

# National Commemoration of “Day of Liberation” (May 8, 1955)

## Abstract

---

The GDR commemorated and celebrated V-E Day (May 8, 1945) as the “Tag der Befreiung” [Liberation Day] a public holiday. The commemorations on Liberation Day were shaped by Cold War rhetoric and politics. The GDR celebrated itself and the alliance with the Soviet Union in the anti-fascist tradition of the Soviet Union and its army, which had liberated Germany and occupied Europe from fascism. This news segment shows the official celebration of Liberation Day on May 8, 1955, ten years after the end of World War II in Europe. Among the guests were delegates from the Soviet Union, including Georgy Zhukov. The film clip includes a longer segment of a speech by GDR prime minister Otto Grotewohl. Reflecting the ideological divisions during the Cold War, he criticized Western aggression, highlighted the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union, and called for an annulment of the Paris Treaties. In contrast to the GDR, V-E Day never became a public holiday in West Germany.

## Source

---

Source: Aktuelle Kamera, May 8, 1955, accessed through ARD Mediathek (Retro Spezial DDR), Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv,  
<https://www.ardmediathek.de/video/aktuelle-kamera/staatsakt-zum-10-jahrestag-der-befreiung-vom-hitlerfaschismus/ard/Y3JpZDovL2hyLW9ubGluZS8xMTY1MDA>

Recommended Citation: National Commemoration of “Day of Liberation” (May 8, 1955), published in: German History in Documents and Images,  
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:video-5065>> [May 01, 2024].