

## The Barn and Storehouse of the Hesserode Estate are Torn Down (May 1948)

### Abstract

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Land reform drastically worsened the existing shortage of residences in the countryside; at first, there were only about 16,000 housing units available for the 210,000 “new farmers” to whom land had been allocated. Since the few new building projects hardly made a dent in this shortage, the Soviet Military Administration (SMAD) issued Order No. 209 of September 9, 1947, which called for an ambitious building program: 101,800 new apartment houses were to be built between 1948 and 1950. In the end, however, only 68 percent of the planned units for the year were built in 1948 (including remodeled or expanded units); 57 percent in 1949, and 39 percent in 1950.

At the same time, Order No. 209 also made it possible to demolish estates, supposedly in order to use salvaged building materials for new farmhouses. In actuality, the political motive behind all of this was to destroy the estates, which symbolized Junker domination. According to statistics provided by the Association for Mutual Farmers Assistance [*Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe* or VdGB], by September 1948, about 720 residential buildings and over 6,700 farm buildings had been demolished in the Soviet occupation zone.

Here, we see the demolition of the barn and storehouse at the Hesserode Estate in Thuringia; the former manor house was however being used as a school.

### Source

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Source: The barn and granary of the Hesserode estate are demolished to obtain building materials. The manor house serves as a school. The reason for this was Order 209 of the Soviet Military Administration in

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Germany (SMAD) for the establishment of new farms. Photo: Herbert Hensky.  
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Recommended Citation: The Barn and Storehouse of the Hesserode Estate are Torn Down (May  
1948), published in: German History in Documents and Images,  
<[https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:i  
mage-2550](https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:image-2550)> [May 12, 2024].