

May Day Rally in Berlin's Lustgarten (May 1, 1946)

Abstract

This silent film clip shows footage of the first postwar May Day celebrations in Berlin in 1946. After the Allied Control Council had approved May Day as a public holiday and issued permission for parades to be held, several hundred thousand Berliners joined the parade from Brandenburg Gate to the Lustgarten in the Soviet occupied zone, where the leaders of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) gave speeches. In April 1946, the SPD and the KPD had merged to form the SED in the Soviet occupation zone, and all trade unions had been merged in the FDGB. At the podium, Otto Grotewohl, a former Social Democrat and now one of two co-chairmen of the SED, is seen giving a speech while Wilhelm Pieck, the second SED chairman and a former member of the Communist Party, stands to the right of the podium. The footage, which seeks to capture both the political messages on display as well as the crowds, was taken by the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

The banners read: "Never again enmity, but friendship with the Soviet Union," "For the unity of the German nation," "Against militarism and war," and "The working youth fight for democracy and peace."

Source

Source: May Day Demonstration in Lustgarten, Berlin, Germany. May 1, 1946. NARA. NAID: 19726

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