

A Group of Elderly People at a Bus Stop in East Berlin (1985)

Abstract

The labor shortage in the GDR meant that, in addition to women, the government also tried to attract people of retirement age to the workforce. Nonetheless, the number of employed pensioners declined both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the GDR's retirement-age population: in 1972, for example, 677,000 pensioners were employed (22.7% of the pensioner population), whereas only 265,000 were employed in 1988 (9.9%). The People's Solidarity organization oversaw the recruitment of pensioners; it also tried to compensate for the shortage of places in senior living facilities and nursing homes by arranging social activities for the aged, as well as ambulant care. Although the Five-Year Plan of 1981 to 1985 aimed to increase the capacity of residential and care facilities by 18,000–19,000 spots, shortages remained a problem until the end of the GDR. In 1989, more than 160,000 applications were filed for spots in these facilities.

Source



Source: A group of elderly citizens wait for the bus at a bus stop in East Berlin, July 1985. Photo: Volker Döring.

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