

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### East German 'dirty networks' survived

*The case of 'Tageszeitung' editor Till Meyer is a real eye-opener on continuing terrorist contacts with the Stasi after unification.*

About 75% of the daily news in Germany is presently absorbed by new revelations about the depth of penetration that the Stasi, the East German secret police, had within its own population and within select West German institutions. A special law, put into effect on Jan. 1, gives German citizens access to the millions of file-cards and other data of the Stasi, so that they can read what was written about them, who spied on them, and who authorized such spying operations.

Rumors that there are personal data on 6 million former East Germans—of a total population of 17 million—may be exaggerated, but there are many files, indeed. The Stasi even had informants among families: Children spied on their parents, husbands on their wives, etc.

The western aspect of this story is also extremely interesting: It is on the public record now that senior members of churches, the scientific institutions, political parties, and especially the media were on the payroll of the Stasi, some for many years. The case of Till Meyer, a leading journalist at the leftist Berlin daily *Tageszeitung*, whose identity as a longtime Stasi informer was made known in mid-January, is particularly revealing. (Meyer has meanwhile admitted he had worked for the East Germans "out of political conviction.")

A co-founder of the 1967 "June 2nd Movement" in West Berlin, a forerunner to the terrorist RAF/Baader Meinhof gang, Meyer was involved in the 1975 abduction of Berlin CDU politician Jürgen Lorenz. He was arrested for the kidnapping and sentenced

to 15 years of jail, not expecting release earlier than the early 1990s. But in early 1978, a team of RAF terrorists led by Inge Viett liberated him from the Berlin Moabit prison, escaped to East Berlin, and traveled on to Bulgaria. All of that occurred with the explicit approval of the Stasi, which maintained a special channel of communication with Viett.

Several months later, Meyer was spotted and arrested in Bulgaria by a West German police squad, with the consent of the Bulgarian government. The exact circumstances of that police operation remain rather mysterious to this day. Inge Viett, however, a member of the hard-core of the RAF who should have been arrested, was allowed by Bulgaria's authorities to escape to Czechoslovakia and from there back to East Germany. Viett was finally arrested along with Christian Klar and other RAF members on east German territory during the German reunification process in 1990.

The East Germans safehoused Viett and her core group in late 1978, and allowed them to redeploy to the West via the Mideast, sometime in early 1979. The whole group was back in its various hideouts outside Germany (France, Belgium, and the Netherlands) in 1980 and began to map out another series of spectacular terrorist attacks on senior NATO officials and German politicians. Assassination attempts against Gen. Alexander Haig and Gen. Frederick Kroesen failed, fortunately.

During the entire period, Viett maintained close contact with the Stasi, and this also enabled her to es-

cape arrest by West German anti-terrorism search squads. Well-placed informants for the Stasi in West Germany had provided crucial information about ongoing or planned police operations, giving early warning to the RAF group.

This takes us back to Till Meyer. Released early from prison in 1986, Meyer became an editor at the Berlin semi-underground daily, *Tageszeitung*. His job was to monitor new developments in the police and in counterterrorism, and security matters in general, where he was able to spread a lot of disinformation about the RAF/Baader Meinhof, saying they were hiding out in the Mideast when they were in East Germany, preparing for another round of terrorist attacks. Meyer also passed on useful information to the Stasi on how much counterterrorism experts knew in the West about core members of the RAF group, like Inge Viett and Christian Klar, who had withdrawn from active terrorism and "retired" in East Germany. His disinformation prevented many counter-terrorism experts from recognizing that a new generation of the RAF "command-level" had replaced the core around Viett and Klar in the mid-1980s.

Stasi Lt. Helmut Voigt, in charge of operative contacts to the terrorist scene in and outside Europe, was the one receiving Meyer's information. Voigt oversaw the combat training of select RAF members in machineguns, explosives, and the Soviet-made RPG-7 anti-tank missile (that type was used against General Kroesen near Heidelberg a year later!) at a remote East German Army camp near the Polish border in 1981. He disappeared from view after the events of November 1989, and is said to have joined those "out-of-work intelligence agents" who work with terrorists underground.