

German Anarchists' Hunger Strike Causing Disputes on Jail Conditions

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STUTTGART, West Germany, Aug. 21— A hunger strike by anarchists in a maximum-security prison here and in other penitentiaries is focusing attention on the imprisoned members of West Germany's radical movement and causing disputes over the conditions in which they are being held.

The protesting anarchists say they are fighting against dispersal in prisons throughout the country and isolation from other inmates. Several anarchists are being force fed, and fights with correction officers have been reported.

Amnesty International has requested information from West German authorities concerning the situation of the protesters. The international human rights group said it was prompted solely by humanitarian considerations.

Best known among the about 40 men and women who on Aug. 9 started refusing food, and in some cases water and beverages, is Andreas Baader. He is serving a life sentence imposed by a Stuttgart court in April for a long list of murders and other violence.

Codefendant Found Dead

A codefendant in Mr. Baader's long trial, Ulrike Meinhof, was found dead in her cell in May of last year. The coroner's verdict was suicide by hanging.

The names of the two are generally used to identify the Baader-Meinhof gang, an urban guerrilla network that is held responsible for many sensational crimes during the last nine years.

The group calls itself the Red Army Faction, a label that Mr. Baader may have borrowed from Japanese radicals whom he was said to have met in a Palestinian guerrilla training camp in the summer of 1970.

West German law enforcement bodies assert they have smashed the Baader-Meinhof gang. However, anarchist attacks are continuing.

Murder of Banker

The police are still hunting five young women and a man implicated in the murder of Jürgen Ponto, one of West Germany's top bankers, in his villa near Frankfurt last month.

The banker was apparently killed while resisting abduction. The police assume anarchist plotters had attempted to kidnap Mr. Ponto to extort a huge ransom and to force the release of imprisoned radicals.

A nurse, Eleonore Pönsgen, was arrested on suspicion of having been one of the banker's assailants, but was released soon afterward when her alibi proved solid.

The conspirators in the Ponto case, like those in other recent terrorist actions, are believed to be members of anarchist cells that have sprung up after most militants of the Baader-Meinhof group were captured. Experts say the radical underground in West Germany numbers now several hundred active plotters and a few thousand backers. There is talk of factionalism and rivalry.

Officials say that members of the Baad-

er-Meinhof gang and other imprisoned anarchists manage to communicate with radical activists and sympathizers who are still at large. Left-wing lawyers who had been authorized to visit radicals in jail are being publicly accused of having provided liaison.

In the modern penitentiary of Stammheim, a northern suburb of Stuttgart, where Mr. Baader and other members of his group are being held, security measures were recently tightened.

Some anarchists were transferred to prisons in Hamburg and Munich, and new rules were imposed to separate the Baader-Meinhof group completely from the more than 700 inmates who are serving time for nonpolitical crimes.

Prisoners' Demands

Mr. Baader and other anarchists went on a "hunger-and-thirst" strike, demanding that the new regulations be rescinded and that a number of correction officers whom they named be replaced. Last week, intravenous feeding of Mr. Baader and other protesters was started after consultation with doctors.

West Germany's chief prosecutor, Kurt Rebmann, said today that the protesters would have to end their hunger strike first if they wanted better prison conditions. He declared that prison doctors should do everything in their power to save the lives of inmates who refused food and drink, but added that parliament ought to enact new legislation stating clearly whether such protesters must actually be force-fed.

"The state must not be pressured into action by a hunger-and-thirst strike of inmates," the chief prosecutor remarked.

Mr. Rebmann was supervising prison conditions for the Baader-Meinhof group as a high official in the Justice Ministry of Baden-Württemberg in Stuttgart before he succeeded Siegfried Buback, the chief prosecutor, who was assassinated by terrorists in Karlsruhe in April.

Some experts say that Mr. Baader, who is 33 years old, wants to prove to younger militants by his prison action that he is still spearheading the fight against the West German authorities.

Best-Known Woman

One of Mr. Baader's associates in earlier conspiracies and in the Stammheim prison protest, Gudrun Ensslin, has emerged as the best-known woman in the terrorist movement since the death of Mrs. Meinhof.

Miss Ensslin, a former teacher and the daughter of a Protestant minister, was also sentenced to life imprisonment here in April. Last week she was briefly transferred to a Stuttgart hospital, but at her request was later returned to Stammheim prison.

This afternoon, prison officials said that the condition of Mr. Baader, Miss Ensslin and other protesters was "serious, but there is no immediate danger for their lives."