

Eisenhüttenkombinat Ost [Steelworks Combine East] **(October 1951)**

Abstract

To safeguard GDR steel production and build up heavy industry (a central objective of the first Five-Year Plan), the SED's 3rd Party Congress (July 20-24, 1950) resolved to build the *Eisenhüttenkombinat Ost* [Steelworks Combine East]. Work began almost immediately, and on January 1, 1951, the foundation stone for the first blast furnace was laid near the city of Fürstenberg on the Oder River a few miles from the Polish border. The choice of location was largely symbolic: the SED hoped to underscore the brotherhood between East Germans and Poles (and the Eastern bloc as a whole) by producing "peace steel" [*Friedensstahl*] from Ukrainian iron ore and Polish coal on German soil. But the party also hoped that the steelworks would boost the regional economy and provide jobs for the rural population. The first blast furnace became operational in October 1951. Taken shortly thereafter, the photograph below features a sign that reads: "Our first iron is proof of the economic rise of our republic." By 1954, a total of six furnaces had been built.

Source



Source: At the blast furnace shortly after commissioning of the first blast furnace. Sign with slogan: "Our first iron is proof of the economic success in our republic!" Photo: Herbert Hensky.

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