



Georg Herbstritt, Helmut Müller-Enbergs. *Das Gesicht dem Westen zu ...: DDR-Spionage gegen die Bundesrepublik Deutschland.* Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2003. 458 S. 24.90 (broschiert), ISBN 978-3-86108-388-7.



Dieter Krüger, Armin Wagner. *Konspiration als Beruf: Deutsche Geheimdienstchefs im Kalten Krieg.* Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2003. 280 S. EUR 19.90 (broschiert), ISBN 978-3-86153-287-3.



Reviewed by Jefferson Adams (Department of History, Sarah Lawrence College)

Published on H-German (December, 2007)

Toward a More Complete Picture of Cold War Espionage

The scholarly study on the state of intelligence history and organizations continues to struggle for a firm foothold in present-day Germany. While British, Canadian, and American academics may still complain about certain obstacles—and worry about the successor generation—the record of accomplishment during the past twenty years is an impressive one, ranging from university-level courses to solid monographs and well-respected periodicals. One might expect that Germany, with its unparalleled series of imperial, Nazi, communist, and democratic espionage organizations, would be a

thriving center for such studies, but that is decidedly not the case.[1]

Even though spy films and novels enjoy a large popular following, very little cross-fertilization is occurring between members of the country's foreign and domestic organs—the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) and the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV)—and the country's institutions of higher learning. Sources present a further problem, for not only are memoirs by former officials relatively rare but the BND, quite unlike the CIA,

has yet to release any documents at all since its founding over fifty years ago. It should also be noted that the efflorescence of Stasi history took place outside a largely indifferent academy, spurred initially by the determination of East German dissidents to preserve their files after the 1989 revolution and carried forward by the in-house research team at the Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen der Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR (BStU).

In this context, the two volumes under review merit particular attention. The first—*Konspiration als Beruf*—has unusual appeal, especially for general readers anxious to gain a fuller understanding of the rival German intelligence services during the Cold War. The editors, Dieter Krüger and Klaus Wagner, both associated with the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt in Potsdam, have opted for a biographical format consisting of eleven sketches, alternating between East and West German officials and proceeding in a generally chronological fashion. The selection also allows for a sampling of the main intelligence organizations in each state with the exception of the Militärischer Abschirmdienst (MAD) of the West German Bundeswehr, for which sources proved inadequate. Moreover, to deepen the book's historical dimension, all the chosen figures—with one exception—were born between 1891 and 1913, thereby amplifying our awareness of the impact that both world wars as well as National Socialism and Stalinism made on the conduct of Cold War intelligence. The chapters are written in an accessible style, and the book achieves the overall coherence so often lacking in scholarly anthologies.

A number of the persons included will be immediately familiar, notably Reinhard Gehlen (written by Krüger), Erich Mielke (Jens Gieseke), and Markus Wolf (Karl Wilhelm Fricke). Although contributors were urged to keep a larger historical framework in mind and avoid the minutiae of an encyclopedic entry, many lesser-known biographical facts emerge, such as the strongly nationalist outlook of Wilhelm Zaisser (Helmut Müller-Enbergs) prior to his enthusiastic participation in World War I. Some of the figures—Friedrich Wilhelm Heinz (Susanne Meinl), Karl Linke (Wagner), and Otto John (Bernd Stöver)—evoked much puzzlement, if not controversy, during their lifetime, yet it is a credit to all of the contributors that their even-handed presentations permit a more judicious retrospective judgment.

Probably the least well-known intelligence director in the book is Fritz Tejassy (Wolfgang Buschfort), but his career is one of the most deserving of recognition. The

son of a Jewish merchant who investigated right-wing extremists during the Weimar period, he spent the Nazi years in exile but returned to head the Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz in North Rhine-Westphalia in 1949. Strictly adhering to the letter of the law in procuring information and maintaining high professional standards for his staff, Tejassy fought against the overcentralization of the BfV by championing greater autonomy for its regional offices (in this respect, the present-day German approach to monitoring subversive activity poses a sharp contrast to that of the FBI and MI5). Two veteran communists—Richard Stahlmann (Matthias Uhl) and Ernst Wollweber (Roger Engelmann)—along with Gehlen's immediate successor at the BND, Gerhard Wessel (Krüger), complete the roster.

The same admirable scrupulousness found in each of the individual portraits extends to the book as a whole. In addition to some well-chosen illustrations, the editors included a fine introductory essay that elaborates on the distinction between a *Geheimpolizei* (secret police) and a *Nachrichtendienst* (intelligence service) and then summarizes their interplay in the longer trajectory of German history, not just during the post-1945 era. The end of the book displays a chart listing all the German intelligence chiefs during the Cold War, followed by the footnotes and a very helpful annotated bibliography for each chapter. This volume, in short, is an outstanding contribution to the field of intelligence studies and can be read with profit by laypersons and experts alike.

Das Gesicht dem Westen zu, edited by Georg Herbstritt and Helmut Müller-Enbergs, both researchers at the BStU, is an anthology of a quite different sort. It derives from a conference held in Berlin in November 2001 under the auspices of the BStU. That representatives from the BND, BfV, MAD, the Federal Prosecutor's Office, the Federal Criminal Office, and the former East German Ministry of State Security (MfS) counted among the participants clearly made it a unique and fruitful interchange. While the editors refer to the open debate that ensued, the book itself contains only the papers, without any additional commentary or discussion, probably in the interest of space. Nevertheless, at times, some of the contributors' assertions sorely beg for further elucidation. For example, Joachim Zähler of the MAD contends that the political leadership of the Warsaw Pact had been "intentionally deceived" in its estimates of NATO's intentions and military strength (p. 212). Likewise, Ulrich Wässner of the BND ends with the cryptic remark that the MfS "failed" overall in its attacks against his organization (p. 403).