

Hello Shipmates,

Have always read about Stasi in East Germany; now have another couple of recent publications pending attention. One titled *Bugging You - in The Lives of Others*, by Ulrich Mühe; the other, *The Grey Men*, pursuing the Stasi into the present, by Ralph Hope.

Some time ago I read of informers in that Soviet controlled area, especially the city of Berlin, where Stasi had 1800 informers - could that be true? Every place, public or private that could possibly be wired for bugging had it covertly installed; somewhat like the mindset of the Woke Organisation of the U.K. who are hell bent on censoring any public, or private, speaker here in our homeland whose opinion is at variance with their idea of English language historical common usage.

It becomes serious when realised they start at the top with people the calibre of university lecturers and guest speakers of all hues, beliefs or affiliations who sadly, if they have the temerity to speak up, are hounded out of their positions by gutless chancellors who rule those high-flown establishments.

As a preamble to the next bit I will say a staunch old friend had a seat on the London Metal Exchange, in younger days; that must have been where he honed his boggling ability with weights and figures, done in double quick time, in the head. He got into dealing with East Germany and Germans. The regime had imploded by the time I was doing a job at Canada dock 2 in Liverpool, and he was expecting a small coaster from Germany to dock further down and said I should come and view the cargo. It was packed solid, chocker-block with old wiring looms such as found in old tower blocks, or demolished factories. The boat was well down on its marks so must have been approaching high hundreds of tons - where is that mares nest from? He said it was all Stasi installed; listening, recording, broadcasting, wiring from homes, factories, shops, bus stops, rail stations, public lavatories; anywhere the population may be chatting together, assuming it was private. People are horrified by the knowledge that children informed on their parents. How far is that from budding university graduates, funded by mum and dad to the tune of nine to twelve grand, hounding notable achievers out of their teaching jobs, silenced by a bunch of snow flakes, who thus far in life, have done F A to enhance the common lot by word or deed.

I would encourage any child of mine to harbour diverse opinion, but no brow beating, or use it to spoil the way of life of others if you are part of mob. Financial and domestic support would cease P.D.Q.



I was able during, the period in question, to get close-ish to the Stasi area of activity as young brother worked for an organisation called BRIXMIS. His station in the East was once home to the Tirpitz family at

Potsdam. A large house about half a mile over the Glienicke Bridge, latterly known as the Bridge of Spies (maybe you saw a film of that name!).

My brother told me the large house was provided by the Soviets, so was expected to be bugged up to the eyeballs. In the package were servants, cook, housekeeper, three or four maids; mature ladies but one, whom Colin said, notable for her short tight skirt and attractive derriere, just in case the Sovs got lucky; it was taken as read that most staff were - Stasi. They also had a gardener, a very pleasant old boy, a bit removed from the others who would do favours, on the quiet, for scented soap, decent cigars and he was popular with the Brits. Sadly



Cephas, my father 'Checking out' the British military train engine

he passed away; the station chief asked the housekeeper if she thought the family would appreciate a half dozen Brits in No. 1 uniform to show respect and send him on his way. The idea was quickly turned down, the family wishes was for a very private function, simple with just a few old friends, but thank you!! Came the day of the funeral, duty officer decided to pop along alone. He and driver turned up at the cemetery and waited for the cortege. Funeral party turned up, cars disgorged mourners, all in full Stasi uniform; pleasant old gardener's coffin

had his Stasi cap on top - comment back at mission house 'Red faces all round'.

Getting up to Berlin could be done in three ways (1) Fly, (2) British military train from Helmstedt in the west or (3) drive the Corridor.

My parents, visiting my brother in Charlottenburg apartment, always flew. The old man was a steam devotee and loved to ride the train from Berlin to Brit check at Helmstedt and back a couple of times; not because a free lunch was served (and it was) but the countryside was lovely and it was always hauled by an exotic foreign steam locomotive, his particular thing.

Jo and I, plus young Andy drove the corridor like an adventure. We had to have military sponsor when reporting in at Helmstedt, the British Control point; four A4 sheet of 'dos and don'ts' had to be read and signed. Crossing to the East the *volksplotzie* took over.

We started following the Brit rules and opened the car windows 4 inches, no more, no less. East police barked into the car a demand for our three passports. Western powers did not recognise the G.D.P. (German Democratic Party) so their stamp in our passports was an emphatic 'No-No'. As per instruction sheets; look nonchalantly into his eyes and say, quietly, "Soviet", each time barked at "Soviet". All calculated to intimidate and did, to a degree. Eventually a Soviet guard, jodhpurs and tailored smock, pistol at hip, polished high boots, 6 foot tall, at least, smart, smart, approached and said something, pivoted and marched back to his office; one had to follow 6" from his heels. A point at his office - was bring passports, tap window, stand back, offer books, window snaps open, books snatched, window slammed in face. Same to get books back. No word spoken or invited. A similar palaver on other end of corridor which terminated on what was a straight on the pre war Avus banked motor race circuit, a Mercedes bench facility. Managed to blot my copy book there, be here all week if I tried to write that.

Father liked to visit Meissen porcelain show room in the East. A British military bus was laid on certain days for that. He thought he was the 'great pimpernel' bringing things to the U.K. wrapped in brown paper, not declared, it being high priced here at home; beautiful stuff. Bought in the East for West marks, East marks not fit to wipe one's - nose - on.

The British sector took in what was pre-war Olympic Village. It included two beautiful swimming pools, kept in pristine order. Most days we, Jo, the boy and I, were the only users. One massive gym with lovely polished hardwood floors was a truck garage. The stadium that figures prominently on TV was a place for very occasional dog walkers, or get a picture sat in Adolph's V.I.P. box. To look at the track, seeing in the mind's eye, Jessie Owens running blond, super-Aryans into the ground did give one a certain feeling of 'Up yours' Mein Herr. Though not once did we experience the slightest anti Brit conduct, out and about, beer hall or super store. No Germans were allowed in the Olympic complex as it was a large army camp. All upkeep, accommodation, schooling for nephews, everything paid by Berlin, the Bonn Government as 'reparations'.

I learned the French sector requested, had delivered every few days, a selection of fresh flowers, winter and summer.

Memories of that interesting time flood back as I write. Am glad we went, now and again, where most feared to tread; wife and son a good get out card.

Now it's hard to avoid tourist traps. We web-footed sort struck lucky with *Superb*, that got us round the Americas before cruise ships and such altered, in a large way, the character of most stops. Apart from that we were all slender, bronzed and muscular; pretty even when doing a 'blue jackets' guard; a credit, ambassadors even, for a nicer, older Britain.

"Get me a dry handkerchief Jo"  
Be seeing you      Andy



When 'The Wall' did finally come down in 1990 it was quite an emotional experience for others, and myself, with whom I have since discussed the event, we had not expected to see the collapse of the Soviet Empire in our lifetimes. With the coming down of 'The Wall', and the reunification of Germany, the occupation of Berlin and the role of B.R.I.X.M.I.S. was at an end, so the bags were packed, and the troops left.

The 'Brits' bowed out by giving a military tattoo at the 'Waldebuhne', an open-air concert arena holding 20,000, appropriate because the Germans do love a good military parade. The tattoo, was held over two nights due to the tremendous response, and on each night the arena was jammed. While the rain just bucketed down, the audience, totally ignoring the weather, gave the bands an amazing ovation.

*"A part of Colin's letter to me"*

What a way to leave, with pride, gratitude and dignity, it has not happened often to us Brits, and I take pride in the fact that I made a contribution.

Above photos are a copy of Colin's Russian Pass his name is 3<sup>rd</sup> line top left