



Volume 8. Occupation and the Emergence of Two States, 1945-1961
Statute of the Free German Youth (May 12-15, 1959)

Whereas the Free German Youth [*Freie Deutsche Jugend* or FDJ], the central mass organization for youth in the GDR, at least formally embraced independence and non-partisanship in its early years, this statute from 1959 was completely focused on the political program of the SED and on building up the Socialist state in East Germany. The FDJ now conceived of itself as the party's unofficial organization for the next generation, and its practical work focused on educating East German youth and shaping their leisure activities in the service of Socialism. That work also included the active defense of Socialism, since the statute explicitly called for the readiness of FDJ members to participate in paramilitary training and later to serve in the National People's Army, the military forces of the GDR.

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The Free German Youth is the Socialist mass organization of the youth.

It unites in its ranks, on a voluntary basis, the working-class and rural youth, the young intelligentsia, pupils and students, and the youth of the middle class.

As a uniform mass organization of the youth, it continuously embodies and solidifies the political and organizational unity of the young generation that has been forged in the German Democratic Republic. The Free German Youth represents the political, economic, and cultural interests of all young people in the German Democratic Republic.

As the friendship league of all boys and girls, it wages the battle for peace and Socialism. It leads the entire youth on the path of the struggle for peace, for the completion of the building up of Socialism in the GDR, against militarism and nuclear armament in West Germany, and for the national rebirth of Germany as a peace-loving, democratic state on the road to a confederation of the two German states.

The Free German Youth carries on the progressive traditions of the German young workers' movement. It fulfills the legacy of the young heroes who, boldly and daringly, following the example of Karl Liebknecht and Ernst Thälmann, fought against militarism, Fascism, and imperialist war, for a happy future for the German youth, and who gave their lives for this. The members of the Free German Youth strive to fight, work, and live like the honorary president of the FDJ, Wilhelm Pieck, who is a shining example for every young citizen.

In its work, the Free German Youth is directed by the guiding decrees and council of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, because its policy, based on the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, is in line with the life interests of the nation and the youth, because the party of the working class shows the youth the right way into a brightly shining future.

The Free German Youth educates the youth to love the working class and its party. It is guided by scientific Socialism and raises the young generation on this basis. The circle of young Socialists is a permanent institution of the GDR, especially for the class-appropriate education of young workers.

The Free German Youth helps all young people to become young patriots who are educated all-around, full of life, cultured, and healthy.

Through cultivation of the body and sports, it aims to educate the youth to become healthy persons, to develop in it qualities such as courage, strength, and endurance, and to promote agility and grace.

The Free German Youth is a community of young people who come together with all youth at work, study, sport, music, song, and dance, and develop a joyous life. The German youth has its true fatherland in the German Democratic Republic. That is why the members of the Free German Youth employ all their powers to further strengthen their workers' and farmers' state, and through their example win over the entire youth for participation in this work of peace.

The members of the Free German Youth regard it as their honor and duty to defend, selflessly and full of sacrifice, peace, their Socialist homeland, and the great achievements of the workers' and farmers' state, and to acquire pre-military knowledge and skills. Service in the armed organs of the German Democratic Republic is a duty of honor for every member of the Free German Youth.

Fraternally connected to the Free Federation of German Trade Unions, the largest mass organization of the workers in the German Democratic Republic, the Free German Youth develops the class-consciousness of young workers in city and countryside, so that they will live up to their responsibility as the core of our Socialist youth league.

The Free German Youth is an inseparable part of the National Front of the Democratic Germany. It works closely with all democratic parties, organizations, and patriotic forces. Through its active work, the FDJ contributes to solidifying the moral-political unity of our nation.

The Free German Youth, as the strongest youth organization in Germany, promotes all efforts that serve the joint struggle of the entire German youth for the preservation of peace, for a confederation of the two German states, for a united, democratic, and peace-loving Germany, against imperialism, militarism, Fascism, and the preparations for nuclear war in the Western zone. It awakens in the hearts of the youth a passionate hatred for and revulsion against the

militarism in West Germany, against all enemies of the youth who threaten their life and happy future.

In the spirit of brotherly bonds, the Free German Youth especially champions a deepening of relations with young workers in West Germany. It supports all measures by the democratic West German youth organizations that serve peace and the creation of democratic conditions in West Germany. The FDJ is helper and comrade to all young patriots of West Germany who advocate peace and the happiness of the young generation.

The Free German Youth acts in accordance with the principles of proletarian internationalism and friendship among nations. It educates the young generation to love and respect all nations. It fights resolutely against chauvinism and war-mongering. [. . .]

Source: *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Freien Deutschen Jugend* [Documents on the History of the Free German Youth], Vol. 4, East Berlin, 1963, p. 11 f; reprinted in Dierk Hoffmann and Michael Schwartz, eds., *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*. Bd. 8: 1949-1961: *Deutsche Demokratische Republik. Im Zeichen des Aufbaus des Sozialismus* [History of Social Policy in Germany since 1945, Vol. 8: 1949-1961: German Democratic Republic. Under the Sign of the Build Up of Socialism]. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004, no. 8/196.

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