

Abstract

The doctoral thesis tries to reflect the collaboration of Catholic priests with the Ministry for State Security (= Ministerium für Staatssicherheit; MfS or Stasi) in the former GDR from a theological perspective. This is done in two steps.

The first part of the thesis illustrates the historical background. This includes an introduction into the history, ideology and working methods of the Stasi. The main goal, however, is to give an overview of the amount and character of the collaboration of Catholic priests. The first part ends with a typology of the different motives and reasons for cooperating with the Stasi.

In the second part the problem of collaboration is reflected from an ethical perspective. It is not intended to evaluate individual cases, but to elaborate criteria for the evaluation of individual cases. The guiding assumption is that the cooperation with state security either arose from a lack of willing, a lack of ability, or a lack of cognition. The priests were therefore either limited in their moral motivation, their freedom or their cognitive competence. To what extent these limitations were caused by the priests themselves or by the surrounding circumstances, can be regarded as a key question when it comes to evaluating cases of collaboration.