

BEARER OF SECRETS: COLONEL HARRY DAHL, DÉTENTE, LAW SCHOOL, AND THE
ORIGINS OF RAF-STASI COLLABORATION 1970-1981

by

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(Under the Direction of Joseph Kellner)

ABSTRACT

From 1980 to 1981, the German Democratic Republic's Ministry for State Security naturalized and resettled some Red Army Faction terrorists while they trained others. A blatant violation of international law and a potential flashpoint for the Cold War, the *Aussteiger* program remained a state secret until the collapse of the GDR in 1990. Researchers have since investigated this RAF-*Stasi* connection, although not the origins of this RAF-*Stasi* collaboration. This thesis uses German federal archives to examine Colonel Harry Dahl, leader of the *Stasi* counterterrorism department and instigator of the *Aussteiger* program. This thesis reveals that the RAF-*Stasi* collaboration had roots in Dahl's 1974 dissertation research at the *Stasi* law school; his dissertation was widely informed by the emergent conditions of détente. This thesis also shows that by the 1970s, ideology and pragmatism had become inseparable in *Stasi* rhetoric and policy, highlighting the limits of ideological hegemony in a single-party state.

INDEX WORDS: Red Army Faction, RAF, Ministry for State Security, Stasi, left-wing terrorism, détente, Baader-Meinhof Gang, Harry Dahl, German Autumn, German Democratic Republic, GDR, Law School of the Ministry for State Security, JHS

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BA, NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY, 2019

A THESIS Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2025

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May 2025

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the educators of the United States and to the thirteen U.S. servicemembers killed at Kabul International Airport on August 26, 2021.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Joseph Kellner, and my committee members Dr. Brian Drake and Dr. John Short. I would also like to thank *Bundesarchiv* archivist Christian Schwack for his patience, dedication, and persistence on retrieving relevant materials from the depths of the archive. I thank Dr. Douglas Selvage and Dr. Molly Pucci for providing feedback and information that was invaluable to this endeavor. Thank you, Beth Gulewich for the gift of a second language, and thank you, Lee Quinn, for fostering my passion for history and the humanities. I would like to thank my graduate cohort at the University of Georgia for their company both inside and outside of LeConte Hall. Thank you to the fine federal employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs for putting in the work that makes using my educational benefits possible.

For more personal acknowledgements, I'd like to thank the Birkemo family for their support, confidence, friendship, and hospitality over multiple years. Thank you to Andy Jones, Sam Jolly, and Ben Roy for the deepest friendships that have both grounded me and changed me for the better. Finally, thank you to my family for your love and encouragement to pursue my passions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Colonel Harry Dahl had been on sick leave for months by the time the Ministry for State Security (*Stasi*) sent official notice of his retirement. For Dahl's thirty-six years of faithful service to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), twenty-nine of which were with the *Stasi*, he was entitled to a monthly pension of 2,500 Ostmarks, a lump-sum of 4,000 Ostmarks, medical care at the Central Medical Services (ZMD), an engraved officer's dagger, a medal, and access for him and his wife to *Stasi*-owned vacation homes.¹ Effective July 1, 1985, Dahl became a pensioner and retiree in the GDR, where he could live out the rest of his years in East German socialist utopia.

In a document of May 3, 1985 that proposed Dahl's discharge and outlined his entitlements, Major General Möller wrote with apparent deference "according to his former function as leader of *Abteilung* [Department] XXII, comrade Colonel Dahl is a *Geheimnisträger*," – a "bearer of secrets."² Indeed, as leader of *Abteilung* XXII, the counterterrorism department of the *Stasi*, Dahl stood at the center of one of the biggest state secrets of the GDR. From 1980 to 1981, the *Stasi* collaborated with and trained the West German terror group, the Red Army Faction (RAF). During these years, the *Stasi* secretly resettled disillusioned RAF militants in the GDR as naturalized citizens while they simultaneously trained the remaining committed RAF militants in tactics, small-arms, and explosives. This became known as the *Aussteiger* (dropout) program. Dahl's role in the *Aussteiger* program came to light

¹ MfS Diszi 6853/92, StUA 0719-0721.

² MfS Diszi 6853/92, StUA 0717.

following the collapse of the GDR and resulted in him standing trial in the courts of a reunited Germany in 1997.

The terror of the RAF during its existence from 1970 to 1998 was consequential to Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) politics and has undoubtedly left its mark on today's reunited Germany. Even without the twist of *Stasi* collaboration or conspiracy, the RAF's persistent violence, notable women leaders, and underground existence seemingly demanded and continue to demand tabloid-esque headlines. When focusing on the *Stasi* half of the RAF-*Stasi* relationship, the collaboration on the *Aussteiger* program seems to be the apogee of *Stasi* ambition, moral dubiousness, and disregard for international law.

Stasi archives reveal that the *Stasi* relationship and collaboration with the RAF was both pragmatic and ideological, although the two strains of thought were so intertwined that they were inseparable. It is nearly impossible to distinguish the two in official *Stasi* documents. Additionally, the escalation of the relationship from RAF-*Stasi* contact in 1970 to RAF-*Stasi* collaboration in 1980 resulted, counterintuitively, from the political context of détente, as revealed in Dahl's 1974 doctoral dissertation research.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORIOGRAPHY

There is very little literature that focuses entirely on the RAF-*Stasi* relationship. Most English-language literature either on the RAF or the *Stasi* tend to confine the summary, examination, and analysis of this relationship to a few pages or a chapter at most. Even fewer words are dedicated to examining the motivations of the *Stasi* in this relationship. Few historians have attempted to directly characterize this relationship or determine the *Stasi*'s motivations. Bernhard Blumenau suggests in *The United Nations and Terrorism: Germany, Multilateralism, & Antiterrorism Efforts in the 1970s* (2014) that the *Stasi*'s motivations to build a relationship

were prudent and pragmatic, to “ensure that [the RAF] didn’t extend their struggle to the GDR.”³ German historian Jens Gieseke in *The History of the Stasi: East Germany’s Secret Police 1945-1990* (2014) contends that this RAF-*Stasi* relationship was ideological, based in “anti-imperialist solidarity.”⁴

David Childs and Richard Popplewell perhaps provide the most nuanced and elaborate English-language examination and synthesis of idealist and pragmatic motivations in their book, *The Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service* (1996). The authors give four reasons. Three of the four are pragmatic motivations; to destabilize the FRG, to gain the favor of the third-world, and to take advantage of the RAF’s connections to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).⁵ The final of the four reasons, Childs and Popplewell write, is that the leader of the GDR from 1971-1989, Erich Honecker, had “a kind of fanatical love for the RAF,” sympathizing with RAF militants, as he himself had lived the life of an underground communist radical during the late Weimar Republic and the Third Reich.⁶

It’s not impossible that the *Stasi* had a combination of all the above motivations for contacting and then eventually collaborating with the RAF. The latest investigation and analysis of the RAF-*Stasi* relationship and collaboration is in Frank Wilhelm’s *RAF im Osten: Terroristen unter dem Schutz der Stasi (RAF in the East: Terrorists under the Protection of the Stasi)* (2016). Wilhelm’s work argues that the RAF-*Stasi* relationship and collaboration was pragmatic, one of “give and take,” and that the *Stasi*, in exchange for protecting the RAF, got

³ Blumenau, *The United Nations and Terrorism*, 31.

⁴ Gieseke, *History of the Stasi*, 182.

⁵ Childs and Popplewell, *The Stasi*, 140-141.

⁶ Childs and Popplewell, *The Stasi*, 141.

information, a valuable currency in intelligence work.⁷ Wilhelm's work, however, focuses on the 1980-1982 naturalization and resettling portion of the *Aussteiger* program, the new GDR lives of former RAF militants. His work does not trace the deeper origins of this collaboration.

To further clarify these historians' points that this RAF-*Stasi* relationship was ideological and pragmatic, one must understand that ideology and pragmatism, in the case of the *Stasi*, were inseparable and not explicitly distinct from each other. Additionally, to understand the wider context of the evolution of this RAF-*Stasi* relationship from off-standish contact in 1970 to *Aussteiger* program collaboration in 1980, one must widen the temporal scope of the historiography.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The *Stasi* may have had a combination of all the above motivations for contacting the RAF and collaborating with the group. However, the *Stasi* was a highly bureaucratized institution, comprised of thousands of analysts, field officers, informants, secretaries, policymakers, forensic scientists, logisticians, etc. Many times, the *Stasi* intentionally shrouded the truth via internal covers, disinformation, or lying by omission. To survey the entire *Stasi* archives for any mention, reference, or allusion to the RAF would not only be impractical, but also fraught with intentionally sown contradictory information. For these reasons, it may be impossible to identify in the archives exactly where, when, and from whom this idea of a *Stasi*-RAF collaboration originated. Investigating Colonel Harry Dahl serves to overcome these limitations, as the documents of *Abteilung XXII* and its involvement with the RAF coalesce around him. Dahl served as the direct link between the RAF and the *Stasi* and was the architect of the *Stasi*'s *Aussteiger* program. Understanding Dahl's background, education, and career is a

⁷ Wilhelm, *RAF im Osten*, 22-23.

way to more precisely characterize and understand the RAF-*Stasi* collaboration, its motivations, and the relationship's transformation from 1970 into the 1980s.

To investigate Dahl's past is to interrogate his own personal and professional motivations as well as his ideological and theoretical foundations that fed into his work at *Abteilung XXII*. Perhaps most important is the inclusion and examination of documents that Dahl produced while at the Graduate Law School of the Ministry of State Security (JHS) where he pursued his *juris doctor*. By investigating research produced during his time at the JHS and his years at *Abteilung XXII*, one can better understand his approach and calculus towards having the *Stasi* establish collaboration with the RAF.

By tracing the transformation of the RAF-*Stasi* relationship from contact to collaboration over the course of a decade during *détente* reveals that intelligence apparatuses react to changing geopolitical dynamics, not by reexamining the likelihood of threats and adjusting accordingly, but by reinterpreting how old threats will manifest in new forms. The intelligence apparatus, like any bureaucracy, seeks to either maintain or to expand itself in budget, personnel, and operations- never to shrink itself or disappear entirely. It persists in justifying its own existence.

Additionally, when the GDR's single-party state intelligence apparatus became so ossified in their politics and bureaucracy, policy became an inseparable amalgamation of ideology and pragmatism. It became impossible to determine what policies are pragmatic or ideological. Apparatchiks justified the pragmatic policy by using an ideological framework and rhetoric. It became unclear what the motivation for the policy truly was. For single-party state GDR to openly enact policy based on a pragmatic approach that is antithetical to the single-party state's ideology was to admit the limitations of that single party's ideology. To conceal this

uncomfortable reality that there were limitations to the GDR single-party state's ideology, the GDR's *Stasi* couched all policy in an ideological framework and in ideological rhetoric.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT

Over the decades of its official existence, from 1970 to 1998, the RAF had three unofficial “generations” of militants. Over the first decade or so, the RAF saw a familiar cycle wherein the group would engage in violent attacks against West German, American, and other “imperialistic” targets, with their repertoire spanning arson, hostage-taking, bombings, shootings, and robberies. Following these concerted campaigns, FRG authorities cracked down on the group, arresting and subsequently imprisoning any RAF members they could get their hands on. In an act of bold (and maybe strategically harebrained) solidarity and loyalty, the remaining free and underground RAF militants launched concerted campaigns to either directly jailbreak their comrades, or to put pressure on the FRG government to free them. This spurred further crackdowns of arrests and imprisonments, and the cycle continued. The three generations of the RAF were closely tied to this cycle. The FRG rounded up and imprisoned RAF leaders, after which more junior members stepped up to lead, filling their predecessors' role.

In April of 1968, Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin set alight two Frankfurt department stores to protest the American napalm bombings in Vietnam.⁸ The lovers, following their convictions of arson by the FRG courts, spent fourteen months in prison and reentered free German society on June 13, 1969, while waiting for a decision on their sentence appeal.⁹

After losing their appeal, Baader and Ensslin fled and went underground. FRG authorities later rearrested Baader during a traffic stop in 1970. During this time, Ensslin contacted Ulrike Meinhof, a West German journalist who ran in sympathetic leftist circles. Ulrike and Ensslin

⁸ Schmeidel, *Stasi*, 145.

⁹ Aust, *Baader-Meinhof*, 46.

plotted to spring Baader from jail, a plan they and three other co-conspirators executed on May 14, 1970. This became the birthday of the Red Army Faction.

On the run, the group went to Jordan, where they received effective guerilla training from the PLO and PFLP, before they surreptitiously trickled back into the FRG via East Berlin's Schönefeld Airport. Following the successful rescue attempt, training in Jordan, and infiltration into the FRG, the group published tracts and manifestos in popular leftist papers. The group's ideology ranged through Marxist-Leninism, Maoism, antiauthoritarianism, anarchism, internationalism, etc. The only consistent rhetorical and ideological strain was anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism. Meinhof, the most educated of the first RAF generation, did her best to synthesize the group's ideology and tactics in a pamphlet titled "The Red Army Faction: The Urban Guerilla Concept" in 1971.

Equipped with their training in Jordan, the RAF engaged in a series of bank robberies and bombings from 1971 until the eventual arrest of the first-generation founders in mid-1972. Schmeidel writes "like a disciplined regiment of World War I that has seen the first wave go down before the machine guns, the true believers outside planned the founders' release for a full five years and then stepped up to the line."¹⁰ From 1973 to 1977, even after the arrest of the first generation's leaders, the RAF continued to engage in militant activity, ranging from seizing the FRG embassy in Stockholm, to raiding Swiss armories for small arms and explosives.

1977 proved to be the most consequential year for the RAF. With Baader, Ensslin, Möller, and Raspe in Stammheim prison since 1972, the still at-large RAF members stepped up to fill the leadership roles. Brigitte Mohnhaupt proved to be one of the most consequential leaders of the RAF during its most consequential year. German authorities arrested her during

¹⁰ Schmeidel, *Stasi*, 147.

the initial wave of arrests of RAF members in 1972. After her conviction, Mohnhaupt requested a transfer to Stammheim prison in 1976 where she met Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe. FRG authorities released Mohnhaupt from Stammheim prison on February 8, 1977. She immediately went to work to coordinate a string of violent acts that would come to be called “German Autumn” of 1977, which culminated in a concerted effort to force FRG authorities to release Ensslin, Baader, Raspe, and Möller from Stammheim.

On April 7, 1977, the RAF killed Siegfried Buback, attorney-general of the FRG in an ambush. On July 30, 1977, the RAF killed Jürgen Ponto, head of the Dresdner Bank in a botched kidnapping attempt. On September 5, 1977, the RAF took Hanns Martin Schleyer, president of the German employers’ association hostage. The RAF intended to use Schleyer as a hostage to secure the release of the RAF’s imprisoned members from Stammheim prison. For five weeks, neither the FRG government nor the RAF budged. On October 13, 1977, the PFLP hijacked Lufthansa Flight 181 in solidarity with the RAF. The PFLP demanded the release of the RAF leaders as well as imprisoned PFLP militants. On October 18, 1977, FRG commandos of the counterterror unit GSG 9 stormed Lufthansa 181 on the Mogadishu tarmac and rescued the passengers. That night, Stammheim prison guards found Baader, Raspe, and Ensslin dead in their cells. The next day, French authorities recovered Schleyer’s body from the trunk of an Audi in Mulhouse.

For the RAF, this disaster meant the death of the first generation and the beginning of the end for the second. From the end of 1977 to 1979, the RAF was on the backfoot, vulnerable, and desperately needed to retreat underground and regroup.

The earliest recorded contact between the RAF and the *Stasi* took place in 1970. While finishing up their training with the PFLP, the fledgling RAF sent member Hans-Jürgen Bäcker

back to the FRG as a scout to reconnoiter the situation and to prepare for the group's return. To enter West Berlin, Bäcker entered by way of East Berlin's Schönefeld airport. Here, the *Stasi* detained Bäcker at the airport and drove him to a secondary location to interrogate him.¹¹ Bäcker was shocked about how much his *Stasi* interrogators already knew. They knew the group's code names, the individuals responsible for freeing Baader earlier that year, their activities in the training camp in Jordan, and so on.¹² The *Stasi* already had an early, intense interest in surveilling the whereabouts, activities, and composition of the RAF. Following this interrogation, the *Stasi* released Bäcker into West Berlin.

From 1970 until 1978, the *Stasi* continued surveilling and monitoring RAF movements, activities, capabilities, and intentions. There is no surviving recorded contact in the archives between these groups during these years. The next time that the RAF and the *Stasi* would have contact would be in 1978, when *Stasi* Colonel Harry Dahl initiated contact with militant Inge Viett. With information provided by Viett, Dahl began planning the details for the execution of the *Aussteiger* program. The *Aussteiger* program sought to resettle and naturalize demoralized and fatigued RAF militants in the GDR following the RAF failure of the 1977 German Autumn, as well as to train the remaining, hardcore RAF militants. In 1970, the relationship between the RAF and the *Stasi* was one of restrained contact; by 1978, the relationship began becoming one of collaboration. Colonel Harry Dahl was at the center of this change in the RAF-*Stasi* relationship.

CHAPTER 5: HARRY DAHL

¹¹ Aust, *Baader-Meinhof*, 72.

¹² Aust, *Baader-Meinhof*, 73.

Harry Dahl was born August 7, 1929, in Schönebeck, on the Elbe River. According to his *Stasi* records, Dahl's "social origins/background" was that of a family of workers.¹³ Dahl joined the Hitler Youth in 1939- which Hitler's Germany made mandatory in 1936- and remained in the organization until the end of the war in 1945. His *Stasi* records noted that he was too young to have officially joined the Nazi party and that he never wound up in the hands the Western Allies as a prisoner of war.¹⁴ In 1945 at sixteen years old, Dahl joined the Anti-Fascist Youth, which would later become the Free German Youth, the youth-wing of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED).¹⁵ Dahl's early biography and background certainly made him an ideal candidate to work for and succeed in the *Stasi*.

After the war's end, Dahl went to trade school to be an industrial clerk at Schönebeck's VEB chemical factory. While an apprentice, Dahl joined the SED on March 5, 1947, just months before his eighteenth birthday. The SED had only been founded eleven months before. This enthusiasm and eagerness were characteristic of Dahl's involvement and achievement within the *Stasi* and the party at large.

While Dahl switched jobs from an apprentice at the VEB chemical factory to a laborer at the local wood processing plant, he remained committed to SED activities, education, and organizing. From 1945-1949, Dahl completed a fourteen-day district party school twice, as well as a four-week course administered by the Free German Workers Union. Armed with a solid political foundation and ideological education, Dahl left the industrial sector and joined the People's Police (VP) in 1949.

¹³ MfS KS 108/90 Bd. 1, StUA, 26.

¹⁴ MfS KS 108/90 Bd. 1, StUA, 26.

¹⁵ MfS KS 108/90 Bd. 1, StUA, 26.

Joining the VP was Dahl's entrance into the world of the GDR's security, intelligence, and law apparatuses. Following his completion of officer school, the VP assigned him to Burg in Saxony-Anhalt, where he carried out his duties as commissar of political culture, and then head propagandist. In 1953, Dahl held his first VP command in the village of Kirchmöser.¹⁶ Dahl's career progress and placement in positions critical to the SED's political and ideological hegemony (as commissar, propagandist), as well as his early and consistent involvement in party functions during his time as an industrial worker in Schönebeck suggest that he was, from the start, committed to the SED's ruling ideology and the GDR's success.

Before leaving the VP to work for the *Stasi*, Dahl had to undergo extensive screening and background checks. On February 1, 1956, the *Stasi* published its final report on Dahl's background and fitness for duty with their agency. The *Stasi* investigations found that Dahl was a "good comrade, one that's class-bound and that works in the interests of our party."¹⁷ A month later, the *Stasi* officially permitted Dahl to join.

CHAPTER 6: DISSERTATION VVS MFS 160-809/73

From his entrance into the *Stasi* on March 1, 1956, to autumn of 1958, Dahl worked in the administrative role of case manager in Frankfurt (Oder). That fall, Dahl attended the predecessor institution that would become the JHS for the first time. There he received two years of training to be a "political operative."¹⁸ During Dahl's first course of study, the JHS (known at *Stasi* school) offered only courses of study that would provide *Stasi* officers with supplemental training and professional development.¹⁹

¹⁶ Kaderkarteikarte Harry Dahl, 4.

¹⁷ MfS KS 108/90 Bd. 1, StUA, 28.

¹⁸ Kaderkarteikarte Harry Dahl, 1.

¹⁹ "Doktoren Der Tschekistik," Das Bundesarchiv, accessed February 14, 2025.

Fitting with the *Stasi* culture, the JHS was a slippery institution, one that hid in plain sight and obscured its own purpose. The “law school” did not exist in the official GDR university directory, nor did its conferred degrees betray the true nature of its purpose.²⁰ Every student studied in uniform and all work was subject to *Stasi* censorship and confidentiality regulations.²¹ By 1965, the JHS moved beyond chekist vocational courses and earned the right to confer state-recognized law degrees, such as *diplom jurist*, the equivalent of completing a master’s degree in law. Three years later, the JHS received the ability to confer the degree of *juris doctor*.²² Dahl would receive both graduate degrees from the JHS, *diplom jurist* in 1968 and *juris doctor* in 1974.

The Cold War in which Dahl found himself by 1974 during his *juris doctor* studies at the JHS was quite different from the Cold War during which he entered the *Stasi* in 1956. There were two major developments- first were the conditions of *détente*, the other was the rise of international terrorism.

In 1969 under the leadership of Chancellor Willy Brandt, the FRG began pursuing *Ostpolitik* as its policy towards the GDR. Brandt and his party (the Social Democratic Party) began the normalization of relations between the FRG and the GDR. This normalization culminated in the Basic Treaty of 1972, in which the two republics formally recognized each other for the first time since their founding. In addition to these formalities, the two republics also signed the Transit Agreement of 1972, a treaty that permitted the travel of West Germans into East Germany, and vice versa (although, for East Germans, only in the case of family emergencies). Indeed, *détente* was manifesting in the heart of Europe.

²⁰ “Doktoren Der Tschekistik,” Das Bundesarchiv, accessed February 14, 2025.

²¹ “Doktoren Der Tschekistik,” Das Bundesarchiv, accessed February 14, 2025.

²² “Doktoren Der Tschekistik,” Das Bundesarchiv, accessed February 14, 2025.

Between 1972 to 1982, there were an average of five million visitors to the GDR annually, putting immense strain on the *Stasi* surveillance apparatus.²³ While these treaties served to bolster the prestige, legitimacy, and soft-power of the GDR, the *Stasi* quickly perceived that détente also meant increased threats to the physical security and ideological foundations of the GDR. As historian Jens Gieseke put it in his book *The History of the Stasi* (2014), “the treaties created many new contact opportunities between East and West that were considered suspicious on principle, because the West would use them, or so they feared, to ‘intensify its counterrevolutionary, subversive activities.’”²⁴

As the number of visitors to the GDR and the contacts between the republics ballooned throughout the 1970s, so did the phenomenon of international terrorism. As the antagonisms between the Cold War blocs softened in the 1970s on a global scale in general, and between the two German republics specifically, the phenomenon of international terrorism became a serious political force and security crisis. No terrorist organization looms larger in postwar German history than the left-wing Red Army Faction.

While the RAF may have been the most direct and immediate group for the *Stasi* to closely monitor, there were plenty of other terrorist organizations popping up around the FRG, Europe, and the wider world. The FRG alone had the RAF, the 2nd of June Movement (2JM), and Revolutionary Cells (RZ). In Italy, there were the Red Brigades, in Japan, the Japanese Red Army. In the middle-east there were the PFLP and the PLO. Many of these organizations were either internationalist by ideology or were nationalist liberation movements with international contacts. This meant the *Stasi* couldn’t treat the RAF as though they were bound to national German borders or as though they were isolated from other organizations. This would be most

²³ Gieseke, *History of the Stasi*, 62.

²⁴ Gieseke, *History of the Stasi*, 61.

evident in the assistance from the PFLP during the German Autumn Lufthansa 181 hijacking. Widespread international terrorism was an emergent, complicated, and tangled security concern for the *Stasi* that coincided with the changing conditions of détente.

In spring 1974, the review committee announced its decision to accept the research of *Stasi* officers Major Achtenberg, Lieutenant Colonel Pätzel, and Lieutenant Colonel Dahl, and to award each of them the academic credentials of *juris doctor*.²⁵ The three men collaborated on their 556 page dissertation, titled “The Qualification of the Preemptive and Offensive Fight Against Anti-State Activities of Covert Warfare under the Current Conditions of the Class Struggle,” listed in the *Stasi* internal directory as document “VVS MfS 160-809/73.” It was not uncommon for dissertations to be a group project. According to Gunter Förster, of all 174 dissertations completed at JHS over its approximate twenty years of awarding JDs, 41 were completed by groups of three students.²⁶ The dissertation was laden with Marxist-Leninist jargon. The introduction stated:

The policy of détente and the development of friendly cooperation between states is wholeheartedly supported by the peoples of the entire progressive, peace-loving world and public. However, there are still forces that, acting in the spirit of the “cold war,” oppose international détente, and advocate the increase of war preparations and the inflating of war budgets... the increased anti-communism and anti-Sovietism as well as the increased agitation against the GDR and its policy of enforcing the principles of friendly coexistence in relations with the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin, prove the hostile subversive

²⁵ MfS JHS 129, BTSU 20.

²⁶ Förster, “Die Dissertationen an der ‘Juristischen Hochschule‘ des MfS,” 41.

activities... [we all must] observe V.I. Lenin's fundamental advice: "the first commandment of our politics, the first lesson that everyone must adopt is... be on guard, remember that we are surrounded by people, classes, and governments that express the greatest hatred against us."²⁷

In other words, the authors recognized that the world was in a moment of *détente*, but insisted that the *détente*, through the lens of Marxism-Leninism, was only a new tactic of the capitalist adversary, a ruse to manipulate peace-loving peoples in the third world and in the Eastern Bloc to let their guards down. This is what the title meant by "current conditions of the class-struggle." This paper obsessed over infiltration and "subversive activities," and stated that the intent of its research was to "provide a practical assessment of the enemy's concept of covert warfare."²⁸ Achtenberg, Pätzelt, and Dahl wanted to qualify, or describe and assess, the new means by which adversarial powers were attempting to continue their "covert warfare" against the GDR while under the backdrop of alleged peace, coexistence, and *détente*. This dissertation's extensive scope covered things such as "special forces of NATO armed forces," "political-ideological diversion," "on the training and schooling of agents," "on collaboration with the forces of the German *Volkspolizei*," etc.

This dissertation was based around the idea that during a period of *détente*, the *Stasi* must watch for foreign infiltrators and agents provocateurs. The paper pointed out that these infiltrators engaged in "covert warfare" for three purposes. The first was to seize power in a country while avoiding open war, the second was to achieve strategic secondary goals, and lastly, to act as a trigger or a concomitant of open war.²⁹ This fear was not completely

²⁷ JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 10-12.

²⁸ JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 12.

²⁹ JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 3.

unfounded; the authors pointed to recent US involvement in the 1973 Pinochet coup in Chile. Despite this understandable concern, either founded or unfounded, the research imagined these infiltrators, saboteurs, and subversives in several different ways, such as US Army special forces, West Germans with mental illness, or East Germans that had defected and decided to come back to seek revenge on their former state.

Most telling is this dissertation's dedicated section on the role of terrorism in the enemy's conduct of covert warfare. After the paper gave a broad introduction and an explanation of the three types of covert warfare listed above, the second chapter had a section titled "on the relationship of terrorism to covert warfare." While it's unclear which of the *Stasi* authors worked on which part, or to what extent each man contributed to a section, it's worth noting Dahl became head of *Abteilung XXII*, the counterterrorism department, a year after completion of this dissertation. This portion of the research was likely his work.

The dissertation stated, "since imperialism is forced to adapt to its changed conditions [of détente] it attaches great importance to terrorism... terrorism has become a striking manifestation of the aggressiveness of modern imperialism."³⁰ Yet the sizable section on the analysis of terrorism as a means of covert warfare by the enemy focused primarily on left-wing terrorism. Most terror organizations listed above declared themselves and branded themselves as anything from broadly leftist or anti-imperialist to Marxist-Leninist. Despite this, Dahl and his coauthors saw these alleged, if not nominal, allies as threats to the GDR and its security. Dahl and his authors recognized this contradiction. The dissertation says:

All terrorist acts by extremist forces have an essentially internal connection...roots and conditions in imperialism. At first glance, this statement

³⁰ MfS JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 81-82.

appears paradoxical, particularly in relation to the terrorism of left-wing extremist forces. However, it has already been pointed out by the classics of Marxism-Leninism that all forms of individual terror and counterrevolutionary terror derive their justification from essentially the same reactionary ideologies and political doctrines that aim at the perpetuation of the antagonistic class society...the left-wing forces, which derive their political and ideological motivation for terror from pseudo-revolutionary concepts, are therefore objectively pro-imperialist with regards to their position in the class struggle and serve imperialism just as much as the criminal activities of other forces, such as fascist terrorists. The history of the class struggle up to recent times provides a wealth of examples (for example, both right and left wing extremist acts of violence were involved to varying degrees in the creation of the reactionary military coup in Chile.). This internal connection between the various forms of terrorism was and is consciously used by the enemy; he sees the interplay between left- and right-wing extremist terrorism directed by the intelligence services as a sophisticated means of counterrevolutionary strategy. The use of left-wing extremist terrorism has been a welcome addition to the means of politics for the imperialist state since the balance of class forces has changed in favor of the socialist camp, in particular to wage the fight against the revolutionary workers' movement and its allies.³¹

In other words, these left-wing extremist groups were not ideologically sound, and therefore they didn't understand that their botched and misinterpreted revolutionary struggle only led to the capitalist powers to be able to "discredit the revolutionary anti-imperialist movement,

³¹ MfS JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 88-89.

to portray all real revolutionaries as supporters of senseless violence and to deter those who feel drawn to the ideas of scientific socialism and the active peace policy of the socialist community.”³²

The dissertation discussed how individuals, out of “ideological confusion,” “passionate indignation,” and “inexperience,” could turn to terrorism, and states that to prevent this, “these forces [must be] brought to the side of the Marxist-Leninist workers’ movement through the political work of the communists or the dialectic of the revolutionary struggle.”³³ If they are not, then these individuals or groups will engage in “primitive” terrorism, a rejection of “all other forms of real class struggle.”³⁴

Dahl and his coauthors did not only fear that left wing terrorism would be exploited by adversarial powers to discredit socialism and the Eastern Bloc as a whole but also warned that Western Bloc intelligence agencies would actively manipulate left-wing organizations to goad them into turning their violence against socialist states. The dissertation alluded to the exploitability of the Sino-Soviet split, as well as the sectarian divides between Maoism, Trotskyism, Marxist-Leninism, etc. “In this respect,” the dissertation stated, “it is increasingly becoming a real ‘moral revolutionary duty’ for the left-wing extremist groups to direct their ‘direct actions’ against the socialist countries ‘in the name of the revolution.’ In principle, these forces have also become a reservoir for covert warfare [by the imperialists], whose main direction of attack is directed against the socialist community. There is no need for a particularly sophisticated ‘ideological justification’ for the imperialist intelligence agencies to inspire left-

³² MfS JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 92.

³³ MfS JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 90.

³⁴ MfS JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 91.

wing extremist groups located in western countries or on the territory of socialist countries to carry out criminal acts against the socialist state and social order.”³⁵

The dissertation also directly addressed the increasingly traversable border established by détente’s normalization of relations between the FRG and GDR, saying “the increased opportunities for citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany/West Berlin to enter the GDR does not also exclude the possibility that certain enemy elements... may decide, out of hatred, feelings of rashness and other hostile motives, to enter the GDR... to resort to terrorist acts of violence during a visit.”³⁶

This section of the dissertation on terrorism closed by conflating terrorism with a means of covert warfare by the enemy, and stated that “terrorist acts of violence... must be countered by a superior Chekist fighting force that ensures the successful defense and offensive destruction of terrorist acts on the territory of the GDR.”³⁷ All in all, Dahl and his coauthors’ writing on terrorism in the context of détente and the tasks of the *Stasi* is that left-wing terrorism was a threat to socialism, through its discrediting of the ideology and the justification it provided for the suppression of socialist sentiment. On the other hand, Dahl and his coauthors believed that the ideological immaturity, misguidedness, and inexperience of fledgling left-wing terrorist organizations left them vulnerable to manipulation by Western intelligence services, manipulation that would lead these groups to attack socialist states such as the GDR.

Dahl, Pätzelt, and Achtenberg in their 1974 dissertation wrote explicitly about the left-wing terrorism and its relationship to “covert warfare” under the new and “current conditions of the class struggle” (détente). While an interesting academic pursuit to analyze emergent

³⁵ MfS JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 93-94.

³⁶ MfS JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 100.

³⁷ MfS JHS 21834, Bd. 1, BStU 101.

conditions of their time, this research was not merely a check in the box to help with these men's promotions or professional development. Even before its completion, this research was intended to be applied as policy of the *Stasi*.

In a letter addressed to Major General Professor Doctor Pösel from September 21, 1973, an unknown person urged Pösel to set a date for the defense. While the signature is illegible on the document, the person's rank is unmistakable: Lieutenant General. Pösel was the chairman of Dahl's dissertation committee, his rank subordinate to the author of this letter. The author reminds Pösel that Dahl's research is relevant to the JHS research plan developed in 1970, and that "since the topic of this work is now extremely topical and deserves serious attention, the related final procedure at the JHS must be concluded without delay. The urgency arises from the need to apply the findings in political and operational practice... I therefore consider it necessary that the work of Comrade Major Dahl and others be completed... at short notice and that the date for the defense be set."³⁸ This Lieutenant General's specific mention of Dahl as well as his insistence on the implementation of Dahl's research proves that the dissertation and its findings were intended to be implemented as *Stasi* policy. The implementation of Dahl's research as *Stasi* policy culminated in, or at least foreshadowed, the RAF-*Stasi* collaboration of the 1980 *Aussteiger* program.

Dahl's research on terrorism pointed out that all terrorism, including left-wing terrorism, was in the service of the "imperialist enemy" for two reasons. The first, is that left wing terrorists, due to their primitive and underdeveloped ideological understanding (in this case "class consciousness"), operate in a myopic manner, engaging in violence that only enabled counterrevolutionary forces to further discredit and repress legitimate left-wing sentiment and

³⁸ MfS JHS 129, BStU 12.

speech. The second is that, once again, due to a lack of a strong ideological foundation, these groups were easily exploitable and able to be manipulated by adversarial intelligence agencies. This could lead to adversarial intelligence agencies egging on these groups to attack the community of socialist states, inflaming infighting and ideological hairsplitting. Perhaps, a group like the RAF required a paternalistic guiding force such as the *Stasi* to prevent these two possibilities from becoming a reality.

Dahl and his coauthors understood their research and conclusions through context of the proliferation of international terrorism and the emerging context of détente. The assumption was that the enemy would no longer act as openly and directly confrontational, and that adversarial powers would attempt more covert and subversive means to destabilize socialist states (such as the GDR). One of those means, of course, being terrorism. The GDR's borders became more porous, and the intelligence of the apparatus of the *Stasi* became even more watchful and suspicious.

CHAPTER 7: CONSPIRATORIAL FACILITY 74

In November 1976, Colonel Harry Dahl, who was now leader of *Abteilung XXII*, wrote a proposal to his boss. The *Stasi* formed *Abteilung XXII* in 1975 in the wake of the attacks on the 1972 Munich Olympics and tasked the organ with counterterrorism. Taking charge of Department XXII was Dahl's first job following the completion of his JD dissertation just a year before. In this eleven-page document, Colonel Dahl laid out his "suggestion to create a multi-purpose base for the implementation of the specific tasks of *Abteilung XXII*."³⁹

³⁹ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Vorschlag zur Einrichtung eines Ausbildungsobjektes für die Abteilung XXII*, November, 1976, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 21916, BL 10-20, 1, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/vorschlag-zur-einrichtung-eines-ausbildungsobjektes-fuer-die-abteilung-xxii/blatt/10/>.

In this document Dahl highlighted what he saw as the need for further training and development of *Abteilung XXII* employees in counterterrorism activities. He claimed that while the *Abteilung XXII* had been successful in counterterrorism efforts thus far, the department suffered from both “insufficient... [*Abteilung XXII*] training sites for combat forces” and weak staffing if *Abteilung XXII* were to double their activities.⁴⁰ To remedy these insufficiencies in *Abteilung XXII*, Dahl proposed the creation of a purpose-made training facility for *Abteilung XXII* operatives. Before outlining his specific vision of how this training site would look, he identified the “political-operational objectives and tasks” of these sites. He wrote of increasing enemy activities and plans against the GDR, not only from what he deemed “revanch[ist] [and] neo-Nazi” components in the FRG, but also from left-wing organizations. Dahl wrote “a similar tendency can be seen in left-wing extremist centers and organizations- particularly the Maoist ones.”

This was an acknowledgement of left-wing groups in the FRG such as the 2nd of June Movement, the Revolutionary Cells, and the RAF. Each of these groups had somewhat ambiguous and broadly leftist ideals, ranging from anarchism to Marxist-Leninism and Maoism. It's clear that the *Stasi* continued to be suspicious of the RAF, although not directly opposed. *Abteilung XXII* sought to continue monitoring and uncovering RAF plans and activities.

In this document, Dahl provided his specific vision of how this covert training site would look, as well as a timeline he intended for its construction. He wrote that in 1976, the year of this proposal, *Abteilung XXII* should acquire the construction means, funds, and security for its

⁴⁰ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Vorschlag zur Einrichtung eines Ausbildungsobjektes für die Abteilung XXII*, November, 1976, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 21916, BL 10-20, 2-3, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/vorschlag-zur-einrichtung-eines-ausbildungsobjektes-fuer-die-abteilung-xxii/blatt/10/>.

property in Brenau in order to begin its covert conversion into a training site.⁴¹ In 1977, Dahl wrote that the construction project should begin building “an accommodation building, connected to a shooting cellar and garage complex,” as well as creating an energy supply, water and wastewater supply, and a heating system.⁴² From 1978 and on, Dahl proposed, *Abteilung XXII* could periodically reexamine and reevaluate what further things were needed until the project was complete.

Dahl spent the rest of the document describing the specific and technical requirements for *Abteilung XXII* to carry out its mission. At this site, *Abteilung XXII* oversaw “the instruction and training of unofficial combat forces” and with “tactical actions of bringing together unofficially active people who are being prepared for specific actions and operations.”⁴³

One may find it peculiar that a department whose official purpose was to engage in counterterrorism planned to train and prepare “unofficially active people” and “unofficial combat forces” for “specific actions and operations.” By its nature, counterterrorism, while having its covert and secretive aspects, is a state function that seeks to reassert the state’s legitimacy and monopoly on violence in the face of nonstate actors who engage in violence to achieve political ends. By its nature, counterterrorism is an official state function. It’s clear that Dahl intended for this site to be used for the training of terror organizations.

⁴¹ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Vorschlag zur Einrichtung eines Ausbildungsobjektes für die Abteilung XXII*, November, 1976, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 21916, BL 10-20, 5, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/vorschlag-zur-einrichtung-eines-ausbildungsobjektes-fuer-die-abteilung-xxii/blatt/10/>.

⁴² Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Vorschlag zur Einrichtung eines Ausbildungsobjektes für die Abteilung XXII*, November, 1976, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 21916, BL 10-20, 5, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/vorschlag-zur-einrichtung-eines-ausbildungsobjektes-fuer-die-abteilung-xxii/blatt/10/>.

⁴³ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Vorschlag zur Einrichtung eines Ausbildungsobjektes für die Abteilung XXII*, November, 1976, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 21916, BL 10-20, 7, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/vorschlag-zur-einrichtung-eines-ausbildungsobjektes-fuer-die-abteilung-xxii/blatt/10/>.

Additionally, much of what Dahl describes as his vision for this training site in Brenau carried over to the so-called “Conspiratorial Facility 74.” Conspiratorial Facility 74 was the covert training site in Briesen where the *Stasi* would train the RAF in small arms, small unit tactics, and explosives from 1980 to 1981. It appears that this proposal by Dahl for the creation of a covert *Abteilung XXII* training site in Bernau was the blueprint for *Stasi* covert training sites that would pop up elsewhere in the GDR until the fall of the Berlin Wall in October 1989. Documents in the *Stasi* archives concerning these training sites appeared as late as June 1989 (“Service Facility ‘Walli’”). Dahl proposed that this Brenau site be a purpose-designed complex with staff rooms, map rooms, guard rooms, a shooting cellar, armories, a physical training hall, barracks, a medical aid station, storage, garages, long-term accommodations, a workshop, and capacity for up to 150 people.

This 1976 document penned by Dahl, who would later personally instigate the RAF *Aussteiger* program by contacting Inge Viett in 1978, shows a measure of premeditation on behalf of the *Stasi* to work with and train the RAF, or at least “unofficial combat forces.” Dahl’s proposal created the blueprint for covert training sites for the *Stasi*, sites that would later appear across the GDR, most importantly, in Briesen, where the RAF would live and train with the *Stasi*. Photos of Conspiratorial Facility 74 in Briesen reveal similarities between that RAF-*Stasi* training site and what Dahl described in his proposal for the Brenau site. In Dahl’s 1976 proposal, it’s evident that he intended to apply his 1974 JD research on terrorism as *Stasi* policy.

CHAPTER 8: THE *AUSSTEIGER* PROGRAM

Inge Viett, originally a 2nd of June Movement member, became an essential connection between the *Stasi* and the RAF. Her involvement was essential to the *Aussteiger* program, a program designed to naturalize demoralized RAF members as GDR citizens and to give

specialized combat training to the remaining RAF faithful. Historian John Schmeidel described her as one of “the most colorful of figures, even by the standards of international terrorism.”⁴⁴ Born in 1944, Viett was involved in the 1970 bombing of the Berlin Yacht Club, escaped jail in 1973, was a leader in the 1975 Peter Lorenz kidnapping, and then escaped jail again in 1978. Upon her escape from jail, Viett headed to Eastern Europe via East Berlin’s Schönefeld airport. At Schönefeld, the *Stasi* detained Viett and there she met Dahl. Dahl permitted Viett and her associates to proceed in their travels further east. Upon entering Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovakian authorities arrested her on May 27, 1978.

In a document from June 30, 1978, the *Stasi* wrote a report on Viett’s arrest in Czechoslovakia, a Warsaw Pact ally of the GDR. The document describes her past terror activity and her arrest for falsified documents. This report states that while under arrest, “Inge V... asked the CSSR [Czechoslovak Socialist Republic] comrades to contact the [*Stasi*] comrades with whom [she] had already been in contact in the past.”⁴⁵ The report went on to explain that “based on the unanimous position of the management of the Ministry of the Interior, of the CSSR, and the *Stasi*, for political reasons, under no circumstances should these people be extradited to the Federal Republic of Germany, the decision was made to hand over the three people mentioned to the *Stasi*.”⁴⁶ From there, the CSSR transported Viett and her associates to Schönefeld airport, where the *Stasi* again arrested them. Here Viett reunited with Colonel Dahl, a meeting which, according to Schmeidel, “had made the RAF and the 2nd of June Movement formally adopted

⁴⁴ Schmeidel, *Stasi*, 149.

⁴⁵ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Bericht über die Freilassung von Inge Viett, Ingrid Siepmann, und Regine Nikolai in der CSSR auf Initiative des MfS*, June 30, 1978, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 19188, BL 11-13, 2, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/bericht-ueber-die-freilassung-von-inge-viett-ingrid-siepmann-und-regine-nikolai-in-der-cssr-auf-initiative-des-mfs/blatt/11/>.

⁴⁶ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Bericht über die Freilassung von Inge Viett, Ingrid Siepmann, und Regine Nikolai in der CSSR auf Initiative des MfS*, June 30, 1978, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 19188, BL 11-13, 2, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/bericht-ueber-die-freilassung-von-inge-viett-ingrid-siepmann-und-regine-nikolai-in-der-cssr-auf-initiative-des-mfs/blatt/11/>.

children of the *Stasi*.”⁴⁷ The report on Viett’s arrest ended by stating the three FRG citizens were taken and “transported to a conspiracy facility” in the GDR, a conspiratorial facility that Dahl himself proposed.⁴⁸

On October 8, 1980, the *Stasi* produced a document titled “Information Report on Leading Member of the ‘RAF’- Viett, Inge.” The report contained all the information that the *Stasi* had on Viett- from her upbringing to her terror activities. Whomever wrote this most certainly did not have the full picture, most likely due to a lack of a higher security clearance. Absent from the report is her release from the CSSR on behalf of the *Stasi*, her transport to a conspiracy facility, or her direct contact with the *Stasi* and Dahl specifically. It’s possible these could have also been excluded for the purposes of later deniability.

Just five days later, on October 13, 1980, the *Stasi* produced a list of “GDR connections with operationally important people.” In this report of 26 people with connections to the 2nd of June Movement and the RAF, it included their full names, legal status, arrest record, “operationally significant clues,” general comments, and “suggestions for decision.”⁴⁹ These “suggestions for decision” were things such as “further reconnaissance,” “defensive measures,” or “possible operational use.”⁵⁰ This was the RAF and *Stasi* creating their roster for the upcoming *Aussteiger* program. Conspicuously absent from this list was Inge Viett.

⁴⁷ Schmeidel, *Stasi*, 156.

⁴⁸ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Bericht über die Freilassung von Inge Viett, Ingrid Siepmann, und Regine Nikolai in der CSSR auf Initiative des MfS*, June 30, 1978, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 19188, BL 11-13, 3, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/bericht-ueber-die-freilassung-von-inge-viett-ingrid-siepmann-und-regine-nikolai-in-der-cssr-auf-initiative-des-mfs/blatt/11/>.

⁴⁹ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Aufstellung der DDR-Verbindungen von RAF-Mitgliedern*, October 13, 1978, Das Bundesarchiv, BD. 9, BL. 1-6, 1, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/aufstellung-der-ddr-verbindungen-von-raf-mitgliedern/>.

⁵⁰ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, *Aufstellung der DDR-Verbindungen von RAF-Mitgliedern*, October 13, 1978, Das Bundesarchiv, BD. 9, BL. 1-6, 1, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/aufstellung-der-ddr-verbindungen-von-raf-mitgliedern/>.

Schmeidel writes that “under Harry Dahl’s orders, it was Inge Viett who sounded out who was stable enough to remain and who would be best put to pasture.”⁵¹ Those who had become so demoralized due to the RAF’s failures in 1977 and the subsequent strain of years of underground life became a liability to both the RAF and the *Stasi*. He explains that:

It was far better to have the knowledgeable [RAF dropout] in a place where they could not confess, if the urge took them. The GDR did not want to see news of their complicity in the earlier aid and comfort to the RAF in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.⁵²

By *Stasi* “aid and comfort,” Schmeidel is alluding to earlier casual contact with the RAF, including the 1970 contact at Schönefeld airport, where they let a known RAF militant, Hans Jürgen Bäcker, through the border and back into the FRG. Over the course of 1980 to 1981, the *Stasi* took in ten RAF members, Viett one of them, and naturalized them as GDR citizens. The *Stasi* kept them at the Conspiratorial Facility 74 in Briesen until they had memorized their new identities and cover stories.

The acknowledged high-water mark of RAF-*Stasi* collaboration during the *Aussteiger* program era was the attempted assassination of US General Federick Kroesen, the commander of the US Army in Europe, on September 15, 1981 in Heidelberg. Christian Klar and three other RAF guerillas ambushed Kroesen’s Mercedes limousine with a rocket launcher, the Soviet-made RPG-7.⁵³ The professionalism of the attack demonstrated the extent of the RAF guerillas’ training by the *Stasi*. While Kroesen’s Mercedes stopped at a red light, Klar and the other guerillas scored hits on the vehicle twice with rockets from a distance of 130 meters, reloaded

⁵¹ Schmeidel, *Stasi*, 156.

⁵² Schmeidel, *Stasi*, 156.

⁵³ Aust, *Baader-Meinhof*, 435.

between each shot, then raked the vehicle with concentrated automatic small-arms fire before they melted into the forest and escaped authorities.⁵⁴

In a report written on October 8, 1980, the *Stasi* created a dossier about Klar. This document reported his past terror activities, childhood aspirations, and conspiratorial capabilities. The document stated “clearly, Klar can be counted among the ‘hard core’ or the RAF.”⁵⁵ The document ended by saying “Klar has extensive knowledge in the area of conspiracy. Despite intensive searches he has not yet been identified. After each action he was able to avoid arrest. He continues to master the handling of various types of weapons... There is no evidence of connections or contacts in the GDR.”⁵⁶ The *Stasi* created this favorable report on Klar while they were executing the *Aussteiger* program in collaboration with Inge Viett and Colonel Dahl. Klar was more asset than liability and therefore, would not be secretly naturalized as a citizen of the GDR.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

Dahl was clearly consequential and essential in the RAF-*Stasi* relationship. This is made clear by his intervention to release Viett after her 1978 arrest in the CSSR as well as his premeditated construction of conspiratorial facilities that would go on to host and train RAF militants from 1980 to 1981. In 1970, the *Stasi* first made contact with the RAF at East Berlin’s Schönefeld Airport where the apparatus held the group at an arm’s length; by the 1980s, the *Stasi* had begun naturalizing RAF militants as GDR citizens and trained the remaining core of the group. Dahl was the hinge upon which the pendulum swung. Dahl’s decisions to collaborate with

⁵⁴ Schmeidel, *Stasi*, 157.

⁵⁵ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, “*Auskunftsbericht*” über den RAF-Terroristen Christian Klar; October 8, 1980, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 19309, BL. 175-177, 3, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/auskunftsbericht-ueber-den-raf-terroristen-christian-klar/blatt/175/>.

⁵⁶ Ministerium für Staatsicherheit, Hauptabteilung XXII, “*Auskunftsbericht*” über den RAF-Terroristen Christian Klar; October 8, 1980, Das Bundesarchiv, NR. 19309, BL. 175-177, 3, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de/medien/auskunftsbericht-ueber-den-raf-terroristen-christian-klar/blatt/175/>.

the RAF were neither chekist improvisation nor strategic impulse, but rather decisions informed by his own dissertation research on terrorism while at JHS.

With this context and understanding, one can trace the origins of the RAF-*Stasi* relationship that culminated in the 1980 *Aussteiger* program to Dahl's dissertation research and its contribution to the development of *Stasi* policy. The RAF-*Stasi* relationship was indeed both pragmatic and ideological. It was pragmatic in the sense that the *Stasi* was adapting to the changing realities of state security that emerged because of détente, and ideological in the sense that the research was couched in ideological terms and understanding. Dahl's research reveals that this distrust of left-wing terror organizations came out of the belief that these organizations had a perverted, distorted, or underdeveloped understanding of Marxism, and therefore they were vulnerable to unwittingly serving the interests of the enemy. Regardless, in the single-party state of the GDR, ideology and pragmatism were inseparable and impossible to discern from one another. To better understand the *Stasi*, the framing policy through the lens of ideology versus pragmatism should be discarded. The two were so inseparable, the question should instead be asked to what extent mid-level officers and bureaucrats had the authority to interpret Marxism-Leninism when creating and implementing policy.

However, the RAF-*Stasi* relationship that culminated in the collaboration of the 1980 *Aussteiger* program can be traced as far back as the research that Colonel Dahl and his coauthors produced while earning their JDs at the JHS. Dahl took his findings and contribution to the terrorism section of the dissertation with him to his post as leader of *Abteilung XXII*, the counterterrorism department in the year following his doctoral convocation. The doubt, suspicion, and distrust of left-wing terror organizations carried over into Dahl's *Aussteiger*

program, a program which effectively put the RAF (the deadliest and geographically closest left wing terror organization to the GDR) under even closer surveillance and GDR influence.

Most counterintuitively, the *Aussteiger* program- short script for the apogee of the RAF-*Stasi* relationship- resulted not from an escalation of the Cold War, but rather de-escalation during détente. Intelligence work can be distilled down to the task of discerning the enemies' intentions and capabilities. As displayed in Dahl's dissertation research, the *Stasi* didn't seem to reevaluate the enemies' intentions and only reconsidered the enemies' capabilities. The enemies would persist in attacking the community of socialist nations while their capabilities shifted. During a period of détente, the enemies abroad could no longer be so direct and aggressive, but, the *Stasi* believed their tactics would instead take on an even more subversive and oblique nature. Intelligence apparatuses such as the *Stasi* have a difficult time adapting policy, programs, and actions to shifting geopolitical dynamics. In this case, that inadaptability led to the *Stasi* engaging in one of the most notorious crimes of the Cold War.

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