

West Germany's Orderly Society Proves Vulnerable to Terrorists

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BONN, Sept. 18—Within hours after urban guerrillas kidnapped Hanns-Martin Schleyer, West Germany's leading industrialist, in Cologne on Sept. 5, police officers in Bavaria set up roadblocks to catch any terrorists who might try to flee abroad.

But at the same time public-service broadcasts kept cautioning motorists to avoid traffic jams caused by the police controls, and recommended alternate routes without roadblocks.

Mr. Schleyer's abductors may never have tried to leave West Germany or even the Cologne metropolitan area. Yet the incident is one of many examples of how things may go wrong in a well-organized, even over-organized, country, and how red tape and long-established routines in effect invite subversion and sabotage.

These days there is much talk here about how vulnerable an advanced industrial and technological society like West Germany's is whenever a tiny band of fanatics, who may be highly intelligent and imaginative, chooses to attack.

More and more West Germans are also asking uneasily why their police are unable to find the murderers and kidnapers. The criminals are by no means anonymous.

Five Women Have Vanished

The wanted posters show the pictures of five young women who are being sought as suspects in the murder of Jürgen Ponto, a leading banker, in July. All five have vanished.

The Federal Criminal Bureau also has a fairly clear idea of who participated in the Cologne ambush in which Mr. Schleyer was abducted and his driver and three police bodyguards killed. Data on hundreds of terrorists and persons believed to be capable of terrorist violence are stored in computers; investigators are said to have narrowed the field of suspects to about 50. Many of these also seem to have disappeared.

The 62-year-old president of the West German Confederation of Employers' Associations and of the industry federation was the latest prominent target of terrorist actions.

In April, gunmen riding heavy Japanese motorcycles shot and killed Siegfried Buback, West Germany's chief prosecutor, in Karlsruhe.

Then Mr. Ponto, chairman of the board of Dresdner Bank, was murdered in his well-guarded villa near Frankfurt by three visitors who were led by the daughter of a school friend, Susanne Albrecht. The young woman was carrying a bunch of red roses when she called at the Ponto mansion.

In the Cologne ambush, a baby carriage, pushed across a one-way street, served as a decoy to stop the motorcade that was to take Mr. Schleyer to his home. The baby carriage was loaded with submachine guns that were immediately picked up and fired by the terrorists. The police escorts also had submachine guns, but they were in the luggage compartment of their car.

The nature of the targets, even more than the cunning techniques of West Germany's ultraleft terrorists, explain why their operations have such a paralyzing effect.

They aim high. A directive by a group of jailed left-wing extremists, issued from a Stuttgart penitentiary two years ago, ordered their associates who remained at large to "hit the imperialist apparatus, its military, political, economic and cul-

tural institutions, its functionaries."

A dead chief prosecutor, a dead top banker and a kidnapped head of the industrial establishment show that the terrorists have been quite successful so far. Now many people here ask apprehensively who is next on the terrorists' list.

On the Adenauerallee in Bonn, double barbed-wire coils, one above the other, and a mobile security wall of armored cars and heavily armed police patrols with watchdogs protect the offices and residences of West Germany's head of state and head of Government.

Sandbagged gun emplacements and miles of barbed wire are all over the West German capital. The effect is that of an unstable country awaiting the next coup d'etat.

Terrorism in West Germany, unlike political violence in, for example, Northern Ireland or the Middle East, is by no means indiscriminate now. It is accurately aimed at the country's top figures and at the ganglia of the country's power system.

This is a nation where pedestrians will patiently wait for a green light at an intersection even if there is no oncoming traffic for half a mile. Germans generally like rules and expect to be told what to do. The terrorist offensive, with its unforeseen shocks, unsettles them more than similar events would in a less highly organized society.

Whenever one asks here about the failure of the police to capture the terrorists, one is told about the incompatibility of the Siemens computers that some law-enforcement agencies are using with the I.B.M. systems on which others rely.

But there are certainly other, less technical reasons for the failure to stop the terrorists.

Unable to Infiltrate

The police here have never managed to infiltrate the small radical groups. Granted, the extremist cells are small, secretive and suspicious of any outsider. But in France, Britain and other countries, police informers have penetrated clandestine organizations.

Officials here say that to win the trust of the terrorist conspirators, an informer would have to establish credentials by participating in some crime, and that a nation based on the rule of law cannot condone such practices.

Neither can the West German authorities resort to widespread, indiscriminate wiretapping and other intrusions on individual rights without laying themselves open to the charge of erecting a police state.

All major parties in West Germany today stress their determination to maintain a liberal system that, although it is denounced as "fascist" by the radicals is far removed from both the Nazi dictatorship and the police states of the Soviet bloc.