

June 18, 1953

**Secret Telephone Report by V. Semenov and V.
Sokolovski in Berlin to V. M. Molotov, 18 June 1953,
Morning**

Citation:

"Secret Telephone Report by V. Semenov and V. Sokolovski in Berlin to V. M. Molotov, 18 June 1953, Morning", June 18, 1953, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVP RF, f. 82, op. 41, por. 93, p. 280, ll. 13-15. Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie (CWIHP).
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/111785>

Summary:

On June 18th the Soviets began actively to include German organizations and SED party organizations to restore order in Berlin. At 9:30 a.m. at the Brandenburg gates, employees of the people's police of the GDR were fired upon from the direction of West Berlin. The people's police fired several shots in return, as a result of which one West Berlin policeman was killed.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

[The following is an excerpt from a secret telephonogram by V. Semenov and V. Sokolovskii in Berlin to V. M. Molotov, dated 18 June 1953, describing the situation in East Germany on the morning of June 18.54]"We are reporting about the situation in Berlin and the GDR at 2 p.m. (Berlin time) on June 18. Today efforts to restore order in Berlin began actively to include German organizations and SED party organizations, which are devoting their main attention to the development of political work at enterprises. Some of the municipal enterprises worked at reduced capacity in the morning, as a result of continued ferment among workers, who in part, when they arrived at the enterprises, gathered into groups and began discussions. The appearance of organized groups of provocateurs at some enterprises was established, in connection with which small numbers of Soviet troops were sent to separate enterprises, acting in concert with the German police. In some cases, it was possible to expose and arrest the ring-leaders of the strikes at enterprises. Thus, at the chemical factory in Grunau (Koepenik region), an engineer who had been urging workers to strike was arrested. At a high-frequency apparatus factory in Kopenik, workers began work after the arrest of two strike organizers. At a cable factory in Koepenik, the workers themselves detained five provocateurs and strike ring-leaders and handed them over to the police. Toward midday, the situation in Berlin's enterprises improved, although individual enterprises continue partial strikes. Capacity at electric power stations grew from 30% in the [early] morning hours to 70% by 11:00 a.m. At 9:30 a.m. at the Brandenburg gates, employees of the people's police of the GDR were fired upon from the direction of West Berlin. The people's police made several shots in return, as a result of which one West Berlin policeman was killed. Representatives of the intelligentsia took almost no part in the strikes and disturbances. Many well-known representatives of the intelligentsia spoke publicly stating their trust in the government and condemning the West Berlin provocateurs. Classes in schools and in institutions of higher learning [and] rehearsals in the theaters of Berlin continued in a normal fashion yesterday and today. At selected enterprises, engineers and technicians obstructed the cessation of work by strikers and convinced workers not to participate in the disorders. West Berlin radio broadcast the speech by the Buergermeister of the Kreuzberg district (American sector), [Willy] Kressmann, who called upon the residents of East Berlin not to approach the border between East and West Berlin, since the Soviet Army had received orders to use their weapons. "We do not want to bear responsibility for your death," Kressmann said. In today's issue of Neues Deutschland, a letter from the Stalinallee construction brigade was published, calling on workers to start work again and to end the disturbances. The letter contained the following impermissible phrase: "Today the enterprises belong to us and it depends on us to force our leading colleagues to do what we need. The last two days at Stalinallee is evidence that we have not yet achieved that at all enterprises." We drew Ulbricht's attention to the impermissibility of such publications. In the GDR, the situation continues to improve. Only isolated cases of disturbances are taking place. At some points, efforts to start demonstrations have been made. Workers at the Stralsund shipyard (900 persons) went on strike. In Halle, strikes are continuing at some factories. The strikers conveyed the following demands to the Soviet commandant through his representatives: Cancel martial law and withdraw troops from Halle, change the government, lower prices, and so on. In Berlin, Magdeburg, Jena [and] Goerlitz, the military commanders announced that death sentences had been carried out against the organizers of the disturbances (seven persons in all)."[Source: AVP RF, f. 82, op. 41, por. 93, p. 280, ll. 13-15. Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie (CWIHP).]"