

Secret Stasi files: Will the truth ever come out?

by Jeffrey Steinberg

During Jan. 13-16, 1986, Tiny Rowland, the British monarchy's own "Butcher of Africa," hosted a closed-door London strategy session with a high-level delegation from the East German Ministry of State Security, the notorious Stasi. The East German team was headed by Gen. Dieter Uhlig, the top aide to Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, the head of Commercial Coordination ("KoKo"), the agency within the Stasi that was responsible for arms, drugs, and other contraband smuggling. Schalck-Golodkowski reported directly to Markus Wolf, the Stasi's head of foreign operations. Uhlig was the director of IMES GmbH, one of the most important of the KoKo fronts, an "import-export firm" housed in the port city of Rostock, which was created in 1982 to facilitate arms shipments to the Middle East, Central America, Africa, and other hot spots.

What was this senior Stasi man doing in London, conferring with the top management of Lonrho, the Club of the Isles' number-one African raw material cartel? And what was in it for Tiny Rowland?

Despite a long, checkered career of thievery, Rowland was, and still is, well-known as a controlled asset of several British intelligence services, dating back to his World War II shenanigans with the Double-Cross Committee, which penetrated and ran Nazi fifth-column operations in the United Kingdom. He had decorated the board of Lonrho with such notables as MI6's Nicholas Elliot, House of Windsor in-law Angus Ogilvie, and City of London bankers Sir Edward DuCann and Duncan Sandys. Some of Rowland's seed money came from one of the Queen's own "discreet" bankers, Harley Drayton. Margaret Thatcher's government was also almost certainly "in the loop" concerning the Lonrho-Stasi confab. Sir Edward DuCann, a Tory Member of Parliament and top political adviser to the Prime Minister, was Lonrho's chairman.

The outcome of the London session was memorialized

in a series of secret Stasi documents, which following the collapse of the East German Communist regime in 1989, fell into the hands of a West German parliamentary committee, and were, eventually, made public. The documents include a contract, signed by Rowland and Stasi official Wolfgang Bruckner, itemizing a number of joint African business deals, and a 20-page travel report by General Uhlig, detailing the meetings in London. The papers reveal a tremendous degree of British-East German collusion, including the planned overthrow of at least two governments, and flooding of the African continent with weapons.

In the *Investigation* that follows this article, Angelika Beyreuther-Raimondi reports from a conference in Berlin on the status of the intelligence archives of the former Warsaw Pact states. You will discover that there is a great degree of collusion—a veritable East-West "gentlemen's agreement"—to bury some of the darkest secrets of the Cold War era. Many citizens of the former Warsaw Pact states are furious that they are being denied access to the secret police files, detailing decades of persecution against them, their friends, and family members. On the more strategic level, the burying and/or destroying of crucial archive material is aimed at hiding the fact that, at the height of the Cold War, collusion in drugs, weapons, and genocide was in full swing.

We begin this survey with a more detailed look at the Rowland-Stasi episode.

Tiny Rowland and the Stasi

When the Stasi's chief black marketeer arrived in London on Jan. 13, 1986, Tiny Rowland certainly rolled out the red carpet. An attachment to the 20-page trip report by "Comrade Uhlig," naming the "discussion partners," revealed that

among the people with whom he conferred were: Edward DuCann, chairman of Lonrho, and the head of a Tory parliamentary faction who “maintains very close relations with the present British government, including with government leader Thatcher.” Another participant was A.H. Ball, also a Tory leader. Uhlig noted that Ball’s “father was head of MI5 shortly after the war and until 1961.” In fact, Joseph Ball was one of Rowland’s patrons throughout the latter’s early 1960s takeover of Lonrho.

General Uhlig informed his seniors in East Berlin: “During the negotiations with the Lonrho concern on January 14 and 15, 1986, in London, a relationship was established with Dr. Ashraf Marwan through Mr. Rowland. . . . Dr. Ashraf Marwan is married to President Nasser’s daughter. According to Rowland, he is said to have been head of the Egyptian secret service under Sadat. In addition there is a very close relationship with the Libyan revolutionary leader Ghaddafi, which was established as early as President Nasser’s time. . . . The close family relationships established at that time are maintained by Dr. Ashraf Marwan. According to Rowland, Dr. Ashraf Marwan enjoys access to Ghaddafi at any time. He is said to be in a position to solve problems in this way.” Rowland also told Uhlig that Marwan maintained offices in Cairo and had close ties to President Mubarak, and could be “useful to the G.D.R. [East Germany] in carrying out certain commercial projects.”

Uhlig added that “a meeting with Adnan Khashogy [sic] took place, also as a result of intervention by Mr. Rowland,” and plans were set for the “Arab millionaire” Khashoggi to travel to East Berlin in the last week of February 1986, to consolidate some large financing agreements.

While Rowland was offering to place his Middle Eastern “cards” in the hands of East Germans, the main focus of the three days of wheeling and dealing—at least, those matters covered in the Uhlig memo—was Africa. Rowland and his Stasi counterpart sealed a large number of commercial joint ventures, covering much of the map of the African continent, including several weapons deals. In a revealing note, Uhlig observed that “in its conceptual approach Lonrho views Africa as a single country and not as a continent containing many countries”—i.e., that Rowland rejects the idea of sovereign nation-states on the African continent.

Rowland provided Uhlig with a detailed and frank profile of Lonrho’s political/insurgency operations on the African continent. He spelled out which African heads of state were on his payroll, including Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe. He boasted that the head of Lonrho’s Kenyan operations was the nephew of Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi. During the visit, Rowland arranged for a senior East German official to visit Kenya for a private meeting with the President. Up until Rowland’s intervention, no East German citizen had been able to obtain a visa from Kenya. During one of the meetings with General Uhlig and a second Stasi official, “Comrade Bruckner,” Rowland placed a phone call to the private office number of Ghana’s Prime Minister P.V. Obeng, and put

Bruckner, also a friend of the Prime Minister, on the line for a brief discussion.

Uhlig was briefed by Rowland on Lonrho’s role in supporting the Ugandan insurgency of Yoweri Museveni, an arrangement that also involved the Frelimo government of Mozambique, which provided training (by East German military personnel) for Museveni’s forces. “Lonrho is said to have repeatedly made one of its airplanes available to fly Museveni to Maputo, as well as to fly equipment and munitions to Museveni.” Rowland said that Museveni would soon be in power in Uganda, and Lonrho’s influence there would skyrocket.

Uhlig noted that “Rowland thinks Colonel Garang is a future President of Sudan. He emphatically portrays the need for helping Garang further. . . . Without Garang there could be no solution to Sudan’s domestic problems. In this Rowland is pursuing the goal of reactivating the Lonrho assets in Sudan, Xenana sugar plantations, which are now being nationalized.”

Another agenda?

The Rowland-Uhlig sessions took place six weeks before the assassination of Sweden’s Prime Minister Olof Palme, on Feb. 28, 1986; at the time, Palme was in the process of discovering a huge East-West weapons pipeline, violating the UN weapons ban against warring Iran and Iraq. The arms pipeline was, in part, run through Uhlig’s IMES GmbH. Following the arrest of a Swedish arms dealer who had been the local contact point for IMES, there was alarm among the international arms smugglers, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, that hundreds of billions of dollars in weapons and explosives trafficking, which was financing intelligence operations East and West, might be blown.

At the time of the session, London sources have reported, Dr. Marwan was running a string of “private security” fronts for Rowland, which engaged in a wide array of covert operations. An electronics expert, hired by Marwan and Rowland, was arrested in January 1986 for the assassination of Gerard Houreau, the Seychelles opposition leader, who had crossed swords with Rowland and some of his “business” associates, including South African intelligence operative Craig Williamson. The assassination occurred in London.

In September 1996, two former South African secret police officials, Col. Eugene de Kock and Gen. Dirk Coutzee, testified under oath that Palme had been murdered by a group of South African operatives that included Craig Williamson and James Anthony “Ant” White. At the time of the assassination, White was the chief of security for Rowland’s Baira corridor pipeline in Mozambique.

In the early 1990s, a former top Stasi official, Herbert Brehmer, had publicly admitted that he had coordinated a disinformation campaign, aimed at blaming the Palme assassination on the European Labor Party and Lyndon LaRouche.

With Rowland security personnel and Stasi disinformation experts implicated in the Palme assassination, one cannot help but wonder: Was Palme’s elimination an additional agenda item in the January 1986 London sessions?