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**THE *STASI* LEGACY:
THE CASE OF THE *INOFFIZIELLE MITARBEITER***

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ABSTRACT

The following thesis examines both the individual and the societal confrontation with one particular aspect of the legacy of the GDR's *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (*MfS*, or *Stasi*), that is the debate concerning onetime *MfS* informers (*Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*, or *IM*).

The thesis is divided into two main sections. Section One describes and analyses specific aspects of the *IM* system. Characteristics of the population of *IM* are examined in Chapter 1, and the ten case studies which are referred to throughout the course of the work are presented. These former *IM* were interviewed by the author in 1994-95, and the *MfS* files of eight of them were subsequently viewed. The remaining chapters in Section One examine the following issues: the recruitment procedure (2); the daily work with an *IM* and his/her relationship to the *MfS* (4); the motivational factors behind an *IM-Tätigkeit* (3 and 5).

Section Two turns to the private and public confrontation with the *IM* legacy. The debate over former *Stasi* collaborators currently active in the political forum is considered in Chapter 6, and the handling of the *IM* issue by the criminal justice system in Chapter 7. The final three chapters are devoted to personal and interpersonal issues. Chapter 8 addresses the *Täter/Opfer* debate. Chapter 9 focuses on the manner in which an *IM* sought to cope with this aspect of his/her biography at the time of active collaboration, and on how s/he seeks to justify this in retrospect. The final chapter examines the profound effect which the availability of the *MfS* files through the *Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz* has had and will have on the understanding of personal and collective history in the former GDR, and the work concludes that this is the most significant and far-reaching impact of this most extraordinary legacy.

CONTENTS

<i>Preface and Acknowledgements</i>	9
<i>Declaration</i>	11

INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY, AND SOURCES

1	'WANN BRICHT SCHON MAL EIN STAAT ZUSAMMEN!': THE LEGACY OF A NATION AND ITS SECRET SERVICE	13
1.1	Beginnings of a Societal Debate	14
1.2	Origins and End of a Secret Service and its <i>Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter (IM)</i>	16
1.3	The <i>Wende</i>	20
1.4	Post- <i>Wende</i> Turmoil	21
	1.4.1 Occupation of <i>MfS (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit)</i> Headquarters	21
	1.4.2 The <i>Runder Tisch</i>	23
1.5	The <i>Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz (StUG)</i>	24
	1.5.1 General	24
	1.5.2 The <i>StUG</i> and the <i>Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter</i>	25
2	AIMS, METHOD, AND SOURCES	28
2.1	Aims	29
2.2	Methodology	31
	2.2.1 Oral History: Origins and Application	31
	2.2.2 The Biographical Approach: The Use of Life Stories in Sociological Research	33
	2.2.3 The Psychology of Memory	35
2.3	The Interviews	36
2.4	Further Sources	40
	2.4.1 Beyond Autobiographical Accounts: The <i>Stasi</i> Files	40
	2.4.2 <i>IM Richtlinien</i>	41
	2.4.3 The <i>Juristische Hochschule</i>	41
	2.4.4 <i>SED</i> Archives	42
	2.4.5 The Press	42
	2.4.6 Secondary Literature	43
2.5	Additional Information	43

3	<i>DICHTUNG ODER WAHRHEIT?: ON THE TRUTH CONTENT OF THE STASI FILES</i>	44
3.1	The Bonfire	45
3.2	Fact or Fiction?: Details and Essence of Collaboration	46
3.3	Legal Decisions	51
3.4	<i>Juristische Hochschule</i> Material	52
3.5	Conclusions	53

*SECTION ONE
DYNAMICS OF AN IM-TÄTIGKEIT*

1	<i>'EINE GANZ NORMALE BIOGRAPHIE?': PROFILE OF AN INOFFIZIELLER MITARBEITER</i>	56
1.1	Terminology for the Employment of <i>IM</i>	57
1.2	Characteristics of the Population of <i>IM</i>	58
1.2.1	Overall Number	58
1.2.2	Gender	58
1.2.3	Social Grouping	59
1.2.4	Political Affiliation	62
1.3	Selecting a Candidate: The <i>Anforderungsbild</i>	63
1.3.1	Definition	63
1.3.2	The Task	63
1.3.3	The Personality	64
1.4	Introduction of Case Studies	65
1.4.1	'Rolf'	65
1.4.2	'Theodor'	67
1.4.3	'Falke'	68
1.4.4	'Reiner'	69
1.4.5	'Thaer'	71
1.4.6	'Fuchs'	72
1.4.7	'Wolfgang'	74
1.4.8	'Stephana'	75
1.4.9	'Katrin'	77
1.4.10	'Sonnenblume'	78
2	THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS: A WORK OF ART	81
2.1	General	82
2.2	Initial Approach	83

2.3	Timing	85
2.4	More <i>Legenden</i>	86
2.5	Commitment	86
2.6	Consolidating the Agreement	90
3	'DAS IST EIGENTLICH EINE GUTE SACHE': MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS BEHIND AN <i>IM</i>- TÄTIGKEIT	92
3.1	'Positive gesellschaftliche Überzeugung'	93
3.2	The <i>Sinn-Angebot</i>	96
3.3	'Persönliche Bedürfnisse und Interessen'	99
3.3.1	'Materielle Bedürfnisse'	99
3.3.2	'Soziale Bedürfnisse'	100
3.3.3	'Geistige Interessen'	101
3.4	'Wiedergutmachungsbestrebungen'	103
3.5	Passivity	108
3.6	Conclusions	109
4	BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN <i>INOFFIZIELLER MITARBEITER</i>	111
4.1	The Nature of the Work with <i>IM</i>	112
4.1.1	Theory	112
4.1.2	Practice	113
4.1.3	Apparent Banality and the Mosaic	116
4.1.4	Serious Sleuthing	118
4.1.5	Scruples	121
4.1.6	Summary	123
4.2	The <i>Führungsoffizier</i> : Friend and Helper?	124
4.2.1	General: Defining the <i>IM/Führungsoffizier</i> Bond	124
4.2.2	Equal	125
4.2.3	Friend	125
4.2.4	Admirer	127
4.2.5	Therapist	128
4.2.6	Concerned Outside Party	129
4.2.7	Mentor	130
4.2.8	Accomplice	131
4.2.9	Summary	132

5	'WENN ICH GEWUßT HÄTTE': MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR CONTINUING AN <i>IM-TÄTIGKEIT</i>	134
5.1	General	135
5.2	The Role of Material Reward	135
5.3	Fear and Obedience	139
5.4	The <i>Sinn-Angebot</i>	142
5.5	The Split Personality	143
5.6	The Security of Routine	146
5.7	Conclusions	146

SECTION TWO

DEALINGS WITH A UNIQUE LEGACY: CONFRONTING THE IM PHENOMENON IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPHERE

6	POLITICIANS AS <i>IM</i> : ASPECTS OF A TURBULENT DEBATE	150
6.1	'Ein Mann der Kirche'?: Manfred Stolpe and the <i>MfS</i>	151
6.1.1	The Debate Begins	151
6.1.2	Immediate Political Ramifications	153
6.1.3	The Role of the Church in the <i>SED</i> State	154
6.1.4	The West's Complicity	157
6.1.5	The East's Complicity	158
6.1.6	The Role of the <i>Gauck-Behörde</i>	160
6.1.7	The Work of the <i>Untersuchungsausschuß</i>	161
6.1.8	Consequences	165
6.2	'Eine Spezialvariante': Gregor Gysi	165
7	JUSTICE AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: THE LEGAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE <i>MfS</i> LEGACY	169
7.1	Fundamental Difficulties	170
7.2	Consequences of a Peaceful Revolution	173
7.3	The Treatment of <i>IM</i> : Uncertainties and Inconsistencies	174
7.4	Legality and Morality	178
7.5	The <i>BStU</i> and the <i>StUG</i>	179
7.6	Conclusions	180
8	THE <i>TÄTER/OPFER</i> CONTINUUM: DEFINING DEGREES OF CONFORMITY AND RESISTANCE	183
8.1	General	184

8.2	<i>Nicht-Opfer</i>	184
8.3	Opportunistic Conformity	187
8.4	<i>Täter</i>	190
8.5	The Files	192
8.6	<i>Opfer</i>	196
8.7	Conclusions	198
9	LOOKING BACK: A <i>STASI</i> INFORMER'S CONFRONTATION WITH THE PAST	203
9.1	The Art of Memory	204
9.1.1	The Phenomenon of Apparent Forgetting	204
9.1.2	Perceptions of Self in Autobiographical Memory	207
9.1.3	Terminological Considerations	209
9.1.4	Release	213
9.1.5	Selective Memory	214
9.2	'Ich habe niemandem geschadet': Coping/Legitimation Strategies for Confronting an <i>IM</i> Past	215
9.2.1	General	215
9.2.2	'Das Normalste auf der Welt': The Normalisation /Trivialisation Approach	216
9.2.3	'Das ist eigentlich eine gute Sache': The <i>IM</i> as Mediator and Helper	218
9.2.4	The Omnipotent <i>MfS</i>	221
9.2.5	Relativisation	224
9.3	The Question of Guilt	226
9.3.1	'Ich habe nicht den Eindruck, daß ich Unrecht getan habe'	226
9.3.2	The Ultimate Victims	227
9.3.3	The Coincidence of Circumstance	229
9.3.4	Summary	230
10	'WIEDERANEIGNUNG DER EIGENEN BIOGRAPHIE': THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OPENING OF THE <i>STASI</i> FILES	231
10.1	Introduction	232
10.2	The <i>Opfer</i> : 'Enttäuschungen' and 'Ent-täuschungen'	233
10.3	The <i>Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter</i>	237
10.4	The <i>Nicht-Täter/Nicht-Opfer</i>	240
10.5	Conclusions	240

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

11	IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF AN EXTRAORDINARY LEGACY	243
11.1	<i>Stasi-Hysteria</i>	244
11.2	<i>Post-Stasi-Hysteria</i>	246
11.3	<i>Was bleibt?</i>	253
	<i>Appendix 1</i>	257
	<i>Appendix 2</i>	258
	<i>Glossary:</i>	262
	<i>Abbreviations</i>	262
	<i>Common Terms</i>	264
	<i>Key Personalities</i>	268
	<i>Bibliography:</i>	270
	<i>A: Interviews with Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter</i>	270
	<i>B: Correspondence Relating to IM</i>	270
	<i>C: MfS Files</i>	271
	<i>D: MfS Documentation</i>	271
	<i>E: Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR</i>	273
	<i>F: Further Primary Documentation</i>	273
	<i>G: Laws</i>	275
	<i>H: Conferences/Events</i>	275
	<i>I: Newspaper Articles</i>	275
	<i>J: Secondary Sources</i>	281
	<i>K: Uncited Sources</i>	288

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

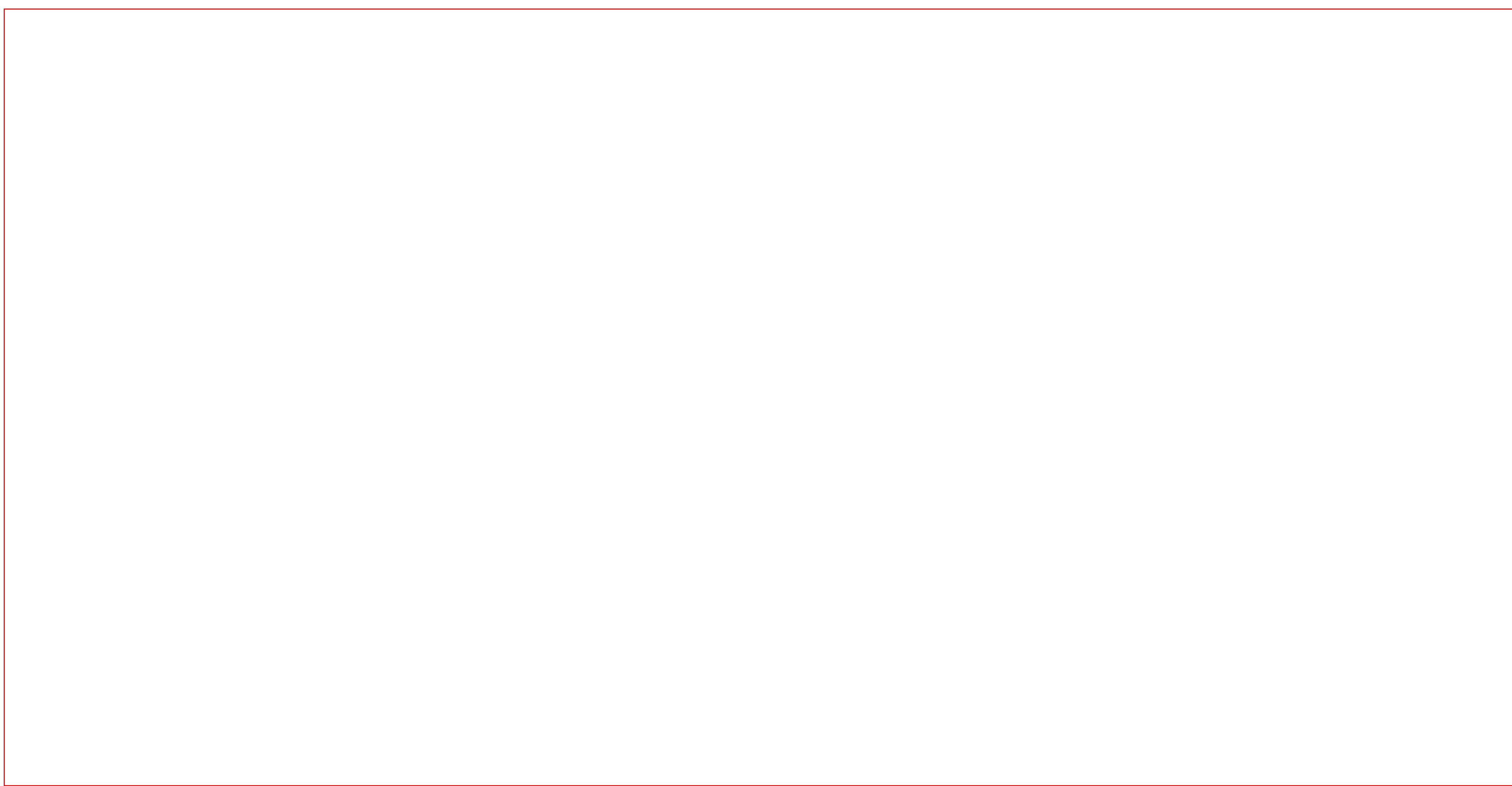
Two particular incidents come to mind when I look back on the teaching I did in 1991-93 on government sponsored re-training schemes for unemployed East Berliners. The first was when a man in one class admitted openly to having worked for the *MfS* on a full-time basis. An embarrassed silence followed, until someone started to nervously giggle. I stopped asking people what they used to do after that, but on one occasion I brought a newspaper article with me concerning the first trial against former GDR border-guards, which was underway at that time. I naïvely imagined that the class would simply be interested in seeing how events in Germany were discussed in the British press. A violent row ensued concerning the relative guilt of the border-guards in question. Many of those in this particular class argued that Chris Gueffroy, the young man who had been fatally wounded in February 1989, had known the danger he faced by attempting to flee the GDR. Occurrences such as these were fascinating, but the issues involved overwhelmed me at the time, and I did not know where to begin and what right I, in an already somewhat controversial role as a re-trainer, really had to question people about their past lives and about the way in which these lives were being re-shaped and re-defined in their new Germany.

Four years later some of the questions which sparked this initial interest are discussed in the following thesis, for which I owe many people considerable thanks. First and foremost Professor Roger Stephenson and his colleagues in the German Department of the University of Glasgow; above all, of course, Dr. Roderick H. Watt, for his limitless time and patience, for his enthusiastic support and dedication, and for his commas! The continued reassurance of friends and family has also been invaluable in carrying me through the rather frequent darker moments of such an undertaking. Most welcome practical help was afforded by the Student

Awards Agency for Scotland in funding the project, a research year in Germany (in conjunction with an Erasmus grant), and several conferences. Conference participation was also kindly supported by the German Department and by various Research Support Awards from the Graduate School of Arts and Humanities at the University of Glasgow. I would also like to mention Thomas Rogalla and Helmut Müller-Enbergs of the *BStU*, whose help ensured that this thesis took the path it did. Regardless of any moral judgements which the reader might make, this would not have been possible if the ten former *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*, whose stories are woven throughout this work, had not been prepared, sometimes at a degree of personal risk, to contribute to this one small part of the confrontation with the *Stasi* legacy.

DECLARATION

I certify that the work contained in this thesis has not been accepted in any former application for a degree. Information regarding the previous publication and oral presentation of sections of the thesis can be found in the Introduction: 2.5. All citations, references and sources of information have been distinguished in the text by the use of notes and bibliography.



INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY, AND SOURCES

Introduction: Part One

'WANN BRICHT SCHON MAL EIN STAAT ZUSAMMEN!': (J-35)

THE LEGACY OF A NATION AND ITS SECRET SERVICE

1.1 BEGINNINGS OF A SOCIETAL DEBATE

The collapse of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 signified the end of forty years of inner-German division and meant that the East/West frontier of Cold War politics, which had been gradually eroding throughout the 1980s, was finally washed completely from the landscape. The following years were to be witness to massive social and political upheaval in the lands of the former Eastern Block, marked by the fragmentation of nation states as a consequence of regional and ethnic conflicts. Events in the former GDR, by contrast, did not follow this pattern of segmentation and, on 3 October 1990, less than one year after the jubilant scenes of 9 November, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) were politically united. The voices of those who had hoped not for unification, but for a reformed GDR, were drowned by the wave of enthusiasm with which ordinary citizens of the five new *Länder* initially embraced amalgamation with their more affluent sister state. The GDR had ceased to be, and in the following years the question of how to confront its legacy would become the subject of bitter controversy between and within the two former Germanys.

Assessing forty years of post-war history was never going to be an easy undertaking, and attempts by the legal system to bring the crimes of the *SED* state to light were criticised for their laxness and ineffectiveness by some at the same time as they were scorned as exemplifying a form of *Siegerjustiz* by others. Liberally inclined West German intellectuals such as Günter Grass tended to argue that the FRG did not have the right to stand in judgement over the GDR (J-31). Frank Schirrmacher of the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* found fault in turn in this stance, pointing out the irony, as he saw it, that it was precisely those who had been highly critical of the lenient manner in which the crimes of the National Socialist regime had been confronted in the FRG who, after the collapse of the GDR,

protested that those who had not been forced to live under the *SED* dictatorship did not have the right to judge the actions of those who had (I-13).

Since only one of the two Germanys had ceased to exist, it was ultimately the bulky legacy only of the GDR which would pose so many problems after the initial euphoria of unification had subsided. A substantial proportion of the reckoning with the GDR past centred around the debate concerning the former Ministry of State Security (the *MfS*, or, more popularly, the *Stasi*). The decision to make the files of this once so feared organisation publicly available meant that citizens of the former GDR were confronted with certain harsh realities concerning the extent of their own compliance and conformity. Only a very small minority of GDR citizens had ever voiced the criticisms of state policies which an increasing number had harboured during the latter years of their country's existence. Most had reconciled themselves to the fact, as they saw it, that they would never leave the GDR and had suppressed their disapproval of certain state practices in the desire for as conflict-free a life as possible. By doing so they had helped to ensure the continued existence of the GDR. Once it had ceased to be and its many flaws had been brought to light, this was a stance of which few were particularly proud. It was with a considerable degree of reluctance that many began to face the bitter reality that they had never acted in a manner sufficiently non-conformist to arouse the *Stasi's* suspicions, particularly since they had perhaps lived their lives believing that the wilful suppression of their true opinion was justified by the fact that they were under *Stasi* observation.

In the turbulent period immediately following the fall of the Berlin Wall a wave of verbal aggression was directed towards those who had served the *MfS*, fuelled by the stream of sensational revelations of partly factual, partly fictional *Stasi* crimes which hit the headlines of the tabloid

press. This anger gradually subsided when the considerable material and social concerns resulting from unification began to take precedence in most former East Germans' lives, and after it had been established that the majority had not, in fact, ever been under direct surveillance. The issue of how to deal with those whose existence, it was argued, had significantly contributed to an all-prevailing atmosphere of distrust, the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*, remained very much on the agenda. The guilt of these individuals was often extremely difficult to define in a legal context, and the moral issues involved were equally complex. The injustices which, to varying degrees, had been inflicted upon the population of the GDR had been decreed at higher levels, but those who had been active as *MfS* informers had more directly exploited trust by reporting on the activities of friends, neighbours, and even close relatives. Theirs was also a crime which had remained undisclosed until the files were made available, and the banal fascination of the phenomenon of observation and control, combined with the compelling discussion of intricate issues of guilt and compliance within a German context, meant that much of the debate concerning this unique legacy would focus on these *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*.

1.2 ORIGINS AND END OF A SECRET SERVICE AND ITS *INOFFIZIELLE MITARBEITER (IM)*

On 8 February 1950 the *Volkskammer* of the newly-founded GDR passed a law decreeing the creation of an independent Ministry for State Security. The text of this law encompassed a mere two paragraphs and stated: 'Die bisher dem Ministerium des Inneren unterstellte Hauptverwaltung zum Schutze der Volkswirtschaft wird zu einem selbstständigen Ministerium für Staatssicherheit umgebildet.' (F-13, p. 180) In the aftermath of the events of 17 June 1953, Wilhelm Zaisser, the man who had been appointed the first Minister for State Security, was dismissed and the Ministry was

temporarily stripped, until 24 November 1955, of its independence and re-integrated into the Interior Ministry. Ernst Wollweber succeeded Zaisser and remained in power until, on 1 November 1957, Erich Mielke took control. Mielke was to occupy the post of Minister for State Security for the next thirty-two years.

The *MfS* was governed from a central complex in the Normannenstraße in Berlin and served by fifteen district divisions, *Bezirksverwaltungen*. There is some dispute as to whether the once unquestionably mighty *Stasi* is best described as having been a state within a state or as 'ein Instrument der SED-Bürokratie zur Aufrechterhaltung ihrer Macht'.¹ The more convincing arguments support the latter hypothesis, with more recent work suggesting that, although even the *MfS* labelled itself the 'Schild und Schwert der Partei', this characterisation alone is too superficial, since it ignores the constantly developing dynamics of the relationship between the Party and the *MfS* (J-93).

In contrast to the discussion outlined above, there is little dispute that the foreign espionage department of the *MfS*, the *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung*, achieved considerable success, notably the positioning of top spy, Günter Guillaume, in the office of the *Bundeskanzler* Willy Brandt. The unmasking of Guillaume was a significant factor in Brandt's decision to relinquish power. What distinguished the *MfS*, however, from other secret services was the quite substantial amount of resources dedicated to internal affairs (J-22, p. 24). The analysis of the documents relating to the observation and control of internal activities has brought the recognition that much of the *MfS*'s attention was focused on specific groups of the population, primarily on individuals associated with the church, with cultural, or with opposition activities. Yet, in the minds of the East German population, the *Stasi* functioned as though it were physically omnipresent,

¹ Hermann Weber, cited by Karl Wilhelm Fricke (F-13, p. 5).

and many a conversation was subjected to a form of self-imposed censorship in the belief that it was being furtively recorded and analysed.

The numbers of those employed by the *MfS* increased steadily throughout the life span of the organisation. In 1974 55,718 people were employed on a full-time basis, by 1980 there were 75,106 such employees, and when the *MfS* went into dissolution in 1989 this figure had risen to 91,000 (J-29, p. 34, J-64, p. 56). Full-time employees were often known among friends and family to be working for the *MfS*. For the approximately 174,000 *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* estimated to have been active in 1989 this was not the case (J-64, p. 56).² There were several different types of *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*, who were each to have varying tasks and areas of responsibility (J-62, pp. 62-90). By far the most common category was the *IMS* (*IM zur politisch-operativen Durchdringung und Sicherung des Verantwortungsbereiches*), defined in the 1979 *IM* guidelines as follows:

Das sind IM, die wesentliche Beiträge zur allseitigen Gewährleistung der inneren Sicherheit im Verantwortungsbereich leisten, in hohem Maße vorbeugend und schadensverhütend wirken und mithelfen, neue Sicherheitserfordernisse rechtzeitig zu erkennen sowie durchzusetzen. Ihre Arbeit muß der umfassenden, sicheren Einschätzung und Beherrschung der politisch-operativen Lage im Verantwortungsbereich und der Weiterführung des Klärungsprozesses 'Wer ist wer?' dienen. (J-62, p. 314)

IME (*IM für einen besonderen Einsatz*) and *IMB* (*IM der Abwehr mit Feindverbindung bzw. zur unmittelbaren Bearbeitung im Verdacht der Feindtätigkeit stehender Personen*) were, as these definitions indicate, in comparison to the *IMS*, to be given more direct and specific tasks. During the course of his/her contact to the *MfS* the status of an *IM* could be changed according to his/her potential to obtain specific information and according to the needs of the *Führungsoffizier* concerned. IM 'Fuchs', for

² 174,000 is the more recent and now more frequently cited figure. Müller-Enbergs originally named 173,000 as the number of *IM* active in 1989 (F-10, p. 17).

example, was originally recruited as an *IMS* but was later promoted to a *FIM (Führungs-IM)* when he was placed in charge of other *IM* in the prison where he worked (C-5b, pp. 87-90). When he changed jobs in 1985 'Fuchs' was once again given the status *IMS* (C-5b, pp. 133-36).

In contrast to the *Hauptamtliche Mitarbeiter*, the majority of *IM* did not receive a regular wage for their services, with the exception of what was termed a *Hauptamtlicher IM* (J-62, pp. 89-90). *Hauptamtliche IM* worked for the *MfS* on a full-time basis but, by the creation of a cover occupation, a *Scheinarbeitsverhältnis*, care was taken to ensure that this fact remain secret (F-3, pp. 195-96).

IM were engaged in the amassing of vast amounts of often seemingly trivial pieces of information which could potentially be used in the *operative Zersetzung* of the enemy (F-3, p. 464). *Operative Zersetzung* involved devising strategies to destroy or neutralise those whose political stance was perceived as a threat to the smooth running of the state. Much of the vast amount of information collected by the *MfS* was reproduced, often by hand, several times within any given file, and when, in 1989, the *MfS* realised that its days were numbered, measures were put into action to begin the immense task of trying to destroy these screeds of written material. Amidst growing political unrest, the *MfS* was also renamed the *AfNS (Amt für Nationale Sicherheit)* on 17 November 1989 by Hans Modrow, the new *Ministerpräsident* of the rapidly disappearing GDR, and Wolfgang Schwanitz was appointed head of the reformed organisation.³ Less than one month later and under pressure from the *Runder Tisch*, Modrow's government announced measures to restructure the *AfNS* into two separate organisations, one responsible for domestic and one for foreign affairs. Finally, the decision was taken to completely disband the *MfS/AfNS* and to stop all preparations for successor organisations, leaving a legacy of 178

³ For a more detailed account of the events of this time, see J-29, pp. 177-292.

kilometres of filed material, which is now in the care of the *Bundesbeauftragter für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU)*.

1.3 THE WENDE

During the 1980s the political climate throughout Eastern Europe had, of course, been undergoing dramatic change. Once the mood of had [↶] upheaval finally reached the GDR, events took on surprising momentum. A significant turning point in this process came in January 1988, when the traditional Rosa-Luxemburg-Demonstration ended with the arrest and subsequent forced temporary exile of several leading *Bürgerrechtler*. The authorities had been enraged when protesters had attempted to participate in the march carrying a banner which criticised the state but which displayed a quotation from Luxemburg herself, stating that freedom was 'die Freiheit des Andersdenkenden'.⁴ Vigils were held for those arrested, and this rally is generally regarded as the first time that previously isolated opposition groups and critical voices joined together in protest. The mood of dissatisfaction continued to grow, and the obvious rigging of the municipal election results of May 1989 led to a further surge of anti-government sentiment. The situation was now acute, but still few could really have believed that the GDR was heading towards its fortieth and final anniversary, a process which was speeded along by Hungary's decision in late summer 1989 to allow the GDR citizens who had been flocking there the chance to escape into Austria. This decision marked the beginning of a mass exodus from the GDR in the following months, and when the Hungarian/Austrian border was finally officially opened on 10 September 1989, 20,000 GDR citizens crossed over into the West in the first few hours

⁴ For a description of the events marking the growing unrest in the GDR, see J-59, pp. 483-553, or J-38.

alone (J-38, p. 28). Thousands of East Germans had also been gathering in foreign embassies in Czechoslovakia and Poland, and on 30 September the GDR government allowed the first wave of what amounted to 5,500 refugees in Prague and 800 in Warsaw safe passage to the FRG via special train (J-38, p. 29). International media attention was focused on the GDR, and the images of the emotional scenes of those who took this opportunity to flee, sometimes even leaving their children behind to do so, have become imprinted in the minds of all those who watched in awe. The stream of those leaving the GDR seemed endless, and celebrations on 7 October 1989 to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Republic were marred when spectators of the parade appealed for help to the visiting Michael Gorbachev. The *Wende* was completed when, on 9 November 1989, and after a somewhat confused announcement by *Politbüro* representative Günter Schabowski, the inner-German border was declared open and the first GDR citizens were allowed by stunned border-guards to pass through the Berlin Wall, the barrier which, since its erection in 1961, had divided the world into East and West.

1.4 POST-WENDE TURMOIL

1.4.1 Occupation of *MfS* (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*)

Headquarters

It was almost a month after the events of the historic night of 9 November 1989 when, on 4 December, *MfS* offices in Leipzig were first occupied by members of the public, some of whom were beginning to form into various *Bürgerkomitees*. Similar action followed throughout the GDR, with activities reaching a dramatic climax on 15 January 1990 when the headquarters in Berlin were stormed by thousands who had been protesting outside, chanting slogans such as 'Stasi raus' and 'Stasi in die Produktion'. Although subsequent reports suggest that the *MfS* was fully prepared for this attack,

probably even actually opening the doors to the protesting mass outside, the event was immensely symbolic and seemed to signify the final liberation of the *Volk* from its oppressor (J-109, pp. 33-40). It was later to be established that most of the files which literally fell into the hands of the protesters as they ran blindly through the complex were fairly harmless and had been carefully and cunningly placed in their path with the intention of distracting them from going in search of other potentially more explosive material. Representatives of the *MfS* and possibly even of other secret services were very probably taking advantage of the chaotic atmosphere to smuggle more delicate material out of the building at that very moment (J-17, p. 80).

One of the ironies of the period immediately following this occupation is that *MfS* officers worked closely with the citizens' committee established to oversee the safekeeping of the files. These officers had, of course, their own interests at heart in this process and, as a result of their inside knowledge, a distinct advantage over the members of the committee. Stefan Wolle later said that he and other members of the Normannenstraße Committee allowed themselves 'to be led through the labyrinth as though through a museum, without taking command' (J-105, p. 352). The uniqueness of the situation meant that many of those who were involved in the ensuing process of disbanding the *MfS* / *AfNS* were bound to make what are now seen to be erroneous judgements when carrying out this immense task. Hans Schwenke, who was involved in the dissolution process, would later write of this time: 'Die Stasi-Leute hatten ihre eigenen Vorstellungen von der Auflösung ihres Geheimdienstes und spielten mit den Auflösern lange Zeit Katz und Maus.' (J-109, p. 218)

1.4.2 The *Runder Tisch*

One of the most seriously misguided decisions made in the period immediately following the storming of *Stasi* headquarters was the one taken in February 1990 to destroy the electronic data bank which catalogued the material contained in the files. The proposal to take such action was put forward and agreed upon by the *Runder Tisch*, with the justification that the information stored in this bank had been illegally obtained and was potentially exploitable by members of the *Stasi* or of other secret services. With hindsight, this action is recognised by many to have ultimately served only to complicate the ensuing attempt to administer the screeds of documents now in possession of the *Gauck-Behörde*, the name by which the *BStU* is more commonly referred to after the *Bundesbeauftragter* himself, Joachim Gauck (J-29, p. 225). Soon it was evident that the destruction of material best served the interests of those who had compiled it. The *Runder Tisch* found itself, however, in an unfortunate position, suffering as it did from a lack, not only of past experience, but also of legitimacy (see J-24, p. 77). As a body of representatives from the various political parties and organisations active at the time, many of those who sat at the *Runder Tisch* aimed to ensure that the principles of democracy were adhered to in this turbulent period. Yet the *Runder Tisch* was itself a self-appointed and thus undemocratic body, some of whose members, it was later to be revealed, had collaborated with the *MfS*:

Es mutet wie ein Kalauer der Geschichte an, daß die ersten freien Wahlen zur Volkskammer veranstaltet wurden, um eine gesetzgebende Körperschaft zu kreieren, die nur eine Aufgabe hatte: sich selbst abzuschaffen. So etwas hat es in der Geschichte parlamentarischer Demokratien noch nicht gegeben, es sind schon etliche Staaten untergegangen, aber keiner so ordentlich wie die DDR. Ebenso einmalig ist es, daß an der Spitze der revolutionären Bewegung Mitarbeiter des Sicherheitsapparates agierten, deren eigentliche Aufgabe darin lag, revolutionäre Veränderungen zu verhindern: de Maizière bei der CDU, Ibrahim Böhme bei der SPD, Wolfgang Schnur beim Demokratischen Aufbruch, nur um die prominentesten zu nennen. (J-16, pp. 22-23)

Within, as Wolle described it, the 'bizarre coalition of extreme opposites' which made up the *Runder Tisch* there were then those who were not so much interested in seeing that justice be done, but rather that their own collaboration with the *MfS* remained undisclosed, leading Jens Reich to remark that he had the feeling that he and other representatives of the *Bürgerbewegung* had been somewhat 'über den Runden Tisch gezogen' (J-106, p. 140, I-90).

1.5 THE STASI-UNTERLAGEN-GESETZ (StUG)

1.5.1 General

In spite of the immense difficulties and resistance they faced, the dedication of members of the various *Bürgerkomitees* resulted in the passing of a law on 24 August 1990 by the *Volkskammer* concerning the protection and use of the data collected by the *MfS* (G-2). This law was not adopted in the unification treaty of 3 October 1990, but ensured that a ruling was included which guaranteed temporary conditions of use until the *Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz (StUG)* was finally passed over one year later (G-3). This was a significant victory, as many on both sides of the rapidly disappearing German-German border would rather have seen the lid kept firmly shut on this quite extraordinary Pandora's box.

Germany's *StUG* is unique in the former Eastern Block. No comparable law was passed in countries such as Poland, Hungary or Romania. In Hungary, for example, legislation was implemented to allow the screening of individuals in specific public positions, but was eventually abandoned in recognition of the fact that there were so few judges available to implement the law who were not themselves liable for screening and possible dismissal (I-93). In Romania the files came under the standard thirty-year closure rule, leading one journalist there to comment:

Heute ist die Angst vor der eigenen Akte größer geworden als die Angst vor dem Repressionsorgan. Das Einfrieren der Dossiers für dreißig Jahre bedeutet eine dreißigjährige Verlängerung der Machtgarantie für jene, die mit diesen Dossiers aus dem Dunkel operieren können. (I-94)

The Czech Republic is the only former Eastern Block country which comes close to having adopted legislation comparable to the *StUG*, although this ruling is somewhat less differentiated and intricate than its German counterpart (J-73, pp. 319-26).

1.5.2 The *StUG* and the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*

The passing of the *StUG* meant that theoretically an end was in sight to the mass speculation about who had or had not collaborated with the *MfS*. Since its subject matter was so delicate and its implications so potentially grave, the law's specifications were the cause of much heated dispute. According to the *StUG* (§ 16), for example, former *IM* are not granted access to the reports which they wrote or helped compile, with the justification that, if they were to be allowed to view this material, 'altes Wissen zum Nachteil von Betroffenen und Dritten aufgefrischt werden könnte' (Angelika Barbe, F-16, p. 116). An *IM* may apply to see these sections of the file only if s/he can prove that a legal interest exists to do so (*StUG*, § 16/4). This particular aspect of the law has been heavily criticised on the grounds that, 'die Betroffenen vor laufender Kamera mit ihrer Akte, die sie selbst noch nie gesehen haben, zu konfrontieren, erinnert an Stasi-Methoden' (J-86, p. 123). Calls for the destruction of the files by the likes of Friedrich Schorlemmer arose partly out of such sentiment. There has, however, been a huge public response to the *StUG* and by 1995, when the second report of the *BStU* went to press, over 2.7 million applications to view files had been lodged (F-17, p. 4). The majority of these requests had come from employers in the

public sector, but close to one million were private applications from ordinary citizens who wished to know if they had been under *Stasi* observation. There can be no doubt that there is wide public interest in the *MfS* legacy. Joachim Gauck, the head of the *BStU*, argues, therefore, that the decision not to confront the harsh truths in the files would lead to 'ein enormes Maß an Frustration und Unmut' in the former GDR (J-17, p. 91).

It is likely that very little of the 'Frustration und Unmut' which Gauck predicts would be detectable on the part of former *IM*, who face possible social stigmatisation as well as dismissal from employment if their contacts to the *MfS* become public. Many of these individuals feel that they have been unfairly singled out as scapegoats in the reckoning with the GDR past. Establishing the identities behind the cover names of former *IM* is, however, arguably a necessary element to the confrontation with the *Stasi* legacy. When he published extracts of his *Stasi* file, the writer Reiner Kunze made the following statement in the introduction to his book: 'Wäre es möglich, eine solche Dokumentation über einen Dritten herauszugeben, würde ich auf die Veröffentlichung dieses Buches gern verzichten. Es geht um die Mechanismen, nicht um Personen.' (J-48, p. 12) When writing to a woman who, together with her husband, had informed the *MfS* on his activities, Erich Loest made a similar statement. Loest was interested in finding out whether the *IM-Tätigkeit* had been brought to an end by the *MfS* or on the initiative of the woman and her husband, 'weil ich hinter das System kommen will, nicht um Ihnen und Wilfried noch irgendwas am Zeug zu flicken. Das ist vorbei und mir nicht mehr wichtig.' (J-52, p. 134)

One of the primary consequences of the fact that the *MfS* files are now publicly available is that the mechanisms of the system of oppression can be studied in detail. Yet, as the above statements from Kunze and Loest indicate, it is hard to imagine any real confrontation with the past without identifying, among other key actors, former *IM*. A recent court case

is interesting in this context. After publishing his book on the *MfS* observation of the literary scene in the GDR, Joachim Walther has found himself losing a case brought by a man who is named in the book as having been an *IM* (J-100). The court decreed that those *IM* whose collaboration was minimal have the right to remain anonymous and that the book should be temporarily removed from circulation. The publisher and the *BStU*, where Walther has been employed while working on his project, intend to contest this decision.

Wolfgang Thierse found the emphasis on the *IM* in the debate concerning the *Stasi* legacy undesirable, arguing that the phenomenon was merely 'ein banales Faszinosum, eine negativ mythisierte Alltäglichkeit' (J-95, p. 30). Thierse appealed to the general public to stop thinking of former *IM* as 'irgendwelche fernen dämonischen Bösewichter, Verbrechertypen, Schweinehunde', and to realise that they were friends, neighbours, and even relatives (J-95, p. 30). It is, however, precisely this aspect of the *IM* network, its banality and the fact that, whether imagined or real, it was a feature of the day-to-day reality of many GDR citizens, which ensures the public's fascination with it. The following study will concern itself with the way in which the *IM* themselves and the society around them confront this 'banales Faszinosum'.

Introduction: Part Two

AIMS, METHOD, AND SOURCES

2.1 AIMS

Von den dem Ministerium für Staatssicherheit zur Verfügung stehenden Mitteln und Möglichkeiten im Kampf gegen die konspirative Tätigkeit des Klassenfeindes nehmen die inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter den wichtigsten Platz ein. (1958, J-62, p. 198)

Das Kernstück der gesamten politisch-operativen Arbeit des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit sind die Inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter. (1968, J-62, p. 247)

Die erforderliche gesellschaftliche und politisch-operative Wirksamkeit der politisch-operativen Arbeit insgesamt ist durch eine höhere Qualität und Wirksamkeit der Arbeit mit den IM - der Hauptwaffe im Kampf gegen den Feind - zu erreichen. (1979, J-62, p. 305)

The above statements, taken from the three successive comprehensive guidelines for the work with *IM*, demonstrate that the *MfS* undoubtedly considered that its 'unofficial employees' played a key role in the war waged against those who had been designated state enemies. Yet, were these bold statements merely a demonstration of the prevailing state rhetoric, or had the thousands of GDR citizens who had been active as *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* truly been such a fundamental asset to the *MfS*?

After the events of 1989, and particularly after the introduction of the *StUG* in December 1991, the identities of onetime informers began to be gradually revealed, often in a most spectacular manner. Since very few were prepared on their own initiative to admit to having collaborated with the *MfS*, former *IM* were generally outed after information became available from the *MfS* dossiers. As if caught up in some kind of murder mystery game, the nation pondered over the questions of who had done it? by what means? where? and to whom? Two possible explanations of the motivation behind an *IM-Tätigkeit* were popularly developed and expounded: were the *IM* evil and sinister individuals who had ruthlessly betrayed their friends and family for their own gain, or, as many *IM* began to vehemently protest, were

they themselves victims of a brutal system of control whose political naïveté had been cunningly abused?

The following study will focus predominantly on *IM* who were citizens of the GDR and who were active within its boundaries. Separate guidelines and conditions were in force for those who worked outside the GDR, in the so-called *Operationsgebiet* (J-62, pp. 351-61). Section One is concerned in the first instance with reconstructing a profile of the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* by detailed examination of several key questions. Who were the *IM* in terms of sex, age, personality, social grouping? Why were they selected for this apparently so vital task? What was their motivation for agreeing to comply and continuing to collaborate with the *MfS*? And what exactly did their duties entail on a day-to-day basis? These questions are posed with the intention of establishing details of the concrete identities behind the label *IM* and thus behind the stereotypical characterisation of the informer. Section One is as much a retrospective analysis as Section Two, since it is concerned not only with the knowledge of the workings of the *MfS* and the details of an *IM-Tätigkeit* which the opening of the files has brought, but also with the effect which the post-1989 *Stasi* debate has had on the way in which these details of collaboration are perceived and characterised by both the *IM* and the society in which s/he lives.

Section Two examines the public and private confrontation with this aspect of GDR history, with respect to the legal and political decisions concerning dealings with former *IM* and to the personal and interpersonal reckoning with this issue. How does a society and how does the individual within that society cope with the phenomenon of wide-scale observation and control once the political and legal structures on which the system rested no longer exist? Who decides where guilt lies? And in what manner and by whom should it be atoned? The impact which the

availability of the *MfS* files under the *StUG* has had on these issues is also discussed.

The complex interaction of legal and political issues with social and moral ones is studied throughout the work by reference in particular to interviews carried out with former *IM* and by an analysis of *MfS* documentation, including the *MfS* files of the majority of these interviewees. These sources are used as a means of trying to gain an understanding of the macro through the micro. In other words, the experiences of individual actors are used in the analysis of the societal debate, whilst studying at the same time the interactive effect of this public discussion on these individuals.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 Oral History: Origins and Application

Although the use of oral sources in the writing of history is as old as history itself, oral history as a distinct and standardised methodology only came into being about fifty years ago, when the advancement of technology allowed the testimonies of larger numbers of interviewees to be recorded and analysed. The term 'oral history' is generally accepted as having been coined by Alan Nevis, who is credited with having pioneered the first recognised oral history project in 1948 by recording the memories of elite American males.¹ In the intervening years oral historians have tended to be concerned not so much with the elite or prominent members of society as with collecting the testimonies of rather more ordinary men and women, whose experiences, as depicted in their life stories, have been used as a means of understanding the interaction between socio-political change and the individual.

¹ For information on Oral History, see J-32, J-66 and J-98.

It is not the intention of oral historians to write history solely by conducting interviews, but to incorporate these sources into a wider socio-historical analysis. Alessandro Portelli comments on the somewhat misleading nature of the term 'oral history', stressing that what oral historians such as himself are really concerned with is the application of oral sources in historical analysis, rather than with an attempt to conduct historical research solely by reference to this material (J-67, p. 96). On the subject of the credibility of oral sources Portelli continues: 'Subjectivity is as much the business of history as the more visible "facts". What the informant believes is indeed a historical *fact* (that is, the *fact* that he or she believes it) just as much as what really happened.' (J-67, p. 100) Recently Ronald Grele argued that oral historians were not so much interested in 'the truth and nothing but the truth' but in studying the 'quality of the lie', since, according to Grele, 'the relationship between the culture and the lie is a truth' (H-3).

The use of the oral testimonies of former *IM* is particularly enlightening in this particular study for two principal reasons. First, since the GDR no longer exists as a political and legal entity, attempts of the collective and the individual to come to terms with the legal and moral issues at hand from within the new Germany are both complex and fascinating. Second, the unprecedented decision to make the files of the GDR's Secret Service so widely accessible meant that the testimonies of the *IM* interviewed could be directly compared and contrasted with the information contained in the *MfS* dossiers relating to these same individuals. Furthermore, since the files have not been subject to a standard closure rule, the likelihood that witnesses are both alive and traceable is greatly increased.

Both the written *MfS* sources and the oral sources of the witnesses' testimonies must be treated, as indeed with any source, with a certain

degree of scepticism, and the question of the validity of *MfS* material will be considered in Part Three of this introduction. The availability in this case of both sources facilitates the possibility, through examination of convergence and divergence, of reconstructing a more objective representation of external events, as well as contributing to an understanding of the more subjective interpretation of these same occurrences on the part of the individual *IM* and the *MfS*.

2.2.2 The Biographical Approach: The Use of Life Stories in Sociological Research

Oral History has much in common with the qualitative biographical approach used in sociology. Rejecting a merely quantitative method of analysis, a growing number of sociologists began in the 1970s and 1980s to work with the detailed life histories of particular individuals who were active in the field of social life under examination. A frequently cited early study which drew on autobiographical accounts is the work of Thomas and Znaniecki on *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, which appeared in the 1920s (J-96). Some similar work was carried out in the intervening period, but it was only in the 1970s that significant numbers of sociologists working with comparable methods began to come together and standardise this approach.²

By using the biographical approach the sociologist aims to attain a closer understanding of the social reality under analysis, that is to move closer to an understanding of objectivity on the macro-sociological level by studying the subjectivity of the micro-level. Kohli distinguishes the biographical approach in sociology from that found in anthropology by stressing that, whereas the latter is interested in individuals as 'differentiated personalities', in sociology 'the analysis of life histories does

² For a comprehensive overview of this approach, see J-9.

not primarily aim at individual particularities, but seeks to unravel what general (or generalizable) elements they contain' (J-43, p. 63).

Sociology is then ultimately interested in the dynamics of the larger social grouping. Pierre Bourdieu describes the focus of the sociologist as being one concerned with different fields of social relations:

Fields present themselves synchronically as structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them). [...] Whenever one studies a new field, whether it be the field of philology in the nineteenth century, contemporary fashion, or religion in the Middle Ages, one discovers specific properties that are peculiar to that field, at the same time as one pushes forward our knowledge of the universal mechanisms of fields, which are specified in terms of secondary variables. [...] In order for a field to function, there have to be stakes and people prepared to play the game, endowed with the *habitus* that implies knowledge and recognition of the immanent laws of the field, the stakes and so on. (J-15, p. 72)

Bourdieu goes on to define the *habitus* as 'a system of dispositions acquired by implicit or explicit learning which functions as a system of generative schemes, generates strategies which can be objectively consistent with the objective interests of their authors without having been expressly designed to that end' (J-15, p. 76). Taking this model of a definition of social relations and applying it to the situation in contemporary Germany we could say that the many sub-fields which made up the GDR have now been incorporated into the pre-existing construct of the FRG. Since the previous *habitus* has been superseded, the norms which defined and shaped life in the old field are no longer applicable. The properties and values of the new *habitus* are now imposed after the fact on the remnants of the old in the confrontation with its uncomfortable legacy. Dealings with the GDR legacy from within the boundaries of the new FRG result thus in a confounding array of complex legal, moral, and political issues for the collective. In a process of self-justification the individual begins to defend his/her stance in

the former field. This act of justification takes place from within a new set of social structures containing the old, and is often a process of re-definition.

Suffice it then to say that there are definite parallels in the methods of oral historians and of sociologists using the biographical approach. Both are concerned with using the detailed autobiographical accounts of particular individuals whose lives have been subject to similar socio-political change as a means of analysing the wider socio-historical dynamic. In the late 1970s Paul Thompson formulated these similarities as follows:

Both sociologists and social historians have recently been rediscovering the value of the retrospective in depth interview, but under different banners. This is because the 'life history' sociologist and the 'oral historian' meet on a common ground which they have reached from different directions. (J-97, p. 289)

2.2.3 The Psychology of Memory

In Section Two: 9.1, where the manner in which an *IM* reflects on and remembers his/her past is discussed, some work from the field of psychology is cited, particularly that of Michael Ross, who carried out research into autobiographical memory. The use of this material is not intended to constitute an in-depth study of memory, but has merely been cited to support the arguments made.

Indeed, all of the cross-disciplinary methodologies or approaches described above are used merely as tools to facilitate insight into the confrontation in contemporary Germany with the *Stasi* legacy, in particular the case of the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*. The interviews and analysis of *MfS* documents should serve as much to increase knowledge of the mechanisms which supported the system of observation and manipulation as to aid the analysis of the debate surrounding the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* and its micro and macro impact in the new Germany.

2.3 THE INTERVIEWS

In his analysis of the processes which led the ordinary men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 to commit the atrocities they did in the Second World War in Poland, Christopher Browning concluded that, for the men of Battalion 101, 'normality itself had become exceedingly abnormal' (J-18, Preface xix). By interviewing the ordinary citizens who had collaborated with the *MfS*, I hoped to examine whether the above statement could also be applied in the case of former *IM*, and to discover how they themselves viewed their actions, both at the time of active collaboration and retrospectively from within the context of unified Germany.

Ten interviews were carried out in 1994-95. This admittedly represents a small number of respondents, who were not randomly selected. They are therefore to be considered case studies, an analysis of which may, as in the work of oral historians or sociologists using a biographical approach, contribute to the general understanding of the *IM* phenomenon. In a discussion of his work with Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame on baker's workers in Paris, Daniel Bertaux argues that sociological representativity was achieved after the collection of thirty life histories. After listening to the stories of about fifteen baker's workers it became clear that 'every new life story was confirming what the preceding ones had shown' (J-8, p. 187). The authors concluded that they 'had moved in another realm than the one of traditional sample representativity' (J-8, p. 187, see also J-7). Since 'saturation' had taken place, nothing new was being learned from successive life stories:

A single life story stands alone, and it would be hazardous to generalize on the ground of that one alone, as a second life story could immediately contradict those premature generalizations. But several life stories *taken from the same set of sociostructural relations* support each other and make up, all together, a strong body of evidence. (J-8, p. 187)

Clearly the Bertauxs' perspective is that of the sociologist comparing the merits of qualitative data from a relatively small number of interviewees with those of the analysis of survey responses from a large number of often anonymous respondents in the more traditional quantitative approach. Thirty interviews is also three times as many as were conducted for this particular study. Yet, although the cited *IM* cases are not statistically representative, they do represent concrete examples of the implementation of *MfS* guidelines concerning recruitment procedure and subsequent operations with *IM*. Furthermore, many of the statements which these particular *IM* made when explaining and justifying their past bore strong similarities to ones made by more prominent *IM* in the media. These legitimation strategies are discussed in greater detail in Section Two: 9.2.

Seven of the interviewees were men and three were women. The youngest of the ten was 34 and the oldest 66 years old. Two of the interviewees answered a small contact-advertisement which appeared in the *Junge Welt*, formerly the newspaper of the GDR's youth organisation, the *FDJ*. The advertisement appeared on 1 October 1994 and read as follows: 'Forscherin aus Großbritannien sucht ehemalige Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des MfS zwecks Gespräch zum Thema Aufarbeitung der Stasi-Vergangenheit. Vertraulicher Umgang garantiert.' A further six interviewees were selected from the responses to an article which appeared in the *Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung*, published in Potsdam (I-30, reproduced in Appendix 1). This article had generated a total of twenty-three responses, thirteen from former *IM*, and a further ten from a mixture of full-time *MfS* employees and individuals who had themselves been informed upon. The ninth interviewee was Kerstin Kaiser-Nicht (*IM* 'Katrin'), the only *IM* in the study who was publicly known. Kaiser had gained a seat in the *Bundestag* representing the *PDS* (the successor party to the *SED*) after the 1994

elections. Although she had made the fact of her previous *Stasi* collaboration public before the elections, Kaiser was accused of not having been entirely honest about the details and extent of these contacts and was eventually pressurised by her own party, as well as by opposing political factions, into resigning her mandate. I approached Kaiser directly and asked if she would be prepared to speak to me. Finally, the tenth interview took place with Berthe Zulind (a pseudonym), alias IM 'Sonnenblume', whom I contacted after reading the account of her *Stasi* collaboration in her autobiography (J-110). By examining predominantly cases of *IM* who were not public figures I hoped that a more open dialogue would be facilitated. I suspected that those *IM* whose cases had been prominent in the media would be so practised at answering certain typical questions regarding their *IM-Tätigkeit*, that they would have built up a repertoire of set answers. This suspicion seemed to be confirmed when, at times during my conversation with 'Katrin', I almost had the feeling that I was listening to a tape recorded account of her *MfS* collaboration. The phenomenon of the professional interviewee is, indeed, one with which oral historians, dealing, for example, with a limited number of Holocaust survivors, must contend. An additional rationale for seeking dialogue with *IM* who were not prominent public figures was that I would be able to promise them that they would remain anonymous, and by doing so hoped that they would be less inhibited when relating aspects of their collaboration. A certain lack of restraint may also have been encouraged by the fact that I was a foreigner, a complete outsider, to whom my interviewees seemed to attribute political neutrality.

Nine interviews took place in the homes of the *IM*, one in the office of the person concerned. All interviews were taped. I informed my interview partners that they should feel free to ask me to stop recording at any time during our conversation if they felt uncomfortable about answering a

specific question. Only one of my interview partners did, in the end, ask me not to record a few select details of his *IM-Tätigkeit*.

There were several stages to each interview (interview questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix 2). First I asked each interviewee to give an autobiographical account of his/her life. At some point this account necessarily reached the point where contact to the *Stasi* had begun, and the *IM* generally came themselves to recounting the details of this collaboration. This second section of the interview, during which the *IM* recounted the details of his/her *IM-Tätigkeit*, was generally one where s/he spoke relatively freely. I interrupted occasionally to clarify details or if I felt that a particular aspect of the contact in which I was interested had been neglected in the telling. These first two sections of the interview were not then carried out in a set question-reply format. In the third section of the interview, where I was interested in discovering how these former *IM* perceived and judged specific aspects of the way in which the *Stasi* legacy was being confronted in the public sphere, the pattern was very much more that of question and answer. I did not listen to any of the tape recordings until I had completed all ten interviews. After I had listened to the conversations and begun to work with the material I contacted most of the *IM* again by letter and asked them to clarify and expand on certain details. Only after this point had been reached did I view the files of those concerned.

In order that they remain anonymous and for the sake of simplicity, all *IM* will be referred to throughout the study by their cover name. In a few cases, on the request of the *IM* concerned, even this cover name has been changed. Quotations have not in general been tidied up or standardised into formal German and, with the exception of a very few omissions of, for example, a repeated 'you know' type utterance, appear as they were originally said.

2.4 FURTHER SOURCES

2.4.1 Beyond Autobiographical Accounts: The *Stasi* Files

MfS files were available for eight of the ten *IM* interviewed. I was not granted access to the file of *IM* 'Thaer', the one FRG citizen with whom I spoke. In 1993 'Thaer' had been tried on the charge of spying for a foreign power and had received a fine and probationary sentence. Unfortunately the files relating to this case, I was informed, were subject to 'Geheimschutzbestimmungen' (B-5). It is likely that the work of the tenth *IM*, 'Wolfgang', had come under the auspices of the foreign espionage department of the *MfS*, the *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung*. The *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* was granted permission in the immediate post-*Wende* period to disband itself, and much of the material relating to foreign espionage has consequently disappeared or been destroyed.

The *MfS* divided *IM* files into two main sections. In the *Personalakte* personal details of the *IM* concerned were recorded, alongside those of his/her immediate family. Documentation regarding the selection and recruitment of the *IM* was also stored here, as well as other general information, such as details of any reward s/he had received for services rendered. The second part of the file was termed the *Arbeitsakte*, and it was here that the actual reports of the meetings were filed. Each section could have various volumes, depending on the length and intensity of collaboration.³ Information deemed personal and intimate concerning either the *IM* or any third person is, according to the *StUG*, to be covered when an outsider views the file (*StUG*, § 32).

³ For a more detailed description of the administration of the *IM* files, see J-62, pp. 111-16.

2.4.2 *IM Richtlinien*

These extensive guidelines for the work with *IM*, drawn up in 1958, 1968 and 1979, are cited throughout the study (J-62). The recently published edition of the *IM Richtlinien*, edited by Helmut Müller-Enbergs, a researcher in the *Abteilung Bildung und Forschung* at the *BStU*, offers in addition a comprehensive summary and analysis of the *Richtlinien*, which were originally published by the *BStU* (F-5). References in this work are to the Müller-Enbergs volume, except where, for example, additional regulations, or introductory speeches by Mielke to the various seminars on the work with *IM* are cited. Since these are not documented in full in the Müller-Enbergs edition, the original *BStU* edition is referenced. The *IM Richtlinien* are fundamental to an understanding of the theoretical structure of the *IM* system. It seems to have been the case that certain aspects of the formal procedure laid down in the guidelines were often not strictly adhered to. This is evident from a reading of various speeches made by Erich Mielke at *MfS* seminars concerned with the implementation of these guidelines and from even a brief acquaintance with the *IM* files themselves, which are often not in accordance with the guidelines concerning their administration (see J-64). In this study the guidelines function primarily as a vital tool for deciphering the general mechanisms involved in the recruitment and work with *IM* and for gaining an understanding of the extent to which the facts of any one case deviated from this theoretical underpinning.

2.4.3 *The Juristische Hochschule*

The *MfS* established its own educational institute in Potsdam-Eiche, which operated under the pseudonym *Juristische Hochschule (JHS)*. The material used in this study originating from the *JHS* falls into two categories: pedagogic material used in the training of *MfS* officers; the results of research undertaken at the *JHS*. The pedagogic material can be regarded

as being comparable in content to the *IM* guidelines, that is as theoretical statements of the desired procedure in the work with *IM*. When applying the results of research undertaken at the *JHS* caution must be exercised, since it should not be forgotten that such dissertations were carried out within the *MfS* and will be at least tainted with its ideology. Nevertheless, these works are still valuable, since they allow insight into the issues of the *IM* system which were addressed by the *MfS* in its own research. They are particularly interesting when they demonstrate that certain aspects of the daily work with *IM* often did not follow the strict form which was laid down in the guidelines.

2.4.4 SED Archives

In the archives of the *SED*, the *SAPMO* (*Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR*), there is little material available which is of direct application in this study. One report from the early 1950s discussing the finding that a significant proportion of individuals who had recently been recruited for the *MfS* had subsequently fled to the FRG is cited in Section One: 2.5.

2.4.5 The Press

Since this was one historical discussion with such an immediate and wide-scale impact, much of the *Stasi* debate was carried out in the German press, particularly in the *Feuilleton* sections. Newspaper articles from various daily and weekly publications have therefore been drawn on throughout the study. Often these articles contain citations of the oral testimonies of more prominent *IM* and of key political and cultural figures in the *Stasi* debate.

2.4.6 Secondary Literature

Despite the relatively short time that has elapsed since the dramatic events of 1989-90, a substantial body of secondary literature relevant to this work has been published. Some of this literature has been produced from an analysis of *MfS* documentation and personal dossiers. Sections of particular individual's' files have also been published and have provided another measure of comparison with the specific *IM* files to which I was able to gain access.

2.5 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Material stemming principally from Section Two: 8-10 has been presented at the following conferences: 'Memory and the Sense of Place', annual meeting of the Oral History Association, Philadelphia, USA, 10-13 October 1996; 'Self and Other: The Fifth International Conference on Narrative', University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA, 18-20 October 1996; The Eighth Annual WIGS (Women in German Studies) Conference, University of Exeter, 9 November 1996; 'Biographical Perspectives on Post-Socialist Societies', a meeting organised by the ESA (European Sociological Association) and the Centre for Independent Social Research, St. Petersburg, Russia, 13-17 November 1996; and in the Kulturhaus Mitte in Berlin by invitation of the *Berlin-Brandenburgische Geschichtswerkstatt*, 27 March 1997.

Proceedings from at least one of these conferences may be published at a future date, and in July 1997 an article similar in content to Chapter 10 will appear in the journal *German Life and Letters*.

Introduction: Part Three

DICHTUNG ODER WAHRHEIT?:
ON THE TRUTH CONTENT OF THE STASI FILES

3.1 THE BONFIRE

Die Akten sind ein gefährliches Gemisch aus Dichtung und Wahrheit. (Vera Wollenberger, J-107, p. 162)

Since the turbulent events of 1989 and the subsequent dissolution of the *MfS* there have been many appeals for the destruction of the *MfS* files. Although he later claimed not to have meant it literally, Friedrich Schorlemmer was quoted as suggesting that a huge bonfire be made with the documents (I-23). Chancellor Kohl also seemed to advocate that the files be disposed of, stating that they were an 'Ärgernis' and source of evil rumours (I-63). Such sentiments were not uncommon, and many, particularly of those who had worked for the *MfS*, would have been only too happy to see the last of the 178 kilometres of filed material.

Often it was those *MfS* officers who had worked on a daily basis with the information contained in the files who maintained that the documents were inaccurate and misleading. At one of a series of 'Täter/Opfer' discussions in the Museum at Checkpoint Charlie one former *Stasi* officer claimed: 'Selbst wenn da steht, der IM "Dirk" oder sonst wer berichtete das und das, das muß wirklich so nicht unbedingt stimmen.' (H-1) Manfred Stolpe was of a similar opinion, arguing that the files did not correspond to the whole truth, 'und die halbe Wahrheit kann als ganze Lüge wirken' (I-42, p. 32). Stolpe proposed that it was possible to analyse the information contained in the files only in conjunction with the statements of 'Zeitzeugen' (I-42, p. 32). It was no surprise that Stolpe held this view since, in the debate surrounding his extensive contact to the *MfS*, the overwhelmingly positive testimonies of numerous politicians and theologians from both East and West were undoubtedly a key factor in ensuring that his name was cleared.

Arguing against the destruction or closure of the *Stasi* files, the historian Armin Mitter pointed out that no one would ever conceive of burning chronicles from the Middle Ages simply because there was mention of divine miracles in them (I-11). Mitter proposed that the *MfS* files be treated with the same distanced objectivity which should be applied to any historical source. Yet one crucial difference between the *MfS* files and other comparable historical legacies is that the fates of those who, for example, compiled the documents which spoke of heavenly intervention have, in contrast to those of the authors of the *Stasi* files, long since been decided. The unique decision to make the *MfS* files immediately accessible has necessarily resulted in dealings with their contents being very much more sensitised than might have been the case if a customary period of closure had been imposed.

3.2 FACT OR FICTION?: DETAILS AND ESSENCE OF COLLABORATION

Joachim Gauck repeatedly stresses that the *BStU* has not been assigned the task of making value judgements on any material it releases, and calls for a differentiated treatment of this information by its recipients (I-73). The clause in the unification treaty regarding the dismissal of public service employees who are shown to have held contacts to the *MfS* allows for but does not necessitate differentiation (G-1). In the hysteria which, at least initially, surrounded the confrontation with the *Stasi* legacy, a critical analysis of the information released by the *BStU* certainly did not take place in many cases, leading Stefan Heym to observe that the texts in the *Stasi* files were being treated 'als kämen sie geradewegs aus der Bibel' (J-36, p. 74). Heym was personally doubtful of the validity of texts which had been compiled by *IM* who, he argued, were rewarded by the number and length of reports given, and by *Führungsoffiziere*, whose welfare was dependent on the number of *IM* in their charge: 'Was wurde da nicht erlogen und gefälscht

und zurechtgeschneidert nach Wunsch und Bedarf!' (J-36, p. 74) It is certainly the case, as Heym suggests, that throughout the history of the *MfS IM* were all too often recruited on the basis of ~~quantity~~ quantity rather than quality, a fact of which Mielke was critically aware (J-62, pp. 93-96). A few cases are also documented where *Führungsoffiziere* literally invented so-called 'fiktive IM'. These incidents were, however, few and far between and when discovered had serious repercussions for the officer concerned (J-62, pp. 140-41, F-4, p. 66). That it is simply not the case that a mass of unwitting individuals was registered as *IM* is confirmed by the observation that in almost every single case of someone having been identified through the *Stasi* files as having been an *IM*, this person has sooner or later admitted to collaboration.

It is certainly true that *IM* were not always entirely honest with their *Führungsoffizier*, perhaps, as Heym suggests, in order to please him, but also, as shall be discussed, for a number of other reasons. Pedagogic material from the *Juristische Hochschule* stipulates: 'Zur Aufklärung der Persönlichkeit des Kandidaten sind nur zuverlässige IM einzusetzen' (D-4, I, 192). This caution suggests that the *MfS* was well aware of the existence of dishonest *IM* who could not be relied upon to give factually accurate information. Since the *IM*'s primary task was to provide information which was *operativ bedeutsam*, that is information which could be employed in the creation and execution of measures to neutralise the enemy, logic would decree that such unreliable *IM* ought not to have been allowed to remain active.

It was precisely the 'Wahrheitsgehalt, Vollständigkeit, Aktualität, Neuigkeitswert und Überprüfbarkeit' of the reports received from *IM* which was of interest to the *MfS* (F-3, p. 171). In order to ensure that the information had these qualities it was checked and double-checked. Such verification was entirely feasible since *IM* were not evenly distributed

among the population but rather, according to the *Schwerpunktprinzip*, concentrated in areas of suspected subversive activity. This working principle meant that reports from any one *IM* could be compared with those of others active in the same circles. In this sense the *MfS* increasingly, as a result of an 'über die Jahrzehnte im Apparat erfolgten Professionalisierungsprozess', tested and re-tested the reliability of its sources, rather as a historical researcher might do (J-22, p. 33). It was thus difficult for an individual *IM* to be consistently untruthful. *IM* 'Fuchs', for example, tried to disguise the fact that he was still in contact with an old friend who lived in the FRG. Unbeknown to 'Fuchs', a second friend, who actually functioned as the link to the man in the West, was also registered as an *IM*, and this man informed his *Führungsoffizier* whenever there was communication between 'Fuchs' and his friend in the West. These reports found their way through the *MfS*'s internal channels to 'Fuchs's' *Führungsoffizier* and were noted down (C-5a, p. 229). 'Stephana' was equally unsuccessful in her attempt to deceive the *MfS*. From the files it is clear that 'Stephana' had told her new boyfriend that she had contacts to a representative from the *MfS* and in doing so had broken the oath taken to remain silent about her collaboration. She was, at least at this point, unaware that her new boyfriend was also active as an *IM* and had reported the story to his *Führungsoffizier*, who had in turn passed this information on (C-6a, pp. 102-12).

Just as it was not easy to keep facets of one's private life secret from the *MfS*, it was generally futile to fabricate information concerning others. Information which was judged significant usually required verification by various sources before it was acted upon. One report given by 'Falke' in June 1985 was, for example, judged as 'operativ-bedeutsam' and 'als Bestätigung der Informationen der IMS "SEE" und "Harald Wenk" zu werten' (C-3b, II, 109).

This is not to say that every individual piece of information which an *IM* gave corresponded to some sort of objective reality, rather that the general character of the collaboration may be deduced from any one *IM* file. Particular caution must be exercised when the reports of the meetings have, as was often the case, been written up after the fact by the officer in charge. It is clear that what we are dealing with in these cases is not a protocol of the actual meeting, but a subjective selection and interpretation of what was said. The *MfS* was aware of potential discrepancies between the content of the actual meeting and that of the report, and later guidelines underline the importance of obtaining written reports from *IM* to try and combat this problem (see J-22, pp. 36-37).

The fact that the *MfS* was concerned to eradicate such flaws in the system is further underlined by the following complaint made by Mielke in 1971 concerning the work with *IM*:

Selbst Hinweise oder Anzeichen auf Unehrlichkeit, Unzuverlässigkeit, Dekonspiration, Ablehnung der Zusammenarbeit oder andere verdächtige Erscheinungen über *IM*, die in einigen Dienststeinheiten fast 10% des gesamten *IM*-Systems betreffen, wurden nicht zum Anlaß für tiefgründige Überprüfungen genommen. (F-5, I, 307)

The *MfS* carried out routine spot checks on its *IM* and *Führungsoffiziere*, and, although Mielke seems to have considered the degree of dishonesty high, it was clearly detected only in a small minority of all cases.¹ Even in the incidents mentioned by Mielke it may well have been the case that the *IM* was guilty not of inventing specific information, but rather, as in the above examples from 'Fuchs' and 'Stephana', that s/he had been untruthful about details of his/her personal life. The argument that the average *IM* did not simply fabricate the majority of the information given to the *MfS* is supported by a comment from Reiner Kunze, who, when

¹ For a description of these regular checks, see J-62, pp. 137-45.

describing the, by all accounts, extraordinary Ibrahim Böhme, claimed that he was 'anders als alle Spitzel in meiner Akte. Er hat sich eine Welt geschaffen mit lebendigen Menschen. Und die hat er dann manipuliert.' (J-49, p. 117)

There is undoubtedly a degree of inconsistency and inaccuracy in the files, yet to propose that the documents ought to be destroyed on these grounds ignores the fact that in the debate surrounding the *IM* the controversial issue has often been less the relative truth content of the reports which a specific *IM* helped compile, but rather more commonly the question of whether this person was or was not aware that s/he was registered as an *IM*.

Although a comprehensive representation of the exact course of past events cannot be reconstructed from the files, it is possible in the majority of cases to assess the extent and general nature of an individual's *Stasi* connections. Accordingly, Günter Nooke felt that Manfred Stolpe's name should not have been cleared by the committee investigating the latter's contacts to the *MfS*. Nooke argued that although no signed document could be found from which it was clear that Stolpe had been aware that he was registered by the *MfS* as *IM* 'Sekretär', the *Ministerpräsident* had nonetheless collaborated to such an extent and in such a secretive manner that the question of whether he was aware of the superficial label was irrelevant (F-2, I, Part C (2), 13).

The balance of fact or fiction in specific details of the information in the files is an issue which not only affects dealings with former *IM* but is one with which those who were under *Stasi* observation have been very much concerned. The inaccuracies or misconstructions of their life histories as they remember them did not weaken the resolve of the *Bürgerrechtler* to keep the files open. Reiner Kunze did, however, advocate that a clause be included in the *StUG* allowing individuals like himself to have their files

destroyed if they so wished. Kunze argued that even a serious researcher would be unable to recognise where the boundary lay between fact and fiction in the files: 'Ich verwahre mich dagegen, daß schon wieder ich derjenige sein soll, der nachzuweisen hat, daß Lüge Lüge ist. Das habe ich fast mein ganzes Leben lang tun müssen. Jetzt muß ich es schon über meinen Tod hinaus tun.' (F-16, p. 216) A clause was, in fact, subsequently included in the *StUG* allowing 'Betroffene' such as Kunze to request that their files be destroyed after 1 January 1997 (*StUG*, § 14). There are certain conditions attached to this clause, one of which is that the files will not be destroyed if the information they contain is deemed necessary for the political and historical confrontation with the past. It remains to be seen if such prominent former state dissidents as Kunze will request and be granted the destruction of the material relating to their person.

3.3 LEGAL DECISIONS

The question of whether the relative truth content of the information in the files should be a consideration when it is made public has received varying responses in German courts of law. Paragraph 34/2 of the *StUG* specifies that if an individual considers information published from the files to be false then s/he has the right to make a counter declaration, which must be printed alongside any subsequent publications of the material. When Reiner Kunze was taken to court by Hermann Kant for having published extracts from his file which showed Kant in an unfavourable light and whose validity Kant contested, Kunze won the case. The court ruled that, in keeping with the *StUG*, it was Kant's right to ensure that in the future his counter declaration was printed with the material, but that ultimately:

Die Publikation einer Stasi-Akte ist ein wichtiger Beitrag zur zeitgeschichtlichen Diskussion. An ihr besteht ein erhebliches öffentliches Interesse (§ 193 StGB). Es kann deshalb nicht verlangt werden, daß vor der Veröffentlichung jede in der Akte enthaltene

Aussage auf ihre Richtigkeit überprüft wird. Die Beweislast für die Unwahrheit liegt deshalb bei demjenigen, der die Richtigkeit bestreitet. (J-3, p. 349)

Not all legal decisions concerning the publication of information from the *Stasi* files were based on the principles applied in the above case. Members of the *Neues Forum* in Halle were dismayed to find themselves losing several court battles after having made anonymously donated lists of former *MfS* employees available for public viewing. Although, in this case, checks by the *BStU* seemed to indicate that the information was factually accurate, it was ruled that the right of the public to the information did not outweigh the individual rights of those whose names appeared on the lists (I-27, see Section Two: 7.1). In the Kant/Kunze case it was decided that the material was of public interest almost regardless of its relative truth content. The members of the *Neues Forum* were in contrast found to have acted unlawfully in making material public even when it had been shown to correspond to fact.

3.4 JURISTISCHE HOCHSCHULE MATERIAL

The results of research originating from the *Juristische Hochschule* which are cited in this study must be treated with some degree of scepticism. These are scholarly works which were written and evaluated within the *MfS*, and as such are certainly likely to be tainted with state ideology. Yet they are valuable in that they provide useful insight into the kinds of issues which the *MfS* considered worthy of research, and are particularly interesting when they document inconsistencies between the theory of the work with *IM* and the day-to-day reality. The analysis of these discrepancies by the *MfS* demonstrates once again that some form of verification of methods and sources was carried out internally.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

Engelmann argues that the legacy of *MfS* files is of considerable value in the confrontation with the GDR past for three principal reasons. First, the *MfS*, in comparison to other secret services, was a relatively large apparatus, whose activities affected a considerable number of individuals and whose legacy, at 178 kilometres of filed material, was not depleted to the same extent as the files, for example, of the National Socialist regime. Second, the area in which the *MfS* was active, as was the case for the other secret services in Eastern Europe, was more extensive than that of traditional secret police. Third, the amount of written documentation is unusually high and was, furthermore, often compiled according to precise regulations (J-22, p. 24).

The *MfS* acquired and documented vast amounts of information which its *Operative Mitarbeiter* relied upon to construct operational plans. Before any action was taken, information deemed significant was generally confirmed from a number of sources whose identities remained unknown to one another. The reports supplied by the *IM* could not be easily fabricated as this might have been detected, and if such incidents had been all too commonplace, the *IM* network would have been unable to function at all. A certain degree of inaccuracy and ideological influence is undoubtedly to be found in the files, and Karl Wilhelm Fricke emphasised that although it was highly unlikely that information had been simply invented, since it formed the basis of *MfS* operations, the possibility should not be eliminated that the files were not sometimes 'geschönt' (F-13, p. 79). Fricke stresses that these documents should therefore be judged only in 'Kontext zur jeweiligen politischen Entwicklung und zur konkreten Situation des Betreffenden [...], über den die Akten angelegt wurden' (F-13, p. 79). On the basis of arguments such as these the consideration of the relative truth content of

the *MfS* files, as is relevant for this study, ends with the conclusion and caution contained in the final report of the *Enquete-Kommission*:

MfS-Unterlagen weisen dort, wo sie über die Beschreibung konkreter Handlungen und Sachverhalte hinausgehen, zuweilen einen beträchtlichen Grad an Ideologisierung auf. Natürlich hat auch dieses 'Ideologiesyndrom' in den MfS-Akten seine Spuren hinterlassen. Soweit man dies bis zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt beurteilen kann, bildete die Berichterstattung des MfS ein Gegengewicht zur allgemeinen, ideologisch geprägten und schönfärberischen Tendenz der Berichterstattung von SED, Blockparteien und Massenorganisationen. Schließlich hatte die Staatssicherheit die Aufgabe, politisch gefährliche Stimmungen in der Bevölkerung und sicherheitsrelevante Disfunktionen aller Art 'aufzuklären'. Es wird ständige Aufgabe der wissenschaftlichen Analyse von MfS-Akten sein, zwischen ideologischen Aussagen und 'operativer' Substanz zu unterscheiden sowie das Verhältnis dieser beiden Elemente zueinander zu bestimmen. (F-1, pp. 227-28)

SECTION ONE**DYNAMICS OF AN *IM-TÄTIGKEIT***

Section One: Chapter One

'EINE GANZ NORMALE BIOGRAPHIE'?: (A-3)
PROFILE OF AN *INOFFIZIELLER MITARBEITER*

1.1 TERMINOLOGY FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF *IM*

Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter were considered instrumental in the extensive surveillance and control measures implemented by the *MfS*. These involved being constantly aware and informed of which individuals posed a threat to internal security at any one time, in other words of 'Wer ist wer?' (F-3, p. 286). *Operative Personenkontrollen (OPK)* were often introduced to this end. An *OPK* had three main applications: to confirm or reject suspicions that an individual had acted unlawfully; to identify individuals who were negatively disposed towards the state; to screen individuals who held positions of power which were potentially open to misuse (F-3, p. 286). An *OPK* sometimes led to an *Operativer Vorgang (OV)* being put into operation, the next and more intensive stage of surveillance. *IM* were to establish or to exploit already existing contacts to individuals who were being observed under an *Operativer Vorgang* and so aim to obtain information which was *operativ bedeutsam*. The objectives of an *OV* were stated as follows:

Im einzelnen muß aus ihnen [*OV*] hervorgehen:
 - zu welchen Tatbestandsmerkmalen und zu welchen Handlungen operativ bedeutsame Informationen und Beweise erarbeitet werden sollen,
 - welche begünstigenden Umstände und Bedingungen festzustellen, zu beweisen und auszuräumen sind,
 - was zur Schadenverhütung erforderlich ist,
 - welche Pläne, Absichten und Maßnahmen imperialistischer Geheimdienste, anderer feindlicher Zentren, Organisationen und Kräfte umfassend aufzuklären, zu beweisen und rechtzeitig zu verhindern sind. (F-3, pp. 296-97)

An essential part of any *OV* was the concept of *Zersetzung*, that is the 'Zersplitterung, Lähmung, Desorganisierung und Isolierung feindlich-negativer Kräfte' (F-3, p. 464). Once again, it was the *IM* who were to be the main force in such measures.

The following section aims to profile the network of individuals who were selected to carry out the task documented above; first, by describing features of the population of *IM*, and second, by introducing the individual *IM* whom I interviewed and whose cases will be referred to throughout this work.

1.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION OF *IM*

1.2.1 Overall Number

In 1989 174,000 *IM* were registered as active. Overall numbers of *IM* had decreased slightly during the 1980s after rising steadily throughout the previous two decades (F-10, p. 11). There was a fairly high annual turnover of *IM*, estimated as being on average approximately 10% (F-10, p. 8). In some district divisions the figure may have been higher. One division is, for example, reported as having an annual turnover of 18% (D-4, I, 43).

1.2.2 Gender

Besondere Sorgfalt erfordert die Gestaltung der
Zusammenarbeit mit weiblichen *IM*. (J-62, p. 271)

Females were not highly represented in the *IM* network. 80-90% of *IM* were male, and it seems that there were no female *Führungsoffiziere* at all (I-33). Of newly recruited *IM* in the area of Rostock in 1989, for example, only 10% were female (F-10, p. 13). It is not clear why the percentage of women informers should have been so low or why 'particular care' was to be taken in dealings with them. There seems to be no evidence that women made less competent *IM* than men. The low percentage of female *IM* may simply reflect the patriarchal structures of the *SED* and *MfS*. Perhaps there was also concern that *Führungsoffiziere* might become

intimately involved with their female *IM* and so run the risk of betraying confidential information. Mielke, at least, seemed to be in favour of increasing the number of female *IM* working for him. Women, he felt, had shown themselves to be capable of the task at hand and he stated explicitly that more females should be recruited, particularly as *IMV* (F-5, I, 288). *IMV*, who were later referred to as *IMB*, were defined as *IM* 'die unmittelbar an der Bearbeitung und Entlarvung im Verdacht der Feindsätigkeit stehender Personen mitarbeiten' (J-62, p. 258). It is possible that Mielke considered women to be particularly suited as *IMV* since they could potentially form intimate relationships with 'im Verdacht der Feindsätigkeit stehender Personen'. These bonds could be fruitful for extracting information, or their very existence could potentially be used to blackmail the man involved, if, for example, he were married. Indeed, earlier guidelines suggest that 'junge, gut aussehende weibliche inoffizielle Mitarbeiter, mit guten Umgangsformen und guter Auffassungsgabe, die auf Grund ihrer beruflichen Stellung in der Lage sind, schnell bei bestimmten Personenkreisen Anschluß zu finden' should be recruited as *GME* (*Geheimer Mitarbeiter im besonderen Einsatz*) (J-62, p. 203).

1.2.3 Social Grouping

IM were not distributed evenly among the population but were recruited according to a *Schwerpunktprinzip*, defined as follows:

Schwerpunktprinzip - wichtiges Grundprinzip der politisch-operativen Arbeit und deren Leitung zur Gewährleistung einer zielstrebigem vorbeugenden Verhinderung Aufdeckung und Bekämpfung aller subversiven Angriffe des Feindes durch Konzentration der operativen Kräfte und Mittel einschließlich der verfügbaren Arbeitszeit, der vorhandenen technischen und finanziellen Mittel auf die entscheidenden politisch-operativen Aufgabenstellungen bzw. auf die vorbeugend zu sichernden entscheidenden Objekte, Bereiche, Territorien, Personenkreise und Personen. (F-3, pp. 374-75)

The three main areas where *IM* were active were in groups affiliated with the church, with cultural activities, or with the opposition. The ratio of *IM* to non-*IM* could be fairly high in such groups, but in line with the principle that 'jeder nur das weiß, was er für die Erfüllung seiner Aufgaben benötigt', these *IM* were generally unaware of each other's identity and were perhaps not even aware that other *IM* were active in their immediate environment (F-3, p. 129). Informers were thus often reporting on one another as much as on those individuals being observed in an *OPK* or *OV*. The sheer density of *IM* occasionally made it difficult for a *Führungsoffizier* to ensure that his *IM* did not become aware of one another's identity. On one occasion, when the writer Rainer Schedlinski was meeting with his *Führungsoffizier* in a car park, he suddenly caught sight of Sascha Anderson coming towards him and quickly took cover. Unbeknown to Schedlinski, Anderson was also active as an *IM* and was working with the same *Führungsoffizier*. It later transpired that Anderson had spotted Schedlinski and realised that he must also be collaborating. When Anderson reported this incident to his *Führungsoffizier*, the latter confirmed that this was the case, but asked Anderson to keep Schedlinski in the dark about the matter (J-2, pp. 248-49).

Since the most successful *IM* was clearly going to be someone who had contacts to the enemy, it was more practical for the *MfS* to recruit from within opposition circles rather than to try and infiltrate them. This led to the paradoxical situation that many *IM* were reporting on the activities of opposition groups which they simultaneously worked with. The policy of the *MfS* towards these *IM* was at times somewhat illogical and ambivalent. 'Stephana', for example, was requested on several occasions to break off the contact she had to a man who had applied to leave the GDR. She was warned that such contacts were undesirable and

that if she continued to pay no heed to these cautions she could not expect the support of the *MfS* if she were to get into difficulties (C-6b, I, 266, 325, 390). Since 'Stephana' was reporting on the activities of a man who, as someone who had expressed the wish to leave the GDR, was under surveillance, it seems rather odd to suggest to her that contact with such an individual was to be avoided. Perhaps, in cases such as these, logic decreed that the *IM* have contact to the enemy, but ideology confounded this logic, causing *Führungsoffiziere* to become uneasy when the bond between the *IM* and the individual under observation appeared to be one of genuine friendship. This contradiction between *MfS* policy and practice is evident throughout the life span of the organisation. Guidelines from 1952 concerning 'die Suche, Anwerbung und Arbeit mit Informatoren, geheimen Mitarbeitern und Personen, die konspirative Wohnungen unterhalten' emphasise that in order to most effectively combat *KgU* (*Kampfgruppen gegen Unmenschlichkeit*) it is necessary to recruit individuals who will win the trust of such groups most easily: 'Dies sind ehemalige Faschisten, aktive Offiziere und Unteroffiziere der faschistischen Armee, Angehörige bereits verhafteter Agenten, kriminelle und korrupte Personen, moralisch verkommene Jugendliche, sogenannte politische Flüchtlinge usw.' (J-62, p. 166) This extract from the *Richtlinie 21* is in line with the *Schwerpunktprinzip*, which stipulated that *IM* were to be recruited from within the ranks of subversive groups. Yet the guidelines from 1958 state that recruitment on the basis of political conviction was to be the most important and frequently employed method (J-62, p. 212). The *Schwerpunktprinzip* and the stipulation that political conviction should be the principal motive for recruitment seem inherently contradictory, but are not in fact if one considers that the *MfS*, believing in its own ideology, hoped to be able to convince 'korrupt' and 'verkommen' individuals of the political necessity of co-operation (J-62, p. 166).

As well as belonging to specific social circles *IM* were in theory also expected to have reached a certain level of education. This was not always realised in practice. In 1971 Mielke complained that not only was the average age of an *IM* too high, but: 'Die Qualifikation der *IM* entspricht ebenfalls nicht mehr ausreichend den heutigen und künftigen politisch-operativen Aufgaben. Abgesehen von der operativen Erziehung und Schulung haben besonders in den Kreisdienststellen die Mehrzahl der *IM* keine Fach- bzw. Hochschulausbildung.' (F-5, I, 289)

1.2.4 Political Affiliation

The 1968 *IM* guidelines explicitly stipulate that *SED* members were only to be recruited as *IM* in exceptional cases (J-62, p. 261). The argumentation behind this ruling *was* that Party members were already committed to actively supporting the state. Before recruiting such an individual as an *IM* it was therefore to be considered whether it would not suffice to give this person the status of a *Gesellschaftlicher Mitarbeiter für Sicherheit*, to whom contact was less formalised and less secretive (J-62, p. 261). All too often, as far as Mielke was concerned, *Führungsoffiziere* ignored this ruling and swelled the ranks of the *IM* network with *SED* members, who tended to be relatively easy to recruit. Mielke complained that in many regional divisions as many as one in three new *IM* were Party members (F-5, II, 440). An *MfS* study by Seidler and Schmidt from 1968 puts the figure even higher, at 40.7%. (D-6, I, 7). Although, as discussed, it cannot be considered to be a representative sample, it is interesting that five of the ten *IM* with whom I carried out interviews had been *SED* members. Furthermore, a higher proportion, at least seven, reported being, at least at the time of interview, *PDS* voters.

1.3 SELECTING A CANDIDATE: THE ANFORDERUNGSBILD

1.3.1 Definition

Individuals were only to be selected for recruitment as *IM* when they could satisfy an already existing need. This need was expressed in an *Anforderungsbild*. An *Anforderungsbild* profiled a particular need, and identified, in terms of experience, ability and personality characteristics, the type of person who might be suitable for this specified task (J-62, p. 341).

1.3.2 The Task

In reality, many *IM* were recruited because it proved relatively easy to do so rather than because there was a specific task at hand for them to carry out. It seems also to have been the case that some *Anforderungsbilder* were constructed with a particular person in mind, rather than that this person was recruited to fit a pre-existing need. Mielke was critical of such shoddy practice, complaining: 'Es kann nicht ein beliebiger IM geworben und nachträglich geprüft werden, für welche Aufgabe er einsetzbar ist.' (F-5, II, 581) In the following three examples from my own interviews there does, however, seem to have been an existing need, as defined by an *Anforderungsbild*. IM 'Sonnenblume' was recruited because of her suspected involvement with a *Kriminelle Menschenhändlerbande*, the *MfS* definition for a group of individuals involved in trying to help people escape the GDR (C-8a, p. 65). In 'Stephana's' case, the *MfS* was interested in recruiting someone who had contacts to various religious groups, an *Anforderungsbild* which 'Stephana' fitted perfectly (C-6a, p. 14). The third example is the case of 'Fuchs', who was recruited as a *Führungs-IM (FIM)* in order that he could build up a network of *IM* among the inmates of the prison where he worked (C-5a, p. 80).

1.3.3 The Personality

Theoretically *IM* were to have a considerable number of interpersonal skills in order to successfully carry out the task at hand. One study from the *Juristische Hochschule* names, among others, the following desired qualities for all *IM*:

Das Einschätzungsvermögen
 Die Fähigkeit, politisch-ideologische Inhalte und Wirkungen von Ereignissen differenziert zu erfassen
 Die Menschenkenntnis und Fähigkeit, menschliches Verhalten zu analysieren
 Die Fähigkeit zur Anbahnung und Aufrechterhaltung vertrauensvoller Beziehungen
 Die Beobachtungsfähigkeit zur planmäßigen, konzentrierten, langdauernden oder auch sehr kurzfristigen Wahrnehmung von interessanten Gegebenheiten und Personen sowie die Fähigkeit zum möglichst schnellen und genauen Speichern und Reproduzieren des Beobachteten
 Die Fähigkeit, erhöhte Beanspruchungen und Belastungen zu ertragen, mit individuellen Bedenken und Skrupeln fertig zu werden. (D-4, I, 140-46)

Finding candidates who fulfilled all the above requirements cannot have been easy, and the authors of the study do concede that it is not to be expected that an *IM* possess all these qualities at the time of recruitment. Some of them were to be developed in the course of the work with the *MfS* (D-4, I, 148).

It tended to be the positive characteristics of the *IM-Kandidat* which were emphasised in the documentation relating to recruitment. 'Fuchs', for example, was considered a suitable candidate because of his ability to understand people and to make accurate observations (C-5a, p. 76). He was also noted as being dedicated to his work: 'Hervorzuheben ist sein Bemühen, bestmögliche Methoden in der Erziehungsarbeit unter den Bedingungen des Strafvollzuges zu finden und zu nutzen.' (C-5a, p. 76) 'Stephana' was likewise thought to be particularly suited for the task as a result of the fact that she was 'kontaktfreudig', 'zielstrebig', and

'gewissenhaft' (C-6a, p. 34). It is somewhat ironic that in order to carry out this most deceitful of tasks, the *MfS* wished their candidates to have such virtuous qualities, including, indeed, an 'ausgeprägtes Gerechtigkeitsempfinden' (J-62, p. 266). Accordingly, when 'Katrin' is selected as an *IM-Kandidat*, among other things because she is a high achiever and popular member of her class, one of the entries under the heading 'Anforderung an die Kandidatin' is 'Ehrlichkeit und Zuverlässigkeit' (C-7a, p. 11).

Although there are certain general characteristics which can be applied to the population of *IM*, it is clear that the *MfS* was successful in recruiting a wide range of personalities to work as informers. By briefly introducing the ten case studies which will be referred to throughout this work the next section aims to give an insight into the diversity of character types to be found within the *IM* network. On some occasions certain biographical details have been changed in order that the person concerned remain anonymous.

1.4 INTRODUCTION OF CASE STUDIES

1.4.1 'Rolf' (A-1, B-1, C-1a,b)

'Rolf' was born in 1952 in a small town in Saxony. After leaving school he studied agriculture and worked in various jobs for several years before returning in 1979 to his hometown to take up a post in the museum there, which he held until 1991. During this time he completed a degree in biology by distance learning.

As a young man 'Rolf' was somewhat negatively disposed towards the state. He had the impression that all his mail at the boarding school he attended was being checked, and this bothered him intensely. As he grew older his attitudes began to change. Although he was not a member of the *SED*, 'Rolf' increasingly felt that he should support the state he

lived in. He was a keen supporter of environmental issues and one of the reasons why he came to the *Stasi*'s attention was because of the contacts he held to environmentalists in the West.

When I visited him, 'Rolf' was obviously nervous, yet eager to talk. His wife sat in on most of our conversation, and his 18 year-old son, his only child, came and listened quietly for a short time. 'Rolf' seemed a shy man, somewhat naïve, but someone who was making an apparently genuine attempt to face up to his past. This was reflected, among other things, in the open family atmosphere regarding his *Stasi* connections and in the fact that he was the only *IM* with whom I spoke who would have been prepared to have been referred to by his real name in this study.

In 1993 'Rolf' made his *Stasi* connections publicly known to the local council with which he was involved. He had hoped that such a revelation would lead to an enlightened debate in this forum and was disappointed when it did not. Yet he felt personally unable to take the initiative and begin such a discussion. The news of his *IM-Tätigkeit* appeared in the local press shortly afterwards. He was astounded to discover that the only person to broach the topic with him was an old school friend who was visiting the town at the time. At work, none of his wife's colleagues discussed the matter with her either. Although surprised and disappointed by this public reaction, 'Rolf' feels relieved that he has overcome the hurdle of making his *IM-Tätigkeit* public and feels that the matter is now in some ways settled.

During the *IM-Tätigkeit* itself 'Rolf' found that he could not overcome his scruples about reporting on an acquaintance of his, Michael Beleites. 'Rolf' approached Beleites and confessed his *Stasi* connections, whereupon Beleites asked if 'Rolf' would be prepared to try and help him. Beleites hoped that if he and 'Rolf' met secretly and jointly compiled reports in which Beleites was presented as someone who did not pose a

threat to internal security, the *MfS* might relax the ban from travelling outside the GDR which had been imposed upon him. In the book *Beleites* later wrote documenting his observation by the *Stasi*, a short account appears by 'Rolf' describing his *IM-Tätigkeit* (J-6, pp. 196-98). *Beleites* praises 'Rolf' in the book for his willingness to endanger himself by agreeing with his plan: 'Mit dem Versuch, mir auf diese Weise zu helfen, hat er wesentlich mehr Mut und Charakter bewiesen, als die vielen "Unbelasteten", die keine Kontakte zur Stasi hatten.' (J-6, p. 193)

When I last heard from 'Rolf' he was working on a freelance basis at his hometown museum again and considering applying for a new job as the head of a recently opened nature park. He was aware of the fact that his *IM-Tätigkeit* might hinder his chances of getting this job, but felt that the *Stasi* hysteria had subsided to the extent that his case would be viewed objectively (B-1).

1.4.2 'Theodor' (A-2, B-2,3, C-2a,b)

On the phone 'Theodor' seemed rather confused and nervous, so it was quite a shock to meet the composed, polite, and articulate man behind the voice. During our conversation he periodically became excited and animated, but remained ultimately in control of the situation, never, it seemed, giving away more than he intended to.

'Theodor' expanded on his family background in great detail. His father had been an officer in the First and Second World Wars and had worked as a banker in the Weimar Republic. The end of World War II had signalled the second great defeat in the life of 'Theodor's' father. Once again the system he had actively supported had crumbled and been shown to be corrupt. Comparing his own situation today, 'Theodor' felt that he could now empathise with his father.

Born in the 1930s, 'Theodor' says that as a young boy he was deeply shocked by and ashamed of Germany's war crimes, and so embraced life in the GDR as a true alternative to fascism. He describes himself as 'überdurchschnittlich autoritätsgläubig' and joined the army after leaving school (A-2). He claims to have initially loathed military life, but, since he had committed himself to ten years service, would have been unable to stand the humiliation of leaving before this time. When he became a communications officer, life improved immensely for 'Theodor'. He was often working with highly motivated trainees, and he found the research projects he was involved in stimulating. It was during this period that he was active as an *IM*, from 1975 until 1985. Interestingly, he writes in his first letter to me that his *IM-Tätigkeit* had spanned the period from approximately 1972 until 1986 (B-2). Since there would be no advantage to his claiming that he was active as an *IM* for longer than was actually the case, it would seem that this mistake on his part is evidence that individuals do have trouble remembering the exact details of their contact with the *MfS*, if not its general nature (see Section Two: 9.1).

'Theodor' retired from his job in the wake of unification out of the fear that if he did not do so his *Stasi* connections would become public and he would be dismissed. He now lives with his family in Brandenburg.

1.4.3 'Falke' (A-3, B-4, C-3a,b)

'Falke', who was born in the late 1940s, describes his biography as having been 'ganz normal' (A-3). His mother was a housewife, his father a bricklayer. Since he did well at school, he was able to complete his *Abitur* and says that he was the only child from a working-class background in his class. After three years in the army he joined the police force and, in 1971, began work with the criminal investigation department. During this

time he undertook further studies and feels that he had a lot of success in his work.

'Falke' related the details of his biography at the same high speed and with the same apparent brusque detachment with which he carried out the whole interview. In many ways he incorporated all the characteristics of the archetypal remorseless *IM*, unprepared to admit to any feelings of guilt whatsoever and tending rather to wallow in self-pity about his present situation. Previously a man with an important job, he had been dismissed from his post as a senior criminal investigator in 1993 when screening revealed that he had been active as an *IM* from 1977 until 1989. 'Falke' had denied having been an *IM* when asked on the mandatory questionnaire concerning previous *MfS* connections which all public service employees from the GDR were required to complete. He is now rather a sad figure, taking his dog for a walk in his track suit, too old to begin again and too young to be content in this unexpected early retirement.

1.4.4 'Reiner' (A-4, C-4a,b)

When I ask 'Reiner' at the beginning of our conversation to relate something about his biography, he takes some time before getting around to answering the question, first and foremost emphasising his lack of guilt and his belief that 'das Leben' has determined his biography (A-4). Indeed, it was difficult to get 'Reiner' to talk at length about his *IM-Tätigkeit* at any point in our conversation. He seemed to want to dwell on anything else but his *Stasi* connections. I felt that if I had never really insistently questioned him about this aspect of his life he would not have noticed or minded. He requested that we take a break from recording on several occasions and seemed to find having me in the house quite exciting. He told me about a previous holiday, about his weekend cottage and the

squirrel he often feeds there, but very little about the *Stasi*. He often did not answer the question I had asked, but drifted off onto another issue. I left the interview not knowing that 'Reiner' had in fact been a *Hauptamtlicher Führungs-IM (HFIM)*, as I later discovered from the files. Throughout the interview 'Reiner' became, however, increasingly direct and to the point when questioned on specific matters concerning the public confrontation with the *Stasi* legacy. He had very firm opinions about the way things should have been in the GDR and was bitter about much of what has happened since unification, feeling that the people from the East are being as badly treated now as they were under Honecker.

'Reiner' was born in 1931 in Pomerania. When he was one year old he was entrusted to the care of foster parents with whom he spent a happy childhood. At the end of the war his family was forced to flee his hometown, and they moved to Magdeburg, where 'Reiner' trained as a mechanic after leaving school. His adoptive parents had been relatively old when they took him in, and both died shortly after the end of the war. Around this time there were many advertisements for careers in the police force and 'Reiner' decided to join up since he had no family or other commitments. He began work with the *Volkspolizei*, and was transferred to Berlin, where he worked as a motorbike policeman. He later returned to Magdeburg after getting married to a local woman. Back home, he initially worked with the fire brigade and, in 1955, joined the *Kriminalpolizei*, with whom he remained employed until the early 1970s. By this time 'Reiner' had become disillusioned with the work atmosphere and had been trying to break his contract for some time. In a lengthy declaration as to the reasons why he wanted to terminate his employment he wrote:

Im VPKA [*Volkspolizeikreisamt*] [X] herrscht eine unpersönliche Arbeitsatmosphäre, keine kämpferische Atmosphäre, wie sie zur Erfüllung der gestellten Aufgaben notwendig wäre. Die Ursachen, daß es einen solchen Zustand in unserem VPKA gibt, sehe ich darin, daß sich die Kritik und Selbstkritik in den 60er Jahren nach und nach zurückentwickelt hat. (C-4a, I, 120)

One of the reasons why the *MfS* was interested in recruiting 'Reiner' was, indeed, precisely because of the critical stance which he took. The advantageous circumstance that he wished to leave his job was exploited to recruit 'Reiner' as a *HFIM*. He continued to work in this capacity until a series of health complaints compelled him to retire from this full-time status in the 1980s. 'Reiner' continued contact to the *MfS* as an *IM* until 1989.

1.4.5 'Thaer' (A-5, B-5)

'Thaer' was the only *IM* from the FRG to whom I spoke. In 1992 he had been tried for foreign espionage and given a two-year probationary sentence and a fine. As mentioned previously, I was unable to gain access to any *MfS* documentation relating to 'Thaer', either from the *BStU* or from court records (see Introduction: 2.4.1). I had the feeling that the details of 'Thaer's' *IM-Tätigkeit* were considerably more complex than he was prepared to reveal. Since I had only his word to go on, there was, however, no way of knowing how much he chose to leave out or gloss over in his account.

'Thaer' was born in the late 1940s in a small town near Hamburg. The family later moved to Bavaria and then, in 1963, to Berlin. Here 'Thaer' took up his studies in agriculture. He had originally toyed with the idea of a career in development work in the Third World, but by the time

he had graduated the job prospects for such work no longer looked so rosy. He began to work for an organisation called the *Bauernverband*. It was during this time that 'Thaer's' contacts to the *MfS* began. These contacts were maintained even after he changed jobs, and he was still active as an *IM* in 1989.

Today 'Thaer' lives in Brandenburg and has set up his own business.

1.4.6 'Fuchs' (A-6, B-6,7, C-5a,b)

At the beginning of our conversation I told 'Fuchs' that if he felt uncomfortable about a specific question then he should feel free to decline answering it, or request that I switch the tape-recorder off. 'Fuchs' assured me that this would not be necessary: 'Ich habe überhaupt keine Probleme. Sie können fragen, was Sie wollen.' (A-6) Despite these bold words 'Fuchs' often answered questions vaguely and frequently seemed to be avoiding delicate issues.

'Fuchs' was born in the late 1930s. His father was not initially called up for service but was latterly ordered to join the *Volkssturm* while trying to flee West with his family. His wife and two sons never heard from him again and presume that he died in a Soviet camp. 'Fuchs's' mother continued the journey West with the children. Chaos reigned at this time, and 'Fuchs' says that he remembers these traumatic events vividly, even although he was still so young, saying that these days are 'manchmal wie gestern' (A-6). The family was unable to carry on and began to return in the direction they had come. At first they found work on an estate in what is now Poland. They later left again and ended up in Soviet-occupied Germany, where 'Fuchs' was enrolled in a school. By this time he had missed a considerable amount of education and was the oldest in his class. He often organised activities with the younger pupils, and did

this with such enthusiasm and ability that he was encouraged to go on to teacher training college, which in fact he did. One day at college he caught sight of an announcement targeting young people from the East who might be interested in taking part in an exchange programme with students in Yugoslavia. 'Fuchs' and two friends followed up the advertisement and began to meet regularly with a woman in an office in West Berlin. They were asked about aspects of their educational training and were often given some money at the end of the meeting. These contacts carried on for about a year until the three friends noticed that they were being observed. They also felt that they were being given more and more concrete tasks to carry out by the woman and they had begun to realise that the promise of a holiday exchange had been merely a pretext and would never be realised. The three broke off the contact but noticed in the following months that they were still being observed: 'Man hatte ein Auge dafür, nicht, ganz früh.' (A-6) One day, shortly before their final exams, 'Fuchs' and his two friends were called in to meet with representatives from the *MfS* and informed that they had not been involved with a youth organisation at all, but with a spy recruiting agency which had been on the verge of trying to engage them officially. 'Fuchs' told me that after their statements had been taken they were told they would be allowed to sit their impending examinations, but that afterwards they would not be admitted to the army, for which all three had registered. They were also told that they would not be allowed to start teaching immediately and were to find alternative employment for a year. When, in 1993, 'Fuchs' was sacked on the grounds of his *IM-Tätigkeit* he contested the sacking, stressing to me and in his letters to the Ministry of Justice that the 'Täter-Opfer' aspect of his life history should be considered when assessing his case. He does not, however, consider his circumstances in any way exceptional and in his original letter to me

describes his biography as being 'nicht spektakulär, aber sicher für einen ehemaligen DDR-Bürger typisch' (B-7).

The school where 'Fuchs' began his teaching career had ties with the local prison. After new legislation was passed which meant that prisoners were to receive educational opportunities, he took up a post there. This was a welcome opportunity, as it meant that he would have Saturdays free, and that he would earn more money. 'Fuchs' was put in charge of the teaching programme for inmates. In 1977 he was asked to work with the *MfS* as a *FIM* and as such had about five or six prisoners reporting to him at any one time. When 'Fuchs' left the prison in the mid-1980s and took up another job he was re-registered as an *IMS*.

1.4.7 'Wolfgang' (A-7)

'Wolfgang' states emphatically at the beginning of our conversation that he considers it vital that he gives a lot of detailed information about his biography in order that his story can be fully understood: 'Die DDR war mein Staat. Ich war davon überzeugt, daß das, was dort vorgesehen ist, richtig ist.' (A-7) His loyalty to the GDR was a recurring theme throughout the interview, and he became periodically quite animated when talking enthusiastically of certain positive aspects of life there and of how terrible things were by comparison under the current system.

'Wolfgang' was born in the midst of economic crisis in the late 1920s and was brought up in a small village in Saxony. His family was very poor and 'Wolfgang' was fortunate that the local teacher was keen to see someone from the village obtain a secondary education. He attended an *Aufbauschule*, a cross between a *Gymnasium* and a *Volksschule*. He was the only working-class child at the school and was conscious of how poorly dressed he was in comparison to the other children there. 'Wolfgang' was called up in 1944 but never saw active service. Young men who had been

born a year before him were involved in fighting in the latter days of the war, and many of them were killed in action. After finishing school 'Wolfgang' began work as a civil servant in a post which involved having dealings with Soviet troops stationed nearby. During this time he made the acquaintance of many Russian officers with whom he says he had a good working relationship. Later he studied economics and took up a managerial post.

'Wolfgang' told me that he began work for the *MfS* in the early 1960s. This work involved travelling undercover to West Berlin and meeting with a man there who gave him seemingly harmless pieces of information to pass back to the *MfS*. The *BStU* was unable to uncover any material relating to 'Wolfgang'. It is possible that his file was destroyed in the extensive destruction of material from the *HVA* (*Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung*), for which he may well have worked, or that the relevant material is still to be catalogued.

1.4.8 'Stephana' (A-8, C-6a,b)

'Stephana' is an interesting and complex personality. Before our first meeting I had the feeling that she did not actually want to go through with the interview at all, since arranging a time and date seemed to be an unnecessarily lengthy and complicated process. During the interview, however, she was extremely co-operative and answered questions thoughtfully and thoroughly. She seemed to have a real need to analyse her past. I spoke to her several times on the phone afterwards and visited her again that summer after viewing her file. The reasons for 'Stephana's' burning interest in contemplating her past are perhaps partly explained by the fact that she is someone who has spent many years becoming intensely involved with a variety of religious groups and tends to engage in much self-reflection. Her biography is also one which is characterised

by periods of emotional instability and vulnerability. Her active interest in different ideological systems, in addition to an apparent need for stability, are perhaps partly responsible for the fact that someone who had not been at all sympathetic towards the state could become so bound to the *MfS* after having been recruited as an *IM* only under considerable duress.

'Stephana' was born in the 1960s in Schwerin. Her parents were Catholics, and theirs was one of few Catholic families in the area. She says that as a result she feels that she grew up in a Diaspora and emphasises that hers was a life characterised by inner and outer conflict. She did well at school, but difficulties arose when, because of her beliefs, she did not take part in the *Jugendweihe* ceremony, the ritual celebration of entrance into adulthood which was commonly practised in the GDR. As a result 'Stephana' says that she was not allowed to complete her *Abitur* and trained instead as a construction worker. 'Stephana' found this work frustrating because she felt that she was getting nowhere, and also because she had married someone who was doing well in a more stimulating job. She decided to take up work with the Post Office since this job offered good childcare facilities at the time. Her decision was also partly influenced by the fact that, although she had completed the training, very few women actually worked in construction and she found it a difficult working environment. Her husband, who travelled extensively in his job, was disappointed that she had taken on such menial work. The marriage did not fare well, and they separated when 'Stephana' was still only twenty. The child remained in the custody of her ex-husband. 'Stephana' met someone else, had a second child and changed job again. Prior to being recruited as an *IM*, 'Stephana' had applied on two occasions to leave the GDR, once to marry an Algerian, and once to pursue her religious interests in a Buddhist centre in the West. She then began a new relationship and changed her mind about trying to go West.

In May 1985 'Stephana' was picked up and interrogated by the *MfS*. She had remained in contact with a former colleague with whom she had at one time discussed leaving the GDR. This man still intended to do so and had told her of his plan to escape by entering the American embassy and seeking asylum. They had agreed that if he did not reappear within two days of his planned entry of the embassy she would phone a number in West Berlin which he had given her and relate the story to the person who answered. After the man did not return within the agreed time 'Stephana' phoned the number, which turned out to be that of a newspaper. The *MfS* interrogated her for her role in this attempted escape and threatened her with legal action. She was then given the option of agreeing to co-operate as an *IM* or of facing legal repercussions for her actions. She signed a *Schweigeverpflichtung* and, approximately four months later, on 1 October 1985, a *Verpflichtungserklärung*, so beginning an *IM-Tätigkeit* which lasted until 1989.

Today 'Stephana' is still involved in various religious groups. She has recently started up a small business.

1.4.9 'Katrín'¹ (A-9, C-7a,b)

'Katrín', alias Kerstin Kaiser-Nicht, was the only *IM* with whom I spoke who was publicly known.² She was a successful candidate for the *Bundestag* elections in 1994 but, shortly after arriving in Bonn to take up this position, Kaiser was put under pressure from her own party to resign, since it was felt that her *IM-Tätigkeit* was damaging the *PDS*'s public profile. Although she had made her *Stasi* connections known before standing for election, she was accused of having disguised the true extent

¹ In the files 'Katrín' is sometimes written 'Kathrin'. In this work she is referred to as 'Katrín', since this was the spelling which she used herself when signing documents (C-7a,b).

² Kaiser-Nicht is sometimes referred to simply as Kaiser, her name prior to her current marriage. In conversation Kaiser says that she finds the Kaiser-Nicht formulation rather clumsy (A-9).

of these contacts (see I-19, 31, 50, 64). As someone who has had to recount her story on many occasions, 'Katrín' was more than practised in doing so, and the experience of talking to her emphasised how much more potentially fruitful dialogue with lesser known *IM* can be. Nevertheless, Kaiser's case is relevant in that it provides a concrete and public example of how an individual and a society confront an *IM-Tätigkeit*.

'Katrín' was born in 1960. She enjoyed a happy childhood and, since she lived in a small town, claims that her only contact to the West was when an aunt whom she was not particularly fond of occasionally visited her family. As the daughter of two *SED* members, 'Katrín' was encouraged not just to be a member of, but to be active in the *Pioniere* and the *FDJ*. She was also involved in a music group, and as a high achiever and popular student, fulfilled all the prerequisites necessary to be among a group of students chosen to carry out their studies in what was then Leningrad. While she was being prepared for these studies at the *Arbeiter und Bauernfakultät* in Halle 'Katrín' was approached by the *MfS* and asked to co-operate as an *IM*. She agreed, and her *IM-Tätigkeit* continued until she left Leningrad at the end of her studies in 1984.

1.4.10 'Sonnenblume' (A-10, C-8a,b)

I contacted 'Sonnenblume' after reading her autobiography and asked her if she would be prepared to talk to me (J-110). 'Sonnenblume' contracted polio in 1940 when she was ten years old, and has been confined to a wheelchair ever since. Her mother was a teacher, who, she says, was suspended after being overheard saying that her daughter probably contracted her crippling disease after playing in a station where Russian soldiers had spat on the ground. Her father returned from the war in 1946 and found employment in a bank. 'Sonnenblume' had two brothers and one sister and describes her early childhood positively, despite the hunger

and the cold that the family had to endure at this time. She completed her *Abitur* at a special school for physically disabled children, and went on to obtain a distance learning degree in translation from Leipzig University, subsequently setting herself up as a freelance translator for French.

As a disabled person, 'Sonnenblume' was not subjected to the same travel restrictions as other East Germans and often used this relative freedom to visit friends who had left the GDR and lived in West Germany. In the course of these visits her friends asked her to secretly relay information to another friend who was trying to flee the GDR. When she was picked up from a train on her way home from a trip West in late 1979 'Sonnenblume' was interrogated about her role in this attempted escape. She was threatened with legal action if she did not agree to co-operate with the *MfS* and, after being detained through the night, signed a *Verpflichtungserklärung*. Her *IM-Tätigkeit* lasted just over a year. A change in *Führungsoffizier* gave her the courage to make the break from the *MfS*.

After 1989 increased competition in the translation business meant that 'Sonnenblume' was unable to continue to find work. She did manage, however, to translate one book about the life of a French singer after this time, something she considers a great personal success, since getting this contract involved a great deal of hard work and personal initiative. When her own book was published in 1993 'Sonnenblume' was dismayed to find that several friends, including and above all the couple whom she had always visited in the West, broke off contact to her. She claims that she had told these friends of her contacts to the *MfS* at the time of her collaboration, albeit in rather vague terms. She now feels hurt and disappointed that they have terminated the friendship. Other reactions to her book have been mixed, from horror and disgust that she should write

so openly about intimate details of her private life to statements of open admiration for having the courage to do so.

Section One: Chapter Two

**THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS:
A WORK OF ART**

2.1 GENERAL

Die Anwerbung darf nicht abstrakt und formal durchgeführt werden und muß fast wie ein Kunstwerk in der Arbeit betrachtet werden, die man bemüht sein muß, ständig zu verbessern. (J-62, p. 171)

The *MfS* was not interested in recruiting individuals who voluntarily offered their services as informers. Instead, *MfS* officers approached and actively recruited those who had been selected to be *IM*, so-called *IM-Kandidaten*. A considerable amount of detailed planning went into the individual stages of recruitment. Once a candidate had been found who corresponded to a particular *Anforderungsbild*, s/he and his/her immediate family were thoroughly screened. The transition from *IM-Kandidat* to *IM* could take months, or even years. When suspicions that 'Rolf' was involved in foreign espionage were not confirmed it was decided, in 1983, to change his status from an *OPK* to an *IM-Kandidat* (C-1a, p. 3). 'Rolf' remained a candidate for a further three years, until, in 1986, he was finally recruited as an *IM* (C-1a, pp. 277-80). By this time 'Rolf's' history with the *MfS* had encompassed a period of thirteen years. He had first come to the *Stasi's* attention in 1973 when *IM* 'Bernd Avis' had reported on 'Rolf's' connections 'zum kap. [kapitalistischen] Ausland' (C-1a, p. 57).

Not all recruitments spanned such an extensive period of time. Some were achieved rapidly and without the investment of much effort on the part of the *Führungsoffizier*. Yet, even in these cases, the analogy of a 'Kunstwerk' is in some ways fitting. There were several key components to the recruitment procedure and, in order to achieve maximum success, *Operative Mitarbeiter* had to ensure that the timing and structure of the various stages of such an operation had been carefully planned in advance.

2.2 INITIAL APPROACH

After the preliminary stages of recruitment had been completed, that is the creation of an *Anforderungsbild* and the selection and screening of a particular *Kandidat*, the *Führungsoffizier* was faced with the task of making contact with the individual concerned. As in any other aspect of the work with *IM* or potential *IM*, the initial approach had to be carried out with utmost discretion and was thus termed 'die konspirative Kontaktaufnahme':

Zur Festlegung der Art und Weise der konspirativen Kontaktaufnahme sind die Möglichkeiten zu prüfen
 - zur legendierten Bestellung des Kandidaten zum Kontaktgespräch,
 - zum direkten Ansprechen und Beginn des Kontaktgespräches durch den Mitarbeiter,
 - zum Schaffen von Einflüssen und Umständen, durch die der Kandidat zur selbständigen Kontaktaufnahme mit dem MfS veranlaßt wird.
 Das Kontaktgespräch ist taktisch beweglich unter ständiger Beachtung der Persönlichkeit und der Reaktionen des IM-Kandidaten zu führen. (J-62, p. 344)

An *MfS* survey carried out in 1973 which analysed strategies of 'konspirative Kontaktaufnahme' in sixty *MfS* divisions found that the *IM-Kandidat* was directly approached by an *Operativer Mitarbeiter*, usually at work or at home, in 34% of cases studied (D-4, I, 294). Contact was initiated by written appointment in 33% of all cases, by telephone in 17%, and by an approach through a third party in the remaining 16% (D-4, I, 294).

The above figures demonstrate that in the vast majority of *IM* recruitments the initial contact with the *IM-Kandidat* was of an official nature. The formal tone of the preliminary contact resulted in the individual concerned feeling more duty-bound to appear for the first meeting and, furthermore, often meant that his/her suspicions were not aroused. *Operative Mitarbeiter* were concerned to avoid a situation where

an *IM-Kandidat* came to the conclusion before the initial meeting that s/he was to be recruited to work with the *MfS*. If this were to occur it might allow a candidate who was negatively disposed to the idea of collaboration with the *MfS* time to plan a possible defence strategy and perhaps to inform others of the forthcoming meeting, so limiting the chances of a fruitful *IM-Tätigkeit*. In order that the *IM-Kandidat* did not suspect the true purpose of the summons, the *MfS* resorted to its much-loved tactic of employing a 'Legende', described in the *MfS Wörterbuch* as a 'glaubhafter Vorwand, durch den Personen in der operativen Arbeit über die wahren Ziele und Absichten des MfS getäuscht werden' (F-3, p. 240). In the previously mentioned study, the majority of those who received a written invitation to the *Kontaktgespräch* were under the impression that they would be attending an appointment with the *Volkspolizei*. The remaining *Kandidaten* were led to believe that they would be meeting with representatives of various other state organs (D-4, I, 294). Even when the *IM-Kandidat* was aware that s/he was to meet with a representative from the *MfS*, s/he was generally misled as to the true purpose of this meeting. The authors of *Die Gewinnung Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter* suggest that the *Legende* could be so constructed to convey to the *IM-Kandidat* the feeling that s/he was regarded as someone to whom confidential information could be entrusted. They propose that one possible *Legende* would be the pretence that the *MfS* was interested in enlisting the *Kandidat* to help investigate reports that a child in his/her immediate neighbourhood had been abused:

Die mit einer emotional tiefgehenden Wirkung verbundene Mitteilung, die dem Kandidaten in einem solchen Fall gegeben werden kann, berührt gemeinsame Interessen zwischen den Gesprächspartnern. Sie wird vom Kandidaten als Vertrauensbeweis des operativen Mitarbeiters zu seiner Person und als reale Gesprächsgrundlage erlebt. (D-4, II, 417)

2.3 TIMING

It was essential that the time lag between the notification of the meeting and the event itself was optimal for the specific situation and candidate. If the time lapse were too great then the chances that the *Kandidat* would inform someone of the planned meeting increased. One *IM* is quoted describing the disturbing half hour he spent between being called to a meeting with an *MfS* officer and the imminent appointment. In this time he contemplated the different stages of his public life, searching for potential misdemeanours which might have resulted in this unexpected summons: 'Diese innere Spannung hielt an bis zum Beginn dieser Aussprache.' (D-4, I, 301-02) There was an obvious danger that in a case like this the candidate would, through increasing uneasiness and nervousness, be unable to remain silent about the approaching meeting. Yet the inducement of this cognitive state could also work to the *MfS*'s advantage. The relief on the part of the candidate to discover that s/he was not to be rebuked for having done something wrong, but had rather been selected to assume a position of trust with the *MfS* may have been significant in his/her decision to agree to the proposed *IM-Tätigkeit*. The desire of the candidate or newly recruited *IM* to diminish his/her fears of the unknown by complying with the *MfS* could be exploited at various stages in the recruitment process. Both 'Stephana' and 'Sonnenblume' describe the period immediately after their initial interrogation as an emotionally turbulent one, during which they were plagued by doubts and fears (A-8, A-10). After the two women had been contacted by their respective *Führungsoffiziere* and the co-operation with the *MfS* had begun to take on concrete form, they experienced intense relief that this period of uncertainty had passed. 'Stephana' and 'Sonnenblume' were consequently less negatively disposed towards the notion of working with the *MfS*, since

such co-operation seemed to offer a more satisfactory alternative to waiting and uncertainty (see Section One: 3.4).

2.4 MORE *LEGENDEN*

After the *Kontaktgespräch* had taken place and the candidate had been made aware of the true reason why s/he had been summoned, it was necessary to ensure that this fact remain secret from those with whom s/he had close contact. In order that this was possible, further *Legenden* were created. After, as a result of her detainment by the *MfS*, 'Sonnenblume' returned home a day later than expected from her trip to the FRG, she was instructed to explain to her father that she had been delayed because of a formality concerning her passport (C-8a, p. 70). Although in his case the period of absence was relatively brief, it was still considered necessary to create a *Legende* to explain why 'Theodor' had left his workplace when he was summoned to his *Kontaktgespräch*. Accordingly, he was asked to bring with him a piece of equipment which he had borrowed. The equipment belonged to a man whose office was situated near the room where the *Kontaktgespräch* took place. Returning the item thus served as the *Legende* for 'Theodor's' absence (C-2a, I, 141).

2.5 COMMITMENT

Operative Mitarbeiter could not expect that an *IM-Kandidat* would agree 'spontaneously and unquestioningly' to co-operate with the *MfS* (D-9, p. 35). In most cases some enticement was required and a *Sinn-Angebot* was often created to achieve this aim (see Section One: 3.2). At this crucial early stage it was important that the candidate made some kind of commitment, but that not too much was demanded, in case s/he became frightened off the idea entirely. In the late 1950s and early 1960s there was concern over the observation that a number of those who had

been approached by the *MfS* and asked to work as *IM* had fled to the West shortly afterwards (E-1, pp. 42-46). It was suggested that those who had gone to the FRG were individuals who, before being approached by the *MfS*, would never have considered leaving the GDR (E-1, p. 43) *Operative Mitarbeiter* were consequently to be discouraged from trying to recruit too many *IM* too quickly. All too often, the report continued, compromising material was being used to coerce *Kandidaten* into signing an agreement to co-operate, with the result that they felt themselves 'so in die Enge getrieben, daß sie den einzigen Ausweg nur noch in der Flucht sehen' (E-1, p. 43). It was advised that more effort be made to convince candidates of the political necessity of the task at hand, instead of pressurising them into agreement. That sufficient time was not being invested to this end was seen to be reflected in the fact that:

Solange die inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter allgemeine Berichte schreiben, arbeiten sie. In dem Moment, wo sie jedoch an eine bestimmte Person angesetzt werden und über dieselbe konkret berichten sollen, werden sie flüchtig, d.h., diese Leute werden durch die Mitarbeiter nicht genügend auf ihre eigentlichen Aufgaben vorbereitet und von deren politischen Notwendigkeit politisch überzeugt. (E-1, p. 43)

Operative Mitarbeiter were tending to encourage *IM* to formally commit themselves at a premature stage and were subsequently demanding that they compile specific reports before sufficient persuasive tactics had been employed. The recruitment of *IM* for the long-term required that *OM* keep sight of the fact that, although written commitment was desired in the majority of cases, 'entscheidend ist nicht die Verpflichtung, sondern die positive Mitarbeit des Kandidaten' (F-5, I, 83). If a candidate was fulfilling the required duties of an *IM*, that is delivering information which was potentially *operativ bedeutsam*, then the goal of recruitment was seen to be achieved. Insisting upon written confirmation of the agreement when

the candidate seemed unwilling to take this step could only endanger the co-operation (J-62, p. 174). It was thus often the case that generally compliant candidates were less likely to be asked to make a written commitment. The case of the physicist Robert Havemann provides one such example. In the late 1960s and 1970s Havemann became one of the *dissidents most despised by the MfS* and suffered the gross injustices which accompanied this status until his death in 1982. In the early days of the new Republic, however, Havemann, a convinced anti-fascist, was a strong supporter of the state and, under the cover name 'Leitz', was registered for seven years as a *Geheimer Informator* (an earlier term for an *IM*). When he was officially recruited in 1956 Havemann, who had been active as a *Kontaktperson* since 1953, was not required to sign a written commitment: 'Auf Grund seiner schon langen Tätigkeit und seiner gesellschaftlichen Stellung wurde eine schriftliche Verpflichtung als formal angesehen und deshalb auf diese verzichtet.' (from Havemann's *MfS* file, I-56, p. 87) Around this time Christa Wolf also agreed to co-operate with the *MfS* and, at least initially, seemed prepared to deliver the kind of information which was desired. When asked if she would be prepared to co-operate Wolf agreed 'without much hesitation' (J-99, p. 90). The only aspect of the co-operation which seemed to bother Wolf at this time was the idea that she should remain silent about the contacts to others. At the mention of such secrecy Wolf became visibly uncomfortable with the result: 'Von einer schriftlichen Verpflichtung wurde wegen ihrer Mentalität Abstand genommen.' (J-99, p. 90)

Before being asked to sign the actual *Verpflichtungserklärung* candidates were often asked to make a *Schweigeverpflichtung*, in which they pledged to remain silent about the *Kontaktgespräch*. On 29 August 1986, for example, 'Rolf' pledged 'strengstes Stillschweigen zu wahren' (C-1a, p. 255). The *Schweigeverpflichtung* had a dual purpose. It gave the

MfS some sort of guarantee that the candidate would remain silent about having been approached by the *MfS*, and it was also a first commitment to becoming a fully-fledged *IM*. In the majority of cases the signing of the official *Verpflichtung* was, however, still fundamental to the recruitment process:

Die Verpflichtung ist mehr als das Schreiben oder mündliche Formulieren einer Verpflichtungserklärung. Sie ist für den Kandidaten die Besiegelung eines komplizierten Bewußtseinsprozesses. (D-4, II, 662)

Bei relativ schwachen Überzeugungsmotiven muß die von dieser Bewußtseinstatsache ausgehende fördernde Wirkung besonders genutzt werden, weil sich darin die Erkenntnis an eine übernommene Pflicht verfestigt. (D-4, II, 664-65)

This theory certainly seems to have been borne out in practice in the case of *IM* 'Thaer'. 'Thaer' tells me that despite the doubts he experienced after signing the *Verpflichtung*, he saw the matter as sealed once he had taken this step and consequently resigned himself to the fact (A-5).

The *MfS* exploited the psychological significance for an *IM* of the signing of a *Verpflichtung*, but naturally played down the effect such a step could have when trying to encourage the *IM-Kandidat* to make this written commitment. During his *Kontaktgespräch* 'Rolf' was asked whether, on his frequent trips to the area of natural habitat near the training ground of the Soviet forces, he had ever noticed anything suspicious. 'Rolf' told the *MfS* officers that he had been surprised at the number of cars he had seen in this area, since he knew that it was forbidden to drive there: 'Hier wurde dem Kandidaten aufgesagt, daß dies bereits die Informationen sind, die wir brauchen.' (C-1a, pp. 252-53) 'Rolf' was thus led to believe that he would be concerned with helping investigate cases of possible foreign espionage which he might be witness to, and that in doing so no more would really be required of him than

delivering the type of information he had already given. Only later did it transpire that 'Rolf' was to be set directly upon individuals belonging to his circle of acquaintances.

2.6 CONSOLIDATING THE AGREEMENT

Die Verpflichtung der neuen IM ist in würdiger Weise so durchzuführen, daß
- die Verbindlichkeit der getroffenen Vereinbarungen ausgedrückt wird. (J-62, p. 349)

Once the candidate had committed him/herself to co-operation, the *MfS* made efforts to ensure that this agreement was seen as binding and the wording of the *Verpflichtungserklärung* often referred to the potential legal repercussions for the *IM* if the contract were broken. The commitment was also further intensified by the fact that *IM* were asked at this point to assume a cover name for future contact. In some cases a name was suggested to the newly recruited *IM*, in others s/he was asked to choose one. Korth, Jonak and Scharbert advise that the *OM* might wish to convey the concept of a 'Deckname' rather as a "'Zweitname", "Arbeitsname" oder "Pseudonym"' (D-4, II, 668). Indeed, on 17 November 1975, *IM* 'Theodor' actually did write in the text of his *Verpflichtungserklärung*: 'Als Pseudonym für die Zusammenarbeit wählte ich "Theodor."' (C-2a, I, 11)

The *IM* was theoretically to be assigned a task for completion before the first meeting after the *Werbungsgespräch* (J-62, pp. 349-50). In the case of 'Theodor' this first mission was threefold, and Point 2. was documented as follows:

2. Erarbeitung eines ausführlichen E.-Berichts
[Ermittlungsbericht] zur Person des OSL [Oberstleutnant] [X] und
[orig. uns] Familie zu:
- dienstliche und politische Entwicklung

- Verbindungen/Reisetätigkeit
- Hobbys/Interessen/Leidenschaften
- besondere Verhaltensweisen
- politische Einstellung/Widersprüchlichkeiten. (C-2a, I, 143)

The strategies described above had the effect of intensifying the bond and commitment on the part of the *IM* to the *MfS*, as did the champagne toast which sometimes followed the signing of this document. In this chapter the recruitment procedure as far as the *MfS* was concerned has been outlined. The motivation on the part of the *IM* to actually agree to co-operate will be considered in the following chapter.

Section One: Chapter Three

**'DAS IST EIGENTLICH EINE GUTE SACHE': (A-1)
MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS BEHIND AN *IM-TÄTIGKEIT***

3.1 'POSITIVE GESELLSCHAFTLICHE ÜBERZEUGUNG'

The *MfS* guidelines drawn up in 1979 define possible premises for the recruitment of an *IM*. Recruitment strategy could be centred around the positive political stance of the *IM-Kandidat* towards the state ('positive gesellschaftliche Überzeugung'), on his/her personal needs and interests ('persönliche Bedürfnisse und Interessen'), on the desire to atone for previous misdemeanours ('Wiedergutmachungsbestrebungen'), or on a combination of all three approaches (J-62, p. 347).

The first of these strategies is further defined as follows:

Bei der Werbung auf der Grundlage positiver gesellschaftlicher Überzeugungen ist auf den bei den Kandidaten bereits vorhandenen weltanschaulichen, moralischen und politischen Überzeugungen aufzubauen und daraus die Bereitschaft zur Zusammenarbeit mit dem MfS zu entwickeln. (J-62, p. 347)

Earlier guidelines from 1958 specify that this basis for recruitment was to be the most important and frequently employed one (J-62, p. 212). The results of the Seidler/Schmidt study suggest that this was indeed the case. An analysis of *IM* in the district of Karl-Marx-Stadt in 1968 found that as many as 81% of *IM* surveyed had been recruited on the basis of political conviction (D-6, I, 6). It is necessary to exercise caution in the evaluation of this finding; first, since this form of recruitment was, according to the theory, to be the most frequently employed one, it is possible that the authors wished to find evidence that this was realised in practice; second, *Führungsoffiziere* who were aware that *IM* were to be primarily recruited on this basis may have tended to exaggerate the number of times when this was the case. In reality, as will be discussed, most *IM* were motivated by the *interactive effect* of a number of variables *and not merely by political conviction.*

Several *IM* whom I interviewed were certainly keen to emphasise that their political conviction had been fundamental in motivating them to

work with the *MfS*. 'Wolfgang' wasted no time in making this point by beginning the interview with a statement of his loyalty to the GDR (see Section One: 1.4.7). 'Wolfgang' repeated and elaborated on the strength of this commitment throughout the interview. Likewise, 'Katrin', born in 1960, argued: 'In meinem bewußten Leben gab es immer die Mauer zum Beispiel, und ich bin relativ widerspruchsfrei aufgewachsen in diesem Land.' (A-9) Both these *IM* and many others claim that when approached by the *MfS* it seemed 'das Normalste auf der Welt' to agree to co-operate and thereby endeavour to prevent anti-state activities (A-9).

It should be taken into consideration when examining such claims of fervent conviction that *IM* such as 'Katrin' and 'Wolfgang' tend now perhaps to exaggerate somewhat the extent of their commitment to supporting the *SED* in order to justify their behaviour in the face of what has sometimes been harsh societal criticism (see Section Two: 9.2.2). 'Katrin's' biographical details do, however, read rather like those of an archetypal patriotic GDR citizen, indicating a high level of sympathy or at least compliance with state ideology (see Section One: 1.4.9). Although she seems to have subsequently doubted her actions, it is easy to comprehend why 'Katrin' might, at least initially, have considered it self-explanatory to agree to work for the *MfS*.

Other *IM* recruited primarily on the basis of a pre-existing positive stance towards the state stress now that they viewed co-operation with the *MfS* as having been an integral part of their working lives (see Section One: 9.2.5). 'Falke' explains his decision to agree to collaborate as follows:

Ich bin, wie gesagt, seit '71 bis '77, war ja sechs Jahre Zusammenarbeit, auch mit diesen Leuten. Ich habe viele von denen gekannt. Und dann habe ich keine Berührungsängste oder sonst 'was gehabt. Ich habe einfach gedacht: Gut, das ist eine Sache, die tut keinem weh. Das ist aber notwendig. Also, was soll das. Machst du das. (A-3)

In a letter to the Ministry of Justice contesting his sacking on the grounds of having been an *IM*, 'Fuchs' argued similarly that, since *MfS* officers were closely involved in the running of the prison, had he, a prison employee, refused to co-operate with them, he imagined that he would have had to reckon with repercussions (B-6).

Recruiting *IM* such as 'Wolfgang', 'Katrin', 'Fuchs' and 'Falke' tended to be a relatively straightforward task for the *MfS* officers concerned. In accordance with the usual procedure, careful checks had to be made on the candidate and his/her immediate family, but once these had been carried out and the meeting where recruitment was to take place, the *Werbungsgespräch*, been planned, it was fairly certain that the candidate would agree to the proposal without much further ado. If any uncertainty at all was detected on the part of such a basically willing candidate it could generally be quickly put to rest by the *Führungsoffizier*. In the report documenting the successful recruitment of 'Theodor', for example, the *Führungsoffizier* noted:

Der Kandidat erklärte seine Bereitschaft zur Zusammenarbeit sofort und versuchte aber gewisse Einschränkungen hinsichtlich von Informationen familiären Charakters bzw. ihm nahe stehender Personen zu erheben. Dies wurde ihm aber als für die inoffizielle Zusammenarbeit widersprechend dargelegt, was der Kandidat einsah und dann sofort Informationen zu sich bzw. Familie gab. (C-2a, I, 141)

'Theodor' seems to have needed only to be given a very gentle assurance that what he was doing was officially sanctioned. Not all candidates came to the *Werbungsgespräch* with such intense pre-established political conviction, and in these cases the *MfS* had the task of convincing such potential informers that there was a politically and morally justifiable purpose to agreeing to work as an *IM*.

3.2 THE SINN-ANGEBOT

The writer Günter Kunert discusses what he terms the 'Sinn-Angebot' involved in working for the *MfS* (J-47, p. 18). Particularly in cases where it could not be taken for granted that an *IM-Kandidat* would agree unhesitatingly to co-operate, the *MfS* was often able to create a plausible *Sinn-Angebot* to facilitate recruitment: 'Diese endgültig letzte weltliche Transzendenz half dem Spitzel, sein Werk zu tun und dabei seine individuelle Verantwortung der "Sache" zu überlassen. Gewissensregungen ließen sich auf diese Weise ausschalten.' (J-47, p. 18)

This *Sinn-Angebot* not only helped many *IM* carry out their duties but was also significant at recruitment. 'Rolf' was undoubtedly swayed by the *Sinn-Angebot* presented to him at the initial meeting. As a result of his active commitment to environmental issues 'Rolf' had many contacts to individuals whose activities the *MfS* was keen to closely monitor. The officers involved in 'Rolf's' recruitment were well informed that the candidate was critical and sceptical of the GDR's policies on environmental protection. This information was used to construct a basis for recruitment which stressed the necessity of supporting the *MfS* in order to bring about change in these environmental practices and, on a wider scale, to help ensure world peace, an issue which also concerned 'Rolf'. To this end the *Werbungsgespräch* began with a discussion of the recent summit meeting in Reykjavik and of certain environmental issues. During the discussion 'Rolf' expressed his belief that not enough was being undertaken to combat pollution in the GDR (C-1a, p. 277). 'Rolf' was therefore critical of government policies, but did not reject the state as such, still believing that change was possible. The *Führungsoffizier* cleverly managed to turn this critical stance, combined with 'Rolf's' ultimate faith in the state, into a *Sinn-Angebot* of working with the *MfS*, an offer the *IM-Kandidat* had difficulty refusing:

Ich habe damals die *Weltbühne* immer gelesen, und da stand mal ein Artikel drin, daß man in dieser Zeit, ja, es ist fast verrückt, daß man in dieser Zeit eben, über seine tägliche Pflichterfüllung oder über das tägliche Arbeitgehen - darüber hinaus, müßte man etwas tun, um den Frieden zu sichern, oder um etwas zu tun, daß es so nicht weiter geht, und ... aber jetzt den Sprung ... Also, ich sage es mal so, ich war in dem Moment nicht abgeneigt. Ich war fast davon überzeugt, das ist eigentlich eine gute Sache, ja, da hilfst du, etwas zu verhindern. (A-1)

Initially 'Rolf' was led to believe that he would be involved in preventing military espionage and given the impression that the *MfS* was concerned with any deficiencies in environmental protection of which he might inform them. Although somewhat hesitant, he decided that he could justify such an undertaking:

Kurz und gut, die haben also, meine, ja, wie soll ich sagen, Friedensliebe oder, das klingt vielleicht pathetisch, meine Sorge um diese Welt haben die als Anlaß genommen und haben gesagt: 'Da helfen Sie uns doch, daß wir das gemeinsam verhindern.' Ja, und da habe ich gesagt: 'Dagegen habe ich nichts'. (A-1)

'Rolf' signed a *Verpflichtungserklärung* and the motivation for recruitment was consequently noted in his *Personalakte* as: 'Positive moralische Überzeugungen des IM, insbesondere solche Überzeugungen wie Erhaltung des Friedens und Durchsetzung der Abrüstungsbestrebungen der soz. Staaten, Durchsetzung des Umwelt-und Naturschutzes.' (C-1a, p. 38)

The text of the *Verpflichtungserklärung*, the written confirmation of the oral agreement, was often worded so as to strengthen further the appeal of the *Sinn-Angebot*, by conveying to the individual concerned the impression that s/he would be engaged in such laudable pursuits as protecting socialism and ensuring world peace. On 1 September 1970, for example, 'Reiner' was dictated a *Verpflichtungserklärung* which began:

'Ich verpflichte mich, das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit bei der Erfüllung seiner Aufgaben zum Schutz und zur Festigung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik mit meiner ganzen Kraft zu unterstützen.' (C-4a, I, 203)

In some cases the sense that there was an honourable purpose involved was short-lived and functioned only as a motivating factor at the time of recruitment. 'Rolf' soon realised that the *MfS* was not concerned with environmental issues and that he was to be increasingly encouraged to give information about people within his circle of acquaintances rather than about any spies whom he might find lurking around the Soviet training ground. It became more and more difficult for him to convince himself of the *Sinn-Angebot* of working for the *Stasi*, and he eventually broke off the contact.

IM who remained active often endeavoured to keep alive the belief in the purposefulness of the collaboration. They were not alone in this endeavour, since the *MfS* was well aware of the necessity of continually persuading its informers that the *IM-Tätigkeit* was morally and politically justifiable. Much emphasis was placed on training the *IM* to this way of thinking. The 1958 guidelines stipulate that the political education of the *IM* is the most important principle of the work with them, and further: 'Die Einsatzbereitschaft des inoffiziellen Mitarbeiters muß soweit entwickelt werden, daß er selbst sein Leben für diese Sache einsetzen wird.' (J-62, pp. 212, 219) In spite of the obvious attempts of the *Führungsoffiziere* to educate and develop their *IM* in this manner, many informers became sceptical and disillusioned. One former *IM* interviewed for the book *Stasi intim* describes the battle of trying to maintain the belief in the good of what he was doing as follows:

Immer wieder diese gebrochene Moral, es ist ja für eine gute Sache, Ordnung und Sicherheit, und wir müssen das Land schützen, klingt

ja alles nicht schlecht ... Ohne sich Gedanken darüber zu machen, daß man eine Sache vertritt, die unterm Strich politisch und moralisch nicht zu rechtfertigen ist. (J-71, p. 149)

The *Sinn-Angebot* was nevertheless an important contributing factor in influencing this *IM*'s and 'Rolf's' initial agreement to co-operate with the *MfS*. For *IM-Kandidaten* who were not so pre-disposed to the idea of supporting the state, recruitment strategy was structured so as to appeal more to the personal needs and interests of a candidate, rather than to those of the collective.

3.3 'PERSÖNLICHE BEDÜRFNISSE UND INTERESSEN'

The *MfS* guidelines subdivide this strategy for recruitment into material needs ('materielle Bedürfnisse'), social needs ('soziale Bedürfnisse'), and intellectual interests ('geistige Interessen') (J-62, p. 348).

3.3.1 'Materielle Bedürfnisse'

Material needs are defined as those, 'die auf das Erlangen finanzieller Zuwendungen und anderer Vorteile, auf die Befreiung von materiellen Belastungen und Verpflichtungen, auf das Beibehalten besonderer Lebensgewohnheiten gerichtet sind' (J-62, p. 348). This definition should not be taken to mean that a significant number of *IM* received a salary for their services. This was really only the case for a small minority and for the *Hauptamtliche IM*. The *MfS* aimed to develop a sense of loyalty and obligation rather than to create a business partnership with its informers. The political tuning of the *IM* was therefore to be achieved through 'eine klug abgestimmte Arbeit mit Lob und Anerkennung sowie Kritik' (J-62, p. 324). Korth, Jonak and Scharbert observe that 'Kandidatin P.'s' decision to agree to co-operate was positively influenced by the help she received in securing her child a place in a psychiatric clinic (D-4, II, 618). The authors

view this kind of enticement positively, clearly distinguishing it from other less desirable motives:

Ganz anders sind solche materielle Bedürfnisse zu bewerten, die Ausdruck kommerzieller Grundhaltungen, egoistischen Vorteilsstrebens sind. [...] Stabile Motive sind auf der Grundlage solcher egoistischer Bedürfnisse nicht zu entwickeln - sie müssen durch immer neue Zuwendungen stets neu geschaffen werden. (D-4, II, 619)

If, at the *Werbungsgespräch*, the *MfS* promised or hinted at the advantages to be gained from working as an *IM*, then these tended to be of the kind from which 'Kandidatin P.' benefited, rather than financial rewards.

After they began working with the *MfS*, many *IM* did, however, receive regular financial bonuses and presents. 'Sonnenblume', for example, was presented with champagne and flowers on the occasion of International Women's Day in 1978. Her *Führungsoffizier* noted afterwards that she seemed genuinely pleased to receive these gifts (C-8b, p. 43).

Although the material recognition which *IM* received may have strengthened the desire to continue co-operating with the *MfS*, it cannot, in the majority of cases, be seen as having been a major motivational factor at the time of recruitment.

3.3.2 'Soziale Bedürfnisse'

'Soziale Bedürfnisse' are defined as those, 'die auf das Erlangen eines besonderen Ansehens und Rufs, auf gesellschaftliche und staatliche Wertschätzung und Vertrauensbeweise, auf den Ersatz für tatsächliche oder scheinbare Benachteiligungen gerichtet sind' (J-62, p. 348). It is important at this point to consider that an individual could not simply approach the *MfS* and offer his/her services as an *IM*. In fact the

guidelines from 1952 warn: 'Bei Personen, die sich freiwillig melden, ist besondere Vorsicht angebracht.' (J-62, p. 173) The candidate had been, and this was made clear to him/her, carefully selected for the task. The effort which was invested throughout recruitment and during the *IM-Tätigkeit* itself to ensure that s/he felt at ease could have a flattering effect, and perhaps gave a candidate the impression that such recruitments were not everyday occurrences. Guidelines from the 1950s suggest that the *Geheimer Mitarbeiter* should be made to feel comfortable by being received in a clean and tidy flat where s/he was offered a little something to eat or drink: 'Bei weiblichen geheimen Mitarbeitern ist auch an Süßwaren zu denken.' (J-62, p. 189)

Potential *IM* were perhaps also influenced at recruitment by the appeal of the enhanced social standing which they imagined would result from being affiliated with the *MfS*. Since an *IM* was under oath to remain silent to even close family members about the *IM-Tätigkeit*, s/he could, however, only hope for such recognition within the *MfS*. The enjoyment derived from such a perceived increase in social standing had to be a private affair and could only be confirmed by the *Führungsoffizier*. The individual may thus have believed that his/her societal ranking would improve by conspiring with those in power, but, ironically, was unable to actually enjoy this perceived increase in esteem publicly.

3.3.3 'Geistige Interessen'

The third subgroup in the category of personal needs and interests are defined as those, 'die auf neu- und andersartige Tätigkeiten und Wirkungsbereiche, auf den Gewinn eines neuen Lebensinhaltes, auf das Bekanntwerden mit bisher nicht zugänglichen Problemen und Erkenntnissen gerichtet sind' (J-62, p. 348).

Much of the daily life of an *IM* was undoubtedly staggeringly banal, and the majority of *IM* themselves 'das ganze Gegenteil von James Bond, praktisch das Spiegelbild von Herrn und Frau Jedermann' (J-55, p. 42). Yet this is not to say that the thrill of feeling just a little bit like an exotic spy was not sometimes influential in a candidate's decision to agree to work as an *IM*. The secrecy and intrigue involved in even just the arrangement of the *Kontaktgespräch* or *Werbungsgespräch* was certainly enough to stimulate a sense of adventure in some candidates. The frequently ensuing banality and routine of the meetings with the *Führungsoffizier* could not be foreseen at this time. 'Thaer' recounted the decidedly adventurous story of the way in which he was recruited as follows (A-5): As he was travelling on the *Transitstrecke* one day 'Thaer' came into what he took to be a casual conversation with an East German guard.¹ After chatting to him for some time the guard offered to set up a meeting between 'Thaer' and an acquaintance of his, with a view to giving 'Thaer', who had studied agriculture, the opportunity of visiting an *LPG* (*Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft*). The meeting became the first in a series of trips by 'Thaer' to the GDR, during which he and the border-guard's 'friend' talked of many things, including the possibility of setting up a youth exchange programme between the two Germanys. 'Thaer' experienced his trips to the East as stimulating and exciting. He also began to regard his East German escort as a friend. Finally, when the question was put to him on the morning after the two men had spent a merry evening together at the Leipzig trade fair, 'Thaer' agreed without much hesitation to co-operate with the *MfS*.

If not quite as prolonged and complex as that of 'Thaer', the recruitment of an *IM* within East Germany could be equally exciting. By use of a *Legende* 'Theodor' was summoned to his *Werbungsgespräch* on the

¹ The *Transitstrecke* was the name given to a stretch of road running through the GDR from, for example, West Berlin to Braunschweig.

14 November 1975 (see Section One: 2.4). The recruitment ran smoothly, and it was agreed that whenever 'Theodor' or his *Führungsoffizier* wished to contact one another they should endeavour to incorporate the words 'Diaserie - DV 10/9' into a fitting context within a written or oral communication (C-2a, I, 142). The use of such code-words or -phrases was common and perhaps helped to stimulate the sense of adventure in some candidates.

Both 'Thaer' and 'Theodor' would, for different reasons, probably have agreed without much further ado to co-operate with the *MfS*. The adventure involved in and around the recruitment, and the anticipation of future mental stimulation was more of an added bonus than the principal motivational force.

3.4 'WIEDERGUTMACHUNGSBESTREBUNGEN'

It was not considered correct procedure to use coercion as a means of recruitment. Seidler and Schmidt found that only 7.7% of the *IM* they analysed were recorded as having been recruited using 'kompromittierendes Material' (D-6, I, 6). Once again, it is difficult to know to what extent this figure reflects some kind of objective reality, given that both the authors of the study and/or the *Führungsoffiziere* may have underplayed their use of this method in light of the fact that the *MfS* guidelines from 1958 specified that this basis for recruitment was only to be used when other possibilities were not available (J-62, p. 213). The 1979 guidelines did not state this explicitly, but did caution that if recruitment was to be made on the basis of 'Wiedergutmachungsbestrebungen', approval had to be sought in advance from superiors (J-62, p. 349).

The key element to this type of recruitment was clearly the existence of suitable 'kompromittierendes Material'. In the case of

'Sonnenblume' this took the form of the evidence held by the *MfS* that she had played a small role in the attempt of a woman to escape from the GDR. Her task had been to relay messages to the woman from mutual friends in West Germany. 'Sonnenblume' was picked up from a train as she was returning from a visit to the FRG, taken to a nearby police station and questioned through the night about this 'Kurierdienst' (C-8a, p. 67). The *MfS* officer concerned with the proceedings had predicted: 'Es ist zu erwarten, daß die IM-Kandidatin nach der Herausbildung eines Schuldgefühls ihre Bereitschaft für die inoffizielle Zusammenarbeit mit dem MfS gibt.' (C-8a, p. 67) The next morning 'Sonnenblume' did, indeed, sign a *Verpflichtungserklärung* in which she pledged 'das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit auf der Basis der Wiedergutmachung bei der Klärung von Problemen und Realisierung von Aufgaben im Rahmen meiner Möglichkeiten zu unterstützen' (C-8a, p. 63). The nature of the co-operation was not elaborated upon at the time of recruitment, and 'Sonnenblume' describes the following days and nights before the first meeting with her *Führungsoffizier* as extremely distressing. She did not know what lay before her: 'Deshalb schwebte ich, ja, in dieser fürchterlichen Ungewissheit, was passiert jetzt, in der nächsten Zeit, als sie sagten: "Sie hören noch von uns."' (A-10, see also J-110, p. 234)

The pattern of 'Stephana's' recruitment bears strong similarities to that of 'Sonnenblume's'. 'Stephana' was picked up from her home on 22 May 1985 and questioned about her role in the attempted *Republikflucht* of a friend of hers. At the end of the interrogation she signed an initial commitment to the *MfS*, which was worded as follows: 'Unter dem Aspekt des Absehens von weiteren strafprozessualen Maßnahmen gegen meine Person, erkläre ich mich im Rahmen der Wiedergutmachung zur Unterstützung des MfS bereit.' (C-6a, p. 7) 'Stephana' was subsequently sent home and she too experienced the following period of uncertainty as

highly distressing. She says that she suffered from a sort of 'Verfolgungswahn', unable to shake off the feeling that she was being constantly observed and followed (A-8). Regular meetings soon began to be set up between 'Stephana' and *MfS* officers during which she was asked to give information on the various religious groupings with which she was involved. Just over four months after the initial interrogation 'Stephana' signed the official *Verpflichtung*, committing herself to an *IM-Tätigkeit* which would last until right up until the demise of the *MfS* in late 1989.

Both 'Stephana' and 'Sonnenblume' were certainly to some extent coerced into agreeing to work for the *MfS*. Psychologist Hans-Joachim Maaz argues, however, that no *IM* can really claim to have been forced to work for the *Stasi*, as otherwise these individuals would have come forward after the *Wende* to denounce their *Führungsoffiziere*. The fact that this did not happen is an indication, according to Maaz, 'daß zur Erpressung immer auch eine innere Bereitschaft oder eine bestimmte seelische Konstellation des Erpreßten hinzugerechnet werden muß' (J-55, p. 87).

Evidence does seem to suggest that refusing to agree to work as an *IM* rarely led to any negative repercussions for the person concerned. Yet, since this was something which one could only establish after the fact, refusing to collaborate did require a certain amount of courage and potential risk. Martin Schubert managed to dissuade the *MfS* officers trying to recruit him by insisting that his wife join them in their meeting and by telling them that he could never keep a secret. His wife confirmed these claims. The men went away and Schubert reflects:

Im nachhinein erschien es mir eigenartig, daß sie sich damit begnügt haben. Es kam nichts mehr. Sie haben uns in Ruhe gelassen. Ich war erstaunt darüber, denn ich habe lange Zeit befürchtet, daß irgendwas geschehen würde. (J-41, p. 356)

Further examples of such resistance are given by Andreas Schmidt, who documents how one man was able to escape the *Stasi*'s clutch simply by telling the *MfS* officers who approached him that he was not a 'Spitzeltyp' (J-80, p. 169). Another man rarely turned up for meetings and only reported positively about others when present (J-80, p. 171). Such behaviour was referred to as 'Ausweich- und Täuschungsverhalten', and when it was detected the *MfS* quickly lost interest in the candidate or newly recruited *IM* (J-80, p. 174).

The *MfS* was keen to recruit *IM* within a positive motivational framework. This served internal ideology and, if successful, meant that the *IM* were more likely to be reliable. Even in cases where the candidate was to be coerced into agreeing to comply, the guidelines for recruitment emphasise the positive aspect of such co-operation, that is the atonement, the 'Wiedergutmachung'. A sense of guilt was to be aroused in the candidate in order that s/he felt the need to make good past misdemeanours. There was no room in this terminology for negative concepts such as recruitment on the basis of fear. That is not to say that fear was not at times instrumental in a candidate's decision to agree to collaborate. The ideological structures of the *MfS* did not, however, allow fear to be documented and thus sanctioned as a motivational factor. Inducing fear was certainly used as a means of manipulating candidates, but this method was rarely noted in the reports relating to recruitment.

The *IM* was to be an ally in the fight against the enemy, and it was the task of the *Führungsoffizier* to educate the candidate or newly recruited *IM* and so aim to create a *Sinn-Angebot* for an individual who was initially negatively disposed. In the 'Konzeption zum Kontaktgespräch', drawn up on the 13 September 1985, 'Stephana's' *Führungsoffizier* planned that this meeting 'soll dazu genutzt werden, die Bindung der [X] an das MfS weiter zu festigen, sowie ihre Bereitschaft zur

inoffiziellen Zusammenarbeit mit dem MfS weiter zu entwickeln' (C-6a, p. 21). When, just over two weeks later, 'Stephana' chose her cover name and signed the *Verpflichtungserklärung* it was noted that she had placed emphasis on including the word 'weiter' in her declaration (C-6a, p. 39). The text of the *Verpflichtungserklärung* consequently read as follows: 'Ich verpflichte mich zur weiteren konspirativen inoffiziellen Zusammenarbeit mit dem MfS und werde den Decknamen "Stephana" führen.' (C-6a, p. 7) 'Stephana' was clearly keen to understand the future contact with the *MfS* as a continuation of what had gone before in the months leading up to the official recruitment. In other words, it seems to have been important to her to emphasise that her compliance was a direct consequence of her interrogation and the threats made against her. Although coercion was used initially, the *MfS* will however have been interested in altering this premise for collaboration by educating 'Stephana' on the 'moralische Rechtfertigung' of aiding the fight against the enemy (D-5, p. 47):

Die Erzeugung der richtigen Gefühle gegenüber dem Feind stärkt die Überzeugungen der IM von der Richtigkeit der eigenen Aufgabe und von der Überlegenheit über den Feind und muß sie dazu bringen, ihn zu verachten und zu verabscheuen, ihm mit Haß entgegenzutreten. Aus solchen leidenschaftlichen Haltungen ergeben sich bei den IM starke Treibkräfte, aktiv gegen den Feind vorzugehen, wächst ihr Pflichtbewußtsein und ihre Opferbereitschaft. (Mielke, 1975, F-5, II, 532)

This *MfS* philosophy could never be a reality. The *IM* network, if it were to be effective, depended on *IM* having close, even intimate contacts to the 'Feind'. A good *IM* was a friend and neighbour to an individual whom the *MfS* had placed under observation. The motivation behind an *IM*'s co-operation was rarely hatred of the enemy as defined by the *MfS*. Such an explanation of motivation was, however, in accordance with the *MfS*'s ideology and therefore found its place in the guidelines relating to the recruitment and subsequent political education of *IM*.

In the months following the signing of the official *Verpflichtungserklärung* the nature of the co-operation between 'Stephana' and the *MfS* began to take on a different form. She began to be given more precise goal-oriented tasks and to be asked to report on specific individuals. By complying with these tasks 'Stephana' slipped increasingly into the web of deceit and intrigue which was part of the daily life of an *IM*, with the result that fear was no longer as significant a factor in motivating her actions. It is partly for this reason that *IM* did not denounce their *Führungsoffiziere* after 1989. At the time when they agreed to work as an *IM* fear may well have been a strong motivational factor in signing the *Verpflichtungserklärung*, but as the contact continued this became decreasingly the case. The *MfS* worked hard to convince the newly recruited *IM* of the honourable nature of his/her actions and the *IM* often managed to rationalise the situation, thus suppressing any nagging doubts about the morally questionable compromises which s/he was making.

3.5 PASSIVITY

A further significant motivational basis which is not documented in the *IM Richtlinien* may simply have been the passivity factor, that is that at the moment when the proposal was put to a candidate, the easiest option was simply to agree. The *MfS*'s policy of carefully selecting and seeking potential *IM* for recruitment meant that becoming an *IM* was not the result of decisive action on the part of the *IM-Kandidat*, but was rather the course of action which demanded the least resistance. The *Stasi* files are testimony to the fact that many potential *IM* did reject the attempts of the *MfS* to recruit them as informers, leading Lutz Rathenow to describe these documents as 'ein Monument des Widerstandes, eine Chronologie der Zivilcourage in der DDR' (J-68, p. 1466). The majority of those

approached did not, however, find the courage which Rathenow speaks of. 'Wolfgang', for example, claimed that he 'konnte auch nicht zu DDR-Zeiten Nee sagen' (A-7). 'Sonnenblume' defends her compliance by arguing that she is 'nicht aus dem Stoff, aus dem Helden gemacht werden', but rather 'lieber für einen Kompromiß' (A-10).

Maaz applies the term 'Gehorsamstäter' to describe the group of *IM* who were unable to resist the attempts of the *MfS* to recruit them (J-55, p. 93). The 'Gehorsamstäter', according to Maaz, were a relatively small proportion of *IM*, who gave information 'einfach weil es von ihm verlangt oder erbeten wurde, weil, das Neinsagen nie geübt, aus innerer Unsicherheit und Abhängigkeit gar keine Verhaltensalternative zur Verfügung stand' (J-55, p. 93). Perhaps the group of pure 'Gehorsamstäter' was relatively small. Yet the inability to say no was significant in many cases. This passivity factor in motivation was one which *MfS* recruiting officers must have been aware of through their dealings with *IM* candidates, but which, because of its negative essence, did not fit with *MfS* ideology and is not to be found in *MfS* guidelines.

3.6 CONCLUSIONS

It is not always easy to obtain objective statements from former *IM* concerning their motivation for agreeing to collaborate. An analysis of the statements they do make in conjunction with the *MfS* files held on these individuals does, however, facilitate our understanding of the mechanisms at work. For many *IM-Kandidaten* it was the interplay of several of the various motivating factors discussed above which swayed their decision to agree to work for the *MfS*. This motivational basis did not necessarily remain constant throughout the course of the *IM-Tätigkeit* (see Section One: Chapter 5). Speaking to the *Enquete-Kommission* Walter Schilling argued: 'Die Motive sind kein geeignetes Kriterium für Spitzeltätigkeit.'

(F-13, p. 94) The motives at recruitments may, indeed, not be sufficient justification for an individual's subsequent actions as an *IM*. In any confrontation with this aspect of the *Stasi* legacy it is, however, vital to understand the methodological and cognitive mechanisms which were involved in such a recruitment, from the point of view of the *MfS* and from that of the *IM*.

Section One: Chapter Four

**BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE:
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN *INOFFIZIELLER MITARBEITER***

4.1 THE NATURE OF THE WORK WITH *IM*

4.1.1 Theory

The *IM*'s essential task was to deliver information which would allow the *MfS* to construct plans to destroy or neutralise the enemy. Such information was termed *operativ bedeutsam* and defined as follows:

Information über Ereignisse, Handlungen, Personen, Einrichtungen, Gegenstände und Zusammenhänge zwischen diesen, die es ermöglicht, bestehende oder zu erwartende - Sicherheitserfordernisse herauszuarbeiten bzw. zu realisieren und daher geeignet ist, zur Bestimmung und wirksamen Durchführung konkreter politisch-operativer Maßnahmen beizutragen. (F-3, p. 171)

In order to obtain this kind of information it was necessary for the *MfS* to stay in close contact with the *IM*, and the *Operativer Mitarbeiter* was to plan thoroughly all meetings with his informers. The *Treffbericht* contained a report of this preparation and of the subsequent meeting (J-62, pp. 179-85). Meetings were to take place in locations specified for this purpose, that is in so-called *Konspirative Wohnungen (KW)* or *Konspirative Objekte (KO)*. If, in an exceptional case, a *Führungsoffizier* planned a rendezvous outside a *KW* or *KO*, this intention was theoretically to be cleared in advance with a superior (J-62, p. 333). There were to be three important components to the meetings:

das persönliche Gespräch mit dem inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter,
die Berichterstattung des inoffiziellen Mitarbeiters,
die Auftragserteilung und Instruierung. (J-62, p. 223)

Operative Mitarbeiter underwent training on how to most effectively carry out meetings with *IM*. They would, for example, be played a tape of a meeting between a *Führungsoffizier* and an *IM*. *OM* were then given the task of evaluating the reported information and then deciding what tasks the *IM* ought to be given for completion before the next meeting (D-11).

OM were also asked to consider that throughout the course of the *IM-Tätigkeit* *IM* were to be challenged and stimulated and that it was to be avoided at all costs that the format of these meetings became routine and predictable (J-62, p. 180, D-10, p. 8).

4.1.2 Practice

The reality of the daily work with the *IM* did not always correspond to the theory. *OM* who met with the same *IM* on a regular basis over a period of many years were bound to find it increasingly difficult to prevent the format of these meetings becoming routine. That meetings often did begin to follow a set pattern is reflected in the *Treffberichte*. On numerous occasions the wording of the notes relating to the preparation and execution of the meetings with *IM* 'Falke' is either very similar or exactly the same (C-3b, II, 7-8, 26-27, 83-84). On the whole, the content of the meetings with this particular *IM* does not seem to have varied significantly over the years. 'Falke' was usually asked to give a character description of a colleague or describe reactions among colleagues to a particular event.

Sometimes the information which 'Falke' gave was judged as being *operativ bedeutsam*, often it was not. Indeed, evidence suggests that at any one time the majority of *IM* was not actively involved in *Operative Vorgänge*. The situation was so acute that in 1971 Mielke complained that 'nur ca. 5% der in einem Jahr von den *IM* erarbeiteten Berichte auf Operativvorgänge bzw. Vorlaufakten Operativ entfallen' (F-5, I, 346). Seidler and Schmidt found that 77.6% of the *IM* included in their study were neither active in 'Operativ-Vorgängen' nor 'Vorläufen-Operativ', and furthermore, that as many as 24.2% had never been involved with such work (D-6, I, 183).

The entire *IM* network was then in many ways chaotically and inefficiently managed. In 1971 checks showed that for some considerable time no meetings had been held with up to 30% of *IM* registered active (F-5, I, 295). This situation may have arisen partly because of the uneven distribution of *IM* among *Führungsoffiziere*. Young colleagues tended to be given a disproportionately high workload, with some having a network of up to thirty *IM*, while departmental heads often had no informers at all under their guidance (F-5, I, 292, 299). It is likely that these young *OM* were swamped by the vast administrative commitment which each *IM* case required, and were at times unable to meet demands adequately. Standard administrative procedure was certainly not always strictly observed. Documents in the files are often not in chronological order, and much of the material is inefficiently duplicated several times by hand. Although *Treffberichte* were to be written up within twenty-four hours, there are often delays of several days between the date on which such documentation was completed and the date of the meeting itself (J-62, p. 224). The sheer volume of paperwork involved in any one *IM* case meant that those *OM* who were in charge of up to thirty *IM* were under considerable pressure and perhaps simply did not find the time to consider how their *IM* could be put to more effective use.

Many of these young *Operative Mitarbeiter* may also have been insufficiently familiar with some of the most basic principles of the work with *IM*. In order to check if *Richtlinie 1/58* had been internalised a test was carried out with *OM*. In the grading system for this test heads of department were instructed, as would be expected: 'Mit "gut" werden die Mitarbeiter bewertet, die den gesamten Lehrstoff gut kennen und ihn klar darlegen.' (F-5, I, 132) Yet, somewhat less predictably, the instructions continue: "'Genügend" erhalten die Mitarbeiter, die wichtige Teile des Lehrstoffs nicht kennen.' (F-5, I, 132) This grading system effectively

meant that it was possible for an *OM* to pass the test even if he were not familiar with important aspects of the material being examined. The *MfS* was aware of such problems and consequently pedagogic material compiled for the *Juristische Hochschule* warned that deficiencies in the system resulted partly from the fact that officers were not recognising information as being *operativ bedeutsam* and were thus unable to fully exploit the potential of the *IM* (D-10, pp. 14-15). Another study found that 110 of 260 *IM* whose *IM-Tätigkeit* had been brought to an end on the grounds that the contacts were no longer fruitful, actually had contacts to individuals whom the *MfS* had identified as 'operativ interessant' (D-7, I, 13).

It was then completely within the realms of possibility that an *IM* could complete an *IM-Tätigkeit* without ever having delivered information which was judged useful to the *MfS*. When 'Sonnenblume' ended her *IM-Tätigkeit*, for example, her *Führungsoffizier* was not particularly sorry to see her go since he felt that the work with her had not produced any 'operativ verwertbare Ergebnisse' (C-8a, p. 149). The *MfS* was not interested in maintaining contact to those who could not supply them with the kind of information they needed, and for this reason 'Theodor's' *IM-Tätigkeit* was ended in 1985 by the *MfS*. It was reasoned that the collaboration was no longer necessary, since officers had contact to 'Theodor' on a daily basis anyway at work, and since the *IM-Tätigkeit* was no longer producing 'wesentliche op. [operative] Momente' (C-2a, II, 181).

If it was often the case that the *Führungsoffiziere* did not recognise information as being *operativ bedeutsam*, then it is possible that both 'Sonnenblume' and 'Theodor' were actually delivering potentially significant reports and that it would have been in the interests of the *MfS* to maintain contact with them. Conversely, *IM* who really were of no use to the *MfS* were often kept on the records in order to boost overall

numbers, and Mielke often complained that all too frequently *IM* were being recruited for quantitative rather than qualitative reasons (F-5, I, 447). Some *Führungsoffiziere* may thus have over- rather than undervalued the significance of information they received from their *IM*. 'Thaer' feels, for example, that more fuss was made of him and the information he gave than was really warranted (A-5). This may well have been the case, yet 'Thaer' could not know where, when, or in what manner the apparently banal reports he gave were used by the *MfS*.

4.1.3 Apparent Banality and the Mosaic

Konrad Weiss described the *Stasi* files as being 'so banal und falsch wie Pornographie' (I-45, p. 6). Many of the character descriptions to be found in the files are certainly concerned with the drinking habits or sexual exploits of the person under observation. A key issue in reports also seems to have been the question of whether the individual under surveillance had a well-ordered family life. It was, however, precisely this sort of seemingly trivial and banal personal information which could be extremely useful to the *MfS*. Such information could potentially be used as compromising material, and it also helped construct a comprehensive personality profile of the enemy, which would facilitate the creation of plans to destroy him/her. Reports concerning the sexual tendencies or behaviour of an individual could be used for blackmail. Other apparently banal personal information also often found application. Reports, for example, that Gerd and Ulrike Poppe's marriage was going through a rough patch led to the planning of measures to deepen this rift, among other things by setting a male *IM* on Ulrike, whose task it was to seduce her (I-37).

The *MfS* was interested in the private affairs not only of those whom it sought to destroy, but also of its own *IM*. 'Theodor', who was

requested to get his family life in order when it was discovered that his wife was having an affair with a work colleague of his, compared the morality of the *MfS* in the 1960s and 1970s to that of the Catholic Church (A-2). IM 'Falke's' private life was also a subject which concerned the *MfS*. 'Falke' was told that he should re-marry his ex-wife, with whom he had rekindled his relationship (C-3a, p. 212). The often absurd attempts to maintain a factual objectivity when documenting such incidents is evident in one of the *Treffberichte* written by 'Falke's' *Führungsoffizier*, who noted: 'In bezug auf die Befragung nach privaten und familiären Sorgen und Problemen, äußerte die Quelle in dieser Richtung keine Belange. Zu der Frage nach Beziehungen zu Frauen, verneinte die Quelle.' (C-3b, II, 94)

Much of the other material contained in the files seems at first glance equally trivial. There are many sketches of people's flats to be found, some of which come with staggeringly precise measurement details. 'Theodor', for example, made an extremely detailed plan of a colleague's flat, including measurements not just for the perimeter of the various rooms, but also for the stove and the door opening size (C-2b, pp. 26-29). 'Katrin' reported that a fellow student returned from visits home with many products from the West, ranging 'von Kosmetikartikeln bis zum Puddingpulver' (C-7b, p. 50). Sometimes it is the clumsy way in which this information is recorded which increases its apparent triviality, yet reports of this kind were potentially of considerable use to the *MfS*, for example, if *MfS* officers were able from a sketch of a flat to decide where to plant bugging devices.

In the majority of cases the potential harm which could have been caused by such reports was not realised. The *IM* who claims that his/her reports never caused any harm can, however, never know this. The seemingly harmless pieces of information which the *IM* gave were like fragments of a mosaic and often only became meaningful when combined

with information from other *IM*. The *MfS* did not like to take chances and checked and double-checked information which was considered important. The information given by an *IM* was, furthermore, not necessarily of immediate use, but was often filed and stored for later application (D-1, p. 5). *IM* were also never supposed to know more than was necessary to obtain the required information and *Legenden* were sometimes created by the *Führungsoffizier* as to why particular information was being requested. These *Legenden* ensured that the *IM* did not gain insight into the 'operatives Wissen' of an *OM* (D-2, p. 17). Pedagogic material from the *Juristische Hochschule* underlined this point:

Selbst ein qualifizierter *IM* kann im konkreten nicht einschätzen, welche detaillierte Fragen z. B. in der Vorgangsbearbeitung zu lösen, welche Beweise in erster Linie zu erarbeiten und zu sichern sind, da er stets nur einen begrenzten Einblick in die operative Arbeit hat und haben darf. (D-3, pp. 3-4)

IM often do not consider the potential consequences of this amassing of small, apparently harmless pieces of information when they claim, as do the majority who speak out publicly, that the reports they gave were harmless. Since most of the reports seemed trivial, the *IM* will have been less aware in this pervading atmosphere of banality that s/he invariably let information slip which was potentially more harmful.

4.1.4 Serious Sleuthing

Although often harmless, or at least apparently so, the meetings with the *IM* had one clear objective:

Die zielstrebige Bearbeitung feindlich tätiger oder verdächtiger Personen in Vorgängen mit dem Ziel der beschleunigten Nachweisführung und Beendigung der staatsfeindlichen Tätigkeit sowie deren schnellen und wirkungsvollen Liquidierung. (F-5, I, 279)

In rarer cases 'Liquidierung' literally meant the physical destruction of the enemy, and Wolf Biermann found evidence in his files that the *Stasi* had planned to tamper with his car brakes (I-12). More often the enemy was to be psychologically tortured. This could be achieved by a variety of methods. Sometimes, as in the case of Gerd Poppe, rumours were spread that someone who was actually being observed and manipulated was him/herself collaborating with the *MfS* (I-37). Even after state enemies were forced to leave the GDR they did not escape the evil of the *MfS*. When Jürgen Fuchs arrived in West Berlin after being forced to leave the GDR, so too did an informer who had also been in captivity in the GDR. It was this man's task to spread disinformation about any accounts Fuchs might give of the harshly unjust treatment he had received in the GDR prior to his departure (J-27, p. 78). Although only a small proportion of the information supplied by *IM* was ever used for such measures, when it was it could have grave consequences for those whose existence and political stance was a burden for the *MfS*.

Former *IM* may have an unrealistic idea of how much information they actually gave, since their willingness to compromise their principles and gradually allow the *Führungsoffizier* to extract more intimate and detailed reports tended to increase gradually throughout the course of the *IM-Tätigkeit*. The first reports which an *IM* was asked to give were often fairly general, and it was only later that s/he was requested to inform on specific individuals. When 'Theodor' looks back now on his *IM-Tätigkeit* he realises how he gradually compromised himself: '... daß ich später vor allen Dingen auf bestimmte Personen angesetzt wurde ... ja ... ja, wissen Sie, da rutscht man dann so Stück für Stück rein.' (A-2) 'Stephana', too, began her *IM-Tätigkeit* determined not to compromise herself completely. When she signed the *Verpflichtungserklärung* she informed her *Führungsoffizier* that there were specific areas of her life on which she did

not wish to give reports. He assured her that the *MfS* could accept this. When a superior checked through the file, however, he noted in the margin at the point where the *Führungsoffizier* had reported this conversation: 'Warum so absolute Zusage?' (C-6a, p. 39) The *Führungsoffizier* was thus under pressure to encourage 'Stephana' not to withhold any information in which the *MfS* might be interested. 'Stephana' does admit that her *Führungsoffizier* was skilled at getting her to talk of specific events and casually slipping in questions about particular participants there (A-8). The fact that the *MfS* had various sources reporting on these events gave 'Stephana' the impression that her *Führungsoffizier* knew everything anyway, and that there was no point in trying to keep anything hidden from him: 'Auch, wenn ich was nicht erzählt habe, ich kam eigentlich nicht dazu, irgendwas zu verschweigen. Man wußte, daß ich dann und dann bei den Zeugen Jehovahs war.' (A-8)

Almost hidden within the triviality of the majority of any one *IM*'s reports there are usually moments where his/her behaviour was most definitely that of a *Spitzel*, a snoop. The majority of 'Sonnenblume's' reports were without doubt overwhelmingly positive character descriptions of her friends and acquaintances. She tells me that she decided only to write positively of others in the hope that perhaps such a report could actually help someone (A-10). Yet, in the course of her contact to the *MfS*, 'Sonnenblume' searched her friends' flat for evidence that they were involved in helping people to escape from the GDR, taking photos which she subsequently handed over to her *Führungsoffizier* (C-8a, p. 103). Another example of serious sleuthing is found in the case of 'Falke', who is one of many *IM* who were at some point asked to intensify their friendship with a particular person whom the *Stasi* wished to place under closer surveillance. In order to achieve this aim 'Falke' uses the chance of 'ein Angebot des [X] zum gemeinsamen abendlichen [sic] Laufen mit den

Ehefrauen' (C-3b, II, 235). It is also noted that 'Falke' has suggested that he and [X] go fishing together in order that he has the possibility to view the man's cottage (C-3b, II, 235).

The daily life of an *IM* could on occasion even be excitingly dangerous. IM 'Theodor', for example, was given the task of obtaining a key from a colleague's flat to allow a copy to be made of it. Preparations for this event involved determining the type of lock and at what times the key was left in the door. Apparently, as 'Theodor' tells me when he relates this same story, keys were often left in the doors of flats at this time, when, for example, as in this case, the children of the family were out playing (A-2). After the plan had been successfully realised 'Theodor' placed the key on the floor near the flat door to give the impression that children had removed it and thrown it back there. Since the *MfS* was keen to check whether this ruse had worked, 'Theodor' was instructed to continue observing the flat in order to determine if the key was left in door after this incident. If it was, this would suggest that the occupants' suspicions had not been aroused (C-2b, pp. 53-54, 61-62).

4.1.5 Scruples

Apart from the obvious time commitment involved in a venture such as obtaining the key in the above example, this type of task often led to scruples being aroused on the part of the *IM*, and 'Theodor' did, in fact, use the word 'Spitzel' to refer to himself during our conversation (A-2). He says that at the time of the *IM-Tätigkeit* he did not always consider himself such, but recalled that he certainly did when he was instructed on one occasion to hide in a doorway and monitor whether a man under *MfS* surveillance received visitors from the West. Of course, it is possible that 'Theodor' may not really have been experiencing scruples at this point, but rather humiliation at being given and carrying out such a lowly task,

which he, since he was after all an officer at a military college, may have considered beneath him. Many *IM*, including 'Theodor', do seem, however, to have suffered from genuine scruples at some point during their *IM-Tätigkeit*. At the first meeting after her recruitment 'Sonnenblume' made an attempt to break the agreement she had made with the *MfS* (C-8b, p. 4). After she was unsuccessful in this venture she began reluctantly to cooperate with the wishes of her *Führungsoffizier*, but the doubts remained, and at a later date he noted that 'Sonnenblume' had told him how she had experienced scruples when searching her friends' flat (C-8b, p. 84). There is evidence in the files that at some point during their time as an *IM* most of those with whom I spoke did express doubts to their *Führungsoffizier*. IM 'Rolf' experienced scruples very early on in his contact to the *MfS* after writing a report about someone for the first time. The *Führungsoffizier* asked 'Rolf' if he felt like a 'Spitzel' or 'Denunziant': 'Zögernd bejahte er diese Frage. Dem Kandidaten wurde daraufhin der Unterschied zwischen einem Spitzel und einem inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter der Staatssicherheit erläutert.' (C-1a, p. 278) The *Führungsoffizier* succeeded at this stage in reassuring 'Rolf', but during the following months this *IM*'s doubts continued to resurface. The whole nature of 'Rolf's' meetings with the *MfS* was suspect to him:

Und das muß ich dazu sagen, während das im Rathaus ja noch so einen offiziellen Charakter hatte, mit ja, ja, wir waren ja in der Dienststelle, fiel das dann in so eine Wohnung in [X], das war so eine Konspirative Wohnung, wo nachmittags anonym der Kaffeetisch gedeckt wird, und da sind wir beispielsweise um 16 Uhr bestellt, und da steht Kuchen auf dem Tisch und Kaffee und dann irgendwie, merken Sie, hier stimmt doch 'was nicht, na. Das war immer so dieser Eindruck, man geht so die Hintertreppe hoch, darf vorher nicht gesehen werden, und soll ja unbedingt aufpassen, daß ihn keiner sieht aus der Bekanntschaft. Wenn ich da hingegangen bin, wurde mir gesagt: 'Also, du gehst zur Versammlung', und all das hatte immer mehr so diesen kriminellen Aspekt gehabt. (A-1)

'Rolf' soon ended the *IM-Tätigkeit* on his own initiative. For other potential *IM* the doubts were too strong at the time of planned recruitment to get involved at all. One man simply told the *MfS* officer, 'daß er sich nicht in die Rolle eines 'Spitzels' der Staatssicherheit begeben möchte und vielleicht dabei 'Kumpels' verpfeifen soll' (from a report written by the *OM*, J-80, p. 167). The *OM* concluded: 'Es machen sich weitere Kontaktgespräche notwendig, um den Kandidaten politisch-ideologisch davon zu überzeugen, daß der Begriff 'Spitzel' ein Begriff des Gegners ist, um gegen die Arbeiterklasse und ihre Errungenschaften vorzugehen.' (J-80, p. 167) These further talks were, however, to no avail, and the man never signed a *Verpflichtungserklärung* and became an *IM*.

4.1.6 Summary

Although there was a considerable amount of discrepancy between theory and practice, the work with *IM* followed in general the basic principles of the guidelines set down. *IM* were instrumental in supplying the *MfS* with information which could be potentially used to destroy or neutralise the enemy. Often this information had an apparently banal character to it, and most *IM* thus claim that their *IM-Tätigkeit* never harmed anyone. It may well be true that no direct harm was ever caused by an individual *IM*, but s/he can never be sure that this was the case. Giving seemingly banal information could have serious consequences, either at the time of reporting or at a later date. This was especially true when information was amassed from a variety of sources. Furthermore, there were moments in most *IM*'s careers when s/he was more than aware of the potential harm which could be caused to others as a result of the reports s/he gave. For this reason many *IM* experienced doubts or scruples at some point during the *IM-Tätigkeit*. One of the most significant factors in determining whether an *IM-Kandidat* would begin to co-operate with the

MfS and whether s/he would continue the co-operation in spite of such doubts was the relationship between the *IM* and the *Führungsoffizier*.

4.2 THE *FÜHRUNGSOFFIZIER*:¹ FRIEND AND HELPER?

4.2.1 General: Defining the *IM/Führungsoffizier* Bond

The *MfS* placed great importance on the well-being of its *IM*, and *Operative Mitarbeiter* were advised to keep sight of the fact that 'die *IM* die Hauptlast in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Feind tragen und mit ihm am direktesten konfrontiert sind' (D-4, I, 55). The informer was to be treated at all times with the utmost respect, and the *OM* was instructed to develop 'echte zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen' with his *IM* (D-9, p. 47). The establishment of such a genuine interpersonal relationship was thought to be of considerable importance in the overall effectiveness of the work with the *IM*. When questioned on the factors which they considered to have most positively influenced their co-operation with the *MfS*, 84.1% of *IM* felt that a good relationship to the *Führungsoffizier* was significant (D-6, II, Appendix 32). In comparison, only 6.1% ticked the factor of 'material recognition' as being positively significant (D-6, II, Appendix 32). It cannot be ruled out, however, that the low percentage of *IM* who identified material reward as positively influencing their work may be partly accounted for by the fact that some *IM* were wary of admitting that they valued such rewards, imagining perhaps that this response would be unfavourably regarded.

The 'echte zwischenmenschliche Beziehung' which the *Führungsoffizier* strove to cultivate with his *IM* could be manifested in the various forms and intensities discussed below.

¹ The term *Führungsoffizier* was not widely used within the *MfS*, but is much more commonly applied in the *Stasi* debate than the formally more correct term *Operativer Mitarbeiter*, even, it seems, by former *MfS* officers themselves (J-62, p. 17).

4.2.2 Equal

Some *IM* claim that they regarded their *Führungsoffizier* as a colleague and thus an equal. 'Theodor', for example, had great respect for his first *Führungsoffizier*, but did not even consider this man's successor an equal, describing him as a 'Niete' with low intellectual ability (A-2). The relationship of an *IM* to his/her *Führungsoffizier* was, however, only ever superficially one of equals. When put to the test the power hierarchy was soon evident. It was the *Führungsoffizier* who dictated what form the meetings with the *IM* were to take and which tasks s/he was to carry out. Despite his lack of respect for the man's intellectual capabilities 'Theodor' and the majority of other *IM* generally complied with the wishes of the *Führungsoffizier*. 'Thaer' may well, as he claims, have considered his *Führungsoffizier* an equal in many respects, but since 'Thaer' was a West German citizen who was betraying his country by conspiring with the *MfS*, the power that this man held over him was considerable. 'Thaer' describes the fear he experienced at the thought of the West German authorities finding out about his secret life, and his *Führungsoffizier* was quick to remind him just how serious the matter was. When, in somewhat mysterious circumstances, 'Thaer' lost a briefcase fitted with a hidden compartment which had been given to him by the *MfS*, he remembers the chill he experienced when his *Führungsoffizier* said in response to this news: "Dafür gehörs du an die Wand gestellt." (A-5) Moments such as these were, however, relatively rare, and the pervading ambience of this particular *IM / Führungsoffizier* bond, as of many others, may well have been that of a relationship of equals.

4.2.3 Friend

In some cases the relationship between the *IM* and the *Führungsoffizier* went beyond that of colleagues and was perceived, at least on the part of

the *IM*, as a friendship. 'Stephana' said that she felt she could talk to her *Führungsoffizier* 'wie mit einem guten Kumpel' (A-8). Evidence suggests that 'Stephana's' sentiments were shared by a significant number of *IM*. In one study, ten out of twenty-one *IM* compared their *Führungsoffizier* to a friend or even best friend (D-8, p. 7). Any trust or openness which was established through this friendship remained ultimately one-sided. The *Führungsoffizier* was instructed to give the *IM* the impression that the relationship was a friendship, but since *IM* were, for example, never to know more than was necessary to carry out the desired task, the *Führungsoffizier* was constantly engaged in manipulating his informers. When one newly-recruited *IM* decided to withdraw his *Verpflichtungserklärung*, he insisted upon destroying the document personally. It was noted that the man seemed composed and satisfied as he burned the paper in the oven in the presence of his *Führungsoffizier* (F-11, pp. 210-11). The man was oblivious to the fact that this act was futile since the *Verpflichtungserklärung* had, of course, been copied and filed. The one-sidedness of the friendship of the *IM* with the *Führungsoffizier* is further highlighted by the fact that at the beginning of every *IM* file a list was drawn up of the *Operative Mitarbeiter* who were known to the *IM* and of the names by which s/he knew them. Sometimes these were the real names of the *OM* concerned, sometimes they were merely cover names. In contrast, the *Führungsoffizier* generally had access to detailed information on almost every aspect of the *IM*'s public and private life.

In cases where the *IM* considered his/her *Führungsoffizier* to be some kind of friend or equal it was not, of course, the reality of the situation which was instrumental in achieving the best results from the *IM*, but rather the way in which s/he perceived the bond. Every effort was made to make the *IM* feel comfortable during meetings, and a little something to eat or drink was often offered to him/her. This cosy

atmosphere, and the impression of friendship that it helped to simulate, lulled the *IM* into a false sense of familiar congeniality. The informer was no longer so wary as might otherwise have been the case and may have let information slip which s/he had not planned to. 'Stephana' says that, particularly since her *Führungsoffizier* regularly expressed opinions which were critical of the state and which she considered genuine, she felt that her conversations with him were clearly divided into an official section and a section where she was talking to him privately and as a friend (A-8). With hindsight 'Stephana' now realises that information which she gave in what she considered to be the unofficial part of their meetings was probably used in the reports compiled afterwards. IM 'Katrin' similarly recognises the potential danger in feeling too relaxed with the *Führungsoffizier*. She remembers having a better rapport with the first of two *Führungsoffiziere* who were responsible for her while she was active as an *IM* in Leningrad. She describes her meetings with this first man as 'relativ locker - vielleicht war es deshalb gefährlicher, das kann ich heute nicht sagen' (A-9). The danger for these *IM* lay in the fact that when the atmosphere seemed to be relaxed and friendly they tended to forget that the ultimate purpose of the meetings was for the *Führungsoffizier* to extract information from them, rather than to have a pleasant conversational exchange.

4.2.4 Admirer

IM 'Sonnenblume' describes her *Führungsoffizier* as 'ein teuflischer Magnet' and claims that she felt not just a friendship towards this man, but an intense physical and mental attraction (J-110, p. 260). Since she considered him to be both good-looking and intelligent she felt flattered by his attentions. After a meeting in January 1978 her *Führungsoffizier* certainly did note that 'Sonnenblume' had told him that she had been very

much looking forward to his visit since she had not been able to get out much due to the bad weather conditions (C-8b, p. 16). When pressed in conversation, 'Sonnenblume' admits, however, that she perhaps exaggerates today just how strong her attraction to this man was in order to justify her *IM-Tätigkeit* (A-10, see Section Two: 9.2.4). It is, nevertheless, the case that when she was assigned a new *Führungsoffizier*, whom she did not find so attractive, 'Sonnenblume' did break off the contact to the *MfS*.

The role of the *Führungsoffizier* as an admirer is clearly one which was potentially more intense for female *IM*. *IM* 'Stephana' also felt flattered by the attentions of her *Führungsoffizier* and regarded the gifts which she received in the course of her *IM-Tätigkeit* as personal and as coming directly from her *Führungsoffizier* rather than from the institution for which he worked (A-8).

4.2.5 Therapist

A rather more intensified form of the *Führungsoffizier/IM* relationship was apparent in the case of Monika Haeger. Haeger had been a *Hauptamtlicher IM*, reporting on the activities of the opposition groups with which she was involved, such as *Frauen für den Frieden*. Two of the women whom she reported on, Katja Havemann and Irene Kukutz, interviewed Haeger at length about her *IM-Tätigkeit* and subsequently published extracts of these conversations (J-45). Haeger was an orphan who had spent a lonely and problematic childhood. As an adult she had psychological difficulties and had been seeing a therapist before she began working for the *MfS*. When active as an *IM*, however, Haeger claimed that she no longer needed this therapy, as she felt that she had found a sort of substitute therapist in her *Führungsoffizier* 'Detlef', whom she could call at any time of the day or night (J-45, p. 43).

4.2.6 Concerned Outside Party

Monika Haeger's psychological dependence was intense. The majority of *IM* did not consider their *Führungsoffizier* to be playing the role of an analyst. The *Führungsoffizier* was, nevertheless, someone with whom many *IM* had the opportunity to discuss personal affairs. The *IM Richtlinien* stipulate after all that 'das persönliche Gespräch' is to be an integral part of meetings with *IM* (J-62, p. 223). The *Führungsoffizier* was to be aware that any personal problems which the *IM* had could hinder his/her ability to fulfil the required duties: 'Deshalb muß der operative Mitarbeiter die Sorgen kennen und ein solches Verhältnis zum inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter herstellen, daß er sich auch in persönlichen Fragen vertrauensvoll an den operativen Mitarbeiter wendet.' (J-62, p. 228) The *Führungsoffizier* was then expected to get to know his *IM* intimately. In a study for the *Juristische Hochschule Wardezki* designed a detailed table of information about the physical appearance of *IM*, which he suggested could be completed by all *Führungsoffiziere* (D-7, II, 59-104). Each part of the *IM*'s face was to be described in detail and the section under nose alone asked for information on the top, bone, tip, width and height, as well as any other defining features (D-7, II, 102). There were eleven possibilities to choose from to describe the gait of an *IM*, and numerous habits were listed which the *IM* might engage in, such as the picking of nose and/or ears, and the rubbing of ears and/or hands (D-7, II, 101, 104). The fact that Wardezki could even dream up this unrealistic chart indicates that it was considered self-explanatory that *Führungsoffiziere* be intensely familiar with their individual *IM*.

The information which the *IM* gave during 'das persönliche Gespräch' was noted down in the *Treffbericht*, allowing the *Führungsoffizier* to keep track of the personal circumstances of his *IM*. Since the *IM* was regularly asked about his/her personal situation,

meetings could in some cases function as a mild form of therapy session, where the *IM* was free to discuss personal issues with a neutral but informed outsider. 'Rolf's' *Führungsoffizier* noted that it seemed to have done the *IM* some good to talk to him of the fact that he had separated from his wife (C-1b, *Treffbericht* from 19 November 1987 [n.p.]). It is possible, however, that the *Führungsoffizier* exaggerated the willingness on 'Rolf's' part to discuss such private concerns. 'Rolf' experienced doubts about his *IM-Tätigkeit* from the outset, and when I ask him if he talked of personal matters to his *Führungsoffizier* he says that he felt that this aspect of the meetings tended to be somewhat forced and ultimately superficial (A-1).

4.2.7 Mentor

The *Führungsoffizier* was able to do more than just listen to his *IM*'s problems and could, if he deemed it necessary, actually intervene in his/her private life. 'Rolf' told me that when he mentioned the fact that his mother has been waiting to move out of her dilapidated flat for quite some time, the matter was quickly resolved with the necessary authorities (A-1). Apparently without her direct request, *IM* 'Stephana's' *Führungsoffizier* arranged that her divorce proceedings be speeded up (C-6a, p. 95). Perhaps the relationship of the *Führungsoffizier* to the *IM* can at moments such as these be best described as that of a mentor. Intervention by the *Führungsoffizier* in the private life of an *IM* not only meant that the *IM* would consequently be in a better position to carry out the assigned tasks competently, but also created a debt on the part of the *IM* which increased his/her bond to the *MfS*.

4.2.8 Accomplice

The *Führungsoffizier* was in some cases the only person who knew of the *IM*'s contacts to the *MfS*, and the *IM* could only hope that the former would never choose to betray him/her. This was an issue which caused some *IM* considerable worry. 'Stephana' was concerned that her boyfriend would be furious if he found out that she was collaborating with the *MfS* and asked her *Führungsoffizier* if the *MfS* would support her if her *Stasi* connections were to become known in her circle of acquaintances. She told him that she was worried that the *MfS* would leave her in the lurch if such a situation were to arise (C-6a, p. 104). When 'Rolf' expressed doubts about the consequences of being discovered to be collaborating with the *MfS*, he was assured, ironically given today's situation, that no-one outside the *MfS* would ever find out about his *IM-Tätigkeit* (C-1a, p. 279).

Some *IM* did break the code of silence they had taken and told, for example, their partner of their *MfS* contacts. Yet, even in these cases of so-called *Dekonspiration*, the *Führungsoffizier* remained the only individual who really knew what went on at these secret meetings. Andreas Sinakowski describes the loneliness of being a *Stasi* informer and the feeling that 'der einzige Ausweg aus dieser Isolation ist das Gespräch mit dem Führungsoffizier' (J-88, p. 77). Hendrik Melle likewise makes the point that the only person he could talk to about being an informer was 'meine Stasi', as he rather endearingly refers to his *Führungsoffizier*: 'Denn der einzige, mit dem ich darüber reden konnte, war meine Stasi. Jedes neue Vertrauen hätte auch eine neue Abhängigkeit bedeutet. So nah wie mein Führer ging mir keiner.' (J-56, p. 156) A third example of this intense dependence comes from Herbert K., a former *Hauptamtlicher IM* who was interviewed for the book *Stasiprotokolle*:

Ich habe dreißig Jahre für die Staatssicherheit gearbeitet, fünfzehn Jahre als Ermittler. Das war manchmal eine ziemlich langweilige

Arbeit. Du hattest mit niemandem Kontakt, du konntest dich mit keinem Kollegen austauschen, nur mal mit deinem Führungsoffizier, dein Arbeitsplatz war zu Hause, wo du deine Berichte zu schreiben hattest, du warst von Betriebsveranstaltungen ausgeschlossen, du mußt dich ja konspirativ verhalten gegenüber anderen Mitarbeitern. (J-39, p. 58)

The *Führungsoffizier* was for many *IM* their only true accomplice. The relief at meetings of suddenly no longer having to lead a double life must have been significant. This aspect of the *IM/Führungsoffizier* relationship could only work in the *MfS*'s favour, when, as a consequence of the welcomed sense of complicity, *IM* were less wary about what they said to the *Führungsoffizier* than they perhaps intended to be.

4.2.9 Summary

The bond between *Führungsoffiziere* and *IM* was fundamental to the effectiveness of their work together. This bond could take on varying degrees of intensity, but the *IM* was always necessarily to some extent dependent on the *Führungsoffizier*. Lienhard Wawrzyn notes that since the *Wende* he has talked to many *IM* who wished to meet their *Führungsoffizier* again (J-101, p. 26). Several of the *IM* with whom I spoke also expressed an interest in seeing their *Führungsoffizier*. 'Rolf' said that he would like to ask his *Führungsoffizier* if he had been aware that 'Rolf' and the man on whom he was reporting were conspiring against the *MfS* (A-1). 'Thaer' claims that he would like to meet up with his *Führungsoffizier*, whom he had considered in some ways to be a friend, in order simply to talk to him (A-5). 'Stephana' likewise feels a certain personal loss at being no longer able to meet with her *Führungsoffizier*, whom after all she compared to a good 'Kumpel' (A-8).

It would be interesting to know whether these *Führungsoffiziere* would be equally keen to meet their former *IM*, whether they too feel a

sense of loss that they can no longer do so, and to discover how they previously regarded the relationship to their *IM*, but this issue remains outside the focus of this study.

Section One: Chapter Five

**'WENN ICH GEWUßT HÄTTE': (A-10)
MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR CONTINUING AN *IM-
TÄTIGKEIT***

5.1 GENERAL

In the vast majority of cases where contact to an informer was broken off, the decision to end the *IM-Tätigkeit* was taken by the *MfS* and not the *IM*. Such a decision was usually reached when the *MfS* considered that the *IM* was no longer suitable for the task at hand or that the task itself had become superfluous. In 71% of 2,431 cases where an *IM* file was shelved in the area of Rostock between January 1987 and October 1989, the main reasons given were: the contact seemed no longer fruitful, 'Perspektivlosigkeit'; the *IM* was not suited to the task at hand, 'Nichteignung'; s/he was too old or ill; the *IM* had been promoted to a *Hauptamtlicher IM* (J-63, pp. 123-24). A further 8% of these *IM-Tätigkeiten* came to an end because the *IM* was judged to be dishonest, and 3% were released from their duties when they were found to have broken their code of silence about the collaboration, that is in cases of *Dekonspiration* (J-63, p. 123). In only 16% of cases did the *IM* end the contact on his/her own initiative (J-63, p. 123). Similar figures are given for the area of Frankfurt/Oder for the period of 1981 to 1985 (J-63, p. 124).

Some of the possible reasons as to why it was that so few *IM* ended their *IM-Tätigkeit*, given, for example, that many suffered, at least periodically, from scruples about their *Stasi* connections, will be discussed below.

5.2 THE ROLE OF MATERIAL REWARD

In 1953 Ernst Wollweber, Erich Mielke's predecessor, explicitly instructed his employees that good work on the part of the *IM* was to be rewarded (F-5, I, 61). Although most *IM* did not receive a regular wage for their services, many were rewarded in the form of financial bonuses or gifts. These were generally awarded to the *IM* on occasions such as the anniversary of the founding of the GDR, on the *IM*'s birthday, or after s/he

had been seen to successfully carry out a challenging assignment. The gifts were, somewhat ironically, often in the form of goods which were not easily attainable in the GDR, such as flowers or particular books, and were usually only too willingly accepted. Indeed, when I visited them, several of the *IM* with whom I spoke showed me items which they had been given by their *Führungsoffizier*. *IM* often felt flattered to receive such gifts, especially when they were carefully chosen to reflect their personal taste and interests. Both 'Stephana' and 'Sonnenblume' told of how they liked to think of these gifts as coming from their *Führungsoffiziere* rather than from the *MfS* (A-8, A-10). If the *IM* was able to convince him/herself that this was the case, s/he not only experienced a sense of flattery, but was also able to partly diminish any feelings of guilt which might result from accepting material rewards.

Material rewards were influential in intensifying the bond of an *IM* to the *MfS*, not so much because of their objective value, but rather as a result of the fact that by accepting them the *IM* entangled and compromised him/herself further. It is perhaps for this reason that *IM* 'Fuchs' claims to have been reluctant to accept the financial bonuses which he received during his eleven years of service as an *IM*. 'Fuchs' told me that he informed his *Führungsoffizier* that he did wish to be financially rewarded: 'Ich hatte immer gesagt am Anfang: "Was soll das? Das halte ich für völlig normal, Ihr braucht ja kein Geld geben. Das macht vielleicht 3% oder 5% meiner Arbeit aus.'" (A-6) 'Fuchs' claims that his *Führungsoffizier* insisted, however, that he take the money, telling him that he should buy something for his children if he did not wish to spend it on himself. At such times as 'Fuchs' was not receiving money for his co-operation it was perhaps easier for him to use the coping strategy that his collaboration with the *Stasi* was simply part of his normal working life (see Section Two: 9.2.5). Today he possibly exaggerates his reluctance to

accept the money in order to justify his *IM-Tätigkeit* as having been motivated by a sense of duty and not by self-interest:

Denn darauf wollte ich immer hin; daß das eigentlich für uns ein völlig normales Verhältnis war, und das eigentlich so dazugehörte, daß ich das natürlich in einer solchen Dienststelle anders gar nicht vorstellen konnte. (A-6)

When an *IM* such as 'Fuchs' did receive money or other material goods it may thus have often served only to increase any moral scruples s/he experienced as a result of the collaboration, and to undermine the *Sinn-Angebot* which had been made to the *IM* at the time of recruitment.

As discussed earlier, *MfS* guidelines discouraged *Operative Mitarbeiter* from establishing a relationship with their *IM* which was motivated by the receipt of material reward and encouraged them to work on the education of the *IM* in order to convince him/her of the political and moral necessity of the task (see Section One: 3.3.1). *OM* did not always heed these guidelines. When 'Reiner's' *Führungsoffizier* applied for a 5,000 mark bonus for his *IM*, his application was initially rejected on the grounds that such a reward was not in line with the principles of *Richtlinien 1/79* (C-4a, I, 332). The claim does, however, appear to have been finally accepted, as soon after this application 'Reiner' signed a receipt for exactly this amount (C-4a, I, 333). This was a princely sum which 'Reiner' was perhaps more than happy to receive, but Seidler and Schmidt suggest that *Führungsoffiziere* were not always successful in giving their *IM* the type of reward they most wished. When *IM* were asked to specify which form of recognition they considered most effective in their work with the *MfS*, 38.1% ticked the category 'Lob', 23.1% considered a 'staatliche Auszeichnung' most valuable, and only 21.5% named a financial reward as most significant (D-6, I, 134). When *Führungsoffiziere* were asked in the same study about the type of recognition they actually

gave their *IM*, this question produced quite different results: 21.9% reported using primarily 'Lob', only 1.5% reported using the reward of a 'staatliche Auszeichnung', whereas a financial reward, a 'Geldprämie', was, at 58%, by far the most favoured form of recognition (D-6, I, 134). It is likely that some *IM* felt that to state that they considered financial recognition as the most effective reward for their work would constitute an undesired response. Perhaps these *IM* were consequently not entirely honest about the extent to which they valued such recognition. Yet, conversely, the *Führungsoffiziere* who were not supposed to use material rewards as the primary form of recognition for their *IM* had nothing to gain by claiming to do so more often than was actually the case. Interestingly, and perhaps significantly, the authors of this particular study see its validity confirmed by the fact that 15.4% of the *IM* questioned admitted having told their spouses about the contact to the *MfS*, although they had pledged not to do so (D-6, I, 12).

In summary, most *IM* did not receive sufficient material recognition for this to be a significant motive for continued co-operation with the *MfS*. The material recognition which many *IM* did receive on a fairly regular basis throughout their *IM-Tätigkeit* did, nevertheless, have a strong bonding effect between the *IM* and the *MfS*. Once the *IM* had accepted such gifts or rewards this individual had compromised him/herself further and thus intensified his/her involvement with the *MfS*. Although they enjoyed the flattery or the advantages of such recognition, this was not necessarily a feeling with which *IM* felt entirely comfortable. *IM* 'Sonnenblume', for example, describes how disgusted she was at herself after she accepted some West German marks from her *Führungsoffizier* which she herself had in fact requested in order to buy spare parts for her wheelchair. 'Sonnenblume' considered such action as symptomatic of her 'moralischer Verfall' (J-110, p. 261).

5.3 FEAR AND OBEDIENCE

Possibly more significant than the material advantages deriving from an *IM-Tätigkeit* were the potential social benefits of having found favour with those in power. The negative aspect of such a liaison for the *IM* was the fear of the possible repercussions of deciding not to continue co-operating with the *MfS*. 'Katrin' told of how she had decided at one point while she was still studying in Leningrad to end her co-operation as an *IM*. Her *Führungsoffizier* was able to persuade her to continue working for the *MfS*. When I asked her how it was that he managed to do this, she replied:

Also, wenn Sie mich heute fragen, ich weiß es nicht mehr. Ich weiß, daß es auch von mir so ein Gefühl gab, daß es nicht unbedingt gut wäre, wenn ich da jetzt in Unfrieden gehe, so eine Intuition. [...] Vielleicht war es sogar von mir karrieresüchtig, ist Unsinn. [...] Ich habe mir schon eingebildet, daß ich irgendwie so leise da 'rauskomme, ohne daß man mich dann permanent beknielt. Ich wollte nicht einen Bruch. (A-9)

'Katrin' was thus concerned about the consequences which leaving the *MfS* on bad terms might have for her future career. For those who were employed as *Hauptamtliche IM*, leaving the *MfS* was potentially even more dangerous. The contract which such individuals were obliged to sign before their employment began stated that any subsequent problems relating to the agreement could only be solved within the *MfS*: 'Der Rechtsweg ist ausgeschlossen.' (J-62, p. 424) The relationship between the *Hauptamtlicher IM* and the *MfS* was thus explicitly not an 'Arbeitsrechtsverhältnis im Sinne des Arbeitsgesetzbuches' (J-62, p. 430).

Any *IM* who did make the break away from the *MfS* did not, in the vast majority of cases, suffer any serious negative repercussions for doing so. Yet in some sense this is irrelevant, as the more important question is not whether those who took this step actually suffered, but rather whether they believed that they would. Christopher Browning concludes that the

men of the Reserve Police Battalion 101, which was responsible for large-scale round-ups and executions of Jews during the Second World War, cannot be said to have been under 'putative duress', since those who did not feel capable of participating in the mass shootings were granted permission to excuse themselves (J-18, pp. 170-71). Daniel Goldhagen's recent work confirms this finding. Goldhagen discusses the case of Lieutenant Buchmann, who seems to have been the only man to make use of Major Trapp's offer to all the officers that it was not mandatory for them or their men to take part in the shootings. Buchmann found little sympathy for his stance among the other officers, but his decision to make use of this freedom was tolerated, and Goldhagen concludes: 'Lieutenant Buchmann did not kill because pressure was not applied; the others killed anyway, because pressure was unnecessary.' (J-30, p. 250) Although it would be grossly inappropriate to equate the deeds of the men of the notorious Police Battalion 101 directly with those of the average *IM*, a comparison is possible. Both the *IM* and the men in the Battalion were engaged in actions which undoubtedly violated certain basic moral codes, but which were officially, if not always explicitly, sanctioned by the state. For a substantial number of *IM*, I would argue, a situation of putative duress, albeit in a mild form, did exist. This was particularly the case for those who had been recruited under duress in the first instance, such as 'Stephana' and 'Sonnenblume'. These individuals had, after all, been threatened with legal action if they did not agree to co-operate with the *MfS*. Many *IM* also signed a *Verpflichtungserklärung* in which they acknowledged that there would be legal repercussions for breaking the agreement. Most *IM*, however, actually put themselves under putative duress, by imagining that the consequences of disentangling themselves from the clutches of the *MfS* would be potentially grave, even when direct threats were not actually made. By convincing him/herself that s/he had to

work for the *MfS* the *IM* reduced personal responsibility for collaboration. The state of putative duress was then one which allowed many an *IM* to alleviate, at least partially, irksome doubts. *IM* found various such ways to minimise any doubts which surfaced. 'Theodor', who describes himself as 'überdurchschnittlich autoritätsgläubig', said that since his colleagues at the military college had pledged to have no contact to the West, his work in helping to detect whether they were breaking this oath was in some ways justified: 'Die Leute hatten ja, die hatten unterschrieben, daß sie es nicht ... nicht machen. Ich fühlte mich insofern völlig im Recht.' (A-2)

In his work on obedience to authority Stanley Milgram found deference to be a 'deeply ingrained behaviour tendency' (cited by Browning, J-18, p. 171). Milgram's subjects were led to believe that they were involved in a learning experiment, in which they were to inflict increasingly powerful electric shocks on the 'learners' whenever their responses were incorrect. The 'learners' were in reality not being subjected to shocks at all, but were actors who were stimulating the crying noises which were relayed to the unsuspecting subject. When encouraged to do so by the experimenter, two-thirds of these subjects continued to inflict shocks which they believed were causing extreme pain. Milgram concluded that, once they have begun the experiment, subjects become increasingly entangled and disobedience becomes increasingly difficult and unlikely: 'The "situational obligation" or etiquette makes refusal appear improper, rude, or even an immoral breach of obligation.' (J-18, p. 173) Milgram applied his findings in an attempt to interpret the behaviour of many ordinary citizens in Nazi Germany, concluding that 'men are led to kill with little difficulty' (J-18, p. 173). His results can also facilitate an understanding of why, in a considerably less extreme situation, so many *IM* continued to collaborate with the *MfS*. Several

variations of the experiment are interesting in this context. The more physically distant the subject was from the 'learner', the higher the rate of compliance. Furthermore, if the subject had to actually force the person's hand onto the shock-plate, compliance to extreme levels dropped to thirty percent. Since the *IM* network functioned as a mosaic, *IM* were very rarely witness to any direct harmful consequences of their actions. Had they been able to see how their apparently trivial information could cause harm to others, one could suppose that compliance would have dropped significantly. A further variation of the experiment found that if the instruction to give the shocks were delivered by a figure who did not appear to hold a position of authority, compliance rates dropped to zero. *MfS* officers were powerful representatives of the state, and the *IM*'s awareness of this might well have been a significant factor in influencing his/her behaviour, regardless of his/her own political convictions.

IM were then often influenced in their decision to carry on working for the *MfS* by their own sometimes unquestioning deference to authority. Not all *IM* were quite as 'autoritätsgläubig' as IM 'Theodor', but many, as a consequence of a series of 'binding factors' and 'cementing mechanisms', found it increasingly difficult to disentangle themselves from a situation, which, once in motion, took on its own momentum (Milgram's terms, J-18, p. 173).

5.4 THE SINN-ANGEBOT

The *Sinn-Angebot* was generally more relevant at the point of recruitment than as a motivating factor for continued collaboration, but the *MfS* was keen to preserve the belief in the moral and political necessity of the co-operation throughout the *IM-Tätigkeit*. The political education of the *IM* was therefore to be an important component of meetings. IM 'Reiner', for example, was given the task of studying the history of the *SED* in

preparation for a meeting with his *Führungsoffizier* (C-4a, I, 284). 'Reiner' was a *Hauptamtlicher IM*, and perhaps the *Führungsoffizier* was particularly concerned to ensure that political education was a continuous feature of the work with this *IM*. In other cases the evidence from the files indicates that most of the political work with the *IM* was carried out in the period immediately before and after recruitment. After this time there is little mention of political discussions with *IM*, and both 'Rolf' and 'Falke' recounted experiencing the section of the meetings which was occasionally devoted to a discussion of political issues as sterile and patronising (A-1, A-3). The continued belief in a *Sinn-Angebot* was generally really only adhered to in the formalised rhetoric of the *MfS*. When 'Fuchs', for example, received a bonus of 150 marks, the certificate he received to mark the occasion was worded as follows: 'Für die weitere gemeinsame Realisierung des Klassenauftrages wünschen wir Ihnen alles Gute.' (C-5a, p. 107)

IM themselves were often keen to keep believing that the contacts had a justifiable purpose (see Section Two: 9.2.3). The *IM* who was unable to summon the resolve to break off the contact to the *MfS* strove to convince him/herself of the legitimacy of the *IM-Tätigkeit*, even if this required an increasing amount of self-deception. The *MfS* was, of course, just as concerned that the *IM* remain active, and in this sense both parties had a common goal and worked hard at deceiving themselves and each other in its pursuit.

5.5 THE SPLIT PERSONALITY

Hans-Joachim Maaz argues that most GDR citizens were only able to conform publicly in situations which were totally at odds with their private convictions as a result of a split in personality (J-54, p. 76). Maaz is not alone in explaining conformity in the GDR in terms of a form of

schizophrenia. Speaking to the *Enquete-Kommission*, Walter Schilling said that *IM* 'haben alle mit zwei Gesichtern leben müssen. Das hat bei ihnen auf die Dauer der Zeit zu einer erschreckenden und nicht zu begreifenden Schizophrenie geführt.' (F-13, p. 97)

For *IM*, the discrepancy between actual behaviour and private perception of self could certainly at times be particularly extreme, as highlighted by the paradox inherent in the fact that many *IM* were active in the opposition scene at the same time as they worked with an organisation who aimed to undermine such activities. Rainer Eppelmann finds this phenomenon baffling as he comes to terms with the fact that Wolfgang Schnur seemed to be able to develop genuine friendships with those on whom he was simultaneously reporting: 'Es klingt zwar völlig absurd, aber ich glaube noch heute, daß Wolfgang Schnur sich als unser Freund verstanden hatte.' (J-23, p. 294) There is no doubt, as this example demonstrates, that many *IM* were able to carry on a double life, reporting on those whose friendship they deeply valued. Yet evidence suggests that it was not so much that the *IM* had two personalities, one of an average GDR citizen and one of an evil *Stasi* informer, but rather the case that the *IM*'s behaviour represented a more intense form of the pattern of opportunistic conformity witnessed in the behaviour of the majority (see Section Two: 8.3). Furthermore, state ideology in the GDR emphasised the collective rather than the individual. Self-reflection and analysis were not cultivated and propagated to the same extent as was the case in Western Europe and North America. One possible consequence of this tendency was that individuals did not reflect to the same extent on their own behaviour, not seeking, for example, psychological counselling to help them analyse past and present perceptions of self and others. At the same time as this tendency was encouraged by the fact that the system focused on the collective, it was simultaneously reinforced and confirmed by the

individual, since it offered a feasible way of coping with life under a dictatorship. It was then rather more the case that a behaviour pattern of opportunistic conformity, combined with a lack of self-reflection and analysis, allowed the individual to engage in apparently contradictory behaviour, rather than that several selves were at play within the one individual:

Die dominierende Ideologie und Alltagspolitik in der DDR setzte - bezogen auf die Menschen - allein an ihrer Charakteristik als Vertreter sozialer Gruppierungen an. Vernachlässigt wurde dabei die jeweilige Vermittlung in den individuellen und konkreten Erfahrungsbereich hinein. [...] Die unmittelbaren Ich-nahen Lebens- und Arbeitsbedingungen konkreter Personen in ihrer Ganzheit, die letztlich Einstellungen und Verhalten bedingen, interessierten nicht. Die Abstraktion davon bedeutete, daß Mensch/Persönlichkeit als philosophisch-ökonomische Kategorie aufgefaßt und behandelt wurde. Sie erschienen als Typen von Produktivkräften, als Vertreter grober soziologischer Klassifikate und auch als Träger von Bewußtsein. Dieser Ansatz vernachlässigt die Subjekthaftigkeit des Individuums, macht es zum passiven Zielobjekt von Maßnahmen, schließt seine eigenaktiven Positionierungen vom Monotonie-Erleben bis hin zu verhaltenswirksamen subjektiven Modellierungen der Welt und seiner Stellung darin aus. (J-84, p. 348)

The *IM* was not completely oblivious to the fact that s/he led a sort of double life, but in many ways such a behaviour pattern was more than familiar, since it was the dominant tendency in the society in which s/he lived. For Andreas Sinakowski, for example, the process of 'forgetting' that he was attending certain events as part of his duties as an *IM* was conscious and deliberate, and usually did not require all too much effort. Describing a social gathering at the house of someone he was supposed to observe, Sinakowski writes: 'Ich konnte mir nicht vorstellen, von der Stasi zu sein. Noch zwei Gläser, und ich hatte es vergessen.' (J-88, p. 75)

5.6 THE SECURITY OF ROUTINE

Christopher Browning concluded that the *Ordinary Men* of Reserve Police Battalion 101 were able to carry out the atrocities they did in Poland in the Second World War because for these men, 'normality itself had become exceedingly abnormal' (J-18, Preface, xix). This factor does, indeed, help explain why it was that most *IM* continued to collaborate with the *MfS* even after they were neither under direct pressure to do so, nor sufficiently convinced of the moral or political purpose of doing so. Since the meetings with the *Führungsoffizier* generally took place at regular intervals, it was relatively easy for the *IM* to integrate the contact into his/her daily routine. Most *Führungsoffiziere* also did not adhere to *MfS* guidelines which explicitly discouraged *OM* from establishing a set pattern in the contact with their *IM* (see Section One: 4.1.1, 4.1.2). This fact was possibly significant in ensuring that many an *IM* allowed the *IM-Tätigkeit* to continue without ever giving it much thought or attention. If the tasks assigned to the *IM* tended, as indeed was most often the case, to be similar in nature, s/he was not regularly confronted with new demands. Once the *IM* had come to terms with his/her actions and decided that s/he could cope with and to a certain extent justify this behaviour, the contact could continue almost indefinitely, since it had become part of a set and predictable routine. Doubts did arise on the part of the individual *IM* from time to time but could generally be relatively easily put to rest by the *Führungsoffizier* concerned.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

Those belonging to the minority of *IM* who did sooner or later end the *IM-Tätigkeit* on their own initiative were generally surprised at how easy this move was. 'Sonnenblume' claims that if she had only known how easy it was to break off the contact to the *MfS* she would have done so much

sooner: 'Wenn ich gewußt hätte, wie leicht das war [...] aber man war so in Angst, man hat die Drohungen zu ernst genommen.' (A-10) As a rule the *MfS* was not interested in continuing contacts with those who proved themselves unwilling or unreliable. The following categories were named on the standard *Abschlußbericht* in an *IM* file as the possible reasons for the discontinuation of an *IM-Tätigkeit*:

Dekonspiration
 Ablehnung der Zusammenarbeit
 Festnahme im Operationsgebiet
 Unehrlichkeit/Unzuverlässigkeit
 Krankheit/Alter/Tod
 Nichteignung/Perspektivlosigkeit
 Ungesetzliches Verlassen der DDR
 Arbeitsplatz- bzw. Wohnungswechsel
 Einstellung als Mitarbeiter des MfS
 Registrierung zum GMS
 Feindliche/kriminelle Handlungen, operative Bearbeitung,
 Einleitung EV [Ermittlungsverfahren]
 Personelle Gründe, offizielle Verbindung, sonstige Ablagegründe.
 (C-1a, p. 314)

The above table shows that the *MfS* certainly reckoned with *IM* taking the initiative to end the contact for a number of reasons. In reality, as discussed, it was the *Führungsoffizier* who most often made the decision to bring the *IM-Tätigkeit* to an end. Very few *IM* ever realised that they need only 'categorically refuse' to continue the contact to the *MfS* in order to break free of the *IM-Tätigkeit* (J-62, pp. 280-81). Most considered themselves bound to the *MfS* until they were released of their duties, fearing at the same time the imagined repercussions of falling into disfavour with the *MfS* and consequently having the *Tätigkeit* discontinued. The *MfS* was able to keep its informers without much effort, since the *IM* effectively made him/herself captive, leading one former *Stasi* officer to make the following comment: 'Die brauchen sich doch nur einmal kräftig zu schütteln, und sie wären uns los. Aber dazu sind sie zu feige.'

Wir kontrollieren, und sie *lassen* sich kontrollieren. Zum Bespitzeln gehören immer zwei.' (cited by Becker, J-33, p. 77)

SECTION TWO

DEALINGS WITH A UNIQUE LEGACY: CONFRONTING THE *IM* PHENOMENON IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPHERE

Section Two: Chapter Six

**POLITICIANS AS *IM*:
ASPECTS OF A TURBULENT DEBATE**

6.1 'EIN MANN DER KIRCHE'?: (I-21) MANFRED STOLPE AND THE *MfS*

6.1.1 The Debate Begins

Wir konnten und können nicht so weitermachen wie bisher. Nicht alle Blümenträume, die manche mit dem Staatsvertrag verbunden haben, konnten in Erfüllung gehen. Aber niemandem wird es schlechtergehen [sic] als bisher. Im Gegenteil. Welches Land bekommt eine solch gute Startposition wie wir mit diesem Vertrag? (J-38, p. 196)

The irony of these words, spoken on the occasion of the unification of the two Germanys on 3 October 1990, by the man who had been the last *Ministerpräsident* of the GDR, could no longer be concealed a mere two months later. Fresh evidence from the *MfS* files meant that Lothar de Maizière was no longer able to deny that he had collaborated with the *MfS* as IM 'Czerny', and he was forced to resign his political mandate (see, for example, I-35). The absurdity of the fact that the unification treaty had been countersigned by a man who had worked with the East German State Security Service as an *Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter* was to be a feature of the political and cultural climate of the following years, during which a steady stream of prominent personalities from the former GDR was unmasked as having collaborated in this way. No political party remained untouched by these events. Dirk Schneider from the Green Party was found to have held contacts to the *MfS* as an *IM*, so too Ibrahim Böhme, who had helped to found the *SDP* (later the *Ost-SPD*), and Kerstin Kaiser from the *PDS*, to name just a few. Most of the politicians who were discovered to have collaborated as *IM* were forced to resign once the fact or extent of their *IM-Tätigkeit* came to light. Some were able to remain in office, notably Rolf Kutzmutz of the *PDS*, who succeeded in being voted in as mayor of Potsdam using the provocative election slogan, 'Meine

Biographie beginnt nicht erst 1989', a tactic which, it was suggested, had lost him 10% of the votes, but gained him 20% (I-48).

The case which resulted in the most extensive discussion of a politician's *MfS* connections was that of Dr. Manfred Stolpe. The debate concerning Stolpe's connections to the *MfS* was sparked off by none other than Stolpe himself with the publication of his book *Schwieriger Aufbruch* (J-91). Stolpe claimed that his intention in writing this book was to document 'welche Einsichten ich im Laufe der Jahrzehnte über das Machtsystem der DDR gewonnen habe' (J-91, pp. 111-12). In *Schwieriger Aufbruch* Stolpe admitted to having been able to gain his knowledge of the power structures of the GDR by virtue of the fact that he had attempted since the 1970s to achieve his political aims 'auf dem Umweg über die Staatssicherheit' (J-91, p. 121). Following this admission, which coincided with the *StUG* coming into force, the *Stolpe-Untersuchungsausschuß* was set up and began its work on 27 February 1992. The official task of the committee was stated as follows: 'Aufklärung der früheren Kontakte des Ministerpräsidenten Dr. Manfred Stolpe zu Organen des Staatsapparates der DDR, der SED sowie zum Staatssicherheitsdienst und der in diesem Zusammenhang erhobenen Vorwürfe.' (F-2, I, 2) Over the next two years the committee heard the testimonies of numerous prominent politicians and theologians from both the former GDR and FRG, as well as those of former *MfS* officers. The Stolpe debate was given extensive coverage in the media, and it was proposed that its outcome would go a long way to deciding 'über die Orientierung nach dem Untergang der DDR' (J-70, p. 51). Several key reasons as to why this debate took on such significance will be discussed below.

6.1.2 Immediate Political Ramifications

A great number of East Germans identified with Manfred Stolpe and did not want to see him forced to resign from his position as *Ministerpräsident* of Brandenburg. Stolpe's party, the *SPD*, also had a clear interest in ensuring that the popular Stolpe remain in power, whilst at the same time trying to preserve their political credibility by not confronting the problematic legacy of the GDR in too lenient a fashion. This was a problem for the likes of *SPD* politician Wolfgang Thierse, who had to be seen to support his party's stance on the Stolpe debate, but whose contemporaries among the ranks of the *Bürgerrechtler* criticised him severely for not speaking out against Stolpe.¹

Günter Nooke from *Bündnis 90* was certainly not prepared to let the immediate political agenda stand in the way of his belief that Stolpe should not remain in office. Nooke threatened to leave the *Untersuchungsausschuß* in summer 1992 in protest at the fact that an interim report had been passed without discussion. He returned after the summer break when the report was withdrawn but remained dissatisfied with the working methods of the committee. In March 1993 Nooke directly accused Stolpe of having lied in the hearings. The *SPD* demanded that he withdraw this accusation, and his refusal to do so led to the end of the so-called 'Ampel-Koalition' in Brandenburg.² Nooke was largely unsuccessful in his attempt to find support for his breakaway party, *Bündnis*, and in the end it seemed at this point as though Nooke and not Stolpe had been forced to sacrifice his political career as a result of the latter's *Stasi* connections.

¹ See the correspondence between Thierse and Jürgen Fuchs when Thierse refused to sign a letter in support of Günter Nooke, claiming that to do so would be to go against the principles of 'innocent until proven guilty' (I-67, I-68).

² See 'Abweichende Meinung des Abgeordneten Günter Nooke (BÜNDNIS)', (F-2, I, C. 2).

The most striking political irony was perhaps the fact that Lothar Bisky was the chairman of the *Untersuchungsausschuß*. As *PDS* leader, Bisky was head of a party whose very existence was a continued source of debate in unified Germany. In the end Bisky resigned from his position as chairman shortly before the final report was passed by a majority of *SPD*, *FDP* and *PDS*.

The Stolpe debate was thus one with obvious ramifications in the volatile political climate of post-unification Germany. The fact that Stolpe was not forced to resign and remains to this day in office as the *Ministerpräsident* of Brandenburg is clearly a significant victory for the *SPD*, who fared so badly in the first elections after the fall of the Wall. The *PDS* have also benefited from the outcome of the Stolpe debate. If Stolpe can remain in power after admitting to having had dealings with the *MfS*, then it is possible that other cases of *Stasi* collaboration, of which there are many within the ranks of the *PDS*, will be viewed more leniently than would have been the case if he had been forced into resignation.

6.1.3 The Role of the Church in the *SED* State

Ich kann mir schlecht denken, was wir als Kirche ohne Manfred Stolpe in der DDR-Zeit gewesen wären. (Friedrich Schorlemmer, J-82, p. 276)

Manfred Stolpe was undoubtedly one of the most influential representatives of the church in the GDR. He established strong links to leading politicians and theologians in both the East and West, and many were content to benefit from these connections without questioning to what extent Stolpe might be collaborating with those in power in order to preserve and facilitate them. A declaration by leading church members on this issue read as follows:

Wir haben Manfred Stolpe insbesondere in der Zeit, in der er die Leitung des Sekretariats des Kirchenbundes innehatte, die Verhandlung aller sensiblen und schwierigen Fragen im Verhältnis zwischen Staat und Kirche anvertraut, ohne ihm vorzuschreiben, welche einzelnen Schritte zu unternehmen sind. (F-2, I, 62)

Even Rainer Eppelmann, who was vehemently against Stolpe remaining in office, had been previously content to allow Stolpe to use the connections he had established to obtain, for example, a typewriter for Eppelmann 'auf irgendwelchen geheimen Wegen aus dem Westen' (J-23, p. 125). When it had been made explicit that such an undertaking did, of course, involve considerable dealings with representatives of the *MfS*, Eppelmann began to question seriously Stolpe's credibility as a politician and as a representative of the church.

In the GDR the church had often attracted those who were reluctant to conform to state policies and, particularly in the late 1980s, had served as a meeting place for diverse groups and individuals who were becoming increasingly disillusioned with the state. In this sense the church had fostered the opposition movement in the GDR, not so much because representatives of the church had been at the forefront of anti-state activities, but rather because it had provided a forum for individuals to gather and establish connections which they used to develop their own opposition activities. Theology was, furthermore, one of the few subjects open to those who, often for political reasons, had been refused entry to other courses of study in the GDR. Under the roof of the church many individuals were thus to be found who were interested in bringing about change in the system. The church itself, however, acted more as a regulating force, as an integral and established part of the system, and in this sense did nothing to challenge the existing order. Speaking to the *Enquete-Kommission*, former *Bürgerrechtlerinnen* Ulrike Poppe and Katrin Eigenfeld stressed that the church had not been interested in

promoting opposition activities in the GDR, but had rather suppressed true opposition. By always encouraging those involved in opposition groups to act within the law, the church, they argued, had in fact functioned as a censor (F-14, pp. 119-22). Leading church representatives such as Stolpe worked with rather than against the system, and although the church was granted a degree of intellectual freedom, it often effectively provided nothing more than yet another protected haven in this *Nischengesellschaft*.

The fact that the church as an institution was well integrated into the existing power structures became even more evident when it came to light that many of its prominent members had collaborated with the *MfS*. During the course of the investigations by the *Untersuchungsausschuß* representatives from the church were also meeting to come to their own conclusions about how Stolpe's *Stasi* connections should be evaluated. With so many leading figures either having collaborated with state organs themselves or having relied on others to do so on their behalf, the result of the debate within the church was really a foregone conclusion. In October 1992 a declaration was drawn up by the *Evangelische Kirche* of Berlin-Brandenburg, stating that 'möglicherweise hat Manfred Stolpe im Einzelfall seinen Auftrag überschritten', but that ultimately he had been 'ein Mann der Kirche, nicht des MfS' (I-21). In 1995 the *Evangelische Kirche* for Germany came to a similar conclusion after examining the Stolpe case:

Die Kontakte standen angesichts ihrer Art und ihres Umgangs mit den Amtspflichten Dr. Stolpes nicht im Einklang. Eine Würdigung seines gesamten Wirkens führt aber zu der Empfehlung, disziplinarische Maßnahmen gegen ihn nicht in Erwägung zu ziehen. Er hat seine Gespräche als Vertreter der Kirche geführt, er hat nicht die Seiten gewechselt. Er hat im Rahmen seiner dienstlichen Aufgaben und darüber hinaus an verschiedenen Stellen mit außergewöhnlichem Einsatz und sichtbarem Erfolg vielfältige kirchliche und humanitäre Belange wahrgenommen. (I-24)

6.1.4 The West's Complicity

Dieser ambivalente, am Fall Stolpe deutlich gewordene Charakter der post-stalinistischen Verstrickungen, von denen wir im Westen nur schwache Vorstellungen haben, macht im übrigen die moralische Beurteilung der komplexen Einzelfälle um so schwieriger. (Jürgen Habermas, I-80, p. 83)

In the course of investigations several leading political figures from the FRG came before the *Untersuchungsausschuß* and spoke out in Stolpe's defence. Former *Bundeskanzler* Helmut Schmidt, for example, said of his conversations with Manfred Stolpe: 'Das, was ich nicht weitergegeben haben wollte, das habe ich auch nicht gesagt.' (F-2, I, 187) Schmidt went on to say that, since he had explicitly asked Stolpe to convey certain information to his political contemporaries in the GDR, it would be absurd to reproach him for having done so (F-2, I, 187). The former Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, also defended Stolpe: 'Ich habe nicht nur im Kauf genommen, daß über dieses Gespräch von den Gesprächsteilnehmern an die Behörden der DDR berichtet wird, sondern für mich war es wünschenswert, daß es so geschah.' (F-2, I, 189) Statements such as these from prominent figures brought to light the issue of the West's own complicity with the system in force in the GDR. Leading politicians from the West had welcomed the contact which they were able to establish to Manfred Stolpe and had gladly used him as a go-between. Stolpe was, of course, only able to fulfil this role precisely because he was prepared to have dealings with those in power in the *SED* state, something his more idealistic contemporaries were less willing to do. After the signing of the *Grundvertrag* in 1972 and the gradual relaxing of the Cold War mentality between the two Germanys, a figure like Stolpe had provided a valuable means of realising dialogue between political adversaries. If Stolpe was to be condemned for the role he had played,

then so too must those in the West who had used him to achieve their own ends, by taking into account, and indeed actively welcoming the fact that here was a man who had close links to politicians in the GDR.

6.1.5 The East's Complicity

It was not only in former West Germany that Stolpe found wide-spread support, but also in the five new *Länder*. The journalist Robert Leicht aptly summed up the reasons as to why this should be the case:

Manfred Stolpe hat vom Streit um seine heikle Vergangenheit letztlich nur profitiert, vor allem weil er eben wirklich nur ein wie immer umstrittener Verhandler und nicht ein Verräter war. Aber insofern er den 'historischen Kompromiß' des Überlebens in der DDR repräsentiert, finden sich viele durch ihn vertreten: Jene, die dem Regime widerstanden, wenn auch nicht bis zum Äußersten - und jene, die sich ihm anpaßten, aber nicht bis zum Letzten. (I-88)

Only a small minority of East Germans did not fit into either of the two groups which Leicht defines. Stolpe was therefore a comfortable figure to identify with. His position in the GDR had not involved policy making, and in this sense he was freed from any direct responsibility for the injustices perpetrated there. Yet Stolpe had not resisted the system in the way in which prominent *Bürgerrechtler* had done. He had presumed that the GDR would exist beyond his lifetime, a point he makes repeatedly in *Schwieriger Aufbruch*, and had worked with and not against the system in order to achieve his aims.

It was those who, on first glance, might have seemed to be political adversaries, that is representatives of the citizens' rights movement of the former GDR, and *CDU* politicians, who met on common ground in their wish to see Stolpe forced into resignation. These two groups were often united on the question of how many aspects of the legacy of the *MfS* should be confronted in a unified Germany, and recently seven former

Bürgerrechtler, among them Günter Nooke and Vera Lengsfeld (formerly Wollenberger), caused a sensation when they did in fact join the *CDU* (I-95).

In contrast to the *Bürgerrechtler*, the population at large soon lost interest in the lengthy debate surrounding Stolpe's *Stasi* connections. An *Infas* survey carried out in late 1992 found that 80% of those questioned wished an end to the Stolpe debate (I-9). The work of the *Untersuchungsausschuß* carried on for over another eighteen months after this survey, but the initial positions of those on the committee remained unchanged. The *Bürgerrechtler* refused in the end to come before the committee, wishing by their refusal to protest at the fact that they had been invited to give testimony at such a late stage in the overall proceedings. They felt that by this point it was already more than evident that Stolpe's name would be cleared and that their statements would have no bearing whatsoever on the final outcome (I-22). The testimonies of the *Bürgerrechtler* may well, as they claimed, have had little impact at this late stage, but their protest also proved futile, in that it could only be symbolic and seemed merely to support Stolpe's claim that the difference between himself and Bärbel Bohley was that whereas he was a pragmatist, Bohley was a fundamentalist (I-81, p. 3). The final report of the *Untersuchungsausschuß* merely lists the accusations made by the *Bürgerrechtler* and states that these issues could not be adequately addressed due to the fact that the invited witnesses refused to appear before the commission (F-2, I, 208-11).

In the end, the *Untersuchungsausschuß* accepted the version of events which Stolpe himself had presented, that is that the pact he had made with those in power in the *SED* state was one made of necessity and was justifiable. As discussed, Stolpe's position was one with which many identified. If he were judged to have acted in a morally justifiable manner,

then so too had the vast majority of East Germans under the dictatorship, namely as opportunistic conformists (see Section Two: 8.3). In his book Stolpe does indeed reinforce the concept of a common and shared fate for East Germans, attributing a collective responsibility to all GDR citizens: 'Schließlich hat jeder, der im Land blieb, arbeitete und Steuern zahlte, das DDR-System mitgetragen, ob er wollte oder nicht.' (J-91, p. 12) For Günter Nooke, the acceptance of this interpretation meant that the Stolpe case had led to a distortion of historical fact: 'Stolpe beschwörte das ostdeutsche Schicksal zu Gemeinschaft - und es hat geklappt.' (H-2) It now seems to be widely accepted that the course of action which Stolpe took was justified. This observation is reflected in the findings of an extensive survey carried out for the *Institut für Demoskopie* in Allensbach into East and West German s' views on various aspects of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. The study found that only just under one quarter of both East and West Germans questioned in 1992 considered that Stolpe had compromised himself to too great an extent in order to achieve his aims (F-12, Tabel A 15).

6.1.6 The Role of the *Gauck-Behörde*

The Stolpe debate highlighted an issue which had begun to be the cause of much controversy at the time when the *Untersuchungsausschuß* took up its work, namely the role which the *BStU* was to play in the confrontation with the *MfS* legacy. Arnold Vaatz, Environmental Minister for Saxony, said that such was the significance of the Stolpe case, if his name were to be cleared then everyone who had been dismissed on the grounds of an *IM-Tätigkeit* would have to be reinstated and the *BStU* would have to be closed (I-40, p. 34). The Stolpe debate certainly did at times seem almost like a personal contest between Gauck and Stolpe. It appeared as though only one of the two would emerge triumphant at the end of a battle

which actually reached the courts on several occasions. Stolpe took Gauck to court after the latter had said in an interview that in any other of the five new *Länder* the evidence which had been brought against Manfred Stolpe would have been sufficient to force his resignation. The courts ruled that this was a value judgement which Gauck was not entitled to make in his role as *Bundesbeauftragter*. Gauck's assigned task was to provide the *Untersuchungsausschuß* with the information it requested, and it was ultimately the job of the committee to assess and evaluate this material (J-1). In another court case Stolpe was granted access to what was termed a *Sonderakte* containing material relating to his person, but was not, as he had originally requested, allowed to have the entire 178 kilometres of files searched in order to have a special file compiled with the results (I-17). Herta Müller described Gauck's problem in this battle as follows: 'Mit Stolpe identifizieren sich viele, mit Gauck nur wenige. Und die Loyalen tun heute so, als wäre die Stasi nicht durch Stolpe, sondern erst durch Gauck unheimlich geworden.' (I-83, p. 50) In the end both parties won and lost. Stolpe's name was officially cleared, but as long as the *BStU* continues to exist there is a chance that new potentially incriminating material will be found and that the case could be re-opened. The *BStU* for its part continues to be inundated with applications from the private and public sector to view the files, and in October 1995 Gauck was confirmed in his post as *Bundesbeauftragter* for a second five-year term. In the end, however, the *Untersuchungsausschuß* attributed just as much credibility to the testimonies of former *Stasi* officers as to the material which was compiled by the *BStU* (F-2, I, 27-30).

6.1.7 The Work of the *Untersuchungsausschuß*

The work of the *Stolpe-Untersuchungsausschuß*, whose final report went to press in June 1994, had been highly topical and controversial. The eight

invited *Bürgerrechtler* had refused to testify, both Marianne Birthler and Günter Nooke had resigned from the committee in protest at the manner in which they felt that Stolpe's highly questionable *MfS* connections were being trivialised, and ex-*MfS* officers Roßberg and Wieland had contradicted themselves and each other on several occasions regarding particular details of Stolpe's contacts to the *Stasi*. The core problem for the committee in bringing the Stolpe debate to any sort of satisfying conclusion was that which is encountered in any case where someone's previous contacts to the *MfS* are examined, namely that there is no consensus on the question of what exactly makes this contact a punishable offence in unified Germany. The *Untersuchungsausschuß* spent much time and effort examining the details of Stolpe's contacts to the *MfS*, notably those surrounding the awarding of the *Verdienstmedaille*, and the question of whether or not he had been aware that he had been referred to by the *Stasi* as IM 'Sekretär'. Stolpe quite simply refused to resign his political mandate. In the absence of the ultimate proof of the *Verpflichtungserklärung*, and with numerous statements of support from prominent politicians and theologians, he was able to remain in office and retain credibility. There is really no doubt that, as far as the *MfS* was concerned, Manfred Stolpe was an *IM*, in that he met with *MfS* officers regularly and secretly, supplying them with information which was regarded as *operativ bedeutsam*. Had a signed *Verpflichtungserklärung* been found in the course of the investigation it is doubtful if Stolpe would have been able to remain in office. This is confirmed by the wording of the final report, which states that, since there was no proof that Stolpe knew that he had been registered under the name IM 'Sekretär', or that he had ever explicitly committed himself to work as an informer, his relationship to the *MfS* was that of a 'gleichrangiger Verhandlungspartner' (F-2, I, 165). Yet the fact that no document was found in which Stolpe committed

himself in writing in effect proved nothing (see Section One: 2.5). *MfS* guidelines suggest that it was often the case that individuals such as Stolpe were not asked to make a written commitment:

Bei Angehörigen der Intelligenz und besonders bei kirchlichen Würdenträgern u.a. ist durch eine systematische und zielstrebige Zusammenarbeit zu erreichen, daß das Vertrauen dieser Personen zu den Organen für Staatssicherheit wächst und das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit wichtige und wertvolle Informationen erhält. Durch ständige ideologische Beeinflussung muß im Endergebnis eine enge Zusammenarbeit geschaffen werden, so daß in besonderen Fällen selbst von einer schriftlichen Verpflichtung abgesehen werden kann, wenn ohne eine schriftliche Verpflichtung das Ziel besser erreicht wird bzw. durch die Ergebnisse der Mitarbeit eine unzertrennbare Bindung erfolgt. (J-62, p. 212)

Despite this evidence from *MfS* documentation, the *Untersuchungsausschuß* placed much importance on details such as the existence of a material commitment, never really scratching the surface of the issues at hand to discuss how, in the historical context of the GDR, such contacts to state organs should be evaluated. It was, in fact, almost impossible for the committee to deal with these issues, since other less prominent *IM* were at the same time being dismissed from their jobs in public service if they were shown to have knowingly conspired with the *MfS* as an *IM*. The discussion could potentially have been significantly more enlightening if it had been accepted from the outset that Stolpe had to all extents and purposes been an *IM*. The question of whether he had compromised himself and others to too great an extent in order to achieve his aims could then have been examined in detail. Robert Leicht suggested that the avoidance of the real issues involved was partly due to the stance which Stolpe's opponents adopted from the outset:

Das *Aufregende* am Fall Stolpe war eben die Frage des konkretisierten politischen Ethos gewesen: In welchem Verhältnis standen die, für sich genommen, per definitionem zutiefst

fragwürdigen Kontakte mit der Staatssicherheit zu den auf diese Weise erzielten humanitären, politischen und kirchlichen Resultaten? Doch eben diese Diskussion war im Grunde nicht zugelassen worden, weil schon der bloße Gedanke an eine legitime Beziehung zwischen Zweck und Mittel von den schärfsten Gegnern Stolpes verabscheut wurde - und viele Verteidiger Stolpes deshalb seine Kontakte vorsichtshalber pauschal verteidigten. [...] Das Ausweichen vor den eigentlichen Fragen hat Stolpe geschützt und seine Gegner gelähmt. (I-87)

Yet it was not solely Stolpe's opponents who ensured that the most potentially fruitful issues of this debate were neglected. The political order of the day dictated that if Stolpe were shown to have known that he was registered as IM 'Sekretär', then he would have been under considerable pressure to resign. As a result this became the principal question with which the committee busied itself. It was extremely difficult to establish the exact details of events which lay so far in the past, and contradictions and ambivalence were the only result of attempts to recreate, for example, the order of events surrounding the awarding of the *Verdienstmedaille*. Such was the inconclusive nature of proceedings that Joachim Nawrocki remarked at the end of the twenty-fifth sitting of the *Untersuchungsausschuß*: 'Es kann alles so oder so ähnlich gewesen sein, muß aber nicht.' (I-86) In *Schwieriger Aufbruch* Stolpe stated that in the frequent conversations he had with the *MfS* it was possible that what he had said had not always been reported in the way in which he had meant it, and that controversial statements he had actually made might well have been left out of the subsequent reports (J-91, pp. 127, 139). Stolpe seems also to have anticipated that he might be on record as an *IM* and trivialised this fact in advance: 'Vielleicht läßt sich der Unterschied aus den Akten nicht immer erkennen. Vermutlich hat die Staatssicherheit ihr interessant scheinende Leute in den internen Berichten als Mitarbeiter geführt, ohne daß die Betroffenen davon Kenntnis hatten.' (J-91, p. 128) Stolpe had thus predicted the uncertainty and ambiguity which, indeed,

would be the dominant features of the work of the *Untersuchungsausschuß* set up to investigate his *Stasi* connections.

6.1.8 Consequences

The final report of the *Stolpe-Untersuchungsausschuß* was published in June 1994, and Stolpe was officially 'entlastet'. The *Landtag Brandenburg* decided on the basis of the *Untersuchungsausschuß's* conclusions that in future the examination of each individual case of *Stasi* collaboration would have to go beyond merely asserting that an individual had worked for the *MfS*, and further: 'Niemandem darf die persönliche Weiterentwicklung und der Wille zur Neuorientierung abgesprochen werden.' (F-15, pp. 5-6) The fact that Stolpe's name was officially cleared threatened only to further marginalise the *Bürgerrechtler* who were so against his remaining in power. The outcome of the Stolpe affair and their dissatisfaction with the manner in which other political parties are confronting aspects of the *Stasi* legacy will without doubt have been influential in the decision of the seven *Bürgerrechtler* to join the ranks of the *CDU*.

6.2 'EINE SPEZIALVARIANTE': GREGOR GYSI (I-70)

The debate surrounding the alleged *IM-Tätigkeit* of *PDS* golden boy Gregor Gysi was in many ways similar to the Manfred Stolpe affair. Gysi is a phenomenally charismatic figure who undoubtedly contributes significantly to the success of the *PDS*. The budding post-unification political career of the former lawyer began to be endangered, however, when, after viewing their *Stasi* files, a number of those who had been represented by Gysi in the GDR claimed that the evidence they found in these documents proved beyond doubt that he had abused his position of trust to betray confidential information to the *MfS* as an *IM* (I-52). In

response to these allegations Gysi claimed time and time again: 'Ich habe die Staatssicherheit niemals direkt und bewußt informiert.' (I-54, p. 49) Although information seeming to stem from Gysi is found under the code names IM 'Gregor' and IM 'Notar' in the *MfS* files, it appears that Gysi, possibly as a result of his social standing, was not considered a typical *IM* by the *MfS*. There was no formal *IM* file for Gysi and no official *Verpflichtung*, leading the *BStU* to conclude: 'Das MfS hat die Zusammenarbeit mit Gysi offensichtlich nicht wie die mit einem gewöhnlichen IM gestaltet.' (I-70)

Since Gysi was even less willing than Stolpe to engage in dialogue concerning his dealings with *MfS* representatives, any attempt to initiate debate proved futile, and the issue soon deteriorated into an at times petty battle between Gysi and a number of former *Bürgerrechtler*, principally Katja Havemann, the last wife of Robert Havemann, who claimed that Gysi had abused her husband's trust, and Bärbel Bohley, who was taken to court on a number of occasions on the question of whether she was permitted to refer to Gysi as a 'Spitzel' (I-4, I-69). Bohley continued to refer to Gysi in this way even after she had been threatened with a substantial fine for doing so, defiantly declaring: 'Ich zahle für keinen IM, ich sitze lieber.' (I-25)

A wide range of public personalities began to take sides in the Gysi issue, notably, and predictably enough, Gysi's political adversaries in the *CDU* (I-5). Signed declarations were drawn up for and against Gysi, with thirty *Bürgerrechtler* claiming in one such statement: 'Gregor Gysi hat durch seine Tätigkeit als Anwalt eine der größten Karrieren im Lügen-Bespitzelungs- und Unrechtssystem der DDR gemacht.' (I-89) A public declaration, signed by the likes of Stefan Heym, Heiner Müller and even various politicians from elsewhere in Europe, argued on the contrary: 'Daß ein Beschuldigter gezwungen wird, seine Unschuld nachzuweisen, statt

daß ihm seine Schuld nachgewiesen wird, stellt eine Umkehr der Beweislast und einen bedrohlichen Angriff auf rechtsstaatliche Grundsätze dar.' (I-26) Statements such as these did nothing to encourage any form of open dialogue. Indeed, the likelihood of this ever being realised had become even more remote after Gysi, in May 1995, made a public statement that, unless new incriminating evidence were produced, he was not prepared to enter into any further debate concerning his *Stasi* connections: 'Nicht mehr beteiligen aber werde ich mich an dem Leerlauf des beschriebenen Karussells.' (I-32) The Gysi debate continues, but the fact that no standard *Verpflichtungserklärung* committing Gysi to collaboration with the *MfS* has been or is ever likely to be found, may once again, as in the Stolpe debate, prove decisive.

I asked the *IM* whom I interviewed, the majority of whom are *PDS* voters, if they believed that Gysi should be forced into resignation if irrefutable evidence that he had officially agreed to collaborate with the *MfS* as an *IM* were to be found. Most thought very highly of Gysi, and there was an intense reluctance on their part to admit that it was at all possible that he had been active as an *IM*. 'Falke', for example, said that he considered Gysi to be extremely intelligent and that he simply could not believe that he could have knowingly collaborated as an *IM* (A-3). When I pressed the point, 'Falke' finally said that even if it were to be shown that Gysi was an *IM*, he thinks that he should not be forced into resignation. Just before we had begun discussing Gysi 'Falke' had told me that he considered it unfair that he himself should be dismissed from his employment as a result of his *IM-Tätigkeit* being revealed considering that he lived in the state of Brandenburg, where Manfred Stolpe was the *Ministerpräsident*. 'Falke' felt that justice demanded that Stolpe should also be forced into resignation. I remarked that his opinions on Stolpe and Gysi seemed contradictory. He paused, finally saying that this was

because it was so obvious to him that Stolpe had been an *IM*, but that he could just not imagine that this was the case for Gysi (A-3).

Gregor Gysi is such a pivotal figure in the *PDS* and so strongly involved with political issues concerning the former GDR that many simply do not want to consider that he could have been an *IM*. Although some of his former clients and many of those in the *CDU* would be only too happy to see him forced to resign, unless absolute proof of willing and conscious collaboration can be uncovered, Gysi's charisma and charm will continue to ensure that the widespread support he has in the former GDR is sufficient to let him remain a force to be reckoned with in the political arena of post-unification Germany, be it as a member of the *PDS* or in any other function he might choose to take up.

Section Two: Chapter Seven

**JUSTICE AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:
THE LEGAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE *MFS* LEGACY**

7.1 FUNDAMENTAL DIFFICULTIES

After he had been given a two-year suspended sentence for his role in the death of Chris Gueffroy, the last person to die while trying to escape from the GDR, Andreas Kühnpast, one of the four border-guards on trial, said of his punishment: 'Das hat mit Rechtsstaatlichkeit nichts zu tun, das war Willkür.' (I-8) This first in a series of border-guard trials was representative of much of the legal reckoning with the GDR legacy, in that it highlighted some of the key difficulties and points of contention involved in such an undertaking. The border-guards had, by firing the fatal shots, been the most directly responsible for the death of the young Gueffroy, yet they were at the very bottom of the power hierarchy and were not responsible for the *Schießbefehl*, the ~~order~~ which demanded that anyone who attempted to cross into the FRG be shot. The courts had to decide if the argumentation used in the border-guards' defence, that they had merely been following orders, was acceptable. This was for many an uncomfortably familiar defence strategy in the German context, and Ralph Giordano argued that it was time that the Germans began to face up to their responsibility, not just for giving, but also for following orders (cited in J-45, p. 180). Yet any severe punishment of these foot soldiers would have seemed inappropriate when those who had been responsible for the order to shoot were not, at least at this point, being brought to trial. Bringing a case to bear on those higher up the power hierarchy was a considerably more lengthy and complicated process, and it was only in early 1996 that the trial against six leading members of the *Politbüro* began for their part in the deaths at the German-German border. This trial began in the same faltering manner as others involving prominent and often elderly politicians from the former GDR. These proceedings have tended to be characterised by a series of delays and interruptions,

caused either by the waning health of the accused or by objections raised on various formalities.

The chief legal difficulty in dealings with crimes committed in the GDR is the principle of *nulla poena sine lege*, Article 103 (2) of the German constitution: 'Eine Tat kann nur bestraft werden, wenn die Strafbarkeit gesetzlich bestimmt war, bevor die Tat begonnen wurde.' This principle has been contested on many occasions since 1945, and Giordano argues that this clause, by decreeing that 'Gesetz = Recht', effectively means that if Hitler had created legislation for genocide then no one could have been tried for his/her role in carrying out the *Endlösung* (I-66). In order for the state of law to remain credible, however, it has to be seen to adhere to the legal principles which it has defined, and the idea that this clause could be nullified in the legal reckoning with the GDR past was never really given serious consideration. Andreas Zielcke commented as follows on the difficulties involved: 'Das Paradox des demokratischen Rechts ist es, einen Unrechtsstaat in rechtsstaatlichen Verfahren nicht verarbeiten zu können, obwohl er (der Rechtsstaat) die einzige angemessene Antwort auf das Unrecht darstellt.' (I-46, p. 79)

At a conference which addressed the issues involved in the legal reckoning with ^{the} GDR past, Klaus Kinkel stressed that, in confronting the crimes of the *SED* state, it was not a question of imposing some sort of 'Siegerjustiz': 'Es geht einfach um Gerechtigkeit. Schuld muß allerdings konkret und individuell nachgewiesen werden.' (J-40, p. 6) Establishing individual guilt is, however, an extremely complex legal problem and Kinkel admitted that 'eben das macht die Prozesse so schwierig' (J-40, p. 6). One consequence of the legal difficulties in bringing such cases to court, as Rainer Frenkl observed, was that in the trials against leading members of the *SED*, the gap between the actual political guilt and the charges brought could not have been crasser (I-84). In an often farcical

trial Erich Mielke, for example, first stood accused of the murder of two policemen in 1936, and not for any injustices carried out by the *MfS*. One of the other most powerful men in the GDR, Markus Wolf, was sentenced in December 1993 to six years imprisonment for his role as head of foreign espionage. At the time Wolf declared: 'Verurteilt werden soll ich, weil es vierzig Jahre die Deutsche Demokratische Republik gegeben hat, die es im politischen und Rechtsverständnis der Urheber solcher Veranstaltungen nie hätte geben dürfen.' (F-6, p. 34) In May 1995 this verdict was declared invalid and overturned. Wolf could only have been legally punished if he had worked for a foreign power. Since he had carried out his duties as a GDR citizen and from the territory of the GDR, it was decreed that he was free from guilt in a legal sense. Wolf is currently on trial once again for his role in the kidnapping from the FRG to the GDR of individuals who were wanted by the *MfS*.

In general, the higher up the power hierarchy an individual had been, the more difficult it proved to bring a case to bear. Even Erich Honecker, who was eventually released on the grounds of ill-health, maintained that he considered himself 'frei von jeder Schuld im strafrechtlichen Sinne' (I-77). Many former *Stasi-Opfer* were disappointed to discover that the *Rechtsstaat* would not necessarily guarantee justice for the crimes which had been committed in the *Unrechtsstaat*, and Marion Gräfin-Dönhoff denounced Bärbel Bohley's now infamous comment that the citizens of the GDR had hoped for 'Gerechtigkeit' and had got the 'Rechtsstaat', as a 'schlimmer Satz', accusing the former *Bürgerrechtlerin* of confusing justice with revenge (I-92). Friedrich Schorlemmer also took up this point, criticising the tendency, as he perceived it, to confuse the 'Rechtsstaat' with a 'Rachestaat' (I-61). Bohley's comment should, however, perhaps not so much be taken as an indication that she confuses justice with revenge, rather as the realisation

and the criticism on her part that justice cannot always be obtained within the constraints of the criminal justice system.

7.2 CONSEQUENCES OF A PEACEFUL REVOLUTION

Man kann von einer Revolution nicht verlangen, daß sie sich an rechtsstaatlichen Regeln hält. Umgekehrt kann eine Revolution, die gewissermaßen mit der Kerze in der Hand gemacht wurde, nicht von den Organen der Justiz verlangen nachzuholen, was die Revolutionäre versäumt haben oder versäumt zu haben meinen. (I-14, p. 126)

It was a bitter discovery not only for Bohley, but for many of those who had suffered injustices in the GDR that, since the FRG's criminal justice system was based on the principle that the accused was innocent until proven guilty, it would offer just as much protection to those who had served the *MfS* as to those who had suffered at its hands. The *Neues Forum* in Halle, for example, was taken to court after it made apparently anonymously donated lists of former *MfS* employees and *IM* available for public consultation. Although checks at the *BStU* indicated that most of the people on the lists had in fact collaborated with the *MfS*, the courts ruled that the individual rights of those concerned outweighed the right of the public to this information (I-27). Katrin Eigenfeld of the *Neues Forum* argued that the publishing of the lists had been entirely successful as it had resulted in a 'psychische Reinigung' in the town of Halle (F-13, p. 160). This may well have been the case for many of those concerned, but those who were not quite as enamoured with the action taken were entitled to make use of the principles of the criminal justice system in what proved to be a run of costly court cases for the *Neues Forum*.

Wolf Biermann sees much of the frustration with the limitations of the *Rechtsstaat* as resulting from the fact that the public demonstrations of 1989 involved 'zu wenig barbarische Substanz, zu wenig organisierte

Weitsicht, ja und zu wenig blinde Wut' (I-44, p. 83). The presence of a little more 'blinde Wut' could, he suggested, have been cathartic for the East German population, allowing them to vent their anger and to feel that some justice had been done. This, however, was not to be. Without a single death and very little bloodshed the GDR ceased to exist and merged with the FRG. The fact that these events took place so peacefully and without any lynch justice meant that there remained a lot of guilt which had not in any way been seen to be atoned. Many placed their hopes in the *Rechtsstaat*, presuming that it would be capable of carrying out this task, and were disillusioned to discover that the legal system and a higher notion of justice were two quite separate constructs, one of which was concrete, and one abstract. In a discussion of the concepts of justice and law Jacques Derrida comments that the English phrase 'to enforce the law' is enlightening, since it serves as a reminder that the law is always something which is imposed by force (J-19, p. 11). He continues: 'Kraft (Gewalt) ohne Gerechtigkeit ist tyrannisch. Gerechtigkeit ohne Kraft (Gewalt) wird nicht anerkannt, weil es immer Bösewichte gibt.' (J-19, p. 11) The point being made here by Derrida is precisely that which was disregarded by those in the former GDR who had hoped that justice and the law were one and the same.

7.3 THE TREATMENT OF *IM*: UNCERTAINTIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

Ein wichtiger Grund für eine außerordentliche Kündigung ist insbesondere dann gegeben, wenn der Arbeitnehmer für das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit/Amt für Nationale Sicherheit tätig war und deshalb ein Festhalten am Arbeitsverhältnis unzumutbar erscheint. (G-1)

When the *StUG* came into force on 29 December 1991 it allowed the above ruling in the Unification Treaty to be fully implemented. For those active in the public sector who still lived with the secret of having been an *IM*, the *StUG* meant that their days in employment were potentially numbered. At the end of May 1995 over 1,300,000 applications had been lodged with the *BStU* from employers in the public sector wishing to discover if their employees had collaborated with the *MfS* (F-17, p. 111). Close to another 300,000 such applications concerned predominantly those active in politics, in the church, as well as lawyers and notaries (F-17, p. 111). The vast majority of those screened in this way are found not to have collaborated with the *MfS*. It was, after all, a small minority of the East German population which was active as *IM*. Of 20,000 teachers who were screened in the Berlin area, for example, 4.5% were found to have collaborated with the *MfS* (F-17, pp. 7-8).

Comparing the way in which former Secret Service employees are being treated in Germany with the Czech Republic, Tina Rosenberg concludes that the German approach is fairer, since individuals are not necessarily dismissed if they are discovered to have worked for the *MfS* (J-73, p. 321). It should, however, be stressed that the German system is only potentially fairer. In practice, comparable cases of collaboration are often treated inconsistently within and between *Länder*. Reflecting on these discrepancies Rosenberg does later comment on the absurdity, as she puts it, that 'Manfred Stolpe can be governor of Brandenburg, but [because of his previous *Stasi* connections] he could not drive a tram in Saxony' (J-73, p. 324).

The final report of the *Enquete-Kommission* cautions against discrepancies in the treatment of comparable cases of former *Stasi* collaboration, and comes to the following conclusion:

Daß es im Prozeß des Zusammenwachsens und der Herstellung der inneren Einheit Deutschlands keine pauschale und dauerhafte Ausgrenzung jener geben darf, die seinerzeit in ihren Funktionen an nachgeordneter Stelle an dem diktatorischen System mitgewirkt haben. [...] Gerade auch die Überprüfungsmöglichkeiten nach dem Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz (StUG) sind nicht als gesellschaftliche Diffamierung zu verstehen. (F-1, p. 281)

The above statement remains ultimately only a recommendation. The German system allows for, but does not demand a differentiated treatment of individual cases. There are no set rules as to what constitutes sufficient grounds for dismissal, and some decisions are thus bound to be 'pauschal', undifferentiated. There have, indeed, been many reports of inconsistencies in the screening of public service employees such as teachers (I-18, I-49). The most notorious example of where the system appeared fundamentally flawed was perhaps the case of the woman who lost her job in the dog taxation department of the finance office as a result of having worked as a kitchen help for the *MfS*. It was decided that the 'hoheitliche Funktion' in the finance office could not be carried out by someone who had worked for the *MfS* (J-50, p. 109). Such occurrences arise partly because each committee responsible for examining individual cases sets its own criteria for deciding whether the person concerned should be allowed to remain in employment. Werner Fischer, who was involved in the screening of public service employees in Berlin, reported that the committee took the length of the *IM-Tätigkeit* into account, but that all those who were still active in the autumn of 1989 were automatically dismissed (I-43, p. 68). There are bound to be crass differences in the degree of collaboration and in the resulting culpability of all those who were still active as *IM* in 1989. The decision to dismiss all such *IM* seems potentially grossly unfair to those whose co-operation may have been minimal.

There have been moves to change the law concerning the treatment of former *IM* to facilitate a more differentiated approach. As the *StUG* now stands, screening of public service employees is only permissible for the fifteen years after the law came into force. It seems likely that this limit will eventually be lowered. Legislation has, indeed, recently been passed which will mean that from August 1998 the *BStU* will no longer be obliged to disclose information concerning an *IM-Tätigkeit* which came to an end before 31 December 1975 (I-60). Furthermore, even if collaboration took place after 1976, the *BStU* will not have to release this information to an employer or potential employer if it is decided that the extent of compliance was minimal. There are, however, certain exceptions to this ruling. Information concerning *MfS* collaboration by Members of Parliament will, for example, still be released. For many of those who have been out of work for a period of years as a result of an *IM-Tätigkeit* it will be no easy task to find employment again, even after such a change in legislation. In addition, such an alteration offers only further incentive for those whose *Stasi* connections have not yet come to light to continue to remain silent about this aspect of their biography. In some ways a ruling where all *IM* received a similar trial and punishment might have been easier to cope with for at least some of those concerned, as was suggested by one former *IM* with whom Rosenberg spoke (J-73, p. 383).

In actual fact, it is, ^{generally} a small minority of those found to have held contacts to the *MfS* who actually lose their jobs. Of the 4.5% of Berlin teachers found to have held *MfS* contacts, a mere 0.9% were eventually dismissed after the cases had been reviewed (F-17, pp. 7-8). Some of even the small number who are dismissed are able to contest this decision on the basis of procedural errors and have to be subsequently reinstated.

7.4 LEGALITY AND MORALITY

The underlying and recurring problem in the debate concerning the legal reckoning with the GDR past is the clear confusion of legal and moral issues. This confounding of moral and legal guilt is particularly evident in the rationale behind the mandatory questionnaire, asking about previous connections to the *MfS*, which GDR citizens active in the public sector were required to complete. Many who had collaborated as *IM* decided to deny having held contacts to the *MfS*. The fact that they had been untruthful was sometimes used as a further reproach when their *IM-Tätigkeit* eventually did come to light. IM 'Falke' was informed in the letter announcing his dismissal that if he had been honest about his *MfS* contacts in the first place he would never have been appointed to his promoted position and that 'darüber hinaus ist durch das Verschweigen der Zusammenarbeit mit dem Ministerium für Staatssicherheit das Vertrauensverhältnis zwischen Ihnen und Ihrem Dienstherrn zerstört' (B-4). There are no legal consequences of lying on the questionnaire and there is therefore only a moral incentive to tell the truth. 'Falke' was informed that he would have lost his job even if he had taken the more morally admirable stance of admitting to his *Stasi* contacts. He was, nevertheless, reproached on moral grounds within the legal context of his sacking for not doing so, as though this morally more correct behaviour could actually have influenced the decision to sack him. The concept of such questionnaires was, I would argue, entirely unsatisfactory. Telling the truth only meant that a former *IM* was likely to be dismissed sooner. Lying generally led to being able to remain in employment longer, but could result in a moral reproach when the collaboration was eventually discovered. The questionnaires were thus merely a pseudo-legal way of confronting the *MfS* legacy, which ultimately led only to the confusion of legal and moral issues, leading Friedrich Schorlemmer to remark: 'Die Art

der Fragebögen führt mich in eine innere Solidarität mit denen, die ich wahrlich nicht geschätzt habe.' (J-82, p. 234)

7.5 THE *BStU* AND THE *StUG*

Stefan Heym criticised the fact, as he saw it, that Germany was ruled by two institutions, the *Gauck-Behörde* and the *Treuhand* (J-36, p. 73). Between them, he argued, these two government bodies had more power than the *Politbüro* in deciding the fates of GDR's citizens, by producing information which:

der Rest der Menschheit auf Treu und Glauben zu akzeptieren hat - und welche genutzt werden, um ausgesuchte Leute abzuurteilen und zu verstoßen, ohne daß die so Gestraften je Einblick erhielten in die angeblichen Beweise ihrer Schuld oder sich auch nur verteidigen könnten.

Da ging es sogar bei der Inquisition milder zu: wenn einer die Folter lebend überstand, wurde ihm vergeben. Und bei dem berüchtigten Senator McCarthy wurde man wenigstens abgehört. (J-36, p. 73)

Heym is not alone in his disapproval and distrust of the *BStU*. During the debate concerning the creation of the *StUG* even Jürgen Fuchs wondered, indeed, whether it would be at all possible 'all das Leid, Demütigung und Lüge tatsächlich nunmehr "behördlich" zu regeln?' (F-16, p. 396). Fuchs believed that the answer to this question was negative: 'Vor Ort, dort wo es geschah, müssen die Archive geöffnet werden. Natürlich nach Recht und Gesetz, aber ohne diese schreckliche Behörden- und Verwaltungsrhetorik, die um sich greift.' (F-16, p. 396) It was decided, however, that the only way to ensure that those who had suffered most would be protected from being done a second injustice was to set up such a body to meticulously control who obtained access, and under what conditions, to the very intimate, hurtful, and potentially exploitable personal information which makes up a substantial part of this unique

legacy. The *MfS* dossiers have as a result been handed over to a government authority, the *BStU*, which must act within the constraints of the *StUG*. This fact is often ignored, and at times one might be led to think that the *BStU* and the *StUG* were the invention of one man, Joachim Gauck. The *BStU* is more commonly referred to as the *Gauck-Behörde*, and the process of screening public-service employees is even popularly termed 'gaucken'. Gauck is then often seen to be synonymous with the institution of which he is in charge and with the *StUG*. This was evident when, in 1991, the *Humanistische Union* went back on its decision to award Gauck the *Fritz-Bauer-Preis* as it was felt that to do so would be an indication of approval of the *Gesetz über die Sicherung und Nutzung der personenbezogenen Daten des ehemaligen Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit/Amt für Nationale Sicherheit*, the law which was the forerunner to the *StUG* (I-6, G-2). Another example of such thinking is seen when Lesley Bodi comments that 'Gauck and his supporters have tended to side with the victims and not the culprits' (J-12, p. 15). Bodi writes as though Gauck himself had personally created the *StUG* and founded the *BStU* as a kind of citizens' committee. This disregard of the facts is commonplace in certain contexts, and Gauck is often a scapegoat for those who feel that the law has treated them unfairly. An article in the *Junge Welt*, for example, was provocatively titled, 'Können wir uns einen Gauck leisten?' (I-29).

7.6 CONCLUSIONS

Die Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit ist nur in beschränktem Maße justitiabel. In weit überwiegendem Maße ist es eine Sache der individuellen, der persönlichen Hygiene und hat nichts mit Zuchthaus und Gefängnis zu tun. (J-92, pp. 182-83)

Since German unification there have been many calls for an amnesty for *MfS* employees (I-51, I-91, J-21). These are often motivated by the recognition of the immense difficulties involved in dealing with the crimes of the GDR within the legal system. The low number of cases reaching the courts is also partly due to the fact that few *Opfer* are coming forward to accuse their former tormentors, even when it would be feasible to bring a legal charge. In one notable case a man was awarded a substantial sum of money when he took his nephew to court for having informed the GDR authorities of his plans to flee to the West. The denunciation had resulted in a three year prison sentence and subsequent *Berufsverbot* for the man (I-71). Many other *Opfer* decide against taking legal action. Even Bärbel Bohley admitted that she herself had not taken this step, but that she would not like to have this right taken from her, arguing that an amnesty would mean that the state was effectively saying to its citizens: 'Guckt in eure Akten, aber belästigt die Justiz nicht, geht nach Hause und bekommt eure Magenschwüre allein.' (I-55, p. 94) Bohley also pointed out that since many had still to view their files, an amnesty would mean that the right to bring their oppressors to court would be taken from some individuals before they had been given the chance to exercise it (I-55, p. 94).

Even if the will were there, it would be extremely difficult to bring many former *IM* to court, since their primary guilt lies most often in the fact that they abused the trust of others. This is a moral guilt which cannot clearly be defined or punished within the criminal justice system. The confrontation with this guilt cannot be decreed from above and can really only take place on an interpersonal level. Difficulties in realising such interpersonal contacts lie partly in the fact that the legal context for confronting the *IM* legacy does exist, and this legal confrontation tends, particularly for the *IM* themselves, to overshadow the consideration of moral issues. As the law stands former *MfS* employees may be fired from

their position in public service, with the result that very few *IM* have been willing to admit to their *IM-Tätigkeit* before it comes to light. Attempts in the immediate post-*Wende* period to establish a forum for open discussion between *Täter* and *Opfer* were thus ultimately doomed, and although a so-called *Forum zur Aufklärung und Erneuerung* was founded, it was largely unsuccessful. The *Forum* proposed the following in its constitution:

Wünschenswert ist die Einbeziehung unabhängiger Sachverständiger und die Bildung einer das Verfahren leitenden unabhängigen Jury. Statt auf ein juristisches Urteil zielt das Verfahren auf Feststellung, öffentliche Dokumentation und Bewertung von Umständen, Vorgängen und Verantwortlichkeiten, die Unrecht bewirkten. (F-9, p. 6)

Apart from the clear difficulties arising in deciding who exactly these 'unabhängige Sachverständige' were to be, it is difficult to imagine what role an 'independent jury' outside the criminal justice system could have played. There are, however, as discussed, clearly issues of moral guilt which cannot be dealt with within this legal framework. It is this equally problematic personal and interpersonal confrontation with the *Stasi* legacy which will be discussed in the following three chapters.

Section Two: Chapter Eight

**THE *TÄTER/OPFER* CONTINUUM:
DEFINING DEGREES OF CONFORMITY AND RESISTANCE**

8.1 GENERAL

The brunt of the anger displayed when *MfS* offices were stormed and occupied in the immediate post-*Wende* period often fell on those at the very bottom of the hierarchy of power, on the *Stasi*'s secret helpers, the *IM*. Many of the 174,000 *IM* active in 1989 and of the many others who had collaborated in the past were not known as such to even close friends and relatives. The most extreme example of such a case was that concerning Vera Wollenberger (now Lengsfeld), who discovered that her husband Knud had been informing on her under the cover name of *IM* 'Donald' for many years. There was, at least initially, a period of extreme uncertainty in interpersonal relationships when it seemed that the *IM* were 'überall und nirgendwo, fast jeder konnte es gewesen sein, und hinterher war's keiner' (J-102, p. 135). Clarifying who had or had not been an *IM* and putting an end to mass, often erroneous, speculation was considerably more difficult before the *StUG* came into force at the end of 1991. Very few *IM* were prepared to come forward and confess to their previous *Stasi* connections. Prominent citizens' rights activist Bärbel Bohley bemoaned, for example, the fact that of over 50 *IM* reporting on her, not one approached her and confessed to having collaborated (I-1). Bohley had to wait until she was granted access to her *Stasi* files before she could establish with certainty exactly who had been reporting on her activities.

8.2 NICHT-OPFER

Bärbel Bohley may have been surprised at the extent and form of the observation of her public and private life but she, as a prominent dissident, could be sure that her activities in the GDR had been closely monitored. Other citizens did not have this certainty, yet had lived their lives in the belief that their words and actions could potentially be

recorded at any time. As a result many had to some extent lived as though they were being observed, effectively assuming a role as victim, without actually knowing that this was the case:

Wie das Monster in einem Horrorfilm saß die Stasi in jeder Gesprächsrunde mit am Tisch. Sie hat das Vertrauen der Menschen in ihrem Staat zersetzt und wesentlich zu seinem Zusammenbruch beigetragen. Die Stasi bespitzelte und verfolgte. Und Millionen Bürger fühlten sich bespitzelt und verfolgt. Beide zusammen bildeten eine Horrorpartnerschaft von Verfolger und Verfolgtem, von Täter und echtem oder vermeintlichem Opfer. (J-101, p. 11)

Many of these 'vermeintliche Opfer' were, in accordance with the *Schwerpunktprinzip*, not actually under observation at all. In the Leipzig area, 500 of 670 *Operative Personenkontrollen* underway in 1989 concerned individuals involved in the church, culture, or opposition, and only 23 *Operative Vorgänge* were in operation outside these three groups (F-13, p. 32). Evidence does suggest, however, that from the outset the *Schwerpunktprinzip* was not always adhered to. Speaking in 1953, the then Secretary of State in charge of State Security, Ernst Wollweber, complained:

Die Schwäche des Informatorennetzes besteht vor allem darin, dass es auf alle Objekte gleichmässig ausgedehnt ist, ohne Berücksichtigung der Konzentration von faschistischen sowie anderen feindlichen Elementen in den wichtigsten Betrieben und Dienststellen. (F-5, I, 59)

This and later evidence suggests that a significant number of *IM* were not employed on the basis of the *Schwerpunktprinzip*, but rather because they were loyal citizens who proved relatively easy to recruit and subsequently manage. Nevertheless, the tendency to concentrate the network of observation in the three groups named above was marked, with the result that in sections of society outside these groups there was a significant number of 'vermeintliche Opfer'. Hence, a type of 'big brother' system

functioned in the minds of the East German population which often did not correspond to reality. Jurek Becker believed that this phenomenon of perceived observation, which resulted to a certain extent in the population imposing a form of self-censorship, was one of the *Stasi's* greatest strengths:

Ein~~e~~r ihrer [the *Stasi's*] größten Erfolge bestand darin, daß man sie oft auch dort vermutete, wo sie gar nicht waren. Viele Telefongespräche wurden nur im Hinblick auf den Abhörenden geführt, Briefe enthielten Floskeln, die nicht an den Adressaten gerichtet waren, sondern an den Kontrolleur, und auf Versammlungen (jedes Leben war voll von Versammlungen) klatschte man an Stellen Beifall, daß einem selbst übel davon wurde. Nach Gründen für den Zorn, der sich nun auf die verfluchte *Stasi* entlädt, braucht man also nicht lange zu suchen. (J-33, p. 77)

The fact that many more people presumed themselves observed than was actually the case is reflected in the finding that over 40% of those who apply to the *BStU* to see their *Stasi* file have to be told that no such file exists (F-8, p. 52). Some of this number are extremely reluctant to believe that this is the case and apply again in the belief that the *BStU* has not been thorough enough in the search for this material (F-8, p. 52). It is possible that the files held on a proportion of these individuals were partially or wholly destroyed in the hurried attempts of the *MfS* in the latter days of its existence to get rid of potentially explosive material. Most of these *Nicht-Opfer* are, however, faced with the probability that their activities within the GDR were simply not considered enough of a threat to warrant observation and, if they choose to confront this fact, are forced to reflect more closely on what role they actually did play in the GDR, if not that of a bona fide victim. Such a confrontation with the past requires a great deal of potentially unpleasant soul searching, and it is for this reason that Lutz Rathenow suggests that the concept of 'Aktenneid' will start appearing in psychology textbooks of the future (J-69, p. 64).

Indeed, a proportion of even those who stormed the *MfS* headquarters crying 'Ich will meine Akte', may well have since discovered that no such file exists. Rathenow believes that these and other potential sufferers from 'Aktenneid' would rather forget the past than confront it: 'Es sind auf die Dauer nicht die Täter, die eine Vergangenheitsbewältigung gefährden. Es sind die Nicht-Opfer, die kaum verkraften, nicht Opfer gewesen zu sein.' (J-69, p. 64)

The realisation that there were very many more supposed rather than genuine *Stasi* victims of observation meant that the average citizen could no longer regard him/herself as quite as distinct from the *IM*, who had previously represented 'das immanente Böse' (J-102, p. 135). Yet such individuals obviously do not then automatically belong to the category of *Täter*. If this large group of *Nicht-Opfer* did not behave in a way which warranted *MfS* observation, yet felt themselves to be opposed to the state to the extent that they suspected a file might have been held on them, how then can their behaviour pattern be best described?

8.3 OPPORTUNISTIC CONFORMITY

Das betrogene Volk betrog ja auch. Es machte seine Obrigkeit jahrelang mit all den Jubelaufmärschen, mit den Fackelumzügen besoffen. (Wolf Biermann, I-78, p. 73)

Various analyses of the average citizen's behaviour in the GDR have been proposed since 1989. Psychologist Hans-Joachim Maaz describes the East German psyche as having been characterised by a split personality (J-54, p. 76). This split in personality enabled East Germans to betray their private convictions in public, and explains why, for example, well over 90% of the population went along with the farcical voting procedure. Maaz argues that many GDR citizens simply did not feel what they saw or

heard. Had they done so, they would have had to confront their public conformity to a system about which they privately harboured grave doubts (J-54, p. 77).

Harry Schröder, by comparison, divides East Germans into three groups: standard conformists; non- or anti-conformists; opportunistic conformists (J-83, pp. 166-67, see also J-85). Standard conformists were individuals who, at least initially, believed in the system and found justification for their actions as representatives of it. The number of such individuals decreased throughout the GDR's existence, but some who had become disillusioned worked hard to continue convincing themselves of their stance, motivated by their previous commitment and by the desire to preserve the way of life to which they had become accustomed. Only a small percentage of East Germans belonged to the second group of non- or rather anti-conformists. These were individuals who spoke out or took decisive critical action against the status quo. Most East Germans fell into the third group of opportunistic conformists, defined by Schröder as follows:

Sie wurden im echten Sinne durch die Bedingungen dominiert, paßten sich ein und bedingten zugleich den Erhalt des bestehenden Staatswesens. Eine Identifikation mit den herrschenden ideologischen Werten fand immer weniger und sehr passager statt. [...] Sie waren bemüht, Möglichkeitsräume zu schaffen und auszuschöpfen, Auswüchse zu beschneiden, andere zu beschützen, Unrecht zu bekämpfen. Bei dieser Variante bestand natürlich immer die Gefahr des Opportunismus, zumeist auch das Faktum dessen. Viele DDR-Bürger berufen sich heute, um dem Vorwurf des prinzipienlosen Wendehalses zu entgehen, auf solche Reaktanz. Und die meisten haben zumindest punktuell auch irgend etwas vorzuweisen. (J-83, p. 167)

The majority had then, according to Schröder, simply learned to live with the existing power structures and to use them to their own advantage. Although, as Jens Reich suggests, many East Germans viewed the GDR with 'ironische Distanz' and may even have periodically engaged

in acts of non-conformity, their general behavioural stance was one of opportunism (I-82). This interpretation suggests that the average East German was very much aware of the degree of disparity between public conformity and private conviction, rather than that these seemingly contradictory behaviours resulted from some kind of schizophrenic or split personality.

Even prominent 'state enemies', who, undoubtedly, were not always willing to betray their private beliefs, were very much aware of the extent at other times of their own compliance. Jürgen Fuchs, for example, asks: 'Wer hat dann da nicht auch geschwiegen, irgendwie mitgemacht?' (J-26, p. 31) Compliance was widespread, and the day of true revolt came very late for many critical minds. The stance which Jens Reich admits to having taken was typical:

Viele Jahre bin ich meinem Beruf nachgegangen, habe den Mund gehalten, habe in der politischen Nische gesessen, habe erst spät, viel zu spät erkannt, daß meine Rolle im Leben nicht die sein kann, immer alles besser gewußt und geschwiegen zu haben. (I-53, p. 41)

Statements such as the above underline that conforming was often a conscious action which resulted in cognitive dissonance, rather than a behavioural tendency which was caused by a split in personality. Michael Beleites suggests that some kind of discord was inevitable, regardless of how one behaved. Both conformity and non-conformity resulted in conflict. If individuals behaved in a way which was at odds with their private beliefs, this resulted in inner conflict. If, on the other hand, they chose to resolve this inner conflict by acting in accordance with their true convictions, these actions might result in outer conflict with the state (F-14, p. 85). The majority of East Germans opted during most of the GDR's existence for the inner conflict, choosing to live with the resultant cognitive dissonance rather than with the undoubtedly more

unpredictable outer conflict of dealing with the potential wrath of the state for engaging in non-conformist activities. Jurek Becker commented that the government of the GDR was thus able to consider itself lucky since it 'hatte mit einer Bevölkerung von hoher Unterwerfungsbereitschaft zu tun, mit Bürgern, deren hauptsächliche Widerstandshandlung darin bestand, sich zu ärgern' (J-33, p. 76).

The split personality described by Maaz suggests a less conscious behaviour pattern. Schröder's term, 'opportunistic conformity', seems to be a more accurate description of the typical attitude to the state. Such a stance is a far cry from the victim status which many would have liked to be able to lay claim to.

Clearly not all former GDR citizens can be characterised as having been opportunistic conformists:

Es gibt wirkliche Täter und wirkliche Opfer, Schuldige und Unschuldige und dann auch noch dazwischen die vielen anderen - wir, die darin gelebt haben, beschäftigt mit unserem Überleben, mehr oder minder anständig, mehr oder minder klug, mehr oder minder feige oder mutig. (Wolfgang Thierse, I-75, p. 33)

The following sections will discuss the difficulties involved in defining who belongs in these categories of 'genuine *Täter*' and 'genuine *Opfer*', if the mass of the 'mehr oder minder klug, mehr oder minder feige oder mutig' is to be defined by a behaviour pattern of on the whole opportunistic conformity.

8.4 TÄTER

According to Maaz's theory, the split in personality not only allowed East German citizens to conform to a system in which they had no faith but, since the cognitive mechanism involved was one and the same, to be active as *MfS* informers. *IM*, Maaz proposes, were not like spies in films, who

slyly become involved with particular individuals solely in order to obtain information:

Nein, vielmehr sind die sogenannten Informationsdienste und das normale Leben eins. Ein Doppelleben ist gar nicht nötig und eine besondere Verstellung auch gar nicht mehr möglich, weil diese schon längst vollzogen ist, und zwar aus ganz anderen, von der Stasi völlig unabhängigen Gründen. Das Sicherheitsorgan ist nur Nutznießer davon. (J-55, p. 86)

Maaz's interpretation suggests that the *IM* was in his/her psychological make-up indistinguishable from other GDR citizens, that it was merely a question of the extent to which the *MfS* chose to make use of this inherent split personality which determined whether or not s/he became an *IM*. He proposes that it is not possible to divide East German society into *Täter* and *Opfer*, as aspects of both were incorporated in every social ranking (J-54, p. 102). Although Maaz adds that the balance of the *Täter* and *Opfer* elements and therefore the level of guilt did vary considerably, his argumentation to some extent effectively frees the *IM* from full individual responsibility for his/her actions, since these had been pre-determined by virtue of the fact that the person concerned had been raised in the GDR. One *IM* interviewed for the book *Stasi intim* argues similarly that, whether one was an *IM* or someone who was merely tolerating the regime, the same psychological mechanisms were at work:

Es ist einem über Jahre moralisch das Kreuz gebrochen worden. Über Jahre. Und das ging letztlich jedem DDR-Bürger so. Dem einen mehr, dem anderen weniger. Diese doppelte Moral, die in der Schule schon ihren Anfang nahm. Diese tagtägliche Lüge, die ja jeder mitgemacht hat in irgendeiner Form. [...] Wenn du lernst, die große politische Lüge zu akzeptieren, dann gestehst du dir kleine Lügen auch woanders zu. Unbewußt. (J-71, p. 146)

Such explanations of the average GDR citizen's behaviour relativise the potential guilt of the *IM* who, in the light of this wide-spread

compliance, can no longer be set apart to the same extent from the *Nicht-Täter/Nicht-Opfer*. Friedrich Schorlemmer is highly critical of those who do attempt to distinguish their behaviour from that of *IM*. Individuals who seek to attribute guilt to the *IM* are merely trying, according to Schorlemmer, to escape a confrontation with their own individual responsibility for not having had the courage to oppose the system: 'Was früher an Mut fehlte, kommt jetzt als Wut. In der Friedfertigkeit des Umbruchs wirkte auch die Angst vor der eigenen Courage nach. Die Rachepose ist eine Variation vierzigjähriger Feigheit, der man sich nicht zu stellen wagt.' (J-82, p. 252) Schorlemmer suggests that instead of striving to attribute guilt to particular individuals, the crimes of the past should be confronted collectively (J-81, p. 58). Playing on the title of the Mitscherlich's work on the difficulties experienced by West Germans in coming to terms with the demise of National Socialism, Schorlemmer says that most East Germans have 'gar keine Lust zu trauern' (J-57, J-81, p. 93). He adds, however, that he cannot really reproach anyone for behaving in this manner as 'so sind wir gemacht worden in diesem Land' (J-81, p. 106). Schorlemmer's argumentation seems inherently flawed, as he asks individuals to recognise that they are collectively responsible for the crimes of the past, yet at the same time liberates them from this responsibility by blaming the system for making them as they are.

8.5 THE FILES

The boundaries between the categories 'genuine *Täter*' and 'genuine *Opfer*' are to some extent only further blurred after an analysis of the *Stasi* files. An examination of an *IM* file not only reveals the extent of an *IM*'s compliance with the *MfS*, but also that of countless others who were not classified as such. These files, particularly the *Personalakten*, could only be compiled with the help of many others who held no rank with the *MfS*.

It was, for example, necessary for the *MfS* to thoroughly screen an *IM-Kandidat*. Post which the *Kandidat* and his/her immediate family received, particularly any correspondence from the FRG, was scrutinised to this end. The censoring and control of post was, indeed, widespread in the GDR, and Fricke reports that from a total of over 100,000 letters sent every day from the district of Dresden, approximately 4000-5000 were closely inspected (J-25, p. 48).

Alongside copies and the occasional photograph of suspicious letters and packages which the *IM* received, a variety of other documentation, collected in order to thoroughly vet the person concerned, is also to be found in the *Personalakte*. This can take the form of reports or references from the particular institutions with which the *IM-Kandidat* was, or had been, associated. The presence of this material is evidence that high levels of co-operation clearly existed between the *MfS* and these various bodies. The relationship between the head of a school, for example, and the *MfS* may never have been officially formalised, but s/he may well have regularly supplied the *MfS* with such documentation. In the *Personalakte* one will also find character descriptions of the *IM* or *IM-Kandidat* which were supplied by members of the general public. The *MfS* seems to have experienced little difficulty finding willing sources. Herbert K, a former *Hauptamtlicher IM*, describes carrying out enquiries with members of the general public, claiming: 'In den meisten Fällen sind wir aufgeschlossenen Leuten begegnet. [...] Was einem da alles erzählt wurde.' (J-39, p. 58) An example of this kind of compliance is found in the case of 'Reiner'. In order to check if 'Reiner' had been concealing the true nature of his work as a *Hauptamtlicher Führungs-IM* as he had pledged to do, the *MfS* decided to make enquiries with certain neighbours who were judged as trustworthy and loyal (C-4a, I, 69). Had the *MfS* not been able to rely on fairly wide

acceptance, or at the very least tolerance, of such control mechanisms it would have been considerably more difficult to sustain the system of *IM*.

The *IM*, of course, went a step beyond this unstructured compliance with the system, and although it is possible that certain informers did not cause direct harm to others during the course of their *IM-Tätigkeit*, Katrin Eigenfeld of the *Neues Forum* argued that one must also consider the indirect harm caused:

Diese IMs haben mein Leben bestimmt, mein Leben verändert in diesen zehn Jahren. So oder so, weil sie uns vergiftet haben mit Mißtrauen, sie haben Schaden angerichtet, einfach nur, daß ich vermutet habe, daß sich im meinem Umfeld IMs befinden könnten. (F-13, p. 132)

Some *IM* are in fact aware of the indirect damage which Eigenfeld describes, and 'Wolfgang' tells me how it shocked him to find out that his daughter had nightmares that she was being followed and observed by the *Stasi*, since he had previously not considered this potential indirect consequence of the *MfS*'s surveillance measures (A-7).

Even if they cannot be shown to have directly harmed others, the *MfS* method of collecting information from a number of sources and compiling it like a mosaic must be taken into account when discussing the relative guilt of former collaborators (see Section One: 4.1.3). All *IM* are, furthermore, at the very least guilty of having potentially caused their fellow citizens the sort of indirect harm which is described above. Yet this is still an unsatisfactory conclusion to the *Täter/Opfer* debate as far as the question of the *IM* is concerned, since it does not distinguish differing levels of guilt within this group. The issue is further complicated by the paradox that many *IM* actually helped the opposition movement, partly simply by swelling its ranks, but also by actively working on opposition activities. After she began working for the *MfS* as an *IM*, 'Stephana' was

encouraged by her *Führungsoffizier* to become involved with particular religious groups whose activities were considered suspect. In some ways these tasks came naturally to her since the groups' interests corresponded closely with her own:

Und mir hat es Spaß gemacht. Jedenfalls, das lag mir ja. Ich hätte's sowieso gemacht, muß ich mal sagen. Es war nichts, was ich irgendwie nicht gemacht hätte. Die haben mir manchmal bloß noch auf die Idee gebracht, 'Mensch, mach das doch', oder gestärkt in den Gedanken, 'Fahr da und da hin', also nie so, daß mir das ... mir war keine Sache eigentlich jetzt so zuwider. Und wenn ich da mitgemacht habe, dann aus vollem Herzen und habe meine Ideen mitgebracht. Da könnte man sagen schizophren. Aber ich habe gar nicht mehr denn den Auftrag gehört, sondern das war sowieso mein Leben. (A-8)

'Stephana' was therefore not only actively involved in these activities in her capacity as an *IM*, but was useful to the *MfS* precisely because of her pre-existing contacts to such groups.

Other *IM* besides 'Stephana' have a similar mix of *Täter* and *Opfer* elements in their biographies. The *MfS* began to observe 'Rolf' closely in 1983, two years before he was recruited as an *IM*. An *OPK* was put into operation after 'Rolf' had been observed carrying photo equipment in a forest close by a Soviet training ground, and it was suspected that he might be engaged in foreign espionage (C-1a, p. 2). When these observations led to the conclusion that 'Rolf' was merely engaged in studying the flora and fauna of the area it was decided that he should be 'weiter als IM-Kandidat aufgeklärt [...] und ein IM-Vorlauf angelegt werden. Das Material der *OPK* soll in den IM-Vorlauf übernommen_a (C-1a, p. 3) In order to establish that 'Rolf' was not involved in anti-state activities he was then observed and manipulated by other *IM*. Afterwards, he remained interesting to the *MfS* only because of the contacts he had made through his commitment to environmental issues. Indeed, one of the main stipulations for recruiting *IM* under the *Schwerpunktprinzip* was

precisely that they have connections to 'operativ interessante Personen' (F-3, p. 312). This means that many *IM* have such a *Täter/Opfer* biography, and it is often extremely difficult to determine to what extent they are 'wirkliche Schuldige oder Unschuldige' (Thierse, I-75, p. 33).

8.6 OPFER

Even those involved in the opposition scene, generally regarded as belonging to the group of 'genuine *Opfer*', often worked in a sense within rather than against the status quo. Ibrahim Böhme's budding political career came to an abrupt end when, in early 1990, he was revealed to have been an *IM*. The news only served to confirm the suspicion which at least some of his many acquaintances had harboured for some time. Markus Meckel, for example, told journalist Birgit Lahann that in GDR times Böhme seemed to have a considerable amount of information about certain high-ranking party officials: 'Im Grunde genommen, sagt Meckel, war das ein Verdachtsmoment. Aber die Informationen waren für uns auch wichtig.' (J-49, p. 216) Although many must have seriously suspected Böhme of holding dubious contacts to the *MfS*, they decided not to confront this situation, but rather to try and use it to their advantage. By doing so they allowed themselves to fall into the structures of conspiracy which the *MfS* had created.

Similarly, after *IM* 'Rolf' confessed to a man on whom he was supposed to be reporting that he was working for the *Stasi*, he and the man conspired for a time to write the reports which 'Rolf' subsequently supplied his *Führungsoffizier* with. The man hoped that if 'Rolf' turned in positive reports about him he would be able to convince the *Stasi* indirectly that he was not a danger to the state, and that the travel restrictions which had been imposed upon him would subsequently be relaxed. In acting in this way the man not only played along with the

rules of the game as decreed by the *Stasi*, but also, in order to clear his own name, seems to have distanced himself in reports from other potential *Stasi-Opfer*. In one report, for example, it is stated that 'Rolf's' acquaintance is not in agreement with the tenor of documentation released from the *Umweltbibliothek* and that he believes that another man involved in these activities is only trying to make a name for himself (C-1b, p. 40). One could argue in his defence that this *Opfer* was left with no alternative to try and improve his situation. Had his plan been successful he would have undoubtedly been able to ultimately achieve more for the environmental issues he was concerned with.

Perhaps the course of action which 'Rolf' and this man took may also have presented itself as the most obvious, since its secretive and indirect nature was more than familiar to those who lived in the GDR:

Das offene Austragen von Konflikten gab es doch nicht. Immer gab es nur Fluchten und Nischen. Ein paar Leute sind in die Kirche geflüchtet, ein paar in die Kulturnischen, in irgendwelche Zirkel, und alles hatte immer den Anstrich von Konspiration. (Ang elika Barbe, J-49, p. 243)

These niches often remained just that and did little to threaten political and social structures. In a sense their existence allowed people to feel that they were involved in some kind of non-conformist activity and thereby to reduce any cognitive dissonance they felt about generally betraying their private convictions publicly. The reduction in dissonance which they experienced in such niches meant that they tended to comply with state policies when outside them, and perhaps partly accounted for the fact, as Eppelmann formulates it, that 'es herrschte ein millionfaches Schweigen über Ereignisse, die nie hätten verschwiegen werden dürfen' (J-23, p. 37). Eppelmann admits in this context that events organised by his church, such as the 'Bluesmessen', which were kept under intense observation,

acted in some ways as a kind of therapy for society: 'Schließlich riefen wir ja nicht dazu auf, die Regierung zu stürzen.' (J-23, p. 158)

The sociologist Wolf Lepenies contrasts the opposition movement in the GDR to that in other Eastern Block countries, describing the East German opposition as having been distinct, in that its supporters were never really concerned with gaining power (J-51, p. 32). This led to the development of 'eine jeder Politik gegenüber skeptische Dissidentengesinnung auf Kosten einer wirksamen Oppositionspolitik', in which no real thought was given as to how an individual viewpoint could become the opinion of the majority (J-51, pp. 34, 36).

By their own admission, those involved in the opposition in the GDR were certainly content at times with their position in society and may not always have really striven to overthrow the existing social order. Lutz Rathenow leaves no doubt that he and those like him suffered for their beliefs but that 'zu anderen Zeiten war das Leben durchaus nicht so unbequem, auch "Dissident" war ein Status in der Staatshierarchie' (J-68, p. 1465). The injustices to which many of these dissidents were subjected were, of course, severe, and Jürgen Fuchs's portrayal of the manner in which he was mentally and physically manipulated in captivity before being forced to leave the GDR should serve as a reminder of the brutality of which the *MfS* was capable (J-28).

8.7 CONCLUSIONS

A substantial proportion of the *Stasi* debate has been characterised by attempts to establish where any one particular individual's behaviour could be placed on the *Täter/Opfer* spectrum, and the question of the relative guilt of the *IM* has been one of the central issues in this discussion. Attributing responsibility to individual *IM* is not easy. One could say that all *IM*, because they worked directly with this system, carry

in some way a portion of the guilt for the injustices carried out. The *IM* network was, however, only capable of functioning within a society whose citizens had on the whole come to accept and even comply with the structures that supported this system of control.

There have thus been many calls for a shift away from an often futile attempt to define East Germans in terms of *Täter/Opfer* categories. Dönhoff argues that since such a mass categorisation is not feasible, the aim of a confrontation with the recent past ought to be 'nicht individuell Belastete zu ermitteln, sondern kollektive Einsichten zu vermitteln (J-20, p. 12). The majority of East Germans have, however, in the face of the social and economical upheaval which unification has brought, no inclination to confront the past collectively. On a one-to-one level such a confrontation is also not taking place. Several *IM* I spoke to were disappointed by the apparent lack of interest aroused by their confessions of having been active as an *IM*. 'Theodor' described how when he confessed to a friend that he had reported on him, the man reacted with silence:

Ich hoffte auf seine Fragen. Die blieben aus, ich erinnere mich noch meiner Enttäuschung. Vielleicht fühlte er sich einfach überfordert. [...] Es wollte ja keiner wissen, wie es für mich dazu kam. Die Arbeit der Selbstanalyse mußte ich schon für mich allein leisten. Es war nicht schmeichelhaft für mich, was da herauskam. (B-3)

'Rolf' was similarly disappointed by the lack of interest, as he saw it, in really understanding how the *MfS* had functioned: 'Das hat nie groß interessiert, wie hat dieses System funktioniert, wie hat dieser personelle Aufbau auch funktioniert, wie hat sich diese ganze Hierarchie zusammengesetzt.' (A-1)

Difficulties in realising fruitful dialogue in such confrontations often arise because, having confessed, the *IM* seems to await guidance as to how the conversation should progress. Stefan Heym describes how he

realised with astonishment one day that a man who had come to him and confessed that he had reported on him was actually awaiting absolution (J-36, p. 92). Heym sees such behaviour as resulting from gross deficiencies in the confrontation with the *Stasi* past. Scores of people in united Germany, he argues, have become victims of a 'Beichtsyndrom': 'Dem einen Teil der Bevölkerung wird unentwegt zugeredet, er möge nur vortreten zur medienwirksamen Beichte, dann würde alles wohler werden, politisch und überhaupt; und der andere lechzt danach, daß ihm was Sensationelles vorgebeicht^{et} wird.' (J-36, p. 92)

Another contributing factor underlying the apparent lack of willingness on behalf of East Germans to analyse the structures which supported the GDR has been that many feel that they share a common identity as the underdogs in the new Germany. Much of the anger which was originally directed at those within the GDR was later focused on those in positions of power in former West Germany who, as the full economic scale of unification began to be felt in the former East, were often apportioned blame for making East Germans the victims and losers. Faced with the demands of coming to terms with unemployment and a new, less rigid, social structure, many East Germans indulge in what has become known as *Ostalgie*. A critical confrontation with the past does not facilitate this nostalgic reminiscing about the good old days. For this reason the more criminal aspects of life in the GDR are often conveniently forgotten in order to allow full indulgence in a shared sense of victimisation and in a mourning for what has been lost. Originally many more former GDR citizens considered themselves *Stasi* victims, and the extent of the *MfS*'s might was exaggerated in the confrontation with the past. The more evil the *Stasi* was portrayed as being, the easier it was to justify conformity, and in 1990 Jurek Becker observed:

Der besondere Eifer, mit dem die Stasi-Schikanen nun angeprangert und verfolgt werden, scheint mir für viele wie ein Versuch, die eigene Unterwürfigkeit ungeschehen zu machen. Je schrecklicher die Bedrohung dargestellt wird, der man ausgesetzt war, für um so verständlicher muß das jahrzehntelange Parieren gehalten werden. Wenn man ihnen schon den perfekten Untertan gespielt hat, sollte man da nicht wenigstens glauben dürfen, daß einem nichts anderes übriggeblieben ist? (J-33, p. 77)

The feeling of hatred towards *MfS* employees and particularly towards *IM* has diminished greatly since 1990, and many East Germans are ready to forget or disregard the severe injustices inflicted on what is really a very small minority who were not content to conform in the past. The small group of 'genuine *Opfer*' are left marginalised and often despised for their attempts to keep the debate alive. Chaim Noll refers to the increasingly prevalent readiness to forgive and forget as an 'allesbedeckender Brei der Versöhnung', within which compliance with the system becomes accepted as having been the norm and opposition as deviation from this normality (J-65, pp. 98-99). Both groups at either end of the *Täter / Opfer* spectrum, that is those of 'genuine *Opfer*' and of 'genuine *Täter*' are very small minorities and represent to many an unwelcome reminder of their own conformity and of the serious flaws in a state whose loss they wish to mourn. A wide-spread societal confrontation with the methods and structures of the *MfS* has not taken place. Emphasis has rather been placed on a more superficial sensationalist approach to the *Stasi* legacy, in which the behaviour of specific individuals has been highlighted, rather than the general tendencies of the collective. Many East Germans are now eager to ignore the failings of the past system and are keen, depending on their age and on their immediate social and economic situation, either to embrace the new system or to reminisce about the former one. In doing so they have defined new categories of *Täter* and *Opfer* relevant to the

current political situation, rendering, at least in the interim, the old ones and the debate concerning them increasingly obsolete.

Section Two: Chapter Nine

LOOKING BACK:

A STASI INFORMER'S CONFRONTATION WITH THE PAST

9.1 THE ART OF MEMORY

9.1.1 The Phenomenon of Apparent Forgetting

Ich bin dankbar dafür, daß ich vergessen hatte, anscheinend schon sehr früh. Wie hätte ich all die Jahre mit diesem Wissen leben und schreiben sollen, wem ich mich offenbaren können.¹

Christa Wolf's popularity in her own country was largely due to the critical stance she took towards the state in her work whilst remaining still fundamentally supportive of socialist principles. She was highly celebrated in the West precisely because of this critical stance, somewhat ironically enjoying greater popularity than others who were less content to comply with the restrictions imposed upon them by strict censorship, and who had thus, willingly or unwillingly, left the GDR and gone to the West. When, in early 1993, the news broke that Wolf had, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, held contacts to the *MfS* as a *GI* (*Geheimer Informator*) under the cover name of 'Margarete', a fierce attack was launched on her person by her critics old and new, in what seemed to be a continuation of the controversy which had surrounded the publication of *Was bleibt* several years previously (J-104). After the hysteria had subsided, and the evidence from the files was examined more objectively, it was generally accepted that the extent of Wolf's compliance had been minimal and had encompassed only a brief period of time. It was argued in her defence that Wolf and her husband had been subjected to well over twenty years of what was at times round-the-clock surveillance as a result of the very much more critical stance she had developed towards the state after an initial period of youthful political naïveté (J-99, pp. 201, 340). This was undoubtedly the case, yet the real shock lay not in the fact that Wolf had

¹ Christa Wolf, after her claim that she had suppressed the memory of her contact to the *MfS* as an informer (J-99, p. 203).

held contacts of this kind to the *MfS* per se, but rather in her apparent forgetting of these events until confronted with the documentation of them in her *MfS* files:

Ich fand aber bei meinen Akten, zu einem 'Auskunftsbericht', auch ein dünnes Faszikel, aus dem ich erfuhr, daß die Stasi mich von 59 bis 62 zunächst als 'GI' ('Gesellschaftlicher Informant') dann als 'IM' geführt hat. Das traf mich völlig unvorbereitet. (J-99, pp. 143-44)²

In not admitting to having collaborated with the *MfS* until the irrefutable evidence from the files lay before her, Wolf displayed what has come to be a classic behaviour pattern witnessed in former *IM*. The *IM* denies having held such contacts to the *MfS* until evidence from the files is produced which renders any further denial futile. At this point s/he claims to have suppressed all previous knowledge of the *IM-Tätigkeit* until the documentation has evoked these lost memories. Often this memory jolt is so effective that the *IM* then seems to remember many details of the contact to the *MfS* and tries to relativise it by claiming, for example, that s/he never reported anything of consequence and cannot be held responsible for causing any harm to fellow GDR citizens (see Section Two: 9.2).

The silence on the part of former *IM* until they are unmasked has infuriated those who were observed by such individuals. Many hold the view that this silence is almost more reprehensible than the deed itself. Advocating the resignation of Manfred Stolpe, Vera Wollenberger said that, whereas Stolpe's co-operation with the *MfS* was in itself highly questionable, 'noch schlimmer, ja fatal, ist jedoch das spätere Verschweigen' (I-16).

² A *GI* was actually a *Geheimer Informator*, an earlier term for an *IMS*. Wolf appears here to have confused the terms *GI* and *GMS* (*Gesellschaftlicher Mitarbeiter für Sicherheit*).

There are obvious practical reasons behind an *IM*'s conscious decision to remain silent about his/her *Stasi* connections. The individual may fear being sacked, or s/he may be concerned about the negative social implications which potentially follow such a confession. Rainer Schedlinski had the following to say on the matter:

Solange die Feuilletonisten sich über die fehlende Geständnisbereitschaft jener *IM*'s [sic] beklagen, aber gleichzeitig nicht bereit sind, andere Erklärungsmuster zuzulassen als Schizophrenie, Korruption, Erpressung oder den postmodernen Verlust der Wahrheitskategorie, liegt das Unverständnis bei ihnen selbst. Dann freilich werden ihnen die Angesprochenen wohl für alle Zeit jene Erklärungen schuldig bleiben, die man von ihnen erwartet, denn wollte man sich zu dieser Wahrheit bekennen, müßte man lügen. (J-77, p. 75)

Sascha Anderson, like Schedlinski a writer who belonged to the Prenzlauer Berg scene in Berlin, was sensationally outed by Wolf Biermann in 1991 as having been an *IM*. Biermann made the revelation in his speech on the receipt of the *Georg-Büchner-Preis*, referring to Anderson as 'der unbegabte Schwätzer Sascha Arschloch, ein Stasispitzel, der immer noch cool den Musensohn spielt und hofft, daß seine Akten nie auftauchen' (J-10, p. 300). *IM* such as Anderson and Schedlinski often decide after there can be no doubt in their own minds that they were considered bona fide *IM*, not to admit to this fact publicly until they are effectively forced to. Christa Wolf herself waited well over half a year after viewing the evidence in her files before she decided to make this information public. Yet, what of the period before an *IM* is confronted with evidence from the files? Are the statements of former *IM* who claim that they had actually suppressed the knowledge of their actions to be taken at face value? Is it at all possible that the desire not to have been an *IM* is so strong that it can actually block the memories of this period of an individual's past life?

9.1.2 Perceptions of Self in Autobiographical Memory

Psychologists researching autobiographical memory have tended in recent times to reject copy theories of memory, which traditionally supported the notion that what was remembered was an exact replica of a past event. Michael Ross has researched extensively into the area of autobiographical memory, finding further evidence that individuals employ 'implicit theories of self to construct their personal histories' (J-74, p. 341). In other words, people will tend to use their current perception of self to infer their past behaviour. Unless information is salient to a subject which leads him/her to believe that personal attitudes and therefore behaviour have undergone change, then s/he will tend to exaggerate the similarity of past to present. When, in 1981, Ross and Conway had two groups of subjects listen to differing statements about health care they found that those subjects who heard that frequent tooth brushing could damage teeth, reported brushing their teeth less often than those who heard a message praising tooth brushing (J-75, pp. 127-28). Ross and Conway concluded that since people are 'cognitive conservatives who bias their memories so as to deny change and maintain temporal consistency and coherence', 'attitudes that are salient and are judged relevant to the behaviour in question may guide reconstructive memory' (J-75, pp. 128, 135). This is the basic principle of 'Dissonance Theory', formulated in 1973 by Goethals and Reckman, which proposed that, since individuals feel uncomfortable when they realise current attitudes clash with prior ones, they tend to reduce this discomfort (dissonance) by forgetting their original stance and presuming that their opinions have not altered (J-75, p. 131). The results of this line of research are applied below in a possible explanation of the phenomenon of apparent forgetting witnessed in former *IM*.

The majority of East Germans citizens conformed at least superficially with state policies for most of the GDR's forty year existence, with many displaying their genuine dissatisfaction and disillusionment only in late 1989. It is often claimed that the demonstrations throughout East Germany at this time played a major contributing factor *in* the fall of the regime, and, although many GDR citizens were taken by surprise at the speed with which unification was achieved, these events tended, at least in the Western media, to be interpreted as an indication that the *Volk* was liberating itself from the throes of communism and embracing the capitalist system. This course of events, one could suppose, led to a change in the self-perception of many GDR citizens, who now considered themselves to have been active opponents of the *SED* state. Applying Ross's findings, that individuals tend to believe their attitudes remain constant over time, one could assume that those who were dissatisfied with the state in 1989 would tend to presume this had been their attitude before this time and, since people believe behaviour reflects attitude, could believe that they displayed this discontentment prior to 1989. This would partly account for the fact that many are reluctant to accept that they were not under direct surveillance (F-8, p. 52, see also Section Two: 8.3). The perception of oneself as a non-conformer is then perhaps strengthened when individuals reconstruct memories of past behaviour on the basis of present, more critical, attitudes towards the GDR. This is not to say that former *IM* cannot remember having had any contacts to the *MfS*, rather that the *IM* remembers the contacts as such, that s/he was visited by an *MfS* officer on several occasions, for example, but strives to convince him/herself that this contact never took on the concrete form of an agreement to co-operate as an *IM*. Ross has shown that people generally have difficulty accurately reconstructing their personal histories and infer their past behaviour from current attitudes and perceptions of self. This

self-image is currently being re-evaluated and perhaps re-defined for the majority of former GDR citizens in the context of the vast societal upheaval which they have witnessed. When the element of the social and psychological undesirability of having been an *IM* is added to the equation, it is hardly surprising that in order even just to preserve their self-esteem, *IM* often apply a sort of 'can't have been' approach to constructing their own personal history. This is confirmed by a statement from Jutta Braband, who resigned her political mandate for the *PDS* after viewing her *Stasi* files. Braband described her shock at being confronted with the details of her *IM-Tätigkeit* which she found in these files: 'Was ich noch erinnert habe, war furchtbar harmlos. [...] Ich hatte eine Version der ganzen Geschichte im Kopf, die mein Selbstbild nicht erschüttern konnte.' (I-41, p. 40)

The issue is further complicated by the fact that even when they were actively collaborating, *IM* may well have had a complex relationship to the self. Commenting on the cases of Anderson and Schedlinski, the journalist Mathias Ehlert said that the: 'Wahrnehmung von sich selbst unterscheidet sich grundlegend von der Wahrheit der Akten. [...] Sie waren an beide Systeme angeschlossen, waren inoffizielle Gesprächspartner einer Macht, mit der sie in ihrem offiziellen Selbstverständnis nichts zu tun haben wollte.' (I-28)

9.1.3 Terminological Considerations

The question of terminology is often neglected in a consideration of the phenomenon of apparent forgetting witnessed in former *Stasi* collaborators. The term *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* has only come into general usage since 1989, and although 'Stephana' was very much aware that by 1989 she had been meeting with a representative of the *MfS* for approximately four years, she did not know that the terminology used to

describe this relationship was that of an *IM* meeting with an *Operativer Mitarbeiter*: 'Dieser Begriff IM, der ist mir wirklich erst lange nach der Wende bewußt geworden.' (A-8) She describes her gradual realisation that she too was one of the group of *IM* who was suddenly receiving so much media attention as follows: "'Bist du auch einer? Bist du keiner? Ach Quatsch, bist du keiner ... dann, Bist du doch einer?'" (A-8)

It is not merely the label *Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter* which is novel for the informer, but much of the terminology which was developed and applied in this highly refined system of observation and control. 'Wolfgang', for example, uses the term *Führungsoffizier* when narrating his biography, but adds ironically 'wie man heute so schön sagt' (A-7). 'Thaer' considered his *Führungsoffizier* to be a friend and equal and rejects the hierarchy implied by this label (A-5).

The entire *Stasi* debate is conducted in what are for the majority of *IM* previously unfamiliar linguistic concepts, and the informer must first identify him/herself with the terminology used to define his/her past actions and re-evaluate and re-define his/her image of self and of personal history in order to incorporate these structures. That much of the terminology applied in the *Stasi* debate was previously not in everyday usage is underlined by the following words from 'Katrin' concerning her recruitment: 'Ich habe ja auch 'was unterschrieben. Das hat man mir diktiert. Da steht aber nicht Verpflichtungserklärung darüber, und selbst dann habe ich nicht mehr gewußt, was dadrin steht.' (A-9)

Experiments into learning have shown that, although memory is usually more accurate if recall takes place in the same context as original learning, the exact reinstatement of the incidental environmental context is not always necessary. Recall can still take place when the subject is simply asked to imagine the original learning environment (J-90, p. 170). The results of experiments concerning recall for learned knowledge

cannot, of course, automatically be directly applied in an interpretation of the phenomenon of apparent forgetting witnessed in *IM*, yet perhaps they can shed light on some of the issues involved. Since the GDR no longer exists as a physical entity, it is perhaps more difficult for former *IM* to imagine the incidental environmental context of, for example, recruitment. The individual such as Christa Wolf who looks back on his/her life in the GDR does so from within a newly defined physical context and using linguistic references which are, for most, novel. Recall for the details, if not the essence, of *Stasi* collaboration, may thus be impeded.

A main failing of the debate concerning the relative guilt or innocence of the *IM* has been the emphasis placed on the details rather than on the essence of an *IM-Tätigkeit*. This was particularly the case in the debate concerning Manfred Stolpe (see Section Two: 6.1.7). The *Untersuchungsausschuß* spent much time on the what proved futile attempt to establish, for example, where, when, and from whom Stolpe had received the *Verdienstmedaille*. It is conceivable that Stolpe was consciously lying, but just as plausible that he was no longer sure of the exact course of events surrounding this episode. Once again it is possible to draw on evidence from studies into memory which indicate that an individual may have difficulty recalling his/her whereabouts even for significant life events. Larsen, a Danish psychologist, kept a diary for six months and, without first consulting it, later tested his memory of his whereabouts on particular days. He found that he had remembered hearing about the Chernobyl disaster on the radio in the morning. His diary told him, however, that he had been 'at Pia's place just after work' when he heard the news (J-103, pp. 289-90). Larsen's recall was also inaccurate for his whereabouts when he discovered that the Swedish Prime Minister, Olaf Palme, had been assassinated, an event of

considerable impact for any Scandinavian. Larsen found these memories so vivid that only the diary convinced him that they were false.

In the Stolpe debate no certainty could be ever established on matters such as the details surrounding the awarding of the *Verdienstmedaille*. The accounts from Stolpe and the *MfS* officers questioned by the *Ausschuß* were often vague and contradictory, and the whole issue became at times merely comical. By placing the emphasis on the details of Stolpe's contact to the *MfS* rather than on their general nature it seemed that an individual was free from guilt if certain formal criteria relating to an *IM-Tätigkeit* had not been met. The silence on the part of some *IM* may be partly a result of this focus on detail. Some *IM* may attempt, for example, to convince themselves that they did not actually sign a *Verpflichtungserklärung* and were perhaps only classed a *Kontaktperson*: 'Kontaktpersonen sind vertrauenswürdige Bürger der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, die zur Lösung bestimmter Aufgaben angesprochen werden. Es erfolgt keine Anwerbung als Kontaktperson.' (J-62, p. 205) Since a *Kontaktperson* would not face the same potential repercussions for having complied with the *MfS*, there is an obvious incentive to remain silent about contacts to the organisation if the individual is unsure of how exactly these were defined. A confrontation with individual behaviour is not facilitated in this atmosphere where terminology rather than substance is often the foremost factor in deciding a person's fate.

In summary, there are then many reasons why an *IM* remains silent about his/her contacts to the *MfS*, particularly if these contacts lie, as they did in Christa Wolf's case, in the distant past. An altered image of self, combined with the social undesirability of having been an *IM*, leads the individual to adopt a 'can't have been' attitude to the confrontation with the past, believing that present attitudes must reflect past

behaviour. The *Stasi* debate has, furthermore, been characterised by the often sensational unmasking of certain individuals as former *IM*. Ultimately, however, they only seem to suffer serious repercussions for having been so if absolute proof, generally in the form of a *Verpflichtungserklärung*, can be produced. In this sense the certified *IM* have to some extent been made scapegoats in the reckoning with the GDR past, and a consideration of individual roles outside this framework has not taken place. Since *IM* can lose their jobs on account of their former *Stasi* collaboration, there are no legal, only moral incentives for admitting to an *IM-Tätigkeit*, especially if there is any element of doubt whatsoever on the part of the individual concerned.

9.1.4 Release

Once the moment has come when they can no longer publicly or privately deny their *IM-Tätigkeit*, many *IM* seem more than keen to talk of it. Since none of them approached him, Klaus Hugler, who had been active in church groups in the GDR, decided after reading his *Stasi* file to contact the *IM* who had been reporting on him. Although these individuals had remained silent until he approached them, they seemed to respond immediately he did so, almost as if they had been waiting for this moment. *IM* 'Gerhard Winzer', for example, got in touch the day after Hugler wrote to him (J-37, p. 93). 'Fritz Wunok' phoned Hugler immediately after receiving his letter and arranged to travel from Bavaria to meet with Hugler in Potsdam the very next day (J-37, pp. 94-95). This urgency would suggest that these *IM* had been holding out as long as possible, hoping that perhaps the contact to the *MfS* would remain undisclosed. As soon as the *IM* realises that s/he has been unmasked there seems, in some cases, to be a tremendous need to talk of the contact. It should not be ruled out that Hugler's *IM* expressed such an urgency to see

him as they hoped to persuade him not to inform others of their former *Stasi* collaboration. This explanation would not, however, account for why the *IM* profiled in this study were prepared to talk to me. Although I had guaranteed them anonymity, there was undoubtedly a certain amount of risk involved in engaging in such dialogue with a complete stranger. When I asked them why they had decided to speak to me, I received varying responses. 'Rolf' and 'Stephana' both said that they felt the need to talk of this aspect of their biography in an attempt to come to terms with it (A-1, A-8). 'Falke' and 'Katrin' emphasised that it was important that their version of events be heard (A-3, A-9). I suspect that most of my interviewees were glad to have someone to relate their story to, and that talking to me afforded them the welcome opportunity of doing so without having to fear any negative repercussions which might follow the admission or discussion of an *IM-Tätigkeit* in their own immediate circle of acquaintances.

Walter Schilling also suggests that many *IM* do wish to break their silence over their *IM-Tätigkeit*, but simply do not find the strength to do so:

Alle *IM* müssen enttarnt werden; Nachdruck auf 'enttarnt'. Das hat mir selber einer gesagt: Ihr habt mich enttarnen müssen; ich hätte es von allein nicht gekonnt. Die Macht der Konspiration ist so groß, daß er das gar nicht kann, ähnlich einem, der sein Suchtverhalten nicht zugeben kann. (F-13, p. 98)

9.1.5 Selective Memory

In cases where the *IM* does sooner or later admit to the *IM-Tätigkeit*, a pattern of selective memory, or rather selective confrontation, develops in the way in which s/he consequently narrates the past. The *IM* will maintain that s/he is certain of particular details of the co-operation with the *MfS*, while still claiming not to remember, for example, ever having

received financial rewards, having met with the *MfS* officer in a *Konspirative Wohnung*, or at what point the work as an *IM* was discontinued.

Even when an *IM* does finally admit to his/her *Stasi* contacts and is prepared to talk of them, this confrontation is then one which is fraught with denial, suppression, half-truths and ambiguities. The public debate concerning the *IM* has to a large extent been concerned with the moral issue of how such individuals should confront this aspect of their biographies. Statements made by former *IM* are often disregarded if they do not correspond to factual evidence, and an analysis of these statements and therefore of the way in which such individuals actually are confronting their past tends to be neglected. Yet this latter issue is particularly worthy of study as, after all, the 'importance of oral testimony may often lie not in its adherence to facts but rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire break in' (J-67, p. 100).

9.2 'ICH HABE NIEMANDEM GESCHADET':³ COPING/LEGITIMATION STRATEGIES FOR CONFRONTING AN *IM* PAST

9.2.1 General

Very few *IM* are prepared to admit publicly to any feelings of guilt whatsoever on account of their *IM-Tätigkeit*. They tend rather to trivialise and justify their actions using a repertoire of by now standard legitimisation strategies. These strategies might at first seem to be feeble excuses for morally questionable behaviour. When they are more closely examined, such statements can, however, provide valuable insights into the way in which former *IM* publicly and privately confront their *Stasi*

³ A common justificatory statement from former *IM*. For a list of such typical legitimisation arguments, see J-87, pp. 6-9.

past, as well as into the way in which they viewed the contacts to the *MfS* at the time of the *IM-Tätigkeit*.

9.2.2 'Das Normalste auf der Welt': (A-9)

The Normalisation/Trivialisation Approach

'Katrín' claims that as a convinced patriot, it was 'das Normalste auf der Welt' for her to agree to co-operate with the *MfS* as an *Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter* (A-9). In a pamphlet advertising her candidacy for election to the *Bundestag* in 1995, she writes that she initially viewed the contact to the *MfS* 'als Beitrag zum Schutz der DDR und erst mit ihrem Verlauf kamen mir Zweifel an ihrem Sinn und ihrer Berechtigung'. Speaking to me, she also claims: 'Das, was heute als Spitzeltätigkeit beschrieben wird, ist etwas, was ich eingeordnet hatte. Also, ich würde nie sagen, daß ich ein Spitzel war.' (A-9) 'Katrín' would put a cross in her diary on the days when she was to meet her *Führungsoffizier*, but thought no more of it: 'Das hat überhaupt nicht beunruhigt, beschäftigt.' (A-9) The *IM* files relating to 'Katrín' present a slightly different picture. 'Katrín's' *Führungsoffizier* noted that after she arrived in Leningrad, where she was to be active as an *IM* while carrying out her studies, she did not abide by the agreement to contact him by telephone. Several months passed until she was prompted by a letter to get in touch with him. A meeting was arranged soon afterwards, at which she excused herself by saying that the telephone number given to her in the GDR had slipped her mind (C-7b, p. 19). The *Führungsoffizier* subsequently noted in the *Treffbericht*: 'Die ganze Schilderung war ihr recht unangenehm.' (C-7b, p. 19) This suggests that the story about the forgotten telephone number was perhaps fabricated and that for some reason 'Katrín' had begun to feel that these duties were not 'das Normalste auf der Welt' after all.

The information in the files of the *IM* to whom I spoke indicates that most were plagued by scruples at some point during their *IM-Tätigkeit* (see Section One: 4.1.5). 'Rolf's' *Führungsoffizier* noted at the beginning of his *IM-Tätigkeit*: 'Der IM möchte niemanden [sic] durch seine Berichterstattung Nachteile verschaffen. Bestimmte moralische Hemmnisse liegen beim IM noch durchaus vor.' (C-1b, p. 39) The *MfS* was well aware that *IM* tended to be troubled by such doubts and documented methods of reducing these by aiming to convince *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* that their actions were morally justifiable. In an introductory speech to a seminar on the work with *IM*, Mielke stated: 'Es muß jedem IM klargemacht werden, daß zwischen der konspirativen Arbeit für das *MfS* und der Spitzeltätigkeit feindlicher Agenten Welten liegen, die einen Vergleich zwischen beiden verbieten.' (F-5, I, 536)

There are of course cases of *IM* who genuinely did not doubt the morality of their actions. In the files held on IM 'Falke' there seems to be no indication whatsoever that he at any time expressed doubts about his role as an *IM* (C-3a, b). In conversation 'Falke' emphasises repeatedly how much this work was merely part of his daily routine, and when I ask him if he felt relieved after it became known that he had been an *IM*, he replies: 'Das hat mich nicht belastet.' (A-3) Cases such as 'Falke' are, I would argue, rather the exception. Former *IM* are more often reluctant to admit to the genuine doubts they experienced as they would then be unable to employ this particular justification strategy of normalisation/trivialisation.

At the time when s/he was active as such, an *IM* could only guess at how many other *IM* were working for the *MfS*. Some were flattered to believe that they belonged to a select few GDR citizens deemed worthy of carrying out this important task. 'Theodor', for example, considered the invitation to co-operate as an *IM* 'eine außerordentliche Ehre' (A-2). *IM*

'Stephana' needed a long time after the *Wende* to come to terms with the fact that she belonged to the large group of *IM*: 'Man denkt ja immer, man ist ein Einzelfall.' (A-8) Whereas at the time of their active involvement with the *MfS* some informers tended to consider their situation special, out of the ordinary, and perhaps this feeling even led to increased motivation, the same individuals justify their collaboration today by stressing exactly the opposite, that is that the contacts were an integral part of their daily lives, a regular feature of their routine, which, since it was in essence trivial, even banal, was morally justifiable and as such never really a source of doubt or scruples.

9.2.3 'Das ist eigentlich eine gute Sache':⁴ The *IM* as Mediator and Helper

One of the most sensational revelations of previous *Stasi* collaboration was the case of Knud Wollenberger, who was discovered to have informed on his wife Vera under the cover name *IM* 'Donald'. 'Donald' admitted publicly to no feelings of guilt for his actions, claiming:

I was reporting on myself as much as anyone. [...] Often I was telling him [his *Führungsoffizier*] what I said and did. These ideas were all part of what should have been possible in this country. Our activities were very public. I tried to influence my handler to change his thinking. By telling the *Stasi* about our ideas, I'm sure I influenced them. (J-73, p. 378)

'Donald' was not alone in trying to convince himself that what he was doing was of benefit to the opposition scene in which he and his wife were involved. The *MfS* wanted the *IM* to believe that there was a meaningful purpose to collaboration, and, as discussed earlier, this *Sinn-Angebot* was often influential in an *IM-Kandidat's* decision to co-operate with the *MfS* at the time of recruitment (see Section One: 3.2). Often, as in 'Rolf's' case,

⁴ 'Rolf', justifying his initial willingness to co-operate (A-1).

the belief in the *Sinn-Angebot* was short-lived, and although both the *IM* and the *MfS* endeavoured to keep it alive, it ceased in many cases to be a real motivating factor. In other cases events took exactly the opposite course, where an *IM* recruited on the basis of 'kompromittierendes Material' later developed a *Sinn-Angebot* as an internal justification and therefore coping strategy. This was the case for *IM* 'Stephana', who, at least initially, understood her co-operation as a direct consequence of the threats made against her at recruitment because of her role in the attempted *Republikflucht* of an acquaintance of hers. Later she tried to find meaning and purpose in the contact to the *MfS*:

Ich hatte so langsam das Gefühl, ich war so ein Mittler, daß diese Veranstaltungen einerseits stattfinden konnten, ja, und andererseits habe ich dem natürlich erzählt, ja, nicht immer die Wahrheit, sondern auch immer noch mehr schöngefärbt, als es dann eigentlich tatsächlich oppositionell war. (A-8)

The word 'langsam' is significant in 'Stephana's' statement as it indicates that she developed this personal legitimation argument over time. It is evident that statements such as these are not merely justifications which informers employ now in a public forum, but ones which they developed and used at the time of their collaboration as a means of privately rationalising behaviour. This phenomenon led one commentator to remark of Knud Wollenberger's arguments: 'So abstoßend Wollenbergers selbstgerechter Ton klingt, so schwer ist zu erkennen, wo die Grenzen liegen zwischen nachträglicher Legende und ursprünglicher Überzeugung.' (I-38, p. 36)

This particular justification/coping strategy was at times not entirely unfounded. Evidence can be found in the files of occasions when *IM* were clearly trying to use their position to benefit others. *IM* 'Sonnenblume' stressed in a report to her *Führungsoffizier* that an

acquaintance who had applied for a visa to visit a relative in Sweden was not planning to use this opportunity to flee the GDR (C-8b, pp. 21-22). Indeed, the majority of the reports 'Sonnenblume' gave were overwhelmingly positive character descriptions of her friends and acquaintances. She tells me that she made a conscious decision to write only positively of others, hoping that perhaps the person in question might benefit from such a report (A-10). Although at other times the reports he gave were undoubtedly potentially harmful, 'Fuchs' did on one occasion report that the inmates had been complaining about the bad quality of the prison food and medical care (C-5b, p. 349). In this case 'Fuchs' certainly appears to have been trying to exercise any influence he may have had to bring about a change for the better. This information is, indeed, judged as 'politisch-operativ bedeutsam', and measures are suggested to improve the situation (C-5b, p. 349). Even Rainer Eppelmann, who was so strongly opposed to Manfred Stolpe staying in power as the *Ministerpräsident* of Brandenburg after the extent of his *MfS* contacts came to light, had to admit: 'Manfred Stolpe hat vielen Menschen, auch mir, bei vielen Gelegenheiten geholfen.' (J-23, p. 295) In many *IM* careers there were undoubtedly moments where the *IM* was able to help others. These moments were emphasised by the *IM* at the time of collaboration in his/her self-image as they are stressed now in order to justify the *IM-Tätigkeit*.

Ironically, the *MfS* did not always pay heed to more critical information supplied by *IM*, which could have, had it been acted upon, benefited not only others but the *MfS* itself. When asked in 1986 about the general mood of the population, *IM* 'Reiner' reported that many fellow citizens had expressed the view that they saw no point in voting (C-4b, III, 229). 'Falke' was equally critical when he reported that some of his colleagues were of the opinion that another colleague had been too harshly

treated when he lost his *SED* membership as a result of a minor misdemeanour (C-3b, II, 9). In 1989 'Falke' also reported that many older comrades believed that mistakes had been made in the running of the country and were disappointed and disillusioned (C-3b, II, 362-63). These pieces of information were indications of general and widespread dissatisfaction within the population, yet they were not judged as 'operativ bedeutsam'. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that the *MfS* nurtured in its internal ideology a somewhat simplistic concept of the enemy, defined as those individuals 'die in Gruppen oder individuell dem Sozialismus wesensfremde politisch-ideologische Haltungen und Anschauungen absichtsvoll entwickeln' (F-3, p. 110). The work with *IM* concentrated on the fight against this enemy, and signs of general decay and of disillusionment within the ranks of those who were basically faithful citizens, such as 'Falke's' colleagues in the police force, were consequently ignored.

That ultimately it was really only a minority of *IM* who truly believed that co-operation with the *MfS* had a meaningful and justifiable purpose is reflected in the results of the Seidler and Schmidt study, which found that 59.2% of the *IM* questioned rated the success of their work as only 'satisfactory' (D-6, I, 137). A further 13.9% considered their work only 'slightly' effective. The cumulative total of these figures indicates that the overwhelming majority of *IM* in this study did not consider that their work with the *MfS* served much purpose. Indeed, only 8% of *IM* questioned rated the effectiveness of the work 'very high' (D-6, I, 184).

9.2.4 The Omnipotent *MfS*

Bei der Staatssicherheit handelte es sich also um einen perfektionistisch organisierten Apparat, versehen mit allen erdenklichen personellen und materiellen Ressourcen, gegen den bis dahin niemand erfolgreich angekommen war. (J-109, p. 22)

The portrayal of the *MfS* as 'ein perfektionistisch organisierter Apparat' was one which was dominant in the immediate post-*Wende* period. This is an image which former *IM* attempting to justify their *Stasi* contacts often exploit. The mightier the *MfS* is seen to be, the more the *IM* is justified in claiming that attempts to resist recruitment or to end the *IM-Tätigkeit* would have been futile. By exaggerating the omnipotence of the *MfS* *IM* aim to impose an element of inevitability on their actions. This is a legitimation strategy employed not only by the *IM* but also by those very much further up the power hierarchy in the GDR. *Politbüro* member Kurt Hager claimed that he would rather not have lived in Wandlitz, describing it as an 'aufgezwungene Internierung' (cited by Becker, J-33, p. 75). On hearing Hager's statement, as Jurek Becker commented ironically: 'schlagartig wurde einem klar, daß auch die Mitglieder des Politbüros Opfer des Politbüros waren.' (J-33, p. 75) It is the frequent use of a vocabulary of necessity in legitimation attempts of former political agitators in the GDR which particularly disturbed Becker, since it denies free will and individual responsibility: 'Dieses *Ich mußte* ist unschlagbar, wer es sagt, ist vor peinlichen Befragungen sicher.' (J-33, p. 74) This strategy is commonplace and, although he does admit to having had scruples about what he was doing, 'Theodor' reduces his individual responsibility by claiming that there was 'eine gewisse Notwendigkeit' to his actions: 'Das ist eine schlimme Sache, wenn man einen Freund bespitzeln muß.' (A-2, my italics)

By justifying behaviour in this way an *IM* implies that s/he cannot be considered responsible for his/her actions since they were to a certain extent environmentally determined:

We do not hold people responsible for their reflexes - for example, for coughing in church. We hold them responsible for their operant behaviour - for whispering in church or remaining in church while coughing. But there are variables which are responsible for

whispering as well as coughing, and these may be just as inexorable. When we recognise this, we are likely to drop the notion of responsibility altogether and with it the notion of free will as an inner causal agent.⁵

In the justification strategies of IM 'Sonnenblume' and IM 'Karin Lenz' the inexorable variable which they define as being largely responsible for their co-operation with the *MfS* is the hold which their respective *Führungsoffiziere* had over them. 'Karin Lenz' describes her *Führungsoffizier* 'Detlef' as a kind of psychological mentor, who acted as a substitute psychiatrist and whom she could call at any time of day or night (J-45, p. 43). 'Karin Lenz' thus reduces the individual responsibility she carries for her actions by portraying herself as a victim whose weaknesses were cleverly exploited by the *MfS* with the result that her co-operation was almost inevitable.

In her autobiography 'Sonnenblume' describes her *Führungsoffizier* 'Roland' as a 'teuflischer Magnet', thereby doubly emphasising the inevitability of her succumbing to him (J-110, p. 260). In conversation she does, however, admit that she has perhaps tended to exaggerate the compelling physical and mental attraction she felt for this man in an attempt to justify her *IM-Tätigkeit* (A-10, see Section One: 4.2.4).

The *MfS* was undoubtedly in many respects a mighty and powerful institution whose cunning it was not always easy to resist. As an examination of *MfS* documentation will quickly reveal, the organisation does not, however, live up to its reputation of having been a 'perfektionistisch organisierter Apparat'. In theory 'peinlichste Genauigkeit' was called for in the handling of documents relating to the *IM*, yet in practice many files were carelessly kept (J-62, p. 222). Reports were often not filed in the strict chronological order stipulated in the

⁵ The behavioural psychologist B.F. Skinner, cited by Morris (J-60, p. 58).

guidelines, and files often overstepped the three hundred page mark, although a reminder that this was forbidden was printed on the front cover of each document (J-62, p. 378). Information in any one file is at times contradictory and illogical. 'Stephana', for example, was judged as a suitable *IM-Kandidat* among other things because of her loyal stance towards the GDR (C-6a, p. 34). Given that 'Stephana' was interrogated because she had attempted to help an acquaintance escape to the West, and given that she had herself applied twice to leave the GDR, this statement of her loyalty seems somewhat absurd. Since the distribution of work among *Operative Mitarbeiter* was highly uneven it is possible that 'Stephana's' *Führungsoffizier* was simply too over-worked to notice this contradiction.

The *MfS* was at times mighty, but never omnipotent. The propagation of this myth serves the needs of those who seek to justify their conformist behaviour and is, therefore, a frequently employed legitimisation strategy by former *IM*.

9.2.5 Relativisation

Former *IM* will sometimes emphasise that there were very definite limits to their willingness to co-operate with the wishes of the *MfS*, thereby aiming to minimise personal culpability by stressing that they did not comply to the extent to which they could potentially have done so. This coping/legitimation strategy is the opposite approach to the one discussed above. Instead of justifying his/her behaviour by emphasising his/her helplessness in the face of the omnipotence of the *MfS*, the *IM* claims to have been strong enough and sufficiently in control of the situation to withstand some of the pressure exerted by the *Führungsoffizier* and to impose certain limitations on the *IM-Tätigkeit*.

After the shock revelation that she too had collaborated with the *MfS* Christa Wolf claimed: 'Ich habe den Leuten nichts erzählt, was sie nicht in jeder Versammlung hätten hören können.' (J-99, p. 305) This relativisation strategy is extremely common and was employed by several of my interviewees, including 'Katrin':

Das sind keine Dinge, die ich mühsam herausgespitzelt habe. Ich habe mich nicht hingestellt und ihre Briefe gelesen oder irgendwas, und deshalb denke ich einfach, daß das Wort Spitzel nicht zutrifft. [...] Ich habe niemandem ausgehorcht oder bin irgendwo mitgegangen in irgendeine Feier, um hinterher darüber zu berichten. (A-9)

At times it may, indeed, have been the case that the informer only gave information which was known to him/her anyway, although this, of course, does not necessarily justify the breach of trust which was involved in reporting these details to the *MfS*. The truth content of relativisation statements such as these must furthermore always be questioned. 'Stephana', for example, employs this strategy when she insists that she very seldom named names when asked about those present at the religious meetings she attended: 'Ich habe versucht, mich immer 'rauszureden, damit, daß ich die Namen mir nicht behalten habe, ich habe also sehr wenig Namen angegeben, weil ich immer gesagt habe, ich habe kein Namengedächtnis.' (A-8) The reports written by 'Stephana's' *Führungsoffizier* indicate that this was only really the case initially, when 'Stephana' is noted as being unable to identify by name various people at the gatherings she is questioned about (C-6b, I, 54-55, 60-61). During the course of her *IM-Tätigkeit* 'Stephana's' resistance appears to weaken and she increasingly refers to those present by name.

Rather than by referring to the content of their meetings with the *MfS*, 'Falke' and 'Fuchs' relativise their collaboration by imposing a contextual limitation on it. They maintain that they considered the

contact to the *MfS* almost as a duty in their line of work, which, since 'Falke' was an officer in criminal investigation, and 'Fuchs' an educator in a high-security prison, involved a considerable amount of contact to *MfS* officers on a daily basis (A-3, A-6). I ask 'Falke' if he then considers himself to be different from a 'Spitzel'. He pauses for some time before answering:

Da bin ich natürlich gefragt ... könnte ich nicht so einfach beantworten ... Nee ... Spitzel ... unter Spitzel stelle ich mir 'was anderes vor. Wenn ich ganz gezielt ... Aufträge annehme und die abarbeite, und so was hab' ich eigentlich nicht gemacht. (A-3)

Perhaps 'Falke's last words in answer to this question are the key to this strategy of relativising the *IM-Tätigkeit*. After a long pause, which was itself quite uncharacteristic of his behaviour during the interview, 'Falke' finally says: 'Ja klar, eine Art Bespitzelung ist es schon gewesen. Doch ... doch, doch, aber hundertprozentig nicht.' (A-3)

9.3 THE QUESTION OF GUILT

9.3.1 'Ich habe nicht den Eindruck, daß ich Unrecht getan habe' (A-7)

The vast majority of those who previously held high office in the GDR and of *IM* claim that no harm was ever caused to an individual as a direct result of their actions. This prevailing tendency has led to the image of the former *IM* as someone with whom dialogue is virtually impossible, someone who is not prepared to admit to any feelings of guilt whatsoever for their actions. 'Die Täter', observes Jürgen Fuchs, 'so scheint es, haben sich längst selbst verziehen' (cited by Schirmacher, J-78, p. 308). The unwillingness to acknowledge personal responsibility is often tolerated to a lesser extent when encountered in the figure of the *IM* than in those higher up the power hierarchy, and Biermann refers to this phenomenon

as the 'Unstetigkeitsstelle in der geometrischen Kurve unseres Hasses' (I-44, p. 89). Publicly, in fear of the legal and social implications of admitting to guilt, the *IM* generally attests his/her innocence if no direct harm can be proved to have been caused as a result of his/her actions. The reluctance of *IM* to admit to their personal guilt is intensified by the fact that no other individuals or groups seem prepared to accept a moral responsibility for the injustices which were carried out within the GDR: 'Wo keine Schuld ist, braucht es auch keine Sühne. Wie sollen auch die kleinen Leute zum Bewußtsein ihrer bescheidenen Schande kommen, wenn sogar die großen Verbrecher sich als Menschenfreunde spreizen.' (I-78, p. 73)

9.3.2 The Ultimate Victims

The issue of whether *IM* are prepared to admit to any feelings of guilt, publicly or privately, is further complicated by the fact that many have actually suffered since the *Wende* as a result of their *IM-Tätigkeit* and have no desire to subject themselves to any further possible repercussions of such an admission. These individuals often perceive themselves as double victims of unification, that is as East Germans and as *IM*. A very small proportion of *IM* have actually been fired from their jobs in public service, yet their *IM-Tätigkeit* still haunts them. They are, for example, aware that they must act within certain limitations if they do not want it to become public knowledge that they conspired with the *MfS*. Three of the *IM* with whom I spoke regretted that they could not become involved in politics to the extent they wished. Were they to do so and at some point to be screened, they would run the risk of damaging not only their personal reputation, but also that of their party. Other *IM* have suffered in different ways. 'Fuchs' and 'Falke' both lost their jobs because of their *IM-Tätigkeit*. 'Katrin' was forced to resign her political mandate. *IM*

'Theodor' took early retirement as he anticipated that if he did not do so his *MfS* contacts would sooner or later become public knowledge and he would be dismissed. Some *IM* have also suffered in their personal life, losing friends who feel betrayed by them. The *IM* also suffers from the fear of being denounced. Most *IM* tend to have confessed their *IM-Tätigkeit* to a select few or kept their secret to themselves, and immediate material and social concerns often override any feelings of guilt the *IM* might otherwise experience. Ultimately, the predominant sentiment of the *IM* is that of self-pity; on the one hand because of his/her immediate situation, on the other for having supported a now defeated system which has been shown not only to have been corrupt, but to have in many ways been a bureaucratic shambles. This feeling of self-pity is prevalent in any discussion with former *IM*, as highlighted by the following words from Dirk Schneider:

Ja, ich habe doch keine Chance mehr, noch irgend etwas zu machen, und das nehme ich auf mich. Das ist berechtigt. Ich habe immer offene Politik gemacht und hatte dieses Geheimnis, und das hatte ich sozusagen mit mir 'rumzuschleppen. Das hat mich wirklich belastet, und das finde ich nicht in Ordnung - das kann ich sagen - das ist ein politischer Fehler, das ist ein grundsätzlicher Fehler, das ist keine Frage. Aber mehr kann man da auch nicht daraus machen, außer das ich mich sozusagen selbst ins Abseits und in eine unmögliche Situation manipuliert habe, unglaublich bin. Keiner will mehr was von mir hören, weil ich mit diesem Unrechtssystem gekungelt habe. Das ist klar, ja. (H-1)

When I ask her whether she feels guilt on account of her *IM-Tätigkeit* 'Stephana's' response also indicates that the sentiments of regret which she does experience are often ones of self-pity: 'Ja, ja ... sagen wir mal, schuldig, wütend, enttäuscht.' (A-8) 'Rolf', likewise, does experience guilt, but also deeply regrets the difficulties which his *Stasi* connections caused him personally:

Erst mal war ich furchtbar naiv, dann miserable Gefühle, wenn ich an die Zeit denke, als ich dann in diese Wohnung gegangen bin und mich mit denen getroffen habe, richtig miserable Gefühle. Und ... ja insgesamt stehe ich dazu und sage, ich möchte jetzt diese Zeit aus meiner Akte tilgen. Ich sage jetzt nicht, daß das mir das furchtbar leid tut, und daß ich das 'rausreißen möchte, dazu stehe ich jetzt, aber es tut mir leid um die Zeit, und die Nerven und das ganze Theater hier zu Hause, was wir hier hatten dadurch. (A-1)

9.3.3 The Coincidence of Circumstance

IM are able to further intensify their feelings of self-pity by emphasising that it was the coincidence of circumstance which led to them becoming *IM* when others did not. 'Fuchs' argues that the chain of coincidence which resulted in him becoming an *IM* began as far back as the time when he and his family were on the move at the end of the World War Two: 'Es ist reiner Zufall, [...] daß man diesen Weg eigentlich gegangen ist, von vielen Zufällen hängt das ab. Wenn ich, wenn wir nur, sagen wir mal, bei der Flucht die Nacht durchgefahren wären, wäre ich vielleicht in Bayern gelandet.' (A-6) 'Fuchs' also emphasises the coincidence of circumstance within the GDR. When I ask him if harm was ever caused to anyone as a direct result of his reports, he admits that he once consciously tried to prevent a colleague whose competence he doubted being promoted to be his successor. 'Fuchs' now argues that he actually helped the man, as, had he stepped into 'Fuchs's' shoes at work, then he too 'hätte den *IM* machen müssen', and would, like 'Fuchs', now have lost his job (A-6). 'Sonnenblume' believes that it was not just a question of strength of character which led to some individuals becoming *IM* and some not, but also of 'günstige Umstände' (A-10).

There is some truth in the argument that particular individuals were unlucky to be asked to become *IM*, when it is considered that the *IM* were not informers in the sense that they occasionally approached the

MfS and offered information, but were rather carefully selected and screened before being approached by an *MfS* officer.

9.3.4 Summary

IM use a variety of strategies to rationalise their behaviour. It is important to consider that these are not merely a means of publicly justifying behaviour, but are also coping strategies which help to reduce and relativise feelings of guilt, which, I would argue, many *IM* suffer now and suffered during their *IM-Tätigkeit*. These are feelings to which they do not readily admit. Many experienced, at least periodically, doubts about their actions. Today, the coping strategies which they have developed often do not allow them to admit to these doubts, and a feeling of self-pity dominates the confrontation with the past. *IM* tend to deny all guilt in the public forum. Privately, they are unsure of what they have done and uncertain of what the future will hold for them. These varying and conflicting emotions are perhaps best summed up by 'Theodor' in the following words:

Wissen Sie, seit 1990, und das sind nun 4 Jahre, lebt man mit diesem Stigma, Spitzel gewesen zu sein. Man kann sich rechtfertigen vor sich selbst, wenn man will. Es bleibt doch immer 'was hängen. Und ... und es stellt sich 'raus, das ist so sinnlos gewesen. [...] Ich bereue, nicht zu einer kritischen Haltung gegen unsere senile Führung gefunden zu haben. [...] Wir haben zwar gesprochen über die Probleme, ja, die Witze, ja; Einmarsch des Politbüros, Einschalten der Herzschrittmacher - alle diese DDR-Witze, ja. Die wurden offen, die wurden auch mit dem Führungsoffizier gemacht, ja. Alle diese Dinge waren offenbar, aber im Grunde genommen haben wir das System geführt, d.h. unser Ethos, als Revolutionäre die Welt zu verändern, haben wir nicht geachtet. Wir sind miese Kleinbürger geworden und das bereue ich. Und da ist meine *IM-Tätigkeit* oder Stasi-Spitzeltätigkeit, oder wie man es immer sagen will, natürlich ein Baustein 'von. (A-2)

Section Two: Chapter Ten

**'WIEDERANEIGNUNG DER EIGENEN BIOGRAPHIE':¹
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OPENING OF THE *STASI* FILES**

¹ Engelmann, describing the process of *Akteneinsicht* for many *Stasi-Opfer* (F-7, p. 53).

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the *Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz* on 29 December 1991 meant that theoretically an end was in sight to the mass speculation about who had or had not been involved in the wide-scale surveillance and the control measures put into action by the *MfS*. The debate over the law's specifications had been heated, leading Jens Reich to remark that the negotiations had been characterised by 'Drama statt Politik, pathetische Gesten statt Handlungen' (I-74, p. 50). No other post-communist country passed such a comprehensive law concerning the files of its former secret service. The Polish writer Andrzej Szczypiorski considered this method of dealing with the cumbersome *Stasi* legacy flawed, arguing that the Germans were only torturing themselves by confronting the harsh truths contained in the *MfS* dossiers. Szczypiorski imagined a scenario where his own wife had informed on his activities to the Secret Service. He proposed that this fact alone would amount to the first great defeat in his life. Becoming aware of this situation, however, through the possibilities of a *StUG*, would constitute a second defeat, indeed, would destroy his life completely (J-94, p. 368). On the other side of the German/Polish border the response to the *StUG* was immense, indicating that many did not share Szczypiorski's fears concerning the potentially traumatic personal consequences of viewing one's *Stasi* file. By summer 1995, when the second report of the *BStU* went to press, over 2.7 million applications to view files had been lodged (F-17, p. 4). The majority of these requests had come from employers in the public sector, but close to one million were private applications from ordinary citizens wishing to discover exactly what role the *Stasi* had played in shaping their past lives. The answer which these individuals receive from the *BStU* can have a marked impact on their understanding of self, and thus on the individual and collective reconstruction of auto/biography.

10.2 THE *O P F E R*: 'ENTTÄUSCHUNGEN' AND 'ENT-TÄUSCHUNGEN' (I-39, p. 183)

Those who are informed by the *BStU* that they were under *Stasi* observation and who view their files have often emphasised the importance of subsequently being able to confirm that their personal conception of the biographical details of their life is valid. After accessing his files Jürgen Fuchs, for example, was finally able to prove that he was in fact arrested, interrogated and practically forced to leave the GDR in 1976-77 (I-36, p. 280). When he was literally abandoned in West Berlin in 1977, Fuchs's memory was the only witness to these events. Fuchs is able to align the official *MfS* depiction of his detainment and deportation with his understanding of his own biography. Similarly, Wolf Biermann described his joy at finding a letter in his file which his mother had sent to him in 1969 but which he had never received (I-47, p. 45).

Often the information available to an individual who was observed by the *MfS* cannot, however, be incorporated into a pre-existing notion of personal history, but forces its complete re-evaluation, as in the notorious case of Knud and Vera Wollenberger. Had the *Stasi* files been destroyed before her husband's *Stasi* connections were brought to light, it is conceivable that Vera Wollenberger (now Lengsfeld) might have forever remained ignorant of this fact. Her conception of personal history would thus have been inherently flawed, since it would have been based on false premises. In the light of the actual or potentially destructive consequences of accessing the information contained in the *MfS* files, Lutz Rathenow claimed that viewing these documents had a more profound effect on his life than any other event, including the fall of the Berlin Wall (I-62). Even Joachim Gauck himself admits to skimming over sections of his file and advises each individual to consider very carefully whether or not to proceed with *Akteneinsicht* (J-17, p. 96).

Since the network of *IM* was not evenly spread throughout the population of the GDR but operated on a *Schwerpunktprinzip*, it is almost inevitable that *Stasi-Opfer* will discover that some of those whom they previously considered close friends were among those who collaborated as *IM*. Similarly, it is likely that in some cases they will have wrongly suspected others of such activities. Günter Kunert experienced great relief upon discovering that his immediate neighbours had not been spying on him after all: 'Gerade sie waren es nicht. Auch das ist eine durch die Akten vermittelte Wahrheit, derentwegen man sie liest und lesen sollte. Sie belasten nicht bloß Mitbürger, sie rehabilitieren sie auch.' (J-46, p. 49)

For most *Stasi-Opfer Akteneinsicht* is thus a process characterised, in Biermann's terms, by both 'Enttäuschungen' and 'Ent-täuschungen' (I-39, p. 183). This dichotomy is illustrated by an anecdote from Erich Loest. Loest told of how he wrote a letter to a friend whom he had deduced to have been one of the *IM* set upon him (H-2). He was shocked later to discover that he had suspected the wrong man. The true identity of the *IM* concerned was that of a much closer friend, whose trust Loest had never questioned. Loest was forced to re-evaluate his biography in light of this discovery. On the one hand he experiences the 'Enttäuschung' involved in the realisation that he has believed one man to be a good friend, who, it transpires, reported on his activities to the *MfS*. Simultaneously, a feeling of 'Ent-Täuschung' results upon discovering that he has wrongly suspected an innocent man.

The discovery that one has wrongly judged others can itself be a traumatic experience. Speaking to the *Enquete-Kommission* Irena Kukutz, one of the members of the *Frauen für den Frieden* group, described the disturbing effects of her realisation that she had wrongly suspected some of the other group members of being *Stasi* informers:

Die ganze Zeit und seit die Stasi-Akten offen sind, bin ich unheimlich erleichtert, weil sich bewahrheitet hat, was ich mir am Anfang des Jahres 1992 gewünscht hatte. Nämlich, daß ich mich recht oft geirrt hatte in den Menschen. Und ich bin auch darüber erschüttert, wie sehr das Mißtrauen in mich eingedrungen war, und das war ja auch eine Arbeit der IMs, Mißtrauen zu säen und ich habe sehr vielen Menschen mißtraut und denke, daß auch wir ein bißchen krank geworden sind und mußte feststellen, daß ich mich getäuscht habe und habe inzwischen auch mit Frauen geredet, darüber, daß ich sie verdächtigt habe und das war manchmal nicht ganz einfach. (F-13, p. 163)

Kukutz's faith in her sense of judgement has been shaken, and her memories and conception of personal history must go through a process of re-evaluation in light of the knowledge which *Akteneinsicht* has brought. Günter Kunert also comments on the regrettable consequences of the all-pervasive mistrust which the system fostered:

Wir haben in dem untergegangenen System unter deformierten zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen und Bedingungen gelebt: Wir waren unfrei in unserem beiläufigen Benehmen gegenüber Dritten - wie eben den Nachbarn. Wir blockierten selber automatisch unsere Empfindungen, wir schränkten unsere Kontaktfreudigkeit ein, sobald uns ein Blick zu neugierig vorkam, eine Frage zu forschend, ein Interesse an unserer Person nicht ausreichend begründet. Wir führten weithin ein Austerndasein. (J-46, p. 49)

If they are still unsure as to the identity of the *IM* whose cover names appear in their files, *Stasi-Opfer* may apply after *Akteneinsicht* to have these de-coded. Marinka Körzendörfer, a member of the *Lesben in der Kirche* group, describes her decision to apply to do so as follows: 'Schon weil ich bei einem Decknamen zum Beispiel auf zwei mögliche Personen kam. Wahrscheinlich ist es dann die fünfte. Und warum sollte ich die beiden ersten falsch in Erinnerung behalten?' (J-44, p. 28) Once the possibility exists that a person's understanding of his/her biography is based on false perceptions, s/he may feel compelled to adjust this by viewing his/her *Stasi* files. There is, however, a potentially high price, to

be paid for taking such a step, and in an article entitled, 'Die Angst, einen Teil der guten Erinnerung zu verlieren', Rainer Eppelmann remarked that after viewing his *Stasi* files he considered himself 'schlauer aber ärmer' (I-3).

The *MfS*'s influence over the lives of these *Stasi-Opfer* continues then to be considerable, since such individuals may begin to re-remember the past on the basis of the information which has been recorded in the files. This is not only the case for the area of interpersonal relationships, but also for past behaviour. Bärbel Bohley concluded that the fact that the *Stasi* did not begin observing her until 1982 meant that she had obviously not been sufficiently active in the opposition scene before this time (J-13, p. 45). Bohley thus seems to accept the *MfS*'s evaluation of the extent of her opposition activities. Yet it may be the case that Bohley's commitment to opposition activities before 1982 went unnoticed, rather than that this point marked a decisive change in her stance. Marinka Körzendörfer was similarly disappointed to find that the behaviour of the *Lesben in der Kirche* was occasionally noted as having been 'vorbildlich' in *MfS* reports (J-44, p. 26). The written biographical history seems to be judged here by the two women to have more objectivity and validity than their autobiographical memory. At other times Körzendörfer rejects the *MfS*'s evaluation of events and relies on her own memory. She is, for example, annoyed that no police report is to be found of the arrest of eleven members of the group at the celebrations to mark the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp at Ravensbrück. Körzendörfer remembers that the women certainly did cause a public disturbance on this day (J-44, p. 26).

Stasi-Opfer such as Körzendörfer have an ambivalent relationship to the files, as demonstrated by their evaluation of the quasi-biographical account of their lives which is found in these documents: Klaus

Schlesinger felt as though he were reading a novel in which he was the protagonist (J-79, p. 30); Vera Wollenberger found it to be a distorted image of her biography (J-108, p. 8); Lutz Rathenow felt that it was not quite his biography (I-65); and Jürgen Fuchs said it was a perverse and destructive caricature of his (I-72). On the one hand, the *Opfer* reject much of what is written in the files as presenting a twisted or simply inaccurate version of events, yet, on the other, hope that the files will be able to help them reconstruct the past and are angered and disappointed to discover that the information available does not always allow them to do so. Körzendörfer is disappointed to find that some of the programmes of the *Lesben in der Kirche* group are not to be found in the files: 'Dabei hatte ich so darauf gehofft. Unser historisches Bewußtsein war damals nicht sonderlich ausgeprägt.' (J-44, p. 27) Indeed, Körzendörfer continues: 'Vieles von dem, was ich mir erhofft hatte, in den Akten zu finden, war nicht vorhanden.' (J-44, p. 27) It is as though she has been hoping that the files will be able to fill in the gaps in her biographical understanding, to make it whole. In actuality the information in the files often does not complete but rather shatters the individual's understanding of personal history.

10.3 THE *INOFFIZIELLE MITARBEITER*

It is not merely the *Stasi-Opfer* whose understanding of self and biography can be radically altered by *Akteneinsicht*, but also those of the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*. As discussed, many *IM* report being shocked to discover that they belong to the group of *Stasi-Täter* (see Section Two: 9.1). Since the existence of an *IM* file potentially defines the private and public life of a former *IM*, the confrontation with this aspect of an individual's past can potentially result for them not simply in a 'Wiederaneignung' of their biography, but in its complete redefinition.

The *IM* may wish to view the actual contents of the file and faces the choice of whether to apply to do so. If s/he decides to take this step then s/he must reckon with certain restrictions on the material which will be made available for viewing. The *StUG* stipulates that an *IM* is only to be granted access to those parts of the files which relate to his/her person and not to the reports which s/he helped compile (*StUG*, § 16/4, see Introduction: 1.5.2). This ruling, in addition to the fact that applications from former *IM* who do apply to see their file are generally not treated with priority, means that many *IM* have either not seen their files or have been allowed only limited access. They are thus largely ignorant of the exact content of these documents. Although they often claim that they never told their *Führungsoffizier* anything of consequence and cannot be held responsible for causing harm to others, they are really no longer entirely sure of what they said and cannot know how their reports were processed and recorded. Almost as though she had been awaiting judgement from the files 'Stephana' asked me in a state of great excitement after I had viewed her file: 'Was für ein Mensch bin ich dann?'² In a similar manner, one of the *IM* who was reporting on Erich Loest told him that she felt that she could continue to look Loest in the eye, adding, however: 'Oder wissen Sie mehr über mich, wissen Sie etwas, was ich vielleicht vergessen haben könnte? Meine Gedanken sind so verwirrt, daß ich auch Selbsttäuschungen für möglich halte.' (J-52, p. 133)

The dilemma on the part of someone who held contacts to the *MfS* of how much to admit to before a concrete accusation has been made was particularly evident from the manner in which Manfred Stolpe made his *Stasi* contacts public (see Section Two: 6.1). The details of this contact, that Stolpe had met with *Stasi* officers in *Konspirative Wohnungen*, for example, emerged only gradually during investigations by the *Stolpe-*

² During a telephone conversation, July 1995.

Untersuchungsausschuß. Stolpe was only ever prepared to justify those aspects of his *Stasi* contacts for which evidence had been produced. Shortly before the final report of the *Untersuchungsausschuß* was passed, he claimed to regret the at times lax and ambivalent approach he had taken to making his *Stasi* contacts public: 'Ich habe durch dieses Abwarten den Mißdeutungen Vorschub geleistet.' (I-59) Yet, had Stolpe admitted to all details of the contact in early 1992, he would have been under considerably greater pressure to resign. The course of action he chose was therefore the only one which allowed him to remain in office as the *Ministerpräsident* of Brandenburg.

Sascha Anderson's confrontation with his *Stasi* past differed from that of Manfred Stolpe's in that the former initially denied having collaborated at all. When he eventually admitted to this fact, Anderson stated that he felt unable to defend himself sufficiently until he had been given the chance to view his *Stasi* files: 'Im Augenblick habe ich nichts in der Hand, um mich an etwas Konkretes zu erinnern.' (I-79, p. 65) Similarly, 'Wolfgang' told me that he had decided to wait until he had viewed his file before confessing to his family that he had collaborated as an *IM* (A-7). 'Wolfgang' is thus, to some extent, waiting for the files to recreate his *Stasi* biography, the details of which he can no longer be sure of. He is unwilling to tell his family of his *IM-Tätigkeit* until the files allow him to judge the true extent of his compliance and guilt.

The mere label *IM* will potentially define the self-perception and public image of a former *Stasi* collaborator, and Christa Wolf said after the debate surrounding her *Stasi* connections that she felt she had been reduced to these two letters 'I.M.' (I-10). Other *IM* are also keen to emphasise that their biography should not be defined solely in terms of their previous *Stasi* collaboration and that it is unreasonable that they should be judged only on this one aspect of their past life. 'Sonnenblume',

whose *IM-Tätigkeit* encompassed a period of just over a year, argued: 'Es ist ja nur ein winziger Teil meines Lebens letztlich, ein kurzer Teil.' (A-10) 'Theodor' feels that no-one understands that his *IM-Tätigkeit* was 'nur ein Steinchen im Mosaik des allgemeinen Verhaltens' (B-3).

As in the case of the *Stasi-Opfer*, the histories in the files of those who collaborated with the *MfS* as *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* allow only a disjointed and fragmented reconstruction of past events. Much is missing, and, consequently, the information which is recorded may be in danger of being retrospectively judged more significant and representative of the individual biography than was the case.

10.4 THE NICHT-TÄTER/NICHT-OPFER

Those who discover that their behaviour was probably not sufficiently non-conformist to arouse the *Stasi's* suspicions and warrant observation must re-evaluate their self-image in light of the knowledge that details of their life were not being recorded and evaluated (see Section Two: 8.2-8.3). At least initially, many were unwilling to face the fact that as opportunistic conformists they had done little to challenge the existing social order. Had the *Stasi* files been destroyed or not been made available to the public, the self-image of some of this group of *Nicht-Täter/Nicht-Opfer* might have been markedly different, since they could have continued to believe that they had been under surveillance.

10.5 CONCLUSIONS

Man kommt beim Lesen dieser Akten zu dem Punkt, an dem man seine Vergangenheit neu bewerten muß. (Gerd Poppe, I-7)

In 1990 Lutz Rathenow argued that the *MfS* files should be made publicly accessible in order that everyone have the opportunity to assert 'inwieweit

er Täter, inwieweit er Opfer war' (J-68, p. 1468). This possibility has now been achieved through the *StUG*, and citizens of the former GDR face the decision of whether to rely on their existing perception of biography or potentially be forced to completely redefine this conception in light of the information which is present or absent in these 178 kilometres of filed material. In the first instance these personal dossiers are significant in that they, albeit often superficially, divide citizens of the former GDR into the categories of *Täter* or *Opfer* or *Nicht-Täter/Nicht-Opfer*. This categorisation alone, although there are many differentiations within each grouping, affects the way in which the individual will remember his/her biography. Many will be shocked to learn that they belong to the third and largest category of *Nicht-Täter/Nicht-Opfer* and that there is an absence of any information relating to their biography in the files. For those who belong to one of the two minority groups, i.e. that of the *Täter* or the *Opfer*, the information which is available will potentially have considerable and traumatic impact on their conception of autobiography, in terms of how they view their interpersonal relationships, their own character, and their past behaviour. The information contained in the *MfS* files has the potential both to dispel and to create myths about the course of individual and collective biographies in the GDR, and the knowledge which *Akteneinsicht* has brought will thus have a profound impact on the way in which future histories of the German Democratic Republic are re/written. In this sense the *Stasi* files can be said to recreate the biography of a lost nation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF AN EXTRAORDINARY LEGACY

11.1 STASI-HYSTERIA

In the immediate aftermath of the events surrounding German unification the *Stasi* debate was at the forefront of any discussion of the GDR's problematic legacy. In particular, issues concerning the *MfS's Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* were the focus of attention, leading Peter Jochen Winters of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* to remark: 'Die Auseinandersetzung mit der SED-Herrschaft konzentriert sich jetzt fast nur auf das Aufspüren von Mitarbeitern des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit der einstigen DDR.' (I-15) Joachim Gauck described the sensational emphasising of this aspect of GDR history as 'Stasi-Hysterie', arguing that this tendency was indicative of obvious deficiencies in the approach to the confrontation with the past (I-2). Yet the hysteria and hyperbole which characterised the *Stasi* debate in its initial stages were perhaps inevitable. If East Germans were not already obsessed with the *Stasi* after having lived their lives imagining that its spies might be just around every corner, then the post-*Wende* discovery that this system could have nurtured such absurdities as a husband reporting on his own wife only served to increase the macabre fascination of the issue.

In GDR times the malaise, described by some as a form of schizophrenia, which developed in response to the permanent suspicion that one might be under surveillance, had spread its way so gradually throughout the population that many were unaware that they too had been infected. Once the system which had carried this disease had collapsed, the wounds which it had left were laid bare and soon became the object of much popular and scholarly attention. In addition to the freak appeal which the intricacies of this rather unpleasant side of GDR history held, another key factor in ensuring that the *IM* debate remained at the forefront of the reckoning with the recent past was the desire on the part of a people which had been active as both the agents and victims of

surveillance to understand the mechanisms which had shaped the course of their past lives. This process involved establishing the identities of the *IM* which had until then been kept secret and, indeed, at times had been so well-disguised that it seemed even some *IM* themselves were unaware that they too had collaborated.

The debate concerning former *IM* certainly received extensive media coverage, but it was not the case that those engaged in the confrontation with the GDR past were only concerned with this one issue. In Bonn an *Enquete-Kommission* was being set up to examine various aspects and consequences of the dictatorship. Around the same time the question of how the crimes of leading party functionaries should be addressed within the legal system was causing some commotion. The former head of state, Erich Honecker, was eventually ordered out of his refuge in the Chilean embassy in Moscow and brought back to Berlin for trial. The Honecker trial was farcical from its outset, as were many of those involving prominent party members. These men had managed to assume important functions in the GDR up to the point of its demise. Yet immediately, and perhaps plausibly, after the events of 1989-90 their health had apparently taken a severe turn for the worse. Consequently, any judicial proceedings were, and still are, greatly hindered by constant pleas that the accused are medically unfit for trial. Eventually the trial against Honecker was abandoned and, although it was suspected that the severity of his ailing condition had been exaggerated, these doubting voices were silenced when, after being released and having settled in Chile with his wife and daughter, the old man did, indeed, die of the cancer he had complained of throughout the trial. Attempts to bring Erich Mielke to court were also the subject of much interest, as were proceedings against various border-guards, the latter amounting to a lengthy series of trials headed by the fraught determination of Karin

Gueffroy to see that justice be done for the death of her son Chris in February 1989. The nineteen-year-old waiter from Berlin had been the last person to be killed while trying to flee West.

As sensational as some of the above events were, they did not touch the individuals who were not immediately affected by them to quite the same extent as the discussion regarding the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*. Until material from the *MfS* files became available this was a phenomenon which potentially reached into the most intimate sphere of every last GDR citizen. Focusing on this particular aspect of the GDR's legacy was also conceptually easier, since the *MfS* was a historical entity which it seemed possible to define and analyse. A true examination of the historical and political factors which had shaped the course of events in the GDR could only really have taken place within the context of an analysis of the recent past within and between the two Germanys, an undertaking which was not only vast, but one which few in positions of power in the former FRG were keen to embark on. The trials involving those who had acted as mediators between East and West, such as the lawyer Wolfgang Vogel, and the head of *Kommerzielle Koordinierung*, Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, were already sufficiently uncomfortable. Since it had been a feature of their daily lives, the *IM* question was also of burning interest to the *Bürgerrechtler* who were heavily involved in the creation of the *StUG*. The *IM* debate was also, I would argue, a more accessible debate for the ordinary citizen, since it seemed not to be an abstract legal or political discussion, but one concerning the most basic of interpersonal issues, such as trust and betrayal.

11.2 POST-STASI-HYSTERIA

After the elation of unification had subsided former East Germans soon became aware that although they could now travel outside the GDR

without further ado, and had access to the so-longed-for consumer goods, these freedoms had only been attained at a price. Despite the boom industry of the numerous re-training programmes established in the immediate post-*Wende* period unemployment figures began to rise dramatically in the former East. The loss of the material security which had been taken so much for granted in the GDR was experienced as an unpleasant and unexpected shock for many East Germans who had been dazzled by the neon glitter of the West. Stefan Heym remarked that the East Germans had hoped for socialism and *KaDeWe* after unification and had got in their place unemployment and *Aldi* (I-85).¹ Former East Germans, previously relatively affluent in the Eastern Block, now found themselves in a socially and materially inferior position to their re-discovered brothers and sisters in the FRG. Overnight they had become children in their own country who had to be re-trained and re-educated in the new ways of the West. Hans-Joachim Maaz remarked that, whereas at first East Germans had embraced and idealised West German culture ('das beschämende Nachahmungsgebaren'), a period of 'Ernüchterung, Enttäuschung' and 'verbitterte Desillusionierung' had begun to set in as the full scale of the economic consequences could no longer be disguised (J-53, p. 33). Gradually, the distinct advantages of life under the umbrella of the socialist dictatorship which had been so gladly forsaken began to seem, in retrospect, increasingly attractive. The unaccustomed burden of social and material concerns resulted in the first signs of nostalgia for the lost state, and a period of mourning for this loss set in, leading Biermann to observe: 'Es stinkt im Osten nach Selbst-Mitleid.' (J-11, p. 141)

This nostalgia, now popularly referred to as *Ostalgie*, resulted primarily from a sense of loss of the security and familiarity of life in the

¹ *KaDeWe* (*Kaufhaus des Westens*) is the most prestigious department store in former West Berlin, situated on the West's show promenade, the *Kurfürstendamm*. *Aldi* is a chain of cheap supermarkets, where prices are kept low by investing an absolute minimum of effort and expense in the display and handling of produce.

GDR. It seemed that every aspect of former life had been replaced by the system which had been in force in the FRG. GDR citizens experienced this course of events as signifying that all they had learned in the GDR, and therefore their whole lives, had been worthless. Several of the *IM* with whom I spoke mentioned the frustration and disillusionment they felt at having, as they expressed it, lived a substantial proportion of their lives in vain (particularly A-2, A-7). Former *IM* will tend to experience this feeling perhaps more acutely than those whose past history is not so potentially incriminating, but the sentiment was indicative of a general mood. Often the perceived arrogance of the West was seen as being at the root of this problem, as the following statement from 'Theodor' illustrates:

Durch die rasche Einigung sind wir so in die Defensive gedrängt worden und müssen Dinge verteidigen ... ich erwische mich manchmal selbst - Dinge zu verteidigen, die ich früher verdammt habe - einfach aus Wut über diese Ignoranz. Das ist eine ganz gefährliche Tendenz. (A-2)

Michael Schmitz addressed the issue of why, in psychological terms, it was unrealistic to expect that those in the East would do anything but defend the system they, however willingly or unwillingly, had lived in:

Wer von den neuen Bundesbürgern das Eingeständnis erwartet, ihr gesamtes Leben in der DDR vertan zu haben, zwingt sie zur Verteidigung des alten Regimes, weil von ihrem eigenen Selbst sonst nichts übrigbleiben würde. (I-57, p. 40)

Yet the unification had not been forced upon the former GDR. A majority had initially embraced it and merrily discarded the restraints of their previous life. Now a mourning process had begun for this loss, intensified by the realisation that public and private identity had, of course, been integrally linked with and dependent on a social reality which had so quickly and almost entirely disappeared. Margarete Mitscherlich, whose

analysis of the way in which ordinary Germans coped with the end of the National Socialist dictatorship had such an impact in the Federal Republic, compared the conclusions which she had made then regarding former West Germans with the situation of GDR citizens after 1989:

Die Trauer um die Hitler-Zeit war bisher, was uns selbst betrifft, vor allem Trauer um den Verlust des eigenen Ich- oder Wir-Ideals und der eigenen und kollektiven Selbstachtung. Ich glaube, daß viele Landsleute aus der ehemaligen DDR nach der Vereinigung ähnlich empfinden. (J-58, p. 413)²

The upsurge of these feelings of self-pity and nostalgia were not indications that the average GDR citizen truly desired the resurrection of the *SED* state, merely that s/he experienced the need to regain a sense of self which had disappeared with it. A sense of common identity began to develop which was partly based on fact and partly on retrospective sentimentality:

'Das werdet Ihr nie verstehen!' ist die Abwehrformel, mit der die Bewohner der DDR ihr Selbstmitleid immunisieren und zugleich versuchen, mit Hilfe eines solchen Erinnerungsprivilegs ihre Identität zu bewahren und sich selbst zu therapieren. (J-51, p. 27)

Joachim Gauck referred to this longing for the past as a desire for 'das süße Gift der Abhängigkeit' and bemoaned the fact that many East Germans were unwilling to come to terms with the freedom they so had wished for and to become 'Subjekte des Gemeinwesens' (I-76). Instead they yearned^{for} the days when they could, under the dictatorship, enjoy the security offered to them by their role as the legitimate objects of decision-making, dependent on the state to determine every aspect of their lives.

The perceived victimisation of East Germans and perceived criminalisation of the structures which had supported the GDR meant

² Mitscherlich's original work was compiled with her husband Alexander (J-57).

then that many felt that their entire previous life had been negated. They found themselves sharing a common fate with those whom they would have previously considered adversaries, and the former *IM* no longer constituted the greatest evil in this new society. In addition, accounts of how brutal life under the dictatorship had been were no longer so popularly received, since a true confrontation with the crimes of the former *SED* state did not facilitate indulgence in the nostalgia which had become so prevalent. At the same time as few were keen to be reminded of the harsher aspects of life in the anti-fascist state, many excused their previous lack of non-conformist behaviour with the reasoning that conditions had been so oppressive that they had been faced with no real alternative but to comply:

Ihre [former East Germans] Rechtfertigungen enthüllen Ungereimtheiten: Sie behaupten, so schlimm wie heute (von Westlern) getan wird, sei das Regime gar nicht gewesen; im gleichen Atemzug erklären sie, die Diktatur sei so hart gegen jede Abweichung vorgegangen, daß es zur völligen Anpassung keine wirkliche Alternative gegeben habe. (I-57, p. 40)

The small minority of those who had made their criticisms audible in the GDR and who subsequently suffered for doing so were left feeling embittered as they realised that they were among the dwindling minority interested in seeing an extensive confrontation with the past. Their situation was to some extent comparable to that of victims of Nazi persecution, some of whom narrowly escaped death in camps only to find that no one was particularly interested in hearing their tales of horror. This parallelism of experience is noted by Jürgen Fuchs, who quotes Viktor Frankl, a concentration camp survivor, to illustrate his point:

Wenn so ein Mensch heimkehrt und feststellen muß, daß man ihm hier oder da mit nichts besserem als Achselzucken oder billigen Phrasen gegenübertritt, dann bemächtigt sich seiner nicht selten

eine Verbitterung, die ihm die Frage aufdrängt, wozu er eigentlich alles erduldet hat. (J-27, pp. 81-82)

In the immediate post-*Wende* period, when it seemed that a victimised population had freed itself from its malignant oppressor, culprits were sought who had been instrumental in enforcing a system of control so brutal that it had allowed almost no resistance. The *Stasi* files, it appeared initially, would serve to identify these individuals. After these had been secured through the efforts of the *Bürgerkomitees*, many in the East were keen to feast on their contents:

Daß der wesentliche Teil der Stasi-Akten vor der Vernichtung gerettet und einer vormundschaftlichen Verwendung durch westdeutsche Behörden und Archive entzogen wurde, verdanken wir dem engagierten Einsatz mutiger Menschen der Bürgerbewegung, einer der wenigen Siege, die von der 'Revolution' - die keine wurde - übriggeblieben sind. Auch das Stasi-Akten-Einsichtsrecht, mühsam gegen die empfohlene Absicht zur Generalamnestie und zum vorschnellen Vergessen, die vor allem immer wieder im Westen hörbar wurde, durchgesetzt, erschien bislang wie ein Rest-Triumph, doch noch in Würde unsere eigenen Angelegenheiten klären und regeln zu können. Doch diese Hoffnung zerrinnt immer mehr. Diese Akten dienen mehr der Jagd auf Sündenböcke als der Aufklärung von Schuld und der Verstrickung in abnorme gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse. (J-55, p. 81)

Soon it became evident that these scapegoats were not so easy to define, that it had been a small minority who could claim to be bona fide *Stasi* victims. These victims now served only to remind the majority of their own lack of active resistance and of the brutality of a system which they wished to idealise retrospectively. Once again, the comparison to the immediate post-war period was apt, as demonstrated by the following statement from Ruth Klüger describing the cold reception concentration camp survivors such as herself received at this time: 'Die Überlebenden

erinnerten durch ihr bloßes Dasein an das Vergangene und Begangene.' (J-42, p. 196)

The paradox of the system which had seen many *IM* working with the opposition at the same time as they worked against it continued to be a feature of the post-*Wende* period. Werner Sellhorn, editor of the magazine *Horch und Guck*, a publication concerned solely with the confrontation with the GDR past, was unmasked, for example, as having collaborated as an *IM*. Indeed, there were many surprises regarding those who had or had not conspired with the *MfS*. The *Schwerpunktprinzip* meant that a substantial proportion of those who had been in some way active in the opposition had themselves collaborated with the *Stasi*. The cases of individuals such as Sascha Anderson, Manfred Stolpe, and even Christa Wolf served only to blur further the boundaries between categories in the *Täter/Opfer* spectrum.

In the hot-pot of deception, secrecy, and lies which the *Stasi* files promised, it had seemed at first that the *IM* were a definable group who were more obviously guilty than the majority. Individual tales soon emerged from the files, however, underlining the fact that the *IM* was not a type, but that many different individuals had become involved with the *MfS* for a variety of often circumstantial reasons. A form of re-humanisation of the individuals behind the label *IM* took place, since it was clear that levels of guilt between any two cases of collaboration could vary significantly. It was recognised that a differentiated approach to each individual case was required which would ideally take into account not only the specific details of the *IM-Tätigkeit*, but also the societal context in which it had taken place, including an analysis of the roles which others not necessarily classified as *IM* had played in the mechanisms of control. Such a mass moral reckoning was, however, not particularly feasible, given the strain of the social and material demands of unification, and

certainly not desired by a majority. The fact that the system had not been reformed, but completely obliterated ensured that any comprehensive legal confrontation with the crimes of the past would be extremely complicated. Furthermore, the individual or collective guilt of the *IM* often defied definition in a legal context. Although *IM* had not been physically omnipresent, they had helped to create a general atmosphere of distrust and conspiracy which had ensured that many a critical sentiment was never voiced lest it should be reported to higher powers. This prevailing air of fear and distrust also contributed to the fact that much opposition activity remained in the underground, surfacing only in the very latter days of the GDR's existence. The *IM* were an extremely important part of the machinery, but these mechanisms could never have functioned without the silent conformity of the vast majority of East German society, which had operated on a national code of conspiracy. As opportunistic conformists individuals complied with the collective because they had become comfortable in the slumber of a predictable pattern of material and social security, in which the individual's true convictions were subordinated to the desire for a simple and relatively harmonious life.

11.3 WAS BLEIBT?

Despite initial resistance to its implementation, the *Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz* has stood the test of time. Thousands of applications for *Akteneinsicht* continue to flood into the *BStU*, and the man at the head of this institution, Joachim Gauck, describes the continued existence of these files and the confrontation with their contents as a medicine against nostalgia, believing that without the files 'wären die Lügen derer, die damals verantwortlich waren, weitaus größer, wäre auch in großen Teilen der Bevölkerung der Grad der nachträglichen Selbsttäuschung weitaus höher' (I-20). Although nostalgia for the GDR has managed to blossom

despite the shadow of the files, it is certainly true that their impact has been traumatic. The detailed accounts of past lives which are found there have brought shock revelations, and individuals have been forced to reassess their biography in the light of this newly acquired knowledge. This re-evaluation has resulted in the often unwelcome acknowledgement that a proportion of what any one individual assumed about his/her past may be invalid. This shock, along with the numerous other strains resulting from unification, hit a population which was, for the most part, quite unprepared for its intensity.

Any truly differentiated confrontation with GDR past was never going to be achieved when East Germans, particularly *IM*, felt that their social and material existence was seriously threatened and that they were in danger of losing hold of an individual and a collective identity. The wide-scale societal confrontation with the *Stasi* legacy has up until now tended to be hectic, sensational, and mostly undifferentiated. Any debate within the former East is, furthermore, clouded by the shadow of the West, the other, socially and materially dominant Germany. Joachim Gauck prophesied that it would take two generations for the citizens of former East Germany to liberate themselves from the 'Untertan-Mentalität' which, in forty years of the GDR's existence, had so gradually worked its way into the population through a 'Prozeß der schleichenden Entmündigung' (I-34). During the passing of these next two generations most former East Germans will become very much more concerned with integration into the new societal structures. Yet, after the passing of this time, a rebellion similar to that which occurred in the FRG in 1968 is unlikely, if it were to result at all, to have a similar impact to that of the angry post-war generation in the former FRG: first, since the events of the late 1960s were not particular to Germany, only their specific content; second, since some form of public debate has taken place regarding the

most recent past, necessitated by the unique decision to make the files of the *MfS* publicly available. This decision was, moreover, taken as a result of the pressure applied from within the former GDR. Some of the decisive policy-making regarding dealings with this unique legacy was thus, in contrast to the immediate post-war period, fought out by those who were directly involved and not by a foreign and victorious power. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, although there is no doubt that severe injustices were committed under *SED* rule, in extreme cases resulting in death or lifelong physical and/or psychological injury, these atrocities are quite simply not comparable in their mass and brutality to the crimes of National Socialism, and, therefore, not the focus of international attention to anywhere near the same extent. Erich Honecker and his *Politbüro* had stood by and watched their *Schießbefehl* executed and had overseen the often harsh suppression of any anti-government activities which the *MfS* was able to detect, but theirs is a crime which simply does not have the same resonance as the attempted extermination of an entire people. It is unlikely that a debate as explosive as the recent controversy over Daniel Goldhagen's work on *Hitler's Willing Executioners* would ensue half a century after the demise of the GDR (J-30).

In the meantime, those whose specified task it was to ensure that the implicit and explicit mechanisms of control which supported the system were maintained, that is the *IM*, are often seen as carrying a greater proportion of at least moral guilt than their superiors in the *Politbüro*. Some of these *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* quite genuinely feel no regret on account of their past actions. Most, however, must live with the real or threatened stigma and shame of having engaged in such dishonorable activity in the service of a defeated and corrupt power. This is a crime which has been distinguished from other forms of compliance within the GDR, in that merely the label *IM* can result in social

stigmatisation and material loss. Many *IM* thus stand judged guilty of a crime which often defies legal definition in anything other than the name and awaiting a punishment which may or may not follow.

The detailed accounts of past lives in the GDR which are found in the *MfS* files have brought both welcome and less welcome surprises, and individuals have been forced to reassess their personal history in the light of this newly acquired knowledge. The histories of collectives such as the GDR's writers' association must, too, be rethought and rewritten to incorporate the knowledge which *Akteneinsicht* has brought. A recently published work on the relationship of writers and the *Stasi* finds, for example, that, in 1987, a staggering twelve of the nineteen committee members of the *Autorenverband* were active as *IM* (I-58, p. 225, J-100, p. 558). The files do not merely help the people of a lost nation to acquire and understand their own history, but, to a certain extent, force its redefinition. Even some of those who were under *Stasi* observation are traumatised by the realisation that significant details of their perception of the past, in terms of interpersonal relationships and behavioural tendencies, may have been based on false premises. This redefinition of personal and collective history is the true and far-reaching impact of the turbulent confrontation with this aspect of the extraordinary legacy of the *MfS*, that is with the case of the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*.

APPENDIX 1

Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung, 26 October 1994, p. 9

Es geht ihr nicht um Schuldzuweisung

Eine schottische Studentin sucht IMs als Zeugen der DDR-Vergangenheit

„Forscherin aus Großbritannien sucht ehemalige Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des MfS zwecks Gespräch zum Thema Aufarbeitung der Stasi-Vergangenheit. Vertraulicher Umgang garantiert.“ Auf diese Anzeige hin gab es nur eine Zuschrift. Hat sich Barbara Miller zuviel vorgenommen?

Sie ist 24 Jahre alt und hat im Juni 1991 ihren „Master of Arts“ im Fach Germanistik abgelegt. Die Universität Glasgow hat sie mit einem Promotionsstipendium ausgestattet und für ein Jahr nach Berlin-Brandenburg geschickt.

In deutschen Ohren klingt Germanistik immer nach „Zauberberg“ oder der „Gruppe 47“. Auch Barbara Miller kennt sich in der deutschen Literatur gut aus. Vor allem Georg Büchner hat es ihr angetan. Von den Schriftstellern aus der DDR schätzt sie vor allem Volker Braun und Stefan Heym. Aber es ist nur zu verständlich, daß eine deutsche Fakultät im Ausland nicht nur das Fach Literatur großschreibt. Wer Deutschland verstehen lernen möchte, muß sich auch mit Landeskunde und Geschichte, Politik und Soziologie herumschlagen. Doch viele Wissenschaftler in Glasgow können das, was sich nunmehr im vereinten Deutschland abspielt, nur schwer einschätzen.

Um so interessierter zeigten sich die Professoren, als Barbara Miller im September 1993 von einem zweijährigen Deutschlandaufenthalt an ihre Heimatuniversität zurückkehrte. Sie hatte ausprobieren wollen, was sie jahrelang studiert hatte: die deutsche Sprache. Auf eigene Faust war sie nach dem Studium nach Deutschland gegangen, um hier eine Weile zu leben und zu arbeiten.

Ihre ersten Erfahrungen sammelte sie als Englisch-Lehrerin. Ihre Schüler waren vor allem ostdeutsche Umschüler, die durch die Wende arbeitslos geworden waren. Einige galten als „Teilzeitarbeiter mit null Stunden“ – ein sozialstaatlicher Aufwand, den sie von Schottland her nicht kannte. Aber ihr Sprachunterricht weckte keine falschen Hoffnungen auf einen neuen Job. Viele der angehenden Dauerarbeitslosen konnten bei ihr etwas fürs Leben lernen. Absurd erscheint es Barbara Miller im Rückblick, daß sie ihr erstes regelmäßiges Einkommen durch die hohe Arbeitslosigkeit im vereinigten Deutschland verdient hat.

Im Unterricht stieß sie auf ein ungeheures Gesprächsbedürfnis. Den Schülern, von denen manche doppelt so alt waren wie sie, lastete der Zusammenbruch der DDR schwer auf der Seele. Oft brachen sie die Konversation in der englischen Sprache ab und fielen ins Deutsche. Und oft dachten sie noch, während sie redeten.

Barbara Miller wurde von ihren Schülern sehr geachtet, vielleicht auch, weil sie keine Westdeutsche war. Diese Sympathie beruhte auf Gegenseitigkeit. Denn wer in Europa lebt schon auf so großem Fuße wie die Westdeutschen? In der Ex-DDR fühlte sich die Rothaarige oft an ihre schottische Heimat erinnert. Vor allem das Miteinander der Menschen erscheint ihr hier unkomplizierter und wärmer. Wenn sie zu Hause einen Pub besucht, würden mitgebrachte Freunde von Freunden viel schneller in das Gespräch einbezogen, als das in Westdeutschland der Fall sei.

Doch inmitten dieser vertrauensvollen Atmosphäre, auf die sie in Ostdeutschland stieß, gab es offenbar auch eklatantes Mißtrauen und Vertrauensbrüche. Die Situation in Ostdeutschland sei einmalig, meint Barbara Miller. Durch die Öffnung der Stasi-Archive käme plötzlich ans Licht, was sich jahrelang im Verborgenen abspielte. Diesem Phänomen ist sie auf der Spur. Sie möchte mehr wissen über die Motivation der IMs und über den Umgang mit den Vorwürfen, denen sie plötzlich ausgesetzt sind. Dabei geht es ihr nicht um Schuldzuweisung. Ob es die Deutschen wollen oder nicht, die Stasi-Hinterlassenschaft ist ein Problem. Und sie möchte sehen, wie in Deutschland mit diesem Problem umgegangen wird. Als Außenstehende kann sie unvoreingenommen zuhören, ohne die Verstrickung einzelner zu dramatisieren. Beim Studium der Gesetze bemerkte sie bereits eine Ungleichheit: IMs dürfen im Gegensatz zu den sogenannten Opfern ihre Akten nur in Ausnahmefällen einsehen.

Doch Barbara Miller möchte an ihrer Universität in Glasgow keine abstrakte Studie abliefern. Deshalb sucht sie das Gespräch mit Menschen, die im Land Brandenburg leben und die in der Öffentlichkeit immer wieder als „Täter“ bezeichnet werden. Wer ihr schreiben möchte: Barbara Miller, British Council, Am Treptower Park 28-30, 12435 Berlin.

K. S.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW-FRAGEBOGEN

1. Biographie

Könnten Sie bitte etwas zu Ihrer Biographie sagen: Kindheit/Schule/Ausbildung/Arbeit/Ehe/Kinder usw.?

2. Werbungsphase

Wann/wo/in welcher Form war der erste Kontakt zum MfS?

War es Ihnen bewußt, was vorging?

Kannten Sie den Begriff 'IM'?

Hat man damals viel über die Stasi geredet - in der Arbeit, unter Freunden, usw.?

Haben Sie lange überlegt, ob Sie sich auf diesen Kontakt einlassen sollten?

Haben Sie damals mit jemandem über die Kontakte geredet?

Mußten Sie eine Verpflichtungserklärung unterschreiben?

Was war Ihre Motivation für diese Tätigkeit?

3. Vorherige Einstellung/Erfahrung

Wie war Ihre vorherige Einstellung zum MfS?

Hatten Sie bereits Kontakt zum MfS gehabt?

4. Nach der Werbung - Gefühle/Ängste/Beziehungen

Waren Sie mit der Entscheidung zufrieden, mit der Stasi zusammenzuarbeiten?

Hatten Sie Angst, daß jemand das herauskriegt?

Was wäre passiert, wenn jemand davon erfahren hätte?

Wie haben Sie sich dann verhalten, wenn danach über die Stasi geredet worden ist?

Hat sich etwas geändert in Ihren Beziehungen zu Freunden/Familie/Kollegen?

5. Aufgaben/Pflichten

Hatten Sie konkrete Aufgaben?

Haben Sie diese erfüllt?

Haben Sie schriftliche oder mündliche Berichte abgegeben?

Können Sie sich an einen bestimmten Bericht erinnern?

Ist es vorgekommen, daß Sie sich verweigert haben, einen bestimmten Auftrag zu erfüllen?

Könnten Sie vielleicht ein typisches Treffen mit Ihrem Führungsoffizier beschreiben?

Wie war die Beziehung zu dem Führungsoffizier?

Haben Sie jemandem Schaden zugefügt?

Haben Sie damals mit jemandem über die Tätigkeit gesprochen?

6. Weiterer Verlauf der Tätigkeit

Wie ging das dann weiter?

Wann/wie/warum/von wem wurde die Tätigkeit beendet?

7. Nach der Tätigkeit

Wann/aus welchen Gründen/mit wem haben Sie angefangen, über Ihre Tätigkeit zu reden?

8. Die Wende

Was für berufliche/persönliche Folgen hat diese Tätigkeit für Sie gehabt?

9. Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit

Beschäftigt man sich eher zu viel oder zu wenig mit der Aufarbeitung der Stasi-Vergangenheit?

Kann man unterscheiden - und wenn ja, nach welchen Kriterien - zwischen Tätern und Opfern der ehemaligen DDR?

Sollten ehemalige Stasi-Mitarbeiter strafrechtlich verfolgt werden?

Was halten Sie von den Urteilen gegen Wolf und Mielke?

Sind Sie im allgemeinen zufrieden mit dem Umgang mit MfS-Mitarbeitern? Wenn nicht, wie hätte ein solcher Umgang aussehen sollen?

10. Gauck-Behörde/StUG

War dieses Gesetz nötig?

Sollten die Akten zugänglich sein?

Wie finden Sie die Arbeit der Gauck-Behörde?

Haben Sie Einsicht in Ihre Akte beantragt? Warum/nicht?

11. Bestimmte Persönlichkeiten

Stolpe

Identifizieren Sie sich mit Manfred Stolpe?

Was halten Sie von der Arbeit des Stolpe-Ausschusses/von seiner Entlastung?

Biermann/Anderson

Was hielten Sie von der Biermann-Aktion gegen Sascha Anderson? War seine Handlung gerechtfertigt? Hat Anderson Schuld auf sich geladen?

Gysi

Kaiser-Nicht

12. Bürgerrechtler

Haben Bürgerrechtler wie Bärbel Bohley eine Funktion in der heutigen Gesellschaft?

13. Nach der Wende

Hat sich Ihr Leben im allgemeinen verschlechtert oder verbessert seit der Wende?

Fühlen Sie sich im allgemeinen eher als Deutscher oder mehr als Bürger der DDR?

14. MfS-Tätigkeit/Rückblick

Wie stehen Sie zu Ihrer Tätigkeit jetzt?

Fühlen Sie sich schuldig?

Haben Sie/Hatten Sie Kontakt zu anderen MfS-Mitarbeitern?

Haben Sie heute noch Kontakt zu den Leuten, über die Sie berichtet haben?

Wie werden Sie von Leuten behandelt, die von ihrer Tätigkeit erfahren?

15. Politik

Welche Partei wählen Sie?

16. Sonstiges

Gibt es sonst noch etwas, was Sie für wichtig halten?

17. Pseudonym/Deckname

Wie möchten Sie in dieser Arbeit bezeichnet werden?

GLOSSARY***Abbreviations***

AfNS	Amt für Nationale Sicherheit
AIM	Archivierte Akte eines Inoffiziellen Mitarbeiters
ASt.	Außenstelle
BStU	Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei
FIM	Führungs-IM
GI	Geheimer Informator
GM	Geheimer Mitarbeiter
GMS	Gesellschaftlicher Mitarbeiter für Sicherheit
GVS	Geheime Verschlusssache
HFIM	Hauptamtlicher Führungs-IM
IM	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter
IMB	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter der Abwehr mit Feindverbindung bzw. zur unmittelbaren Bearbeitung im Verdacht der Feindtätigkeit stehender Personen
IME	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter im bzw. für einen besonderen Einsatz
IMK	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter zur Sicherung der Konspiration und des Verbindungswesens
IMS	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter zur politisch-operativen Durchdringung und Sicherung des Verantwortungsbereiches
IMV	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter, der unmittelbar an der Bearbeitung und Entlarvung im Verdacht der Feindtätigkeit stehender Personen mitarbeitet

JHS	Juristische Hochschule des MfS
KgU	Kampfgruppe gegen Unmenschlichkeit
KO	Konspiratives Objekt
KP	Kontaktperson
KW	Konspirative Wohnung
MfS	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit
OM	Operativer Mitarbeiter
OPK	Operative Personenkontrolle
OSL	Oberstleutnant
OV	Operativer Vorgang
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus
SAPMO	Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
Stasi	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit
StGB	Strafgesetzbuch
StUG	Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz
VP	Volkspolizei
VPKA	Volkspolizeikreisamt
VVS	Vertrauliche Verschlusssache
ZA	Zentralarchiv

Common Terms

Akteneinsicht The process of viewing one's *Stasi* files.

Anforderungsbild An *Anforderungsbild* profiled a particular task, and identified, in terms of experience, ability and personality, the type of person who might be suitable for this task and who could therefore potentially be recruited as an *IM* (see J-62, p. 341, Section One: 1.3).

Arbeitsakte The volume/s of an *IM* file where the actual reports of the meetings between the *IM* and the *Führungsoffizier* were filed (see J-62, pp. 111-16, Introduction: 2.4.1).

Bürgerrechtler Citizens' rights activists. The term is widely used even now to refer to individuals such as Bärbel Bohley who were prominent in the opposition scene in the GDR.

Dekonstruktion The term applied by the *MfS* when one of its employees betrayed confidential information to outsiders (see F-3, pp. 68-69). Used in this study to refer to incidents when an *IM* broke the oath of silence s/he had taken about having contacts to the *MfS*.

Enquete-Kommission Commission set up in 1992 which was concerned with the 'Aufarbeitung von Geschichte und Folgen der SED-Diktatur in Deutschland'. Its work included inviting individuals before the commission to testify on various aspects of life under the dictatorship, and commissioning reports from researchers working in the field. The final report of the *Enquete-Kommission* was passed in June 1994 (see F-1, F-11, F-13, F-14).

Führungs-IM An *IM* who was in charge of other *IM* and *GMS* (see J-62, pp. 318-20).

Führungsoffizier The *MfS* employee responsible for recruiting and working directly with *IM*. The term *Führungsoffizier* was not widely used within the *MfS*, but is much more commonly applied in the *Stasi* debate than the more formally correct term, *Operativer Mitarbeiter*, even, it seems, by former *MfS* officers (see J-62, p. 17, Section One: 4.2).

Gauck-Behörde The more popular term for the office of the *BStU*, after the head of the organisation, Joachim Gauck.

Geheimer Informator The original term (1950-1968) for what later came to be known as an *IMS* (see J-62, p. 62).

Geheimer Mitarbeiter The original term (1950-1968) for what later came to be known as an *IMV* (1968-80), and finally, an *IMB* (1980-1990).

Gesellschaftlicher Mitarbeiter für Sicherheit An individual who was periodically approached by the *MfS* and asked to give information. *GMS* were to be 'Bürger der DDR mit einer auch in der Öffentlichkeit bekannten staatsbewußten Einstellung und Haltung', and the contact to

such individuals was less formalised and less secretive than to an *IM* (J-62, p. 368).

Hauptamtlicher IM *Hauptamtliche IM* worked for the *MfS* on a full-time basis but, by the creation of a cover occupation, a *Scheinarbeitsverhältnis*, care was taken to ensure that this fact remain secret (F-3, pp. 195-96).

IM-Kandidat An individual who was to be recruited as an *IM* if the thorough checks carried out on him/her at this preliminary stage proved satisfactory (see J-62, pp. 91-116).

IM-Tätigkeit The period of collaboration between an *IM* and the *MfS*.

Juristische Hochschule *MfS* training college situated near Potsdam.

Konspiratives Objekt Any location other than a *Konspirative Wohnung* which was used for meetings between the *Führungsoffizier* and the *IM*.

Konspirative Wohnung The flat or house used for the secret meetings between the *Führungsoffizier* and the *IM*.

Kontaktgespräch The initial meeting between the *IM-Kandidat* and the *Führungsoffizier*.

Kontaktperson *Kontaktpersonen (KP)* were 'vertrauenswürdige Bürger der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, die zur Lösung bestimmter Aufgaben angesprochen werden' (J-62, p. 205). There is some evidence that the categories of *IM* and *KP* were not always as distinct as Erich Mielke would have wished (see J-62, pp. 84-89).

Legende The term used for any pretext used in the *MfS*'s work, defined in the *MfS-Wörterbuch* as a 'glaubhafter Vorwand, durch den Personen in der operativen Arbeit über die wahren Ziele und Absichten des *MfS* getäuscht werden' (F-3, p. 240, see Section One: 2.2, 2.4).

operativ bedeutsam Information was deemed *operativ bedeutsam* if it could potentially be applied in the fight against the enemy (see F-3, pp. 171-72, Section One: 4.1.1).

Operativer Mitarbeiter The formally more correct term for a *Führungsoffizier*.

Operative Personenkontrolle The first stage of observation of individuals suspected of being a danger to internal security. *OPK* were fundamental in determining 'Wer ist wer?' (see F-3, p. 286, Section One: 1.1).

Operativer Vorgang A measure implemented to observe those who had been deemed state enemies, and, if necessary, to physically or psychologically harm them in order to hinder their engagement in opposition activities (see F-3, pp. 287-97, Section One: 1.1).

Ostalgie Popular term referring to nostalgia for the GDR.

Personalakte The volume/s of an *IM* file, in which personal details of the *IM* concerned were recorded alongside any information relating to his/her immediate family. Documentation regarding the selection and recruitment of the *IM* was also stored here, as well as other general information, for example, concerning any rewards s/he received for services rendered (see J-62, pp. 111-16, Introduction: 2.4.1).

Pioniere The state-run organisation (officially titled *Pionierorganisation 'Ernst Thälmann'*) for children in the GDR, of which membership was an implicit duty.

Rechtsstaat The term used to define a state whose criminal justice system operates on the democratic principle of the separation of legislature and judicature.

Republikflucht A term used by the *SED* and the *MfS* to describe an escape from the GDR.

Runder Tisch The body set up in the immediate post-*Wende* period to facilitate inter-party dialogue in the transition period of the run-up to the first and last democratic elections in the GDR in March 1990 (see J-24, Introduction: 1.4.2).

Schießbefehl The order to shoot anyone found trying to commit *Republikflucht*. The exact implications of the *Schießbefehl*, i.e., had it been an order to kill or merely to wound, were heavily debated in the controversial series of border-guard trials (see Section Two: 7.1).

Schweigeverpflichtung The (usually written) oath of silence which *IM* in the process of being recruited were asked to make at the end of the *Kontaktgespräch* (see Section One: 2.5).

Schwerpunktprinzip Working principle of the *MfS*, whereby resources were not to be distributed evenly among the population but concentrated in areas of suspected subversive activity (see F-3, pp. 374-75, Section One: 1.2.3).

Siegerjustiz Victor's justice. Attempts of the legal system to bring the crimes of the GDR to court were often criticised in the post-*Wende* period as representing a form of *Siegerjustiz* (see Section Two: 7.1).

Sinn-Angebot A term used by Günter Kunert, and throughout this work, to describe the motivational incentive often used by the *MfS*, particularly at recruitment, which involved convincing an *IM-Kandidat* that such collaboration was for an ultimately justifiable good (J-47, p. 18). During the course of the *IM-Tätigkeit* both the *MfS* and the *IM* often strove to maintain the belief in the *Sinn-Angebot* (see Section One: 3.2, 5.4, Section Two: 9.2.3).

Treuhand The more common term for the *Treuhandanstalt*, the body set up above all to administer the privatisation of formerly state-run GDR businesses and properties.

Unrechtsstaat The term used to define a state whose criminal justice system does not operate on the democratic principle of the separation of legislature and judicature.

Verpflichtungserklärung The (usually written) declaration of commitment which newly recruited *IM* were asked to make at the *Werbungsgespräch* (see Section One: 2.5, 2.6).

Werbungsgespräch The meeting during which an *IM-Kandidat* was recruited as an *IM* (see Section One: Chapter 2).

Zersetzungs-Maßnahmen Measures devised to physically or psychologically neutralise the enemy (see F-3, p. 464).

Key Personalities

For more detailed information, see *Wer war Wer in der DDR: Ein biographisches Handbuch*, ed. by Bernd-Rainer Barth and others (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1995).

Bohley, Bärbel (b. 1945) *Bürgerrechtlerin*. Arrested in January 1988 after protesting at the Rosa-Luxemburg-Demonstration. Temporarily left the GDR soon afterwards to escape a long jail sentence. Involved in various opposition/peace groups such as the *Initiative für Frieden und Menschenrechte*.

Böhme, Ibrahim (b. 1938) Co-founder of the *SDP* (the *Ost-SPD*), *IM*.

De Maizière, Lothar (b. 1940) *Ministerpräsident* of the GDR (April-October 1990), *IM*.

Eigenfeld, Katrin (b. 1946) *Bürgerrechtlerin*. Active in various church/peace groups. Co-founder of the *Neues Forum* in Halle.

Eppelmann, Rainer (b. 1943) *Bürgerrechtler* and theologian. Co-founder of the party *Demokratischer Aufbruch*. Chairman (*CDU*) of the *Enquete-Kommission*.

Fuchs, Jürgen (b. 1950) Writer and psychologist. Close acquaintance of Robert Havemann. Arrested in 1976 after protest at Wolf Biermann's expulsion. Forced to leave the GDR in 1977 after nine months imprisonment.

Gauck, Joachim (b. 1940) The Federal Commissioner in charge of the *MfS* files.

Gysi, Gregor (b. 1948) Lawyer and politician (*PDS*).

Havemann, Robert (1910-1982) Physicist and possibly the most prominent GDR dissident. Placed under constant surveillance and house arrest by the *MfS*.

Honecker, Erich (1912-1994) Leader of the *SED* (1976-1989).

Mielke, Erich (b. 1907) *Minister für Staatssicherheit* 1957-1989.

Nooke, Günter (b. 1959) *Bürgerrechtler*. Representative of *Bündnis 90*, (later *Bündnis*) on the *Stolpe-Untersuchungsausschuß*.

Poppe, Gerd (b. 1941) *Bürgerrechtler* and politician (*Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*). Co-founder of the *Initiative für Frieden und Menschenrechte*.

Poppe, Ulrike (b. 1953) *Bürgerrechtlerin*. Founding member of *Frauen für den Frieden*. Heavily involved in the *Demokratie Jetzt* movement in the *Wende* period.

Rathenow, Lutz (b. 1952) Writer and *Bürgerrechtler*. Active in literary circles in Jena in the 1970s and 1980s. Advocate of a comprehensive confrontation with the *Stasi* legacy.

Reich, Jens (b. 1939) *Bürgerrechtler* and biologist. MP for *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* in the first freely elected *Volkskammer* (March-October 1990).

Schnur, Wolfgang (b. 1944) Lawyer. Co-founder and leader in the *Wende* period of the party *Demokratischer Aufbruch (DA)*, *IM*.

Schorlemmer, Friedrich (b. 1944) Theologian. Co-founder of the party *Demokratischer Aufbruch (DA)*.

Stolpe, Manfred (b. 1936) Head of the secretariat of the *BEK (Bund der Evangelischen Kirchen)* in the GDR (from 1969) and *Konsistorialpräsident des Evangelischen Konsistoriums* (1982-1990). *Ministerpräsident (SPD)* in Brandenburg since 1990.

Wolf, Markus (b. 1923) Head of the *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung*, the foreign espionage department of the *MfS* (1953-1986).

Wollenberger (now Lengsfeld), Vera (b. 1952) *Bürgerrechtlerin*. Co-founder of the *Kirche von unten*. Arrested in January 1988 after protesting at the Rosa-Luxemburg-Demonstration. Temporarily left the GDR soon afterwards to escape a long jail sentence.

Wollweber, Ernst (1898-1967) *Staatssekretär* and then *Minister für Staatssicherheit* (1953-1957).

Zaisser, Wilhelm (1893-1958) *Minister für Staatssicherheit* (1950-1953).

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- B. Correspondence Relating to *IM*
- C. *MfS* Files
- D. *MfS* Documentation
- E. *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR*
- F. Further Primary Documentation
- G. Laws
- H. Conferences/Events
- I. Newspaper Articles
- J. Secondary Sources
- K. Uncited Sources

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