

The OSS and the London “Free Germans”

Jonathan S. Gould

“
The OSS was faced the formidable task of finding agents willing to parachute blind into the Third Reich.
”

Editor's Note: The opening of the files of the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the end of the Cold War have enabled scholars to add new perspective to our understanding of World War II intelligence operations. Two decades ago, Joseph Persico's Piercing the Reich used some of the declassified records to tell the story of the OSS's daring infiltration of agents into Nazi Germany in the closing months of the war. One of the OSS officers who ran those operations, the late Joseph Gould, left a memoir that now adds texture and impact to Persico's account and subsequent scholarship. The author of this article, Gould's son Jonathan, has combined his father's memories with the published literature—and with a startling twist from behind the Iron Curtain.



Following the Allied landing at Normandy in June 1944, the OSS dispatched over 200 spies into Nazi Germany. The London office of the Secret Intelligence Branch (SI), under the leadership of the late CIA director William J. Casey, organized and dispatched over 100 missions from September 1944 through April 1945.¹ Agents recruited from the ranks of church dissidents, Spanish civil war veterans, political refugees, and underground labor groups throughout occupied Europe gathered

military intelligence critically important to the advance of the Allied armies, leading to the surrender of Germany on 8 May 1945.

This article focuses on one set of those missions, manned by seven exiled German trade unionists, and the relationship between the agents and the OSS officer who recruited and trained them. That officer—Army Lt. Joseph Gould—was the author's father. This article is dedicated to his memory and to the courage and sacrifice of these seven silent soldiers of the German resistance, who have gone largely unrecognized.

The Penetration Campaign

As the war against Germany intensified, the OSS mission in London emerged as a critical intelligence component of the US military effort. In September 1942, the OSS had established the Secret Intelligence Branch to organize clandestine agent operations abroad. SI appointed Casey as director of its London office in June 1944. Casey was given full responsibility for organizing the penetration of Nazi Germany by OSS agents. The London office, located at 72 Grosvenor Street in the Mayfair section, expanded quickly and became the focal point of Anglo-American intelligence cooperation in the war against Germany. As one historian noted, “the London mission was at the heart of OSS relations with British intelligence, and as such it personified

Jonathan S. Gould is an attorney in New York City. Copyright © 2002 by Jonathan S. Gould

¹ William J. Casey served as Director of Central Intelligence from 1980-1986 under President Ronald Reagan.



William J. Casey, Director of Special Intelligence for OSS/London. Photo taken in Washington DC, 1942

the essence of that connection in the Allied war effort.”²

Casey's appointment as head of OSS/London's SI operations came at a time when the military brass at the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) in London held little hope of accomplishing anything of consequence in terms of military intelligence in Germany. In fact, as late as August 1944, high-level intelligence officers within SHAEF admitted that the Allied Command “had no specific intelligence objectives within Germany and ... had not done any planning for tactical intelligence inside Germany.” As a result, SHAEF made it known to the OSS that “any information regarding location, strength and movement of troops and supplies,

together with the state of morale (inside Germany) was of interest.”³

In response to SHAEF's request, SI formulated the FAUST Plan for the penetration of Germany. The plan—named after Goethe's famed character from German literature known for his quest for knowledge—called for the training and infiltration of 30 secret agents, who would be dropped inside Nazi Germany to establish a network of spies to collect and transmit military intelligence to the OSS. To achieve this objective, SI proposed to establish relationships with anti-Nazi elements, especially underground labor groups within Germany, who had conveyed to the OSS their willingness to shelter and aid agents dropped behind enemy lines.⁴ On 20 August 1944,

² *Ibid*

³ Memorandum from Col. James Forgan, OSS Detachment, ETOUSA, to Supreme Commander, SHAEF, 16 August 1944. Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Declassification No. NND843115

SHAEF approved the FAUST Plan and directed the OSS to begin work on the project.

Recruitment of the London Free Germans

SI was now faced with the formidable task of finding agents to cover Germany. The OSS had already placed spies in occupied countries, but identifying men who would parachute blind into the Third Reich “without reception committees, safe houses or friends... who shared a common hatred of the Nazis” was a challenge to Casey's leadership.⁵ The pool of potential recruits was small. Where would the OSS find German nationals in England in their mid-to-late thirties, who were conversant in the particular dialect of each German city targeted and familiar with local neighborhoods? Even if such persons existed, would they be willing to be trained and parachuted as enemy spies into their own war-torn country?

SI's Labor Division, led by New York labor lawyer Arthur Goldberg, helped to meet the challenge. Goldberg—later appointed to the US Supreme Court by President John F. Kennedy—was known at the time for his defense of the Chicago Newspaper Guild during its 1938 strike against the Hearst Corporation. Joining OSS/London in 1943, Goldberg convinced colleagues and OSS director, Gen. William J. Donovan, of the

⁵ Joseph Persico, *Piercing the Reich: The Penetration of Nazi Germany by American Secret Agents During WWII* (New York: Viking Press, 1979), p. 13

² Brian Nelson Macpherson, *Kings and Desperate Men: The United States Office of Strategic Services in London and the Anglo-American Relationship* (University of Toronto: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1995), p. 156

need to establish contact with underground labor groups in occupied and Axis countries. He believed that trade union resistance groups could be useful to the war effort because they shared with the Allies a common hatred of the Nazi regime, which had violently dissolved labor organizations in Germany. Because such groups were already major forces of internal resistance behind enemy lines, they constituted a readymade source of valuable military and political intelligence.⁶

The Labor Division's efforts to cultivate relationships with underground anti-Nazi labor groups led it to discover a potential source of

⁶ Memo from Arthur J. Goldberg to Gen. William J. Donovan, 23 February 1943, Fort Carlisle, PA. Archives of the Army War College, William J. Donovan Papers, Box 67, File 267.

“
The OSS discovered a source of agent recruits right in its own backyard: the Free Germany Committee of Great Britain.
 ”

agent recruits right in its own backyard: the Free Germany Committee of Great Britain. Following the German Army's surrender at Stalingrad in January 1943, high-ranking German prisoners of war and communist exiles had formed the Moscow-based National Committee for a Free Germany. Its primary goal was to foment anti-Nazi resistance and become the nucleus of a post-war German government. Free Germany movements had sprung to life in Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, and France, drawing upon sizeable German émigré communi-

ties of anti-Nazi communists, socialists, and social democrats. Comprising nearly one thousand members, the Free Germany committees served as popular front organizations under the more-or-less open leadership of German communists. They supported the Allied war effort by providing information about conditions inside Nazi Germany and by calling for Germans to rise up and overthrow Hitler.⁷

By September 1944, the search for suitable agents to conduct the German penetration missions had intensified. After learning that a community of anti-Nazi political exiles with links to the Free Germany Committee was living in the Hampstead section of London, the OSS Labor Division assigned the task of initiating contact with the group's leadership to Joseph Gould, a twenty-nine-year-old army lieutenant from New York City.

Gould's prior experience in organizing trade unionists made him well suited for the job. After graduating from Columbia University's School of Journalism in 1936, Gould had accepted a job as a motion picture publicist in the Manhattan office of United Artists, the film studio then owned by Hollywood screen legends Charlie Chaplain and Douglas Fairbanks. He later joined the fledgling east-coast chapter of the Screen Publicists Guild, which elected him its first president in 1938. His leadership of that white-collar trade

⁷ Heike Bungert, "The OSS and Its Cooperation with the Free Germany Committees, 1944-45," *Intelligence and National Security*, Volume 12, July 1997, p. 151



Staff of Labor Desk, OSS/London, July 1944. Arthur Goldberg is seated at far left, Joseph Gould is standing, second from right

“

In November 1944, the seven volunteers began rigorous training under the direction of OSS officer Gould.

”



Joseph Gould, blending in as a civilian in wartime London, August 1944.

union proved to be quite effective. The Guild's first contract with the film studios doubled the weekly pay of its members. During contract renegotiations in 1940, Gould led a picket line of guild members outside the New York theater premiering Disney's *Fantasia*. A better deal for the screen publicists was signed shortly thereafter. Two years later, Gould enlisted in the US Army. After completing basic training, he was assigned to the OSS. He joined the staff of the Labor Branch in the London office in June 1944.

Dressed in civilian clothes, Lt Gould roamed through London neighborhoods in search of information about the Free Germany Committee's UK chapter. Employing typical New Yorker instincts, he decided to explore local bookstores. That hunch yielded results when he encountered Morris Abbey, the friendly

owner of a bookstore on New Bond Street.⁸ Abbey took an immediate liking to Gould. He offered him an introduction to one of his regular customers, Dr. Juergen Kuczynski, an economist whose father was President of the Free Germany movement.⁹

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Kuczynski had earned a doctorate at the University of Heidelberg and then studied in the United States at the Brookings Institution. He returned to Germany from the United States in the late 1920s to edit the German Communist Party newspaper. With the rise of Hitler, Kuczynski went to Moscow in 1936 to meet with exiled German Communist Party leaders. He agreed with their suggestion that he rejoin his family in England where his father was a well-known professor at the London School of Economics. There, he assisted his father in founding the Free Germany Committee of Great Britain

With a phone number supplied by the bookseller, Gould contacted the younger Kuczynski and arranged to meet with him at his flat in Hampstead. Gould wasted no time in asking for his help in recruiting

⁸ Joseph Gould, "An OSS Officer's Own WWII Story: Of His Seven German Agents and Their Five Labor Desk Missions into Warring Germany," unpublished memoir (Washington, DC, 1989), p. 4

⁹ Bungert, p. 132

Free Germans to volunteer for dangerous missions inside Germany. Kuczynski responded favorably to Gould's request and shortly thereafter set up a meeting at a London tavern to introduce Gould to four exiled German trade unionists.

All four of the men had gone underground in Germany after Hitler's rise to power and later fled to Czechoslovakia in the mid 1930s, where they continued their work with anti-Nazi underground resistance groups. The resistance fighters faced increasing peril after the Munich Agreement and then the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939. To help out, liberal elements within England formed the Czech Refugee Trust Fund. Underwritten by the British government, the organization was led by Liberal Party leader Lord Layton, publisher of the *Economist* and a leading figure in the British House of Lords. The Czech Refugee Trust Fund worked tirelessly to help refugees escape to Poland where they received visas that allowed them to enter the United Kingdom, find jobs, and resettle with their families. The Fund chartered ships to ensure safe passage to England. Its efforts enabled over 8,000 people to escape Nazi persecution and the war in Europe.¹⁰

The exiled German trade unionists, who were introduced to Joseph Gould by Juergen Kuczynski that afternoon in late August 1944, were beneficiaries of the Czech Refugee Trust Fund's work. Paul Lindner, a

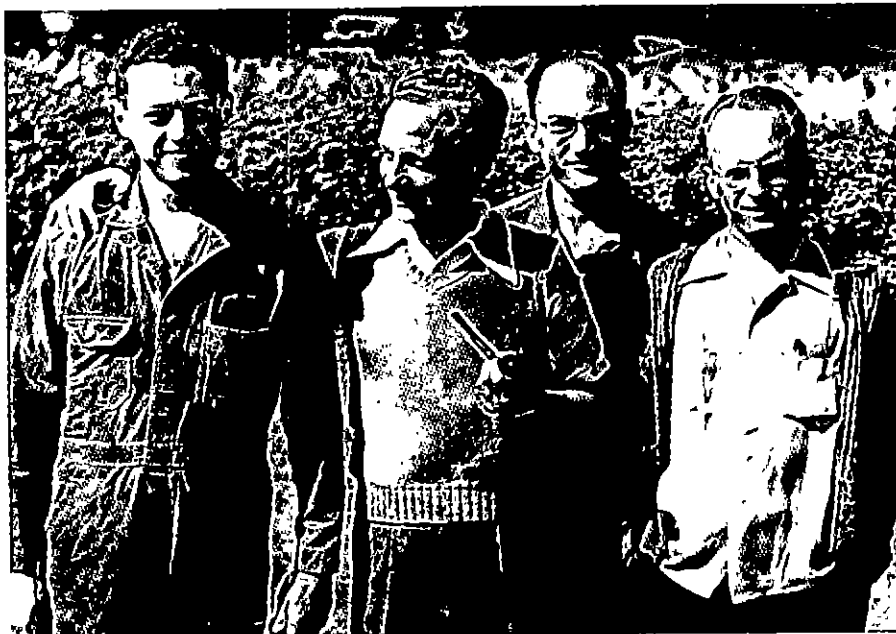
¹⁰ Flora Lewis, *Red Pawn: The Story of Noel Field*, (New York: Doubleday, 1965), pp 116-117

German machine turner, attended the meeting, along with Anton "Toni" Ruh, Lindner's lifelong friend from Berlin. Also in attendance was a coal miner from the Ruhr Valley named Kurt Gruber, and Adolph Buchholz, a metal worker from Spandau-Berlin. At that meeting, Gould presented them with an opportunity to join the war effort as OSS spies. He explained the pressing need of the Allies to obtain military intelligence as they entered Germany. Each exile who volunteered would be offered "overseas agent employment contracts," which would provide compensation during training and the performance of their missions, and death benefits for their families should they not return. According to Joseph Gould's memoir, "The men asked to think about these things and to talk with others of their group."¹¹

Following that first meeting, Kuczynski introduced Gould to a German refugee named Karl Kastro and told him that Kastro would assist him with the mission recruitment process.¹² With Kastro's aid, Gould continued to meet with the trade unionists in various homes in Hampstead, finding out what they knew about current conditions inside Nazi Germany, what contacts they had, and who might shelter them if they were to parachute into their homeland following years of exile. From an initial list of eleven potential Free Germany Committee recruits, seven were chosen for the TOOL missions,

¹¹ Gould, p. 5.

¹² Ruth Werner, *Sonya's Report* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1991) p. 262.



Joseph Gould with TOOL mission trainees at OSS training field outside London, October 1944.

which were named HAMMER, CHISEL, PICKAXE, MALLET and BUZZSAW. In addition to Lindner, Ruh, Buchholz, and Gruber, Gould selected Werner Fischer, Walter Struewe, and Emil Konhäuser. Like the first group, the latter three had gone underground after the Nazis destroyed the trade unions in Germany; each had grown up in the German towns and cities that later became the targets of their missions; and their ages ranged from 30-41, considered important to avoid the suspicions that younger, conscript-age males would arouse.¹³ The OSS also hired Karl Kastro to serve as a liaison with the families of the men during their training and deployment.

¹³ Gould, p. 6.

Mission Training

In November 1944, the Free Germany Committee volunteers began rigorous training under the direction of Lt. Gould, who had been designated the OSS training officer for the TOOL missions. With the exception of parachute training at Ringway Airfield, the agent recruits were able to live at home with their families in the Hampstead section of London. They commuted daily to the OSS mission training school in Ruislip, where they attended briefings dealing with a wide range of subjects related to their missions. Mondays were devoted to learning order of battle; Wednesdays focused on how to deal with elite Waffen-SS troops and military patrols, Fridays were for studying maps and reconnaissance photos taken by the US Air Force, showing the exact location within

Conditions Inside Germany as Reported by TOOL Mission Agents Infiltrated into German POW Camps Outside London in Early 1945

On the prospect of losing the war

Out of fear of physical harm from other POWs, the German captives publicly expressed their faith in the Fuhrer and the secret weapons that they believed would enable Germany to turn around the tide of war. Privately, however, most admitted that the war was lost. Nonetheless, all still believed that the German soldier was a superior fighter, who simply could not overcome the vast material superiority of the Allied armies.

When Allied bombers would fly over the camps en route to Germany, the POWs would bemoan the destruction of their homeland. Through conversations about the effects of the bombing raids, the Free German agents were able to learn about the wartime fate of the towns in which their families still lived and the areas into which they would soon be inserted.

On the morale of the German Army

The infiltrated agents heard again and again about the failure of leadership exhibited by commanding officers on the front lines. The POWs repeatedly called them cowards who would run for shelter inside tanks at the first shot, leaving their men to fight without direction. Often mentioned in this connection was the decisive battle on the plains of Kursk, when Soviet troops drove the German Army out of Russia in the spring of 1944. Some claimed that their superiors would surrender positions in the field to induce capture, rather than repel the enemy and then have to return home to the conditions in Germany. According to one POW, a field commander even refused a private plane sent by Hitler, instead surrendering his unit to an Allied army officer rather than report back to the Fuhrer.

On the persecution of the Jews

When the subject of the Nazi persecution of European Jews came up, almost all of the captured POWs knew that the Allies would hold Germany responsible for the Holocaust. Most chilling was the predominant view in the camp that the Nazis should have waited until military victory was attained before exterminating the Jews. This, according to one POW, would have enabled Germany to avoid "bringing the Jews of the USA and England into the frontline against us."

All of the POWs knew of the "slave hells," where Jews and foreigners were worked to death. According to Lindner, when he tried to elicit conversation about the death camps, "the POWs would smile back with a knowing glance and a twinkle of the eye that said, *you know yourself and I needn't tell you.*" To one Free German, the feelings expressed on this subject by the German POWs demonstrated what "twelve years of Nazi education had taught the younger generation: *education for murder*."

POW cage reports submitted by TOOL mission agents are found in NARA, RG 226: Records of the OSS 148, Box 101, File 1740-42; Records of the OSS 210, Box 47, File 915; and Record of the OSS 210, Box 298, File 12123.

Germany where they would be dropped.¹⁴ According to a historian who interviewed Joseph Gould about this period, "His students were a pleasure to their instructors—serious, hardworking, quick, ready with original ideas."¹⁵

The Free Germans also worked on the development of their cover stories and reviewed documents containing information on underground resistance contacts and safehouse addresses in the German cities that their missions targeted. As their departure dates grew closer, the OSS Schools and Training Division subjected them to so-called "cover quizzes" to see if they had internalized their mission identities. The agents also were outfitted at refugee clothing depots, which were stocked with garments manufactured in Germany or countries under German occupation.

To provide the recruits with a fresh feel for conditions in the German towns and cities they had fled years earlier, some of them were infiltrated into German prisoner-of-war camps maintained outside London by the US Army. This part of the program was emotionally difficult for the exiles, but the camps proved to be a great training ground, enabling them to live their cover stories and develop additional details to improve upon them. Beginning in early 1945, Lindner, Buchholz, and Struewe were inconspicuously placed inside the POW compounds where they

mingled for days before quietly slipping out with OSS aid. Afterward, they submitted detailed reports on the valuable information they had obtained from quiet conversation with the German prisoners.

Covert Communications

Another important aspect of the Free Germans' mission training dealt with technology. In early 1943, the OSS formed a Communications Group to develop equipment for transmitting military intelligence from behind enemy lines. One of the OSS radio operators heard about the work of a New Jersey inventor, Al Gross, who had designed a battery-powered, hand-held "walkie-talkie." Gross, who was later hailed as a pioneer in wireless personal communication technology, was invited by the OSS to demonstrate his invention to Gen. Donovan in Washington.¹⁶ The meeting was so successful that Donovan recruited him into the OSS and made him a captain.

Capt. Gross collaborated with two scientists from RCA Laboratories recruited by the OSS—Lt. Cdr. Stephen Simpson and DeWitt R. Goddard. Their work led to the development of the battery-powered Joan-Eleanor ("J/E") transmitter-receiver that resembled a modern-day cell phone: it



Al Gross and the J/E transmitter-receiver used by the TOOL mission agents behind enemy lines.

measured six inches, weighed only three pounds, and was equipped with a collapsible antenna. Each of the Free Germany Committee agents was trained to operate the J/E transmitter, which utilized very high radio frequencies. This enabled them to orally transmit military intelligence from the ground to planes hovering over Europe without detection by German Army shortwave radio operators. The Free Germans were also trained to decipher coded messages that would be transmitted to them behind enemy lines through the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio programs in German. They were instructed to listen to BBC broadcasts to learn the time and location of supply drops and J/E transmissions. To confuse German radio operators, the OSS instructed the BBC to play alternate bars of Sindling's classical

¹⁴ Declassified CIA files, OSS Schools and Training Division, 1944-45, NARA, Record Group (hereafter RG) 226, Records of the OSS 148, Box 102, Folder 1751-1753

¹⁵ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, p. 168

¹⁶ *Business Daily* (20 July 2000) reported that Al Gross received the Lemelson-Massachusetts Institute of Technology Lifetime Achievement Award for invention and innovation. For other tributes and accomplishments, see the obituary for Gross in the *Los Angeles Times*, 14 July 2001.

“

[Despite concerns about the recruits' leftist politics,] Donovan was reported to have said later that he would 'put Stalin on the OSS payroll if it would help defeat Hitler.'

”

music composition Rustles of Spring as a signal to the Free Germany Committee agents that mission-related information would shortly be conveyed to them.

Moving Up the Timetable

In late December 1944, the seven Free Germans marked the Christmas season—and the midpoint of their training—with a gala holiday dinner at Paul Lindner's home. Lt. Gould attended and joined the recruits and their wives and children in singing Christmas songs in German.¹⁷ Here, at a time when the machinery of the Holocaust was running full-blast murdering Europe's Jews, an oasis of admiration and mutual respect was beginning to flourish between a Jewish US Army officer and his seven German recruits who shared a common goal: the destruction of Nazi Germany.

One last desperate thrust by Hitler's army, however, dampened holiday spirits and underscored the need to jumpstart the OSS penetration campaign. Known as the Battle of the Bulge, the German counter-offensive through the Ardennes Forest in Belgium in late December 1944 has been described as “the first and only serious reverse suffered by the Allied armies in their sweep from Normandy to the Rhine.”¹⁸ Ironically, a cabal against OSS director Donovan by military intelligence, which had intensified

after the Normandy invasion, had culminated in the expulsion of the OSS detachment from the First US Army Group just prior to the German attack. As a result of poor intelligence, combined with heavy fog in Belgium that hid the German military buildup, the attack came as a complete surprise, earning a reputation as “the Pearl Harbor” of the European Theater.¹⁹

The Ardennes Forest attack, which brought the Allied offensive temporarily to a halt and cost the American and British Armies over 70,000 casualties, intensified pressure from SHAEF on the OSS to launch the penetration missions into Germany. The Reich's action resulted “in the acute awareness that Allied forces were going into Germany blind and in a genuine appreciation of the intelligence that had been extracted from the (French underground) both before and after the (D-Day) invasion. And it caused an immediate demand for tactical intelligence (from high ranking military leaders).”²⁰ With

¹⁷Joseph Persico, *Roosevelt's Secret War: FDR and World War II Espionage* (New York: Random House, 2001), pp. 361-62

²⁰Macpherson, p. 172 (citing the OSS's “Final Report on SI Operations”). According to Joseph Gould, the need for this intelligence was specifically demanded by US Army Generals Patton and Patch and UK Gen. Wilson. See Gould, pp. 7-8

only three active OSS agents inside the Reich, the pressure on Casey to get more spies into Germany began to mount.²¹ As the Allies repelled the offensive and began to drive Hitler's armies back into Germany, the Free Germans selected for the OSS mission to Berlin completed their training.

Political Complications

At the last moment, an unexpected challenge to the proposed utilization of the Free Germans arose within the OSS. Some intelligence officials argued that the Free Germany Committees were no more than western subsidiaries of the Moscow-based National Committee for a Free Germany. As the committees continued to proliferate in Western European countries, the State Department, the FBI, and conservative elements within the OSS suspected an “international Moscow line,” a coordinated plan issued from Moscow to Bolshevice Germany after the end of the war.²² One OSS officer within SI “found the prospect of arming Reds and positioning them where they could grasp power in Germany to be naive.”²³ SI director Casey also expressed reservations, because of the strong objections raised by British military intelligence. Labor Division Chief Arthur Goldberg, however, opposed Casey on this issue.

The matter was brought to Gen. Donovan for resolution. Although

²¹Macpherson, p. 176

²²Bungert, p. 132

²³Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, p. 166

¹⁷Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, p. 169, Gould, p. 13

¹⁸Charles V.P. von Luttichau, “The German Counteroffensive in the Ardennes,” *United States Army in World War II*, Ch. 20

Donovan was a Republican and a Wall Street lawyer with impeccable establishment credentials, he found Goldberg's legal arguments more persuasive. In particular, Goldberg asserted that the "letter and spirit of the 1942 Joint Chiefs of Staff charter that created the OSS had expressly referenced the potential enlistment of irregular forces in fighting the war."²⁴ Donovan's ultimate decision to overrule Casey reflected his pragmatism in seeking assistance from anyone who could help the Allies defeat Nazi Germany. He was reported to have said later that he would "put Stalin on the OSS payroll if it would help defeat Hitler."²⁵ On 22 February 1945, Donovan told Casey to issue a directive ordering the use of the Free Germans as OSS contract agents. All that remained was an order to go. On 1 March 1945, the order arrived—Casey sent word to Gould that the first mission to Berlin should be dispatched immediately.

The HAMMER Mission

Of the five TOOL missions, the HAMMER team was the first one sent into Germany and the one that achieved the most historical significance, mainly because it drove "deeper into the Reich than any other mission before ... to Berlin."²⁶ The Free Germans chosen for this mission—Paul Lindner and Anton "Toni" Ruh—were close friends who had worked together in the anti-Nazi underground. Both

²⁴ Gould, p. 7

²⁵ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, p. 167

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 171.



Paul Lindner (left) and Anton "Toni" Ruh, just before the launch of the HAMMER mission, London, February 1945

were ordinary workingmen who found themselves needed to perform a secret mission that could make a difference in ending the war.

Paul Lindner had just reached his 34th birthday on the evening that Lt. Gould accompanied him and Ruh to Watton Airfield for the flight into Germany. Born in Berlin, Lindner grew up in a traditional social democratic household and had become active in the German labor movement at an early age. By his 18th birthday, he was already well known for his work as an organizer of the German Metal Workers' Union. In 1930, Lindner spoke out publicly against the Nazi Party's proposal for labor conscription of German youth. His efforts helped to sway public opinion against the

plan, earning him a place on the Nazi Party's enemies' list. In 1932, Nazi stormtroopers laid an ambush near his parents' home and attacked and beat him. A year later, after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, Lindner was arrested and taken by Nazi thugs to a barracks where he was beaten and tortured for nearly 12 days; he suffered broken teeth and permanent kidney damage.²⁷ His spirit and determination to fight the Nazis remained intact, however, as he bravely continued his underground trade union resistance work.

²⁷ Application for Internment Release from Paul Lindner to Under Secretary of State of UK Aliens Department, 5 August 1941, NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 115, Box 101, File 1740-42

After recovering from his injuries in a Berlin hospital, Lindner organized a hiking club to serve as a cover for his underground work with the League of Labor Youth. By 1935, he had trained over 400 young Germans in the basics of underground resistance work.²⁸ He also continued distributing anti-Nazi leaflets, painting anti-Nazi slogans on public street corners, and providing aid to families whose breadwinners had disappeared into the first concentration camps. Inevitably, Lindner surfaced on the Gestapo's radar screen. In 1935, he fled Berlin for Czechoslovakia. There he posed as a ski instructor to mask the illegal political work he continued to perform for the underground trade union resistance. For the next three years, Lindner helped Jews fleeing Nazi persecution to escape across the border into Czechoslovakia and collected information on secret German military installations for the Czech Army.²⁹

As Lindner's activities became more difficult to conceal, he secured a UK visa—in 1939—through the Czech Refugee Trust Fund and arrived in the small English town of Chatham. He received aid from the local Youth Refugee and Relief Counsel, an organization formed by anti-fascist sympathizers to help German refugees adjust to life in England. He then met and soon fell in love with Marjorie Andrews, a

volunteer with the Labor Party League of Youth who tutored him in English.

Following the invasion of Belgium and Holland by the Nazis in May 1940, Lindner was deported to Ottawa, Canada, where he was interned with other German political refugees. By late 1941, the British had relocated him to an internment camp off the coast of England on the Isle of Man. Shortly thereafter, British immigration officials accepted his application to be released. Upon his release, Lindner could have sat out the war with other German refugees. Instead, he chose a different path and returned to England, still fiercely committed to fighting the Nazi regime. Lindner and Marjorie Andrews finally were married in May 1942 and moved to the Hampstead section of London. He soon obtained employment as a machine turner for a British firm. While continuing to build ties with Hampstead's growing community of Free Germany Committee exiles, Lindner waited for an opportunity to rejoin what had now become a global struggle to destroy Hitler.

Anton "Toni" Ruh's journey from underground resistance fighter to OSS secret agent also equipped him with skills needed for the HAMMER mission. A Berlin native like Lindner, he had trained as a printer and lithographer. He started doing illegal political work with Lindner, but was arrested and held for nearly six months until his release in early 1934. Ruh sought refuge in Czechoslovakia after the Gestapo

discovered a political leaflet shop he was operating secretly in Berlin.

While residing in Prague, Ruh continued to smuggle leaflets into Germany. During this period, despite being hunted by the Gestapo, he returned to Berlin on six occasions to deliver forged passports to help Jews and other political dissidents flee Hitler's regime. After Germany occupied Czechoslovakia in 1938, the Nazis declared Ruh a political fugitive. Able to evade capture, he fled to England, with the aid of the same Czech underground that had assisted Lindner.

Ruh settled in London briefly, but, like Lindner, was interned by the British government in June 1940. Deported, he lived in Australia until November 1941. Upon his return, he reunited with his wife Elizabeth, resumed work as a welder for a British firm, and began raising a family. Ruh was fluent in Czech and English and spoke the Berlin dialect, characteristics that strengthened his suitability for the mission ahead.³⁰

Undercover in Berlin

On 2 March 1945, Lt. Gould oversaw the dispatch of the HAMMER team. One historian has characterized Gould as the "mother hen" of the HAMMER mission agents. While

²⁸*Ibid*

²⁹Profile of Paul Lindner, compiled by US Army Lt. Joseph Gould, OSS Labor Division, December 1944, NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 148, Box 101, File 1740-42, also, Records of the OSS 115, Box 43, File 563

³⁰Memorandum from Lt. Joseph Gould to BACH Unit, 5 December 1944. All of the information on the HAMMER mission was drawn from interrogations and mission reports found in NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 148, Box 101

driving Lindner and Ruh to Watton Airfield where they would be flown out and parachuted into the Berlin area, Gould recalled being bothered “by the sensation that he was living through a movie scenario.”³¹ In both his memoir and interviews with historians, Gould described that night as being very emotional because he “had committed the professional sin of growing too close to these men.”³² As they boarded the plane, Lindner and Ruh were carrying their J/E transmitters and forged “work orders” documenting their status as skilled defense workers exempt from military service. After taking deep swills of brandy from Gould’s flask, they shook hands and were off. Four hours later, the mission aircraft, battered by German anti-aircraft fire, returned to Watton Airfield with the news that Lindner and Ruh had parachuted safely into a clear moonlit evening. The mission to Berlin was in.³³

Declassified HAMMER mission files and interviews with surviving relatives of the HAMMER agents provide an extraordinary window into the life of ordinary Berlin residents trying to survive the final days of chaos that marked the death rattle of the Nazi regime. After landing in a field about 30 miles outside the city, Lindner and Ruh buried their weapons and communications gear. They walked to a nearby station where they were able to catch a train to downtown Berlin. Because of blackouts, the trains were dark as well as

³¹ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, p. 174

³² *Ibid*

³³ *Ibid*

“
After taking deep swills
of brandy from Gould’s
flask, Lindner and Ruh
shook hands and were
off [to Berlin].

”

overcrowded, enabling the HAMMER team to go unnoticed in these tense early moments of the mission. Although they came prepared to make contact with a member of the underground resistance, the darkness and late hour made it unsafe to confirm the address. Instead, Lindner and Ruh invoked the mission’s contingency plan and sought shelter with Lindner’s parents, whom he had not seen since 1935. While Paul Lindner, Sr., and his wife Freeda had received letters from their son during his internment in Canada, they were completely unprepared for what became one of the special moments of the HAMMER mission—the reuniting of the Lindner family.

They arrived to find the Lindner home miraculously untouched by Allied bombs. Lindner tapped on a front-door window. The noise awakened his parents. Marjorie Lindner later recounted that the elder Lindners, still fearful of political reprisals, did not at first believe that it really was their son who had returned after ten long years.³⁴ Finally, concluding that only Paul could answer their very personal questions, the parents joyously welcomed him. Lindner later recalled his mother’s emotional embrace

³⁴ Marjorie Lindner, wife of HAMMER mission agent Paul Lindner, Telephone Interview from Berlin, 10 March 2001



Paul Lindner, Sr., at home with daughter Inge (sister of Paul Lindner) in Berlin, 1938

and her telling him that she “knew that he would come home and fight the Nazis one day!” In a city overflowing with households filled with sorrow, this unexpected and very emotional reunion of mother and son after ten years in exile was especially poignant

The HAMMER agents spent the first week of the mission with Lindner’s family while quietly familiarizing themselves with the barely beating pulse of war-ravaged Berlin. Despite the extensive time they had spent developing their cover stories, both Lindner and Ruh decided to remain illegal and not use their work papers, because they felt that the papers would impede their ability to execute the mission. Mission objectives remained the same: to collect strategically important information for transmission to the OSS via the J/E transmitter.

The agents’ next destination also resulted in a family reunion, this time with Ruh’s sister. Her

“
**Incessant Allied
bombings circumscribed
their every move.**
”

opposition to Hitler's regime had never wavered in his absence. Lindner and Ruh eagerly sought information about old friends who might help with their mission, but sadly found out that all had been killed in action or died in concentration camps. On 8 March, the agents returned to their landing point to retrieve their weapons and the J/E communications equipment that was stored inside their gas masks. They carried cigarettes and coffee, which they used to barter for food, including bartering for a live sheep that they slaughtered and ate that night. Every evening, they listened to the BBC's German-language broadcasts to learn the dates for J/E transmissions and supply drops at locations outside Berlin.

While walking through Berlin, the HAMMER agents were often accompanied by Lindner's father. His strong identification papers enabled the agents to remain above suspicion. Some of the information eventually transmitted to the OSS came from one of Lindner's favorite teachers whom he sought out and found at his home. The night of 18 March when the two met, however, brought more Allied bombing, which rendered it impossible to make contact with the Allied planes that they knew were coming to drop supplies and receive J/E transmissions. Moreover, the Nazi regime had imposed stiff controls in a last-ditch effort to force Berliners to stay and defend the city. No one could safely slip out of Berlin.

On 26 March, the HAMMER mission made successful contact with

an Allied plane hovering over Germany and transmitted critically important military intelligence dealing with German troop movements, the location of operational munitions factories, and the sinking morale of the German people. In his memoir, SI chief Casey noted that a “big breakthrough had been achieved from the intelligence yielded by the HAMMER team [from this J/E transmission], including important air-target data on a still-functioning power plant that kept key factories running...as well as detail on the importance of a Berlin transportation net and suggestions of key spots where [Allied] bombs could disrupt it.”³⁵ Collecting that information over the prior two weeks had tested the limits of the survival skills of the HAMMER agents. Incessant Allied bombings circumscribed their every move. In order to avoid suspicion, Lindner and Ruh moved through a maze of public bomb shelters. Often, they had to break up fights between Berliners whose nerves were fraying from the unending air assaults.

Mission Threatened

During Lindner's exile from his family, his sister Inge had married a young soldier named Hans Gottwald. Gottwald had never met his

brother-in-law. After the 26 March transmission, Gottwald showed up at the Lindner home unexpectedly. He had been granted leave from his unit as a reward for destroying a Russian tank, an action that earned him the Iron Cross. The discovery that his brother-in-law had returned to Germany as an enemy agent led to an intense all-night dialogue between Gottwald and Lindner and Ruh, which nearly threatened the lives of the agents—and the survival of the HAMMER mission.³⁶

Much to Lindner's relief, however, Gottwald turned out to be “more good soldier than Nazi” and responded positively to the agents' passionate arguments against the Nazi regime and Hitler's barbarism.³⁷ Gottwald apparently recalled his own terrible experiences witnessing the carnage on the eastern front and began to question whether he owed his loyalty to the Fuhrer or to his family. This self-examination ultimately led to his decision to abandon his unit and not report Lindner and Ruh to military authorities, which would have meant their immediate execution for treason. Having decided to remain with his family, Gottwald benefited from Lindner's document-forging skills, which were used to copy the stamp of Gottwald's Panzer unit and imprint an extension on his leave papers. The documents passed muster when checked the next day during a visit to a German Army field office. Gottwald was now part of the HAMMER team.

³⁵William J. Casey, *The Secret War Against Hitler* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1988), pp. 196-199.

³⁶Marjorie Lindner, Telephone Interview.
³⁷Perisco, *Piercing the Reich*, p. 212.

“

An encounter with a German patrol nearly cost them their lives.

”

Contacting the Resistance

Lindner and Ruh did not parachute into Germany completely blind; they had been supplied with a roster of contacts in the underground resistance provided by the Free Germany Committee in France. One contact was a female dentist named Margarit, whom Ruh initially approached under the guise of seeking treatment for a painful tooth. She and her husband later sheltered Ruh and provided him with valuable intelligence about Berlin defenses. Other members of the resistance supplied similarly important information, which was sent to the OSS during a second J/E transmission on 8 April.

In early April, the HAMMER agents had an encounter with a German patrol that nearly cost them their lives. On Easter Sunday, Lindner and Ruh received a message through the BBC that food supplies were to be dropped at a contact point some 50 kilometers northwest of Berlin. When they arrived at the location, Allied planes failed to respond to the messages they sent through their J/E transmitter. They wound up spending the night in an open field. At dawn, they awoke to find themselves surrounded by German Army troops! After gathering their gear, the HAMMER agents began to walk quietly through the woods toward a nearby railroad station. Suddenly, they were stopped by a lieutenant from the Herman Göring Division, who asked to see their papers

Almost certainly having endured similarly tense moments during

their pre-exile days with the Berlin underground, Lindner and Ruh were prepared for such situations. According to the debriefing transcripts, both men routinely carried dirty laundry in their duffel bags to make it appear as if they were just arriving from outside the city to help with the defense of Berlin. They used Ruh's dirty underwear as a prop in a "Laurel and Hardy" routine that they devised to escape encounters with German patrols.

When the German soldier asked to see their papers, Lindner pulled out his Nazi Party membership card and work orders. While examining them, the lieutenant asked to see Ruh's papers and the contents of his bag, which contained the J/E transmitter and incriminating documents. Playing to the German soldier's "master race" indoctrination, Paul informed him that his friend was a dumb Czech who did not understand German and that he would have translate the soldier's instructions. This bought the HAMMER agents time to prepare their weapons, which they almost certainly would have to use. The German officer, however, grew exasperated with Ruh's snail-like search for his papers as he emptied one dirty sock after another and finally let them go. Having averted a close call, the HAMMER team continued on its way and caught a train back to Berlin.

Mission Finale

During the second week of April, conditions in Berlin continued to hamper the HAMMER team's ability to respond to requests from the OSS, via the BBC, for more military intelligence. Incessant Russian artillery fire combined with the Allied bombing raids caused chaos in the streets. Ruh had been staying with Margarit, the dentist, and had hidden his J/E equipment inside her home. When the district around her house became the object of fierce fighting between Russian and German troops, Ruh was forced to return to the Lindner family home.

With the noose tightening around Berlin, the HAMMER mission was about to end—but not before some of the mission's most extraordinary events. On 22 April, the team received a coded BBC message from the OSS requesting that one of them cross over the battle lines and turn himself in to a Soviet Army officer. The other was to stay behind until American troops arrived in Berlin. Because Berlin defenses manned by German Army troops had closed off all avenues of escape out of the city, Lindner and Ruh decided to remain with his family until Russian troops reached the Neukölln district. They did not have long to wait. The Soviet Army achieved a major breakthrough in the Battle of Berlin two days later. Armies commanded by Generals Zhukov and Konev met in the southern suburbs of Berlin and encircled the troops of the German 9th Army. Bitter street fighting

“

In the climate of fear and suspicion that marked the chaotic final days of the war, the Soviet Army ... placed the HAMMER agents under arrest.

”

broke out in the eastern and southern districts of the capital *

The HAMMER team, along with Gottwald, the elder Lindner, and other friends, took part in the fighting when they came upon a battle involving Russian troops trying to stop German soldiers from blowing up a bridge near the town of Baumschulenbrücke, not far from the Lindner family home. With weapons having been obtained just the day before for Lindner's father and brother-in-law, the whole team opened fire. More Russian soldiers arrived to join the battle and started firing on Lindner's group, but stopped after realizing that they were anti-Nazi partisans. The German soldiers were disarmed and taken prisoner by the Soviet Army. The HAMMER team also deactivated explosives set by the German Army, preventing destruction of the bridge that would have hindered the advance of Soviet tanks. The Russian troops thanked them for their help. The HAMMER mission had now aided both American and Soviet armies in support of the Allied cause.

Shortly thereafter, Lindner and Ruh decided to end the HAMMER mission by reporting themselves as American soldiers to a Russian officer named Capt. Martov. In the climate of fear and suspicion that marked the chaotic final days of the war, however, the Soviet Army refused their explanation and placed the HAMMER agents under arrest. Upon searching their

belongings, the Russians discovered OSS codebooks that they felt should have been handed over voluntarily. The agents were subjected to harsh interrogation. Moreover, they angered Martov by claiming to have witnessed Soviet soldiers brutalizing German civilians and asking for protection from retribution by other Russian troops. According to the debriefing transcripts, Martov reacted especially harshly to this accusation of misconduct and threatened to imprison Lindner and Ruh as enemies of the state.

Unable to convince the Russians that they were OSS agents, Lindner and Ruh remained in Soviet custody for the next two months. Moved repeatedly throughout Germany, they were finally released to US Army personnel near Leipzig on 16 June 1945. From there, the HAMMER agents were flown to Paris where they were extensively debriefed.

The Other TOOL Missions

Of the remaining TOOL operations, the PICKAXE mission recorded the most impressive results.³⁹ The two men who led the mission were the oldest of the seven Free Germans. They had just reached their 40th birthdays when

dispatched into southern Germany near Munich on 4 April 1945.

Walter Struewe was born in Bielefeld, Germany, in 1904. His path to recruitment as an OSS secret agent was similar to that of the HAMMER agents. After apprenticing in the building construction trades from 1921 through 1933, Struewe had gone underground to continue illegal political work in Frankfurt with other construction trade unionists. He had also become a leading figure in the Rhineland branch of the German Communist Party. In 1937, he fled to Czechoslovakia, having learned that a co-worker had disclosed his identity during torture by the Gestapo. Struewe eluded the Gestapo's pursuit by fleeing across the Polish border on skis in April 1939. Later he obtained a British visa with the aid of the Czech Refugee Trust Fund. After a brief period of internment in the same camp on the Isle of Man where Paul Lindner had been held, Struewe was released. He later settled in Manchester and joined the Free German League of Culture.

Unlike his fellow agents, **Emil Konhäuser** spent two years in the Dachau concentration camp from 1933-1935. Born in Bavaria, Konhäuser had trained in the construction trades. After his release from incarceration, he worked briefly with construction crews building the Autobahn, Germany's superhighway. Konhäuser's role in the underground resistance

* Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, Nemesis 1936-1945* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 2000), p. 809.

³⁹ Information on the PICKAXE mission is drawn from documents in NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 210, Boxes 295 and 298, files 12123 and 11690.

forced him to seek exile in Czechoslovakia in 1935. Until 1938, he worked with the Political Refugees Committee in Prague where he continued, as he later noted on his OSS application, "helping victims of Nazi terror." With the aid of the Czech Refugee Trust Fund, Konhäuser secured passage to England and resettled in London.

After living in cosmopolitan England for several years, the members of the PICKAXE team must have felt that their first moments back in Germany were like a time-travel episode from the Twilight Zone. Struewe and Konhäuser found themselves on the outskirts of Landshut, a southern German city near Munich, which was overflowing with foreign workers and war refugees. Realizing that the city was far too crowded to find shelter, they sought a hiding place in the woods. After burying their communications equipment beneath a makeshift hut and covering it with rain gear, the agents walked back into Landshut and mingled anonymously with the local population.

Based on their conversations in town, Struewe and Konhäuser decided to remain illegal and not utilize their munitions work force documents. Evidently, the German Army was constantly moving the foreign workers conscripted from occupied countries. Had the PICKAXE team been swept up in these forced evacuations, the mission would have been cut short. Given the valuable military intelligence that the operation later yielded, this proved to be a wise decision. So, with an abundance of

authentic-looking ration cards, Struewe and Konhäuser stocked their forest hut with food and spent the next three weeks on the ground collecting information. During that time, they were also able to persuade the local population not to answer the call of German Army officers for volunteers to help defend the city as Allied armies approached.

During the course of nine J/E transmissions from 4 April through 1 May 1945, the PICKAXE agents funneled massive amounts of information—on rail and road traffic, communication centers, and troop movements—to waiting aircraft.⁴⁰ In his report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the German penetration missions, Gen. Donovan referenced one of the PICKAXE team's most notable achievements: transmittal of the precise location of a Landshut railroad depot that was enabling the movement of German troops. This intelligence led to the destruction of the depot the next day, 16 April, by the Eighth Air Force. Struewe and Konhäuser confirmed the strike's accuracy that night with their J/E transmitter. The OSS later received a commendation from the Air Force on behalf of the PICKAXE team for their effective work behind enemy lines.⁴¹

The Allied military command was also seeking intelligence on whether rumors about a so-called "National Redoubt" were true. Many believed that Hitler was

planning to retreat into an area of southern Germany that encompassed almost twenty thousand square miles of mountains and organize a last stand. A new type of commando unit, called Werewolves, was reportedly planning to engage in a guerilla war with Allied armies to force a negotiated peace with the German government. Allied intelligence in Switzerland was warning that a large supply of munitions and poison gas was being stockpiled in underground tunnels connecting strongpoints within this "alpine fortress."⁴² The reports transmitted by Struewe and Konhäuser, together with information from other OSS operatives in the area, confirmed that the "National Redoubt" was a myth. The PICKAXE team found no evidence pointing to any German ability to mount a serious resistance in the Bavarian mountains.⁴³ With the war in Europe coming to an end, Struewe and Konhäuser were recovered by US military intelligence personnel and underwent extensive debriefing in Paris, before returning to London in July 1945.

None of the other TOOL missions yielded useful military intelligence. The agents who led the missions either met untimely deaths or were captured and held by Soviet troops. Kurt Gruber (CHISEL mission) was killed when the US Air Force plane carrying him to his destination in the Ruhr Valley crashed in bad weather on 19 March 1945. Werner

⁴⁰ Casey, p. 200.

⁴¹ Jürgen Heideking, *American Intelligence and German Resistance to Hitler* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 404.

⁴² Ada Petrova, *The Death of Hitler. The Full Story with New Evidence from Secret Russian Archives* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995).

⁴³ Casey, p. 200.

“

In 1990, Gould traveled to Berlin ... [and] sought information on the fate of the surviving Free German agents.

”



Ursula Kuczynski, aka Ruth Werner

Fischer (BUZZSAW), after being dropped near his hometown of Leipzig on 7 April 1945, is believed to have been executed by Russian soldiers who probably mistook him for the enemy. Adolf Buchholz (MALLET), parachuted into Berlin on 10 April 1945, but found himself in the middle of a gunfight between German and Soviet troops during the final days of the war. He was captured by the Russians and held with other German officers until his release to Joseph Gould in Berlin in November 1945.

Years Later, A Strange Twist

Almost immediately after the war ended in May 1945, Joseph Gould was transferred to occupied Berlin to serve with the Office of Military Government. He remained there until his honorable discharge from

the US Army in 1946, when he returned to his family in suburban New York and resumed his career in the film industry. As the Cold War intensified, Gould lost touch with the surviving agents of the TOOL missions, who had returned to Germany in 1946. In 1975, he came across an interview with Juergen Kuczynski in the Wall Street Journal and initiated correspondence with the German economist. At that time, Kuczynski was living in East Berlin and was a writer and economic adviser to East German President Erich Honecker.

The end of the Cold War in 1989 made it easier for Gould to consider visiting Germany for the first time since his US Army discharge. In August 1990, he traveled to Berlin and enjoyed a reunion with Kuczynski. He also sought information on the fate of the surviving Free German agents, but discovered that all of his men were deceased. Kuczynski, however, was able to arrange for Gould to meet with Marjorie Lindner, wife of HAMMER mission agent Paul Lindner, and Ellen Buchholz, wife of MALLET mission agent Adolph Buchholz. Both were residents of Berlin and shared warm remembrances of their husbands with Gould before he returned to Washington that fall.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Unpublished correspondence from Joseph Gould to Marjorie Lindner and Ellen Buchholz, September 1990



Dr. Juergen Kuczynski

Another occasion during the 1990 trip, however, proved profoundly unsettling. Kuczynski introduced Gould to his elderly sister—Ursula—during a quiet lunch at the Kuczynski home. Gould discovered that Ursula Kuczynski was actually Ruth Werner, a notorious Soviet spy, who had written the controversial memoir, *Sonya's Report*, published in East Germany in 1977.⁴⁵ Upon meeting Werner, Gould was deeply troubled to learn that the Soviet spy purportedly played a role in the recruitment of the Free Germans for his OSS penetration missions. In 1991, when Werner was revising her memoirs in preparation for the English language release of *Sonya's Report*, she added a chapter that referenced her meeting with Joseph Gould when he first discovered her involvement.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The German language edition of *Sonya's Report* was published in Berlin, by Verlag Neues Leben, in 1977

⁴⁶ Werner, p. 265. All page references are from the English language edition

“
**Henschke had been
 receiving compensation
 from both the OSS and
 the Soviet GRU!**
 ”

Born in 1907, Ursula Kuczynski was raised in a comfortable Jewish home in Berlin. She joined the *German Communist Party* in 1926 and was recruited to work for Soviet Army intelligence in 1930 by Richard Sorge, a GRU master spy in Shanghai. Given the code name “Sonya,” she traveled to Moscow for covert communications training. By 1938, after assignments in *China, Poland, and Switzerland*, she married an English citizen and moved to Great Britain, rejoining her father and brother who had emigrated there in the mid-1930s. Settling on a farm outside Oxford, Werner set up her transmitter in the attic and resumed her work as “Sonya” for the Soviet Army.⁴⁷ During the war, she transmitted atomic secrets given to her by physicist Klaus Fuchs, another communist refugee from Germany. Fuchs was a member of the UK’s delegation to the secret “Manhattan Project,” which was developing the atomic bomb at Los Alamos, New Mexico.⁴⁸ In 1949, Werner eluded the pursuit of British intelligence, which had gotten wind of her possible involvement just before Fuchs’s trial, and hurriedly left England for East Germany.⁴⁹ She lived in Berlin until her death in July 2000 at age 93.

According to Werner, her brother, Juergen Kuczynski, told her of the OSS’s interest in recruiting the Free Germans, after his initial meeting with Joseph Gould arranged by the bookseller Mornis Abbey. Werner

⁴⁷Obituary of Ruth Werner. *The Guardian*, 11 July 2000

⁴⁸Persico, *Roosevelt’s Secret War*, pp. 252, 259

⁴⁹Werner, pp. 250–52 and 288–89

notified “Centre,” as Moscow-based Soviet Army intelligence was called, of the OSS plan.⁵⁰ The Soviets expressed interest in the proposed utilization of the Free Germans for the TOOL missions. Werner conveyed this to her brother, who, with Centre’s approval, introduced Gould to a key member of the German Communist Party then living in London named Erich Henschke—alias Karl Kastro.⁵¹ This was the same Karl Kastro who had assisted Gould with agent recruitment in the late summer of 1944 and was subsequently hired by the OSS as its liaison to the families of the Free Germans recruited for the TOOL missions.

Werner, who had known Henschke during their party work in Berlin during the late 1920s, claimed in her book that she then took over the project and directed Henschke to serve as her covert connection with the OSS.⁵² She instructed him to consult with the exiled German Communist Party leadership in England about the OSS’s interest in recruiting Free Germans for the TOOL missions. According to Werner, the party leadership designated Henschke and two other German communist exiles—Hans Kahle and Wilhelm Koenen—to compile a roster of potential candidates for the missions. Henschke was the perfect

⁵⁰Werner, pp. 306–308

⁵¹Bungert, p. 132

⁵²Werner, p. 261.

candidate for this job. He had close ties to members of the German refugee community who had escaped to England with the aid of the Czech Refugee Trust Fund and he knew from which German town each refugee had fled. Werner received photos and biographies of the Free Germans from Henschke and claims to have passed them to Soviet Army intelligence for approval before the information was given to Lt. Gould during October 1944.⁵³ By that time, according to Werner, Henschke was receiving compensation from both the OSS and the GRU.⁵⁴

OSS files released by the CIA in July 2000 appear to confirm some of Werner’s claims about the activities of Karl Kastro, alleged to be Erich Henschke.⁵⁵ After the recruitment of the Free Germans was completed, Joseph Gould requested that the OSS provide Kastro with a security clearance. The documents indicate that Kastro was a consultant to the OSS from October 1944 through July 1945 and received compensation for his services. Described as a “spokesman” for the Free Germany Committee recruits and their families, Kastro performed a variety of tasks. After the Free Germans were dropped into Germany, for example, the OSS would deposit hazardous duty pay into the bank accounts set up in each agent’s

⁵³Werner’s book is not clear on how she managed to transport these documents from England to Moscow as the Soviet and Allied armies marched toward Berlin

⁵⁴Werner, p. 262

⁵⁵Only the release of Ruth Werner’s GRU file by the current Russian government can confirm her alleged involvement with the TOOL missions and the dual identity of Karl Kastro.

name and request that Kastro inform the families of the transactions. Marjorie Lindner, wife of Paul Lindner, recalls receiving word of the successful dispatch of the HAMMER mission from Kastro.⁵⁶ Declassified OSS files also reference Kastro in connection with a trip he took to France in December 1944 with Joseph Gould. The purpose of the trip was to meet with leaders of the Paris-based Free Germany Committee who were to provide the OSS with information on Berlin safehouses for use by the HAMMER and MALLET teams.⁵⁷ According to Werner, Kastro's participation in the trip had required GRU approval.

Through his position as the liaison between the Free German community and the OSS, Kastro clearly had access to top-secret information during the mission training period. Since Werner claims to have passed everything—including the J/E codes and agent cover stories—to Soviet Army intelligence, she could only have received this information from Kastro, the only person involved with the penetration operations who knew of her clandestine work.⁵⁸

Epilogue

OSS/London's campaign to penetrate Germany has been recognized as an important milestone in the

⁵⁶Telephone interview with Marjorie Lindner, 19 March 2001.

⁵⁷Memorandum from Thomas Wilson to Lillian Traugott of the Labor Division, OSS Secret Intelligence Branch, 22 December 1944, NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 148, Box 101.

⁵⁸Werner, p. 263.

“

The Free Germans clearly contributed to ‘the high-quality intelligence that gave the American military timely insights into enemy defenses ... No other source of intelligence was as useful ... in the closing months of the war.’

”

history of US intelligence during World War II. The five TOOL missions manned by the Free Germans clearly contributed to “the high-quality intelligence that gave the American military timely insights into enemy defenses and the dubious prospects for a last-stand bastion in the Alps. No other source of intelligence was as useful in reliably discerning such details in the closing months of the war.”⁵⁹ With regard to the performance of the Free Germans themselves, the OSS, in its final report, praised them for “rendering extremely valuable service during the hostilities period when they were dropped blind into enemy territory to accomplish secret intelligence missions.”⁶⁰

Declassified documents reveal that the OSS recommended to the US Army that HAMMER mission agents Paul Lindner and Anton Ruh be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and that the Bronze Star and the Silver Star be issued to PICKAXE agents Walter Struwe and Emil Konhauser, respectively.⁶¹ In addition, the OSS commended

⁵⁹Macpherson, p. 180.

⁶⁰Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, p. 323.

⁶¹NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 210, Box 298, File 1211.

the PICKAXE team for “undertaking a dangerous mission in which they performed courageously and efficiently that led to results of great value to the Allies and which contributed directly to the defeat of the enemy.”⁶² In January 1946, the War Department endorsed an OSS recommendation that Kurt Gruber, who was killed in the airplane crash that aborted the CHISEL mission, be posthumously awarded the Medal of Freedom.⁶³

Postwar politics, however, intervened. The OSS's final report on wartime penetration operations states that, “because of the political background of these men, there is serious doubt as to whether they could fit into our postwar German operations.”⁶⁴ The US Army then reversed an earlier decision to utilize HAMMER mission agents Lindner and Ruh for postwar military intelligence work with the OSS Mission to Berlin.⁶⁵ Moreover, Lindner, Ruh, Struwe, and Konhäuser never received the military decorations that the OSS had recommended, and Kurt Gruber's family never got word of the US Army's decision to posthumously issue him the Medal of Freedom.⁶⁶ Because of the unwelcome climate

⁶²NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 210, Box 298, File 125.

⁶³NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 148, Box 101-102, File 149-1750.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Correspondence from Army Lt. H. L. Marchand to OSS Labor Desk/Paris, 18 July 1945, NARA, RG 226, Records of the OSS 148, Box 101.

⁶⁶The families of TOOL mission members have authorized the author of this article, a New York attorney, to prepare an application to the Secretary of the Army, under applicable US armed forces law, for the posthumous issuance of these medals.

in postwar England, the Free Germans eventually sought repatriation and returned to their native land. All except Emil Konhäuser, who remained in West Germany, lived out their lives in East Germany. Because of escalating Cold War tensions and the East German government's distrust of their loyalty as a result of their work with the OSS, the London Free Germans never received even their own

country's recognition for their work in the early anti-Nazi underground or their wartime service. Only now, with the Cold War over, can tribute be paid to the courage and sacrifice of the Free Germans and to the man who recruited and trained them for their OSS intelligence mission.