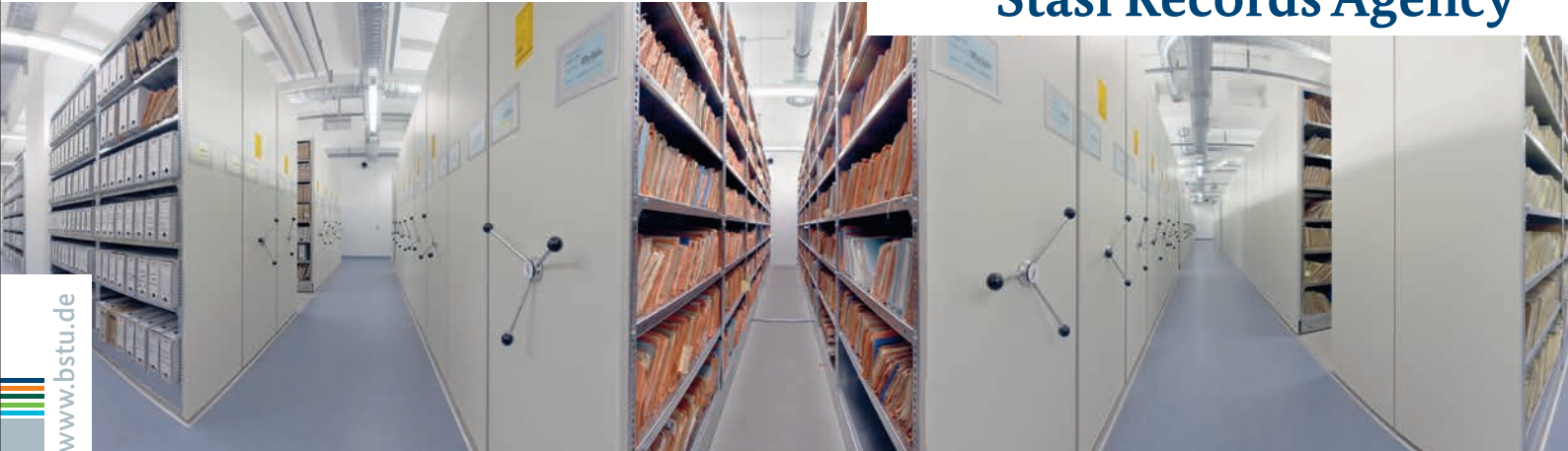


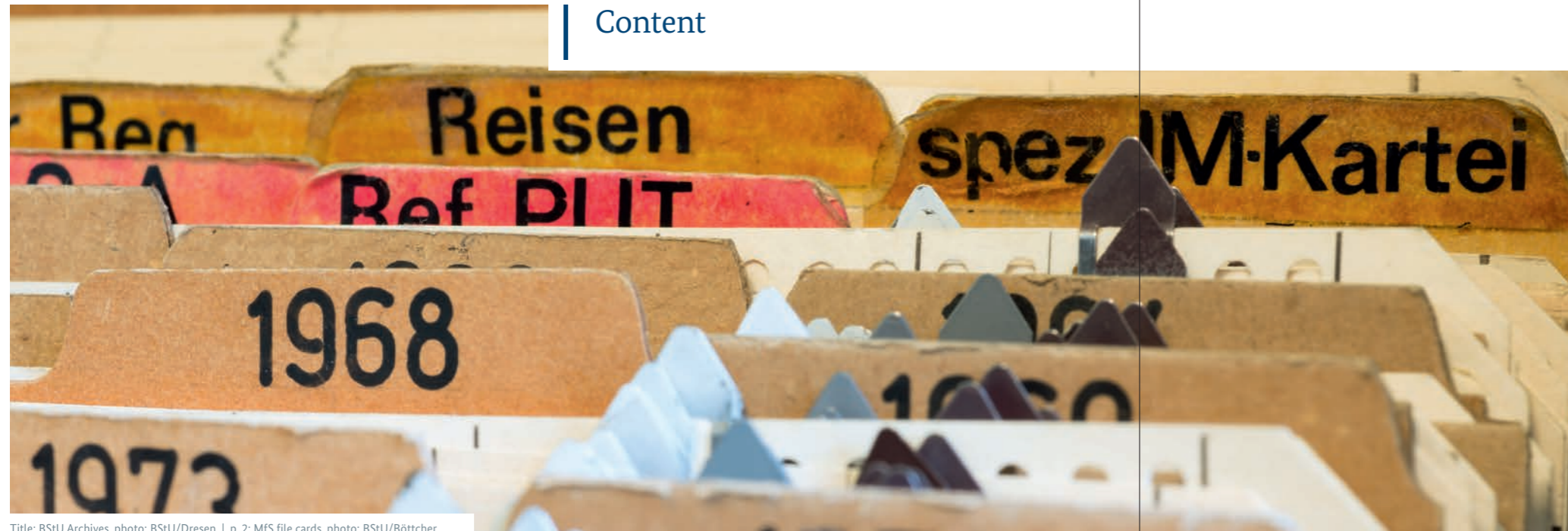


Federal Commissioner for the Records
of the State Security Service of the former
German Democratic Republic



Stasi Records Agency





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Introduction



p. 4: Demonstration on 7 October 1989 in Berlin (East), photo: Andreas Schoelzel | p. 5: photo: rbb Kontraste

Democracy, not Dictatorship! This was the message transmitted by the Peaceful Revolution in the GDR in 1989. At great risk to themselves, courageous women and men put a stop to the activities of the SED's secret police. They seized the offices of the Ministry of State Security and were able to ensure that most of the Stasi records were preserved.

Shedding light on what happened. The SED dictatorship lasted 40 years – until the people liberated themselves from oppression. How could this repressive system have functioned for so long? The Ministry of State Security (Stasi) was a central instrument of the SED state party, which it used to systematically put its own people under surveillance and thus asserted its claim to power through repressive means. The Stasi files help us today to shed light on the mechanisms, to identify who worked for the secret police with what intention and how.



An archive for democracy. For the first time ever with access to the Stasi files citizens were granted access to records a secret police had previously gathered as a result of massive surveillance. For the first time ever citizens thus obtained wide access to the data a state had amassed outside the rule of law. This short booklet explains how the records are administrated today and how we inform the public about the structure, methods and mode of operation of the Stasi.

The better we understand dictatorship, the better we can shape democracy.

ROLAND JAHN
Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Records (BStU)



MfS film reels, photo: BStU/Hertel

The Legacy of the MfS

Although the State Security destroyed a massive amount of files, nearly 111 kilometres of shelved documents have been preserved in the archives of the BStU, along with many photographs, film, video and audio recordings. This material provides evidence of an apparatus of informers in the GDR, and thus it contains documents that reveal planned and committed injustices, conformity and betrayal, but also civil courage and resistance.

Approximately half of these documents were stored in archives created by the Ministry of State Security and classified according to the ministry's principles of secret information storage. The remainder, found in a largely disorganised state in Stasi offices, was taken over by the BStU. Thousands of bags of torn up documents were also found.

In 2007, in collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institute for Production Systems and Design Technology (IPK) in Berlin, the BStU initiated a pilot project to virtually reconstruct these fragmented documents (see. p. 21). The technique is currently being tested.

The archives in numbers (Berlin and regional offices)*

- Documents: **111 shelf kilometres**
- Filmed documents: **the equivalent of 47 shelf kilometres**
- File cards: **41 million**
- Photos, film negatives, slides: **1.7 million**
- Film, video and audio recordings: **30,100**
- Fragmented material: **15,000 bags**

* The records of the former ministry headquarters as well as the former district administrations in Berlin and Potsdam are archived in Berlin; the files of the remaining 13 district administrations and local offices are held in the BStU's 12 regional offices.

Access to Records



Viewing One's Personal File

Everyone has the right to view the documents that the MfS generated about him or her. Under certain conditions, close relatives may also view the files on a missing or deceased relative.

Requests to view a file can be submitted to the BStU in Berlin or to any of the regional offices. Application forms are available in all the BStU offices. They can also be downloaded from the Internet (http://www.bstu.bund.de/EN/AccessToRecords/_node.html) or have sent by mail.

To assure that no one gains unauthorized access to someone else's file, a signature and an identity confirmation is required. The latter can be issued by a registry office or by a BStU employee upon presentation of a valid ID.

Use by Public and Non-Public Entities

On the request of public and non-public entities, the BStU will disclose whether evidence exists to suggest that certain individuals in important social and political positions cooperated with the Ministry of State Security. It is the responsibility of the requesting entity to decide whether the examination should be carried out and what consequences are to be drawn.

The Federal Commissioner also provides information for rehabilitation and restitution claims and for criminal investigations and danger prevention. Additionally, it processes requests regarding unresolved property claims, pensions of former MfS employees and medal awards.



Scene from the film "The Life of Others", photo: Hagen Keller

Research and Media Use

Researchers and media representatives also have the right to view records. By fulfilling these requests the BStU contributes to the historical and political reappraisal of the impact of the East German "state security". When requested, the BStU will provide records concerning the activities of the MfS and the mechanisms of domination in both the former GDR and the former Soviet zone of occupation. The BStU also supports research on the Nazi past by providing documents from the Third Reich that the Stasi had used for its own operations.

The film "The Lives of Others", parts of which were filmed in the archives of the Stasi Records Agency, is perhaps the best-known example of the media addressing the subject of the Stasi and showing how it operated. Staff of the Stasi Records Agency shared its knowledge and expertise with the film team during production.

A sample request letter for researchers and media representatives is available on the BStU homepage. (www.bstu.bund.de/EN)

Requests in numbers

From 1991 to late 2014, the BStU received approx. 7 million requests and petitions to view records.

› Requests from citizens for information, to view records or have copied files released:	3.05 million
› Requests from researchers and media representatives:	30,500
› Petitions to vet civil service employees and people in important functions:	1.98 million
› Petitions concerning rehabilitation, restitution, criminal investigations:	497,000
› Petitions concerning pension claims:	1.16 million
› Miscellaneous examinations and petitions:	467,000



Visitors in the "Mielke Suite" in the Stasi Museum at the former Stasi headquarters in Berlin-Lichtenberg, photo: BStU/Dresen

Travelling and Temporary Exhibitions

The BStU's exhibitions provide information on the development, structure and mode of operation of the GDR secret police, as well as on its methods of surveillance and persecution. The travelling exhibition "Feind ist, wer anders denkt" (The Dissenter is the Enemy) is shown primarily in the former West German states. It presents the history and development of the GDR secret police and describes the strategies and methods it used against dissenters. Various other travelling and temporary exhibitions, often with a local emphasis, are also shown in the regional offices.

Permanent Exhibition in the Stasi Museum

The headquarters of the Stasi was located from 1950 to 1989 on grounds that in the end were 22 hectares in size in Berlin-Lichtenberg. "House 1", where Minister Erich Mielke had his offices, formed the central area of the complex. Today it houses the Stasi Museum.

The exhibition "State Security in the SED Dictatorship", created jointly by the BStU and ASTAK association (Antistalinistische Aktion), describes the structure and methods of the MfS and shows the actual people within the apparatus, who took concrete action and made decisions. Hundreds of thousands of people worked as official employees or unofficial collaborators for the MfS. How did they come to join the Stasi, what career paths did they take, what was their social and professional background and what kind of work did they do for the Stasi?

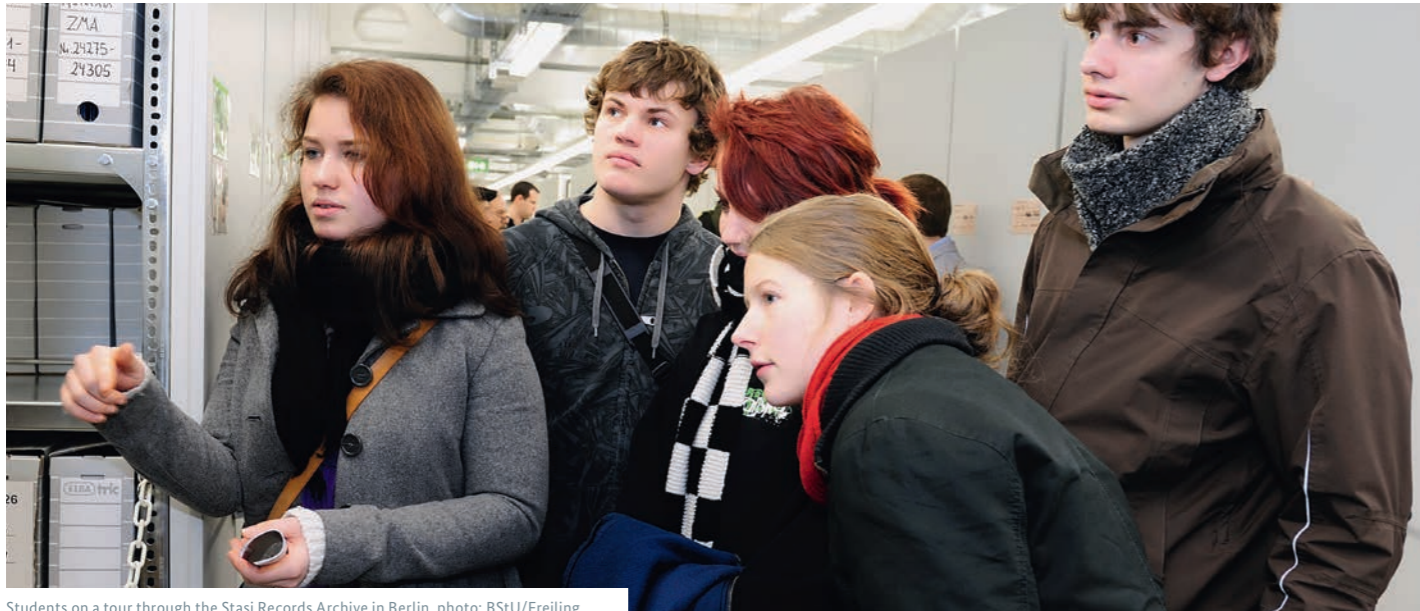
The "Mielke Level" with the original offices of the Minister of State Security and his staff is incorporated into the exhibition.

House 1, Ruschestraße 103, 10365 Berlin

Hours: Mon-Fri 10 am-6 pm; Sat, Sun and holidays: 11 pm-6 pm

Admission: €6, reduced €4.50, pupils €3

www.stasimuseum.de



Students on a tour through the Stasi Records Archive in Berlin, photo: BStU/Freiling

School Programs

The Stasi Records Agency educates about dictatorship through teacher seminars and projects for students at the historic site of the Stasi headquarters. The educational programs can be combined with a visit to the Stasi Archive, the Stasi Museum or a tour of the historic grounds. The BStU also provides material designed especially for schools. The source material presents examples of teenagers who were persecuted by the Stasi, young people who became Stasi collaborators, and official Stasi employees performing their routine work.

Events

The BStU uses various public platforms to promote a lively exchange of ideas on Stasi-related subjects such as surveillance, conformism, civil courage and resistance. More than 200 events take place each year in Berlin, in the regional offices, and other sites throughout Germany, often in cooperation with other institutions that also address this history.

Internet

The BStU homepage (www.bstu.de) aims to inspire an interest in historic and political education in many different ways. The site offers an overview of the information resources provided by the Stasi Records Agency as well as specialised themes for research on the Stasi. An events calendar shows the events and exhibitions taking place throughout Germany.

Research of selected Stasi records and citizen services can be conducted in different ways. Several collections of key documents from the Stasi archives relating to research areas of the BStU are accessible online. The site also presents a list of all the BStU's publications, some of which are available as PDF files or a databank. The Web site offers detailed information on how to apply to view records and how the Stasi records may be used. The request form to view files is available as a download.

Stasi Mediathek

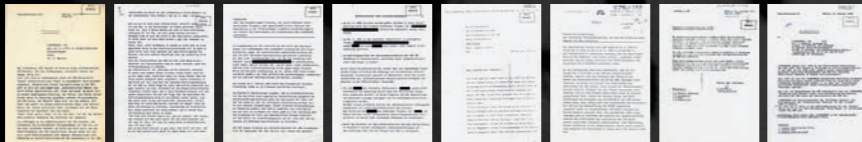
Geschichte



Udo rockt für den Weltfrieden

Nur einen einzigen Auftritt hatte Udo Lindenberg in der DDR. Am 25. Oktober 1983 spielte der westdeutsche Rocker 15 Minuten beim Friedensfestival der „Freien Deutschen Jugend“ (FDJ) in Ostberlin. In dieser Hochphase des „Kalten Krieges“ löste der Auftritt bei der Stasi einen umfangreichen Einsatz aus, nicht zuletzt, weil Udo Lindenberg ein steter Kritiker der Berliner Mauer war.

> Zur Geschichte



Vivid examples provide insight into the mentality and actions of the Stasi.

“Stasi Media Centre” – Original: Stasi-Mediathek

The online “Stasi Media Centre” – Original: Stasi-Mediathek – is a window into the Stasi Records Archive. Thousands of pages of documents, hundreds of photo series, and many hours of audio and video material provide an in-depth view of the methods and activities of the Stasi.

The “Stasi Media Centre” invites the public to gather their own impression of the material left behind by the Ministry of State Security (MfS). It is aimed both at users with little previous knowledge as well as experts in the field. Specially arranged texts and an explanation of terms help people to better understand the complex content.

The website contains general documents and vivid case studies. It provides an overview of the activities, structure and development of the Ministry of State Security over the 40 years of the SED dictatorship.

A modern page design allows for both a rational and emotional approach to the content. All media can be explored in full text through a word-based search. Collections arranged by topic provide an uncomplicated view of events and personal fates. They show how the Stasi intervened in the lives of people in the GDR. The “Stasi Media Centre” can be accessed from a desktop computer as well as from tablets and smartphones. Currently it is only available in German.

www.stasi-mediathek.de



Specialised library in the Stasi Records Agency, photo: BStU/Böttcher

Research

The authentic Stasi documents provide a broad range of source material for research into the structures, operating mechanisms, mentalities, work methods and historic impact of the GDR secret police. The historians and scholars working for the Federal Commissioner for Stasi Records conduct basic research and publish numerous studies and primary source editions. In addition to several monographs, there are a few key publications worthy of special note: the MfS lexicon and the handbook “Anatomie der Staatssicherheit”, which both provide well-grounded information about the MfS; and the ZAIG volume of documents, a collection of secret reports sent by the MfS to the SED leadership from 1953 to 1989. These publications can be purchased through the BStU, the Internet or bookstores, and are also available in the BStU library. Many of these publications can be downloaded for free from the BStU homepage: www.bstu.de.

Specialised Library

The library in the Education and Research Department is a specialized scholarly library. It contains publications on subjects relevant to the reappraisal of the East German secret police and the communist regime of East Germany. The reference library supports the work of the agency’s staff, but is also open to anyone interested in this subject.

In addition to books, the library’s holdings, most of which are freely accessible, include journals and newspapers and numerous audio-visual media (CD, DVD and CD-ROM). The library maintains a large archive of German-language newspapers.

Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 31/33, 10178 Berlin
Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs 8:30 am–4 pm; Wed 10 am–6 pm,
Fri 8:30 am–2:30 pm

Torn Documents



Torn documents stored in bags, photo: BStU/Dresen

Manual Reconstruction

During the Peaceful Revolution of 1989/90, the MfS tried to destroy or make unusable as many documents as possible. Documents that recorded social-political repression were to be eradicated to cover up evidence of injustice in the GDR. The destruction was stopped when the Stasi offices were stormed.

In 1995, work began to put the fragmented documents back together. Thousands of pages of texts were made accessible again, including documents on the surveillance and persecution of well-known figures in the opposition movement and critics of the regime such as Robert Havemann and Jürgen Fuchs.

Virtual Reconstruction

Without increasing staff, it would take many decades to put all these documents back together by hand. Thus in 2008 the German Bundestag agreed to fund a pilot project that would use computers to speed up the reconstruction process. The Fraunhofer Institute for Production Systems and Design Technology (IPK) began developing a software program for the BStU that would be able to reassemble the fragments on the basis of similar features such as torn edges, colour and handwriting. Tens of thousands of pages have already been reconstructed using the “ePuzzler”, which began functioning in late 2013. After the documents are reassembled, they are compiled into files and cases in the archive. The project has been a basic success, but its automation and speed requires further development. Additional funds were provided for this by the German Bundestag in 2015. After the pilot project is completed, the Bundestag will decide whether virtual reconstruction should be applied on a much larger scale.

Regional Reappraisal Work



Former Stasi remand prison in Rostock, photo: BStU

The archives in the regional offices of the BStU provide concrete evidence of the Stasi's influence throughout the entire country. The BStU maintains offices in 12 of the 14 former GDR district capitals outside of Berlin, assuring a citizen-centred and regional reassessment of the Stasi documents. The regional offices in Dresden, Erfurt, Frankfurt (Oder), Rostock and Halle also maintain information and documentation centres.

These regional offices of the BStU organise special events and exhibitions, and work with schools to address various aspects of the repressive system in the GDR. Special emphasis is placed on the Stasi's regional influence. These offices have made a number of travelling exhibitions available to schools, memorial sites and public institutions. The files contain many documents on life and living conditions in the GDR as observed by the Stasi – for example the surveillance measures in the districts, environmental conditions in Leipzig, the nuclear power plant in Stendal, the shipyards in Rostock and the Uranium mines in the south of East Germany (Wismut). Exhibitions on these and other subjects can be borrowed free of charge from the regional offices.

The Documentation and Memorial Site in Rostock



The former Stasi remand prison in Rostock today is transformed into a documentation and memorial site (DuG). After the prison was built in 1959, thousands of prisoners were held there in pre-trial detention from 1960 to 1989, mostly for political reasons. In the DuG, visitors can view the cell block and original cells. On tours visitors see the prison yard, dark cells and prisoner transport vans. A permanent exhibition depicts everyday life in the Stasi remand prison and describes how the Stasi operated in the region of Rostock.

*Hermannstraße 34 b, 18055 Rostock
(entrance across from the supermarket)*

Telephone: 0381 498-5651, E-Mail: dug-rostock@bstu.bund.de

Hours: March to October: Tues–Fri 10 am–6 pm, Sat 10 am–5 pm

November to February: Tues–Fri 9 am–5 pm, Sat 10 am–5 pm

Closed on Sunday, Monday and holidays

Public tours: Wednesday and Saturday at 2 pm (in German)

Admission is free

“Campus for Democracy”



Grounds of the former Stasi headquarters in Berlin-Lichtenberg, photo: BStU/Dresen

Stasi City, Normannenstraße Documentation Centre and Memorial, Stasi Museum, Learning Centre in the Stasi Headquarters, Educational Site on Repression and Resistance, Stasi Records Archive – there are many different names for the grounds and buildings that make up the former State Security headquarters. Another idea is to convert the grounds into a “Campus for Democracy”. The former Stasi headquarters in Berlin-Lichtenberg would be an ideal place to help people grasp the phenomenon of dictatorship, thus reinforcing the social and political awareness of the importance of democracy.

The idea of creating a “Stasi headquarters learning centre” is an invitation to government and social institutions to continue developing these grounds 25 years after the Peaceful Revolution. In addition to the Stasi Museum and Stasi Records Archive, which are now established institutions in Berlin’s landscape of historic reappraisal, the grounds have the potential for more. In 2016, for example, the Robert Havemann Society plans to present an open-air exhibition on the Peaceful Revolution in the inner courtyard of the former Stasi headquarters.

The “Expert Commission on the Future of the Agency of the BStU”, which was appointed by the German Bundestag in July 2014, also deliberates on the future of the grounds. It is expected to develop recommendations for the “... conceptual and spatial use of the authentic site at Normannenstraße while taking into account the previous uses of the site and other sites involved in historical reappraisal of the SED dictatorship.”

History of the BStU



Jürgen Fuchs viewing his files on 2 January 1992, photo: Peter Wensierski

- ❶ **Winter 1989/90:**
The Stasi offices and later the Stasi headquarters in Berlin are seized.
- ❷ **August 1990:**
The *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber) resolves to open the files and passes a law to safeguard and regulate the use of Stasi documents.
- ❸ **September 1990:**
A clause is added to the Unification Treaty calling for a law that contains the basic elements of the *Volkskammer* law and also for the appointment of a special federal commissioner to oversee the Stasi records.
- ❹ **October 1990:**
Joachim Gauck is appointed Special Commissioner when the Unification Treaty comes into effect.
- ❺ **December 1991:**
When the Stasi Records Law comes into effect, the "Special Commissioner" is renamed "The Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic".
- ❻ **January 1992:**
Citizens are able to view their files for the first time.
- ❼ **September 2000:**
The Bundestag elects Marianne Birthler as Commissioner.
- ❽ **January 2011:**
The Bundestag elects Roland Jahn as Commissioner.

The BStU and its Regional Offices



BStU main offices in Berlin-Mitte, photo: Franz Brück

The headquarters of the Federal Commissioner for Stasi Records is located in Berlin. Regional offices exist in twelve former district capitals of the GDR: Chemnitz, Dresden, Erfurt, Frankfurt (Oder), Gera, Halle, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Neubrandenburg, Rostock, Schwerin and Suhl. Potsdam and Cottbus maintain counselling offices.

Citizens can apply to view their files in any of the offices regardless of their place of residence. Special events and exhibitions are also open to the general public.

More information on the work of the BStU is available online at: www.bstu.bund.de/EN

Contact information in Berlin

Central office in Berlin

Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 31/33 | 10178 Berlin-Mitte
Mailing address: 10106 Berlin
Tel.: 030 2324-50 | E-Mail: post@bstu.bund.de

Citizen's counselling office

Personal counselling is available at the following times:
Mon–Thurs 8 am–12 pm and 1 pm–5 pm, Fri 8 am–2 pm
Telephone counselling and appointments: 030 2324-7000

Research and media inquiries

AU 5 | AU 6
Tel.: 030 2324-9051 / -9061 | Fax: 030 2324-9059 / -9069
E-Mail: GZ.AU5@bstu.bund.de | GZ.AU6@bstu.bund.de

Stasi Records Archive in Berlin

Ruschestraße 103, Entrance House 7 | 10365 Berlin
Tel.: 030 2324-6699 | Fax: 030 2324-6619
E-Mail: archivfuehrungen@bstu.bund.de

Education and Research Department

Tel.: 030 2324-8801
Fax: 030 2324-8809
E-Mail: GZ.BF@bstu.bund.de

Specialised Library

Hours:
Mon, Tues, Thurs 8:30 am–4:30 pm
Wed 10 am–6 pm
Fri 8:30 am–14:30 pm

Tel.: 030 2324-8862
Fax: 030 2324-8819
E-Mail: bibliothek@bstu.bund.de

History and Political Education and Exhibitions

Tel.: 030 2324-8831
Fax: 030 2324-8839
E-Mail: GZ.BF3@bstu.bund.de

Regional Offices of the BStU

Regional Office Chemnitz

Jagdschänkenstraße 52 | 09117 Chemnitz
Tel.: 0371 8082-0 | E-Mail: astchemnitz@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Dresden

Riesaer Straße 7 | 01129 Dresden
Tel.: 0351 2508-0 | E-Mail: astdresden@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Erfurt

Petersberg Haus 19 | 99084 Erfurt
Tel.: 0361 5519-0 | E-Mail: asterfurt@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Frankfurt (Oder)

Fürstenwalder Poststraße 87 | 15234 Frankfurt
Tel.: 0335 6068-0 | E-Mail: astfrankfurt@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Gera

Hermann-Drechsler-Straße 1, Haus 3 | 07548 Gera
Tel.: 0365 5518-0 | E-Mail: astgera@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Halle

Blücherstraße 2 | 06122 Halle (Saale)
Tel.: 0345 6141-0 | E-Mail: asthalle@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Leipzig

Dittrichring 24 | 04109 Leipzig
Tel.: 0341 2247-0 | E-Mail: astleipzig@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Magdeburg

Georg-Kaiser-Straße 7 | 39116 Magdeburg
Tel.: 0391 6271-0 | E-Mail: astmagdeburg@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Neubrandenburg

Neustrelitzer Straße 120 | 17033 Neubrandenburg
Tel.: 0395 7774-0 | E-Mail: astneubrandenburg@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Rostock

Straße der Demokratie 2 | 18196 Waldeck-Dummerstorf
Tel.: 038208 826-0 | E-Mail: astrostock@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Schwerin

Resthof 2 | 19065 Görslow
Tel.: 03860 503-0 | E-Mail: astschwerin@bstu.bund.de

Regional Office Suhl

Weidbergstraße 34 | 98527 Suhl
Tel.: 03681 456-0 | E-Mail: astsuhl@bstu.bund.de

Beratungsstelle Cottbus

Karl-Marx-Straße 67 | 03044 Cottbus

Date: August 2015



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