

# **The STASI Decomposition**

## **Decomposition (Ministry for state security)**

- Decomposition [1] [2] was a covert method of the Ministry for State Security (Stasi) of the GDR to Combating alleged and actual political opponents. The Stasi used the decomposition before, while, after or instead of an arrest of the target person. As a repressive prosecution practice it contained extensive covert control and manipulation functions to the family and personal relationships. [3] The term "operative psychology" was being taught at the Law School of the Stasi Potsdam/Oak, where you could acquire a doctoral degree in it.

## **Political and Social Conditions**

- Since the early 1970s the Stasi on the basis of "changed conditions of class struggle" sanctioned and reinforced their efforts for oppositional behavior without the use of criminal law. This was caused by the quest for international recognition of the GDR and the German-German Convergence from the late 1960s. Thus, the GDR had both in basic agreement with the FRG [4] and with membership of the UN Charter [5] and the signing of the CSCE Final Act [6] to respect the Human Rights expressed its intention or obligation. Since the latter was also published in the New Germany, its implementation was an improvement particularly in relation to the adopted Exit rule, even for domestic political debate. Moreover, the communist regime tried the number of political prisoners instead, to reduce the concessions promised by the repressive practices below to compensate the threshold of arrest and conviction. [7]

## **Conceptual origin and definition**

- The origin and use of the word comes from the military parlance: Under decomposition understood as a strategic measure of the psychological warfare with psychological resources to lower the morale of enemy soldiers. In the army there was the time of National Socialism specifically the concept of "undermining the war effort", but this was an entirely different meaning.
- The MfS defined the aims and methods of decomposition as follows:  
"The decomposition is a method to deal effectively with the Stasi subversive activity. with the Decomposition by various political and operational activities impact on hostile-negative persons, particularly hostile to their negative attitudes and beliefs taken in such a way that they are shaken and changed gradually or contradictions and differences between hostile-negative forces caused, exploited or intensified. The aim of decomposition is the Fragmentation, paralysis, disorganization and isolation of hostile-negative forces, thereby providing a differentiated political-ideological recovery. "
- Ministry of State Security: Dictionary of political-operative work, keyword: "decomposition" [8] In the secret of "undermining" Directive No. 1/76 states in addition:
- "Measures of decomposition are on the elicitation and the exploitation to gain such and address inconsistencies or differences between hostile and negative forces by which they are fragmented, crippled, disorganized and isolated, and their hostile and negative actions, including their effects will thus be reduced, substantially reduced or eliminated altogether."
- Directive No. 1/76 to the development processes and machining operating from 1 , 1976 [9]

## Decomposition in practice

- The decomposition was a purely psychological instrument of repression, which the scientific evident "Operative psychology" was deliberately used to undermined the "self-confidence and self esteem of a person, create fear, panic, confusion, causing a loss of love and security and should stir up disappointment "[10]. They should be caused by political opponent's and life crises, so that they psychologically unsettle and burden, so the sacrifice of time and energy for anti-state activities was taken. The Stasi, who were behind the action should not have to be seen. [11] The writer Jurgen Fuchs spoke so well of "psycho-social crime" and an "attack on the soul of the People ". [10] Although already allowed for the late 1950s to demonstrate methods of decomposition, the decomposition method as defined in the mid 1970s and 1970s primarily in the scientific applied and 1980s. [12]
- "Proven applicable forms of degradation" the Directive 1/76 is called, among other things:
- "Systematic discrediting of public reputation, the reputation and prestige on the basis interconnected true, verifiable, and discrediting, and false, credible, non-rebuttable, and thus also discrediting information, systematic organization of professional and societal failures to undermine the confidence of individuals, generating [...] Doubt the personal perspective, creating mistrust and mutual suspicion within groups [...]; local and temporal. Prevent or limit the mutual relations of the members of a group [...] [...] for example, by assigning locals to remote jobs "
- Directive No. 1/76 to the development processes and machining operating from 1 , 1976 [13] Among the decomposition techniques also open, hidden or fake spying, letter or Telephone control of the "enemy of people worked", damaging private property, tampering with vehicles to the poisoning of food, "incorrect medical treatment" and strategically targeted and coercion of suicide. [14] It is controversial whether the Stasi began to X-rays at political opponent's health Cause long term damage. [15] Thus, with Rudolf Bahro, and Gerulf Pannach dead, only two to three years apart, about the same time incarcerated, prominent East German dissident Jurgen Fuchs died of rare Cancers [16].
- For the manipulation of friendship, love, marriage and family relationships the Stasi used anonymous letters, Telegrams and telephone calls as well as compromising photos. In addition, this targeted (even minor) "Unofficial collaborator" promoted and used. [17]
- Of the measures have been applied primarily to the Department (HA) XX of the Stasi in Berlin and the XX departments of the 15 county governments (BV) and 209 district offices (KD) of the Stasi. The purpose of supervision of religious communities, culture and media companies, block parties and social organizations, the education and health system and of sport covered the line XX virtually the entire public Life in the GDR. [18] The knowledge gained in this way turned to the Stasi for personality-oriented forms of degradation and picked it specifically personal characteristics such as "fear, uncertainty, egotism, Careerism, propensity toward criminal behavior, alcoholism, homosexuality and other sexual varieties, Collectors and game passion, addiction or dependence on drugs "[19] back. Thus did the MfS notes that "the personality-related forms, means and methods brought to the application of the decomposition are to achieve the greater success in the sense of preventive efficacy [...] [are]. "[19].

## Target groups for measures of decomposition

- There exist no homogeneous group of decomposition measures, as the "political underground activities most sophisticated and diverse in appearance, "went in, and thus from the perspective of the MfS" a differentiated manner fighting it, "was necessary [20] Nevertheless, the Stasi called as the main target groups. [21]:
  - Combinations of emigration applicants
  - hostile groups critical artists
  - "reactionary clerical circles" (religious opposition groups)
  - Groups of youths
  - and their supporters (human rights and refugee assistance organizations, went out and expatriate Opposition)

Among the most prominent victims of decomposition measures Jürgen Fuchs, Gerulf Pannach, Rudolf Bahro, Wolf Biermann and Robert Havemann and Rainer Eppelmann.

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- Policy 1/76 Stasi "operative development and processing operations - The application of the measures Decomposition "[23] (PDF, 518 kB)
- Policy 1/76 MfS [24] on [www.ddr-wissen.de](http://www.ddr-wissen.de) [25]
- Andrea heart functions and forms of "decomposition" [26] (PDF of [www.thueringen.de/tlstu](http://www.thueringen.de/tlstu) , 4 kB)
- "Quiet forms of destruction" - a lecture by Dr. Sandra Pingel-Schliemann on the occasion of book launch 23rd May 2002 in Berlin [27]

## See also

- COINTELPRO

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