

From a Statement by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED (June 16, 1953)

Abstract

Under pressure from the growing protests in East Berlin, the Central Committee of the SED issued a statement on June 16, 1953. According to the statement, increased work quotas were still necessary but would not be carried out in the form stipulated by the ministerial decree from the end of May. Rather, they were to be achieved through voluntary action taken out of conviction. In making this statement, the Central Committee hoped to remove the grounds for worker protests.

Source

1. It will only be possible to build a new life and create better living conditions if productivity improves and production increases. Only by realizing the old party slogan “produce more, live better” was the GDR able to restore and rapidly develop its national economy after the war. This was and remains the only correct path.

For this reason, the Politburo believes that the initiative taken by the most progressive workers, who have voluntarily raised work quotas, is an important step on the path to building a new life – a step that shows the entire nation the way out of the current difficulties.

The Politburo is of the opinion that one of the most important duties of factory managers and party and union organizations is to take measures to improve work organization and production, so that the wages of workers who have raised their quotas can be increased in the near future.

2. *At the same time, the Politburo considers it absolutely wrong to take the administrative route to increase work quotas by 10 percent in enterprises in nationally-owned industries.*

The increase in work quotas cannot and must not be carried out through administrative methods. It can only be based on conviction and voluntary action.

3. *It is proposed that the mandatory increase in output quotas ordered by the various ministries should be given up as improper. The resolution of the government of May 25, 1953, is to be evaluated jointly with union participation.*

Source: “Erklärung des Politbüros des ZK der SED zur Normenfrage” (June 16, 1953), *Neues Deutschland* (June 17, 1953); reprinted in Ernst Deuerlein, ed., *DDR*. Munich, 1966, p. 134.

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