

The secret life of Bellingcat's so-called 'Timmi Allen'

Garrick Alder

His name is Olaf Neitsch, and he was born on 18 November 1961, in the former East Germany (GDR).¹ As an adult, he achieved his youthful ambition of serving as an officer in the communist regime's secret police, the Stasi.² Neitsch's office defeated and silenced prominent local opponents of the GDR. The office's operational zone included a long section of the Berlin Wall, where numerous would-be defectors were shot dead by GDR border guards. Stasi officers were not involved in these killings, but they had to deal with the administrative aftermath, and often went to great lengths to cover up what had happened.

The Stasi was perhaps the most feared and hated branch of the communist government, and openly used kidnapping, false imprisonment, blackmail, and psychological and physical torture. Indeed, the Stasi had its own training academy, in which officers and aspiring officers were instructed in such techniques and were required to write formal dissertations about developing these skills. In its overall objective of defeating the 'fascist' west during the Cold War, the Stasi assisted and funded numerous international terrorist organisations. The Stasi itself was not above committing murder from time to time. Its repressive and brutal conduct moved even Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal to remark that, in terms of mistreating Germany's own citizens, the post-war Stasi was 'much, much worse than the Gestapo'.³

Today, Olaf Neitsch is a key staff member of the Bellingcat investigations group, tracking down and identifying international wrongdoers. Privately, he is in informal contact with members of a network of surviving Stasi officers, who operate in mutual trust and protection. Other members of this network have penetrated numerous institutions in modern Germany, and they work, often

¹ The German Democratic Republic, a satellite state of the former Soviet Union. The GDR existed from 1949 to 1990, when it was abolished and merged with West Germany (the Federal German Republic).

² 'Stasi' is a contraction of the last word in the title *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* – The Ministry of State Security.

³ John O. Koehler, *Stasi* (Boulder [Colorado]: Westview Press, 1999), p. 8.

successfully, to obliterate and rewrite the history of the Stasi and the communist regime that it served. This network of retired secret police officers is known as the Organisation of Officers of the Ministry (ODOM) and it has been described as 'a present and future threat'.⁴ It seeks to undermine, neutralise, and smear critics of the now-defunct East German dictatorship. While Olaf Neitsch is not known to have participated in the network's aggressively subversive activities, he has – for wholly understandable reasons of his own – attempted to obscure his own Stasi career. He has achieved this by erecting a wall of lies and disinformation around his past, and by adopting a pseudonym: 'Timmi Allen'.

Part I: Tracking down 'Timmi'

The key to identifying Neitsch was provided by a video called 'Spying Then and Now', which was produced by Dutch documentary studio VPRO and published in 2020. This short film shows Neitsch at home, still under the pseudonym 'Timmi Allen', and provides multiple separate views from his domestic CCTV monitoring system. 'Timmi Allen' has cameras stationed at the front and back of his house, and the live feeds from each camera are displayed in a split-screen arrangement on a monitor in his living-room. By taking screengrabs from the VPRO programme, it was possible to use these CCTV feeds to assemble panoramic views of 'Timmi Allen's' front and back gardens. Some of the CCTV cameras were positioned in such a way that they also captured imagery just outside his property. This provided useful details of roads, buildings, and vegetation in the immediate vicinity.



Figure 1. Composite panorama of 'Timmi Allen's' back garden.

⁴ Koehler (see note 3) p. 29

Figure 1 (above) shows a panorama of 'Timmi Allen's' back garden, assembled from enlargements of three screengrabs from the VPRO documentary. This panorama shows his shed, part of his pool, and his boundary hedge and rear garden gate. His garden gate opens onto an alleyway, along which lies a cluster of three distinctive structures and a wooden gate (arranged toward the left-hand side of this panorama). Also visible: A glimpse of asphalt road surface; one neighbour's shed; another neighbour's pool; and two conservatories attached to the house immediately adjacent to Allen's.



Figure 2. Composite panorama of the front pathway of 'Timmi Allen's' house.

Figure 2 (above) shows a panorama of the pathway leading to 'Timmi Allen's' front door, assembled from enlargements of three screengrabs from the VPRO documentary. It shows three medium-height trees in a row alongside the path to 'Allen's' front door. Also visible is his next-door neighbour's very distinctive irregular low white stone wall. A glimpse of asphalt road surface can be seen, as can a black bollard of some kind at the entrance to the footpath leading to 'Allen's' front garden. From the two panoramas, a concept map of 'Allen's' house was created, simulating an aerial viewpoint, as shown in Figure 3 (below). Shadows seen in the garden in the VPRO film, along with the timestamps on 'Allen's' own CCTV monitor, provided a rough idea of the house's geographical orientation. It was clear that the building is aligned broadly east-to-west, with the back garden facing in a westward direction, and the front door facing approximately eastward. The reader is encouraged to examine how the concept map in Figure 3 relates to the panoramas in Figures 1 & 2.

With a clear idea of what 'Timmi Allen's' house would look like seen from above, it became feasible to locate and identify it using satellite imagery publicly available on the Google Earth mapping system. However, this search would have to be performed manually, and the land surface of Germany (excluding bodies of water) is 348,672 km². It was therefore important to

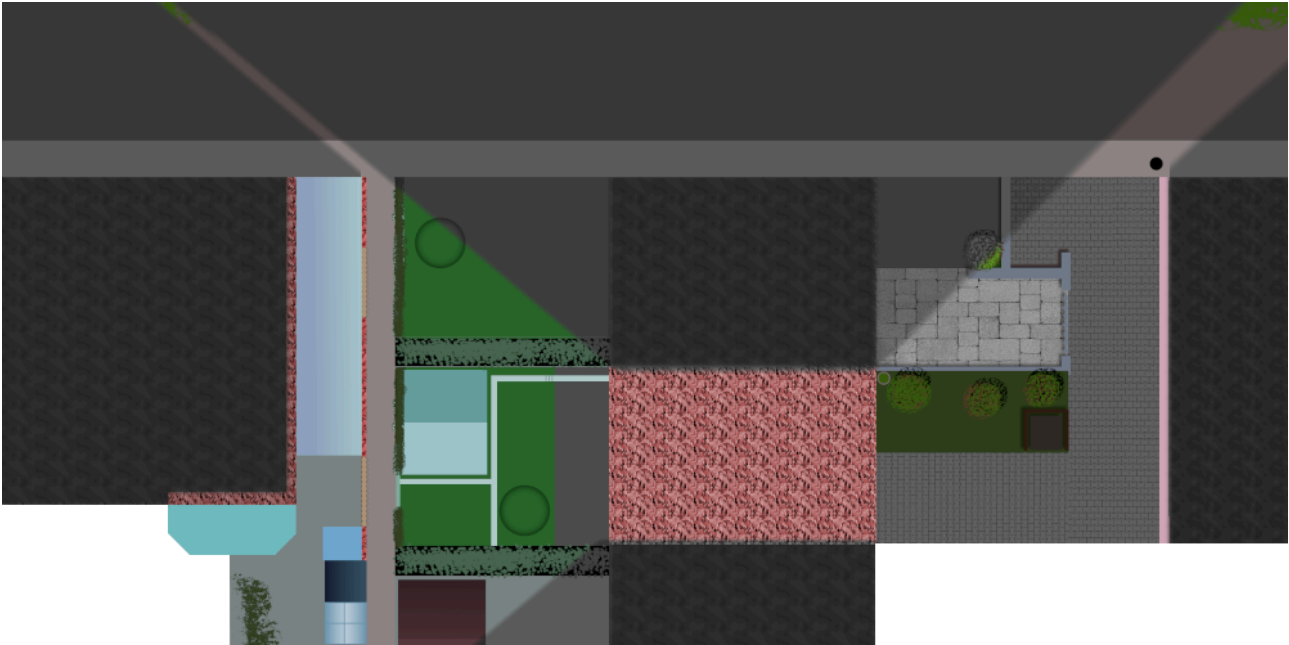


Figure 3. Concept map of the area immediately surrounding 'Timmi Allen's' house. 'Timmi Allen's' house is represented by the red textured oblong at the centre of the diagram. The highlighted zones represent the sight-lines extending from the house to details of the surrounding area seen in the panoramas shown in Figures 1 & 2. This concept map is presented with the geographical west and east respectively corresponding to the left and right of the image.

narrow down the search area as much as possible. Again, information seen in the VPRO documentary was crucial. The film includes a short tracking shot of 'Allen' walking along a residential street. This shot is 10 seconds long and was seemingly recorded without his knowledge.

By taking screengrabs during this tracking shot, the panorama shown in Figure 4 (below) was assembled. It seemed likely that the residential street seen in the VPRO documentary was near to 'Allen's' home, since he was seen walking along it. The panorama in Figure 4 provided several identification



Figure 4. Panoramic composite of an unidentified residential street, presumed to be near 'Timmi Allen's' home. Assembled from VPRO documentary.

points to search for, including the geographical orientation of the target street. Streets with different orientations could therefore be automatically excluded. From the panorama, a concept map of the layout of the street was created.

Identifying this street from above, using satellite imagery, would be easier than identifying 'Timmi Allen's' house alone, and could give a good indication of whereabouts that house was.

The rear licence plate of a parked white car is briefly visible toward the end of this tracking shot (i.e. near the right-hand edge of Figure 4). Vehicle registration plates in Germany are very specific. The first two to three characters of each plate are letters, which provide a very abbreviated indication of where the car's owner lives.⁵

There was of course no guarantee that the parked white car was registered to anyone living in the same area as 'Timmi Allen', since the whole point of cars is that they are useful for long-distance travel. In this case, it was not possible to distinguish the letters clearly, except to say that the first letter was a capital 'E'. The second letter is blurry, but it can be discerned that it is an angular letter rather than a curved one. The angles of the blurry letter are vertically oriented (as seen in an M or an N), rather than horizontally (like a Z, for example). There does not appear to be a third letter in this part of the licence plate.

There are 35 urban district codes on German licence plates that begin with the letter E. Of these, 15 consist of just two letters. Six of these two-letter abbreviations broadly fit the criterion of having an angular second letter. They are: EA (Eisenach, Thuringia); EH (Eisenhüttenstadt, Brandenburg); EL (Emsland, Lower Saxony); EM (Emmendingen, Baden-Württemberg); EN (Ennepe-Ruhr-Kreis, North Rhine-Westphalia); and EW (Eberswalde, Brandenburg).

Two of the six urban registration codes that accorded with the parked white car's number plate are in the Brandenburg state. Eberswalde lies roughly north-east of Berlin, and Eisenhüttenstadt roughly east. Furthermore, Brandenburg has a surface area of 29,480km², accounting for less than 10 per cent of Germany's total size. Therefore, the two Brandenburg code areas were searched first. The initial task of locating 'Timmi Allen' had seemed like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. At the end of this preparatory stage, the haystack had shrunk dramatically and a magnet was available.

A systematic scouring of satellite imagery in one of those registration districts yielded over 100 candidates for the residential street seen in the tracking shot. These candidate sites were then inspected from ground level, via Google Streetview, and eliminated one-by-one. Unexpectedly, this process

⁵ A comprehensive overview of this subject can be read at < <https://www.customeuropeanplates.com/german-license-plate-codes>>.

helped to clarify what the aerial view of the target street must look like, which in turn accelerated the process of elimination.

In this way, a Brandenburg residential street that was an impressive match for the target street was discovered. The Streetview imagery was captured by Google in May 2022. Several changes had occurred since the VPRO documentary was filmed in January 2020, but conspicuous and non-generic details were apparent in both the Brandenburg site and the street panorama assembled from the VPRO documentary. Inspecting the Brandenburg street in detail, in an attempt to eliminate it from the search, only provided further evidence corroborating the match with the target street. And by a stroke of luck, the white car was parked in exactly the same spot that it had been in January 2020, even though Google had obscured the licence plate. A panoramic view of the identified street is provided in Figure 5 (below), with the areas seen in the VPRO documentary highlighted.



Figure 5. Residential street, in an undisclosed location in Brandenburg, Germany. Imagery from Google Streetview.

With the residential street identified, a search for the target house was conducted in the immediate neighbourhood, using the maps and panoramas already constructed. This search was finished almost before it had even begun. Although it was not possible to get to the front door of the target house with Google Streetview, many of the details in the panoramas were immediately recognisable in the Streetview imagery. Importantly, it was possible to inspect the footpath seen at the back of 'Allen's' house, which provided several more highly-distinctive points of identification. Two key matching features are shown in Figure 6 below.



Figure 6. Identifying details of the exterior of 'Timmi Allen's' house, in an undisclosed location in Brandenburg, Germany. Imagery obtained via Google Streetview. 6(a) shows the cluster of distinctive structures in the alleyway behind 'Timmi Allen's' back garden (visible in Figure 1, above). 6(b) shows the distinctive stone wall of his neighbour's front garden (visible in Figure 2, above). The three trees positioned along 'Timmi Allen's' front path can be seen immediately beyond this stone wall.

The remainder of the exterior of 'Timmi Allen's' house is not shown here, which allows him to maintain a reasonable degree of privacy.

Having geolocated the house, its postal address could be determined. Having established the address, the identification of the resident soon followed. With the occupant's real name, it then became possible to recover information about his life in the East German dictatorship. In total, the task of unmasking so-called 'Timmi Allen' was not at all easy. But it should have been impossible, and it wasn't. Olaf Neitsch only has himself to blame for that.

Part II: Mauertrauer

When Olaf Neitsch was born in November 1961, the Berlin Wall was still under construction. Work had started in August that year, and when completed, this prototype Berlin Wall consisted of barbed wire and concrete blocks. This was improved and reinforced over the years and the wall took on its infamously formidable and monolithic final form in the mid-1970s. By 18 November 1989, when Neitsch celebrated his 28th birthday, the Berlin Wall was being

dismantled, East Germany itself was gradually collapsing, and the Stasi had just three months before it would be dissolved.

About Olaf Neitsch's childhood, almost nothing biographical can be discovered with certainty. Much the same can be said of his private adult life, although objective details of his career effectively neutralise some of his personal obfuscations. This, therefore, is an attempt to reconstruct Neitsch's life, long after most of the events described. There are large and unavoidable gaps. It has not been possible to conclusively establish the dates of some of the events mentioned.⁶ The reconstruction is also hampered by multiple attempts at disguising the past, attempts made by Neitsch and also by others seeking to protect him for various misguided reasons.⁷ But if you suddenly had the power to inspect the entirety of Neitsch's life from a 'God's-Eye' point of view, you would be able to recognise it from what follows. This is only the first draft of a previously secret history.

What can be said is that the East Berlin borough of Treptow, where Olaf Neitsch grew up, was a prime locus of national pride in the former GDR. Treptow was home to an extraordinary landscape memorial park, which still exists and celebrates the liberation of German territory by the Soviet Union in the final stages of the Second World War. In the GDR, this memorial was the scene of ritualised mass gatherings twice a year, drawing visitors from all over East Berlin and beyond.⁸ The young Neitsch would have been keenly and unavoidably aware of his borough's historic status, and he would no doubt have learned all about its glorious past during his formal education. Living alongside this flourishing pro-Soviet propaganda installation, and occasionally venturing inside it, can only have exercised a strong influence on Olaf's developing mind. One might describe it as immersive indoctrination, and it left an indelible impression. Many years later, Neitsch would take up residence in another town with similarly tangible nostalgic links to the Soviet occupation era.

In 1966, when Neitsch was just five years old, the state-produced

⁶ These uncorroborated dates are marked with an asterisk.

⁷ For example, in a 2019 story published by *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (RFE/RL), 'Timmi Allen's' home is said to be in Berlin. This was a deliberate lie, because RFE/RL reporters had personally visited Neitsch's house in Brandenburg state, in order to film the interview. As discussed below, this is not the only important fabricated detail in the RFE/RL story. RFE/RL 19 October 2019. See <<https://shorturl.at/aehP4>> or <<https://www.rferl.org/a/from-stasi-to-bellingcat-former-east-german-agent-turns-investigative-reporter/30240232.html>>

⁸ These reverential ceremonies occurred on 1 May (international socialism's May Day) and 7 October (the anniversary of the founding of the GDR).

children's magazine *Atze* ('*Pal*') began a long-running propaganda comic strip entitled *Der Soldat von Treptow*, which both reflected and enhanced the area's prominence in the GDR mythos. Since *Atze* had a national readership of nearly half a million, the young Olaf Neitsch would at least have heard of the dark and gritty *Soldier of Treptow* serial, and given the local link he quite probably read it himself. Much later in life, he recalled his youthful patriotic fervour as his chief motivation for pursuing a career with the secret police: 'I joined the Stasi because I thought our state was the best. And I wanted to protect it as a matter of principle.'⁹

Olaf's father was apparently a Stasi officer,¹⁰ and it seems that Olaf was inspired to follow in his footsteps. As is the case with many other intelligence and security agencies, literal patronage was a preferential pathway for potential Stasi recruits. Perhaps the best-known instance of this structural nepotism is to be found in the case of Andrej Holm, under-secretary for housing in Berlin's city council, who was forced to resign when his Stasi past came to light in 2017.¹¹ Holm's father had been a Stasi officer, and as a 14-year-old, Andrej expressed his own desire to join the force. He eventually fulfilled this desire at the age of 18, only to see the GDR dissolved a few months later. In all, Andrej Holm managed to keep his Stasi service a secret for 26 years.¹²

In 1978, after reaching the 10th grade in the East German polytechnical

⁹ VPRO, *Spying Then And Now*, commencing at 2 minutes and 10 seconds.

¹⁰ It is important to emphasise that it has not been possible to finally prove or disprove this claim, which reached this author as an imprecise second-hand retelling of personal conversations held during the GDR years. However, when the Stasi was dissolved in January 1990, a 52-year-old named Herbert Neitsch was working in the Stasi's District Administration Offices in Karl-Marx-Stadt (present-day Chemnitz, in Saxony). He was born on 13 August 1937 and would therefore have been 24 years old when Olaf Neitsch was born in 1961. At the time of publication, Herbert Neitsch – if he is still alive – would be 85 years old. This essay presumes that, on the preponderance of evidence, Olaf Neitsch's father was indeed a Stasi officer, even though that Stasi officer might not have been Herbert Neitsch.

¹¹ BBC News, 15 January 2017. See <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-38630030>>.

¹² An academic study has analysed the degree of nepotism in the Stasi's Karl-Marx-Stadt district office, where the above-mentioned Herbert Neitsch was one of 59 employees. The study is anonymised, but in view of the inferred familial relationship between Herbert and Olaf Neitsch, it is worth noting that the study found only eight of the 59 officers had no relatives in the Stasi. Between them, the other 51 officers at Karl-Marx-Stadt had seven parents, 10 siblings, 16 wives and 34 children, all working as full-time Stasi employees. See page 17 of 'The District Leadership Cadre of the Stasi: Who Were These Men and Why Did They Not Crush Mass Protest in 1989?' by Matthias Finster, Scott Stock Gissendanner, Uwe Krähnke, Philipp Reimann, Anja Zschirpe; in *German Politics & Society*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter 2018). Accessible at <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48561514>>.

schooling system, 16-year-old Olaf opted out of formal education and embarked on an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering.¹³ The vocational certificate received on successfully completing an apprenticeship was a normal feature of educational attainment in the GDR, and it served as the holder's passport for entering related professional fields. From an ideological perspective, it also demonstrated the apprentice's soundly socialist character, having achieved personal development through willing and voluntary participation in collective labour. After more than a year's work, Olaf Neitsch completed his apprenticeship and became a qualified 'journeyman' professional. The journey he had in mind was a short one. As an 18-year-old, Neitsch was expected to undertake his compulsory national service in the GDR's armed forces. Ordinarily, this would mean conscription into the National People's Army.¹⁴ As a qualified entry-level mechanical engineer, and with a father who was a serving Stasi officer, Olaf Neitsch had the right connections to enlist with the paramilitary wing of the Stasi.

The Felix Dzershinsky Guards Regiment was a motorised infantry corps garrisoned in Adlershof, a quarter in Neitsch's home borough of Treptow.¹⁵ It was named after the chief of the Cheka, the first secret police force to arise in Russia after the 1917 revolution. The regiment had started out as simply 'Guard Regiment A' when the GDR was formed. It was renamed in 1967 under Stasi chief Erich Mielke, whose official title was Minister for State Security. A lifelong communist, Mielke regarded Dzershinsky as his role model, and referred to himself as a Chekist.¹⁶ Dzershinsky had been an ardent advocate of state terrorism, as long as the state in question was (a) his and (b) communist. He had led the years-long Red Terror of the post-revolutionary period, a slow motion massacre of tens of thousands of Russians viewed by the Bolsheviks as active counter-revolutionaries. 'The Red Terror' was not a derogatory label invented by critics and opponents of communism and its purges. While Lenin was recovering from the 30 August 1918 attempt to

¹³ Treptow was a heavily industrial area, and it has not been possible to identify the firm where Neitsch served his apprenticeship.

¹⁴ The *Nationale Volksarmee*, usually abbreviated to NVA.

¹⁵ A brief summary of the regiment can be read on the website of Germany's federal archives. See <<https://shorturl.at/bmDL9>> or <<https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/informationen-zur-stasi/themen/beitrag/das-wachregiment-des-mfs-feliks-e-dzierzynski/>>. (Source in German.)

¹⁶ The two men never met. Dzershinsky was born in Russia in 1877 and died there in 1926. Mielke was born in 1907, but didn't visit Russia until 1931, when he fled Weimar Germany after assassinating two police officers.

assassinate him, he had told his inner circle: 'It is necessary to urgently and secretly prepare the terror'; and 'Red Terror' became the official title of a Cheka newspaper. As the GDR's Minister for State Security from 1957 to 1989 Erich Mielke frequently praised Dzershinsky in his speeches. The Stasi chief described his idealised Chekist as '[. . . T]he political combatant. He is the loyal son of the class, the workers' class. He stands at the head of the battle to strengthen the power of our workers' and peasants' state.' Mielke's Chekist ideas were put into practice in 1959, when East German farmers refused to be collectivised under the new communist regime. Mielke had hundreds of these latter-day Kulaks rounded up and summarily imprisoned, and then confiscated their farms.¹⁷ This was lenient compared to Dzershinsky's Red Terror, but Stasi-run prisons in the GDR were by no means a soft option.

The Felix Dzershinsky Guards Regiment was tasked with protecting the East German government, meaning its institutions, property, and officials. In practice, the East German government meant the ruling East German Socialist Unionist Party, the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei*), which always stayed in power despite the country's strictly performative democratic elections. The guards' connection with the borough of Treptow was the source of a degree of civic pride, with one local high school being renamed in Dzershinsky's honour during the GDR years.¹⁸ The regiment's garrisoning also meant that it had been instrumental in constructing the local stretch of the original Berlin Wall in 1961. Treptow had the longest internal border with Western-occupied Berlin of any East German borough, 17 kms in total.

Olaf Neitsch served dutifully in the Felix Dzershinsky Guards Regiment and in 1982* began pursuing the academic qualifications required to develop his longed for formal career with the Stasi. Much later, in middle-age, he would gravitate toward another town with historical links to his paramilitary background. Having established impeccable service credentials, he was enrolled with the Law Academy in Potsdam (JHS) (*Juristische Hochschule*). Founded in 1951,¹⁹ the JHS was a technical school (*Fachschule*), graduation from which provided students with the entry qualification required to pursue careers at the middle level of business or in the East German civil service. The JHS was created by the GDR state's sequestration and reassignment of the

¹⁷ Koehler (see note 3) p. 66

¹⁸ In view of the regiment's high-profile presence in the borough, it is tempting to speculate that the state-sponsored *Soldat von Treptow* comic strip was to some extent a recruitment advertisement.

¹⁹ Originally as the School of the Ministry of State Security.

Golm campus and facilities of the University of Potsdam.²⁰ The JHS was awarded GDR university status in 1955, but in so far as it was a university at all, JHS was a 'secret' one. It was never listed as part of the official East German university system, issued no prospectuses, and had totally closed enrolment processes. It was really a subordinate department of Erich Mielke's Ministry of State Security, and its certificates, communications, and internal records identified it only as 'Academy of Law, Potsdam'.

At some unknown later date, Neitsch also commenced a distance-learning degree in criminology with Humboldt University, Berlin. After the reunification of Germany in 1990, Neitsch sometimes allowed others to believe that he had only studied at Humboldt. His vagueness about the academic aspects of his Stasi career has been assisted by, for example, RFE/RL. In its October 2019 profile of 'Timmi Allen',²¹ RFE/RL inexplicably conflated the two strands of Neitsch's studies, stating that he attended 'East Berlin's Humboldt University in Potsdam'. That statement is patent nonsense, not least because Humboldt University is 40km from Potsdam University, and the latter institution is in Brandenburg state anyway.²² Furthermore, RFE/RL states that 'Timmi Allen' left Humboldt University in 1987 to take up work as a Stasi officer, and quotes 'Allen' as saying that it was in early 1987 that he began to have misgivings about his new job. This is self-contradictory, since an academic year at a German university started in autumn and ended the following summer. Additionally, when 'Timmi Allen' was shortlisted for the European Press Prize in 2020, his education was given as attendance at Potsdam University (rather than the *Juristische Hochschule* in Potsdam) from 1986 to 1988.²³ This is two years shorter than the JHS course that 'Allen' undertook in order to win the title *fachschuljurist* (which the European Press Prize citation correctly ascribes to him). If Neitsch had really graduated as a *fachschuljurist* in 1988, he couldn't possibly have had taken up his new job in early 1987 – as claimed in the RFE/RL story – because he would not yet have been qualified to do so. It is unlikely that Neitsch's shifting stories about the key dates and places of his formal Stasi education are slips of the memory. His inconsistency is inherently far more likely to be deliberate evasiveness, which may itself be very significant.

²⁰ The campus was returned to the University after the end of the GDR.

²¹ See footnote 7 above.

²² In terms of geographical separation, a reasonable UK analogy would be the proposition that someone had attended 'East London University in central Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire'.

²³ <<https://www.europeanpressprize.com/laureate/timmi-allen/>>

Humboldt University did offer advanced courses in criminology for Stasi officers, who could study as direct attendees, or under a 'distance learning' scheme. The head of the criminalistics department was Hans-Ehrenfried Stelzer (1939-2010), regarded as the GDR's pre-eminent criminologist. Stelzer's analytical and deductive skills were also put to a less constructive use by the dictatorship, namely compiling a detailed database of 911 hard-to-detect ways of murdering people with poisons and radioactive materials.²⁴ Due to German privacy laws, Humboldt University does not disclose personal information about its Stasi students during the GDR dictatorship. However, Auste Wolff of the University's archives was able to provide details about the courses available to Stasi students. Humboldt offered a two-year criminology diploma course, specifically designed for the Stasi's JHS Potsdam graduates. This two-year course could be completed in four and a half years as a non-attending 'distance-learner', which meant Stasi officers who were already in full-time employment. If this criminology course was the Humboldt study alluded to by Neitsch in his European Press Prize statement, then he never finished it. By the time Neitsch graduated from the JHS in mid-1986, the four-and-a-half year Humboldt course could not have been completed in the time left before the GDR eventually collapsed in October 1990.

Having graduated from JHS Potsdam as a *Fachschuljurist*, in mid-1986, Neitsch left active military duty and was assigned to the Stasi's county office in Treptow, where the extensive local knowledge he had acquired earlier in his life could be put to its most effective use. The manager of KD Treptow²⁵ in late 1986 was Lt-Col Klaus Starke (born 1938), who had been appointed earlier that year. All such appointments were decided by Minister for State Security, Erich Mielke. Lt-Col Starke replaced Kurt Zeiseweis, who had successfully applied to become manager of another office, KD Berlin.²⁶ The 68 staff of KD Treptow had been headquartered on Berlin's Hasselwerderstrasse until 1983.²⁷

²⁴ The database was called TOXDAT, and Stelzer completed it in 1988. His former colleagues at Humboldt University handed it over to West German authorities when the Cold War ended. Today, TOXDAT is held by the German Federal Archives, which for understandable reasons refuses to release it. Ralph Hope, *The Grey Men: Pursuing the Stasi into the Present* (London: London, 2021) pp. 176-178.

²⁵ KD being a formal Stasi abbreviation, standing for *Kreisdienststelle*, literally 'County office'.

²⁶ In the Stasi's administrative structure, KD Berlin and KD Treptow were both subordinate to the same office, which was BV Berlin. BV was a formal Stasi abbreviation and stood for *Bezirksverwaltung*, literally 'District administration'.

²⁷ KD Treptow seems to have operated a 'one in, one out' recruitment policy, since it also had 68 official employees when the Stasi was dissolved in 1990. See Appendix 2.

After German reunification, some former Stasi officers from the original KD Treptow were allowed to hold meetings in their former KD, by the current occupiers of the premises. This caused a significant local scandal in 2018 when the far-right AfD party (*Alternative für Deutschland*) drew public attention to these secret Stasi soirées. The group in question is a formalised chapter of the national and informal ODOM network, and this chapter calls itself ISOR.²⁸ One of ISOR's chief objectives is to gain increases to the pension payments made to ex-Stasi officers by the German government. The logic is that the Stasi's wages were higher than those of normal GDR citizens, and therefore the post-GDR pensions should be recalculated analogously to create a similar disparity.²⁹

ISOR itself is in formal partnerships with other known Stasi 'survival' organisations, and between them they wage a constant low-level war to rewrite the history of the East German dictatorship. At the very lowest level, this shows up as pro-Stasi/GDR letters occasionally printed in German newspapers. In an everyday context, Stasi diehards have been known to mingle with the crowds at museums and memorials to Stasi brutality, attempting to discredit the tour guides by deliberately starting arguments with them in front of their impressionable charges.³⁰ At far higher levels, this network of hidden persuaders has even jury-rigged investigations undertaken by the United Nations, in order to engineer findings that favour ex-Stasi men.³¹

After 1983, KD Treptow was relocated from Berlin's Hasselwerderstrasse to rather more modern and spacious premises on Segelfliegerdamm, in Johannisthal, a quarter in Treptow borough that abutted the Berlin Wall itself.

²⁸ A very welcome abbreviation for *Initiativgemeinschaft zum Schutz der sozialen Rechte ehemaliger Angehöriger bewaffneter Organe und der Zollverwaltung der DDR*, which goes into English as 'Initiative Community for the Protection of Social Rights of former members of armed organs and customs administration of the GDR'. In 2021, ISOR had some 10,000 members of whom 6,000 were former Stasi officers. (Hope [see note 24] p. 213)

²⁹ This is despite the fact that the GDR had claimed that, as a proudly socialist nation, it wanted to create the same standard of living for all its citizens.

³⁰ Hope (see note 24) p. 205

³¹ As was achieved by ISOR's partner GBM in 2011. *Der Spiegel*, 14 July 2011. See <<https://shorturl.at/acBU2>> or <<https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/ex-stasi-informants-and-newspaper-clippings-un-social-report-relied-on-questionable-sources-a-773609.html>>. GBM's submission to the United Nations was made in May 2011, and the English-language text can be downloaded at <<https://shorturl.at/mrEHM>> or <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=En&CountryID=66&ctl00_PlaceHolderMain_radResultsGridChangePage=4_50&ctl00_ContentPlaceHolder1_radResultsGridChangePage=58>.

Just across the road from KD Treptow's new home stood a watchtower, constructed in 1970 to monitor activity along the local border. It consisted of an 18-foot tall steel-reinforced concrete shaft, ascended via internal ladder to an enclosed observation deck on top. This observation deck housed radio communication equipment, rifles and ammunition, and a powerful searchlight.³²

When Olaf Neitsch arrived at KD Treptow on Segelfliegerdamm, the office was already in the middle of a lengthy campaign against local peace activists and dissidents. A 'Peace Circle', whose members professed themselves to be anti-war activists, had been established in 1983, at the Confessional Church, on Treptow's Plesserstrasse. The war to which the anti-war activists were opposed was the Cold War, which was an indirect way of opposing the GDR itself. They were taking advantage of the semi-protected status granted to Christianity by the dictatorship, and the Stasi knew it.

It is not possible to discuss the internal opposition to the repressive GDR without referring to the central and very considerable role played by organised religion in the former East Germany. Many German churches, while officially remaining 'above the fray', became nuclei and meeting places for dissenters and dissidents. Much later, toward the end of the Cold War, Treptow Confessional Church would become the organising point of the pressure group Democracy Now (*Demokratie Jetzt*) which openly agitated against the tyranny of the GDR. After reunification, Democracy Now merged with the former East German Green Party, which in turn merged with the Green Party that still operates in Germany today. In terms of opposition to the GDR dictatorship, Treptow was not an insignificant backwater.

Christianity was officially regarded as contrary to the ideals and principles of the GDR, and treated as a historical aberration that would be erased in the fullness of time. During the Cold War, however, not much progress had been made toward the eradication of the Church. There had even been some remarkable concessions toward the faithful, most notably the accommodation of conscientious objectors, who were assigned to non-combatant duties during their compulsory 18-month stint of national service.³³

³² This watchtower, VEB K hlautomat, still stands today, although the derelict interior is not accessible to visitors. See <<https://shorturl.at/dGX57>> or <https://digitalcosmonaut.com/the-watchtowers-of-east-berlin/#Wachturm_VEB_Kuhlautomat>

³³ Cf. Poland, where the Soviet Union didn't suppress Catholicism as ruthlessly as it could have, effectively allowing an ancient and well-established counter-ideology to remain endemic among the population. Historians have yet to adequately account for the failure of the Soviet bloc to co-opt religion as an ideological component in Eastern Europe.

The Treptow church itself was a constituent part of the greater Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR (BEK; *Bund der evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR*). This Protestant umbrella organisation enjoyed a precariously privileged position in East Germany thanks to its relationship with a counterpart federation of churches in West Germany.³⁴ BEK had itself been infiltrated by the Stasi at a very high level. Consistorial president Dr Manfred Stolpe (1936-2019) had been recruited as an informant in 1969, and remained one until 1989. After reunification, when Stolpe had been elected regional Minister-President of Brandenburg, he admitted his Stasi informant career. This became a major scandal, and a specially-created 'Stolpe commission' was formed to clarify Stolpe's role in sustaining the GDR dictatorship. Ultimately, it was decided that although Stolpe may have gone too far on some occasions, he had worked to achieve peaceful and Christian objectives by engaging the totalitarian machine on its own terms.³⁵ One German journalist³⁶ summed up the commission's findings by saying Stolpe's case represented 'the historical compromise made to survive in the GDR – those who did resist the regime, but not to extremes, and those who conformed to it, but not on every single count'. A striking documentary example of Stolpe's complex role in the GDR's deep state is shown in Appendix 3 of this essay.

Dr Stolpe's uneasy semi-cooperation with the Stasi was not replicated at the local level in Treptow. In the eyes of the local Stasi office, the short-lived Peace Circle established at the church in 1983 had transformed into a significant problem. Some former Peace Circle members had formed a cabaret troupe called The Voles, which often performed on church premises. The entertainment on offer to Treptow residents had a tendency toward the satirical, which, in what was a *de facto* one-party state, meant mockery of the GDR dictatorship itself. The Stasi were not amused, and reclassified the Voles as political subversives rather than straightforward churchgoers – which, in all fairness, was an objectively accurate assessment. Accordingly, it had been decided at KD Treptow to destroy the Voles cabaret. This was to be done via the Stasi process of *Zersetzung*, a word which literally meant 'decomposition' or 'disintegration', the process itself being informally known as 'no-touch torture'. On 5 June 1984, KD Treptow had commenced Operation 'Confession' (*OV Bekenntnis*), aimed at 'Initiation of necessary measures for the disintegration

³⁴ The two federations had previously been one entity, the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg, until it was split in half by the formation of East Germany.

³⁵ Essentially, a very high-stakes version of 'gaming the system'.

³⁶ Robert Leicht, quoted on p. 79 of Barbara Miller's *The Stasi Files Unveiled: Guilt and Compliance in a Unified Germany*, (London: Routledge, 2018).

of the [Treptow Peace Circle] group'.³⁷ The opening report of *OV Bekenntnis* observed:

Based on the available unofficial and official evidence, it is suspected that the persons named in the opening report have brought about an association of young adults [. . .] and are pursuing objectives that run counter to the social interests of the GDR. Due to the fact that the so-called "TFG" [*Treptower Friedensgruppe*, i.e. the Treptow Peace Circle] is highly conspiratorial in its activities and has duplication [i.e. printing] technology within the church, [criminal offences by the Peace Circle] cannot be ruled out.

This opening report also stated:

On the subjective side of the persons, it can be assessed that the three main initiators have increasingly departed from a formerly progressive world view, represent pluralistic opportunistic views, profess pacifism and consciously exploit the freedom of the church for these objectives.

'Operation Confession' was still in full swing when Olaf Neitsch arrived at KD Treptow in 1986. The Voles cabaret had moved its meetings to another church, and the Stasi had put that new location under observation too. A report on 11 August 1987 stated: 'The members of the amateur dramatics group still meet regularly every week (usually on Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.) in the building of the Protestant church garden in Berlin-Oberschöneweide at Number 16, Firlstasse.'³⁸ The Stasi sought in vain for connections between the Voles and foreign subversives, but could only find communication with amateur theatrical groups in the Soviet bloc: 'There were no contacts with groups in other socialist countries. However, there are known contacts and connections between individual members of the amateur dramatics group "Die Wühlmaus" and people in Hungary and the USSR.'³⁹ It does not seem to have crossed the mind of anyone at KD Treptow that these other Soviet-bloc theatre clubs might also have been nests of anti-communist activity. The Stasi might not have

³⁷ In original: '*Einleitung erforderlicher Maßnahmen zur Zersetzung der Gruppierung*'.

³⁸ In original: *Die Laienspielgruppe "Die Wühlmaus" trat in der Vergangenheit auch unter dem Namen "Friedenskreis-Wühlmaus" in Erscheinung. Die Mitglieder der Laienspielgruppe treffen sich nach wie vor regelmäßig wöchentlich (meist Donnerstags in der Zeit von 18.00 bis 22.00 Uhr) im Gebäude des evangelischen Kirchengartens in Berlin-Oberschöneweide in der Firlstraße 16.*

³⁹ In original: *Kontakte zu Gruppierungen im sozialistischen Ausland existieren nicht. Es sind jedoch Kontakte und Verbindungen einzelner Mitglieder der Laienspielgruppe "Die Wühlmaus" zu Personen in Ungarn und die CSSR bekannt.*

managed to destroy the Voles, but the 11 August 1987 report's authors (Lt-Col Starke and Lt Uwe Beyer) could proudly declare that *Zersetzung* had been partially successful:

In the process of handling the amateur dramatics group "Die Wühlmaus", fictitious cancellations were also sent to prevent planned performances, which were either not recognized as such or were only later suspected or recognized as fictitious cancellations. This also led to mistrust within the amateur dramatics group.⁴⁰

KD Treptow eventually managed to break up the Voles cabaret group by applying a *Zersetzung* strategy at the bureaucratic level. In December 1987, Lt-Col Starke and Lt Beyer reported that:

By initiating coordinated disintegration measures with KD Köpenick and KD Königswusterhausen, it was possible to successfully create differences within the amateur dramatics group, which led to some members withdrawing from their activities in the amateur dramatics group.⁴¹

The measures alluded to included having two of the Voles drafted into the army, having another one arrested on fake charges, and intimidating another Vole indirectly by harassing her parents. Starke and Beyer concluded with evident satisfaction that: 'These and other measures further accelerated the process of disintegration, and the [Voles cabaret] group was no longer able to put on its own program.'⁴² *OV Bekenntnis* was therefore considered a success and was formally closed on 29 December 1987.

Despite the 1987 *Zersetzung*-driven dissolution of the Voles cabaret group, one of its leading members, Peter Grimm (born 1965), was developing into quite a formidable internal opposition figure within the GDR. In 1986, he was one of the founders of the Peace and Human Rights Initiative (IFM:

⁴⁰ In original: *In der Bearbeitung der Laienspielgruppe "Die Wühlmaus" wurden auch zur Verhinderung von geplanten Auftritten fiktive Absagen gesandt, welche entweder gar nicht als diese erkannt wurden bzw. erst später als fiktive Absagen vermutet bzw. erkannt wurden. Dies führte auch zu Mißtrauen innerhalb der Laienspielgruppe.*

⁴¹ In original: *Durch Einleitung koordinierter Zersetzungsmaßnahmen mit der KD Köpenick und der KD Königswusterhausen konnte erreicht werden, daß innerhalb der Laienspielgruppe Differenzen auftraten, die dazu führten, daß sich einige Mitglieder aus ihrer Tätigkeit in der Laienspielgruppe zurückzogen.*

⁴² In original: *Diese und weitere Maßnahmen führten dazu, daß der Zersetzungsprozeß weiter beschleunigt werden konnte und die Gruppe nicht mehr in der Lage war, ein eigenes Programm aufzuführen.*

Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte), which had an indeterminate relationship with the church. On the one hand, all the founders of IFM were associated with the church, and on the other they were simultaneously independent of the church. Perhaps this deliberate evasiveness was one of the reasons for the ambiguous title of the IFM's illegally produced magazine, *Grenzfell* (*Borderline Case*, published on the prohibited 'duplication technology' mentioned in the *OV Bekenntnis* report of 5 June 1984). Among Grimm's editorial colleagues on *Grenzfell* was a like-minded IFM peace activist called Ralf Hirsch (born 1960), who in turn was involved in mildly-subversive music festivals, which he helped organise with a pastor called Rainer Eppelmann (born 1948).

The cases of Hirsch and Eppelmann suggest that the Treptow Voles may have had a lucky and very narrow escape. Both men were earmarked for assassination, by a Stasi Captain called Peter Kappis (born 1949), who worked in Main Department (*Hauptabteilung*) XX, at the Stasi headquarters in Normannenstrasse in Berlin. Main Department XX was the branch of the Stasi that dealt with the GDR's internal opposition and dissent groups, and it was particularly interested in the activities of churches and their pastoral communities.⁴³ During 1986, Kappis and a colleague, Major Edgar Hasse, had begun to draw up something they called *OV Blauvogel* (Operation Bluebird), which was a harmless-sounding name for getting rid of Hirsch and Eppelmann. Among the possible fates considered for Ralf Hirsch was an accident caused by sabotage of his car. Another possibility was the semi-forcible administration of highly alcoholic drinks on a cold winter evening, after which the unconscious Hirsch would be left outside overnight, to die of hypothermia. Evidently, Kappis and Hasse had not got far with their research against Ralf Hirsch, because their prospective victim did not even own a car. But Rainer Eppelmann did own and drive a car, and Kappis and Hasse had got as far as devising and rehearsing ways of sabotaging it. The Kappis/Hasse plans included interfering with the brake-fluid pipes and loosening the wheel nuts so that the vehicle would fall apart at high speed.⁴⁴

Staged vehicle accidents were not a novelty during the GDR dictatorship. In the modern age of privately-owned transport, the frequency,

⁴³ For a fuller description of *Hauptabteilung XX*, see <<https://shorturl.at/hjxy5>> or <<https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/mfs-lexikon/detail/hauptabteilung-xx-staatsapparat-kultur-kirchen-untergrundha-xx/>>. (Source in German.)

⁴⁴ *Der Spiegel*, 22 November 1999. See <<https://shorturl.at/cAC14>> or <<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/furchtbar-schief-gelaufen-a-b3f5fa2f-0002-0001-0000-000015118781>>. (Source in German.)

unpredictability, and banality of car crashes constitute a perfect ready-made camouflage for assassination attempts. After the abolition of East Germany, dissident singer-songwriter Wolf Biermann (born 1948) found that the Stasi had drawn up a 20-point *Zersetzung* plan for him. Unimaginatively titled *OV Lyrik*, it proposed falsely accusing Biermann of murder and of sex with minors, damaging his health with inappropriate medical treatment, and deliberately causing car accidents.⁴⁵ Some Stasi methods of causing car crashes were almost untraceable. The East German footballer Lutz Eigendorf (born 1956) was fatally injured in a one-car crash on the night of 5 March 1983, just four years after having escaped to West Germany. Eigendorf's 1979 defection was acutely embarrassing for the Stasi, because the honorary chairman of his club, BFC Dynamo, was Stasi minister Erich Mielke. After the 1990 reunification of Germany, Eigendorf's Stasi file was recovered and found to contain the annotation: '*Verblitzen, Eigendorf*'. Meaning 'Lightning-strike', *Verblitzen* was a Stasi term that denoted using an extremely bright light to temporarily blind a night-time driver, with the aim of causing a high-speed crash.⁴⁶

It would appear that Peter Kappis's murderous 1986 *OV Blauvogel*, targeting Ralf Hirsch and Rainer Eppelmann, was not approved by his superiors, or perhaps had been tentatively approved and later firmly de-approved, because in 1988 Peter Kappis was inexplicably demoted from Captain to Lieutenant.⁴⁷ But this was not an ordinary demotion, because it was more of a step sideways than a step downward. Kappis became a Stasi Officer on Special Deployment (OibE),⁴⁸ a title which sometimes applied to 'sleeper agents' in West Germany and in other countries, and sometimes meant

⁴⁵ *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 6 October 2016. See <<https://shorturl.at/hlL48>> or <<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/wolf-biermann-mein-leben-ist-ein-schelmenroman-1.3189477>> (Source in German)

⁴⁶ *DW News*, 15 July 2013. See <<https://shorturl.at/LMSW3>> or <<https://www.dw.com/en/bundesliga-murder-mystery-the-death-of-lutz-eigendorf/a-16947852>>.

⁴⁷ The received wisdom about *OV Blauvogel* is that it was hastily cancelled after a comparable operation, carried out by Polish intelligence against a troublesome priest in that country, backfired and caused even more protest and dissent than it had aimed to quell. This Polish precedent is mentioned in comments made by one Stasi inspection officer who reviewed *OV Blauvogel* at the time, and decided to put a stop to the whole thing: See: *Magazine of the Leipzig Memorial*, issue 59 (January 2008), <<http://www.horch-und-guck.info/hug/archiv/2008/heft-59/05911/>> (Source in German. Stored at archive.org.)

⁴⁸ *Offizier-Im Besonderen Einsatz*. For an explanation of this title, see <<https://shorturl.at/hFG34>> or <<https://www.stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/mfs-lexikon/detail/offizier-im-besonderen-einsatz-oibe/>>. (Source in German.)

discreet placement in other branches of the GDR government. With his new status, Kappis had to apply to be assigned to a location of his own choosing, and his choice (which was then officially granted) was KD Treptow. Kappis first appeared on the KD Treptow payroll in September 1988.*

What Kappis did at Treptow remains unknown, but given his previous role at Hauptabteilung XX, and his keen interest in disposing of Hirsch and Eppelmann, it seems likely that his posting was related to the subversive activities going on at and around the Treptow Confessional Church. According to Dr. Elke Stadelmann-Wenz, of the Hohenschönhausen Museum and Memorial, reassignment as an OibE 'was a very common procedure for full-time [Stasi] employees who were guilty of something but could still be of use [. . .] due to their experience and knowledge'.

It is not possible to ascertain whether Olaf Neitsch ever met Peter Kappis in person, or even whether they communicated in any way. What is absolutely certain is that Peter Kappis was not a complete stranger to the personnel of KD Treptow. It would be interesting to know whether Neitsch has any insights to offer on Kappis's thwarted *OV Blauvogel*, or any private knowledge that might help explain Kappis's mysterious choice of redeployment to Treptow.

Neitsch might also be able to shed new light upon even weightier historic matters. During his employment at Treptow from late 1986 to early 1990, Neitsch would have been in a good position to receive inside information relating to at least four fatal shootings by border guards protecting the local stretch of the Berlin Wall.

Manfred Mäder (born 1948) and René Gross (born 1964) decided to escape from East Germany in late 1986. The two men, aged 38 and 22 respectively, had become friends after separately applying to leave the GDR and then each being left in bureaucratic limbo for years. Applying to leave the GDR was in itself a decision that ordinarily brought citizens to the attention of the Stasi. Manfred's plan was to be accepted by West Germany and then apply for his wife to be allowed to leave the GDR and join him. René's plan may have been similar, but his wife was reluctant to leave East Germany. René decided to escape without warning her, which may not have been as heartless as it sounds. Doing so avoided any chance of his plans and intentions being leaked. Late at night on 20 November 1986, Manfred and René stole a heavy truck with a platform tail-lift capable of lifting a man above the height of the Berlin Wall. Shortly after 5am the next morning, they crashed their truck at speed through the perimeter security fence on Karpfenteichstrasse, Treptow, and came to a halt beside the Berlin Wall itself. Border guards opened fire immediately. Manfred was shot in the left thigh, and quickly bled to death

where he lay.⁴⁹ René tried to take shelter under the stolen truck, but was shot in the head and died instantly.⁵⁰ Manfred Mäder and René Gross were approximately five kilometres north-west of Stasi KD Treptow when they died.

On the day of their husbands' deaths, René's and Manfred's widows were separately subjected to lengthy interrogations by unidentified Stasi officers, to see if they had known about the escape plan. When these interrogations proved fruitless, Manfred's widow was forced to sign an affidavit stating that she would not tell anyone else what had happened; and René's widow was kept under surveillance for months to see if she would reveal information to anyone else. The two women, who have exercised their right to privacy ever since, were also forbidden from ever contacting each other.

Lutz Schmidt (born 1962) was 24 years old when he decided to escape from East Germany. His plan was to be accepted as a political refugee in West Germany, and then apply for his family to be allowed to leave the GDR and join him. At around 10pm on 12 February 1987, he tried to scale the Berlin Wall in Altglienicke, Treptow, but was shot dead by a border guard.⁵¹ Lutz Schmidt died approximately five kilometres south-east of Stasi KD Treptow.

On 13 February, his newly-bereaved wife was ordered by the Stasi to lie about his death. Karin Schmidt was instructed to tell everyone in her life that her husband had died in a car accident. She was told that failure to comply would result in her children being taken from her and put up for adoption, while she herself would be falsely imprisoned in a secure psychiatric hospital. Karin was not allowed to visit Lutz's body, or arrange a laying-out, and the corpse was cremated in private.

Karin and her now fatherless children were generously given accommodation by Lutz's father, Gerd Schmidt, who lived in Zittau, Saxony, 200 km from Berlin. Gerd Schmidt had been a Stasi informant since 1975. He received a 1,000 Mark bonus for monitoring his grandchildren and widowed daughter-in-law, applying constant pressure to make sure they never told the truth about the death of his own son. Karin maintained the car-accident cover story to everyone she spoke to, including her children, until years after the

⁴⁹ <<https://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/en/victims/180599/maeder-manfred>>

⁵⁰ <<https://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/en/victims/180598/gross-rene>>

⁵¹ Schmidt's co-escapee, Peter Schultz (34), succeeded in getting across the border, which escalated Lutz Schmidt's death into an international scandal. In 2009, Rheingoldstrasse, the road in Altglienicke from which the two men had launched their escape bid, was renamed Lutz Schmidt Strasse.

GDR had ceased to exist.⁵²

Treptow was also where the last-ever fatal shooting at the Berlin Wall took place, when 20 year-old waiter Chris Gueffroy was killed on 5 February 1989. Gueffroy (born 1968) had decided to defect to the west after learning that he was due to be conscripted into the East German People's Army. Gueffroy and his friend Christian Gaudian had heard that Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson was visiting East Berlin and that the border guards' 'shoot-to-kill' directive had therefore been temporarily suspended. Their information was wrong on both counts: Carlsson had already left East Germany, and the shoot-to-kill directive had not been suspended. Gueffroy and Gaudian took a set of home-made grappling irons, and attempted to scale the Berlin Wall from a Treptow vegetable garden.

Gueffroy was shot through the heart by border guards and died at the scene. Gaudian was wounded, captured, and put on trial for 'a severe case of illegally attempting to cross the border'. He was convicted, and received a three year prison sentence.

The soldiers who had shot at Mäder and Gross were later that day each decorated with the GDR Border Troops Medal of Merit (*Verdienstmedaille der Grenztruppen der DDR*). They were also feted at a banquet held that evening to mark the occasion. The men who killed Lutz Schmidt received the GDR Medal for Exemplary Border Service (*Medaille für vorbildlichen Grenzdienst*), and three days of special leave. After the abolition of the GDR, former border guards stood trial for the deaths of Gross, Gueffroy, Mäder, and Schmidt. Mäder's killers were convicted of 'less serious manslaughter' and sentenced to 10 months imprisonment, which was commuted to probation. Schmidt's killers were convicted of joint manslaughter, and both men were sentenced to two years' imprisonment, which was commuted to probation. It was not found possible to determine which border guard fired the shots that killed Gross. The guardsman who fired the fatal shot at Chris Gueffroy received a three and a half year prison sentence for manslaughter, due to his 'very high degree of callousness and abjection'.

There is no suggestion that Olaf Neitsch played a role in the fatal shootings of Gross, Gueffroy, Mäder, or Schmidt. The East German Border Guard was subordinate to the GDR Ministry of Defence, rather than to Stasi chief Erich Mielke's Ministry for State Security. In 1992, the former GDR president Erich Honecker was put on trial, as he had given the border guards

⁵² *Die Welt*, 15 February 2007. See <https://www.welt.de/politik/article714833/Vater-musste-an-der-Mauer-sterben.html>. (Source in German.)

their original shoot-to-kill directive. Honecker accepted what he called 'political responsibility' for Berlin Wall deaths in general, but denied any moral or legal guilt. The prosecution was abandoned in early 1993 when it became clear Honecker was terminally ill and unfit to stand trial. He died of liver cancer in 1995.⁵³

It is, however, entirely possible that Olaf Neitsch has valuable undisclosed knowledge concerning one or more of the deaths at the Berlin Wall that occurred in Treptow borough, since (as discussed above) he was stationed at KD Treptow from late 1986 until early 1990, although for some reason he has given inconsistent versions of when he was first posted there. It is worth reiterating that Lutz Schmidt was shot dead in February 1987, and Neitsch himself claimed that it was in 'early 1987' that he began to experience misgivings about his cherished Stasi career. As has already been mentioned, Treptow had the longest abutment with the Berlin Wall of any East German borough, 17 km in total. Consequently, it was the scene of many escape attempts. In 1988 alone, KD Treptow reported 65 local attempts to defect to the west via the internal German border, and it would be fair to say that Olaf Neitsch must have known about at least some of them.⁵⁴

While Neitsch probably has knowledge related to the deaths of René Gross, Chris Gueffroy, Manfred Mäder, and Lutz Schmidt, he may also have indirect and/or second-hand knowledge about a dozen other killings that took place along the East German border in Treptow before he was stationed at KD Treptow in 1986. Each of these cases was known to the local Stasi offices at the district and borough levels, and was thoroughly documented. Neitsch was only 25 when he began working at KD Treptow; some older Stasi officers would have had careers and memories stretching back to before he was born.

Heinze Jercha (born 1934) was a West Berliner who operated a secret tunnel through which East Berliners could defect; one end of Jercha's tunnel

⁵³ Strictly speaking, it is questionable whether the reunified Germany had the jurisdiction or justification for trying or convicting the GDR's border guards. East Germany was a foreign country with its own penal code, until it was subsumed into the separate and pre-existing jurisdiction of federal Germany. This meant that the border guards had been extradited by default. The uncomfortable truth is that border guards had, under East German law, a duty to use extreme force to protect and control the border – which potentially included lethal force. Erich Honecker's dismissive attitude toward the question of his own legal culpability may have been distasteful, but it certainly wasn't without foundation. In retrospect, the lenient sentences handed down in the majority of border guard court cases makes them look very much like show trials, designed to get the lingering historical controversies over and done with in the name of reconciliation.

⁵⁴ None of the 65 escape attempts made in Treptow during 1988 resulted in a fatality.

opened in Treptow, and he was fatally wounded there on 27 March 1962.⁵⁵ Horst Kutscher (born 1931) made a drunken escape attempt after being fired from his job; he was shot dead by a border guard in Treptow on 15 January 1963. Dieter Berger (born 1939) attempted to climb the East German border fence near the Wrede bridge in Treptow on 13 December 1963, and was shot dead by border guards while in the act of surrendering. Walter Hayn (born 1939) was shot dead by border guards while trying to escape on Treptow's Kiefholzstrasse on 27 February 1964; the local Stasi officers at that time pressurised his family into maintaining that he had drowned under the bridge and the truth did not come out until the 1990s. Hans-Joachim Wolf (born 1947) tried to escape from East Germany by swimming across the Britzer-Zweig canal from Treptow under cover of darkness, on 26 November 1964, but was shot dead by border guards; his family were told that he had drowned, and the truth did not come out until the 1990s. Erich Kühn (born 1903) was shot and fatally wounded by a border guard while trying to cross railway tracks at the East-West border in Treptow on 26 November 1965.⁵⁶ Michael Kollender (born 1945) was not only a would-be defector, he was a deserter from the East German Army and still in uniform when he was shot dead attempting to cross the border in Treptow on 25 April 1966. By the time Max Sahmland (born 1929) was killed on 27 January 1967, he had already attempted to escape from East Germany twice; he was trying to swim the Teltow Canal when he was shot through the lung by a border guard, and drowned while bleeding to death.

Gerald Thiem (born 1928) was a West Berliner who, for some unknown reason, climbed the Berlin Wall and entered East Germany on 7 August 1970. He was shot dead in Treptow by border guards and his death was kept secret until 1994, with the West German authorities believing he had simply gone missing. Christian Peter Friese (born 1948) was shot dead by border guards while trying to escape across the Treptow border to West Germany on Christmas Day 1970; his body was cremated in secret, and the Stasi told his family that he had died in a car accident. West Berliner Werner Kühl (born 1949) was shot dead in Treptow while attempting to defect to East Germany on 24 July 1971. Johannes Sprenger (born 1905) was an elected councillor in East Berlin when he was shot dead by border guards while trying to defect to the West from Treptow on 10 May 1974. Sprenger had been running for re-election at the time, and his death was kept secret by the Stasi until after he had 'won'

⁵⁵ Jercha managed to crawl back through his tunnel to West Berlin before dying.

⁵⁶ Kühne died of his injuries a week later, on 3 December.

the election.⁵⁷

As the approaching collapse of East Germany became unignorable in late 1989 and early 1990, the Stasi went into overdrive trying to cover its tracks. At Stasi headquarters on Normanstrasse, Berlin, officers 'were instructed to destroy files, beginning with the most incriminating – those naming westerners who spied for them, and those concerning deaths'.⁵⁸ The Normanstrasse personnel used their office shredders so intensively that the machines burnt out and stopped working. The same thing happened in local Stasi offices throughout the country. Olaf Neitsch, then at KD Treptow, recalled: 'We received the order to destroy all our documents. We had to tear them all apart. We worked also with shredders, but they overheated and broke down.' Neitsch prioritised some files over others for destruction, claiming years later: 'For me it was important to protect the sources that I had worked with. So I burnt some files that were related to these sources.'⁵⁹

When citizen protestors eventually occupied the Stasi's Normanstrasse headquarters in January 1990, they were greeted by Stasi officers who obligingly showed them shelf upon shelf of confidential paperwork. The protestors fell upon these documents and started carrying them off for examination. It was all a trick. Over the preceding months of document destruction, the Stasi had also arranged what was tantamount to an exhibit, collecting its bureaucratic chaff and low-level information, and shelving it in the office's outermost areas, where civilians would find it immediately. The protestors were acting blindly, since they had no concept of how the Stasi organised its files, or how the contents were segregated. Historian Stefan Wolle, of the Citizen's Committee that took over the Stasi's records, recalled: '[We were] led through the labyrinth as though through a museum, without taking command.' Another civilian who took part in the Normanstrasse occupation, politician Hans Schwenke, said: 'The Stasi people had their own ideas about how to disband their secret service, and for a long time played cat and mouse with those engaged in this process.'⁶⁰

The game of cat and mouse is still going on years later. It would become a significant scandal in German politics in 2007, when a leaked government

⁵⁷ Detailed accounts of all 12 of these Treptow fatalities can be found in *The Victims at the Berlin Wall 1961-1989: A Biographical Handbook*, edited by Hans-Hermann Hertle and Maria Nook (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2011).

⁵⁸ Anna Funder, *Stasiland* (London: Granta, 2003) p. 67.

⁵⁹ RFE/RL 19 October 2019. See footnote 7 above.

⁶⁰ Miller (see note 36) p. 7.

report revealed that the country's federal archive of Stasi material employed more than 50 former officers and informants to handle and catalogue documents, and that two former high-ranking Stasi officers had been placed in charge of investigating the links between the Stasi and political figures still active in modern Germany.⁶¹ In 2011, former East German dissident Roland Jahn took office as commissioner of the Stasi archives.⁶² Jahn (born 1953) vowed to rid the archives of former secret police who might destroy or tamper with material, stating: 'Every former Stasi collaborator who is still employed by the agency is a slap in the victims' faces.'⁶³ Not only did Jahn find himself unable to dismiss the Stasi officers in his archive,⁶⁴ he was subjected to intimidation in an attempt to get the archive itself shut down. On 23 October 2018, Jahn was confronted at a formal meeting by a group of former Stasi men from the Society of Legal and Humanitarian Support, another post-GDR Stasi 'survival' organisation. They presented Jahn with a list of demands framed as questions, under the title 'Truth and Reconciliation'. The allusion to South Africa's attempt to heal in the post-apartheid period was purely superficial. The Stasi men wanted Jahn's specialised archive closed down, and its files transferred to the generic state archive system.⁶⁵ What they were demanding would have been an institutional cover-up.

In William Faulkner's memorable phrase, 'The past is never dead. It's not even past.'⁶⁶ The Stasi may be formally dissolved, but it lives on in the minds of some former officers. Due to the layers of obfuscation under which Olaf Neitsch has buried his Stasi career, the question of his remaining loyalty to the Stasi is ultimately unanswerable by anyone else. On the one hand, Neitsch has said that he is 'not proud' of his time with the Stasi. On the other hand, the

⁶¹ See <https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Stasi_still_in_charge_of_Stasi_files>.

⁶² In his twenties, the Stasi had intervened to have Jahn kicked out of university for his political obduracy, and he was then arrested and imprisoned on trumped-up charges. In 1983, he was finally kidnapped by the Stasi and forcibly expelled from East Germany for good.

⁶³ Hope (see note 24) p. 11 remarks that visitors to the archive are commonly kept under passive observation while viewing records, because there have been attempts to destroy Stasi files during such visits. Some people are so desperate to erase their incriminating pasts that they have even been known to eat the damning documents.

⁶⁴ As employees of the former GDR government now working for the unified German government, the Stasi men could only be transferred to analogous bureaucratic roles at a similar pay grade, and none of them was willing to leave.

⁶⁵ Hope (see note 24) pp. 252-254.

⁶⁶ Delivered by the character Gavin Stevens, in Act 1, Scene 3 of Faulkner's experimental novel *Requiem for a Nun*, published 1951.

formal oath sworn by each new Stasi officer on taking up employment effectively bound them to protect and serve the East German dictatorship's secret police for the rest of their life.

I swear:

– To fight alongside the National People's Army and the other armed forces of the German Democratic Republic, the military, the defence and the security forces of the Soviet Union and allied socialist countries as a member of the Ministry of State Security against the enemies of socialism, even risking my life, and to fulfil any assigned order to guarantee state security.

Should I ever violate this, my solemn oath of allegiance, the severe punishment of the laws of our republic and the scorn of the working people shall come upon me.

– **Even after my dismissal, to act in such a way that a security hazard for the work of the Ministry of State Security and myself cannot arise.**⁶⁷

Olaf Neitsch's views on the oath he took are not known, but he has made no public recantation. Such an 'unswearing' is a formality that could be witnessed and recorded by any qualified notary.

Dr Helge Heidemeyer is the serving head of the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Museum and Memorial to Stasi victims. While Dr Heidemeyer would not comment on specific cases, he said:

Openness is the prerequisite for seriously dealing with the past, especially with one's own. Only an open approach to the darker sides of our history can lead to liberation from the old burdens. In a personal sense as well as in terms of society as a whole.

In this respect, it is a sign of a failure to come to terms with the past if, by adopting a new identity, one attempts to brush off the past on the outside, as it were. The fact that employees of dictatorial secret police forces of communist states have internalized a certain world view and, based on it, values and ways of acting can be seen in many cases. This behaviour is also evidence of a lack of critical analysis of the past.

As unattractive as this behaviour is for any society, it is only really threatening if accompanied by political power again. Democratic communities can deal with them. The unattractive behaviour is harmful first and foremost to the individuals themselves, who are closed off in

⁶⁷ Quoted in Hope (see note 24), p. 240. Emphasis supplied.

their old world and become inwardly stunted.

Bellingcat and Olaf Neitsch declined to comment.

Appendix 1: Ethical considerations

'[The mice in the fairy-tale] have a plan. They'll be saved. The only problem. Who will put a bell on the cat? That was it: our name and our mission. Belling the cats.'⁶⁸

The 'outing' of a former officer of one of the world's most infamous secret police forces is not a step to be taken lightly. It could potentially expose Neitsch to dangerous hatred and hostility. He also has the right to some degree of privacy. On the other hand, there is a clear public interest justification for exposing details of his life. Weighing these two factors against each other, Neitsch's home address is not described in this research. Photographic proof will suffice to demonstrate how he was discovered.

An EU citizen, Neitsch also has the hotly-debated 'Right to be Forgotten'. Some former Stasi officers have exploited that right, in order to silence complaints from the very people that they had persecuted during the communist dictatorship. However, Neitsch has undeniably forfeited any 'Right to be Forgotten' by relinquishing obscurity and attaining new prominence – and indeed fame – as a member of Bellingcat. Neitsch has been trying to have it both ways, by seeking adulation while hiding behind a pseudonym. Those are not compatible ambitions, and his Stasi career is an abstraction that does not in itself have any human rights.

Olaf Neitsch had first been speculatively identified as 'Timmi Allen' by *Der Spiegel* in 2015. However, this was a purely verbal tip-off from an unidentified source, and Neitsch himself refused to confirm or deny the identification when approached. *Der Spiegel* was able to determine that there was a Stasi officer by the name of Olaf Neitsch, but was not able to prove that this was the same person as so-called 'Timmi Allen'.⁶⁹ Predictably, when Eliot Higgins of Bellingcat was approached, he also stonewalled *Der Spiegel* with vague and non-committal remarks. This essay in *Lobster* has objectively established the identity of so-called 'Timmi Allen', once and for all.

There will undoubtedly be objections that the identification of Neitsch could expose him to danger emanating from the intelligence agencies of hostile

⁶⁸ Eliot Higgins, *We Are Bellingcat*, Bloomsbury (London), 2021, p. 61.

⁶⁹ *Der Spiegel*, 5 June 2015. See <<https://shorturl.at/aoIM4>> or <<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/bellingcat-autor-war-hauptamtlicher-stasi-mitarbeiter-a-1037297.html>>. (Source in German.)

nations, most obviously Russia. Such objections would be absurd. These intelligence agencies have far more powerful resources at their command than journalists can call upon, and undoubtedly discovered 'Timmi Allen's' real identity many years ago. Since they haven't already neutralised or eliminated Neitsch, it would be a fair assumption that he poses no real threat to them.

On the other hand, the ODOM network of former Stasi officers is very serious, and has an international reach. Conceivably, ODOM might try to avenge the unmasking of Olaf Neitsch, by taking action against this author. This is an unavoidable risk, and it would also be unethical to self-censor out of fear of the unknown. ODOM probably has more important things to be getting on with, anyway.

Finally, it is completely true to state that the present research was initiated as a direct result of Olaf Neitsch's reprehensible online behaviour. The research was undertaken objectively and dispassionately, and the results serve the public's best interests rather than any personal grudge. The 'Right to be Forgotten' must always be weighed against the right to remember, particularly when it comes to a dictatorial force that has tried, and is still trying, to obliterate and rewrite its own history. Perhaps the moral Mr Neitsch should draw from his own unmasking is: 'Wer im Glashaus sitzt, sollte im Keller duschen'.

Appendix 2: The personnel of Stasi KD Treptow

At the time of publication, it has not been possible to conclusively ascertain the rank of each officer. Names marked with an asterisk are presumably non-officer staff, e.g. filing clerks, due to their low (or in one case, non-existent) pay.

A

APEL, Jens

D.O.B: 17 October 1964

Personnel number: 430078

Salary (DDR Marks): 17,466.50

B

BAUMANN, Matthias

D.O.B: 14 December 1966

Personnel number: 407039

Salary (DDR Marks): 17,280.00

BEHM, Axel

D.O.B: 03 March 1964

Personnel number: 430134

Salary (DDR Marks): 16,830.00

BERNSTEIN, Andrea*

D.O.B: 05 January 1964

Personnel number: 510058

Salary (DDR Marks): 6,500.00

BEYER, Uwe

D.O.B: 24 August 1956

Personnel number: 412237

Salary (DDR Marks): 25,817.50

BLUEMEL, Karl-Heinz

D.O.B: 04 November 1939

Personnel number: 430051

Salary (DDR Marks): 24,480.00

BOCHNIG, Michael

D.O.B: 21 December 1954

Personnel number: 426217

Salary (DDR Marks): 22,310.00

BOERNER, JENS:

D.O.B: 01 September 1966

Personnel number: 66405114

Salary (DDR Marks): 16,639.83

BUDSCHIKG, Uwe

D.O.B: 29 February 1960

Personnel number: 430210

Salary (DDR Marks): 17,490.00

C

CHRISTIANSEN, Hagen

D.O.B: 25 November 1963

Personnel number: 412289

Salary (DDR Marks): 18,900.00

D

DOERING, Uwe

D.O.B: 16 October 1966

Personnel number: 415032
Salary (DDR Marks): 14,256.00

DUESTERBECK, Bernd

D.O.B: 08 February 1961
Personnel number: 430153
Salary (DDR Marks): 20,867.50

DUMKE, Franka*

D.O.B: 21 May 1968
Personnel number: 530266
Salary (DDR Marks): 5,370.16

E

ENGELHARDT, Sabine

D.O.B: 26 November 1948
Personnel number: 526316
Salary (DDR Marks): 23,250.00

F

FLEISCHER, Fritz

D.O.B: 29 June 1951
Personnel number: 429719
Salary (DDR Marks): 21,440.00

G

GANTHER, Henry

D.O.B: 29 August 1961
Personnel number: 415040
Salary (DDR Marks): 20,869.00

GUENTHER, Axel

D.O.B: 26 March 1965
Personnel number: 428128
Salary (DDR Marks): 19,470.00

H

HEENE, Gregor

D.O.B: 17 January 1969
Personnel number: 430088
Salary (DDR Marks): 13,575.00

HEIDENREICH, Klaus

D.O.B: 04 May 1952

Personnel number: 427724

Salary (DDR Marks): 23,760.00

HERRMANN, Irina*

D.O.B: 23 June 1970

Personnel number: 528240

Salary (DDR Marks): 4,600.00

J

JOOS, Michael

D.O.B: 05 November 1941

Personnel number: 429745

Salary (DDR Marks): 27,000.00

K

KAESTNER, Bernd

D.O.B: 16 November 1955

Personnel number: 429786

Salary (DDR Marks): 20,182.50

KAUTHER, Alexander

D.O.B: 06 January 1948

Personnel number: 429750

Salary (DDR Marks): 30,750,00

KNOECHEL, Uwe*

D.O.B: 29 July 1968

Personnel number: 420718

Salary (DDR Marks): 8,300.00

KUEHNE, Heiko

D.O.B: 14 August 1967

Personnel number: 405122

Salary (DDR Marks): 14,094.00

L

LEHMANN, Lutz

D.O.B: 21 July 1945

Personnel number: 430179

Salary (DDR Marks): 26,820.00

LINDEMANN, Karlheinz

D.O.B: 07 May 1937
Personnel number: 429729
Salary (DDR Marks): 19,500.00

M

MAI, Andreas*

D.O.B: 29 August 1964
Personnel number: 430203
Salary (DDR Marks): 7,661,00

MARKGRAF, Birgit*

D.O.B: 18 April 1958
Personnel number: 507212
Salary (DDR Marks): 0.00

MATTHES, Kerstin

D.O.B: 21 January 1961
Personnel number: 530037
Salary (DDR Marks): 6,699.40

MOERSCH, Harri

D.O.B: 27 September 1945
Personnel number: 430151
Salary (DDR Marks): 25,200.00

MUELLER, Ernst

D.O.B: 08 May 1942
Personnel number: 429730
Salary (DDR Marks): 24,000.00

N

NEITSCH, Olaf

D.O.B: 18 November 1961
Personnel number: 430028
Salary (DDR Marks): 20,295.00
PKZ number (GDR person registration): 181161430028

NEUBERT, Reiner

D.O.B: 11 August 1948
Personnel number: 428110
Salary (DDR Marks): 34,375,00

P

PAUL, Gerhard

D.O.B: 10 March 1935

Personnel number: 429725

Salary (DDR Marks): 24,118.96

PAULISCH, Ilona

D.O.B: 11 July 1956

Personnel number: 508316

Salary (DDR Marks): 20,010.00

PETER, Willi

D.O.B: 29 July 1947

Personnel number: 406167

Salary (DDR Marks): 26,250.00

R

RAGUSCHKE, Barbara

D.O.B: 03 November 1949

Personnel number: 530129

Salary (DDR Marks): 14,190.00

RENSCH, Thomas

D.O.B: 10 July 1954

PERSONNEL NUMBER: 429877

Salary (DDR Marks): 20,340.00

RUESCHER, Marco*

D.O.B: 30 May 1970

Personnel number: 430722

Salary: 3,620.00

S

SCHERRES, Thomas*

D.O.B: 03 February 1970

Personnel number: 429730

Salary (DDR Marks): 8,955.00

SCHIEWECK, Michael

D.O.B: 08 September 1954

Personnel number: 429796

Salary (DDR Marks): 25,740.00

SCHINDLER, Manfred

D.O.B: 21 May 1933

Personnel number: 429731
Salary (DDR Marks): 30,750.00

SCHLEHUFER, Birgit
D.O.B: 04 April 1948
Personnel number: 530174
Salary (DDR Marks): 21,390.00

SCHMIDT, Hanno*
D.O.B: 24 June 1969
Personnel number: 430165
Salary (DDR Marks): 8,955.00

SCHOETKZE, Rainer
D.O.B: 14 August 1955
Personnel number: 403445
Salary (DDR Marks): 23,885.00

SCHRO(E)DER, Volkmar
D.O.B: 25 April 1954
Personnel number: 429801
Salary (DDR Marks): 22,440.00

SCHROEER, Andre
D.O.B: 28 January 1952
Personnel number: 425079
Salary (DDR Marks): 22,080.00

SCHULTZ, Karsten
D.O.B: 07 July 1957
Personnel number: 430078
Salary (DDR Marks): 20,380.97

SCHULZ, Hilmar
D.O.B: 24 June 1956
Personnel number: 429763
Salary (DDR Marks): 28,175.00

SIMON, Rolf
D.O.B: 21 July 1963
Personnel number: 63430172
Salary (DDR Marks): 21,120.00

STARKE, Klaus

(Head of KD Treptow)
D.O.B: 15 September 1938
Personnel number: 429754
Salary (DDR Marks): 39,750.00

STEPHAN, Eckhart
D.O.B: 26 November 1954
Personnel number: 400875
Salary (DDR Marks): 23,460.00

STIEHL, Peter
D.O.B: 27 February 1969
Personnel number: 430163
Salary (DDR Marks): 14,425.00

T

TAPPERT, Wolfgang
D.O.B: 30 September 1948
Personnel number: 429775
Salary (DDR Marks): 28,500.00

TENNER, Ulf
D.O.B: 23 February 1956
Personnel number: 429917
Salary (DDR Marks): 24,412.50

THIEL, Harald
D.O.B: 16 February 1964
Personnel number: 430175
Salary (DDR Marks): 18,535.00

THIELE, Volker
D.O.B: 21 August 1957
Personnel number: 430181
Salary (DDR Marks): 22,770.00

THIEMANN, Gerhard
D.O.B: 13 January 1949
Personnel number: 429737
Salary (DDR Marks): 26,105.00

THRANDORF, Axel
D.O.B: 25 August 1959

Personnel number: 400855
Salary (DDR Marks): 21,780.00

THURK, Knut

D.O.B: 10 April 1945
Personnel number: 429718
Salary (DDR Marks): 28,500.00

TISCHENDORF, Claus

D.O.B: 14 February 1948
Personnel number: 429774
Salary (DDR Marks): 31,375.00

TROEGER, Joerg*

D.O.B: 01 February 1967
Personnel number: 430097
Salary (DDR Marks): 9,872.00

W

WARZATA, Guenther

D.O.B: 13 December 1947
Personnel number: 429719
Salary (DDR Marks): 28,500.00

WEIGEL, Lothar

D.O.B: 07 March 1941
Personnel number: 429727
Salary (DDR Marks): 35,250.00

WOLFF, Michael

D.O.B: 18 April 1961
Personnel number: 409138
Salary (DDR Marks): 23,450.00

WOLKSY, Bernd

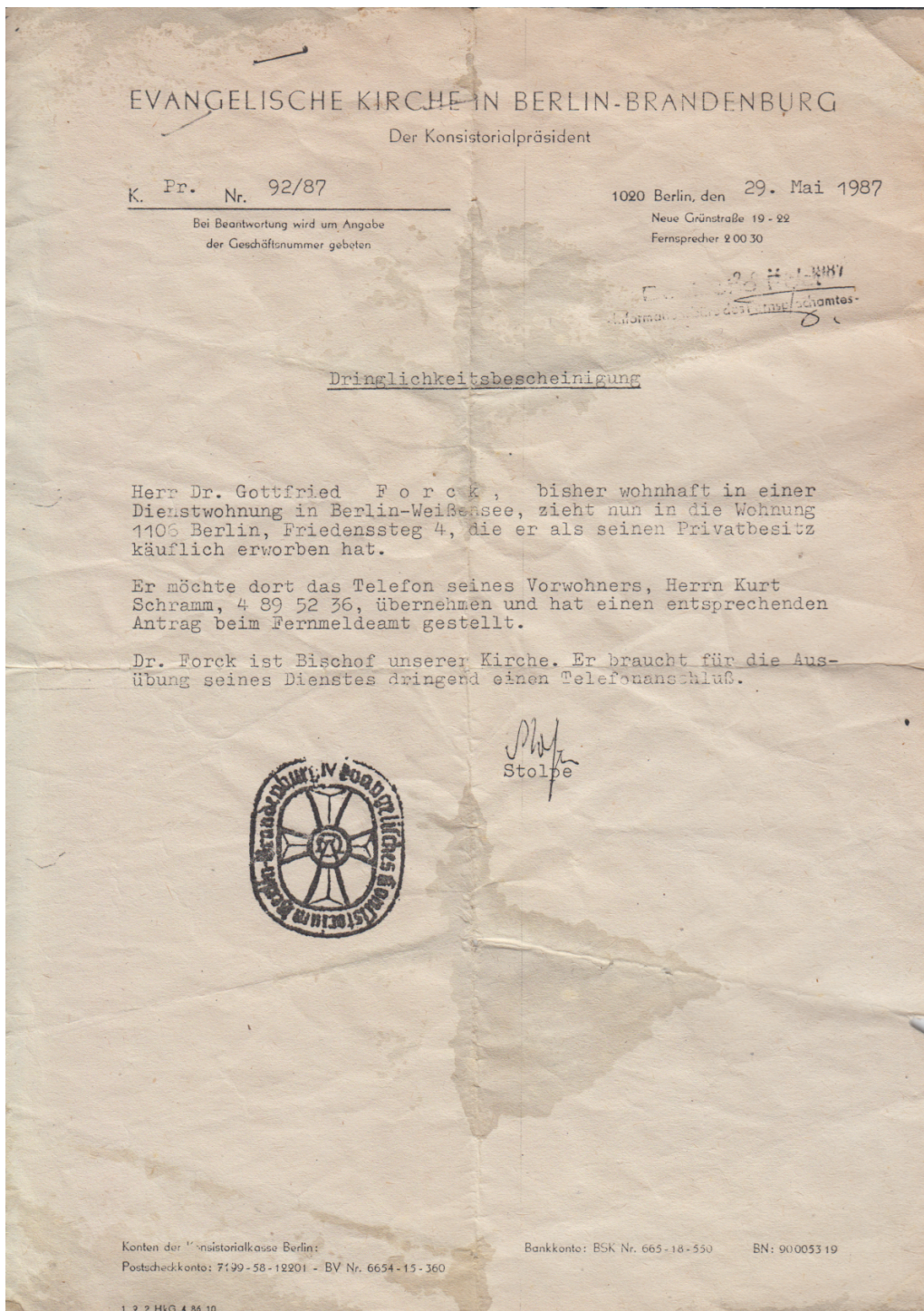
D.O.B: 14 February 1956
Personnel number: 412235
Salary (DDR Marks): 23,460.00

Z

ZIRNSTEIN, Sven

D.O.B: 15 September 1966
Personnel number: 430082
Salary (DDR Marks): 11,016.00

Appendix 3



Stasi filing copy of a letter written by Dr Manfred Stolpe to the Stasi officers at his local telephone exchange, dated 29 May 1987. Stolpe attests to Bishop Gottfried Forck's urgent need for the installation of a telephone line. The stamp at the top-right of the document is the internal transmittal order that sent the letter from the the telephone exchange to Forck's local Stasi office for implementation. (Author's collection.)

