

## Germany Faces Tough Task In Controlling Terrorism

**T**HERE was at least one important difference between the successful Israeli recapture of a hijacked Air France plane at Entebbe airport last year and the successful German recapture of a hijacked Lufthansa plane at Mogadishu airport last week. The Israeli commandos had to take on not only the terrorists in the plane but also Ugandan troops at the airport, a number of whom were killed; but the German commandos were able to concentrate all their attention on the terrorists, for the Somali troops kept out of it. No doubt this is one reason why all the hostages were safely rescued in Somalia but not in Uganda.



Harvey Ford

The terrorists have some reason to feel betrayed by Somalia. They had landed at Mogadishu because Somalia is a Marxist country and as relentless enemies of capitalism the guerrillas expected a sympathetic reception at the least. But Somalia is at war with Ethiopia, another Marxist state which has moved close to the Soviet Union in recent months. Somalia therefore has had to turn to the West for arms. The West German government denied that any deal had been made with Somalia for permission to land at Mogadishu, but Bonn added that it would continue to supply Somalia with equipment and other aid. The comradeship of marxism apparently was not enough to prevent the sacrifice of the terrorists to the demands of practical politics.

★ ★ ★

In the aftermath of Mogadishu there were demonstrations by leftists ranging from riots and the destruction of German property in Rome to a march of 25 persons calling themselves the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee at the United Nations in New York. This naturally has led to speculation that the terrorist movement is an international conspiracy with some sort of central direction, but the experts are inclined to be skeptical. The Baader-Meinhof gang (or **Red Army faction**, as the German group is also called) has obvious connections with Palestinian extremists, and other links with guerrilla organizations like the Japanese Red Army and the Irish Republican Army; but these are loose and tenuous.

Indeed, the German gang seems less close to some of its contemporaries than it does to

the nihilists who terrorized imperial Russia a century ago. There is observable in both the same middle-class influences, even stronger among today's Germans than among the Russians of the last century. Women were prominent among both groups and ruthless murder existed side by side with a self-sacrificing motivation that can only be described as romantic. And both were dedicated to the overthrow of the governments of their day and the societies they represented.

★ ★ ★

Although the Russians succeeded in assassinating a czar and other officials, they failed to destroy the government and the social order. That had to wait until years of disastrous defeat in World War I produced the Communist revolution. The Soviet rulers of Russia have never seemed particularly sympathetic to the terrorists who prepared the way for the Communist regime. For instance, one young woman who gained brief worldwide notoriety and a life sentence for assassinating a general was still living in prison when the Communists took over: She was set free, but only for 16 months: she quarreled with her new Soviet masters, who put her back in prison for the rest of her life.

The present government of West Germany, headed by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, is socialist and the conservative parties in opposition can be expected to take advantage of any political opportunities which develop from the terrorist attacks, just as would be the case in the United States or any other democratic country. If the corrupt and inefficient imperial regime in Russia could withstand the long terrorist offensive, there need be no worry about the Bonn government being toppled. Indeed, Mr. Schmidt said that Germans "have drawn closer together" because of the attacks.

★ ★ ★

There is a basic difference between the old Russia and the new Germany, however. Imperial Russia was an absolutist state and was uninhibited by civil-rights concerns in dealing with the sympathizers who provided the vital support that kept the terrorists going. Modern West Germany is a thoroughly democratic nation where the officials have been conscientious on the matter of civil rights — and where the number of sympathizers has been estimated from 10,000 all the way up to 150,000. Bringing terrorism under control therefore poses a difficult challenge, but there is no reason to believe Bonn is any less capable of meeting it than any other western democracy.