

# Bonn Guards Liberty In Terrorism Fight

By WOLFGANG WAGNER

HANNOVER, West Germany—The rise of urban terrorism here has shocked, dismayed and baffled West Germans. But above all, it has injected doubts into their commitment to the constitutional process.

For at the same time that they favor stronger measures to cope with terrorists, they are concerned by the prospect that civil liberties may be restricted in the effort.

## Background Report

Thus they face a dilemma that confronts all democratic societies threatened by violence—whether individual freedoms must be curbed in order to enforce the law, and if so, to what extent. Given Germany's totalitarian experience under the Nazis, this is a particularly sensitive subject.

As crime statistics go, the actual number of terrorist acts carried out by self-styled German revolutionaries has not been high. Since the spring of 1972, when they attacked U.S. military instal-

*Wolfgang Wagner, the editor of the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, writes on political issues in West Germany.*

lations in Frankfurt and Heidelberg; fewer than 25 persons have been killed.

Within the past couple of years, however, the terrorists have been focusing on prominent West German government and business figures, and they seem to have been pursuing a careful strategy.

In March, 1975, they kidnaped Peter Lorenz, the head of the Christian Democratic party in West Berlin, and traded him for the release of a group of their jailed comrades. A month later, they raided the West German embassy in Stockholm, murdering two diplomats and taking several others hostage. So far this year, their strikes have been even more daring.

Early in April, they killed Siegfried Buback, the nation's chief prosecutor, and six months afterward they murder-

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ed Juergen Ponto, one of the country's leading bankers.

On Sept. 5, in Cologne, they abducted Hans-Martin Schleyer, the president of the West German Industrial Association, in a street ambush that left Schleyer's driver and three bodyguards dead. (Schleyer's body was found last night in the trunk of a car at Mulhouse, France.)

The terrorists assert that they intend to claim other prestigious victims, and their threats have succeeded in creating an obsessive atmosphere of fear throughout West Germany's principal cities.

Businessmen keep their movements secret, and politicians have barricaded themselves behind barbed wire. The government has added \$500 million to the budget for internal security—a belated response to charges that it has dealt ineffectively with the violence.

The government's difficulty in tracking the terrorists stems in part from the fact that West Germany, with its memory of the Nazi era, has resisted the creation of a centralized law enforcement agency like the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States. The police are primarily under state jurisdictions, which inhibits their efficient operation on a nationwide scale.

There are probably not more than 200 active terrorists supported by an estimated 1,000 sympathizers. They are well trained and well organized, as evidenced by their ability to acquire weapons and false passports and their skill as guerrillas.

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has said that their aim is to trigger an "emotional, indiscriminate, uncontrolled reaction so that they can denounce our country as a fascist dictatorship." But their positive objectives are unclear.

Many of the terrorists come from comfortable and even wealthy families. Susanne Albrecht, implicated in Juergen Ponto's murder, was able to gain admittance to his home because he was a friend of her father, a well-known Hamburg lawyer. She is reported to have joined the terrorists because, as she put it, "I am sick and tired of all

that caviar."

Judging from their propaganda, the terrorists apparently hoped, in the beginning that they would attract the backing of West Germany's industrial proletariat, or at least its radical fringe. But nothing of the sort has happened. They are even denounced by the Communists.

As a consequence, they have lapsed into something akin to sheer, destructive anarchy—as if violence itself is their goal.

Nevertheless, the terrorists have caught the imagination of a fraction of intellectuals, many of whom are critical of West Germany's bourgeois affluence. When Siegfried Buback was killed, for example, the Gottingen University student newspaper published an "obituary" that came close to celebrating his death. And when the police opened an investigation, a group of professors defended the newspaper's right to publish the article.

Aware of the possibility that this kind of conduct might prompt a backlash against all critics of the country, former Chancellor Willy Brandt recently spoke out against intolerance.

"The community of democrats must prove that it is stronger than the perpetrators of violence," he said.

Even so, the public outrage against the terrorists is such that the West German legislature has overwhelmingly approved a bill that prevents imprisoned suspects from seeing their lawyers or other visitors.

Public opinion here would undoubtedly agree to legislation making it easier for the police to tap telephones as well as register all citizens. Until now, however, there has been little pressure to restore capital punishment, which was abolished in 1949.

Professor Golo Mann, son of the famous writer Thomas Mann, summed up the feelings of many West Germans when he said not long ago that the country is engaged in a civil war. The fight against the terrorists, therefore, is seen as a struggle for national survival.

But one of the casualties of this civil war may be personal liberty—which is, ironically, precisely what the terrorists are striving to destroy.