

View of the Stormed Headquarters of the Office for National Security (formerly of the Ministry for State Security) in the East Berlin Neighborhood of Lichtenberg (January 15, 1990)

Abstract

While the district administrations of the Office for National Security (AfNS) in Erfurt, Leipzig, and Rostock were occupied as early as December 4, 1989, the central office of the AfNS in East Berlin was initially able to continue its work without any disruption. Frustrated by this fact, representatives of regional citizens' committees met in East Berlin on January 14, 1990, to dissolve the state security apparatus. They decided to occupy the AfNS headquarters (formerly the Stasi headquarters) the following day, and to work together with district attorneys and the police to seal off individual rooms and secure the building. In the meantime, Berlin's New Forum had also scheduled a demonstration in front of the building for the afternoon of January 15. When a small delegation representing the citizens' movement attempted to enter the central office of the AfNS at noontime on January 15, it was allowed unhindered entry for the purpose of an "Ortsbegehung" (inspection tour). Military district attorneys and the police had already sealed off several "sensitive" rooms earlier. During the afternoon, about 50,000 demonstrators gathered in front of the gates of the building and demanded that they be opened. The representatives of the citizens' movement eventually succeed in opening the gates; demonstrators poured into the building and occupied it. This led in part to chaos, as can be seen in this photo. That same night, a group of citizens founded a committee for the purpose of occupying the AfNS central office. With this, the foundation was laid for the dismantling of the state security apparatus.

Source



Source: picture-alliance/dpa (c) dpa-Bildarchiv

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