

WE  
LIVE  
ON A



Mayor Brandt's wife Rut (left) aids quietly behind the scenes. Below: sons Peter and Lars admire new baby brother Matthias.



The Mayor rows with his sons across the picturesque Schlactensee Lake, a favorite spot in the neighborhood of the Brandt home.



# POWDER KEG



By **WILLY BRANDT**  
Governing Mayor of Berlin  
as told to Helen Zotos

*There are grim moments—and lighthearted ones, too—for the First Family of*

AS MY 13-YEAR-OLD son Peter says, Berlin is a "city with two faces." His own life illustrates this fact.

Although Berlin is as modern as any place in the world, Peter was born by candlelight! The reason: his birth occurred during the Communist blockade when we in free Berlin were desperately short of almost everything—including electricity.

The blockade is past, and we continue to live as free men. Nevertheless, we are completely surrounded by Communist-ruled territory, and this creates the paradox of "the city with two faces."

Outsiders most often think of Berlin as the focal point of international crises. But we who live here also know it as a city where day-to-day life is not a great deal different than in America.

When the boys of my household catch me between crises, they have a way of reminding me I'm their father as well as mayor of Berlin.

The "boys" I refer to are my sons Peter, Lars, age 11, and Matthias, just one year old.

On occasional Sundays when I do manage to romp with

them in our small house, we carry on so riotously that my wife Rut happily insists she really has four Brandt boys—"three little ones and the fourth one, a mayor!"

Living in Berlin where crises are plentiful, I am obviously deprived of much of the nourishing time I would like with my family, for growing boys have crises of their own from which I think I could learn something.

For example, Peter and Lars are so resourceful that, when they want a favor from me, they phone my secretaries for an appointment at Schöneberg Rathaus, our city hall. When they reach me, however, the "important" call is usually about a Sunday outing or the next vacation.

Rut herself never complains, although her life in Berlin revolves almost solely around home and children. "Four boys" are sometimes a handful, but in her patient, feminine way she manages to keep the children scrubbed and disciplined, the house polished, and hot dinners on the stove for me until all hours.

Rut has a great deal more privacy than her American counterparts. A mayor's wife in Berlin is not expected to christen ships, cut ribbons, or make public speeches. But Rut

*West Berlin, an island of freedom surrounded by Communist-ruled territory*

has played an important behind-the-scenes role in my life—and once even helped me avert a Berlin crisis!

In November, 1956, when Soviet tanks crushed Hungary's freedom fighters, an angry crowd of several thousand Berlin students threatened to march in protest to the Brandenburg Gate. Realizing the danger of such a demonstration at the border of the Soviet sector, Rut and I hastened to head them off. I was only a struggling young politician then, but I pleaded with the rioters over a loud-speaker while Rut fearlessly disappeared into the crowd. Communist troops drew up to the gate toting tommy guns, but Rut proceeded to mobilize some of the more reasonable young demonstrators to link arms together and push the crowd back.

IN BETWEEN such hours of tension there are other problems that affect day-to-day life. Most of the lovely forests, lakes, and mountains that were once our vacation lands are now in the Soviet zone—and off limits to us.

Every day at my office in Berlin or at the Berlinhaus in Bonn or wherever else I go, I am confronted with problems and political challenges that are peculiar to my city alone.

The Berlin Wall—which shocks the entire world—is keeping me busier than I've ever been during my five years as mayor. Needless to say, no people look upon the Wall with greater dismay and revulsion than the Berliners themselves.

The Wall touches every family in the city, separating not only the living from the living but the living from the dead. Families from West Berlin cannot even visit the graves of their parents if these happen to be behind the Communist barricade. Husbands have been torn from the arms of wives, mothers from their children, and grandparents from their grandchildren. The faithful cannot worship at their churches, some children cannot attend their schools, and all visits between the two sectors are banned.

The only links the Communists have not destroyed between us and our loved ones are radio broadcasts, mail deliveries (after censorship), sewage disposal, and the exchange of funeral ashes once a week.

But the Wall is not the only Soviet provocation that has brought us to the present situation of great tensions. For 15-odd years we in Berlin have been living on a powder keg.

As far back as 1948, the Communists divided our city and

(Continued on page 6)