
Interview: Ingo Herrmann

Police must be protected from AIDS

Mr. Herrmann is chairman of the Bund Deutscher Kriminalbeamter (BDK) (Alliance of German Criminal Police Officers). The interview has been translated from the original German.

Although the particulars differ, the concerns expressed by Ingo Herrmann in this interview correspond closely to what policemen and firefighters in the United States have been telling the representatives of EIR's Biological Holocaust Task Force in recent discussions in the United States, about the AIDS threat to uninfected persons in those professions.

EIR: Mr. Herrmann, to be a policeman today in the Federal Republic of Germany and especially in Berlin, is certainly no easy task. Not only is the officer's health increasingly threatened by violent demonstrators, but some politicians, jurists, and sociologists are contesting your right to guarantee the safety of the officers from AIDS infection through the Wanted Criminals computer. Can you first please describe this practice and its background?

Herrmann: In the so-called INPOL system there exists the possibility of storing information about individuals. There is the further possibility of using a certain blank area for remarks. Both capabilities can only be examined by individual, i.e., in the look-up, you must first enter the personal data of a wanted person. The individual indication "ANST" (Infection Danger) as such can refer to the most varied types of infection. Only in the comment area, does the supplemental notation "Caution Blood Contact" indicate the kind of infection threat. So this supplemental comment line is not a concept that can be searched for. Hence it is also not possible to inquire, which persons have this comment line. Therefore, it is false to state that the police are building up an AIDS data bank.

By way of background, already in 1985, the Working Group of leaders of the State Criminal Offices, with the presidents of the Federal Criminal Offices, were concerned with the practical problems that had arisen because of some incidents, and as a result they informed an Interior Ministry

Conference task force of the need to undertake storage of individual supplementary indications and comment lines.

In this connection, it should especially be stressed that the present ground for storing [such data] is exclusively the well-grounded suspicion that a crime has been committed, and not some disease.

EIR: How is the acute danger to officers presented in their daily work? You mentioned elsewhere, that some of your colleagues have already been infected with tuberculosis. Can you give us laymen a couple of clear examples?

Herrmann: The danger of becoming infected with TB rests on different criteria than the danger of infection with AIDS. The danger of AIDS infection consists, according to published medical opinion, at least insofar as police are concerned, mainly in blood contact or also through bites. In the day-to-day duties of police officers, it occurs almost daily that persons resist arrest, which can very quickly come to injury, with open wounds on both sides. Also, it often happens that persons being arrested resist arrest by biting. In some cases it was even established that persons who were likely or actually AIDS-infected, threatened intervening police officers with the disease and with biting.

EIR: Who exactly contests police officers' right to protect themselves, and at the same time defend the virus's right to spread unhampered?

Herrmann: To my knowledge in the recent period, elected officials from all the parliamentary parties have spoken out against the computer storage of individual data related to AIDS.

EIR: In your view, what is the basis for this attitude?

Herrmann: The basis of this attitude often varies with the individual politicians. In part it lies, in my observation, in a kind of data protection hysteria, which seems to have become the world outlook of many. The police have had to observe for years that the necessary protection of data is often interpreted in a way that it becomes protection of criminals.

With respect to the individual indication "Danger of Infection" and the appended comment "Caution Blood Contact," the data-protection argument is completely incomprehensible, since these indications exclusively serve the purpose of warning police officers what precautionary measures are appropriate. The police officer must not be exposed unknowingly to danger of infection on the grounds of data protection. He too has the constitutionally guaranteed right to physical safety.

EIR: Is there any danger that you will yield to pressure and change your current practice?

Herrmann: I, on behalf of the Alliance of German Criminal Police Officers, will certainly not yield to pressure and, moreover, will intercede in the interest of the lives and health

of the criminal police officers for the maintenance of the present procedures. However I can not rule out that the police will have to change their practice on the basis of political decisions. That would mean absolutely for the police officers—and probably not just for them—causing a considerable threat to their safety. I cannot imagine that a politician who is also responsible for the police could make such a decision.

EIR: Is there an international information exchange among police on these questions?

Herrmann: An international exchange of information among police has not, as far as I know, in any case from the German side, been implemented.

EIR: Are you being adequately informed on the present state of probable and proven modes of transmission?

Herrmann: At the federal level and from state to state at different levels, there are circulars, information sheets, etc., which contain the regulations for dealing with risk groups. These regulations stem from recent years and therefore ought to be relatively up to date. The fact that such regulations are contained in the official writings of the police forces, speaks for the fact that the need for updated information on findings about the danger of contagion is foreseen in the future.

EIR: If you could draw up a "wish list," what demands would you like to make and to whom, in order to reasonably guarantee officers' safety in all areas of their activity?

Herrmann: The principal demand is that the present procedures should be continued and used where necessary. The opponents of the present procedures bring up the argument (among others) that the legal grounds for the procedures either are insufficient or in fact don't exist. The federal epidemics law is above all doubted as legal grounds. In case the conclusion is actually reached that there is no legal basis, then one should push for the fastest possible creation of a legal basis.

I also demand that, above all, where the police stations are not supplied, or not in sufficient quantity, with protective clothing, e.g., with leather or synthetic gloves, impermeable gloves, etc., the corresponding protective clothing and other protective gear should immediately be made available.

In general, care for the health of police officers by the service authorities, in light of the threat of AIDS infection, must be intensified.

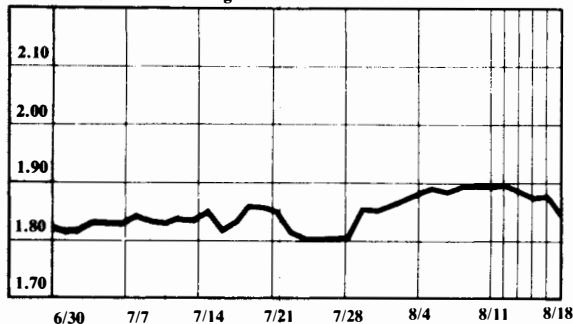
EIR: You have the last word. What would you like to inscribe in the albums of the federal and state authorities?

Herrmann: The police in our democratic republic not only have to protect this state and above all its citizens. The police officers, who in any case are in a risky job, need the state's protection when it is a question of defending them from harm as far as possible.

Currency Rates

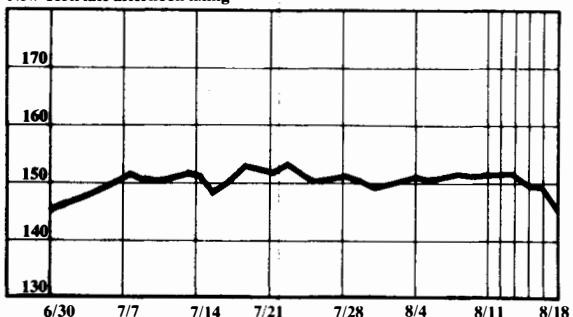
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



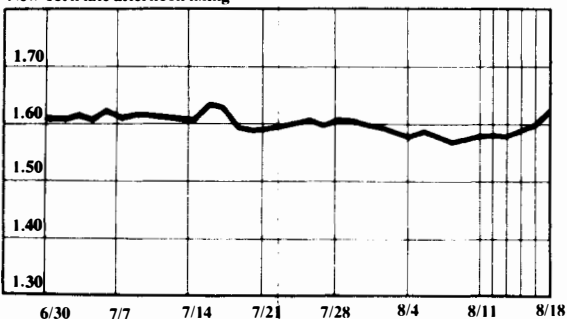
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

