

Sample Commentary by Egon Bahr, RIAS correspondent in Bonn, August 7, 1952

"Dear listeners!

"Our greatest enemies are indolence and habit. The spice of the unusual will never keep people in suspense for long, and this human weakness is the best ally of every dictatorship. We can be utterly enthusiastic or enraged over some incident, but we can not maintain these feelings. And we can not reach the same or relative emotional climax if the incident occurs en masse. One or two men were killed, what a tragic event! A thousand men are killed daily in a war, but, apart from their families, who else speaks of it? Thousandfold tragedy for thousands of days - instead of the climax to be expected, there is actually a diminution of feelings; it has become habit, although more deaths undoubtedly mean more grief.

"A man was abducted, and everybody talked about it. Tomorrow a month will have passed since Dr. Linse was abducted. The vehement indignation which arose all over the world has not remained the same as in the first days after the crime. Furthermore, Dr. Linse was not the only one abducted during these 30 days, but who knows all the others? Well, we can not change the characteristics and habits of this strange animal known as the human being, but where emotions and feelings cannot be maintained, reason and determination must be called upon to remind, to admonish and to urge, no matter whether this is comfortable or not.

"The Linse case as well as all the others must not be forgotten. It should serve as a warning to many people- although not all, thank God - that the recent note of protest by Deputy US High Commissioner Reber has brought the name Linse back to the front pages of the newspapers. It is most reassuring to see that the Americans keep on pushing this case. This protest constitutes not only a psychological, but also a political move.

"After the Soviet Zone newspapers have cynically acknowledged the abduction of Dr. Linse, there are only two answers to the American questions addressed to Chuikov. Either he admits that the title "Control Commission" is a misnomer and the Soviets are, therefore, not in a position to find out what happens in their zone, or they must acknowledge

this heinous crime. Nobody would believe the first answer, while the second would confirm that such a crime can be committed with Soviet approval. In that case, one really can not expect anybody to believe the Soviet assurances that the Soviet Union wishes the reunification of Germany on the basis of democratic freedom.

"It is difficult to understand anyhow how Germans are expected to sit down with such individuals for discussions before the abducted are set free or are at least submitted to incontestable legal procedures. This obviously does not include trials in which so-called judges attempt to fill their quota of convictions prior to the deadline. These staged trials, not based on genuine espionage or sabotage evidence, but only on monotonously recurring cruelty designed to break the spirit of resistance in the population, will be discussed at a later date.

"Even the mechanized uniformity of the trials has a purpose, - that of spreading the poison of habit in the Soviet Zone population. But it is up to every individual in the Sovzone as well as in the Federal Republic and Berlin to fight and inoculate himself against this poison. After this protest, however, which has become more than a US-Soviet affair, because the British and French High Commissioners have also brought it up, the Soviets will have to realize that the West is determined to protect and to defend the principle of freedom of the individual, no matter how small and insignificant he may be.

"The rights of all abducted persons are inalienable and they will always remain the first point on the agenda when the Soviets do want to discuss things with us.