

Workers' revolt in East Berlin (17 June 1953)

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[Commentary] Adenauer's Westpolitik, which tied Germany with Western Europe and the United States, also received broad support because citizens witnessed how the Soviet Union imposed its regime on those states falling within its sphere of influence. Crises in the Eastern bloc: uprisings in Poland and in Hungary. 17 June 1953: popular uprising in the GDR. Workers' protest demonstrations against the increase in work quotas turn into a popular uprising against the Communist regime. Large numbers of Soviet tanks are deployed to put down the uprising, leaving many dead and injured. All political efforts made towards the attainment of reunification in freedom also failed. The Bundestag declares 17 June to be the symbol of a free and reunified Germany.

[Konrad Adenauer] It is with great sorrow, with great compassion and with utmost respect that we remember the martyrs of freedom. [...] We shall never rest content — and I make this pledge on behalf of the whole German people — until they have regained their freedom and until the whole of Germany is reunited in peace and freedom.