

“The Failed Adventures of Foreign Agents in Berlin” (June 18, 1953)

Abstract

The day after the workers' uprising on June 17, 1953, the SED's central organ, *Neues Deutschland*, interpreted the unrest as “fascist” provocation planned and directed by West Germany – this view stood as the official interpretation of the day's events until the end of the GDR in 1989. Harsh punishment was announced for those involved: in the following months, more than 1,300 prison sentences were imposed. Purges were also carried out within the SED. The newspaper's assertion that the uprising was thwarted by resistance from within the civilian population is a patent falsehood. The SED was able to stay in power only through the intervention of the Soviet occupying power.

Source

While the government of the German Democratic Republic directs its endeavors towards the improvement of the standard of living of the population by new and important measures, paying special attention to the situation of the workers, mercenary elements, i.e., agents of foreign powers and their accomplices belonging to the circles of German monopoly lords, have tried to foil these government measures.

It has been established that yesterday's stoppages of work in a number of enterprises, and also provocation and rioting by single groups of fascist agents in the streets of the democratic sector of Berlin, took place under a uniform plan drawn up in West Berlin for a specific propitious moment. The excesses ended with the total collapse of the adventure thus instigated, because they met with resistance from large parts of the population and from the state authorities.

Normal work is being resumed everywhere. Order is being maintained in the streets. No excesses by *agents provocateurs* and criminal elements will be tolerated.

The infamous attempts by foreign agents to interfere with the measures of the government aimed at an improvement in the living conditions of the population have foundered. The attempt to sow confusion in order to put new obstacles in the way of the reunification of Germany has been foiled.

The government of the German Democratic Republic will take decisive measures to ensure the stern punishment of those guilty of these excesses.

The *agents provocateurs* must not expect clemency.

Source: “Zusammenbruch des Abenteuers ausländischer Agenten in Berlin” [“The Failed Adventures of Foreign Agents in Berlin”], *Neues Deutschland* (June 18, 1953); in Beata Ruhm von Oppen, ed., *Documents on Germany under Occupation, 1945-1954*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 591.

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