

May Day Demonstrations (1950)

Abstract

The tradition of workers' demonstrations on May 1st, which had existed in Germany since the first strikes of the German Kaiserreich in 1890, after the Second International in Paris in summer 1889 had declared May 1st an international working class holiday, was also preserved in the GDR. But with the adoption of the first GDR constitution in 1949, this day of protest was transformed into a guaranteed state holiday – and, as a result, what was once an opportunity to speak out on behalf of social and political rights became a state-organized ritual. This photograph shows the parade on May 1, 1950, as it passed by the facade of the palace in the Lustgarten in East Berlin. This spot had been recently rededicated to Marx and Engels and was a popular place for such rallies and demonstrations. The demonstrators carry portraits of the SED leaders Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl, as well as of Stalin.

Source



Source: May Day Demonstrations, 1950 in East Berlin. Demonstrators in front of the ruins of the City Palace carry pictures of Pieck, Stalin and Grotewohl. Photo: Herbert Hensky.
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