

June 17, 1953

**Cable from the Czechoslovak Mission in Berlin to
Foreign Minister Vaclav David, 4:30 p.m.**

Citation:

"Cable from the Czechoslovak Mission in Berlin to Foreign Minister Vaclav David, 4:30 p.m.", June 17, 1953, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Security Archive/CWIHP, READD Collection. Provided by Andreij Edemsky (Moscow). Translated by Oldrich Tuma (Prague). <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/111312>

Summary:

Flash Cable from the Czechoslovak Mission in Berlin to the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister reporting on the situation in East Germany following the popular uprising. The cable reports workers asking for the formation of a new government and free elections. The cable also reports sporadic clashes between the demonstrators and the East German security forces and Soviet forces.

Original Language:

Czech

Contents:

Translation - English

Receiving number: 6569/53 Sent by: Berlin information Received: [6/17/53] at 4:30 PM
 Attention: I. Referred: [6/17/53] at 5:30 PM Assigned to: Comrade Minister of Foreign Affairs David
 Situation at 12:00 [noon]. The demonstrators have entirely left Unter den Linden, and are saying that attacks on the Soviet occupying forces must not occur anywhere, as the demonstrators are not fighting the Soviets. Clashes took place between demonstrators and groups of the People's Police and the FDJ only around the House of Ministries. These were not, however, repeated. The mood among the strikers is at times militant, and SED members speaking with the demonstrators have been very sharply attacked and driven off. The masses from Potsdamer Platz and the streets around the House of Ministries building began to move through the pouring rain towards Marx-Engels-Platz, where more and more are gathering. Everywhere one can hear the demand for Ulbricht or any other responsible functionary to speak, though no one from the government has spoken yet today. The People's Police are nowhere to be seen around Marx-Engels-Platz, and there is relative order here. Individual workers speaking from the podium are repeating the growing demand: a general strike for the creation of a new government and the holding of free elections. They announce that the metal workers from Hennigsdorf along with workers from other factories are marching to the square. We do not have accurate reports from the individual large factories, but have heard that [factories in] Brandenburg and the large factories of Berlin and north of Berlin have gone on strike. From GDR radio reports to the effect that the railway workshops in Revalerstrasse (2,500 workers) and the power station in Klingenberg are not on strike, it is possible to conclude that everywhere else is, at least partially. Public city transport, electrical, underground and high-speed rail are all partially at a standstill, and within the city nothing is moving. In the streets there are many cases of demonstrators overturning cars and breaking shop windows and Interior Ministry propaganda billboards. In front of our Mission they broke the Interior Ministry billboard on the corner and shouted, "but your turn will come too." The SED CC had its windows broken, Soviet soldiers have now come to the entrance and occupied the streets around the CC to protect it. Demonstrators burned a kiosk on Unter den Linden next to the Soviet Embassy. Soviet detachments, tanks, and armored cars are constantly cruising the city. Near Alexanderplatz, demonstrators burned 4 police cars and one government vehicle. A radio car was brought to the sector borders, and Social Democrat [Ernst] Scharnowski spoke. A demonstration has been called for 6 p.m. in West Berlin. In the streets the demonstrators are singing Prussian military songs. At 1:30 p.m. Berlin radio announced the declaration of a state of emergency. A Soviet tank near our Commercial Mission fired a shot into the air. All news up to 2.00 p.m. Hlavác 1165