

The New Terror Network

Small groups of political renegades are hitting NATO targets in Western Europe.

Just before dawn one morning last week, a young woman rang the doorbell at the home of Ernst Zimmermann, a West German industrialist whose firm makes engines for NATO's Tornado jets. When Mrs. Zimmermann answered, the woman said she had a letter for her husband and needed a signed receipt. Zimmermann came to the door. Suddenly a man with a submachine gun jumped from behind a shrub. The intruders barged into the house and tied up the couple. Then they took Zimmermann into a bedroom and pumped a bullet into his head. A few hours later an anonymous caller phoned a Munich newspaper. The caller said that Zimmermann had been killed by the left-wing Red Army Faction (RAF)—in league with a shadowy alliance called "the West European guerrilla movement."

The West German press has given it another name: "The New Terrorists." Over the past few months three groups—West Germany's RAF, France's Direct Action (AD) and Belgium's Fighting Communist Cells (CCC)—have attacked scores of NATO and other defense-related targets across northern Europe. They appear to have formed a loose working alliance; they may also have links to Italian, Portuguese, Dutch and Middle Eastern terrorists. Compared with the Baader-Meinhof Gang and the Red Brigades of the 1970s, this generation of political renegades is still small and inexperienced. But their fervent antimilitarism—fueled by the deployment of U.S. Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe—has drawn committed recruits. And with the shooting of Zimmermann and the recent murder of a French general, they have

moved their campaign from attacking defense installations to killing top officials.

In hindsight, the first sign of the new wave of terror seemed to have come last June with the theft of a cache of explosives from a quarry near Brussels. But it gathered force in the fall. In Italy several groups claimed responsibility for the bombing of an express train, bound from Naples to Milan, that killed 15 passengers and wounded more than 150. In Paris, Direct Action bombed the Atlantic Institute, a pro-NATO think tank. Later AD attacked a French Defense Ministry research center and tried to blow up the headquarters of the Western European Union. Briefly things quieted down. Then the CCC launched its own offensive. It bombed the offices of the U.S.-based Honeywell firm in Belgium, then a NATO fuel pipeline, then a U.S. military facility near



The gutted remains of the Naples-Milan express train: Disturbing proof that the deadly appeal of violence is still very much alive

CAYALL—SIPA-SPECIAL FEATURES



BOHLSSON AND LAURIE GRACE

1 June 24, 1984: An 1,800-pound cache of explosives is stolen from a quarry in Ecaussines village near Brussels.

2 July 14: A French government building is bombed in Paris. Direct Action (AD) claims responsibility.

3 Oct. 8: A Fighting Communist Cells (CCC) bomb damages the Brussels office of Honeywell, a U.S.-based supplier of NATO equipment.

4 Dec. 11: Six bomb attacks damage NATO emergency fuel pipelines in Verviers, near Brussels, and other areas in Belgium. The CCC claims responsibility.

7 Dec. 18: A Red Army Faction (RAF) bomb is found and defused outside an American-run NATO officers' training school in Oberammergau.

6 Dec. 23: Fifteen people are killed in a bomb attack on the Naples-Milan express train near Bologna. A number of international terrorist groups claim responsibility.

7 Dec. 30: An RAF firebomb damages the U.S. Army Liaison Office in Dusseldorf, West Germany.

8 Dec. 31: An RAF bomb blast damages a French Embassy annex in Bonn.

9 Jan. 7, 1985: A homemade bomb explodes in an underground shaft near a NATO fuel pipeline in Karlsruhe, West Germany. Investigators say the blast appears to be the work of the RAF.

10 Jan. 15: A CCC car bomb causes \$500,000 worth of damage to a U.S. military facility at Sint-Stevens-Woluwe near Brussels.

11 Jan. 20: Johannes Thimme, a convicted RAF terrorist, is killed by a bomb he was trying to plant at a computer center in Stuttgart.

12 Jan. 25: Gen. Rene Audran, director of international arms sales at the French Defense Ministry, is assassinated outside his home in Paris. The AD and the RAF claim responsibility.

13 Jan. 25: A bomb knocks down a high-voltage mast at a nuclear power plant in Krummel, near Hamburg—apparently to demonstrate support for jailed members of the RAF.

14 Feb. 1: Ernst Zimmermann, chief management executive of the West German munitions company MTU, which makes engines for NATO's Tornado jets, is slain in his Munich home. The Patrick O'Hara Squad of the RAF claims responsibility.

Brussels. Since the beginning of December the RAF has carried out some 30 arson and bomb attacks—including an attempt on a NATO officers' school in Oberammergau. Among other aims, the West German terrorists are supporting a hunger strike by 30 RAF prisoners who have demanded to be housed together and given POW status.

Hideaway: Signs of cooperation among the three groups have become increasingly apparent. Since the quarry robbery, the RAF, Direct Action and the CCC are each believed to have used some of the stolen explosives in separate attacks. Before the Belgian terrorists attacked the NATO pipeline, maps of the facility were found during a raid on a West German hideaway. The CCC has dedicated one of its bombings to the RAF. And on Jan. 15 the RAF and the AD announced the official formation of a "Political-Military Front in Western Europe" to attack NATO targets.

Ten days later the merger was inaugurated with the murder of Brig. Gen. René Audran, director of arms sales at the French Defense Ministry. At about 8 p.m. on Jan. 25 a woman with a German accent phoned Audran's house in La Celle-Saint-Cloud, a Paris suburb. Audran's daughter, Marie-Hélène, said her father would be home in an hour. When Audran backed his gray Renault 20 up to the gate at 8:50 p.m., a gunman stepped out of the shadows, opened the car door and fired eight shots from a Colt .45. The general was found sprawled across the front seat. Neighbors reported seeing three men running from the scene.

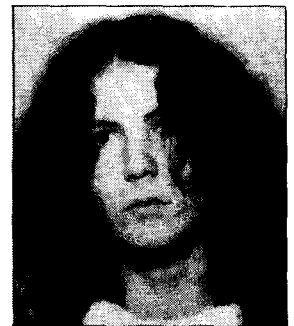
A letter to the Paris bureau of the Deutsche Presse-Agen-

tur claimed responsibility in the name of both Direct Action and the RAF. It accused Audran of being "at the heart of the homogenization of the European states under the control of NATO." The letter was written

in both French and German, but the German was better—a clue that the RAF was in charge. French authorities were also investigating the possibility of Middle Eastern involvement. Audran oversaw French arms sales to Iraq; thus either Iran or Syria may have wanted him out of the way. France has thousands of North African guest workers, and Middle Eastern terrorists can easily slip into the country on Algerian or Moroccan passports. A Soviet connection was also a possibility, although



Zimmermann: 'Hit list'



PHOTOS BY DPA

Wreckage from the failed bombing of a computer center in Stuttgart, Wannersdorfer (above), Thimme: Showing signs of inexperience

most French officials believed that Moscow was giving only passive encouragement to the anti-NATO attacks.

With the Zimmermann killing, the terrorists confirmed the escalation of their undeclared war. Zimmermann was the head of the Motoren und Turbinen Union, West Germany's largest jet-engine manufacturer; he was also president of the West German Aerospace and Armaments Industry Association. The main suspects in his shooting were Bernhard Lotze, 27, an RAF veteran, and Barbara Meyer, 28, a recent recruit. Police disclosed that Zimmermann's name appeared on a "hit list" found during a raid on an RAF safe house in Frankfurt last year. The list named dozens of officials including Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his predecessor, Helmut Schmidt. Until last week the list was not taken terribly seriously. But now authorities fear the RAF may go after other leaders—especially if the RAF hunger strikers, now in their eighth week without food, start to die.

On paper, at least, none of the three main

terrorist groups looks very formidable. Direct Action is thought to have only 30 active members, and 19 of them are behind bars. Most RAF members are also in jail; West German police estimate they have fewer than 20 activists at large, and perhaps 100 sympathizers prepared to hide them. Little is known about the CCC, but its ranks are believed to be thin, too. The three groups have also shown signs of inexperience—especially the RAF. The bomb at the NATO school in Oberammergau didn't go off because whoever put 60 pounds of high explosives in the trunk of a silver Audi left the timer on "stop." More recently RAF member Johannes Thimme tried to blow up a Stuttgart computer center by hiding a bomb in a baby carriage. The bomb went off—but it killed only Thimme and injured his accomplice, Claudia Wannersdorfer.

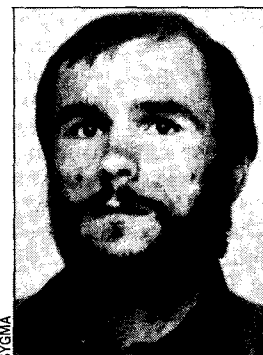
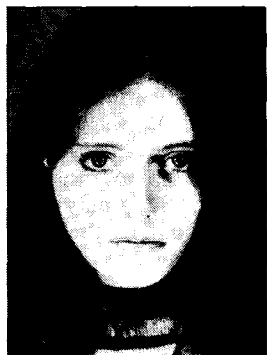
German police, in fact, tend to refer to the new terrorists as "the babies." But officials across Europe are both impressed and dismayed by the dedication and daring of the new generation. "They seem to be even

more strongly indoctrinated politically than the veterans, who have been underground for years," says Heinrich Boge, director of the Federal Criminal Office in Wiesbaden. They tend to rely on a strong cell structure, and do not depend on charismatic leaders to hold their groups together.

Murky: And the new terrorists have compensated for their weaknesses with closer coordination. Contact among the RAF, AD and CCC is thought to be limited: they probably have no central command, and may communicate only through individual cells. But they clearly have pooled intelligence, resources and manpower. There is also evidence of alliances—of interest least—with other terrorist groups. Italian terrorists are often spotted in France; last year AD leader Jean-Marc Rouillan is believed to have hidden in an apartment rented by a member of Italy's Prima Linea. Recently the Red Brigades' symbol, a five-pointed star, has shown up on CCC communiqués. Two Dutch terrorist groups—Onkruid and the Red Resistance Front—have

vowed "hard actions" against Western defense targets. And in Portugal, a murky group called FP-25 has also launched its own campaign. Last week it fired shells at six NATO ships in Lisbon Harbor. Two days later it exploded eight bombs near a West German Air Force training ground in southern Portugal.

The wave of attacks has prompted fresh criticism that some European governments have been less than vigorous in dealing



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Meyer, Klar, Menigon, Rouillan: Though small in numbers, the new generation is tough and disciplined

with the terrorist threat. In France, Audran's murder stirred anger among conservatives, who recalled that in 1981 President François Mitterrand had unconditionally pardoned the two imprisoned leaders of Direct Action—Rouillan and Nathalie Menigon. Freeing the pair, the right-wing daily *Le Figaro* charged, made atrocities like Audran's assassination "predictable, even inevitable."

Others have chided the French government for its willingness to grant sanctuary to political refugees from around the world. Although France signed the European Convention on Suppression of Terrorism in 1977, it has yet to ratify the pact formally. "The French do not feel bound to extradite terrorists," says Prof. Paul Wilkinson, a leading expert on terrorism at Britain's University of Aberdeen. "The country has now become the natural area for people who have fled from justice in other countries."

Computers: French officials argue that the country should not renounce its long—and mostly honorable—tradition of providing asylum for political refugees. But even authorities in Paris acknowledge that many of those émigrés may be involved in terrorism. Part of the problem is that France is lagging behind in surveillance and crime-busting technology. In contrast to West German antiterrorist agents, who have access to 2.5 million index cards on potential suspects that can be called up on 2,500 terminals around the country, French police have only 70,000 cards on 40 computers. Still, there are signs that the French are beginning to toughen up security. Despite harsh criticism from left-wing members of his own Socialist Party, Mitterrand agreed last summer to extradite three Basques to Spain to face murder charges. And in a speech late last week he vowed that "France will refuse protection, direct and indirect, for terrorist acts of bloodshed."

West German authorities have taken far tougher steps to combat terrorism. The country has an elite antiterrorist unit known as the GSG-9 squad that can be quickly deployed in crisis situations. As part of an effort to keep tabs on potential troublemakers, officials have developed a network of paid informants—and a chillingly thorough system of national surveillance. Not long ago West Germans were surprised to learn that police have a television camera trained full time on the news kiosk at the main railroad station in Frankfurt. The reason: authorities theorized that the kiosk would be a natural stop for traveling terrorists. In fact there are thousands of such cameras monitoring strategic public spots all over West Germany. The police are even trained to recognize better-

known terrorists through flashcard drills.

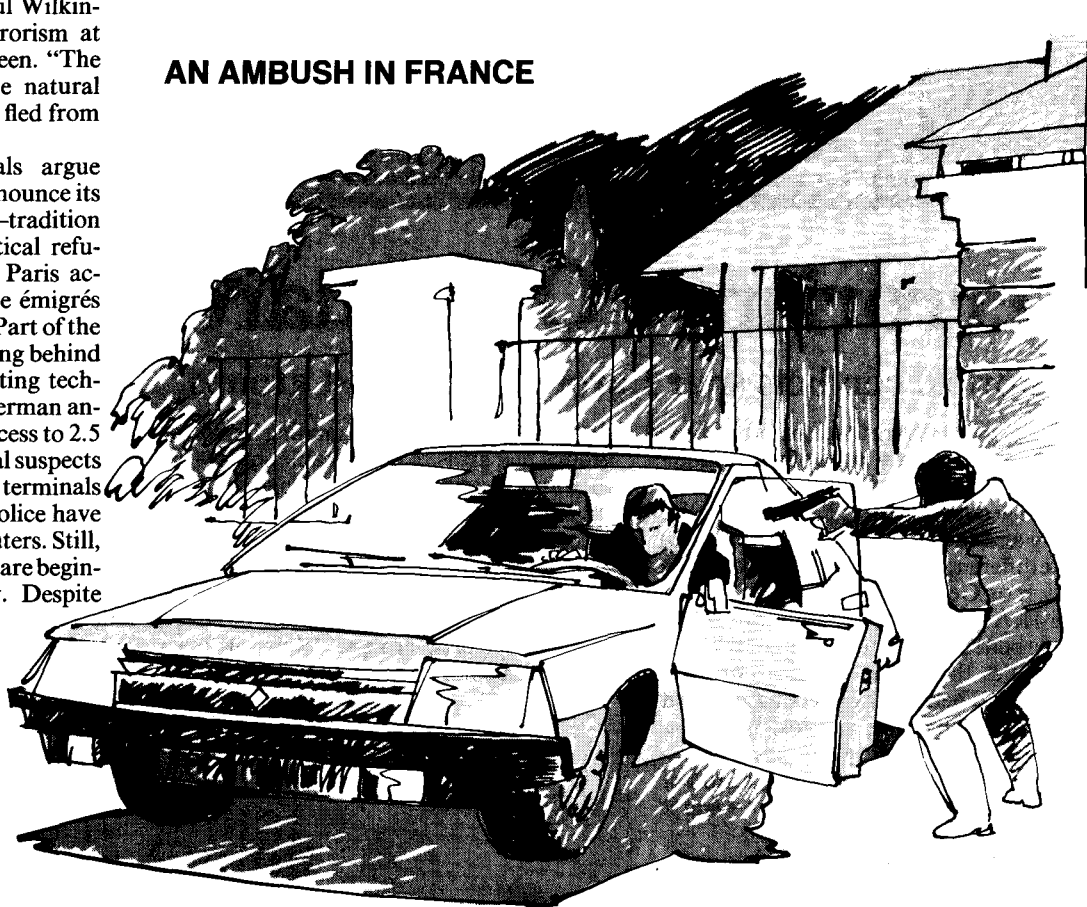
Not all of West Germany's security measures have been applauded, however. Many civil libertarians worry that in its zeal to crack down on terrorists, the Bonn government may limit the rights of ordinary citizens. As evidence they cite the case three years ago of a policeman who thought he had spotted Christian Klar, one of the leaders of the RAF, in a speed-trap photo. Tracing the license number on the car, police broke into the home of the suspect and arrested him. But the young man turned out to be a student who bore only a vague resemblance to Klar. The outcry over that episode has helped delay the implementation of a

mats should try to blend in more with the local population to avoid being obvious targets.

It is the cross-border nature of the threat, however, that has hit European antiterrorist forces where they are weakest—in shared intelligence. Lack of international legal codes is one problem; conflicting extradition procedures is another. "Let's face it," says the University of Aberdeen's Wilkinson. "It is difficult to get Europeans to work together on simple problems such as bread and wine, let alone on such a problem as this."

But faced with the latest wave of violence, authorities across Europe are bound to step

AN AMBUSH IN FRANCE



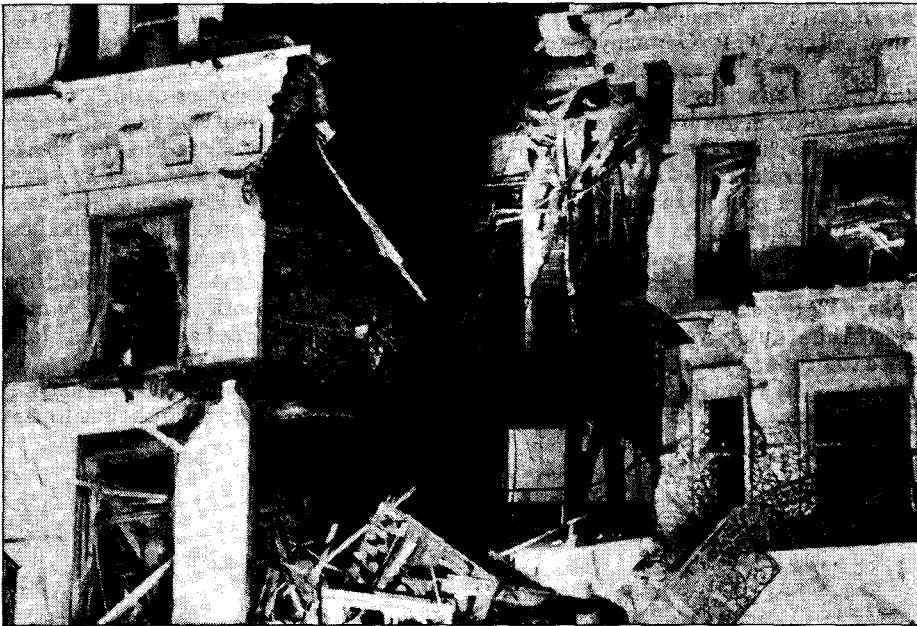
The murder of Audran: The campaign has moved from attacking defense installations to killing top officials

nationwide system of computer-readable identity cards that would enable police to make spot checks of citizens.

Officials in Washington worry that U.S. military and diplomatic personnel in Europe may become even more tempting targets for terrorists. Curbing the threat, however, will not be easy. Robert Kupperman, a terrorism expert at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies, believes that penetrating the various terrorist organizations should be one of the top priorities for Western intelligence. Contrary to the notion that American officials should be virtually isolated in high-security fortresses, Kupperman suggests that diplo-

up antiterror measures. Already security has been strengthened at U.S. and NATO facilities in Belgium and Portugal. New rewards have been offered for RAF terrorists in West Germany. And in Italy officials are talking about an antiterror campaign to rival the recent joint U.S.-Italian efforts against the Mafia. How successful all this will be, however, remains to be seen. The thrill of violence, combined with the politics of destruction, has always held a strong attraction for many young Europeans. And if nothing else, the new terrorists have proved that terror's deadly appeal is very much alive.

MARK WHITAKER with THEODORE STANGER in Bonn, FRED COLEMAN in Paris and bureau reports



The Brighton bombing: The causes are archaic, but the terrorists' methods are fully up-to-date

CAVALLI—SIPA SPECIAL FEATURES

Terrorism's Old Guard

Historical conflicts spur Europe's separatist groups.

Their methods are the same as those used in Europe's new wave of terror: bombings and kidnappings and murders. But the aims of groups such as the Irish Republican Army and the Basque ETA movement are quite different from those of France's Direct Action or Germany's Red Army Faction. The IRA and the ETA are motivated by ethnic concerns rather than ideology, fighting battles that began decades—or centuries—ago. Their goal might be nationhood for a region that long ago lost its autonomy; it might be revenge for past oppression. But whatever the motive, the toll of the violence mounts year by year—and it shows no sign of stopping.

To a great extent, the problem is so intractable because it is rooted so deeply in history. In Northern Ireland, the IRA's battle has its origins in 800 years of British rule. Armenian terror squads have killed or wounded scores of Turks in the past decade in retaliation for a massacre that occurred in 1915. Separatist groups in Corsica launched 1,300 bombing attacks in one 18-month period. Terrorists in the Brittany region of France have followed suit; like the Corsicans, they have pushed their ancient claims for independence by bombing power stations, government buildings and police stations. In Spain, the Basque ETA separatist movement has killed almost 500 people since 1975—all in an attempt to regain the autonomy they lost centuries ago.

The causes for which these groups are fighting may seem archaic, but their techniques of terror are thoroughly up-to-

date. Many of the longstanding terrorist groups buy arms from the same sources as their new-breed cousins, and some receive training at the same Middle Eastern sites. In recent years, many of them have even begun to spout similar Marxist ideology. But the ethnically motivated groups are likely to press their fight much longer than the latest breed of terrorist groups. "You can outgrow an ideology," says Brian Jenkins, a



ETA fighters: The violence mounts year by year

terrorism expert at the Rand Corp. "But if you're raised speaking Basque, you'll be motivated when you're 18 years old and motivated when you're 50."

The IRA is the oldest and best-organized of Europe's terrorist groups. Since Britain sent its troops into Northern Ireland in 1969, the IRA has fought back savagely, killing more than 2,400 British soldiers and civilians. Recently, the IRA has suffered some significant setbacks, including the confiscation last October of a huge shipment of arms and explosives. But any hope that the group was in retreat ended with the Brighton hotel bombing; its target was no less than British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. She was not hurt, but four people were killed. And last week, the IRA murder of an Ulster soldier served notice that the bloodletting is a long way from over.

Pact: The IRA's strength is partly due to its broad base of support within Ulster Roman Catholic minority—and a steady flow of dollars from sympathizers overseas, notably in the United States. Spain's Basque terrorist movement is not so well funded. The ETA was widely popular during the years when Francisco Franco ruled Spain, but it lost much of its backing after democratic rule was restored. The Spanish government has just signed an antiterrorist pact with the Basque regional government—but the battle is far from over. The accord, which the ETA immediately denounced, is sure to spark a new round of violence.

France has often drawn fire for its refusal to extradite terrorists. But it also has problems—and not just with Direct Action. Since the mid-1970s the Corsican National Liberation Front has pressed its demand for independence with a steady stream of bombings. Late last month the group set off 10 bombs across the island, causing extensive property damage. France must also keep a close eye on a separatist movement in Brittany that has waged periodic bombing campaigns for decades.

Perhaps the most quixotic campaign of all is that waged by Armenian nationalists seeking to avenge Turkey's takeover of their homeland—and a 1915 massacre that is estimated to have killed more than 1 million people. Armenian terrorists have waged near-constant war against Turks living overseas, killing 41 Turkish diplomats since 1973. The Armenians have also carried their fight into Turkey itself; a 1982 bombing at the Ankara airport caused more than 80 casualties.

Europe's ethnically motivated terrorist groups have shown a remarkable ability to replenish their forces and fight on—and that seems unlikely to change. "It cuts across generational lines," says Jenkins. "Kids who were tossing rocks at British troops 10 years ago are the same ones who are now planting bombs." As long as memories endure, there will be more children, more rocks—and more bombs.

MacLEAN GANDER with
JULITH JEDAMUS in New York

GARCIA FRANCES—COVER