in to seal off safes and offices. In a first effort to safeguard the files, citizens' committees established a "security partnership" with the public prosecutors' office and the People's Police. Views differ as to how effective they were, but on all accounts, the AfNS leadership's plan to continue destroying files under these new conditions failed. The Council of Ministers' resolution of 7 December had to be retracted following protests by the citizens' committees.

The power structures of the SED state broke down rapidly in the weeks after the Stasi offices were occupied. The Central Round Table acted as a counterbalance to the government and it was agreed that the AfNS should be dissolved. Then, on 15 January 1990, citizens also occupied the MfS headquarters in Berlin.

In the beginning opinions differed, even among members of the citizens' committees, about how to deal with the safeguarded files.[4] In mid-February 1990, the Schwerin citizens' committee presented its own graduated plan for destroying the records. In Berlin the destruction of (mostly less significant) documents continued until June – in part with the approval of the citizens' committee. Two of the most important resolutions were

1   Cited in Walter Süß, *Staatssicherheit am Ende. Warum es den Mächtigen nicht gelang, 1989 eine Revolution zu verhindern* (Berlin, 1999), p. 555.

2   Ibid., p. 559.
3   On the destruction of files and safeguarding measures taken by the citizens' movement, see ibid., pp. 554–739, and Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Endspiel. Die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR* (Munich 2009), pp. 500–520. A more compact presentation in Tobias Hollitzer, "Die Bürgerkomitees. Besetzung und Auflösung der Stasi-Zentralen. Eine Reflexion der Ereignisse", *Horch und Guck* 9 (2000) 29, pp.1–13.
4   For more on this, see Christian Booß, "Von der Stasi-Erstürmung zur Aktenöffnung. Konflikte und Kompromisse im Vorfeld der Deutschen Einheit", *Deutschland Archiv* 44 (2011) 1, pp. 79–87.

After the take-over of the Stasi headquarters on Normannenstrasse in Berlin-Lichtenberg, Stasi employees are required to have their bags checked, 16 January 1990
BArch, Bild 183-1990-0116-015, Uhlemann

Civil-rights activists find evidence of destroyed files in the Stasi buildings in Rostock and Waldeck, 4 December 1989
photo: Siegfried Wittenburg

passed by the Central Round Table and its security taskforce on 19 and 23 February 1990. The first resolution concerned the destruction of the Stasi's electronic data files, while the second granted the HV A [foreign espionage] the authority to dissolve itself, a decision which led to the almost total destruction of the department's files. The fear that data could fall into the "wrong hands" had played a role in both resolutions. Despite these losses, the MfS files are extraordinarily well preserved.

There was a long controversial debate over how to regulate use of the files.[5] A resolution passed by the Central Round Table on 22 January 1990 ultimately formed the basis of later regulations. It called for the establishment of a central research centre and memorial site on Stalinism, where the MfS records could be made available for research and criminal prosecution and accessible to individuals wishing to view files that concerned them personally. The resolution, however, had no practical

consequences – in fact, initially, the political will seemed to lean in the opposition direction. Six weeks later, the Central Round Table's security taskforce presented its final report in which it recommended that all MfS files on specific individuals be destroyed. Material that did not concern individuals, however, was to be made available to the public as soon as possible. Given the general structure of the MfS files, this kind of selective destruction would have proved highly problematic, if not unfeasible; it was basically impossible to separate the material about individuals from the non-personal matter. The final decision on the fate of the files was left to the *Volkskammer*, the East German parliament that had been elected in free elections less than a week earlier, on 18 March 1990. As the *Volkskammer* elections were taking place, the public became increasingly sensitised to the issues concerning the Stasi: Certain people who now occupied high positions in the re-established or newly-founded democratic parties, such as Wolfgang Schnur [chairman of the Democratic Awakening], Martin Kirchner [general secretary of the CDU], and Ibrahim Böhme [chairman of the SPD in the GDR], were exposed as former unofficial collaborators during this time.

Civil-rights activists spoke out on behalf of preserving the files and making them accessible – despite the risks this entailed. It became clear that the MfS records could serve as important evidence in rehabilitation cases and that the GDR population had a strong interest in having all the MfS' scheming methods revealed. According to a survey conducted by Spiegel magazine in April 1990, 86 per cent of GDR citizens supported the

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5   On this discussion and the legislative process, see Silke Schumann, *Vernichten oder Offenlegen? Zur Entstehung des Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetzes. Eine Dokumentation der öffentlichen Debatte 1990/1991* [Berlin, 1995].

victims' right to see their own files. Growing numbers of people felt that an intense and comprehensive confrontation with the past was a prerequisite for a truly new beginning. This view had been expressed in the spring of 1990 by Wolfgang Templin from the Peace and Human Rights Initiative, the author Lutz Rathenow, and Joachim Gauck, a representative of the political party "Alliance 90" in the *Volkskammer*.

A "*Volkskammer* Special Committee" was established on 21 June 1990 under the chairmanship of Joachim Gauck to oversee the dissolution of the MfS/AfNS. The committee, which consisted of 11 delegates and 16 representatives from citizens' committees, had a strong influence on the wording of the Stasi Files Act later passed by the GDR parliament. It was thanks to this committee that the initial, rather scanty text drafted by the government was fundamentally revised and expanded. In it, the right to information, which was modelled after the Federal Republic of Germany's data protection law, was granted to all citizens who had been personally affected by the MfS. The original draft intended to restrict this right to people who were able to show credibly that they had suffered severe damage. The revised *Volkskammer* law, however, was not as far-reaching as the Stasi Records Act, which was passed at the end of 1991 and which included a general right to everyone to view their own personal files. The *Volkskammer* law had forbid using personal data from the MfS files for intelligence-related purposes. It had limited the use of this kind of information to criminal investigations of very serious crimes (such as murder or manslaughter) that had not been prosecuted in the GDR on the basis of the valid existing laws at that time. Moreover, it authorized use of the Stasi records as part of a legally regulated security check, or when "politically relevant" reasons existed, to verify whether a person had acted officially or unofficially on behalf of the MfS. The *Volkskammer* law also allowed the records, including a relatively broad use of personal data, to be used for scholarly purposes.

Unlike the later Stasi Records Act (StUG) of December 1991, the *Volkskammer* law had called for the MfS files to be stored and administered under a decentralized system. This would have entailed entrusting the new states in the former GDR with the custody of the State Security's files from the district administration offices. The special commissioner appointed by the *Volkskammer* would have been responsible solely for the MfS central

archive in Berlin. This decision was based on a fear that East Germans might lose all access to the MfS records after unification if the Federal Ministry of Interior were to have complete authority over the MfS files. There was also a general mistrust of centralized structures in the East.

That these fears were not totally unfounded became clear as the *Volkskammer* was deliberating the law on 24 August 1990. A telex sent by the [West German] Federal Ministry of Interior on 21 August strongly objected to the draft law. The Federal Republic of Germany was especially opposed to the decentralised administration of the files. It reiterated the importance of "a differentiated regulation of destruction" and suggested that the president of the federal archives be considered as future special commissioner for the Stasi Records. That the unification treaty, which had been almost fully negotiated by this time, did not call for the *Volkskammer* law to be adopted into Federal Republic law sparked outrage in the GDR. On 30 August, the *Volkskammer* requested that the DDR government renegotiate the unification treaty and a compromise was subsequently agreed upon: the future special commissioner for the Stasi files would be appointed by the people in the GDR. The files were to be stored and administered centrally under the jurisdiction of the federal government, but would remain on the territory of the former GDR. It was also agreed that the principles of the *Volkskammer* law would be taken into consideration in the future legislation of unified Germany. Despite these concessions, civil-rights activists occupied the former Stasi headquarters on Normannenstrasse on 4 September. Demonstrators, including well-known figures such as Bärbel Bohley, Jürgen Fuchs, and Wolf Biermann, began a hunger strike, which drew considerable media attention. The unification treaty was renegotiated once more and further concessions were made by the West German government. A supplementary agreement stipulated that the principles of the *Volkskammer* law would be taken into account "extensively" in the future legislation of a unified Germany and that a decentralised storage of the files would be taken into consideration. The *Volkskammer* strongly supported Joachim Gauck, the GDR Council of Minister's proposed candidate for special commissioner, and he was appointed by the federal government on the day of reunification. The provisional rules governing the use of the Stasi records were passed soon thereafter, limiting their use to purposes of restitution and rehabilitation,

Joachim Gauck, chairman of the *Volkskammer* committee to oversee the dissolution of the Stasi (left), and songwriter Wolf Biermann (centre) in the former Stasi headquarters on the day of the "second occupation", 4 September 1990
BArch, Bild 183-1990-0906-405, Hartmut Reiche

to examining whether parliament members and public servants had collaborated with the Stasi, and to prosecute the crimes of the MfS and other serious crimes committed against the state.

The Stasi Records Act (StUG in short), which the united Bundestag took over a year to pass, called for much broader access to the files than the *Volkskammer* had intended. People affected by Stasi measures were granted the unlimited right to view their files and were also allowed to have the real names of the unofficial collaborators in their files revealed to them. To determine whether someone had cooperated with the MfS, the StUG allowed for all civil service and church employees to be vetted against the records, even without their consent. It also granted access rights for criminal prosecution and for research and media purposes.

Although the law entered unexplored legislative territory, it was found to be surprisingly balanced and practical. Amendments that were added later addressed mostly marginal concerns. Thus, it can be rightly claimed that the Bundestag achieved a great political triumph when it passed the Stasi Records Act in December 1991. This was demonstrated by the unexpected numbers of citizens, government offices, researchers, and publicists who took advantage of the rights granted by the StUG. The German effort to address its past also became a model for other countries engaging in historic reappraisal.

USING STASI FILES FOR CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

Günter Bormann

The opening of the Stasi files raised high expectations. Many hoped the records would provide information about functionaries' personal gains, abuses of power, violations of the law as well as the general system of organised repression. Criminal prosecution began even before the free elections for the *Volkskammer* were held on 18 March 1990, and probes were initiated by the criminal investigation agencies of the GDR. The initial investigations soon proved typical of the general system of injustice in the GDR: electoral fraud, abuse of office, corruption, and the use of force against peaceful demonstrators in October 1989 in Berlin.

After the *Volkskammer* was elected and a commissioner was appointed to oversee the Stasi records, the MfS documents were made available for criminal investigations. The *Volkskammer* law on the use of Stasi records limited personal access to the documents to people who had been politically persecuted by the Stasi; however, it provided a broad foundation for allowing public prosecutors, courts and government agencies to use the records for criminal prosecution, rehabilitation, cassation and restitution proceedings. But the *Volkskammer* law was not adopted into the unification treaty as a valid GDR law that should remain in effect, a controversial decision that led to protests and a second occupation of the Stasi

headquarters. A compromise was subsequently reached that stipulated that the special commissioners' "provisional regulations" would apply until new legal provisions could be established. For this interim period, the files were made available to determine whether elected officials had cooperated with the Stasi and to prosecute criminals. When the Stasi Records Act took effect in December 1991 and the Stasi Records Agency (BStU) – a government agency with more than 3,300 employees – was established, a comprehensive legal and organisational basis was created to regulate the use of the Stasi files, including their use for criminal prosecution.

Numbers of petitions submitted to the Federal Commissioner requesting access to MfS records for criminal prosecution:

Year	Requests
1991	no data
1992	28,653
1993	32,983
1994	28,650
1995	24,399
1996	24,889
1997	17,302
1998	20,229
1999	15,421
2000	8,166
2001	4,792
2002	3,235
2003	4,711
2004	1,919
2005	2,078
2006–2010	2,193
2011–2014	1,466

By 2000, most criminal offenses had fallen under the statute of limitations. The subsequent decrease in requests is reflected in the chart above. According to the Federal Commissioner, most investigations concerned cases of spying (on West German citizens), assault, manslaughter

and murder, perversion of justice, breach of domestic peace, and coercion. Unfortunately, the data cannot be broken down according to specific crimes, but a few things can be said about the following crime categories:

Stasi Files and General Crime

Although public attention focused primarily on the system of injustice in the GDR, it should not be forgotten that the criminal prosecution of general crimes in reunified Germany also relied on the State Security files. Here too, the "hypotrophy" of the Stasi system becomes evident – the Ministry for State Security investigated many serious crimes. Officially, however, serious crimes were not supposed to exist under socialism since class society and its accompanying discrepancies – the proclaimed cause of such crimes – were supposedly non-existent. Hence, for ideological reasons, serious offenses were also a matter of state (security). Citizens in the GDR often felt safe because serious crimes were handled by the Ministry for State Security and kept secret from the public. The MfS also stored a large amount of judiciary files as information data – even when it had not been in charge of the criminal proceedings.

Although it was never discussed publicly, right-wing extremism and xenophobia were strongly prevalent in the GDR. The State Security was aware of this and prosecuted such activities. Its files contain important information on this subject that became useful later. Here, too, the documents reveal the State Security's distorted view of the origins of social problems in the GDR: according to the ruling ideology, the only way to explain the existence of right-wing extremism in the GDR was to blame Western influence.

Stasi Files and Terrorism

The State Security not only tolerated West German RAF terrorists, it also supported them passively by allowing them to enter and travel freely through the GDR. Moreover, the GDR made it possible for terrorists to start a new life under a new name in the GDR. This came to light when the Stasi files were made accessible. Documents provided important information about the whereabouts and new identities of terrorists who had gone into hiding in the GDR.

Sketch of route to "Object 74", where the MfS and RAF members practiced using weapons of war
BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 264/91, Bd. 1, p. 32

The Stasi records also show that the State Security's support extended not only to liberation movements but to terrorist groups as well. They show, for example, that the MfS tolerated and supported the "La Belle assassination" in Berlin 1986 as well as the terrorist named Carlos. This information strongly undermined the State Security's claim that it was a supporter of legitimate liberation movements and a guarantor of world peace.

Spying for the GDR on the territory of the FRG

Stasi documents served as the basis for intense investigations that public prosecutors conducted on MfS espionage activities in the West, including spying on the secret services of the Federal Republic of Germany and other countries in the Western world. It can be assumed that through these investigations, the agent network and foreign activity structures of the State Security, including its foreign espionage department (HV A), were completely exposed.[1] Unfortunately, this achievement was not widely acknowledged by the public. One reason for this might be the late return of the Rosenholz Files by the United States. (These files were the HV A's electronic central register of persons, which had mysteriously survived the mass destruction of HV A files and resurfaced in the U.S.) The Federal Commissioner did not acquire them until 2003. It was thus falsely assumed that crucial information was still lacking when in fact, the opposite was true: Many crimes were successfully prosecuted and the BStU began publishing important publications on this topic in 1993.[2]

Stasi Files and Deaths at the Border

The Stasi files were indispensable to investigations of crimes committed at the border. The State Security not only reported in detail on fatal incidents that occurred at the border, it also documented the measures it took to conceal these deaths. The records of the State Security and those

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1   See Joachim Lampe, *Juristische Aufarbeitung der Westspionage des MfS*, 3rd printing (Berlin, 2002).

2   A good overview is presented, for example, by Georg Herbstritt, *Bundesbürger im Dienst der DDR-Spionage. Eine analytische Studie* (Analysen und Dokumente, 29) (Göttingen, 2007); *Der Deutsche Bundestag 1949 bis 1989 in den Akten des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (MfS) der DDR. Gutachten für den Deutschen Bundestag gemäß § 37 (3) des Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetzes*, published by the BStU (Berlin, 2013). The BStU research was able to use not only the Rosenholz files and Stasi records, but also the extensive documents of the Federal Public Prosecutor.

of former "brother organisations" were also essential in solving other cases, such as unidentified bodies found in the Baltic Sea or deaths at the Bulgarian border. These investigations, however, faced major judicial difficulties. A fundamental problem in the criminal prosecution of the GDR system of injustice was that, according to GDR law, when a border soldier tried to stop someone from crossing the border illegally, he was preventing a crime and thus acting lawfully. Given the prohibition against the retroactive application of laws not valid at the time of the crime, verdicts could only be reached in exceptional cases when it could be proven that a border guard purposefully took action that went beyond the requirements of GDR law. It was quite clear that the GDR border regime represented a serious violation of basic human rights and the GDR leaders were aware of this as well. This is why the command hierarchy was left intentionally vague, confidentiality was a priority, and the public was not informed. To ensure secrecy, people who were injured at the border were taken clandestinely to special designated hospitals, even though this created an additional health hazard to the injured person. In the end this meant that everyone involved – from the border soldier to the responsible Politburo member – had to answer to criminal charges and could not use GDR regulations or orders in his defence.[3]

Stasi Files and National Socialist Crimes

The MfS archive also contained a large number of documents from the Nazi era. Over the years, the MfS took great effort to systematically collect Nazi documents in Germany and Eastern Europe. After 1989, investigative agencies submitted more than 500 petitions to the BStU requesting access to these Nazi records. Not surprisingly, major proceedings were not instituted because too much time had passed since the crimes had taken place. This is one reason for a critical assessment of the State Security's use of these documents until 1989. Henry Leide, a BStU researcher, has pointed out in his studies that the MfS was not actually interested in

Mielke and Honecker run into each other again at the start of the Politburo Trial on 12 November 1992 in the Berlin District Court
picture-alliance/dpa, Bild-Nr. 2014295, photo: Wolfgang Kumm

criminally prosecuting Nazi perpetrators.[4] Although a few Nazi perpetrators were indicted in high-publicity trials in the GDR, the main purpose of these trials was to convey a positive impression of the GDR's criminal prosecution of Nazis. The trials and their results were carefully staged to create a strong contrast to similar trials taking place in the Federal Republic of Germany. The State Security was mostly interested in using the Nazi documents for its operative work, thereby assuring that the prosecution of Nazi crimes was not carried out thoroughly. The Nazi documents were used primarily as propaganda material in the ideological conflict between the two German states, as material to blackmail individuals in public life or to put pressure on former Nazi perpetrators to agree to cooperate with the MfS.

Stasi Files and the Criminal Prosecution of GDR Injustice

"The criminal prosecution of GDR injustice is finished. All relevant investigative and judicial proceedings were completed by 2005. The absolute

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3   On criminal prosecution of the border guards who fired fatal shots at the Berlin Wall, see Hans-Hermann Hertle; Marie Nooke, [eds.], *Die Todesopfer an der Berliner Mauer 1961–1989. Ein biographisches Handbuch* [Berlin, 2009].

4   Henry Leide, NS-Verbrecher und Staatssicherheit. *Die geheime Vergangenheitspolitik der DDR* [Analysen und Dokumente, 28] [Göttingen, 2006].

Markus Wolf (centre) on 20 May 1997 with his wife Andrea and his lawyers Wolf Römmig (left) and Johann Schwenn on their way to the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court
picture-alliance/dpa, Bild-Nr. 2544139, photo: Uta Rademacher

statute of limitations on all crimes except murder took effect as of 3 October 2000 and hence new proceedings are not to be expected."[5]

Now we arrive at a topic that sparked strong public interest. At first glance, the results of criminal prosecution of the GDR system of injustice are disappointing: After reunification, 75,000 investigative proceedings were initiated against 100,000 people accused of crimes in the GDR (excluding espionage). Following the investigations, 1,021 trials were conducted against 1,737 defendants. Only 43 per cent of the trials ended with a verdict (753 individuals were indicted). These are clearly sobering results of criminal prosecution of GDR injustice, which covered a broad range of crimes including violent acts on the German-German border, election fraud, perversion of justice, denunciation, MfS crimes, prisoner mistreatment, doping, abuse of office, corruption, and economic crimes. The results demonstrate that a "victor's justice" did not take place here. The prohibition against the retroactive application of laws not valid at the time of the crime as a constitutional principle meant that provisions could not be applied post-factum. Thus after the transitional process between

the two legal systems was completed, it was agreed that an act committed in the GDR could only be penalized if it had been a crime according to East German law and could also be persecuted according to the law in reunified Germany. It is important to note that although the judiciary paid scrupulous attention to the rule of law in the proceedings, it was nevertheless able to bring to light several important issues. Significantly, political responsibility for the border regime was prosecuted all the way up to the nomenclature.

Stasi Files and Legal Rehabilitation and Restitution

It is worth remembering that there were two sides to criminal prosecution of GDR injustices: The prosecution of perpetrators, who were tried for crimes committed in the GDR, and restitution for injustices committed against victims. After reunification, thousands of victims, who had been unfairly convicted by the GDR judiciary, had to be rehabilitated. Despite the challenges, the judiciary did an exemplary job in this regard and in many cases the Stasi records were the only evidence available. This stands in strong contrast to the long time it took West Germany to lift Nazi verdicts after the war. In evaluating the success of criminal prosecution as a whole, it is important to consider the victims: In many cases, the Stasi files formed an essential basis for awarding legal restitution to victims of judicial crimes in the GDR through cassation proceedings, annulment of unfair verdicts, and compensation proceedings. The Federal Commissioner received 496,895 requests to use the Stasi documents for the purpose of rehabilitation and restitution.[6] The Stasi files were essential to criminal prosecution of GDR crimes and they continue to be important for future historical research and civic education.

5   Klaus Marxen; Gerhard Wehrle; Petra Schäfter, *Die Strafverfolgung von DDR-Unrecht. Fakten und Zahlen* (Berlin, 2007), p. 7.

6   According to the 12th activity report, see *Zwölfter Tätigkeitsbericht des Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik für die Jahre 2013 und 2014* (Berlin, 2015), p. 101.

APPENDIX

Abbreviations

AfNS	Office for National Security	
	[Amt für Nationale Sicherheit]	
AG	Workgroup	
	[Arbeitsgruppe]	
AGM	Minister's Workgroup	
	[Arbeitsgruppe des Ministers]	
AKG	Evaluation and Control Group	
	[Auswertungs- und Kontrollgruppe]	
ANC	African National Congress	
AOibE	Archived File of an Officer on Special Assignment	
	[Archivierte Akte eines Offiziers im besonderen Einsatz]	
AOP	Archived Operational Procedure	
	[Archivierter Operativer Vorgang]	
AS	General Subject File	
	[Allgemeine Sachablage]	
BArch	Federal Archives	
	[Bundesarchiv]	
BdL	Office of the Leadership	
	[Büro der Leitung]	
BFC	Berlin Football Club	
	[Berliner Fußballclub]	
BKK	Commercial Coordination Division	
	[Bereich Kommerzielle Koordinierung]	
BMB	Ministry for German-German Relations	
	[Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen]	
BND	Federal Intelligence Service	
	[Bundesnachrichtendienst]	
BStU	Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former GDR	
	[Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR]	
BV	District Administration Office of the MfS	
	[Bezirksverwaltung]	
CDU	Christian Democratic Union of Germany	
	[Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands]	
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union	

CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe [today OSCE]	
ČSSR	Czechoslovak Socialist Republic	
	[Československá Socialistická Republika]	
CSU	Christian Social Union	
	[Christlich-Soziale Union]	
DEFA	German Film Company	
	[Deutsche Film AG]	
DKP	German Communist Party	
	[Deutsche Kommunistische Partei]	
DM	German Mark	
	[Deutsche Mark]	
EDV	Data Processing	
	[Elektronische Datenverarbeitung]	
EKD	Protestant Church of Germany	
	[Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland]	
FC	Football Club	
	[Fußballclub]	
FIM	IM Supervisor	
	[Führungs-IM]	
FDJ	Free German Youth	
	[Freie Deutsche Jugend]	
FDP	Free Democratic Party	
	[Freie Demokratische Partei]	
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany	
	[Bundesrepublik Deutschland]	
Genex	Gift and Small Export Company	
	[Geschenkdienst- und Kleinexporte GmbH]	
GDR	German Democratic Republic	
	[Deutsche Demokratische Republik]	
GmbH	Limited Liability Company	
	[Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung]	
GMS	Societal Collaborators for Security	
	[Gesellschaftlicher Mitarbeiter für Sicherheit]	
GRU	Soviet Military Intelligence Agency	
	[Glawnoje Raswedywatelnoje Uprawlenije]	

HA	Main Department	
	[Hauptabteilung]	
HIME	Full-time Unofficial Collaborators on Special Mission	
	[Hauptamtlicher Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter im besonderen	
	Einsatz]	
HSV	Hamburg Sports Association	
	[Hamburger Sportverein]	
HV A	Directorate A	
	[Hauptverwaltung A]	
IM	Unofficial Collaborator	
	[Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter]	
IMB	Unofficial Collaborator with Contact to the Enemy	
	[Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter mit Feindberührung]	
IME	Unofficial Collaborator on Special Mission	
	[Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter im besonderen Einsatz]	
IMK	Unofficial Collaborator to Secure Conspiracy	
	[Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter zur Sicherung der Konspiration]	
ISH	International Union of Seamen and Harbour Workers	
KD	County Administration Office of the MfS	
	[Kreisdienststelle]	
KGB	Committee for State Security	
	[Komitet Gosudarstwennoj Besopasnosti]	
KL	County Leadership of the SED	
	[Kreisleitung]	
KJVD	Communist Youth Association of Germany	
	[Kommunistischer Jugendverband Deutschlands]	
KoKo	Commercial Coordination [division within the GDR Ministry	
	of Foreign Trade]	
	[Kommerzielle Koordinierung]	
Komintern	Communist International	
	[Kommunistische Internationale]	
KPD	Communist Party of Germany	
	[Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands]	
MdI	Ministry of Interior	
	[Ministerium des Innern]	
MfS	Ministry for State Security	

	[Ministerium für Staatssicherheit]	
MGB	Soviet Ministry of State Security	
	[Ministerstwo Gosudarstwennoj Besopasnosti]	
MWD	Soviet Ministry of Interior	
	[Ministerstwo Wnutrennych Del]	
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	
NS	National Socialism, National Socialist	
	[Nationalsozialismus, nationalsozialistisch]	
NVA	National People's Army	
	[Nationale Volksarmee]	
NVR	National Defence Council	
	[Nationaler Verteidigungsrat]	
OD	On-Site Administration Offices of the MfS	
	[Objektdienststelle]	
OibE	Officer on Special Assignment	
	[Offizier im besonderen Einsatz]	
RAF	Red Army Faction	
	[Rote Armee Fraktion]	
RFB	Alliance of Red Front Fighters	
	[Rotfrontkämpferbund]	
RIAS	Radio in the American Sector [of West Berlin]	
	[Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor]	
SBZ	Soviet Occupation Zone	
	[Sowjetische Besatzungszone]	
SdM	Secretariat of the Minister	
	[Sekretariat des Ministers]	
SED	Socialist Unity Party of Germany	
	[Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands]	
SIRA	HV A Information Research System	
	[System der Informationsrecherche der HV A]	
SM	Fragmentation Mine	
	[Splittermine]	
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany	
	[Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands]	
StGB	Criminal Code	
	[Strafgesetzbuch]	

StPO	Code of Criminal Procedure [Strafprozessordnung]	
StUG	Stasi Records Act [Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz]	
SV	Sports Association [Sportverein]	
SWAPO	South West African People's Organization	
TU	Technical University [Technische Universität]	
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics	
UKW	Ultra Short Wave [Ultrakurzwelle]	
UNO	United Nations Organization	
V-Leute	Police Contacts [Verbindungs-Leute]	
VP	People's Police [Volkspolizei]	
WR	Guard Regiment of the MfS [Wachregiment]	
ZAIG	Central Evaluation and Information Group [Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe]	
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union	
ZIG	Central Information Group [Zentrale Informationsgruppe]	
ZKG	Central Coordination Group [Zentrale Koordinierungsgruppe]	
ZK	Central Committee [Zentralkomitee]	
ZMA	Central Material Filing [Zentrale Materialablage]	
ZOV	Central Operational Procedure [Zentraler Operativer Vorgang]	

MfS District Administrations Offices and Administration Offices 1989

Territorial division of the MfS in 1989:
15 district administration offices, 209 county administration offices and 7 on-site administration offices

■ District administration office
● County administration office [Berlin: 11 county administration offices]
● On-site administration offices

Organisation Chart of the Ministry for State Security, 1989

Minister for State Security
General of the Army Erich Mielke
Member of the Politburo

Council

SED Party County Organisation
in the MfS Berlin
1st Secretary
Major General Horst Felber

Minister of State
Colonel General Rudi Mittig

Minister of State
Lieutenant General Gerhard Neiber

Minister of State
Lieutenant General
Wolfgang Schwanitz

Minister of State
Colonel General Werner Großmann

Heads of the 15 District
Administration Offices

Secretariat to the Minister
Major General Hans Carlsohn

HA II
Counterintelligence
Lieutenant General Günther Kratsch

Dept. M
Postal Inspection
Major General Rudi Strobel

HA IX
Investigative Agency
Major General Rolf Fister

Dept. X
International Contacts
Major General Willi Damm

Dept. XIV
Remand, Prison Regime
Colonel Siegfried Rataizick

Dept. 26
Telephone Surveillance
Major General Olaf Leben

AGM
Minister's Workgroup
Major General Erich Rümmler

Guard Regiment
Major General Manfred Döhring

BdL
Office of the Leadership
Major General Egon Ludwig

Central Management Office
of SV Dynamo
Major General Heinz Pommer

Dept. Finance
Major General Werner Hennig

HA KuSch
Cadre and Training
Lieutenant General Günter Möller

JHS
MfS School of Law
Major General Willi Opitz

ZMD
Central Medical Services
Major General Klaus-Wolfgang Klein

HA PS
Personal Security, Support
Lieutenant General Günter Wolf

ZAIG
Central Evaluation and
Information Group
Lieutenant General Werner Irmler

Dept. XII
Central Data/Storage
Colonel Heinz Roth

Dept. XIII
Central Data Processing Centre
Colonel Gunar Hartling

Legal Office
Colonel Udo Lemme

Secretariat to the Deputy
Lieutenant Colonel Gerhard Scherf

HA XVIII
Securing the National Economy
Lieutenant General Alfred Kleine

HA XIX
Traffic, Post, Communication
Major General Edgar Braun

HA XX
State Apparatus, Culture, Church,
Underground
Lieutenant General Paul Kienberg

AG BKK
Commercial Coordination Division
Colonel Karl-Heinz Herbrich

AG E
Operative Technology
Lieutenant Colonel Hermann Petrich

VRD
Behind the Lines Services
Administration
Colonel Manfred Weihmann

ZAGG
Central Workgroup for the
Protection of Classified Information
Colonel Werner Schröder

ZOS
Central Operative Staff
Colonel Manfred Sommer

Secretariat to the Deputy
Colonel Rüdiger Falk

HA I
Defence in the NVA and
Border Troops
Lieutenant General Manfred Dietze

HA VI
Passport Control/Tourism/Interhotel
Major General Heinz Fiedler

HA VII
Defence in the MdI/People's Police
Major General Joachim Büchner

HA VIII
Observation/Investigation
Major General Karli Coburger

AG XVII
Visitors Offices [West Berlin]
Colonel Horst Janssen

HA XXII
Counterterrorism
Colonel Horst Franz

ZKG
Central Coordination Group
Escape/Emigration
Major General Gerhard Niebling

Secretariat to the Deputy
Colonel Heinz Krause

HA III
Signal Intelligence, Radio Defence
Major General Horst Männchen

Dept. XI
Encryption
Major General Wolfgang Birke

Dept. BCD
Armaments/Chemical Services
Colonel Erich Schwager

Dept. Communications
Securing Communications
Lieutenant Colonel Karl Zukunft

OTS
Operative Technical Sector
Major General Günter Schmidt

Supervisory Sector Head of HV A
Mobilisation "Internal Security",
Evaluation, Counterespionage,
Active Measures

Supervisory Sector 1st deputy
Major General Horst Vogel
Operative Technology, Data
Processing, Science and Technology
Sector

Supervisory Sector Deputy and
Leadership Staff
Major General Heinz Geier
Staff, Regime Concerns, Smuggling,
Behind the Lines Services

Supervisory Sector Deputy
Colonel Ralf-Peter Devaux
FRG Political Intelligence

Supervisory Sector Deputy
Major General Heinrich Tauchert
Military Intelligence NATO, EC,
North America, FRG

Supervisory Sector Deputy
Major General Werner Prosetzky
International Residences,
Training, Support

List of Contributors

Günter Bormann
Born 1955, jurist; head of the BStU legal office

Jutta Braun
Dr., born 1967, historian; research associate, Centre for Contemporary History, Potsdam

Roger Engelmann
Dr., born 1956, historian; project manager in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Bernd Florath
Dr., born 1954, historian; research associate in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Jens Gieseke
Dr., born 1964, historian; project manager, Centre for Contemporary History, Potsdam

Christian Halbrock
Dr., born 1963, historian; research associate in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Helge Heidemeyer
Dr., born 1963, historian; head of the BStU Department of Education and Research

Georg Herbstritt
Dr., born 1965, historian; research associate in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk
Dr., born 1967, historian; project manager in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Daniela Münkel
Prof. Dr., born 1962, historian; project manager in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Arno Polzin
Born 1962, mechanical engineer; employee in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Elke Stadelmann-Wenz
Dr., born 1966, historian; research associate in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Walter Süß
Dr., born 1947, political scientist; former project manager in the BStU Department of Education and Research

Jan Philipp Wölbern
Dr., born 1980, historian; research associate in the Centre for Contemporary History, Potsdam

Tobias Wunschik
Dr., born 1967, political scientist; research associate in the BStU Department of Education and Research

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Daniela Münkel: Staatssicherheit und Grenze (pp. 185–188)
Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk: DDR-Alltag und MfS (pp. 193–196)
Walter Süß: Endphase des MfS (pp. 202–205)