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Summary:

This CIA report contains a chronological breakdown of the nature and extent of the riots and demonstrations in East Germany, and descriptions of the Soviet reaction, East German capabilities, East German government reaction, and the Soviet policy reaction. According to the report, at this point, the USSR has not yet revealed any long-term policy reaction to the German situation.

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Roundup of the East German Situation

I. Nature and extent of the riots and demonstrations:

The demonstrations were of sufficient magnitude to lead to an immediate intensification of Soviet military control and to disrupt communications for several days. The focal point of the disorders was East Berlin, where a demonstration of workers from the Stalinallee construction project set off the chain reaction of disturbances on 16 June.

The events occurred in the following order:

A. With a call for a 10 percent decrease in production norms, about 5,000 workers at the Stalinallee project started demonstrating at about noon on 16 June. (Some 2,000-3,000 Stalinallee workers had actually started striking on the preceding day at 09:00.)

B. The demonstrators marched to the vicinity of the Leipzigerstrasse government offices where two East German ministers, Rau and Selbmann, attempted to pacify and disperse them. The crowds shouted down Selbmann and, at about 14:00, a demand was made for all-German elections and the resignation of the government.

C. The demonstrators then moved to Alexanderplatz and called for a general strike.

D. At about 15:00 the demonstration ended.

E. At about 17:00 a delegation of East Berlin workers called at RIAS, West Berlin radio, requesting assistance in spreading their call to East Berliners to go on general strike the following day.

F. Demonstrations by scattered groups of East Berliners continued until 00:30, 17 June.

G. The demonstrations were continued with increased force and intensity on 17 June, spreading throughout East Germany. East Berlin was again the central point of activities, though strikes and demonstrations of greater magnitude occurred at least at two points elsewhere in East Germany, Magdeburg and Halle. The following events occurred in East Berlin on the 17th:

1. At 05:00 RIAS called on the East Berlin population to support the demonstrators.

2. The Soviet occupation of the city commenced very early, with tank units being observed as early as 04:30.

3. About 17,000 demonstrators were marching toward the government office district by 08:30.

4. Some elevated train traffic was halted by 11:00.

5. During the morning the demonstrations became violent. Police were beaten and thrown into a canal; several buildings, kiosks and police huts were burned; police cars were overturned and burned; there was looting.

6. By 12:00 East Berlin's elevated and subway trains were at a standstill.
7. Shortly after noon East German police started using small arms fire to scatter the mobs, and during the afternoon both Soviet and German forces employed firearms.
8. At 13:45 martial law was announced.
9. During the afternoon strong forces of Soviet armored cars, tanks and troops moved into East Berlin from East Germany.
10. At 18:00, the streets were still filled with crowds (numbering about 100,000), and two large fires were in progress.
11. At 19:00 the streets were still crowded including large numbers of Soviet tanks and troops.
12. By 20:15 order had been largely restored and only people's police and Soviet troops were on the streets.
13. At 21:00 the curfew went into effect.

H. Demonstrations and riots occurred simultaneously throughout East Germany. Disorder was reported from nearly every city, but demonstrations, strikes or riots have been confirmed only in the following places: Aue (strikes in the uranium mines), Bitterfeld, Brandenburg, Chemnitz, Cottbus, Dresden, Erfurt, Gera, G[ö]rlitz, Gross Beeren, Halle (where the prison was stormed and prisoners released), Henningsdorf (strikes in the steel mills), Hillersleben, Jena, K[ö]nigswusterhausen, Leipzig, Ludwigsfeld, Magdeburg, Merseburg (strikes at the Leuna Works), Nachterstedt (burning briquette factory), Neuruppin, Rostock, Schkopau (strikes at the Buna Works), Schwerin, Torgau, Warnem[ü]nde, Wismar, and Zwickau.

It has been confirmed that the following major plants were inoperative because of strikes:

1. Oberspree Cable Works, Berlin.
2. Karl Liebknecht Transformer Works, Berlin.
3. Treptow Communications Equipment Works, Berlin.
4. Henningsdorf Steel Mills.
5. Buna Works, Schkopau.
6. Leuna Works, Merseburg.
7. Briquette Factory, Nachterstedt.

II. Soviet reaction:

A. Diplomatic:

The only official Soviet reaction to the riots was a 20 June letter from the Soviet commander in Berlin to his Allied counterparts. He held that not only had the Western powers failed to keep agents from crossing into East Berlin in connection with the riots but that US officers in full uniform actually directed the rioters.

B. East German propaganda:

1. Primary blame was placed on Western agents.
 - a. The US bore the main blame. There were reports of U.S. officers in full uniform directing rioters, U.S. planes dropping pamphlets, U.S. radio cars issuing instructions, MSA funds used.
 - b. British and French authorities were also accused, but later propaganda gave them a subsidiary role.
 - c. Adenauer, Kaiser, Ollenhauer, Reuter were all subject to bitter attack. Nazi remnants were also cited.
 - d. Western agents were used as an excuse for not resuming normal communications and travel in Berlin. (This charge was in a 20 June letter to the Soviet military commander in Berlin.)
2. Western motives were attacked.
 - a. The riots were tied to Korea. Hands of the Western powers were seen in both the

riots and the Rhee prisoner release.

b. The West was said to be frightened by the prospect of East German reforms destroying the Adenauer war policy and to be trying to sabotage them.

c. A comparison was made with Hitler's tactics and with the "invasion" of North Korea.

d. The West was accused of trying to prevent an understanding between peoples, of lighting the fuse of a new war.

3. There were admissions that the workers were in some cases misled.

a. The party was blamed for letting this happen; it had lost touch with the workers, failed to heed their demands.

b. Now the workers were protesting the attempt to deceive them.

c. The misled workers would not be punished.

4. There were some indications that the riots would not stop future reforms.

a. "The riots will not deter determination to carry out reform. The riots did not force the reforms; the reforms started before the riots."

b. Soviet peace policy has made possible a reduction in military and heavy industry--butter, not guns. This will permit more consumer goods. Nevertheless high productivity is still essential.

c. Propaganda continues to stress examples of applications of reforms--return of farms and private business.

C. Soviet propaganda:

1. Moscow's immediate reaction was to publicize East German reports and comments.

2. Soviet restraint of initial comment was much less evident in subsequent propaganda. The 23 June Pravda lead article "Failure of Foreign Hirelings' Adventure in Berlin"--apparently was the first independent editorial comment. In general, Moscow's line was a recapitulation of East German charges.

3. Notes on Moscow's attention to the event:

a. On 25 June public "protest" meetings were organized in Moscow for the first time since the Kojé riots (May 1952) and only the third time since World War II. The widely publicized meetings voiced faith in the German workers even while repeatedly calling on them to rally around the Socialist Unity Party and the East German government.

b. Comment on the riots was heavy to the home audience, and news items gave them unusual attention.

c. The meetings and propaganda appeared designed to establish the meaning of the German events for the Soviet people, giving them assurances as to the stability of the East German government. At the same time, however, they were used to warn of the dangers of a new war by explicitly designating the riots as a provocation to a new war.

d. Moscow's heavy attention to the event in German-language broadcasts, in contrast to Moscow's usual treatment of unfavorable Satellite developments, appears intended as a reaffirmation of Soviet support of the East German government.

III. East German capabilities:

In the face of popular uprising the East German military and people's police proved to be both inadequate and unreliable. Intervention of the people's police during the initial period was sporadic and half-hearted. For many recruits of the people's police, it was the first exposure to violence and the necessity of using arms against a mob, and their reactions were varied. Many feared for their lives, and for this reason fired indiscriminately into the crowds. Others defected to West Berlin. No doubt many were swayed by sympathy with the rioters and revulsion at firing on their fellow-countrymen.

No accurate figures as to the number of German military or police defectors during the riots are available, but it is believed that 150-200 came over to West Berlin during

this period. These defectors were probably from the units originally charged with the maintenance of order who were surprised by the unexpected ferocity of the demonstrators. There is no reliable evidence of widespread desertion and mutinies among the German military or the people's police units. The German people[']s forces were confined to their barracks and not committed until 18 June, when Soviet forces had gotten control of the situation. This suggests that the Soviet authorities considered these forces unreliable or inadequate to the situation. When committed, the German military were used primarily as border guards.

On the basis of their performance, it does not appear that East Germany's military and police forces have either the physical capability or morale to maintain order without Soviet help. The breakdown of German military morale under the stress of a major war is probable. It is questionable whether they could be depended upon to keep order if the Soviet occupation armies were otherwise committed. There have been many unconfirmed reports that the East German military forces will be substantially cut.

IV. East German government reaction:

A. The East German authorities reacted to the riots by issuing a series of decrees and announcements, most of them designed to placate the population. These measures were as follows:

1. At 16:30 on 16 June the East German government announced that the 10 percent increase in workers' production norms should be considered cancelled as a compulsory measure and that future norm increases would depend on the workers' voluntary consent.
2. At 20:00 on 16 June Minister President Grotewohl and his deputy, Ulbricht, addressed a meeting of Socialist Unity Party members, promising further "far-reaching measures" to correct past mistakes.
3. At 15:30 on 17 June the government issued an announcement calling on the people to maintain order and go back to work, promising punishment to the perpetrators of the riots, and calling upon the mass organizations to support the government.
4. At 22:00 on 17 June the government issued an announcement stating that "agents of foreign powers, fascists and other reactionary elements" had started the demonstrations.
5. At 23:17 on 17 June the government announced that normal work would be resumed on the following day.
6. At 23:46 on 17 June the government announced that the riots ended "in the complete collapse of the adventure" and that further disturbances would result in severe punishment.
7. At 10:20 on 18 June the Socialist Unity Party executive pledged party efforts in restoring normal operations and ferreting out "provocateurs."
8. On 21 June the Socialist Unity Party's Central Committee announced the following proposed improvements: reduction in norms, reinstatement of train fare reductions for workers, increase in pensions and accident benefits, liberalization of the sick leave policy, restoration of social insurance benefits to all citizens, improvement of housing in industrial areas, improvement of sanitary conditions in nationalized industries, increase in the supply of working clothes, and discontinuation of daily electric power reductions.
9. On 24 June Grotewohl said a new wage policy was needed, that there was "no need to build up a heavy industry" on the scale planned, and that all efforts must be concentrated on the fight for German unity.
10. On 25 June the government decreed the following: abolition of work norm increases, improvement of the food supply, improvement of the supply of working clothes, improvement of the supply of industrial goods, improvement of housing, "further development of peasant holdings," reductions in agricultural delivery quotas, and increase of pensions and social welfare benefits.

11. On 26 June, at a staged demonstration in East Berlin, Grotewohl promised that the government would rectify its errors and improve the living standard of the workers.
12. On 26 June, Deputy Prime Minister Rau, speaking at Chemnitz, declared that the government would concentrate on the consumer goods and export industries at the expense of heavy industry.
13. On 27 June the government announced that release of food and industrial goods from the state reserves were possible because of reduced requirements of the armed forces.
14. On 28 June the East German radio reported that the USSR-led peace campaign had made it possible for the East German government to "consider the reduction of our police forces and use the funds and industrial goods earmarked for them for the benefit of the population."
15. On 29 June Minister of Justice Fechner announced that no special courts had been set up to deal with the "provocateurs" of 17 June and that only "persons guilty of crimes" would be punished.
16. On 30 June the State Commission for Trade and Supply announced that meat ration cards would be fully honored and that fish would not be substituted for meat.
17. On 3 July the East German press carried a "correction" stating that only "persons guilty of serious crimes" would be punished. A statement was added that the right to strike is constitutionally guaranteed, and that no one would be punished for activities on a strike committee.
18. On 5 July, the East German public prosecutor announced that since 11 June 7,753 prisoners had been released, most of them serving terms for economic crimes.
19. On 7 July the government announced increased pay for minors [sic] based on length of service. According to press reports, workers' demonstrations were flaring again in East Berlin on 7 July. These reports indicated that strong Soviet and German forces had moved in to maintain order. There were some indications that the disorders would continue, possibly on an increased scale, on 8 July.

V. Soviet policy reaction:

A. The Soviet reaction was a firm show of military strength, combined, however, with a desire to avoid shooting whenever possible. The cautious, slow lifting of martial law indicated a Soviet desire to return to normalcy as soon as possible without renewing the danger of new outbreaks. Soviet authorities in Berlin have so far retained most of the severe restrictions on travel between the sectors of the city.

B. The USSR has not yet showed its hand on any new long-range policy line in reaction to the German developments. However, the recall of top diplomats and particularly the reported recall of top Soviet officials in Germany may have been for the purpose of re-examining present policy or gauging Western reaction to the new Soviet tactics to date.