

# The “Rote Ochse” - History of a Prison

1838-1842	Erection of the Royal Prussian “Penal and Reform Facility” outside the gates of Halle
1848/49	First detention of political prisoners after the revolution
1933	Incorporation of the "Rote Ochse" in the Nazi penal system
1935	Reorganisation of the prison to a hard labour penal facility
1942 - 1945	Execution of 549 prisoners
17 <sup>th</sup> April 1945	Liberation of the prisoners by the US Army
1 <sup>st</sup> July 1945	Handover of the “Rote Ochse” to Soviet occupying forces
1945 - 1952	Use of the penal facility for military tribunals and as a detention centre
1950 - 1989	Use of parts of the building complex as a remand centre by the Ministry for State Security of the GDR
1990	Incorporation of the prison in the judicial and penal system of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt
1996	Handover of the “Rote Ochse” memorial to the public
2002-2006	Comprehensive restoration of the memorial and construction of a new permanent exhibition

## The Memorial

Both permanent exhibitions document the history of the “Rote Ochse” in the years 1933 to 1945, and 1945 to 1989.

On the ground floor - the former execution rooms – there is a presentation on the history of the National Socialist dictatorship.

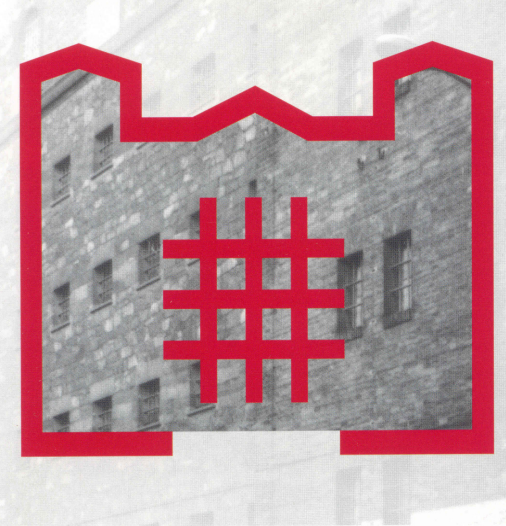
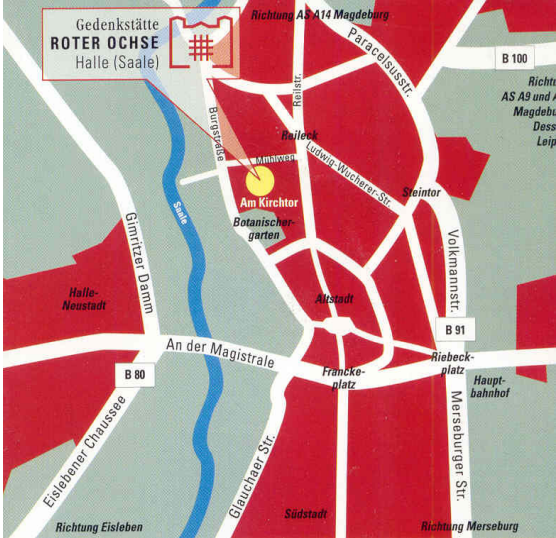
On the first floor, next to the Stasi vault for personal effects, it is possible to view a reconstructed cell. The special exhibitions are also located here.

On the second floor there is an exhibition dedicated to the Soviet Military Tribunals and the Stasi remand centre.

On the top floor there are seminar rooms and a PC-area.

In the former guards house there is a film about the construction history of the “Rote Ochse”.

Separate signs provide information about individual parts of the building complex.



Gedenkstätte  
**ROTER OCHSE**  
Halle (Saale)

Am Kirchtor 20b – 06108 Halle (Saale)  
Tel: (0345) 2201337 – Fax: (0345) 2201339  
[www.info-roterochse@stgs-sachsen-anhalt.de](http://www.info-roterochse@stgs-sachsen-anhalt.de)

**Tuesdays – Fridays:**  
10 am – 4 pm  
**Every first and third weekend each month:**  
1 pm – 5 pm  
Entrance free.

Tram connections:  
Line 7 alighting at "Hermanstraße"  
Line 8 alighting at  
"Peißnitzstraße/Diakoniewerk"

With the benevolent support of the Federal Government, the Culture and Media Commission and the "Stiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur"

The ROTE OCHSE Halle (Saale) memorial is part of the Memorial Foundation of Saxony-Anhalt.

## The ROTE OCHSE Halle (Saale)

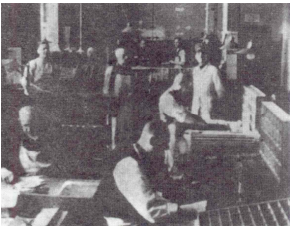
**Political Justice**  
**1933 – 1945**  
**1945 – 1989**

Gedenkstätte  
**ROTER OCHSE**  
Halle (Saale)

## National Social

Shortly after Adolf Hitler was named Reich Chancellor, the “Rote Ochse” started to be incorporated into the penal system of the Third Reich. The complex of buildings located at Am Kirchtor (by the Church Gate) was then used by the National Socialists to imprison political opponents and those who did not fit in with the “ethnic community” on racial or religious grounds. Many of them served long sentences in the prison, which was converted into a hard labour penal facility in November 1935. With the start of the Second World War, the Nazi leadership tried to stabilise its power via ever more brutal means. These attempts peaked in 1942 with the

erection of a place of execution. By the end of the war, the executioner at the Halle hard labour penal facility had passed the death sentence on 549 people from 15 European countries



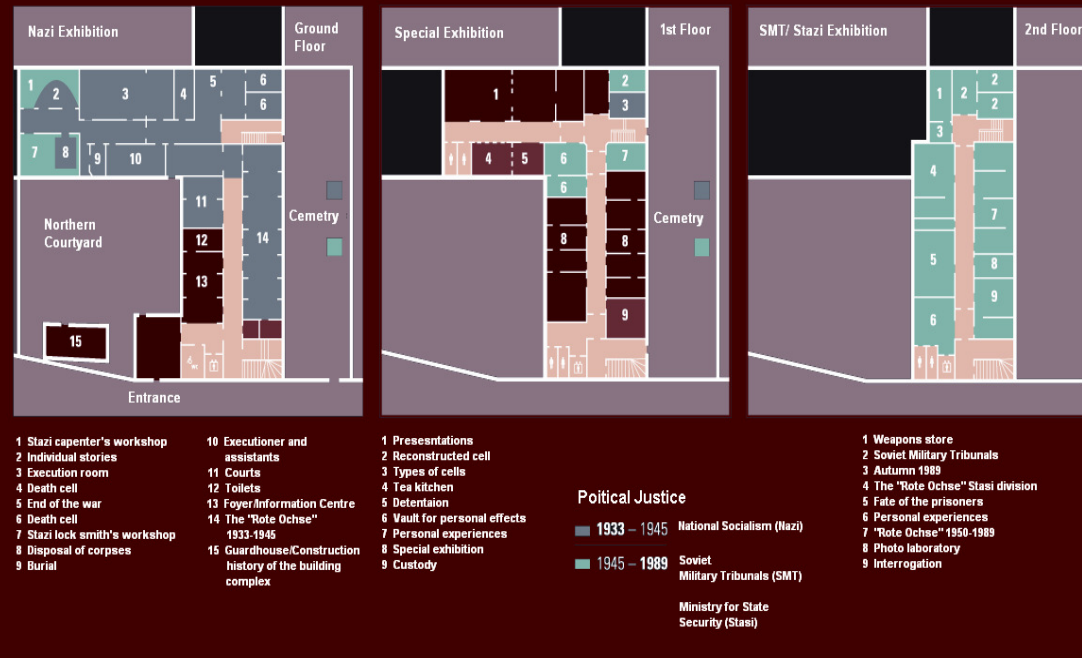
This picture, taken in 1938, shows prisoners and an enforcement officer in the typesetting workshop

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The wording on the notice is supposed to suggest that the father of six underage children is a hardened criminal.

Executed in “Rote Ochse”: 24 year old Polish resistance fighter, Krystyna Wituska



## Exercises and Educational Opportunities

This is a memorial to the victims of the National Socialist dictatorship. It is also dedicated to the victims of the periods when the “Rote Ochse” was used by the Soviet Military Tribunals and as a remand centre by the Ministry for State Security.

Visitors to this building – in particular schools and other educational institutions – may make use of the following opportunities:

- **Guided tours** and **presentations** on a range of individual topics
- **Seminars/project days** on the following:

### 1933 – 1945

- Nazi special and military jurisdiction
- Victims of Nazis justice
- Legal officials as offenders
- Liberation of Halle by the US Army

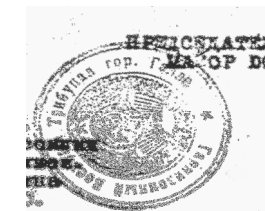
### 1945 – 1989

- Denazification in Halle
- Soviet Military Tribunals/concentration camps/GULAG
- 17<sup>th</sup> June 1953 in Halle
- Victims of the Stasi and SED justice
- Stasi employees as offenders
- Disbandment of the Stasi

All educational opportunities are offered free of charge. Groups are requested to register at least one week in advance.

## Soviet Occupation/GDR

In July 1945 the Soviet occupying power took command of the “Rote Ochse”. The complex of buildings was not only used to imprison actual and suspected Nazis but also those being tracked as political opponents. Soviet Military Tribunals (SMT) passed hundreds of judgements here. Even today, the number of death sentences passed by the SMTs in the “Rote Ochse” is unknown. Reliable details about the number of those who died in the concentration and work camps after being transported from the Halle penal facility are also missing.



Stamp of the SMT Garrison Halle, 1950

In Autumn 1950 the Ministry of State Security (Stasi), one of the most important instruments in maintaining the leadership of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands

(SED), took command of parts of the “Rote Ochse”. It then installed a remand centre (UHA).



Cell furniture



Relic of the Stasi-UHA: lit sign outside the interrogation room

By 1989 the Stasi had detained approx 8,100 men and 1,600 women in the UHA which had been responsible for the district of Halle since 1952. The detainees were regarded by the SED leadership as political opponents. The Stasi-UHA “Rote Ochse” ceased to exist in December 1989.