

Refugees are Transported to West Germany from Berlin's Tempelhof Airport (1953)

Abstract

After the zonal border separating the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic (i.e., the inner-German border) was sealed in 1952, refugees could only leave the GDR via West Berlin. The GDR refugees accepted for admission to West Germany under its emergency admission procedure [*Notaufnahmeverfahren*] were then flown out of the city. Around 20 percent of all applicants for emergency admission were granted the status of “political refugees from the Soviet Zone.” In 1952-53, the flow of refugees from the GDR increased dramatically. In 1952, a total of approximately 185,000 refugees left the GDR for West Germany or West Berlin. These figures swelled to nearly 195,700 in the first six months of 1953 alone. To ease the strain on West Berlin, refugees were flown to West Germany on Allied military aircraft or on planes from private airlines. In March 1953, 1,400 refugees were flown out of the city on a daily basis. Between January and April of that same year, a total of 108,000 refugees left West Berlin by air.

Taken at Tempelhof Airport, this photograph shows officially recognized political refugees boarding a chartered plane from Air Charter Ltd., a British airline.

Source



Source: Recognized political refugees are flown by American military plane from Tempelhof Airport in West Berlin to West Germany. Unknown photographer.
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