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Shaken, not Stirred: Markus Wolf's Involvement in the Guillaume Affair and the Evolution of Foreign Espionage in the Former DDR

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"The principal link in the chain of revolution is the German link, and the success of the world revolution depends more on Germany than upon any other country."

-V.I. Lenin, Report of October 22, 1918

The game of espionage has existed longer than most people care to think. However, it is not important how long ago it started or who invented it. What is important is the progress of espionage in the past decades and the impact it has had on powerful nations. More specifically the period from 1945 to 1989, referred to as the Cold War era, is essential to the history of spying. While there are numerous stories of international intrigue throughout the Cold War, there was one man synonymous with international espionage. Markus Wolf has been called the "Spy Master" of the century. Wolf was so good at his job that no one even knew what he looked like for more than twenty years. He was called "the man without a face" by the competing agencies in the West. Wolf was the head of the Foreign Intelligence Service (HVA) of the Ministry for State Security (MfS), more commonly known as the "Stasi", of the German Democratic Republic (DDR or GDR). For thirty-four years, Wolf ran the most efficient clandestine service that placed East German moles in places like NATO and the British and West German governments.

The best-known success of Wolf's career was the Guillaume Affair. The Stasi placed an East German spy in the office of the West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt; which is said to have caused the chancellor's resignation. Political and public pressure forced Brandt out of office because this scandal was too big. Many in the East German Politburo saw this as a failure because Brandt was trying to unify a split nation with his policy of *Ostpolitik*. Having a mole in such a high position was advantageous for the MfS. Wolf and those who worked with him did not want this mole discovered so that they could keep the flow of information coming to their agency.

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This controversy was believed to have had far reaching political implications. Even after the fall of the *DDR* in 1989, four years after Wolf retired, there was still much speculation about how involved he was with the placing of spies in West Germany. While he was given several opportunities to turn over information in exchange for immunity from prosecution, he did not turn against the system he truly believed in and worked so hard to protect.

Wolf did not wake up every day with the intention of doing harmful acts against his own countrymen. Here was a man so dedicated to a system that he would do whatever was necessary to ensure its safety. During Wolf's career as "spy master" of the *MfS*, he never took advantage of his position to further himself financially or politically. Wolf was a man of great conviction and morals so much so that he never gave up the names of agents. He would rather face further prosecution than go against the oath he took to protect the people of the *DDR*.

Wolf believed so much that the *DDR* could function alongside of the *BRD* as a successful nation. However, since Wolf had such a deep understanding of the inner workings of the "Party Apparatus", that he knew the hindrances involved. That is where Brandt and his policy of *Ostpolitik* came into the picture. This policy was about including East Germany instead of excluding it from international politics. Wolf saw potential in this and in Brandt as a way to reconcile the split country. When the *HVA* placed Günter Guillaume in West Germany, there was no intention of him reaching the Chancellor's Office. They used Guillaume's placement not as a way to destroy Brandt's reputation but to develop an understanding of *Ostpolitik*. Wolf was one of the few who understood the benefits of this and that it would help restore the people's confidence in the *DDR*.

Wolf was truly a unique man who survived and flourished in numerous repressive states. He was born in 1923 in Hechlingen, a small town in southwestern Germany, and was the son of well-known author and doctor, Friedrich Wolf. Friedrich Wolf came from a devoutly Jewish family and became a Communist after fighting in the First World War. Markus' mother, Else, was involved with the Communist Party in Germany and had broken ties with her family when she married a Jew.^[2] Markus grew up in the Weimar republic. He was in the right place to be molded by the ideals of Communism. While still in Germany, Markus and his brother joined the Communist youth organization, the Young Pioneers. In this group he listened to tales of the revolution in the great "Soviet Union."^[3] This education, coupled with his family atmosphere, definitively influenced the rest of his life.

As a child of Communists in Germany, Wolf "came to perceive Stalin as a wise and distant figure, like the benevolent magician in the fairy tales."^[4] He often imagined what life must be like in the Soviet Union

and thought that it was a great land with good people, all "guided by the wizard."^[5] As time went on, the Wolf family's relatively simple life became intolerable after the Nazis came to power in 1933. After the burning of the *Reichstag*, the German Parliament house, the Nazis' pointed the finger of blame at the Communists. As both a Communist and a Jew, Wolf's father was in immediate danger and fled to Austria. Markus and his mother experienced persecution and random searches by the "Brown Shirt" SA. These constant brutal searches of his house took a toll on Markus' perception of the Germany he had once loved and called home. It would not be long before his family was forced to flee Germany, narrowly escaping incarceration by the Nazis. They were considered fugitives of the Reich and in 1934 were granted asylum in the Soviet Union. Markus had no trouble fitting into Russian life and came to love his new home in Moscow. Of course, life in the Soviet Union under the oppressive rule of Stalin would not be easy. In the years that followed, Wolf would undergo the type of education and training that best served the Soviet Union. He would learn to follow orders without question and to never betray the state.

After completing his training in the Soviet Union, Wolf was sent to the front lines in Berlin, but he did not fight against his former countrymen. Instead he was sent to occupy an abandoned radio station in the Soviet occupation zone. Wolf was in charge of spreading Soviet propaganda over the radio. He would soon find himself moving up in the ranks of the newly formed East Germany. Wolf was made the director of the *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* (HVA), or the Main Intelligence Directorate, in December of 1952.^[6]

East Germany had a lot of work to do at the end of World War II. The people of Berlin had to rebuild a leveled city and deal with the Soviet Union taking over from the east and the Allied forces dividing the city between them in the west. There was a lot of tension between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union on what to do over recently conquered Germany. It was not until 1949 that the Soviet Union placed their puppet government, the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland (SED)*, or the Socialist Unity Party. The Soviet Union saw East Germany as a crucial buffer zone between them and the West.

The "sovereign" DDR was on the front line of the Cold War and soon realized the dangers that lurked around. The *MfS* would soon become the agency in charge of the protection and security over East Germany and its vast citizens. In October 1949, the German Democratic Republic (DDR) was created consisting of a *Ministerrat*, or ministerial council. Members of the DDR also belonged to the Politburo and the Central Committee, both being the central political machines of the Soviet Union. The Soviets tried to demonstrate that the DDR was ruled by a parliamentary democracy, so a provisional *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber) was installed. It was basically set-up as a way for laws

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created by the Politburo, the Central Committee of Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to be passed by the *Volkskammer* so as not to seem as if the Soviets were in direct control of the DDR. On January 14, 1950, the Soviet Military Administration ceded all judicial functions to their German minions.^[7] Soon after this, parliament passed a two-paragraph proposal creating the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (Ministry for State Security, or *MfS*). And so, the era of Stasi repression had just begun and would continue to grow until its collapse in 1989. The *MfS*'s initial directive was internal security which encompassed the suppression of political dissent, counter-espionage, and sabotage. The foreign espionage service was attached to the *MfS* in 1953 and operated independently for the most part. Markus Wolf was first the Deputy Director and was then made the director of the *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* (*HVA*), or Main Intelligence Directorate.

Over the next couple years, the *MfS* worked to establish a network of secret informants who would eventually infiltrate every facet of life in the *DDR*. This allowed the Stasi to identify and eradicate any opposition before a viable threat to the East German state. German-Soviet Relations would go up and down during the early years of the Stasi and would eventually come to a point where the Central Committee and the *KGB* had a good working relation with its counterparts in East Germany. This gave the *MfS* the operational autonomy to create a highly efficient organization. Despite the relative autonomy of the *DDR*, the Soviets had a great deal of influence over *SED* party members and agents of the *MfS*. The *MfS* particularly maintained steady communication with its Soviet counterpart, the *KGB*. Markus Wolf and his *HVA* played a more direct role with the *KGB*. Wolf did not rely on the *KGB* for daily operations but maintained a relationship of confidence and respect with influential members of the Soviet state.

While German-Soviet relations were good and steady, Wolf took note of the broadening differences and ailments that plagued the *KGB*. One principle problem for both spy agencies was a top-heavy Party bureaucracy and fundamental distrust within the organization. East German agents looked at their intelligence work as honorable and were given praise for their work where as some *KGB* agents were treated with a lack of gratitude for their service. Wolf tells of how East Germany became a "dumping ground" for spies that Moscow wanted hidden away.^[8] It was a combination of these factors that allowed the East German Ministry of State Security to become the most reliable intelligence organization within the "Eastern Block."

Wolf managed to build a complex spy network from knowledge gained as they went along. Wolf and his foreign espionage service, the *HVA* were new to the game of international espionage as part of the newly created *DDR*. The *HVA* operated mostly independent from the watchful eye of *MfS*. Wolf would be

responsible for putting together reports for his boss, Erich Mielke, and for certain Party Functionaries. His time was not solely dedicated to documenting all the actions of his agents. As time went on, Wolf certainly encountered more paperwork as any head of a bureaucratic organization would experience.^[9] Wolf managed to focus most of his time with agents in the field and devising new ways of obtaining the information they needed. He placed agents and had moles in every aspect of life one could imagine. Markus Wolf left no stone unturned in West Germany. The *HVA* had informants and moles in organizations ranging from industrial trade and technology to political parties and church organizations. It did not matter what the Stasi had their hands in, the purpose was to gain information necessary to advanced East Germany past its western competitors.

Since the creation of East Germany as a sovereign state, there has been much progress made in its political and security structures. The *DDR* would be the Soviet Union's prized possession until its collapse in 1989. There were, however, faults to the system that most outsiders never knew. This mostly involved individuals who were a part of the *apparatchik*. The many members worked to enjoy a life of privilege that came with the job. Some of those privileges included shopping at stores filled with western items that were otherwise unavailable to the general public. Top Soviet officials from the Central Committee would vacation in places like East Germany and Hungary where the standard of living was slightly better than at home.^[10] Wolf was not blind to the privileges bestowed upon the elite of the Communist party apparatus. He understood the imbalance of wealth between those at the top and average citizens. While Wolf was indeed aware of this, he did not work for these privileges but for the satisfaction that the intelligence service had brought him. He was convinced of its necessity, and was deeply committed to it.^[11] Wolf would soon begin to question the merits of the communist system. His eyes would be opened when Nikita Khrushchev gave his famous speech at the Twentieth Party Congress.

Markus Wolf had been a firm believer in Communism ever since he was a child. Wolf and many others like him had a strong belief in the system they lived in and would do whatever necessary to protect it from those who wished to harm it. During the time of Stalin, no one dared to utter anything negative against the state. No one even bothered to look within the system to identify its faults because many of the government's failures were swept under the rug. This would all change when Nikita Khrushchev delivered his "secret speech" at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow in February 1956. In this speech, Khrushchev revealed the many crimes of Stalin and denounced his actions as a ruthless dictator. This shook the very core of belief for many Communist, including Wolf. Khrushchev's words would have repercussions within the Soviet Union. Wolf noted:

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"I was one of many in the Party who, having hoped for fresh impulses, bowed to its almighty discipline once again. Nevertheless, the Twentieth Party Congress was the first step on a long journey toward what we would later come to know as perestroika and glasnost, the beginning of an arc whose end would be described in 1989. I too would have to undergo a bumpy journey until I would be able to embrace new ideas and leave behind the intelligence service and its strictures on my thinking."^[12]

Wolf might have questioned the teachings of Stalin's Russia for a short while but would not let the "secret speech" disrupt his loyalty to the system he was assigned to protect. He continued to work hard in order to maintain the security of the *DDR* and its citizens.

Wolf and the *HVA* placed thousands of spies in many areas of life in West Germany. The Stasi's influence ran so deep that even today there are thousands of past informants that have yet to be discovered. By 1989, the Stasi had 85,000 regular employees with 21,000 of them being "directly operative," meaning they were either supervising agents or were agents themselves. Of these employees, 5,000 were in the position of observers and investigators, 2,200 were in control of the postal service and 1,052 were engaged in telephone tapping.^[13] However, simple informers outnumbered Stasi regulars as sources. In fact, the Stasi employed 109,000 "unofficial people."^[14] The Erfurt Citizens' Committee found that every hundredth citizen there had been a part-time informer.^[15] The most important informants were the *InoffizielleMitarbeiter* (unofficial employees), or *IM*, as they were also agents of Party influence in society. These *IM*'s were placed in every government and social organization.

Their vast network of spies and informants, both official and unofficial (*IM*) were the main backbone of the *MfS* and Wolf's *HVA*. Most of these agents spied for more than one department of the *MfS*. But it was the *HVA* who ran the crème de la crème of spies like Guillaume.^[16] The *HVA* certainly proved itself to be one of, if not the most effective espionage agency during the Cold War. Wolf ran such an efficient agency that it made the CIA look pathetic and in many ways was superior to the KGB. West German experts guessed that the *HVA* by itself produced as much as 80 percent of Warsaw Pact intelligence on the Federal Republic of Germany, or the *BRD*.^[17] They held the crucial "front-line" between the Communist powers of the East and the Democracies of the West.

The success of the *HVA* can be attributed to more than just their highly skilled agents. In assessing its performance, it should not be forgotten that they enjoyed unique major advantages for its work in the *BRD*. The two sides shared proximity, common culture, language, and history.^[18] There were about twelve million people living in West Germany who came originally from the East. This

allowed *HVA* agents to easily hide and assimilate into the population. Early on in the 1950s, there was a strong feeling from West German Leftists that the anti-fascist *DDR* represented the "better Germany," and sympathy for the *DDR* persisted among some Leftists for decades to follow.^[19] All of these factors made it easy for Wolf and the *HVA* to channel agents into the Federal Republic especially before the Berlin Wall was erected in August of 1961.

The focus of the *HVA* operations was primarily in the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin, however. The *HVA* was able to place their agents easily in government institutions, political parties and government agencies in the Federal Republic.^[20] Among the most spectacular spy cases was that of the "Chancellor's Office Spy," during the Brandt chancellorship. Agents of the *HVA* remained in the chancellor's office continuously until 1989, including always at least one secretary.

The Stasi also directly influenced politics in the Federal Republic to keep its network in place. For example, a Member of Parliament was bribed during a confidence vote organized against Brandt. It helped to prevent a change of government. The basic rule in the Stasi was the principle of "unity of intelligence and defense."^[21] This meant that the *HVA* systematically cooperated with other service units of the Stasi, who were primarily responsible for domestic espionage. Conversely, numerous other service units of the *MfS* had unofficial employees in the West. Of the approximately 3,000 informants that spied on the West for the Stasi, one half worked for the *HVA* and the other half for all the other departments of the Stasi.^[22] The *HVA* looked for suitable candidates in government secretaries. They knew a lot and remained even when the boss changed. A special interest was shown in the Federal Chancellery, the German federal ministries, the Federal Criminal Police Office, the Foreign Office, and in the many intelligence institutions. In the period from 1949 to 1987, 58 secretaries were unmasked in the Federal Republic by the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution or *BfV*). Many of them were arrested and some sentenced to several years of imprisonment.

Even though the *MfS* had many informants and moles in the West, they had a system in place to undermine the West German government if necessary. In Wolf's case, this was commanding a small but effective working group that went by the name "Active Measures" (*Aktive Massnahmen*). Their political purpose was to weaken Bonn's international position, weaken the Hallstein Doctrine, which mandated the diplomatic isolation of East Germany, and stop West German rearmament.^[23] Wolf recalls the specifics of their purpose:

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"The central focus of our task was not 'lying' or 'deliberately misleading,' but a method of disseminating uncomfortable and embarrassing facts. Call it psychological warfare. We did play our share of dirty tricks, but that was not our prime function. We combined true and false information and disseminated it so as to strengthen our policies, weaken Western policies and organizations, and compromise individuals."^[24]

This small group that engaged in these "active measures" eventually was set up formally into its own department, HVA-10, with the express purpose of influencing the Western media and confusing and misleading our opponents in Western Europe and America as they were formulating policies toward the Soviet bloc.^[25]

Something else that contributed to the success of the Stasi was its relationship with the *SED*. The Stasi was described as the "shield and sword of the Party" that protected it from any dissention that might be considered hostile. The Stasi closely monitored every aspect of a society, weeding out 'bad germs' in order to protect what was perceived to be good for the whole.^[26] This gave the Stasi an excuse to lock up or watch anyone who would be considered a threat against the *DDR*. The close intertwining of the Party and the secret police apparatus was one of the main reasons why the East German regime endured for so long with so little popular opposition. This unity between Party and security organs lay at the heart of the Stasi's work.^[27] However, the interdependence between the Stasi and the *SED* would ultimately prove to be fatal as the intelligence gathered for the Party did not tell of the social changes occurring in East Germany. Until that point, the Stasi could be everywhere and anywhere. "The very knowledge that the Stasi were there and watching served to atomize society, preventing independent discussion in all but the smallest groups. It seemed, until the end of 1989, the potential terror was as effective as real terror."^[28]

The basic principles of social control used by the Party and the Stasi remained constant between 1953 and 1989. These tactics ranged from seizure of property to arresting those who publicized their dissenting opinions of the Party. The level of physical repression differed from that used pure Stalinism. The Stasi did not torture their victims or put them in work camps like their Soviet brothers or the brutal Romanian Securitate. The *MfS* focused on its technical capabilities of surveillance along with infiltration of every part of the *DDR*. Stasi agents used their powers of coercion because "the Party could not trust all elements of its population."^[29] The Party justified these means because the government knew better than the mass of society.

Even though the Stasi had a wealth of information and control over East German citizens, thousands were fleeing to the western part of Berlin. To combat this, in 1961 the *Politburo* decided to cut all traffic between East and West Berlin. The Stasi had the enormous task of manning strategic locations and guard against defectors escaping to the West. Within a year, an eight-foot-high concrete wall was constructed and armed with artillery and units of the *Nationale Volksarmee (NVA)*.^[30] The Berlin Wall remained a symbol of repression until its collapse in 1989.

Up until 1961, the borders of East and West Germany were virtually open to anyone that wanted to pass through. Millions of East Germans fled to the West in droves. It was relatively easy for the *HVA* to send agents through to the other side to gather information and come back home. This all changed once the Wall was erected. Many of Wolf's most useful sources were being cut off for good by a concrete wall. Wolf and his counterparts had to come up with new methods for sending an agent to the West or to contact any potential informants. One new way the *MfS* received information was through defectors. In the eyes of the East Germans and the Soviets, the bigger the defector the bigger the propaganda victory.

The first of these "big" defectors was Günter Gereke, a German Patriot who was imprisoned for opposing Hitler. Gereke was in fact part of the plotters who tried to assassinate Hitler in 1944. He was also staunchly opposed to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his policy of a new Germany with the help of the Americans. Gereke was a valuable source of information about the Christian Democrat party (*CDU*). He would eventually be expelled from the party for his opposition to Adenauer's pro-American policies. His stay in the West came to an end when it became clear to Wolf that the West German authorities were working up a case against Gereke accusing him of being a communist. Wolf brought Gereke to the East and made him a propaganda victory for the leadership. Wolf recalled that his superiors were "too delighted, in fact, since it awakened an unhealthy appetite for classy defections, regardless of the fact that a good agent in place is usually worth a dozen defectors."^[31]

Soon enough Wolf would encounter such a request to produce a defector. He had to do this with one of his most promising moles, Karlfranz Schmidt-Wittmack. Wittmack was a member of multiple security and defense committees and was rising to the top of his political party. He was passing Wolf information about West Germany's possible entry into NATO. Wolf was furious at the prospect of giving up such a promising asset just for some press conference.^[32] He said that "however sharp may be the instincts of an intelligence service, it is always the toy of the government it serves."^[33] Wolf understood the follies of the bureaucracy he lived in. The *DDR* however, gained valuable information about Bonn's intentions for rearmament of West Germany and its entry into NATO as a military ally. On August 26, 1954,

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Schmidt-Wittmack appeared in a press conference in East Berlin and revealed that Adenauer had withheld important information about his intentions in foreign and security policy.^[34]

Wolf also had to keep in mind of the mental stability of agents when they were brought back from the West. The agents often had lives and careers set up in system that allowed them great freedoms and products that one would not find on shelves of East German or Russian stores. The higher priority defectors or agents that came back to the East were given accommodations that the average citizen would never see. They would be given nice living quarters and a pension to live off and placed in some sort of job that would make them seem important to the cause. The Wives of these men would be allowed to shop at stores that the government would stock with all kinds of goods they were used to having in the West.

Another tool in the *HVA* arsenal were the "Romeo" spies. The link between romance and espionage is no recent invention. For the longest times, security services have used "love" to gain proximity to interesting peoples. It seemed inevitable that the two oldest professions would meet. Wolf's Romeo spies gained notoriety across the world by winning women's hearts in order to obtain the state and political secrets their targets had access to.^[35] They were so successful that Wolf thought that he should be given credit for perfecting the use of sex in spying.

Wolf and the *HVA* demonstrated their growing skill set with the Romeo spies. The identity of his first Romeo remains a secret to this day. The success of the Romeos was due to the fact that that in the 1950s there was a postwar shortage of men that was felt among lonely secretaries. That gap was filled by East German bachelors.^[36] The first Romeo, code-name Felix, happened upon this method by some chance. He met a dark-haired secretary, code-named Norma, from the chancellor's office at the bus stop. Once the two became more established, Felix was able to gather information from Norma and her colleagues. Soon enough, Felix developed genuine feelings for her.^[37] This affair continued for several years until Felix was being watched by the *BfV*. Wolf made the decision to bring him back before he could be captured. Needless to say, Felix was devastated. Wolf and the *HVA* would continue using "Romeo" and "Juliet" spies to gather sensitive information.

HVA History and Break-down

The *MfS* had a history that has been carefully documented and followed since the fall of the *DDR*. Many East German citizens sought to find out more about the repressive organization that stifled the will of

East Germans for decades. In the fervor of going through the mountainous piles of information the Stasi had collected on its own citizens, many have neglected other branches of the *MfS*. The work most neglected was the work of its foreign intelligence arm, the *Hauptverwaltung A* (Main Directorate for Intelligence or *HVA*).

The history of the *HVA* is widely untapped in the field of foreign intelligence. Even more unknown were their priorities and especially the sources they used.^[38] Those sources were usually people who gave, consciously or unconsciously, information to the *HVA*. The *HVA* had set up an incredible information system thanks to its numerous informants. Markus Wolf and his colleagues set this up in way that was highly organized and secretive. The majority of informants, *IM*'s, were kept on record except for any high-profile informants in top positions like in the West German government or NATO.

Top *HVA* assets were usually not prominent in civic life. The idea that these top assets were reputable politicians or high-profile party officials is a common misconception. They were usually people who were active at certain pivotal points of institutions that the public barely noticed, but had considerable importance for the gathering of operational intelligence.^[39] An example would be secretaries or mid-level management. The operational objectives of the *HVA* differed from the overall goals of the *MfS*. The main concerns of the *HVA* dealt with gaining political and military information from the West for the benefit and security of the *DDR*. There are three departments of the *HVA* that are primarily concerned with the military policy or politics: *HVA-I*, which dealt with the West German government and its ministries; *HVA-II*, which was responsible for the operational handling of West German political parties, and finally *HVA-XI*, which was entrusted with espionage against American institutions.^[40]

There was one department that was most pertinent to Wolf's involvement in the Guillaume affair that saw the end of Willy Brandt's political career. *HVA-I* focused on policies and strategic intentions of the West German government, the Federal Republic of Germany of *BRD*.^[41] Each *HVA* department had its own tasks to which certain operational priority targets which had to be infiltrated with the help of sources that were assigned.^[42] The units within *HVA-I* worked together to pass along information to each other gathered from different sources.

Many agents were left in the West for years as "sleepers" while they advanced in whatever career served as their cover. This was the case with Guillaume, who was sent to West Germany in the mid-1950s, and would eventually become Chancellor Brandt's personal assistant. Markus Wolf recounts his experience with this when one of his agents brought the end of Brandt's career and his policy of *Ostpolitik*:

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"The discovery that one of my agents had infiltrated Chancellor Brandt's private office abruptly ended Brandt's career...is a responsibility that I bear and that troubles me even after his death...The only justice I can now do to the late Willy Brandt is to explain in detail how the greatest spy scandal in postwar Germany happened and why."^[43]

Willy Brandt

According to Wolf, "Chancellor Willy Brandt was a morally upright man and a compelling figure" in postwar German history.^[44] He had an eye for the appropriate gesture—he fell to his knees in honor of the murdered Jews when he visited the Warsaw ghetto and was honestly devoted to bridging the chasm between East and West Germany, the communist and capitalist worlds.^[45] This is how Wolf and many others in East Germany felt about the man who ran the other half of their split country. Wolf and some of his comrades had a kind of respect for Brandt and his attempts to bring a torn Germany back together. As the leader in Bonn, Brandt advanced his policy of reconciliation with the East known as *Ostpolitik*. Of course, being a master spy had its advantages and disadvantages. This man and certain party members in the *SED* (Socialist Unity Party) had plenty of reasons to make sure that Brandt was no longer an enemy and more of a partner for German Unity. In order to assure this, Wolf and the *MfS* had set up an extensive network of informants and spies.

Brandt was a very important figure during his time as chancellor. His wanting a unified Germany goes back to when he was Mayor of Berlin. Starting off his career in Berlin gave Brandt a unique perspective when it came to Germany. He saw first-hand the problems and issues that surrounded a divided country. It was this "divided world" that gave Brandt the ability to see what the world was really like. When Brandt was mayor, the Allied forces that controlled the city left a bitter taste in his mouth. He saw that they were not acting with the best interest of the people of Berlin or of Germany as a whole. In reference to the Soviet ultimatum of 1958 and the subsequent meeting between the Soviets and Western powers, Brandt made clear his thoughts about the proceedings. He thought that it was most unfortunate that the Western powers gave in so quickly to the Soviet demand to discuss Berlin separately from the general German problem.^[46] Brandt was dedicated to the German people and wanted a solution for all of Germany. At a mass demonstration in May of 1959, Brandt exclaimed "look at the people of Berlin and you will know what the Germans want!"^[47]

Willy Brandt was a charismatic leader that brought a lot of hope for a reconnection between East and West Germany. He was a savvy politician that appealed to many people for his policies of reconciliation with the East. It was his policy of *Ostpolitik* that made Brandt popular amongst many of his peers in the West and East. Brandt would be recognized for his great reform policies. Wolf and others in the *MfS* were keen on the idea of more open economic trade between the separated states. Of course there were many who had their doubts about Brandt's new reforms and policies. The hard-lined leaders of the Soviet Union and East Germany saw some advantages to these new policies of reconciliation. However there were the doubts of this because of an internal political security risk. The risk was increased by Brandt's charisma as a popular social democrat and anti-fascist chancellor of peace.^[48] Brandt had an amazing effect on the masses with his programs of ideological, political and cultural "change through convergence."^[49] This even had an impact in the *DDR*, sparking hopes of more consumer goods and relaxation of social and cultural restrictions.

Brandt started his rise in politics as mayor of Berlin from 1957 to 1966. He was there when tensions between Eastern and Western Germany reached an explosive level with the construction of the Berlin Wall. Brandt also was able to rebuild a city that had been decimated by war. He was very passionate about speaking out for his "Free Berlin" and for his fellow countrymen that are in need of further help. Brandt wrote an open letter to the British government "to contribute a few ideas on the East-West problems and the widely discussed questions of the day."^[50] Brandt believed that the fate of Berlin cannot be separated from the fate of all other Germans and that compromises would lead to some kind of patchwork that would plague generations to come.^[51] Instead, he wanted Berlin to be united back into one city as opposed to being separated by the Allied conquerors.

Brandt makes several points in regards to "Free Berlin" and the problems that encompass his city. At first he talks about Free Berlin being based on the co-operation between its inhabitants and Allied friends. His second point involved the progress of reconstruction of the city to meet its fullest potential. Brandt's last point is without a doubt the most important to his later policy of *Ostpolitik*. He discusses that the function of Free Berlin is to be a uniting bond between the inhabitants of a divided city.^[52] Brandt states in his letter that "we can use the isolated and divided capital of our arbitrarily divided country as an example of the importance we attach to the re-establishment of a united State and to show that we know we are acting in the right way."^[53] Brandt even impressed the likes of President Kennedy, who thought that Brandt should replace Konrad Adenauer as Chancellor.

Brandt seemed to be the kind of man that could accomplish anything. He was ready to do whatever it took to unite this divided city. This kind of appetite for politics and diplomacy would serve Brand the

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best way possible later when he would become the West German Chancellor. Brandt believed that Berlin was a living bridge between Germans of East and West Berlin. He wrote in a letter;

"In the first place we refuse to accept the unnatural division between the inhabitants of East and West Berlin. The fellow citizens in the Eastern sector belong to us and we refuse to be parted from them... our city will defeat every attempt to stabilize the Communist regime in the so-called German Democratic Republic and thus prevent the consolidation of a dual state on German soil."^[54]

Brandt makes repeated remarks in regards to a solution to the problems in Berlin. He continually strikes on the point that he will do whatever it takes to keep the separation of its inhabitants from happening or worsening. Brandt wrote "We shall do all in our power to counteract the inhuman effect of the splitting of Germany."^[55]

Chancellor Brandt worked tirelessly to convince others that his policy of *Ostpolitik* was to be taken as a serious model of foreign policy with the East. Brandt was able to show incredible foresight and realism with his policies which allowed him to reach a large audience. Despite his ability to command an audience, Brandt's policies had the possibility of creating rifts with West Germany's allies. The most important allies were those that belonged to NATO. Brandt was aware of the difficulties that would accompany an attempt to reconcile East and West Germany. He understood that reconciliation could not be guaranteed overnight but would require an active effort to organize peace.^[56]

Brandt was on the forefront of East-West relations throughout his entire career. He understood the intricacies that are involved with the super-powers of the day. Those "super-powers" were of course the United States and the Soviet Union. Brandt knew that his plans for *Ostpolitik* could not interfere with the policies of Western allies. The same could be said between the East and the Soviet Union. Brandt did not want to shake-up relations with NATO allies that were responsible for protecting them from outside threats. He knew that West Germany would have to improve its relations with allies by facing up to the realities without illusions and by avoiding any shade of ambiguity.^[57] Most importantly, Brandt realized that the balance of power that existed in Europe was essential to keeping peace. He knew that "without a balance of power provided by the presence and active participation of the United States, a solid and lasting détente with the Soviet Union is impossible."^[58] There is no doubt that Brandt knew he could not alienate the U.S. with his *Ostpolitik*. Their commitment was key to any kind of peaceful order in Europe. Keeping up with Western allies was important to Brandt. However, the German problem at home was his main concern.

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One theme that is common of Brandt's writings is the way he phrases his policy. This is accomplished by using terminology that promotes a certain kind of unity instead of division. Brandt says that "although our foreign policy toward these states is called 'East European policy,' this term is relative. Countries like Poland may lie east of Germany, but they have good reasons for regarding themselves as part and parcel of Central Europe."^[59] He does this so that *Ostpolitik* can reach a wider area than Germany alone. This was also achieved with allies when Brandt and President Nixon met at Key Biscayne on December 28, 1971. Brandt noted that a "commentator pointed out that the joint statement issued seemed more like an American-European than an American-German communiqué."^[60] Brandt, however, keeps the main focus on a divide that he saw was dangerous, artificial and unjust, for it prevented people from living as a nation according to its own will.^[61]

Brandt's foreign policy toward Eastern Europe was concerned with two closely linked areas: the Soviet Union and the European states connected to them.^[62] The central area of concern was the other part of Germany. Brandt was able to see that the traditional sense of foreign policy would work, for neither part of Germany is a foreign country to the other.^[63] He acknowledges that the two Germany's are part of very different systems. Naturally, there were many critics to Brandt's policies. This was made evident by Eastern propaganda. They claimed that the West's policy was a smokescreen behind which we cling all the more relentlessly to a denial of realities, a policy of strength and a striving for nuclear weapons and continuation of the cold war.^[64] East German Politburo leaders expressed their concern over the growing popularity of *Ostpolitik*. The East German Communist leader, Erich Honecker, mistrusted Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, seeing West Germany's relationship with Moscow as a threat to East Germany's legitimacy.^[65] Markus Wolf, however, shared in the enthusiasm for *Ostpolitik*. Brandt saw that they shared the same goals to safeguard peace, reduce tensions, improve relations and contribute to a system of peaceful order in Europe.^[66]

Wolf and Brandt shared similar observations about German unification. Brandt saw that a reduction in the overheated temperature of East-West relations had been noted in recent years before his election to Chancellor in 1969.^[67] Wolf had also seen that Brandt's *Ostpolitik* had improved relations between the estranged countries.^[68] These two men were able to see the advantages of the new policies. However, they also both saw that nothing was guaranteed. But they felt it was justified to count at least partially on a mutual sense of responsibility on part of the world powers.^[69] The opposite was also felt by those involved who feared an overnight conflict that could erupt in nuclear war. Brandt was determined to bring Europe together and unite a divided Germany once and for all. Brandt reflects this desire in a paper he wrote to *Foreign Affairs* journal. Brandt wrote:

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"Europe-which is to say Europe as a whole-is moving toward a transformation of historic dimensions in the course of which old kinships will be rediscovered and new ones found. Peoples are talking to one another again. Technical, economic, scientific and intellectual communications are leading to a fruit full exchange and increasing understanding of the situation and of each other's interests. More and more, dialogue is being mixed into the monologues of political propaganda. People are listening to each other."^[70]

The reconstruction period that followed World War II took a heavy toll on Germany and Berlin in particular. There was some work to be done in Germany and Brandt did not want Berlin to fall behind because it was not a top priority to the Western powers in charge. Brandt thought Berlin should be reconstructed because the people could demonstrate their responsibility toward the whole of Germany.^[71] His time as mayor of Berlin would no doubt have an influence on the rest of his political career. He established himself as a man of the people and vowed to not stop fighting until East and West Germany was unified as one. Brandt's rise to the top would bring both supports and skeptics of his reconciliation policy of *Ostpolitik*. It would be up to Wolf and his *HVA* to make sure that Brandt's motives were pure and would not bring harm to the *DDR*.

The Guillaume Affair

The greatest success in the *MfS*'s history came in the early 1950s when the *HVA* sent Günter Guillaume and his wife Christel to West Germany to provide information on the *SPD*. The "Guillaume Affair", as it was later labeled, was one of the biggest cases of espionage to hit Germany during the Cold War. This was made possible when on October 21, 1969 Willy Brandt was elected West German chancellor. A few weeks later, Günter Guillaume (codename, "Hansen") presented himself in Brandt's office after being recommended by the labor leader Georg Leber for the post of junior aide to the chancellor.^[72] He was given a job with responsibility to make links with the trade unions and other political organizations. However, Günter Guillaume would not drop into his position in the chancellor's office for some time. In that time, Brandt was working to build up his political career and spread his policy of *Ostpolitik*.

The story started much earlier when the Guilllaumes came to the West under false pretenses to avoid detection by West German security services. By not registering in one of the refugee camps like so many others fleeing the East, the Guillaume's were able to initially pass through security measures that were meant to catch any threats to West Germany.^[73] Before their departure to the west, they received the best spy training in the world at the Stasi's foreign espionage school in the city of Belzig. They were

trained in covert arts that allowed them to send thousands of West German secrets to their *MfS* handlers. Guillaume took orders from a veteran handler, Colonel Paul Laufer.^[74]

West Germany's most spectacular security failure began on November 14, 1955, when an informant drew attention to a photographer named Günter Guillaume who was a member of the Communist Party employed by a state-owned publishing house.^[75] This information was sent from agency to agency and was continually put off. The report eventually landed in the central registry and was forgotten. This showed a fundamental flaw in the West German system. The bureaucratic system took hold and the early suspicions about Guillaume were lost in the organization for almost twenty years.

The key to their low-profile entry to the West was through Günter's wife, Christel (codename, Heinze). Her mother, Erna Boom, was a Dutch citizen that had settled in Frankfurt-am-Main and opened a tobacco shop.^[76] Christel's family background and the presence of her mother in Frankfurt gave the couple the chance to evade the bureaucratic hurdles erected by the authorities in order to aid secret service scrutiny of new arrivals.^[77] They avoided intensive questioning by West German authorities by not registering at a refugee camp. Instead, the Guillamaes registered with the local police. To help circumvent the customary questioning, Erna Bloom wrote a letter to the authorities requesting refugee status for her daughter and son-in-law. Wolf recalled;

"That our couple should try to make their career within the *SPD* itself as an operational cover...Their rise to the top was not in our plan; they were intended eventually to act as handlers for our sources in the *SPD*. But they were simply far more energetic and industrious than we ever expected."^[78]

The couple was initially assigned to infiltrate the West German *Social Democratic Party (SPD)*. Günter would listen to the Stasi's shortwave spy messages and was told in 1957 to join the *SPD*. He devoted himself to *SPD* affairs by first working for the party newspaper *Der Sozialdemokrat*. Guillaume was eventually made a salaried district *SPD* secretary and became a member of the Frankfurt city council. Günter was even making the rounds in the Frankfurt *SPD* making connections and talking gossip with co-workers after work. Christel was even making advances in her career. His wife Christel was offered the job of head of every day operations of Willy Birkelbach's office.^[79] Her boss, Birkelbach, was promoted to be the aide for the Governor of the German state of Hessen. This meant that he now had access to NATO strategy documents. As his trusty secretary, Christel was now able to provide her husband with sensitive information from the governor's office.

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Günter applied the tradecraft he learned from the Stasi to photograph documents his wife acquired which included reports on NATO maneuvers. The Guillaume's handlers were particularly interested in reports dealing with the strengths and weaknesses of socialist functionaries who might make good candidates for recruitment as spies.^[80] The Guillaume's were moving up in the party ranks and were quickly becoming the star possession of Wolf and the HVA. The HVA decided to improve their communication methods and infiltrated two highly experienced couriers. The team was a married couple that came to the West with separate identities and met each other "by chance" at a ski resort.^[81]

In 1969, Wolf and the MfS would soon have one of their own in the top office of the West German government. In the elections of 1969, Günter worked as a campaign manager for prominent Social Democrat and labor union leader, Georg Leber, who was elected to parliament. However, the star of this election would be the former mayor of Berlin, Brandt. Brandt was elected West German Chancellor on October 11, 1969. Günter would soon be rewarded for his loyalties by being recommended for an aide position within the chancellor's office. Minister Leber was quite fond of Günter. He later gushed; "What I especially valued was his dependability and his sense of responsibility in standing up for a life in freedom and democracy. In many difficult situations...he proved his absolute trustworthiness."^[82]

Günter was certainly on track to be a favorite amongst the party leadership. In fact, Günter was himself surprised when he received the news of this consideration.^[83] Little did they know that the Guillames did in fact work for the HVA. It would be too late and the damage already done by the time they discovered Günter's secret.

Before he could be confirmed in this position, Günter would have to pass the background security checks done by the criminal investigation agency (BKA), the federal foreign intelligence service, the counterespionage agency, and the refugee affairs authority.^[84] The latter two agencies reported back that they had no information on Günter. The BKA sent an inquiry to the Berlin police and they replied with a summary of the initial report from 1955. It said that Günter was previously employed by a publishing company and traveled often to West Germany on espionage assignments.^[85] However, they concluded that while the accuracy of this information could no longer be established, the source of the information was reliable.

There were those in the Chancellor's Office who had their doubts about Guillaume and did not trust him. One of those men was Egon Bahr, Brandt's most trusted advisor and the architect of *Ostpolitik*. Bahr told Horst Ehmke that he was unhappy with putting Guillaume so close to Brandt and said, "maybe I am

doing the man a bad turn, but his past is too risky."^[86] Intelligent Chief Gerhard Wessel wrote that "the 1964 report alone was no reason to disadvantage Guillaume but that it necessitated a comprehensive background check by the counterespionage agency."^[87] Guillaume was questioned on January 7, 1970, by Chancellery Minister Ehmke. After the interrogation, Ehmke commented that Guillaume had made "a self-confident and relaxed impression and that there was nothing to the suspicions."^[88] Günter described the "interrogation" process as informal, quick and standard procedure done whenever there is a new administration in charge.^[89]

He signed his employment contract on January 28, 1970 and began work the same day.^[90] Guillaume was doing so well that he was eventually appointed a *Referent*, or official adviser. This was a position that required him to have top secret security clearance. The placement of Guillaume in the Chancellor's Office was not the product of Wolf's schedule driven agency.^[91] Being so close to Brandt allowed Guillaume to pilfer documents on the negotiating positions of West Germany and its allies. Guillaume's main priority was watchfulness.^[92] This gave the *DDR* and the Soviets an advantage when they meet with the Western allies in control of West Berlin over access to the divided city. Nevertheless, his real importance for the East lay in his political instincts. Wolf recalls just how important Guillaume was:

"Through Guillaume's judgments, we were able to conclude sooner rather than later that Brandt's new *Ostpolitik*, while still riven with contradictions, marked a genuine change of course in West German foreign policy. As such, his work actually aided détente by giving us the confidence to place our trust in the intentions of Brandt and his allies."^[93]

This helped the *MfS* to decide how to handle Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Guillaume really shined during the 1972 elections. There was a confidence vote on the Basic Treaty with the *DDR* that had almost fallen through. The *HVA* helped Brandt by secretly paying Julius Steiner, a Christian Democrat, fifty thousand deutschmarks to buy his vote.^[94] It allowed Brandt and the *SPD* to guarantee more seats in the parliament. This meant that *Ostpolitik* would go forward under Brandt. The *HVA* would still have their top mole in place to keep the information coming. During this period of time, Guillaume became very close to Brandt. He would spend countless hours next to him and got to understand his strengths and weaknesses. One of Brandt's most well-known weakness was women.

It would not be long before suspicions about Guillaume were coming to the forefront. Deciphered spy messages were checked to see if the dates given on the messages corresponded with Guillaume. Sure enough, the dates matched with Günter's, Christel's and their son's birthday. Brandt was informed of

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the suspicions and told to act normal toward Guillaume. Surveillance of Guillaume continued around the clock with no concrete results. On April 24, 1974, four BKA officers went to Guillaume's apartment and arrested him on the spot. When Guillaume was told he was under arrest on espionage charges, he blurted out: "I am an officer of the National People's Army of the *DDR* and a member of the Ministry for State Security. I beseech you to respect my honor as an officer."^[95] Word of the scandal leaked out to the press and remained front page news for weeks. The Brandt administration, littered with scandal, could not take a blow this significant. On May 6, 1974, Willy Brandt resigned as chancellor of West Germany.^[96] Günter Guillaume, in December of 1975, was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to thirteen years in prison while his wife received an eight-year term. Günter understood the brevity of the situation as he sat in court and heard the sentence being handed down.^[97] He could not grasp onto the fact that he was 50 years old and was about to spend the rest of his time behind bars.^[98] The worst for Guillaume was not knowing how Christel handling the shock of the situation. The couple would eventually be exchanged in October of 1981 for eight West German spies.

Fall of the *DDR*

After the fall of the Wall and the *MfS* in 1989, East Germans began to uncover the extensive amount of information the Stasi had on their citizens. The far reach of the Stasi had different psychological effects on the repressed East Germans. No one really knew for sure how far the Stasi's tentacles reached, and it only increased as the Stasi carried on. The effect was changing the course of people's lives.^[99] One of the causes that led to the revolution was the hard line taken by the state against the protesters that resulted in a sudden wave of solidarity that spilled into the streets.^[100]

With the Stasi gone, its victims were no longer afraid of speaking their minds on the oppressive nature of the *MfS*. Those that were interrogated had an inside glimpse of how the Stasi would use the information obtained as a way to remain powerful over its perceived threats. Some were brought in so often that they would develop a kind of relationship with their Stasi handlers. This was the case with Werner Fischer. He was a member of the Initiative for Peace and Human rights and was constantly interrogated by the Stasi. Those interrogated frequently were often assigned "special interrogators." Fischer developed a special relationship with his interrogator. Although the interrogator had all the power, it was almost negated by the fact that they took the information they had for granted and as an absolute, while the information they obtained was censored and incomplete. Fischer used every observable detail about his interrogator to piece together information about him. His "handler" did not rely so heavily on such measure, because he was the person in power with all the information he had on Fischer.^[101] Not everyone had the privilege of knowing who was gathering information on them.

However, this would change on January 15, 1990 when thousands of protesters stormed the *MfS* headquarters in an effort to prevent files from being destroyed that contained information about six million East Germans and about two million West German Citizens. The availability of Stasi documents was a result of the East German revolution. Once the files were recovered, the *DDR*'s last Communist Prime Minister, Hans Modrow, allowed the Berlin Citizen's Committee to work on sorting the *MfS* archives in order to appease the demands of East Germans to access these files and to bring attention to the wrong doings of the Communist government. In the spring of 1990, Stasi reports and orders were published in a book entitled *Ich liebe euch doch alle!* (I love you All!).^[102]

The East German parliament used these documents to establish if any elected officials previously worked for the Ministry for State Security. Where the vetting process revealed such collaboration, the MP or public servant was to be dismissed from their post.^[103] The Stasi files were also to be used for 'judicial reckoning with the past' in order to facilitate prosecution where crimes had been committed, but also to vindicate those who had been wrongly accused.^[104] There was much controversy over the release of the documents to those who wished to see their files. Most of the files contained the names of more than one person and it was believed that this could have serious repercussions. The majority of the oppressed and spied-upon population had a legitimate interest in publicizing the Stasi files. They hoped that the new knowledge would have consequences for the collaborators who enjoyed the advantages they were given.^[105] The files were very technical and filled with mostly facts, however, they did not reflect the real lives of the people they depict. They were impressive in detail but lacked insight. "This prison was run by bureaucrats, not philosophers. The Stasi were very capable of recording the minutiae of people's lives, however, they failed to discern the deeper meaning that held it all together."^[106]

The practice of international espionage has been around longer than most care to know. The most important period of espionage history was during the "Cold War" era. Markus Wolf and the *HVA* created a network of spies so deep that many informants have yet to be found. These spies allowed the *DDR* to survive in an era of uncertainty with the threat of nuclear war looming. The biggest star of the East was the spy, Günter Guillaume. He gave Wolf access to the political and military pulse of West Germany through the administration of Willy Brandt. While Wolf did not place Guillaume in the West himself, he did however become directly involved when Guillaume was able to supply details of Brandt's reconciliation policy of *Ostpolitik*. Guillaume helped the *MfS* to have a direct influence over West German politics. He did this in order to better understand the intentions of Brandt in hopes that a unified Germany can exist once again. Wolf, however, should not be seen as an evil person who is bent on world domination. He should be recognized for his wanting to protect that which he believed. Without a doubt, Markus Wolf was the greatest spymaster that ever lived.

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