STASI.
The exhibition on the GDR’s State Security

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Stasi. The exhibition on the GDR’s State Security

The concept of the exhibition

Gabriele Camphausen

111 km of written documents which include 39 million file cards, 1.4 million photographs, 34,000 film and sound documents: the records of the GDR’s Ministry for State Security (MfS) provide us with an extraordinary wealth of historical source material.

Is it possible to present the vast amount of data documented in these files – on the State Security's structure and personnel, its methods and, not least, the effects of its activities – in an exhibition?

Yes – not in the sense of an encyclopaedic transfer, but by imparting a limited amount of knowledge in order to provide orientation: the exhibition format functions by the consistent condensation of quintessential facts.

Both the concept and the contents of 'Stasi. The Exhibition on the GDR's State Security' are based on maximum concentration. Condensed information gives visitors a well-founded insight into the subject of the MfS, while also inviting them to explore and critically examine the topic for themselves. It is the visitors themselves who decide where to focus their interest. There is no prescribed route through the exhibition. It is modular in structure, and although its individual sections and components make cross-references possible, each can also be understood in its own right.

The exhibition's subject matter is structured in three sections: the history of the MfS, the biographies of some of its victims, and topic 'The MfS in everyday life in the GDR'. Each section can be recognized by its own characteristic design.
The nine chapters on the history of the MfS give the visitors basic information on the GDR State Security Service. They are informed about the MfS's self-image; its fundamental mistrust of anything that deviated from the SED norm; its all-embracing claim to total control; its multiple functions as the secret police, an investigative agency and the foreign intelligence service rolled into one; and, finally, its methods of spying, 'psychic demolition' and criminalization. The visitors also see that the MfS was answerable only to the SED leadership.

These topics are covered in rectangular, table-high modules made of cement-bonded chipboard. The modules are internally lit and give the viewer a topography of the exhibits on different levels: facsimile documents, photographs and three-dimensional original objects.

The biographical section is devoted to the people who were kept under surveillance and 'processed' by the State Security. Six victims' stories from different time periods with different social and political backgrounds have been chosen as examples to illustrate the repercussions of MfS operations. These are the experiences of individual people, but they are certainly not isolated cases: they stand for many. Their fates document and substantiate the systematic violation of fundamental rights under the SED dictatorship. They also exemplify the range and extent of the determination, civil courage and resistance that the regime had to face.

The design and materials used for these biographical exhibits set them apart from the other sections of the exhibition. They are rotundas made of a special textile fabric, which hang from the ceiling and are open on one side. They are positioned higher than the MfS modules. Screen-printed portraits and the names of the victims are printed on the outer surface. Inside the rotunda a slow sequence of documents is shown on two monitors. A small showcase within the rotundas, visible from both out-
side and inside, contain original biographical exhibits. The rotundas invite visitors to gradually get to know the life story of the person concerned. They enclose the biography, protecting and surrounding it with respectful attention.

Finally, the exhibition's third section shows how the State Security influenced people's day-to-day lives in the GDR. Many people may not have consciously noticed the MfS's actual presence in their daily lives – but present it was. Visitors can read about this presence in seven selected areas of life – from work to sport, culture and travel. In this way the exhibition broaches a subject that is often fraught with tension when we try to come to terms with the past. When recounting their personal or family memories, many former GDR citizens restrict themselves to an account of their private lives outside of party doctrine and MfS surveillance. The interference of the State Security in the population's daily lives is generally not mentioned in this context. By contrast, the exhibition outlines how the MfS sought to monitor people's daily lives, including their personal, private spheres. The exhibition aims to provide a cautious confrontation as well as an opening for the discussion of a sensitive area.

These topics are presented on tall sliding panels that offer a variety of perspectives and insights into the subject: one panel shows a large-format, 'grainy' picture on the respective area of life, the other displays information and objects relating to the presence of the MfS, and excerpts from MfS surveillance films. The documentary sequence on these walls is made of the same cement-bonded material as the MfS modules.

To return to the initial question as to whether it is possible to present the vast amount of information and knowledge about the GDR State Security in an exhibition, where space is naturally limited – the answer is a resounding yes. Our aim is not to communicate as much data as possible to the visitor, but to provide access to the subject matter, highlight lines of development and characteristics, supply productively filtered
and precisely structured knowledge – and, not least, encourage independent study and a critical reception of the subject. To this purpose, the Education Centre provides visitors with PC workstations and further literature in the study room. We hope that this catalogue, too, will provide a helpful format for readers to delve into the subject in greater depth.
THE MINISTRY OF STATE SECURITY
The Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) governed the GDR for 40 years without ever being legitimized in a democratic election. The SED maintained its position of power by means of a huge security apparatus. One cornerstone of this system was the Ministry for State Security (MfS), or 'Stasi', which was founded in 1950.

The MfS was set up under the direct guidance of the Soviet secret police. As well as being a domestic secret police organization, it was also an investigative authority and foreign intelligence agency. It had its own detention centres and own armed forces. The MfS was answerable only to the SED leadership. The MfS saw itself as the 'shield and sword of the Party'. Any ideas or attitudes that deviated from SED norms were considered to be subversive. In the eyes of the MfS they were a result of the influence of 'enemy headquarters' in the West.

In order to track down and eliminate 'hostile negative elements', the MfS sought to penetrate all areas of life of the GDR population.
The apparatus

The Ministry for State Security (MfS) was organized on military lines, and its structure was strictly centralised. From 1957 to 1989 it was headed by Erich Mielke, who had a decisive influence on its development.

The MfS covered the GDR with a dense network of offices, and kept a close watch on certain important companies and universities, where it opened its own 'on-site' offices. Furthermore, it used thousands of secret apartments where MfS officers could meet unofficial informers for conspiratorial talks. The State Security steadily expanded its fields of activity over the years, and its staff grew in parallel. By 1989 the State Security had about 91,000 full-time employees.

The largest surge in growth was in the 1970s. In view of the policy of détente and increasing contacts between West and East, the MfS, fearing what it saw as an enormous threat from 'hostile influences', developed an abundance of new justifications for surveillance.
The methods

The Ministry for State Security (MfS) acted with aggressive harshness and brutality during the early years of the GDR. Its methods ranged from physical violence to arbitrary arrests, from kidnappings in the West to conducting show trials and having the courts impose draconian sentences.

In the 1970s the MfS changed its secret police activities and began increasingly to use 'softer' methods. The GDR leadership did not want to compromise its attempts to gain international recognition: persecution and repression were to be concealed. The MfS now focused more on preventive surveillance and so-called 'psychic demolition'. It used manipulation and targeted rumours in its attempts to systematically intimidate individuals or groups, to ruin their reputations, isolate or criminalize them. Friendships were destroyed, and professional careers ruined without the victims even realizing why.

However, the change in methods did not lead to any let-up in the repressive pressure exerted by the MfS. And the aim also remained the same: to prevent the development of non-conformist or dissident ideas and behaviour.
Numerous methods used by the Ministry for State Security (MfS) can be traced back to classic secret police and intelligence-gathering methods. The decisive factor, however, was that the MfS was answerable only to the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). Otherwise its activities were not monitored or restricted in any way.

The State Security had access to all areas of life in the GDR – even though this was not always noticeable to the individuals themselves. The MfS penetrated into the citizens' private lives; observing them, bugging their phones, spying on them, arresting and interrogating them.

The MfS worked in close cooperation with the police force, the customs authorities, employment offices and other GDR institutions to implement its policy of blanket control. It had access to almost any information or documents it wanted.

However, despite mass surveillance and spying, the State Security did not succeed in suppressing dissatisfaction and opposition among the GDR population.
Official staff

The full-time employees of the Ministry for State Security (MfS) made up the core staff of the secret police. In a similar way to the 'Cheka', the first Soviet secret police, MfS staff saw themselves as an elite for the protection of the ruling Communist Party. The guiding principle for their activities was the 'passionate and implacable struggle against the enemy' who questioned the rule of the Party. From this principle, they deduced the right to use violent and unlawful methods.

The MfS used strict criteria to select its full-time employees. The main focus was on Party loyalty and the ban on contacts with the West. Staff were sworn to the strictest secrecy and subject to rigorous rules.

Apart from a few civilian employees, the full-time staff members of the MfS held military ranks. They enjoyed above-average salaries and numerous privileges.

The MfS recruited its staff mainly from the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), its youth organisation the Free German Youth (FDJ), the police and the armed forces. Often whole families were employed by the MfS.
Unofficial staff

The unofficial informants (IMs) were the 'key weapon' of the Ministry for State Security (MfS). They were used primarily in the GDR. With their help the MfS spied on the population and tried to gather information on its moods and any attempts at 'subversion'.

In written or oral statements informants committed themselves to working under cover with the MfS. They reported on all areas of society, infiltrated opposition groups and supplied even the most intimate information about their colleagues, friends or fellow pupils. They also played an active role in the State Security's activities in the field of so-called 'psychic demolition'.

The informants had many different motives, ranging from political conviction, a sense of duty or bloated self-importance – to a fear of reprisals. Some hoped for professional or material advantages. In the case of young informants it was often a longing for recognition or a sense of security that made them susceptible to recruitment by the MfS.

By 1989 the State Security had about 189,000 unofficial informants – one for about every 90 GDR citizens.
'Work in the West'

One of the main tasks of the Ministry for State Security (MfS) was foreign espionage, which was primarily the responsibility of the HV A – the Main Directorate for Reconnaissance. This was headed by Markus Wolf from 1952 until 1986, thereafter by Werner Grossmann.

The HV A's operations were largely directed at West Germany and West Berlin. HV A spies infiltrated public institutions, political parties and government offices there. The HV A systematically carried out industrial and technical espionage in West German companies.

By 1989 the HV A had a full-time staff of 4,600, plus 13,400 unofficial informants in the GDR and another 1,500 in West Germany. The HV A had been acting as part of the overall MfS apparatus, both in its policies of persecution within the GDR and in its operations abroad.

After the peaceful revolution the HV A was allowed to dissolve itself. It took the opportunity to destroy a large quantity of its documents.
The 'brother organizations'

The Ministry for State Security (MfS) and its secret police forerunners were set up under the strict control of the Soviet Secret Service. Soviet 'advisors' gave direct instructions to the East German State Security Service. In the late 1950s they were replaced by so-called liaison officers, and the MfS gained a certain amount of independence. Regular 'working meetings' were still held to exchange information and plan joint operations. In addition, the Soviet Secret Service itself was active in the GDR.

The MfS cooperated with the 'brother organizations' of the other Warsaw Pact states. Priority was given to the surveillance of GDR citizens in 'socialist countries abroad' and to the prevention of attempts to escape.

In 1977 the State Security Services of the Warsaw Pact and other communist secret services agreed to set up a joint database. In 1987, the SOUD – the abbreviation of the Russian name – contained information on over 188,000 people who were regarded as a 'danger'. Only the Soviet Secret Service had direct access to the data.
The number of people fleeing or leaving the GDR rose steadily in the course of 1989. Inside the country itself the democratic movement gained momentum. Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Berlin and other towns and cities in the GDR became symbols of the peaceful revolution in autumn 1989.

The Ministry for State Security (MfS) waited in vain for orders from the Social Unity Party of Germany (SED) to intervene. Although the SED regime brutally dispersed demonstrating citizens in October 1989, no general order to suppress the civil protests was given.

The evident and sudden disintegration of the SED's power left MfS staff confused and uncertain. In the late autumn of 1989 the State Security began to destroy its files. Thereupon, outraged citizens occupied State Security offices and secured the remaining documents.

On 13 January 1990 the GDR interim government voted to completely disband the State Security, thereby meeting one of the key demands of GDR's citizens' action groups.
BIOGRAPHIES
Hermann Josef Flade

N Born 1932 in Würzburg / secondary-school student / arrested in Olbernhau, Saxony, in 1950 / released from prison and moved to Traunstein/Bavaria in 1960 / studied political science and was awarded a PhD in 1967 / became a staff member of the Gesamtdeutsches Institut (Pan-German Institute) in Bonn in 1969 / died in 1980

One night in October 1950, Hermann Flade, an 18-year-old secondary-school student, secretly distributed home-made leaflets in Olbernhau to protest against the undemocratic elections in the GDR. A police patrol caught him red-handed. He resisted arrest and slightly injured a police officer with his pocket knife. He was able to run away, but was arrested two days later. The State Security interrogated him for weeks, and also played a leading role in the propagandistic preparation of the show trial. In January 1951 the court sentenced Hermann Flade to death for 'incitement to boycott and attempted murder'. Massive protests, especially in West Germany but also in the GDR, forced the SED government to commute the draconian sentence to 15 years imprisonment. Hermann Flade was released from prison in November 1960 as part of an amnesty, and moved to West Germany.
Burkhard Herzel

Born in Kirchmöser, Brandenburg, in 1951 / broke off apprenticeship in 1968 and worked as an untrained printer / sentenced to six weeks imprisonment in 1969 and subsequently to a further two years / jailed for one year and ten months in 1975 for refusal to work / was allowed to leave for West Germany in 1976 / trained as a printer / lives today Berlin and is self-employed.

On 7 October 1969 Burkhard Herzel travelled to East Berlin. He had heard that the Rolling Stones were giving a concert on the roof of the Axel Springer building in West Berlin. As the official celebrations marking the GDR’s 20th anniversary were taking place on the same day, he was arrested as a ‘troublemaker’ and sentenced to six weeks in jail. During this time an unofficial informant of the State Security reported that, before his arrest, Burkhard Herzel had been planning to flee to the West. This led to Herzel being sentenced to a further two years in prison. After his release, he no longer wanted to live in the GDR. He filed several applications to leave for West Germany. To lend weight to his project, he refused to work from March 1975. He was arrested again and sent to jail for one year and ten months. After eleven months Burkhard Herzel was released and allowed to leave for West Germany.
Gerd Stöcklein

Born in Halle/Saale in 1950 / passed his Abitur (A-level school-leaving certificate) in 1968 / surveyor's assistant / moved to Brno (CSSR) in 1972 / returned Halle in 1975 / studied at the College for Civil Engineering in Leipzig, and started working as a civil engineer in 1980 / moved to West Germany in 1988 / lives and works in Halle again today.

The aims of the Prague Spring and the hopes of 'socialism with a human face' had a lasting affect on Gerd Stöcklein's attitude towards the GDR. He discussed the possibility of similar reforms in the GDR with like-minded young people. When leaflets containing slogans critical of the GDR appeared in Halle in 1978, Gerd Stöcklein and his friends were immediately suspected of being the authors. From then on he was observed and persecuted by the Ministry for State Security (MfS). But Gerd Stöcklein was not intimidated. He used the relative freedom of the Church and became involved in an opposition group called Kirche von Unten (Church from Below). Only when he was threatened with arrest did he apply to leave the country. The State Security wanted to get rid of the 'troublemaker' as fast as possible and quickly organized Gerd Stöcklein's move to West Germany.
Gabriele Stötzer

Born in Emleben near Gotha in 1953 / trained as a medical technical assistant / studied art education in 1973 / struck off the university register and arrested in 1976 / released from prison in 1978, subsequently worked as an artist • participated actively in the citizens’ movement in 1989 / today lives in Erfurt and Utrecht

Gabriele Stötzer studied art education at the Erfurt College of Education. She was forced to leave the college in mid-1976 because she refused to tolerate the expulsion of a critical fellow student. In autumn 1976 she began collecting signatures in protest at the expatriation of Wolf Biermann. As a result, she was arrested by the State Security, and five months later was sentenced to one year imprisonment for ‘defamation of the state’. After her release, Gabriele Stötzer began writing autobiographical and experimental texts. Until 1981 she ran the private Galerie im Flur (Gallery in the Hallway) in Erfurt, which provided a platform for non-conformist artists. Although she was kept under intensive observation by the State Security until 1989, Gabriele Stötzer always managed to find new ways to side-step the guidelines imposed on artists by the state authorities. In the autumn of 1989 she became actively involved in the citizens’ movement, and was a co-founder of the Erfurt Kunsthaus asso-
Thomas Jonscher

Born in 1959 in Halle/Saale / trained as a skilled construction worker with Abitur (A-level school leaving certificate) / assistant geriatric nurse in a senior citizens' home in Halle / arrested in 1980 and released in mid 1982 / moved to East Berlin in 1985 / worked as a geriatric nurse until 2007 / works today as an honorary music editor

As the son of a Ministry for State Security officer, Thomas Jonscher was well integrated into the GDR system. It was only when he married a woman with 'relatives in the West' that the course of his life was disrupted. Now he had to decide between his family and his career as an officer. He gave up his studies at the Officers' Academy of the People's Army and worked as a geriatric nurse. But when in 1980 he used a wall newspaper to caricature the GDR press's glorifying reports and the lack of freedom of opinion, an SED party secretary informed the State Security. Thomas Jonscher was arrested and, after four months in custody, was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment for 'public vilification'. After his release from prison, Thomas Jonscher moved to East Berlin and became involved in peace groups connected with the Church.
Susanne Hartzsch-Trauer

Born in 1962 in Rosslau/Elbe / obtained her Abitur (A-Level school-leaving certificate) in 1980 / trained as a puppeteer / worked in Zwickau theatres in 1983 / was a puppeteer in Karl-Marx-Stadt (now Chemnitz) in 1988 / co-founder of the Mothers' Centre in Zwickau in 1991 and currently still active there

Susanne Trauer was a very good pupil and politically conformist. But she gradually became more critical of the situation in the GDR. State reprisals against a school friend who had protested against the expatriation of Wolf Biermann in 1976 proved to be a decisive experience. In 1983 she met political dissenters through the Church, and joined their ranks. She was co-founder of an alternative women's group and the Peace Library in Zwickau. Together with friends, she organized aid for Romania that was independent of the state. The Ministry for State Security (MfS) was suspicious of these activities; Susanne Trauer was spied on for years and impeded in her professional development. In autumn 1989 she became a founder-member of the Neues Forum citizens' association in Zwickau, and was one of the organizers of the first 'prayers for peace' events.
THE MINISTRY OF STATE SECURITY AND EVERYDAY LIFE
State Security and GDR Youth

It was of key importance to the Social Unity Party (SED) to politically educate children and young people to become loyal citizens of the GDR system. Schools and universities, youth and scout (‘pioneer’) organizations created a dense network of ideological and social control, and ensured that non-conformist behaviour was marginalized.

Any young people who tried to escape the clutches of the SED state were soon noticed by the Ministry for State Security (MfS). Beat-music fans or punks, young Christians or pupils who refused to take part in the obligatory military-education lessons, members of peace or environmental groups – the MfS considered young people who wouldn't conform as 'decadent' or 'hostile negative', and their longing for self-determination as 'subversive'. Many of them were subject to disciplinary measures and harsh reprisals. Private relationships, academic or professional prospects were ruined.

In this context the State Security also used young people it had recruited as unofficial informants. Furthermore, the MfS collaborated with state youth organizations, and tried to instrumentalize teachers, church staff and sports trainers to achieve its aims.
State Security and Sport

Sport was always a political matter for the Social Unity Party (SED). The 'security area sport' was one of the most important tasks of the Ministry for State Security (MfS).

The MfS monitored sport in the GDR because it feared 'hostile influences', and also because it mistrusted the sportsmen and -women themselves. This applied in particular to competitive sport with its international ties. The MfS tried to forbid contacts between sportsmen and -women with anyone from the West, and to prevent them escaping abroad. The State Security often continued to persecute 'sports traitors' – as the MfS called them – even after their escape.

The State Security also attached a great deal of importance to 'securing' mass sport in the GDR. The German Gymnastics and Sports Federation (DTSB) was one of the objects of its surveillance, and it monitored every detail of the German Gymnastics and Sports Festivals.

The MfS gave a lot of attention to ensuring that doping was kept secret. The German College for Physical Education and the Sports Medicine Service, with its central institute in Kreischa, were kept under strict observation.

The MfS also kept West German sports institutions under surveillance and spied on research institutes for competitive sports with the aim of uncovering the 'activities of hostile centres'.

State Security and Culture

It was the aim of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) to remodel all art, literature, film and music in the GDR to create a 'socialist national culture'. The SED tried to achieve this by laying down ideological guidelines and state licensing procedures. Restrictive periods alternated with seemingly more liberal phases.

The Ministry for State Security (MfS) safeguarded the SED's cultural policy by using its influence and keeping a tight control. The MfS department responsible for 'security in the areas of culture and mass communication' monitored the German Cultural Association (known after 1974 as the Cultural Association of the GDR), artists' professional associations, art colleges, arts centres, radio and TV, cinema, the press, publishing houses, theatres and music. In addition, there was the non-conformist, non-state cultural scene which the State Security regarded as a 'hotbed of decadence' – self-publishing (Samisdat), free artist groups, writers, singer-songwriters and rock bands. The MfS covered the alternative scene in particular with a dense network of informants, and made many attempts at 'psychic demolition' and demoralization. In spite of this, dis-sidence in GDR culture continued to grow – a fact that the State Security put down to increasing contacts with the West and thus to external 'hostile influences'. 
State Security and Travel

In the GDR the organization of holiday trips was predominantly in state hands. The *Reisebüro der DDR* (GDR Travel Agency) and *Jugendtourist* (Young Tourist) were the responsible organizations. State companies and the holiday service of the Free German Federation of Trades Unions (FDGB) allocated places in their holiday homes.

After the Wall was erected in 1961, travel for GDR citizens was basically restricted to Eastern Bloc countries and the GDR itself. Yet the Social Unity Party (SED) still saw considerable dangers. GDR holiday-makers could make contact with tourists from the West, and there was a risk that they might try to escape to the West from their holiday destination.

For this reason the Ministry for State Security (MfS) ensured that all tourist traffic was monitored and kept under surveillance by the secret police. Officers on special assignment (OibEs) were deployed in the administration of the state travel agencies. The MfS had a dense network of unofficial informants particularly amongst the tour guides.

The State Security operated in close collaboration with the police- and registration offices, with the transport police, the customs and the border police. In the case of trips to socialist countries abroad, the MfS cooperated with its 'brother organizations'. It also maintained its own units locally, the so-called operative groups.
State Security and Churches

Churches and religious communities in the GDR were a thorn in the flesh of the Socialist Unity Party (SED). Churches had a certain degree of independence, they could give life a meaning and felt entitled to have a say in shaping society – all this was seen by the SED regime as a constant threat. The SED’s policy towards the churches therefore aimed to stop or at least stem their influence by means of open or covert repression. The Ministry for State Security (MfS) supported the SED’s policies with monitoring and spying operations.

The Protestant Church, the largest church in the GDR, was the main target. Its youth and charity work increasingly attracted people who were critical of the GDR system. It became a safe harbour for environmental, peace and human rights groups. The MfS reacted to this development with surveillance and infiltration. It tried to install unofficial informants in key Church positions, influence internal processes and sow mistrust in the parishes. At various levels of the state apparatus responsible for relations with the Church, the MfS supported the SED’s anti-Church policy with unofficial informants or officers on special assignment (OibEs).
State Security at the Workplace

'Protecting the economy' was a key task of the Ministry for State Security (MfS). The state-owned industrial and production plants, where a large proportion of the GDR population worked, were therefore inevitably a focal point for the MfS. Furthermore, ever since the national uprising on 17 June 1953 the State Security was required to prevent any further workers' protests.

The MfS tried to sound out the workers' moods, monitor work discipline and find scapegoats when factories failed to achieve production targets. The MfS would spy on anyone at work suspected of making comments that were critical of the regime. It also selectively spread misinformation to isolate 'hostile negative elements' from their colleagues.

The MfS set up its own special site offices in important enterprises such as the Buna, Leuna and Bitterfeld chemical combines and the Carl Zeiss Jena combine. Contacts with companies in the West were monitored with the utmost care. The MfS infiltrated companies with 'officers on special assignment' (OibE) posing as safety or security officers. Numerous informants supplied reports, so that the State Security had an unembellished insight into the widely ailing GDR economy. In the early days deficits were attributed to enemy sabotage, in later years to the consequence of the misconduct of individuals.
State Security and the National People's Army (NVA)

The National People's Army (NVA) played an important role in the highly militarized society of the GDR. Its task was to defend the country at home and abroad. The NVA was one of the Ministry for State Security's (MfS) 'priority areas'.

Because of compulsory military service, introduced in 1962, almost every male GDR citizen came under the MfS's area of responsibility at some time in his life.

The State Security's task was to combat endeavours which were 'subversive' or 'hostile to the state', as well as attempts at desertion or sabotage. They monitored the teaching staff at officer schools, investigated accidents and suicides and analyzed the mood of the NVA. They paid particular attention to unarmed conscripts in the 'construction soldiers' units. For the MfS they constituted a 'concentration of hostile negative forces' and were therefore monitored particularly intensively.

Unofficial informants of the State Security played an important role in the secret police measures. There was one informant for about every 20 members of the NVA. In the GDR border troops, which were part of the NVA from 1961 to the turn of the year 1973/74, on average every fifth member was an unofficial informant.