

**June 17, 1953**  
**Report from V. Sokolovskii and L. Govorov in Berlin  
to N.A. Bulganin**

**Citation:**

"Report from V. Sokolovskii and L. Govorov in Berlin to N.A. Bulganin", June 17, 1953, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AGSh, f. 16, op. 3139, d. 155, ll. 4-5. Provided and translated by Viktor Gobarev.  
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/112449>

**Summary:**

V. Sokolovskii and L. Govorov summarized the events taking place in East Berlin and the GDR on 17 June 1953.

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

OPERATIONS DIVISION,  
MAIN OPERATIONS ADMINISTRATION,  
GENERAL STAFF OF THE SOVIET ARMY

Top Secret (Declassified)  
Copy #6

To Comrade BULGANIN, N.A.

1. The events that have taken place in Berlin and the other large cities of the Soviet Zone of Germany today, 17 June, seem to be a major planned uprising covering the whole territory of the German Democratic Republic and aimed at making a coup d'etat and simultaneously replacing the government in the German Democratic Republic. It is confirmed by the following:

Firstly, the disorders began simultaneously in Berlin and the following big cities: Magdeburg, Brandenburg, Leipzig, Jena, Gera, Halle, Bitterfeld, Dresden, Cottbus, Riesa, Gorlitz, etc.

Secondly, the same tactics of actions were used everywhere, i.e. stoppages at plants, factories, public transport facilities and institutions; there were attempts to capture the same kind of objects, such as the district committees of the SED, the branches of the state security forces, and prisons.

Thirdly, all the disorders have taken place under the same slogans:

- a. To pay salaries in accordance with the previous output quotas.
  - b. To decrease immediately the food prices.
  - c. To oust the current government by means of free and secret elections.
  - d. To release political prisoners and eliminate the state security bodies.
2. Despite the fact that this uprising had been prepared beforehand and took place under the leadership of the West, it was totally unexpected for the German democratic government as well as for our [Soviet control] structures [organy].
3. It should be noted that the People's Police have been active, but poorly armed.
4. The timely implementation of measures to restore order by our troops has been complicated by the fact that all the troops happened to be located far from the big cities, i.e. in the field camps, as well as by the fact that the Staff of the Group [of the Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany] and the Office of the [Soviet] High Commissioner [in Germany] did not take seriously the events starting on 16 June.

These factors have unavoidably led to delays in liquidating of the disorders.

SOKOLOVSKII GOVOROV  
17 June 1953

Reported by "VCh-phone" at 2.05 a.m., on 18 June 1953 by General Gryzlov.