Jugendweihe in East Berlin (1979)

Abstract

At the beginning of the 1950s, the SED decided to introduce the *Jugendweihe* as a secular alternative to religious confirmation for GDR youth. The idea was opposed by the churches but implemented nonetheless. To avoid the potentially negative effects of non-participation on educational and professional advancement, young people participated in these ceremonies in growing numbers. In the process, the ritual became a common family celebration. The *Jugendweihe*, which took place at the end of 8th grade, also served as a symbolic rite of passage or initiation into the “ranks of adulthood.” The propagandistic thrust of these events, however, is clearly conveyed by the poster seen in this photograph of a *Jugendweihe* ceremony in East Berlin in 1979. It reads: “To do everything for the good of the people—that is the meaning of socialism.” Photo by Manfred Uhlenhut.

Source

Source: *Jugendweihe* (a kind of secular confirmation ceremony for GDR youth). Date: 1979. Location: East Berlin. Photo: Manfred Uhlenhut.
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