

The Stasi and UK-GDR Relations

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In arguing that a primary purpose of the GDR's desire to gain recognition by the United Kingdom in the 1970s was to establish a more secure base for its intelligence operations against Britain, this chapter explores how the Stasi exploited their UK platform. The East German secret intelligence and security service, or Ministry for State Security, was a unitary agency which brought together under one roof foreign intelligence gathering and domestic security. Here, and because of this, the term Stasi (used only after 1989) includes both the HVA and domestic secret police officers who operated in the UK. This chapter explores a fundamental issue: that no meaningful political or policy-making distinction can be drawn between the Stasi and the East German State whether its domestic or foreign policy aims are under review. It explores the systems used by the Stasi to work against Britain, discusses some of its major UK intelligence gains and considers the roles of some of those who became the Stasi's British assets.

Introduction

Most people regard the relationship between states as being in essence a diplomatic one, in which each state respects the sovereignty of the other and where they agree to abide by the 1961 Vienna Convention, which regulates diplomatic relations. East Germany's relations with the UK, however, had far more to do with the Stasi's secret (and illegal) activity in the UK than any above-board diplomatic relationship. British-GDR relations were, from the East German viewpoint, more about the Stasi than anything else.

This is a legitimate matter of concern for two discrete reasons. First, as far as human rights issues are concerned, it must be stressed that the Stasi was the 'sword and shield' of an odious police state which imprisoned and abused up to a quarter of a million of its own citizens. What the Stasi did in the UK was designed to underpin its secret-police activity in East Germany. As one of Mielke's most trusted colleagues, General Dr Siegfried Gehlert, head of the Karl-Marx-Stadt Stasi, put it succinctly: 'There could be no German Democratic Republic without a Stasi since it was the Stasi's job to ensure that peace, order and security existed for the citizens'. Those

Britons who helped the GDR with its goals, covert or overt, were supporting a German police state.¹

Secondly, since East German intelligence operations in the UK were largely undetected by the British Security Service, MI5, at the time they were being conducted, doubts must exist about the effectiveness of its counter-espionage skills. In almost forty years of East German spying in Britain, before and after recognition, MI5 caught only three Stasi members. One officer, Heinz Knobbe was expelled (having been named by an East German defector in 1983) and two illegals, both HVA spies, were identified in August 1985 (thanks to evidence supplied by West German intelligence). Their trial was the first successful espionage prosecution in twenty-five years but at least one major British newspaper (*The Guardian*) was told they had been spying for the Russians which in fact they were not: the Stasi files describe them clearly as 'the HVA couple'.² Neither the Stasi nor any East German officer or spy features in the index of Peter Wright's account of MI5's post-1945 activities or in Stella Rimington's vain 'history' of MI5 in the 1980s.³

Curiously, perhaps, scholars have ignored this dimension to British–East German relations. Two of the most recent studies of British–GDR relations do not mention the Stasi interest in Britain at all. One might be forgiven for thinking that culture and trade were all that concerned the East German diplomats in London. Even so, and tellingly, perhaps, neither work feels the need to give the name of even a single East German diplomat in London.⁴ The obvious inference is that no GDR diplomat ever did anything genuinely diplomatic in London, significant enough to merit description in a history book. And so it was. None of the diplomats in 34 Belgrave Square – the GDR Embassy in London – played any decisive role

1 Anthony Glee *The Stasi Files. East Germany's Secret Operations Against Britain* (London, 2003); idem, 'Social Transformation Studies and the Abuse of Human Rights in the GDR' in: *German Politics* 7:3 (1998), pp. 165–191; idem, 'Legacies of Exclusion: The Memory of Terror and the Creation of Civic Values in the New Bundesländer', in: C. Flockton, E. Kolinsky and R.M.O. Pritchard (eds), *The New Germany in the East: Policy Agendas and Social Developments since Unification* (London, 2000), pp. 165–192; 'Debate' in *German Politics* 9:2 (2000), pp. 244–249

2 Edward Vulliamy in: *The Guardian* 9.7.1986; BStU MfS HAI 1639.

3 Stella Rimington, *Open Secret* (London, 2001).

4 See the third chapter by Klaus Larres, in Klaus Larres with Elizabeth Meehan (eds), *Uneasy Allies: British German Relations and European Integration Since 1945* (Oxford, 2000); also Klaus Larres, 'Britain and the GDR in the 1960s: The Politics of Recognition by Stealth' in: Jeremy Noakes et al., *Britain and Germany in Europe, 1949–1990* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 187–217. The 'stealth' in the title refers to what the author claims was *de facto* prior to *de jure* recognition and has nothing to do with covert operations.

in overt British–GDR relations. As Bert Becker and Marianne Howarth have suggested, in the areas of economic relations between Britain and East Germany recognition changed virtually nothing in what seemed a down-beat diplomatic relationship.⁵ More than one observer has noted that it seemed paradoxical that the East Germans, having spent so much energy on gaining diplomatic recognition, then proceeded to appear to do very little with what they were given.⁶ The explanation is that the GDR was able to get all it wanted from its relationship with the UK from the use of its diplomatic cover to engage in secret intelligence activity against the UK.

The 1980s were, of course, critical years when the entire security of the West was at stake – and therefore precisely the sort of time when high-grade counter-intelligence work was the *sine qua non* of successful policy-making. It was an era of seismic shifts in the relationship between the two nuclear superpowers, the USA and the USSR. In the late 1970s, it became clear that under Brezhnev the Soviets were developing a new range of missiles which seemed to call their commitment to detente into serious question.⁷

In order to safeguard this dangerous policy, predictive stories about the real views of Western political leaders, tales of high-level arguments or virulent hatred and quarrels hidden beneath a veneer of unity between allies, whether in government or between governments, could and did reveal much of importance to foreign policy makers. There is no doubt at all that SED leaders, led by Honecker and Mielke regarded such intelligence as absorbing and of great value in developing policies and policy stances for the GDR. Indeed, intelligence digests (called *Aktuelle Informationsberichte*) – of which a few copies remain – were obligatory reading for the leadership and testify to the sensitive nature of the material gained by Stasi agents.

East German intelligence was a unitary body – the ‘Ministry’ – which comprised both a security service and a secret foreign intelligence service called the HVA (*Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* or Main Directorate Intelli-

5 See Bert Becker, *Die DDR und Grossbritannien 1945 bis 1973. Politische, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Kontakte im Zeichen der Nichtanerkennungspolitik* (Bochum, 1991).

6 See Henning Hoff, ‘“Largely the prisoners of Dr Adenauer’s policy”: Grossbritannien und die DDR 1949–73’, in: Ulrich Pfeil (ed.), *Die DDR und der Westen: Transnationale Beziehungen 1949–89* (Berlin, 2001); Marianne Howarth, ‘Die Westpolitik der DDR zwischen internationaler Aufwertung und ideologischer Offensive (1966–1989)’, in *ibid.*, pp. 81–98.

7 An excellent thumbnail account of these issues is given in Richard Sahwa, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union 1917–1991* (London, 1999).

gence). By 1989 the service consisted of over 90,000 official personnel and as many as 150–170,000 agents, who came to be known as *informelle* or *inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* (both terms were used) or IMs, informal collaborators or, as British intelligence terms them, ‘co-opted workers’ which most accurately describes their true role in the UK in particular.⁸ The HVA was the largest single unit within the Stasi and worked almost exclusively in the West. It had 3,819 officers, led until 1986 by Markus Wolf and then by Werner Grossmann. In addition, the Stasi (like any intelligence service) could rely on its contacts, or persons of trust – who, in the case of Britain, were British.

The entire service, despite its communist goals, was run on what might best be called Prussian authoritarian lines. It was centrally controlled, with Erich Mielke, Politburo member, Government Minister, but styled *Armee-general*, presiding at the top, and ready to intervene at every level beneath him. All in all, the ‘Ministry’ was one and a half times the size of the East German army.

A reasonable description of the general direction of work at 34 Belgrave Square has been provided by Klaus Eichner, a former senior Stasi officer (working for Wolf in the ‘Centre’, not in London).⁹ The importance of his statement is that it confirms what we know from the Stasi files, rather than providing any startling new insights (which, bearing his status in mind, is hardly surprising). In an interview, Eichner stated that Britain had possessed a ‘certain priority (*gewisse Priorität*)’ both as a sovereign nation and as a leading member of NATO, although the two chief Stasi targets were West Germany and the USA. He explained that the very first Stasi analysis of a NATO state’s secret services was done on Britain. After the clampdown on the KGB in Britain in the early 1970s, in addition to its own East German concerns, the Stasi, always wholly within the KGB’s orbit, increasingly became its surrogate with some fifty per cent of HVA intelligence going to the Soviet Union.¹⁰

Whilst warning of the danger of ‘double agents’ (IMs who were in fact working for MI5 or MI6) Mielke nevertheless instructed his officers to

8 According to Jens Gieseke at the end of October 1989 the Ministry consisted of 91,015 members of whom 71,233 held the rank equivalent of officer, 2,232 were officers for special duties (*Oibes*), 143 so-called anonymous members, 185 civilian employees, 13,073 soldiers on secondment and 2,301 on other duties. See idem, *Mielke-Konzern: die Geschichte der Stasi 1945-1990* (Stuttgart, 2001), p. 70.

9 Interview with Klaus Eichner, Berlin, 31.5.1994.

10 Hubertus Knabe, *West-Arbeit des MfS: Das Zusammenspiel von ‘Aufklärung’ und ‘Abwehr’* (Berlin, 1999), p. 150.

create 'a solid and highly active net of patriots working on the invisible front – a strong, successful, effective and conspiratorial intelligence force'.¹¹ In his directive 2/79 he had offered more precise orders: his officers were to 'gain intelligence on the aims, the agents, the means and methods utilised by the Enemy which was both timely and reliable in order to preclude any surprise changes in the political, economic and scientific spheres'. They were to 'discover exact information about the Enemy and his centres, and his potential and to execute offensive measures against them and all hostile forces'. The Stasi also drew up lists of their targets in the West. There were 82 in the USA and 17 in the UK.

This intelligence about the realities – usually the *secret* realities – of British policy was, as far as we can tell today, to be gained chiefly by what is called 'humint', that is to say by the use of agents to collect secret information, preferably as documents but also (and more frequently) as reports to the Stasi. Certainly, however, as the Stasi files demonstrate repeatedly, 'humint' can provide useful additional detail to an emerging intelligence picture. It is, of course, the case that most of the HVA files were destroyed in the first months of 1990 when the transitional East German Government agreed to this in order to facilitate a 'bloodless revolution'. However, the encoded indexes to its archives, stored on magnetic tape and today known as SIRA, were put to one side pending future destruction because it was believed they were indecipherable. In addition, some HVA outstations (in Leipzig for example) failed to destroy all their material and a certain amount of raw and assessed intelligence, which had made its way to the desks of policy makers, was retained and then passed on to the Archive in Berlin after unification in 1990.¹² Non-HVA material, including some of the Military Intelligence Files, remain virtually intact, generating almost 200 kilometre of papers.

The Stasi files show that there was a high level of hostile intelligence-gathering in Britain. Wolf grudgingly recognises the existence of secret intelligence operations in the UK but indicates that intelligence was 'gathered', at any one time, by a single 'resident' operating out of the Embassy, by East German journalists recruited in the UK or by a single spy, Dr Hagen Blau, personal aide to the then West German Ambassador.¹³ Blau

11 Quoted in *ibid*, p. 100.

12 See Glees, *Stasi Files*, pp. 19 ff.

13 According to Markus Wolf, 'Dr Hagen Blau, gave us [the HVA] access to all the intelligence the West Germans had on Britain and was one of the best sources in the West German foreign service', see *idem* with Anne McElvoy, *The Man Without a Face. The Memoirs of a Spymaster* (London, 1999), pp. xi ff.

was in London from 1971 to 1975 (that is, not during the 1980s). But the idea that intelligence – in the 1980s – came from only one ‘foreign intelligence resident’ in London at any one time, as Wolf claims, is plainly utterly absurd: the Stasi files prove that they possessed at least twenty-one discrete sources of secret intelligence in the 1980s, not counting the half dozen secret military intelligence officers also based on Residency 201 or the ‘illegals’ who were kept far from the Embassy’s confines. London was riddled with Stasi spies.

In this way, the embassies of the GDR in the West, in particular those in London and Paris, were in fact little more than Stasi resources. The Treaties paving the way to GDR recognition by these states were passed by the Bundestag on 17 May 1972. Negotiations between Britain and East Germany started on 23 January 1973 and were concluded on 8 February when diplomatic relations started up. The British Embassy in Unter den Linden was opened in April and, in return, the Foreign Office arranged for the East Germans to be given the very site in London they had already identified as their heart’s desire – 34 Belgrave Square, so close to their most mortal enemy, the Federal Republic at number 22.

After recognition, the Stasi had two main means of running agents in Britain. The first, and most fruitful, was to construct a network of relationships based on open or semi-secret diplomatic ones into which, in time, a secret intelligence framework, based on recruited agents, could be integrated. This was, and is, classic spycraft: all secret intelligence services exploit the possibilities presented by diplomatic activity. The second, and most hazardous means of spying on a hostile state, was to continue the pre-recognition strategy of building a network of ‘illegals’ – penetration agents and spies who could operate independently of the diplomatic cover.

The Organisation of East German Secret Intelligence in London

The East German Embassy at 34 Belgrave Square was the London base for several Stasi officers. But at the same time it was also the HVA’s Residency 201, home, too, for the military intelligence unit of the National People’s Army, the NVA. Both were discrete secret groupings, though firmly under Mielke’s overall control, and like all the other Stasi officers and agents in London, they were there illegally, in direct contravention of international law. What makes this worse is that for the Stasi, Britain was, literally, their

'enemy', against whom they were fighting a secret war. It is probable that at any one time in the region of thirty to forty people worked there.¹⁴

At the top side of this structure in London, as in every other place the Stasi operated, including East Germany, there existed a secondary level of officers for special duties (*OibEs* or *Offiziere in besonderem Einsatz*) as well as ordinary officers (*Offiziere der Residentur*). They are examined in detail below. At the bottom end of the structure we find talent spotters and go-betweens or middlemen (the German phrase was '*Tipper und Ermittler*').¹⁵ It is clear that in the UK these go-betweens played a critical part in transferring secret material from a source to an officer.

It is important to differentiate between intelligence officers, agents and sources as is discussed later on in greater detail. For MI5 all human sources of information are called their 'agents' (unlike in the FBI where its 'agents' are the officers). In effect, in Britain, East German officers controlled agents in London, under legal cover, who were co-opted workers who themselves ran further agents, variously called 'sources' or simply 'persons of trust' in what schematically resembled a pyramid. They were the Stasi's British assets. Where the Stasi planted 'illegals' in Britain, they were straightforward agents, also called IMs, run by paid co-opted workers and officers in East Germany, almost always in Leipzig. This elaborate structure, conspiratorial and fluid – and therefore always hard to detect – was designed to generate effective intelligence whilst maximising the security of all those involved.

The Stasi's UK Requirements

The Stasi wanted to know all they could about the mindset of British policy-makers and agenda-setters. They wanted information on the precise nature of the policies that were being made (especially if they were secret ones, had to do with defence and arms or in some way impacted on the internal affairs of East Germany as part of the Communist world). They sought to know who was making policy, and what their motives might be. They also wished to collect data on the leading members of the political class, and, given their understandable preoccupation with the West Germans, were always desperate to have up to date material on the nature of the British–West German relationship. Finally, they consistently wanted to

14 London Lists supplied by the FCO Research Department.

15 See BStU MfS HAI 1649; Hubertus Knabe, *Die Unterwanderte Republik* (Berlin, 2000), p. 345

know about any Britons who had interests, both economic and political, in East Germany and who might be giving secret support to those inside the German Democratic Republic regarded by the Communists as their enemies. They wanted, in short, to secure Communism in East Germany for all imaginable time and this meant neutralising the regime's opponents.

In detail, the Stasi sought the UK's defence secrets in the aftermath of the 1979 Twin-Track NATO rearmament programme, and other UK government's secrets. They wanted to uncover the private views of Britain's leading personalities, to penetrate the British peace movement (which also involved an element of steering on the part of the Stasi), to investigate the condition of the British Labour and Conservative Parties and, in the early 1980s, examine carefully the emerging split in the ranks of the British Labour Party which led to the formation of a breakaway party, the SDP. The HVA, the East German secret intelligence service, and the Stasi more generally, were all charged with gaining intelligence in these areas although the UK's defence secrets were also targeted by a military intelligence unit.

At times, voices are heard suggesting that much of the Stasi's intelligence was derived from newspapers or open sources rather than spies. In fact, this assertion is totally contradicted by the evidence of the Stasi files. No officer in the field could get away with palming off a *Times* editorial, for example, as a piece of secret intelligence. It is true that from time to time Stasi officers have claimed otherwise but the documentary evidence of the files shows that this is false and said simply to protect their sources in accordance with time-honoured traditions of spycraft. The record shows that where too few secret sources were being used, it spelt serious problems, including dismissal, for the officer involved.¹⁶ This is also why the veracity of the 'Centre's' analyses was of such a high standard and has never – so far – been called into question by any expert. Apart from the existence of 'illegals' (who work is discussed later on) there are other reasons for discounting the idea that this was not an active secret service on the prowl.

There is a final reason for accepting that the secret material was precisely what it purported to be – considerable sums of money changed hands. The Stasi was always very orderly indeed about payments to their agents – they had to be registered and the name of the officer handling the money was set down, usually in the form of his cover name. The Stasi was well-heeled but that this does not mean that it would have dreamed of paying for intelligence secrets that it could get itself without needing to

16 See, for example, BStU MfS HAI 1641.

use third parties, that it would pay serious money for rubbish or pay intelligence officers to do what journalists or diplomats could do for less money (intelligence salaries were high in East Germany). In order to supply the GDR with the information its leaders truly desired, rather than the information that normal diplomacy might provide, the Stasi could rely on numerous intelligence assets in the UK. Some of these were paid for their efforts. From 1985 to 1987, the only two years for which records still exist, the Stasi spent £206,895 on intelligence in the UK.

Did any of this matter? Recently, when told I was writing about the Stasi's operations in the UK, one of the most senior figures in British intelligence quipped, 'So it will be short work, then'.¹⁷ I replied that the fact that he, and some of his colleagues, should think so was a measure of the Stasi's success. Its record in London, as revealed by the Stasi files, was patently far more substantial than he seemed to realise even today. MI5 has four categories for determining its response to hostile intelligence operations, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', where 'A' denotes a likelihood of 'serious and continuing damage probably involving the continuous loss of classified information' and 'D' describes 'marginal security significance'.¹⁸ Although some of Stasi's UK material can today be seen to have fallen into category 'A', most was in 'B', 'C' or 'D'. It seems safe to conclude that the Stasi did cause Britain damage, serious in part.¹⁹

The Process of Intelligence Gathering: The Stasi's British Assets

Some of those examined here were straightforward spies who sold British secrets to the HVA for cash, or who secretly gathered information about the activities of people or groups in whom the Stasi took an interest, and reported the results. We have their cover names, a description of the secrets they sold, and, sometimes, an account of the secrets themselves. We also have a record of some of the cash they received.

But some were agents of conviction who wanted to fight for Communism (or, as it seemed easier to formulate, 'against Fascism') and for whom money was not a factor. 'Armin', 'Diana', 'Lissy' and 'Jaguar' came into this second category. Others, however, sourced the Stasi for entirely different reasons. One became an agent of influence, or as he puts it, a possi-

17 Information from J.S., 24 April 2002.

18 Intelligence and Security Committee, *The Mitrokhin Inquiry Report* (London, 2000), Column 4764, Annexe H.

19 See Glees, *Stasi Files*, pp 128–152 for examples of obvious category 'A' material.

ble source – though one, he says, who gave absolutely nothing away – in the belief that to deal directly with the Stasi served the high-policy interests of the United Kingdom and that in doing so British intelligence would protect and watch over him. In addition, the Stasi could rely on two other sorts of British assets. The first was a group of British military intelligence spies who worked for them on arms technology issues; the other was the British peace movement (CND and its associated group, END). They were all run and recruited by the military intelligence officers serving in London and included traitors who betrayed this country and its values.

Finally, the Stasi could count on one last group of assets. They were misguided, and we may deprecate what they did, but they were not traitors, for they possessed no state secrets. This group was composed of a pot-pourri of various men and women who, for one reason or another, were able to illuminate specific issues on which the Stasi wanted enlightenment and saw no harm in telling them certain things of use to the East Germans, and helping them in other ways too.

Some of the Stasi's British spies were formally signed up – Robin Pearson, whose espionage for East Germany is discussed below, was one example – whilst some others were encouraged not to regard themselves as spies at all. What is more, all of those who spied for the Stasi, including those we would call their agents, were themselves spied on by the Stasi. Bizarrely, the category of 'victim' merged organically into the category of 'perpetrator' on many occasions both in the UK and beyond.²⁰ In Britain, individuals were spied on by the Stasi whilst, at the same time, helping the Stasi to do its work.

Political Intelligence Work – 'Eckhart' and Lord Roper, 'Kraft' and WMD and the Collection of Data on CND and END

The two most important officers charged with collecting political intelligence were Edgar Uher, codenamed 'Eckhart', and Erich Schwager, code-named 'Kraft' and 'Erich'. Uher worked in London from 1981–86. His most important contact was undoubtedly (Lord) John Roper, at the time of his relationship with Uher, Director of Research at Chatham House.²¹ It seems fair to conclude that Roper became what might be called a Stasi 'agent of

20 Joachim Gauck, the German 'father' of research into the Stasi, and the first head of the Stasi Archive, wrote in 1991 that it was often very difficult to distinguish between Stasi 'perpetrators' and their 'victims'. See, idem with M. Steinhausen and H. Knabe, *Die Stasi-Akten* (Reinbek/Hamburg, 1991), p. 27.

21 See, Glees, *StasiFiles*, esp. pp. 247–315.

influence' or even a 'useful idiot'. The earliest extant evidence of a direct HVA interest in Roper is dated April 1986. However, at least one Stasi officer in London has claimed contact with him began in 1983. Roper was one of Britain's leading defence policy experts for many years, after an early start in political life as the CND organiser at Oxford as a student and then several years spent as a Labour MP before joining the SDP and then the Liberal Democrats. As we have seen, these were all fields in which the East Germans took a special interest. Roper worked with individuals he knew to be East German intelligence officers in a variety of ways: he introduced East Germans to a leading member of the SDP, Bill Rodgers, and his Polish-born wife. He invited East Germans he knew to be Stasi and a military intelligence officers to join 'round tables' organised for the British Foreign Office, he arranged for one of their spies to become a 'research fellow' at Chatham House in 1987 and in 1989 he offered the East Germans a special conference on security policy and a special event to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the GDR at Chatham House. The Stasi rated the former very highly and wrote: 'This would offer the possibility of executing an exceptionally effective measure in support of foreign information gathering, strengthening our contact to leading British scientific institutions and to develop contacts in the security policy and military spheres'.

It is important to note that Lord Roper argues that in forging links to East German intelligence he was following what he states were the wishes of the Foreign Office. The aim of the 'round tables' (which included figures like Pauline Neville-Jones, a Joint Intelligence Committee chair, and Tessa Blackstone, a leading Labour Party figure) was to promote dissidence in Eastern Europe and it was inevitable, Roper has rightly said, that this would attract the attention of the Stasi. It is, however, the case that the Foreign Office policy covering this field specifically (and not surprisingly) ruled out inviting hostile intelligence officers to participate; indeed no Stasi officer was ever 'turned' and all we know of stayed loyal until the very end (and arguably well beyond it). Similarly, Lord Roper insists he did not know Kasper's true job in London but accepts that he appointed him without reading his *curriculum vitae*. Kasper has claimed he knew Roper ever since the early 1980s. It is also indubitably the case that Roper did not inform either his boss at Chatham House, Sir James Eberle, or the Security Service MI5 of his knowing contact to the Stasi. Roper has no recollection of a 40th anniversary celebration or a security policy conference. It is also the case that for an individual to knowingly engage with officers or agents of a hostile intelligence service following an instruction from the British Government would, in effect, be to mount a counter-intelligence

operation against them. Yet neither MI5 nor SIS counter-intelligence had authorised one.

Erich Schwager's precise operations in the UK are still unknown. He was responsible for passing back to East Berlin information on SDI research, on the British and European anti-nuclear movement, on the structure of UK armed forces and Amnesty International. However, he was more than just a spy for he was an OibE, expert in chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of considerable seniority. Following his return from London, he had 176 officials working under him as chief of the Stasi's Department BCD. It seems likely that he was involved in weapons sales to various Arab states using London as his operational base. Oddly, Uher and Schwager are today business partners in Berlin. One of Schwager's companies, which deals with 'industrial engineering', is based in Amman Jordan.²² One can only speculate which of Uher's and Schwager's many skills find a market in today's Europe and the Middle East.

The Stasi also took a keen interest in the activities of CND (run by Bruce Kent and others) and END (led by E. P. Thompson and Mary Kaldor) which opposed the former's unilateralist stance.²³ They were able to rely on a number of sources, most notably Bruce Kent (codenamed 'Pakt'), Professor Vic Allen of Leeds University (almost certainly 'Barber'), Canon Paul Oestreicher ('Kranz'), Irene Fick ('Freundin'), Professor John Sandford of Reading University and Barbara Einhorn. It is important to emphasise that although these people supplied the East Germans with information of considerable use to the Stasi, they had no access to any 'classified' material of any kind. The East Germans devoted much energy to penetrating CND and END, wishing to see the former prosper (because of its opposition to NATO rearmament in the 1980s) and the latter disappear. The fight against 'ideological subversion' was a core KGB-Stasi concern along with the collection of UK secrets.²⁴ Whilst at first glance MI5 might be expected to have cared very little whether or not there was an East German attempt to penetrate and influence the British peace movement, it was, on deeper reflection, obviously a serious matter were it to be shown this was the case and counter-measures would equally plainly have been called for. We know, of course, today that MI5 did take an interest in CND (after all, many leading CND members were also leading Labour Party members

22 Ibid, pp 216–17.

23 See *ibid*, esp. pp. 316–45.

24 See Christopher Andrew, 'Intelligence, International Relations and "Under-theorisation"' in: L.V. Scott and Peter Jackson, *Understanding Intelligence in the 21st Century* (London, 2004), p. 36.

who might become British Government ministers) but there was never any sign that the Stasi's work in this area was the object of Security Service interest. Certainly, in an ideal world, any East German target should have attracted MI5's intervention even if the target appeared to have no access to material of category 'A' importance. At the same time, it should be added that the Stasi spied on their CND-END sources whilst also courting them and gaining information from them. Even if their sources knew, there is no reason to think they would have been unduly upset for many were genuinely sympathetic to what they believed were the high ideals of German Communism.

Military Intelligence Work

This was undertaken by a series of officers based at No 34 Belgrave Square of whom MI5 had no knowledge at all.²⁵ The most successful of these was Hartmut Linser, codenamed 'Harald' and Jörg Döring ('Harke'). Modelled on the Soviet military intelligence (GRU) the London unit ran a series of British agents. We know their codenames ('Adler', 'Astor', 'Barber' – a leading member of CND – 'Bill', 'Baldur', 'Basalt', 'Isak' and 'Ivo') but not their true identities. Some of them seem to have worked in the British defence industry but one, 'Adler', was privy to the secrets of the IRA on whom some Stasi effort was expended. Britain's NATO command base at Northwood was a constant target. It would seem that East German officers had a lease on a property within viewing distance of its main entrance.

Long-term Penetration Agents

In addition to the above sources and agents run from officers located in 34 Belgrave Square, the Stasi ran a series of long-term penetration agents from a base in Leipzig set up for this purpose.²⁶ There is evidence of a recruitment drive in Leeds and Bradford at some time after 1985. It is also plain that Edinburgh University was a major target for the Stasi who relied on a strong relationship with a lecturer there, named Dr Karin McPherson. We know very little about most of these spies thanks to the HVA's destruction of its files in 1989-90: one Stasi spy was codenamed 'Jaguar' and lived in a small town near Oxford, another was codenamed 'Lissy'. However the files of two penetration agents, Robin Pearson (codenamed

25 See Glees, *Stasi Files*, esp. pp. 155ff.

26 See *ibid*, esp. pp. 346ff.

'Armin') and Fiona Houlding ('Diana') were preserved intact. They were both exchange students at Leipzig and gifted linguists. Their papers show that the Stasi attempted to groom them with the aim of inserting them into certain – obvious – locations: GCHQ, the Security Service, the Secret Intelligence Service, the Ministry of Defence, NATO and the European Commission. Pearson, in particular, proved an outstanding Stasi asset. Recruited in 1978, he started his Stasi work by spying on his fellow British students (one of them, Graham Watson, was already a Lib-Dem activist and is today a leading Lib-Dem member of the European Parliament). Although he eschewed seeking a post in a secret British institution, he did provide information about various British academics who took an interest in East European and Communist affairs. This certainly put them in harm's way. From May 1983 until December 1985 he withdrew from Stasi work but his subsequent activities earned him their praise and countless gifts of cash and travel. His most sinister work was initiated in November 1987 when he was ordered to spy on a Polish-born dissident and explosives expert working in the Ministry of Defence, believed by the Stasi to have links to Solidarity, the Polish dissident movement. Pearson also offered to set up links between his employer, Hull University, and East Germans. Bearing in mind that he had been recruited in this way, it is not implausible to suggest that recruitment lay at the heart of this project. Fiona Houlding was signed up by the Stasi in July 1988. They hoped, and she agreed, to seek employment in Brussels, working for the European Commission or NATO. By the end of March 1989, by now back in England and before she could really begin her work, she seems to have thought twice about a spy's life. The fall of the Berlin Wall that November plainly ended the matter in her case.

There was, therefore, a dangerous covert war being waged by the East German secret service against targets in the United Kingdom. Here, on what it called 'the invisible front', it was engaged in what it saw as part of its never-ending war against the West, a war which required it to penetrate British institutions and secure this country's secrets – political, military, scientific and economic – to help perpetuate its rule in East Germany and the rule of Communism more generally.²⁷ We should never lose sight of these facts even when examining the Stasi's battle against the UK. Its objective was to make an input into GDR foreign and domestic policy defined by the SED leadership as an offensive policy, driven by the need to

27 See Knabe, *West-Arbeit*, passim.

maintain a repressive regime at home.²⁸ This input was predicated on the gaining of secrets which would inform the SED leadership on the realities behind both the foreign policy (especially the strategic policy) being pursued by the United Kingdom and the level of support being provided for East German dissidents and other Eastern bloc dissidents by institutions and bodies in the United Kingdom. In this way, the Stasi fulfilled what were the real 'diplomatic' goals of the East German police state.

Conclusion

Everyone, whether German, British (or of any other nationality), who knowingly or even half-knowingly worked for the Stasi, as officer or source, was serving an organisation committed to uphold Communism in East Germany with an armoury of repressive weapons which could gravely abuse the human rights of anyone regarded by the Stasi as a threat to the regime. What is more they were, of course, serving a state which – as the Stasi files show – saw Britain as 'the enemy', one against whom the Stasi was (as Mielke frequently put it) 'at war'.²⁹

Each and every one of these people were to a greater or lesser extent collaborators with the East German regime. They chose to work together with its representatives in confidential relationships but they were not members of formal British agencies who might be authorised to maintain such contacts for the purposes of Britain's national security. That they may have done so to try to improve the quality of the East German regime and that they were themselves spied on by the Stasi – its victims as well as its sources – does not make their actions less questionable. It merely emphasises their naivety in trying to collaborate with the representatives of a wicked police state.

Former HVA officers may claim today, as its former chief Markus Wolf has also done, that it was not quite as wicked as its domestic colleagues in the Ministry for State Security. In fact, the HVA had its people working within every East German Stasi office and they were every bit as implicated in the abuses as their other Stasi colleagues.³⁰ Any individual,

28 Fricke was the first author to point to the Stasi's work against the West, pp. 173–6, but does not mention its work in the UK. See idem, *Die Staatssicherheitsdienst: Entwicklung, Strukturen, Arbeitsfelder* (Cologne, 1989), pp. 173–76.

29 Wolf, *Memoirs*, pp. xiff, 205 ff, 286.

30 Wolf writes that he failed to criticise loudly and early enough the 'workings' of a judicial system so closely allied to the State, see idem, *Memoirs*, Ibid, p. 196. Knabe is one of sev-

whether in Britain or East Germany, who gave such assistance, directly or indirectly, to someone they believed was an East German intelligence officer, or might be reporting to one, was thereby aided a terrorising and odious secret police force. What is more, all those who worked with the Stasi had made contact with a hostile secret intelligence organisation which would always have a hold on them, as long as their identity remained secret. As Wolf put it: 'It amazes me that otherwise intelligence westerners believed they remained masters of their own destiny. No co-operation with an intelligence service is ever forgotten. It can be unearthed and used against you until your dying day'.³¹ When the linkages between the Stasi and today's secret groupings in the Middle East and elsewhere are borne in mind, the chilling point of Wolf's words can hardly be overlooked.

eral writers to expose Wolf's special pleading on this issue, see, *idem*, *West-Arbeit*, p. 33 and *passim*.

31 Wolf, *op. cit.*, p. 238.