

Stasi – Power and Banality

Permanent exhibition at the
"Runde Ecke" Museum

HISTORY
at
original places

HIER BEFAND SICH
VON 1950 - 1989 DIE

Bezirksverwaltung
für
Staatsicherheit
Leipzig

BÜRGER BESETZTEN SIE
WÄHREND DER
MONTAGSDEMONSTRATION
AM 4. DEZEMBER 1989

From 1950-1989 this was the headquarters of the
Leipzig District Administrative Department for State Security
It was occupied by citizens during the Monday Demonstration of 4 December 1989



SED + Stasi sind
bankrott

Opening times and tours

“Runde Ecke” Memorial Museum

Open daily 10am – 6pm

Guided tour for the public 3pm daily

Guided tours for groups by arrangement (also foreign language)

Audioguides available in German, English, French, Italian, Dutch, Spanish, Polish and Arabic

Guided city tour “In the tracks of the Peaceful Revolution”

Every Saturday, 2pm, meeting point: main door of St Nikolai’s Church

Dates for groups by arrangement

Stasi Bunker Museum

Open every last weekend in the month, 1pm – 4pm

Guided tours for groups by arrangement

Please consult our homepage: www.runde-ecke-leipzig.de for information about our special offers for groups of visitors, our comprehensive programme of events and current projects.

If you would like to support our work, we would be pleased to receive donations. Please use our donations account:

IBAN: DE09 8608 0000 0111 8043 02

BIC: DRESDEFF860

Commerzbank Leipzig

We are happy to provide a donation receipt on request. If you require this, please give your full address on the transfer form. In the case of contributions of up to 50 euros the bank statement serves as proof of donation.



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Kultur und Medien



Stadt Leipzig

STAATSMINISTERIUM
FÜR WISSENSCHAFT
UND KUNST



Freistaat
SACHSEN



KULTURRAUM LEIPZIGER RAUM

The work of the Citizens Committee is sponsored by the Saxon Memorial Foundation using funds from authorised representatives of the German Federal Government for Culture and the Media, funds from the Saxon Ministry for Science and Art and by the city of Leipzig and cultural organisations from the Leipzig region.



Citizens' Committee

Leipzig is regarded worldwide as the city of the Peaceful Revolution. It was here in 1989 that the first moves began towards the emergence of democracy in the whole of the GDR.

The route taken by the Monday Demonstrations in autumn 1989 led from the churches of the inner city via the ring road around Leipzig's old town – and then past the "Runde Ecke," the seat of the district administrative department for state security. One of the demands of thousands of demonstrators that became increasingly louder from one Monday to the next, was the crushing of Erich Mielke's "Ministry of Fear." Finally, during the night of 4th to 5th December 1989, citizens peacefully occupied the Leipzig Stasi central office and further branches, both in the city and the surrounding countryside. That same night, the "Bürgerkomitee", the Citizens' Committee of Leipzig, materialized from this loose association of committed citizens, who stayed in the "Runde Ecke", and from then onwards guarded thousands of documents.



Since then, the association, now registered, has pursued the goal of preserving the evidence and authentic sites of repression and persecution in the GDR. It documents the work of the Ministry for State Security using Leipzig as an example. The Citizens' Committee has both worked on the legal arrangements for dealing with the Stasi files and supervised the public reappraisal of the GDR past. The association is custodian of the Memorial Museum at the "Runde Ecke" and the Museum in the Stasi Bunker. We invite you to come along to this unique combination of memorials at the original locations, following in the tracks of the Peaceful Revolution.



Stasi Bunker Museum

In the Lübschützer Teiche recreational area near Machern is the former emergency command centre of the leader of the Leipzig district administrative department for State Security. It was disguised as a holiday complex belonging to the Leipzig water supply and sewage treatment VEB (nationally-owned company). At the heart of the complex is the bunker built between 1968 and 1972. In the event of "tension" and the need for "mobilisation" the Leipzig Stasi chief, together with 120 full-time employees and two KGB (Soviet secret service) liaison officers, would have moved his seat of office to Machern. The emergency command centre was a secretly created complex, designed to maintain the Stasi leadership's hold on power, even in exceptional circumstances.

The entire grounds, extending to 5.2 hectares and now classified as a historic monument, with all their preserved buildings and installations, including the interior of the bunker, comprising 1435 square meters, are open to visitors. The guided tours demonstrate, among other things, how the supply systems worked, how news contacts were produced throughout the GDR and what survival strategies the Ministry of State Security had developed for an atomic bomb attack. An exhibition shows mobilisation plans in the district of Leipzig and the involvement of the emergency command centre in these plans.



Stairs of the bunker



Desks in the bunker



Collection



Tape-recorder for recording the reports of unofficial personnel

Only part of the Memorial Museum's comprehensive collection can be seen in the permanent exhibition. Numerous further objects are kept in storage. The collection comprises in total about 30,000 items, some unique. This contemporary evidence documents all sections of the extensive work of the Ministry of State Security. At the same time, it depicts how the Ministry of State Security was incorporated into the overall structure of the Communist system of rule in the GDR. The unified nature of this collection thus makes it unique.

The objects are available for the Museum's own permanent exhibition, for special exhibitions and as loans for exhibitions in other museums all over Germany. The collection is augmented by new items almost daily, mainly contemporary evidence from the years 1945 to 1989. We are constantly on the lookout for further objects for selective addition to our stock, and would be pleased to receive any gifts or loans.

You will find information on selected items from the collection on the Citizens' Committee's homepage.



Weapon stand with training rifles



History of the building

For 40 years in Leipzig, the "Runde Ecke" symbolised suppression by the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) and the comprehensive infiltration of society with suspicion and physical and mental violence. Today it is a symbol of the self-liberation of the people of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) from dictatorship, for it was here, on 4 December 1989, that the Monday demonstrators removed the power of one of the most important pillars of the SED regime, the Ministry of State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit - MfS), the secret service of the former GDR, also called "Stasi".

The building has a varied history. It was built by the "Alte Leipziger Feuerversicherung" (Old Leipzig Fire Insurance Company) between 1911 and 1913 as its company headquarters and used as such by them for several decades. The building plans were drafted by the acclaimed Leipzig architect Hugo Licht. He planned a complex consisting of two elongated wings meeting in a cylindrical central structure. Because of its distinctive shape, the building became popularly known as the "Runde Ecke" (Round Corner).

In 1945, shortly before the end of the Second World War, the American army moved into the "Runde Ecke" quarters, temporarily. Not long afterwards, once Soviet military administration had been established in the eastern part of Germany, the building apparently became the property of the Soviet occupying force and was used by the Soviet secret service, NKWD, and the predecessor of the Ministry of State Security, "K 5". In 1950, the building became the headquarters of the district administrative department for State Security. Over the years the



The „Runden Ecke“

Ministry of State Security created an extensive, tripartite complex of buildings for itself here. The nucleus of the ensemble remained the two-winged building on Ditztrichring. Two extensions followed: one was known as "Saalbau" ("hall building"), with a cinema and bowling alley, in 1958, and in 1985, the new building, adjacent to Große Fleischergasse. The district authority of the German People's Police also had its headquarters in the immediate vicinity.

Today, in addition to the Citizens' Committee memorial, the "Runde Ecke" also houses the Leipzig branch of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former GDR.



Exhibition

Bugs, forged rubber stamps, number plates and passports, devices for opening letters, a workshop for making disguises and preserving smells – these are just some of the legacies of the Ministry of State Security shown by the Citizens' Committee in the permanent exhibition of contemporary history, called, "Stasi – Power and Banality." The original tools of the trade of the Ministry of State Security document its history, structure and methods of operation, using the Leipzig district administrative department as an example. They are supplemented by selected photographs and documents.



The exhibition gives an introductory outline of the development of the Ministry of State Security, its ideological roots, the interior structure of the Ministry and the activities of full-time employees and unofficial personnel. A second section is devoted to the activities of the different departments of the Ministry, for example M (checking post), 26 (telephone surveillance) and VIII (observation and investigation). Numerous tools and items of equipment, some developed by the Ministry of State Security itself, bear witness to its efforts to keep as extensive a watch over the people of the GDR as possible. Some of the objects used in its work, the devices for checking letters, parcels and telegrams, for instance, have been preserved only in Leipzig.



Preserved smells

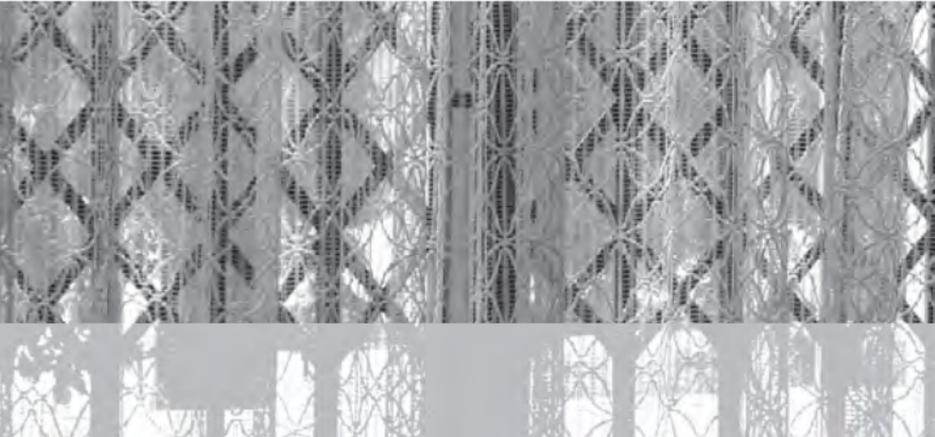


An exhibition room on Stasi detention shows how far the surveillance measures could go at their worst. You can see the faithful reconstruction of a cell from the former Leipzig Ministry of State Security institution for prisoners awaiting trial. A special part of the exhibition is concerned with the death penalty, which from 1960 onwards was carried out in Leipzig for the entire GDR. The entrance area of the museum has been dedicated to the way the 40-year dictatorship was overcome, and information is provided here on the history of the Peaceful Revolution in Leipzig.



The permanent exhibition is presented in authentic surroundings. Leipzig is the only place in Germany where original rooms of a district administrative department for State Security have been preserved and can be visited as a memorial. The linoleum floor, the lattice bars on the windows, surveillance cameras and, not least, the typical GDR smell, which still lingers today in the former offices, are all reminders of the former use of the building.

One of the Citizens' Committee's most important tasks is to preserve historic sites where the SED dictatorship exercised its power in Leipzig. Besides the original rooms at the Memorial Museum, these also include the former Stasi cinema in the neighbouring building, the forecourt of the "Runde Ecke," and what used to be the GDR's central execution site in the south of the city. All these places are classified as historical monuments and are open to the public.



A tour of the exhibition, "Stasi – Power and Banality," brings home to visitors how the SED developed its surveillance state and systematically robbed GDR citizens of their basic rights. In 1989, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators overthrew the dictatorship and won back their democratic freedoms. The exhibition is designed to make people aware of, among other things, how significant these victories won by the Peaceful Revolution still are today. The Citizens' Committee wants to sensitize the young generation specifically, who no longer know about life in the GDR from their own experience, to the dangers of dictatorship and encourage them to act democratically.

The museum is a place of warning, commemoration and learning. It has also become established as a much-visited site of political and cultural discourse. The Citizens' Committee issues regular invitations to discussions, film evenings, lectures and numerous other events at the "Runde Ecke".



Reconstructed cell used by the former Ministry of State Security for prisoners awaiting trial



Contact

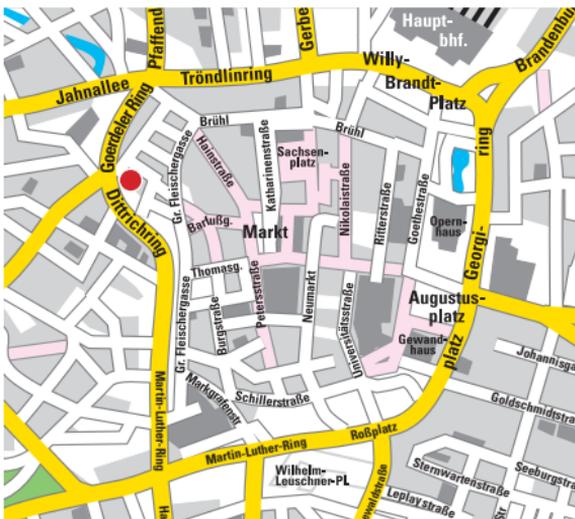
Bürgerkomitee Leipzig e.V.

Custodian of the "Runde Ecke"
Memorial Museum and the
Stasi Bunker Museum

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Bürgerkomitee Leipzig e.V.

für die Auflösung der ehemaligen
Staatsicherheit (MfS)



Träger der Gedenkstätte

Museum in der „Runden Ecke“ mit
dem Museum im Stasi-Bunker