

Joint Message from the Commandants of the United States, the United Kingdom and France in Berlin to the Soviet Control Commission (18 June 1953)

Caption: On 18 June 1953, in a note addressed to the Soviet Control Commission in East Berlin, the Commandants of the US, British and French forces in West Berlin express their indignation at the Soviet troops' brutal intervention to control the workers' riots in East Berlin and throughout the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

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Joint Message from the Commandants of the United States, the United Kingdom and France in Berlin to the Soviet Control Commission, June 18, 1953.

As Commandants of the French, British and U.S. sectors of Berlin and in the name of the Allied High Commission we desire to express our grave concern over events which have taken place in Berlin in the past few days.

We condemn the irresponsible recourse to military force which had as its result the killing or serious wounding of a considerable number of citizens of Berlin including some from our own sectors.

We protest the arbitrary measures taken by the Soviet authorities which have resulted in the interruption of traffic between the sectors and free circulation throughout Berlin.

We formally deny that Willi Coettling, executed after a travesty of justice, was an agent provocateur under the orders of the intelligence service of a foreign power. His condemnation to death and his execution on an empty pretext appear to us as acts of brutality which will shock the conscience of the world.

As the highest Soviet authority in the Soviet sector of Berlin you share with us the responsibility of guaranteeing the wellbeing and the freedom of the people of Berlin. We therefore demand in the interest of Berlin as a whole that the harsh restrictions imposed on the population be lifted immediately and that free circulation within Berlin be re-established.