

Following Several Kidnappings, Minister Jakob Kaiser Demands Stricter Border Security (July 16, 1952)

Abstract

Since 1948, politically active people were repeatedly abducted from West Berlin to the Soviet zone and later the GDR, where they were often convicted in sham trials and imprisoned. In July 1952, the lawyer Walter Linse, who had fled from the Soviet sector to West Berlin in 1949, was abducted. Linse worked for the West German "Untersuchungsausschuss Freiheitlicher Juristen" [Investigative Committee of Free Lawyers], which documented human rights violations in the GDR. The increasing number of abductions and the fear that spread among the population of Berlin as a result soon also occupied the Bundestag. On July 16, 1952, the Federal Minister for All-German Affairs, Jakob Kaiser (CDU), commented on this and supported motions for stronger protective measures at the German-German border that had been submitted by the SPD and FDP.

After being arrested and interrogated by the Ministry for State Security, Walter Linse was handed over to the Soviet secret service and executed in Moscow in 1953 for alleged espionage and anti-Soviet propaganda.

Source

/Kaiser: More than 100 German citizens have been abducted from Berlin and the Federal Republic by the Soviet zone's terror regime since 1948; 83 Germans were abducted by trickery, 86 by force. We remember each of their names, and we commemorate with all sympathy the pain and sorrow of their relatives, some of whom have been waiting for years for their return.

The latest and one of the most blatant cases of kidnapping cost Dr. Walter Linse of Berlin-Lichterfelde his freedom. If ever the total disregard for human rights was demonstrated to the whole world, then the Soviet regime did it with this kidnapping of Dr. Walter Linse.

Even more, ladies and gentlemen. The Soviet zone's press has threatened further abductions, from Berlin and from the Federal Republic. The Federal Government, ladies and gentlemen, will work tirelessly and emphatically with the occupying powers to persuade them to release Walter Linse.

The Federal Government will also bring all cases of kidnapping on German soil to the attention of the Council of Europe and the United Nations. It will ask these international organizations for protection and help against the continuing threat to German citizens, and all cases of kidnapping will be compiled in a white paper. The crimes and reaction of the Soviet zone's regime show that the threat to the freedom of German citizens in West Berlin and in the Federal Republic requires comprehensive protection and extensive security measures. Ladies and gentlemen, it should be noted at the outset that Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany are genuine democratic states and cannot abandon the principles of the rule of law in the protective measures to be taken.

This must be said, ladies and gentlemen, to those voices calling for reprisals. If it is countered that the SED and its henchmen only understand the language of violence, this cannot be a reason for us to answer injustice with injustice, but we must take other defensive and retaliatory measures.

The Federal Government has noted with satisfaction that the Berlin Senate has provided all arterial roads from West Berlin to the Soviet zone with the necessary security against kidnapping. Increased police protection has been set up at the zone and sector borders.

The Federal Government will ask the Senate of Berlin and the Allied city commanders of Berlin to take all necessary security measures, also for the personal protection of particularly endangered persons. In the opinion of the Federal Government, however, the danger can only be effectively countered if the

population, the police and the occupying powers pay increased attention to all suspicious occurrences. In order to protect the population in the federal territory against abduction, the Federal Government is of the opinion that the zonal borders must be secured even more extensively by the Federal Border Guard. Ladies and gentlemen, as long as our Germany is divided, the life and freedom of the population and its security will remain under threat. And that is why there is only one effective, definitive solution for all Germans. That is our reunification, our policy is and will remain directed towards this goal.

/Chairman: I would ask the ladies and gentlemen who wish to vote in favor of both motions to rise from their seats.

Now I ask for those opposing the motions to rise.

Abstentions?

Ladies and gentlemen, I note that the two motions have been adopted by an overwhelming majority of the House, with only a few votes against.

/Reporter: Only the few Communists voted against the two motions tabled by the FDP and SPD.

Source: SWR2 Archivradio

<https://www.swr.de/swr2/wissen/archivradio/der-fall-walter-linse-beschaefigt-die-bundesregierung-entfuehrt-6-100.html>

Recommended Citation: Following Several Kidnappings, Minister Jakob Kaiser Demands Stricter Border Security (July 16, 1952), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:audio-5015>> [May 03, 2024].