

Opening of the “Ernst Thälmann” Pioneer Republic at Wuhlheide, East Berlin (May 24, 1950)

Abstract

In mid-October 1949, at the behest of the SED Politburo, the Central Council of the Free German Youth invited young people from both parts of Germany to participate in an all-German youth festival in East Berlin. The aim of this intensively planned event, which was held on May 27-30, 1950, was to mobilize approximately 500,000 young people in support of the SED's *Deutschlandpolitik* (policy on German-German relations). It was extremely difficult to find accommodations for the participants, so that around 20,000 members of the so-called Young Pioneers (the GDR's mass organization for children) were put up in a camp named the “Ernst Thälmann” Pioneer Republic. GDR president Wilhelm Pieck quoted Lenin at the camp's official opening on May 24, 1950: “He who has the youth has the future.” The majority of the young participants came from East Germany, but official sources claimed that between 25,000 and 30,000 youngsters came from the West as well. The highpoint of the youth festival came on May 28, 1950, when hundreds of thousands of young people marched by the dignitaries' stand in the Lustgarten in East Berlin during an eight-hour parade, which, unfortunately, took place in the rain.

Source



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Recommended Citation: Opening of the “Ernst Thälmann” Pioneer Republic at Wuhlheide, East Berlin (May 24, 1950), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:image-2607>> [March 16, 2026].