

June 19, 1953 CIA Current Intelligence Digest 'Comment on Berlin Rioting'

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Summary:

According to the CIA report, as of the 19th of June, the situation in East Berlin has been repressed by Soviet troops and the East German police, and inter-sector traffic is strictly controlled. However, in other areas of East Germany, strikes and disturbances are still being reported.

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19. Comment on Berlin rioting: The situation in East Berlin has apparently been brought under control. Soviet troops continue to back up East German police, and numerous arrests have reportedly been made. Public transportation in East Berlin was still disrupted on 18 June, however, and Soviet zone traffic into the city irregular. Strict controls over intersector travel have been imposed.

There are numerous unconfirmed reports of strikes and disturbances in other areas of East Germany, and martial law has reportedly been extended to some of them. The government has obviously been frightened by these events and continues to alternate promises of generous concessions with threats of severe punishment. It is probable that at various levels the government has been compelled to relinquish authority to the Soviet military establishment.

American observers in Berlin tentatively attribute the riots to popular suspicion that the recent conciliatory moves of the East German government were a confession of weakness and that demonstrations would be dealt with less ruthlessly than in the past.