

Report from Bonn by George Gregory and Rainer Apel

A fight among Social Democrats

Willy Brandt would like to see the SPD a house divided, by means of the "peace movement" riots.

While hundreds of smashed windows, plundering, and public violence in nearly all of West Germany's big cities remind many of the older citizens of the rampant Nazi movement at the end of the Weimar Republic, a handful of courageous politicians, led by the Chancellor himself, has taken steps against the spread of rioting that goes under the guise of "the new social movement."

Both Helmut Schmidt and one of his closest allies in the SPD, Holger Börner, the Social Democratic Governor of the powerful state of Hesse, have addressed two major causes of these riots: the deteriorating economic situation and the fact that the riots are being used against Schmidt.

Facing increasing problems with the "peace movement," which works into the rather unstable situation in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and undermines Schmidt's public image, Schmidt wrote to SPD Chairman Willy Brandt on Sept. 16, addressing the need to discipline the party's discussions about the "peace issue." Schmidt drew a direct line from the Berlin riots against U.S. Secretary of State Haig, through the following series of terrorist attacks on U.S. military officers and facilities, to the Bonn demonstration against NATO on Oct. 10 that is planned to assemble more than 100,000. SPD Chairman Brandt, whose sympathies for the "peace movement" are not con-

cealed, failed to rule that no Social Democrat, and especially no leading member of that party, may participate in the Bonn demonstration; a deep split and open controversy followed between the Chancellor and the SPD Chairman.

The Schmidt faction of the SPD, known as the *Kanalarbeiter*, has called for application of the party's incompatibility regulations against members who join the demonstration. In a widely publicized statement, Peter Corterion, Undersecretary of State in Bonn's Foreign Ministry, has characterized the demonstration as "an undisguised effort to stab the Chancellor and his government policy in the back." The Brandt wing's endorsement of most of the recent—and mostly violent—demonstrations has led many party members to demand that Brandt resign his post.

The Chancellor himself, as if to underline his political position, met with the chairman of the police trade union on Oct. 6 to assure him of the government's and the nation's support for the very difficult task of the police.

Holger Börner faces similar problems with the environmentalist protest against such industrial projects as the construction of a third runway for Frankfurt's international airport. It was Börner who, in an interview with the weekly *Der Spiegel*, first termed the radical environmentalists as "tendentiously fascist"—a notion that has since

been expressed by most of the trade unions here, whose offices were ransacked by rampaging youth.

Börner, who had previously blamed recessionist policies as the main cause for the urban riots that shook Britain this spring, has added an attack on monetarist policies, in a speech he gave at the Hesse state SPD convention on past errors. Stressing that his own policy is one of industrial jobs, he said, "What is being practiced as an alternative economic model in England or in the United States at present, I would not wish to be practiced here in our country." He said that he considered it "intolerable cynicism if millions of human beings are made, as happens there, victims of a few scientists who try to apply to living beings economic theories they invented on their drawing boards. Not even Wall Street believes in the application of this American policy."

Börner asserted that a policy of "planned recessions" would inevitably lead to more unemployment and the growing susceptibility of people to "strongman propaganda" and toleration of political violence—as West Germany has begun to experience it in the form of youth riots thinly disguised as "peace movement" demonstrations. Instead, Börner proposed a policy of social stability and détente as the best way to secure industrial jobs and exports and, thereby, public wealth.

Börner and Schmidt, aware that they do not have the support of the Socialist International and its Chairman, Willy Brandt, have stated they intend to hold town meetings to gain public support for their policy among the "silent majority" of West German citizens.