

Crowd at a Polling Station in Gransee/Brandenburg on the Day of the Regional and Parliamentary Elections (October 17, 1954)

Abstract

On July 14, 1945, the anti-Fascist parties in the Soviet occupation zone (SPD, KPD, CDU, and LDP) decided to form the “Unified Front of the Anti-fascist Democratic Parties,” called the “Antifa-block.” After the KPD and the Eastern SPD had been coerced to merge to form the SED in April 1946, the Communists increased their efforts to establish their claim to leadership in the block. The Democratic Farmers’ Party of Germany and the National Democratic Party of Germany were founded under the guiding control of the SED, and in August/September 1948 they were included in the block, along with the Free German Trade Union Federation, in order to ensure the SED’s dominant control. For the same reason, the Free German Youth, the Democratic Women’s Association of Germany, and the GDR Cultural League also became part of the block later on. Since the block parties recognized the leading role of the SED, they were virtual conveyor belts for SED policies. The unified-list principle had been in effect since the election to the Third German People’s Congress in May 1949, further ensuring SED majorities and turning elections into a form of acclamation. On October 17, 1954, the “elections” for the regional conferences and the People’s Parliament [*Volkskammer*] took place; under the circumstances, only the rate of participation – 98.4 percent – was surprising; the vote for the unified list – 99.45 percent – was not.

Source



Source: Large crowd at a polling station in Gransee on the day of the Volkskammer election. Photo: Hildegard Dreyer.

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