

STUDENTS JAILED FOR PASSPORT MISUSE

East Berlin ADN in German to East Germany 1705 GMT 8 March 1962--L

(Text) Berlin--The criminal activities of reactionary West Berlin student groups, which even after 13 August are trying to continue to trade in human flesh, were the subject of a trial before the Berlin city court. Three students from the GDR had fallen into the clutches of West Berlin agents trying to recruit GDR citizens. They were to "escape" to West Berlin by misusing foreign passports.

In the dock were a 21-year-old student of chemistry, Wolfgang Wichmann; a 21-year-old student of sport, Manfred Loth; and a 21-year-old student of building, Michael Batsch. They were charged with having infringed the passport law of the GDR and also with the misuse of documents. In the course of the trial it emerged that the wire pullers and chief culprits were reactionary West Berlin cliques of students.

After a day's interval for deliberation the city court today sentenced the defendant Wichmann to two years imprisonment, and defendants Loth and Batsch each to one year and eight months imprisonment. In the verdict it was stated that all three defendants, by their illegal acts, had attacked the sovereignty, security, and authority of the GDR. The misuse of German language foreign passports was to be regarded as an aggravating circumstance, since international agreements concerning the use of foreign passports had been most grossly violated.

The three defendants, who knew each other, had almost identical careers. They were diligent pupils in secondary schools, worked in the FDJ, and were finally chosen to study. But occasional visits to cinemas in West Berlin before 13 August and regular listening to slanderous transmissions of Western stations brought them on to the wrong road. A former classmate who had left the republic illegally pulled the strings and handed over the three GDR students to the West Berlin traders in human beings.

This criminal enterprise, to which West German, West Berlin, and U.S. students belong, is organized in several groups. West German students are doing the preliminary work among the GDR citizens who are to be caught, West Berlin students obtain German language foreign passports, and foreign students are "supervising" the illegal frontier crossing.

Bewildered by the importance of their criminal action, the defendants spoke about the crafty methods used in preparation. Telegrams and mysterious telephone calls with cover names are part of these preparations, as are also the two Swiss passports bearing the names Anton Studer and Werner von Lerber, and the Austrian passport bearing the name Helmut Kienberger. The students were provided with West German cigarettes and foreign travel brochures, to make them appear as foreigners. They had to practice writing false signatures and memorize bogus life stories. Despite these intricate methods they were arrested on 1 January at a GDR state frontier.