

Pitched Battles in the FRG

Bitter, furious protest suddenly erupted and swept through 16 cities in W. Germany in September and October of 1985. On Saturday, 28 September, Günther Sare, a long-time activist in the Frankfurt area, was knocked over and crushed to death under the wheels of a 26-ton police water cannon during a mass demonstration targeting a meeting of the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party. Thus the armed forces of the state demonstrated—and it was not beyond the call of duty—that murder is no obstacle in this so very democratic Federal Republic of Germany when it comes to protecting fascist thugs and their anti-immigrant, anti-Turkish venomously reactionary message.

Hundreds from the demonstration and others too immediately pulled together and, led by a youth holding the towel on which Günther Sare bled to death, marched through the neighborhood. A few blocks away, a Daimler-Benz parts warehouse was sent up in flames. Daimler-Benz manufactures the water cannon which killed Sare—and which is also exported to Turkey and South Africa, among other places. To cover up this murder, the next afternoon the city prosecutor's office announced that besides having a crushed chest, Sare had also suffered a skull fracture—which they outrageously proposed as "probably" caused by a rock thrown by a demonstrator! Meanwhile, members of the neighborhood in which Sare was murdered, a proletarian area, renamed the street Günther Sare Strasse and put up a banner reading "Murdered in the name of the people, to protect the Nazis." That evening, several thousand angry demonstrators gathered and, attacked by the police once again, fought for hours into the night in a scene not seen since Hot Autumn '83 in W. Germany.



Even as the city government in Frankfurt clamped down further, outlawing all demonstrations except those held by "responsible" groups, further fighting blazed in other W. German cities. In Hamburg two commercial centres were trashed and a police car torched. In Berlin, barricades were set up and nine police injured. Even as far away as Copenhagen, the W. German embassy was hit with rocks and paint. The suddenness and the fury of these outbursts belied the calm which had reigned over the surface of the country during the past two years. And as in Britain, a hint of larger forces at work was felt in the streets, as in this one chant: "Frankfurt, Brixton, Transvaal, Bullen morden uberall" (the police murder everywhere). □



