

The Politburo's Argumentation Guidelines on the Change in the Quality of Bread (January 29, 1957)

Abstract

In the second half of the 1950s, the GDR government even found it difficult to supply the population with staple items. In January 1957, the government ordered that the percentage of rye in bread be reduced. In response to anticipated criticisms from the population, the government planned to emphasize the superior quality of the new mixed-grain bread and the fact that, unlike in the Federal Republic, the price of bread was not rising in the GDR.

Source

The government of the German Democratic Republic has decided to have a new bread – made of a mixture of 85% rye flour and 15% wheat flour – baked starting next week, in place of the current, pure rye bread. The rye flour used in this bread will be milled out at 4% higher than previously.

This measure is necessary because the production of rye has declined considerably not only in our Republic, but in all countries. Because of this, the demand for rye needed for the previous rye bread is not being met, also in our Republic.

According to unanimous assessments by nutritional scientists and bakers' guild leaders, the quality of the new bread exceeds that of the current rye bread. Although the necessary wheat flour is more expensive than rye flour, the government has decided to leave the price of bread unchanged.

By contrast, in West Germany the bread price has risen in the past few years by more than 50% and is now already DM 0.75 (West) per kilo. According to announcements from upper-level Bonn government agencies, it is supposed to be raised by yet another 5 Pfennigs in the near future. It is clear that these measures will invariably affect the workers primarily.

Every worker in our Republic and in West Germany can see for himself, based on these facts, that concern for the people is our government's highest commandment.

Source: SAPMO-BArch ZPA, J IV 2/2/525; reprinted in Dierk Hoffman, Karl-Heinz Schmidt, and Peter Skyba, eds., *Die DDR vor dem Mauerbau: Dokumente zur Geschichte des anderen deutschen Staates 1949–1961*. Munich: Piper, 1993, pp. 275–76.

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