

Kidnaping of Dr. Walter Linse

The following is a translation of a press statement made in Berlin on Nov. 13 by Dr. Johannes Stumm, Berlin's police president, concerning the kidnaping of Dr. Walter Linse, a resident of the American sector.

A THOROUGH and widespread investigation covering a period of four months following the kidnaping of Dr. Walter Linse has resulted in the identification of four East Berlin professional criminals who stand accused of assaulting and abducting Dr. Linse from in front of his home in West Berlin on July 8, 1952.

This sweeping inquiry, conducted by scores of Berlin's most skillful police officers, represents a combination of exhaustive effort, the study of hundreds of leads and the application of all modern police methods. The investigation had disclosed not only the names of the four principal kidnapers but also of 13 other hand-picked and professional outlaws and gangsters who played important roles in one of the most brazen and repugnant crimes in the history of Berlin.

The four East Berliners who had been convicted previously of charges of murder, burglaries, embezzlement and safecracking are:

Harry Liedtke, 22, whose most recent address is 17 Barnim Street, Berlin-Friedrichshain.

Erwin Knispel, 50, who has many addresses in East Berlin.

Herbert Nowak, 27, whose most recent address was Heidenfeld Street, Berlin-Friedrichshain, near the Zentralviehhof.

Josef Dehnert, 22, who has changed his address frequently in East Berlin.

THESE FOUR men are identified as part of a criminally organized and criminally subsidized ring of kidnapers approved, sponsored and directed by the DDR* Ministry for State Security which has become widely known as the dread MSS, which not only is modeled after the MGB, the Ministry of State Security of the Soviet Union, but is an integral, thriving organ of the Russian police state.

The relentless investigation into the abduction of Dr. Linse from in front of his home in Gerichts Street, Berlin Lichterfelde, has disclosed the heinous methods which the MSS employs in organizing its syndicate of kidnapers. By the very nature of its criminal mission the

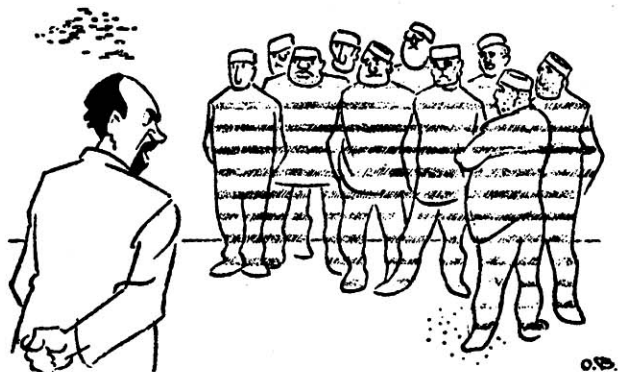
*DDR are initials of the name applied in the Soviet Zone to its German governmental regime.

MSS is compelled to rely completely upon murderers, dope addicts, highly trained burglars and black market operators. The MSS's masters even enlist prostitutes of all ages to assist them in their outlawed operations in West Berlin.

The MSS, which has been established only for a relatively short time, adopted a system of recruitment which is not particularly new in the annals of crimes against decent and law-abiding citizens, but is definitely effective. For example, the MSS leaders visit criminals in their prison cells and make nefarious deals with them. It operates something like this: A gangster may be serving a sentence for murder, as in the case of Nowak, or for 18 separate cases of safecracking, burglary, and other felonies, as in the case of Knispel, will be approached by an MSS stooge who holds out a promise of a reduced sentence or freedom if the imprisoned criminal agrees to join the kidnapers club. Since these criminals are offered such fine opportunities their answers to these proposals are obvious.

ONCE THESE crooks and killers are let out of prison to perform even worse crimes, their files and records are invariably removed from the police and prosecuting attorney's files and sometimes destroyed. But sometimes they are retained by the MSS which holds these records as a club or threat over the heads of the criminal hirelings.

It was under this system that the four East Berlin bandits were directed to attack and kidnap Dr. Linse. The execution of the crime was well planned. The habits and movements of Dr. Linse were studied and reported in details. There were to be no mistakes, no margin for



The Linse Case: . . . I therefore trust that you will live up to the expectations of the great Stalin and do your duty by kidnaping war mongers and imperialists. — from *Ruhr Nachrichten* (Dortmund), November 15.

error. Every move, every plan, every step, every report, every observation made by the four principal kidnapers and their 13 accomplices, whose records are just as bad as their companions, constituted a major crime in themselves.

The kidnap ring even went so far as to stop a West Berlin taxicab, driven by Wilhelm Woiziske of 26 Ohlauer Street, Kreuzberg Borough, Berlin, with the purpose in mind of removing its KB license plate for transfer to an MSS sedan which was used in the actual kidnaping. The taxicab driver was actually kidnaped himself and locked up in the cellar of the Prenzlauer Berg (borough) police inspection at 23 Schoenhauser Boulevard. After the assault and kidnaping of Dr. Linse had been successfully concluded, Woiziske was released and retrieved his taxicab.

THE FOLLOWING is a review of the kidnaping as it actually happened on July 8, 1952:

At approximately 7:30 on the morning of the above date Dr. Linse emerged from his home. The kidnapers' car was parked on Gerichts Street near Drake Street. Liedtke and Dehnert stepped out of the kidnap car. Dehnert, who approached Dr. Linse as though to ask for a light, struck the jurist in the face with a sandbag blackjack while Liedtke held Linse from behind.

The two culprits then yanked Dr. Linse into the car and dashed off at high speed with Dr. Linse's feet protruding from one of the rear doors of the car. The driver of a delivery truck, parked nearby, saw the abduction and pursued the kidnap vehicle. One of the kidnapers threw several tetrahedral nails onto the street in a vain attempt to halt the pursuer. Nowak has been identified as the gangster who fired two shots at the pursuing vehicle, both of which struck the car but not the driver.

The kidnap car sped down Drake Street at 59 to 62 miles an hour. When the kidnap car crossed Karwendel Street the kidnapers pulled Dr. Linse's legs into the car and shut the door. At this point one of Dr. Linse's shoes fell to the pavement.

The fugitive car then crossed Teltow Canal and then turned down Diesendorfer Street and Berliner Street to Schwelmer Street and subsequently roared across the Soviet Zone border where a zonal barrier had been raised to accommodate the kidnaper's vehicle.

THE CRIME from beginning to end was witnessed by many Berliners. This crime, of which the Soviet authorities have repeatedly denied knowledge, was aided and abetted by the following 13 accomplices, all of whom have criminal records:

Paul Liebig, 38 to 42. This man, an official of the MSS in charge of the *Unsichtbar-Gruppe Wein-*

*meister** is the most myterious character of the lot. It is not even known whether Liebig is his correct family name, since he is commonly known simply as "Paul."

Fritz Vahle, alias Paul Schmidt, aged 31, last known to have lived at 10 Weinmeister Street, Berlin-Mitte. He is assistant to Paul. He is also a drug addict and claims to be a physician. In 1946 he was tried, convicted and sentenced to three years in prison in the British Zone for illegally using the title "Dr." Later that same year Vahle was declared to be not completely sane and was committed to a Schleswig sanatorium for observation. He escaped May 20, 1947.

Hans Richard Joswig, alias Bauer, aged 30; a man of many addresses, the most recent of which was 13 Lottum Street, Berlin-Mitte. Joswig, a professional criminal, is wanted for the theft of \$220 and DM 20 committed on August 18, 1950, in Berlin-Steglitz. Subsequently he was arrested by Soviet Sector police and later released.

Else Joswig, wife of Hans Joswig, 25 or 26 years of age.

Kurt Knoblauch, 22 to 23, formerly of Anklamer Street, Berlin-Mitte, another paid gangster known to have been held in the Dirkenstrasse prison in February 1950.

Sonja Ballentin, 23, who has relatives at Rigaer Street, Berlin-Friedrichshain, Sonja who has lived with Harry Liedtke at 17 Barnim Street is engaged to the criminal Liedtke.

Fritz London, 26, last known to reside at 24 Immanuelkirch Street, Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg.

Walter Paerschke, personal data unknown but whose records shows an arrest more than two years ago by East Sector police in Berlin-Treptow for stealing an automobile, and a sentence to Barnim Street prison.

Wladimirowicz Feder, 40 to 45, last known address Pistorius Street, Berlin-Weissensee.

Siegfried Benter, 26 to 27, of 4 Palisaden Street, Berlin-Friedrichshain.

Leiser, first name unknown, 35, Pistorius Street, Berlin-Weissensee.

Skrolek, first name unknown, 30 to 35, brother of Wladimirowicz Feder.

Schura, first name unknown, 35, address unknown.

The West Berlin police have unimpeachable evidence that this MSS-sponsored and protected kidnap organization is financed by the sale of great quantities of cigarettes, coffee and silk stockings on the black market.

These then are the type of people, guarded and supported by the Soviet-controlled and dominated East Berlin, who assaulted and kidnaped Dr. Linse. **+END**

*may be translated as "Underground gang of Wine-Master Street"