

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Date of Elections: October 17, 1976

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of the German Democratic Republic, the *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber) consists of 500 seats: 434 filled through election by popular vote and 66 filled by members representing Berlin, who are elected by the Municipal Assembly of East Berlin.

All deputies have 5-year terms of office.

Electoral System

Every citizen of the GDR who is at least 18 years old on election day and resides in the country has the right to vote and to be elected to the *Volkskammer*, unless he is under tutelage or detention, imprisoned or insane.

Electoral lists are established at least 21 days prior to the polling day and are publicly displayed for two weeks. Voting is not compulsory.

Candidates for the *Volkskammer* are nominated 30 to 40 days before election day by parties and mass organizations, which may present their proposals in a joint list of candidates of the National Front of the GDR. Voters may propose changes in the list(s) up to five days before the elections.

The 434 deputies are elected in 67 constituencies, each choosing from four to eight members, depending on its population. To be elected, a candidate must receive more than half of the valid votes cast in his constituency. If, within a constituency, an insufficient number of candidates obtain the required absolute majority needed to fill all the seats, a second ballot is held within 90 days. If the number of candidates winning this majority exceeds the number of seats in the respective constituency, the order of the candidates on the election list is decisive. Elected candidates who, on this basis, receive no seat become successor candidates who fill vacancies in the *Volkskammer* which occur during a legislative period.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The 1976 elections for the *Volkskammer* coincided with those for the country's 14 regional assemblies and for the Municipal Assembly of East Berlin.

Political parties and mass organizations — all belonging to the National Front of the German Democratic Republic — which participated in the poll included the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the National Democratic Party (NDPD), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPD), the Democratic Farmers' Party (DBD), the Democratic Women's League (DFD), the Free German Youth (FDJ), the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB) and the German League of Culture (DKB). Candidates from these groups appearing on the official Front list numbered 591; 434 (excluding the Berlin representatives) were elected, the remaining 157 becoming substitute deputies.

At its first meeting on October 29, the *Volkskammer* chose Mr. Willi Stoph as Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Volkskammer*

Number of registered voters	11,425,194
Voters	11,262,946 (98.58%)
Blank or void ballot papers	2,616
Valid votes	11,260,330
<i>Votes in favour of the National Front of theGDR.</i>	11,245,023

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Number of Seats
National Front of the German Democratic	591	434*

* 66 additional deputies are elected by the Municipal Assembly of East Berlin.

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category*

Workers.	235
Salaried employees.	127
Intellectuals.	76
Members of agricultural productive co-operatives, individual farmers, market gardeners, fishermen	60
Others.	<u>2</u>
	500

3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men.	332
Women.	<u>168</u>
	500

4. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group*

18-20 years.	15
21-25.	25
26-30.	20
31-40.	77
41-50.	200
51-65.	130
Over 65.	<u>33</u>
	500