16. Papers, Codes, and False IDs

Espionage requires communication between the intelligence service and the spy, for appointments and announcements. Telephone communications can easily be intercepted. Computers and the internet did not exist in 1968.

My means of contact with the BVD was simple: I called a phone number in The Hague and stated my first name, nothing more. The switchboard operator then connected me with whomever I wanted to speak to. Such conversations were always kept short. For example, I would say, “I cannot be at the agreed time and place tomorrow. Can we meet two hours earlier or later?” The matter was dealt with in less than twenty seconds.

We also communicated in person in cars or restaurants. In a restaurant, for instance, we would agree to meet at half past two, but not at lunchtime. After lunchtime we could sit at a safe distance from other guests and avoid the risk of eavesdropping!

To communicate with East Berlin, at the end of June 1967, I was given a pad with special paper and envelopes. To inform my GDR comrades of anything, I had to send a letter to a man living at Karl-Marx Allee 63 in Berlin. Because of the address, residents knew they had to inform State Security about a letter from the West, and SS would collect the letter.

The envelope contained just blank paper. Each of the pad's lined pages was backed by a blank sheet. I had to put cardboard under the blank one, then write my message on the lined text with a ballpoint pen. Ebi told me to burn the lined piece of paper. For simplicity's sake, I gave it together with the open envelope and the blank paper, to the BVD. I got it back later, stuck a postage stamp on it, and mailed it. I had to take the letter to the post office at least two weeks before planning a meeting, and delivery and censorship took five to eight days.

I found it strange to send an empty sheet of paper. Why should the East German inspectors not become suspicious? Who would know, if not the Western censors, that such a letter demanded more scrutiny? The name "Peter" and a post office stamp from Zeist were the only way to identify me, but that was sufficient for them to find me at some point. For that reason, after sending a few empty pages, I wrote a chess letter and folded the blank sheet inside it.

About this, the "fathers: were of the same opinion as Eberhard and Heiner; it was a clever idea. However, after the enthusiasm had abated, I let both parties know that because of my ingenuity, there should be nothing to stand in the way of a pay raise. Writing chess letters took more time, but it wasn't too bad because the letters usually consisted of text from letters I'd received from friends.

In fact, I did receive more pay, but neither the BVD nor the East Germans used good performance as an

argument and never mentioned my idea of the chess letters.

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Coded Messages Via Radio

In early 1968, my East German companions told me that they wanted to send me reports via shortwave radio. I was given training on a Saturday afternoon, and by the end of it I was completely exhausted from all the endless repetitions. I wanted to feel cozy and go to see Gudrun. But, no—that wasn't allowed.

There was nothing very spectacular about the code reports the Ministry for State Security sent me. Sometimes, codes were sent all day long, but for me, only late in the evening on certain days. A monotonous female voice read out blocks of five figures, one after another. From the first block, I had to discern if the report was meant for me, and at the end was a final code with five figures. I had to memorize my personal recognition code at the beginning of the broadcast. For example, if my code was 54721, I would have to be able to recognize it. Then the report could continue, for example, with 39246, short pause, 85017, and the conclusion might be 11799. All the code blocks were on a code list they gave me, which I copied for the BVD. Decoding a report was child's play.

The moment I was given an advance to buy a radio, I signed a note. With the advance payment, I also got

information about the radio frequencies and the days I should listen, as well as a set of codes. The paper showed that I had contact with the GDR state authorities and that I had received the codes for radio communication.

Eberhardt and Heiner thought I could be blackmailed after signing the certificate. They felt that now they had power over me in case I wanted to quit as a spy. In that case, copies of the note would be sent to my employer and to the Dutch police.

I got bored listening to the emotionless female voice read out block after block of numbers without drawing a breath. On an adjacent frequency, called something like fishery frequency, you could hear the same. Even the voice sounded the same.

The frequencies for messages changed from day to day. First, I had to buy a radio. Then I drew lines at the corresponding frequencies. I wasn't good with technology, so I bought a simple radio. The frequencies were so close together I had trouble setting them correctly. Often things went wrong, but fortunately specialists from BVD were listening in. When I missed a few reports and the contents were important, the BVD helped me.

In East Berlin they also noticed that although each report was repeated twice on another day, I missed a radio report relatively often. I was rewarded for my stupidity with grumbling and sighs and another round of training. The problem was, I wasn't allowed to take the

radio to East Berlin so they could show me what to do. The BVD, meanwhile, refused to train me.

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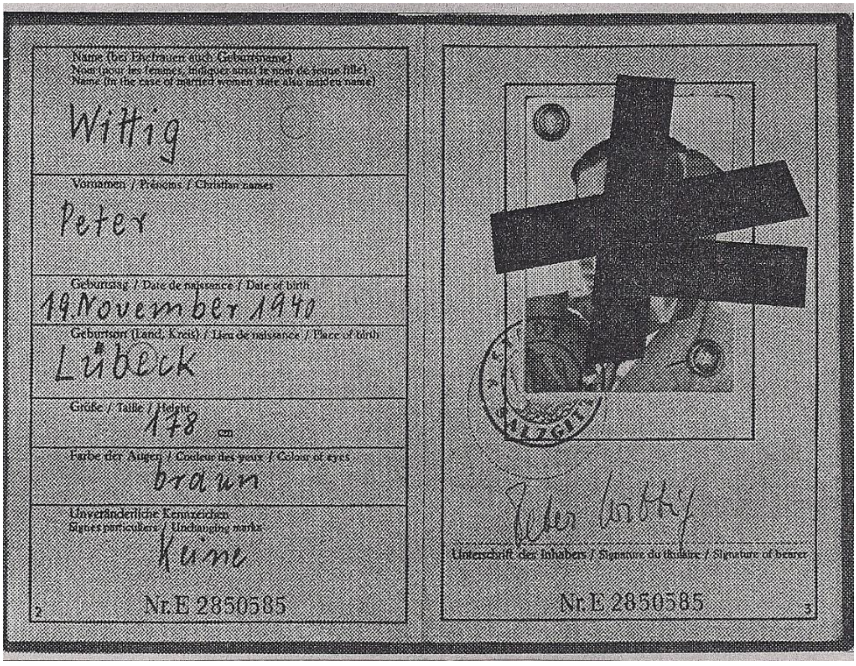
Fake Passport in the Name of Peter Wittig

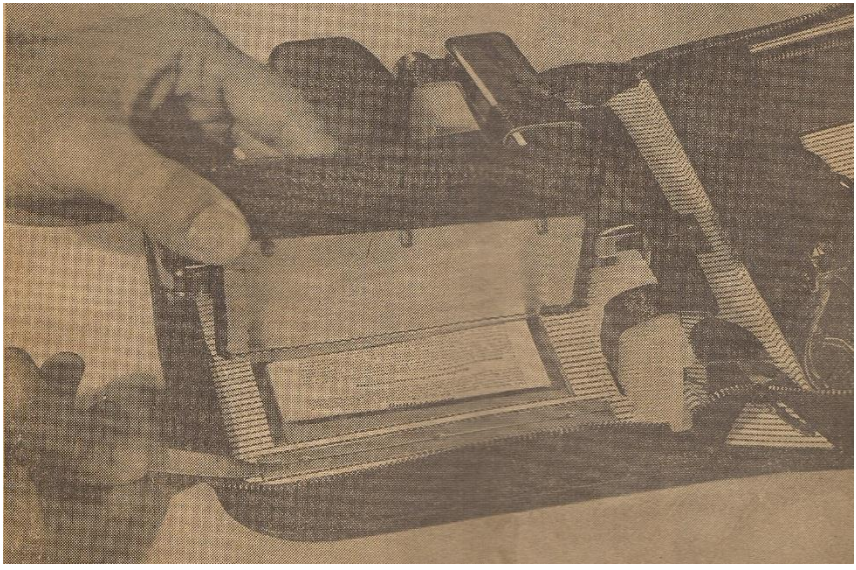
At the point when East German intelligence felt an agent's training was complete, the spy was given a fake identity card. I received mine at the beginning of 1969. With the new name, I was also given a new history.



My alias was Peter Wittig. In case of an emergency, I had to travel as quickly as possible to East Berlin. Peter

Wittig was a West German who lived in Salzgitter, in the east of Lower Saxony near the GDR border. Like many in his surroundings, he'd worked in a salt mine. He'd been killed in 1967 in a car accident. His parents were already dead, and he had no brothers or sisters.

Once again, I had to sign a document declaring that I had contact with state authorities in the GDR and had received a West German passport, which was the property of the Ministry of National Defense of the GDR. By signing this declaration, I was, according to Eberhardt and Heiner, completely at their mercy.



…The secret compartment in the toiletry bag…

I committed to memory what school Peter went to and the names of teachers and classmates. I knew which sports club he belonged to and which soccer team he

played for. In retrospect, I'm glad I never had to use this false passport. The photo was of me, but Eberhard had put in his messy writing my data, but from me was the signature. At signature control, where customs compare the writing of the signature and the data, I would have flunked it.

When I went to Berlin, I kept this passport safe in a travel pouch I'd received from the East Germans. For all my normal traveling, I used my Dutch passport. In those years, you had to show the card at every border.

The Fathers were happy with what the East Germans had made available. I'd be even more valuable to them. It also gave them an insight into the progress the East Germans thought I'd made up to that point.

The fake passport and travel pouch were, of course, admired and photographed from every possible angle. Then I had to show the BVD people how I'd found the hiding place for it. The travel bag was the ideal location.

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