

the red winter

RE

J. SMITH AND ANDRÉ MONCOURT

THE RED ARMY FACTION

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

VOLUME 2: DANCING WITH IMPERIALISM

INTRODUCTION BY
WARD CHURCHILL

RAF

PRAISE FOR VOLUME 2: DANCING WITH IMPERIALISM

In this book Moncourt and Smith are offering some “institutional memory” for those of us who are struggling against the horrible situations that unbridled capitalism and imperialism have forced upon us. Such institutional memory is desperately needed.

They remind us that a generation ago a RAF political prisoner in Germany wrote that the world was facing a “...fascism that no longer requires mass mobilization of ideologically motivated fascists, but only bureaucrats and technocrats in the service of the imperialist state.”

A political observation that a generation later we still have not adequately mobilized around.

Here too, Ward Churchill lets us see that not nearly enough has been done to provide a similar institutional memory regarding those who struggled against the same forces in the United States in that same time period. Is it any wonder that the fight against prison isolation in the U.S. is hobbled by a failure to realize that this country’s 80,000 isolated prisoners suffer under hellish conditions originally designed to destroy political prisoners? Knowledge that would force U.S. prisoners to recognize that their struggle requires political and not “legal” solutions.

Moncourt and Smith also remind us of the crucial strategic roles wimmin played in the struggles centered in Germany. Widespread and courageous roles that even left me stunned as to how little I really knew of that aspect! A realization that if patriarchal conditions can blind one who has been struggling over four decades against these same forces, then we all must step up our efforts to place the destruction of patriarchy and all forms of gender oppression on the same level as the fight to overcome capitalist and imperialist exploitation.

—Russell “Maroon” Shoatz, U.S. political prisoner

Dancing with Imperialism, the second volume in the Red Army Faction documentary trilogy, continues to excavate a fascinating history of the German revolutionary left in the 1970s and 1980s. It powerfully situates the RAF within a broader orbit of revolutionary politics and world events. It gives us the inside story of how militants did and might engage with police, prisons, informants, media, and one another in the context of struggle. It is an exciting story, a global story, and very much a story for today’s movements.

—Dan Berger, editor of *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*

PRAISE FOR VOLUME 1: PROJECTILES FOR THE PEOPLE

The editors of this work, J. Smith and André Moncourt, have created an intelligently political work that honestly discusses the politics of the Red Army Faction during its early years. Their commentary explains the theoretical writings of the RAF from a left perspective and puts their politics and actions in the context of the situation present in Germany and the world at the time. It is an extended work that is worth the commitment required to read and digest it. Not only a historical document, the fact that it is history provides us with the ability to comprehend the phenomenon that was the RAF in ways not possible thirty years ago.

—Ron Jacobs, author of *The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground*

This first volume about the RAF is about a part of WWII that did not end when the so-called allies defeated the nazis. The RAF warriors come from a strong socialist history and knew they were fighting for the very life of their country. Many victories and many errors were scored which provide this important look into REAL her/history lessons. A must read for all serious alternative history students who then in turn can use it as a teaching tool towards a better future.

—b♀ (r.d. brown), former political prisoner, George Jackson Brigade

This book about the Red Army Faction of American-occupied Germany is one that should be read by any serious student of antiimperialist politics. Volume 1: Projectiles for the People provides a history of the RAF's development through the words of its letters and communiqués. What makes the book especially important and relevant, however, is the careful research and documentation done by its editors. From this book you will learn the mistakes of a group that was both large and strong, but which (like our own home-grown attempts in this regard) was unable to successfully communicate with the working class of a "democratic" country on a level that met their needs. While the armed struggle can be the seed of something much larger, it is also another means of reaching out and communicating with the people. Students interested in this historic era would do well to study this book and to internalize both the successes and failures of one of the largest organized armed anti-imperialist organizations operating in Western Europe since World War II.

—Ed Mead, former political prisoner, George Jackson Brigade

THE RED ARMY FACTION:
A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

VOLUME 2

DANCING WITH
IMPERIALISM

THE RED ARMY FACTION:
A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

VOLUME 2

DANCING WITH IMPERIALISM

introduction by Ward Churchill

*introductory texts and translations by
André Moncourt and J. Smith*

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the red army faction: a documentary history
volume 2: dancing with imperialism

introductory texts and translations by André Moncourt and J. Smith

The opening epigraph is from Brigitte Mohnhaupt's December 4, 1984, trial statement, which appears in this volume on pages 304–315.

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dedicated to the memory of Christa Eckes

“The RAF’s struggle was always based on both the global balance of power and the conflict in the metropole. The war is not just about escalating things in the most developed sectors; rather it is the reality of the entire imperialist system, and will be until victory.”

Brigitte Mohnhaupt

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Many people, both in Europe, Germany in particular, and in North America, have contributed to this book by sharing their thoughts about and their experience of the historical events addressed herein. For a variety of reasons, they prefer not to be acknowledged by name, but without their input, insights, and support, the documents they provided, and situations and debates they described, we would have been unable to piece together the history we present here in anywhere near as much detail.

One person, however, particularly deserves our thanks. Ron Augustin maintains the most extensive online archive of RAF and RAF-related documents, housed at the International Institute of Social History in the Netherlands (<http://labourhistory.net/raf/>), without which this book, as it is, would have been impossible. Ron also proved ever ready to respond to our many, often arcane, questions and to provide us with valuable documents, including some of the photos used in this book. Besides the authors, only Ron and one other person read the historical portions of this book as it was being written. Both pointed out errors and incorrect interpretations on our part, allowing us, we hope, to produce a narrative that reflects the events we are addressing as accurately as is possible. Any errors that remain reflect shortcomings in our own research.

To all those who contributed in any way, our heartfelt thanks, and you

can anticipate hearing from us again as we begin to tackle the task of producing the third and final volume in this series.

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND SOURCES

In preparing these texts, we consulted the German-language originals available on various websites, of which the Labour History website is undoubtedly both the most complete and reliable.¹ For some texts, the ID-Verlag collection entitled *Rote Armee Fraktion: Texte und Materialien zur Geschichte der RAF* served as our source.² On rare occasions other sources were used. We have done our best to ensure that the German original we were using was in fact a faithful reproduction of the document originally released, but the existence, in some cases, of two or more different German-language versions complicated matters. Should any differences exist between our translations, particularly in terms of missing passages or additional passages, and versions found on the Labour History website, the error lies with us.

These are, however, translations, and we have done our best to present faithful but readable texts that retained the sense of the originals. Other translators would doubtless have made different decisions, perhaps choosing other words or hewing more closely to the original sentence structure. Our primary preoccupation, however, was to create translations that were as elegant as possible, while retaining as closely as possible the meaning of the original. We trust that errors on our part will prove minor and in no significant way misrepresent the original intent of the texts translated here.

We refer to this work as the complete texts of the Red Army Faction. The meaning of that statement seems indisputable, but that is not the case, and so we must explain what we mean by “complete.” To the best of our knowledge, we will have included every document issued by the RAF in its close to thirty-year history in the first volume (1968-1977), this second

volume (1978-1984), and the upcoming third volume (1984-1998). By this, we mean every theoretical manifesto, every communiqué accompanying an action, and every letter sent by the organization to the media. We have also included a number of pertinent interviews.

We did not include, with several exceptions, letters written by imprisoned RAF members. There are literally thousands of these, a significant selection of which have been published in German in a book entitled *Das Info*, edited by a former lawyer for prisoners from the RAF, Pieter Bakker Schut. This book can be found in its entirety on the Labour History website, as can Bakker Schut's invaluable historical analysis of the Stammheim trial, simply entitled *Stammheim*. Nor have we published, with the exception of a handful, any of the hundreds of court statements, often of epic length, made by RAF defendants over the years. When we did choose to publish a letter or a court statement, it was because the document in question filled out some theoretical or historical aspect of the RAF's history that we felt was not adequately addressed elsewhere.

Furthermore, as explained in our first volume, we decided not to include the 1971 text *Über den bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa* (Regarding the Armed Struggle in West Europe) penned by Horst Mahler. This document, a sprawling theoretical text, was rejected by the other members of the RAF and played no small role in the decision to expel Mahler from the group—making him the only member ever publicly expelled. (The interested reader proficient in German will have no difficulty finding this document online, and in the aforementioned ID-Verlag book.)

1. <http://labourhistory.net/raf/>.

2.

<http://www.nadir.org/nadir/archiv/PolitischeStroemungen/Stadtguerilla+RAF/RAF/raf-texte+materialien.PDF>.

PREFACE

The book you hold in your hands, along with its companion volumes, constitutes the most complete collection of texts and history of the Red Army Faction ever published in the English language.

Our first volume, *Projectiles for the People*, which came out in 2009, attempted to provide a history of the RAF that was both interesting and useful for people involved in movements for radical social change today. In this, we felt our work was unique, as English-language studies of the RAF were almost uniformly written from a counterinsurgency perspective, the goal being to discredit the guerilla and to deny it any recognition as a legitimate political force; in short, to deprive us of its history. The favored means to this end was to pathologize the individuals concerned, to reduce the 1970s experience of guerilla struggle in the Federal Republic of Germany to the work of a few mentally unbalanced characters, “spoiled children,” perhaps even Hitler’s progeny. Even those studies not devoted to counterinsurgency objectives as such suffered from this context, which was easily able to infect the wider discourse thanks to the dearth of accurate information about the RAF, and the fact that almost none of the guerilla’s writings were available in English.

Our first volume was an attempt to remedy this situation, and our hope is that what we produced was at least somewhat effective in this regard. Far from being a mere relic of history, the RAF’s experience, and the lengths to which the state went in its attempt to annihilate them, are of great relevance today. This is most obviously the case in the way an endless “war against terror” provides a fig leaf behind which one U.S. administration after another is able to invade and destabilize countries around the world. But there is another way that the RAF’s history remains eerily salient today,

in that the methods developed by West German penal authorities to try and break revolutionaries have metastasized into a monster devouring the lives of people who may have never even heard of a place like Stammheim. We refer to the widespread use of solitary confinement, or “isolation torture,” in prisons around the world, but especially in the United States, where as many as one hundred thousand people may be subjected to such inhumane conditions on any given day. Some prisoners are held in this way for a few days or weeks; others have spent decades in isolation. As prisoners from the RAF pointed out when these conditions were first used against them, this is a program of social extermination. It is a form of psychological murder.

It is not a complete surprise that some of our most enthusiastic readers have been prisoners held in these conditions in the dungeons of the United States. They have no difficulty grasping the reality of prison conditions purposefully designed to inflict “clean” torture, destroying people while leaving no physical scars.



When we began this series, we intended to produce two books about the RAF, the obvious breaking point in the narrative being 1977. (Most authors and cinematic propagandists simply pretend that the group ceased to exist at that point.) It became clear soon after we began work on our second volume, however, that we had made a mistake; given numerous written documents produced by the RAF in the course of its own coming to grips with its history in the 1990s, there was simply too much to fit into two books. The project would require a third volume.

If the question of where to split the RAF’s narrative in two was obvious, where to divide it in three was far less so. A strong argument could be made for 1986, when the “front” definitively came to an end and the era of assassinations began, or even 1992, when the group would decide to

unilaterally de-escalate. However, we chose 1984, allowing us to devote this, the shortest of the three volumes, to a very specific phase of reorientation, on the level of theory and of practice, for the RAF and for the rest of the left.

This volume examines seven difficult years. Our narrative begins in the moments following the guerilla's greatest defeat to date, the failed attempt to win its prisoners' freedom in 1977. This was only the most dramatic in a series of challenges then facing all of the movements and tendencies that had emerged from the 1960s radical left. Everything was open to question, and insofar as the guerilla was concerned, these questions were all the more urgent as the consequences of pursuing failed strategies could be all the more dire.

Reappraisal, coming to grips with mistakes and addressing weaknesses in one's own ranks, trying to find a new footing under adverse conditions, navigating the tensions between different strategies—these are the themes of this volume. It is not always a cheery story. Our hope, however, is that it will prove a useful one.



The present volume is intended to stand alone. While we imagine readers will want to learn all they can of the RAF's formative ideas and experiences, and how their ideas developed in their first seven years, one need not have read *Projectiles for the People* in order to appreciate the tale told in *Dancing with Imperialism*. Where necessary, we have quoted from our first volume to provide the context necessary to understand a particular question or issue, so that the story from 1977 to 1984 should be comprehensible from the book currently in your hands.

Those who have read volume 1, and for whom it remains fresh in their minds, may choose to skip over our first chapter, which largely amounts to

a summary of what came before. That said, we have purposefully tried to include observations and perspectives in that chapter which we had not included previously, to make the effort worthwhile for those who do opt to start their reading at page one.

We hope that our third volume, which should appear sometime in the next few years, will bring this story to its close. The formulation “we hope” is not used casually, for in recent years the German state has proven itself eager to keep the RAF’s story alive and developing into the second decade of the twenty-first century. A new trial for former RAF member Verena Becker was held in 2012, in connection with the 1977 murder of Attorney General Siegfried Buback. This was preceded by legal threats against other former RAF members, in an attempt to coerce them into providing details about their past activities. Besides sheer vindictiveness, there are political—and historiographical, in the sense of creating a historical narrative palatable to the state—motives behind all this. As some former RAF members explained in a statement in 2010:

The RAF was dissolved in 1998, based on its assessment of the changed political situation globally. The fact that it was its own decision and that it has not been defeated by the state, obviously remains a thorn in the flesh. Hence the eternal lament of the “myth” yet to be destroyed. Hence the political and moral capitulation demanded from us. Hence the attempts to finalize the criminalization of our history, up to the mendacious proposal of a “Truth Commission”. Whereas the search for those who are still underground, the smear campaigns in the media and the legal procedures against former prisoners continue, we are expected to kowtow publicly. As, in all these years, it didn’t work by “renunciation”, we are now to denounce each other. Save yourself if you can.³

The present volume is dedicated to the memory of Christa Eckes, one of those who was called upon to testify in Becker’s trial, and who refused. This despite the fact that she was at the time battling a particularly virulent cancer, and had been threatened with coercive detention in a prison cell if she did not comply. Eckes stood her ground, and in the end the state was

forced to back down. This refusal to snitch, this example of refusing to betray one's principles, was a final gift that Eckes gave to us all. She died of cancer on May 23, 2012.

[3.](#) RAF, some former members. "A note regarding the current situation—by some who have been RAF members at various points in time," May 2010.

ACRONYM KEY

2JM	<i>Bewegung 2. Juni</i> (2nd of June Movement); West Berlin-based guerilla group formed in early 1972, its name comes from the date of the police shooting of protester Benno Ohnesorg in 1967.
AD	<i>Action Directe</i> (Direct Action); French armed struggle group.
AI	Amnesty International; a liberal human rights organization with chapters around the world.
AIK	<i>Antiimperialistischer Kampf</i> (Anti-Imperialist Struggle); a Marxist-Leninist anti-imperialist group that grew out of the <i>Knastgruppe Bochum</i> , a political prisoner support group in Bochum. It parted ways with the RAF over disagreements around the 1982 May Paper.
AL	<i>Alternative Liste</i> ; left-wing electoral party with close ties to the Green Party, formed in 1978, includes many former prominent members of the APO.
APG	<i>Arbeitskreis politische Prozesse</i> (Political Trials Working Group); Vienna-based political prisoner support group, several of its members would participate in the 1977 2JM kidnapping of Austrian businessman Walter Palmers.
APO	<i>Außenparlamentarische Opposition</i> (Extra-Parliamentary Opposition); the name given to the broad-based militant opposition with its roots in the student movement that encompassed the left-wing anti-imperialist and social revolutionary movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s.
BAW	<i>Bundesanwaltschaft</i> (Federal Prosecutors Office); noted for its aggressive prosecution of cases against the guerilla and the left.
BGH	<i>Bundesgerichtshof</i> (Federal Court of Justice); the supreme court in all matters of criminal and private law.
BGS	<i>Bundesgrenzschutz</i> (Federal Border Guard); border security police.

BKA	<i>Bundeskriminalamt</i> (Federal Criminal Bureau); the German equivalent of the FBI, particularly active in police activities against the guerilla and the left.
BND	<i>Bundesnachrichtendienst</i> (Federal Intelligence Service); the FRG's foreign intelligence service.
CC	(Coordinating Committee); a body repeatedly established with the goal of coordinating (and, according to some, centralizing) activities of the West German "peace" movement.
CDU	<i>Christlich Demokratisches Union Deutschlands</i> (Christian Democratic Union of Germany); Germany's mainstream conservative party.
CSU	<i>Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern</i> (Bavarian Christian-Social Union); Bavaria's mainstream conservative party, the Bavarian partner to the CDU.
DGB	<i>Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund</i> (German Union Federation); the largest union federation in the FRG.
DKP	<i>Deutsche Kommunistische Partei</i> (German Communist Party); the pro-Soviet communist party founded in 1968, in effect the rebranding of the KPD which had been banned in 1956.
EC	European Community. Political body bringing together numerous European countries outside of the pro-Soviet Eastern Bloc; became the European Union in 1993.
ETA	<i>Euskadi Ta Askatasuna</i> (Basque Homeland and Freedom); a Basque nationalist guerilla group active in Spain and to a lesser degree France, founded in 1958, it dissolved itself in November 2011.
FDP	<i>Freie Demokratische Partei</i> (Free Democratic Party); Germany's mainstream liberal party.
FMLN	<i>Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional</i> (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front); an umbrella group bringing together five popular armed organizations in El Salvador in 1980. The FMLN was engaged in revolutionary warfare throughout the 1980s. In 1992 following a peace agreement, it demobilized, becoming a

	legal political organization.
FSLN	<i>Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional</i> (Sandinista National Liberation Front); leading force in the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution, subsequently formed the government of Nicaragua from 1979 to 1990.
GIGN	<i>Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale</i> (National Gendarmerie Intervention Group); section of the French police specialized in hostage situations.
GIM	<i>Groupe Internationale Marxisten</i> (International Marxist Group); West German section of the Trotskyist Fourth International active in the FRG in the seventies and eighties, fused with the KPD/ML to form the VSP in 1986.
GSG-9	<i>Grenzschutzgruppe 9</i> (Border Patrol Group 9); officially part of the BGS, in practice Germany's antiterrorist special operations unit.
IKSG	<i>Internationale Kommission zum Schutz der Gefangenen und gegen die Isolationshaft</i> (International Commission for the Protection of Prisoners and Against Isolation Torture); established in 1979 to provide support for political prisoners in Western Europe.
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army; a Marxist republican paramilitary group, founded simultaneously with the IRSP in December 1974 as the People's Liberation Army, it declared a ceasefire in August 1998, its members now being involved in legal political activity.
INPOL	<i>INformationssystem der POLizei</i> (INformation system of the POLice); computer database set up by the Conference of Interior Ministers in 1972, compiling millions of pieces of police data and linked to the NADIS system.
IRSP	Irish Republican Socialist Party; a Marxist party, founded simultaneously with the INLA in December 1974.
IVK	<i>Internationales Komitee zur Verteidigung politischer Gefangener in Europa</i> (International Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners in Europe); founded in 1975, bringing together jurists from throughout Europe to work on behalf of the rights of political

prisoners, especially those from the RAF. Became largely moribund due to repression following the German Autumn.

KPD	<i>Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands</i> (Communist Party of Germany); a Maoist party founded by the KPD/AO in 1971 and dissolved in 1980. Also the name of the older communist party which was pro-Soviet in the time of Lenin and Stalin, that had been founded in 1919, was banned under Hitler in 1933, and then again under Adenauer in 1956.
KPD/AO	<i>Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands/Aufbauorganisation</i> (Communist Party of Germany/Pre-Party Formation); a Maoist organization founded in 1970, became the KPD in 1971.
KPD/ML	<i>Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands/Marxisten-Leninisten</i> (Communist Party of Germany/Marxist-Leninist); a Maoist party founded on December 31, 1968. It fused with the Trotskyist GIM in 1986 to form the VSP.
LG	<i>Landgericht</i> (<i>Land</i> Court); each of the <i>Länder</i> has its own Court.
LKA	<i>Landeskriminalamt</i> (<i>Land</i> Criminal Bureau); the equivalent of the BKA functioning at the level of a <i>Land</i> .
MAD	<i>Militärischer Abschirmdienst</i> (Military Counterintelligence Service); the military's intelligence gathering service; antiwar and antinuclear groups have been the targets of its investigations.
MEK	<i>Mobiles Einsatzkommando</i> (Mobile Deployment Commando); specialized <i>Länder</i> police units, a kind of SEK specialized in surveillance, rapid arrests, and mobile hostage takings or kidnappings.
MfS	<i>Ministerium für Staatssicherheit</i> (Ministry for State Security); better known as the <i>Stasi</i> , was the East German secret police force that tracked both internal dissent and foreign threats. It was similar in some ways to the FBI or the BKA, but played a more central role in policy decision-making.
NADIS	<i>Nachrichtendienstliches Informationssystem</i> (information system of the intelligence service); computer database containing names and

	details about any person stored in the files of the <i>Verfassungsschutz</i> ; accessible by the BKA, the BND, and MAD.
NPD	<i>Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> (National Democratic Party); far-right political party, supported by many neo-nazis.
NRW	North Rhine Westphalia; Germany's most populous <i>Land</i> and the site of four of the country's ten largest cities.
OLG	<i>Oberlandesgericht</i> (<i>Land</i> Court of Appeal); each of the <i>Länder</i> has its own Court of Appeal.
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries; an intergovernmental organization of oil-producing countries founded in 1960 and headquartered in Vienna. Its primary function has been in the areas of supply and price setting.
ÖTV	<i>Gewerkschaft öffentliche Dienste, Transport und Verkehr</i> (Public Service, Transport, and Communication Union).
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; founded in 1953, secular nationalist and Marxist, the second largest tendency within the PLO after Fatah.
PFLP (EO)	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (External Operations); originally a section of the PFLP, expelled in the early 1970s for conducting controversial actions outside of the Middle East, effectively dissolved in 1978 after the death of its leader Waddi Haddad, who had been poisoned by the Mossad.
PFLP (SC)	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Special Command); a successor organization to the PFLP (EO), which dissolved in 1978 with the death of its leader Waddi Haddad, it ceased operations in the 1980s.
PIOS	<i>Personen, Information, Objekte, Sachen; Staatsschutz-Recherchesystem</i> (Persons, Institutions, Properties); the BKA's computer database devoted to the "terrorist" scene; a subset of INPOL.
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization; founded in 1964 as the main body of the Palestinian national liberation movement.

RAF	<i>Rote Armee Fraktion</i> (Red Army Faction).
RDF	Rapid Deployment Forces; specialized military units that receive advanced training and armaments.
RVF	<i>Rood Verzetsfront</i> (Red Resistance Front); aboveground Dutch anti-imperialist organization that provided solidarity to the RAF and its prisoners.
RZ	<i>Revolutionäre Zellen</i> (Revolutionary Cells); founded in 1973, most groups within its structure ceased activity in 1991, with the final action occurring in 1994.
SDS	<i>Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund</i> (Socialist German Students Federation); founded by the SPD in 1946. By the late sixties it was an independent left-wing student federation and the most significant organization in the APO. It dissolved in 1970.
SEK	<i>Spezialeinsatzkommando</i> (Special Response Unit); specialized <i>Länder</i> police unit, similar to SWAT units in the United States.
SPD	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> (Social Democratic Party of Germany); Germany's mainstream social democratic party.
SPK	<i>Socialistisches Patientenkollektiv</i> (Socialist Patients' Collective); founded in 1970, part of the antipsychiatry movement. It dissolved under extreme state pressure in 1971, a number of its core members later joining the RAF
VSP	<i>Vereinigte Sozialistische Partei</i> (United Socialist Party); formed in 1986 through the fusion of the KPD/ML and the GIM, splintered into various groups in 1993.
WAIW	<i>Frauen gegen imperialistischen Krieg</i> (Women Against Imperialist War); an organization that brought together anti-imp and <i>Autonomen</i> women in the 1980s.

GERMAN TERMS

Anti-imp: short for “anti-imperialist”; the tendency of the radical left that was sympathetic to the RAF.

Autonomen: the German wing of the autonomist movement, which was the major radical political tendency in the 1970s and ‘80s in countries throughout Western Europe, drawing on an eclectic mix of sources, including anarchism, non-Leninist Marxism, feminism, and the confrontational legacy of various social movements.

Berufsverbot: “career ban”; legislation passed by the SPD in 1972 barring “disloyal radicals” from working in the public sector.

Bundestag: the federal parliament of West Germany.

Bundeswehr: the West German armed forces, reestablished in 1954.

Jusos: *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Jungsozialistinnen und Jungsozialisten in der SPD* (Workers Association of Young Socialists in the SPD); the SPD’s youth wing.

Land/Länder: the singular and plural for the German equivalent of states or provinces.

Ostpolitik: the FRG’s official policy toward the GDR and the Eastern Bloc.

Sponti: “spontaneists”; the most important of the self-styled anti-authoritarian tendencies to emerge after the dissolution of the APO in the early 1970s.

Stasi: The colloquial and somewhat derogatory term for the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (Ministry for State Security, or MfS), East Germany’s secret police force that tracked both internal dissent and foreign threats. It was similar in some ways to the FBI or the BKA, but played a more central role in policy decision-making.

Verfassungsschutz: literally “Protection of the Constitution”; the German internal intelligence service, primary police force for intelligence actions against the guerilla and the left.

Zielfahndung: “target search”; the name of a BKA unit whose agents are assigned to track specific individual targets.

DANCING WITH IMPERIALISM

ON THE NECESSITY OF ARMED STRUGGLE: REFLECTIONS ON THE RAF AND THE QUESTION OF MOVING FORWARD

by Ward Churchill

Never again without a rifle.

Italian leftist slogan
(circa 1970)

Looking back from the vantage point of more than forty years, it's clear that those of us in the so-called developed world purporting to be serious about abolishing the prevailing order had by 1970 come to know a few things now forgotten or, perhaps more accurately, consigned to the murky depths of active denial. Among the foremost of these is that absent a global system of imperialism the grossly inequitable societies in which we find ourselves could not exist in their present form,¹ that colonialism/neocolonialism constitutes the veritable bedrock upon which imperialism is both foundationed and sustained,² and that the impact of colonialism upon the colonized is inherently genocidal.³

No less clear was the understanding that there can be no valid basis for equivocation. Faced with the systemic perpetration of what has been aptly described as "the incomparable crime,"⁴ we are obliged—morally and legally, individually and collectively—to intervene through any and all available means. In this, there are no bystanders. As Karl Jaspers observed of so-called Good Germans during the nazi era, those who pretend blindness with regard to genocidal processes or, worse, seek to avoid the weight of oppositional responsibility by arguing that such processes weren't or aren't "really" what they were and are, may be properly viewed as accomplices to the crime itself.⁵

Concrete action is plainly required. In this sense, merely “bearing witness” to genocide serves little purpose (other than allowing the witnesses to claim a feeble moral superiority over proverbial Good Germans, perhaps).⁶ Relatedly, the notion that “speaking truth to power” about what is witnessed—as if those holding power were somehow oblivious to the effects of the manner in which they wield it—can in itself remedy the situation is at best a mythic proposition.⁷ And, of course, the pursuit of substantive change through electoral politics has long since revealed itself as adding up to little more than a species of alchemy or, perhaps more accurately, masturbation.

The same holds true with regard to the forms of dissent formally permitted or even approved by those in power—marches, rallies, and other state-sanctioned modes of protest—irrespective of the scale on which they might be pursued.⁸ Indeed, the ability of advanced states to assume a posture of “repressive tolerance”⁹ has largely nullified the prospect that business as usual can be significantly impaired even by mass engagement in the rituals of nonviolent civil disobedience.¹⁰ It’s of course possible that the hallowed anarchosyndicalist prescription of a general strike might in some ways accomplish the desired result, as it very nearly did in France during the spring of 1968,¹¹ but, alas, history offers no example of where it has been possible to organize such action either on an explicitly anti-imperialist basis or, more narrowly, in opposition to a particular genocide.¹²

This is not to say that the range of approaches mentioned are altogether devoid of value or utility. On the contrary, each has a place in a continuum of tactics and techniques required to effect the galvanization of popular consciousness and consequent political mobilization essential to transforming the status quo. Even where all elements have been present and functioning more or less in concert, however, the historical outcome has been a consistent failure to achieve the desired result. In other words,

something more has been and remains necessary. In this connection, it is instructive that the only instances to date in which genocidal processes undertaken by technologically advanced states have been brought to a halt have involved significant—often massive—applications of military force.

The most conspicuous examples are undoubtedly those of Germany, Japan, and Italy, each of whose imperial ambitions and frankly exterminatory policies vis-à-vis various subject peoples were unconditionally terminated by force of arms during World War II.¹³ Other noteworthy instances include the Cuban guerillas' eviction of a U.S. client regime in 1959,¹⁴ Algeria's sustained prosecution of a guerilla campaign resulting in the eviction of French colonialism in 1962,¹⁵ the protracted Vietnamese people's war that defeated first the French (in 1954) and then the United States (in 1975),¹⁶ the guerilla campaigns that freed Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola from Portuguese rule in 1973, '74, and '75, respectively,¹⁷ the elimination of another U.S. client regime by Nicaraguan guerillas in 1979,¹⁸ and the success of Namibia's war of national liberation against apartheid South Africa in 1988.¹⁹

While it is taken as an article of faith in many quarters that Britain's postwar relinquishment of dominion over India—manifested with truly genocidal callousness between 1940 and 1944²⁰—was brought about through a Gandhian program of nonviolent civil disobedience, the reality was actually quite different.²¹ Not only was there a significant armed dimension to India's struggle for independence,²² but without the Second World War itself Gandhi's effort would most certainly have failed. Simply put, the demands of waging total war against the earlier-mentioned tripartite alliance of Germany, Italy, and Japan so exhausted British military and financial resources that the Empire simply lacked the capacity to maintain its grip on the subcontinent.²³ The more so, since Britain was simultaneously confronted with armed liberation struggles in others of its

colonies, notably Malaya (now Malaysia), Kenya, and, a bit later, Aden (Yemen).²⁴

It is of course true that in no instance has national liberation yielded the results hoped for by those who sacrificed to attain it, and in even the most successful cases abatement of the genocidal effects of imperialism has been transient at best. Not the least reason for this dismal outcome is that, aside from the crushing of the tripartite powers by other industrially/technologically advanced states in 1945, the imperial order has been forcibly repealed only in the so-called Third World of colonized rather than colonizing countries.²⁵ With the exceptions of Germany, Italy, and Japan—each of which was quickly reorganized, rebuilt, and restored to its “rightful” place in the international hierarchy—the imperial centers have remained largely unscathed.²⁶

This has allowed imperialism to absorb and in many respects even welcome dismantlement of its classic system of overseas colonialism in favor of a more refined, profitable, and genocidally immiserating mode of neocolonial domination now depicted by its proponents, rather contradictorily, as being both a “global free market” and a “fully integrated global economy.”²⁷ It follows that the eradication of imperialism cannot be viewed as an objective attainable solely through the success of armed struggles in the colonial hinterlands, a proposition once—and still—embraced by far too many professed anti-imperialists in the metropoles.²⁸ Rather, it must be brought about in the metropoles themselves. The only real question is how this might be accomplished.

Ideally, something akin to the British Royal and U.S. Eighth Air Forces which together bombed the Third Reich into oblivion during World War II would be available to visit the same fate upon *all* the imperial centers,²⁹ thereby precluding reconstitution of the system in some still more virulent variation. That scenario, unfortunately—along with those of the materialization of a figurative counterpart to the Soviet Red Army that

both gutted the German army and overran Berlin³⁰ or to the People's Army of Vietnam that fought a half-million-strong U.S. military force not merely to a standstill, but to the point of the latter's disintegration in the field³¹—belongs to the realm of pure fantasy.

As was understood well before 1970, however, guerilla warfare—of the sort initially practiced by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) during the early twentieth century and subsequently evolved specifically for urban settings—offers considerable potential.³² At the very least, it serves to put teeth in the expression of anti-imperialist opposition. Crucially, in regard to those functionaries in the metropoles imbued with what Noam Chomsky had by 1968 already described as a “creeping Eichmannism,”³³ it removes a sense of their own immunity to consequence. In a context of armed struggle carried out “on the home front,” the little Eichmanns complicit in ongoing crimes against humanity can entertain few doubts that their actions might at any moment result in the imposition of tangible penalties, both material and, at least potentially, personal as well.³⁴

Between 1969 and 1973, serious anti-imperialists in the metropoles therefore set about the task of implementing urban guerilla operations in locales extending from the United States to Western Europe and Japan.³⁵ While a welter of sometimes mutually opposing strategies were evident and the results were decidedly mixed, a number of important organizations and initiatives emerged from the effort. These may be loosely grouped into three distinct but overlapping and often interactive categories:

- formations like the Weather Underground (WUO), the George Jackson Brigade, and the United Freedom Front (Sam Melville/ Jonathan Jackson Brigade) in the U.S.,³⁶ Italy's *Brigate Rosse* (Red Brigades),³⁷ the *Groupes d'action révolutionnaire internationale* (GARI) and *Action Directe* in France,³⁸ and the *Rote Armee Fraktion* (the Red Army Faction or RAF) in Germany, arising in a manner

organic to and targeting the state/corporate apparatus of their own countries;

- formations arising in colonies internalized by an imperial power and conducting operations within the borders of the “mother country” itself for purposes of furthering the struggle for decolonization of their respective peoples. Examples include the Basque separatist *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) in Spain³⁹ and the *Front de libération du Québec* in Canada,⁴⁰ as well as the Black Liberation Army (BLA) and *Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueña* (FALN) in the U.S.⁴¹ To a significant extent, the Provisional IRA’s guerilla campaign to free Ulster (Northern Ireland) from British rule also falls into this category;⁴²
- formations like the Japanese Red Army (JRA) and a section of the German Revolutionary Cells which, although arising in particular metropoles, adopted an “internationalist” stance leading to their operating largely—in the case of the JRA, all but exclusively—outside their own countries, targeting the state/corporate apparatus of imperialism on a global basis.⁴³ Often, groups of this type worked directly with and often took their lead from Third World guerilla organizations (notably the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (External Operations)).⁴⁴

While each of the organizations named above is deserving of in-depth study and analysis, only a scant handful have thus far received it. The matter is by no means of mere academic interest. Only through excavation of their histories in substantial detail can lessons of their much-varied experiences be extracted, their errors corrected, and a better praxis of armed struggle in the metropoles achieved.

Here, the ongoing effort of J. Smith and André Moncourt to provide a definitive archeology of the Red Army Faction is to be especially

commended. This is so not only because of the exemplary quality of the work produced by Smith and Moncourt but because of the unique importance of the RAF as a signifier of the potential lodged in the populace of the mother country itself.

With material like this at our disposal, not only should it prove possible to overcome the current inertia evidenced by those claiming to oppose imperialism from within the metropoles, but maybe this time we'll get it right.

NOTES

1. For a comprehensive overview of how this came to be, see Immanuel Wallerstein's magisterial study, *The Modern World-System*, 4 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011; the first three volumes were originally published by Academic Press in 1974, 1980, and 1989, respectively).
2. A rather vast literature has been devoted to this topic. In my estimation, Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1955), Eduardo Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), and Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Baltimore: Howard University Press, 1974) remain among the very best explications.
3. The equation of colonialism to genocide was first made by Jean-Paul Sartre in an essay prepared for the 1967 Russell Tribunal on U.S. war crimes in Vietnam and was originally published under the title "On Genocide" in *Ramparts* (February 1968), 35-42. Somewhat more accessibly, the essay was subsequently released in short book form—see Jean-Paul Sartre and Arlette El Kaim-Sartre, *On Genocide and a Summary of the Evidence and Judgments of the International War Crimes Tribunal* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968)—and is included in the Tribunal's published record; see John Duffett, ed., *Against the Crime of Silence: Proceedings of the Russell International War Crimes Tribunal* (New York: Clarion, 1970).
4. See Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, *The Incomparable Crime: Mass Extermination in the Twentieth Century* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1967).
5. Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961; reprint, New York: Dial Press, 1947).
6. For a standard litany of claims to the contrary, see James Dawes, *That the World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).
7. A considerable measure of sheer hubris is typically embodied in the framing of this ubiquitous postulation. See, e.g., Kerry Kennedy and Eddie Adams, *Speak Truth to Power: Human Rights Defenders Who Are Changing Our World* (Brooklyn, NY: Umbrage Editions, 2000).
8. Witness, as a prominent example, the failure of the October-November 1969 Moratorium demonstrations against the Vietnam War—in which it is credibly estimated

that some two million people participated—even to forestall the Nixon administration’s expansion of ground combat into Cambodia a few months later. See “1969: Millions March in US Vietnam Moratorium,” *BBC News: On This Day, October 15* (http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/15/newsid_2533000/2533131); Simon Hall, *Rethinking the American Anti-War Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 119-136; Keith William Nolan, *Into Cambodia: Spring Campaign, Summer Offensive, 1970* (San Francisco: Presidio Press, 1999).

9. On the concept at issue, see Herbert Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance,” in Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 95-137.

10. Consider, for instance, the 1971 May Day demonstrations against the war in Indochina, during which roughly twenty thousand people participated in a concerted program of deliberately disruptive—but essentially nonviolent—civil disobedience in the U.S. capital. Now mostly forgotten, May Day had no discernable effect on Nixon administration policy, even with regard to the “secret” bombing of Cambodia (which continued unabated until 1973). See Lucy G. Barber, *Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 204-213; William Shawcross, *Sideshow: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

11. On the concept of the general strike, see, e.g., Ralph Chaplin’s 1933 essay, “The General Strike,” collected in Lenny Flank, ed., *The IWW: A Documentary History* (Athens, GA: Red and Black, 2007), 185-212; Milorad Drachkovitch, *The Revolutionary Internationals, 1864-1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1966), 83-100. On the strike in France, see, e.g., George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End Press, 1999), 87-116.

12. The reasons for this are no doubt varied and complex. As concerns North America in particular, however, considerable light is shed on the matter by J. Sakai’s *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat* (Chicago: Morningstar Press, 1989).

13. The case of Germany is very well known, but see Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008). On the genocidal comportment of imperial Japan, see, e.g., Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). On the relatively neglected topic of Italian colonialism’s genocidal impacts in Libya and Ethiopia, see Alberto Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1997); Rory Carroll, “Italian Atrocities in World War

II," *The Guardian*, June 24, 2001
(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2001/jun/25/artsandhumanities.highereducation>)

14. See generally, Aviva Chomsky, *A History of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

15. Although its author's biases are obvious, the best history of the war for Algerian independence available in English is probably Alistair Horne's *The Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: Viking Press, 1977; rev. ed. published by the History Book Club, 2002).

16. See Marilyn Blatt Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991).

17. On Guinea-Bissau, see Gérard Chaliand, *Armed Struggle in Africa: With the Guerrillas in "Portuguese" Guinea* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); Patrick Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981). On Mozambique, see Thomas H. Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution: Mozambique's War of Independence, 1964-1974* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983). On Angola, see John Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969 and 1978, respectively).

18. See, e.g., Carlos M. Vilas, *The Sandinista Revolution: National Liberation and Social Transformation in Central America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1986).

19. There is a paucity of readily accessible English-language material on the Namibian liberation struggle, but see John Ya-Otto, Ole Gjerstad, and Michael Mercer, *Battlefront Namibia* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1986); Fen Osler Hampson, *Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute for Peace, 1996), especially pages 53–64.

20. The British knowingly induced a severe famine in Bengal and other areas of Eastern India by siphoning off the grain necessary to sustain the population, and stockpiling it in England as a hedge against postwar scarcities. An estimated three million people died as a result. See Madhusree Mukerjee, *Churchill's Secret War: The British Empire and the Ravishing of India during World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

21. The notion that the independence of India was achieved through Gandhian nonviolence has been aptly dismissed as a “comfortable fiction” by a number of knowledgeable analysts. See, e.g., Alex Von Tunzelmann, *Indian Summer: The Secret History of the End of an Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007), 8. For a good debunking of the mythology surrounding Gandhi's pacifism, see Faisal Devji, *The Impossible*

Indian: Gandhi and the Temptation of Violence (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[22.](#) See Peter Ward Fay, *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

[23.](#) See generally, Roy Douglas, *Liquidation of Empire: The Decline of the British Empire* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Peter Clark, *The Last Thousand Days of the British Empire: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the Birth of the Pax Americana* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2008).

[24.](#) The Anti-British Liberation War, as the Malayan guerillas called it, was not directly successful. Nonetheless, it tied up a considerable proportion of Britain's military assets for a considerable period. See Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960* (New York: Frederick Muller, 1975). On Kenya, where quelling the so-called Mau Mau Uprising demanded an even greater share of Britain's available strength during the period, see Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Pimlico, 2005). Despite its rather stilted prose, the best English-language source on the Yemeni war for national liberation is probably Vitaly Naumkin's *Red Wolves of Yemen: The Struggle for Independence* (Cambridge, UK: Oleander Press, 2004).

[25.](#) Again, there is a wealth of literature documenting the outcome and analyzing its causes. For a somewhat superficial but nonetheless useful summary, see Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007).

[26.](#) On Germany, Italy, and Western Europe more generally, see Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Nicolaus Mills, *Winning the Peace: The Marshall Plan and America's Coming of Age as a Superpower* (New York: John Wiley, 2008). On Japan, see, e.g., John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), especially pages 526–547.

[27.](#) For the seminal work in this area, see Kwame Nkrumah, *NeoColonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International, 1966). For more current assessments, see Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Richard A. Falk, *Predatory Globalization: A Critique* (Oxford, UK: Polity Press, 1999); Michel Chossudovsky, *The Globalization of Poverty and the New World Order* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2003); Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2008).

²⁸. Even if such a strategy was viable, the moral and ethical implications attending the beneficiary population's displacement of the suffering entailed in such struggles onto the colonized speak for themselves. With very few exceptions, such a posture has nonetheless been perpetually evident among anti-imperialists in the United States. For a good overview, see Richard Seymour, *American Insurgents: A Brief History of American Anti-Imperialism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012).

²⁹. See Alan J. Levine, *The Strategic Bombing of Germany, 1940-1945* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992).

³⁰. Notwithstanding triumphalist Anglo-American prattle about the decisiveness of the Normandy invasion, and so on, the truth is that the Red Army not only bore the great brunt of the fighting against German ground forces but inflicted vastly more casualties upon the Germans—roughly 80 percent of the total—than did the Western Allies; William J. Duiker, *Contemporary World History* (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2009), 128. For further background, see Chris Bellamy, *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War* (London: Macmillan, 2007).

³¹. See Richard Boyle, *Flower of the Dragon: The Breakdown of the U.S. Army in Vietnam* (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1972); Cincinnatus (Col. Cecil B. Currey), *Self-Destruction: The Disintegration and Decay of the United States Army during the Vietnam Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981).

³². On the IRA campaign, see, e.g., Peter Hart, *The IRA at War, 1916-1923* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003). By the late 1960s, Uruguay's Tupamaros had emerged as a useful template for adaptation to North American and European contexts; see María Esther Gilio, *The Tupamaro Guerrillas: The Structure and Strategy of the Urban Guerrilla Movement* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1973). Among the more influential tracts during the period was Brazilian practitioner Carlos Marighella's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (Berkeley, CA: Long Time Comin' Press, 1969; reprint, St. Petersburg, FL: Red and Black, 2008).

³³. Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon, 1968; reprint, Oakland, CA: AK Press), 277. In actuality, the term “creeping Eichmannism” predates Chomsky’s usage by nearly a decade, having first appeared in E.Z. Friedenberg’s *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Beacon Press, 1959). See Neil Postman, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (New York: Delacourt Press, 1970), 9.

³⁴. For further development of this argument, see “The Ghosts of 9-1-1: Reflections on History, Justice, and Roosting Chickens,” in my *On the Justice of Roosting Chickens: Reflections on the Consequences of U.S. Imperial Arrogance and Criminality* (Oakland,

CA: AK Press, 2003), 5-38.

35. That such undertakings commenced on three continents more or less simultaneously was hardly a matter of happenstance. There was a high degree of interaction between the movements in Western Europe—especially Germany—and the United States, while SDS, and perhaps other organizations in the U.S., was in direct contact with *Zengakuren*, the radical student movement in Japan, during the late 1960s. See Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); William R. Farrell, *Blood and Rage: The Story of the Japanese Red Army* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 90.

36. On the WUO, see Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005); Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, and Jeff Jones, eds., *Sing a Battle Song: The Revolutionary Poetry, Statements, and Communiques from the Weather Underground, 1970-1974* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006). On the George Jackson Brigade, see Daniel Burton-Rose, *Guerrilla USA: The George Jackson Brigade and the Anticapitalist Underground of the 1970s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Daniel Burton-Rose, ed., *Creating a Movement with Teeth: A Documentary History of the George Jackson Brigade* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010). No comparable material is currently available on the United Freedom Front.

37. Although the first source is inadequate and the second reactionary, see Alessandro Silj, *Never Again Without a Rifle: The Origins of Italian Terrorism* (New: Katz, 1979); Robert C. Meade, Jr., *The Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990). From an activist perspective, see also, Chris Aronson Beck, Reggie Emiliana, Lee Morris, and Ollie Patterson, *Strike One to Educate One Hundred: The Rise of the Red Brigades in Italy in the 1960's-1970's* (Seeds Beneath the Snow, 1986), portions of which are available at <http://www.urbanguerilla.org/brigaterosse/index.php>.

38. There is no English-language material available on the GARI, *per se*, but on its successor, see Michael Y. Darnell, *Action Directe: Ultra-Left Terrorism in France, 1979-1987* (London: Frank Cass, 1995). Readers should be advised that this is a decidedly right-wing source.

39. See Robert P. Clark, *Negotiating with ETA: Obstacles to Peace in the Basque Country, 1975-1988* (Reno University of Nevada Press, 1990); Paddy Woodworth, *Dirty War, Clean Hands: ETA, the GAL and Spanish Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

40. The best English-language material available on the FLQ—which isn't saying a great

deal—appears to be Louis Fournier's *F.L.Q.: The Anatomy of an Underground Movement* (Toronto: NC Press, 1984).

41. Material on the BLA is scanty, but see Akinyele Omowale Umoja, "Repression Breeds Resistance: The Black Liberation Army and the Radical Legacy of the Black Panther Party," and Russell Shoats, "Black Fighting Formations: Their Strengths, Weaknesses, and Potentialities," both in Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, eds., *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 3-19, 128-138. See also Dhoruba bin Wahad, Assata Shakur, and Mumia Abu Jamal, *Still Black, Still Strong* (Brooklyn: Semiotext(e), 1993); Jalil Muntaqim, *On the Black Liberation Army* (Montreal: Abraham Guillen Press/Arm the Spirit, 2002).

42. Although the FALN engaged in "more than 120 bombings of military and government buildings, financial institutions, and corporate headquarters in Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C." between 1974 and 1983, there is a near-total absence of material about the organization available in English. See generally, Ronald Fernandez, *Prisoners of Colonialism: The Struggle for Justice in Puerto Rico* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1994).

43. There is a substantial literature (of wildly varying quality) on the Provos. One of the more useful overviews is provided by Richard English in his *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Also see Gary McGladdery, *The Provisional IRA in England: The Bombing Campaign, 1973-1997* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006).

44. The JRA should not be confused with either the short-lived Japanese Red Army Faction or its immediate successor, the United Red Army, which self-destructed in Japan in 1971; see Farrell, *Blood and Rage*, 1-29. On the Revolutionary Cells, per se, there is virtually nothing currently available in English.

45. While the armed struggle for the liberation of Palestine has been quite complex, both militarily and politically, the PFLP (EO) in particular adopted a strategy of working with and sponsoring non-Arab organizations for purposes of conducting operations inside the imperial centers from which the Israeli settler state drew support. For background, see generally, Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000).



Previously on Red Army Faction

FORTY YEARS AGO, THE WORLD was a very different place.

The division between “Communism” and “The Free West”—détente notwithstanding—marked each and every political conflict, as did the anticolonial revolutions, which had by no means run their course.

Millions of people around the world felt that it was reasonable and worthwhile to risk their lives fighting for liberation from capitalism and imperialism, joining movements with these stated goals. This global upheaval found its epicenter in the Third World, and yet its effects left no nation unchanged. While in the wealthy imperialist countries these revolutionary movements were most evident in the 1960s, there remained pockets of resistance, subcultural remnants, people who persisted in putting their lives on the line, carrying the struggle forward through the 1970s and beyond.

This is the story of one such group, the Red Army Faction (RAF).

West Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), was an anticommunist state set up after World War II to threaten the Soviet bloc, around which imperialism hoped to and succeeded in rebuilding Western Europe’s economy. As part of this process, immediately after the war the capitalist Allies decided to make peace with former Nazis and their supporters, so long as they were willing to play ball with the new “democratic” masters. Throughout the late 1940s, the ‘50s, and the ‘60s, many of the key positions of power in the FRG were occupied by men who

had played similarly important roles in Hitler’s Third Reich.

As a substitute for any real denazification, religious and civil leaders simply repeated the mantra that the best way to make sure the crimes of the Nazi period were never repeated was for all Germans to concentrate on living “decent, law-abiding” lives. A message that would often be repeated by parents—not a few of whom had sieg-heiling skeletons in their closets—to their children.

A stifling, authoritarian, and conformist ideology was being imposed from above, a perfect match for the cultural wasteland that had been sterilized in the postwar period, just as it had been “Aryanized” by fascism.

The global wave of revolt that became known as the “New Left” hit the FRG in the 1960s, just as it was reaching the other imperialist countries. Students in West Berlin began questioning not only the economic system, but the very nature of society itself. The structure of the family, the factory, and the school system were all challenged as these young rebels mixed the style of the hippie counterculture with ideas drawn from the Frankfurt School’s brand of Marxism.

In 1966 and ‘67, a recession that had hit the entire capitalist world pushed unemployment in the FRG to over a million for the first time in the postwar era. In a move to preempt dissent, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) was brought into a so-called “Grand Coalition” government alongside the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its more rabid Bavarian counterpart, the Christian Social Union (CSU). With the putative “left” working hand-in-hand with the right to manage the crisis, it appeared that any real change could only come about outside of government channels. Disenchantment struck West Germany’s youth in the factories and on the street, as younger workers were increasingly marginalized by the new corporatist compact—but most especially in the universities, which had been bastions of right-wing power for over a hundred years.¹ The *Außerparlamentarische Opposition* (APO), or Extra-

Parliamentary Opposition, was born.

Communes and housing collectives began to spring up. Women challenged the male leadership and orientation within the student movement and the APO, setting up daycares, women's caucuses, women's centers, and women's communes. The broader counterculture, rockers, artists, and members of the drug scene all rallied to the emerging political insurgency. Political protests encompassed traditional demonstrations, as well as sit-ins, teach-ins, and "happenings."

This was all the more striking given the conservative cultural and political situation in West Germany at the time. In retrospect, it may not be difficult to see that the student revolt was one part of a complex and often contradictory process of social transformation, through which capitalism was not only being challenged, but also renewed, new classes rising as old classes updated their worldview. At the time, however, the gulf that separated the student protesters from the surrounding society could seem well-nigh unbridgeable.

The APO was opposed by a rabidly right-wing gutter press and gratuitous violence, which would be exemplified for many by the killing of Benno Ohnesorg, a young student shot dead by police while attending his first demonstration in West Berlin, on June 2, 1967.² In this context, the APO was forced to develop a capacity for street militancy, as ongoing attacks on the movement combined with the specter of Germany's recent past to imbue it with a sense of "do or die" urgency—an attitude that was sadly vindicated, as Socialist German Students Federation (*Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*, or SDS) leader Rudi Dutschke, the target of a hate campaign in the popular Springer Press, barely survived being shot three times by a would-be assassin in 1968. (He would in fact die as a consequence of his injuries eleven years later.)

In radical circles it was a commonplace that the Federal Republic was simply the Third Reich in new clothing, and this view—made all the more

credible by the violence directed at the New Left—had consequences as to the place that repression, violence, and resistance would all play in activist strategies. As Irmgard Möller would recall, over thirty years later:

Repression had not brought people together, but it had sharpened the perspective of those affected. Who is it that one confronts? How can one protect oneself? Above all, it became clear that people could only defend themselves if they acted together! Then, the overview of the entire justice system, the repressive system—what would they go after? What grinder would they put us through? I'm not saying that persecution automatically gives rise to something good. But at the time, it was important that anyone who had ever set foot on the street—against the state of emergency legislation, protesting the Vietnam War, the junta in Greece, there was an endless stream of demonstrations and demonstrations—felt threatened. All of this was criminalized.³

It was within this context, and inspired by the liberation struggles occurring in the Third World, that militants began experimenting with a new form of political intervention: the urban guerilla.⁴

Initially, this armed development manifested itself in two broad tendencies. A constellation of groups based in the communes and the counterculture, often described as anarchist, carried out a number of firebombings, robberies, and attacks on police. They operated under names such as the Tupamaros Munich and West Berlin, the Raging Panther Aunties, the Central Committee of the Roaming Hash Rebels, the West Berlin Yippies, and the Blues—by 1972, elements from all these had coalesced into the 2nd of June Movement (2JM), the group taking its name from the date of Ohnesorg's murder in 1967. This first tendency was marked by a more populist approach and paid particular attention to the question of class within the FRG.



Demonstrations following the murder of Benno Ohnesorg in 1967 (top) and attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke in 1968 (bottom).

The second guerilla tendency to emerge was more clearly a product of the student movement, for whom capitalism had been discredited, not so much by internal class oppression but by its past and present complicity in military aggression and genocide around the world.⁵ This second tendency overlapped significantly with the first, with several individuals crossing back and forth, but it would ultimately develop along a separate path.

Those who followed this path constitute the subject of our study, the guerilla organization they established being the Red Army Faction.

A STRATEGY AGAINST IMPERIALISM

The Red Army Faction first announced itself in 1970, when a small group broke a young man out of jail.

Andreas Baader was serving a three-year sentence for having set fire to two department stores to protest the war in Vietnam. One of his rescuers, Gudrun Ensslin, had also participated in this political arson, and, as such, was living underground at the time. Another rescuer, Ulrike Meinhof, was a well-known left-wing social critic, a journalist who had been putting the finishing touches on a docudrama about girls in reform school. Significantly older than the other guerillas, within the FRG she was in fact the best-known left-wing female intellectual of her generation; due to her role in Baader's escape she had no choice but to go underground.

The RAF made international headlines with this jailbreak, during which an elderly librarian was shot and seriously injured, and the operation was hotly debated on the left. All the more so when one year later at the annual May Day demonstration in West Berlin, supporters handed out copies of the group's foundational manifesto, *The Urban Guerilla Concept*, a document that not only made the case for armed struggle in the metropole, but also established the RAF's reputation as a group that took political theory seriously.



In this and subsequent texts, the RAF would develop a distinctive analysis of capitalism and the possibilities of resistance “in the belly of the beast,” addressing the difficult fact (as formulated by former RAF member Knut Folkerts), that “All revolutionary initiatives in [Germany] suffer—if they do not wish to resolve the question opportunistically—from the contradiction between the reality presented by this population and the need to find a base here.”⁶

Grappling with this, the RAF would combine insights from the Frankfurt School and other European Marxist intellectuals with the anti-imperialism of their day, arguing that the First World working classes suffered a unique form of psychological/cultural oppression, the “twenty-four-hour-workday,” saturated with “consumer terror.” That oppression notwithstanding, according to their subjectivist anti-imperialism, material issues in the metropole no longer qualified as the primary contradiction; the battlefield had shifted to the Third World, and the national liberation movements now constituted the global vanguard. While it was not exempt from contradictions and class oppression, for various reasons (social democracy, consumerism, and integration into the state, to name a few) the metropole, imperialism’s “safe hinterland,” had become a place where people could only be mobilized for revolution through a personal breakthrough, for instance, the realization that life under capitalism is alienating, that commodities are no replacement for communities, or that living off the blood of others is unacceptable.⁷

While aspects of this analysis could be found in *The Urban Guerilla Concept*, a countervailing focus on poverty in West Germany was evident in *Serve the People: Class Struggle and the Guerilla*, released in May 1972.⁸ These ideas would find their ultimate synthesis in *The Black September Action in Munich: Regarding the Strategy for Anti-Imperialist Struggle*, released in November 1972.⁹

In this document, material divisions within the FRG were

acknowledged, but described as secondary to the question of consciousness, of each person's capacity to make a personal and explicit break with the dominant society. Although not ever stated as such, it was understood that part of this strategy was the idea that correctly applied violence could jumpstart such a process. Guerilla attacks were thus conceptualized as a way to demoralize the enemy and inspire people to make a break with the system. Although the goal was not to provoke repression, it was expected that the state's attacks could be turned to the guerilla's advantage, exposing imperialism's fascist core and leading to even greater disenchantment. As such, it was hoped that the guerilla would serve as a spark plug, if not as the flame that would start a prairie fire. Years later, Christian Klar would explain:

*...I think that the RAF was active and provided inspiration at exactly the right moment. By that I mean, not acting from a base, but on the basis of the existing contradictions, acting to create a rift in society's ideology, an ideology that presents the bourgeoisie as representing shared political interests—creating a rift around that. In that regard the urban guerilla tactic was effective. The other thing, as far as the mass base goes, is, of course, the solidarity with anticolonial struggles occurring on other continents—and an identification with them.*¹⁰

Or, more bluntly, as Helmut Pohl would later recall:

*I have to say that we had no faith in agitation among the masses. We did not take this K-group¹¹ revolutionary strategy seriously. Our project was different from that of traditional communist parties. We set about the process of developing the guerilla and of polarizing society through our actions. From our point of view, the guerilla was the small motor that would jumpstart the large motor. It was necessary to build and anchor this small motor.*¹²

At some future point, when imperialism had been beaten back around the world, its chickens come home to roost, it was predicted that social divisions would reassert themselves within the metropole, and that these would once again provide a basis for revolutionary action. It was then that

the work done on the basis of this radical subjectivity would truly bear fruit. As explained in *The Urban Guerilla Concept*:

*[The urban guerilla struggle] is based on the analysis that by the time the conditions are right for armed struggle, it will be too late to prepare for it. It is based on the recognition that without revolutionary initiatives in a country with as much potential for violence as the Federal Republic, there will be no revolutionary orientation when the conditions for revolutionary struggle are more favorable, as they soon will be given the political and economic developments of late capitalism.*¹³

SEVEN YEARS OF STRUGGLE AGAINST THE STATE

Shortly after Baader's liberation in 1970, RAF members traveled to Jordan, in the Middle East, where they received weapons training from Al Fatah, part of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The RAF would make extensive use of various Arab countries as rear base areas throughout its existence, places where one could go not only for training but also to hide when Europe got too "hot."

Upon returning to the FRG, the guerilla once again seized the public spotlight, carrying out a series of bank robberies and preparing for campaigns to come.

Successfully evading the police, the RAF began to take on the aura of folk heroes for many students and leftists who were glad to see someone taking things to the next level. Thousands of people secretly carried photographs of RAF members in their wallets. Time and time again, as the cops stepped up their search, members of the young guerilla group would find doors open to them as they were welcomed into people's homes, including those of not a few middle-class sympathizers. Newspapers at the time carried stories under headlines like "Celebrities Protect Baader Gang" and "Sympathizers Hamper Hunt for Baader Group."

Shortly after a firefight in July 1971, in which RAF member Petra Schelm was killed by police, one opinion poll found that 40 percent of young people were prepared to describe the RAF's motives as political, not criminal; 20 percent indicated that they could understand efforts to protect fugitives from capture; and 6 percent stated that they themselves would be willing to conceal a fugitive.¹⁴

What Is a Rear Base Area?

As has been discussed elsewhere:

Rear base areas are little discussed, but essential to guerillas. This is something precise: a large area or territory, bordering on the main battle zone, where the other side cannot freely operate. Either for reasons of remoteness or impenetrable mountain ranges, or because it crosses political boundaries.¹

For the RAF and other West German guerilla groups, two countries in particular emerged as favored travel destinations in this regard: Lebanon and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The former was home to a large number of Palestinian refugees, and served as a base of operations for several revolutionary organizations. The latter was the only self-described Marxist-Leninist country in the Middle East, which had earned the admiration of progressive people around the world for its social and economic reforms.²

In both countries, it was not the government that provided sanctuary for the European guerilla, but a Palestinian organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (External Operations), or PFLP (EO). Having split from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the early 1970s, this was a small armed organization devoted to carrying out attacks throughout the world.³

Throughout the 1970s, PFLP (EO) training camps in the Middle East served as sanctuaries for many West European guerillas. Indeed, most RAF members involved in the '77 offensive had spent time in these camps, where they not only learned how to use various weapons, but were also able to meet with other revolutionaries from around the world.

¹ Butch Lee, *Jailbreak Out of History: The Re-Biography of Harriet Tubman* (Montreal: Kersplebedeb Publishing, 2000), 25.

² Joe Stork, “Socialist Revolution in Arabia: A Report from the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen,” *MERIP Reports* 15 (March 1973): 1-25; Maxine Molyneux, Aida Yafai, Aisha Mohsen, and Noor Ba’abad, “Women and Revolution in the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen,” *Feminist Review* 1 (1979): 4-20.

³ Moncourt and Smith, 559-561.

Then, in 1972, immediately following the release of *Serve the People* at that year’s May Day demonstrations, the group turned things up a notch, carrying out a series of bombings that would come to be known as the “May Offensive.” Targets included police stations and U.S. army headquarters, to protest killer cops and the ongoing war in Vietnam, as well as an attack on the Hamburg offices of the Springer Press, accused of racism, Zionism, and inciting violence against the New Left. Four American soldiers were killed, and dozens of other people, including civilians, were injured. The attacks were not only unprecedented in West Germany—Western Europe itself had not seen anything like it in the postwar period.¹⁵ While many people may have been turned off by this escalation, others saw it as an inspiring example of what could be done.

There followed a wave of repression, as an army of police, supported by both West German and U.S. intelligence units, set up checkpoints and carried out raids across the country.

Within a few weeks ten members of the RAF—almost the entire guerilla—had been captured. Besides the alleged leadership (Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Holger Meins, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Ulrike Meinhof), the police arrested Klaus Jünschke, Irmgard Möller, Gerhard Müller, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, and Bernhard Braun.¹⁶ A supporter, Katharina Hammerschmidt, also ended up behind bars after she chose to turn herself in. These eleven joined several other combatants from the RAF and 2JM

who had already been picked up over the previous two years.



Holger Meins captured

The state, having apprehended its armed adversaries, was not content to simply remove them from the field. Instead, it hoped to render them ineffective not only as combatants, but also as spokespeople for anti-imperialist resistance. To this end, it set up special “dead wings” inside its prisons, where captured guerillas were subjected to severe isolation, with the clear hope that if this did not induce them to recant, it might at least drive them insane.

Isolation—which at its worst took the form of sensory deprivation—had been developed by an unholy alliance of secret services, penal authorities, doctors, and psychologists working in Western Europe and North America, their goal being to find a form of “clean torture,” i.e., one that could break a prisoner without leaving physical marks. The RAF and other guerillas in West Germany would be among the first test-subjects for this program.

Astrid Proll, a RAF member who had been picked up on bogus charges of shooting at a police officer in 1971, was one of the first to be so confined. She was held for four and a half months in an empty section of Cologne-Ossendorf,¹⁷ with her cell painted white and acoustically sealed, receiving absolutely no sensory stimuli or contact with other inmates. Her physical and mental health deteriorated to such a point that she could barely walk, and the state was obliged to release her to a sanitarium in the Black Forest,

where she stayed for a year before escaping and making her way to England. Even when recaptured years later, Proll remained scarred by her ordeal. In 1978, she wrote:

*Not even today, six years later, have I completely recovered from that. I can't stand rooms which are painted white because they remind me of my cell. Silence in a wood can terrify me, it reminds me of the silence in the isolated cell. Darkness makes me so depressive as if my life were taken away. Solitude causes me as much fear as crowds. Even today I have the feeling occasionally as if I can't move.*¹⁸

Ulrike Meinhof was held in these conditions for 237 days following her arrest in 1972. After eight months of this torture, she wrote:

*I finally realized I had to pull myself out of this, I myself had no right to let these frightful things keep affecting me—it was my duty to fight my way out of it. By whatever means there are of doing that in prison: daubing the walls, coming to blows with a cop, wrecking the fitments, hunger strike. I wanted to make them at least put me under arrest, because then you get to hear something—you don't have a radio babbling away, only the bible to read, maybe no mattress, no window, etc. —but that's a different kind of torture from not hearing anything. And obviously it would have been a relief to me...*¹⁹

Opposition to isolation and the various “dead wings” quickly became the most important issue for the RAF’s supporters, and would remain so throughout the 1970s. In this way, despite capture and isolation, the guerilla managed not only to survive, but in a sense even turned things around, for through the strategic use of hunger strikes, they would call attention to both their conditions of incarceration and their strategy of anti-imperialist armed struggle. Indeed, the hunger strikes became a way for the prisoners to maintain their dignity as well as their political identity.²⁰

Beginning with the RAF’s third hunger strike in 1974, a key demand was “association” for political prisoners. As explained in our first volume:

The prisoners had come to the conclusion that the demand for integration [into general population], while it had undeniable appeal given the high esteem in which the New Left held marginalized groups like social prisoners, was simply not going to work. As a result, integration was dropped, and the struggle was now defined as one against isolation and for the association of political prisoners with each other...

*In practical terms, association meant bringing together political prisoners in groups large enough to be socially viable, fifteen being the minimum number normally suggested. Political prisoners in some other European countries, such as Italy and Northern Ireland, had already won such conditions for themselves, and so it was hoped that this might prove a realistic goal.*²¹

After six weeks on hunger strike, on November 9, 1974, RAF member Holger Meins died, setting off protests across West Germany. Thousands met in university auditoriums in West Berlin to discuss how to respond, while thousands more braved the ban on demonstrations and took to the streets, battling police with stones and bottles, with protesters in Frankfurt and Mannheim smashing the windows of court buildings.²²

The next day, in the course of a failed kidnapping attempt meant to avenge Meins and potentially even win the freedom of some prisoners, the 2nd of June Movement shot and killed the president of the West Berlin Supreme Court, Judge Günter von Drenkmann.

RAF-prisoner support groups had already been established, an International Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners in Europe (*Internationales Komitee zur Verteidigung politischer Gefangener in Europa*, IVK) working alongside various Committees Against Torture as well as a Relatives Committee in the FRG, but now the prisoners' struggle would serve to gain them more than just sympathy: it would win new recruits. For, in the eyes of many German leftists, the RAF had come to symbolize resistance to the imperialist state, to the “new fascism” or “fascist drift.”

Following the death of Meins, the prisoners would continue their third hunger strike until a regenerated RAF issued a communiqué addressed to

them, in which it ordered them to start eating again. The guerilla promised that they would carry out the necessary actions on their behalf, explaining that the prison struggle “is now something that we must settle with our weapons.”²³

This would soon come to pass: on April 25, the RAF’s “Holger Meins Commando” seized the top floor of the West German embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, taking twelve hostages and killing the military and economic attachés. They demanded the release of twenty-six West German political prisoners, including all of the captured members of the RAF.



The KPD/ML, while hostile to the RAF, was one of the only Marxist-Leninist parties to support the 1974-1975 hunger strike. Graffiti reads, “Holger Meins, the people will avenge you.”

Under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, the West German government refused to give in to the commando’s demands, and as police were preparing to storm the building, the explosives the guerilla had laid detonated. The state and media would claim that the explosives went off due to some error on the part of the commando; the guerilla would suggest that the police intentionally triggered the explosion. One RAF member, Ulrich Wessel, was killed on the spot. Police rushed in, and RAF members Siegfried Hausner, Hanna Krabbe, Karl-Heinz Dellwo, Lutz Taufer, and Bernd Rössner were all captured.

Despite the fact that he had a fractured skull and burns over most of his body, Hausner was only hospitalized for a few days. Then, over the objections of doctors in Sweden and Germany, he was flown to

Stammheim prison in the FRG where he died soon after.²⁴

The state was confronted with the fact that from within prison the RAF's "first generation"²⁵ had managed to inspire its own successors. Chancellor Schmidt went so far as to state that "anarchist guerillas" now posed the greatest threat the Federal Republic had encountered during its twenty-six-year history. Destroying the prisoners, or at least undercutting their support, became a top priority.

Fear mongering was stepped up: claims were made that the RAF had nuclear weapons and was intent on kidnapping children to exchange for the prisoners. No story was too preposterous, as those few members who had been broken in custody were paraded out as state witnesses, alleging all kinds of horrors. Proof, or even mildly convincing evidence, was no longer deemed necessary.

These dirty tricks were complemented by the rapid growth of the state's repressive infrastructure. In September 1971, a new Chief Commissioner was appointed to the *Bundeskriminalamt* (BKA; Federal Criminal Bureau): Horst Herold, former chief of the Nuremberg police and an expert on the new methods of using computerized data processing as a law enforcement tool. Under Herold's leadership, the BKA was transformed from a relatively unimportant body into the West German equivalent of the FBI. By the end of the 1970s, its budget had grown sixfold and its staff tripled, as it became one of the most advanced political police forces in the world.²⁶

In 1975, Herold authored a document entitled "The Principles of Disinformation in Combating Terrorism." Arguing that "Disinformation is a new form of struggle that must be further developed and that should take its place beside other forms of combating war-like activities," he proposed that false information be fed to "the press, radio, and television" and circulated within the radical left. The objective was to "create dissent within oppositional groups, so as to destroy them," with "making the terrorists appear less heroic" being listed as one means.²⁷

By 1979, Herold's computers contained files on 4.7 million individuals and over three thousand organizations, as well as photos of 1.9 million people and 2.1 million sets of fingerprints.²⁸ While it has since become routine for such data to be available at the touch of a police keyboard, in the 1970s this represented a simply unheard of level of surveillance.

During this same period, a range of measures were taken against the prisoners. Cells were routinely raided and papers relating to their trials seized. Even their lawyers came under attack, accused of supporting the guerilla and in some cases barred from conducting their defense. All of this took legal form when the *Lex Baader-Meinhof*, or “Baader-Meinhof Laws,” became constitutional amendments in 1975. In particular, §138a-d allowed for the exclusion of any lawyers deemed to be “forming a criminal association with the defendant,” while §231a and §231b allowed for trials to continue in the absence of a defendant if the reason for this absence was found to be of the defendant’s own doing—a stipulation directly aimed at the prisoners’ effective use of hunger strikes.²⁹ Under §146, it was prohibited to present a joint defense, even though many of the prisoners were facing joint trials. Surveillance of defense correspondence was sanctioned by §148 and §148a, while the previously held right of the accused and defense lawyers to issue statements under §275a was withdrawn.³⁰ By 1976, these were supplemented with §129a—an antiterrorist subsection to §129 which dealt with criminal organizations—and §88a, criminalizing all those who “produce, distribute, publicly display, and advertise materials that recommend unlawful acts—such as disturbing the peace in special (e.g., armed) cases, murder, manslaughter, robbery, extortion, arson, and the use of explosives.”³¹

Concrete form—literally—was given to this repressive atmosphere with the construction of a special “terrorist-proof” bunker, for holding the “RAF ringleaders” trial in the regular Stuttgart courthouse was declared to be out of the question. This dungeon-courtroom adjacent to Stammheim prison

came equipped with antiaircraft defense against helicopter attack, listening devices sown in the ground around the building, scores of closed-circuit TV cameras, and an underground tunnel to the prison so that the defendants could be brought to and from court without ever appearing in the open.³²

What came to be known as the Stammheim trial—where Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Ulrike Meinhof would face charges relating to the May Offensive—did not start until 1975, three years after the defendants had been arrested and barely a year after Meins had died on hunger strike. (Had he not died, he too would have stood trial there.) Due to the attacks on sympathetic lawyers, not all of the defendants had legal representation of their choosing, and it would later be revealed that one of the judges was leaking court documents to a conservative newspaper throughout the proceedings. Despite the state's assertions that it held no political prisoners, there was never any pretence that this was a mere “criminal” case, nor was there much effort put into even pretending that it would be a fair trial.

This already bad situation got dramatically worse on May 9, 1976, just as the proceedings were entering their most critical phase. On that day, the state announced that Ulrike Meinhof had died in her cell, having apparently committed suicide by hanging. The BKA circulated excerpts from notes that had been found during cell raids months earlier, in order to create the impression that there had been a falling out, with Meinhof on the one side and Baader and Ensslin on the other. The prisoners, and most of the left, immediately denounced the suicide story as impossible, and did not hesitate to accuse the state of killing the woman who many viewed as the RAF’s chief theoretician.

In Meinhof’s own words, part of the court record the day before she was found dead, “It is, of course, a police tactic in counterinsurgency conflicts, in guerilla warfare, to take out the leaders.”³³

Her sister Wienke Zitzlaff similarly rejected the state's version of events. "My sister once told me very clearly she never would commit suicide," she remembered. "She said if it ever were reported that she killed herself then I would know she had been murdered."³⁴

It is impossible to overstate the effect that Meinhof's death had on the left, both within the FRG and throughout Western Europe. An open letter signed by various intellectuals—including Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir—compared it to the worst crimes of the Nazi era. Social and political prisoners in Berlin-Tegel Prison held a three-day hunger strike, and in Paris the offices of two West German steel companies were bombed, as was the German Cultural Center in Toulouse and the German Academy and the West German Travel Bureau in Rome. The product of armed movements indigenous to France and Italy, these attacks bear witness to the solidarity that existed between the various combatants across Western Europe, and to the prominent position that the RAF, and Meinhof in particular, held in the mental universe of those others who had joined them in taking up the gun.

Meanwhile, back in the FRG, bombs went off in Munich outside the U.S. Armed Forces radio station and in a shopping center in the middle of the night, as thousands took part in demonstrations across the country.

Fighting was particularly fierce in Frankfurt; according to one police spokesperson, "the most brutal in the post-war history of the city."³⁵ Following a rally, hundreds of people rampaged through the downtown area, breaking the windows of American Express and the America House cultural center, as well as setting up barricades and defending them against police water cannons with molotov cocktails. Twelve people were arrested and seven police officers were injured, two of them seriously when their car was set ablaze. (The repression that followed, and the Frankfurt scene's inability to come to grips with the consequences of such near-lethal levels of violence, would signal the beginning of a period of decline for the

antiauthoritarian left in that city, with far-reaching consequences.)³⁶



Police beat protester at Frankfurt demonstration following Meinhof's death

On May 15, some seven thousand people, many with their faces blackened and heads covered to avoid identification by the police, attended Meinhof's funeral in West Berlin. Her sister requested that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the prisoners' support campaign, and when they left the cemetery mourners joined with demonstrators in downtown West Berlin and at the Moabit courthouse where Meinhof had been sentenced two years earlier, in a previous trial. That same day there were more bomb attacks in the FRG and abroad.

This was followed three days later by another demonstration of eight thousand people in West Berlin, during which several police officers were injured. Bombs continued to go off in France, cars with German license plates and the offices of a right-wing newspaper being targeted. On June 2, the U.S. Army Headquarters and U.S. Officers' Club in Frankfurt were bombed. This last attack was carried out by the "Ulrike Meinhof Commando" of the Revolutionary Cells. (The RZ were the third major West German guerilla tendency; see [pages 69–74](#).)

Finally, an International Investigatory Commission into the Death of Ulrike Meinhof (*Internationale Untersuchungskommission zum Tod von Ulrike Meinhof*) was formed: it took three years to release its findings, but in 1978 it announced it had found evidence Meinhof had been murdered—a claim that the state rejected out of hand as a fabrication by RAF supporters, designed to manipulate the credulous. Nevertheless, the many

inconsistencies and troubling details surrounding Meinhof's death have never been adequately addressed or explained by those who reject the murder thesis.³⁷

Certainly, at the time, much of the radical left believed that Meinhof had been killed, and this simply added to the already overwhelming sense of urgency.

1977: THE PRISONERS' STRUGGLE HEATS UP

The prisoners' struggle was to remain of great importance to the RAF throughout its existence, but never more so than in 1977.

On March 29 of that year, prisoners from the RAF embarked upon their fourth hunger strike, demanding treatment as guaranteed by the Geneva Convention, association in groups of no less than fifteen, an end to isolation, and an international investigation into the deaths of RAF prisoners³⁸ in custody. Initially, thirty-five participated, but soon the number of prisoners refusing food surpassed one hundred, with some even refusing liquids.

The guerilla was not going to let the prisoners wage this battle on their own. On April 7, as Attorney General Siegfried Buback was waiting at a traffic light, two individuals on a motorcycle pulled up alongside his Mercedes. Suddenly, one of them pulled out a submachine gun and opened fire, riddling the car with bullets.

As head of the Federal Prosecutor's Office (BAW), Buback bore direct responsibility for the prison conditions which had already claimed the lives of Ulrike Meinhof, Siegfried Hausner, and Holger Meins; commenting on the dirty tricks the state used to clamp down on the guerilla, he is quoted as having said that, "State security is given life by those who are committed to it. People like Herold and myself, we always find a way." It was in the name of the "Ulrike Meinhof Commando" that the RAF issued a communiqué claiming responsibility for his assassination, remarking that, "For 'protagonists of the system' like Buback, history always finds a way."³⁹



Attorney General Siegfried Buback, April 7, 1977



Wanted poster seeking information about Günter Sonnenberg, Christian Klar, and Knut Folkerts, the initial suspects in the killing of Attorney General Siegfried Buback.

Within a day, police announced that three suspects were being sought in connection with the attack. Despite the fact that an eyewitness described the shooter as petite and female, the BKA investigators concentrated on three men: Günter Sonnenberg, Knut Folkerts, and Christian Klar, all of whom had passed from the prisoner support scene to the RAF in the months following Meinhof's death.⁴⁰ The main evidence against them seems to have been that before going underground, they had all lived in Karlsruhe, the city in which the attack took place. A bounty of 200,000 DM (\$88,000) was offered for their capture.

The hunger strike continued, consolidating support. Soon relatives of the prisoners began a solidarity strike, and on April 17, Peter's Church in Frankfurt was occupied and turned into a hunger strike information center. As the number of prisoners refusing food reached one hundred and twenty, more outside supporters began a second solidarity hunger strike in a Bielefeld Church. On April 27, relatives of political prisoners held a demonstration at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva demanding the application of the Geneva Convention. The next day, Amnesty International added its voice to that of eighty clergymen, one hundred and twenty-eight U.S. lawyers, one hundred French and Belgian lawyers, and twenty-three English lawyers, all calling for the state to address the prisoners' demands.

The snowballing support was effective: on April 30, a government spokesperson announced that the prisoners would be granted limited association. The seventh floor of Stammheim prison was soon being renovated to allow up to sixteen prisoners to be housed together. Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Irmgard Möller (who had been transferred to Stammheim following Meinhof's death) would soon be joined by RAF prisoners Ingrid Schubert, Helmut Pohl, Wolfgang Beer, and Werner Hoppe.⁴¹

In response to this victory, the prisoners agreed to end their hunger strike.

Then, on May 3, RAF members Günter Sonnenberg and Verena Becker were captured in the German town of Singen, near the Swiss border. A woman had tipped off the police after spotting the two as they sat in a café: she recognized Sonnenberg from the wanted posters that had gone up throughout Western Europe after the Buback assassination. When the police arrived on the scene, the guerillas tried to play it cool, innocently pretending to have left their ID papers in their car. While being escorted from the café—presumably to retrieve these phantom ID papers—they

drew their weapons and shot the two cops, commandeered a car, and took off. Pursued by squad cars alerted to the incident, they took a wrong turn and ended up in a field, at which point they ditched their vehicle and tried to escape on foot.

As they fled, Becker dropped her submachine gun—as it would turn out, the same weapon that had been used to kill Buback. A cop picked up the weapon and fired: Becker was hit in her leg and Sonnenberg in his torso and head. His injuries were such that police had difficulty identifying him, despite the fact that his face was on wanted posters across Europe, and he would remain in a coma for four weeks. While he did survive, he suffered brain damage and initially could not remember his own past, or even how to speak, and to this day remains prone to epileptic seizures.

While he was still in the hospital intensive care unit, sedated, and unable to grasp his surroundings or speak coherently, Judge Horst Kuhn had him interrogated, taking note of each grunt as evidence to be used against him in his trial.⁴² Starting in 1979, Sonnenberg's release would be a consistent demand of every RAF prisoners' hunger strike, and of the guerilla itself. Nevertheless, he would remain in prison until 1992, spending much of that time in isolation.



Günter Sonnenberg

The next attack occurred on July 30, as three RAF members, including

Susanne Albrecht, came with flowers to the door of Jürgen Ponto, chairman of the board of directors of the Dresdner Bank and one of the most important financiers in West Germany. Ponto had direct ties to many Third World governments and had served as an advisor to South Africa's brutal apartheid regime. He was also Albrecht's sister's godfather, and a close friend of her parents. The guerilla attempted to abduct him, but when he resisted they opened fire, shooting him five times. As Albrecht had been recognized by Ponto's wife, she signed her name to the communiqué for this action.

On August 8, the RAF prisoners who had been moved to Stammheim just one month earlier were transferred back to Hamburg. The precise excuse used was a "fight" with guards: essentially a set-up whereby the guards provoked an incident and used it as an excuse to attack and beat the prisoners. It appeared that Buback's replacement Kurt Rebmann was reversing his previous decision to grant association. Baader, Raspe, Ensslin, and Möller were once again alone on the seventh floor of Stammheim prison.

In reaction to these machinations and to the attack on Ponto, all RAF prisoners went on hunger strike, some escalating to a thirst strike almost immediately. Within days force-feeding had begun: a sadistic penal tactic whereby prisoners were drugged, strapped down to a table, and had a pipe rammed down their throat for hours at a time. It was not meant to save the lives of the hunger strikers, but was another form of torture which the state had come to depend on in its struggle against the prisoners. Holger Meins, for instance, who had died during the 1974 hunger strike, had been force-fed for weeks. As he wrote shortly before his death:

A red stomach pipe (not a tube) is used, about the thickness of a middle finger (in my case between the joints). It is greased, but doesn't manage to go down without causing me to gag, because it is only between 1 and 3 mm narrower than the digestive tract (this can only be avoided if one makes a swallowing motion and remains completely still). The slightest irritation when the pipe is introduced causes

*gagging and nausea and the cramping of the chest and stomach muscles, setting off a chain reaction of extremely intense convulsions throughout the body, causing one to buck against the pipe. The more extreme and the longer this lasts, the worse it is.*⁴³

In the words of Margrit Schiller, a RAF member who had been captured in 1974: “I was force-fed every day for a month. Each time was like a rape. Each time, I felt totally humiliated and destroyed.”⁴⁴

Defense attorneys Armin Newerla and Arndt Müller began organizing public support for the striking prisoners and came under heavy police surveillance as a result. On August 15, the lawyers’ offices were firebombed, almost certainly with the collusion of the police who had them staked out twenty-four hours a day. Newerla was subsequently arrested when copies of a left-wing magazine were found in his car; he was charged with “supporting a criminal organization” under §129a. Seeing the writing on the wall, defense attorney Klaus Croissant had already fled the country to France, where he requested political asylum. (Croissant had been harassed for years as a result of his tireless work on behalf of RAF defendants.)

The new attorney general staked out the hard-line position that he would be remembered for. “I know that the population is not at all interested if these people go on hunger and thirst strikes,” Rebmann told the press. “The population wants these people to be hit hard, just as hard as they have earned with their brutal deed.”

He was asked about the possibility of prisoners dying. “That is always a bad thing,” he answered, “but it would be the consequence which has been made clear to them and their lawyers and which is clear to them. The conditions of imprisonment don’t justify such a strike; they are doing very well considering the circumstances.”⁴⁵

On August 25, the RAF responded by targeting Rebmann’s offices. An improvised rocket launcher was aimed at the attorney general’s

headquarters, but the timing device was not set properly, so it failed to fire.

The RAF attempted to put this mishap in the best possible light, issuing a communiqué a week later in which they claimed that the entire exercise had merely been intended for show. The guerilla went on to warn that it was more than willing to act should it prove necessary to save the prisoners:

*Should Andreas, Gudrun, and Jan be killed, the apologists for the hard line will find out that they are not the only ones with an arsenal at their disposal. They will find out that we are many, and that we have enough love—as well as enough hate and imagination—to use both our weapons and their weapons against them, and that their pain will equal ours.*⁴⁶

The guerilla was clearly concerned, following Meinhof's death, and given Rebmann's bloodthirsty statements, that the state might move to kill Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe. This fear was shared by the prisoners themselves, who knew that they might suffer reprisals for the RAF's actions.

As such, following the breakdown of negotiations between Amnesty International and the Federal Government, the prisoners called off their hunger and thirst strike on September 2. In a short statement, Jan-Carl Raspe explained that the attacks on Ponto and on Rebmann's office had created an environment in which the prisoners had become hostages of a state that was ready and willing to kill them to set an example.⁴⁷

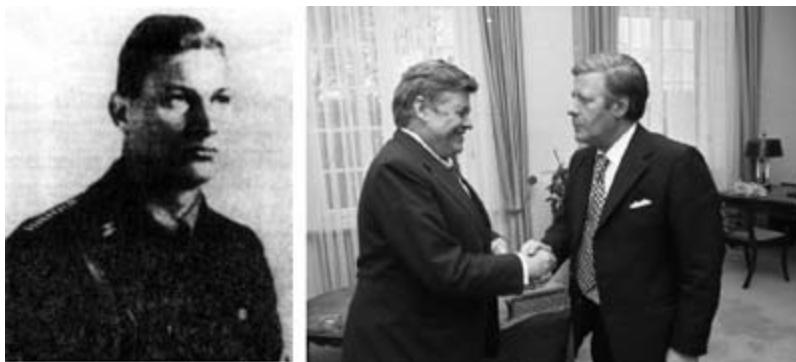
GERMAN AUTUMN

The failed Ponto kidnapping had been intended to be the first of a two-pronged action to put pressure on the West German ruling class to force the state to free the prisoners.⁴⁸ Despite their failure to take Ponto alive, it was decided to follow through on the second part of this plan.

On September 5, the RAF's "Siegfried Hausner Commando" kidnapped Hanns Martin Schleyer, the most powerful businessman in West Germany at the time. Schleyer's car and police escort were forced to a stop by a baby stroller that was left in the middle of the road, at which point they were ambushed by guerillas who killed his chauffeur and three police officers before making their getaway.

A note received soon after warned that, "The federal government must take steps to ensure that all aspects of the manhunt cease—or we will immediately shoot Schleyer without even engaging in negotiations for his freedom."⁴⁹

Like Ponto, Schleyer was a powerful representative of the ruling class. He was the president of both the *Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* (Federal Association of German Industrialists) and the *Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände* (Federal Association of German Employers), and had earned a reputation for aggressively opposing workers' demands when he had ordered a lock-out of striking metal workers in Baden-Württemberg in 1966. As a veteran of Hitler's SS, he was a perfect symbol of the integration of former Nazis into the postwar power structure.



Hanns Martin Schleyer as a young man in uniform (left), and later on as a giant of industry, meeting with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in 1974.

Within a day of Schleyer's kidnapping, the commando demanded the release of eleven prisoners, including Ensslin, Raspe, and Baader, and their safe passage to a country of their choosing.

Despite the fact that the prisoners offered assurances that they would not return to West Germany or participate in future armed actions if exiled, on September 6, the government declared that it would not release them under any circumstances.

On that same day, a total communication ban was instituted against all political prisoners. The so-called Contact Ban law, which had been rushed through parliament specifically to deal with this situation, deprived the prisoners of all contact with each other, as well as with the outside world. All visits, including those with lawyers and family members, were forbidden. The prisoners were also denied all access to mail, newspapers, magazines, television, and radio.

In short, those subjected to this law were placed in 100 percent individual isolation.

Over the next weeks, as the guerilla attempted to negotiate with the state through a series of ever-more-desperate communiqés, the hunt for Schleyer and his captors continued. During this time he was moved between a series of safehouses in West Germany, Holland, and Belgium.

On September 22, RAF member Knut Folkerts was arrested in Utrecht after a shoot-out which left one Dutch policeman dead and two more injured. Another RAF member managed to get away. The search for Schleyer was extended to Holland, but to no avail, as the state continued to stall for time, and the guerilla let one deadline after another pass.

In this situation, with negotiations deadlocked, a Palestinian commando intervened in solidarity with the RAF, moving the already intense confrontation to an entirely different level. On October 13, the four-person Commando Martyr Halimeh, led by Zohair Youssef Akache of the PFLP (EO),⁵⁰ hijacked a Lufthansa airliner traveling from Majorca, Spain to Frankfurt in West Germany—ninety people on board were taken hostage.

The airliner was first diverted to Rome to refuel and to issue the commando's demands: the release of the eleven RAF prisoners as well as two Palestinian guerillas being held in Turkey.

The plane then flew on to Cyprus, and from there to the Gulf, where it landed first in Bahrain and then in Dubai. The FRG's Minister in Charge of Special Affairs, Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, promised that there would be no military intervention. The plane departed the next day, the plan being to fly to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), where the PFLP (EO)'s training camp was located, and whose government had a history of tolerating guerilla fighters from the FRG and elsewhere in Western Europe.

Here, however, the hijackers' plan went off the rails. Instead of providing refuge, as had been expected, the South Yemeni government tried to prevent the airliner from landing, going so far as to station tanks to block its access to a runway. When this did not work (the plane made an emergency landing), the hijackers were allowed to refuel, but then forced to depart. This represented a critical setback; with misgivings, they now charted a course to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia.

The hijacked airliner landed in Mogadishu on October 17. As

negotiations continued, West Germany’s “antiterrorist” GSG-9 unit was secretly flown into the Somali capital. That night, sixty GSG-9 commandos attacked the airliner, killing the guerilla fighters Zohair Youssef Akache, Hind Alameh, and Nabil Harb, and seriously wounding Souhaila Andrawes. All hostages were rescued unharmed, though Flight Captain Jürgen Schumann had been executed the night before and his body left in South Yemen.⁵¹

At seven the next morning, October 18, a government spokesperson publicly announced the resolution of the hijacking.

One hour later, another spokesperson announced the “suicides” of Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader and the “attempted suicides” of Jan-Carl Raspe and Irmgard Möller in Stammheim prison. Raspe subsequently died of his injuries.

A plethora of bizarre “coincidences” and irregularities were put forth by the state to explain how this had been possible, that four individuals in the most high-security prison in Western Europe had allegedly not only acquired guns (Baader and Raspe were shot in the head), but also managed to coordinate a group suicide as a reaction to a military raid happening on a different continent, all while being subjected to a strict ban on communication with one another and the outside world (no radio, television, newspapers, etc.).

In the year since Meinhof’s death, the Stammheim prisoners had repeatedly expressed their fear of being similarly “suicided.” They had belabored this point in conversations with prison chaplains and letters to their lawyers sent in the days before their deaths. Ensslin in particular had told two chaplains that there were letters in her cell containing important information that should be forwarded to the appropriate authorities if she were killed—needless to say, initially it was denied that any such letters had been found. Only later would the BAW admit they had been confiscated; to this day, they have not been released.⁵²



“Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe murdered in Stammheim.”

Making the state's suicide story even more unbelievable, the closed circuit cameras that were supposed to film everything occurring on the prisoners' floor had mysteriously malfunctioned that evening. And the inconsistencies just kept coming.⁵³ For many, the clincher was the fact that one of the prisoners did not die from her injuries: Irmgard Möller, who survived several stab wounds to the chest, has consistently and adamantly denied the state's suicide story, insisting instead that a government commando must have killed her comrades, just as it tried to kill her on the night in question. From an interview with *Spiegel* magazine in 1992:

Spiegel: The authorities are of the opinion that you knew about the storming of the aircraft and the freeing of the hostages, and as a result attempted suicide with a kitchen knife.

Irmgard Möller: That's a lie. I listened to the final news at 11:00 PM.⁵⁴ I knew that something would happen, that a decision would have to be made. However, I didn't know what decision. I found that unbearable. Then, I went to sleep.

Spiegel: And then?

Irmgard Möller: At some point during the night, I heard a dull noise that I couldn't identify, a distinct noise. I didn't think of a shot: it sounded like a locker falling over or something like that. The next thing I remember I was lying on the floor under neon lights with people all around me grabbing at me and trying to force my eyes open. Then I heard voices say, "Baader and Ensslin are dead." Then

everything faded away.

Spiegel: What do you remember after that?

Irmgard Möller: I regained consciousness for the first time three days later and clearly remember everything that happened after that.

Spiegel: What was the nature of your injuries?

Irmgard Möller: Four stab wounds to my chest. My lungs were injured and filled with fluid from my pericardium, which had also been hit.

Spiegel: A number of medical experts, including some from outside of the country, came to the conclusion that the deaths of your companions were cases of suicide.

Irmgard Möller: I know that. Obviously, they weren't objective. They were intentionally brought in. I'm aware of the details of the autopsy reports, and know, for instance, that one of Gudrun's injuries was not seriously examined.

Spiegel: Who do you think inflicted the injuries?

Irmgard Möller: I don't think it was the guards that were always around there. I think that it was a commando. There were a variety of entries into the prison wing.⁵⁵

Despite this, the government's suicide theory would eventually come to be accepted by many on the left, and even by a number of former RAF members as well. But in '77, the belief that the prisoners had been murdered was widespread. So far as the radical left was concerned, it was clear: as with Meinhof, the other Stammheim prisoners had now been killed by the state.

Confronted with defeat on all fronts, the RAF now issued a communiqué announcing that it had executed Schleyer.

After forty-three days, the most intense clash between the antiimperialist guerilla and the West German state had seemingly come to its bloody conclusion, and yet there would be one more death: on November 11, RAF prisoner Ingrid Schubert was found hanged in her cell, one hour after she had been moved into isolation in Munich-Stadelheim. On the Thursday before her death, she had assured her lawyer that she had no intention of committing suicide.

BAD DAYS

The RAF's focus on freeing its prisoners was taken to the limit in 1977, yet its seven-month campaign of assassinations and kidnappings had come to naught. With the hijacking carried out by a Third World commando, the FRG was thrown into a state of emergency well beyond the capacity of the West German movement to navigate. The Stammheim deaths contributed an almost incomprehensible element to the equation, and the result was mass psychological trauma, especially pronounced among the ranks of the guerilla and its supporters.

As RAF member Monika Berberich would explain years later:

*I see both nights, Ulrike's death as much as those of the other three prisoners in Stammheim, as a complete defeat, not only for the armed groups, but for the entire radical left—and that regardless of what really happened on those nights in Stammheim. In the morning, comrades who were extremely important to the continuation of our struggle were dead. In 1977, with the storming of the airliner, the state triumphed. The death of the prisoners admittedly reduced the level of the triumph, but measured against the victory for the state's position that wasn't terribly relevant. I think at the time, we didn't deal with this consciously enough, although we all sensed it. Instead, we argued endlessly about whether it was murder or suicide. Of course, this is an important question, but it doesn't change the fact that the comrades were dead.*⁵⁶

The state responded to the '77 offensive with a wave of repression against the entire left. In West Berlin, thirty-eight apartments, bookstores, and print shops were raided and forty people taken into custody, prompting a protest outside of police headquarters, which was met by cops swinging rubber truncheons.⁵⁷ The radical newspaper *Info-BUG* was targeted, with the paper banned and several of its printers sent to prison.

Lawyers who defended RAF prisoners and outside supporters found themselves under arrest and charged with supporting a terrorist organization.

But the fallout went far beyond arrests: as the so-called German Autumn unfolded, the entire political culture seemed to lurch to the right. Anybody who dared speak out in favor of civil liberties, regardless of how critical they might be of armed tactics, became an instant suspect, a potential terrorist. Speaking at Schleyer's state funeral, President Walter Scheel declared:

The fight against terrorism is the fight of civilization against a barbarism trying to destroy all order... They are the enemies of every civilization... The nations of the earth are beginning to realize this. They realize with horror that not this or that order is being attacked, but all order.

Specifically referring to anyone who dared protest following the Stammheim deaths, he remarked that, "They too share the guilt."⁵⁸ As described in *New German Critique*:

*A virtual war atmosphere was created in the country in mid-October: hundreds of thousands of motorists were pulled off the road and searched; constant appeals to the population were issued to encourage their reporting any suspicious types of activities to the police—such as sudden change of address, of hair cut or any other cosmetic changes, unusual mailings or publications.*⁵⁹

Most people stood behind the government, not only in its hunt for the RAF, but also in its broader clampdown. In one poll, 62 percent of respondents stated that they were willing to accept restrictions on their personal freedoms through controls and house searches, while only 21 percent were opposed.⁶⁰

At the same time, politicians and the press became ever more merciless. Following the Stammheim deaths, even allowing Ensslin, Raspe, and Baader to be buried in a common grave was enough to earn one the sobriquet of being "soft on terrorism." Stuttgart's moderate CDU mayor, Manfred Rommel—the son of the famed Field Marshal—refused to forbid such a burial, insisting that "Death must end all animosity." As a result, he

found himself marginalized within the *Land* party organization, and telephone calls poured in from angry citizens demanding that the RAF dead be cremated and their ashes poured into the city sewers.

Just as the RAF's failure in 1977 spelled disaster for the guerilla and the prisoners, it similarly buttressed the power of the state. To this day, counterinsurgency experts point to Mogadishu as a model intervention, and it surprised no one that in its wake Chancellor Schmidt's personal popularity began to rise. Upon their return home, the GSG-9 commandos who had raided the airliner were lionized as heroes, with the unit's head Ulrich Wegener receiving the prestigious Cross of Merit. In response to the events of '77, the internal security budget was increased by \$100 million, up to \$650 million in 1978.

Carlos Marighella, whose *Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla* had influenced so many of the armed groups that emerged from the New Left, had suggested that by provoking a disproportionate response the guerilla could alienate the population from the state. In 1977, however, this tactic was turned on its head, the state's abuse of the prisoners pushing the guerilla to overplay its hand, and in so doing to discredit its own struggle for years to come.

The RAF and its prisoners were isolated as never before.

The RAF and the GDR: Benign Neglect No More?

Throughout the 1970s, West German guerillas had benefited from a kind of benign neglect on the part of the pro-Soviet East Bloc. GDR security agents turned a blind eye to guerillas traveling between the FRG and the Middle East through East Berlin, and Belgrade was a frequent transit point. While guerillas were detained from time to time, this was simply for interrogation, as the Eastern spooks endeavored to keep track of developments in the West.



East Berlin's Schönefeld airport, a safe transit point

From the point of view of the East, this attitude may have become formalized in 1975, when Department XXII of the Ministry for State Security (the MfS or *Stasi*—East Germany’s political police) was established, ostensibly devoted to preventing terrorism, but in actual fact also involved in trying to get a handle on it.¹ This despite rampant opposition to “the East” throughout the New Left and the fact that many in the MfS felt that spectacular armed actions in the West got in the way of more mundane, but also more important, intelligence gathering. Indeed, the balance sheet was not always easy to tally, as John C. Schmeidel has explained:

Occasionally the RAF’s attacks gave the east a chance to learn about how the Bundesrepublik mobilized in time of crisis, as a fighter plane will deliberately

skirt the edges of hostile airspace to time how long it takes the opposition to scramble. The western services exposed their normally hidden clandestine assets. On the other hand, [MfS chief Markus] Wolf and the HVA² were aware that constant police alerts and border controls from terror attacks made life hard for its bread and butter collection effort across the border.³



Given these considerations, there were reasons to believe that in '77, with the FRG practically in a state of martial law, the stakes had simply ceased to be acceptable. To this day, there are observers who suggest the GDR sabotaged the PFLP (EO)'s skyjacking of the *Landshut* airliner and passively supported the GSG-9's intervention in Mogadishu. Stefan Wisniewski, for instance, has suggested the GDR may have pressured South Yemen to not provide the skyjackers with a safe base from which to negotiate the hostage exchange.⁴ Till Meyer (formerly of the 2nd of June Movement) has asserted that the *Stasi* had furnished the Palestinian commando with harmless dud weapons, and then relayed this fact to the FRG.⁵



PDRY tank prevents Landshut airliner from accessing runway

While such claims remain pure conjecture, it is true that as events unfolded there were reasons to believe that the guerilla's bridges to the East had been burned, as had so many others.

¹ John C. Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 152, 154.

² The *Hauptverwaltung für Aufklärung*—the foreign intelligence arm of the MfS.

³ Ibid., 159.

⁴ Stefan Wisniewski, *We Were So Terribly Consistent... A Conversation About the History of the Red Army Faction* (Montreal: Kersplebedeb, 2008), 27. Opinions vary about why the South Yemeni government chose this moment to take its distance from the West European guerillas. The late Fred Halliday suggested that the PDRY's reticence to get involved was due to the fallout from their having agreed to provide refuge to prisoners freed in a 2nd of June Movement hostage exchange in 1975. (Fred Halliday, *Revolution and Foreign Policy: The Case of South Yemen 1967-1987* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], 76-77.)

⁵ Schmeidel, 194, n.36.



*A banner at the funeral of Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe: "Against Deaths in Prison!
Against Skyjackings! Peace to the Hovels, War to the Palaces!"*

1. Joyce Marie Mushaben, *From Post-War to Post-Wall Generations: Changing Attitudes toward the National Question and NATO in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 176-177.

2. According to most accounts, this murder constituted the defining moment in the birth of the 1960s generation's revolt in West Germany. An unexpected and almost unthinkable twist to this story came to light in 2009, when journalists uncovered proof that police officer Karl-Heinz Kurras, who had killed Ohnesorg, was at the time an informant for the *Stasi*, and a secret member of the East German Socialist Unity Party.

3. Irmgard Möller, interviewed by Dagmar Brunow and Luka Skywalker, "Zur Mythenbildung nicht geeignet," *Testcard*, May 12, 2003.

4. The persistence of so many Nazis in power also played a part in this process, as RAF prisoner Lutz Taufer would later explain, “In the context of Auschwitz and Vietnam, it was politically and morally justifiable to join with these forces in an uprising, taking up arms even in the center. The fuzzy relationship that the politicians, finance, the justice system, and the military had to the fascist past, as well as their clear position in favor of the genocide in Vietnam, made it an open question whether or not fascism could creep back in Germany. In this sense, armed struggle in the Federal Republic was a form of belated resistance.” (Karl-Heinz Dellwo, Knut Folkerts, Lutz Taufer, Thomas Ebermann, Rosita Timm, and Hermann L. Gremliza, “Sie wollen uns auslöschen,” *konkret* June 1992).

5. Mushaben, 167. As RAF member Rolf Clemens Wagner would later put it, “Throughout the world, the critique of the Vietnam War was also a critique of the capitalist system.” (Helmut Pohl and Rolf Clemens Wagner, interviewed by *junge Welt*, “Wir wollten den revolutionären Prozeß weitertreiben,” *junge Welt*, October 17, 2007. This interview has been translated and is available at http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/documents/07_10.html.)

6. Knut Folkerts, interviewed by Wolf-Dieter Vogel, “Im Politik-Fetisch wird sich nichts Emanzipatives bewegen lassen,” *Jungle World*, October 1997.

7. RAF, “The Black September Action in Munich: Regarding the Strategy for Anti-Imperialist Struggle,” in André Moncourt and J. Smith, *The Red Army Faction, a Documentary History, Vol. I: Projectiles for the People* (Oakland: PM Press, 2009), 222-223.

8. As a consequence of creative page design, while this text was initially titled “The Urban Guerilla and Class Struggle,” it became more commonly known as “Serve the People,” although this had in fact been intended as the original document’s subtitle.

9. All three of these texts are available in English in our first volume, and also on the German Guerilla website, www.germanguerilla.com.

10. Christian Klar, interviewed by Günter Gaus, “Günter Gaus im Gespräch mit Christian Klar,” *Angehörigen Info*, February 15, 2002.

11. So called because of the ubiquitous “k” (for “communist”) in their names, the K-Groups were those Marxist-Leninist parties and pre-party formations that emerged from the decline of the APO.

12. Helmut Pohl and Rolf Clemens Wagner, interviewed by *junge Welt*.

13. RAF, “The Urban Guerilla Concept,” in Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 97.

14. Allensbach Opinion Poll, published in *Spiegel*, July 26, 1971.
15. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 163-169.
16. Ibid., 170-172.
17. The formulation used in Germany is to put the city name first, and then the name of the prison, usually the name of the neighborhood in which the prison is located. So Cologne-Ossendorf refers to the prison in the Ossendorf neighborhood of Cologne.
18. Friends of Astrid Proll, *Astrid Proll: The Case Against Her Extradition* (London: 1978), 8.
19. Stefan Aust, *The Baader-Meinhof Group: The Inside Story of a Phenomenon*, translated by Anthea Bell (London: The Bodley Head Ltd., 1987), 246.
20. As Rolf Clemens Wagner would later recall, “My experience is—and I’ve heard the same thing from other prisoners—that one feels the best during hunger strikes. Not physically, but because one is active and struggling in unity with others.” (Helmut Pohl and Rolf Clemens Wagner, interviewed by *junge Welt*). Or as Karl-Heinz Dellwo once put it, “With our hunger strikes we have transcended a torturous reality and reconstituted ourselves as subjects.”
21. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 253-254.
22. United Press International, “Gunmen Kill German judge,” *Hagerstown Morning Herald*, November 11, 1974.
23. RAF, “Letter from the RAF to the RAF Prisoners,” in Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 338.
24. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 332-335.
25. The periodization of the RAF into “generations” was at the time resisted by the guerilla and its supporters. In Christian Klar’s words, “The ‘generations,’ that was never our understanding. That’s based on the needs of the people pursuing us, who after 1972 or 1977 had to explain why, after we were ‘smashed,’ it nonetheless continued. One must instead work through the actual stages and the changes in the political situation.” (Christian Klar, interviewed by *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, “Die RAF gehört in eine ganz bestimmte Zeit...” *Angehörigen Info* 194, May 16, 1997). See also Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 336.
26. Ibid., 181.
27. Helmar Büchel and Ulrike Demmer, “Krieg der Lügen,” *Spiegel*, April 11, 2009. Such psychological warfare techniques were by no means unique to West Germany—rather

they had become a standard fare in countries around the world by this time. This has been perhaps best documented in the United States, where in 1971 activists broke into an FBI field office in Media, Pennsylvania, and made off with files detailing the FBI's COINTELPRO program. Of course, when confronted with evidence of such activities, the state's preferred tactic is to dissimulate and downplay. As such, in 2009, when Herold was contacted by *Spiegel* about the BKA's dirty tricks he merely admitted it was possible he had written such a document, but claimed not to recall any actual cases where its suggestions were implemented. Former Baden-Württemberg LKA president Kuno Bux, who had met with the police and *Verfassungsschutz* to discuss the paper in 1975, would insist that "we dropped the disinformation concept, because it was neither legally nor politically viable."

28. Ibid.

29. It should be noted that even as they condemned this as a transparent move to bar them from proceedings, the prisoners insisted that they were unfit to stand trial because of the isolation conditions, not the hunger strikes themselves.

30. Sébastien Cobler, *Law, Order and Politics in West Germany* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1978), 207.

31. Gerard Braunthal, *Political Service and Public Loyalty in West Germany: The 1972 Decree Against Radicals and Its Consequences* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 160-161.

32. Philip Jacobson, "Show Trial," *Sunday Times Magazine*, February 23, 1975, 21.

33. Deutsche Welle [online], "Journalists Unearth Rare Terrorism Trial Tapes from 1970s," July 31, 2007.

34. United Press International, "Urban Guerilla Leader Hangs Herself in Cell," *The Hayward Daily Review*, May 10, 1976.

35. *Winnipeg Free Press*, "Uneven Contest," May 19, 1976.

36. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 441-443.

37. Ibid., 381-388.

38. Throughout this book we will refer to "RAF prisoners" to indicate prisoners who had previously been active in the RAF. It should be kept in mind that the prisoners (as well as the RAF) were always clear that once captured, a guerilla was no longer a member of the RAF. As Irmgard Möller explained, "When you are arrested and are no longer armed, and you're as aboveground as you can get, you can no longer struggle as a RAF

member, given that you have been captured. You're still a part of it all, though no longer part of the organization." ("NDR/Arbeiterkampf Interview mit Christine Kuby, Irmgard Möller, Hanna Krabbe und Gabriele Rollnik, May 16, 1992," in ID-Archiv im Internationalen Institut für Sozialgeschichte/Amsterdam, *wir haben mehr fragen als antworten: RAF diskussionen 1992-1994* [Berlin-Amsterdam: Edition ID Archiv, 1995], 33-46.)

[39.](#) RAF, "The Assassination of Attorney General Siegfried Buback," in Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 490.

[40.](#) Jürgen Dahlkamp, Carsten Holm, Sven Röbel, Michael Sontheimer, and Holger Stark, "Operation Zauber," *Spiegel*, July 9, 2009; Michael Sontheimer, "Logik des Krieges," *Spiegel*, May 14, 2007.

[41.](#) Pohl and Beer had been captured along with Ilse Stachowiak, Margrit Schiller, Eberhard Becker, Christa Eckes, and Kay-Werner Allnach, on February 4, 1974. Hoppe had been captured three years earlier following a firefight with police.

[42.](#) *Spiegel*, "Sicher gestört," February 27, 1978.

[43.](#) Holger Meins, "Holger Meins' Report on Force-Feeding," in Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 293.

[44.](#) Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 259.

[45.](#) *Frankfurter Rundschau*, August 15, 1977, quoted in "The Stammheim Deaths," *Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review*, no. 4.

[46.](#) RAF, "The Attack on the BAW," in Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 496-497.

[47.](#) Jan-Carl Raspe, "Statement Breaking Off the Fifth Hunger Strike," in Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 495.

[48.](#) See the RAF's explanation to this effect on [pages 246–247](#).

[49.](#) RAF, "The Schleyer Communiqués," in Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 498.

[50.](#) On the PFLP (EO), see the sidebar on [page 23](#), and also Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 559-561.

[51.](#) Schumann had been caught sending out coded messages about the situation on board, and when the guerillas allowed him to leave the plane to quickly check the aircraft was not damaged after the rough landing in South Yemen, he refused to come back for over an hour, during which time he communicated with the security forces about the situation. Schumann was posthumously awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit, and a Lufthansa pilot school in Bremen was named in his honor, as was a street in

the Bavarian city of Landshut. (The hijacked airliner was called the *Landshut*.)

52. Karl-Heinz Weidenhammer, *Mord oder Selbstmord? Das Todesermittlungsverfahren: Baader, Ensslin, Raspe*, (Kiel: Malik Verlag, 1994).

53. For a detailed discussion of the inconsistencies and irregularities in the state's version of events, see Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 511-520.

54. Although subjected to the Contact Ban, Möller had been moved to one of the few cells where the connection to the prison radio had not been disconnected. In a book-length interview with former *taz* journalist Oliver Tolmein, she has explained that she had a pair of earphones with which she could connect to the prison radio and sometimes hear the news. (Oliver Tolmein, *RAF—Das war für uns Befreiung: Ein Gespräch mit Irmgard Möller über Bewaffneten: Kampf, Knast und die Linke* [Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 1997], 100.)

55. Irmgard Möller, interviewed by Manfred Ertel and Bruno Schrep, "Irmgard Möller: Ich will nicht anders leben," *Spiegel*, May 5, 1992.

56. Monika Berberich, interviewed by *Initial*, "Interview zur Geschichte der RAF," *Initial*, October 6, 2002.

57. Associated Press, "German Leftists, Police Battle after Paper Raided," *Waterloo Courier*, October 24, 1977.

58. United Press International, "Crusade Against Terrorism Urged," *Newport Daily News*, October 25, 1977.

59. Margit Mayer, "The German October of 1977," *New German Critique* 13 (Winter 1978): 155.

60. Braunthal, 162.

Twilight of the Seventies Guerilla

THE GUERILLA FLED.

Having lost their gambit of winner-take-all, the combatants were now among the most wanted fugitives in Europe. Once again, they sought refuge abroad, regrouping in Iraq, where the PFLP (EO) maintained autonomous bases, and from which they could easily travel in and out of South Yemen, still a safe haven the recent contretemps notwithstanding.¹

The first arrests occurred in Holland. Christof Wackernagel and Gert Schneider were in Amsterdam, unaware that their safehouse had been identified and was under constant observation. On November 11, the two men were followed as they left the apartment; when they realized that they had been surrounded by police, they drew their weapons and began to fire, even throwing a hand grenade. Sharpshooters took them out: one guerilla was hit in the chest and stomach, the other survived a bullet to the head.

Schneider was being sought in connection with the Schleyer kidnapping, Wackernagel in connection with firebombing a courthouse in the city of Zweibrücken, in Rhineland-Palatinate. Along with Knut Folkerts (arrested just weeks earlier), there were now three RAF members in Dutch prisons.

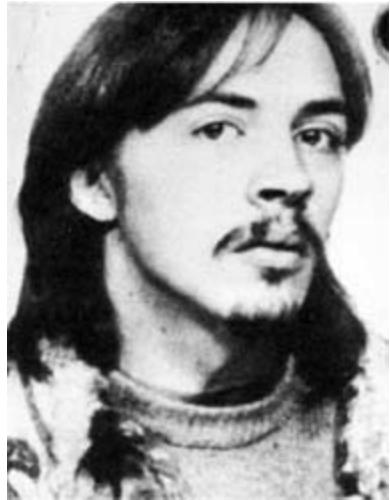
Next, on January 21, 1978, Christine Kuby was captured following a shootout with police in a Hamburg pharmacy. The circumstances surrounding this arrest—she had been attempting to use a forged prescription to buy narcotics—pointed to a problem that had been festering in the RAF for some time: the drug habit of Peter-Jürgen Boock, a

man who had played an important part in organizing and carrying out the '77 campaign.

As Boock, and his addiction, would play an important part in determining the RAF's fortunes in 1978, as well as in the historiography that would be built up around the group, and even in legal proceedings taking place as this book was being written over thirty years later, it is worth reviewing his history with the guerilla in some detail.

Boock's connection to the RAF was both personal and longstanding. He had first met Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin in Frankfurt back in 1970—he was a teenager who had just run away from reform school, and at the time the future guerilla leaders were trying to organize young delinquents along antiauthoritarian lines. Boock had wanted to join them when they went underground, but his involvement had been rejected: not so much on account of his age (some other members were also in their teens), but rather because of his drug habit, a curse which only worsened with the passing years.

Nevertheless, by the mid-1970s the original leadership was largely removed from the field, and the fact that Boock had known them on the outside and remained committed to seeing them freed made him a particularly valued supporter. As Monika Berberich would put it years later, pulling no punches: "There was a hierarchy in the support scene, with the prisoners or the people the prisoners particularly trusted at the top. P. Boock and V. Speitel² are examples of supporters that the prisoners had a privileged relationship with in spite of widespread outside criticism."³



Peter-Jürgen Boock

In August 1972, Boock moved into a collective house with Klaus Dorff and Waltraud Liewald, both of whom had contact with the guerilla. In 1974, the three went underground. The group, which Rolf Clemens Wagner and Jürgen Tauras later joined, intended to free Baader, and entered into contact with both the RAF and the Revolutionary Cells with this plan in mind. Dorff and Tauras were arrested in 1976, at which point the RZ broke off contact, and Boock, Liewald, and Wagner joined the RAF.⁴

Within a short time, Boock was in South Yemen preparing for the upcoming offensive.

Boock would tell his comrades that he needed drugs to cope with pain from intestinal cancer, which he claimed to be dying from. While some had their doubts about this story, initially he was sheltered from criticism by the prestige he enjoyed for having known Baader and Ensslin, and also due to the relationship he had begun with Brigitte Mohnhaupt, at the time one of the senior guerillas in the field. Yet the situation was becoming untenable, especially when drugs became scarce and he began going through withdrawal. Kuby's arrest underscored the perils of sending combatants to procure narcotics, and so the decision was made to seek

medical treatment.⁵

Meanwhile, the arrests continued: next was Stefan Wisniewski, apprehended on May 11, 1978, at Orly airport in Paris, as he attempted to board a plane to Yugoslavia. Not only was Wisniewski in possession of a large quantity of painkillers, he was also found to be carrying a letter from Karl-Heinz Dellwo that had been smuggled out of prison. The fact that Wisniewski had been picked up on his way to Yugoslavia was an indication that there might be other guerillas in that country. A fact that was confirmed the next day when Bock and three other RAF members—Mohnhaupt, Wagner, and Sieglinde Hofmann—were arrested transiting through Zagreb. As the French newspaper *Libération* reported:

*The arrests in Yugoslavia were the result of close cooperation between German and Yugoslav police. The movements of the four were being closely watched by West German secret agents, who subsequently informed the Yugoslav authorities. According to Agence France Presse, these arrests are related to the arrest of Stefan Wisniewski... carried out by French police at Orly airport, as he was boarding a plane to Yugoslavia.*⁶

The West German agents involved were likely members of a *Zielfahndung* unit, the “target search” squads that tracked—and where possible, apprehended—members of the RAF. With the help of Ulrich Wegener, head of the GSG-9, the *Zielfahndung* had been established as a direct consequence of the RAF’s ‘77 offensive, just one week after Mogadishu. It incorporated agents from various LKAs, operating under the aegis of the BKA and relying heavily on the latter’s state-of-the-art computer system. As detailed elsewhere:

The new unit, formed by the [BKA], was initially composed of 90 investigators operating in small teams on Zielfahndung (Target Searches). Its working method is for each team to take one terrorist and immerse itself in his life, using the Wiesbaden computer, whose data banks contain ten million pages of information about terrorist suspects, to provide information about a target which even he

*doesn't know. No item of information is too trivial for the target search teams. If they know that a suspect always telephones his mother on her birthday, her telephone is tapped, if he supports a certain football team, investigators will travel to the team's matches inside and outside Germany.*⁷

The *Zielfahndung* learned what kind of cigarettes their target smoked, his or her sexual proclivities, relationships, blood type, dental records, and much more. Acquaintances, relatives, and former friends were all contacted for background information. If tape recordings of the target's voice existed, they were studied. The target's schoolwork from university or high school was reviewed and compared with movement documents—something as trivial as a recurring grammar mistake, a spelling error or favorite catchphrase would be filed away as evidence.⁸

Such targeted manhunts and data mining are the stuff of everyday repression today, but in 1978 they represented a new, hitherto unheard of, level of sophistication on the part of the state. Yet, while the BKA's enormous computer files were a cause for ongoing concern on the part of civil libertarians, the existence of the *Zielfahndung* teams and their activities would remain largely uncontroversial.

It was not only in terms of police science, though, but more importantly as an example of improved East-West cooperation, that the Zagreb arrests were touted as a breakthrough by the state. For the guerilla, this was a bitter pill indeed, as the Eastern zone suddenly appeared not quite so safe as had been previously assumed.

It was an alarming situation; nevertheless, it all soon proved less damaging than was initially feared, for the Yugoslav government would not deliver the captured combatants without receiving something in return. Talks were initiated with Bonn, and it was proposed that the four RAF combatants be exchanged for eight Croatian nationalists being held by the FRG.⁹ The West German government balked, and there followed a lengthy period of negotiations. It took six months, but finally the FRG

made it clear that there would be no trade, dismissing the evidence against the Croats as inconclusive. In a convenient case of tit for tat, on November 17, Belgrade announced that it found the evidence against the RAF prisoners similarly inconclusive, and allowed the guerillas to depart to a country of their choosing.

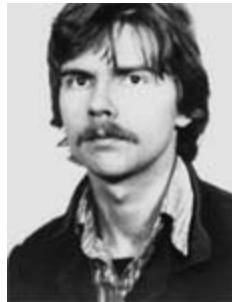
According to a joint statement made ten years later by several RAF members including Hofmann, Mohnhaupt, and Wagner, the four had only been passing through Yugoslavia en route to a hospice where Boock's "cancer" could be properly treated.¹⁰ Although Boock had made it clear that he didn't like this idea, he could not refuse outright without making his comrades suspicious. While in captivity, however, they made an interesting discovery, as they were all required to undergo mandatory medical examinations—examinations that revealed that Boock was not in fact suffering from cancer but was simply a junkie stringing his comrades along. The revelation obviated any need for a hospice, and so upon their release the disillusioned guerillas returned to the Middle East.

During the period of their detention, however, the other guerillas had not been idle, and there are indications that an action was being planned for later in 1978.¹¹ In August, Christian Klar, Heidi Schulz, and Willy Peter Stoll narrowly escaped after chartering a helicopter to fly over the Odenwald mountains. It has been alleged that they were carrying out reconnaissance for an action to break Stefan Wisniewski out of the prison where he was being held in Frankenthal. It was apparently the second time the three had chartered the helicopter, and the pilot had contacted the police after becoming uneasy with the photos his passengers were taking, all the more so when they asked him about landing in the prison yard for a scene in a film they claimed to be working on.¹²

Not long thereafter, on September 6, one of the three was recognized while dining in a Chinese restaurant in downtown Düsseldorf. The police were called, there was an exchange of fire, and Stoll was shot dead. A

guerilla who had participated in the '77 campaign, Stoll had initially studied as a tax advisor before being drawn to join the RAF through prisoner support work in 1976.¹³

A few days later, thanks to a tip from neighbors, police identified the apartment Stoll and the others had been using. Apart from a coded diary, a small arsenal (including an improvised rocket launcher), and fingerprints of six suspects,¹⁴ police also claimed they found evidence of a plot to kidnap a business magnate from the Ruhr area.¹⁵ Indeed, it would later be said that Stoll had been carrying out surveillance on Deutsche Bank president Friedrich Wilhelm Christians, with just such a plan in mind.¹⁶



Willy Peter Stoll

Hundreds more tips poured in, and a second safehouse was soon located. According to police, Klar, Schulz, and Silke Maier-Witt's fingerprints were identified, along with papers that included the name of Wolfgang Grams, a student who would now be accused of acting as a courier between the guerilla and aboveground supporters. Grams was promptly arrested under 129a¹⁷ and would spend 153 days in remand.¹⁸ He was not the only one picked up in the sweeps occurring at this time: Christine Biehal and Leila Bocooc would be arrested in September, and Biehal's husband Harald would be arrested in November, charged with membership in a terrorist organization under §129a.¹⁹

Later that month, police surprised three RAF members engaged in target practice in the woods outside of Dortmund. The guerillas opened fire,

killing officer Hans-Wilhelm Hansen and wounding his partner, who nevertheless managed to get off one long burst from his submachine gun as he fell. Angelika Speitel was shot in the leg and Michael Knoll received gunshot wounds to the head, lower abdomen, and liver, while Werner Lotze managed to get away unharmed, grabbing the dead cop's submachine gun as he escaped.²⁰ While Speitel would recover from her wounds,²¹ Knoll would not. He died in the hospital on October 7.



Angelika Speitel

The next encounter between the guerilla and its pursuers occurred on November 1, when Rolf Heißler and Adelheid Schulz were identified crossing into Holland. A firefight ensued and Dutch border guards Dionysius de Jong, nineteen years old, and Johannes Goemans, twenty-four, were both shot dead.

Several former RAF members who subsequently chose to cooperate with police have claimed that the RAF was considering a number of new actions in this period. Besides the stories about potential jailbreaks and kidnappings that we have already detailed, there are others even more daring, or foolhardy, depending on how one sees these things. For instance, Maier-Witt would later claim that following the killings and the arrest in Düsseldorf and Dortmund, there was talk of a retaliation action. According to this tale, the idea would have been to lure police to a trap set with land mines.²² Less outrageously—and, given subsequent events, more believably—it has also been said that there were plans to kidnap a high-ranking NATO officer.

Whatever may have been planned, the fact of the matter is that the constant arrests and killings were keeping the guerilla off balance, preventing it from going on the offensive. Perhaps not surprisingly, several members began to doubt the wisdom of even continuing with the armed struggle. Depleted and dazed, the RAF's future seemed less certain than ever before.

As such, this is perhaps an appropriate point for us to turn our attention to the fortunes of the other main guerilla groups and their supporters in the FRG.

THE 2ND OF JUNE MOVEMENT

The 2nd of June Movement, with its roots in the communes of the West Berlin counterculture, had been active for almost as long as the RAF. While the latter had developed its positions in a series of lengthy manifesto-style documents grounded in Marxism-Leninism, the 2JM's approach was more accessible and even light-hearted in tone. These qualities were perhaps most famously expressed in a 1975 bank robbery, during which they distributed pastries to customers and employees while the bank's registers were being emptied. Even during trials, the court statements of 2JM defendants could include clever jokes, and it was not for nothing that they became known as the *Spaßguerilla*, or “fun guerilla.”²³

The 2JM's initial strategy was to seek out contradictions within the metropole, to ground their struggle in their own society. While repeatedly acting in solidarity with the RAF, they were critical of the way in which the latter framed its struggle so much in terms of the international context. As 2JM member Werner Sauber argued in 1975:

*The RAF has failed to orient itself around the forms of struggle of the most exploited: women, foreigners, and young German unskilled laborers. A practical debate about the connection between the armed struggle and the militant proletariat is something the RAF refuses. Instead, the comrades act as a revolutionary “secret service” that sees its basis solely in the liberation movements on the Three Continents. Their anti-imperialist concept as such is that it makes the most sense for them to attach themselves to a Third World liberation struggle and struggle against the metropole on that basis. As a result, however, the RAF are neither fish in the sea nor birds in the sky. They have only worked with marginalized groups or with the left to gain more support for anti-imperialist terrorism, not to develop a strong class struggle of the oppressed in the metropole.*²⁴

Being like “fish in the sea” or “birds in the sky”—i.e., remaining grounded and camouflaged by a larger sympathetic mass—was a priority for the early 2JM, and for that reason the group tried to restrict its activities to West

Berlin, the scene from which it had developed and that its members knew best. As we have seen, graduating from bank robberies and firebombings, in a 1974 kidnapping gone awry, the 2JM killed Berlin's Supreme Court Judge Günter von Drenkmann in retaliation for the death of RAF prisoner Holger Meins. More successfully, in early 1975, the group kidnapped CDU mayoral candidate Peter Lorenz, demanding 120,000 DM and the release of six political prisoners. After five days of negotiations, the state acquiesced and the prisoners were granted safe passage to South Yemen.²⁵



Some presumed 2JM members, from left to right: Anne Reiche, Inge Viett, Ralf Reinders, Werner Sauber, and Till Meyer.

These actions were relatively well received in the radical scene, but of course this alone could not shield the guerilla from state counterattack. Indeed, the heat that followed the Lorenz abduction kept the 2JM hemmed in for years to come, a situation that was aggravated by a general lack of agreement as to what strategy to pursue going forward.

It started with the capture of 2JM members Gerald Klöpper and Ronald Fritzsch in West Berlin on April 28, 1975, just weeks after Lorenz had been released. Then, on May 9, Werner Sauber was killed in a late-night shootout with police in a Cologne parking garage. One police officer, Walter Pauli, also died in the exchange. Two other men, Karl-Heinz Roth and Roland Otto, were arrested, but not before Roth (a former SDS leader and important left communist intellectual) was shot and seriously wounded. (Both Roth and Otto would face charges, but were ultimately found not guilty of Pauli's murder.)²⁶

Next, on September 9, 2JM members Inge Viett, Juliane Plambeck, and Ralf Reinders were captured in West Berlin. A few days later, 2JM members Fritz Teufel and Gabriele Rollnik were similarly apprehended. All were suspected of involvement in the Lorenz kidnapping, with Plambeck accused of killing Judge von Drenkmann as well. Viett had been sought since escaping from prison two years earlier by sawing through her cell bars; she had been first captured in 1972 asleep in a car with other guerillas and a certain quantity of explosives. (They had allegedly been planning to bomb the Turkish consulate.) These arrests would be followed with the capture of Andreas Vogel, on March 26, 1976, also charged in connection with the Lorenz kidnapping.²⁷

The 2JM had been dealt one blow after another, but it was not yet down for the count. Several guerillas remained on the outside, and in less than a year, with their help, Viett would once again manage to escape—this time from Lehrter Straße prison, in the company of Plambeck, Rollnik, and RAF member Monika Berberich. As the Associated Press would report:

*The women locked themselves out of their cells early Wednesday. When two female guards came through the cellblock on a routine inspection, Miss Viett pulled a gun on them. They bound and gagged the guards with bedsheets and locked them in an outer room of the library. The prisoners climbed out onto the third-story roof from the library, made their way to a corner of the building by hanging onto window bars and dropped over the wall to the outside where a getaway car was apparently waiting.*²⁸

The question of just how the women had managed to acquire a gun and keys to their cells would provoke some consternation among partisans of the state, and lead to the resignation of West Berlin's SPD minister of justice and deputy mayor, Hermann Oxford.

The July jailbreak put a number of experienced combatants back on the street. Viett, Plambeck, and Rollnik soon made their way to the Middle East, passing through Iraq to the PFLP (EO)'s base in South Yemen.²⁹

Berberich was less fortunate, as just two weeks later, while on her way to arrange a meeting between the 2JM and the RAF, she was recaptured after unexpectedly bumping into her brother walking down the street: he had been under constant BKA surveillance since her escape. Before she could flee she was taken back into custody,³⁰ and the meeting between the 2JM and the RAF—most likely to discuss closer cooperation—had to be postponed.

It was in the wake of the RAF's failed '77 offensive that the 2JM would carry out its largest fundraiser since Lorenz: on November 9 of that year, several guerillas kidnapped stockings-magnate Walter Palmers in Vienna, dragging him from his car as he arrived home for dinner.

This was an action that the guerillas had been preparing prior to Schleyer's abduction by the RAF, and due to the added heat caused by the latter there was some debate about whether or not to proceed. They decided to persevere, but because Austria was a relatively safe zone and provided a convenient route into Italy, they tried to disguise the political nature of the kidnapping, hoping that it would be reported as a merely criminal endeavor.³¹ Initially at least, the ruse worked, and in the days that followed, both Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and police chief Otto Kornek publicly discounted the possibility that any guerilla group might be involved.³²



West German newscaster Eduard Zimmermann announces Palmers's kidnapping: the guerillas hoped this might seem the work of non-political criminals.

According to Viett, it was only once they had Palmers that they realized

with some unease that he was in fact not as young as he looked in his photos; in her words, “we suddenly had an old man on our hands.”³³ Despite this potential complication, all went smoothly—in fact, Palmers would thank his captors for the good treatment he received³⁴—and he was released unharmed four days later, his son having delivered the 31 million shillings ransom.³⁵ The 2JM took the money and divided it three ways, giving sorely needed funds to the RAF and to a Palestinian resistance group.

It wasn’t long, however, before police found their first clue that this had been no merely criminal abduction. Ten days after Palmers’s release, two theater students were arrested crossing into Italy from Switzerland: Thomas Gratt and Othmar Keplinger were already known as members of the *Arbeitskreis politische Prozesse* (APG; Political Trials Working Group), a political prisoner support group in Vienna. Upon searching their vehicle, border guards found two weapons previously used in guerilla actions, money from the Palmers ransom, as well as the typewriter the ransom note had been typed on. At the same time, police received a tip implicating Reinhard Pitsch, a philosophy student who had founded the APG the year previously, as having made the ransom call to Palmers’s family; he was arrested on November 28.³⁶

It would seem that the 2JM had recruited three supporters, barely out of their teens (in fact, Keplinger was only nineteen), to help out with the logistics of the operation, such as procuring getaway cars and train tickets, and making the necessary phone calls, the hope being that their Austrian accents would help obscure the German guerilla’s presence. While well-intentioned, the three students were clearly not prepared to deal with the consequences of working with the guerilla; Pitsch was interrogated and abused by the police for the better part of five days before being brought before an investigating judge, and it was reported in the newspapers that he provided extensive information. Both he and Gratt were denounced as

traitors in the support scene.³⁷ Pitsch was sentenced to six and a half years, of which he would serve three years and eight months, and Keplinger was sentenced to five years, which the courts later reduced to four years—he served his entire sentence. Gratt—who had guarded Palmers, and had been fully integrated into the 2JM³⁸—would be sentenced to fifteen years, of which he would serve thirteen.³⁹



Left to right: Reinhard Pitsch, Othmar Keplinger, and Thomas Gratt.

Gratt and Keplinger's bad luck at the border would be repeated on December 20, as Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann attempted to cross into Switzerland, accompanied by Christian Möller. They were both captured and found to be in possession of weapons, phony IDs, and money from the Palmers action—but not before Kröcher-Tiedemann had seriously wounded two border guards.⁴⁰ (Three weeks later, a grenade went off in the Bern office of the prosecutor responsible for this case. The action was claimed by a Benno Ohnesorg Commando, which promised further attacks if the two were extradited from Switzerland to the FRG.)⁴¹

This left Inge Viett as one of the most senior 2JM combatants on the street. Over the next years, she would play an important part in determining the course of the West German guerilla; not only the 2JM, but the RAF as well.

Born in 1944, Viett had been one of the millions of European children orphaned in the chaos of the war and its aftermath. Taken in by a family in Schleswig-Holstein, from a young age it was clear that her function was to provide manual labor, her status little different from that of a farm animal. Sleeping on a bed of hay (shared with her foster-sister) in the same annex

where pigs were butchered, her childhood as recounted in her autobiography reads like an unhappy Dickens novel, replete with deprivation and abuse.⁴² Leaving this “home” in her late teens, she traveled widely, and would later credit time she spent in North Africa for her political awakening.⁴³ Upon returning to the FRG, Viett joined the APO, where she met other radical women, including Verena Becker, with whom she would go on nighttime excursions smashing the windows of sex shops and bridal stores.⁴⁴

Both women would be recruited into the 2JM. Becker was arrested in 1972, at the age of nineteen, and charged in connection with the bombing of the British Yacht Club in West Berlin,⁴⁵ for which she received a six-year sentence, only to be subsequently freed in the 1975 Lorenz exchange, at which point she switched over to the RAF. As we have seen, she would next be arrested in 1977, along with Günter Sonnenberg, in the town of Singen.

Meanwhile, Viett remained with the 2JM, but by 1976 she too had become a strong proponent of rapprochement with the RAF.

This new direction was pushed forward by the sad reality that even the vibrant West Berlin scene was not able to shelter the guerilla from repression, and by the fact that several members of the 2JM were essentially living with RAF combatants in the PFLP (EO)’s Middle East camps.⁴⁶ The political and logistical pressures that resulted from the RAF’s German Autumn simply accelerated this process, and behind the scenes the 2JM would effectively split into two factions, the one “social revolutionary” (or “populist” to its detractors), the other “anti-imperialist.”

Anti-Imperialism Defined

The anti-imperialist position that would attract so many radicals of the APO generation was always most closely identified with the RAF of the 1970s. Knut Folkerts would explain the group's position as follows:

Our assessment was that anyone who based an analysis on the conditions in the metropole, developing a worldview from that perspective, could not arrive at a valid appraisal of the situation. One must start from global conditions, or one can only arrive at the chauvinistic perspective of the relatively privileged.¹

Criticisms that the RAF ignored "domestic" contradictions due to this "global" focus are overly simplistic, and ignore the effort the RAF devoted to integrating both realities into a comprehensive critique. In this regard, it is worth highlighting these comments by Brigitte Mohnhaupt about anti-imperialism, internationalism, and social revolution:

Given that they address the same thing, these concepts cannot be placed in contradiction to one another—otherwise they become a caricature of themselves: internationalism reduced to appeals for solidarity with revolution somewhere else, so the question of whether people want revolution for themselves doesn't raise its ugly head; anti-imperialism as research into imperialism, where the abstractions fail to address the practical question of how to resist it; social revolution as a synonym for social questions that must be addressed to meet people's needs, which can only end in reformism so long as the key question is ignored, namely what power relations need to be destroyed for people around the world to have their needs met. This approach only blocks any learning process or practice that could lead to a united attack.²

¹ Knut Folkerts interviewed by Vogel, "Im Politik-Fetisch wird sich nichts Emanzipatives bewegen lassen."

² See Strategic Thoughts, page 310.

It must be kept in mind that despite the terms used to describe these two political camps, everyone involved would have welcomed a social revolution, just as they all were opposed to imperialism. In the context of the West German far left, in no small part due to the influence of the RAF, “anti-imperialism” represented an identification with the Third World national liberation struggles and translated into a deep pessimism about the short-term prospects for mass revolutionary movements in the metropole. In its extreme form, such anti-imperialism could lead to the view that the guerilla in the metropole should merge with or act under the leadership of Third World revolutionaries abroad. (While the RAF never held such a position, as we shall see, certain combatants from the Revolutionary Cells explored this strategy with tragic results.)

To be a social revolutionary, on the other hand, meant to prioritize seeking a base and a field of political action within one’s own society—this was the view that some critics would accuse the RAF of having repudiated with its 1972 document *Black September*. Social revolutionary politics had defined the 2JM for years, but in the aftermath of the 1975 Lorenz kidnapping it had come to be rejected by increasing numbers of 2JM fighters outside of prison.⁴⁷

Within the 2JM, this split would finally be consummated during the group’s 1978 trial, in which Ralf Reinders, Fritz Teufel, Ronald Fritzsch, Gerald Klöpper, Andreas Vogel, and Till Meyer faced charges related to the Drenkmann killing and Lorenz kidnapping. Presiding was Judge Friedrich Geus, well-known to the sixties generation for having acquitted killer cop Karl-Heinz Kurras of the June 2, 1967, shooting death of Benno Ohnesorg—the very murder from which the 2JM had taken its name. While the accused maintained their innocence, they were equally outspoken in their support for armed struggle and revolutionary politics in the FRG, no

matter how differently they may have come to conceive of these.

This was the context in which the anti-imperialist faction made its move, carrying out what one newspaper described as “the first serious action by proponents of ‘armed struggle’ since Stammheim and Mogadishu.”⁴⁸ As reported by UPI:

Two women terrorists posing as lawyers invaded an “escape-proof” jail Saturday, freed one of Germany’s most wanted men and casually strolled out with him under the noses of patrolling police.

One police guard taken hostage in the meticulously planned raid at the Moabit prison was shot in the leg. The terrorists all escaped unharmed...

[T]he two women used lawyers’ identity cards to get into the prison and timed their raid to coincide with visits by Meyer’s and Vogel’s real lawyers.

Once inside, the women pulled out pistols and shouted to Meyer and Vogel to leave the unlocked cells where they were conferring with their lawyers. Meyer ran free but a guard grabbed a pistol from one of the two women and locked himself in the cell with Vogel. He sounded an alarm that alerted guards in the prison but not the police patrols outside.

The two women then took another guard hostage and forced other guards to open a security door that led to an unguarded front door.

“To show they meant business they shot their captive in the leg,” [Minister of Justice Jürgen] Baumann said.

The plot was so carefully planned and prison controls so lax that the two young women then simply strolled out of the prison’s main entrance onto a busy thoroughfare under the eyes of police patrols, got into a Volkswagen bus with waiting accomplices and drove off.

The bus later was found abandoned not far from the prison. The prison had been billed as “escape proof” after undergoing a \$2 million renovation.⁴⁹

The entire operation, from the time the women arrived at the prison to the time they left, took only six minutes. Almost immediately, police swarmed over the scene, soon locating the minivan, abandoned, a half-mile away—but the guerillas were all long gone. Certainly unknown to the raiders, the action was all the more galling for the state, as Baumann, who had replaced

Oxford as West Berlin's justice minister, had scheduled a visit that morning with his colleague from Baden-Württemberg, to show off "one of the most secure prisons in Europe."⁵⁰ Just as his predecessor had been forced to resign following the guerilla women's breakout in 1976, Baumann too would feel compelled to step down after the 1978 jailbreak.⁵¹



A West Berlin movement publication celebrates the Till Meyer jailbreak.

The Meyer liberation action established the predominance of the anti-imperialist faction. Not only was it carried out over fears of being perceived as the work of a "free-the-guerilla guerilla" (like the RAF), the unavoidable profile of such an action was sure to bring more heat down on the West Berlin scene, making it even more difficult for those who hoped to pursue a social revolutionary strategy. What's more, the group that carried out the action styled itself the "Nabil Harb Commando," honoring one of the PFLP (EO) fighters who had died in Mogadishu⁵²—this despite the fact that the "populist" 2JM and its traditional supporters had been highly critical of skyjackings, which they rejected as inhumane.⁵³ As Gabriele Rollnik would later explain:

There were other political prisoners in Moabit, but we decided upon Till Meyer and Andreas Vogel, because they both agreed with our politics. The other men had criticized us, saying we had broken with the old 2JM. Communication with them was very difficult or had ceased altogether. They thought what we were doing was completely incorrect. They didn't understand why we weren't carrying out social

*revolutionary actions in Berlin any more. For us, the struggle had reached a new stage and had to be carried out taking into account the international context. Till Meyer and Andreas Vogel agreed with this decision, so they were the object of our liberation action.*⁵⁴

According to Klaus Viehmann, the Meyer liberation was in fact the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back, splitting the organization and prompting Viehmann himself to leave. He was arrested just one week later, driving a car that the Nabil Harb Commando had left him. As he has explained, this was the result of a double slip-up: his erstwhile comrades hadn't told him the car was stolen, and he hadn't thought to ask. He would eventually be convicted of participation in the Meyer liberation, the Palmers kidnapping, and a series of bank robberies, and would spend a total of fifteen years in prison, much of it in isolation.⁵⁵

As for Meyer and the women from the Nabil Harb Commando, they split up, seeking shelter in various East Bloc countries, with the intention of regrouping in the Middle East. A misjudgment, as the guerilla's relationship to the world of "real existing socialism" remained ambiguous in this period, just weeks after the RAF's Zagreb arrests. As such, one month after the breakout, on June 21, Meyer was recaptured, along with Rollnik, Gudrun Stürmer, and Angelika Goder, at the Golden Beach holiday resort in Bulgaria.

Federal Minister of the Interior Gerhart Baum publicly boasted that the arrests were the work of a *Zielfahndung* squad—though there was also the story that a vacationing West German prison guard had recognized Meyer relaxing on the beach.⁵⁶ According to Rollnik, it is also possible that Bulgarian intelligence had betrayed them to the FRG, as there was already a high level of cooperation between the two countries around drug trafficking. As the guerillas were making daily calls to West Berlin, there is also the theory that they were located through telephone surveillance by the U.S. National Security Agency.⁵⁷

Regardless of how they were found, there is little mystery about the details of their capture. Sitting in a café, the four were suddenly swarmed by heavily armed assailants in civilian clothing; overpowered, they were whisked off to a nearby bungalow, where they were tied up and left lying on the floor for several hours. Once the guerillas realized that they were dealing with Germans, they demanded to speak to the Bulgarian authorities, which they were allowed to do, but to no avail: the Bulgarians were cooperating, and all requests for asylum fell on deaf ears. Chained hand and foot, in the middle of the night they were brought to the airport, where they were loaded onto a *Lufthansa* plane along with a couple of dozen more German police. The icing on the cake was a representative of the Bonn Security Group, who introduced himself with a mocking, “My name is Scheicher. Now, let’s go home to the Reich!”⁵⁸

Upon their return, Rollnik was placed in isolation in Cologne. It took a thirty-day hunger strike for her to be transferred to Berlin, where she was able to have some contact with Berberich and other political prisoners. (In 1980, she, Berberich, Goder, and Stürmer would all be transferred to the new high-security wing at Moabit prison.)⁵⁹

The arrests in Bulgaria, like those of the RAF fugitives in Yugoslavia, were said to augur a new era of East-West cooperation against “terrorism.” Indeed, it seems clear that sections of the East Bloc security apparatus were cooperating with the West. But the world of international espionage is a murky one where double- and triple-crosses are not uncommon and political factors constantly force matters into their own mould, and so two further possibilities bear consideration.

First, it is possible that the *Zielfahndung* opted to seize and remove the guerillas from Bulgaria as a result of the fact that Yugoslavia was still holding onto Mohnhaupt, Boock, Hofmann, and Wagner. Belgrade’s refusal to extradite the four was turning into a serious wrinkle in the FRG’s much-hoped-for “antiterrorist” rapprochement with the East, and

preventing a repeat of this problem was clearly in Bonn's best interests.

Second, in both the case of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, it is possible that the Eastern authorities only went along with capturing the guerillas because they had been "caught out" by the *Zielfahndung*, which had located its targets independently. This would have placed the governments in question in the uncomfortable position of having to brazenly admit to sheltering the guerillas or else make a show of cooperating. In this light, it is possible that Belgrade's insistence on trading for the Croatian nationalists held by the FRG—as much as they wanted the Croatians—was intended to provide a convenient excuse for eventually releasing the West Germans.

Further evidence of the complex relationship between the guerilla and the various East Bloc nations came just days after the Golden Beach busts. On June 27, Viett, her longtime companion and fellow 2JM member Regina Nicolai, and 2JM member Ina Siepmann, found themselves detained while transiting through Czechoslovakia on their way to Baghdad.⁶⁰ The three were questioned extensively about the 2JM's attitude toward the socialist countries, the strength of anticomunism in the West German left, and their reasons for traveling to the Middle East—but the FRG was never informed that they were being detained. After three days, the guerillas tired of this and requested that the GDR be informed that Inge Viett was in custody. As soon as this was done, three agents from Department XXII (Terrorism) of the MfS were sent to retrieve the 2JM fighters, bringing them to the GDR where they were entertained by Colonel Harry Dahl, Major Helmut Voigt, and his understudy Gerd Zaumseil.⁶¹ The women remained in the GDR for two weeks, before continuing on to Baghdad.⁶²

Viett had apparently first made contact with the *Stasi* after breaking out of prison in 1976. Now the East Germans had gotten her out of a bind, and it would seem that each side was apt to view the other with favor. A

situation that would not be without its consequences.

But for the moment, the 2JM, like the RAF, was in crisis. For all the beauty of the 1978 jailbreak, Meyer was now back in prison, as were several other members. The group had split, and post-'77, their experience with the Austrian students served as an object lesson as to the challenges of integrating new recruits, never mind carrying out new actions.

Discretion being the better part of valor, keeping a low profile and staying out of the country struck those left as the wisest option to pursue.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CELLS

Unlike the RAF and the 2JM, West Germany's third guerilla group did not emerge from West Berlin, but from the self-styled "antiauthoritarian" wing of the post-APO left in Frankfurt, the same scene that also gave rise to the *Spontis*.

Dubbed "the after work guerillas," the Revolutionary Cells adopted a very different approach from either the RAF or the 2JM. Anybody could carry out an action within the context of the RZ's politics—defined as anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, and "supporting the struggles of workers, women, and youth"⁶³—and claim it as an RZ action. In line with this, the Cells did not field underground militants, but rather advised comrades to maintain their aboveground existence while carrying out clandestine activities. Finally, within the FRG, the group purposefully stopped short of carrying out lethal attacks, the sole fatality during their entire nineteen-year existence being a politician who bled out when an RZ cell kneecapped him. (The group subsequently issued a communiqué explaining that they had not meant to kill him.)

Apart from bombing the Chilean consulate, the offices of El Al, police stations, U.S. army bases, government buildings, and bosses' cars, for years the RZ also forged public transportation passes which were broadly distributed, and food vouchers which were passed out to homeless families. While some of these actions were relatively high-level, requiring as much planning and risk as the RAF's bombings, in general RZ attacks were considerably less heavy, as can be seen by this partial list from the period covered by this volume:

- In April 1979, pesticides were used to destroy the garden at the Frankfurt home of IGM Chairman Eugen Lorderer, and stink bombs were dumped on the floor of IGM Vice Chairman Hans Mayr's house —workers at IGM had recently experienced a defeat after six weeks on

strike.

- In November 1979, sugar was put in gas tanks and tires were slashed at the Seeland Trucking Company, involved in building a nuclear power plant.
- In January 1981, four trucks belonging to Bilfinger and Berger, a Frankfurt construction company involved in gentrification, were torched.
- In May 1982, the Mercedes belonging to the head of the Frankfurt Real Estate Office was torched in protest against gentrification.
- In November 1982, stinking liquid was poured into the home of George Luze, managing editor at the *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, for his role in driving competing newspapers out of business.

As indicated by the above, RZ actions were carried out around a variety of issues and could at times be considered little more than vandalism. (One wag, comparing them to the RAF, dubbed them the “property destruction faction.”) Unlike the illegal activities carried out by the RAF’s support scene—which were timed and determined in the framework of the RAF’s own campaigns, with the militants taking their lead from the guerilla—the Cells tended to take their direction from the social movements themselves. What prevented all this from simply dissolving into a sea of movementism was the ideology and identity established when an action was claimed by the Cells. Furthering this process, ever since May Day 1975, people in the Revolutionary Cells milieu had been issuing an annual newspaper, *Revolutionärer Zorn* (Revolutionary Rage), which helped establish a common framework for RZ actions and politics; it was immediately banned under §88a, but widely read in the scene regardless.



Eventually, an autonomous women's guerilla group, Rote Zora (named after a Pippi Longstocking-type character from a children's book), would emerge from the Cells. Its first action was to bomb the Federal Doctors' Association in Karlsruhe on April 29, 1977, as payback for the association's opposition to abortion reform.

At the same time, unbeknownst to most observers, some RZ members had adopted an anti-imperialist perspective, not simply (like the RAF) in the sense of viewing the Third World liberation struggles as the global vanguard, but in the sense of literally fighting alongside the Third World guerilla. In practical terms, at first this meant working in joint commandos under the direction of the PFLP (EO). Sometimes referred to as the RZ's "international wing," and alternately as the International Revolutionary Group, this section may have comprised a very small number of militants, and yet as they could trace their history back to the Cells' earliest days their importance should not be underestimated.

The first of the international wing's actions occurred on December 24, 1975, with Hans-Joachim Klein and 2JM member Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann participating in a joint German-Palestinian commando under the command of the Venezuelan adventurer Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, better known as "Carlos." Klein had moved from being a *Sponti* street fighter to the RAF prisoner support scene and finally to the RZ following Holger Meins's death in 1974. Given that he was the only RZ member to have participated in this action, and that he subsequently broke from the guerilla, some people do not consider the RZ's international wing to have been involved. (As for Kröcher-Tiedemann, she was certainly acting independently of the 2JM in this operation.)

The so-called “December 21st Movement of the Arabic Revolution” delivered a bloody nose to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries as it met in Vienna. Sixty oil ministers from around the world were taken hostage, with both an Austrian police officer and a Libyan diplomat being killed in the process. In exchange for the ministers’ release, the guerilla demanded—and received—a \$5 million ransom. They were flown to Algeria, and from there they returned to the underground.

The operation had been meant to punish OPEC for its recent decision to lift its embargo against Israel. Yet it was not considered a success: the plan had been for the guerilla to execute diplomats from Saudi Arabia and Iran, important American allies; instead, Carlos negotiated a ransom for their freedom. Many reports claim that he was excluded from the PFLP (EO) organization for this breach.

Not that this less bloody outcome assuaged the operation’s many critics: officials from the PLO accused Carlos of having orchestrated a “criminal act” designed to “undermine the nature of the Palestinian struggle,” claiming that the raid was such a disaster it could have been an imperialist false flag operation—which it wasn’t.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, all of the guerillas had survived (though Klein had been seriously wounded), and so it was not an unmitigated failure.

The same could not be said for the next operation to include members of the RZ’s international wing.

On June 27, 1976, a joint commando made up of members of the PFLP (EO) and members of the RZ hijacked an Air France airliner traveling from Tel Aviv to Paris, diverting it to Entebbe, Uganda. The guerillas demanded the release of fifty-three political prisoners held by Israel, West Germany, France, Switzerland, and Kenya, including several from the RAF and the 2JM.

The hostage-taking was a drawn out affair, in part because so many governments were involved. After a week of holding all 260 passengers and

crew, the guerillas arranged to release the non-Jewish passengers.⁶⁵

On July 4, an Israeli commando raided the airport, killing all of the guerillas, as well as over forty Ugandan soldiers who were guarding the area. More than one hundred Jewish hostages were freed and quickly flown out of the country.

Entebbe was a fiasco, doing so much harm to the Palestinian cause that British diplomats at the time even considered the possibility that it might be a Mossad false flag attack—but it wasn’t.⁶⁶ It was in reaction to Entebbe that the United States established its first counterterrorist military units.⁶⁷ As for Israel, the Mossad was given the mission of assassinating PFLP (EO) head Wadi Haddad, which it accomplished in 1978.⁶⁸

Many observers eventually concluded that the perceived singling out of Jews represented a political defeat far greater than any military failure. Certainly, Entebbe provides a stark example of the inability some leftists had in recognizing or rejecting antisemitism.

Initially, for most critics, the issue was not that Jews had been segregated—a fact which was dismissed by many as state propaganda—but that an airplane had been skyjacked. Karl-Heinz Dellwo, who at the time was a prisoner from the RAF, remembers feeling disbelief at the news, and was relieved to have a letter smuggled to him from Gudrun Ensslin in which she expressed the desire to publicly condemn the action, though she eventually decided to hold back out of respect for the two dead RZ guerillas.⁶⁹ Helmut Pohl, too, would recall that, “We were critical of that action for a number of reasons: the selection of passengers with Israeli passports, the resolution of the action on the Three Continents instead of in the metropole, and most importantly, the tactic of hijacking a plane.”⁷⁰

Within the 2JM, Entebbe merely aggravated what were already the beginnings of the tensions between the anti-imperialists and social revolutionaries.⁷¹ Nevertheless, there too, nobody felt that a public

denunciation was appropriate. As Fritz Teufel would later explain:

*In the aftermath of the Entebbe hijacking, we considered a public critique. I was opposed.... It is not easy to criticize comrades who risked and lost their lives in an effort to free their comrades. The brutality and military precision of the Israeli military and GSG-9 commando actions in Entebbe and Mogadishu and the deaths of the comrades involved initially set in motion a process that blocked us from considering the sense or lack thereof of these actions, a suspension of thought.*⁷²

Tragically, the lack of public criticism of Entebbe from the ranks of the armed combatants left the door ajar for future skyjackings, and as such for the debacle in Mogadishu.

As for the RZ's international wing, in the years to come it would continue along its troubled trail, eventually becoming a franchise for Carlos and various foreign intelligence agencies. Nevertheless, unlike Mogadishu, where the RAF suffered a serious political defeat and was widely condemned, Entebbe did not result in any backlash against the "domestic" RZ. Partly, this was because none of the hostages were Germans, the airliner was not from a German company, and the action was not carried out on German soil and did not directly involve the West German state. For many leftists, it could all be viewed as somewhat distant, and despite the leading role played by two members of the RZ, it could be dismissed as having nothing to do with anything in West Germany.

So it was, that as the 1970s came to a close, all three of the FRG's main guerilla groups had been faced with challenges to their identity and their sense of purpose. These challenges were not the same, though, and would be resolved in very different ways. Nonetheless, operating as they did in a world of shared illegality, their choices would not be made in isolation, but would rather build on each other's experiences, accomplishments, and failures.

Nor did any of the guerilla groups exist in a bubble of isolated armed conflict—with the possible exception of the RZ's international wing, all

three organizations, anti-imperialists and social revolutionaries alike, remained entrenched in the broader political context, both domestically and internationally. As such, in order to understand the paths they would take, we must now turn our attention to the rise of militant resistance on what was at first a quintessentially aboveground, and certainly unexpected, terrain: the movement against nuclear energy.

1. Tobias Wunschik, *Baader-Meinhofs Kinder: Die zweite Generation der RAF* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997), 273.
2. Volker Speitel was arrested in 1977 and would end up providing all sorts of information—and tall stories—to the state prosecutors. See [page 252](#).
3. Monika Berberich, “Erfahrungen in der Gruppenarbeit mit Psychotherapeuten,” in Angelika Holderberg (ed.), *Nach dem bewaffneten Kampf* (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2007), 137.
4. Wunschik (1997), 199-200.
5. Ibid., 294.
6. J.M. Bouguereau, “Recherchés pour l’affaire Schleyer arrêtés en Yougoslavie,” *Libération*, May 30, 1978.
7. R.K. Pruthi, *An Encyclopaedic Survey of Global Terrorism in 21st Century* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 2002), 28-31
8. *Spiegel*, “Wen suchen wir denn eigentlich?” November 7, 1977. In the cases being discussed, Butz Peters has claimed that both Wisniewski and Wagner were identified because the aliases they used when traveling had already been cracked by the BKA. In the case of Wisniewski, at least, this was done by means of handwriting analysis of the customs cards he had filled out on a previous flight. Butz Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum: Die Geschichte der RAF* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004), 480-481.
9. The FRG was at this time an important rear base area for fascist *Ustashe* and other Croatian nationalist organizations, many of which engaged in armed attacks against Yugoslav consulates and diplomatic representatives. In 1976, this included the assassination of the Yugoslav consul in Frankfurt. See: Paul Hockenos, *Homeland Calling: Exile Patriotism and the Balkan Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 63. The eight men in question, ranging in age from 29 to 62, were accused of carrying

out several such attacks, including a skyjacking and multiple bombings, in their struggle against the Titoist state. A number of them were already in prison in the FRG. *Spiegel*, “Maghrebinische Lösung,” August 31, 1978.

10. Wunschik (1997), 294. See Appendix II: Boock’s Lies, [pages 328–332](#).

11. Wunschik (1997), 297-299.

12. Ibid., 299-300; Dominique Linhardt, “Guerrilla Diffusa: Clandestinité, soupçon et provocation dans le conflit entre organisations révolutionnaires subversives et l’État ouest-allemand (années 1970),” *Politix* 2006/2, no. 74, 73-74.

13. United Press International, “General Police Kill Terrorist,” *European Stars and Stripes*, September 7, 1978.

14. *Time*, “Closing In On an Elusive Enemy,” October 9, 1978.

15. United Press International, “General Police Kill Terrorist.”

16. Wunschik (1997), 299.

17. United Press International, “Stoll’s Death Foiled a Plot, Officials Think,” *European Stars and Stripes*, September 12, 1978.

18. Grams would eventually be released, as there was not enough evidence for a conviction; he received compensation of 10 DM per day he had spent locked up. He would later join the RAF. Willi Winkler, *Die Geschichte der RAF* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2008), 397.

19. dpa, “Kontakte zu Terroristen”—Haftbefehl,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, September 21, 1978; dpa, “Mutmaßlicher Terrorist festgenommen,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, November, 17, 1978.

20. United Press International, “Baader-Meinhof Gang Member Dies of Wounds,” *European Stars and Stripes*, October 8, 1978. Wunschik (1997), 302-303.

21. During her trial Speitel would fight with the court guards and denounce presiding Judge Klaus Wagner as “a sack of filth, a hangman and an accomplice of U.S. capitalism.” Charged with murder and attempted murder, she insisted her only regret was that she had not made sure both cops were dead. Reuters, “Terrorist Dragged to court,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 4, 1979. She was sentenced to life in prison, but would be pardoned in 1989.

22. Wunschik (1997), 303-304.

23. A play on words, as the German term for “urban guerilla” is *Stadtguerilla*.

[24.](#) Werner Sauber, “Mit dem Rücken zur Wand?” January 1975. This text will be included along with other documents from the 2JM in a forthcoming documentary history to be copublished by Kersplebedeb and PM Press.

[25.](#) Rolf Pohle, Rolf Heißler, Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, Verena Becker, and Ina Siepmann were flown out of Germany. The sixth prisoner, former RAF member Horst Mahler, refused the release. See Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 328-332.

[26.](#) Linhardt, 85-86.

[27.](#) Andreas Vogel, *Grussaktion an alle politischen Gefangen*, July 1984.

[28.](#) Associated Press, “Resignation of Berlin Justice Minister Sought,” Lawton (Oklahoma) *Constitution*, July 8, 1976.

[29.](#) Gabriele Rollnik and Daniel Dubbe, *Keine Angst vor niemand* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2003), 63-64; Inge Viett, *Nie war ich furchtloser* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 1996), 160.

[30.](#) Rollnik and Dubbe, 63.

[31.](#) Ibid., 75-76.

[32.](#) Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann, “Deutsche Terroristinnen in Österreich,” *zeitgeschichte* 2/37. Jahrgang 2010, 119-120.

[33.](#) Viett, 169-171.

[34.](#) Winkler, 374. Leaving aside Judge von Drenkmann, it appears that if one was going to be kidnapped, one was lucky to be kidnapped by the 2JM: Lorenz had similarly thanked his abductors in 1975, even going so far as to express the desire to meet with them again under better circumstances, perhaps at one of his garden parties. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 329.

[35.](#) Roughly \$3.1 million.

[36.](#) Bandhauer-Schöffmann, 119-120; Rollnik and Dubbe, 76-77.

[37.](#) Bandhauer-Schöffmann, 130.

[38.](#) Rollnik and Dubbe, 76-77.

[39.](#) Bandhauer-Schöffmann, 123-124.

[40.](#) While the media trumpeted this as a “major blow” to the RAF, the FRG’s minister of the interior, Werner Maihofer, downplayed the arrests, stating that “Christian Möller, 28, the driver, in no way belonged to the hard core of the RAF, and Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann wasn’t a major figure, but was at least a ‘symbolic figure.’” In actual fact, she

was not a RAF member at all, but had come out of the 2JM milieu. According to some accounts Möller was just a supporter who had been driving her into Switzerland that day. He eventually received an eleven-year sentence. Kröcher-Tiedemann, who had been freed from prison in the 1975 Lorenz hostage exchange, would serve two-thirds of her fifteen-year sentence before being extradited to the FRG in 1987, where she was brought to trial for her part in the 1975 OPEC raid (see below, [pages 71–72](#)). Due to a lack of evidence, however, she was acquitted in May 1990 and released from prison in 1991. She died of cancer on October 7, 1995, at the age of 44.

[41.](#) J.P. Bruneau, “Le Jura Suisse saisi par le spectre de la RAF,” *Libération*, June 13, 1978.

[42.](#) Viett, 19-50.

[43.](#) Ibid., 78.

[44.](#) Dahlkamp et al., “Operation Zauber.”

[45.](#) The 2JM had planted a bomb at the club on February 2, 1972, to protest the murder of thirteen unarmed demonstrators in Derry, Northern Ireland, three days earlier, in what became known as the Bogside Massacre, or simply Bloody Sunday. An elderly boat-maker found the 2JM’s bomb and attempted to disarm it—the device exploded, killing him.

[46.](#) Rollnik and Dubbe, 75; Klaus Viehmann, “Was nicht geschrieben steht,” 6.

[47.](#) Among the prisoners, Reinders, Teufel, and Fritzsch would be associated with the social revolutionaries, and Vogel, Meyer, and Kröcher-Tiedemann (in Switzerland) with the anti-imperialists. (Klöpper was at this time taking his distance from the guerilla.) On the street, Klaus Viehmann is the only known combatant who remained with the social revolutionaries, Inge Viett, Juliane Plambeck, Gabriele Rollnik, Gudrun Stürmer, and Angelika Goder all rallying to the antiimperialist camp.

[48.](#) *Libération*, “Berlin: un ‘terroriste’ délivré par un commando de cinq femmes,” May 26, 1978.

[49.](#) United Press International, “Terrorist Freed,” *Pharos Tribune*, May 28, 1978.

[50.](#) *Libération* “Berlin: un ‘terroriste’ délivré par un commando de cinq femmes.”

[51.](#) Associated Press, “Berlin’s Law Chief Is Forced to Resign,” *European Stars and Stripes*, July 6, 1978.

[52.](#) Viehmann (1997), 7.

[53.](#) Ralf Reinders and Ronald Fritzsch, *Die Bewegung 2. Juni* (Berlin, Amsterdam: Edition ID-Archiv, 1995), 63.

54. Rollnik and Dubbe, 81.
55. Viehmann (1997), 7.
56. *Winnipeg Free Press*, “Combatting Terrorism,” July 18, 1978.
57. Rollnik and Dubbe, 84. According to Willi Winkler, the four were located due to a tap on the phone they called in Bielefeld (Willi Winkler, *Die Geschichte der RAF*, 372).
58. Rollnik and Dubbe, 83-85. Also: Pruthi, 29.
59. Rollnik and Dubbe, 87.
60. Tobias Wunschik, “Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit und der Terrorismus in Deutschland,” 2.
61. Schmeidel, 155-156.
62. Viett, 196-207.
63. Autonome Forum, “A Herstory of the Revolutionary Cells and Rote Zora—Armed Resistance in West Germany.”
64. *Time*, “Kidnaping in Vienna, Murder in Athens,” January 5, 1976.
65. To this day the point is debated in the radical left as to whether the guerillas’ intention was to single out Jews or Israelis. The editors are unable to fully examine the question of intent in this context, however the fact of the matter is that both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews were held back. Yossi Melmen, “Setting the record straight: Entebbe was not Auschwitz,” *Haaretz* July 8, 2011.
66. Fran Yeoman, “Diplomats Suspected Entebbe Hijacking Was an Israeli Plot to Discredit the PLO,” *Times Online*, June 1, 2007.
67. Marc A. Celmer, *Terrorism, U.S. Strategy, and Reagan Policies* (Contributions in Political Science) (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987), 66.
68. Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., *Hunting Leadership Targets in Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorist Operations: Selected Perspectives and Experience* (Hurlburt Field, Florida: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2007), 16.
69. Karl-Heinz Dellwo, *Das Projektil sind wir* (Hamburg: Nautilus, 2007), 142.
70. Helmut Pohl and Rolf Clemens Wagner, interviewed by *junge Welt*.
71. Viehmann (1997), 6.
72. Fritz Teufel, “Indianer weinen nicht—sie kämpfen,” late May 1979. This text will be published along with other documents from the 2JM in a forthcoming documentary

history to be copublished by Kersplebedeb and PM Press.

The Antinuclear Movement: Old Meets New

IF THE ONWARD MARCH OF generations affects all human endeavor, this is particularly true of the left, to such an extent that it often seems to keep time by the changing of the generational guard, and even remembering the lessons of just a few years past can be a challenge to what frequently appear as movements driven forth by youth itself.

As the guerilla languished, just a little farther afield history's march was welcoming a new generation into the fray. Merging and clashing with veterans of the APO in a variety of struggles, the most important of these in the latter half of the 1970s was certainly the direct-action movement against nuclear power.

AGAINST THE ATOMIC STATE!

The FRG's three main political parties had all held pro-nuclear positions since the 1950s. Indeed, at first, even social critics wondered if cheap nuclear power might provide a science fiction fix for the evils of industrial capitalism, as when Ernst Bloch waxed eloquent about the atom's potential to "make flushing meadows from wasteland, flowering spring from ice, in the blue atmosphere of peace."¹

Of course, outside of the left, the new and mysterious high-tech energy source held a different appeal. For the first generation after Hitler, nuclear energy gave hope that technical prowess might replace military might as the measure of the nation's strength. As one journalist from the liberal newspaper *Die Zeit* explained:

*There was no way to express German national feeling after the war. This would have been interpreted as a Nazi attitude. West Germans instead constructed their new national identity around economic growth and power. Nothing better symbolized this than the nuclear industry.*²

This vision of nuclear power as a symbol of pride, vital to the national interest, was bolstered by the first oil shock in 1973. That year, the price of oil quadrupled as a result of an OPEC decision to limit production following the Yom Kippur War; this came shortly after the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system in 1971. The world economy was sent into a deep recession, the post-World War II boom drawing to a final close.



Spiegel sums up the imperialists' evaluation of the oil crisis: "Oil Sheikhs Against Europe."

As the price of oil continued to spiral upwards (by the end of the decade it would be fourteen times what it had been in 1973), the West German ruling class saw both danger and opportunity. On the one hand, petroleum imports at the time accounted for almost 60 percent of the country's primary energy consumption, and so the skyrocketing prices had the potential to strangle the economy.³ On the other, the oil crisis created an opening for the FRG to use atomic energy to gain leverage in the world market.

At the time, the country was ruled by a “Social-Liberal” coalition made up of the SPD and the much smaller Free Democratic Party (FDP), and the government’s economic strategy was for the FRG to position itself as a producer of capital-intensive, high-value exports, with the state mediating between employers and the working class to ensure social peace. This “Model Germany,” a term coined by SPD Chancellor Schmidt during his 1976 election campaign, involved phasing out labor-intensive industries that produced inexpensive products and making substantial state investments in the research, development, and infrastructure upon which the high-tech sector would depend. Nuclear power was key to this strategy, and by the middle of the decade that sector alone was receiving one-third of all federal R&D moneys, with the FRG becoming second only to the United States in international sales of light-water reactors and fuel cycle

equipment.⁴ Meanwhile, at home, Schmidt's 1974 Energy Program called for ten years of rapid growth in the domestic nuclear sector, with plans for more than forty new high-capacity plants supplying energy to several giant projected industrial corridors to be built in traditionally agricultural areas.⁵

The anticommunist bulwark was becoming the atomic state, based on a kind of nuclear imperialism and supported by all political parties, the trade unions, and big business. The word "technocracy" is an apt description; as sociologist Christian Joppke has noted, "In response to energy crisis and economic recession, the neocorporatist elites moved closer. Not dialogue, but the repression of dissent prevailed."⁶ Faced with this ruling-class unity and a fourth estate which studiously ignored the risks associated with the new technology, most people initially favored building more nuclear plants, one poll in 1975 finding only 16 percent opposed.⁷

Echoing the experience of the 1960s Grand Coalition and APO, this "unity of all democrats" made for a cocky and belligerent ruling class, while also giving its detractors a strikingly clear view of the system they were up against. Consequently, it provided an easy route to radicalization.



Social Democratic Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (above), whose "Model Germany" relied upon the labor aristocracy remaining closely tied to the corporate and state elites.



Over the course of the decade, a series of campaigns against various nuclear facilities would become linked in a mass movement. Ironically, although reinforced by the successors to the APO New Left, notably the antiauthoritarian *Spontis* and the Marxist-Leninist party-oriented K-Groups, this movement actually originated in various Citizens Initiatives, groups initially set up by the SPD to seduce new members.⁸ As the radical left was drawn in, the movement's political content became a point of contention, with the question of "violence" serving as the symbolic dividing line between those who viewed the state as something to reform and others who recognized it as an opponent to fight against.

The way this broke down varied from one place to another; for instance, in Hamburg the *Kommunistische Bund* found itself well-placed to lead the local campaign, while in Bremen and Göttingen the dominant K-Group (the *Kommunistische Bund Westdeutschland*) was in decline, and so a younger generation, more sympathetic to the *Spontis*, took the lead.⁹ Coming together in a series of confrontations with the state, the antinuclear campaigns would serve as a laboratory for these groups to put their very different ideas into practice, exchanging insights and comparing results. More importantly still, their strengths and weaknesses would be made plain to see for all the new people being drawn to the struggle. It was, in the best sense of the term, a living movement.

The first major mobilization occurred in 1975 against the proposed construction of a nuclear power plant at Wyhl in the conservative *Land* of

Baden-Württemberg, where the FRG borders on both France and Switzerland. Led by local farmers and professionals, and fueled by regionalist sentiments, the opposition was dismissed as irrelevant by the *Land*'s CDU government and the nuclear utility, which ominously warned that, “Even if the risks of nuclear power were bigger than they actually are, we would have to accept them in the interest of freedom and democracy.” Or as *Land* president Hans Filbinger put it, without Wyhl, “the lights go out in 1980,”¹⁰ any opposition to the plant obviously being “teleguided by Communists or Maoists.”¹¹

Despite the fearmongering, protesters carried out an audacious—though strictly nonviolent—action against the planned plant. In the frozen month of February, hundreds of local residents occupied the construction site and refused to move. They remained for two days before police turned on them with water cannons. Although driven away, they returned the next week, joined now by tens of thousands of people who had come from throughout the FRG, as well as from France and Switzerland. This time they built barricades.¹²

Dutch social scientist Ruud Koopmans has argued that “novelty gives protesters a strategic advantage—authorities are unprepared for new strategies, political actors, and themes,”¹³ and this was certainly borne out at Wyhl, the first site occupation of its kind in Europe. As the world’s attention turned to this tiny German town, so did that of the urban radical left.¹⁴ The nonviolent occupation became a miniature village, preventing construction work and creating a political nightmare for the government. After ten months, the state blinked, declaring a “temporary” halt to construction, which would in fact never be resumed.

Wyhl was a successful first round, but the struggle against nuclear energy was just beginning. One year later, the ante was upped at Brokdorf in Schleswig-Holstein, the intended site of a nuclear power plant slated to produce 1,300 megawatts—as much power as the total energy

consumption of the entire *Land*.¹⁵ As protesters assembled for what was billed as a nonviolent occupation in the spirit of Wyhl, they found that the building site had already been occupied—by a battalion of police. As one student from Göttingen University remembers:

*For the first time, we were visually confronted with the atomic state: huge police levies, barbed wire fences, dogs, a construction site turned into a fortress. That was new for us. Before that, we had not been directly confronted with the state. The student movement and the wildcat strikes of the late 1960s had occurred before our time.*¹⁶

The RAF had similarly energized a section of post-APO youth, but only a small one. One needed to be predisposed to the prisoners' struggle, and preferably live in a big city with a supporters' scene, in order to "get it." Nuclear power, with its potential for widespread calamity, energized far greater numbers, and yet its opponents sparked a familiar dynamic, with repression exposing the system's violent core, drawing new people and forces into what was initially a more limited conflict.

If the state had supposed it could keep a lid on things with its police deployment at Brokdorf, it would soon learn otherwise. Within a month, a national march on the site had been organized, with the insistence on nonviolence dropped. Thirty thousand people streamed in from across the country and beyond, many prepared for action. As they approached police lines, some two thousand broke away, fighting their way through. They waded across the moat that had been dug, and, braving water cannons, attacked the wall surrounding the building site.¹⁷ The response came as police helicopters indiscriminately tear-gassed the retreating crowds, including the vast majority who had not joined in the attack.¹⁸ For the first time in West Germany's history, units of the Federal Border Guard were deployed at a protest.¹⁹

Things continued to escalate. The next battle came in early 1977, in

Grohnde, where another one of the Schmidt government's new power plants was being built. As the movement magazine *Autonomie*²⁰ reported, "A demonstration did not occur. Instead, the activists immediately attacked the fence with the necessary tools." Joppke explains:

*With "military precision" and "criminal energy," and the help of blowpipes and electric chainsaws, the militant attackers struck a huge hole into a monstrous steel fence that had been considered indestructible. Eight hundred police officers and demonstrators were injured in this ferocious battle—the worst political violence ever registered in the FRG.*²¹

Clearly, a section of the movement had transcended the normal bounds of democratic protest. As the movement radicalized it also made connections, growing beyond its single-issue origins. In the words of Jens Scheer, a physics professor from Bremen university, and member of the Maoist *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (KPD),

*The escalation of violence originates not from us but from the state. Already the construction of nuclear plants is violence. Many citizens learn from Wyhl and Brokdorf that their real enemy is not a flawed energy policy or a dangerous technology but the state itself.*²²

Opposition to nuclear energy was radicalizing people by shining a light on the ugly face of repression in Model Germany. In the year after Grohnde, movement energies were spent supporting a number of arrested activists, eleven of whom would eventually be convicted of endangering national security. The state added insult to injury, taking legal action to force them to pay the costs for the police action (230,000 DM), while eighty people who testified on their behalf were brought up on charges of perjury.²³



Grohnde, March 19, 1977.

All of this was largely ignored by the RAF and the 2JM—most of their members being either in prison, or focused on freeing the prisoners—but not by the RZ. Members of the Revolutionary Cells had participated in the action in Grohnde, and in Brokdorf before that. Impressed by what they had seen—and coinciding with their move away from the international terrain subsequent to the Entebbe disaster²⁴—they decided the time might be right to add the guerilla to the mix. The RZ carried out two such actions in August '77, against the MAN corporation in Nuremberg and against both Klein and Schanzlin & Becker AG installations in Frankenthal—all three targets were involved in nuclear weapons production, and MAN had important contracts in South Africa.²⁵

If Grohnde represented a high point for the antinuclear movement, the pendulum would soon swing the other way. Construction was nearly complete at Kalkar, a small town in North Rhine-Westphalia not far from Düsseldorf, by the time the movement's next national mobilization occurred. Protesters were particularly incensed as the Kalkar power plant was to be a “fast breed” facility—one which produces more radioactive material than it consumes, with byproducts that can be used to make nuclear weapons. A demonstration was planned for September 24, 1977: smack dab in the middle of the German Autumn, just a few weeks after the RAF had abducted Hanns Martin Schleyer.

Despite the tense political situation, between thirty and fifty thousand people gathered for the march. The police had been given a green light to proceed as they saw fit, and as many as ten thousand manned checkpoints throughout the area, all motorists and travelers being searched, and hundreds of foreigners being turned back at the FRG's borders. At one point, a police helicopter even forced a train to a halt and had its passengers disembark.²⁶ Protesters were fingerprinted, photographed, and entered into the police computer files.²⁷ The authorities would announce that thirty-three persons had been preemptively arrested and that thousands of masks, helmets, and protective shields, five hundred batons, forty-one walkie-talkie sets, as well as steel ball projectiles, catapults, steel rods, knives, and flare guns had been confiscated. Thus disarmed, the protesters were kept from the actual construction site by over a thousand police armed with submachine guns and protected by barbed wire, a moat, and a concrete wall.²⁸

In the lead-up to Kalkar authorities had warned that the demonstration would likely turn violent, with the possibility of fatalities—not completely far-fetched as an antinuclear protester had been killed by police in France just a few months earlier. As it was, officials were left crowing about how they had managed to defang the protest before it could even begin, and the movement suffered a serious blow. In the words of one organizer,

*At Kalkar, we ran into the machine guns of the state. The demonstration never occurred; it was already smashed in the forefield. The state used all means to demonstrate its power. We experienced a limit. It became clear we could no longer confront the state in this form. A long period of resignation set in.*²⁹

Here too, a movement had seemingly reached an impasse; but repression did not stop people—it polarized them. For some, the problem now became the “atomic mafia” and its “atomic state.” As one movement text would later explain,

*The atomic State is not a temporary or reversible development. It is a symbiosis between the development of military strategy all over in Western countries which are increasingly going over to considering and treating their own populations as the enemy and the development of a destructive technology (atomic energy technology) that is to be put to use by the electricity concerns and the energy fetishes regardless of the consequences that could follow. Atomic technology has developed out of a social system which has often proven that it will even risk genocide for the sake of economic progress. Criticizing atomic energy thus becomes a basic criticism of the way of production in this society.*³⁰

It was a situation not without its possibilities.

THE ONGOING ADVENTURES OF THE POST-APO LEFT

The antinuclear movement brought together different political tendencies and generations and, as we shall see, would eventually provide a launching pad for new cycles of struggle. For the first postwar generation, those who had come of age in the 1960s, it served as a way station, a place to remain active as one's ideological reference points began to show their age. While the RAF had plunged the guerilla and its supporters into the most dramatic crisis with its actions in '77, the fact of the matter is that all tendencies of the post-APO left were approaching various crossroads in their respective paths.

The German Autumn would serve as a synecdoche for this broader crisis. For while it fell to the guerilla to solve the problems of its own unique circumstances, others pondered a much similar quandary: how to break through the obstacles that faced them? Not an easy task, given that these obstacles could often be traced back to the ideologies and class trajectories of the groups in question.

The self-styled “antiauthoritarians” who had emerged from the APO had been exemplified by the *Spontis*, with strongholds in Frankfurt and West Berlin. As this scene experimented with increasing levels of violence, it fractured, some sections adopting out-and-out pro-guerilla positions, while others retreated into the so-called “alternative movement,” which was pioneering what would later be termed, somewhat reductively, lifestylism. Dissatisfied with these choices, others continued to look elsewhere for new places and ways to introduce and advance their politics.

If any single event can be credited for the antiauthoritarians transcending their time of crisis, it would be the Tunix Conference, held in West Berlin on the last weekend of January 1978. A month earlier, a group of friends had issued a wistful call out for this gathering of the countercultural left:

*We are fed up with this country! The winter is too sad, the spring too contaminated, and the summer too suffocating. The smell from the offices, the reactors, the factories, and the highways is unbearable. The muzzles no longer taste good and neither do the plastic-wrapped sausages. The beer is as flat as are bourgeois morals. We no longer want to do the same work and make the same faces day in and day out. We have been ordered around long enough. We have had our thoughts, our ideas, our apartments, and our IDs controlled. We have had our faces smashed in. From now on, we refuse to be arrested, insulted, and turned into robots. We are leaving for the beaches of Tunix!*³¹

Organizing under the names Quinn the Eskimo, Judas Priest, and Frankie Lee (all characters from Bob Dylan songs), they would later explain,

*During the fall of 1977 a political discussion took shape among us that encouraged us to initiate Tunix. We experienced the reaction of the left to the events surrounding... Schleyer and Mogadishu as a cringing before an imaginary attack on the part of the state. Many were taking cover as they would from an approaching thunderstorm and were crying, “Don’t get wet!” Pessimism had spread even among us. We no longer believed it possible to accomplish a revolutionary project.*³²

No sooner had they announced the conference, the three left on vacation to Sweden. As one of them admitted years later, “We didn’t even know if anyone would show up.” When they returned from their holiday, however, they found that thousands had signaled they would be attending—suddenly the scene prepared itself, almost overnight, to host one of the most important political gatherings of the decade.

Tunix—a play on words that means “Do Nothing”—attracted thousands of people from both the counterculture and what was known as the undogmatic (meaning non-Leninist) left. Workshops discussed setting up a new ecological political party and a new left-wing national newspaper, while political theory was debated with Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Michel Foucault, Johannes Agnoli, and other intellectual superstars of the day.³³ The conference ended with a march through the streets of West

Berlin, as noted in the *Tagesspiegel*:

For the first time in years, a demonstration in Berlin turned violent. When a crowd of about five thousand people gathered to end the three-day TUNIX meeting at the Institute of Technology, paint bombs were thrown at the police outside the women's prison in Lehrter Straße and cobblestones outside the court house in Moabit's Turmstraße. The protesters included Spontis, Urban Indians, and other nonorganized leftists. They came from Berlin, West Germany, and Western Europe.... Swastikas and SS runes were painted on police vehicles.... The American House in Hardenbergstraße was bombarded with rocks.... A huge German flag saying "Modell Deutschland" was pulled through the streets by a sound truck. At the corner of Kurfürstendamm and Joachimstaler Straße, the flag was burned with police and passers-by watching.... Anarchists carried banners saying, "Stammheim Is Everywhere," "Away with the Dirt!" and "Gross!" Graffiti was painted on houses along the marching route, for example, "Free the Agit Printers" and "Anarchy Is Possible." Outside several prisons, the protesters chanted, "Free the Prisoners!"³⁴

Defiant rhetoric notwithstanding, Tunix did not augur any escalation of resistance as such. Rather, it was another sign of the gravity of the RAF's conflict with the state in '77 that anything organized in the months following was obliged to refer back to the German Autumn. What did end up coming out of Tunix were a series of concrete plans to build left-wing infrastructure, and there followed a period of dramatic growth in the already-important West Berlin alternative scene—health food stores, co-ops, bike shops, etc. As one historian of the period explains, "West Berlin turned into the secret capital of the alternative movement. A 1979 survey claims that about a hundred thousand people in the city counted themselves, at least in a wider sense, among the alternative scene."³⁵

One product of the conference to have national significance was a new daily newspaper, the *tageszeitung* (Daily News), which became more commonly known as taz. Radical weekly newspapers had existed in almost every city previously, but only one, *Info-BUG*, had ever had a truly national circulation, and even then, it had been focused on West Berlin and had

been banned the day of the Stammheim deaths. Even before this ban, though, there had been discussions about establishing a more “respectable” newspaper. As Wolfgang Ströbele recollects, “We were annoyed with the pamphlets of the undogmatic left, which were actually full of biased and often false information, and we were upset about the alignment of formerly left-liberal papers like *Frankfurter Rundschau* and *Spiegel*, which had in the meantime become social-democratic-liberal and loyal to the government.”³⁶



The Tunix Conference in West Berlin, a milestone in the development of the countercultural, antiauthoritarian, and alternative movements. Musicians performing at opening ceremony (left), people demonstrating on the closing day; flags from the anarchist-syndicalist CNT-FAI fly alongside flags from the Red Aid (Rote Hilfe) prisoner support group (right).

This had become particularly glaring in the state’s confrontation with the guerilla, especially in 1977, so while *taz* would never be sympathetic to the RAF, the shameless subordination of the press to the government’s counterinsurgency dictates was a catalyst for its inception. As has been noted elsewhere, in this way the German Autumn “had a unifying effect on the diverse and diffuse counterculture, particularly in its channels of communication, that is, the alternative press.”³⁷

taz would become the voice of the APO generation, now styling itself the Tunix generation, and would eventually establish a national circulation dwarfing that of any scene publication.³⁸

At the same time as the challenges and innovations of the nonparty left were being discussed at Tunix, one of the other main tendencies that had

emerged from the APO—the Marxist-Leninist K-Groups—was grappling with an even gloomier perspective. This current, the West German expression of what in North America is known as the New Communist Movement, had almost exhausted its possibilities by 1978. As the Maoist road faltered, West Berlin was once again the site of an experiment that sought a way to move forward, now in the unlikely form of a new electoral party, the *Alternative Liste*, officially founded on October 5, 1978.³⁹

Bringing together activists from the Citizens Initiatives, women's groups, the alternative scene, and a heavy contingent from the KPD, it has been argued that, initially at least, the AL served as a front group for the latter. However, as it was soon swamped by all kinds of people to the left of the SPD, it quickly underwent a political metamorphosis, capturing and captured by many of the same energies represented at Tunix and in *taz*. As Ernst Hoplitschek, one of the AL's founding members, would later reflect,

*The AL marked the end of the political sects of the seventies. But without the old, classical left blocs of those years, without the programmatic, personnel, and organizational framework of the Maoist KPD, self-critically speaking, the AL would not have existed.*⁴⁰

The different incarnations of the post-APO left were collapsing into a new synthesis. As such, it is perhaps not surprising that some of those who rallied to the new party had spent time in the guerilla and its support milieu: Dieter Kunzelmann and Gerd Klöpper, for instance, had been close to the 2nd of June Movement and the West Berlin *Blues* scene that had preceded it.⁴¹ Hans-Christian Ströbele and Otto Schily, two lawyers who had risen to prominence defending RAF prisoners, were also involved in establishing the AL, though Schily publicly withdrew from the project on the day of its official founding, in protest against what he feared would be the untoward influence of so many Maoists.⁴²

The *Alternative Liste* was a sign of things to come. Fifteen months later,

in January 1980, AL delegates attended a gathering in Karlsruhe to found the Green Party. While the AL would remain significantly more radical, both parties represented the same class shifts and generational journeys, and together they would, in time, redraw Germany's political map. (As for Chancellor Schmidt, he dismissed the new party: "They're just environmental idiots," he said, "who will have disappeared again soon.")⁴³

Mesmerized by the success of its electoral gambit, the Maoist KPD would disband in 1980, to be followed by one after another of the rival K-Groups, as the AL and Greens reaped the most benefit from this implosion. Although the Greens and AL both styled themselves "antiparty parties"—promising to operate on behalf of the movement, behind enemy lines as it were—it has been observed that "the Left's disguise was already taking on a life of its own, and it was beginning to adopt the characteristics it had been pretending to possess."⁴⁴

Although some critics would make much of the Marxist-Leninists' rally to the state—arguing that their conservative cultural and organizational politics had predisposed them to such a turn—the radical edge of the undogmatic left, represented so well at Tunix, had also been dividing into two broad tendencies, one of which was similarly finding its way back into the system. Like many former Maoists, these too would make their journey home by way of the left's new electoral vehicles.

Complicating this survey of the late '70s left is the case of the women's liberation, or feminist, movement. While it too had emerged from the APO, both its scope and its ideological framework make comparisons with the *Spontis* or K-Groups (which some sections overlapped with, and others disdained) awkward and of limited use; if in some ways feminism was part of the left, it was also much more than just that.

In the context of this movement, women had developed practical projects around violence against women, collective childcare, reproductive rights, and much more; this was supplemented by a theoretical production

that took the ruthless criticism of all that exists in directions hitherto unknown. Years before the alternative scene, women had built counterinstitutions ranging from bars and theatre troupes to newspapers, shelters, bookstores, and autonomous women's centers. As with the *Spontis*, the idea of "autonomy"—no matter how vaguely defined—was a cornerstone of this movement,⁴⁵ often taking the form of a desire to remain independent from not only the state, but also the "male left":

*As women began to move out from the base they had constructed, defining more and more areas of conflict, raising issues such as birth control and lesbianism, which increasingly placed the very issue of interpersonal relationships on the agenda, tension began to develop between the women's movement and the rest of the extra-parliamentary left and between women and men in traditionally male-led left organizations. By 1973 this tension had exploded into a full-fledged public split. Two strains of Feminism emerged more clearly defined from this split. Socialist Feminists continued to work on the general extra-parliamentary left in mixed groups or coalitions. Radical Feminists chose to work in women's groups defining their issues and priorities outside of the influence of the male-dominated currents of the extra-parliamentary left.*⁴⁶

After an International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women was held in Brussels in March 1976, the issue of violence against women became increasingly prominent. Attended by over two thousand women from forty countries, the Tribunal addressed medical and economic crimes, rape, political prisoners, crimes against lesbians, spousal abuse, prostitution, pornography, and the murder of women.⁴⁷ The first battered women's shelter was established in West Berlin that year, followed by the first Rape Crisis Line and the first annual *Walpurgisnacht* demonstration⁴⁸ in 1977. At the same time, women were active fighting for abortion law reform, the rights of lesbians, access to childcare, and increasingly around ecological issues, which formed a bridge with the antinuclear movement then in its heyday.

As the movement continued to grow, further divisions appeared

between different conceptions of what women's liberation might mean—equality with men under the reigning conditions, a change in the way all of society was organized, the dominance of supposedly "female" characteristics, or something else altogether?⁴⁹

As one revolutionary women's group would recount, this was a time of "polarization within the women's/lesbian movement. The powerful upsurge of the 'new women's movement'—with its initial plethora of militant actions against sexism and its radical shift in personal lifestyles—had already ebbed away..."⁵⁰

The focus on building counterinstitutions had paved the road for "professionalization" and state funding that often went hand-in-hand with the exclusion of more radical women. At the same time, the idea that there was a "genetically defined female nature" (what in North America would be termed essentialism), while it could facilitate women's involvement in ecological or peace movements (seen as naturally female concerns), could also lead in a quietist and even reactionary direction:

Taken with New Age ideas, some women began celebrating "women's intuition" and found tarot cards to be a way to divine the future. This inward turn in the movement signaled "a new femininity" and celebration of motherhood...⁵¹

As the women's movement felt increasingly isolated, its projects taken over by government monies or turned into established ongoing businesses whose subversive cutting edge seemed blunted, many women felt disenfranchised by the turn toward motherhood and a new femininity. As many women turned further inward, limiting themselves to their private spheres of lovers and close friends, radicals felt that the slogan "The personal is political" had been turned on its head—to the point where the political was irrelevant.⁵²

Or as some women active at the time have recalled:

A section of the women's/lesbian movement withdrew from the offensive implementation of women's demands and from provocative actions into inner life and the esoteric. Initially conceived of as an expansion of feminist political activity

by numerous women/ lesbians, for many this approach rapidly evolved into a conscious dissociation from radical public feminist politics.

Others held on in order to empower themselves and others, to create social spaces for resisting sexist violence, and to, for example, establish women's houses. Even this political and very important and necessary work was engaged in and presented by many women/lesbians as an alternative to and distancing from militant resistance. With this the professionalization and institutionalization of many women's/lesbian projects began.

*Radical women/lesbians often felt isolated and many of them returned to the mixed groups, which had themselves also been decimated in the extreme.*⁵³

Looking back in 1980, the group Women Against Imperialist War explained:

*There was a split in the women's movement that was the result of a narrow and false concept of women's liberation that was intended to detach their struggle against the patriarchy from its economic and political function in imperialism (because politics and economics are men's thing), thereby leaving the entire system of gender and imperialist division of labor unaddressed. On the other side were women who withdrew into the mixed left-wing groups to struggle against the political system here (no longer contributing their political demands and goals to the women's movement).*⁵⁴

Like the antinuclear movement, the feminist movement was something larger and more diverse than either the Spontis or the K-Groups, yet like the latter feminism offered the possibility of a radical critique of society as a whole. As such, the challenges facing the women's movement overlapped and combined with the crises occurring elsewhere, just as the resolution of these would shape the forms and possibilities for both women's ongoing resistance and their cooptation.

But that process would take years to play itself out. In the meantime, as the '70s came to a close, things could seem bleak, save for the new illusions of making change within imperialism. While there were shoots sprouting beneath the snow, on the surface what was visible were the new structures that the APO generation had built, the very ones with which so many of

their number would be integrated by the state.⁵⁵



Poster from the late 1970s: “Until we are finally free, we will have to tie many sheets together.”

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1. Christian Joppke, *Mobilizing Against Nuclear Energy: A Comparison of Germany and the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 39. This chapter relies heavily on Joppke’s account, which is one of the better studies of the ebbs and flows of the antinuclear movement in the 1970s and ‘80s.
 2. Dorothy Nelkin and Michael Pollak, *The Atom Besieged: Antinuclear Movements in France and Germany* (Boston: MIT Press, 1982), 22.
 3. Joppke, 93.
 4. Ibid., 94.
 5. Ibid., 93.
 6. Ibid., 94.
 7. Ibid., 117.
 8. Along with the women’s movement, the *Spontis*, K-groups, and Citizens Initiatives comprised the main strains of the West German left in the 1970s. For more on this, see Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 433-436, 441-452.

9. Joppke, 104.
10. Ibid., 97-98.
11. John Vinocur, Associated Press “Little Towns Get Big Results,” *The Greeley Daily Tribune*, March 6, 1975.
12. United Press International, “Demonstrators Again Take Over A-Plant Site,” *The Independent* (Long Beach, CA), February 25, 1975.
13. Ruud Koopmans, “The Dynamics of Protest Waves: West Germany, 1965 to 1989,” *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 5 (October 1993): 653.
14. Joppke, 101.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 102.
17. Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 103-104.
18. Joppke, 103.
19. Geronimo, *Fire and Flames: A History of the German Autonomist Movement* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012), 86.
20. Despite its name, *Autonomie* predated the German *Autonomen* by several years. Founded in 1975, it would provide “a historical bridge from the 1968 student revolt to the autonomous scene of the 1980s.” Geronimo, 63-66.
21. Joppke, 106. Readers may have noticed that nary a year passed in the Federal Republic at this time without some demonstration or riot being described by someone, somewhere, as “the worst political violence ever” in the country. This is not just testimony to the steady escalation of social conflict that followed the 1960s, but also to the temptation (widespread among writers) to always frame matters in terms of extremes.
22. Ibid., 105. The state would try for several years to apply the *Berufsverbot*—a law that banned suspected radicals from working in the public sector—to remove Scheer from his university position. Finally in 1980, by which time the KPD had already been dissolved, he was “merely” fined. (Brian Martin, “Nuclear Suppression,” *Science and Public Policy* 13, no. 6, December 1986: 312-320.)
23. WISE, “First Anti-Nuke Activists Seek Political Asylum,” no. 5 (May-June 1979): 7.
24. Sonja Suder and Christian Gauder, interviewed by Andreas Fanizadeh, “Du schaust

immer, ob jemand hinter dir ist,” *taz*, March 20, 2010; Klaus Viehmann, “Stadtguerilla und Klassenkampf—revised,” in: jour fixe initiative berlin (ed.), *Klassen und Kämpfe* (Münster: Unrast, 2006), 71-92.

25. Revolutionäre Zellen, *Subversiver Kampf in der Anti- AKW- Bewegung* (anonymous: np, 1980).
26. Robert Reid, Associated Press “Anti-Nuclear Demonstration in West Germany Peaceful,” *The Joplin Globe* (Joplin, Missouri), September 26, 1977.
27. Peter Francis, “Tu-wat (Do Something),” *Open Road* no. 13, Spring 1982.
28. Reid, “Anti-Nuclear Demonstration in West Germany Peaceful.”
29. Joppke, 108.
30. Open Road, “German War Machine Targets Anti-Nukers,” no. 11, Summer 1980: 18.
31. Geronimo, 71-72.
32. Sabine Von Dirke, *All Power to the Imagination! The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 111-112.
33. Wikipedia, “Tunix Kongress.”
34. Geronimo, 73.
35. Ibid., 74.
36. Von Dirke, 120.
37. Ibid.
38. Michael Sontheimer, interviewed by Rainer Berthold Schossig, “25 Jahre *taz*,” *Deutschlandradio* [online], April 12, 2004.
39. Keith Duane Alexander, “From Red to Green in the Island City: The Alternative Liste West Berlin and the Evolution of the West German Left, 1945-1990,” dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2003: 147.
40. Ibid., 145.
41. Having distanced himself from the guerilla, while on trial with the others from the 2JM Klöpper was actually elected on the AL ticket—which did not stop him from receiving a sentence of over 11 years in prison. “Eine seltsame Würze. Darf ein mutmaßlicher Terrorist ins Parlament?” *Die Zeit*, May 25, 1981.

- [42.](#) Alexander, 150. Schily would return to AL, briefly, in 1981 (*ibid.*, 190).
- [43.](#) Isabelle De Pommereau, “How Germany’s Greens rose from radical fringe to ruling power,” *Christian Science Monitor*, March 28, 2011.
- [44.](#) Alexander, 181.
- [45.](#) For more on the women’s liberation movement in this period, see Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 444-448.
- [46.](#) Untitled document about the West German women’s movement, in the editors’ possession, 1980s.
- [47.](#) Wikipedia [website], “International Tribunal on Crimes against Women.”
- [48.](#) This was roughly equivalent to the “Take Back the Night” phenomenon in North America, which was itself another result of the Brussels conference.
- [49.](#) Georgy Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (Oakland: AK Press, 2006), 75-79.
- [50.](#) Rote Zora, “Unsere Anfänge als autonome Frauengruppe.”
- [51.](#) Katsiaficas, 77.
- [52.](#) Ibid., 78-79.
- [53.](#) Rote Zora, “Unsere Anfänge als autonome Frauengruppe.”
- [54.](#) Alexandra Michel, *Frauen, die kämpfen, sind Frauen, die leben* (Zurich: self-published, 1988), 78.
- [55.](#) According to some observers, here too the experiences of ‘77 were central. Wolfgang Kraushaar, for instance, has argued that “it appears to be anything but a coincidence that simultaneous with the unquestionable disaster of 1977, the radical left began a process of transformation that resulted in increased parliamentary power for the Green Party.” (Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus* [Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006], 26).

Kick at the Darkness

FIGHTERS IN THE FIELD MAY withdraw; things are more complicated for captured combatants. In Western Europe's high-security isolation cells, the RAF prisoners continued to be targeted for destruction.

After a short time in the hospital following the attempt on her life, Irmgard Möller was back in Stammheim. Even before the harrowing events of 1977, she had been diagnosed with serious emotional, intellectual, and nervous disorders, described by court-appointed doctors as the classic symptoms of sensory deprivation.¹ Rather than heed recommendations that she be released from isolation, the prison authorities now had the door to her cell replaced with bars, and stationed a guard outside so that she could be kept under constant observation. She was forced to undress completely several times a day. Newspapers she received were censored, with anything even remotely related to the German Autumn cut out. Any visits she received took place through a glass partition.²

In a fight for her life, Möller went on hunger strike, demanding association with Verena Becker.

Similarly, on February 1, 1978, Knut Folkerts, Gert Schneider, and Christof Wackernagel, who were in prison in Holland, went on hunger strike demanding an end to isolation and the visitor ban, free access to reading materials, and safe passage to a country of their choosing. The three received support from the Dutch lawyer Pieter Bakker Schut, who had been an important figure in the IVK and other prisoner support efforts

since 1974,³ as well as from the *Rood Verzetsfront*—the RVF, or Red Resistance Front—a Dutch Marxist-Leninist group that despite remaining aboveground shared much of the RAF’s politics. (The RVF’s ranks had recently been replenished by a new generation of activists, many of whom had been radicalized by the events of 1977 and the continental search for Schleyer’s kidnappers.)⁴ Meanwhile, an autonomous group in Belgium occupied the Dutch embassy in that country to break through the media’s silence and support the prisoners’ demands. While this first prisoners’ strike, and the support it received, succeeded in winning some modest improvements, when a second strike was begun in October 1978, the Dutch state secretary of justice moved to quickly have the three extradited to the FRG.⁵

In mid-March 1978, the RAF prisoners began their sixth collective hunger strike, demanding that they receive treatment in accord with the Geneva Convention, association, an end to the psychological warfare against the guerilla, and the release of information regarding the Stammheim deaths. As communication was extremely difficult, not everybody began on the same date, the first starting on March 10, followed by others as the word spread.

Dozens of prisoners in the FRG would participate in the strike, including some from the aboveground left and Andreas Vogel and Till Meyer of the 2JM’s anti-imperialist wing.⁶ Still, there was an effective media blackout and their action failed to achieve any substantial support. They called it off on April 20, though over the next months there would be a number of individual strikes, as the prisoners continued to attempt to resist—or at least draw attention to—the conditions of their incarceration.⁷

Meanwhile, some prisoners’ situations actually deteriorated, with the cases of Gabriele Rollnik,⁸ Werner Hoppe, and Karl-Heinz Dellwo causing particular alarm.

With the exception of one month in Stammheim alongside other RAF prisoners,⁹ Hoppe had spent the entire seven years since his arrest in isolation. By June 1978, he could not eat without vomiting, suffered from intestinal bleeding, had pain in his right shoulder, and could barely walk; he was finally transferred to Hamburg's Altona General Hospital in September. There, Professor Wilfried Rasch, director of the Institute for Forensic Psychiatry in Berlin, concluded that a return to prison, even under normal conditions, would endanger Hoppe's life, as would detention in a prison hospital. Even if released, full recovery was deemed unlikely.¹⁰

As for Dellwo, he would later describe his situation at Cologne-Ossendorf as follows:

Between October 1977 and December 1978 I was also one of the prisoners who were mistreated in all sorts of ways as a revenge for the attacks of the guerilla: for months a guard was sitting in front of my cell, looking through the peep-hole every three minutes and writing down what I was doing. Occasionally they would bang at the door or shout insults or scornful remarks at me. For one year the light stayed on also throughout the night and if I made any attempt at darkening it the guards bursted (sic) in and usually carried me off to the "bunker" again. One little sign from the yard towards any other window was enough for the hour outside to be broken off by force.

Whatever could be removed from my cell they took away. My cell was ransacked every day, everything turned upside down, papers mixed up, messed up with food or just trampled down. There were days on which I was forced to undress completely and change all my clothes 10 times, each time I left my cell or returned to it.¹¹



Left to right: Gabriele Rollnik, Werner Hoppe, and Karl-Heinz Dellwo: three of the many prisoners from the guerilla who were being subjected to torturous conditions

at this time.

In order to try and secure his transfer to another prison and integration into general population, Dellwo commenced a hunger and thirst strike on September 21, 1978.¹²

The crisis around Dellwo and Hoppe's condition is what pushed some comrades to engage in the most militant aboveground prisoner-support action in years.

On November 6, 1978, eleven masked individuals forced their way into the offices of the *deutsche presse-agentur* (dpa) news agency in Frankfurt. Cutting the telephone wires and tying up the staff, the "Willy Peter Stoll and Michael Knoll Commando" intended to send out a statement about Dellwo and Hoppe on the dpa's newswire. It might have worked, except that an editor managed to trigger a panic button, setting off the alarm at a nearby police station. The cops quickly descended on the premises, arresting the eleven—who despite carrying out the occupation as a "commando" had only been armed with clubs.¹³

As the occupiers explained in a subsequent interview:

*We named our action after Willy Peter Stoll and Michael Knoll. For us, these two names exemplify the nature of the overall situation in which we acted. Some of us knew the two personally, but independent of that, the fact that the pigs could insidiously and openly liquidate them, with the left's reaction ranging from bewilderment to disinterest or completely cynical indifference, while the media celebrated these murders with bloodthirsty outbursts—that was a slap in the face for us. The murders of Willy and Michael expose our lack of resolve in the face of a development that is deadly in nature and turns resistance into an existential issue. The dpa occupation was a step toward breaking through this, nothing more, nothing less.*¹⁴

One of the occupiers was Wolfgang Beer, a former RAF member who had recently been released after spending four years in prison. (He was one of those who had been arrested on February 2, 1974; his younger brother

Henning had subsequently become a fixture in the support scene.) Simone Borgstedde and Rosemarie Prieß were also among the occupiers: the two knew Dellwo and other RAF members from their days squatting in Hamburg in the early 1970s, and had more recently lived with Susanne Albrecht before she went under in 1977. Prieß had been arrested along with Volker Speitel in October 1977, charged with support for a terrorist organization, but had been released shortly thereafter. It would come out that the *Verfassungsschutz*—West Germany’s internal political spy agency, the “Guardians of the Constitution” (see sidebar on next page)—had been bugging the two women’s flat since October, raising questions about how much it had known about the occupation beforehand.¹⁵

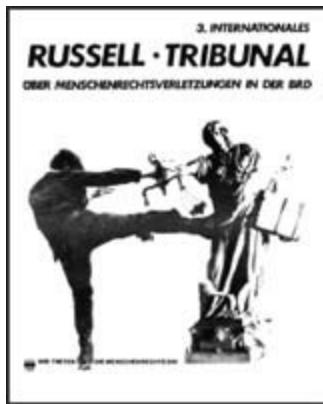
The eleven would be charged with—and convicted of—supporting a terrorist organization, each receiving a one-year prison sentence under §129a. For some, this was not their first such prison sentence, for others, it would not be their last.¹⁶

One month later, over the objections of all three major political parties, the Altona General Hospital had Hoppe transferred to a semi-open unit, in order to provide him with more intensive care.¹⁷ Despite the “antiterrorist” grandstanding being indulged in by the politicians, the medical evidence was incontrovertible, with one doctor after another finding that Hoppe was not fit for incarceration. Bloodthirst notwithstanding, the state had nothing to gain from having a prisoner die like this, especially once the risk had been so clearly established in the public record. So it was, that on February 8, 1979, the decision was made to release him on grounds of ill health.¹⁸

The dpa occupation represented an attempt by RAF supporters to get back on their feet, part of the process of recovering from the defeat of ‘77 and the political isolation that had ensued. However, the militant nature of the action (not to mention the fact that nothing actually got sent out over the newswire), meant that its appeal was limited to those already

sympathetic to the prisoners' struggle.

In terms of broader outreach, a more important exercise came in the second phase of the Third International Russell Tribunal on Civil Liberties in West Germany. The first such Tribunal had been held in 1967, as a public body examining and ultimately condemning U.S. war crimes in Indochina. This was followed by a Second Russell Tribunal, investigating political repression in Latin America, provoked in large part by the 1973 Pinochet coup in Chile. The idea of holding a Third Tribunal, on human rights in the FRG, had first been broached at an Anti-Repression Conference held in Frankfurt following Meinhof's death in 1976. With encouragement from Klaus Croissant, different committees were formed in the FRG and abroad to bring the Russell Tribunal to the Federal Republic; its initial hearings would be held in Frankfurt in March 1978.



The decision to hold such a Third Tribunal, now focusing on the internal affairs of a West European country, was a scandal in the eyes of conservative critics, who complained that conditions in the GDR were not going to be similarly examined. As such, the Tribunal's first session, on the *Berufsverbot*—the law that banned “subversives” from employment in the public sector¹⁹—received a great deal of publicity, much of it negative.²⁰ Right-wing politicians derided the exercise as the “slaughtering of a democracy,”²¹ while several intellectuals close to the SPD organized a “Congress for the Defense of the Republic,” held in Hannover in April

1978, to counter its findings.²²

The *Verfassungsschutz*

Founded in 1950, the *Verfassungsschutz* is West Germany's internal political intelligence service. There is a federal *Verfassungsschutz* and eleven *Länder Verfassungsschutzen*, all of which are charged with collecting information about "enemies of the Constitution" and political extremism, considered security threats regardless of whether or not criminal activity is involved.

In 1972, as a reaction to the appearance of the RAF on the political scene, the SPD passed legislation expanding the powers of the *Verfassungsschutz*, legalizing the use of "undercover informants, clandestine observation, electronic listening devices, hidden video cameras, false documentation, and automobile registration."¹ (Wiretaps and mail interception were previously unconstitutional.) At the same time, the office's purview was expanded to include both foreign espionage (especially that conducted by the GDR), as well as "foreign residents whose activities endanger or harm the Federal Republic's external interests or security."² Nevertheless, in theory, the *Verfassungsschutz* are "not permitted to stop, question, search, detain, arrest, or interrogate suspects, nor to search private residences, nor to seize personal materials."³ Nor is the *Verfassungsschutz* supposed to be able to take any direct action, other than alerting police, against criminal activity. Unlike political police forces such as the FBI, the *Verfassungsschutz* is not empowered to make arrests. This has repeatedly led to murky situations in which undercover *Verfassungsschutz* agents and informants were present during, and participated in, criminal activities.

At the same time, the agency is not obliged to divulge information to

either the courts or the police if this would reveal either its sources or methods of collecting information.

(For more on the *Verfassungsschutz*, see Appendix I: Conclusions of the Third Russell Tribunal, pages 324–325, 327.)

¹ Michaela W. Richter, *German Issues 20: The Verfassungsschutz* (Washington DC: American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1998), 20.

² Ibid., 23.

³ Ibid., 18.

For the much smaller number of people who made up the radical left, however, the problem was not that the Tribunal was focusing on West Germany, but that it was prioritizing the issue of the “career ban” over more life-and-death concerns. RAF supporters had been active in organizing the Tribunal from the very start, and yet their standing in the exercise had suffered in the course of the state’s crackdown, especially in ‘77. Police would single out anti-imperialists working on the Tribunal, and as they were thereby tied up dealing with their legal situation more liberal forces were able to gain the upper hand. As one anti-imperialist recalls, over forty years later:

In the end it was impossible to resist the attacks both internal from within the ranks of the Russell Tribunal and external by state forces. Our work in 1977 was smashed in the best meaning of the word. My home in Düsseldorf (like others in other cities) was raided four times by the cops and they confiscated boxes upon boxes of work materials about the prison conditions of political prisoners. I was not arrested for more than two days during those events, but it was not before the end of 1978 that all those materials were given back to me “without comment.” It was quite clear that they just wanted to make it impossible for us to do our work and make the prisoners an important part of the Tribunal.²³

This troublesome situation was made all the more galling as the Tribunal’s

first hearings occurred in the midst of the RAF prisoners' sixth hunger strike, and ended just a week before the Drenkmann-Lorenz trial was scheduled to begin in West Berlin. Rumors were spread in the right-wing press that RAF supporters might even disrupt the hearings—a transparent attempt to deepen the rifts that already existed between liberals and radicals. Nothing came of this, of course, but on the opening day of the *Berufsverbot* hearings thirty protesters did occupy a Lutheran church in Hamburg, decorating it inside and out with posters calling attention to the prisoners' conditions. Among their number was Sybille Haag, whose husband Siegfried was a RAF prisoner, and one of those on hunger strike at the time.²⁴

Such pressure, combined with criticism from sympathetic quarters, including the *Kommunistische Bund*, was successful, and eventually led to a second set of hearings being held in January 1979, in which the Tribunal refocused its attention on political censorship, prison conditions, and the power wielded by the *Verfassungsschutz* in the FRG.

This second set of Russell Tribunal hearings provided a space where those sympathetic to the RAF could work more productively in tandem with civil libertarians and human rights activists who still disagreed with the guerilla's politics, but nevertheless did not countenance the state's violence and repressive legislation.²⁵ Such cooperation with liberal human rights activists had always been an important part of supporting the prisoners, despite the inevitable frustrations and pitfalls involved. But the situation was made all the more difficult now that the prisoners' most trusted legal representatives—those best placed to navigate such waters—were themselves in prison, or facing charges, as a result of the crackdown. Klaus Croissant had been extradited from France on November 17, 1977, and was serving a thirty-month prison sentence for supporting a terrorist organization. Armin Newerla and Arndt Müller were similarly incarcerated as they awaited trial, accused of smuggling weapons into the

Stammheim prisoners—an accusation based solely on the testimony of Volker Speitel and Hans-Joachim Dellwo, who had been flipped by the police. For his part, Kurt Groenewold was facing charges that would result in his receiving a two-year suspended sentence later in 1979, condemned for having facilitated communication between the prisoners via the “Info System” between 1973 and ‘76.²⁶ Indeed, by the end of ‘77, these attacks had effectively put an end to the work of the IVK—the prisoners’ support committee founded in 1975 by lawyers from across Europe—in the FRG.

Nonetheless, by the time the Russell Tribunal finished its deliberations, it had condemned the FRG on all counts.

So it was, that much of the public attention paid to prison conditions was thanks to liberal watchdog organizations that certainly shared none of the RAF’s politics, for even a narrow civil liberties perspective provided ample scope to identify illiberal excesses in the FRG’s war against the guerilla, especially in its dreaded high-security wings.

Another example of this occurred in February 1979, as Amnesty International sent a *Memorandum on Prison Conditions of Persons Suspected or Convicted of Politically Motivated Crimes in the FRG* to the minister of justice, Hans-Jochen Vogel. Here the international human rights organization reiterated the findings of previous inquiries:

pathological disturbances representing a separation syndrome were apparent in many cases of prisoners detained in solitary confinement and small-group isolation. In some, intellectual and emotional disturbances and disturbances of the autonomic nervous system were so pronounced as to be reminiscent of the effects produced by sensory deprivation in experiments.

*Amnesty International concluded further that these effects of isolation militate against reform and rehabilitation, contrary to accepted international norms of imprisonment, and that ways must and can be found to accommodate security needs with humane treatment, avoiding the severe forms of isolation inherent in the prison conditions described in the memorandum.*²⁷

Like the findings of the Russell Tribunal, such a declaration represented a potential step forward for the prisoners. Normally, a larger sympathetic base could have amplified these advances, but in the context of the day any political gain was largely muted. Thus, as Amnesty International noted, things remained grim for those behind bars—and for all their polite protests, the “human rights community” was unable to win anything but replies which, in AI’s own estimation, failed to address the substance of their concerns.²⁸

In the final analysis, the prisoners were left to rely on one another and their own collective identity in the battle against isolation torture.

On April 20, 1979—exactly one year after the preceding hunger strike had been called off—more than seventy prisoners took part in the RAF prisoners’ seventh collective hunger strike, demanding an end to isolation and the release of Günter Sonnenberg, who despite his near-fatal injuries had been condemned to two life sentences in 1978. The anti-imperialist content of the strike was symbolized by the demand to be treated as prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention; this was meant to affirm the connection between armed struggle in the metropole and the anticolonial revolutions in the Third World.

The prisoners also demanded an inquiry into prison conditions to be carried out by an international body. While the Russell Tribunal and Amnesty International’s declarations against prison conditions had been welcome, this was in fact a demand directed at the remnants of several previous initiatives with more clearly anti-imperialist politics: not only the IVK, but also the International Investigatory Commission into the Death of Ulrike Meinhof, the various Committees Against Torture, and the FRG Relatives Committee. The networks of people who had been involved in these groups remained active, and were in fact consolidating their work in this period; in June, as the strike was in its second month, they would officially come together as the *Internationale Kommission zum Schutz der*

Gefangen und gegen die Isolationshaft, or International Commission for the Protection of Prisoners and Against Isolation Torture.

On June 15, Amnesty International contacted the Baden-Württemberg and federal authorities about reports that the hunger strike had reached a critical stage for a number of prisoners. It was particularly concerned about Irmgard Möller, who was still being held at Stammheim, where she and Bernhard Braun had been brought up on new charges relating to the 1972 May Offensive.²⁹ Without supporting the politics of the RAF, the international human rights organization once again called upon the state to stop inflicting solitary confinement and small-group isolation on the political prisoners.³⁰

Actually, the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Justice seemed to be escalating matters, for it was now reported that Möller would not be force-fed until she fell into a coma. Supporters understood this to mean that the state was preparing for her to starve to death. In reaction to this, on June 20, women prisoners in West Berlin escalated to a thirst strike. The RAF's Monika Berberich, along with Angelika Goder, Gabriele Rollnik, and Gudrun Stürmer of the 2JM, called for Möller to be immediately granted association, while also supporting all of the strike's other demands. As they explained in a statement released by Rollnik's attorney Ulrich Bergmann, "Escalating to a thirst strike is the only option we have to resist this attempted murder."³¹

All the pieces appeared to be falling into place for yet more tragedy. The prisoners were struggling to improve their conditions and to advance their politics, but not to create martyrs. With the deaths of one or more of their number seeming increasingly likely, the decision was made to call off the hunger strike on June 26.

Unexpectedly, just before the prisoners' recommenced eating, the guerilla chose to enter the mix.

GUERILLA WOES

Following the release of Boock, Hofmann, Mohnhaupt, and Wagner in Yugoslavia, the RAF had regrouped in South Yemen, where those who had remained at large were asked why there had been no actions carried out to free prisoners. It is said to have been a time of heavy discussions and some soul-searching, as more than one guerilla came in for criticism.

It was in February 1979 that several combatants returned to Europe. In March, a bank in Darmstadt was relieved of an estimated 49,000 DM—when a customer intervened and grabbed one of the robbers, another guerilla shot him in the leg. The next month in Nuremberg the haul was much larger: 211,000 DM.³²

The war chest was being replenished, but at the same time, the state continued its pursuit.



Elisabeth von Dyck

On May 4, two weeks into the prisoners' seventh hunger strike, Elisabeth von Dyck was identified approaching a safehouse in Nuremberg; she was cut down by police bullets, dying on the spot. Although police claimed she

had been turning to fire, her parents noted in a public statement that the house had been under surveillance for some time, but no plans had been made for anything but a firefight, and their daughter had been shot in the back.³³ Within the guerilla, the police story was considered impossible, von Dyck being known for her refusal to carry a weapon.³⁴



Von Dyck's funeral; "They can kill a revolutionary, but not the revolution."

Like most RAF members, von Dyck had been politicized through the APO. She had been close to the Socialist Patients Collective (SPK), the radical antipsychiatry group that furnished a number of the guerilla's early recruits, and had subsequently done support work for Carmen Roll, a RAF prisoner. She later served as a legal assistant to Klaus Croissant. In early 1975, she was briefly detained in Zurich for allegedly attempting to acquire guns. In November 1976, she was again briefly arrested and detained, this time with attorney Siegfried Haag. As a consequence, both she and Haag had decided to go underground.³⁵

One month after von Dyck's shooting, on June 9, Rolf Heißler was captured after he miraculously survived being shot in the head as he entered a safehouse in Frankfurt.³⁶ One hand had been holding a briefcase, the other had been on the door handle: his weapon had been in its holster, inside his pants.³⁷ Besides lethal intent, Heißler's capture represented a

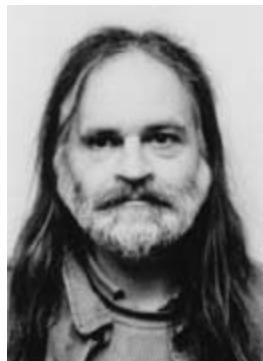
new level of sophistication on the part of the BKA, which had located the apartment through the use of computerized data mining and cross-referencing. As an engineering magazine explains:

Much was already known about the terrorists. “The police knew that they rented apartments to conduct their crimes,” recalls Hansjürgen Garstka, the State of Berlin’s commissioner for data protection and freedom of information. “But they used them only a couple days before the event. Also, the police knew these people paid their electricity and rent only in cash.” The terrorists preferred high-rise apartments with underground garages and direct access to the highway, and they were primarily young and German.

Profile in hand, the police contacted electricity companies, to find out which apartments used no or little electricity, and apartment complexes, to find out which people paid in cash; they also combed through household registrations (German citizens are required to register with the state). “The results were all merged, and in the end, they found one flat which fit absolutely absolutely this profile,” Garstka says. Police put the apartment under surveillance and soon nabbed RAF member Rolf Heißler.³⁸

Heißler spent a few weeks in the hospital, where he was told how unfortunate it was that he had survived. He was then placed in complete isolation, often going days without hearing a single word spoken. Due to his injuries, he lost most of his sight in one eye.³⁹

The murder of von Dyck and attempted murder of Heißler took two more fighters off the street, but it was not enough to scuttle the guerilla's plans.



Rolf Heißler

On Monday, June 25, 1979—one day before the prisoners called off their hunger strike—the RAF carried out its first attack since 1977. On that morning, in Belgium, the Andreas Baader Commando attempted to assassinate General Alexander Haig. Former White House Chief of Staff under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, Haig had served as Supreme Allied Commander—head of NATO and U.S. forces—in Europe since 1974. The RAF attack took place only a few days before he was scheduled to step down.

The Andreas Baader Commando buried a load of plastic explosives by the road that Haig normally took to work. As his car passed by, the charge was manually detonated; however, something had gone awry, for the general sped off, and it was soon apparent that he had escaped uninjured. The commando would later explain: “Our error was in thinking that we could manually trigger the explosion precisely enough with the target moving that quickly.”⁴⁰ However, police investigators would claim that the real problem was that not enough dynamite had been used.⁴¹

As is not uncommon in the world of guerilla actions and state psychological operations, initially there were conflicting stories floated about the attack’s authors. Some news agencies reported that an unknown “Julian Lahaut Commando”—named after a Belgian Communist politician assassinated in 1950—had claimed responsibility.⁴² British sources blamed the IRA, which at the time was also carrying out attacks in Belgium, and using similar munitions to boot.⁴³ Within the FRG, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND; West Germany’s foreign spy agency) and the *Verfassungsschutz* considered it a RAF action, while the BKA disagreed, pointing to the discrepancies between the technical details described in the communiqué and evidence of how the attack was actually carried out.⁴⁴ Even the CIA, according to one account, when contacted by Haig soon

after and asked to find out who wanted him dead, came back with a somewhat bizarre theory, the director of central intelligence opining that the four-star general had been the target of “Belgian nihilists.”⁴⁵

Soon enough, however, it became clear that this was indeed the first RAF attack since ‘77. Even more noteworthy—and perhaps contributing to the initial uncertainty about its authors—was the fact that this action was not aimed at securing freedom for the prisoners, but rather sought to deliver a blow against NATO. Haig was not responsible for the prisoners’ conditions, but was being targeted for his position in imperialism’s war machine. The attack came in the midst of a hunger strike where prisoners’ lives were at stake, several having escalated to refusing liquids, and yet the RAF’s communiqué did not once mention their comrades behind bars or their conditions. This was a first.

In retrospect, ideological factors can be discerned in this change of tack—especially in the exhortation to “Build the anti-imperialist front in the metropole!”—but the significance of this would only become clear in the years to come. For the time being, it was enough that the RAF was back. Just carrying out an attack after ‘77 was a major achievement, even though in military terms it was a failure, with Haig escaping unscathed.

However, this failure would soon be compounded.

A SETBACK IN SWITZERLAND

After the Haig action, the RAF was broke. The money from Darmstadt and Nuremberg had been used up renting safehouses in Brussels and Paris, as well as on food, clothing, and travel. It was decided to acquire more funds in Switzerland, with the hope that police would be caught unawares, as the RAF had never been active there in the past. At first, there were some discussions about kidnapping a Swiss businessman, however the group still did not have the capacity for such an operation.⁴⁶ Instead, the decision was made to hit a bank.

The RAF had been robbing banks since its earliest days, initially alongside the 2JM, but thereafter on its own. This was considered a relatively low-risk way of acquiring necessary funds: as Monika Berberich later explained, “It was not about redistributing wealth, it was about getting money, and we weren’t going to mug grannies in the streets.”⁴⁷ Or as the RAF had put it to supporters in its 1972 document *Serve the People*:

*For revolutionary organizations, it mainly represents the solution to their financial problems. It makes logical sense, because there is no other solution to the financial problem. It makes political sense, because it is an expropriation action. It makes tactical sense, because it is a proletarian action. It makes strategic sense, because it finances the guerilla.*⁴⁸

This was made all the more palatable by the fact that no civilian had ever been killed in an expropriation by the West German guerilla. The 2JM had decided early on that they would try to scare bank employees into cooperating, and would potentially be open to roughing up the bank managers, but that they would not shoot people for money. On one occasion they even called off a robbery when they saw a pregnant woman enter the premises, as they feared their smoke grenade might damage her unborn child.⁴⁹ In fact, in nine years of struggle, the only person to have ever been killed during a guerilla expropriation was police officer Herbert

Schoner, who was shot dead after stumbling upon the RAF robbing a bank in Kaiserslautern in 1971.⁵⁰

This long run of good luck came to an end on November 19, 1979.

On that day, four guerillas robbed the Swiss People's Bank in Zurich. After stuffing 548,000 Swiss Francs (roughly \$237,000) into shopping bags, they walked out into the crowded street, hopped on bicycles, and sped off to the nearby central train station.

Right away, there was an unexpected complication, as a bank employee decided to play hero. Flagging down a car, he explained the situation and convinced the driver to take off in pursuit, apparently intending to snatch the money back. Somewhat comically, they were almost upon the guerillas, when a traffic light turned red and the car's driver screeched to a halt; he needed to be cajoled to roll slowly through the intersection, and insisted on leaning on the horn all the while. A guerilla heard the noise, and at that point realized someone was following: he turned around and shot at the car, not hitting anyone, but shattering the windshield, and thus putting an end to the pursuit.⁵¹

The guerillas reached their destination, but things continued to go wrong when they were spotted by a cop. The result being that a firefight broke out in the train station's underground Shopville mall, during which a bullet ricocheted and struck a bystander in the neck—Edith Kletzhändler, described in all accounts as a housewife, would die almost instantly. Two policemen were also wounded, and a second woman was shot as three guerillas forced her out of her car, which they promptly used to make their getaway.⁵²

Rolf Clemens Wagner was the only RAF member to be captured—he was found sitting on a bench not far from the mall where Kletzhändler lay dying. He offered no further resistance, and besides his weapon, police found he was carrying most of the money from the robbery.⁵³ He stood

trial in Switzerland, charged with murder, five counts of attempted murder, bank robbery, and one count of threatening someone's life. In September 1980 he was found guilty of attempted murder and robbery.⁵⁴ He was then extradited to the FRG in 1982, where he stood accused of involvement in Schleyer's killing.

The Shopville shoot-out was more than just a snafu. For the first time, a civilian had been killed during an expropriation, and this can only have exacerbated the thoughts that some were already entertaining, that perhaps the armed path had played itself out.⁵⁵

It all marked an inauspicious end to the decade.



Shopville mall, Zurich, after the fatal firefight.

Christian Klar Regarding Zurich

The starting point for the problem was that not enough thought had been given to our exit from the bank, so all it took was one unexpected development to create a situation where citizens felt encouraged to act on the bank's behalf. Such people also eventually mobilized the police in pursuit of the RAF group.

Up to that point, nobody had been injured. However, two police officers started shootouts in two different places in the context of which a woman passerby was shot dead and a second woman was seriously injured. However, contrary to the indictment, at no point during its escape did the RAF group intentionally shoot at civilians, not even at either of the women!

It cannot be established by the physical evidence whether the death of the woman passerby or the injuring of the woman who owned the car were caused by police bullets or bullets from the RAF group's guns. On the basis of the particular later reconstructions, there are only probabilities inferred from where people were standing and the directions of the shots. However, that does not make responsibility unclear. That lies with our action itself—particularly with the fact that when the skirmish with the police could no longer be avoided, weapons were used with a lack of caution, as well as to some degree with a grave recklessness that is unacceptable in such an environment. It is part of one's basic responsibility when using a weapon can no longer be avoided, that it must be done in way that does not endanger any nonparticipants.

These are essential revolutionary left principles—and both as individuals and as an organization we must consistently abide by them, and implementing them must be part of the (self-)education of left-wing

armed struggle organizations.

An excerpt from a 1992 trial statement: Christian Klar, “Die Situation der Gefangenen ist wie gehabt,” *Angehörigen Info*, September 10, 1992. This document has been translated in its entirety and is available online at <http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/documents/92-09-klar.html>.

1. Amnesty International, *Amnesty International's Work on Prison Conditions of Persons Suspected or Convicted of Politically Motivated Crimes in the Federal Republic of Germany: Isolation and Solitary Confinement* (London: Amnesty International, 1980), 17.
2. “Portrait of Irmgard Möller, Imprisoned for 21 Years,” in Committee ‘Solidarity with the political prisoners in Germany’ (ed.) *Time Is No Inexhaustible Resource* (Berlin: Committee ‘Solidarity with the political prisoners in Germany,’ nd), 10.
3. Jacco Pekelder, “The RAF Solidarity Movement from a European Perspective,” in Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder, and Joachim Scharloth (eds.), *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960-1980* (New York, Oxford: Bergahn Books, 2012), 258, 260.
4. Beatrice de Graaf (ed.), *Rode Jeugd in the Netherlands* (Leiden: 2009), 32-33.
5. Pekelder, 260.
6. RAF Prisoners, *Hungerstreikerkklärung*, Hamburg, March 14, 1978.
7. There were dozens of individual and small-group hunger strikes, most of which are not detailed in this study. For instance, between 1978 and 1985, Karl-Heinz Dellwo went on hunger strike twelve times, spending a total of fourteen and a half months combined on strike.
8. As detailed in [chapter 2](#), following her capture in Bulgaria, Rollnik had been placed in isolation in Cologne. See page 67-68.
9. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 474.
10. Amnesty International (1980), 18.
11. Gerd Klusmeyer, “23 Years of Solitary Confinement and Special Custodial Measures Against Political Prisoners in Germany,” in Committee ‘Solidarity with the political

prisoners in Germany,’ 6-7.

12. “Interview mit den Gefangenen dpa-Besetzern im Winter 1978/79,” in Jean-Paul Marat, *Widerstand heißt Angriff!: Erklärungen, Redebeiträge, Flugblätter und Briefe, 1977-1987* (Amsterdam: Bibliotheek voor Ontspanning en Ontwikkeling, 1988), 35.
13. Associated Press, “11 Seized after Raid on Frankfurt Agency,” *European Stars and Stripes*, November 10, 1978; *Spiegel*, “Eigene Schlosser,” January 22, 1979; dpa, “Zwölf RAF-Anhänger überfielen dpa-Büro,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, November 7, 1978.
14. “Interview mit den Gefangenen dpa-Besetzern im Winter 1978/79” in Marat, 39.
15. *Spiegel*, “Eigene Schlösser.” Wunschik (1997), 208-210, 225-226.
16. In the years to come, Helga Roos, for instance, would serve years in prison due to bogus charges of being an “aboveground member” of the RAF, Peter Alexa would be arrested on a similar charge, while Ingrid Jacobsmeier would in fact join the RAF, and would be captured in 1984.
17. rup, “Der Fall Hoppe wird das Parlament beschäftigen” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, December 1, 1978.
18. Associated Press, “German Terrorist to Get Health Leave,” *European Stars and Stripes*, February 15, 1979.
19. See Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 116-117.
20. Hugh Mosley, “Third International Russell Tribunal on Civil Liberties in West Germany,” *New German Critique* 14 (Spring 1978): 181-182.
21. dpa, “Judos halten am Russell-Tribunal fest,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, January 16, 1978.
22. dpa, “Gegen-Kongreß zum Russell-Tribunal geplant,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, March 29, 1978. Some of those involved in this counter-conference included Max Frisch, Jan Amery, Eugen Kogon, Günter Grass, and Carola Stern.
23. Personal communication, May 25, 2012.
24. asd, “Besetzte Kirche mit Plakaten beklebt,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, March 30, 1978.
25. For instance, Helmut Pohl’s wife Gisela Pohl, alleged RAF supporters Dag Maaske, Karin Avdic, and Andrea Klump, and future RAF members Werner Lotze, Christine Dümlein, and Birgit Hogefeld all carried out work related to the Tribunal (Wunschik [1997], 381).
26. Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 1980* (London: Amnesty

International Publications, 1980), 273-274. For more on the Info System, see Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 344, 347.

27. Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 1979* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1979), 131.

28. Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 1980*, 275.

29. To quote *Time Is No Inexhaustible Resource*: “Absolutely everything about and around this trial was illegal: although her wounds had not yet even properly healed she was dragged to the court bunker in Stammheim with force. It was impossible for her to partake in the proceedings: her complete records were at the federal office for months. Since she was secluded from all political informations [sic] and needed all her strength to resist the daily terror in the prison of Stammheim she could not prepare herself for trial.” Tried on the basis of statements made by Gerhard Müller, who had broken from the RAF during the 1974-1975 hunger strike, she would receive a sentence of life plus fifteen years. (Committee ‘Solidarity with the political prisoners in Germany,’ 11)

30. Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 1980*, 275.

31. Pressemitteilung, Berlin, 20.6.79.

32. Wunschik (1997), 304-309, 311.

33. *Gemeinsame Erklärung anlässlich des Todes von Elisabeth von Dyck*, May 8, 1979.

34. Hans Wolfgang Sternsdorff, “Im Schützengraben für die falsche Sache,” *Spiegel*, February 23, 1981. Wunschik (1997), 375.

35. *Spiegel*, “Mord beginnt beim bösen Wort,” November 7, 1977; Wunschik (1997), 232; Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 337.

36. Associated Press, “Nab Murder Suspect in Frankfurt,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, June 12, 1979.

37. Rolf Heißler, “Report by Rolf Heissler, Prisoner from the RAF, in Prison for 14 Years,” in Committee ‘Solidarity with the political prisoners in Germany,’ 14.

38. J. Kumagai, “The German Solution,” *IEEE Spectrum*, April 11, 2003.

39. Heißler, 14.

40. See page 116.

41. Wunschik (1997), 315.

42. René Haquin and Pierre Stéphany, *Les grands dossiers criminels en Belgique* (Brussels: Editions Racine, 2005), 266.

- [43.](#) *Spiegel*, “Dublin Connection,” August 20, 1979.
- [44.](#) *Die Zeit*, “Anschlag in Ramstein,” September 11, 1981. The discrepancies in question regard the quantity of explosives used and the RAF communiqué’s reference to a tunnel. In actual fact, investigators believed only ten, not twenty, kilograms had been used, and that there was no tunnel, just a hole dug by the side of the road. In his 1991 obituary, Christian Lochte of the Hamburg *Verfassungsschutz* would be credited with having been one of the first to argue that the attack had indeed been carried out by the RAF. (*Hamburger Abendblatt*, “Ein hartnäckiger Querdenker,” September 4, 1991.)
- [45.](#) Tim Naftali, *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 117.
- [46.](#) Peters, 500-501.
- [47.](#) Ben Lewis and Richard Klein, *Baader Meinhof: In Love with Terror* (United Kingdom: A Menthorn Production for BBC Four, 2002).
- [48.](#) RAF, “Serve the People: Class Struggle and the Guerilla,” in Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 157.
- [49.](#) Reinders and Fritzsch, 23-24.
- [50.](#) Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 112.
- [51.](#) Peters, 502-503.
- [52.](#) Ibid., 503-504.
- [53.](#) Reuters, “Charges Being Prepared against Schleyer Suspect,” *The Lethbridge Herald*, November 20, 1979.
- [54.](#) dpa, “Lebenslang—die Mutter war dabei,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, September 27, 1980.
- [55.](#) See for instance, Wunschik (1997), 325.

Sixth Hunger Strike

Today, we began a hunger strike.

Following the execution of Andreas, Gudrun, Jan and Ingrid—following the death of eight prisoners from the RAF in the past three years—following the Stuttgart parliamentary investigative committee’s official cover-up of the murder of the hostages, the final scene in the intelligence service operation has unfolded, occurring at the same time as the idea was being floated that now that the leading prisoners from the RAF had been liquidated, those remaining should be dispatched as well—following all of the hunger and thirst strikes of recent years, and the torture that accompanied them: we are beginning this strike both conscious of and enraged by the fact that we have only this wretched means at our disposal, and we are doing so in the face of the boundless desire for destruction that the imperialist strategists are mobilizing against us as prisoners in their war against the armed resistance.

Our isolation from each other and from the outside world violates the promise made by the federal government a year ago.¹ In spite of the internal promises of “improvements” in recent months, nothing has changed. We continue to find ourselves trapped inside an all-encompassing machine, one that assails us on several levels, cutting us off from the conditions necessary to ensure our ongoing humanity. The murders of Andreas, Gudrun, Jan, and Ingrid constitute a turning point, after which everything we have gained in the way of minimum living conditions is to be wiped away.

Given that the federal government, state security, and their justice and prison systems have made the extermination of the prisoners into an example of their readiness to commit any crime, with the contemptuous hope of smothering the revolutionary process in the metropole, we will act

to make it clear that our status as hostages is an example of imperialist politics. They will once again learn that people will not let themselves be liquidated like dogs, and that there exists a type of strength that their machine cannot contain.

We demand:

- That the FRG respect human rights and apply the minimum guarantees for prisoners of war, as established in the Geneva Convention.

That means:

- association for the prisoners of the RAF and the other anti-imperialist organizations in groups suitable for healthy interaction. We are only demanding what medical experts have been demanding for years, what Amnesty International has campaigned for, and what this state already agreed to during our April '77 hunger strike.

Beyond that, we demand:

- that all of Andreas, Gudrun, Jan, Ingrid, and Irmgard's confiscated writings be published—especially Gudrun's letter to which the prison chaplain refers;²
- that all facts and all material regarding October 18, 1977, be made available to an independent investigative committee.

We will not break off this strike until conditions suitable for life have been established—guaranteed by an appropriate international organization.

Hamburg Remand
for the prisoners from the RAF
March 14, 1978

¹ On April 30, 1977, RAF prisoners called off their fourth collective hunger strike after

receiving assurances that they would be granted limited association. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 471.

² See [page 41](#).

Seventh Hunger Strike

We are on hunger strike against continuous and perfected isolation, part of the extermination strategy directed against the prisoners from the armed anti-imperialist groups. The clearest example of this strategy is the current project of the BAW, the BKA/State Security, and the *Länder* justice authorities to isolate us in special cells, a project drawing on eight years' experience using isolation. Soundproof cement bunkers with bullet-proof windows that cannot be opened; airtight doors and an air conditioner that produce pressure fluctuations; neon lights glaring all day long; a stainless steel sink, toilet, and mirror; furniture bolted to the cement floor. Many such isolation units exist, units that are under total surveillance and are hermetically sealed off from the rest of the institution. The prisoners held in these cells have no contact with one another. "Free movement" takes place in a wire-covered cement cage that is to all intents and purposes just another cell.

In Celle, Straubing, and Stammheim, the prisoners already suffer in this type of isolation bunker; in Berlin, Lübeck, Ossendorf, and many other prisons, similar units have been built or tested.

This machinery of destruction is being used because the state recognizes that the prisoners who were subjected to the previous isolation techniques had not been broken and that the murders of Ulrike, Andreas, Gudrun, Jan, and Ingrid and the attempted murder of Irmgard—made to look like suicides—were and are detrimental to the federal government's objective. This objective, the establishment of social democracy's "Model Germany" throughout Western Europe and beyond, is to be legitimized in the eyes of the people through the direct vote at the European Parliament—as, for example, was indicated during Kohl's recent appearances in Holland. (That doesn't preclude the federal government executing more prisoners should

guerilla actions raise the stakes.)

The prisoners who refuse to stop struggling and who reject the “re-socialization” deal, who neither renounce nor collaborate, are to be physically and psychologically destroyed in the new isolation bunkers; when they are released they are to be incapable of further resistance—“their condition should make it nearly impossible” for them “to play any active role for the foreseeable future” in the anti-imperialist struggle, as Senator for Justice Dahrendorf has cynically formulated the counterstrategy’s objective.

We demand:

- the abolition of isolation bunkers;
- the application of the minimum guarantees of the Geneva Convention and the International Declaration on Human Rights for all prisoners from anti-imperialist groups;
- association of these prisoners in groups large enough to allow interaction, as recommended by medical specialists;
- freedom for Günter Sonnenberg, whose head injury renders him unfit for prison;
- an inquiry into prison conditions by an international humanitarian body/organization.

In Ireland, Spain, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, and Israel prisoners are struggling against prison conditions meant to destroy their political identity and to physically break them—prison conditions that, for the most part, have been implemented in the FRG.

Our hunger strike is part of this struggle and an expression of our solidarity with all prisoners who even in prison are resisting.

The Berlin RAF prisoners

April 20, 1979

Attack on Alexander Haig

On June 25, 1979, the Andreas Baader Commando carried out a bomb attack on NATO Commander-in-Chief General Alexander Haig.

We want to explain how the action failed in its concrete objective, which was to directly hit Haig:

We dug a 1.8 meter trench under the road surface of a bridge on the route from Haig's home to the NATO Headquarters and buried the payload (20 kg of plastic explosives) approximately 40 cm below the surface. The fuse was a 200-meter electrical cable, to be triggered at the moment when the front door of Haig's Mercedes was directly above the payload. We had determined that his car traveled two meters per tenth of a second. Our error was in thinking that we could manually trigger the explosion precisely enough with the target moving that quickly.

We carried out this action, because Haig represents and executes in a particularly precise way the "new course" or "modified style" of the American strategy.

Since the political and military defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam all that has changed is that instead of U.S. aggression decreasing, it is increasing, confronting the people of the world with a new American offensive, which also marks a qualitative leap forward in the development of the relationship of forces between the revolution and the counterrevolution, or, as we have said elsewhere, the worldwide revolutionary process of the cities being encircled by the villages.

With the victories of the liberation struggles in Southeast Asia and Africa, the front line has moved closer to the center. It has fallen back to the metropole itself and is making the tactical and strategic retreat of U.S. imperialism—the so-called shift of the strategic core to Western Europe—

inevitable. What Haig calls the “modified style” requires that the Europroject managed by the FRG finally integrate the West European states into U.S. global strategy: “Europe can no longer afford the luxury of being a spectator on the sidelines.” What Haig means by that is Shaba, is Chad,¹ is the next expedition into the Gulf, is the direct military intervention by states subjugated to or bought off by North America in the “crisis zones,” all to defend the vital interests of the West.



The concrete steps in this policy of reinforcement—which Haig, as NATO Chief, has carried through with the FRG’s help, so as to be prepared for this “half war”² (which also means having the European states firmly under control, which was not the case in ‘73)—requires molding the FRG into the most aggressive U.S. base—atomic weapons deployment accompanied by a “steady increase in the number of American troops,” turning the entire country into one big barracks. Thus the FRG will address the “ambivalent and ambiguous situations arising on NATO’s flanks or in the peripheral areas, for instance in the Middle East and in Africa,” and act as an iron collar controlling neighboring countries. For Schmidt’s Social-Liberal government this means that the social democratic project of covert warfare—which, in its measures against the RAF, has already broken down—is exposed, and the government is recognized internationally as a party

of brazen warmongers.

This balancing act between the “Model Germany” sales pitch and the reality of the Federal Republic, which led to Brandt’s downfall in ‘73, is now Schmidt’s biggest problem. This problem arises from the 1977 Pentagon publication that openly addressed what the “flexible response”³ strategy means for the FRG: five million of us dead to protect the American homeland. That’s the price the SPD pays to stay in power, and it is only a symptom of the total subjugation of the FRG against which we are fighting.

NATO began developing its program against the armed resistance of the RAF the moment we came into being. Under orders from NATO, cadre incarcerated in West German prisons have been executed. For those of us who struggle on the outside, there is the order to preventively shoot us in the head.

The eradication of every revolutionary group and movement “the activities of which are directed against the interests of this alliance”—and that’s everyone who understands and carries out their struggle within the framework of internationalist anti-imperialism—is the necessary precondition for the imperialist offensive, and that is clearly understood.

The only question is what we will do. How, for example, will we mobilize the revolutionary forces in this phase in which U.S. imperialism continues to act as the deadly enemy of humanity?

THE STRUGGLE NEVER ENDS!

SMASH U.S. IMPERIALISM AND ITS BASES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!

ORGANIZE ARMED RESISTANCE IN WESTERN EUROPE!

BUILD THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT IN THE METROPOLE!

SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST FINAL SOLUTION!

SOLIDARITY WITH THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST RESISTANCE IN TURKEY!

Andreas Baader Commando

June 25, 1979

¹ Since 1977, France had intervened in military conflicts in Zaire (today the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Chad to support those parties favored by Western imperialism.

² U.S. policy since Richard Nixon had been to maintain armed forces capable of fighting and winning “one and a half” wars simultaneously, meaning a major war with the Soviet Union as well as a war in the Third World.

³ “Flexible response” had been the U.S. nuclear doctrine since the Kennedy administration; as its name indicates, it called for a graduated use of nuclear and conventional weapons in conflicts short of total nuclear war.

Statement Calling Off the Seventh Hunger Strike

Today, June 26, 1979, the prisoners from the RAF, the other social revolutionary movements, and the social prisoners, are collectively ending the hunger and thirst strike. We are doing this because it has become clear that the FRG aims to use the hunger strike to liquidate any prisoners who were not liquidated at the time of their arrest, through life destroying isolation or by murderous attacks such as those which occurred on October 18, 1977.

This indicates that—as the recent cases of Willi Peter Stoll, Elisabeth von Dyck, and Rolf Heißler made clear—prisoners will no longer be taken.

The FRG believes that it has a handle on international public opinion, and that—especially following the European elections—this will not cause them any embarrassment.

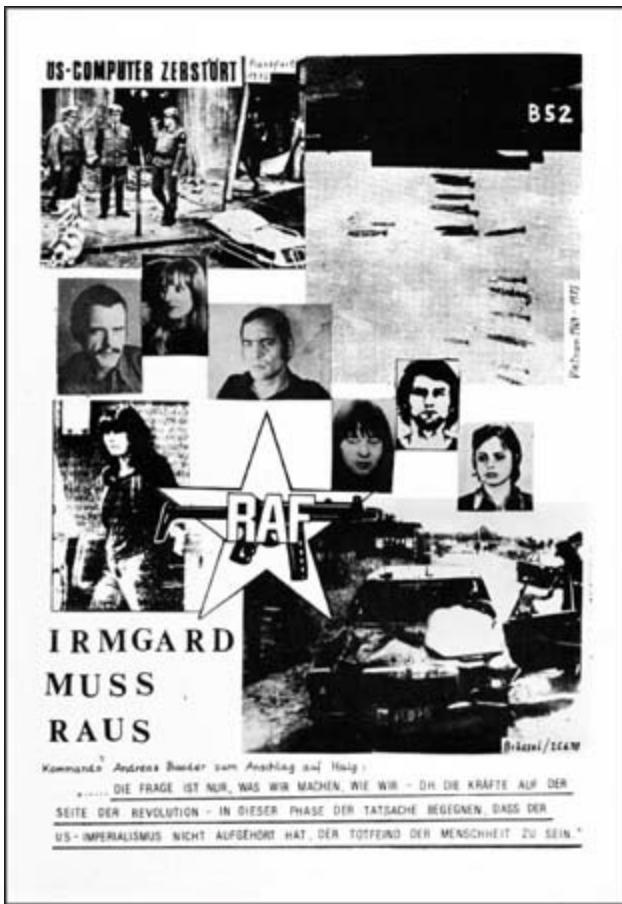
To prevent them from achieving their objective, we are calling off the hunger and thirst strike.

We will now await the outcome of negotiations with the international commission dealing with us,¹ as well as those going on between Amnesty International and the federal minister of justice.

We will not give up our struggle for survival.

RAF Prisoners
June 26, 1979

¹ This refers to the networks of supporters that were coming together in this period, and would formally constitute themselves as the International Commission for the Protection of Prisoners and Against Isolation Torture (IKSG); see [page 103](#).



Poster from the 1979-1980 period: "Irmgard Must Get Out" followed by a quote from the Andreas Baader Commando: "The only question is what we will do. How, for example, will we mobilize the revolutionary forces in this phase in which U.S. imperialism continues to act as the deadly enemy of humanity?"

Shake the Dust From Your Feet

AS THE 1970S CAME TO a close, two contradictory developments were manifesting themselves in West Germany. On the one hand, Helmut Schmidt and his technocratic “Model Germany” had been buoyed by the guerilla’s repeated defeats. On the other, a new radical youth movement was emerging out of various struggles, most notably the direct-action wing of the antinuclear movement.

Politics and history consist of wheels within wheels, and so neither of these developments occurred in a vacuum. Rather, they existed within, and had to respond to, a whole gamut of challenges and forces, both internal and external. Chief among the latter were the changes to the international balance of power that accompanied the end of the 1970s— what the Andreas Baader Commando had referred to hopefully as the “development of the relationship of forces between the revolution and the counterrevolution... the worldwide revolutionary process of the cities being encircled by the villages.”¹



President Jimmy Carter and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt

Jimmy Carter was sworn in as U.S. president in January 1977. Derided as

a bumbling wimp by his right-wing critics, Carter was in actual fact a shrewd imperialist strategist, and in many ways his policies laid the groundwork for the Reagan offensive of the 1980s. While he presented himself as the “human rights” president, this was little more than a smoke and mirrors act. Bill Vann has explained that

The human rights approach found expression only in what were peripheral areas for U.S. imperialist interests. Security assistance was cut off to the dictatorships in Ethiopia, Chile and Uruguay. In the latter two countries, ties with the U.S. military and economic aid remained untouched. Moreover, the secretary of state announced that the military regime in South Korea and the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines would be exempted entirely from the policy on grounds of “national security.”

*In Central America, the Carter administration came up with a unique method for limiting direct security assistance to right-wing dictatorships, while assuring that they remained armed to the teeth for the purpose of suppressing popular revolt. Israel was recruited to fill the gap, supplying Galil assault rifles and Uzi submachine guns to substitute for American-made M16s. Israeli military advisers were likewise dispatched to the region, while U.S. aid to Israel rose dramatically.*²

The neocolonial strategy was necessary, because the wave of decolonization that followed World War II had unleashed forces that imperialism could not simply vanquish, but was obliged to try to integrate. Discretion being the better part of valor, the smarter approach was cooptation, using both carrot and stick. After Vietnam, Nixon, and the global sixties revolt, a soft touch was required.

Indeed, in 1979, it could still appear that American imperialism was being beaten back around the world. The year began with the overthrow of the Shah, a longtime ally of both the FRG and the United States, under whose iron fist Iran had earned its reputation as the gendarme of the Middle East. A campaign of civil resistance had developed in 1978, with strikes, demonstrations, and guerilla attacks paralyzing the country in the latter half of the year. The Shah finally fled in mid-January 1979, and the

monarchy collapsed weeks later when rebel forces overwhelmed troops loyal to the old regime. The revolution took international observers by surprise, and soon fears of losing access to Iranian oil led to a panic, which in turn did lead to an increase in oil prices—the “second oil shock.”

In November, students would seize the U.S. embassy in Tehran, taking its staff hostage, and demanding the exiled Shah and his family be returned to face trial. While the occupation cemented Khomeini’s power vis-à-vis other forces in Iran (including the left), it also resulted in a windfall for all opponents of U.S. imperialism: searching through the embassy, the students found an archive of CIA and State Department documents—these were pieced together and published in book form, representing the single greatest disclosure of foreign intelligence secrets up to that point in postwar history. This not only exposed many of the CIA’s activities in Iran, but also in the Soviet Union, Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq.³ (The students would hold the fifty-two American hostages for 444 days. Within a week, Carter had announced an immediate halt to all imports of Iranian oil and froze \$8 billion worth of Iranian assets in the U.S.)⁴

While the Iranian revolution was the most striking reversal for Western interests in 1979, it was not the only one. In March, Maurice Bishop, leader of the Marxist New Jewel Movement, seized power in Grenada, as Prime Minister Eric Gairy fled the Caribbean island. In Zimbabwe, the guerilla struggle was intensifying, and in a stop-gap effort to prevent a Marxist victory, a Black-led government was installed in May (it wouldn’t last out the year). In July, Anastasio Somoza, another vicious American ally, fled Managua for Miami, as a coalition of left-wing forces known as the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN, or more popularly, the Sandinistas) took power in Nicaragua.

Within NATO itself, Turkey was increasingly rocked by political violence, as a state of general unrest began sliding into full-on civil war.

The situation worsened as the economy began to tank: like many Third World countries, Turkey was hit particularly hard by the new economic situation, and was soon spending two-thirds of its foreign currency earnings on oil imports.⁵

In December 1979, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan to prop up the country's Marxist government against a growing insurgency. Considered by some to be the opening scene in what would prove to be the Soviet Union's undoing, its entry into Afghanistan was immediately condemned around the world. Nonetheless, it has subsequently been learned that elements in the Carter administration were not only aware of the Soviet invasion beforehand, but had actually worked to provoke it. Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski admitted in a 1998 interview that the CIA had been funding the rebels before the Soviets invaded: "We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would... That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap," he explained. "The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter: We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam war."⁶

With the Soviets in Kabul and the Ayatollah in Tehran, national security propagandists pointed to a purported "arc of crisis" stretching from Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, with Moscow pulling the strings.

This rise in tension provided the backdrop for several bellicose developments in the realm of U.S. foreign policy, which together with Afghanistan would usher in a new era of superpower sabre-rattling, known to historians as the second Cold War—it was in fact a counteroffensive, intended to shore up and restore imperialism's power worldwide.

As early as 1977, heartened by his newfound popularity in the aftermath of Mogadishu and responding to the Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe, Helmut Schmidt had called upon Carter to modernize

and expand the U.S. Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF)—the Americans’ European arsenal.⁷ Plans to do so were announced in the last month of the decade, as NATO officially adopted what was known as the “Double-Track” strategy. A double-or-nothing gambit, this consisted of deploying thousands of new Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe, while simultaneously negotiating with the Soviets for their removal—conditional on the Soviets also removing their SS-20s.

The U.S. jacked up defense spending and scuttled the recently negotiated SALT II arms control treaty. At the same time, Carter issued Presidential Directive 59, declaring that the U.S. would strive to develop and maintain the ability to wage a “winnable” war against the USSR. An outgrowth of the already existing “flexible response” strategy, intended to allow for a “limited” nuclear war, Presidential Directive 59 involved a typically Carteresque “humanitarian” shift: missiles would no longer be aimed at Soviet cities, but at Soviet military installations. What this meant in practice was that Moscow faced the prospect of having its retaliatory capacity knocked out by a U.S. first strike; the only way to avoid this possibility would be for the Soviets to fire first.

To millions of people, nuclear war suddenly seemed a much more real possibility. Given that the INF missiles had a short range (in some cases less than 100 km) it was clear that if hostilities did break out, this war would be a European—and most especially, a German—affair. The very elements that Carter presented as making such a nuclear war more “humane”—shorter-range weapons, packing less punch, aimed at military not civilian targets—in fact simply made it more likely. “The shorter the missile range, the deader the Germans,” became a commonplace observation in the Federal Republic.⁸

All the while, this more user-friendly nuclear strategy was accompanied by the same old imperialist arrogance. In his 1980 State of the Union address, the U.S. president expounded what would become known as the

Carter Doctrine, a Middle East corollary to the already infamous Monroe Doctrine. As Carter put it, “Any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”⁹

Détente was over, and the stage was set for a new round of imperial brinksmanship, the consequences of which we are still living with today.

The 1979 Double-Track Decision became the focal point of West Germans’ anxieties about what NATO’s war plans would mean for them. Antimilitarism and “peace” suddenly came to the fore, attracting forces from the left, the women’s movement, and beyond.

The first crest in this new wave of discontent occurred on May 6, 1980: the day of a public swearing-in ceremony for some 1,200 new army recruits in the liberal city of Bremen. The ceremony was the first of several planned by the Schmidt government with the goal of drumming up public support for its rearmament policies. It was opposed by a broad left-wing coalition which called for a demonstration against the spectacle—according to a subsequent military investigation, between ten and fifteen thousand people participated.¹⁰

A younger generation of radicals, many of whom had first cut their teeth in the recent antinuclear battles, managed to take the lead at Bremen, successfully transforming the protest into a major riot.¹¹ As one participant would later explain, “The explicit goal was to prevent the ceremony. Cars were burned because they were the cars people used to get to the ceremony... The large demonstrations, like Brokdorf, were always dealt with militarily—we decided we would not be stopped militarily again.”¹²

Hours of fighting left roughly three hundred and fifty police officers injured, five requiring hospitalization. Cars were set alight and eight army vehicles were destroyed, as was military equipment left vulnerable in front

of the soccer stadium where the ceremony was to have taken place. The total damage amounted to over 100,000 DM.¹³

As one cop recalled years later, “It was war. The demonstrators were using rocks and molotov cocktails... We weren’t trained for a demo of this size... All we could do was try and hold our ground.”¹⁴

The Bremen riot was a coming out party for the *Autonomen*,¹⁵ as the new militant youth movement was known. While one can trace their lineage back to the *Spontis*, the alternative movement, the women’s movement, and Italy’s autonomous Marxists,¹⁶ the *Autonomen*’s most important lessons had been learned in the militant wing of the antinuclear movement.¹⁷ Reflecting both continuity and a rupture with the politics of the APO generation, the *Autonomen* represented a breakthrough for radical politics in the FRG, one born of Model Germany’s contradictions and given initial form by all the myriad experiences, both positive and negative, of the previous ten years.

At Bremen, the *Autonomen* established the important part they would play in the antimilitarist resistance, making it clear that if opposition to war were to become an important focus of activism in the years to come, it would no longer be the exclusive purview of the Church- and pacifist-dominated peace movement. The young *Autonomen* had clearly overcome the fear of violence that had followed the German Autumn. Spurred on by their example, there would be further disruptions at swearing-in ceremonies elsewhere, as the methods and ideas of this new youth movement became the default pole of attraction for a fresh wave of rebels.¹⁸

It was a significant turning point, and was recognized as such at the time.

THE GUERRILLA IN PARIS: PUTTING DOUBTS TO REST

Between 1977 and 1981, seven RAF members who had been arrested on February 4, 1974—dubbed the “2.4 group” by police—completed their sentences and were released from prison.¹⁹ While most of these never returned to the underground, there were some for whom the RAF continued to represent the best course of resistance to the system that had tried and failed to break them in its isolation wings.

As we have seen, Wolfgang Beer had been released in 1978, and had subsequently participated in the dpa occupation. Upon completing his one-year sentence for this, he returned to the RAF.

Another of those arrested in 1974, Helmut Pohl completed his sentence in September 1979. While often treated as a marginal figure in the RAF’s history, Pohl was in fact one of the earliest guerrillas, and was also one of the most steadfast; it is no surprise that upon his release, he lost little time in joining up once again with his comrades in the underground.²⁰

As Pohl would later recall, the RAF he found in 1979 was paralyzed by doubt to such an extent that people who wanted to join were being told it would be better if they devoted their energies to local, above-ground activism. The priority within the group was to work on its internal dynamics and political orientation.²¹ Indeed, for two years, the RAF had been stymied as to how, or even whether, to continue. Although the Haig attack represented a step out of this morass, it had failed, and the subsequent Swiss tragedy had revived these questions. What was the point of integrating new members when so much remained uncertain?

This was compounded by the killings of von Dyck and Stoll, and the near-fatal shooting of Heißler, all of which served as a reminder of how dangerous the guerrilla struggle could be, and seemed to indicate that West German police had adopted an unofficial policy of taking no prisoners.

This was the context, after Haig, in which the RAF regrouped in Paris, a

location that offered one important advantage, namely its proximity to the FRG. Yet before good use could be made of this, the group's internal problems finally had to be addressed.

In the time around the '77 offensive, several members of the anti-imperialist left had joined the guerilla under intense, and less than ideal, circumstances. Susanne Albrecht, Sigrid Sternebeck, and Silke Maier-Witt had all been close friends, moving together from the Hamburg squats to the prisoner support scene. Albrecht was recruited in order to help in the ill-fated attempted kidnapping of her sister's godfather, Jürgen Ponto. Given that it seemed increasingly likely aboveground supporters might be rounded up at any time, Sternebeck and Maier-Witt had followed her underground soon after. Ralf Friedrich, who had worked in Klaus Croissant's law office, joined the RAF in November 1977 out of fear that he would soon be targeted by the same kind of repression as the lawyers—he would later insist that he spent his entire time underground in France.²² Monika Helbing had also joined in '77 as a result of a police raid following the Buback assassination,²³ and was followed in 1978 by her partner Ekkehard von Seckendorff-Gudent.²⁴ Werner Lotze and Christine Dümlein had joined in the summer of 1978.²⁵ (It does not appear that von Seckendorff-Gudent or Dümlein ever participated in any RAF actions.)²⁶

These were people who had been faced with difficult choices. Like everyone else, the defeats of '77 weighed heavily on them, as did the continued setbacks of 1978 and '79. While some had participated in the attack on Haig, there was widespread dissatisfaction with how the guerilla struggle was panning out. Some of these individuals had decided they wanted to leave the RAF. In other cases, the rest of the guerilla decided they were not suited to the group, and they were told they would have to go.²⁷

Safehouses, paid for out of the RAF's war chest, were being maintained to house these dropouts, but this was obviously not a permanent solution.

Those who were staying with the RAF now began searching for a long-term retirement plan of sorts for their former comrades, all fugitives who figured prominently on police “most wanted” lists.²⁸

Added to this was the case of Peter-Jürgen Boock, whose elaborate lies and serious drug addiction had been exposed in 1978. At first the other guerillas had taken the understandable position that they could not continue working with him, and efforts had been made to find a place where he would be safe from capture, but would not be able to cause them any further grief. He would have none of it, adamantly rejecting exile. Shockingly, he managed to win over his comrades, and it was agreed to reintegrate him: he was brought back to Europe after the Haig attack and is one of those who participated in the bloody Zurich robbery gone bad. After that, like the other guerillas, he remained in hiding in Paris.

It was not long, however, before there were signs that Boock had started using again, and the decision was made to send him into exile, willing or not. The need for a retirement plan became all the more pressing. As we shall see, the solution would come from an unexpected quarter.

The RAF had been joined in the French capital by the 2JM’s anti-imperialist faction—the only 2JM members still on the street. Years later, writing from prison, Inge Viett would remember this as a depressing period, for even more than the RAF, the 2JM was struggling with doubts and indecision. As the oldest and most experienced member on the outside, Viett felt responsible for the group’s survival, but also saw little point in carrying out any further military actions.²⁹

Before this crisis could be addressed, the state intervened, and in so doing settled matters for Viett and her comrades.

In the spring of 1980, with the help of Chalid Dschihad, a BND mole in the PFLP (Special Command) (a successor-group to the PFLP (EO)), a safehouse was uncovered on Flatters Street in Paris’s Latin Quarter.³⁰ West

German agents placed it under surveillance, hoping to apprehend as many guerillas as possible. French police moved in on May 5, capturing five women: 2JM members Ingrid Barabaß and Regina Nicolai, RAF member Sieglinde Hofmann, and two other Germans, Karin Kamp-Münnichow and Karola Magg. Hofmann was being sought in connection with the Ponto killing, Nicolai was a suspect in the Palmers kidnapping and Till Meyer breakout, and Barabaß in the Palmers kidnapping. Kamp-Münnichow and Magg had no charges pending against them and were in fact unknown to police, yet were arrested and held along with the others.³¹

Once the women were in custody, *Zielfahndung* agents dressed like movers entered the flat, stripping it clean and carting everything—kitchen utensils, railway timetables, empty bottles, cigarette butts, etc.—back to Wiesbaden, to be catalogued and fed into the BKA’s computers.³²

The five women were held for two months in strict isolation at the High-Security Wing at Fleury-Mérogis prison—*Libération* described it as “the German prison model that is bit by bit becoming the European model, spreading to Italy and France”³³—with no visits, reading material, mail, or contact with one another or other prisoners. Having been subjected to physical violence during their initial interrogations,³⁴ they were now subjected to strip searches by male guards. At first, the women were handcuffed with their arms behind their backs during their court appearances, and even when provided with legal documents to review—in the words of the cop in charge, “One can read perfectly well with handcuffs on.”³⁵ At the same time, whenever they were brought before a judge they were surrounded by a battalion of police from the GIGN unit (specialized in hostage situations), and observers and supporters alike had to pass through metal detectors and submit to searches before they could enter the court.³⁶

The women’s lawyers concentrated their efforts on challenging these conditions, as well as trying to ascertain who exactly had ordered them, as

the French attorney general denied having made any such request.³⁷ To little avail, although they did manage to have the women's handcuffs removed in the courtroom.³⁸ As for the prison administration, its response was laconic: "We don't see why they protest their conditions so much, it's not like they're going to be here for very long."³⁹

Indeed, such was the case: on July 10 the court ruled that the six could be extradited to the FRG, as the RAF and 2JM were apparently "not political organizations." When the ruling was read out the courtroom exploded into violence between supporters and police, who beat people with billy clubs and bicycle chains, as well as setting off a smoke grenade.⁴⁰ The next morning, the women were on a plane to Munich; in the case of Hofmann, her extradition was done with the assurance that she would not be charged with the Ponto killing—a stipulation that would be ignored as soon as she was in West German custody.

The morning of the women's extradition, the Paris offices of the *Bundesbahn*, the West German railway company, were rocked by an explosion. (This was in fact the third time the company's Paris offices had been targeted over the years in solidarity with the RAF.)⁴¹ Just afterwards, police noticed a suspicious-looking car parked by a red light, and took off in pursuit when they saw three men jump in and depart at high speed. They had soon captured Jean Paul Gérard, Michel Lapeyre, and Frédéric Oriach, three revolutionaries from the French guerilla group the *Noyaux armés pour l'autonomie populaire* (Armed Nuclei For Popular Autonomy) who had themselves only recently been released from prison; the three would acknowledge their responsibility for the attack, carried out in solidarity with the West German guerillas.⁴²

With the Flatters Street arrests, the 2JM was for all intents and purposes wiped out, Viett and Juliane Plambeck being the only known combatants still at large. The two soon came to the conclusion that the only way to

continue the struggle would be to join the RAF.⁴³ There had been discussions about this for years,⁴⁴ and these had already been pursued in Paris prior to May 5, but, according to Viett, the RAF remained highly critical of what they considered the opportunism of the 2JM's traditional social revolutionary, "populist" approach. But the anti-imperialists had already rejected this orientation, and so, united by their condition of shared weakness, it was decided that the rump 2JM would publicly declare that it was dissolving itself into the RAF. The dowry in this marriage of last resort was to take the form of a public repudiation of much of the 2JM's history.⁴⁵



Inge Viett (left) and Juliane Plambeck, the only 2JM members remaining at large following the 1980 Paris arrests.

The 2JM's dissolution statement is an unpleasant document, as self-criticisms tend to be, especially when they result from outside pressure. All the more so, given the disingenuous nature of what is written: as we now know, there was not much of a 2JM left to dissolve in 1980, just two survivors from the anti-imperialist faction stranded in Paris, looking for a way to continue. The historic 2JM was much better represented in the angry rejoinder the document provoked from Ralf Reinders, Klaus Viehmann, and Ronald Fritzsch, who were being held together at Moabit prison in West Berlin. During a trial statement delivered on June 10, Gabriele Rollnik, who had herself been sympathetic to the anti-imperialists, went straight to the point: "The 2nd of June Movement

cannot be dissolved by someone reading a leaflet.”⁴⁶

Nonetheless, with Viett and Plambeck’s rallying to the RAF, the 2JM was no more. Although there were some isolated low-level actions by a “Friends of the 2nd of June Movement,” including the bombing of the Berlin-Kreuzberg municipal offices,⁴⁷ these soon petered out. While important elements of the politics it represented did persist, resonating in the actions of the Revolutionary Cells and even the *Autonomen*, these lacked the proletarian and class-oriented perspective the early 2JM had tried so hard to embody. It was, in that sense, a tradition that had failed to find fertile ground in the new Model Germany.

There is a sad postscript to this unpleasant document.

Life underground implies constant illegality, as one’s fugitive status makes legal means of acquiring certain things more risky than simple theft. Automobiles in particular were required by the guerilla, and new ones were always being sought in order to keep one step ahead of the authorities. In the village of Flein, in Baden-Württemberg, on July 25, 1980, Heidi Schulz, Juliane Plambeck, and the two Beer brothers had just stolen a BMW—Schulz and Henning Beer took off in the stolen car while Plambeck and Wolfgang Beer followed in another vehicle. Tragedy struck as they rounded a corner just outside of the town of Unterriexingen: Plambeck lost control of her car, crossing over the median into oncoming traffic and colliding head-on with a dump truck. The two guerillas were dead before police arrived on the scene.⁴⁸

Juliane Plambeck had been active in the Munich Red Aid, a prisoner support group,⁴⁹ before joining the 2JM. She was arrested in 1975 and charged in connection with the Lorenz kidnapping. After she and the other women prisoners escaped in 1976,⁵⁰ she continued her work with the guerilla, being one of those involved in the Palmers kidnapping in 1977. She had turned twenty-eight less than two weeks before her death.

Wolfgang Beer had only recently been released from prison following the stint that had resulted from the dpa occupation. Choosing to return underground to the RAF, it was on his recommendation that his younger brother Henning—who had repeatedly tried to join the RAF, only to be refused each time—had been brought into the guerilla.⁵¹ Witnessing his brother’s death, Henning Beer now fell into a deep depression.



Wolfgang Beer

When police realized who the dead occupants of the car were, the *Zielfahndung* descended on the scene, bagging and tagging over two thousand items for computer analysis. Eager to exploit the situation to their full propaganda advantage, the police noted that Lothar Späth, the president of Baden-Württemberg, lived only a few hundred meters from the crash site, which had also occurred on a route that Rebmann regularly used⁵²—it was soon being trumpeted that the guerilla had been working on a new “terrorist spectacular.”⁵³ Thousands of police scoured the surrounding countryside and nearby towns in the days following.⁵⁴

There was now only one 2JM member left from the “historic” liquidation of the 2JM “to continue the anti-imperialist struggle within the RAF—as the RAF.” Viett would later claim that she never felt personally close to the guerillas she now found herself with, that there was not the same sense of affinity or trust that she had shared with the 2JM women she

had lived and worked with for years.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, she would soon prove pivotal in resolving the key issue facing the RAF, namely, what to do with those members who either wanted out or whom the core group no longer felt they could work with.

Various solutions had already been discussed, including the possibility of the eight relocating to one of the new national states in Africa. Viett was asked to use her contact with Colonel Harry Dahl of the *Stasi* to see if he could help them broker such a deal. However, when he heard of the plan he pointed out that, as white people, the former guerillas were liable to stand out like a sore thumb. He had a better idea, suggesting that the eight relocate to East Germany. The RAF had never considered that, but when Viett presented them with the offer, it seemed to solve all their problems. She was sent back to the GDR, where she spent ten days as a guest of the state, making the necessary arrangements.⁵⁶

Ralf Friedrich and Sigrid Sternebeck were the first to go. They were given instructions to travel from Paris to Italy, then to Austria, where they were provided with new passports. From there they flew out to Czechoslovakia, and then to East Berlin. At Schönefeld airport, they were picked up and driven to Pankow, where they were interviewed about their personal histories.⁵⁷

Everything having proceeded smoothly, these first two were followed by Susanne Albrecht, Silke Maier-Witt, Werner Lotze, Christine Dümlein, Monika Helbing, and Ekkehard von Seckendorff-Gudent. They became citizens of the German Democratic Republic at a champagne dinner in the town of Briesen in September 1980. They were provided with false identities, and once they had mastered their cover stories they were dispersed across the country.⁵⁸

As Helmut Pohl would recall, years later:

People wanted to leave, but to where? Through contacts to the GDR it was possible

*to provide them with good conditions—otherwise they would have ended up in prison. Given the existing reality, the comrades in the GDR really did offer them the best possible conditions.... The defectors weren't sent off to some secluded area. They received professional training and were able to study. The GDR really went all out.*⁵⁹

There was, however, one dropout who would not be making the trip East: Peter-Jürgen Boock. Boock would later claim that he had wanted to break with the RAF ever since the Zurich bank robbery, but that during this period he was essentially the RAF's prisoner, disarmed and kept under constant watch. Intent on avoiding exile, a short while before the transfers East began, he claims to have sabotaged a gas boiler in the safehouse where they were staying, so that a repairman would have to be called. In this situation, where the others couldn't use their weapons, he apparently jumped out a window and made his way back to West Germany.⁶⁰

(According to a public statement made in 1988 by several RAF prisoners, Boock's resistance to exile was due to the fact that the kind of drug scene he was dependent on did not exist outside of the metropole.)⁶¹

Despite this hiccup in the plan, the overall problem seemed to be solved. Buoyed by this resolution, the RAF began to make arrangements to test the waters for a more active partnership with the *Stasi*. Already for years, the guerilla had benefited from transit through East Berlin and tolerance from the GDR's security apparatus. The *Stasi* was also able to inform West Germans when the names they were using on phony ID had been detected and entered into police computers, and when their depots were under surveillance.⁶² Within a couple of years, the East Germans would be providing the RAF with weapons training, as well as a safe place to meet and make plans. It was a far cozier relationship than any of the guerilla's supporters could have imagined, and one that flew in the face of the radical left's hostility to the "real existing socialist" regime.

(Ironically, while their supporters may not have had an inkling of the

GDR's assistance to the RAF at this time, with the help of its mole Chalid Dschihad the BND quickly found out about the exiles' new whereabouts.⁶³ Hoping to capitalize on the exodus, the *Verfassungsschutz* visited relatives, friends, and former colleagues of suspected guerillas, promising that any future defectors would be relocated with new names, passports, and anywhere up to 250,000 DM. There were no takers.)⁶⁴

The presence of so many guerillas with misgivings about the armed struggle had been an obstacle blocking the RAF's path forward and a serious drain on its resources. With this obstacle now removed, and with help now being provided by the East, the guerilla was ready to forge ahead, with hopes of finally putting the setbacks of recent years behind them.

1. See "Attack on Alexander Haig," [page 116](#).

2. Bill Vann, "Nobel Peace Prize Goes to Jimmy Carter—the 'Friendly' Face of U.S. Imperialism," World Socialist Website, October 12, 2002.

3. Edward Jay Epstein, "Secrets of the Tehran Archive," *The People's Voice*, August 3, 2009.

4. Associated Press, "Iranian Assets under U.S. Control Set at \$8 billion," *The Lethbridge Herald*, November 20, 1979.

5. Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 267.

6. Bill Vann, "Nobel Peace Prize Goes to Jimmy Carter—the 'Friendly' Face of U.S. Imperialism."

7. Scott Erb, *German Foreign Policy: Navigating a New Era* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 56.

8. Mushaben, 99.

9. Michael A. Genovese, *Encyclopedia of the American Presidency* (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 76.

10. Carl Christoph Schweitzer, *Politics and Government in Germany 1944-1994* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995), 197.

11. Geronimo, 111.

- [12.](#) Marianne Strauch, “Krawall gegen Massengelöbnis vor 30 Jahren,” *buten un binnen Magazin*, RB TV, May 5, 2010.
- [13.](#) Schweitzer, 197-198.
- [14.](#) Strauch, “Krawall gegen Massengelöbnis vor 30 Jahren.”
- [15.](#) Despite a possible reading of their name in English, readers should keep in mind that “Autonomen” is a gender-neutral German word, roughly meaning “autonomists.” In many cities, women formed the backbone of the movement. Somewhat confusingly, many radical women (some of whom were part of the *Autonomen*, some of whom were not) often referred to their movement as the “autonomous women’s movement”; in the interests of clarity, we will use the term “militant women’s movement” in their regard.
- [16.](#) Katsiaficas, 101-103. Geronimo, 51-53.
- [17.](#) Geronimo, 89.
- [18.](#) Ibid., 115-116.
- [19.](#) Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 325-326.
- [20.](#) Peter O. Chotjewitz, *Mein Freund Klaus* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2007), 232-233. The reasons for Pohl’s marginalization in many histories is at least partly due to the state’s ringleader theory, which led the media to focus on Baader, Raspe, Meins, Meinhof, and Ensslin initially, and then Klar and Mohnhaupt later on.
- [21.](#) Helmut Pohl, “Wir müssen jetzt Wege zur Entlassung finden,” *Angehörigen Info*, June 15, 1996. This interview has been translated by the editors and is available at http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/documents/96_06_15.php.
- [22.](#) Baptist Ralf Friedrich, interviewed by *Spiegel*, “Ich bitte um Vergebung,” *Spiegel*, August 20, 1990; Wunschik (1997), 375.
- [23.](#) Ibid., 203-204.
- [24.](#) Ibid., 298.
- [25.](#) Ibid., 224-225.
- [26.](#) *Spiegel*, “Hier bleibt jeder für sich,” June 25, 1990; Lars-Broder Keil and Sven Felix Kellerhoff, “Aufstieg und Fall der zweiten RAF-Generation,” *Welt*, February 15, 2007.
- [27.](#) See Appendix II: Boock’s Lies, page 330.
- [28.](#) Viett, 220.
- [29.](#) Ibid., 210-211.

30. Carsten Holm, "Die wollen's nicht hören," *Spiegel*, September 8, 2008.
31. *Spiegel*, "Da waren die Vögel schon ausgeflogen," October 13, 1980; *Spiegel*, "Sieben singen," May 12, 1980.
32. Pruthi, 29.
33. *Libération*, "Deux allemandes devant la chambre d'accusation," June 11, 1980.
34. Annette Levy-Willard, "Cinq allemandes devant la chambre d'accusation," *Libération*, June 25, 1980.
35. Annette Levy-Willard, "Cinq Allemandes à isolement... à Paris," *Libération*, May 29, 1980.
36. Annette Levy-Willard, "Fleury-Mérogis à l'heure de Stammheim," *Libération*, June 12, 1980.
37. Annette Levy-Willard, "Les cinq Allemandes en isolement portent plainte," *Libération*, June 16, 1980.
38. Annette Levy-Willard, "Cinq Allemandes devant la chambre d'accusation."
39. Annette Levy-Willard, "Fleury-Mérogis à l'heure de Stammheim."
40. Annette Levy-Willard, "R.A.F.: Les cinq Allemandes seront extradées," *Libération*, July 10, 1980.
41. Ibid.
42. *Libération*, "À Nouveau Oriach, Lapeyre, et Gérard," July 12-13, 1980. The three would be amnestied on September 14, 1981, as part of the Mitterand government's attempt to defuse its own guerilla problem.
43. Viett, 209-217.
44. For instance, Gabriele Rollnik has stated that there were a series of meetings in 1977 about the 2JM participating in a prisoner-liberation action, but, in a sudden about-face, the RAF had demanded a self-criticism, which the 2JM members refused. The RAF then proceeded to carry out the offensive on its own—with consequences that are now well known. Rollnik and Dubbe, 74.
45. Viett, 209-217.
46. Peters, 515.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., 509.

49. Marion Schreiber, "Wir fühlten uns einfach starker," *Spiegel*, May 11, 1981.
50. As detailed on pages 58-59.
51. Wunschik (1997), 226-227.
52. Fridtjof Theegarten, "Im Hosenbund steckte die Pistole," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, July 26, 1980.
53. Pruthi, 29.
54. dpa, "Vier Terrorautos kamen unbemerkt über die Grenze," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, July 31, 1980.
55. Viett, 209-217.
56. Ibid., 221-224.
57. Baptist Ralf Friedrich, "Ich bitte um Vergebung."
58. Schmeidel, 156.
59. Helmut Pohl and Rolf Clemens Wagner, interviewed by *junge Welt*.
60. Hans Wolfgang Sternsdorff, "Im Schützengraben für die falsche Sache."
61. See Appendix II: Boock's Lies, page 331.
62. Wunschik (1997), 396.
63. Holm, "Die wollen's nicht hören." Dschihad claimed to have learned this while RAF members were spending time at a Middle Eastern training camp. He fell out of contact in 1983; the BND assumes he was killed.
64. *Spiegel*, "Angebot des Verfassungsschutzes: Geheimdienst lockte RAF-Aussteiger mit Millionenprämie," September 6, 2008. This would not be the last attempt to bribe RAF members into defecting; according to Stefan Aust, in 1982 agent Werner Mauss met with the lawyer Hans-Heinz Heldmann, who had defended Baader, to offer Brigitte Mohnhaupt a cash payment to defect. Heldmann and Mauss met in a neutral country, and cash changed hands, despite the fact that Mohnhaupt had no contact with either man. (Winkler, 391.)

Statement Dissolving the 2nd of June Movement

After ten years of armed struggle, we want to reflect critically on our history and clarify why we have decided to dissolve the 2nd of June Movement as an organization in order to continue the anti-imperialist struggle within the RAF—as the RAF.

The 2nd of June Movement was founded in contradiction to the RAF with the vague purpose of carrying out “spontaneous proletarian politics.” We considered revolutionary theory and analysis—on the basis of which the strategy and tactics, the continuity and perspective for struggle could be developed—to be unimportant, and “jumped into the struggle” with the goal of blowing the minds of young people. And so we determined our practice on the basis of what would blow their minds, and not on the basis of what the real contradictions and weaknesses in imperialist strategy were that we should focus our attacks on.

The Movement was a putative alternative to the RAF for those comrades for whom struggle without compromise went too far.

This produced ten years of splits, competition, and disorientation on the left and also within the guerilla, and it also hindered our own revolutionary development.

We carried out our actions following a populist line, without providing political direction and without managing to mobilize people against the pigs’ strategy.

It is never the responsibility of the guerilla to please the people and win their praise, but rather—in a country where social democracy is tied to Nazi fascism and U.S. imperialism, depriving the working class of any proletarian organizations—it is the guerilla’s responsibility to be the

cutting edge, deepening the central political contradictions through armed attacks, so as to drive the state into political crisis.

In the metropole, in the context of imperialism, only the guerilla is in a position to be the politically explosive factor, the form of attack—as such the revolutionary politics—that forces open the rupture between society and the state, developing the proletarian politics and anti-imperialist organizing necessary to shift the balance of power in our favor.

The political attack—made material through armed means—is always a victory, even in cases where the operation is militarily defeated, because it anticipates this process and sets it in motion.

That is also the difference between Schleyer and Lorenz. Today, we are certainly critical of our most important action. All the errors that we've made over the past ten years are to be found in it, and we've learned from these errors.

The '75 liberation action unfolded in a politically charged context. The Stammheim comrades' struggle had given rise to a national and international mobilization, which the widespread hunger strike had brought to a highly developed point with which Schmidt was having difficulty coping. We not only completely ignored this context, but by our choice of prisoners we shifted the political focus.

Therein, as well as by the guy we chose—from a party that was of only secondary importance to the imperialist strategy—lay a calculation rather than a strategy. In our propaganda work before and after Peter Lorenz, the short-term success—the consumable ritual—was more important than the politico-military level of struggle required to break through the imperialist strategy. Therein one can also see the perversion of the fun guerilla¹ of Reinders, Teufel, etc. The RAF's '77 offensive and the state's reaction finally placed the question of strategy before us in a new way. '77 was a step forward in the development of imperialist strategy, as well as in the concept of the guerilla in the metropole. Since the Mogadishu and Stammheim

massacres, Schmidt has given Western Europe—under the leadership of the FRG—its political definition: the project and model for imperialism in the crisis created by the liberation struggles in the Third World *and in the West European metropole*.

The unconditional integration of Western Europe into U.S. military strategy and the internal militarization of the metropolitan states through an increasingly unified apparatus—this is the imperialist response to the coming together of revolutionary struggles worldwide.

Revolutionary strategy takes on an international significance insofar as anti-imperialist groups are recognized as the main enemy of the U.S.A. and its West European project.

The U.S.A. and its accomplices knew that the next strategic defeat *anywhere* in the world would put them on the road to ultimate defeat.

The “post-Vietnam era”—that is to say, the attempt to recover from the defensive position that followed U.S. imperialism’s politico-military defeat in Vietnam—through a strategy relying on political and economic means—collapsed in Iran, following the chain of defeats that stretched from Angola to Kampuchea.²

Imperialist politics now seeks a military solution that cannot be achieved, and this leads—through the preparations for widespread destruction—to the development of total annihilation as a naked concept.

A new, and in reality, final strategic military defeat in the Third World is to be prevented by launching war from Europe, a war that right from the start is meant to be a nuclear war. A new perverse variation on the theory of “limited war.”

They are not preparing war to divide the world into imperialist spheres of control. The issue is revolution or counterrevolution—which is to say, the decisive stage of the confrontation is unfolding.

This decisive stage of the confrontation will, in the final analysis, occur

in the metropole, because it is obvious that the victorious Third World liberation movements that have achieved state power can be blackmailed as long as they have to function within the East-West contradiction, and as long as the imperialist centers can apply pressure militarily and through the world market.

This is the essence of the entire international revolutionary process—destruction of the state, self-determination, and identity—which has come into sharp relief in the conflict arising from the struggle against communism in the metropole in recent years. It happens now—or it doesn't happen at all.

The question facing the entire West European left is whether, in this escalating situation, which will settle things one way or another, they will take on their historic responsibility or betray it.

UNITY IN THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST ARMED STRUGGLE

For the last time:

2nd of June Movement
June 2, 1980

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1. In German this is a play on words: *Spaßguerilla* meaning fun guerilla and *Stadtguerilla* meaning urban guerilla, both sounding similar.
 2. Democratic Kampuchea was the name of Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, under the Khmer Rouge government.

Regarding the Alleged Dissolution of the 2nd of June Movement

That's right, the faction that has been trying for three years to shift the 2nd of June Movement to the RAF line has now joined the RAF. In the heat of the moment, these comrades have also dissolved the entire 2nd of June Movement—in an ocean of words.

To the comrades who have spoken with us and asked who wrote this politically empty nonsense, we have to say that that is not entirely correct. If it were only “nonsense,” we wouldn’t have to worry about this “nonsense” expressing itself through idiotic actions, such as airline hijackings, etc. In this instance, we are taking the advice of Comrade Mao tse Tung seriously: one cannot leave unaddressed the subjective bullshit that some comrades present as an appraisal of the political situation. There are always inexperienced comrades who follow such theories and hurt not only themselves, but also the rest of us—the entire left movement.

This “dissolution paper” contains no material analysis, only a series of sentences following one after the other.

An initial comment regarding the claim that now the roots of the “perversion of the fun guerilla of Reinders, Teufel, etc.” have finally been exposed. To this we say: following a critique from steadfast “combatants,” the fun guerilla as a source of “leadership” and strategy is at long last disbanded by the dissolution. “Reinders, Teufel, etc.” have confirmed it by affixing their thumbprints:¹ the fun guerilla is dissolved! That’s it! For years we’ve made our own perversion a mainstay of the resistance. Down with it! Fun is perverse! And fun during the struggle is perverse fun! For weeks now we’ve been in a state of elated self-flagellation.

Smack... aaahh... smack... aaahh...

However, not everything in this “dissolution paper” is so funny. For instance, the assertion that the 2nd of June Movement “was founded in contradiction to the RAF.” The 2nd of June Movement resulted from the fusion of three West Berlin groups that wanted to develop and organize the armed struggle.

The largest group was the “Tupamaros West Berlin,” which since 1968 had been carrying out various actions in Berlin. Imperialist and Zionist facilities and symbols were attacked. Factories where workers were being laid off were attacked. And, above all, in the context of the APO’s 1969 Justice Campaign, courthouses, judges, and state prosecutors were attacked.

The 2nd of June Movement was able to learn from this practice. The broad range of targets and forms of struggle came out of the experiences of the youth revolt at the time.

The 2nd of June Movement was certainly correct to not develop an *Urban Guerilla Concept* theory like the RAF. That was completely unrealistic. This was a country where after twelve years of Nazi terror and a twenty-year anticommunist campaign, a youth movement was just beginning to consider socialist ideas; a country where after a few years of grappling with the fact that they had no unbroken tradition to fall back on, a mass of proletarian youth began to tentatively and selfconsciously take up the struggle against antisocial policies and oppression, against apathy in the face of genocide and imperialism, against the absurd capitalist machinery of consumption, which hideously deforms human needs into alien sources of profit. Their resistance developed out of their own distress, and they drew their strategic and tactical understanding from the experiences this led to, an ever-deepening analysis of the overall social situation. This dialectical development, based on theory and practice, is the process that Marx recognized as the precondition for revolutionary politics to succeed.

At the time, there was no satisfactory practical experience from which to

develop such a definitive *Concept*. The fact that at the time the RAF couldn't put their *Urban Guerilla Concept* into practice proves this.

The contradiction between the RAF and the 2nd of June at that time was the result of the different ways the groups had evolved: the 2nd of June Movement out of their members' social scene and the RAF on the basis of their theoretical revolutionary model. And, equally, as a result of the RAF's centralized organizational model on the one hand, and our autonomous, decentralized structures on the other. Another point of conflict was to be found in the question of cadre going underground, which the RAF insisted on as a point of principle.

As such, the immediate forerunners to the 2nd of June Movement were always open to a practical—proletarian—alternative; an alternative that had nothing to do with competition, but more with different visions of the revolutionary struggle.

There was strong mutual support and joint actions in the early period of both groups, for example the expropriation actions at the three West Berlin bank branches in September 1970. At the time, both groups proceeded with the idea that the future would determine which political vision would prove effective in the long run.

In this obscure *Dissolution Paper*, Lorenz's capture by the 2nd of June Movement and the freeing of a number of prisoners is heavily attacked. It is argued that “all the errors that we've made over the past ten years are to be found in it.”

Obviously, in the years leading up to 1975, and even in the Lorenz action, mistakes were made—the setback of September 1975² proves that all too clearly. But what is passed off here as “self”-criticism reveals a hilarious ignorance that would be hard to beat.

Apparently, “The Stammheim comrades’ struggle had given rise to a national and international mobilization, which the widespread hunger

strike had brought to a highly developed point with which Schmidt was having difficulty coping.” (And because of this he was on the point of collapse?) And this was barely four weeks after they broke off the hunger strike, because the demand for association in Stammheim could not be achieved at that time.

What “highly developed point” could this be referring to?—perhaps the hunger strike? Or maybe the Berlin election campaign? Or is the struggle in Wyhl part of the political situation? Mass unemployment? Inflation? and and and...

And Schmidt? Now he has a little more to deal with (a shame).

So, this *Dissolution Paper* reads as if the hunger strike nearly led to the downfall of the Western Zones, which, however, didn’t happen because the 2nd of June—those bastards of historic proportions—through the “choice of prisoners, politically shifted” the almost hopeless situation that Schmidt faced in his favor.

The 2nd of June, saviors of the nation and Schmidt’s aides. (Helmut, where are our Federal Crosses of Merit?!) And all of that just before the RAF was going to tip the balance of power in their favor. That simply can’t be true.

To be blunt: whoever today looks at the Lorenz action, the single biggest victory in twelve years of armed struggle, and spreads this sort of shit, is in fact truly brainless, absolutely and totally!

How can these comrades arrive at such ivory tower “appraisals”? The answer can be found in the paper itself.

In this way, revolutionary politics are sold to us as “the attack” that pushes the rupture between society and the state to the breaking point.

Yeah, whatever!

Apparently, we should help to widen the rupture between capitalist society and the form in which it is expressed, the bourgeois state. Sounds

like: free the leaders from their roots and then we'll have free leaders.

At least you can't go downhill from there.

This paper is an example of bloated prose, flippancy, hubris, arrogance, contempt for the masses, and resignation.

What is expressed by these contradictory statements is a mirror image of bourgeois society, where, on the one hand, capitalist interests dictate social conditions, and, on the other, armed struggle is an end in itself. In any event, nothing is asked of the people. They are reintegrated into a state of alienation.

Debray described this process correctly in *A Critique of Arms*: the question of what organizational form the revolutionary struggle will take cannot be answered, without other questions also being answered: which class interests does the guerilla serve? Posing the technical problems of the method divorced from its relationship to the goals and aspirations of the masses, whom this method is meant to serve, or tackling the organizational problems of the vanguard independent of the class or the class relationship, of which the vanguard is an instrument, means confusing the means with the ends, and, thereby, losing one's footing. The painfully real decline can be analyzed step by step as follows: initially the military instrument is separated from the social class and the violent method from its economic and social point of application; thereafter, it follows logically that the instrument sets itself above the class and the method above its real point of application, so that these become the governing and determining factors ("the key aspect of the dialectically unified dichotomy"): eventually the instrument—the army or party—takes the place of the class and the method—armed struggle—the place of its objective purpose; in this way the instrument eventually begins to act in its own interests and the revolutionary armed struggle becomes "left-wing terrorism."

What kind of guerilla is this, the purpose of which is never to be "favorably representing the people so as to gain their approval"? For what

and, more importantly, with whom can such a guerilla hope to struggle?

The construction of the dichotomy “populist line vs. political orientation” makes no sense. The problem of an “incorrect populist strategy” isn’t the issue—it is a question of the guerilla lagging behind the interests of the people and their willingness to struggle.

Yeah, obviously the 2nd of June Movement’s actions were meant to be populist—in the most obvious sense of the word: popular. They were meant to politically win people over to our side, not to push them into the arms of the state. There’s nothing particularly revolutionary about shitting all over the sympathies of the people.

And approval, that is to say, gaining affirmation for an action or for the politics of the guerilla, obviously involves breaking through the rigidity of standard bourgeois consciousness, and that in turn creates the initial support for revolutionary politics. “Approval” creates a situation which allows the guerilla to grow, to remain mobile, to develop its logistics, and to develop options for action.

Ten years ago, we all acted on the basis of the slogan “Serve the People.” In Mogadishu, were the people served? In a single stroke all of our efforts to counter the cops’ propaganda about how it could also happen to the “lady selling flowers on the corner” lost all credibility.

The difference between terrorism, which can affect anyone equally, and the revolutionary struggle is that a revolutionary action, both in its intended impact as well as in the way it is conducted—targeting class enemies and their henchmen—does not provide the cops with easy arguments. Otherwise, the action rebounds against those who carry it out. And this is not a question of tactics, but of principles!

Revolutionary politics can only be developed in connection with the potentially revolutionary class—and not against it. Those who constantly complain about the “campaign to break solidarity” should take a moment

to consider that they themselves made the basic errors that facilitated this.

It is a key error to fetishize the armed struggle—struggling in order to struggle: “The political attack—made material through armed means—is always a victory, even in cases where the operation is militarily defeated, because it anticipates this process and sets it in motion.” This sentence is a masterpiece of dialectical thinking! Or more plainly: of mental acrobatics. The punch always lands because it initiates and anticipates this process (augurs), even when it misses its mark...

We judge a political attack on the basis of whether it serves a purpose, whether it is advantageous to us and weakens the enemy. And that is the case regardless of the form of the attack—armed/legal/illegal. The political content determines the form of struggle, and not the other way around!

In any event, all of the “classics,” from von Clausewitz, through Mao and Che, slam the idea of the guerilla separating the political from the military!

Continuous military defeat is always the result of political errors.

Not paying attention to one’s base, losing any connection to the daily struggle of the people, incorrectly analyzing the political and concrete national/regional conditions of struggle—these are cardinal errors!

Any sober appraisal also shows that this has nothing to do with the much-touted “continuity of the guerilla strategy.” The consistent use of the same strategy over a ten-year period while ignoring ongoing developments and changes has not produced a particularly glorious chapter of political activity.

Debating the overall position presented in this *Dissolution Paper* is almost impossible. For example, “Schmidt has given Western Europe—under the leadership of the FRG—its political definition: the project and model for imperialism in the crisis created by the liberation struggles in the Third World *and in the West European metropole*.” Making political sense of this sentence would require an effort akin to emptying the North Sea

with a sieve.

The “unconditional integration of Western Europe into U.S. military strategy” is simply a fabrication, and this should be obvious to everyone given that France has effectively withdrawn from NATO. NATO expresses the common interest of its member states to maintain and extend the “Free West” in opposition to the Soviet Union.

Competition between the different countries in the metropole is a dominant feature within the context of these common strategic interests. From the EC-USA steel war to the Japan-USA-EC automobile war. From the EC’s Iran boycott, which really isn’t a boycott, to Japan’s economic advances in China against the USA/EC. The imperialist states are sometimes appropriately described as “rival siblings,” united by a common enemy, the Soviet Union.

That the countries of the metropole are arming themselves for internal reasons is a characteristic of every capitalist state, now as in the past; they must do so in order to suppress their own “citizens” in times of crisis—not because there is an “increasing unity of revolutionary struggles worldwide.” This mindset can only lead one to disregard all of the specific conditions of particular struggles, the basis for these struggles, their fundamental nature, etc. so as to suggest an “objective” connection between the uprising in Southeast Asia and the recent ÖTV³ collective agreement. The masses, who make history, make it wherever it is that they find themselves. Those who live here, but set their watches by the time in Tehran or Hanoi, are deluding themselves, are falling into a form of lunacy that has nothing to do with proletarian internationalism.

Those who constantly work themselves up into an almost Teutonic sense of cataclysm, claiming that imperialism is facing defeat in the Third World and will depart the world stage with sound and fury, are throwing sand into their own eyes and the eyes of others! The “chain of defeats from Angola to Kampuchea” they refer to is only impressive if you overlook

imperialism's victories: Egypt, Somalia, China, and Iraq, and the ongoing situation in South Korea.

The everyday realities of imperialism and the way it develops are persistently mistaken for its death struggle. That, however, will occur in the metropole; here where its wealth is produced by working people and where it draws the strength to rule other countries. This is why it is not the case that the national liberation of Third World countries creates a problem that imperialism cannot solve.

"Imperialist politics now seeks a military solution that cannot be achieved and this leads to the development of total annihilation as a naked concept." This sentence has the quality of a funhouse mirror.

Seeks, doesn't find, annihilation as a naked concept. What does it mean? Does it perhaps have something to do with the concept of the naked? Who knows what any of this means?

The authors proceed from the assumption that a nuclear war is being prepared in Europe—in order to prevent a "final strategic defeat in the Third World."

The imperialists would be out of their fucking minds if they attempted to secure their assets in the Third World by destroying Europe, where they have so much more invested. If a "limited nuclear war" were to become possible, it would be because of the U.S. interest in containing the Soviet Union. Were it actually to come to a "limited nuclear war" in Europe—which is unlikely—it would be because U.S. imperialism calculated that a cunning competitor—the European Community—and a strategic opponent—the Soviet Union—could both be decisively weakened without the U.S. itself being directly attacked.

Where the "dissolvers" occupy themselves with problems like "limited nuclear war" and the like, it's as if the solutions will appear out of thin air. Of course, nothing can come of that!

And that, despite the fact that the paper correctly notes that the “decisive stage will, in the final analysis, occur in the metropole.”

Those who want to struggle in the “belly of the beast”—as Che called it—must be familiar with the problems confronting the struggle here and must be able to integrate themselves into that struggle.

In this regard, the *Dissolution Paper* is also the paper illustration of the political crisis the guerilla has drifted into. While reams of paper have been churned out about the international situation, NATO committees, etc., most of the actions in recent years have had nothing to do with the left-wing struggle and even less to do with the people’s everyday resistance. Even the exceptions—actions by the RZ and *Autonomen*—have been unable to prevent the guerilla’s subsequent isolation. Admittedly, some comrades have recognized this crisis, and have grasped the fact that the only way to avoid total defeat at the hands of the counterrevolution is to stop conducting politics in a way that is completely divorced from everyday struggle.

Breaking out of this isolation means not only winning the approval of those who already support our politics, but also winning over the people who are not yet on our side.

In this phase of the struggle, that means that we have a lot to learn and a lot to forget, too. We need to look in the dusty corners where we will find the comrades and groups we have long ignored—“they don’t want a guerilla movement,” “they’re nonviolent,” “they’re revisionists,” “they’re Green Party,” and so on. We need to clear the table and search out the things that really separate us, the things we disagree about, and the things that connect us.

Nobody—regardless of the state of the broad left in the FRG—can deny the need for political cooperation. Political cooperation doesn’t mean betraying one’s own position, but rather establishing the solidarity necessary for the given stage of the struggle. Only in this way can we get

closer to our goal of winning a real majority of the people over to the side of social revolution.

We are responsible for developing social revolutionary politics—a socialist alternative to social democratic crisis management.

We can anticipate widespread unemployment and high levels of inflation in Western Europe in the eighties, higher than almost anyone imagines. As a result of the development of new technologies—computers, for example—rationalization and increased job insecurity will be spurred on in ways that are not yet clear. The intense competition in a relatively crowded world market will expedite currency devaluation in the imperialist states and lead to a decline in real wages. Because, in pursuing capitalist interests, the state must use more and more social wealth for subsidies and arms expenditures, the “social safety net”—which, in any event, is paid for out of the pockets of all those who might require it—will become ever more threadbare. Broad layers of the population will be declassed/proletarianized and will find themselves slipping below the poverty line.

The ruling class is preparing for the coming conflict—it knows full well that all of this will deepen the contradictions between itself and the people. They are once again refining and upgrading their repressive apparatus, in the time-honored tradition. The social democrats and the technocrats also hope to confuse the people with their reformist slogans and “dialogue.” This is the way they’ve used Baum.⁴ They want to prevent the discontented, the aggrieved, and the oppressed from acting in unity with the left opposition in a way that would be mutually radicalizing. They want to neutralize and buy off the left, so as to head off any movement that might question the legitimacy of this state.

In the final analysis, how successful they will be depends on whether we succeed in intervening in the already developing conflict on the issues which the state cannot resolve or defuse with reforms, forcing them to

make direct use of their violent potential. And this is true in regard to every single-issue struggle—be it the antinuclear movement, the housing struggle, the women’s movement, antimilitarism, the struggle against unemployment, or the struggle in the factories.

In the final analysis, the fundamental problems that lie behind the facade of the “social state” can only be resolved with violence. For example, a capitalist factory will always remain a source of exploitation and inhumane working conditions—co-management, collective agreements, and factory councils notwithstanding. In this state, profit is still, after all, the point of the exercise.

To this end and for this very reason a few thousand cops will be deployed. Just as Gorleben⁵ was violently cleared because it was standing in the way of the entire atomic energy program, which the monopolies in the FRG could not allow, because they intend to use their know-how to remain competitive on the world market.

Wherever the economic or political interests of the ruling class have been met with massive opposition, the state has responded with violence—from Grohnde to Brokdorf, from Westend to Dreisameck,⁶ from the swearing-in ceremony in Bremen to the occupation of America House in West Berlin,⁷ from the legal rubber-stamping of the lockouts to the clubbing of striking printers.

In all these struggles the state is attempting to protect its monopoly of violence, a precondition for the smooth functioning of exploitation and capitalist production. As a result, they are attempting to eliminate any doubts about the legitimacy of this monopoly of violence.

If we want to break through this monopoly of violence—both practically as well as in the popular consciousness—we must intervene in the people’s struggles with militant actions. We must carry out exemplary actions that can be understood and imitated by many people, and which will also make

it clear that illegal actions are necessary.

An atomic power plant that couldn't be prevented despite construction site occupations and demonstrations can still be neutralized if the power pylons are knocked over.

A crane is only a useful tool for a real estate speculator until it is torched.

A slumlord that lets a living space be destroyed gets a sense of what it's like when his own digs are "renovated."

A Municipal Planning and Building Control Office encounters certain difficulties with further deforestation if its offices burn down.

A prison warden learns less about daily life in prison from petitions and protest letters than from a couple of bullets in the leg.

All the small and large enemies of the people can no longer bask in their glory if they are made to fear being held accountable for their scummy behavior!

No aspect of everyday struggle can be overlooked when pursuing the long-term goal of uniting all of the resistance groups. Only in this way can a broad, militant, revolutionary movement develop, and through a protracted process of disruption of all of the ruling structures—economic, political, and military—carry through the social revolution in the metropole.

We can never lose sight of this goal—the social revolution—which today seems so utopian, otherwise we will lose ourselves in sects, transcendental theories, and political irrelevance.

Now a final comment regarding the *Dissolution Paper*:

Social revolutionary politics—which are represented by the 2nd of June Movement, among others—cannot be "dissolved" like some petit bourgeois gardening group.

Reinders, Viehmann, Fritzsch

Berlin-Moabit
June 1980

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3. In 1972 Andreas Baader had affixed his thumbprint to a letter to the press to prove its authenticity. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 113, 120-121.
 4. A reference to the series of arrests in which many 2nd of June Members were captured, as detailed on [page 58](#).
 5. *Gewerkschaft öffentliche Dienste, Transport und Verkehr* (Public Service, Transport, and Transit Union).
 6. Gerhart Baum, the FDP minister of the interior from 1978 to 1982. See [chapter 8](#).
 7. The occupation of a projected nuclear waste disposal facility site at Gorleben, in Lower Saxony, had been violently cleared by police earlier in June 1980. The protesters had opted for a course of strict nonviolence, to the disgust of many *Autonomen*.
 8. Both Westend in Munich and Dreisameck in Freiburg were sites of militant struggles for affordable housing.
 9. The America Houses are cultural centers funded by the U.S. government that can be found in many cities in Germany. They were repeatedly targeted by militant left protests from the late 1960s through the 1980s.

The Deaths of Wolfgang Beer and Juliane Plambeck

Wolfgang and Juliane—their deaths are hard for us, especially in such an absurd accident. They had prepared for a different death, not this brutal, daily metropolitan waste.

The bullshit the press is cranking out is really too much. Anyone who ever had anything to do with Wolfgang knows who he was. For him, the most important thing was to learn through and from the attack—living underground, aboveground, or in prison. It was something he also taught others. His clarity about the hows and whys of his undertakings, his militancy, and his political thinking were important to us—the RAF—for eight years.

Juliane wanted the guerilla in the FRG unified, and that's how we came to be with her. She was someone who through her openness and political radicalism could clear the bullshit out of the way. The decisiveness and the enthusiasm with which she embraced this new chapter had a strong effect on us all.

Regarding the filthy way the BAW and the BKA are making use of their deaths, we can only say that Rebmann doesn't concern us right now—he already brags enough about attacks against him—and neither does Späth.¹ Nor do we intend to blow Schmidt up. Naturally, we're still here, which they know better than they let on in their propaganda. “Proving our capacity to act” and “desperate actions” aren't really our thing. The '77 offensive opened up possibilities for a new step. Concretely, it is necessary for us to restructure for the next step in the development of our strategy to create politico-military unity between the armed underground and the legal structures in the anti-imperialist movement. Then we'll decide upon our course of action.

Red Army Faction
July 26, 1980

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1. A reference to police claims that the RAF were planning an attack at the time of Beer and Plambeck's accident. See [page 134](#).

The ‘81 Offensive

THE AUTONOMEN HAD BURST ONTO the scene and the RAF had regained its sense of purpose, but not much had changed in the FRG’s tombs, the 1978 and ‘79 hunger strikes notwithstanding. Yet again, it would be the prisoners’ struggle that would push developments forward, and win a hearing for anti-imperialist politics among the new generation of radical youth.

After their seventh hunger strike, the prisoners had returned to individual or small-group actions to defend themselves.

For instance, in February 1980, Christine Kuby, Christa Eckes, Inga Hornstein, Anne Reiche, and Brigitte Asdonk were all strip-searched and moved to a new high-security unit in Lübeck-Lauerhof. The women responded by going on hunger strike, demanding their transfer out of the dead wing; at one point, they even escalated to refusing liquids. Over a thousand people demonstrated in solidarity in nearby Hamburg, and the America House in that city was occupied, in an action that was framed not only as support for the prisoners, but also for the politics of the RAF.¹

After several weeks, the prison administration gave in, promising to relax the women’s isolation conditions—a rare victory.

In May, Knut Folkerts’s trial for murder began in Düsseldorf. It was a rowdy affair, with supporters chanting slogans against isolation torture (four would be fined for disrupting the proceedings). Folkerts denounced the spectacle, explaining that so far as he was concerned, his sentence had

been decided before proceedings even began. Referring to the presiding judge as a “state security rat” and a “fascist pig,” he told him bluntly, “We don’t talk to people like you. We shoot people like you.”² He would be found guilty of two counts of murder in connection with the Buback assassination, receiving a sentence of life in prison.³

In September, also in Düsseldorf, Christof Wackernagel and Gert Schneider were found guilty of membership in a terrorist organization and attempted murder of police officers, stemming from the circumstances of their capture. Removed from the court for heckling during their trial, they each received sentences of fifteen years.⁴

It was on February 6, 1981, that the prisoners returned to coordinated action, initiating their eighth collective hunger strike, demanding association, the release of Günter Sonnenberg, and that their prison conditions be monitored by the International Commission for the Protection of Prisoners and Against Isolation Torture, which had been set up for this purpose in 1979.

The prisoners had hoped that Stefan Wisniewski would use the occasion of his trial, which began in September 1980, to announce their strike in his opening statement. But this was to be the first trial directly related to the Schleyer kidnapping, and Wisniewski felt it should be used to discuss the events of ‘77. By calling the hunger strike at this time, public attention would be shifted to the prisoners’ struggle. This was a source of some discord and led to Wisniewski quietly distancing himself from his comrades, while publicly maintaining solidarity with them. As he would explain years later, “Having posed the question of the prisoners—our weakest point—as politically central in 1977, there was no way I wanted to repeat this fatal error as a prisoner myself.” Nonetheless, once the strike began he did refuse food for six weeks and encouraged various social prisoners to do the same.⁵

Hundreds of prisoners joined the strike, most of them not from the

RAF. As militants in one city explained, “Only with the hunger strike of about 300 political prisoners a connection among us in Hamburg was established again that made it possible for the different groups to enter into a political discussion.... Solidarity with the political prisoners and the fight against imperialism also became part of the politics of the squatters movement in Berlin and the antinuclear movement in northern Germany.”⁶ In West Berlin, thousands of people marched in support of the prisoners, the largest demonstration of its kind in years.⁷ On March 4, members of the FRG Relatives Committee—including the mothers of Rollnik, Stürmer, and Wagner, as well as Becker’s sister—occupied the offices of *Spiegel* magazine, in an attempt to force the media to begin reporting on the strike.⁸



“Prisoners in the FRG on hunger strike since February ‘81; Against extermination and isolation! For life and self-determination; Freedom for Günter Sonnenberg; Inside and outside—one struggle!”

On March 8, International Women's Day, a relatively new group called Women Against Imperialist War marched on Lübeck prison in an attempt to bridge the gap that had always separated the women's movement from the RAF.⁹

There was an important victory on March 11, when Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, Christian Möller, and Rolf Clemens Wagner—who were all being held in Switzerland—announced that their demands had been partially met. They had been promised that their conditions would be relaxed immediately, and that they would be integrated into the general population in the near future.¹⁰ The three resumed eating, issuing a statement in which they explained that, “We view these developments as further proof that it would also be possible for the authorities in the FRG to take *concrete steps* to address the demands put forward by the comrades from the guerilla... thereby allowing them to call off their hunger strike.”¹¹

Sympathy for the prisoners was not confined to partisans of armed struggle; once again, sections of the liberal intelligentsia were successfully mobilized, with some progressive doctors and clergy taking a public stand.¹² Two days after the victory in Switzerland, Amnesty International weighed in, urging the West German authorities to abolish solitary confinement and small-group isolation as regular forms of imprisonment.¹³

When a female justice official showed up to speak at a women's conference in Hamburg she was ejected, denounced by WAIW as “being one of the authorities we wanted to attack but not talk to.”¹⁴ This same conference passed a resolution supporting the prisoners' demands and requesting that the International Federation of Women and the World Council for Peace do the same. Also in Hamburg, a demonstration of three hundred women marched on the offices of the NDR public broadcaster to break through the news blackout surrounding the strike.¹⁵

Even minor, nonviolent, actions could have serious consequences. For instance, Sybille Haag and several other supporters would spend weeks in jail for hanging a banner from an overpass on the autobahn between Stuttgart and Heilbrunn.¹⁶ In another case, a young woman spent six weeks in remand for helping to organize a demonstration in support of the prisoners. Ten people caught spraypainting slogans on highway signs similarly spent six weeks in remand, while one graffiti artist who had been apprehended writing “War to the Palaces” on a fence received a one-year prison sentence. In all of these cases the relatively minor offenses relating to vandalism were supplemented by prosecution for supporting a “terrorist” organization under §129a, and those thus charged found themselves subject to the same treatment as captured combatants: lawyers’ visits through glass partitions, censored mail, restricted visitors, exclusion from group activities, solitary yard time, etc.¹⁷

Such cases were not rare, nor was the state’s reaction considered out of the ordinary. The RAF would later note that fifty people had been charged under §129a during the strike,¹⁸ but this was just the tip of the iceberg: the Attorney General had launched 133 preliminary investigations for promoting a terrorist organization, and in the first half of the year, there were 263 proceedings against 600 people: all for nonviolent support activities—leaflets, posters, slogans, and banners—during the hunger strike.¹⁹

Once again, Amnesty International was successfully lobbied to protest this repression. As the international human rights organization would explain in its annual report:

[I]n Amnesty International’s opinion the arguments in indictments and judicial decisions against supporters of the hunger-strike constitute a threat to the nonviolent exercise of the freedom of expression. Judge Kuhn,²⁰ a judge at the Bundesgerichtshof (federal court), who is responsible for the pre-trial proceedings in virtually all these cases, has argued in many cases that the “ultimate aim” of the

hunger-strike was the continued existence of the Red Army Fraction. Supporters of the hunger-strike who he felt “knew and wanted” this “ultimate aim” therefore supported the terrorist organization, even though the opinions they expressed related only to the direct demands of the hunger-strikers. Many supporters of the hunger-strike were consequently held in investigative detention charged with “making propaganda for a terrorist association” (Article 129a of the criminal code) because of “ultimate aims” which Judge Kuhn held to be apparent from, for example, the use of a red five-pointed star.²¹

While nonviolent protesters were facing such repression, there were also other forms of support that could be termed “more active behavior”: the SPD *Land* office in West Berlin was firebombed, as was the American International School in Düsseldorf-Lohausen, a bomb went off outside a U.S. intelligence building in Gießen doing 200,000 DM in damages, and in Frankfurt nine U.S. military police vehicles were torched at the Gibbs Barracks and a U.S. Army employment office was firebombed.²² In that same city, in what might have been an homage of sorts, two department stores were set alight,²³ and on April 10, attempts were made to torch two more military installations. Then on April 12, a Bremen to Hannover military transport train was derailed using steel cables, causing approximately 200,000 DM in damages.²⁴

While these attacks were welcomed, the RAF prisoners were not happy with every action supposedly carried out on their behalf: in Cologne, a bomb was set off in the subway, injuring one transit worker and six cops, and a train was derailed by metal chains laid across the tracks. The prisoners condemned these attacks, insisting that they must have been the work of state agents attempting to discredit the hunger strike.²⁵

As in previous strikes, participants faced the ordeal of force-feeding and increased brutality from their jailers. For instance, Angelika Speitel, who had suffered from depression since her 1978 arrest, and had attempted suicide in 1980, was repeatedly taken to the hole, stripped naked by male guards, put in chains, and denied water. All throughout, she remained

under constant observation.²⁶

In Celle's high-security wing, Karl-Heinz Dellwo and resistance prisoner Heinz Herlitz were force-fed by means of a tube inserted through the nose. *Die Zeit* reported that it was such a bad procedure that in the end even the prison doctor no longer wanted to continue doing it.²⁷ Such force-feeding was little more than torture, as the procedure was excruciatingly painful, and yet the amount of nutrition delivered was negligible.

By early April, seven prisoners were in serious condition;²⁸ once again Amnesty International contacted officials, noting the risks the prisoners were enduring, and urgently called upon authorities to meet the demand to abolish isolation.²⁹ Yet despite the growing support from both liberal and militant quarters, the state held firm.



Demonstrators call for association and support for the hunger strike.

Tragically, on April 15, what everyone feared, occurred: after sixty-four days without food, Sigurd Debus joined Holger Meins as the second prisoner to die during a RAF prisoners' hunger strike. A tall man, measuring six feet four, he weighed 119 pounds at the time of his death. He had been refusing food since February, and had been subjected to force-feeding beginning on March 20.

Dr. Görlach of the prison office was responsible for Debus at the

Hamburg remand center, where he and other hunger strikers had been brought. There he worked under the close supervision of Dr. Friedland, who had been outspoken in his view that hunger strikes must be dealt with forcefully, as an expression of the guerilla's war against the constitutional state.³⁰

Debus's health had taken a rapid turn for the worse in the first week of April; his mother was permitted to visit with him, but he didn't recognize her, and doctors declared that he may have suffered brain damage.³¹ He lost consciousness on April 7, spending eight days in a coma before he died.

The doctors conducting Debus's autopsy found that "the immediate cause of death was the death of brain tissue as a result of cerebral bleeding and a significant increase in pressure on the brain."³² It was unclear whether this was caused by a stroke or as a result of the insufficient nourishment he received during force-feeding. Critics were quick to blame this cerebral hemorrhage on the fact that Görslach had started adding fat emulsion to the fluid Debus was being force-fed.



Funeral procession for Sigurd Debus.

Just hours after Debus's death, in a public statement ostensibly addressed to Amnesty International, Federal Justice Minister Jürgen Schmude announced that while recognizing prisoner of war status and

granting association in one large group were both out of the question, the *Länder* Justice Ministers would meet to discuss some improvements in prison conditions.³³ The RAF prisoners were led to understand that they would no longer be held in individual isolation, and that more groups would be established. According to some supporters, the timing was no coincidence—the state had been waiting for someone to die before making any concessions:

*Sigurd's death was planned. It was carefully planned that he should die because thereby [the] most could be made out of his death in the media. Sigurd was not a member of the RAF, but he joined the hungerstrike, not, as the authorities would have the public believe, out of solidarity, but because the demands of the RAF prisoners were also his own. He wanted to be put together with prisoners of the RAF as those were his comrades and he was determined not to bear any longer the situation in the so-called "reform prison" he was in, where he could not develop and communicate with anyone of his own history and identity. So it was not just an act of solidarity but an act of political consciousness and self-determination that made him join the hungerstrike. The authorities let his murder coincide with the ending of the hungerstrike to show the public that the RAF is willing and able to sacrifice the life of someone who was not even a member of their own group for their unreasonable demands, to show that the RAF is determined to "step over corpses."*³⁴

Debus died on the Thursday before the long Easter weekend—often an occasion for political protest in the FRG—and that evening people came together in spontaneous demonstrations in several cities. As detailed in one movement history of the West Berlin squatting scene:

In Kreuzberg a loudspeaker van toured the streets announcing the news. The reaction was swift and once again caught the police off guard. A thousand people made their way immediately to the Kurfürstendamm and, rushing through the Easter tourist crowds, smashed 80% of the windows... When the police arrived in force a half an hour later most of the damage was already done and there was nobody around to arrest. From then on the troop carriers and the paramilitary uniforms of the riot police became part of the sights of the city centre. It was becoming blatantly obvious that a large and militant minority had rejected the

*West German state and the consumer society.*³⁵

The following days witnessed dozens of bomb threats across the country, accompanied by dozens of actual firebomb attacks on government buildings. The Saarbrücken offices of the Ministry of the Interior were hit, as was the Lübeck Employment Office, and the Psychology Institute at Hamburg University.³⁶ The Max Planck Institute's West Berlin offices were also bombed, a communiqué explaining that the institute was being targeted for its research into torture,³⁷ and antinuclear activists blew up a power mast at a nuclear power plant near Bremen, drawing a clear connection to the hunger strike in their communiqué.³⁸ At the same time, over a thousand people marched in Hamburg with banners that read “We Mourn Sigurd Debus,”³⁹ and various SPD offices were firebombed in the port city.⁴⁰



Spiegel magazine asked, “Who were those hundreds of masked people who wrecked cars, smashed windows, hoisted banners, and occupied churches across the land?” Journalists wrote ominously about the resistance in the streets, referring to “black blocs” and *Chaoten*. The BKA described the weekend’s events as a “people’s storm of solidarity.”⁴¹

Although the high-security wings remained, the wall of political isolation that the state had erected around the prisoners had been

breached.

Sigurd Debus, 1942-1981

Sigurd Debus had never been a member of the RAF but had gravitated toward armed struggle after leaving the KPD/ML in the early seventies. He helped to bring together a small group which made contact with the RAF, but opted to remain separate, preferring to act on their own. In 1973 they bombed the Cologne Federal Association of German Industrialists building and planted a bomb (which failed to detonate) at a Hamburg municipal government office. Then on February 28, 1974, Debus was captured in Hamburg along with Karl-Heinz Ludwig and Wolfgang Stahl when a bystander blocked their escape following a bank robbery. (A fourth comrade, Gert Wieland, was arrested soon after.)

Debus conducted a political trial, praising the recent Lorenz kidnapping, and when the RAF's Holger Meins Commando seized the West German embassy in Stockholm on April 24, 1975, he and Stahl were among those whose freedom was being demanded. The Stockholm action failed, and his trial statements were deemed to constitute aggravating circumstances—one month later Debus received a twelve-year sentence for the two bombings and three counts of robbery. He spent the next three years in strict isolation, subjected to daily cell and strip searches before and after his solitary yard time.¹



When Debus was finally transferred out of isolation, it was as part of an ambitious police gambit to infiltrate the RAF. At the prompting of the secret police, the Celle prison warden had him transferred next to two social prisoners—Klaus Dieter Loudil and Manfred Berger—who had been secretly recruited by the *Verfassungsschutz*. Pretending to befriend Debus, Loudil and Berger began discussing the possibility of escape, and also helped “smuggle” messages and a radio in for him. In September 1977, Berger was released, and then in May 1978 Loudil pretended to escape from a work furlough—in actual fact, he had been secretly pardoned by Holger Börner, the Hessian president.²

On July 25, 1978, with the help of the GSG-9, the *Verfassungsschutz* detonated a bomb outside Celle, hoping to breach the prison wall. The idea was that Debus would escape and meet up with Loudil and Berger, leading them into the underground, and hopefully to the RAF. Comrades in Amsterdam had already been approached by undercover Dutch agents, and asked if they would be able to provide Debus with shelter, as an escape plan was in the works.³ A multinational penetration

of the underground was what was intended.

The plan failed due to a technical error: the *Verfassungsschutz* agents' bomb was too weak to break through the prison wall, and Debus never escaped. Instead, this "attempted breakout" was used as justification to send him back to isolation, and for the Hannover police authority to float the story that the RAF's "Holger Meins Commando" had attempted the breakout.⁴ (That all members of the actual Holger Meins Commando had been killed or captured in 1975 seemed not to bother anyone.) The entire plot was only exposed years later, in 1986, as part of a parliamentary inquiry into the activities of secret agent Werner Mauss.

Over the next years, Debus's conditions would be slowly relaxed, and in February 1980 he was transferred into general population at Fuhlsbüttel. According to *konkret* magazine, Debus joined the '81 hunger strike because he felt that with the liberal Gerhart Baum as minister of the interior, there was a chance to improve prison conditions for everybody, and because he personally hoped to win association with other political prisoners.

¹ Juhnke "Tod durch Ernährung."

² Hinrich Lührssen, "'Feuerzauber' mit dunklen Figuren," *Die Zeit*, June 12, 1988.

³ de Graaf (2009), 34.

⁴ Hans Schueler, "Feuerzauber am Allerufer," *Die Zeit*, May 2, 1986.

ANTI-IMPS, AUTONOMEN, MILITANT WOMEN: FROM THE SQUATS TO THE ANTI-NATO MOVEMENT

Change has never come from the elderly.... It's a question of mobility and power, because no stiffness, impairment, or fatigue has begun to set in yet. When you're younger, you have a lot more energy. One just has to accept that. But you cannot expect them to continue all the same things or to be just like you.

Irmgard Möller⁴²

Throughout the FRG, the prisoners emerged as an important, but complicated, reference point for the new generation of rebels.

As we have seen, the *Autonomen* had developed out of the antinuclear struggles of the previous decade, establishing their wider perspective in the antimilitary resistance in Bremen in May 1980. Since then, material conditions, exacerbated as youth unemployment hit a postwar high, had provided a promising new theatre of struggle: the squatters' movement.

For years, landlords had allowed buildings to fall into disrepair and go empty in what has been referred to as an “informal capital strike” against rent controls that had been passed in the mid-1970s. Once these properties became run down, their owners became eligible for low-interest city loans to build condominiums for the upwardly mobile. The result was tens of thousands of people without affordable housing, while thousands of houses and apartments, oftentimes entire city blocks, stood empty.⁴³ Things were especially bad in West Berlin, where the political mood was aggravated by the news that members of the Senate had broken their own rules to make 160 million DM in loans to Dietrich Garski, a well-connected architect, who had invested the money in bankrupt housing projects abroad.

Immigrant “guest workers” from Italy and Turkey had pioneered the first housing occupations at the start of the 1970s, but within a few years the *Spontis* and members of the guerilla support scene had come to dominate the growing number of overtly political squats.⁴⁴ This provided a

history that the *Autonomen* could identify with, and they soon renewed a tradition that combined practical concerns with a vision of a better society to come. Like the antinuclear occupations, the squats pushed people to become more radical, both by virtue of the fact that they were deciding to live collectively in new ways, and also by the illegal nature of the exercise itself.

On December 12, 1980, police confronted some people trying to occupy a house in the Kreuzberg area of West Berlin, a neighborhood that had become a stronghold for the alternative movement and the center of the city's squatter scene. News of the showdown quickly spread, sparking rumors that a house had been cleared and that a second eviction was imminent; barricades went up and hundreds of people spent hours fighting with cops and looting nearby stores. Over one hundred were arrested, and over twice that many injured, in what became known as the 12-12 riot.⁴⁵

As a local social worker explained to the *New York Times*:

I saw people take up rocks who never would have had a stone in their hand in a million years. You have a situation where the softer ones see their interests defended by the “no future people” who are ready to take any kind of risk.

*There’s a tremendous potential there, because everything is so poorly defined, for everyone to attach their grievance to the movement and feel linked together through their disillusionment. Among the young people I know, the Social Democrats, who used to have strong contacts with youth, are completely discredited now.*⁴⁶

In the months that followed, squatters repeatedly squared off against police, clashes leading to riots in cities across the Federal Republic, as hundreds of buildings were occupied. In West Berlin, night patrols, a telephone chain, and a radio system were set up in order to guard against attacks by police and right-wing groups. Independent medics were also trained in order to provide first aid to those injured in street confrontations.⁴⁷

The West Berlin Social Democrats were put on the defensive. Already tarnished by the Garski scandal, with the Senators for Finance and the Economy being forced to resign,⁴⁸ they now lost support to the right for their inability to stamp out the squats, and to the newcomer *Alternative Liste* for even attempting to do so. When voters went to the polls on May 10, 1981, the SPD lost control of the Berlin Senate for the first time in twenty-five years, and power passed to a CDU-FDP coalition. Far more significant, though, was the rise of the AL, which, benefiting from a resurgence of the far left, doubled its support from 1979 and won seats in government for the first time ever.⁴⁹

In this polarized municipal arena, the new CDU Senator of the Interior, Heinrich Lummer, threw down the gauntlet, declaring that ten of the largest squats would be cleared by the end of August.

The summer was set for a serious showdown. Squatters responded to Lummer's threats by calling for a month of resistance dubbed "Tuwat,"⁵⁰ initially expected to attract hundreds to West Berlin. The callout itself was banned, and organizers had to go underground to avoid arrest, but the repression and media fearmongering worked to spread the news.⁵¹ In the end, three thousand people gathered to resist the promised police offensive.⁵²

At the same time, the *Autonomen* remained active in the antinuclear movement—they would be present at new mobilizations against the power plants at Gorleben (1980, 1982), Brokdorf (1980, 1981), Kalkar (1982), and beyond⁵³—as well as in other struggles, many of which had ecological and antimilitarist overtones. Perhaps the most famous of these was the resistance to the expansion of Frankfurt's airport, the so-called Startbahn West, which would require significant logging in an area of untouched forest. Despite local opposition, this expansion had been approved by the courts in 1978.⁵⁴ As Freia Anders recounts, while the local Citizens

Initiatives appealed the decision, “in 1980 the Hessian Minister for Economic Affairs Heinz Herbert Karry (FDP) confronted the public with a fait accompli and ordered an immediate start of construction without waiting for the decision of the Hessian Superior Administrative Court.” There followed “the construction of tree-houses and wooden huts in the neighboring Flörsheim forest, a hut village that developed into a popular place for outings and a symbol of resistance.”⁵⁵

Demonstrations and gatherings held in the hut-village regularly attracted thousands of people, bringing together hippies, locals, and *Autonomen*. It lasted for over a year, until police carried out a violent early-morning raid on November 2, 1981. People resisted, and even as police drove some off, others moved in, attempting to reoccupy the site. It took not hours or days, but two weeks for the police to gain control, and even then they were constantly being challenged. Although the hut-village had been cleared, the projected runway site would become the scene of weekly “Sunday strolls” attracting hundreds or even thousands of protesters, for years to come. The *Autonomen* were a regular feature at these “strolls,” and introduced a useful element of low-level violence and clashes, in what has been dubbed the “war of the fences.” This rise in tactical militancy was accompanied by a deepening of analysis, as people began to recognize how the new runway would fit into NATO’s war plans, extending its reach further into the Middle East.⁵⁶

Whether in the antinuclear demonstrations, at Startbahn West, or in the squats, the *Autonomen* attracted young people who felt both culturally and economically alienated from the system. Whereas the sixties generation had grown up at a time of increasing material wealth, fighting against former Nazis and inflexible conservatives, this new generation had come of age in a period of economic decline, facing repression that often wore a social democratic mask. The result was less hope, more angst, and a different kind of anger. This was reflected in the movement’s embrace of

punk rock and its slogan “No Future.” As *Spiegel* observed in its special issue on youth riots, the eighties generation would have simply laughed at anything like Rudi Dutschke’s famous long march through the institutions.⁵⁷ Or as Sabine Lenk of the *Liste aktiver unorganisierter Studenten* put it, “What was previously an extra-parliamentary opposition has become an anti-parliamentary opposition.”⁵⁸

Oskar Lafontaine, at the time mayor of Saarbrücken, feared the youth revolt was “spreading like a wildfire across the Federal Republic,” while North Rhine-Westphalia Labor Minister Friedhelm Farthamm bemoaned the fact that it had reached “even the most secluded provincial areas”—evidence that their less middle-class and student base, as well as their antireformist (or even antipolitical) ethos, allowed the *Autonomen* to reach further afield than the more famous APO ever had.⁵⁹ One poll conducted by *Stern* magazine in early 1981 found that 64 percent of West Germans between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one viewed the squatters with approval.⁶⁰ The squats in turn provided a base for all manner of progressive projects: solidarity with Third World liberation struggles, women’s liberation, gay and lesbian rights, anti-militarism, and, of course, support for the prisoners.

Despite the RAF prisoners’ having reminded people of their situation through the 1981 hunger strike, it was the RZ that enjoyed the most popularity among the *Autonomen*. The Cells’ fluid strategy and structure appeared better suited to this scene, while the RAF was viewed in a much less favorable light (see sidebar on next page).

As for that minority who did identify with the RAF’s struggle, they developed a separate identity, becoming known as anti-imps (short for “anti-imperialists”). Not for the first time, a major part of the RAF’s appeal to these new supporters was the impression that theirs was an uncompromising, “fundamental” struggle; their willingness to go head-to-head with the state described as “posing the question of power.”

This distinction, between anti-imps and *Autonomen*, was further complicated by the militant women's movement, sections of which remained hostile to the RAF, while others were finding inspiration in its struggle.

Radical women's blocs had begun to appear at demonstrations, and both anti-imperialist and *Autonomen* women's groups now appeared in various cities, trying to connect questions of violence against women, reproductive freedom, and patriarchy with the new wave of antimilitarism, youth revolt, and prisoners' struggles.⁶¹ This was part of a broader phenomenon, as those who had been marginalized by the trends toward professionalization and mysticism in late-seventies feminism created new spaces to struggle as women (and often in women only groups) around a wide range of issues. A leaflet distributed in Heidelberg in 1980 was typical of this trend; in it, the authors explained,

*We want to finally put an end to the split between work in women's groups and centers against oppression specific to women, such as rape, and political work against prisons, nuclear arms, and nuclear power plants in mixed groups. For us, this split is alienating. As women/lesbians, we are oppressed, despised and hated from morning to night. From morning to night, we struggle to break through all forms of oppression, whether their source is the police, state security jerk-offs, the media, Helmut Schmidt and his big brother Jimmy Carter, or tediously typical men.*⁶²

RZ vs. RAF?

The bourgeois press loved to play up conflicts—real, exaggerated, or imaginary—between the various tendencies of the radical left. Yet it was no media fabrication that there were indeed real differences between the politics of the *Autonomen* and the RAF. It is undeniable that the new youth movement felt much more at ease with the strategy and methods of the Revolutionary Cells.

In 1983 *Spiegel* magazine interviewed several *Autonomen* on this subject.¹ While their comments were somewhat simplistic, they do provide a good sense of how some radicals, rightly or wrongly, saw the different guerilla groups at the time.

As one put it, “It is important to express solidarity with the people in the high-security units, but the RAF’s strategy and concept is a failure.” Another explained, “The way the RAF did it, isolating themselves from the people and making a political strategy out of that, I simply couldn’t do that.”

Further observations: “The RZ is good. In part, because they are not an organization the state can capture”; and, “A good action is one which doesn’t require a multi-page communiqué, like the RAF’s. Also, one can’t conceive of the RZ as a sort of party the way one can the RAF.”



¹ Hans-Wolfgang Sternsdorff, “Tränengas ist der dritte Bildungsweg,” *Spiegel*, October 24, 1983.

For many radical women, opposition to state violence in the form of nuclear missiles and isolation prison cells—and even support for the guerilla—was already a logical extension to resisting everyday male violence. As a flier released after the German Autumn had declared, “Stockholm, Drenkmann, Buback, Ponto [were] an unbroken chain of screams. Screams of women.... The consciousness of patriarchal society prevails everywhere. And then suddenly it breaks down. It’s perfectly clear why women are attacking. As always. There are many kinds of self-defense.”⁶³

Writing as the Revolutionary Feminist Cells, women from the RZ milieu had made a similar point years earlier:

*We are sick of the daily oppression and destruction and we will assault them before they assault us. The concept of the Revolutionary Cells developed through many years of experience with West German imperialism and patriarchy. Experiences like these: The walk home at night. The fear of being raped. The experience of a woman confronted not only with an economic-clique, but with the oppressive thinking of men. “I’m less than men,” etc. Finally, I defend myself. At night I hit his face. The next time I shall defend myself better; teargas—jiu jitsu. I defend myself because it is my only chance, I use violence. Violence against violence.*⁶⁴

Such views were held by many women in the radical left, and seemed to take their most exemplary form with the Rote Zora guerilla formation emerging from the RZ as an autonomous women’s armed group. At the same time, for some of these women, the RAF was particularly important, as its prisoners (many of whom were women) were facing the heaviest repression, and its struggle remained the most intense.

The prime expression of aboveground feminists grappling with the

RAF's brand of anti-imperialism was the group Women Against Imperialist War, which as we have seen had been active during the 1981 prisoners' hunger strike. WAIW consisted of groups active in several cities, including Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, and Hamburg, which brought together women from the anti-imp and *Autonomen* scenes. As explained in the call-out for a Hamburg WAIW meeting in September 1980, "We are women from throughout the FRG, who are engaged in a common struggle against imperialist and patriarchal domination and who, as a result, want to live and struggle with women with whom we can develop a revolutionary perspective."⁶⁵

As they explained elsewhere, in a document translated into English as part of WAIW's work to build ties with the North American antiimperialist left:

*When we got together as "Women Against Imperialist War" two years ago, it was very important for us to discuss the politics of the RAF and of the prisoners from the RAF. It was our aim to develop a new political offensive out of the women's movement, a movement most of us came from. An offensive that brings our fight against male violence and male supremacy together with our fight against the state and imperialism. We knew that we did not want for ourselves quiet islands within the system, because doing that would mean not to attack male violence and the state, not to abolish it, but to just bypass it. This is why the RAF's politics are so important to us: the comrades from the RAF and their politics do not bypass reality, do not bypass imperialist structures of violence, do not bypass alienation. This is because it is a politics that does not lie and deny reality by making compromises, that does not align itself with the system, but takes the perspective and possibility of liberation from imperialism, our liberation as people, very seriously and fights.*⁶⁶

For women as for men, anti-imperialist strategy had never eschewed struggles within the FRG, but had understood these as occurring in the context of a global war, one that was made visible by the national liberation movements in the Third World, and the guerilla in the First. As such, anti-imps were keenly aware of the clashes taking place abroad, most

specifically in Central America (Nicaragua and El Salvador) and the Middle East (Iran, Turkey, and, of course, Palestine). At home, the anti-imperialists' main interest in West Germany's domestic affairs had always been prison conditions and other forms of repression, for it was there that the conflict with the state was laid bare. Within this context, groups like WAIW would struggle to add an antipatriarchal component to anti-imperialism. The prevalence of violence against women provided an alternate lens with which to expose the lie of "peace" in the metropole. Further dimensions were added to this analysis, when, starting in 1982, the questions of population control and eugenics increasingly served to tie these two systems of domination together conceptually for many radical women.⁶⁷



The explicitly gendered concerns of WAIW were a significant departure from the RAF's traditional analysis and provided a breath of fresh air and space for women who had been active in the feminist movement to find common ground with the guerilla. Yet the import of this development would be overshadowed by an even greater change in the anti-imperialist worldview.

Since Bremen, many anti-imps had begun showing interest in the opposition to the deployment of short- and medium-range missiles, NATO's Double-Track strategy of anti-Soviet brinksmanship. Strictly

speaking, this campaign would not have fit into the RAF's traditional analysis, which considered the conflict between imperialism and the Third World to be paramount. Nevertheless, the antimissile movement and the anti-imps did share a common adversary in the form of U.S. imperialism, as well as an opposition to NATO and U.S. military power within Europe. In this way, the antimissile movement was able to complement an orientation built around solidarity with the national liberation movements. As new forces buoyed the left, with Cruise missiles and Bremen as their reference points, this view quickly gained ground. So much so that for many anti-imps, any superpower sabre-rattling eventually came to be seen as "imperialist," whether directed against the Third World or the USSR, or even against the people of Europe.

Unlike WAIW's antipatriarchal innovations, this shift in emphasis, decentering the Third World and drawing more heavily on anti-American and anti-NATO sentiment, was not limited to the support scene; in fact, it could be discerned as early as the RAF's Haig communiqué, and would only become more apparent in the years following.

The new approach was facilitated by the fact that U.S. and NATO forces were not indifferent to the West German radical left. There was talk of CIA agents being stationed in West Berlin to deal with the movement,⁶⁸ and the revelations that during the squatter battles of late 1981, the U.S. military commander had offered to assist the police against the rioters⁶⁹ and that the CIA had infiltrated squatter protests.⁷⁰ There had been frequent NATO training exercises simulating civil unrest in the FRG, and many felt that either the Atlantic Alliance or the CIA was likely behind the false flag attacks that had dogged the guerilla throughout the 1970s.

Such views were reinforced when Ronald Reagan assumed the U.S. presidency in 1981, his new secretary of state being Alexander Haig: the man whom the RAF had tried to assassinate, and who had subsequently—and somewhat predictably—become a strong advocate of a more aggressive

“antiterrorist” strategy. Soon after his appointment, Haig announced that “International terrorism will take the place of human rights in our concern because it is the ultimate abuse of human rights.”⁷¹ As one anti-imp noted, “Reagan’s open declaration of war against ‘international terrorism,’ and the way in which this war is being carried out... make one thing clear: war has been declared against us—a war that only one side can win: us or them.”⁷²

Nor were such claims pure hyperbole; as recounted in the NATO journal *The Atlantic Community Quarterly*,

*A lively debate occurred in the German press in the spring of 1981 following reports that the United States planned to send to Germany special antiterrorist task forces, which until then had operated only in the Panama Canal Zone and other sensitive areas. Although the specific purpose of the task forces was reported to be guarding nuclear installations, the task forces were said to have been trained in Florida in tactics for combatting urban guerrillas and to have studied the strategies and methods of the Red Army Faction and the Revolutionary Cells.*⁷³

Anti-imps drew conclusions which they then applied directly to the prisoners’ struggle. Believing the Stammheim prisoners to have been murdered, many suspected a NATO death squad of carrying out the executions. Events in other countries shaped people’s understanding of what might occur in the FRG. While it took place thousands of miles away, the 1980 military coup in Turkey (see sidebar) was a particularly poignant example for German radicals. Not only because it corroborated claims that NATO would prefer a military dictatorship in any of its member states rather than risk revolution,⁷⁴ but also because Turkey was the birthplace of many of the FRG’s “guest workers,” and the Federal Republic soon emerged as one of the junta’s most vocal and enthusiastic supporters.



Patsy O'Hara, INLA POW and martyr who died on hunger strike on May 21, 1981.

Closer to home, Northern Ireland provided another example. There, prisoners from the Irish Republican Army and the socialist Irish National Liberation Army had been struggling for years to regain official recognition as POWs, after this status had been withdrawn by the UK's Labour government in 1976. In 1980, faced with a new hardline Tory government, seven prisoners had participated in a first hunger strike, which ended after fifty-three days with no concessions being made. Less than three months later, on March 1, 1981, they embarked upon a second hunger strike. By the time it was called off, on October 3, 1981, ten of their number would be dead.

The NATO Coup in Turkey

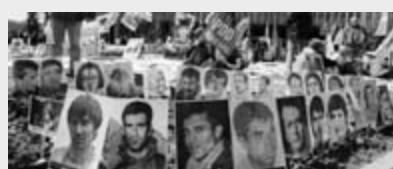
For West German anti-imperialists, a particularly horrific example of what the Atlantic Alliance was prepared to sanction came on September 12, 1980, as NATO generals carried out a *coup d'état* in Turkey.

The NATO coup was supported by the neofascist Grey Wolves, paramilitaries who were already responsible for hundreds of political murders throughout the 1970s, during which time they had been supported by and integrated into NATO's counterinsurgency plans for the region.

Immediately following the coup, wages and salaries were frozen despite an inflation rate of 130 percent. In the years to come, state-owned industries and services would be privatized, the currency devalued, and state expenditures for welfare, health, and education drastically reduced. Workers lost the right to strike and bargain collectively for years to come.¹ Meanwhile the Grey Wolves were used to launch a genocidal war against the Kurdish minority which left tens of thousands dead and countless others raped and tortured.

The NATO coup was followed by over six hundred thousand arrests, political incarceration being a major element of the new government's crackdown against the left. Most of those arrested were tortured, and over five hundred were sentenced to death.²

In the FRG, the expulsion of Turkish and Kurdish communists back to Turkey underscored the RAF's position that the Atlantic Alliance had become the headquarters for world reaction.



Pictures of some of those murdered or simply “disappeared,” placed outside Ankara courthouse over thirty years after the coup.

¹ Justus Leicht “Twenty Years Since the Military Coup in Turkey” World Socialist Website, September 27, 2000.

² *Hürriyet Daily News*, “Turkey’s 1980 Coup Facts,” April 4, 2012; Firat Cengiz, “Turkey’s 1980 Coup Lives on its Legal System.” *The Guardian*, April 11, 2012.

With both British and West German governments facing simultaneous hunger strikes demanding a special status and association for political prisoners, it was only natural for RAF and Republican prisoners to view each other as comrades engaged on the same side in a greater conflict, ultimately against the same foes. INLA prisoner Patsy O’Hara— one of those who would die during the 1981 hunger strike—had sent a solidarity message to the striking RAF prisoners saying just this: “To achieve our aim, our hope for socialism, we cannot, I believe, limit ourselves to national boundaries. Our perspective is internationalist, that is the nature of socialism.... Together with the other INLA-IRSP prisoners on the blanket I send you the warmest greetings and I hope that your struggle will succeed without loss of life.”⁷⁵

In a telegram to the FRG Relatives Committee, the Irish Republican Socialist Party had no trouble drawing the connection between how the Irish and West German prisoners were being treated:

The Irish Republican Socialist Party completely opposes the German government, which hopes to break the will of your political prisoners. We completely support your prisoners’ demands and the purpose of your campaign. While recognizing that your struggle differs from ours, we support your right to better prison conditions. We condemn the brutal torture experienced by the prisoners during the hunger strike, particularly the barbaric forcefeeding, which was responsible for the death of the Irishman Michael Gaughan, who hunger struck in an English prison.

For an end to repression. Victory to the women and men on hunger strike.
*Venceremos.*⁷⁶

The declarations of solidarity went both ways, WAIW and other groups routinely expressing support for the Irish hunger strikers.⁷⁷

Just as the prisoners in these different contexts viewed one another as comrades, each government would encourage the other to maintain its hard line against their demands, and NATO was indeed one structure which tried to elaborate a multinational strategy against attempts to have the Geneva Convention and other international legal agreements applied to captured revolutionaries.

For the RAF prisoners and their supporters, there even seemed to be a smoking gun, as an article in the October 1980 *NATO Review* warned against recognizing prisoners' political status, specifically lamenting "governments conceding to terrorist convicts the privileged status of political prisoners," and "yielding to demands... for official enquiries, or international investigations, into alleged ill-treatment of terrorist suspects or convicts." As the article's author, Paul Johnson, argued, "The terrorists succeed when they provoke oppression; but they triumph when they are met with appeasement."⁷⁸

While articles in the *NATO Review* are not policy documents, and the comments on political status were part of a long laundry list of advice from Johnson, the piece did reflect a definite consensus that had taken shape throughout Western Europe and North America. While he had previously served as editor of the *New Statesman*, at the time that he wrote this article, Johnson was in fact a close advisor and speech-writer for Margaret Thatcher, recently elected prime minister of Great Britain, and as such the woman who would preside over the Irish prisoners' deaths in the months to come. RAF supporters would often refer to this passage as a "NATO directive" against the prisoners—an exaggeration, perhaps, but one that nonetheless matched the overall reality of the situation.⁷⁹

This understanding of NATO's role as a key instrument of imperialism was shared by revolutionaries throughout Europe; for instance, following the May 1980 busts in Paris, supporters had written in to *Libération* outlining the way in which,

*This Europe of cops is not just the dream come true of Herold's gang, it is one part of the military and political project of the U.S.A.; the NATOization of all of Europe, meaning as a bloc totally integrated within the U.S.A.'s war strategy, obviously directed against the people of the Third World, but also against those here who refuse to submit.... Putting into place sophisticated and large-scale means to oppose the armed movements, especially the RAF, is a manifestation of this "struggle." This is particularly the case so far as the RAF is concerned, as it has been struggling precisely and directly against this Europe under Germano-American hegemony: and concretely so in '79 against the instigator of this plan, General Haig, at the time the head of NATO, who they attempted to assassinate with the Andreas Baader Commando.*⁸⁰

One result of this perspective was that the struggle for the prisoners could be framed as one part of the struggle against NATO—and struggling against NATO as a means to support the prisoners. Indeed, NATO was beginning to appear as the very embodiment of imperialism in Western Europe, in a way that built upon and highlighted the Alliance's very real involvement in counterinsurgency operations around the world. As RAF prisoners held in Stammheim would explain in a 1984 statement:

*The revolutionary struggle in Western Europe faces a unified system centralized by NATO. The revolution in Portugal is threatened with NATO intervention. Spain has been integrated into the EC and NATO against the wishes of the population, institutionalizing the fascist generals. The NATO putsch in Turkey. Ireland and Italy experience NATO counterinsurgency. The formation of this unstable unified system makes destroying NATO the orientation for the revolutionary strategy in Western Europe.*⁸¹

At the same time, choosing to focus on NATO only made good tactical sense; Birgit Hogefeld, an anti-imp who would later join the RAF, was

quoted in *Spiegel* explaining how the RAF's ideas suited the mood that was sweeping the country.⁸² The question of new missiles being stationed in the FRG was provoking widespread opposition, and antipathy toward NATO was combining with a latent anti-Americanism and concerns about Ronald Reagan, who was beating the war drum from the other side of the Atlantic. This all seemed to offer a chance for the anti-imps to reach out to the radical left, just as some on the radical left saw it as an opportunity to reach out to "ordinary Germans."

Finally, attacking NATO, and elevating the East-West conflict to the same level as that between North and South, was in step with an ideological turn taking place throughout the West German left. The GDR and the other real existing socialist states suddenly appeared in a more sympathetic light. As Helmut Pohl has explained,

...political conditions were intense, with the stationing of missiles and the Reagan policies. You saw the relationship to the socialist states differently if you were afraid that a war was coming. For example, we know that radical left groups in the movement that existed at that time went to the FDJ⁸³ summer gatherings—Autonomen, as well as women's groups and professional associations. This was not a RAF thing, but rather it must be seen as an expression of the overall situation.⁸⁴

Indeed, the RAF was not the only armed group to adopt an anti-NATO focus: the Revolutionary Cells had been bombing U.S. military bases for years, and in 1981 they attacked their first targets related to the Startbahn West. Attacks against the military-industrial complex would soon be a priority for the RZ as well.

The guerilla was taking its lead from the streets, where the *Autonomen* were joined by unprecedented numbers in opposing the brinksmanship of the Reagan administration and its European allies. For the RZ to embark on this trajectory was only natural, given its movementist orientation. For the RAF, though, this represented a gamble, for there was the real risk that its politics might be obscured without any consequent gain.

ENTERING THE FRAY

If the *Autonomen* had captured the antimilitarist initiative with the Bremen riots, they remained just one part of a broader “peace” movement which was rooted in the Citizens Initiatives, and attracted people of all political persuasions from across the FRG.

This new movement’s largest protests up to this point were planned for September 13, 1981, the day that Alexander Haig—Reagan’s new secretary of state—was scheduled to visit West Berlin. It was clear to everyone that this had the potential to be the opening chapter in a major wave of anti-American and anti-military activity.

Just a few months after the prisoners’ hunger strike, and in the middle of the Tuwat gathering, the RAF went into action, carrying out two attacks in rapid succession, each of which targeted the U.S. forces stationed in the FRG.

On August 31, the Sigurd Debus Commando detonated a car bomb at Ramstein USAREUR, a U.S. military airbase and the headquarters for NATO air forces in central Europe. The explosion took place at 7 am, just outside the Air Force headquarters building,⁸⁵ shattering windows up to 100 meters away and setting cars aflame across the parking lot. Twenty people were injured—eighteen Americans, including a general, and two Germans—and damage to surrounding homes and automobiles was estimated at 7.2 million DM.⁸⁶ Police would eventually find that the engine of the RAF’s vehicle had been blown so high it had landed on the roof of a nearby five-story building.⁸⁷

The bomb went off just before most people at the base arrived for work—as one witness noted, “It’s a miracle that no one was killed. A half-hour later, and there would have been a massacre.”⁸⁸ In no time at all, military police in full battle dress and brandishing M-16 rifles ringed the parking lot, as roadblocks went up in the surrounding area—a clear case of closing

the stable doors after the horse had bolted, for the guerillas were long gone.



Ramstein airbase, 1981, after a visit from the Sigurd Debus Commando.

The BKA had known that Ramstein was a possible RAF target, as plans for the base had been found in a safehouse the year before.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, it came as a shock—while 1981 had been marked by numerous actions and protests against the American military presence, this was a potentially deadly attack, the likes of which had not been seen since the 1972 May Offensive. Furthermore, this was the first RAF attack inside the FRG since the German Autumn. People took notice.

The Ramstein bombing set off a familiar dynamic. Just as the prisoners' hunger strikes elicited solidarity actions on the outside, actual RAF attacks would inspire the movement to act. The way this normally played out was that high-level guerilla actions would be followed by anti-imps carrying out less spectacular low- and medium-level attacks, often against similar targets. For instance, two days after the bombing, persons unknown set fire to the SPD's Frankfurt offices, leaving behind graffiti referring to Ramstein and calling for "Death to U.S. Imperialism."⁹⁰ This was followed by the torching of several cars belonging to U.S. troops in Wiesbaden. Later that week, the same day that tens of thousands gathered to protest against Haig's visit to West Berlin, firebombs were thrown at the residence of the

U.S. consul general in Frankfurt.

Indeed, Haig's visit itself proved to be a major embarrassment for the state. One week before, the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (Confederation of German Trade Unions) had held a pro-American “peace” rally in West Berlin to mark the forty-second anniversary of the beginning of World War II, one of several events organized by the DGB to counter the growing antimissile movement. Coming one day after the Ramstein attack, this backfired, as hundreds of masked *Autonomen* joined the march and began smashing the windows of banks and businesses on the Kurfürstendamm. There were seventeen arrests and forty-two police were injured, with fighting lasting well into the night⁹¹—just a taste of what was to come.

Haig's arrival the following Tuesday was greeted by fifty thousand demonstrators, including anti-imps who had printed up fliers with the secretary of state's picture and the caption “2.7 seconds too late”—a reference to the RAF's failed attempt on his life two years earlier.⁹² Seven thousand police were deployed; undaunted, as the demo was drawing to a close some three thousand militants broke off and headed toward the Berlin-Schöneberg city hall.⁹³ Initially taken by surprise, the police rallied and then attacked with water cannons, tear gas, and baton charges. People built makeshift barricades by setting cars and dumpsters alight, but eventually the streets were cleared, in part by police driving through the crowds at high speed.⁹⁴ There were 105 arrests and 151 police were injured.⁹⁵

The Haig demonstration was another political victory for the *Autonomen*, with the next day's headlines reading “Haig in Berlin—Flames, Blood, and Looting.” (Of course, the vast majority of protesters did not engage in—and likely disapproved of—the violence, but the conservative wing of the peace movement had yet to figure out how to deal with the more radical street scene.)

The RAF launched its next attack just two days later, on September 15, attempting to assassinate General Frederick Kroesen, supreme commander of the U.S. Army and of NATO's Central Europe Section.

The guerillas had camped out overnight on a wooded slope near a bridge crossing the Neckar River, a route the general regularly took from his suburban home to the U.S. Army headquarters in Heidelberg. On the morning in question, he was traveling with his wife in his chauffeured car, followed by a military police escort. The guerillas took aim with an RPG-7 grenade launcher and fired. One grenade blew up the car's trunk, while another exploded on its fender, as the vehicle was strafed with bullets.



General Kroesen's car, slightly the worse for wear...

Such an attack would normally have been deadly: in an ordinary car the gas tank should have caught fire and exploded. However, one of the general's bodyguards had apparently noticed they were being tailed by individuals on a motorcycle earlier that year, and upon running its plates had connected it to the anti-imp scene.⁹⁶ Heightened security measures had been taken, and a new car with armor plating ordered. As such, although the vehicle was hit by two grenades and numerous bullets, its passengers escaped with their lives, though both suffered serious damage to their hearing.⁹⁷

Kroesen spoke to reporters from the hospital where he and his wife were

treated for minor cuts from broken glass. “I don’t know who was responsible, but I know there was a group that declared war on us,” he said, referring to the RAF, “and I’m beginning to believe them.”⁹⁸

Despite the fact that the general had survived largely unscathed, the technical skill involved raised eyebrows. As one police spokesman put it, the use of a military weapon lent a “new quality” to the guerilla.⁹⁹ More than that, the RPG-7 is intended to be used against tanks—the general’s Mercedes was only a fraction that size, and was partially obscured by brush, yet it had been hit twice from a range of almost five hundred feet.¹⁰⁰

Years later, Inge Viett would claim that the East Germans had provided the training for this attack. According to the former 2JM guerilla, *Stasi* agents had spent a few days that spring at the Briesen camp, showing RAF members how to use the RPG-7, having them blow up a series of Mercedes limousines, manned first by plastic dummies, and then finally sacrificing a German Shepherd dog. This apparently led to a heated argument, as the guerillas saw no point in killing a defenseless animal, but the *Stasi* insisted, wanting to show what effect the explosion would have on a back-seat passenger.¹⁰¹

It must be noted that Viett’s account has been contradicted by other former RAF members, including Helmut Pohl, who stated in a 1991 interview with the *Frankfurter Rundschau* that the training lesson she refers to occurred after, not before, the Kroesen attack, the purpose being to ascertain what the guerillas had done wrong.¹⁰² Furthermore, Pohl specified that the training in question had been supplied by the National People’s Army, not the *Stasi*. In 2011, Christian Klar (who had been released in 2008) accused Viett of having lied about the date in order to lay the basis for prosecuting *Stasi* agents on grounds of “supporting a terrorist organization” thirty years after the fact, as the former GDR had by that point been annexed by the FRG. According to Klar, this was part of a deal

Viett made in exchange for a reduced sentence.¹⁰³ (It is true that the day after Viett made this assertion, charges were laid against a *Stasi* officer in this regard. However, they were subsequently dropped, and while Viett has issued a public apology for her statements, she has also vehemently denied that they were part of any kind of deal.)¹⁰⁴

At the time, of course, such stories were both unknown and unimagined. For the anti-imps, the attack on Kroesen, like the Ramstein bombing before it, had been a political success, an example of the guerilla's relevance to the aboveground left:

*...many people now realized that the targets attacked have great importance for the U.S. war strategy. In May 1981 for example the women's peace groups organized a huge demonstration to the Headquarters in Ramstein. The attacks of the RAF have been discussed within the various peace groups and, unlike 1977, there have been few denunciations.*¹⁰⁵

Momentum continued to build. At the very moment that Kroesen was giving his second press conference about the attack, police identified and defused two bombs that had been placed on the railway tracks used to carry supplies in and out of the Rhine-Main airbase in Frankfurt.¹⁰⁶ That same week, persons unknown planted a bomb in the offices of Dow Chemical in Düsseldorf, though it too was disarmed before it could go off.¹⁰⁷

Heavier attacks lent their weight to what would otherwise have passed as relatively innocuous harassment, as when on one evening the tires of cars belonging to American GIs in Frankfurt were slashed—vandalism that made the international newswires as the vehicles were also daubed with the injunction to “Stop the NATO runway” (a reference to Startbahn West), and the words “Kroesen” and “Ramstein.”¹⁰⁸ Of course, as we have seen, the flipside to this was that even something as harmless as spraypainting graffiti could be interpreted as support for a “terrorist” organization under

§129a.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, this rise in resistance was opposed not only by the state, but also by the liberal section of the peace movement. Since the decline of the movement against the Vietnam War in the early 1970s, “peace” activism had become the purview of Citizens Initiatives and church groups, often overlapping with the pacifist wing of the antinuclear movement, sometimes even having ties to the SPD. This hegemony had been cracked in Bremen in 1980, but the radicals were still fighting an uphill battle. As one writer has put it, it was an awkward situation, as “there was a booming peace movement on the one hand, and a weak antiwar movement on the other.”¹¹⁰

A look at the October 1981 Peace Congress held in West Berlin provides a snapshot of the different coexisting forces. The Congress had been called to establish a central Coordinating Committee for the entire movement; a process that included the marginalization of the *Autonomen* as part of its agenda. Worlds collided as Karsten Voigt and former Justice Minister Hans-Jochen Vogel—both of the SPD—took the podium. Anti-imps stormed in screaming and whistling and smashing the light fixtures. Taking the floor, they read out the prisoners’ demands from the hunger strike earlier that year, and then sat down chanting, “Vogel murderer! Vogel out! Voigt out!” At first the audience was unsure how to respond—then, after some delay, organizers linked arms and “nonviolently” forced the anti-imps into a corner. Eventually the SPD politicians were able to talk, though by that time half the audience had left.¹¹¹

Within the antimissile movement, armed struggle remained far more unpopular than simple street militancy. Nevertheless, the RAF’s ‘81 offensive had clearly been a setback for the state, which had hoped to be done with the guerilla in ‘77. Instead, it now faced a combination of clandestine and aboveground opponents committed to building a resistance movement—a small current, to be sure, but one which was

growing, and making all sorts of interesting connections.

Repression—meaning capture or death—remained one obvious way to counter this development. However, following the arrests of the past few years, by 1981 the police seemed to have run out of luck. Looking for new leads, they announced a 50,000 DM (\$22,225) reward for information regarding the Ramstein or Kroesen attacks, or which would lead to the arrest of a guerilla or to the location of a RAF safehouse¹¹²—to no avail. Initially, at least, it seemed that for all their resources, the combined might of the BKA, the *Verfassungsschutz*, and sundry local constabularies was coming up empty.

Catch as catch can, it was the aboveground supporters who were now targeted.

Following the attack on Kroesen, police had recovered the rocket launcher, along with camping equipment and cans of cocoa, that had been abandoned on the hillside where the RAF had lain in wait. Fingerprints belonging to Klar, Mohnhaupt, and other individuals were apparently lifted from the scene, and this provided the initial focus for the investigation. Police released photos of various vehicles that the guerillas had allegedly been spotted driving, as well as the motorcycle that Kroesen's bodyguard claimed to have noticed earlier that year.

§129a was used to try and shake something loose from the scene, anyone with radical politics being a potential target. Of the thousands investigated under this law, hardly any were actually charged, so much so that it became known as “the investigator’s paragraph.”¹¹³ (Of 2,131 preliminary proceedings between 1980 and 1987, only 30 led to convictions.) Nevertheless, once proceedings were initiated, the target of the investigation was placed under twenty-four-hour-a-day surveillance, which often included phone taps. In extreme cases, people were held in remand, with their correspondence censored and all visits through a glass partition, like other political prisoners.¹¹⁴ Of course, beyond those actually named in

proceedings, §129a also provided the means to criminalize and intimidate the militant left in general, and the anti-imps in particular. As observed by *Bunte Hilfe*, a prisoner support group, “[§129a] seeks to disrupt and prevent discussion between the different sections of the movement, by making it clear that anyone involved might find themselves facing years in prison.”¹¹⁵

Building on this, the state now refined its propaganda, developing the position that not all RAF combatants had gone underground, but that there was also an “aboveground RAF.” After years of charging comrades for supporting the guerilla, this now established a basis for bringing them to trial as if they were actual RAF members, a qualification that had both political and legal consequences, as “membership” made one liable to prison terms much longer than those for mere “support” or “promotion.”¹¹⁶

Among the first attempts to implement this thesis were the cases of Karl Grosser and Jürgen Schneider, two anti-imps arrested on April 10, a few days before Debus died.¹¹⁷ Police would claim that Schneider had helped to write the eighth hunger strike statement, but still only charged him with support. Grosser, on the other hand, would be charged with actual membership in the RAF: even though he had been in prison since April, he was accused of having helped to carry out the attack on Kroesen in September, the police claiming that it was he who had been the person allegedly tailing the general’s car on a motorcycle earlier that year. Still, when he was tried in 1982, the Stuttgart court did not find the claim of membership convincing, and instead sentenced him for support—with a three-year sentence—while Schneider received two and a half years.¹¹⁸



Solidarity poster for Helga Roos, Karl Grosser, and Jürgen Schneider.

Cases like these, and the accusation that the RAF had aboveground members, served to threaten and intimidate anyone who refused to reject armed struggle as beyond the pale. As one movement flier put it, “Faced with our new won strength, which began with the militant 1980 demo in Bremen and the common struggle with the hunger-striking prisoners, and included the anti-Haig demonstration and the struggle against NATO’s Startbahn West, the state has reacted with the police fabrication of an ‘aboveground RAF,’ with the goal of destroying this movement with intimidation, criminalization, and imprisonment.”¹¹⁹

One month after the RAF’s summer offensive, the “aboveground RAF” story was trotted out again. On October 16, Helga Roos was arrested in Frankfurt, the police claiming that she had purchased the tent used by the Gudrun Ensslin Commando the night before the Kroesen attack, and that her fingerprints had been found on a can of cocoa at their campsite. Soon after, Gabriele Gebhard was arrested in Mannheim, also accused of having helped the guerilla carry out its recent attacks. Then in December, several anti-imps were picked up in a series of raids in Heidelberg. This was either a fishing trip or straight up harassment; in any case, they were all released a few days later, although they faced subsequent investigations under §129a. The substance of their anti-imperialist activity consisted of supporting the prisoners’ hunger strike, demonstrating against U.S. foreign policy, and

attending public meetings against Startbahn West and in support of the resistance in El Salvador and Palestine.¹²⁰

As for Gebhard, police claimed she had lived with Gisela Dutzi, an anti-imp who had gone underground in March and was believed to have joined the RAF. She was also accused of having rented a safehouse in Heidelberg used by the RAF in 1980.¹²¹ By the end of 1981, these charges had been dropped, there being insufficient evidence to mount a case.

Things were more serious for Roos. She had already served one year in prison for participating in the 1978 dpa occupation, and the police had observed her attending the trial of RAF member Sieglinde Hofmann. Earlier in 1981, her friend Barbara Augustin had been arrested at the Swiss border with a carload of guns and explosives—according to police, Augustin was a member of the RZ.¹²² Roos was charged with “membership” under §129a and was held in strict isolation in Stammheim, Bühl, and Zweibrücken prisons. In July 1982, while still awaiting trial, she hunger and thirst struck for a week—this was both in solidarity with Sieglinde Hofmann and Ingrid Barabaß who were hunger striking for association,¹²³ and also for her own sake, as she herself demanded association with other prisoners from the resistance.¹²⁴ Eerily echoing the treatment Ulrike Meinhof had been subjected to, the BAW even went so far as to attempt (unsuccessfully) to have her declared insane and committed to a mental institution without trial.¹²⁵ (Two hundred and fifty women went to Stammheim to support Roos; as they noted in their call-out, “The attack on one of us is meant to destroy our hope for change where we’re carrying out resistance, against NATO and in our daily lives.”)¹²⁶

Unsafe Waters

Besides appealing to the public in its hunt for the guerilla, the *Verfassungsschutz* continued to infiltrate the movement. In 1981, the RAF identified two likely agents in the Hamburg scene and arranged for a letter to be circulated outlining their concerns. Egon and Paula Giordano were significantly older than most other activists, and Paula would in fact claim to have been active in the anti-Nazi resistance decades before. She was a regular at meetings of Women Against Imperialist War. For his part, Egon had worked with anti-NATO groups and for a movement newspaper, and both were involved in the Hamburg *Friedenskoordination*, which coordinated radical antimilitary actions.¹

Women Against Imperialist War echoed the RAF's accusations, and uncovered evidence that Egon had in fact been expelled from the KPD in the 1950s because he had been informing on people to the *Verfassungsschutz*. All of which would be confirmed one year later, when Hamburg *Verfassungsschutz* chief Christian Lochte admitted to *Spiegel* that he had planted the two former KPD members in Hamburg.²



¹ Frauen gegen imperialistischen Krieg, *Stellungnahme zu Egon u. Paula Giordano*. September 15, 1981.

² *Spiegel*, “Die alte RAF ist zu Ende gegangen,” November 22, 1982.

The state’s strategy of criminalizing activists as members of the “aboveground RAF” would pay handsome dividends. In the years to come, many were those who would spend time in prison as a result of such charges. This not only lent §129a its bite, it also isolated the militant left, as many people feared what might happen if they worked on the “wrong” political issue.

These “aboveground RAF” arrests prompted the real RAF to issue a public statement, refuting the state’s allegations. The RAF accused police of planting Roos’s fingerprints, and denied that any of the individuals arrested had had any involvement in the summer’s attacks. It was pointed out that there was a new resistance taking shape, and that this was the state’s real target—by acting as if anti-imps were in fact aboveground RAF members, the state was laying the groundwork to clamp down on the entire radical left.

This was an important observation, shared by many, and in harmony

with the RAF's line that guerillas must go underground, that any "aboveground organization" would simply amount to setting people up for arrest. As they had argued in *Serve the People* in 1972,

*We do not believe that the guerilla can be formed as the "illegal wing" of a legal organization. Such an illegal wing would lead to the illegalization of the organization, i.e., its liquidation, and nothing else.*¹²⁷

The arrests of aboveground supporters and the criminalization of otherwise legal activities by §129a bore out the truth of this early observation. However, the RAF could only be renewed by support from the radical left. In the 1970s, this may have occurred organically, but by 1981 most militants on the street were a generation younger than most RAF members. What's more, by 1981, the Revolutionary Cells were offering a more attractive, and seemingly more effective, alternative that consisted of blurring the line between aboveground and clandestine activists.

The RAF grappled with the tensions that arose from these contradictory realities, trying to chart a way forward in this unfamiliar territory.

Nevertheless, despite these questions, and the arrests of supporters, it was clear that the RAF had finally overcome the trauma of '77. There was a new movement afoot, with potential beyond that of the APO from which the guerilla had first emerged.

The guerilla had reached out, and some people had reached back.

It finally seemed like things just might be back on track.

1. *Hamburger Abendblatt*, "Amerika-Haus war besetzt," March 3, 1980; "Erklärung zur Besetzung des Amerikahauses in Hamburg," in Marat, 43.

2. dpa, "Stürmischer Stammheim-Prozeß," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, May 21, 1980.

3. dpa, "Geschossen oder nicht? Lebenslang für Folkerts," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, August 1, 1980.

4. dpa, “Vogel: Gewalt von rechts nimmt zu,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, September 6, 1980.
5. Wisniewski, 5.
6. “Summary of a Brochure by Autonomist and Anti-imperialist Groups,” in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, *War on the War Makers: Documents and Communiqués from the West German Left* (San Francisco: John Brown Book Club n.d.), 8.
7. Geronimo, 101.
8. Wienke Zitzlaff, interviewed by *Libertad*, “Interview with the West German Resistance!” *Libertad*, May 1986: 988. *Hamburger Abendblatt*, “Besetzer in der ‘Spiegel’-Kantine: Protest gegen ‘Isolationshaft’,” March 5, 1981.
9. Michel, 79-80. Discussed in further detail below, for many radical women, WAIW would come to provide a route out of the impasse of the late 1970s.
10. *hungerstrekabbrucherklärung* (sic) March 11, 1981—readers should note that this document has been translated and is available at http://www.germanguardilla.com/red-army-faction/documents/81_03_11.php.
11. Ibid.
12. *Resistance*, “Anti-Imperialist Prisoners: The Struggle Against Isolation,” no. 5 (Winter 1983): 38.
13. Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 1981* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1981), 290.
14. *Guerilla Notes*, “Statement from Women Against Imperialist War, April 3rd 1981,” 1981: 20.
15. Michel, 78.
16. Hans Schueler, “Knast für Schmierer?” *Die Zeit*, May 22, 1981. The banner read, “The RAF prisoners have been hunger striking for 9 weeks against isolation—Immediate association for RAF prisoners.”
17. *Spiegel*, “Spatzen und Sternchen,” July 13, 1981.
18. See page 202.
19. Bunte Hilfe Nürnberg, “Wunderwaffe oder Papiertiger?” in Wüster Haufen, *Aufruhr: widerstand gegen repression und §129a Widerstand Gegen Repression und §129a* (Berlin: ID Archiv, 1991), 227-228.
20. This was of course the same Judge Horst Kuhn who had seen fit to interrogate

Günter Sonnenberg in 1977 while he was still in intensive care. See [page 35](#).

21. Amnesty International (1981), 291-292.

22. "Kommuniqué: Die Solidarität der Menschen gründet in der Revolte!!!," "Kommuniqué: Die Solidarität der Menschen gründet in der Bewegung der Revolte!!!" and "Kommuniqué," in Marat, 56-58; United Press International, "Bomb Damages U.S. Air Base in Germany," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, August 31, 1981; dpa, "Vor neun Jahren gab es Tote in Heidelberg," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, September 16, 1981.

23. *Die Zeit*, "Hungerstreik: Mobilisierung der Anhänger," April 17, 1981. In 1968, Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Thorwald Proll, and Horst Söhnlein had set fire to two Frankfurt department stores to protest the carnage in Vietnam. This is widely viewed as the precursor action to the formation of the RAF. See Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 47-48.

24. dpa, "Vor neun Jahren gab es Tote in Heidelberg."

25. See [page 196](#).

26. Hans Schueler and Gerhard Spörl, "Krieg aus dem Knast," *Die Zeit*, June 5, 1981. As has been noted elsewhere, women prisoners were doubly attacked, subjected to sexism, forced gynecological examinations, attempts at psychiatrization, etc., as well as the "normal" attacks on political prisoners. (Michel, 98)

27. Schueler and Spörl, "Krieg aus dem Knast."

28. *Die Zeit*, "Hungerstreik: Mobilisierung der Anhänger."

29. Amnesty International (1981), 290.

30. These statements had been made at a 1975 conference of prison doctors. See: Andreas Juhnke, "Tod durch Ernährung," *konkret* 4/86.

31. *Hamburger Abendblatt*, "Seine Mutter nicht erkannt," April 9, 1981.

32. Juhnke "Tod durch Ernährung."

33. *Die Zeit*, "Hungerstreik: Einlenken nach dem ersten Opfer," April 24, 1981.

34. *Guerilla Notes*, "Statement from Women Against Imperialism," 1981: 29.

35. Frank Jackson, *Squatting in West Berlin* (London: Hooligan Press, 1987), 8.

36. *Spiegel*, "Schnell aufschaukeln," April 27, 1981.

37. "Kommuniqué: Die Solidarität der Menschen Gründet in der Bewegung der Revolte!!!" in Marat, 59.

- [38.](#) “Summary of a Brochure by Autonomist and Anti-imperialist Groups,” in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 8.
- [39.](#) jok, “Friedlicher Protest gegen Zwangsernährung,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, April 27, 1981.
- [40.](#) rob, “Radler nach Brandanschlag von der Polizei gestellt,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, April 30, 1981.
- [41.](#) *Spiegel*, “Schnell aufschaukeln.”
- [42.](#) Irmgard Möller, interviewed by Dagmar Brunow and Luka Skywalker, “Zur Mythenbildung nicht geeignet.”
- [43.](#) Katsiaficas, 89.
- [44.](#) Serhat Karakayali, “Lotta Continua in Frankfurt, Türken-Terror in Köln: Migrantische Kämpfe in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik.”
- [45.](#) Katsiaficas, 92.
- [46.](#) William Guess quoted in John Vinocur, “A Cry of ‘No Future’ Rallies West Germany’s Young,” *New York Times*, March 18, 1981.
- [47.](#) Alexander, 214.
- [48.](#) Ibid., 194-195.
- [49.](#) Katsiaficas, 98.
- [50.](#) *Tuwat* means “do something.” This was a deliberate reference to the countercultural festival of three years prior, which as we have seen, had been known as *Tunix*, or “do nothing.”
- [51.](#) A.G. Grauwacke, *Autonome in Bewegung* (Assoziation A: Berlin, 2008), 50-56.
- [52.](#) Andrej Holm and Armin Kuhn, “Squatting and Urban Renewal: The Interaction of Squatter Movements and Strategies of Urban Restructuring in Berlin,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2010.
- [53.](#) Geronimo, 131-134.
- [54.](#) Freia Anders, *Violent Action and Political Communication: The ‘Autonomen’ at the Startbahn West 1981-1988*, conference paper presented at This Town’s Gonna Blow... (Bremen, May 2010), 2.
- [55.](#) Ibid.
- [56.](#) Geronimo, 109; Katsiaficas, 87.

57. *Spiegel*, “Da packt dich irgendwann ‘ne Wut,” December 22, 1980.
58. *Spiegel*, “Wir sind unregierbar und unkalkulierbar,” March 26, 1979.
59. *Spiegel*, “Deutschland ist krank,” March 23, 1981.
60. Associated Press, “Youths Defy Consumer Values of W. German Establishment,” *The Lethbridge Herald*, April 16, 1981.
61. Michel, 74-76.
62. Ibid., 74.
63. Untitled document about the West German women’s movement, in the editors’ possession, 1980s.
64. Revolutionary Feminist Cells, *Women at War* (np, nd). Document in the editors’ possession.
65. Michel, 77.
66. Women Against Imperialist War (Hamburg), “War on Imperialist War,” in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 25.
67. Untitled document about the West German women’s movement, 1980s.
68. “Redebeitrag auf der Demo gegen die Räumung der Startbahn West und die Häuserräumungen in Berlin vom 15.10.81 am Platz der Luftbrücke,” in Marat, 80-81.
69. Jackson, 16-17.
70. Women Against Imperialist War (Hamburg), in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 22.
71. Associated Press, “Haig Takes Hard Line in Diplomatic Debut,” *Gettysburg Times*, January 39, 1981.
72. “Redebeitrag auf der Demo gegen die Räumung der Startbahn West und die Häuserräumungen in Berlin vom 15.10.81 am Platz der Luftbrücke,” in Marat, 81.
73. Daniel J. Nelson, “The Problem of Terrorism Against American Forces in Germany,” *The Atlantic Community Quarterly*, Fall 1985.
74. In this regard, the Hamburg chapter of Women Against Imperialist War was clear: “According to the operation plan 101-1, which has been forced upon the members of NATO by Washington, the American Commander-in-Chief in Europe is entitled to undertake his own actions of repression when there is ‘internal unrest’ in the FRG. According to this plan, black lists have been established in all the countries of NATO. These lists contain the names of all the people that are to be arrested by the U.S. military

police in time of civil unrest.” (Women Against Imperialist War [Hamburg], in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 22.)

[75.](#) Patsy O’Hara, “Brief von Patsy O’Hara,” *Zusammen Kämpfen* no. 2 (April 1985): 10-11.

[76.](#) Westdeutsches Solidaritätskomitee, *Pressemitteilung* (Oberursel, April 9, 1981).

[77.](#) Michel, 78, 80.

[78.](#) Paul Johnson, “The Seven Deadly Sins of Terrorism,” *NATO Review* no. 5 (October 1980): 33.

[79.](#) See [page 193](#). Also, “Kommuniqué,” in Marat, 58.

[80.](#) *Libération*, “La RFA, le BKA, et 5 Allemandes,” June 3, 1980.

[81.](#) *Zusammen Kämpfen*, “Erklärung vom 10.4.84 aus Stammheim zu den Aktionen 81,” no. 1, 3.

[82.](#) *Spiegel*, “Schnell aufschaukeln,” April 27, 1981.

[83.](#) The *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, or Free German Youth, was the official youth movement of the ruling Socialist Unity Party in the GDR.

[84.](#) See Appendix III: For Us It Was a Question of Learning Explosives and Shooting Techniques, [page 340](#).

[85.](#) MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. “Red Army Faction Attacked Military Target (Aug. 31, 1981, Federal Republic of Germany).”

[86.](#) Peters, 521.

[87.](#) Associated Press, “New Violence Is Reported in Germany,” *Gettysburg Times*, September 1, 1981.

[88.](#) Associated Press, “Bomb Explodes at U.S.-NATO Base,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, September 1, 1981. This was not the first occasion that the RAF’s timing had reduced the overall carnage of its bombs—an almost identical observation had been made by a military police officer during the guerilla’s May Offensive in 1972. See Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 163.

[89.](#) Associated Press, “New Violence Is Reported in Germany.”

[90.](#) United Press International, “W. Germans Fear Friction with U.S.,” *Roswell (N.M.) Daily Record*, September 2, 1981.

[91.](#) *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “2nd Bomb Found at Ramstein AB,” September 4, 1981.

- [92.](#) *Spiegel*, “Brutaler Vollzug, Stich um Stich,” September 21, 1981.
- [93.](#) Grauwacke, 57.
- [94.](#) Jackson, 14.
- [95.](#) Mushaben, 205-206.
- [96.](#) *Die Zeit*, “Deutschland im Herbst: die neue Terrorwelle,” September 25, 1981.
- [97.](#) Herald News Services, “German Terrorist Ambush Injures Army Chief, Wife,” *The Daily Herald: News for Chicago* (Elk Grove edition), September 16, 1981; Peters, 524.
- [98.](#) Associated Press, “Terrorist Grenades Injure U.S. General in Germany,” *The Orange County Register*, September 15, 1981.
- [99.](#) Ibid.
- [100.](#) Schmeidel, 157.
- [101.](#) Ibid.
- [102.](#) See Appendix III: For Us It Was a Question of Learning Explosives and Shooting Techniques, [page 338](#).
- [103.](#) Christian Klar, “Zur Rosa-Luxemburg-Konferenz und Inge Viett,” Jan. 2011.
- [104.](#) Inge Viett, untitled document, February 9, 2011.
- [105.](#) “Summary of a Brochure by Autonomist and Anti-imperialist Groups,” in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 9.
- [106.](#) The explosives, placed within fire extinguishers and rigged with a cable and timer, had apparently been spotted by an airman who had recently attended a security class which included lessons on recognizing bombs. Charles Freadhoff, “Kroesen Plans No Security Hike after Attacks,” *European Stars and Stripes*, Sept. 17, 1981.
- [107.](#) United Press International, “German Office of Dow Is Target of Terrorists,” *European Stars and Stripes*, September 19, 1981.
- [108.](#) United Press International, “W. German Terrorists Slash GIs’ Tires, Renew Threats,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, November 21, 1981.
- [109.](#) Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 1984* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1984), 280.
- [110.](#) Geronimo, 113.
- [111.](#) Karl-Heinz Janßen, “Es muß Unruhe herrschen im Lande,” *Die Zeit*, October 30, 1981.

- [112.](#) Clay Sherman, “Police seek data on vehicles,” *European Stars and Stripes*, September 19, 1981.
- [113.](#) Heinz Jürgen Schneider, “Der Terror-Paragraph,” *junge Welt*, August 18, 2006.
- [114.](#) *Spiegel*, “Gemalt Weihnachten,” November 14, 1988.
- [115.](#) Bunte Hilfe Nürnberg in Haufen, 226.
- [116.](#) Wüster Haufen, “Der Straftatbestand des §129a StGB,” in Haufen, 28-29. “Membership” was punishable by one to ten years, whereas “support and promotion” was punishable by six months to five years.
- [117.](#) Untitled flier, distributed in Hamburg in 1982 to support Grosser and Schneider during their trial.
- [118.](#) Bunte Hilfe Nürnberg in Haufen, 225-227.
- [119.](#) Untitled flier, distributed in Hamburg in 1982.
- [120.](#) *Pressekonferenz am 18.8.1982 in Stuttgart*, 9.
- [121.](#) *Spiegel*, “New Generation,” October 26, 1981.
- [122.](#) Ibid.
- [123.](#) “Kommuniqué: Für unseren Genossen Bernd Rössner,” in Marat, 100.
- [124.](#) *Pressekonferenz am 18.8.1982 in Stuttgart*.
- [125.](#) “Political Internment in the FRG,” in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 27. It is unclear to what extent psychiatric incarceration was used against the radical left in the FRG; there are certainly anecdotal accounts of squatters, anti-imps, and *Autonomen* who would be picked up at demonstrations and not seen for years, only for their friends to eventually learn that they had been committed. The fact that young people occasionally claimed to have some kind of psychological or mental illness in order to avoid compulsory military service could facilitate this process.
- [126.](#) Michel, 87-88.
- [127.](#) Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 152.

Eighth Hunger Strike Statement

THE SOLIDARITY OF THE PEOPLE IS GROUNDED IN REVOLT

We, the prisoners from the RAF, are once again going on hunger strike.

We will not stop struggling against torture, against the open and covert extermination campaigns, against the entire institutionalized and refined strategy to destroy our political identities.

The state is calculating that by systematically creating separate prison regimes of individual and small group isolation, as perfected in the high-security units, and seeming integration, it can destroy the group's collective structure and our collective unity. At the same time it hopes to undermine the national and international protests, including those of the International Commission, and, in the end, that of Amnesty International. They will not succeed. They can't possibly succeed, because the concrete knowledge that this state is ready and able to commit any inhumanity is one of the things that led us to rise and take up arms in the first place.

Having for years been isolated from one another, from any possible collective political process, and from the outside world, we are determined, using the only means available to us—the unlimited collective hunger strike—to break through this separation and establish the conditions necessary for a collective learning and working process, in order to be able to survive as human beings. We demand:

- The application of the minimum guarantees of the Geneva Convention for prisoners from the RAF and other anti-imperialist resistance groups.
- Association for these prisoners in conditions where they can interact with one another; such interaction is made impossible—as a result of

acoustic and visual surveillance of communication—in isolation units where light, air, and sound are electronically controlled.

- Freedom for Günter Sonnenberg, because his continued incarceration makes it impossible for him to recover from his head injuries.

The struggle doesn't stop in prison, and the objectives don't change; the only things that change are the methods and the terrain of the guerilla-state conflict, of the war. So the state reacts to this situation, in which we are imprisoned and unarmed and engaged in a collective hunger strike, as if it were under armed attack.

The overall measures used against us leave no room for doubt: we are prisoners of war with the status of hostages. Every time the confrontation has escalated, an imprisoned RAF cadre has been executed: Holger, Siegfried, Ulrike. Once the RAF's politico-military offensive had exposed the failure of the huge repressive effort to exterminate the prisoners using all possible means, the U.S. National Security Council's "Special Coordination Committee" decided upon the final solution—the execution of Andreas, Gudrun, Jan, Nina,¹ and our brothers and sisters of the Commando Martyr Halimeh.

This was an attempt to wipe out every trace of their struggle, their example, and their persistence.

"Snuff out the flame before it becomes a wildfire," in order to deprive the people of the metropole of any hope of freedom. The torture and murder of political prisoners, like the executions in the streets, are no longer simply a matter of police tactics: in this Third Reich successor state, the methods and goals remain the same.

For this, its third attempt, German imperialism is not acting against American capital, but with it. It is not acting independently, but is serving a function for American foreign policy, expressed as a global domestic policy. It must therefore liquidate the militant prisoners and the whole

resistance movement, which pose a threat and raise the question of power here in the heart of the U.S. system of states, the key economic, political, and military launching pad for the aggressive policies of the U.S. since 1945.

The torture and murder of political prisoners and the death squads in Turkey, Ireland, Italy, and Spain can all be traced back to the NATO Supreme Command, which wants to use the BKA and intelligence services to impose a unified domestic policy throughout Western Europe. This is the same Supreme Command which, in the latest *NATO Review*, openly reminded governments that there must be no question of considering demands for political status or for international inquiries into the torture of militant prisoners, and that they must stick to the agreed upon strategy for criminalizing revolutionary resistance.²

The resistance developed on the wasteland of bourgeois resistance and the German workers movement, moving from the naive humanism of the Easter Marches and the antinuclear movement³ to the youth revolts and the Vietnam opposition, and finally to the urban guerilla. They respond to this humanity with the inhumanity of mass murder, because humanity gets in the way of their solution: to present brutality, misery, the overall violence of property ownership as “humanity’s cultural imperative.” They project their crimes onto the guerilla—“poisoned drinking water, nuclear contamination, deadly bacteria”⁴—to divert the fear that they produce away from themselves, so that no resistance will develop based on an understanding of the real source of these problems. The goal of the anti-RAF campaign is to prevent, at any cost, militant protest against rearmament, against the militarization of all areas of society, or against the deployment of the *Bundeswehr* in the streets from returning to what it was before it was suppressed thirty-five years ago—solidarity with the guerilla based on people drawing the same conclusion we have drawn: that illegality provides the liberated territory that the resistance in West

Germany needs to develop its capacity to act.

The state's reaction reveals its weakness and vulnerability, as well as the possibility of speeding up the process of decline by constant attack, creating a "real state of emergency." Nothing we can do will prevent the state's transition to fascism, through which the state of emergency will be legally sanctioned, because it is inevitable.

Since capital is now creating the conditions for its own aggressive reconstruction on a world scale, we must—all of us who want freedom, accountability, and a humane way of life—prepare to prevent this project in the countries from which this onslaught is to be launched. At this stage, we have to develop the political and military counterforce necessary to establish a "political barrier" to U.S. imperialism's military overkill potential, with the ultimate goal of destroying it.

If the militant left can recognize what imperialism has understood every time it has been defeated—that imperialism's power ends at the point where its violence no longer frightens people—then it will have completely exposed the secret to imperialism's apparent invincibility. Solidarity excludes compulsion and it cannot be cancelled like a line of credit.

It is the practical expression of each person's consciousness that there is no contradiction between individual and collective liberation, despite what the pathetic apologists for the satisfaction of individual needs believe. Rather, there is a dialectical relationship—just as liberation here cannot be separated from the liberation struggle of the peoples of the Third World.

Solidarity manifests its reality and power as proletarian internationalism, i.e., through attacks against the common enemy, U.S. imperialism, at the strategic points where each of us encounter it. This is the basis upon which the anti-imperialist struggle can be unified.

Our hunger strike is an expression of solidarity with:

- the IRA and INLA prisoners and their long and determined struggle

for political status.

- the Red Brigades prisoners in their struggle against the extermination strategy, in which they have seized the political initiative.
- all prisoners from the anti-imperialist resistance in Western Europe, particularly in Turkey.
- the struggle of the Palestinian prisoners for Prisoner of War status.
- with all prisoners who have begun to resist in prison and are struggling to organize themselves.

ARM THE RESISTANCE!

ORGANIZE THE UNDERGROUND!

ORGANIZE ARMED RESISTANCE IN WESTERN EUROPE!

Prisoners from the Red Army Faction

February 6, 1981

1. Ingrid Schubert's nickname.

2. This article, by Margaret Thatcher's advisor Paul Johnson, appeared in the October 1980 *NATO Review*, and is discussed on [page 177](#).

3. Here the prisoners are referring to the movement against nuclear weapons of the 1950s and '60s, not the movement against nuclear energy of the 1970s. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 22-23.

4. As part of its psychological war against the guerilla, police sources routinely warned that they had received information that the RAF was planning to use biological, chemical, or even nuclear weapons against the public. No evidence has ever been provided to indicate that any of these far-fetched stories was true.

Statement Calling Off the Eighth Hunger Strike

We've decided to break off the hunger strike, since it seems that following two interventions by Amnesty International prisoners will no longer be held in individual isolation and more prisoners' groups will be formed. Also, over the past few days it has become clear that after ten weeks on hunger strike, Sigurd Debus died as a result of force-feeding carried out with the most brutal violence possible. We can barely express our pain about his death.

His will could not be broken.

Intelligence counteractions—such as the bombing of the Cologne subway, and other obscure targets, like laying tree trunks across train tracks—are meant to legitimize his death and the deaths of other prisoners should they occur.

The fact that there is now a resolution doesn't mean that the state has abandoned its extermination strategy. However, we don't think that we will repeat the December 1980 experience of the IRA, not least of all because of the solidarity we've received.

The prisoners from the RAF
April 16, 1981

Attack Against USAFE Ramstein

ATTACK THE CENTERS, THE BASES, AND THE STRATEGISTS OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY MACHINE

Today, with the “Sigurd Debus Commando,” we attacked the Ramstein Headquarters of the U.S. Air Force in Europe. The U.S. imperialists will not be permitted to prepare and carry out their plans for world domination in peace and quiet.

They want war. They want to roll back history to the point before the liberation movements’ offensive undermined their political and military power around the world. To do this, it is essential that they disrupt the military balance between the socialist and imperialist states. Their stated goal is to reverse the historic changes and to become, once again, the most powerful ruling class in the world. That means they must be prepared to wage war on all fronts, both in Europe and in the Third World. All of the steps they have taken in the past ten years—the technological modification and the restructuring of the war machine since the peak of the Vietnam War, the achievement of NATO’s long-term objective of perfecting the neutron bomb, the “struggle against international terrorism” which included united action against uprisings in Western Europe, the supervision of mass murder in El Salvador, and the NATO putsch in Turkey.

The imperialist war of annihilation is now returning from the Third World to Europe, its point of origin. The people of Europe, and of the FRG, understand that unless it can be stopped, this will mean their extermination. They are now getting a clear and direct idea of what reality has been like for people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America for hundreds of years, of the impact of imperialism when you yourself are its target. Imperialism, in its essence and as a system, means extermination—so far

and so long as the resistance is not strong enough to stop this class from acting.

In the face of all of the defeatist, escapist fantasies about an atomic inferno and all of the helpless pacifist hopes that accompany these fantasies, we assert that this monster can be defeated if resistance develops in the centers that addresses the gravity of the actual situation, and if an offensive strategy for speeding up the collapse of imperialism's political base in the center is developed quickly enough to prevent the imperialists from proceeding with their plan.

Ramstein, the European Headquarters of both the U.S. Air Force and of the NATO Air Force, is the largest American airport outside of the United States and is key for any nuclear war in Europe. Ramstein is where the headquarters for nuclear warfare are located. It is the launch pad for both the Cruise and Pershing II missiles. It is where jet fighters equipped with atomic missiles and AWAC reconnaissance planes leave from. It is the relay point for the U.S.A.'s strategic bombers and the gateway for its troops, and serves as the launch pad for war in the Third World. If the imperialists feel they are losing their hold on the Middle East or the Gulf region, their oppressive machinery will be launched from Ramstein.

U.S. military strategy is the most extreme option available to the imperialist chain of states. All of the other political, economic, and social methods are based on this strategy, which determines the social developments within the NATO countries. This strategy serves as a focal point, reducing this system—imperialist politics overall—to its purest form: the slow death of the twenty-four-hour day in the metropole, the destruction wrought by the struggle for survival, the lack of perspective, the alienation, the dehumanizing labor, the widespread replacement of humans by machines in the production process, the destruction of people's living conditions by the nuclear power industry, chemicals, and concrete, the prisons, and the regimentation of any expression of life, as well as the

repression of anyone unwilling to adjust themselves to the system.

BUILD THE RESISTANCE AGAINST THIS DESTRUCTION INTO THE FRONT FOR REVOLUTION IN EUROPE

CARRY OUT THE STRUGGLE IN THE METROPOLE ALONGSIDE THE STRUGGLE OF REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE THIRD WORLD

Red Army Faction
August 31, 1981

Attack Against General Frederick Kroesen

ATTACK THE CENTERS, THE BASES, AND THE STRATEGISTS OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY MACHINE

Today, with the “Gudrun Ensslin Commando,” we attacked General Kroesen, the supreme commander of the U.S. Army and of NATO’s Central Europe Section. He is one of the U.S. generals who directly control imperialist policies in an area stretching from Western Europe to the Gulf region. It is he who decides on the nature of missions and the methods to be used in cases of confrontation. He decides when conventional means of destruction are to be used and when and where neutron bombs are to be deployed. He commands the U.S. intervention troops that are stationed here for deployment in the Middle East. He and Rogers are the strategists who are called back to the Pentagon from the European front when decisions, such as the decision to intervene in Iran, are taken. Should the resistance seriously threaten the colonial status of the FRG, he will be one of the American military figures who will openly control this country instead of Schmidt, Genscher, Kohl, Strauß, or whoever it might be at the time. For that reason, information about the left in the FRG has been stored in the computers at the Heidelberg Headquarters for years now. He regularly meets with the BAW to coordinate what steps are to be taken, and he personally assesses the reports of the Western intelligence services working within the context of NATO to wage the U.S.’s war against the guerilla in Western Europe. Kroesen is a front line general.

Western Europe is no longer the hinterland from which imperialism wages war. With the victories of the Third World liberation wars, with the development of the guerilla in Western Europe, and with the generalized crisis now facing imperialism, it has become part of the worldwide front. While it is the region where they own everything, it has also become the

critical region for the worldwide liberation process.

The struggle in the metropole can keep the global imperialist system in check if a fresh breakthrough develops in conjunction with revolutionaries in the Third World. The struggles in the metropole now constitute genuine revolutionary steps in the centers themselves, and can now be seen as permanent upheavals within the process of developing revolutionary resistance.

Resistance means attacks against the counterrevolutionary attack. Resistance means situating your own practice in the context of the guerilla. The guerilla, the struggle of the prisoners from the guerilla, and the struggle of the anti-imperialist militants are the elements that together form the revolutionary front in Western Europe—or will form it.

CARRY OUT ALL STRUGGLES FOR DECENT LIVING CONDITIONS IN ALL AREAS AS ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLES AND AS PART OF THE FRONT.

MAKE THE PRISONERS' STRUGGLE, WHICH IS CENTRAL TO THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE, YOUR OWN.

SUPPORT THE PRISONERS HERE, IN IRELAND, IN TURKEY, IN ITALY, AND IN SPAIN.

THE WEST EUROPEAN GUERILLA IS SHAKING THE CENTER

STRUGGLE ALONGSIDE US

Red Army Faction
September 15, 1981

Letter Addressing Police Fabrications

Even if it's not really our thing to issue rebuttals to police fabrications, we want to make a few things clear, because they are trying to make an example out of some public political figures to show that they can use whatever scare tactics they want—to spread terror.

The cops don't know anything about how we move about, how we plan our actions, or the practical details of how we work with the legal left. It is no surprise that they shamelessly resort to lying about the growing anti-imperialist resistance. Here they are:

- The most outlandish story is the one about the “first arrest in the Kroesen case.” Of course, Helga Roos has been a thorn in the cops’ side for some years now. She has struggled politically in the anti-imperialist movement and on behalf of the prisoners from the guerilla. She had nothing to do with the action of the Gudrun Ensslin Commando. It wasn’t her, but two of our men who bought the tent from the *Kaufhof*¹ at the Paradeplatz in Mannheim early in the afternoon on September 14 (the day before the action). Their books can verify this. It’s true that we were on the hill for several days before the action, but we didn’t use the tent there. Nor did she ever bring us any cocoa. If there was a bottle with her fingerprints on it there, then the cops planted it or put her fingerprints on it afterwards, as has already happened in Ireland. This is also meant to create the impression that we get in position and then “sympathizers” come to serve us.
- Gabriele Gebhard was arrested, because Gisela Dutzi is said to have lived with her while she was underground. Anyone who knows anything about the Heidelberg-Mannheim scene knows that the

police know that address. It seems obvious that nobody from the underground would live there. Another fascinating detail is that Gabriele is supposed to have worked on the Sigurd Debus Commando's statement. Really.

- During the last hunger strike, two guys were arrested in Heidelberg. After our action against Kroesen, the cops looked at two men they said they had seen driving a motorcycle behind Kroesen. They claimed a success in their manhunt when they conveniently found the license plate number in the notebook of one of the two. The fact of the matter is that no motorcycle was ever used in preparing for this action. In the case of one of the two men, Karl Grosser, who at the time of the attack had already spent five months in prison, an order to detain him was issued due to his "updated status," with the fabrication: "participation in the Kroesen attack." He had as little to do with the action against Kroesen as he did with the Ramstein action.

All these fabrications are absurd. Obviously, apart from those of us who actually carry out the actions, nobody knows when, where, or what we are planning.

In the case of both actions, from beginning to end, only RAF people were involved in surveillance, planning, and execution. There are many ways we can cooperate with people living aboveground, but working as closely and as intensely on a concrete action as the police allege in this case isn't one of them. If we have such a relationship with someone, it is because he is one of us.

The "threat of a manhunt" that they are subjecting us to would be funny, except for the fact that it means the extermination machinery is going to be directed against people who aren't prepared to deal with it. What we have here is an attack against a structure that they know nothing about.

What began with the arrests of Sabine Schmitz and Johannes Thimme in

1976 and continued with the arrests Christine and Harald Biehal a little later, and the over fifty arrests during the hunger strike, the “black bloc,” all of that, has now taken on a new dimension. This indicates a new repressive line, with which they hope to destroy that which they cannot control, this is why they’ve started using the formulation “the aboveground RAF.” No such thing exists or could exist. What has sprung up is the beginning of an anti-imperialist movement in the FRG—isolated circles, “antifascist groups,” Third World groups, women’s groups, prison groups, antimilitary groups, etc.—this movement sees itself existing in the context of the strategy of the guerilla in the metropole. It is understood that fundamental resistance—every political step that is meant to be serious—must stay outside of the state’s control. It has been obvious to everyone for years now that when people who live aboveground want to meet, they must outmaneuver state surveillance if they don’t want the *Verfassungsschutz* and the political police to see who meets who where and about what. Of course they have no choice, faced with the preventive state security strategy that intends to destroy these developments before they have taken shape.

Naturally, that is intolerable for state security. So now their starting point is the criminalization of comrades who have nothing to do with our actions—by connecting them to the actions if they disappear for a few weeks, cut their hair, shake off surveillance—in short, if they engage in “conspiratorial behavior.” But if they criminalize these things, then they are in the process of laying the political groundwork for a police state: it is meant to become normal in this state for everyone to be under control and registered at all times and to accept it—and to be criminalized if they try to avoid it.

Red Army Faction
November 7, 1981

1. *Kaufhof* is a department store chain in Germany.

Out and In: Viett, Beer, and Eckes

Over the winter of 1981-1982, two final guerillas went East, taking advantage of the MfS retirement plan.

That summer, just before the Ramstein bombing, Inge Viett had been trekking around Paris, where she was in the process of consolidating the 2JM's supplies with those of the RAF.¹ It was a hot summer day, and she did not know that it was against the law to ride a scooter without a helmet. She took off when a cop tried to pull her over, but failed to lose him. Ducking into a parking garage, when the cop followed she surprised him with her gun drawn. He reportedly looked at her with a puzzled expression on his face before going for his own weapon: she put a bullet in him, and officer Francis Violleau would never walk again.² For Viett, who had already been wrestling with doubt, this close call proved to be the final straw: she left for South Yemen, where she spent several months before finally deciding that she had spent enough time in the guerilla. She contacted Harry Dahl, who arranged for her to receive a new identity in the GDR.

The other RAF member who went East during this period was Henning Beer, who had never recovered from the shock of seeing his older brother die in a car crash in 1980. He had practically been raised by Wolfgang, and following the latter's arrest in 1974 had been essentially adopted by Wolfgang's friends in the Hamburg squatting scene—a number of whom subsequently passed over into the guerilla.³ It was while the RAF was preparing to assassinate Kroesen that the younger Beer had had a breakdown; he was taken to a safehouse in Leuven until arrangements could be made for him to cross over.⁴



Viett and Beer were to be the last RAF members to take this path.

These two losses were compensated by one last reinforcement from prison: Christa Eckes had first made news as a teenager in 1970, when she was expelled from high school for starting a political action group that handed out questionnaires about students' sexuality and protested the transfer of a popular teacher. Her mother had hired Kurt Groenewold, the left-wing lawyer, to force the school to readmit her daughter: a fateful decision, as Groenewold would soon be known as one of the RAF's leading attorneys. Eckes was involved in the 1973 defense of the Ekhofstraße squat in Hamburg, and then in 1974 was arrested along with other RAF members on February 4 in that same city.⁵ She was the last of these "2.4" defendants to be released, in 1981, after the prisoners' eighth hunger strike.

Upon her release she briefly made contact with supporters in the scene before returning underground.⁶



Inge Viett (opposite page) and Christa Eckes

¹ Peters, 564.

² Viett, 239-241. Violleau would spend two years in the hospital, and after his release remained essentially bedridden. His wife Yolaine had to turn him every two hours to avoid bedsores, and she in turn had to be hospitalized after three months for exhaustion. Their two children spent two years in a police orphanage. Peters, 565.

³ Wunschik, 225-226. Peters, 563.

⁴ Wunschik, 329.

⁵ "Ihr gerader Weg in den Untergrund," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, February 5, 1974

⁶ Alexander Straßner, *Die dritte Generation der "Roten Armee Fraktion": Entstehung, Struktur, Funktionslogik und Zerfall einer terroristischen Organisation* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003) 106-107.



**GUERILLA,
WIDERSTAND UND
ANTIIMPERIALISTISCHE FRONT**

Planting Seeds in May

ONCE AGAIN, THE RAF HAD asserted its place on the radical left, and yet nothing more would be heard from the organization throughout the winter of 1981-1982. As such, it was the aboveground movement that ran with the momentum created by the year's events.

As we have seen, no matter what the issue—Startbahn West, the squats, the antinuclear or the antimissile campaigns—the radical edge was defined by the *Autonomen*, alongside and in uneasy alliance with the anti-imps, who by this time consistently formed a much smaller and more hardline faction.

Prison conditions remained a priority, all the more so as militants were now finding themselves threatened with arrest and imprisonment under §129a on charges of being “aboveground RAF members.” Along with the new focus on NATO, repression would remain an important radicalizing factor, as increasing numbers of people became personally acquainted with prison conditions in the FRG.

It was not only in the cells, but also on the streets, that the state’s violence polarized the situation. One of the most brutal examples in this period occurred just after the RAF’s summer attacks, Tuwat, and the Haig demonstrations, at a time when the movement had the wind in its sails. On September 22, 1981, the West Berlin police and the new CDU city government took their revenge; at the behest of Senator Heinrich Lummer, several squats were cleared in a series of perfectly synchronized raids. In

the process a squatter was chased into the street by a police baton charge, where he was struck by a bus and dragged for two blocks. Klaus-Jürgen Rattay, eighteen years of age, died on the spot.¹

That evening there were demonstrations and attacks against banks, police stations, and real estate developers across the FRG. Not surprisingly, the largest took place in West Berlin. As one observer recorded:

Slowly, what began as a chant became a deafening roar: "Lummer is a murderer! Lummer is a murderer!" Passers-by and the few tourists watched the never-ending stream of demonstrators. As they passed a Berlin flag on the Kurfürstendamm the demonstrators lowered it to half-mast. As it approached the Potsdamer Straße, the front of the demonstration passed the first of the evicted houses. From its windows the police began shooting volleys of teargas into the crowd. It had started.

In the following eight hours, some of the most intense street fighting that West Berlin had ever seen since the war took place. Again and again the columns of police troop carriers were attacked with paving stones and petrol bombs and were forced to retreat. When they attempted to counter attack they were foiled by the rows of barricades that crisscrossed the streets. At the height of the fighting it was hard not to believe that a civil war was going on—burning barricades, ambulances rushing to and fro from the area, burnt out cars and looted shops in tear gas and smoke filled streets. At around three o'clock, when a lot of the demonstrators had left the area, the tide began to turn, and police felt confident enough to leave the safety of their troop carriers and to start taking possession of the streets again. But it was only at dawn the next day that they could announce that they had the situation in control.²

The following day, the Senate issued a statement that no more houses would be cleared that year. Yet this did little to cheer the West Berlin scene, shocked by what they saw as the police murder of one of their own. For a minority, the September events seemed to indicate that more drastic methods were required, but for most a period of despair set in.

Over the next few years, the government would employ a combination of negotiations and repression to isolate the more radical squats, stymieing the movement's forward march, and yet it would take most of the decade

to truly neutralize the threat. Throughout the 1980s, buildings and even entire city blocks remained occupied, providing a material base for different ways of life and action against the system, islands of resistance that could loom as large as continents in the movement's psychic geography.³



West Berlin, 1981. (Photo: Peter Homann)

While West Berlin had been the movement's epicenter, the two most important and well-known squats were in the FRG proper. In Hamburg, several city blocks of apartment buildings had been taken over on Hafenstraße ("Harbor Street"), which as its name indicates runs alongside the city's historic waterfront. The complex would grow to eventually include a café, a movement info-center, a library, a soup kitchen, two pubs, and an occasional pirate radio station, all of which served to turn the Hafenstraße squats into an important center for *Autonomen* politics, known around the world.⁴ Less famous perhaps, the Kiefernstraße squats in Düsseldorf were almost as large, and would serve as an organizing hub for anti-imps. (In typical fashion, the militant women's movement penetrated these categories without negating them, radical women living throughout both squats, each of which would also eventually have a women- or lesbian-only building.) Both Hafenstraße and Kiefernstraße were founded in 1981, and both would soon be stigmatized as "RAF nests,"

squatters who lived there all considered potential “aboveground RAF members” by the forces of law and order.

Meanwhile, on the armed terrain, the Revolutionary Cells continued to take the lead, fully exploiting the breakthrough their clandestine-aboveground and movementist strategy afforded them. The RZ would carry out attacks every month: against gentrification in January, Startbahn West in February, gentrification, anti-worker initiatives, and the sterilization of Third World women in March, and so on. The actions only increased in number, as the entire movement was successfully brought to a new level of confrontation.

The RAF remained silent during this period, but far from inactive, as a process of discussion and research that had been going on for some time now neared completion. As we have seen, there had been years of reflection, not only about whether or not to continue the armed struggle, but also about how to renew the guerilla’s ties to the movement. Events seemed to be showing that the underground-all-the-way strategy had been bested by the RZ’s “after hours” fluidity. Especially as every month brought new RZ attacks, which both the *Autonomen* and the capitalist media compared favorably to those of the RAF, who some now referred to as “grandpa’s guerillas.”

Indeed, those RAF members at large did have a lot of experience under their belts, in both the aboveground movements and in the guerilla. Individuals like Heidi Schulz and Christian Klar had come up through the 1970s squatting scene, the prisoner support movement, and the disastrous ‘77 offensive. Others, such as Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Helmut Pohl, could trace their involvement all the way back to the so-called “first generation,” and had done hard prison time, surviving hunger strikes and isolation. Yet while they had experienced the hopes and shortcomings of the APO, and could provide a personal connection to the guerilla’s history, their ideas had continued to evolve. In the period since ‘77 they had been grappling

with these developments, discussing them internally and also with trusted supporters; eventually, as part of this process, they had begun to reexamine some of the guerilla's historic suppositions.

This discussion process would eventually take form in a new document, *The Guerilla, the Resistance, and the Anti-Imperialist Front*, appearing in the spring of 1982. More commonly known as the May Paper, this was the first major theoretical document to be released by the RAF in almost ten years, and as such it was widely read both within the scene and throughout the broader left, especially after *taz* published a slightly edited version in its July 2 edition.⁵

Building on observations that can be found in other statements dating from the attack on Haig, including even the 2JM's dissolution statement, the May Paper presented three main arguments.

First, that the guerilla and the militant left (the "resistance") should unite in a single front. How this unity would work was unclear, given that the RAF was underground and continued to reject the idea of creating a legal organization. Nor was it discussed how the existence of such a front would play out in regard to the state's claims that there were aboveground RAF members. Despite these silences, the May Paper unambiguously reasserted that there was an important place reserved for the militant left in the RAF's anti-imperialist strategy. Clearly, the guerilla was trying to find a solution to the fact that some people who had been supporting them wanted to become politically active on a more militant level without going underground. A related question was how to broaden and deepen the mobilization and at the same time replenish the "pond" in which the guerilla was swimming.

While everything was left vague, what such a front might look like had been presaged in the mobilizations of previous years, in the way in which anti-imps would carry out low-level actions during hunger strikes and following each RAF attack. As the May Paper explained,

While establishing the nucleus of this new guerilla structure over the past two years, we have found that this coordination springs up spontaneously quite easily and that it is powerful—both subjectively and objectively—in material terms, opening up possibilities for attack. On the other hand, we have found that it is difficult to maintain the momentum necessary for this strategy to transcend the boundaries between separate political initiatives, actions, and limited practical contexts. That is the roadblock that must now be dismantled.

Besides taking a page from the RZ's playbook, the front idea may have also drawn on the negative experience with the GDR exiles. While Susanne Albrecht had been involved in militant support work for years before going under, and had participated in some of the guerilla's heaviest actions, she was the exception, for most of those who had gone East had been comrades who might have made good supporters, who might even have been suited for the level of activity engaged in by the RZ, but who found it difficult to cope with what it meant to be in the RAF. As we have seen, some of these individuals would claim to have never participated in any attacks: they apparently joined in the heat of the moment around '77, and having taken this step found that there was no turning back—they had no choice but to remain underground or face lengthy prison sentences. Had they surfaced, §129a would have been the least of the charges against them. It has been said that the other RAF members described the dropouts as "our mistakes,"⁶ and resolving the problem of what to do with them had finally fallen to Viett and the *Stasi*. The proposed front provided a place for militants who were not ready or suited for the underground, and as such, it might be hoped that it would prevent this problem from reoccurring.

The second revision in the May Paper concerned the potential for revolution in the First World, more commonly referred to as the "metropole" or even just the "center." Whereas the RAF had traditionally held that theirs was a rearguard position, with the central struggle being found in the Third World, the May Paper argued that the struggle in the metropole had itself now become an important variable in the world

revolution. The system was apparently slipping into deep crisis, and in its desperation might even resort to nuclear annihilation. At this critical juncture, imperialism needed to maintain its control everywhere at once; it therefore followed that it could be destabilized by resistance breaking out anywhere at any time.

Within this global field, pregnant with possibility, Western Europe was singled out as occupying a particularly important position, it being the “point of intersection between East and West, North and South, state and society,” a “cornerstone” for the world revolution, and “ripe” for radical change.

Although never explicitly stated, by repeatedly describing the proposed guerilla front as “West European” (as opposed to West German), the May Paper also raised the prospect of greater formal cooperation between guerillas in different countries, an idea that would be more fully taken up in due course. With some ambiguity, over the years to come, the term “the front” would be used to refer to each of these concepts: the front formed by aboveground and underground combatants, the front formed by the revolutionaries of the metropole and those of the Third World, and eventually even a front formed by different West European guerilla groups working together.

The May Paper’s third theme was an appraisal of the events and consequences of ‘77. Admitting it had made mistakes, and that ‘77 had dealt the guerilla its largest setback to date, the RAF nevertheless proposed that the overall effect had been to push the movement forward:

[I]n the autumn of ‘77, all real opposition was faced with a new situation and new operating conditions, both in terms of the existing reality and in terms of the prospects for future struggle. This forced everyone to fundamentally redefine their relationship to power—or else renounce their identity.... This leap in consciousness was the personal, living moment within real people where the conditions of struggle here changed: IN FAVOR OF DEVELOPING A REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE METROPOLE.

The RAF noted the stark contrast between the optimistic, student-based, sixties left and the eighties “no future” rebels in the squats—“Cold, without illusions, expecting nothing from the state”—and, furthermore, viewed this as a positive development, explaining that, “This is the terrain upon which the revolutionary front in the metropole is now developing.” Despite conceding that it had made some errors, the RAF largely credited its own actions for this new hardline attitude:

[T]he dialectic of the '77 confrontation led to qualitatively new subjective conditions of struggle here and to the definite integration of contradictions in the center into the development, the imperative, and the possibility of international class war. In this sense, it came at the right time.

Finally, although Western Europe now stood alongside the Third World as a key site of struggle, the RAF continued to avoid the usual approach of identifying and naming social sectors that had a material interest in revolution. In no way did the May Paper represent a turn to the working class. Neither was it quite the same as the RZ’s embrace of movementism, of variegated citizen complaints giving rise to multiple sites of resistance; nor, despite the appearance of groups like WAIW, were the antipatriarchal politics of Rote Zora in any way approximated.⁷ Rather, the May Paper continued to build upon the RAF’s traditional (ungendered) radical subjectivity, the idea that by experiencing the violence and repression of the capitalist state, and the sense of collectivity that came from fighting back alongside others, people might undergo a psychological break with the system. In *Serve the People*, written in 1972, it had been proposed that this break would lead people to join the guerilla; now the May Paper updated this to the somewhat more realistic view that they would rally to the “resistance” and its front:

We have already had this experience ourselves, and we are ready to share it with those we know: the decisive moment for the breakthrough, which shows how far we've come, is the struggle of those who have begun to act within the framework of

this strategy, or who want to participate as subjects within the framework of the anti-imperialist front. They have started to anticipate this within themselves and for themselves and to determine all political initiative and action from this perspective and toward this end. They think of everything they do from the perspective of the fighting front.

Initially, the RAF's line on radical subjectivity had drawn upon ideas circulating in the New Left, ideas which signaled a break with what was (somewhat unfairly) looked down upon as the narrow class focus and cultural conservatism of their predecessors. Radical subjectivity emphasized the view that for all its wealth, life in the metropole left people psychologically and culturally bereft. At times sounding like a distant echo of the Situationists or the Frankfurt School, the RAF had applied this analysis in a unique way by combining it with violent action and an anti-imperialist worldview.

It is not surprising that when the May Paper was released over ten years later, it too contained themes that one could hear being voiced by quite different political thinkers—thinkers who in the 1980s were now pondering the shortcomings of the New Left. Although the RAF had retained the idea of a primary contradiction, this had been projected outwards, onto the Third World; as such, within the metropole the RAF was now able to embrace not only the reality of multiple sites of resistance, but also the way in which a revolutionary identity could be forged *sui generis*, out of resistance itself, with no blueprint for the future required. At its most simple, this was expressed in the phrase (often mocked by detractors), that, “The revolutionary strategy here is simply a strategy against their strategy.”

While some might object that this could not provide a sustainable basis for action, and that its proponents were opening themselves up to a new host of errors, it did reflect the zeitgeist of the day. From the Revolutionary Cells to post-structuralist Marxists like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari,

by 1982 the blueprint and the big-theory-that-explains-it-all had fallen out of favor, in a philosophical turn whereby opposing suddenly seemed infinitely better than proposing. Such ideas were particularly attractive after the 1970s—a period during which the K-Groups in particular had pushed the grand narrative to absurd lengths—and especially among the *Autonomen*. Where the RAF distinguished itself was in declaring that it would harness this micropolitical anomie to what remained a quintessentially macropolitical project, the destruction of imperialism.

Yet, if the May Paper was intended to woo the *Autonomen*, it would have mixed results at best. While the idea of the guerilla and the militant left working in tandem was appealing, it was noted that even in this “self-critical” document, the May Paper’s authors continued to place themselves at the center of the struggle, taking it for granted that the left should orient itself around the RAF. Furthermore, many people felt that the entire front strategy echoed that of the Revolutionary Cells, and yet the RZ was never directly referred to at any point in the document.

As one *Autonomen* critique, published in *radikal*, put it,

The so-called new, positive orientation is woolly and ill-defined. The new movements are not named nor are their motivations analyzed. They are only referred to in the context of the conflict between the state and the guerilla. The authors see the guerilla in the traditional vanguardist manner in which it is coterminous with the RAF. The armed struggle of the RZ and the independent cells, which played an important role in spreading armed and militant struggle within the left, is never mentioned. For the first time, the political significance of militant struggles alongside the guerilla is recognized. It is suggested that all three milieus must form a common front. The paper says little about what the nature of this front will be. The RAF is seen as the force around which other movements are arrayed, without the nature of the connection between them being clarified. The “strategy” as expressed in the paper is formal and empty, presenting little more than an “everyone together against the system” line.⁸

Twenty-five years after the fact, Karl-Heinz Dellwo (who had been

transferred to Celle prison, where he would remain until his release in 1995) remembered his own reaction to the May Paper in very similar terms:

I was rather appalled by the paper. I felt as if I had been cheated out of a reappraisal of 1977. It was the same old thing: what lay behind us was glossed over with something new. Those of us in prison had withheld our criticisms for years in order to allow those on the outside the space to assess things.

In 1980, it appeared to me that, with the resistance against the Bremen swearing-in exercise, the years of defensiveness and paralysis had been overcome. My view at the time was that this radical left resistance had developed in spite of the RAF's politics, that there existed independent radical positions in society. The "Front Paper" presented it as if these events occurred suddenly as a result of the dialectic created by the '77 offensive! If one saw things that way, reflection was no longer necessary. I felt that was wishful thinking, so as to avoid a necessary self-criticism. In addition, the paper contained platitudes like "our strategy is the strategy against their strategy," about which those of us in Celle could only shake our heads.⁹

Regardless, at the time, Dellwo and the others at Celle continued to hold their tongues, and their criticisms remained unknown.

While they could not have seemed more different at the time, in retrospect the May Paper might be compared to the RZ's *Revolutionärer Zorn* no. 5, released in 1978, which (with far more practical advice, and much less theoretical fanfare) had similarly called for members of the aboveground left to form their own cells and carry out low-level actions. That move by the RZ had been a striking success, but it was an open question whether it could be replicated, especially by a group which had a much heavier reputation and continued to engage in a much more intense conflict with the state. (Of course, another critical difference was that the RZ's strategy consisted of taking its lead from the aboveground left and encouraging attacks on multiple fronts, whereas the RAF remained wedded to the idea of the guerilla and its aboveground supporters concentrating their fire on specific targets.)

At the same time, the RAF's focus on NATO, and its claim that Western Europe was a cornerstone of the world revolutionary process, did not sit well with all of its supporters. Some saw in this new strategy a distressing departure from the anti-imperialist line they had spent years defending. This included individuals who could trace their relationship with the RAF back to the West Berlin commune scene of the APO days. In some cases they had known the founding members personally, and, unlike so many others, they had never stopped supporting the guerilla. While there were no immediate public recriminations, behind the scenes many of these traditional supporters were not at all happy with this new analysis. Indeed, in some cities a generational split would eventually occur around the May Paper, some seeing it as a bold step forward, while others considered it to be a dereliction of the RAF's internationalist duties.

These criticisms remained whispered, if not unspoken, for two years. It was a heavy thing to be an anti-imp or a RAF supporter, and leaving the scene or repudiating the guerilla's choices was not something that was done lightly, at least not while trying to remain true to a pro-guerilla perspective.

It was 1984 by the time a public version of this critique appeared, in the form of a series of scathing articles in *Antiimperialistischer Kampf*, a sporadic and very small circulation magazine that had emerged from the Marxist-Leninist *Knastgruppe Bochum* (Bochum Prison Group), which had taken its distance from the RAF following the 1981 hunger strike. Without presenting the AIK as more than it was, for the purposes of exposition we will go over their critique in some detail, as it summed up many of the misgivings shared by these older supporters. According to AIK:

The RAF was ideologically anti-white. It consciously placed the anti-imperialist struggle in the metropole under the hegemony of the liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations of the Third World. This made them simultaneously the protagonists of the proletarian position in the class struggle within the FRG and

the opponents of the modern revisionism of the left in the FRG. While the student movement's proletarian parties were developing the chauvinistic specter of a revolution in the FRG, simultaneously reducing their politics to the wage-labor/capital contradiction in the imperialist metropole... the RAF continued to develop the student movement's ideological dividing line: the criterion for dividing friend from foe in the class struggle in the metropole is that any struggle against imperialism that is not an unconditional struggle against the subjugation of three quarters of the world's population to the interests of finance capital is in the final analysis a direct betrayal of the international revolution.

Now, however,

The better part of the May Paper... consists of a new chauvinist ideology... as the basis for "anti-imperialism." There are two issues. First, the historical revisionism and the destruction of the anti-imperialist position held by the RAF up until '77. Second, the assertion of an international relationship of forces that reflects a true chauvinism, and from which, conversely, that chauvinism can draw nourishment, support itself, and meet its needs.

The critique continues,

The RAF's 1982 May Paper... constitutes a complete revision of the line the RAF formulated in the 1970s, which served as a reference point for an entire section of the anti-imperialist movement in the FRG, laying the groundwork for an entire concrete political experience.

Such a revision obviously doesn't occur overnight. It developed in the heart of the RAF itself, and within the anti-imperialist movement, following the execution of the leading RAF cadre in Stammheim in autumn 1977. With the 1981 hunger strike, the Kroesen and Ramstein communiqués, and the trial statements from 1981 on, a strategy and tactic was formulated, on the basis of which the RAF and its section of the anti-imperialist movement would in the future take a position concerning the national and international class struggle that was completely different from the one held in the 1970s. The May Paper is the programmatic document for this new line, and with regard to the important anti-imperialist questions, it constitutes a break with the historical continuity associated with the RAF's name.¹⁰

The AIK's critique was twofold. First, by reorienting itself toward the

radical left in West Germany, the RAF was no longer operating within the framework of Third World revolution. Second, by adopting an anti-NATO focus and mentioning the Soviet bloc alongside the national liberation movements as factors opposing imperialism, the RAF was adopting a pro-Soviet position. (The AIK, like many Maoist groups, held to a staunchly anti-Soviet version of Marxism-Leninism; its chief criticism of the peace movement, for instance, was its alleged close ties to the “social imperialist” Eastern Bloc. That such views had never been shared by the RAF, either before or after the Stammheim deaths, was well known in the support scene, making these accusations of “betrayal” all the more disingenuous.)¹¹

While the vehemence of the AIK’s charge does not seem obviously justified by the document itself, there is the intriguing coincidence that at the time the May Paper was being written, the RAF was indeed receiving aid from the GDR. What’s more, during the period that the May Paper was being implemented, the idea did gain currency in anti-imperialist circles that the Soviet Union was being threatened with NATO’s new first strike missiles, and that this was what prevented it from intervening to counter imperialism’s attacks on the Third World liberation movements.¹²

This was anathema to AIK, which saw the Soviet Union as a major threat to the Third World in its own right:

[T]he Soviet Union presents its own hegemonic aspirations as a struggle against U.S. imperialism and as the “strategy of world revolution” for the people in the countries lying between them—through bloody or bloodless neocolonialism in the Third World and with political and military pressure in the Second World... For the peoples of the world, the Soviet Union is an enemy that is as dangerous as U.S. imperialism...

In the May Paper, the RAF makes this “world revolution” strategy into the anti-imperialist line for the FRG, and as such becomes a direct agent for Soviet hegemonic aspirations and, as such, a section of the social imperialist united front, which intends to conduct its conflict with U.S. imperialism on the backs of the peoples of the world.

And finally, the May Paper,

*provides a chauvinist ideological basis for a new “anti-imperialism” that focuses on “resolving” the class struggle by developing a white socialism in the FRG, which achieves a fraternal accommodation with social imperialism, because it corresponds to the latter’s social base.*¹³

While the AIK was always a tiny group even by the standards of the far left, and its magazine was never widely read, its critique of the May Paper became a reference point for a goodly number of older RAF supporters who rejected the guerilla’s new strategy. Even if one did not agree with the AIK—even if one had not read the actual article in question—many of its arguments against the May Paper seemed on point. Within the broader radical left, this critique was of marginal importance (if it was even noticed at all!), the various criticisms from the *Autonomen* clearly speaking for far more people. However, within the ranks of the RAF’s traditional supporters, the kind of criticisms made by the AIK gave form to many people’s unease and provided a way to step away from the project while retaining one’s anti-imperialist identity. Although in retrospect the AIK itself seems to have been little more than another variant of eighties Maoism, at the time this critique was experienced by some supporters as a way to make sense of changes in the anti-imperialist milieu.

When evaluating how important this break was, it is worth keeping three things in mind. First, those who stepped away tended to be older supporters, more likely to have been central to previous support efforts, and thus more able to provide a sense of continuity with the previous “generations” of the RAF and its support scene. They also tended to be more well-read, and more at ease discussing what younger comrades might have dismissed as “high theory.”

Second, despite how rooted these detractors may have been in the guerilla’s previous interpretation of anti-imperialism, no new guerilla group was established by these anti-imperialist critics. While they may

have felt they were being true to the original RAF, they certainly weren't setting out to repeat the latter's practice. As such, no matter how cogently they may have identified a crisis in anti-imperialism, these detractors seem to have been no more able to address this crisis than their erstwhile comrades in the underground.

Third, as we shall see, the May Paper would be implemented by future RAF members who had not yet gone under at the time it was released, and this would provide an opening for others to retroactively claim that the paper constituted a definitive break with what had come before. Yet in point of fact, although they were not underground at the time, some of the future RAF members in question had in fact participated in the discussions that led up to and informed the May Paper, as anti-imps. Furthermore, even a cursory reading of RAF statements in the period between 1979 and 1981 shows that these ideological changes had been in the works for years. It has been said that before his death, Wolfgang Beer had worked with Helmut Pohl on the ideas that found their way into the paper, and if this is so, it should be noted that both men had served years in prison, and could trace their involvement in the RAF back to its earliest days. As for those who remained in prison, while Dellwo's opinion has been noted, the overall view of the May Paper was a positive one. As Irmgard Möller would recall fifteen years later, most of the prisoners agreed with the front strategy and with the idea of a unified European guerilla:

We were familiar with the paper and discussed it at every opportunity, even if only in snippets. We were sympathetic to the idea within the front concept that the time was right for a front, with its components defined anew and its pivotal point and hub being the struggles in Western Europe. The basic idea was to also act politically, to develop political projects and build political relationships. The first phase, the formation of the guerilla, was over, and it was now a question of consolidation. We too felt the time was ripe for that. Even from the inside looking out, we could see that there was once again a movement in 1980. The state of paralysis, stagnation, and torpor that had defined the radical left between 1977 and 1980 was gone. Demonstrations were occurring once again: for squats, against

*NATO, against nuclear power. There were new forms of action, and a lot seemed to be happening. We were very pleased about all of this.*¹⁴

Regardless of the amount of support, or lack thereof, from the prisoners, nobody denied that the May Paper represented a major shift, even where it was not seen as breaking with the guerilla's original orientation. For a great many supporters, the RAF remained the RAF, and the proposed changes amounted to a necessary coming to terms with the experiences of the previous twelve years. While disagreements about these new ideas would eventually lead to some acrimonious debates, for the time being these remained muted.

Indeed, despite this major declaration, nothing more would be heard from the RAF for several months, during which time the movement continued to grapple with its own challenges and build its own momentum.

RESISTING REAGAN IN 1982

The Revolutionary Cells seemed unstoppable in 1982, but tabulating their activity poses a methodological problem, as anybody could carry out an attack—from breaking some windows to planting a bomb—and claim it as an RZ action. Limiting the account to major actions is both arbitrary and unavoidable in a study not itself devoted to the Cells; nonetheless, readers should keep in mind that these major attacks were accompanied by a much greater number of low-level actions, even if most of these are now largely forgotten.

The main left mobilization in 1982 was provoked by Ronald Reagan's first presidential visit to the FRG, to attend a two-day NATO Summit in downtown Bonn. Initially, with the previous September's Haig protests still fresh in everybody's mind, there were questions as to whether the trip would include West Berlin, but the symbolic importance of the divided city made it impossible to avoid.¹⁵ Indeed, not visiting would have undone the real purpose of the exercise, which was to create a show of unity behind the Double-Track decision to station new short-range Pershing and Cruise missiles in the FRG.

To prepare the ground for the June visit, the West Berlin police began to terrorize the city's squatters. The first raid since Rattay's death occurred on April 28, in the midst of negotiations to legalize the occupied houses. A peaceful demonstration that night was met with tear gas and a baton charge, with the excuse that the protesters had not sought a police permit. The next day a “legal” demonstration with a permit attracted five thousand people—it too was met with tear gas and billy clubs, as two thousand police engaged in what has been described as an “orgy of violence.”¹⁶ Over the next six weeks the raids continued, anti-Reagan leaflets and banners were confiscated, as police took to painting over anti-American graffiti.¹⁷

This preemptive clampdown was accompanied by a public relations

charade, meant to paint the Western powers as the true peacemakers. At the Bonn Summit, just before Reagan's West Berlin appearance, NATO issued a hyperbolic "Program for Peace in Freedom." As one historian has noted, "The program, which referred to NATO as 'the essential instrument of peace' and which vowed that NATO's nuclear weapons would never be used except in response to attack, pointedly set out to contrast NATO to the Warsaw Pact in an unsubtle effort to offset the growing influence of the peace movement..."¹⁸

NATO's public relations ploy did not go unchallenged. One week before the Bonn Summit, the Revolutionary Cells carried out its most ambitious offensive to date: on June 1, in the middle of the night, different RZs bombed the U.S. Army Headquarters in Frankfurt, the U.S. Army radio station in West Berlin, ITT in Hannover, IBM and Control Data in Düsseldorf, and the U.S. Army Officers Clubs in Hanau and Gelnhausen. Timed to avoid injuries,¹⁹ and involving militants from across the FRG and West Berlin, it was a night of attacks that cemented the RZ's position at the center of the West German resistance movements. Less obviously, it also did nothing to contradict the RAF's recent call for a strategy built around common attacks against NATO and the U.S. military. Further bombings—which similarly avoided any casualties—continued throughout the week leading up to the Bonn Summit.²⁰

On June 10, the second day of the summit, over one hundred thousand people descended on Bonn to demonstrate their opposition to NATO's war plans. Border police locked down the city, and riot cops easily turned back several thousand who broke away and attempted to march to the city center. The heaviest the action got was just before the rally began, when in nonviolent protest one man doused himself with gasoline and set himself on fire—suffering from third-degree burns, he was quickly rushed to hospital by helicopter.²¹ That same day, tens of thousands gathered in West Berlin for a similarly peaceful demonstration.



The Bonn demonstration against Ronald Reagan, June 10, 1982: “Atomic Death Threatens Us All.”

The June 10 protests were carefully orchestrated by various church groups, the *Jusos* (the SPD’s youth wing), and the Greens—the same forces which had held the initiative at the Peace Congress in West Berlin the previous October—and made a priority out of avoiding any altercations with police. Due to the reformist nature of the Bonn demonstration’s demands (see sidebar on next page) many *Autonomen* and anti-imp groups in fact chose to stay away, the sentiment being that, “To form our own contingent in order to demonstrate our politics within the demonstration would probably mean that we would go under in the masses of people there.”²²

This left June 11, the day of Reagan’s West Berlin visit, to the radical left.²³ In vain, the West Berlin Senate had imposed a total ban on all demonstrations for the day in question, and the day before police had raided a number of houses, confiscating dozens of banners and arresting would-be protesters.²⁴ Nevertheless, *Autonomen* and anti-ims called for an illegal demonstration in the city center; people were asked to bring helmets, as well as gloves and goggles to protect against tear gas, and were warned to travel in groups and to leave their children at home. Without

going so far as to call for violent resistance, the Council of Delegates of the *Alternative Liste* voted to defy the Senate (to which it had just been elected) and threw its weight behind the June 11 demo.²⁵

What Kind of Peace?

It has been said that in the eighties in the FRG, “there was a booming peace movement on the one hand, and a weak antiwar movement on the other.”¹

What this meant was explained in a document produced by *Autonomen* and anti-imps in the wake of President Reagan’s visit to Bonn and West Berlin:

The anti-war movement is to be pacified by the offer of a zone without nuclear weapons. That means: the promise that a war is not going to take place here. This “inner stability” would be achieved in the centers of imperialism, the condition necessary to guarantee and to escalate plunder in the Third World, the “grey zones,” and to do this with the countries of Europe taking part in the plunder directly and militarily. [...]

*It cannot be our aim to “secure peace,” meaning the status quo here, because we cannot see peace in this country or anywhere else in the world. We cannot pray for peace, we can only fight against the cause of the open and hidden wars and destroy them, in a fight against the system here and against NATO because NATO is the major instrument in the securing of imperialist interests. Our aim is our liberation and that of all people.*²

Or as the Hamburg chapter of Women Against Imperialist War explained, “We are no ‘Women for Peace’ because we see that here and everywhere in the world we cannot conjure up peace and that there will be no peace unless we fight the material causes for war and destroy them.”³

¹ Geronimo, 113.

² Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, “Summary of a brochure by Autonomist and Anti-imperialist Groups,” in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 11-12.

³ Women Against Imperialist War (Hamburg), “War on Imperialist War,” in Prairie



June 11, 1982: rioting spreads through West Berlin as anti-Reagan protesters break out of the Nollendorfplatz kettle.

Thousands answered the call, gathering at Nollendorfplatz, when suddenly the area was ringed by barbed wire and water cannons; the police announced that nobody would be allowed to leave without submitting to a search and presenting their ID. Rather than agree to this, people began to attack the barriers of what some would later refer to hyperbolically as a makeshift concentration camp.²⁶ In this they were supported by latecomers who remained outside of the fenced area, and soon the riot spread.²⁷ According to one account,

*Demonstrators built barricades, set fire to cars parked in the area, threw stones at police, and torched and plundered stores in the area. At times, the intensity of the flying stones hurled by protesters prevented firefighters from extinguishing the blazes. Hundreds of anarchists repeatedly charged the police lines, seeking to break through the barriers. Some statistics give an idea of the scope of the riots: police made 271 arrests, 87 police officers were injured in the melee, 40 demonstrators had to be hospitalized, and more than 200 injured people were treated at the scene.*²⁸

As one anti-imp report put it:

This time we had discussed the objective of the demo at a national level and organized it nationally. In spite of the state's efforts to demoralize people, thousands came to Nollendorfplatz determined to demonstrate....

[U]ltimately, it read as if it were always just us—sometimes fewer, sometimes better organized—who were involved in the fighting at these demos. But that's not true. A great number of young people who are not part of our scene and who weren't involved in the organizing participated in all of these demos. They participated not because they agreed with our goals, but because of their own living conditions (no work, no homes, no future) and because they knew they had to defend themselves.²⁹

Of those arrested, twenty-one were charged with serious breach of the peace; they would eventually receive sentences of up to three and a half years.³⁰ As further payback, the day after the riot persons unknown firebombed the *Alternative Liste*'s main offices and preferred pub, which had become important gathering places for the left. Both were completely destroyed.³¹

Violent demonstrations in West Berlin were nothing new, but the fact that some radicals now sat in the city's Senate complicated the equation. While the AL remained more connected to its militant grassroots than did the Greens, in both cases a dynamic existed whereby violence from the base, while it may have continued to radicalize the movement as a whole, provoked pressure on activists operating in the political arena, forcing them to move in a more conservative direction. As an example of this, following the Reagan visit, the AL apologized for having made a "mistake" in "permitting" the demonstration to erupt into violence, and pledged to promote nonviolent resistance in the future.³² Even the former guerilla Dieter Kunzelmann was quoted as saying that, "The peacemakers must become more courageous, and the militants must become more reasonable."³³ At the same time, this meshed with the internal clampdown within the peace movement, part of the process of strict nonviolence being adopted by all organizations and initiatives endorsed by the national

Coordinating Committee.³⁴

BACK TO THE RAF

While NATO and the peace movement dominated the headlines in Europe, around the world there was no shortage of imperialist depredations. The Malvinas War between England and Argentina was in full swing; with the help of the United States, El Salvador's government was carrying out a bloody counterinsurgency war against the FMLN; and, just before the “peace through strength” Bonn Summit, Israel had invaded Lebanon—in September it would arrange for Phalangists to massacre thousands of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Over the coming year, U.S. forces would bomb Beirut, and a few days later invade the Caribbean island of Grenada. There was a lot going on in both Western Europe and the Third World, and yet following the release of the May Paper, the RAF remained silent and unseen.

While the precise details remain unknown, the fact of the matter is that the RAF was busy working with others to lay the groundwork for its front. Guerilla groups may be unique for their armed quality, but they remain a primarily political phenomenon. Implementing what was essentially a new strategy, the two years following the release of the May Paper would be without further RAF attacks, and yet they were far from being without activity.

This was also a period in which the relationship with the *Stasi* seems to have come to an end. According to Helmut Pohl, this happened in early 1984. As he would later explain, there had been sympathy there, but not any kind of ideological unity: “We didn’t care a wit about real existing socialism. The artificiality and the clichés—that aspect created friction at every point. We were probably sometimes as unbearable for them as they were for us.”³⁵ Meanwhile, in the Middle East, the PFLP (EO)’s leader Wadi Haddad had been assassinated by Mossad in 1978, and his comrades-in-arms were embarking on different trajectories. The Palestinian scene which had been providing the RAF with support was in

flux, and while the West Germans retained connections in the region, South Yemen suddenly seemed a little further away. Yet while these foreign ties were perhaps reduced, other links were being forged, and clandestine structures extended, as the guerilla repositioned itself for campaigns to come.

In mid-September 1982, it was reported that three RAF members had successfully robbed a bank in Bochum making off with 100,000 DM.³⁶ What was planned next remains unclear, as the state was about to score a major victory.

At some point in October, the BKA located a RAF supply cache outside of Frankfurt. Among other things, they found a series of coded documents, which they quickly shipped off to the Wiesbaden headquarters. Within forty-eight hours the code had been cracked, allowing the BKA to locate a series of similar depots in wooded areas throughout the FRG.³⁷ Besides a large quantity of fake driver's licenses and passports, military IDs, guns, as well as notes about various prisons, police stations, politicians, and Israeli and U.S. institutions, these depots provided the perfect opportunity to trap members of the guerilla, for none of the discoveries were made public.³⁸ Under the rubric *Operation Eichhörnchen* ("Operation Squirrel"), GSG-9 agents and MEK special police units were deployed around each of these locales, and an indefinite stakeout ensued.

On November 11, Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Heidi Schulz were captured as they approached a cache outside the town of Heusenstamm, close to Frankfurt. Although they were armed, they were taken by surprise and overpowered before they could defend themselves.



Left to right: Heidi Schulz, Christian Klar, and Brigitte Mohnhaupt; all captured in November 1982.

Five days later, Christian Klar was similarly captured as he approached an arms cache outside of Hamburg. He too was armed, but did not put up a fight, leading to media propaganda that he must have been despondent following the capture of his companions the week before. Indeed, Attorney General Rebmann gloated that he was “astonished” that Klar, “a man so sensitive to police hunts and such a practiced criminal could have made this mistake after the events in Frankfurt last week.”³⁹

In the wake of these arrests, houses were searched throughout the FRG, and several anti-imps were arrested, including Dag Maaske and Karin Avdic who had worked on the 1978 Russell Tribunal, as well as Peter Alexa, who had been one of the dpa occupiers. (Most of these would be released almost immediately, with the exception of Maaske, police claiming that his fingerprints had been found on a sketch recovered at the Wiesbaden depot.)⁴⁰ It was a major setback for the RAF, and one that some saw as indicative of even deeper problems. In his 2007 book *Das Projektil sind wir*, Karl-Heinz Dellwo was characteristically blunt:

*With their arrests, an infrastructure created over years was swept away, because the central depot contained a list of numerous other depots. Those of us in Celle viewed this with a mixture of sadness and solidarity, as well as anger.... The central depot indicated a clear hierarchy. All experiences with resistance structure indicate that one must organize independent circles, so that if one of them collapses the rest remain intact.... The collapse of the structure brought the defeat of 1977 to its ultimate conclusion. A military defeat was, so to speak, added to the political and moral setbacks without the latter ever being addressed.*⁴¹

The 1982 arrests were a disaster for the RAF, which had finally been hitting its stride for the first time since '77.

To all appearances, the initiative had passed to the state.

Verena Becker and the *Verfassungsschutz*

At some point in 1981, Verena Becker, who had been captured along with Günter Sonnenberg in 1977, began providing the secret police with information. Among other things, Becker claimed that Stefan Wisniewski had been the shooter in the Buback assassination—a story that was suppressed by the *Verfassungsschutz* in order to avoid legal complications, as Knut Folkerts was already serving a life sentence for this crime.¹

The reasons why Becker provided information are difficult to ascertain, though subsequent reports would point to the harsh prison conditions that she, like the other RAF prisoners, was subject to. Similarly, there are serious doubts about how trustworthy her claims were, some suspecting that she simply provided misinformation in order to diminish her own responsibility and curry favor with her captors.



The *Verfassungsschutz* would pick Becker up from prison with a civilian automobile under the pretext of bringing her to a medical clinic, while in fact she was taken to an apartment in Cologne where she was

debriefed for days on end. Although she received no immediate benefit in terms of her prison sentence, she was paid 5,000 DM, which she spent on language courses²—a paltry sum indeed, considering that the *Verfassungsschutz* was at the time offering up to a quarter-million DM to any RAF members at large who might turn themselves in.

Regardless of why she did it, Becker was clearly torn by her decision to cooperate with the state. At some point in 1982 she managed to get word to the other RAF prisoners about what she had done, and according to some accounts offered to kill herself.³ The others took their distance from her, but sent word discouraging her from doing herself any harm. Strikingly, there was no public condemnation, and the matter was hushed up. While the prisoners now knew that Becker could not be trusted, they made no move to exclude her from what support they were receiving from the outside.

While it has been reported that her interrogators were mainly interested in the RAF's internal structure, the exact details of what Becker divulged remain unknown; when the story broke almost thirty years later, in 2007, the *Verfassungsschutz* was characteristically tight-lipped about what they had learned from their informant, whose debriefing was codenamed *Operation Zauber* ("Operation Charm").

Indeed, they have even refused requests from the BAW for copies of their files.⁴



Verena Becker from a mugshot (right) and while being escorted by police following her 1977 arrest (opposite page)

¹ For more on this see pages 273–274. Ironically, in 2010, at a time when Becker and Peter-Jürgen Boock were each making public statements accusing other RAF members of involvement in the Buback hit, Becker herself was brought up on charges related to the killing. She would go to trial in 2012 and was found guilty, receiving a sentence of four years for aiding and abetting. As two and a half years of that are considered served as part of her previous life sentence, she is expected to be released in less than a year. Tagesschau.de “Haft für Ex-Terroristin Becker wegen Beihilfe,” October 5, 2012.

² Dahlkamp et al., “Operation Zauber.”

³ Werner Mathes and Rainer Nübel, “‘Verräterin’ bot RAF Selbstmord an,” *Stern*, April 25, 2007.

⁴ Christian Rath, “Verena Becker will raus,” *taz*, November 19, 2009.

1. Jackson, 15; Grauwacke, 59.

2. Jackson, 16.

3. Geronimo, 105; Jackson, 17, 22-27.

4. “Ten meters without a head.”

5. Peters, 528.

6. Viett, 220.
7. Indeed, female RAF prisoners who corresponded with WAIW would routinely reject this kind of politics.
8. Autonome und Knast-Gruppen BRD und West-Berlin, “Guerilla und Widerstand—eine ‘Front’,” *radikal* no. 108 (September 1982): 2.
9. Dellwo (2007), 173.
10. *Antiimperialistischer Kampf* “Zum Mai-Papier der RAF,” no. 3: 5.
11. See for instance, the *Fragment Regarding the Soviet Union* written by Gudrun Ensslin in Stammheim Prison on January 19, 1976, available at <http://www.germanguardilla.com/red-army-faction/documents/76-01-19-ensslin.html>.
12. See for instance, the September 1982 communiqué by the anti-imps who firebombed the NATO weapons depot and Faber and Schnepf in Grebenhain-Oberwald in Vogelsberg district, Hessen; “Kommuniqué,” in Marat, 103.
13. *Antiimperialistischer Kampf*, “Zum Mai-Papier der RAF,” no. 3: 8, 9.
14. Tolmein, 147-148.
15. William Safire, “Changing Relations between U.S., Bonn,” *New York Times* in *European Stars and Stripes*, March 1, 1982.
16. Jackson, 18.
17. Ibid., 20.
18. Ian Q.R. Thomas, *The Promise of Alliance: NATO and the Political Imagination* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 126.
19. Associated Press, “West German Bombs Precede Reagan Visit,” *The Wisconsin State Journal*, June 2, 1982.
20. Associated Press, “Protesters Decry U.S. Arms Policies,” *The Capital* (Annapolis, MD), June 10, 1982. As part of this campaign, Bourns Ketronic Flugtecknik in Hamburg was firebombed on June 4, and the Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut in Tübingen was bombed on June 5.
21. United Press International, “Thousands Protest Reagan’s Visit to Bonn,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, June 10, 1982.
22. “Summary of a Brochure by Autonomist and Anti-imperialist Groups,” in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 12.
23. Ibid.; Geronimo, 113.

[24.](#) "Summary of a Brochure by Autonomist and Anti-imperialist Groups," in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, 12-13. This source also explains that police had in fact drawn up a list of 500-800 people to arrest preventatively, but as they noted, "When the pigs came on the night before the 11th, they found houses empty. Most comrades had preferred to sleep elsewhere. Only 29 people were arrested that day."

[25.](#) Alexander, 261.

[26.](#) Jackson, 21.

[27.](#) Ibid.; J.I. Kominicki, "Hecklers Fail to Dampen Berlin Welcome," *European Stars and Stripes*, June 12, 1982; Grauwacke, 73-74.

[28.](#) Alexander, 261.

[29.](#) "Redebeitrag: Zur Entwicklung der Antiimperialistischen Front in der BRD seit Bremen," in Marat, 99.

[30.](#) Grauwacke, 74.

[31.](#) Alexander, 264.

[32.](#) Ibid., 263-264.

[33.](#) Ibid., 265.

[34.](#) Mushaben, 220. These observations about social movement dynamics seem à propos: "the reactions of established political actors typically reinforce divisions among the activists, which leads to a twin process of moderation and radicalization," (Koopmans, 645) and subsequently, "The presence of a radical minority may in turn strengthen the moderate faction's tendency toward moderation and institutionalization." (Ibid., 655).

[35.](#) See Appendix III: For Us It Was a Question of Learning Explosives and Shooting Techniques, [page 339](#).

[36.](#) *Spiegel*, "Die alte RAF ist zu Ende gegangen."

[37.](#) Ibid.

[38.](#) *Spiegel*, "Knarren im Wald," November 15, 1982.

[39.](#) United Press International, "West Germans Nab Terrorist," *Tyrone Daily Herald*, November 17, 1982. Twenty years after the fact, Klar remembered the media speculation that he was "glad" to be captured, and addressed it thus: "It was meant to mock someone they had long sought and had finally gotten. When one is arrested and there is no room for negotiation, it gets nasty. That's the case, and one must deal with it. I saw it this way at the time: more retaliation against someone who has been taken prisoner. It is perhaps

also a projection, one that I often experienced afterwards in this general context from the *taz* milieu, which always pontificates about the extreme pressure of being underground and all that sort of thing.” (Christian Klar, interviewed by Günter Gaus.)

[40.](#) *Verwandtentreffen am 13. November 1982 in Frankfurt.*

[41.](#) Dellwo (2007), 173.

The Guerilla, the Resistance, and the Anti-Imperialist Front

We are going to discuss what we have learned in recent years, and what we want to do as a result. What we have to say will, of course, be general in nature.

We believe that it is now possible and necessary for the revolutionary strategy to enter a new stage in the imperialist centers.

First, we will outline some discussions, initiatives, and actual steps taken over the past two or three years to prepare the terrain from which to act.

An idea and a concept have taken form from which we can proceed. The first concrete steps indicate possibilities that would be effective: THE GUERILLA AND THE RESISTANCE UNITED IN A SINGLE FRONT.

Our vision is to bring together the options already explored in different areas and different scenes, often in a diffuse fashion and with only a vague underlying plan, so as to bring them to a new level of struggle, that is to say, to make them effective and strategic. If this is not done now, then all the new, productive, and open developments—the unprecedented developments—risk losing their clarity and degenerating.

WE SEE '77 AS A POINT OF TRANSITION FOR THE GUERILLA FROM THE FIRST STAGE TO THE NEXT.

The conflict between the guerilla and the state in '77 was the catalyst for a new political situation here. Within the dialectic of attack and reaction, the conditions of struggle were transformed. And just as the conditions have changed, so can and must the form of struggle change. After '77, nothing was as it had been before: not the state, not the left, not the role of the FRG in international politics, not the role of armed struggle in the center within the international class struggle. We made errors in '77, and

the offensive was turned into our most serious defeat. We have some things to say about this.

The situation today—which developed as a result of the confrontation, and which can be seen more clearly now than was previously the case—shows that neither the errors nor the defeat were decisive.

In a fundamental way, the '77 offensive marked the end of the struggle we had been waging since '70 and forced us to make some decisions.

During the entire period of struggles that gave birth to the RAF and allowed it to grow, we concentrated on one question of power: whether the prisoners, whom the state had used both to represent the RAF and as a pretext for its own policies, would be freed. In the same way, more generally, the struggle to implement the urban guerilla concept, the question of whether the armed struggle could actually take root in the FRG, thereby opening up a revolutionary perspective, is fundamentally a question of power. This question has been at the heart of all the actions, skirmishes, manhunts, and media campaigns over the past years. That is why the government has reported our “collapse” hundreds of times. That is why most leftists’ whining has focused on the “hopelessness” of armed struggle. Isolation, the high-security wings, and the Stammheim show trial were meant to destroy what had been built. And then there was '77.

Today, we have no doubt that they decided to let Schleyer die, to risk a hundred people being blown up in Mogadishu, and to liquidate the Stammheim prisoners, because they really hoped and believed that they could be done with it once and for all, or at least for a while.

The unfolding dialectic that has changed everything reveals the nature of the guerilla and of the state, and how the struggle will unfold.

It almost worked, but the irony is that it actually created a situation in which we can continue the struggle in different and better conditions.

Throughout this final endeavor, in which there were no longer any

limits—as a result of the suppression of the ‘77 offensive, whereby the state had us by the throat and intended to finish us off—the state had to openly use all its power to repress the entire spectrum of opposition, to repel all criticism, and to establish itself as a social system that cannot be questioned, with all the subtle ramifications that implies. This meant that in the autumn of ‘77, all real opposition was faced with a new situation and new operating conditions, both in terms of the existing reality and in terms of the prospects for future struggle. This forced everyone to fundamentally redefine their relationship to power—or else renounce their identity.

At that point, the objective situation was reduced to the most basic issue. Subjectively, many people suddenly had the life-altering realization that if the guerilla had actually come to an end, then all of their hopes and dreams for a different life would have also disappeared. That there would no longer be any clear perspective. That there is only hope as long as there is struggle. That they wanted and needed the guerilla, and that our defeat was their defeat. Once you realize that the guerilla is necessary, the leap to a new consciousness is easy. If the guerilla struggle is all there is, making it material can only mean—on whatever level possible—situating yourself within the guerilla’s strategy.

This leap in consciousness was the personal, living moment within real people where the conditions of struggle here changed: IN FAVOR OF DEVELOPING A REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE METROPOLE.

There has been an effort over the past seven years to introduce into this political desert—where everything is fake, for sale, conditioning, lies, and falsehood—a spirit and a morale, to introduce a practice and a political orientation in favor of an irreversible disruption and destruction of the system. The guerilla. On the basis of ties to and identification with the struggles in Southeast Asia, in Africa, and in Latin America, an effort has been made to violently assert the existence of the guerilla and to root it here. What Che called the stage of survival and implantation manifested

itself here as the stage in which the concept was established, made headway, and was taken up—even if at a given point the existing illegal armed groups were destroyed. Above all, it is a concept that is violently imposed. In every regard. And in isolation. Not only against a repressive apparatus without historical precedent, but also against the ideas of people we would rather be cooperating with. In this one-dimensional landscape, which has existed for generations, the idea of liberation has difficulty breaking through thick layers of corruption, alienation, and emotional and psychological deformation to reach people's hearts and minds.

At this point, the question of whether to take up arms and struggle in the FRG and Western Europe has been resolved. It's obvious. That does not mean that the guerilla's future is guaranteed: that is never the case, but the existence of guerilla politics now constitutes the basis upon which the struggle will develop.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUTHENTIC REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY IN THE IMPERIALIST CENTER IS A REALITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL CLASS WAR.

In the context of the international liberation struggle, the isolated guerilla struggles are seen to be a concrete factor in daily conflicts. It is now necessary to turn our full attention to the situation here and to proceed in an inverse movement, bringing resistance in the metropole to the front line of the international class war.

It is a strategy that has its roots here. In the existential hunger for a different life, in the overall experience of the imperialist center, and in the necessity of resistance here. AS A RESULT THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE METROPOLE IS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR ALONGSIDE THE STRUGGLES IN ASIA, AFRICA, AND LATIN AMERICA.

This means that from the moment one sides with the guerilla and the struggle for liberation within the anti-imperialist struggle, one has reached

a radical turning point. To struggle within the context of an open, strategic concept, where each person, based on the gravity of his or her own situation, based on his or her own history and subjective process, can arrive at the common goal of the destruction of the imperialist system and the revolutionary overthrow of society through concrete struggle in the context of the guerilla's politics. To be part of the revolutionary front here. This means that right from the start they share our objective of building the front in the center. That is what we mean by: struggle together in a front.

If one wants to, one can differentiate our line of action prior to '77 from that of today, in that, prior to '77, it was always a question of what would lead directly to armed struggle or what would prepare for this step, and now what matters is that the guerilla and the militant and political struggles unite as integral components of a developing strategy in the metropole.

What we are saying is that even if the illegal armed organization is at the heart of this strategy, it will not be strong enough until armed politics, militant attacks, the struggles that result from all forms of oppression and alienation, as well as the political struggle, are all united to identify and carry out a conscious attack against the weak points in the imperialist center.

For us, the subjective side of the developments that came out of the dialectic of '77—the possibility of a front in the center—is essential. This remains the case. It will determine whether the struggle develops in the imperialist centers, which do not normally produce revolutionary conditions, but are objectively destructive and corrupt due to the way in which the crisis is managed and all social developments are turned into instruments of domination.

Obviously, nobody climbs to a higher level on their own. The qualitatively different situation that exists now is born of the objective

development of the international class struggle and can only be understood in that context.

The long history of liberation wars on the colonized continents culminated in the struggle of Vietnam's National Liberation Front, and their victory gave rise to a new historical stage of anticolonial national liberation struggles by peoples subjected to imperialism.

The effects of this historic breakthrough: the new strength of the emergent national states in international politics—the generalized economic, political, and social crises in the imperialist center—the rise, parallel to the liberation struggles, of the Soviet Union as a superpower equal to the United States—all of this has destabilized the global balance of power between North and South, between East and West, and between the state and society in the imperialist centers. It has thus destabilized the uneasy balance between imperialism and liberation. In other words, all around the world imperialism's instability produces a situation whereby it could slide into a final systemic crisis if it is defeated at any point in the global system or loses its dominance in some area—whether a strategic military position (Southern Africa, the Middle East), an economic component (such as oil, strategic mineral resources, or technological superiority), or the political domination of a geographic region (such as Central America or the Gulf).

Since Vietnam, the conflict has shifted from a confrontation between the center and the liberation struggles, the front and the hinterland, to a situation where the front line cuts across every sector and every country. Any sector, due to its specific point of integration and its unique significance in the overall system, could disrupt the balance of power—and, as a result, any sector could become a front in the liberation war.

To put it bluntly, imperialism must react by centralizing its power: the state, the unified structure of the U.S. chain of states, the reconstruction of its capacity for military, economic, and political action, and of its

instruments of domination. In an attempt to get global developments back under control, they will intervene everywhere: in the existing struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in the emergent national states, in the East-West conflict, and in Western Europe, with the goal of using this generalized offensive to reestablish their hegemonic position.

Faced with united imperialist reaction, it is necessary for the anti-imperialist struggle to carry out parallel struggles on all fronts. They are all different sectors of a single front. And, as struggles that must be carried out side by side, each sector—and this includes the West European sector—will, on the basis of its own strengths, its own particular development, and its own specific current and historical conditions, be able to form an actual front that can shake imperialism.

This is why the dialectic of the '77 confrontation led to qualitatively new subjective conditions of struggle here and to the definitive integration of contradictions in the center into the development, the imperative, and the possibility of international class war. In this sense, it came at the right time.

In fact, this is also the context in which the state found itself in '77. Faced with the end of the U.S. chain of states' first stage of development, our defeat provided it with an opportunity to put on a show of force that was meant to show that it was not acting within the context of the national state, but on the level of the global counterrevolutionary project. In other words, it was acting as the key European power, which, in keeping with its function within the U.S. chain of states, will be politically compelled to act both domestically and throughout Western Europe against all forms of resistance, so as to facilitate the international attack. But by doing this it has helped define the lines along which the decisive struggle will develop: the unified struggle of the West European states against the guerilla has made the concept of a West European guerilla front a reality, and, at the most basic social level, as a result of the FRG's laws and its history, a profound chasm has opened between society and the state, making the

revolutionary front a realistic option here.

There is no longer any point in analyzing the internal changes here as isolated phenomena. As a result of their attitude and experiences, those who have been struggling for some time have already internalized the new situation and have accepted it as a turning point. What we are saying is that the system is faced with unprecedented fundamental opposition. Cold, without illusions, expecting nothing from the state. It's no longer about "changing the system" or an "alternative model" of the state. All of that seems completely absurd. That's over now—only with the end of the system can one imagine a life of any quality.

Imperialism offers no positive or meaningful future, only destruction. That is the key issue, the root of militancy in all areas of life.

This reality is experienced on the level of daily economic reality, through the arms race and the preparations for nuclear war, in the natural and social conditions of life, and also on a personal level within each individual, a level where alienation and oppression express themselves through massive distortions and the destruction of any depth of individual thought, the feeling that one's very personality has been mutilated. The majority have lost all hope. Imperialism has perfected and systematized domination in its centers to such a degree that people feel powerless to resist. Skyrocketing suicide rates, people losing themselves in sickness, alcohol, tranquilizers, and drugs; these are reactions to the long history of defeats, hardship, and suffering—depoliticization to such a degree that people are no longer able to see the need for violent resistance.

But this profound misery also constitutes the profound existential basis for struggle and hatred. It is not a matter of short, spontaneous bursts of rage. This hatred has been building for years. This is the terrain upon which the revolutionary front in the metropole is now developing. Should the system finally be reduced to destruction and extermination, the resistance—whether it knows it or not—will prove to be the element of

opposition that will become total resistance, both within single-issue struggles and beyond them. The unity of the revolutionary struggle will be both possible and necessary. For everyone who wants to struggle to bring about a break with the state and a revolt across the spectrum of militant struggles, the first order of action must be to develop unity around a strategy of attack within the imperialist centers, through a practice that will itself inevitably create this unity.

THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT

Over the past two years, there have been numerous leaflets and actions with the slogan “a front with the RAF,” and we know that the need and the desire to achieve this cuts across all political issues. But there is still a very long way to go from this need, this desire, and this initial potential for a front, to the practical process of developing and organizing such a movement.

The front will not emerge automatically from common struggles and a proclamation. Such a proclamation and any mobilization that accompanied it will come to nothing if the practical aspects of this strategy —how it can be undertaken and how it can be effective—are not tackled more seriously. And not by us alone.

The front will not become a reality unless everybody, regardless of where they find themselves, makes it a priority to develop the process and practice necessary to unite the underground armed struggle and the aboveground militant resistance, as well as the methods, tactics, and structures that are necessary for them to determine the level of illegal activity and development that is possible for them. In this way, they will be able to make a conscious decision about their further integration into this strategic process.

THE FRONT REQUIRES THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL COORDINATION IN THE ATTACK AGAINST IMPERIALIST POWER—OTHERWISE IT IS MEANINGLESS.

While establishing the nucleus of this new guerilla structure over the past two years, we have found that this coordination springs up spontaneously quite easily and that it is powerful—both subjectively and objectively—in material terms, opening up possibilities for attack. On the other hand, we have found that it is difficult to maintain the momentum necessary for this strategy to transcend the boundaries between separate

political initiatives, actions, and limited practical contexts. That is the roadblock that must now be dismantled.

It's not a question of morale, enthusiasm, or activity. It means that, as a result of deciding to engage in this struggle, one must take realistic steps to determine how the system can actually be smashed and to determine one's role in the process.

We have already had this experience ourselves, and we are ready to share it with those we know: the decisive moment in the breakthrough that underpins how far we've come is the struggle of those who have begun to act within the framework of this strategy, or who want to participate as subjects within the framework of the anti-imperialist front. They have started to anticipate this within themselves and for themselves and to determine all political initiative and action from this perspective and toward this end. They think of everything they do from the perspective of the fighting front.

Since the first discussions in '79 about uniting the anti-imperialist struggle, the same obstacles have persisted within and between the anti-imperialist groups, preventing what would have otherwise been possible a long time ago: an active front. We can't get anywhere with phony struggles over the fetishization of militancy or pleas to establish "links with the masses." On the contrary, all expressions of support for us or efforts to discover some connection with us that only take the form of talk are useless. The fact is that all this will just result in the next simple step not being taken.

The front means more than just actions. The front—meaning the struggles that by their common objectives become a common struggle and develop into practical political unity—will take many forms in the West European center. At this point, the anti-imperialist front in the FRG—the militant attacks, militant projects coordinated in a united fashion to counter the imperialist strategy, political initiatives that mediate politics,

that intervene in the actual resistance—is the structural and organizational struggle to establish the capacity to act. It is, at every point in its development, a struggle for an alternative and for the practical application of our discussions and declarations in the strategic process.

The front signifies more than building a legal structure around the guerilla. We have said before that there is no “legal arm of the RAF” and that none is possible. Sure, we have some contacts with people here and there, and this is also part of concrete guerilla politics. But it is only by specific, independent development in this area and by having common goals that one becomes part of the front. This is how division is broken down. This is the only way the struggle in this area can develop politically and achieve continuity and strength—and, as a matter of principle, self-determination and complete accountability are essential to each stage of the struggle for revolutionary politics in the West European center.

Debates that always remain at the same level, in which isolated perspectives confront professions of faith, the insular nature of isolated groups, the incapacity to take initiative; all of that disappears the moment one understands and internalizes the reality of the situation: the anti-imperialist front is as desperately needed as it is underdeveloped—but it could develop a strong position in the West European center and has enormous potential in the context of the international liberation war.

A SIGNIFICANT FIGHTING FRONT AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST STRATEGY IS THE MOST PRESSING GOAL.

The extensive understanding of imperialism and its plans that pours forth in the form of papers—as well as the determination and the passion of the militant actions—all this will be in vain if it does not lead to the decision to forge the connections necessary for us to build the process together.

STARTING WITH WHAT ALREADY EXISTS: THE FORM OF ACTUAL RESISTANCE AND THE CONDITIONS OF STRUGGLE IN

THE METROPOLE, THE POLITICAL, STRUCTURAL, AND PRACTICAL ELEMENTS AND LINES OF ATTACK AGAINST THE CORE OF IMPERIALIST POWER HERE: THE DISRUPTION OF THE WEST GERMAN STATE AND NATO WITH THE GOAL OF FURTHER DEVELOPING THE OFFENSIVE.

The reality is that the anti-imperialist struggle is retreating in the face of the—certainly contradictory, but unified—imperialist machine. There was no new anti-imperialist mobilization against the post-Vietnam imperialist reconstruction and the beginning of the crisis, or against their preparations or the first stages of their offensive. At that stage, the resistance was paralyzed by the disorientation and final collapse of the '68 left. The mobilization only began after the reactionary attack had been going on for some time and on all levels. As their offensive continued to unfold, a large, spontaneous resistance came into being, but anti-imperialism was not its overall goal. In the future, anti-imperialism must be present as a proactive and significant factor in discussions about and actions against the imperialist projects that now determine the course of history: the U.S. war strategy in Europe—the reactionary domestic state offensives—the international strategy of the imperialist chain of states to roll back the liberation movements and the emergent national states, as well as against the socialist states.

The fact of the matter is that it is an open question how history will unfold. U.S. imperialism—in its historic crisis, its existence threatened for the first time in forty years—has recourse to the most extreme means, and unless it is prevented from doing so it will use them if the system slides into an uncontrollable crisis. Given its potential for nuclear destruction, this certainly takes on a catastrophic dimension, which we, the oppressed and exploited of the world, have no reason to fear. Because it would mean the end of imperialism, and imperialism means the end of us. Faced with the possibility of nuclear destruction, our attitude is, first of all, that we do not

fear it and, second of all, that we can and will prevent it through revolutionary war. Far more serious than the possibility of nuclear war is the fact that U.S. imperialism is preparing a broad-based general offensive to reestablish itself as a world power, which will only be possible if it succeeds in expanding its domination. But it is possible to intervene against this offensive, and the anti-imperialist struggle in Western Europe will be decisive in determining whether imperialism succeeds in its efforts or whether the outcome is a leap forward for the worldwide liberation struggle against imperialism. The expansion of their domination is meant to occur without any major wars. It is to be brought about by making extermination a part of daily life, a part of living conditions, and through manipulation and repression—which will result in death and the destruction of humane living conditions for millions of people for a long time to come.

This is more or less certain, and will be for some time to come: given our relative weakness in the face of the power that controls almost everything here, we are in a situation where we cannot establish a front capable of threatening their power here. To resolve the generalized crisis at the social, socio-political, and politico-military level, they will be forced to adopt aggressive measures that will exceed the limits of what is politically acceptable in the metropole, the “limits of what is tolerable”—democracy, well-being, internal peace—and they won’t be able to do so indefinitely if they are constantly confronted with anti-imperialist struggle and constantly unmasked in open confrontation, for this will sever the fine ideological thread holding the state and society together. The limits of what is politically acceptable have been historically determined for the imperialist centers in Western Europe. They became established pillars of the system in the struggles against the workers’ movement and the liberation wars, and they cannot be pulled down without provoking general social upheaval. This opens up the possibility of transforming the relative weakness of the anti-imperialist struggle in the West European

center into a strong-point in the international struggle.

As to the imperialist system overall, its global restructuring project can only succeed if its plans for the imperialist center unfold relatively smoothly and quickly without encountering any serious, radical resistance. Given the international contradictions, any disruption caused by the anti-imperialist struggle here would prevent this project from succeeding. Imperialism would have to bring its massive power to bear to impose solutions at home and abroad, which would result in a unified international class war being waged around the world at a higher, more intense level. That is to say: it would bring about a renewed struggle to smash the imperialist system. This is the starting point from which we struggle. And it is our awareness of this opportunity, of our power, and of the option that only we here have—and, as a result, also an awareness of our responsibility—that pushes us to establish and build the anti-imperialist front here.

THE REVOLUTION IN WESTERN EUROPE HAS BECOME A CORNERSTONE OF THE GLOBAL CONFRONTATION.

In the context of the international class war, the imperialist offensive in Western Europe, which depends on the FRG, is essential to ensuring the functioning of the global system of domination and capitalist reproduction. On the other hand, from our point of view, the development of the front in the center to resist this is of vital importance in order to be able to counter the current tendency for the global liberation process to get derailed by the East-West contradiction, and to break through the constraints caused by developments at the level of the state in those countries that have achieved national liberation.

Western Europe is the point of intersection between East and West, between North and South, and between state and society. So the centers themselves are both the launching pads and the bases for restructuring projects. It is here that they must attempt to develop the necessary military

power to pressure the socialist states and the national liberation struggles, as well as to develop the economic power necessary to get a grip on the internal waves of economic and social crisis. It is also from these bases that imperialism must intervene to dominate and integrate the emergent developing states. And—as a precondition for all of this—domestic political unity must be imposed; if there is not a consensus, there must at least be peace on the home front. In this sense, imperialism has been forced back to its centers. Using all its resources, it must offensively and aggressively impose the global reactionary project at all levels and with maximum force in the center.

Medium-range missiles, neutron bombs, conventional weaponry, concentration and centralization of capital, rationalization, plans for massive unemployment, turning humans into simple extensions of machines, the inevitable forceful shaping of energy policy based on its use as a weapon of war on the global market, the destruction of social structures to serve the interests of the police and big capital, exploitation of the means of subsistence, training programs functioning as factories, police, justice, prison, etc. are the initial blows in this militarily conceived offensive. This is the iron vice squeezing all sectors of society in the metropole, which long ago made it irrelevant whether or not we want the front in the center—the war has already begun. The only question today is whether there will be a revolutionary front to oppose the reactionary offensive.

This is what is behind the emergence of the anti-imperialist front in the center. Its significance is not just measured by whether or not it is able to stop this or that current imperialist project. Whatever it achieves, it achieves as a fighting section within the international front. It is primarily on the basis of the overall conflict between imperialism and liberation that the power relationship is developed that will make social revolution here possible.

RESISTANCE TO THE IMPERIALIST MACHINE BASED HERE—AND THIS IS ALSO OUR DEFINITION OF GUERILLA ACTION AND BUILDING THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT—IS BASED ON THE ATTACK AND ON BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE CENTER WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE.

The attack, which the overall situation demands, must occur here. On the world stage, the two blocs confront each other with weapons, locked in overkill mode, neither one willing to back down. The liberation movements have become states, and those that have not yet become states behave in a quasi-state fashion. International policy and international relations constitute the principal terrain for these liberation movements and emergent states. They are forced to function within the context of both the East-West contradiction, which reproduces itself within these countries, and the global market, in which and in opposition to which they are forced to pursue their development. At the same time they are forced to attempt to expand the power of the newly liberated states within international bodies, so as to create some room to maneuver for themselves. This development makes complete sense. It is both the expression of the strength achieved through the national liberation struggles and of the weakness that obliges them to continue to function within the imperialist-controlled state system.

In this situation, development in these countries creates a double-edged contradiction for the leadership of the emergent states. On the one hand, increasing misery, mass poverty, and underdevelopment call for radical solutions. On the other hand, the inevitable nature of the struggle to obtain the resources necessary to address these problems, resources over which the imperialist states have almost complete control, pushes them to come to terms with imperialism. This has the tendency to push them into ever-greater contradictions, which can easily end in divisive disasters, such as

civil wars, famine, hopelessness, repression, and intervention. These contradictions are not of their making. They are above all the result of colonial history, from which imperialism continues to profit by exploiting the ruin it leaves behind when it is forced out of a country.

The guerilla and the militants in the metropole struggle today on the basis of a dynamic created by the liberation movements, and if a movement has existed here for thirty years, it is thanks to the struggles of these liberation movements, just as the situation there is significantly conditioned by the fact that the struggle here is so underdeveloped.

There can be no way to destroy imperialism as long as there is no way to destroy imperialism's power, command structures, and productive centers here. In other words, politics must take forceful material form, becoming a significant factor in the international struggle, so as to achieve its goals and establish continuity, and to develop the will and the way forward that will put an end to the system. Only then will the revolutionary leap forward be possible. Imperialism will not collapse on its own. Nor will it collapse by being encircled and strangled from the outside. Unless the front develops here, the world will repeat the historical experience that has been fatal to class struggle in Europe and on the political level in the East-West conflict: irresolvable, bitter trench warfare. This militarily and politically aggressive imperialist system, with its highly developed technology and highly developed productive and organizational techniques, is intent on once again being the sole world power, by militarily opposing the desire of the Soviet Union and the socialist states to remain equal powers and by politically opposing the consciousness of the people of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. This is no longer feasible—but it does have sufficient political, military, and economic power to control, and thereby prevent, development in the countries that have achieved national liberation. It may also be powerful enough to undercut the socialist states by imposing an arms race and using the global market to disrupt their economies. And

within the metropole, the state never stops trying to establish imperialist hegemony, using shows of force, police state tactics, and crisis management to keep a decaying society in its place.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

Steadfast resistance and revolutionary attacks tailored to conditions here are our only option—and it is an option that only we have—for opening up the way to put an end to the system—a way which achieves its purpose by destroying imperialist power.

As the situation in the metropole ripens, with the development of social production transforming into a source of extermination, the revolutionary struggle here, through its goals and its structure as a fighting front, points the way to a social future beyond the historical threshold of the existing system of states. In the current historical stage, in which the external boundary has been rolled back and the disintegrating imperialist system is in complete internal crisis, the metropole is ripe for change. It is, in fact, ripe for a radical struggle to overthrow social relationships and shift society to communist goals. In this context, life is not simply a series of transitional steps, nor is victory conceived of as seizing state power, but rather as a seamless process of resistance that creates a counterforce and a transition to freedom.

REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS HERE IS THE STRATEGY THAT UNDERSTANDS EVERYDAY RESISTANCE AS A STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, AND AS A PART, A STAGE, AND A FACTOR WITHIN THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE, IN WHICH THE GOAL CAN ONLY BE REACHED BY COMBINED ACTION.

These politics have nothing to do with a global theory. They are not about creating one of those endless successions of ideological blueprints which one pretends will be realized at some future date. It can only be a real process. The route to utopia is a clear, long-term strategy—one might say it is a way of life—within which the strategic goal of destroying imperialist power is tied to a real and immediate transformation. The step-by-step process by which the front develops liberates both political terrain and individuals, destroying the state in the process—by building a

counterforce, this process creates the necessary conditions for the politico-military offensive and establishes, as a material development, the renewal of fully human relationships between the combatants. Immediate transformation, liberated territory, and revolution are fully achieved in the process of resistance—and only as such do they become real. The revolutionary strategy here is simply a strategy against their strategy.

RESISTING THEIR STRATEGIC PLANS OR THEIR CONCRETE PROJECTS AND USING MATERIAL ATTACKS TO POLITICALLY DISRUPT IMPERIALIST OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD CREATES THE CONSCIOUSNESS NECESSARY FOR BOTH THE NATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT TO BLOCK THEIR PLANS BEFORE THEY CAN EXECUTE THEM.

A SIGNIFICANT FIGHTING FRONT HERE WOULD MATERIALLY DISRUPT THE CONSENSUS IN THE IMPERIALIST CENTER AND, THROUGH THIS DISRUPTION, WOULD MEDIATE A BREAKDOWN AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL DEPRIVING THE SYSTEM OF ITS LEGITIMACY AND APPEAL, BOTH OF WHICH IT REQUIRES TO REPRODUCE ITSELF ECONOMICALLY, AND TO REPRODUCE ITS SYSTEM OF MANIPULATION AND DESTRUCTION INTERNATIONALLY IN THE NEW STAGE.

SUCH A RADICAL SHIFT IN THE METROPOLE WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO PUT AN END TO IMPERIALIST POWER AND ITS LEGITIMACY IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE, WHO WOULD SEE THAT THE TIME WAS RIGHT TO ESTABLISH A FREE SOCIETY.

REGARDING '77

The problem that we faced during the Schleyer kidnapping—given our concrete goal of liberating the prisoners—was that we did nothing to advance our political goals during the offensive, nor did we elaborate on the growing contradictions created by the overall crisis. Even though the action touched a nerve for the state, we did not react politically to the challenge we were presented with.

In the summer of '77, the prisoners' situation had reached such a critical point that we could no longer put off an action to liberate them. The prisoners were on a thirst strike and Gudrun was dying.

We knew that, at that point, any action would be carried out from a position of relative weakness, but we wanted to act anyway, because war is not a condition that de facto exists between us and them. It only exists if it is developed materially as a question of power. Ever since Stockholm, the question of the prisoners had been central to the conflict between the guerilla and the state, a central question within which the demand for the prisoners' freedom combined two issues and made them manifest: the relationship of the guerilla to its imprisoned comrades, and the role of this relationship in the struggle, as well as the importance of each individual to the whole—and of the power relations in general, given that the guerilla materially and directly challenged state power, as the attack intentionally aimed to create a political crisis by targeting Schleyer, one of the pillars of the state power structure (this was the only realistic option), thereby forcing a reaction that would expose the internal characteristics of their power structure by forcing them to react, while simultaneously creating divisions among them.

We hoped to force the SPD to decide whether to exchange these two figures who embodied the global power of West German capital in a way that no more than ten other individuals do: Ponto for international financial policy (revealing how all the German banks, especially his own

Dresdner Bank, work to support reactionary regimes in developing countries, as well as the role of the FRG's financial policy as a tool in the institutional strategy to control the way in which European integration unfolds)—and Schleyer for national economic policy (the large corporations, concerted action, the FRG as an international model of social peace). They embodied the power within the state that the SPD, as the ruling party, must respect if it wishes to stay in power.¹

Our action was meant to expose the contradiction that lies in the tension between the strategy of American capital, which has determined the SPD's understanding of the state and all of its reactionary maneuvering in matters of domestic and foreign policy since 1945, and the banks and corporations, or, if you prefer, national capital. Certainly, national capital cannot formulate its own policy in the face of the hegemony of the American line—unless you count the narrow, provincial variations of a Kohl or an Albrecht, etc., or Strauß's grand plan, which he has been trying in vain to carry out for twenty years. But the strength of this national capital, which allows it to be competitive and to spread itself vertically within the overall capitalist structure, finds its natural expression in a consensus and in the consciousness of the national elites, so that Schmidt must represent it consistently at every level, both nationally and internationally.

The action's political escalation was defused primarily by the fact that the Ponto kidnapping fell through, and so one of the two pillars of the tactical and political plan was lost. But our critical error was in not completely reconsidering the action when the federal government let the first ultimatum pass, when it became obvious that they had abandoned Schleyer and were awaiting his death, which would allow them to rapidly consolidate their position. Given Schleyer's efforts to achieve a trade, we recognized that his connections and his influence weren't worth shit in the face of the united imperialist strategy.

All along they followed the tactical and psychological program of the BKA: avoid any official government decision and draw things out by pretending to negotiate, all in order to use police tactics to settle matters; prevent any public pressure with a news blackout; use Wischnewski's trips to so-called welcoming countries to impose an international "condemnation of terrorism," with the focus, in this case, on the prisoners. All of this objectively gave us the time and the opportunity to exploit the situation politically. For example, to immediately use the conversations with Schleyer to aggravate the contradictions which were disrupting the "unity of all democrats," contradictions which went as far as the CSU's attempt to rid themselves of Schmidt by proposing the release of the prisoners, to be immediately followed by the declaration of a state of emergency, which would have signaled the end of any social-democratic policy through an open recognition of the state's crisis, which would have had to then be resolved at any cost.

In this situation, characterized by an escalation in which it became obvious that we were on the defensive, the Commando Martyr Halimeh decided to intervene in the growing crisis, in the way that they were able.

It was the first time a commando from a liberation movement intervened directly in the confrontation here and made the metropolitan struggle their own. Much has been said about the tactical strategic error underlying this action, which provided the state with the opportunity to go on the counteroffensive. We take full responsibility for these errors.

It was an error not to seek the solution in the metropole itself rather than using a young national state to intensify matters, because the decision should have been based on the balance of power here—because it concerned the prisoners, who embodied the struggle here, and because it was a question of isolating the FRG. In connection with an action in the metropole, the goal of which was to polarize the metropole and create a break between the people and the state, the method used—hijacking an

airplane—could only neutralize the attack because the people in the plane found themselves in the same situation, treated as objects, as the imperialist state always and in all ways places people, thereby destroying the goal of revolutionary action.

The incorrect thinking behind the action that played against the commando, and which the federal government could count on in its planning, started with the fact that it was obvious that the commando would do whatever it could, and would continue to negotiate as long as it saw any hope of the FRG freeing the prisoners. This played against the commando, allowing the government to develop its strategy. As for the SPD, it chose to resolve matters by carrying out a massacre, as it had in Stockholm, because it is always ready to discard its popular image when American interests—stable rule in the center—are attacked. At the time, Schmidt said, “It was impossible to know if it would result in an acceptable outcome.” It amounted to a decision in favor of a military solution at a time when a guerilla victory in the FRG, the key country for the reactionary integration of the West European states, would have meant a decisive setback for imperialist plans for reconstruction. It was a leap forward for the reactionary counteroffensive to consolidate its internal security mechanisms in Western Europe. But with Stammheim and Mogadishu, a centerpiece of social democratic policy, the hidden war, was unmasked. The imperialist state appeared shamelessly and openly reactionary; it no longer shied away from comparisons with its fascist past, but embraced them. The “desert foxes” of Mogadishu were to be an example for German youth. But at the same time, the political weakness of the metropolitan states, the internal fragility of the entire structure that appeared so powerful from the outside, was made obvious as never before.

Red Army Faction
May 1982

¹ A slightly different translation of this paragraph appeared in our first volume (478). The version presented here is more true to the German original.

Using Honey to Catch Flies

SO FAR, THE PRESENT VOLUME of our study has examined how the guerilla groups met the challenges and answered the questions posed by the development of their conflict with the state in the 1970s. We have seen how the 2nd of June Movement split over the question of where and in what way to pursue the struggle, and how the Revolutionary Cells became an important reference point for the new protest movements, thanks to its fluid structure and movementist strategy. As for the RAF, the May Paper articulated a series of proposals that had been debated and discussed for several years and constituted an attempt to re-ground the guerilla in the new movements that were rocking the FRG in the eighties.

At this point, we intend to discuss the state, which despite its hidebound proclivities, had not wholly avoided learning lessons from a decade of armed struggle. We have already seen how '77 spurred on preexisting tendencies of repression and control, witness the rise of the *Zielfahndung* and the use of Horst Herold's computers to track its targets. What must also be appreciated is that some state actors were thinking outside of the box, examining methods other than repression, considering political rather than military means of terminating the armed struggle.

It is to these that we will now turn our attention.

JUDICIAL COUNTERINSURGENCY

As we have at times belabored, West Germany had been an intensely conservative society in the 1960s. Even after the APO and Willy Brandt's "Dare more democracy" ushered in a new, more open age, many institutions retained their authoritarian reflexes. For these, it remained an article of faith that left-wing political violence could only be answered with repression, and the more of it the better.

Surveillance and arrests were buttressed by psychological warfare, for which the courtroom was always an important theatre. At first, various trials were used to push the idea that the RAF was a hierarchical organization with brutish leaders. The so-called "ringleader thesis" blamed Baader, Meinhof, Raspe, Meins, and Ensslin for all the group's activities, explaining the guerilla away as a consequence of a few individuals' charisma, rather than any deeper political conflicts. As a result, the five were charged with attacks even where there was no evidence directly implicating them, in what amounted to a show trial at a special courtroom bunker built within the Stammheim prison compound, with psychologists, psychiatrists, and even neurologists being enlisted to pathologize the "leaders" and their supporters.¹

At the same time as the ringleader thesis was being used for propaganda purposes, implying the RAF was made up of seductive maniacs and idiot followers, a "collective responsibility thesis" was developed, according to which all RAF members were responsible for all RAF attacks. If the ringleader thesis was the cornerstone of the Stammheim trial, the collective responsibility thesis was used to justify the prosecution of the other RAF members for criminal acts even when there was no direct evidence supporting such charges.² This second approach became all the more important after '77, once all five "ringleaders" were dead.

The collective responsibility thesis was further refined during Angelika

Speitel's 1979 trial, drawing in part on statements Speitel was alleged to have made while hospitalized and under sedation, after having been shot during her arrest. (She was questioned by police officers dressed as doctors.)³ Judge Wagner, who presided over Speitel's trial, followed this by sentencing Stefan Wisniewski to life in prison on December 4, 1981, finding him responsible for the Schleyer kidnapping and murders, although there was no evidence against him other than his membership in the RAF. Similarly, on June 16, 1982, Sieglinde Hofmann received a fifteen-year sentence in connection with the murder of Jürgen Ponto, despite the fact that the court had to acknowledge that she had not been at the scene of the killing.⁴ (This was also despite the fact that she had been extradited from France on condition that she not be charged with this crime, as the main evidence against her was the hearsay testimony of Hans-Joachim Dellwo, whose work for the prosecution will be detailed below.)⁵

All this was criticized by civil libertarians, and yet it must be stressed that neither the RAF nor the prisoners made a big deal about the collective responsibility thesis, which actually fit well with the guerilla's own understanding of its internal process and political responsibilities. Although Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Helmut Pohl had each testified in 1976 to the effect that commandos operated on a need-to-know basis, the position that every RAF member was willing to publicly stand by every RAF action was voiced by more than one prisoner. In this way, they could affirm their ongoing solidarity with one another, as well as their political identity as captured combatants (see [pages 273–274](#)).

If trials constituted the stage on which the state presented its narrative, the drama would have been incomplete without the cooperation of turncoats, former guerillas or supporters who had flipped and agreed to collude in the psychological warfare campaign.

A string of such “repentant guerillas” had been trotted out as witnesses in various trials in the 1970s. First, there was Karl-Heinz Ruhland, a

mechanic who had worked with the RAF, and who after being arrested with a stolen car testified against his former friends. Next, an actual member of the guerilla was flipped; Gerhard Müller, who was arrested in 1971, had killed a police officer, but the charges were dropped and he was provided with a new identity and cash payment in exchange for his testimony, which included the smear that the RAF executed its own members rather than allowing them to leave.⁶

At the time, the FRG had no crown witness⁷ law permitting reduced sentences for those who provided state's evidence, and as such the deals between the attorney general and these witnesses fell into a legal grey zone. Indeed, outrage at Müller's testimony played an important part in discrediting the Stammheim show trial, with *Spiegel* arguing that it constituted "an intentional breach of the law."⁸

Müller and Ruhland's testimony was further compromised by the fact that both men had been peripheral to the RAF. This was to prove typical, as most of those who flipped in the 1970s were simply supporters who found themselves facing heavy charges in circumstances for which they were ill-prepared. The most damaging of these were probably Volker Speitel and Hans-Joachim Dellwo—respectively the husband and brother of RAF members Angelika Speitel and Karl-Heinz Dellwo—who were arrested in the heat of '77, and who subsequently testified that the prisoners' lawyers had smuggled guns into Stammheim. This testimony was not only used to send attorneys Armin Newerla and Arndt Müller to prison, it also provided cover for the shim-sham investigation and discrepancies surrounding the prison deaths of the RAF's leading figures in October 1977.

Over the next five years, Volker Speitel's testimony was repeatedly presented at RAF trials, making him a "star witness" who could not be cross-examined by the defense, and who did not even deliver his testimony in court, all due to alleged "security concerns."⁹ This despite the fact that

not once in the RAF's history had a crown witness or defector been targeted by the guerilla.

The antiterrorist §129a had been crafted as a net to snare and intimidate such supporters. Under this law, over three thousand preliminary proceedings were launched against the left between 1980 and '88, only 5 percent of which actually resulted in charges being laid (the average for other laws was 50 percent)¹⁰, and less than 2 percent resulted in a conviction.¹¹ The paragraph's real function was twofold: to elicit information, whether or not there existed any evidence that could stand up in court, and to intimidate the guerilla's sympathizers.¹²



Gerhard Müller (left) and Volker Speitel, two of the most notorious crown witnesses of the 1970s.

Prison conditions constituted the other half of this equation—years of isolation and abuse creating extreme pressure, with the only option for relief being to flip. This is the real reason why the state felt compelled to crack down on the prisoners' various attempts to communicate with one another, and why it resisted association: for a long time, the main view was that harsh treatment was the best way to elicit a jailhouse conversion, and that the prisoners had to be kept apart in order for this process to do its work.

This strategy had some successes, but at the same time it came at a significant cost, as prison conditions themselves became one of the main reasons that supporters joined the guerilla. As Dieter Kunzelmann has

observed, “By 1972, practically the whole founding generation of the RAF were behind bars. Yet there was still a second generation and a third generation. Why? Primarily because of the conditions of imprisonment and state-organized terror.”¹³

Given that the hard line so often proved counterproductive, the question must be asked: why was it pursued for so long?

Institutional inertia is one part of the answer. Police and state organs were full of individuals ideologically committed to the iron fist. The revolutionary left was viewed as a social pathology, perhaps the asset of a foreign enemy, and only superficially a political movement. The proposed cure was a combination of quarantine and surgery, isolating the revolutionaries while hitting them hard. Despite the mediocre results, many on the right maintained that waging a “war against vandals and partisans”¹⁴ was the only sensible approach when dealing with “terrorists.”

The hard line was also a consequence of jockeying within the state, as the CDU/CSU attempted to win votes by painting the SPD/FDP government as “soft on terrorism”:

*The Christian Democrats, most notably CDU’s party leader Helmut Kohl, deliberately evoked associations of chaos and democratic weakness and blamed the government for its “inability to govern.” He painted the spectre of “political vandalism” and a relapse into “the bad period of the Weimar Republic.” Berlin’s parliamentary CDU party chairman Heinrich Lummer spoke of a “degeneration of democratic morals and principles.” While Federal President Karl Carstens (CDU) warned of a “weak state that, like in 1933, could not defend itself against its enemies.”*¹⁵

In a pattern familiar the world over, the alleged “left” political party opted to prove its bona fides by trying to out-right the right. In point of fact, the two parties had a symbiotic relationship; as was noted in 1977, “The repressive politics of the Social Democrats make the Christian Democrats’ wider-ranging efforts seem more tolerable to some, while the latter’s

excesses sustain the former's self-image of moderation to others.”¹⁶ SPD Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was indistinguishable from the CDU's fearmongers, warning of the guerilla's “intellectual pioneers that live in some of the institutions and the media of our society.”¹⁷ Throughout most of the 1970s, his Social-Liberal government defended itself against the right's accusations by engaging in ever-more-repressive measures, granting the BKA and *Verfassungsschutz* free reign.

This dynamic not only occurred between the main political parties, but also within them, as so-called “domestic security” issues provided a useful tool for technocrats to marginalize more progressive or liberal factions within the SPD and FDP. For the SPD, this game reached its tipping point in 1977, when it suddenly found some of its own most prominent members publicly excoriated as RAF sympathizers, just as its lurch to the right was leaving it shorn of much of its own base.¹⁸

Beyond these domestic political realities, there were also international factors behind West Germany's hard line. Guerilla warfare had come to the First World as an exotic import, radicals in Western Europe inspired by what was clearly a winning strategy in the Third World, while also referring back (at times awkwardly) to their own countries' antifascist partisan experiences, or lack thereof. Against this development, the FRG and United States pushed to create a consensus within the NATO states that would drive out this new scourge or—if that proved impossible—at least deprive it of any legitimacy. As we have seen, this strategy depended on denying captured combatants any kind of special status, all the while singling them out for special treatment in court and in prison. Given that the FRG had been lobbying other countries to adopt this hard line against their respective political prisoners, it was not completely free to do otherwise in regard to its own.

THE FREE DEMOCRATS AND SOFT COUNTERINSURGENCY

Despite the aforementioned obstacles, certain elements within the state recognized that the hard line played into a cycle that fed rather than choked the guerilla's growth. Paradoxically, one can trace the first ascent of a more flexible and far-sighted “soft counterinsurgency” line to a time when undifferentiated repression seemed to hold sway. In 1977, President Walter Scheel had spoken at Schleyer’s funeral, where he had described “terrorism” as “a barbarism trying to destroy all order.”¹⁹ But just months later, Scheel began to complain that anonymous denunciations of alleged sympathizers were polarizing society and undermining the “private sphere of fellow citizens”—a reference to his fellow politicians and members of the intelligentsia who were coming under attack from the right.²⁰

Significantly, Scheel was from the FDP—the “liberal” part of the Social-Liberal coalition—which had less to lose by questioning such ham-fisted repression than the SPD. With its base in the professional middle class, the FDP fancied itself the standard bearer of classical liberalism, and within its left wing were several individuals sincerely committed to expanding civil liberties. Unlike the SPD and CDU, which had taken turns as the largest force in government throughout the postwar period, the FDP was the perpetual third party. Yet due to this very fact and to its distinct ideological location between the two larger parties, it had become kingmaker in West German politics: with the exception of eight years in the 1950s and ‘60s, the Free Democrats had been a junior partner in every coalition government since World War II, effectively determining who would hold power. While the FDP normally supported the right-wing CDU/CSU, between 1969 and 1982 the party’s leadership was controlled by its more progressive faction, and as such supported the SPD, and on some issues even outflanked its senior coalition partner to the left.

As a result of this kingmaker role, the FDP remained largely impervious to attacks from the right, as the CDU/CSU strategists knew all too well that

their road back to power would depend on reconciling with the liberals.

Gerhart Baum had become Minister of the Interior in 1978, replacing fellow Free Democrat Werner Maihofer, who had held the position since 1974, and who had been a staunch advocate of giving police and security forces any powers they desired.²¹



Gerhart Baum

Baum would quickly prove to be cut from different cloth. As early as January 1978, in a speech before the Catholic Academy in Freiburg, he expressed dismay that security measures had taken pride of place in the antiterrorist arsenal, suggesting that it might be better to work on refuting the guerilla's ideas.²² Baum felt that the state should be approaching those who were open to the guerilla's arguments, identifying sections of the left or even the radical left that could be engaged in dialogue—one of the goals being to deprive the guerilla of its base, leaving it isolated and vulnerable.

So it was that at the same time as police were gunning down guerillas in the street, the Ministry of the Interior initiated an ambitious social-science research project, which eventually resulted in five books, published between 1981 and 1984, intended to foster a more sophisticated approach to countering political radicalism. As Baum explained:

Even though I am the minister responsible for the police, I am called upon to combat terrorism with more than just police methods. Preventing and hindering

*future crimes means addressing the questions posed by people who are not yet clear about which way they'll go—whether they'll go the normal democratic way, whether they'll achieve their goals using democratic instruments and means, or whether they will support the terrorists. As a result, I hold scientific research into the causes of terrorism to be necessary.*²³

Baum became known for his brash style and the pleasure he took at upsetting conservative shibboleths. At the height of the hysteria about the West Berlin squats, for instance, he stated that, “The heart of the matter is that there are young people, and older ones as well, who answer the question about the meaning of life in another way than the majority that until now has made policy.”²⁴ Characteristically, Baum suggested that rather than excluding or punishing people who held alternative values, it would be better to reach out to them. Nor did he lack a sense of humor. When asked how he was going to respond to media criticism that he was downplaying the “terrorist” threat, his reply was simple: “I’m going to bomb *Südwestfunk* [Southwest Radio]. Will that do?”²⁵

Baum hoped to temper the more odious aspects of the national security state, even if this meant locking horns with the BKA. In the fall of 1979, FDP members of the *Bundestag* attempted to have three important security laws repealed: §88a (publishing material encouraging violence), §130a (instructions for carrying out crimes), and the Contact Ban.²⁶ That same year, Baum limited the BKA and the *Verfassungsschutz*’s access to the NADIS computer database (which contained information gathered from a variety of police and nonpolice sources) and made a point of announcing that he had had thirty thousand entries removed from the BKA’s PIOS system (devoted to “terrorists”).²⁷ Publicly clashing with Horst Herold, Baum’s moves against the security establishment pushed the BKA chief to take an early retirement in 1981.²⁸

All of which not only provoked the ire of the right—some grumbled that Baum himself was a “security risk”—but also upset many within the SPD,

where Chancellor Schmidt accused him of grandstanding and acting as if he were the only one who cared about the rule of law.

NEOCOLONIAL “ANTITERRORISM” ABROAD

While Baum’s domestic reforms were making headlines, a parallel strategy was being pursued on the international stage, but with less fanfare and controversy, as Minister of Foreign Affairs Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski²⁹ worked to seal off the RAF’s rear base areas in the Arab world.

The Social-Liberal government had been pursuing this goal for years, with full support from the chancellor himself. In 1978, Colonel Muammar Khaddafi traveled to the FRG to receive medical treatment in Wiesbaden: Schmidt personally contacted the Libyan leader and asked him to deny sanctuary to West German guerillas. Khaddafi not only agreed, but also promised to pressure the PLO to do the same.³⁰ In exchange, the *Bundeswehr* sent a major to begin secretly training Libyan security forces in Tripoli, in a program that would last until at least 1983. (According to some sources, it in fact continued with the help of “private” West German corporate partners until as late as 2006.)³¹

Discussions between the PLO and West German officials in Lebanon were followed in 1979 by a meeting in Austria, hosted by the more left-wing Social Democratic government of Bruno Kreisky. Here it was agreed that the PLO would cooperate with Austrian and West German security forces to prevent guerilla attacks in Europe. PLO security chief Ali Hassan Salameh offered to locate RAF members in the Middle East, though he stopped short of agreeing to have them extradited back to the FRG.³² He also encouraged the Europeans to pursue their multilateral international “antiterrorist” strategy, and provided what information he could about the RAF’s plans and capacities.³³

Wheels Within Wheels

On January 22, 1979—shortly after meeting with West German government representatives in Austria—Ali Hassan Salameh was assassinated by the Mossad in Beirut.

Not only was this payback for Salameh’s previous role in the Munich Olympics operation, it was also intended to sabotage the work he had been carrying out forging ties with the West. As such, the Mossad chose to use a sleeper agent who had spent years in the FRG, living close by the offices of the BND and the *Verfassungsschutz*, leading to accusations that the Germans had had a hand in the assassination.

The West Germans were alarmed, and Baum himself issued a public statement to the effect that, “Someone is trying to derail our contact with the PLO. I’m fighting terrorists, and nobody should interfere.”¹



Ali Hassan Salameh

¹ *Time*, “Death of a Terrorist,” February 5, 1979; Tom Rawstorne, “The Top QC, His Vanished Sister and the Mystery of Mossad’s first British Hitwoman,” *Daily Mail*, February 20, 2010; *Spiegel*, “Zwielichtige Geschichte,” November 12, 1979.

It was ironic that Salameh—also known as Abu Hassan—was the one negotiating these terms, as it was he who had been in charge of the training camps where the first RAF members had been hosted in Jordan in 1970.³⁴

It was also he who, in 1972, had organized the Black September attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, whose demands included the release of Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof, and other unnamed RAF members.³⁵ In offering to help the FRG in its fight against the RAF, the PLO was not simply buckling under Libyan pressure, rather, it was pursuing its own strategy of quiet rapprochement with Western intelligence agencies. Despite his personal history, this strategy very much revolved around Salameh, who had been the PLO's liaison with the CIA since 1974.³⁶

In exchange for these favors, it was hoped that the Europeans might help the PLO gain standing as the Palestinians' sole legitimate representative—and indeed, there had been overtures in this direction leading up to the Austrian meeting.³⁷ The Israeli colonial project at that time relied on denying Palestinians any national recognition, pretending that they did not even exist, and so it was of some significance that in 1978 the PLO was granted observer status at a United Nations conference in Vienna, receiving the same privileges as other participants. That same year the *Informationsstelle Palästina* (Palestine Information Agency) was recognized by Bonn as the PLO's unofficial representative in West Germany, and in 1979, the Kreisky government extended official diplomatic recognition to the PLO.³⁸ This was part of a complex dynamic that challenged the Palestinian people's exclusion from the international political arena, while simultaneously encouraging neocolonial tendencies within their own liberation struggle.

It remains unclear what consequences these maneuvers had, if any, for the West German guerilla. By the time Salameh agreed to work with the FRG, it had been some time since the RAF had received any assistance from the PLO—by then its Middle Eastern contacts were with the PFLP (EO), and with the PFLP (SC) after that. Nor is there any evidence of the West German guerillas having ever benefited from Libyan support,

accusations to the contrary notwithstanding. Nevertheless, even if they were only empty gestures, these efforts show how the West Germans used “antiterrorism” to bring the national liberation movements into the imperialist camp, a position supported by America’s Carter administration, though less popular with its Republican successors.

While one might expect such foreign diplomacy to provoke right-wing bellyaching, it was not considered particularly scandalous, for it fit within both the amoral framework of international espionage, as well as West Germany’s traditional role as a neocolonial “friend” of the Third World. Indeed, the CDU had used similar diplomatic means to its own anticommunist ends at the height of the Cold War during the global wave of decolonization.³⁹

SPLITTING THE GUERILLA

Turncoats like Gerhard Müller and Volker Speitel may have had some propaganda value, but their outlandish claims and the questionable legality of the deals they had cut often discredited the state more than the RAF. While the right-wingers from the CDU/CSU were undaunted, and perhaps even happy to have an antiguerilla strategy that would also alienate the legal left, Baum and others recognized the need for something more subtle. Indeed, besides isolating the combatants at home and abroad, the soft counterinsurgency strategy aimed to sow division within the guerilla itself.

Over the years, certain RAF prisoners had taken their distance from the guerilla project, all the while retaining a commitment to revolution and solidarity with their former comrades. Manfred Grashof, for instance, had stepped away in 1974, at the time of the prisoners' third hunger strike. Nevertheless, he made no public criticism, and continued to maintain the RAF position in his dealings with the police and guards. Klaus Jünschke had similarly broken with the RAF quietly during the '77 hunger strike. Then during the sixth hunger strike, Stefan Wisniewski took his distance, in part due to the strike's timing and in part as a reaction to Debus's death, which he felt had been avoidable.⁴⁰ At the time, none of these prisoners allowed themselves to be incorporated into the state's propaganda strategy.



Former RAF member (and future neo-nazi) Horst Mahler meeting with Minister of the Interior Gerhart Baum: attempts at rapprochement.

As such, the first opportunity for Baum's new line to come into play would involve a man from the guerilla's earliest days: former attorney

Horst Mahler. While he is sometimes described as a founding member, this is disputed by everyone else from the RAF; furthermore, Mahler had been expelled in 1973.⁴¹ He had then gone through a period with the KPD/AO, but by the end of the decade had abandoned Marxism-Leninism as well.⁴² As a repentant guerilla, he enjoyed the support of *Jusos* chairman Gerhard Schröder, who began acting as his lawyer in 1978. With time off for good behavior, he was released from prison in August 1980.⁴³

Mahler represented a unique opportunity for the state, but one which the hardliners in government were ill-equipped to fully exploit. Unlike Ruhland or Müller, Mahler fancied himself a thinker—while he had renounced his past, he would want more out of any propaganda exercise than the somewhat pathetic role reserved for previous turncoats. What's more, Mahler had never testified against any of his former comrades, nor had he gone along with the state's various slanders. The typical cop's idea of how a defector should act was too cartoonish and clichéd to work here.

In December 1979, just before his release, *Spiegel* published a joint interview with both Mahler and Baum, in which each bemoaned the chasm that separated the state from the radical left, calling on all parties to “come out of the trenches.” Following Mahler’s release, the two repeated the exercise, holding a series of talks in which they continued to belabor this theme. These interviews were collected and published in book form shortly thereafter.⁴⁴ Plans were also made for Mahler to start touring schools and speak at a variety of public events, expounding on the futility of “terrorism.”⁴⁵

In freeing Mahler and pursuing dialogue with sections of the radical left, Baum may very well have been acting out of a personal commitment to democratic principles. At the same time, however, he was not afraid to argue that a more flexible position on the part of the state might lead to splits among the prisoners, isolating the more “hard core.” It was even hoped that this approach might foster divisions within the underground,

perhaps convincing some combatants to lay down their arms. In this regard Baum distinguished between “traitors”—those like Ruhland, Müller, and Speitel, whom the police and hardliners were equally happy to use—and “defectors” such as Mahler, who might wish to separate from the guerilla without testifying against their erstwhile comrades or publicly embracing the counterinsurgency agenda.

He elaborated on this in an interview with *Spiegel* magazine in 1981, entitled “The State Must Not Be Implacable”:

*The way defectors are dealt with is important. It can make an important contribution to containing terrorism. It can prevent young people from embracing terrorism, which is the most important thing. In the long run, this can also make the active terrorists' image of the state as an enemy difficult to sustain.*⁴⁶

As to imprisoned defectors, Baum said,

*In my opinion, a suspect who makes it clear that he is a defector should be handled differently than someone who continues to actively embrace terrorism, even in prison. This principle must be applied from day one, even in remand. Our society must set an example for that which we naturally demand: rehabilitation through social reintegration, toward which we must all struggle.*⁴⁷

And regarding more traditional means of suasion:

*I believe that the crown witness rules regarding terrorists can play a role after an arrest if need be...*⁴⁸

According to Baum, defectors need not even turn themselves in—the act of laying down arms was enough. When *Spiegel* suggested that the minister was advising fugitives to remain in hiding, he merely answered, “It happens... We concentrate on active terrorists. If we know someone has defected, we don’t look for them so hard.”⁴⁹

Mahler was not the only defector Baum courted. As previously mentioned, Peter-Jürgen Boock had left the RAF in early 1980, living

under a false name in Hamburg for a year before being captured on January 22, 1981. Boock had had a troubled relationship with his guerilla comrades for some time, ever since his drug addiction and lies about his health had been revealed during the Yugoslav sojourn in 1978. He had left the RAF in the midst of Baum's public dialogue with Mahler, at a time when the minister was promising that other defectors could expect leniency and understanding. He would later claim that this is why he remained in the FRG rather than seeking refuge abroad.⁵⁰ By the time he was captured, Boock had made up his mind to pursue this option, hoping to make the best of his situation by following in Mahler's footsteps and playing the part of the principled defector.

Immediately following arrest, Boock publicly criticized the RAF while insisting that he would be no mere stooge for the state. As he put it to his erstwhile comrades:

*I will not betray anyone. I won't name names. I will not make statements against anyone. However, I will defend myself. I know that that is enough to make me a traitor and a pig in your eyes. For me now, that is only part of the ignorance and the political superficiality that makes up the wall behind which you sit and behind which I also once sat.*⁵¹

Boock asked for an interview with *Spiegel* magazine, and used this tribune to call upon those still active in the RAF to lay down their arms, to recognize the futility of armed struggle.⁵²

Throughout his trial, Boock denied that he actually bore any responsibility for the RAF's deeds. He claimed that he had not been aware of the Ponto and Schleyer actions until after the fact, that the only commando action he had been involved in was the failed attack on the BAW, and that during this attack he had in fact purposefully sabotaged the rocket launcher, ensuring that it would fail.⁵³ Meanwhile, the defense made much of Boock's drug habit, essentially arguing that he had been stoned for

years, and as such had not been fully responsible for his behavior.

The spectacle was in stark contrast to the RAF prisoners' usual position of being willing to stand by all the RAF's actions. What's more, Boock began telling increasingly enticing stories to the press, including details of what he claimed were actions the RAF was planning. Although he had at first insisted that he would not betray his former comrades, it was clear that he was increasingly comfortable in the limelight, enjoying it even.

Boock's case provided a very public arena for proponents of "hard" and "soft" counterinsurgency methods to air their differences. Baum demanded that Boock's prison conditions be relaxed, in line with his strategy of soliciting defectors. As a measure of how promising Boock appeared, the new BKA President Heinrich Boge also supported this demand. On the other side, Rebmann insisted that Boock testify as a prosecution witness in the trials of other RAF members, in the tradition of Müller, Speitel, and company. When he refused, Rebmann had him transferred to Stammheim, closing the door on the preferential treatment that Baum and Boge had requested.⁵⁴

His lawyers being based in Hamburg and Bremen, the move to Stammheim posed a significant inconvenience to Boock's legal defense. What's more, his request for counseling to deal with his drug addiction was initially denied, and he was placed in the very cell where Andreas Baader had died. When one of Boock's lawyers suggested to Rebmann that his client was himself at risk of committing suicide, the answer was short and to the point: "That's a responsibility the BAW will just have to live with."⁵⁵



Peter-Jürgen Boock and his police detail, following arrest.

Liberal opinion was shocked, with *Die Zeit*'s justice critic complaining that, "If self-avowed dropouts and defectors are handled the way Boock is now being handled, if they are only well-treated on condition that they become crown witnesses, then all the big political talk directed to the terrorist underground that a retreat will be fairly honored becomes nothing but words."⁵⁶

Anxieties about Boock's treatment were reinforced in December 1981 by a statement from an unexpected source: the fugitive Hans-Joachim Klein, a former member of the Revolutionary Cells' international wing. From the underground, Klein had precipitated much of Baum's interest in reconciliation back in 1978, when he had broken with the guerilla and mailed his gun, along with a lengthy criticism of the armed struggle, to *Spiegel*.⁵⁷ He had been in hiding ever since. Now, as Boock prepared for trial, Klein once again used *Spiegel* to reach out to the liberal establishment, in an open letter to Baum in which he decried the state's collective responsibility thesis and the consequences it had for would-be defectors:

Why wasn't this done after 1945, when it would have been damned appropriate, and the future FRG would have been spared so very much? Who knows, maybe even this perverse form of political conflict in which I had a terrible part.

This collective sentencing at terrorism trials is, from my point of view—and not

*only because it affects me personally—a tremendous obstacle to this whole defector problem.... Obviously, what incentive would a defector have to turn himself in, if he sees years of prison or even a life sentence in store for him.*⁵⁸

Those who were disappointed by Boock's initial treatment would be truly dismayed by what came next. Soon after his trial began, the hardliners gained the upper hand, not because of their own successes in the counterinsurgency field, but due to larger political changes afoot. That year, the FDP made the historic decision to break with Schmidt's SPD over the question of job security, which the liberals wanted gutted. On October 1, 1983, the CDU called for a vote of no-confidence and, supported by the FDP, took power. This was ratified by a federal election several months later, with the FDP once again supporting the CDU and CSU, which now formed the government. Although the Free Democrats were a necessary part of this new coalition, the Ministry of the Interior was removed from their hands for the first time since 1969; Baum's old position now went to the CSU's Friedrich Zimmermann, a former member of the Nazi Party under Hitler.

Hans-Joachim Klein: a German Guerilla



Formerly active in Frankfurt's *Sponti* and prisoner support scenes, Hans-Joachim Klein, who had acted as Jean-Paul Sartre's driver during the latter's famous prison visit with Andreas Baader, went underground following the death of Holger Meins in 1974, joining the Revolutionary Cells and ending up as part of the 1975 raid on OPEC, led by Carlos.

Dismayed by what he considered the unprincipled and foolhardy politics of the RZ's international wing, Klein left the organization sometime in 1976 or 1977. His public criticism of the guerilla from the underground sent shockwaves through the RZ's support scene, and the group eventually felt compelled to respond with two statements entitled

“The Dogs Are Barking and the Caravan Moves On” and “The Dogs Always Bark.” (Despite this angry dismissal, several other former RZ members would later claim that the substance of Klein’s criticisms were based in fact.)

With assistance from various friends, including the Green politician Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Klein lived underground for many years, settling in Normandy, France, before being arrested in 1998. Following a four-month trial in 2001, he was sentenced to nine years in prison for his role in the 1975 OPEC raid. He was released in 2003, having provided information about former guerilla associates.

Needless to say, the “openness” of the Baum years quickly came to a close, and this did nothing to help Boock. After a fifteen-month trial, on May 7, 1984, the repentant guerilla was found guilty of six counts of murder related to the Ponto and Schleyer actions. He was also found guilty of membership in the RAF under §129a, and the court rejected his claim that he had sabotaged the BAW action, declaring him guilty of four counts of attempted murder in that regard.⁵⁹

Because at the time there was no evidence proving that he had actually been at the scene of any of the killings, the most serious charges against Boock all relied on the collective responsibility thesis. Representing the BAW, Peter Zeis—a right-wing prosecutor who had made a career out of RAF trials, and who insisted on referring to Boock and his lawyers as “the accused and his aides”⁶⁰—had asked for four life sentences. Judge Walther Eitel gave almost that: three life sentences plus fifteen years. It was the heaviest penalty pronounced in a RAF trial up to that point.⁶¹

For all his public repudiation of the guerilla, Boock had received no mercy from the state. “Where fairness was promised,” one newspaper complained, “the attorney general demonstrated unyielding harshness.”⁶²

Even before the sentence was pronounced, Baum acknowledged that

Boock's treatment cast doubt on the credibility of past appeals to RAF members to defect.⁶³ But with the Ministry of the Interior now in the hands of the right wing, the soft counterinsurgency project Baum had developed seemed consigned to the back burner, if not the dustbin. Dialogue was no longer pursued, nor did the state prioritize cultivating more defectors—once again the demand was for clear repudiation from those wishing to separate from the guerilla, and a willingness to testify in court against their former comrades.

Nevertheless, the defeat was neither as complete nor as deep as it may have seemed. Just a year later, with the support of several prominent liberals, Boock would successfully appeal his sentence (though not his conviction), which in November 1986 was reduced to a single life term. His appeal, both legally and to his admirers, was certainly not hurt by the fact that he began to divulge more and more “information” about the RAF, much of it questionable, becoming even more outspoken in his criticisms of his former comrades.⁶⁴ In point of fact, Boock was soon blurring the line between “defector” and “turncoat,” and as such could be considered to be vindicating Rebmann’s hard line, despite the fact that he continued to be supported and courted by liberals more likely to be have been sympathetic to Baum.

At the same time, before he was removed from office, Baum’s overtures had caught the attention of some of those prisoners who had been questioning the RAF’s strategy. Klaus Jünschke now took a more public position repudiating armed struggle in a bid to have his isolation conditions relaxed.⁶⁵ He was joined by Christof Wackernagel and Gert Schneider, both of whom had been arrested in 1978, who now also began speak out against the RAF. By 1982, the three were allowing themselves to figure prominently in a campaign orchestrated by former *Sponti* Wolfgang Pohrt in favor of amnesty for those who repudiated the armed struggle.⁶⁶ As Wackernagel would argue:

*Everywhere in the world where there are guerilla prisoners, the demand for amnesty is raised. Why not in the FRG? Our orientation for all other issues comes from the liberation movements, why not in this case? Israel trades 4,000 PLO prisoners for six Israelis, but the FRG wouldn't exchange anyone for one employers president and ninety civilians. In Ireland IRA prisoners struggle to be released without having to renounce their politics. Here the very idea is treated like betrayal, a split, surrender. In Germany, both sides have an identical commitment: final victory. Both the BAW and the anti-imps have the same pipe-dream. They both serve imperialism's interests and not the struggle against it.*⁶⁷

Regardless of where it might have led, with Baum's departure, Pohrt's campaign was doomed. Despite a public declaration from a *Verfassungsschutz* section head that he was sure the three prisoners had truly repudiated armed struggle, and that it was out of the question that they would ever reoffend, the idea of an amnesty, either individual or collective, went nowhere.

As for Baum, while he was atypical of the security establishment in the FRG at the time, the more nuanced approach that he represented was not without its parallels internationally. During the period between 1979 and 1982, for example, Italy, Spain, and England all experimented with differentiated prison regimes and categories of guilt and defection in their respective struggles against the Red Brigades, ETA, and the Irish Republicans.⁶⁸

Furthermore, even in the West German security establishment, certain individuals had noticed how repression without nuance played into a cycle of escalation which had benefited the revolutionary left. Although rare and often isolated, the failures of the right-wing approach would gradually leave the field open to these individuals, and although it may have seemed farfetched in 1983, by the end of the decade it was they who would be directing the state's "antiterrorism" machine.

One of these unlikely figures was Christian Lochte, the head of the Hamburg *Verfassungsschutz*, and the one who had spoken out on behalf of

Jünschke, Wackernagel, and Schneider. Despite being a life-long member of the CDU, Lochte would become increasingly prominent in the 1980s as the *Verfassungsschutz* section chief who had no patience for the stilted repression of the right. He insisted that the guerilla threat had been exaggerated, and that the measures taken in 1977 had been an overreaction. Agreeing to be interviewed by the left-wing *taz*, he announced that the newspaper was one of the best sources for analysis about the armed struggle and that if it didn't exist the *Verfassungsschutz* would have had to set it up themselves, adding that he had taken out subscriptions for each of his caseworkers.⁶⁹



Christian Lochte

Even as Rebmann and company continued to push for more draconian legislation, Lochte was repeating Baum's earlier observations regarding the use of prison conditions to exacerbate divisions within the guerilla:

In the case of a decision to defect from a terrorist group, the treatment the defectors receive at the hands of state agencies is decisive. It shouldn't be special treatment in the sense of better treatment than other convicts (as "mollycoddled" defectors), but it also shouldn't be worse treatment than other convicts (as a particularly dangerous terrorist). Prevention doesn't only mean "encouraging defection," but also "preventing people from joining." For the hard core of the RAF, the lack of difference in the way defectors are treated only confirms their understanding of "political justice." It cannot appear that defection is only possible through betrayal. That would only confirm the either-or formula the RAF promotes.

In the end, terrorism in the Federal Republic will probably only be overcome by the internal decay of the terror groups. This decay should be promoted by all means possible. As a result, the treatment of arrested defectors and their known circle is

*crucial. It can play a major role in encouraging other people to bolt from the terror scene. In the treatment of arrested defectors suspected of serious crimes, there are few legal options for perks, relief or shorter sentences. Therefore, it is all the more important to use the limited remaining leeway for measures that build trust.*⁷⁰

Lochte would go even further, and from within the *Verfassungsschutz* became an early proponent of relaxing prison conditions for all RAF prisoners, even supporting association. As he would put it near the end of his career, “to bring about the end of the RAF, the end of what they call armed struggle, association is a necessary first step.”⁷¹

The reader should make no mistake: while their proposals clearly placed Lochte and Baum at odds with the political establishment in the early 1980s, their approach was less a sign of weakness than of intelligence. Both men understood that their job description meant putting an end to the armed struggle, and they took this job seriously enough to see past the state’s own propaganda, grasping the fact that without a political component the ongoing arrests and killings were unlikely to do much good.

But the proof of this lay in the future. In 1983, the hardliners once again set the tone, rendering the state incapable of fully exploiting divisions among its opponents when they occurred. When this strategy would be resurrected, it would be partly thanks to a new opposition party, one that first entered the *Bundestag* at the same time as the SPD lost power.

As we have seen, disenchantment had been growing throughout Helmut Schmidt’s chancellorship, as the SPD moved further to the right while clashing with an array of grassroots movements. Following the 1983 elections, this process entered a new phase, as the Greens won 5.6 percent of the popular vote and entered the *Bundestag* for the first time with twenty-seven seats.

From here on in, the Greens—the “anti-party” party, carrying the hopes of the Citizens Initiatives and the antinuclear and antimissile movements—

would represent the most progressive option in the electoral arena. As such, the SPD found itself deprived of much of its base, while the revolutionary movements were confronted by a new political machine eager to integrate them into the system. The Greens were instrumental in pressuring the “peace” movement to adopt a strictly nonviolent code of conduct, and although its relationship with the *Autonomen* would remain complex for several years, by the end of the decade it was lining up behind the police in demanding a clampdown on its erstwhile allies.⁷²

Shortly thereafter, the soft counterinsurgency strategy would be dusted off and put to work again; not surprisingly, by that time the Greens would be well placed to play their small role in this final assault on the RAF.

But that was years away, and much would happen before things got to that point, which will be addressed in our next volume.

On the Question of Collective Responsibility

Jurists have established the myriad pitfalls that come with assigning collective responsibility to all members of an organization for deeds that they may have approved of, but which they nevertheless had no part in committing. Nonetheless, on a moral and political level, many members of the guerilla have shown little interest in eschewing responsibility for the RAF's activities.

Take, for instance, the case of Knut Folkerts, who in 1980 was found guilty of two counts of murder for his purported role in the assassination of Siegfried Buback, receiving a sentence of life in prison. He would be released after eighteen years, in 1995. In 2007, a media frenzy ensued when it became known that the *Verfassungsschutz* had been aware since 1981 that Folkerts had not in fact been at the scene of the crime.¹ Nevertheless, Folkerts expressed no interest in having his trial or sentence reviewed, declaring that the courts were not an appropriate place to evaluate the RAF's history. Explaining that he is a former RAF member, not a victim, his position remains that he and everyone else who was a member of the RAF at the time share responsibility for the Buback assassination.²

Discussing his own responsibility, Karl-Heinz Dellwo has been equally forthright:

*I have always defended the collective guilt thesis. I also consider all the adult German citizens of the period responsible for the crimes of Nazism. I likewise have the collective responsibility for everything that occurred in my milieu, that is to say, the “RAF Collective” milieu. With regards to Stockholm, I’m equally responsible for the deaths of both of the embassy staff members. Every member of the commando shares equal guilt.*³

Many former RAF members might reject the concept of “guilt” applied to their

actions, as formulated by Dellwo, for all its connotations of “wrongdoing.” Nevertheless, there is broad unanimity as to the fact that all members of the RAF bear responsibility for actions carried out while they were in the guerilla. As Irmgard Möller pointed out in 1992, “We collectively decided upon and carried out the actions.”⁴

This continuing solidarity and accountability for the actions carried out when they were active in the guerilla is the norm, not an exception. It constitutes a significant retort to the state’s insistence that former RAF members provide the names and details of those who participated in each attack—framed in terms of being “necessary for the victims to heal,” this is nothing but a transparent ploy to have former comrades served up for prosecution, and to allow the state to finally map out the armed resistance of generations past.

As explained by some former RAF members in 2010:

*Through all these years, despite “screensearch” technologies, the highly armed state security apparatus hasn’t been able to obtain a reasonably comprehensive picture of our movements. Even those who, under the pressure of isolation, smear campaigns and blackmail, broke down and were used as “crown witnesses”, could not contribute to completing the picture. The bits and pieces put together by state security agencies haven’t been very useful for general counterin-surgency purposes. They have no clue of the approach, the organization, the traces, the dialectics of an urban guerilla in the metropolis. And there is no reason to help them out on this. The RAF’s actions have been discussed and decided collectively when we agreed. All of us, who in a particular period have been part of the group and shared these decisions, obviously have the responsibility for these as well.*⁵

¹ See pages 230–231.

² Knut Folkerts, interviewed by Michael Sontheimer, “Logik des Krieges,” *Spiegel*, May 14, 2007.

³ Karl-Heinz Dellwo, interviewed by *Tagesspiegel-Sonntag* “Ich bin kein Pazifist,” March 26, 2007.

⁴ Irmgard Möller, interviewed by Manfred Ertel and Bruno Schrep.

⁵ RAF, some former members.

1. Peter Zinke, “Die Kriminalisierung der RAF,” in Haufen, 61.

2. Ibid., 66.

3. *Die Zeit*, “Mitgefangen, mitgehängt,” March 30, 1984.

4. Zinke, 62.

5. *Spiegel*, “Starke Beklemmung,” October 5, 1981.

6. Clemens Kaupa, “The Multi-causal and Asynchronous Development of Terrorism Laws in Germany from the 1970’s to the Present,” (MA Thesis, Vienna, December 2009), 16-18. The claim that would-be RAF defectors were executed centered on the disappearance of Ingeborg Barz, but her alleged execution was never corroborated in any way. Numerous examples of RAF members who did leave over the years, often with assistance from the guerilla, make the claim highly dubious. See Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 352.

7. As German law developed in the context of the Prussian monarchy, various legal terms talk of the “crown” when referring to the state. As such, a “crown witness” is a witness for the state, i.e., for the prosecution.

8. Kaupa, 17.

9. Erwin Brunner, Karl-Heinz Janßen, Joachim Riedl, and Michael Sontheimer “Wunderwaffe Kronzeuge,” *Die Zeit*, November 21, 1986.

10. Heinz Jürgen Schneider, “Der Terror-Paragraph.”

11. *Spiegel*, “Gemalt Weihnachten.”

12. Josef Gräßle-Münscher, “Der Straftatbestand des §129a StGB,” in Haufen, 42-43. While the state relied heavily on §129a, not all jurists were comfortable with the way in which even spraypainting or posterizing could be construed as “support for a terrorist organization.” Such misgivings led Judge Helmut Plambeck, the Chairman of the Hamburg OLG State Security Senate, who had himself presided over some minor RAF trials, to call for the law to be abolished. (*Spiegel*, “Besteht die RAF denn überhaupt noch?” July 13, 1981.)

13. Lewis and Klein, *Baader Meinhof: In Love with Terror*.

- ¹⁴. Beatrice De Graaf, “Counter-Narratives and the Unintentional Messages Counterterrorism Policies Unwittingly Produce: The Case of West-Germany,” in *Countering Violent Extremist Narratives* (Netherlands: National Coordinator for Counterterrorism [NCTb], July 2010), 13.
- ¹⁵. Ibid., 15.
- ¹⁶. Milton Mankoff and Monica Jakobs, “The Return of the Suppressed: McCarthyism in West Germany,” *Contemporary Crises*, 1 (1977): 353.
- ¹⁷. Kaupa, 13.
- ¹⁸. Ibid., 14; see also Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 525.
- ¹⁹. United Press International, “Crusade Against Terrorism Urged,” *Newport Daily News*, October 25, 1977.
- ²⁰. De Graaf (2010), 16.
- ²¹. *Spiegel*, “Der umstrittenste Mann der Regierung,” September 8, 1980. Maihofer had in fact been forced to resign in 1978 when *Spiegel* revealed that he had sanctioned illegal wiretaps, not only of activists, but also the manager of West Germany’s nuclear power industry, Klaus Traube, simply because he had known some people in the radical scene back in his university days.
- ²². Jörg Requate and Philipp Zessin, “Comment sortir du ‘terrorisme’? La violence politique et les conditions de sa disparition en France et en République Fédérale d’Allemagne en comparaison 1970-années 1990,” *European Review of History/ Revue europeenne d’histoire* 14, no. 3 (2007): 432.
- ²³. Axel Jeschke and Wolfgang Malanowski (eds.), *Der Minister und der Terrorist: Gespräche zwischen Gerhart Baum und Horst Mahler* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Spiegel-Buch, 1980), 53.
- ²⁴. United Press International, “Squatters in German City Try to Burn 90-Foot Cross,” *European Stars and Stripes*, April 2, 1981.
- ²⁵. *Spiegel*, “Der umstrittenste Mann der Regierung.”
- ²⁶. Joachim Wagner, “Schafft Gesetze auf Zeit: Befristete Normen brauchen nicht immer Ausnahmegeresetze zu sein,” *Die Zeit*, February 1, 1980.
- ²⁷. *Spiegel*, “Der umstrittenste Mann der Regierung.”
- ²⁸. Kaupa, 40.
- ²⁹. Wischnewski was well-suited to this task: in the 1950s he had acted as an interlocutor

with the Algerians during the National Liberation Front's war for independence from France, and had been a public critic of the CDU government's pro-French policy in that conflict. He later negotiated the release and free transit of Germans arrested during the Pinochet coup in Chile, as well as free transit out of the country for Chileans who had taken refuge in foreign embassies. As such, he had a good reputation with many of the new national governments in the Third World.

30. *Time*, "West Germany: Talking Quietly," May 7, 1979.

31. Reinhard Müller, "Weshalb Gaddafi die RAF für geisteskrank hielt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 14, 2008.

32. Matthias Dahlke, "Das Wischniewski-Protokoll: Zur Zusammenarbeit zwischen westeuropäischen Regierungen und transnationalen Terroristen 1977," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 2/2009, Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München-Berlin, 211.

33. Ibid., 210-211.

34. On this trip, see Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 56-57, 59.

35. Axel Frohn, "Hilfe vom Roten Prinzen," *Spiegel*, October 8, 2001. See also Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 188-193.

36. Frohn, "Hilfe vom Roten Prinzen."

37. Dahlke, 210.

38. Ibid., 214.

39. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 12.

40. Wisniewski, 4. Wisniewski was also critical of the demand for association, explaining that, "Association for us in groups of fifteen based on the Geneva Convention, which is not immediately applicable to us and is impractical for the guerilla struggle in the metropole, is the wrong road to go down. In the long run, it separates us from all other social revolutionary undertakings in the FRG, at a point when they certainly constitute the seeds of a social movement. Association in groups of fifteen—even if it was achievable—is not thinkable without some form of high-security unit. That, however, means accepting the incremental steps of the reform-fascist corrections system." (Stefan Wisniewski, Untitled document, March 23, 1981.)

41. Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 254-257, 288-291.

42. German Law Journal, "Federal Constitutional Court Issues Temporary Injunction in the NPD Party Ban Case," *German Law Journal* [online] 2, no. 13, (August 1, 2001).

43. Hans Kundnani, *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany's 1968 Generation and the Holocaust*

(New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 161.

44. *Der Minister und der Terrorist: Gespräche zwischen Gerhart Baum und Horst Mahler*, or, “The Minister and the Terrorist: Talks between Gerhart Baum and Horst Mahler.” See Jeschke and Malanowski.

45. Not all guerilla supporters remained sanguine in the face of this—when Mahler tried to speak at a Stuttgart memorial for Rudi Dutschke, he was shouted down by anti-imps who accused him of attempting “to channel the resistance against the extermination of the prisoners into a rehabilitation program.” See “Bericht über die Störung der Staatsschutzveranstaltung in Stuttgart: Horst Mahler, eine Staatsschutzfigur,” in Marat, 41.

46. Gerhart Baum and Virginio Rognoni, interviewed by *Spiegel*, “Gespräch: Der Staat darf nicht unversöhnlich sein,” *Spiegel*, October 19, 1981.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. *Die Zeit*, “Mitgefangen, mitgehängt.”

51. Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, “Gnade statt Rache: Einsicht in den Irrsinn des Terrors ist die beste Garantie gegen Wiederholung,” *Die Zeit*, June 24, 1988.

52. Hans Wolfgang Sternsdorff, “Im Schützengraben für die falsche Sache.”

53. Gerhard Mauz, “Was wir verstrickten Menschen schulden...” *Spiegel*, June 6, 1983.

54. Kaupa, 20.

55. *Spiegel*, “Falsche Signale an den Untergrund,” August 21, 1981.

56. Ibid.

57. Hans-Joachim Klein, *The German Guerilla: Terror, Reaction, Resistance* (Sanday, UK: Cienfuegos Press, 1981).

58. Hans-Joachim Klein, “Sind wir denn nicht auch Mensch?” *Spiegel*, Dec. 7, 1981.

59. Associated Press, “German Terrorist Convicted of Murder,” *European Stars and Stripes* May 8, 1984.

60. *Die Zeit*, “Ein Abgrund von Informationslücken,” March 2, 1984.

61. Marion Gräfin Doenhoff, “Gnade statt Rache: Einsicht in den Irrsinn des Terrors ist die beste Garantie gegen Wiederholung,” *Die Zeit*, June 24, 1988.

[62.](#) *Die Zeit*, “Mitgefangen, mitgehängt.”

[63.](#) *Spiegel*, “Falsche Signale an den Untergrund.”

[64.](#) It has been suggested that Boock’s initial attitude and evasion of responsibility had indicated that just a little more pressure might do the trick and turn him into a major propaganda asset, and that independent of any changes in government this is what determined his treatment.

[65.](#) Klaus Jünschke, interviewed by *Spiegel*, “Angst vor mancherlei Rachegeschrei,” *Spiegel*, July 18, 1988.

[66.](#) Discussing the amnesty campaign during his 1982 trial, Rolf Heißler noted that “[the] initiative is the chorus of the authorities, the warmongers, and their auxiliary clique in their struggle against fundamental opposition,” but at the same time, “The demand for ‘amnesty’ for the political prisoners is also an expression of the sense of powerlessness and resignation that the ‘German Autumn’ created for broad sections of the left.” (“Ich hatte so ein Gefühl, das von den Dächern schreien zu müssen,” *taz*, January 11, 1982.)

[67.](#) Christof Wackernagel, “Die Mythen knacken,” January 1984, in Linke Liste (ed.), *Die Mythen knacken: Materialien wider ein Tabu* (Frankfurt: Linke Liste, 1987), 378.

[68.](#) See for instance, Michael Von Tangen Page, *Prisons, Peace, and Terrorism: Penal Policy in the Reduction of Political Violence in Northern Ireland, Italy, and the Spanish Basque Country, 1968-97* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1998).

[69.](#) *taz* editorialized that as the newspaper went to print, they could already imagine their windows being smashed. As it happened their entire offices were trashed by anti-imps outraged that they would sit down to discuss the guerilla with a cop. *taz*, “Das Gespenst des ‘Euroterrorismus’ geht um,” April 11, 1985.

[70.](#) Gerhard Mauzy, “In der Toilette eines Eil- oder eines D-Zugs?” *Spiegel*, October 27, 1986.

[71.](#) *taz*, “Die Fehlschlüsse der Bundesanwaltschaft,” July 25, 1991.

[72.](#) Geronimo, 162.

Knockout Punch?

The front will not emerge automatically from common struggles and a proclamation. Such a proclamation and any mobilization that accompanied it would come to nothing if the practical aspects of this strategy—how it can be undertaken and how it can be effective—are not tackled more seriously. And not by us alone.

The Guerilla, the Resistance, and the Anti-Imperialist Front

NOTHING WAS HEARD FROM THE RAF for a long time after the November 1982 arrests of Klar, Mohnhaupt, and Schulz. While most of the guerillas remained at large, clearly the loss of these three, and of a number of the guerilla's supply depots, constituted a serious blow.

At the same time, the Revolutionary Cells continued to strike almost every month, and Rote Zora—which until this point had carried out only a few attacks—stepped up its activity, carrying out a number of low-level actions in 1983 (against a porn store, doctors involved in sterilization campaigns in the Third World, and a company involved in the international sex trade).

Then, on March 1, 1983, RAF member Gisela Dutzi was captured, surrounded by police at the Darmstadt train station. She had been recognized by a citizen who had phoned the police tip line, subsequently receiving a 50,000 DM reward.¹ Dutzi had worked as a graphic artist at a U.S. military installation before joining the guerilla in 1980, and prosecutors claimed that she had been acting as an “aboveground member”

of the RAF at the time, passing on information about U.S. military vehicles in nearby Heidelberg.² She was carrying a gun and fake ID when captured, and so charges of forgery and possession of arms were laid, along with bank robbery and membership in a terrorist organization under §129a.³



The combination of §129a and the bogey of the “aboveground RAF” continued to give the state a very large stick to wield against the radical left. Anti-imps were, of course, at particular risk. As part of this process, on May 2, Helga Roos, who had been arrested in 1981, received a sentence of four years and nine months for supporting a terrorist organization. Accusations that aboveground anti-imps were members of the guerilla had been made more plausible by the RAF’s own muddying of the waters with its front concept. When Brigitte Mohnhaupt was called to testify at Roos’s trial, she insisted that it was the commando that attacked Kroesen that had bought both the tent and the cocoa in Mannheim the day before the action. But in regard to the front, and contact with those aboveground, her explanation was not so cut and dried:

[The front] is the unity developed between armed politics and the aboveground struggle, a common resistance that aims to develop a genuine and relevant strategy for opposing the imperialist state—that is to say, a struggle that has a real impact, that hits on both the political and the military level. And calling that a common strategy has nothing to do with people being in contact with us, but rather arises on the basis of each person’s own perspective, on the basis of each person’s own

*reflections about how we can frame the question of power here and organize around it. Obviously, we discuss this with those whom we know—that's clear.*⁴

Anti-imps responded to Roos's sentence by spraypainting the outer wall of the former death camp at Dachau. As was explained in a subsequent communiqué:

*Dachau was the first Nazi research station. Experiments were conducted there toward the development of physical and psychological extermination programs against people who engaged in resistance. For us, Dachau doesn't only stand for the filthy deeds of the Nazi pigs, but is also a symbol of resistance on the part of people who struggled in the death camps and attempted to organize resistance... From this, we can learn that it is possible to struggle even in death camps. That is also the strength of the struggle waged by the prisoners, who themselves, in the state security extermination machinery, embody resistance for many people.*⁵

Arrests continued throughout the year. In October, eight houses in Mannheim, Stuttgart, and Heidelberg were raided, the inhabitants accused of conducting surveillance of munitions transports on behalf of the RAF.⁶ That same month, the magazine *radikal* was targeted with prosecution. Although produced anonymously, police had decided that Michael Klöckner and Benny Härlin were the editors of what had become the most important movement publication since the suppression of *Info-BUG* in 1977. They would be sentenced to two and a half years for supporting a terrorist organization, a prison term they would not end up serving.⁷ This was payback for *radikal*'s policy of publishing communiqués from the different guerilla groups; the fact that this was done from a highly critical perspective was deemed irrelevant.⁸ This was followed in December by the arrest of four anti-Startbahn West activists in Frankfurt, charged with forming a terrorist organization.

§129a was even used against people who were already serving time: on March 8, 1983, raids were conducted against thirty-one prisoners, the Hamburg Info-Büro, and five people on the outside (including former 2JM

political prisoner Anne Reiche) in an effort to prove the existence of an illegal information system. As a result, thirteen RAF prisoners found themselves charged for a second time under §129a.⁹ As the support group *Bunte Hilfe Nürnberg* explained:

According to the BAW this refers to letters mailed back and forth between prisoners and people on the outside, which had passed through the normal supervisory authority. The subject matter of the “illegal discussion” engaged in through these letters was the prisoners’ demand for association in large groups, which served “to maintain organizational integrity and the continuation of the armed struggle.”

These preliminary investigations... are primarily meant as propaganda. They are meant to support the claim that the association [demand] is intended to support the armed struggle, which is directed from within the prison cells, and that the description of the prison conditions as identity-destroying isolation torture is only a tactic...

*Preliminary proceedings in connection with support were also launched against two of the relatives with regard to the aforementioned “illegal information network.”... §129a preliminary proceedings against the very active relatives’ groups are extremely common, but to the best of our knowledge, none have ever resulted in charges. The BAW’s objective is not terribly hard to decipher; intimidation and occupying/tying up energy.*¹⁰

As anti-imps were being locked up for solidarity activities, the conditions in the cells remained harrowing. During this period, the case of Bernd Rössner was considered particularly egregious. Rössner had engaged in a four-month dirt strike, demanding association with the RAF prisoners held at Celle; for the duration of his protest he was held in an acoustically sealed windowless cell. When his health began to suffer and he could no longer keep food down, he was transferred to a psychiatric ward.¹¹

In the fall of 1983, supporters responded to all this with a campaign to mail as many letters as possible to the prisoners, the goal being to break through their isolation and include them in the movement’s discussions. As Irmgard Möller would recall years later:

*They told us about their work and about the projects they were developing. They sent us information and books and campaigned for others to do so as well, and in a very short period of time an enormous amount of mail arrived. Of course, a lot of it was withheld by the prison censor, but at least we had to be informed about that, so that we knew something was going on anyway. It was something different from the squatting movement, because this time it wasn't just that we could see that something was happening, but we ourselves were included. Of course, from the inside, we could only get a faint sense of how substantial the new commitment was and what its prospects were. That aside, it created a sense of a new vitality—and that meant a lot to us.*¹²

Known as the *Grüßaktion an die politischen Gefangenen* (Greetings Action to the Political Prisoners), the campaign immediately drew fire from the attorney general's office, which recognized that it might breach the isolation that had been so painstakingly erected. At a December press conference, Rebmann denounced the campaign as an attempt to bypass the Contact Ban law—a tacit admission that the law's purpose was not to safeguard prison security, but to cut the prisoners off from the movement. Bookstores and newspapers that publicized the action were raided under §129a.¹³



While the campaign focused on the RAF prisoners, they had not initiated it, and some questioned its overall orientation. Andreas Vogel, who had shifted from the 2JM to the RAF by this point, was somewhat critical, arguing that mere communication was insufficient, that the state

would have to be made to understand that people wouldn't quietly stand by and accept the situation. He pointed out that the government had made it clear that it would not be influenced by mere protests or information campaigns, that what was necessary was resistance at a level that would force the state to retreat. Vogel argued that the *Grußaktion*'s claim that public attention provided the only protection was incorrect, as only revolutionary politics and attacks on the state, imperialism, and oppression provide such protection, and even that was not enough as long as imperialism and prisons continued to exist.¹⁴

Nevertheless, as Möller and others experienced it at the time, the campaign was a welcome initiative:

It is much more than moral support—although that is also important when you are in isolation. We also got some insight into what was happening on the outside from the reports about specific actions, the alliances, whether they were cohesive or not, and people's thoughts about the RAF. For political prisoners that is essential.

*Everything interested us, every approach that people on the outside found for organizing their resistance. We wanted to know: What are your disagreements with us? What do you mobilize around? How do you educate yourselves? What steps do you take and what experiences do you have as a result? It was difficult to say anything about this from inside prison—which the people who wrote us often wanted us to do. For example, I had already been inside for ten years, which meant that the reality outside was completely foreign to me. That inclines a person to overestimate things and to be overly optimistic. However, this feeling of no longer being completely cut off meant a lot to me at the time. It creates a new strength and makes you more alive.*¹⁵

Möller attempted to take things further, and plans were made for some of these new correspondents to visit her. However, she found that, “Visits under these conditions don’t lead to lasting relationships. At the time, I just couldn’t write letters.” Suddenly she would find herself sitting in front of someone she had never seen before, and who was totally uncomfortable, not least because of the rigmarole visitors to political prisoners were put through. Only to meet separated by a glass partition with an LKA agent

there all the time, taking notes about everything said. As Möller experienced it, by the time people got over their discomfort, there would only be a few minutes left.¹⁶ Furthermore, visitors from the anti-imperialist movement were often barred after two or three visits, on the grounds that they were not helping the “resocialization” process;¹⁷ in some cases, activists were simply barred from visiting any political prisoners.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it was an invaluable experience for her: “Not much remains as a result of it—but at the time, it was a very important initiative for us.”¹⁹

KREFELD AND THE DECLINE OF “PEACE”

For two years, anti-imps had been busy discussing and implementing the May Paper. The RAF had not only acknowledged the importance of the semi-legal movement, it had charged it with building the still-abstract “front,” reaching out to the radical left. Following this lead, many now redoubled their efforts to work with the *Autonomen*.

As they worked in uneasy tension with the anti-imps, the *Autonomen* were simultaneously finding themselves shunned within the peace movement which was bracing itself for the mobilization against the new NATO missiles being deployed that fall. Yet another Coordinating Committee had been established in April 1983, and while the more conservative actors failed to squelch plans for decentralized civil disobedience actions, they had no trouble pushing through the line that these should remain nonviolent, and that an “open relationship” with the state should be pursued.²⁰ The process of isolating and marginalizing radicals intensified, the demand for “nonviolence” in the face of nuclear war being intrinsic to this process. As detailed elsewhere:

Between 1980 and 1982, the radical anti-war movement was marginalized by many organizations and initiatives, including the DKP,²¹ the Greens, the Jusos, and most pacifist and church groups. This allowed the peace movement to replace the antiwar movement. Church groups and social democrats became dominant and cemented their role by establishing a central coordination committee in Bonn. Some of these activists took their “leadership role” and the demand to “keep the peace” so seriously that they collaborated with the police when it came to undermine the politics and tactics of the Autonomen.²²

This process crossed an important threshold on June 25, 1983, the day U.S. Vice President Bush Sr. visited Krefeld, in North Rhine-Westphalia, to commemorate the three-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the town’s first emigrants to the United States. Over twenty-five thousand people formed a human “wall of life” under the auspices of the official peace

movement, while roughly a thousand *Autonomen* and anti-imps gathered separately in the town center.²³ Isolated in this way, the radicals were attacked by the SEK (similar to a North American SWAT unit); despite defending themselves with molotov cocktails and two by fours,²⁴ at least sixty of their number were badly injured and one hundred and thirty-four were arrested.²⁵ While a few hundred did manage to regroup to lob rocks and paint bombs at Bush's motorcade later that afternoon,²⁶ the day was considered a defeat. (As for the vice president, he gloated that "All this reminds me of Chicago in 1968. It makes me feel at home.")²⁷

The reaction from the Coordinating Committee was to repudiate the *Autonomen* and anti-imps. In their words,

*The peace movement declares clearly and bluntly, that its actions are carried through with solely non-violent means. Whoever uses violence, places himself outside the peace movement and is detrimental to its objectives... The police are not the opposition of the peace movement.*²⁸

While certain groups objected that the CC did not have "the right to define who or what the peace movement is in this country,"²⁹ the radical left simply did not have the strength to push the movement against nuclear weapons to make a revolutionary break. At the same time, Friedrich Zimmermann, the new minister of the interior, began turning the screw, drafting legislation to allow police to arrest anyone caught in the vicinity of "violent" protesters. Zimmermann's goal was twofold: to criminalize the broader opposition to the NATO missiles, and to push the conservative groups to move against the radicals. It was an effective strategy.³⁰ (Unsurprisingly, to ensure the trick worked, the *Verfassungsschutz* was more than happy to provide some of the "violent demonstrators" in question, and indeed, it was subsequently revealed that Peter Tröber, a "particularly violent" rioter who had traveled to Krefeld from West Berlin, was in fact a *Verfassungsschutz* agent taking orders from Lummer at the

Berlin Ministry of the Interior.)³¹

As Helmut Kohl's Conservative-Liberal coalition moved ahead with plans to welcome NATO's new medium-range missiles that fall, the *Autonomen* debated how or even whether to intervene. Some groups opted to continue working within the broader peace movement, upping the ante and pushing the envelope in the hopes of radicalizing others. But for many, the results were disappointing:

*The peace movement with its strong nonviolent ideology continued to exclude all anti-imperialist and social-revolutionary forces. Their protests—eager to prove their nonviolent commitment—became predictable and empty symbolic gestures of submission to the state. The collaboration with the police also continued. Many peace activists not only wanted to control the Autonomen but were also willing to denounce them.*³²



Autonomen and anti-imps demonstrating against Bush Sr. in Krefeld.

If the *Autonomen* had entered the peace movement with the goal of radicalizing it, the anti-imps had done so with the more modest hope of connecting with and winning over specific radical elements—not least among them, the *Autonomen*. As such, the disappointment many people felt as they were ostracized by the movement leadership provided a new clarity, and while some were demoralized and demobilized, others found themselves drawn in a more militant direction. As usual, state repression was central to this process, as observed in this anti-imp statement from February 1983:

The situation is now clear: given the change of government and the possibility of the unopposed stationing of medium-range missiles, 1983 will be a “decisive year.”

It could be a year marked by the most powerful mobilization against the NATO strategy.

The state is fully prepared for that eventuality, and a reactionary offensive against the entire spectrum of the resistance has been going on for some time; the largest FRG-wide wave of trials since ‘45, with Helga [Roos]’ trial at Stammheim being the cutting edge, as it is meant to serve as an example for the entire anti-imperialist political movement. In Spiegel 2/83 you can read about the technical level of BKA and Verfassungsschutz operations—certainly (and by definition) not just against the guerilla. The BAW increased its agitation against the resistance during the manhunt accompanying NATO maneuvers and with the three arrests. At his annual press conference, Rebmann announced that there would be more arrests of people from the anti-imperialist resistance. And now we have the terror against the prisoners. Helga is to be destroyed, because she wants to speak with Adelheid [Schulz].³³

This tried and true approach, building on opposition to state repression, was evident immediately following the anti-Bush demonstration, as unknown anti-imps firebombed the Wuppertal Justice Academy, sending “Love and Strength to Our Imprisoned Comrades from June 25 in Krefeld and All Other Imprisoned Militants”:

We decided to attack as quickly as possible in order to prevent the arrests and beatings carried out by SEK units from forcing us onto the defensive, and to avoid spending weeks debating what we could do about it, by instead striking back directly and not letting up. For us, it is important to learn to constantly struggle against the fear that each of us feels and to embrace the reality that this individual fear can only be prevented from developing and can only be overcome through collective confrontation.

Even if every one of our people who is locked up represents a loss for us on the outside, they cannot prevent us from uniting through the walls and bars in common struggle with our imprisoned comrades, each of whom strengthens the struggle within the prisons. We see the struggle for the organization of the revolutionary prisoners, i.e., for the association of the prisoners from the RAF and the resistance in self-determined groups, as a significant part of the struggle against

the NATO war policy—in this case, the attempt to use prisons to destroy the resistance and to frighten people collapses in the face of the prospect of collective struggle in the prisons. Those of us on the outside are responsible for bringing pressure to bear in support of association.

*The Justice Academy is part of the prison system, as it trains the jailers to control and dominate prisoners. We see our attack against this counterinsurgency institution as part of organizing the revolutionary front that has developed out of the unity of the guerilla, the prisoners, and the militants.*³⁴



"Krefeld Anti-NATO Demo Trial; We demand: Association for the prisoners to prepare a common defense; Freedom for the prisoners"

In this way, at the same time as they were being marginalized by the peace movement, militants could remain grounded through the legacy the guerilla and its supporters had built up over the years. As one speaker pointed out at a demonstration at the Krefeld courthouse in November 1983, “The Krefeld prisoners are not alone. They can draw on the experience from the years of prison struggles.”³⁵

THE RAF

As the anti-imps reached out to the *Autonomen*, the RAF was working to implement the ideas found in the May Paper, deepening its own relationships with supporters. In the midst of the constant arrests, both aboveground and underground, the group prepared for this vision of an intermediate level of resistance, a kind of anti-imp parallel to what the RZs had accomplished: the front.

On March 26, 1984, RAF members robbed a bank in the Bavarian town of Würzburg, netting 171,000 DM.

A few months later, on June 22, police in the town of Deizisau in Baden-Württemberg came upon a woman conducting surveillance of the home of Klaus Knopse, the judge who had been presiding over the trial of Mohnhaupt and Klar, which had started earlier that year. When she was asked for her ID, she pulled a gun and started shooting, but without hitting any of the police officers. Manuela Happe took off running, only to be arrested in a cornfield shortly thereafter.³⁶

Within two weeks of Happe's arrest, there was an even more devastating setback.

Several RAF members had been staying in a Frankfurt safehouse when on July 2 one of them accidentally shot a hole in the floor while cleaning a gun. Their downstairs neighbor was watching television, and at first thought something had fallen over in his bedroom. A few minutes later a woman knocked at his door, explaining that she was "taking care of the cats" in the apartment above and had spilled some water—she wanted to make sure it wasn't leaking into his apartment. He told her there was no problem, but after she left he thought it best to make sure: that's when he noticed the hole in the ceiling and the bullet lying on the floor. He called the police.

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Ernst, and Ernst-Volker Staub were all found hiding in a closet. As well as netting so many guerillas, the police retrieved over eight thousand pages of notes from the safehouse, including surveillance records and personal details about hundreds of government and business figures throughout Europe.³⁷ Within this haul there was a document that the police would refer to as the RAF's *Aktionspapier* (Action Paper), alleging that the group had been preparing to release it to supporters. The paper, which it has been said was directed at members of the anti-imperialist resistance working within the context of the RAF's front concept, was unfinished, and like all such papers, the guerilla would dismiss it as nothing more than discussion notes, not an official RAF document.³⁸

While the police did not know it at the time, with the July 2 arrests—occasioned by a careless mishap and a fateful decision to not flee the safehouse—the entire RAF had been captured.

Not a single combatant remained at large.

A Process Comes to Fruition

For those of us who joined the guerilla in or after '84, the early eighties were obviously a time of important experiences, decisions, and changes in our country, and this formed the basis of our decision to take up the armed struggle. It was a time of widespread struggle around various issues: the anti-NATO movement; the political prisoners' hunger strike of '81, during which Sigurd Debus was murdered; the antinuclear struggles; the Startbahn West struggle; the squatter movement; and of course the mass mobilizations against the stationing of medium-range missiles. We ourselves participated in some of these struggles, and we had the same experience as everyone else there: we failed to defeat the powers that be.

At that time, it wasn't just the hundreds of thousands of people in the streets who supported these struggles and demands. In reality, it was a contradiction involving millions of people, and yet they were unable to force those in power to budge around even one of their demands—there is a reason why struggles became more and more radical and militant. Many people decided to participate in various militant initiatives against key aspects of the extermination policy. The main thing that meant during this period was attacking the U.S./NATO military strategy. This was meant to lend a new intensity and resolve to our struggles. Every day it became increasingly clear that the state would simply ignore demonstrations of hundreds of thousands, while at the same time engaging in ever more brutal and violent attacks against the people who took their demands to the streets. It was only luck that prevented our side from suffering more deaths (Klaus-Jürgen Rattay, Olaf Ritzmann)¹ and serious injuries in the struggle during those years. The inhumanity

and brutality with which the prisoners were treated during the '81 hunger strike—with the police and paramilitary units using clubs and gas—clearly showed that the state intended for there to be deaths on our side. Kohl's remark about stationing medium-range missiles—"They demonstrate, we govern"—made it clear how those in power viewed anyone who wanted change.

These developments here also had implications for the international situation; for example, in the confrontations between the liberation movements and liberated nations on the one side and imperialism on the other. It was a time of coordinated efforts to effect a rollback: the medium-range missiles were to hold the Soviets in check and trap them in a deadly arms race; the bombing of Libya; the Malvinas War; the destruction of the Palestinian refugee camps in Sabra, Shatila, and Tel Zaatar; opposing the liberation movement in El Salvador; low-intensity warfare to drag wars out and bleed the people dry; the contra wars in the liberated countries of Southern Africa to make independent development impossible, which led to unimaginable numbers of people dying as a result of war and starvation. Here, we can only briefly sketch an outline of what was going on during these years; in every case, imperialism indicated its desire to achieve its centuries-old dream of subjugating all of humanity, using whatever violence proved necessary, including the deployment of nuclear weapons. This is why it sought to impose its plans and projects despite massive resistance, and this is why all forms of resistance had to be crushed and obliterated.

So, like many others, we became increasingly convinced that we had to build an organized force capable of employing both militant and military methods here. Based on everything we experienced in those years, it was perfectly clear that in order to overcome this intractable power we needed to develop something new in our struggle—the alternative would have been to surrender and to capitulate to this power, and for us that wasn't an option. For increasing numbers of people, the

proposal the RAF brought to the discussion in '82 with the "Front Paper"—i.e., an organization that would bring together the guerilla, the militants, and the resistance, in order to develop a new form of power—corresponded to their own experiences and the conclusions they had drawn.

Excerpt from *We Must Search for Something New*
Red Army Faction, August 1992

¹ On August 25, 1980, sixteen-year-old Olaf Ritzmann was hit by a tram while fleeing a police attack on a demonstration against an appearance by CSU leader Franz Josef Strauß in Hamburg. He died of his injuries four days later. As detailed on pages 207–208, on September 22, 1981, Klaus-Jürgen Rattay was struck by a bus and killed while defending a squat from a police raid.

1. Ed Reavis, "Tipster to Receive 50,000 Marks for Spotting Dutzi," *European Stars and Stripes*, March 3, 1983.
2. Associated Press, "Woman Accused of Giving Terrorists U.S. Military Data," *European Stars and Stripes*, January 24, 1984.
3. Associated Press, "Trial Begins," *The Paris News* (Paris, Texas), May 11, 1984.
4. "Aussage von Brigitte im Prozess gegen Helga," in Marat, 122-123.
5. "Erklärung zu den Sprühaktionen in München und Dachau," in Marat, 131. The Dachau spraypainting was just one of a number of low-level actions in this period that took symbols of real historic Nazism as opportunities to protest the "fascism" of the contemporary Federal Republic. Earlier in the 1980s, anti-imps had occupied art exhibits devoted to the antifascist resistance to the Third Reich, drawing a parallel between the concentration camps and the treatment the prisoners from the resistance were receiving in West Germany. This was in line with the 1970s RAF's claim that isolation imprisonment was simply "Auschwitz" reborn in a new form, an extreme example of the "continuity thesis" that held sway in the APO and student movement of the late sixties. Another example of this was the way in which anti-imp groups in the early eighties referred to themselves as "antifascist" groups, the "fascism" they were actively opposing being that of the Social-Liberal coalition, not the NPD or other far

right groups. For more on the APO's continuity thesis, see *Utopia or Auschwitz* by Hans Kundnani, especially [pages 18–19](#).

6. Bunte Hilfe Nürnberg in Haufen, 232.
7. Both Klöckner and Härlin were elected to the European Parliament on the Green ticket in 1984. Drawing on various European legal traditions, members of parliament benefit from the principle of inviolability (as do members of the *Bundestag*), rendering them immune from arrest for the duration of their term. The charges were then repealed by the BGH in 1989, and as such they never had to serve their sentences.
8. Haufen, 269.
9. *informations-büro: politische gefangene in der brd* no. 38, October 5, 1983.
10. Bunte Hilfe Nürnberg in Haufen, 230.
11. “2. Beitrag am 10.11.83,” in Marat, 138.
12. Tolmein, 160.
13. *Die Situation der Gefangenen in den ersten Jahren*.
14. Andreas Vogel, *Grussaktion an alle politischen Gefangen*.
15. Tolmein, 160-161.
16. Ibid., 161.
17. *Pressekonferenz am 18.8.1982 in Stuttgart*.
18. Wienke Zitzlaff, interviewed by *Libertad*.
19. Tolmein, 161.
20. Steve Breyman, *Why Movements Matter: The West German Peace Movement and U.S. Arms Control Policy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 156-158.
21. The pro-Soviet, non-Maoist, German Communist Party.
22. Geronimo, 113.
23. Breyman, 166.
24. Associated Press, “West German Rioters Pelt Bush Motorcade,” *Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), June 26, 1983.
25. Breyman, 166.
26. Sandra Hill for United Press International, “Bush Unhurt in Anti-Nuclear Demonstration,” *Hutchinson News* (Kansas), June 26, 1983.

- [27.](#) Ibid.
- [28.](#) Breyman, 167.
- [29.](#) The Federal Congress of Autonomous Peace Initiatives, the Federal Congress of Development Action Groups, and the Federation of Nonviolent Action Groups signed a statement to this effect; Ibid., 167.
- [30.](#) Geronimo, 116; Breyman, 167.
- [31.](#) Claus Nordbruch, *Der Verfassungsschutz: »Geistig-politische Auseinandersetzung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 97-98.
- [32.](#) Geronimo, 116.
- [33.](#) “Kommuniqué: Warum wir uns jetzt für die Initiative für die Zusammenlegung der Gefangenen aus Guerilla und Widerstand einsetzen,” in Marat, 126.
- [34.](#) “Kommuniqué: Liebe und Kraft unseres gefangen Genoss-inn-en vom 25.6 in Krefeld und allen anderen kämpfenden Menschen in den Knästen!” in Marat, 135.
- [35.](#) “2. Beitrag am 10.11.83,” in Marat, 137.
- [36.](#) Peters, 597; Anke Brenneke-Eggers, interviewed by *Grosse Freiheit*, “Interview mit Anke Brenneke-Eggers, Rechtsanwältin von Brigitte Mohnhaupt,” *Grosse Freiheit*, October 1984.
- [37.](#) Peters, 599-600.
- [38.](#) Specifically, in 1985, the RAF would state that, “the BAW and the BKA have always referred to a ‘Strategy Paper’ that they found in an apartment in Frankfurt. We are not responsible for any ‘84 Strategy Paper. What they found was a discussion paper by some militants, in which they developed their own idea about how their practice and the prisoners’ struggle could interact.” (RAF, interviewed by *Zusammen Kämpfen*, “Interview mit Genossen aus der RAF,” *Zusammen Kämpfen* April 1985.)

Tubthumping

EVEN BEFORE THE 1984 ARRESTS, *Spiegel* magazine had been crowing that the RAF had been finished off with the capture of Klar and Mohnhaupt almost two years earlier. While this was not the first time that reports of the RAF's demise had been greatly exaggerated, it is true that the group had not carried out any attacks since the attempted Kroesen assassination. What had seemed like a leap forward in 1981 might by 1984 have appeared to have been more of a last hurrah.

Urban guerilla groups—in spite of the inevitable romance, mystique, and 007 fantasies—are fundamentally political organizations. Despite the superficial similarities, they are neither special operations units nor are they commandos in the usual military sense. As has been belabored in almost every single RAF document, the point of the guerilla's attacks was always political, aimed at people's consciousness, not at a target's actual material value. In Gramscian terms, the urban guerilla was involved in a war of position, not a war of maneuver, all the guns and bombs notwithstanding.

Though it is not clear that the state knew it at the time, by the RAF's own account, the Frankfurt arrests in 1984 swept up all the group's remaining members.¹ It is here that the difference between the urban guerilla and a military unit is most clear, for such a blow would have wiped out the latter. As to the RAF, though, before the year was out new militants had gone underground, the group was reestablished, and indeed was able to quickly

launch its most ambitious, and arguably most successful, offensive to date.



Zusammen Kämpfen, Newspaper of the Anti-Imperialist Front in Western Europe.

The first signal came on December 4, 1984, as Christian Klar and Brigitte Mohnhaupt appeared in the special courtroom-bunker at Stammheim prison. The two started by reading lengthy statements going over some of the same points addressed by the May Paper, namely the RAF's '77 offensive and the changes in the world since. After these statements had been delivered, Mohnhaupt announced the start of the prisoners' ninth collective hunger strike.² That day, over thirty prisoners in seventeen prisons simultaneously began refusing food.³

On the outside, just one month earlier, two men had robbed a gun store in Maxdorf, near Ludwigshafen, netting twenty-two pistols, two repeating rifles, and 2,800 rounds of ammunition.⁴ There were no arrests or casualties in the robbery, which had come as the first sign that the RAF was once again active.

That the RAF had been renewed so quickly after the disastrous July arrests speaks to the strength of its base, and of the anti-imperialist politics it had implanted over the previous fourteen years. It also spoke to the promise of the front strategy as outlined in the May Paper. This strategy, which called for greater coordination between above- and underground militants, took further form in December, as the first issue of the *Zusammen Kämpfen* (Struggling Together) newsletter was released, with the tagline "Newspaper for the Anti-Imperialist Front in Western Europe." As the introduction to this first issue explained:

We are producing this newspaper, because we want a way to communicate about the reality and orientation of revolutionary politics in the West European metropole. Communication and discussion are a prerequisite if we are to advance. We intend to provide a starting point for such communication.

For the development of the communist perspective in the metro-pole, a revolutionary, antagonistic practice is both a means and an end. We intend to use this newspaper to address this practice and to provide a preliminary analysis of the existing conditions. To that end, the contents of the newspaper are primarily:

- *the actions of the West European guerilla*
- *the struggle of the revolutionary prisoners*
- *the actions of the groups from the anti-imperialist and social revolutionary resistance*
- *the political initiatives and campaigns occurring in this context*
- *analyses addressing this practice*

We are organizing the newspaper illegally from the outset, because that's the only way it'll work. As we don't know everyone who will want to read the newspaper, those who receive it should copy it and distribute in their milieu.

Just as the RZ and Rote Zora had their newspaper *Revolutionärer Zorn*, the anti-imps now had their own publication. The first issue included the hunger strike statement, prisoners' statements, news reports of anti-imp attacks, as well as an interview with a member of the IRA, communiqués from the French guerilla group *Action Directe* and the Belgian guerilla group the *Cellules Communistes Combattantes* (Fighting Communist Cells), which had launched its own offensive in October. Needless to say, *Zusammen Kämpfen* was illegal under §88a; nonetheless, over the years to come twelve issues would be released, the publishers never apprehended.

On December 18, the RAF itself went into action at Oberammergau, an idyllic Alpine village an hour's drive south of Munich. The target: NATO's

SHAPE officers' training school. A car, with stolen license plates identifying it as American-registered, had been left in the school's parking area by a guerilla with a stolen U.S. Marine uniform and forged U.S. government identification papers. Its trunk was packed with over fifty pounds of explosives and three propane gas tanks connected to a timing device.



Demonstration in support of the prisoners during the ninth collective hunger strike.

The attack, however, was thwarted, for the RAF member who drove the car in was spotted walking away, which raised suspicions—although nobody was captured, the car was identified and the bomb defused. Regardless: politically the action “worked,” and a wave of attacks broke out across the FRG, more intense than during any previous hunger strike; over seventy bomb and arson attacks were registered in the weeks following.⁵

This was the front heralded in the May Paper, in the first sense of the term, bringing the guerilla together with the aboveground resistance.

In January, in the midst of this anti-imp offensive, the RAF released a joint statement with *Action Directe*, in which the two guerilla groups explained:

We think it is now possible to launch a new phase in the development of

*revolutionary strategy in the imperialist centers and to create the politico-military nucleus required for this qualitative leap forward in the international organization of proletarian struggle in the metropole: the West European guerilla.*⁶

On January 25, 1985, General René Audran, a high-level official in the French Ministry of Defense, was assassinated as he was parking his car outside his suburban Paris home. An anonymous caller contacted *Agence France-Presse*, explaining that *Action Directe* had carried out the assassination with a commando named for Elisabeth von Dyck, the RAF member killed by police in 1979.⁷

This was the front's second dimension, uniting different European guerilla groups.

On February 1, 1985, a RAF commando forced their way into the suburban Munich home of Ernst Zimmermann, president of the Federation of German Aviation, Space and Equipment Industry (BDLI) and CEO of the MUT corporation that produced engines for combat vehicles, including the FRG's new Leopard tank and Tornado aircraft. Zimmermann's wife Ingrid was tied up and left lying on the floor while her husband was brought to their bedroom, handcuffed to a chair, and shot execution style.

A call was placed to the *Gautinger Anzeiger*, a local newspaper: "The commando Patrick O'Hara takes responsibility for the attack on Ernst Zimmermann. The West European guerillas will shake the imperialistic system."⁸ The RAF had taken the name of the martyred INLA prisoner, another example of its placing its struggle firmly in the West European context.⁹

Almost immediately following this second assassination, prisoners began calling off their hunger strike. A document was soon released, explaining that, "The politics of the guerilla in the metropole have achieved the breakthrough anticipated by the past five years of struggle."¹⁰

This is just a bare outline of the beginnings of what would be a two-year-long offensive, putting the ideas outlined in May Paper to the test, and involving hundreds of attacks carried out by anti-imps “in the context of the guerilla’s struggle,” as called for in the May Paper. Indeed, there were more attacks from 1985 to 1987 than in any other three years in the history of West Germany.¹¹

We end our second volume at this point with some misgivings. On the one hand, the attacks in 1985 and 1986 were the fruit of the May Paper, and of the years of discussion and action that had allowed the RAF to put itself back on its feet after the disaster of ‘77. A strong argument could be made for including this offensive before we close.

Yet we have chosen to leave this offensive, and the years of assassinations and then de-escalation and disarray that would follow, for our third volume. While this decision was far less obvious than our ending our first volume in ‘77—most other histories of the RAF simply end the entire story there—it was the arrests of 1984 that swayed us. Those who were now underground in the RAF had perhaps been consulted in the discussions leading up to the May Paper, but they were not the architects of this strategy. Yet this “last generation” would make the RAF their own, putting their stamp on the organization, doing their best to ride the momentum of the project they had joined, as many of the worst possible consequences of the global imperialist counteroffensive outlined in the May Paper came to pass.

As such, to do them justice, the successes and failures of the front’s offensive, and the ordeals of those who chose to join the RAF in 1984, will have to wait for our final volume.



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1. RAF, “Wir müssen das Neue suchen,” August 1992. This document will be included in our third volume as “We Must Search for Something New.”
 2. *Libération* “Le troisième visage de la RAF,” February 2-3, 1985.
 3. *Spiegel*, “Front draußen,” January 28, 1985. It should be noted that accounts differ as to the precise number of hunger strikers, between 30 and 39.
 4. Peters, 600.
 5. Peters, 603.
 6. RAF, *Für die Einheit der Revolutionäre in Westeuropa*, 1985. This document has been translated as “For the Unity of Revolutionaries in Western Europe” and is available at http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/documents/85_01.html; it will also be included in our next volume.
 7. Veronique Brocard and Laurent Gally, “Action Directe: Une execution en coproduction,” *Liberation*, January 28, 1985.
 8. *Winnipeg Free Press*, “Red Army Terrorists Kill Industrialist,” February 2, 1985.
 9. Sinn Fein reacted to this attack by accusing the RAF of sullying O’Hara’s name. This was part of a process that had been going on for several years, whereby the Republican leadership had been distancing itself from the communist and anti-imperialist guerilla in the hopes of currying support with Green and Social Democratic parties on the continent.
 10. *Hungerstreikabbruchs-Erklärung der Gefangenen aus der RAF und aus dem*

Widerstand February 1985. This document has been translated as “Calling Off the Hunger Strike: A Statement from the Prisoners of the RAF and the Resistance” and is available at <http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/> documents/85_02b.html; it will also be included in our next volume.

11. Koopmans, 643.

A Statement Regarding '77

We have to talk about '77 again here, specifically about the political strategy behind the first phase of armed struggle in which the attacks occurred and how new conditions for revolutionary politics developed out of this conflict. We also have to say a few things about what happened when we took Schleyer captive and demanded the prisoners in exchange for him.

Following the arrests in '72 and the Stockholm action, the social democratic state hoped for a realignment that would put an end to the guerilla's complete negation of the capitalist system and the rupture it represents. The guerilla was to remain an incident involving a couple of guys, historically connected to the situation around the Vietnam War, and perhaps to a critique of the old sterile antifascism—as if it was intended to be the latest form of treason—to prevent the possibility of revolutionary struggle here from serving as a reference point. In '76, we had arrived at the goal of deepening the guerilla project and further developing an understanding of the rupture in the metropole by resuming the struggle—setting the revolutionary process in motion and making the rupture irreversible. The goal of restructuring the guerilla in '77 was connected to the prisoners' struggle.

The ongoing social democracy was an external condition under which we struggled in the '70s; against the strategy of the SPD, which had broken the back of proletarian revolution many times since 1914—which had disarmed the working class in the face of fascism—which after '45, guided by U.S. capital, was again inserted into the class as a pillar of support for capital—which, as the modern form of imperialist rule, institutionalized all social contradictions, political struggles, and autonomous movements. It was against these political conditions that we carried out the first RAF

attacks. These actions were part of a practice that destroyed the “objective unity of the bourgeoisie,” that recreated the conditions for class consciousness, and developed the strategic political-military struggle.

The other condition: after the consolidation of the October Revolution, the national class struggle failed to develop anything that correctly clarified the current conflict between the proletariat and the capitalist system or showed how to overthrow it. Capital had further internationalized itself.

And regarding the different forms of colonization of people in the south and in the metropole, different realities were shaped to separate them socially and politically. So the relationship to oppression in the metropole was stabilized for decades through the internationalization of production, and was politically sealed by social democracy and the unions limiting the labor movement to purely economic struggles. This relative stability was disrupted by the Vietnamese liberation struggle. First of all, because this successful struggle for national self-determination and social development was connected to worldwide change, it created barriers to capital. But more importantly, the Vietnamese liberation struggle changed political conditions. An aspect of this decolonization was that it simultaneously involved confronting U.S. imperialism, and for that reason this war revealed the totality and the unity of the entire imperialist system, for the first time since the consolidation of the October Revolution. That facilitated a break with the long history of revisionism here. Vietnam transformed the worldwide revolutionary process from one of separate national class struggles into an increasingly unified international class struggle, uniting the struggles on all fronts. Since then this has been the context within which all of the struggles confronting the capitalist system occur. They differ only as to the level of the concrete conditions in which and under which they are conducted.

At the beginning of ‘77, the question here was whether things could continue to advance or whether they would suffer further reversals.

Following the military solution to the guerilla struggle that was used against the commando in Stockholm, all those who chose not to leave were also choosing to not allow the revolutionary strategy to once again be pissed away in the states of the metropole. It was a decision to oppose the Social Democrats' strategic intent, which was to annihilate the guerilla with depoliticization, rabble-rousing, and repressive normality, using mass control and modern fascism to their full potential. Brandt said that the counterstrategy must redevelop "society's immune system," something that social democracy represents more than almost anything else. As such, the most important recommendation the U.S. counterstrategy could offer the SPD was that they bury the Stammheim prisoners as deep as possible. With this goal, the state's openly liquidationist line determined the speed and intensity with which the guerilla had to reorganize itself and develop its offensive.

The prisoners' struggle had a political objective of its own. It arose from a contradiction which clarified both the political preconditions for the rupture as well as the depth it could achieve here. At the same time, '77 was the point where the first phase of the guerilla struggle ended and where the political objective of this phase, the rupture in the metropole, was thereby established.

By taking Schleyer prisoner, we confronted the FRG state with its problem of legitimacy—using this bureaucrat from the Third Reich and its successor state, a state which was entirely shaped from the outside and imposed internally. The action confronted the FRG with this problem of legitimacy—the historical conditions for the overthrow of this system were ripe and its back was to the wall—because the negotiations forced it to acknowledge its adversaries. And the action confronted the federal government with the antifascism that to some degree already existed in Western Europe, and which was not just a historical factor, but was being produced anew as a reaction to the FRG's new and pervasive claims to

power. Schmidt said in parliament, “The hope that memories of Auschwitz and Oradour¹ would begin to fade in countries outside of Germany will not be fulfilled. If a terrorist is shot by us... we will face questions that other nations don’t have to deal with.”

In fact, the old antifascism here collapsed without resistance, because it was propped up by a left that had waited thirty years for Strauß so they could scream about fascism, but have not to this very day caught on to the fact that everything that the CDU tried to do they learned from the SPD. And in Western Europe outside of Germany, it lost its strength to the degree that it oriented itself toward an impending revolution in one country and treated this as typical of Western Europe. This relationship to power consisted of the weakness of the old antifascism at a point when the new antifascism emerging from the anti-imperialist struggle was not yet adequately developed. This allowed the state to achieve its goal of waging war against the enemy within—“civilization or barbarism,” hyper-criminality—and to resolve the situation militarily, in keeping with Schmidt’s imposed dictum, at least during those weeks: society could not be permitted to debate the guerilla’s politics.

Because social democracy has its historical roots in the betrayal of the working class, they are particularly sensitive to the problem of legitimacy faced by the capitalist system. This was illustrated by the conflicts within the Crisis Management Team. The SPD wanted to handle it as a state of emergency, without actually declaring such a thing. Wehner² insisted that people stop talking openly about a state crisis. The CDU/CSU was prepared to drop this line—for example, the CSU proposed allowing the prisoners to go free and then declaring a state of emergency to smash the mobilization that the situation had provoked. Or Rebmann’s idea to institute martial law and shoot the imprisoned guerillas. Schmidt relied on the effectiveness not of traditional fascism, but of the institutional variety. He too wanted to use the prisoners as hostages, but legally, with the

Contact Ban law. He too wanted a military solution, but with the police waging the war, accompanied by the construction of the necessary ideological superstructure. The goal was the same. As a result, everything was focused on the prisoners, because they couldn't get at the commando.

On September 8, 1977, the Crisis Management Team allowed *Die Welt* to demand that Rebmann's plan be carried out. On September 10, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published the same thing as reflecting a discussion within the CSU *Land* group, which wanted a prisoner shot at half-hour intervals until Schleyer was released. A day later, *Frühschoppen*³ demanded the introduction of bloody torture, noting that the guerilla groups in Latin America had been defeated in that way. The next day, *Spiegel* provided a platform for the CSU's Becher⁴ and Zimmermann to express their longing for the deaths of the Stammheim prisoners. On September 13, the same idea was put forward by the SPD through Heinz Kühn,⁵ but in a more delicate way: "The terrorists must be made to understand that the death of Hanns Martin Schleyer will have grave consequences for the fate of the violent prisoners they are hoping to free through their disgraceful actions." Next, there was a debate regarding the pros and cons of the death penalty, which ranged from the Catholic Church to *Stern*. In the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Strauß demanded a pogrom against the prisoners, because "then the police and the justice system wouldn't have to bother with this anymore." On October 16, throughout the media the BKA psychological warfare line was once again advanced, laying the groundwork for the operation on the seventh floor. The following day, using state security material, *Spiegel* claimed Andreas was the mastermind behind our action. Any journalist could easily see that this material had been manipulated. That same evening, on *Panorama*,⁶ Golo Mann⁷ demanded that the prisoners be treated as hostages and shot. This was all part of the Crisis Management Team's public show, the preparatory propaganda. Rebmann served to connect this public line to the operational possibilities arising

from the vacuum created by the Contact Ban.

The Federal Republic's decision to adopt the hard line is best understood in light of the role this operation played in the global reconstruction of imperialist politics for counterrevolutionary revival. The FRG's function was to take the lead in the reactionary restructuring of Western Europe, in order to establish a continental police state. Part of the price the Federal Republic had to pay to prevent any resurgence of revolutionary politics in Western Europe's power center was the collapse of the old social democratic ideology and policies. All of this was connected to the question of the prisoner exchange. At the state funeral, Scheel said that if the flame wasn't immediately snuffed out then it would spread like wildfire all around the world, and freeing the prisoners would have been its starting point. Because of this setback, over the next years we had to develop new ways to struggle alongside the prisoners.

The Federal Republic's decision to refuse the exchange was only made possible by mobilizing every conceivable form of institutional fascism, and by the BKA's political putsch—in short, by transforming the political situation into a military situation. Partly this was accomplished through the manipulation of parliament and the Federal Constitutional Court, partly by turning the media into official public organs, and partly by the news ban, supposedly necessary for Schleyer's safety. Regarding this, in the September 14 video, Schleyer himself said that for his own protection he wanted contact with the public. After that, the Crisis Management Team made decisions that were contrary to his interests, they acted primarily to prevent negotiations and to prevent any public debate that could have interfered with their preferred solution. In any case, after five weeks of nonstop rabble-rousing, a public opinion poll showed that as many people supported the exchange as opposed it. But there was only one possible way to quickly resolve the crisis, given that the federal government had lost its capacity to act: the NATO solution. The Contact Ban was the means by

which the Crisis Management Team gained control of the situation—as well as giving Rebmann all of the options he required. This was never meant to protect Schleyer, but rather to protect the Crisis Management Team’s plan.

With ‘77, the form and the content of the FRG state became one and the same. Its political content: a post-Nazi state and an anticomunist bulwark within the NATO structure. Its form: the dictatorial heart of NATO democracy, the national security state, the state that exterminates people to protect them from themselves. Given its raw unmediated structure, right from the beginning it was obvious that in the FRG proletarian politics would require autonomous struggle, which is to say, illegally organized armed struggle. However, it was not just the old structures and forms that had been renewed, but fascism itself. The SPD had already proceeded so far with its process of institutionalization that the officially declared state of emergency had been made redundant. Just as in Stammheim in ‘75, it wasn’t presented as an issue of high treason, because that charge contained too much political substance. In ‘74, Brandt said, “Since the Social-Liberal Coalition has been in power, basic precautions have been taken to secure the state internally.” Beyond legalizing counterinsurgency, he was referring to the program that party partisan Herold had already envisioned in ‘68: fascism in an historical era of automation and data processing, and the institutional penetration of society, so as to paralyze it—fascism that no longer requires mass mobilization or ideologically motivated fascists, but only bureaucrats and technocrats in the service of the imperialist state. In the emergency situation of ‘77, its entire potential was mobilized. Behind the fictional separation of powers and parliamentary procedure lies the *Maßnahmestaat*,⁸ the real power structure where police and military bodies control the analysis—given their “privileged access to information” (Herold)—and in so doing shape policy.

The extraordinary part of the crisis structure—the Crisis Cabinet, etc.—was disbanded following the military solution. Yet this was no mere ad hoc repressive deployment on the part of the state in response to a particularly intense guerilla offensive. Rather, it is the unfolding of a process that Marighella already identified in the experience of the Latin American urban guerilla: when faced with resistance that calls its very existence into question, the state transforms the political situation into a military situation. That is what is happening today on an international level. Imperialism is everywhere losing its capacity to resolve problems politically, so it is militarizing its strategy. From imperialism's point of view, for society overall, this means that state security—with its centers, its special sections, its psychological campaigns, etc.—provides significant structural support for its rule. In this way, it also modifies the state's ideology and carries out the projects for “domestic peace” that were developed primarily by the Social Democrats, in order to go on the offensive to destroy all political expressions of social antagonism. The state acknowledges the rupture that the guerilla here originally struggled to create. At the end of '77, Vogel bemoaned the “irreparable rupture.” This was the defeat they had suffered, which tarnished the image they had cultivated with their domestic and foreign policies, and which also brought about the degradation of their ideology, opening up possibilities for the left to act.

These changes were not the result of '77 alone. They were the result of a process set in motion by the first RAF attacks and the prisoners' hunger strikes, as well as in response to those who opted to continue the struggle after '77. In this regard, the actions in the autumn of '81 were particularly important. Following '77 and continuing to this very day, there have been attempts to reverse the rupture. Following the neutralization of liberalism and antifascism by the events of '77, this position is today occupied by a new left that situates itself somewhere between “the guerilla and the state” and attempts to lay its own claim on parliamentary action. However, this

left is of no importance. Not only because the political-economic crisis leaves reformism with objectively even less room to maneuver than in the seventies, but also because what is required here is a left that is beyond their reach, that has been politicized to grasp the meaning of '77, and that can find its bearings in a situation where the state targets any fundamental opposition. This resistance must be grounded in an understanding that reformism here is not limited by the economy but by politics, which must in turn be targeted by revolutionary activity.

The rupture in the metropole remains irreversible. Kissinger also speaks about this shift in relationships, which occurred in less than a decade, characterizing the SPD as still pursuing the “idea of domestic peace” in ‘76, but noting that by ‘84, “On both sides of the Atlantic we are threatened by domestic politics overshadowing the worldwide strategy.” That is his automatic response to the fact that imperialism, with its global project to perpetuate the capitalist system, is not only limited by the liberation struggles in the South, but is also held back by the front within.

Christian Klar
Stammheim, December 4, 1984

¹ On June 10, 1944, the Waffen-SS destroyed the French village of Oradour-sur Glane, killing all 642 of its inhabitants.

² Herbert Wehner was a prominent SPD politician.

³ *Frühschoppen* (Brunch) is a German TV news show.

⁴ Walter Becher, a former Nazi, worked his way through a number of extreme right-wing parties in the postwar period before settling into the CSU.

⁵ Heinz Kühn (SPD) was, in 1977, the president of North Rhine-Westphalia.

⁶ *Panorama* is a German TV news program.

⁷ Golo Mann was a German historian and philosopher.

⁸ The *Maßnahmestaat* (literally: state of measures) is a term usually applied to the Nazi state. It has no adequate translation into English and is commonly used in its German form. See William Treharne Jones, “Germany: Prospects for a Nationalist Revival,” in *International Affairs*, Royal Institute of International Affairs 46, no. 2 (April 1970): 316-322.

Strategic Thoughts

In the Front Paper we state that the revolutionary strategy is the strategy against their strategy. With this we have proceeded forcefully, basing ourselves on our own situation, and on that which has characterized it since '77: the military offensive from which imperialism hopes to emerge as a world system.

It is a definition of fundamental importance, because war—the concept upon which our reality is based—is a concept that every revolutionary movement requires in order to be able to struggle. “War is the key,” Andreas once said in this regard—the key to arriving at a practical perspective, as is the case now—yes, historically, we really are at the highest stage of imperialism—the key to finding a path to social revolution. As such, it is the way we can struggle against the conditions we face.

We say that proletarian internationalism—the subjective connection between existing combatants and the strategy for those who collectively and consciously take up the goal of worldwide liberation and who oppose the imperialist project to establish global fascism—is the way those who desire a final fundamental revolution and prefigure this and make it concrete through attacks, advance to destroy and wear down the system in every sector, together in a front. That is the strategic goal and the political objective that determines our practice; internationally and authentically, on the basis of the specific experience and function of the metropolitan guerilla.

The RAF’s struggle was always based on both the global balance of power and the conflict in the metropole. The war is not just about escalating things in the most developed sectors; rather it is the reality of the entire imperialist system, and will be until victory. For us it is a question of revolutionary warfare and how we can bring it to a level that is powerful

enough to actually bring this system to its breaking point: as international class war in the form of a protracted struggle.

The goal determines the brutality with which imperialism conducts its war on every level and all fronts. They see it as the decisive battle, because, following the breach opened by Vietnam, they felt that the only way to secure their power would be to completely eliminate all sources of antagonism—the guerilla, the liberation movements, the states that have achieved national liberation, and eventually the socialist states in the East. We are now midway through that phase. They are launching attacks everywhere: stationing missiles and waging war against the guerilla in Western Europe, attempting to stamp out the Palestinian revolution, Grenada, El Salvador, the bloody wars against Nicaragua, Mozambique, Angola, and Cambodia.

They have not yet completed their unification into a homogenous counterrevolutionary bloc—as they must if they are to politically survive the military offensive—nor is there any guarantee that they will. However, it is also true that the revolutionary struggles, facing different conditions and having achieved different levels of development, have already felt the effects of the offensive meant to prevent them from achieving their goals. The *New Jersey*¹ carried out the heaviest bombing since the Vietnam War in an effort to secure an American victory. Following this attack, an American official said the objective was to make Lebanon look like a lunar landscape. To do this, they withdrew from El Salvador, where they had recently set up base with the objective of crushing the civilian population and isolating the guerilla. The entire machine, which is constantly attempting to perfect this extermination policy, reaches its limit at the boundary established by simultaneous struggles and a balance of power that, as a result, is constantly shifting. The smooth unfolding of their power project is shattered by this dialectical reality.

The conditions of struggle in each sector have a direct impact on all of

the other sectors, because the conflict has fundamentally changed. Vietnam won. The guerilla has politically implanted itself in Western Europe. Developments in the Middle East have taken on new and more powerful dimensions as part of the broader Arab revolution. In Latin America—where for ten years they installed military dictators everywhere, because the guerilla had a mass base—they are now confronted with new struggles and with people who will no longer accept easy solutions, who show no fear in the face of fascism, because the experience of fascism has shaped their resistance. And the Nicaraguan revolution broke the grip of reaction throughout the continent. Nothing is dead and gone. Fifteen years ago the Tupamaros explained how they had drawn on Che's experience to develop the urban guerilla concept, and now two years ago Salvador Carpio² made it clear that the FMLN had learned from the Tupamaros' struggle and built upon what they had learned. There is no single international strategy, but there is a learning process based on the different experiences and political developments, and it is clear that in their perspectives and relationships the combatants see every attack as a practical building block in a strategy to open up new possibilities.

The military strategy is now the unifying factor and the basis for imperialist restructuring. They are pushing Western Europe and Japan to the forefront, because they need a unified system for their global offensive. That was a lesson they learned from Vietnam, and they are now making the connection: wars of aggression and intervention have ramifications for their own society—they serve to mobilize people. There is no place left where they have any hope of legitimacy or support. The formation of the unified system depends on their keeping the “political costs” under control, creating legitimacy based solely on the military strength of the bloc as a whole, and confronting their own society with this power. That is why the invasion of Grenada followed a request from the Caribbean states, why the NATO intervention in Lebanon took place under the rubric of

“multinational peacekeeping,” and why right to the end Weinberger³ tried to involve ten different states in order to avoid a troop withdrawal. What they hope to achieve is a flexible structure of military commandos in the core imperialist states—the United States, the FRG, Great Britain, France, and Japan—that can tailor its response to the style and requirements of the regional states concerned. The German Association for Foreign Policy,⁴ which produces studies in association with the Office of the Federal Chancellor,⁵ the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Defense, demanded this at the beginning of ‘81. Board members range from Stoltenberg, Weizsäcker, and Schmidt⁶ to Zahn, Beitz, and Vetter,⁷ all of whom—industry, political parties, and trade unions—are concerned with making the necessary internal preparations. With the stationing of missiles, the formation of the French and British RDF⁸ units, and the integration of Japan into NATO’s military strategy, the military core has come together.

For them, the offensive has thus become a decisive battle, and the reformist version—social democracy and covert warfare—is unfolding on all levels. The SPD’s ambitious project to institutionally bury all antagonism has not succeeded in any way; not internally between the state and society, and not internationally. Having promised to guarantee the internal stability of Model Germany by nationalizing the conflict between capital and labor (concerted action, intergroup mediation, the trade unions as equal members of economic associations), they found themselves confronted not only with an economic crisis, but also with the politics of class struggle—a result of the effects the national liberation struggles had on the metropole. In June ‘68, Schiller⁹ congratulated the government and business for the collaboration between the state, industry, and the trade unions that had prevented “any social conflict from spreading to the workforce in the FRG, as occurred in France.” They thought that with Brandt and the amnesty they had succeeded in depoliticizing the working class and reintegrating the students who had been criminalized, bringing

them back into the orbit of the state.¹⁰ But the politicization achieved by the front's struggle was stronger than that.

Algeria, Vietnam, South Yemen, Che, and the Tupamaros reestablished something that had been declared long dead in the metropole: a new internationalist consciousness and with it a perspective for struggle here—a struggle in a front with them. Later Sartre would call it the decisive political discovery in the West, and that was true. And so the armed struggle began in Germany, and under different conditions in Italy. Since that time, the social revolution has been taken up as part of the objective pursued by the movements for national autonomy, such as ETA and the IRA.

More than anything, the first RAF action threatened the SPD's institutional strategy for domestic peace, and with it the political preconditions for the smooth integration of the West European states. For this reason, as well as the fact that reformist politics in this state have only a very narrow field of maneuver, to get back on track the antagonism had to be liquidated—that is why the reaction against us sought to exterminate us. This contradiction eventually broke the SPD's back. They couldn't resolve it. The only way they could have had victory over the guerilla would have been if we had given up the struggle. The confrontation with revolutionary politics made the reintegration and depoliticization of the '68 left irrelevant. It exposed the SPD's institutional strategy for what it was: war tailored to the metropole. It was not Model Germany as the most advanced form of imperialist rule that was exported, but rather the brutality of the national security state. In Italy this is known as "Germanization," and it is what the SPD state has been known for around the world since '77—revolutionaries know Germany as imperialism's most advanced tactical position, while reactionaries know it as the state with the most modern and pervasive repressive machinery. It is no longer the Israelis who are training anti-guerilla units everywhere, but instructors from the GSG—from Fort Bragg to Thailand. Their plan to impose peace along the North-South front

line—using money and counterinsurgency—had just as little success in masking the contradictions. The hunger and hardship are too great and the gap between rich and poor is too wide and too deep. Last year, when Kreisky¹¹ proposed a new Marshall Plan like the one after ‘45, Shultz¹² responded that he was naïve, because the conditions that had existed in devastated Europe were in no way comparable to the poverty in the poor countries.

The U.S. magazine *Foreign Policy*¹³ wrote that the imperialist solution to the crisis—i.e., neverending debt and dependency on the political dictates of the core states—has set the development of entire continents back forty or fifty years. Brandt’s North-South Commission no longer talks about a global partnership or a new world economic order to harmonize conflicting interests, but about the need to rescue the banking system. There is nothing left to harmonize between the different parties, because it is clear there can be no new world economic order without a worldwide revolution. There is only one solution to the economic crisis, a political solution: the destruction of the system of hunger and despair, repression and exploitation. In the long run social democratic intervention has been unable to establish a foothold anywhere, no matter what form it has taken—Bahr’s¹⁴ attempt in ‘76 to use cash payments to shift the liberation movements away from military struggle, or the attempt to use the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*¹⁵ to build up figures who could emerge as the “democratic opposition” following a successful revolution, or else the pressure brought to bear on the new national states, i.e. financial aid in exchange for an anticommunist foreign policy. Their ideology was shattered by the reality of war. The conflict has spread too far.

They also failed on the East-West front line. The United States experienced national revolutions in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa in the sixties, and a quick victory against the USSR ceased to be possible because they too had the atom bomb, forcing another shift in U.S.

foreign policy. At first the objective was to defeat the liberation wars in order to get a free hand with which to force the USSR into a conventional war that would remain below the atomic threshold, so as not to provoke a counterattack. This gave rise to the policy of détente, and here the SPD was important. It was the SPD's job to implement the new line and to accept the borders established in '45, a line that the CDU at that time could neither enforce within their own party nor—after twenty years of revanchism—credibly present to the socialist states. It was intended to force the USSR between a rock and a hard place: a policy of coexistence and a lull in the arms race in exchange for an end to their support for the liberation movements, combined with the hope that the market, consumption, and propaganda would wear down the socialist states from the inside, gradually destabilizing them politically. That didn't work either. Most importantly, they didn't develop anything capable of destroying the Vietnamese revolution. Vietnam became the example of revolutionary war, protracted war, and the continuity of attacks through setbacks and victories.

Since Vietnam, counterinsurgency strategists have been saying that the most important thing is the struggle against consciousness, because it is the strength of the people's consciousness that is decisive for victory in a protracted war, not the weapons. It is the method that works for us, because it is the process that advances the revolutionary cause and makes its necessity and reality both evident and understandable. That has been the objective of all national liberation struggles, and it can already be seen in the experiences of the West European guerilla as well.

Because they know that they have always lost, and must always lose, this struggle for consciousness against the liberation movements, the current military strategy accepts this as a fact and relies on the atomic blitzkrieg. The overall arms buildup is meant to gain absolute military superiority over the USSR. Given that they can no longer intervene in the USSR

without provoking a nuclear attack, they must neutralize its capacity to oppose them. That is what is behind the “global war on many fronts” that Weinberger talks about, the medium-range missiles stationed here, and the RDF. They are meant to quickly bring things to a head. That is the nature of the conflict. Because a political victory is no longer possible for imperialism, the only option left is a short total war.

Revolutionary war is a qualitative concept. It not only addresses the conflicts occurring on different levels, but demands a conscious decision in its favor, a conscious decision in favor of proletarianization and the abolition of private property. We’re not struggling with some abstract understanding of imperialism, as if it were something with no connection to our lives: we’re struggling because we know what it is, because through the rupture each of us has experienced its depths of destruction and alienation. Our struggle is based on an understanding of the system that is rooted in an awareness of our own situation, and this is the basis of our desire for liberation—because the fact that the metropole is ripe for revolution is experienced on a personal level: one cannot live in a system where one’s existence is based on extermination, where every idea and any humanity can only be asserted violently, through revolution. And we base our attacks on an analysis of the conditions here: the imperialist center, the continuity of German imperialism since ‘45 in reactionary alliance with the preeminent capitalist power today, and the formation of an imperialist bloc and a unified military commando.

In recent years there has been a tendency on the left here to generate different lines based on concepts like anti-imperialism, internationalism, and social revolution. But given that they address the same thing, these concepts cannot be placed in contradiction to one another—otherwise they become a caricature of themselves: internationalism reduced to appeals for solidarity with revolution somewhere else, so the question of whether people want revolution for themselves doesn’t raise its ugly head;

anti-imperialism as research into imperialism, where the abstractions fail to address the practical question of how to resist it; social revolution as a synonym for social questions that must be addressed to meet people's needs, which can only end in reformism so long as the key question is ignored, namely what power relations need to be destroyed for people around the world to have their needs met. This approach only blocks any learning process or practice that could lead to a united attack.

The goal of the front in the metropole is internationalist: liberation—social revolution and anti-imperialism based on an antagonistic relationship to the power structure.

The RAF developed its attacks along both these front lines: against the internal power structure, the imperialist state, and against its bulwark, the U.S. military apparatus. That was our fundamental starting point: the fact that the revolutionary process could only be carried out using antagonistic power if our strategic goal took the unified nature of the imperialist system into account—the social revolution as a world revolution. If the system is not completely destroyed, the social revolution cannot pursue its needs or goals in any sector. Certainly not in the metropole. Here, nobody seems to grasp that.

We wanted to make that concrete in '77, because it was the practical point at which the two coincided and their strategic identity became clear. They converged inasmuch as the question of power posed by the FRG state forced the entire system to respond and mobilize. At that point and for the first time, they openly based their actions and decisions on the reality of the international class war, because by attacking this state we also attacked its function within the greater imperialist project, which is to establish the necessary conditions here in Western Europe for them to carry out their global offensive—and because in order to act at this level they must do so as a unified system.

Their decision as an alliance not to engage in the prisoner exchange was

a strategic decision that touched upon the basic nature of their military project: the question of whether they could pull it off here. For them it was a question of doing whatever was necessary to preserve the first phase of West European unification that had taken place prior to '77—the integration of police forces and the centralization of counterinsurgency—because this is the internal precondition for the second phase, the arming and shaping of the West European states as centers for war.

A victory for the guerilla in the FRG, the country that has led this process and pushed it forward, would have posed some basic questions. It would have fundamentally altered the balance of power here and everywhere. So Schmidt got to the point where he had to unleash the fascism of the metropole both at home and abroad, using it to set the next phase in motion. In London, on October 28, ten days after Stammheim and Mogadishu, he demanded that gaps in the missile system be closed and that the new American medium-range missiles be stationed in Western Europe.

It was the overall situation that determined the intensity of the confrontation in '77, as well as its dimensions: every step of the way things were coordinated with Carter, Giscard,¹⁶ and Callaghan,¹⁷ Schmidt's source for every word that entered the federal government's official documents; the U.S. State Department's Crisis Management Team remained on duty in Bonn the entire time; threats were made against the countries that the prisoners had identified as potentially willing to receive them; eventually the imperialist actions were integrated to enable the GSG-9 to act against the Palestinian commando in Mogadishu.

Because it was a strategic decision made at the level of the entire system, the interest of West German businessmen in saving one of their own was also overruled. Schmidt's job was to negotiate domestic priorities with business and the opposition. The practical expression of this was that he involved Zahn and Brauchitsch¹⁸ in the Crisis Management Team,

integrating them directly at the decision-making level. Such concerted action also led to Strauß's trip to Saudi Arabia, where he publicly promised the Saudis Flick Leopards¹⁹ to be used against Somalia. Somalia was the country that, at that point, had publicly said they would take in the prisoners and had thus exposed Wischnewski's lies. This came out when, much later, the Saudis asked where the Leopards were, and neither Schmidt nor Kohl²⁰ could push the issue by the pro-Israel lobby in parliament. Schleyer naturally placed his complete trust in Brauchitsch, as his letter proves. This was a given, because more or less all of the important figures in Bonn were caught up in these companies' political nets, as he well knew. All of that was nothing but an afterthought, and any commitment the business world had to him was never more than show. In the phase we are now in, it is not the interests of the different factions that are decisive, but those of the entire system. Ponto's successor Friderichs²¹ said, "It is only a problem if it affects the material core"—meaning, not when it affects just one or two of their most important people, but only when the functioning of the most central aspects of their power structure is threatened—because then the whole machine will be disrupted.

Similarly, Schmidt before parliament: "If either Herr Kohl or I ever found ourselves in a similar situation, we would be condemned to make the same sacrifice, as everyone here in the house knows." Elsewhere, Schmidt has said that this situation set the standard and that after '77 no NATO country could backtrack from that decision. With '77 it became a doctrine for Western Europe, as Kissinger had already declared it to be in '74. It has nothing to do with strength. The entire hard line comes from their need to do everything they can to prevent a revolutionary breakthrough in the metropole. Countering this possibility and using the state of emergency laws against the guerilla—as they did here in '77, and in Italy in '78 and '82²²—strikes them as the lesser of two evils. The real problem is not the prisoners being freed, it is that freeing them would

mean acknowledging the revolutionary process in the metropole as a political fact. Kupperman,²³ who is an advisor for emergency planning and fighting terrorism at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, told an antiterrorism conference in Hamburg shortly after the Schleyer action, “I think that what the question of negotiations involves and how it unfolds at a political level requires that we be incredibly firm, at least from a strategic point of view. Governments can’t react in such a way that they surrender their sovereignty to a swarm of bees, which is what terrorists are when compared to the armed state.”

But that is completely relative, because it always depends on what the concrete conditions are, that is to say, how relevant an action is and how long it lasts, what the action can hope to mobilize and what friction and long-term political effect it creates. The decisive aspect of an action, which is not limited to the military attack, is what new level of action it will make possible; this begins with and develops out of the question of power. So, determining the next step on the basis of the new political quality—not in the military sense, but rather overall, in anticipation of a new phase—is the only way a military attack can have political significance. That is the most important lesson we have drawn from the Schleyer action.

Because the military strategy has become the linchpin, politics are now dead—or perhaps they have achieved their “pure expression.” Stümper²⁴ has already said that security policy has become survival policy for the imperialist states. The national security state is the form this survival policy takes internally: it is a preventive reaction based on the global intensification of the tensions between imperialism and revolution—against “the national and international struggle of this decade” (Boge²⁵), against “the epochal upheaval” (Stumper), against the possibility of “international civil war.” (Geißler²⁶)

Against the backdrop of world revolution, they are formulating their concept of a reactionary world state. When Maihofer spoke some years ago

about the global domestic policy and global society, where there were no revolutionaries, just criminals, and Rebmann spoke of the coming international legislation designed to prosecute the liberation movements, that wasn't simply their fantasy of a Thousand Year Imperialist Reich; it has a real, uncompromising basis. A West European strategy, a European BKA, and a NATO foreign policy "that speaks with one voice" are to be the legs on which it will stand. It is part and parcel of the overall offensive, the cutting edge of which is the military strategy. It also represents the sordid nature of reformists: they deal with imperialist war as if it were insane and irrational, reducing it to an incomprehensible and surreal apocalypse, because they really don't want it—they don't want to be blown away—but they want the struggle against it even less. That is not really irrational. It has an elementary and precise goal, to destroy the worldwide antagonism, while ensuring one's personal survival. And whether or not that is unrealistic can only be answered through struggle. It is, in any event, an open question at this point, and it is the key question at the heart of the conflict today. The West European guerilla is simultaneously facing complex strategic possibilities and especially difficult conditions. We face a tremendously intense military presence with unimaginable firepower at its disposal, a heavily armed police apparatus which is attempting to dominate the entire society, a well-integrated media etc.—and the fight starts from a situation of mass casualties and critical defeats for the revolutionary struggles. The proletariat here has always been confronted by two kinds of enemies: counterrevolution, war, and fascism, on the one hand, and the different methods of social democracy, consumption, and the state, on the other. They get nothing out of any of this, but the history and experience of the metropole does however provide them with a school where they can learn everything they need to know to understand the enemy.

The West European guerilla groups began their struggles under different conditions and with different perspectives. Over the past fifteen years, they have moved closer to each other as a result of a practical process of

learning from developments and from each other. “An identity across differences,” Jan once called it, and that must be the case now if we hope to make this phase the second phase for the guerilla in the metropole and establish the strategy in the metropole as the West European strategy that underlies every step we take.

Brigitte Mohnhaupt
Stammheim, December 4, 1984

¹ The U.S. battleship *New Jersey* bombarded Beirut in 1983.

² “Marcel” Salvador Cayetano Carpio was a cofounder of the FPL (*Fuerzas Populares de Liberación*—Popular Forces for Liberation), the largest of the five guerilla groups that made up the FMLN in El Salvador.

³ Caspar Weinberger was, at the time, secretary of defense for the Republican Reagan administration in the United States.

⁴ *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*.

⁵ *Bundeskanzleramt*.

⁶ Gerhard Stoltenberg (CDU) was federal minister of defense from 1982 until 1989. Richard von Weizsäcker (CDU) was president from 1984 until 1994.

⁷ At the time, Joachim Zahn (CDU) was the chairman of Mercedes-Benz. Berthold Beitz was a prominent industrialist in the mining sector and a member of the German Olympic Committee. Heinz Oskar Vetter (SPD) was chairman of the *Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* (German Association of Trade Unions).

⁸ Rapid Deployment Forces are specialized military units that receive advanced training and armaments.

⁹ Karl Schiller (SPD) was federal finance minister from 1966 until 1972, and federal minister of finance in 1971 and 1972.

¹⁰ Willy Brandt was elected chancellor as part of the first Social-Liberal coalition, in 1969; in 1970 the government decreed an amnesty for those arrested for minor infractions in the context of the APO; 5,868 people were affected. (Jutta Ditfurth, *Ulrike*

Meinhof: Die Biographie [Berlin: Ullstein, 2007], 266.) See also Moncourt and Smith Vol. 1, 41-42, 44.

¹¹ Bruno Kreisky was, at this time, the chairman of the SPÖ (Austrian Social Democratic Party) and the chancellor of Austria.

¹² George Shultz was, at this time, the U.S. secretary of state.

¹³ *Foreign Policy* is the official organ of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think tank based in Washington, DC.

¹⁴ Egon Bahr (SPD) was, at that time, minister for economic cooperation and development. Prior to this, he is credited with having crafted Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.

¹⁵ The *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung* (Friedrich Ebert Endowment) is a German social democratic think tank and charity organization.

¹⁶ Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the president of France in 1977.

¹⁷ James Callaghan, the prime minister of Great Britain in 1977.

¹⁸ Eberhard von Brauchitsch was, at the time, the general business manager of the Flick Corporation, one of Germany's key steel-producing companies.

¹⁹ Leopards are a kind of military tank.

²⁰ Helmut Kohl (CDU) was the leader of the opposition in 1977. He had previously been president and by the time of this statement had been elected chancellor.

²¹ Hans Friderichs (FDP) was a former finance minister and, at the time, the president of the Dresdner Bank, having replaced Ponto after he was assassinated by the RAF in 1977.

²² On March 16, 1978, the Red Brigades kidnapped Italy's Christian Democratic leader and former prime minister Aldo Moro, demanding the release of imprisoned members of their organization. The government refused to negotiate, and, after 55 days, the Red Brigades executed Moro. On December 17, 1981, the Red Brigades kidnapped U.S. General James Lee Dozier. He was freed by a NOCS (Italian counterinsurgency) unit 42 days later, on January 28, 1982. Besides a paramilitary response, the Italian state also implemented a judicial counterinsurgency assault, which took form as a law named after Minister of Internal Affairs Francesco Cossiga, "introducing temporary [provisional] detention in police custody, extending search powers without a mandate from the competent judge, further increasing the length of preventative imprisonment, and

introducing the criminal offence of subversive association. The Cossiga law also introduced sentencing discounts for ‘terrorists’ who choose to cooperate; this was the first special law on ‘repentance’ that entered the Italian legal order.” Italo di Sabato (Osservatorio sulla Repressione), “Italy: The never-ending emergency,” *Statewatch Bulletin* 19, no. 1, January-March 2009.

²³ Robert Kupperman was a leading U.S. counterinsurgency expert. After leaving the government he worked for the Center for Strategic and International Studies until his death in 2006, authoring several books on “terrorism.”

²⁴ From 1971 to 1990 Alfred Stümper was the superintendent of police for the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg.

²⁵ From 1981 to 1990 Heinrich Boge was the president of the BKA.

²⁶ From 1982 to 1985 Heiner Geißler was the general secretary of the CDU.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Conclusions of the Third Russell Tribunal

The Third Russell Tribunal on Human Rights in West Germany completed its work with a Second Session held in Cologne on January 3-9 1979. Its judgement on questions of Censorship, the Rights of Defence and the activities of the domestic secret service, the Verfassungsschutz, were presented at a press conference in Bonn on January 10.

PREAMBLE

The primary characteristic of a free democracy is the existence of an unrestrained exchange of information and ideas, regardless of the nature or popularity of the latter. The history of the past 200 years teaches that democracy thrives on popular vigilance. Such a society has unlimited potential for change and growth in conformity with mankind's continuously evolving understanding of itself and the world in which it lives, subject only to one restriction: democratic means.

The way a society organizes its restrictive apparatus determines the degree of freedom in a given society. This is especially true for the organization of the police in general, and the secret services. An additional indicator of the freedom in a society is the state of criminal justice, which is an exclusive concern of the state. Because criminal laws have traditionally been tools of repression and because successful prosecution results in a deprivation of a person's liberty, every free society requires that the criminal laws be applied universally, impartially and publicly.

These principles are reflected in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany:

- All State Authority emanates from the people—*Art. 20(2)*
- The dignity of man shall be inviolable—*Art. 1(1)*
- The Liberty of the individual shall be inviolable. These rights may only be encroached upon pursuant to law—*Art. 2(2)*
- All persons shall be equal before the law—*Art. 3(1)*
- Everyone shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinion... there shall be no censorship—*Art. 5(1)*

It is axiomatic that any effort, particularly by government, to restrict or inhibit public debate or to further strengthen the power of the state vis-à-

vis the accused in a criminal case is antithetical to the notion of a free and democratic society.

Because of the leadership role of the Federal Republic of Germany and the influence its policies have on governments in other countries in Western Europe and elsewhere, any signs that there is, within the Federal Republic, a slippage from a liberal democratic state to a more authoritarian or repressive country, should be of concern to us all.

CENSORSHIP

Conclusions

The practices of censorship described below constitute, among other things, the objective conditions to which individuals and groups react in anticipation, by exercising self-censorship.

In this respect, self-censorship is not at all an overreaction of some intimidated people. It is rather the appropriate reaction, to measures of censorship, of those who wish to keep their jobs, gain promotion, or simply find employment.

As measures of censorship threaten to narrow increasingly the range of officially and semi-officially permitted expression of opinion, the danger of a further division of society emerges. The normal, dominant part conforms. The minorities are marginalized. In view of this situation, it is not surprising that escapist responses are ever more frequent, particularly in the younger generation, ranging from drug addicts, who in their helplessness exercise terror against themselves, to those who take refuge in terrorist acts against others. The social background of this escapism can be clearly defined. Censorship has an essential part in it.



If one is talking about censorship, this normally means encroachment upon the freedom to express oneself in speech and in writing, and to divulge one's opinion in print. But there are two sides of censorship: a positive and a negative one. A positive censorship, which serves to protect minorities from discrimination, is not at all directed against democracy; rather, it serves to create and maintain it. Negative censorship, however, consists in measures, by public and private bodies, which drastically curtail the right of freedom of expression, especially with respect to minorities, and render them powerless vis-à-vis powerful authorities.

This shows that censorship in the negative sense of the word aims at preventing the criticism which groups and individuals of all kinds must be allowed to exercise among each other.

To condemn censorship is not to condemn criticism. We must rather attack the authorities who prevent those in a less powerful position expressing their opinion.

There is no censorship—or so it is stated on the basic law. And indeed, there is no official instance of censorship in the Federal Republic. Nevertheless, censorship is daily exercised in many areas.

An important tool of the state in practicing this unofficial censorship is the new laws enacted in the 1970s, for instance para. 88a and para. 130a of the criminal code, which were intended to serve “public order”, but in fact allow even scientific and literary statements about violence to be considered criminal. But not only are these recently enacted laws an invitation to abuse by the state. An additional way to suppress is based on a special German characteristic: holding the state to be the first and supreme individual person, who is permanently sensitive and vulnerable to slander (para. 90a of the criminal code). Other paragraphs of the criminal code, which primarily threaten to penalize use of journalistic freedoms, have a similar function of suppressing criticism (see para. 353c of the criminal code).

FACTS

Censorship is practised in the following manner:

1. In the sphere of technical media—through political influence exercised by the supervisory boards, which have been conceived for the purpose of control and not for actual influence over the programmes themselves. In this way, the broadcasting law, which defines the technical media as “institutions under public law”, intending to hand responsibility over to the citizens, has been weakened.
2. In the sphere of public libraries—pressure is exerted by the authorities concerning the purchase of books, the placing of books on the shelves to which the public has access, employment policies and control of reading habits.
3. in the sphere of the theatre—fluence is exercised by local and state (*Länder*) authorities on the repertoires of municipal and state theatre. Children’s and youth theatres are especially afflicted, because as independent groups they often have no facilities of their own.
4. in the spheres of the press, book stores, universities, and critical art, e.g.—there are tendencies to attack art if it is more than “just” art; to restrict the freedoms of scientific research, of teaching and learning if social activity does not fit the normal pattern; to bury publishing houses and book stores in law suits and searches, to the extent of endangering their economic existence, merely because they had published and distributed unfavoured books; to threaten journalists with punishment for passing on information which they had obtained in a quite legal manner; etc., etc.

RIGHTS OF DEFENCE

Conclusions

It is the Jury's opinion that recently enacted laws and measures adopted in connection with the cases of alleged terrorism described in some detail under the heading "facts" constitute a serious threat to human rights. The Jury finds that there are intrusions into the relationship between attorneys and clients, whose rights of comprehensive and sufficient defence by a defender of choice must never be violated. There are encroachments upon defendants' rights to a full hearing by the court, and in some cases detention conditions exist which more likely result in physical injury or psychological deterioration, thus violating the defendant's right to a fair trial and humane treatment. Since there is a danger of extension to other criminal proceedings there is also a possible danger to each individual citizen of the Federal Republic.

Facts

An effective defence is hindered by measures which presume a general suspicion of complicity between the attorney and his client. We list a few of these measures:

1. By controlling the correspondence, by frequent house searches and confiscation of defence files, and by setting up glass partitions for prison conversations, the absolutely essential trust and confidentiality of communication between attorney and his client is hampered in so-called terrorist trials. There are examples in which, through manipulation of the charge, these restrictions are extended to other trials with a political background.
2. A zealous defence which is required by law is endangered, as in some cases defence attorneys were excluded from the trials because they had strongly supported their client's interests regarding the conditions of detention, which was interpreted by the courts as complicity with the accused. Another danger results from the fact that criminal and court of honour proceedings were instituted against defence counsellors because of vigorous argumentation on behalf of their clients in general.
3. Defence counsellors in so-called terrorist trials have to put up with degrading body cavity searches; upon their refusal to submit, they are charged substantial sums for "costs".
4. In several cases the telephones of defence lawyers were intercepted and confidential conversations between attorney and client were monitored by hidden microphones.
5. On account of the so-called Contact Ban Law, contact between the defendant and his attorney may be interrupted for an unlimited period of time, or even prevented from the very beginning. On the

other hand, the prosecution is allowed to see and question the prisoner practically at any time. By these measures an effective defence can be not only impeded but even made completely impossible.

Furthermore, the prohibition of collective defence constitutes a serious impediment for an effective representation of the defendants. An attorney who has represented one member of an alleged criminal group is not permitted to represent another alleged member of the same group in a subsequent trial; although prosecutors are permitted to gain a growing expertise by prosecuting an unlimited number of accused persons.

Certain accused persons, alleged to be members of a terrorist organization, are subject to imposition of total isolation and sensory deprivation, which results in serious physical and psychological damage. We call your attention to the evaluation of such a treatment, from a report by Amnesty International, dating from 1973:

"Every investigative procedure which has as purpose or consequence to cause a deterioration or malfunction of the mental processes of a human being is just as heavy an attack on the inherent dignity of the person as the more traditional physical techniques of torture."

Accused persons who are treated in this manner, and therefore are not fit to stand trial, find that the proceedings continue in their absence. This is based on the rationalization that defendants themselves are responsible for the (detention) conditions they are subjected to. This practice is a violation of the defendant's right to legal hearing.

THE DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (VERFASSUNGSSCHUTZ)

Conclusions

In any free democracy the rights of individuals or groups of citizens are threatened by the existence of a domestic secret service. In the FGR this threat is substantial because of the installation by its domestic secret service, the *Verfassungsschutz*, of a vast network of information gathering, storage and dissemination.

Far from protecting the Constitution, the *Verfassungsschutz* today is the crucial component of a vast machine which, by a system of secret collection and distribution of information (and misinformation)—of which the individual has no knowledge and to which the individual has no access—has destroyed the livelihoods and reputations of innocent German citizens (and sometimes has caused them to be imprisoned) and threatens to exercise this power over the lives of countless others. In many cases the victims are those with no explicit political views, and in others, the people affected have done no more than exercise their democratic right to express individual political opinions.

The growth and practices of the *Verfassungsschutz* are totally out of proportion to any actual threat to the state. The *Verfassungsschutz* has its own momentum which not only is not controlled by Parliament but which actually defines the security needs of the state without adequate and efficient Parliamentary control. Indeed, the *Verfassungsschutz* itself constitutes the largest threat to a free democracy because it can become a kind of “secret” government.

Some Salient Facts

1. According to the statute regulating the *Verfassungsschutz*, the task of the Federal and State (*Länder*) Authorities for *Verfassungsschutz* is to “collect and evaluate intelligence, news and other material concerning efforts which aim at an abolition, change or infringement of the

Constitutional order of the Federal German Republic or in one of the states, or at an illegal encroachment on the work of members of Constitutional organs and institutions of the FGR or a state”.

2. Secrecy surrounds the *Verfassungsschutz*, thereby ensuring that much information about it is limited to little more than approximations. In the 10 years 1969-1978, the budget of the *Verfassungsschutz* increased more than three-fold from 29.9 million DM to over 100 million.
3. By 1975 the *Verfassungsschutz* had created computerized files on over 2 million citizens of the FGR and an additional 190,000 in West Berlin, where these files represented 10 per cent of the population.
4. In 1972 the *Verfassungsschutz* installed an integrated system to collect information (NADIS) which is also at the disposal of the Federal Office of Investigation (BKA), the Foreign Intelligence Service (BND) and the Military Counter-Intelligence Service (MAD). This latter service has stored information on more than 3 million citizens. The *Verfassungsschutz* also exchanges information with other bodies, and has direct access to the common police information system (INPOL), which is linked to NADIS. INPOL includes guides to all sources of information available. The *Verfassungsschutz* also has access to the computerized records of universities, public libraries, the personnel departments of the public services and governments of the state (*Länder*), among others. INPOL receives 6 million requests a month for information.
5. The *Verfassungsschutz* exchanges information with foreign intelligence organizations, including those of severely repressive dictatorships, thereby ensuring that many citizens and foreigners live their entire lives dominated by fear.
6. The *Verfassungsschutz* exercises a system of classification of citizens, who may be “authoritatively” defined as enemies of the state without

any opportunity afforded to challenge such a description.

7. The nominal accountability of the *Verfassungsschutz* to the Federal Interior Minister excludes popular accountability. An arrangement also exists which ensures that the *Verfassungsschutz* by-passes Parliament.
8. The *Verfassungsschutz* has developed a system of interlocking computerized information, shared with many organs of the state including police organizations, thereby partially circumventing the restriction that the *Verfassungsschutz* should not possess police powers. In this way, there is a tendency for the separation of powers, not only between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, but also inside the executive and its different branches, to be modified in the direction of a unified structure of power.

THE VERDICT OF THE TRIBUNAL

At the conclusion of the public session members of the Tribunal voted by secret ballot on the following eight questions, concerning the subject matter of the second session. Votes cast are shown below each question. The council of German members of the Tribunal (Beirat) did not vote.

Censorship

1. Are there laws in the Federal German Republic which unconstitutionally restrict the free expression of opinions in the political field?

Yes: 12 No: Nil Abstentions: 1 Insufficient evidence: nil

2. Has the application of forms of censorship in practice directly infringed the rights of free speech in the Federal German Republic?

Yes: 12 No: Nil Abstentions: 1 Insufficient evidence: nil

3. Is there evidence of an overall trend towards greater censorship in the Federal German Republic which endangers the right of free expression of all kinds?

Yes: 7 No: 5 Abstentions: 1 Insufficient evidence: nil

Rights of the defence

4. Does the *Kontaktsperregesetz* infringe upon the right of defence?

Yes: 12 No: Nil Abstentions: 1 Insufficient evidence: Nil

5. Are there any other interventions into the relationship between attorney and client which violate the right of the defendant to comprehensive and sufficient defence by an attorney of his choice?

Yes: 12 No: Nil Abstentions: 1 Insufficient evidence: Nil

6. Has the continuation of trials without the defendants, in some cases, violated their constitutional right to a fair and public hearing?

Yes: 12 No: Nil Abstentions: 1 Insufficient evidence: Nil

7. Are there certain cases of prison conditions in the Federal German Republic, e.g. social and sensory deprivation, which are apt to cause a physical or psychological deterioration or destruction of the personality of the accused?

Yes: 12 No: Nil Abstentions: 1 Insufficient evidence: Nil

Verfassungsschutz (Domestic Intelligence Service)

8. Are the practices of the *Verfassungsschutz* in the Federal German Republic consistent with the legitimate role of government in a free democracy?

Yes: 1 No: 11 Abstentions: 1 Insufficient evidence: nil

Excerpt from Russell Tribunal III, *Censorship, Legal Defense and the Domestic Intelligence Service in West Germany* (Nottingham: Bertrand Russell Peace foundation, 1979), 1-7.

APPENDIX II

Boock's Lies

At the time this statement was issued, Peter-Jürgen Boock had never been more popular with the liberal intelligentsia. In 1985 former SDS leader Peter Schneider coauthored a book with him examining the armed experience; the next year, following a legal appeal backed by many progressives, his sentence was reduced to a single life term. During this period Boock continued to protest his innocence of the various charges for which he had been convicted, while still not testifying against his former comrades. (His first testimony in this regard would come in the early 1990s.) Boock's celebrity took a somewhat excruciating twist in 1988 when he accepted 20,000 DM as a donation to his legal appeal from the brothers of liberal diplomat Gerold von Braunmühl, whom the RAF had assassinated in 1986. In 1992 he would finally admit that—contrary to what he had always insisted to his supporters—he had in fact been an active participant in the RAF's actions in 1977. He would only be released in 1998. (M. & S.)

We weren't going to say anything about Boock. The main point we want to make here is that he knowingly betrayed the group for months, wasting a significant amount of its energy and—after his lies were out in the open—preventing a reasonable resolution of the issues. It was always more important for us to clarify the conditions within the group—the subjective and political content—than to deal with Boock and the contributions he has been making to the anti-RAF smear campaign since 1981, and this allowed him to play his game for quite some time.

We are now going to present a few basic facts, as there is a serious lack of concrete information—information that we now realize could contribute to a more useful discussion. (A more complete report will be issued if necessary.)

Early on, Boock told the group—he told several individuals—a story about being examined by a doctor before he went underground and learning that he had intestinal cancer. As a result he only had a certain amount of time left to live.

Later, Boock would complain of, and was visibly in, extreme physical pain. The painkillers that he wanted at first were relatively easy to acquire. His pain got steadily worse. He doubled over from the cramps and screamed—at first every few days, then daily. Now it was a question of specific painkillers, which were hard to come by, especially for people in an underground organization. It was dangerous. A comrade found herself on her own, taken prisoner as a result, because she had to use an uncool prescription to try to get more dope for Boock.¹ He pressured people. He wanted larger and larger quantities to deal with “unbearable bouts of pain,” which inevitably made acquiring the drugs more risky.

We quickly considered the obvious options. We needed to organize a decent and safe hospice. By decent we mean a place that would allow Boock to remain in contact with the group and with doctors who understood the situation. And this obviously meant a place where the imperialist apparatus had no power. He didn’t want to be examined, because, he said, he only had a few months left to live and wanted to spend them with the people he had struggled alongside, and because even doctors who were comrades were bourgeois and objectified the ill.

At one point doctors came to the house, but were unable to examine him, though he did accept the painkillers they gave him. His greatest fear was to be examined, because then it would have been clear that he was healthy.

The situation got increasingly serious, and we were arranging—over Boock’s objections—for a hospice that met the necessary criteria. Nobody thought that his story was simply an invention; it was convincing, and it made sense. Eventually, everything was ready. Boock didn’t want his lies to

fall apart, so he had to make the trip. In transit through Yugoslavia, the four were arrested.² So now there were arrests the comrades had to deal with—they struggled desperately to convince the authorities that Boock was seriously ill and needed immediate medical attention. Now, there was no way left for him to avoid an examination, and it showed that Boock was completely healthy.

After being released the four went together to a safe country. One important thing that came out of this was the clarification. The issues were very simple: the lies that had cost the group so much energy and so many arrests, the reasons why Boock had lied, as well as his future relationship to the group. All of this would have to be clarified through further discussion.

He had got caught up in a form of politics in which he was always the “tough guy” and his cunning led him to make up stories and develop an all-encompassing political rationalization for his drug use; it was a dynamic in which he was a rat in a maze of consumption, drugs, lies, and the exploitation of his comrades. What had happened became increasingly clear with time.

The first question was how he and the group would carry on. This was at a time when we were clarifying the ‘77 actions, their effects, the errors, and what to do next—in other words, the overall development of a new phase of struggle and a more clear-headed focus on strategy and planning. Obviously no one was willing to work with him after everything that had happened, which meant we had to set up a safe life for him, a viable long-term living situation. That soon became clear.

There was one option, but Boock still had not decided what to do. Boock was only one factor in the overall clarification. In the following months, there was also the question of how to develop the next phase of struggle, and one after another, eight people decided to leave the group. The reasons and routes that led to these departures varied, and the desire to clarify matters always came in part from the individuals themselves, but

sometimes the initiative came from those who would later continue the politico-military project.

For those who wanted to leave, we sought a place that would be more than just a safe hideout, something that would offer much more of a life and a future. We found a good solution, and Boock could have chosen to accept it. This would have been possible, because the solidarity and the sense of responsibility within the group (and the political bonds) were more important than the personal and political differences about whether or not to continue the struggle here after '77. The group was soon deeply immersed in both the reflection and the practical steps required to carry on politically. At first, this was more focused on new concrete actions than on fancy conceptual formulations.

Soon, Boock was insisting that he wanted to return to Western Europe with us to continue the struggle. There were many discussions about this. He didn't want the exile we had arranged and overcame the group's resistance to the idea of continuing to work with him.

Boock conducted multiple self-criticisms to achieve his goal, and, most importantly, he rejected exile. We couldn't jam up the comrades there with a guy who absolutely didn't want to be there. That would have been a disgraceful solution. They were already finding his demands difficult to bear.

Eventually, we arranged for Boock to travel back to Western Europe and integrated him into a section of the new structure. It wasn't long before he began trying to acquire dope. That made it perfectly clear that a different decision was required, that we could no longer work together. Exile was the solution, and we weren't giving in this time. Boock saw that this was now a clear group decision and that we were organizing his trip. That was when he ran for it.

There was a reason he was so determined to return to Western Europe: the kind of drug consumption that is only possible in the metropole; and

ultimately his confidence in his own cunning, which made him think he could deal with life in the underground, and that should he ever be arrested he could simply continue to make deals on a new terrain thanks to Baum's offer at that time.³ This was the basis for the deal he tried to make with Rebmann, which proved that his cunning was nothing more than political idiocy. In this way, Boock eventually defected with the support of some public figures and everyone who wanted dirt on the RAF. That was the road that lay before him, and it is along that road that he has foraged ever since.

It is unclear whether or not Boock is connected to the state security apparatus, but it is obvious that he is managed—for journalistic purposes. Among the defectors, Boock holds a special place. In pursuing his charade, he has become morally bankrupt. That makes him particularly useful to state security propaganda. He is an empty vessel that can be filled with anything. His claim to fame in this regard: “Insider” (but not too far inside). Even a section of the left, with its consumerist and voyeuristic mentality, sits at home believing that there is much in Boock’s many stories that is true. But there isn’t. His story is a house of cards. It’s nothing more than his trip. With spite and projections he rejected everything in his own life in exchange for a pardon: this is what his cunning really amounts to.

The most important thing is the campaign he is engaging in. It always includes the tried and true model of the state security campaign; the campaign to politically and morally discredit the guerilla and all other decisive efforts for liberation in the metropole. Boock’s fabrications: an underdog’s special relationship with the original Stammheim prisoners; the early RAF was still political; the RAF continues as the struggle against prison conditions; the hierarchy; the futile attempt to shape the new human; group pressure; his friendship with the Palestinians, which served to protect him from the group; the return home; and the red carpet rolled out for his rehabilitation, with the claim that the Nazis were worse and they

never had to serve time in prison.

This has created a feeding frenzy within the deflated German left-wing intelligentsia. They aren't victims of Boock's lies. It's a mutual arrangement. It all serves to justify their shameless subservience to power. The fleeting moment of truth that these sectors of the left experienced in '77 melted away in their dance with the fraud, Boock.

Die Zeit proudly presents, while in *Spiegel* one can read that "Weizsäcker is interested in the case." The extensive media campaign— the showpiece of contrite, repentant former militants and an imposed peace—all of this is fuel for expanding the role of German imperialism on a world scale.

Knut Folkerts, Rolf Heißler, Sieglinde Hofmann, Christian Klar, Christine Kuby, Roland Mayer, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, Adelheid Schulz, Günter Sonnenberg, Rolf Clemens Wagner

August 1988

1. This refers to the January 21, 1978, arrest of Christine Kuby. See [pages 49–50](#).

2. See [pages 51, 53](#).

3. See [chapter 8](#), especially page 262-266, 268-269.

APPENDIX III

For Us It Was a Question of Learning Explosives and Shooting Techniques

The following interview with Helmut Pohl was originally published as “RAF bestätigt Ausbildung an Waffen in der DDR; Helmut Pohl dementiert Spionage im Auftrag der Stasi” in the July 7, 1991, Frankfurter Rundschau. On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall had fallen, and soon afterwards the entire GDR was annexed by the FRG. Over the course of the summer of 1991, all ten former RAF members who had been living in the GDR were captured. All except Inge Viett would provide the police and crown prosecutors with information about the guerilla, leading in some cases to new charges being laid against prisoners from the RAF. (Viett, it should be noted, did provide information about her former contacts in the MfS.) (M. & S.)

Frankfurter Rundschau: Herr Pohl, we'd like to proceed directly to the question of the connection between the RAF and the *Stasi*. When were you yourself in the GDR for the first time?

Helmut Pohl: First, I'd like to say a few words. We only agreed to this because we feel compelled to comment on this GDR story, which has been blown out of proportion. Neither for our practice nor for the GDR did the contact have the significance that has been attached to it. Of all our international contacts, those with the GDR were the least significant. The only reason to discuss them is that the story has been exaggerated, and that must be corrected.

Frankfurter Rundschau: We'll take that into consideration. Again, when did you first travel to the GDR?

Pohl: In the autumn of 1980.

Frankfurter Rundschau: As early as the early 1970s, the GDR apparently allowed RAF members to transit through.

Pohl: I've been with the RAF since the end of 1970. The only transit was in connection with training in Jordan. I didn't take part in that in 1970. At that time, the group traveled from Schönefeld to Jordan, using phony IDs. Incidentally, in 1973, I traveled to the Middle East in a way that had nothing to do with the GDR.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Are we going to address the question of...

Pohl: The GDR story is connected to the fact that the eight went there. As I understand it, the contact was established by Inge Viett. A year had been spent looking for somewhere for the eight to go. I got out of prison in the autumn of 1979. I don't know anything about the nature of the meetings before that. I went to the GDR in the autumn of 1980. There was a house there, managed by an older married couple; for the life of me, I can't remember where it was. The question for us was whether we'd continue to go there or not. That was clarified in the autumn. I estimate that I remained there for about fourteen days. That was my longest visit. Apart from that there were short discussions. We didn't know what they had in mind.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Which *Stasi* associates did you personally meet?

Pohl: We addressed each other by our first names. Helmut, Günther, and Gerd were the names I knew them by. I learned their last names when they were printed in the press.

Frankfurter Rundschau: What did you talk about with them?

Pohl: About the military-political conflict surrounding missile stationing. We were interested in getting a picture of how other countries saw it,

because, as a result of its internationalism, the GDR knew a lot about Third World countries. Their views interested us.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Was the exchange productive for the RAF?

Pohl: Let me finish with the first question. I want to give you a complete picture. In early 1984, we ended the contact to the GDR from our side. After the second-to-last discussion in the autumn of 1983, we had actually decided to break it off, because the discussions were always unpleasant. In early 1984, our members Ingrid Jakobsmeier and Christa Eckes went there for the last visit. Christa because she had never been, and she needed to get a sense of why we had ultimately come to this conclusion.

Frankfurter Rundschau: The objective of the RAF in the 1970s was to provoke the state's repressive apparatus. To formulate it in the RAF's jargon: "to expose the ugly face of capitalism." Was there even any debate within the RAF about the problem of cooperating with a repressive apparatus like the *Stasi*?

Pohl: We wanted contact with the GDR. The Ministry for State Security¹ was simply the appropriate agency for such contact. The trainers did not, in any case, come from the MfS, but from the National People's Army. Now, all of that was structurally interlocked. In the beginning, the contact occurred in the limited context of finding a place for the eight people, which created a basis for further discussion, out of which came the training. Beyond that, there was no cooperation.

Frankfurter Rundschau: What was the political significance of these discussions for the RAF?

Pohl: Starting in 1980, our politics changed conceptually from what they had previously been. After 1977, we arrived at a point where we were restructuring. Part of the organization broke away, and the remainder wanted to do things differently. We developed the front strategy as a

strategy against the offensive of the imperialist state. At the time, all politics were closely tied to and defined by the rearmament debate, the Reagan policies, and the military strategy. These were the main issues we discussed. These discussions helped us to clarify our concept, and we hoped to learn as much as possible about the actual nature of NATO policies.

Frankfurter Rundschau: What did the GDR hope to learn from the RAF?

Pohl: They wanted to know about political developments in the FRG. We absolutely never talked about our structure. They, of course, had numerous contacts in the FRG. They asked us, “What do you think about this or that? What’s your assessment?” They showed us numerous leaflets and asked us about them. We thought about how we should talk to them. We had a very clear approach: we would talk to them like anyone here that came from one of the social movements or, in the same sense, like any international contact. We generally talked in the same way: extensively on a political level, while offering very limited concrete information.

Frankfurter Rundschau: What price did the RAF pay for the GDR’s help in solving the defector problem?

Pohl: There was no price. There was never, for example, any effort to find out about our plans for actions. For them, it was a question of understanding developments in the militant scene, as, for example, with the leaflets I mentioned. At the most, their interest included using our “appeal,” as they called it, to mobilize for the peace movement. They said things like, “Imagine if you said that all militants should get involved. That would have an impact.”

The most recent nonsense being spread by *Spiegel TV* is this espionage story.

Frankfurter Rundschau: According to *Spiegel*, Helmut Voigt, a lieutenant and a section leader with the *Stasi*’s Department XXII, claims otherwise.

He spoke of shooting and explosives training for the RAF in the GDR...

Pohl: Certainly that was discussed during our conversations. But first a little more about this most recent espionage story. What Voigt now says is the exact opposite of what they said to us at the time. I clearly remember that we once addressed the issue—more or less in this way, conversationally, not as an offer—of whether they had any interest in our knowledge about military facilities, and they expressly said, “No, anything that could be construed as espionage should be avoided.” Today, Voigt claims the opposite. This is a result of the crown witness policy. He has to produce evidence of a legally useful offense. The goods must be delivered. Obviously, crown witnesses were always called upon to comment on the RAF’s actions and structures. As this failed to produce anything, an effort is being made using this alleged “espionage.” In fact, it’s a joke. Everything we knew about military facilities, they, with their satellites, knew far better. That the opposite is now being advanced by an ex-MfS agent makes no sense to me, other than as an attempt to fabricate something so as to be able to make use of the crown witness law.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Did the people you talked with have it in the back of their minds to discuss defection with active members?

Pohl: From the start, it was clear to us that they weren’t in contact with us because they agreed with the RAF’s politics. They said they found them incorrect. For the socialist states, the revolutionary process would unfold through three main currents: the socialist states, the working class in the capitalist centers, and the liberation movements in the so-called Third World. It was clear to us that they wanted to integrate us to serve their political interests. They said to us, “Any of you can come and live here.” They would take care of it. But pushing us to defect? No. They didn’t try to influence us in any way. It was clear that we would not let ourselves be dissuaded from anything by the GDR.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Henning Beer, who participated in discussions with the Stasi and then defected said during his trial that there were negotiations about munitions and similar things. Were you also involved in such things?

Pohl: No. There were no negotiations. In the beginning, when Wolfgang Beer and Christian Klar were in the GDR, everything imaginable was discussed. Those things may have been discussed. By 1980, it was clear that they wouldn't agree to that.

Frankfurter Rundschau: They did, however, train RAF members. How did that come about?

Pohl: The training took place in the spring of 1982. I don't know who besides the BAW today claims that this took place before the actions against the U.S. airbase in Ramstein and the U.S. general, Kroesen, in Heidelberg in 1981. After the Kroesen and Ramstein actions, we had a few concrete, very specific questions about explosives and shooting techniques. We addressed this during our subsequent visit. Then the GDR proposed comprehensive training. They prepared a schedule. Three people attended: Inge Viett, Adelheid Schulz, and myself. Christian Klar, who is always mentioned in this context, wasn't there. On one occasion, he came with us to the shooting range. He visited us there for three days, because he was on his way to meet another international contact and was bringing a few pages of a paper that others who were not in the GDR were working on.

So there can be no talk of the RAF having been trained there. It was three people. We consciously limited it.

The GDR said that more of us could come, ten people or more. However, for us, the goal was to get clear answers to our questions about weapons and explosives techniques. We could share what we learned there with the others. For us, the significance of the whole thing was to create the conditions for the others to train themselves. The program simply and

exclusively included explosives and shooting techniques.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Where did it take place?

Pohl: In different locations. We were brought to a forester's lodge "on the water" near Briesen. I've already said that in published material. Theoretical classes were held there. The practical classes took place in different places at National People's Army military facilities. Gun training included pistols, semi-automatic pistols, and short- and long-range weapons of various types. One day, we practiced with the Soviet RPG-7 grenade launcher. Explosives techniques, including industrial and homemade explosives, were obviously important for us—explosives and the construction of detonators.

Frankfurter Rundschau: What the *Stasi* people also report—that a Mercedes like Kroesen's containing mannequins and a German shepherd was fired upon—is that true?

Pohl: Oh yes, the German shepherd. That much is true. When we arrived at the location, the Mercedes was there with the dog in it. The GDR people wanted to recreate the action against Kroesen to test its deadly effect. The trainer shot once, and it was a bullseye. The dog was hit, and he then shot it with a pistol. After that we engaged in target practice.

This training early in the year was the only one that occurred. Later on, Christian Klar once had the opportunity to practice with a pistol, because at the time training was underway. However, he only emptied a couple of magazines.

Frankfurter Rundschau: So the reason for the whole thing was, in this case, to test why the attack against Kroesen hadn't succeeded?

Pohl: The questions we had came more from Ramstein, because we had made very poor quality explosives in that case. We weren't satisfied. As far as firing the RPG goes: it is foolish to believe that any of us learned that

there. We had long since known how to do that. However, you don't often get a chance to practice, and it's a difficult weapon to handle. Therefore, we were interested. The GDR handled the training in a very traditional military way. When the Palestinians train you, they do it entirely differently. The training was interesting and important for us.

Frankfurter Rundschau: How did the contact with the GDR end? When did the relationship between the West German guerilla and East German real existing socialism cool down and why?

Pohl: In the two years that followed, there were four or five visits, two of which I was part of. During these, the discussions continued. As far as the training goes, we had the most intensive contact in that context. We also did other things. We were once driven to Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen to visit the concentration camps. I once said that I wanted to go to the German Historical Museum in Berlin, so we did that too. The longer the contact lasted the more difficult it became. Toward the end, there wasn't much left in it for us except the risk involved in traveling back and forth. We had the impression that it was only defensive, only pronouncements and rationalizations, just "securing socialism" and the peace policy. It was so artificial that instead of talking to them, we could have read *Neue Deutschland*.² We didn't learn anything new from it.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Were you disappointed with this behavior on the part of your partners in the anti-imperialist struggle?

Pohl: We didn't see them as partners: they were simply one of the existent realities. Because of historical developments, the socialist states played a particular role in supporting the liberation movements. We didn't care a wit about real existing socialism. The artificiality and the clichés—that aspect created friction at every point. We were probably sometimes as unbearable for them as they were for us. When things started to get rough, they said that that was simply the proletarian way. However, they also did

quite a bit. At the beginning, we were surprised with the qualitatively positive way they incorporated the eight people that wanted to leave the RAF.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Do you want, at this time, to provide details that are previously unknown—and will sooner or later be published?

Pohl: If something more comes out at this point, if more crown witnesses from the former GDR come forward, then they are lying. I can only talk about the period up until 1984, but I can't imagine that similar contact was reestablished later. In the meantime, the *Verfassungsschutz* has claimed that the support milieu, as they call it, had contact. That's complete nonsense. The fabrication is: we facilitated further contact via the aboveground and maintained it in the same way. However, we never discussed it with anyone. Even within the RAF, we limited information about the GDR to a few people. The other thing that I want to say about it is that the GDR was neither a rearguard nor a base of operations. There were visits and discussions, in general for three or four days, then we left. The longer, first trip at the end of 1980 had nothing to do with the crazy Schmidt story that the *Stasi* people are now telling—that they wanted to have us there longer to prevent us from carrying out actions during the election in which Schmidt faced Strauß—instead, it was because we wanted to clarify whether we even wanted to have further conversations. They are now trying to ensure that they get as much out of this as possible. We are alleged to have used the GDR as a rear base area due to the constant pressure created by the manhunts. However, that's not true.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Why not?

Pohl: Because our logistics were good enough. As far as I know, we were never in our history as well positioned logistically as we were at that time.

One more thing about the alleged continued contact through the aboveground: that runs parallel to the fabrication about an aggregate RAF,

by which as many people as possible are to be criminalized, because they were allegedly part of this aggregate concept. There may have been contact with the radical left scene, but that had nothing to do with us. You should not forget that at the time this was going on political conditions were intense, with the missiles being stationed and the Reagan policies. You saw the relationship to the socialist states differently if you were afraid that a war was coming. We know that radical left groups in the movement that existed at that time went, for example, to the FDJ³ summer gatherings —*Autonomen*, as well as women's groups and professional associations. This was not a RAF thing, but rather it must be seen as an expression of the overall situation. There was, however, no RAF-MfS conspiracy. I know of no concrete contacts. We noticed that the GDR was looking for contacts across the militant spectrum. However, people kept their heads and closed that door.

Frankfurter Rundschau: From prison, you were only able to follow the fall of the GDR through the media—what was your main feeling about it? Did you feel joy that masses of people went into the streets to demonstrate peacefully, or was your main feeling that everything was slipping away?

Pohl: I felt surprise—I had noticed the economic difficulties the socialist states faced. They had already talked about their economic constraints. However, nobody had thought that the socialist camp would implode.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Did you sympathize with this people's revolution?

Pohl: No. Obviously it was legitimate, correct, and inevitable that in a “socialist state” like the GDR, the population would at some point explode. However, I wouldn't call it a revolution. It was more of an outburst than a revolution. The cake was re-cut, and the East Germans like the Germans and the Central Europeans in general belong in their completely obvious self-perception to those who own everything and sit at the top of the power structure. In this way it is essentially a relationship of Europeans to the rest

of the world.

Frankfurter Rundschau: From your point of view, is there a difference between defectors like Peter-Jürgen Boock, who rejected the “traitor role,” and Susanne Albrecht, who completely “spilled the beans”?⁴

Pohl: Boock played a very special role. I don’t, however, see any difference. I don’t know which of them played the worse role. It wasn’t that the defectors had left the RAF. That was not the problem from our point of view. At the time, some of them waffled, and they were encouraged by us to leave. The problem is that they later allowed themselves to be used by the state as crown witnesses.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Should the defectors now fear for their physical safety? More to the point, should they anticipate the RAF’s revenge?

Pohl: Nonsense.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Why do you want to talk now?

Pohl: That’s a misconception on your part. Previously, the state never allowed us to speak out. We’ve been trying to speak publicly since 1988. During and after the hunger strike, we received tons of requests for interviews from the media.⁵ At the time, Karl-Heinz Krumm from the *Frankfurter Rundschau* was among them. I always agreed, but the Ministry of Justice always forbade it. By 1987, we were putting every effort into finding a way around that problem. From the outset we wanted to do it. In 1988, there was the Vollmer/Walser proposal. We accepted and made a concrete proposal: we, the prisoners, wanted to talk to them, even if it was only once. It would at least be a starting point.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Was the desire for discussion a question of a critical reappraisal?

Pohl: Well that was part of it. Since the mid-1980s, we’ve said it was time

for an historical suspension of activity. No one took that seriously. Instead, everyone, the left included, heard what they wanted to hear. That was when it began, the starting point of our desire for a discussion with people and groups, as long as it did not contribute to state repression. The problem of a critical reappraisal of the past twenty years is not something specific to the RAF: it is the entire left's problem. It is not only a question of the armed struggle, yes or no.

Frankfurter Rundschau: That is, however, a decisive question.

Pohl: It is part of it, but must be seen as the least important issue. Our politics can't be reduced to actions. You have to begin with an understanding of the current situation, and on that basis discuss the necessary methods for revolutionary politics. The question, violence yes or no, cannot be addressed in the same way today.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Was it not a concept that your side introduced?

Pohl: Communiqués achieve nothing. Even if the prisoners announce the end of the struggle, others will continue it regardless. The problem lies somewhere else entirely. I'm thinking about non-political violence that arises from the compounding of contradictions, for example, right-wing radicalism and racism. On the international level, as well: for example, what we are seeing in Yugoslavia and the USSR. It runs through all levels, both domestically and internationally. The question is, how do you set a process in motion that can provide a new orientation, new reference points, and developments in the conflict. It's a question of real steps.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Over the past few years, the RAF's attacks seem more and more like those of the mafia. They are mostly conducted as ambush murders, for example Detlev Karsten Rohwedder, former head of the Berlin *Treuhändanstalt*.⁶ Do you approve of this action?

Pohl: I won't respond to such a question. It's not an issue we address. The

prisoners don't comment on armed actions on the outside. That, of course, doesn't mean that we'll never comment.

Frankfurter Rundschau: Recently, in various media, the BAW has portrayed you and others of the so-called hard core of the RAF as still active cadre of the armed struggle. Do you give orders to those on the outside?

Pohl: There is no control from within the prison cells. We have nothing to do with the actions on the outside. [At this point the LKA agent present terminated the interview, but permitted it to resume at the *Frankfurter Rundschau's* request.] So, they are trying to pin something on me, for example, that I had something to do with Herrhausen, and then I'm not allowed to comment on it. It's an absurd idea that the prisoners can call for or actually order actions. We deny that assertion. In our texts we have always said that it is part of our basic politics that those who carry out the practice also determine the concrete policy.

Frankfurter Rundschau: The published quotes from the pages seized from the prison cells—apparently seven thousand—make it sound otherwise.

Pohl: They conducted three or four cell searches, and in this context extracted individual sentences to construct what they needed. Certainly, none of us had any knowledge of the preparations, nor did we guide any of those underground in their actions. All of this propaganda stands things on their head. That the prisoners took control of the initiative during the 1989 hunger strike was an exceptional situation. It was completely clear to those outside that no militant or military actions were to be undertaken. Everybody understood this. But it was equally clear that when the hunger strike was over, this role of the prisoners in relation to the outside would also come to an end.

Frankfurter Rundschau: It was in this context that letters written by you

were published.

Pohl: Having seen what was published, I don't know what the significance could be. There is nothing that could be called an *Info* system—unfortunately. We consider it legitimate to discuss things with each other. That has nothing to do with the people underground. That's not our business. It should have been obvious to everyone that there would be actions if the hunger strike failed to yield anything. However, we had no idea what they would be. We would really like to get past all of this criminological bullshit, such as the “RAF-MfS connection” and control from within the prison cells, and finally get down to business: to political discussions, to association, and to a development that would lead to freedom for the political prisoners.

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1. *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (MfS); this is the official name of the *Stasi*.
 2. During the time of the GDR, *Neue Deutschland* was the newspaper of the ruling Socialist Unity Party.
 3. The *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, or Free German Youth, was the official youth movement of the ruling Socialist Unity Party in the GDR.
 4. With the exception of Inge Viett, all of the former guerillas who had defected to the GDR provided information about the RAF to investigators following their arrests in the early '90s. Their testimony would be used in numerous new RAF trials. Susanne Albrecht was unique among these crown witnesses for her high public profile, given her family connection and role in the Ponto killing. She would implicate Sieglinde Hofmann, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, and Christian Klar in this attack, and based on her testimony Hofmann would be sentenced to an additional fifteen years.
 5. A reference to the RAF's 1989 hunger strike, which will be detailed in volume 3.
 6. On April 1, 1991, the RAF's Ulrich Wessel Commando assassinated Detlev Karsten Rohwedder, the chairman of the *Treuhandanstalt*, the organization responsible for privatizing the industries in the former GDR.

Dramatis Personae

Akache, Zohair Youssef: 1954-1977; PFLP (EO) member; killed during the Mogadishu action.

Alameh, Hind: 1955-1977; PFLP (EO) member; killed during the Mogadishu action.

Albrecht, Susanne: b. 1951; 1977, joined the RAF; 1980, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1996, released from prison.

Alexa, Peter: b. 1955; 1978, participated in the dpa occupation, arrested and sentenced to one year in prison; 1982, arrested in the wake of the arrests of RAF members Brigitte Mohnhaupt, Heidi Schulz, and Christian Klar when his fingerprints were found on items in RAF depots; 2007, publicly distanced himself from his past politics.

Andrawes, Souhaila: b. 1953; PFLP (EO) member; 1977, injured and arrested during the Mogadishu action; 1978, sentenced to twenty years in prison in Somalia; 1980, pardoned; 1991, moved to Norway; 1994, arrested; 1995, extradited to the FRG and sentenced to twelve years in prison; 1997, transferred to Norway to complete her sentence; 1999, released from prison on grounds of ill health.

Asdonk, Brigitte: b. 1947; 1970, founding member of the RAF, arrested the same year; 1982, released from prison.

Augustin, Barbara: Alleged RZ member; 1981, arrested at the Swiss border attempting to smuggle explosives and munitions into the FRG.

Augustin, Ronald: b. 1949; 1971, joined the RAF; 1973, arrested; 1980, released from prison.

Baader, Andreas: 1943-1977; 1968, participated in the Frankfurt department store arsons; 1970, founding member of the RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1977, sentenced to life in prison, killed in prison during the events of the German Autumn.

Bahr, Egon: b. 1922; SPD politician, crafted *Ostpolitik* to normalize relations with the Soviet Union in the early 1970s.

Bakker Schut, Pieter: 1941-2007; Dutch lawyer, 1974, began representing Ronald Augustin and other RAF members; author and editor of several books related to the

prisoners from the RAF and the Stammheim trial.

Barabas, Ingrid: b. 1952; alleged guerilla supporter; 1980, arrested in Paris; 1985, arrested in Frankfurt and charged with being a RAF member living aboveground.

Baum, Gerhart: b. 1932; FDP politician; 1978, federal minister of the interior; 1982, stepped down, active at the UN thereafter.

Baumann, Jürgen: 1922-2003; FDP politician; 1976, West Berlin minister of justice; 1978, stepped down following the prison liberation of 2JM member Till Meyer, withdrew from politics.

Becker, Verena: b. 1952; 2JM member; 1974, sentenced to six years in prison; 1975, joined the RAF after release from prison as part of a prisoner exchange for CDU politician Peter Lorenz who had been kidnapped by the 2JM; 1977, arrested; 1982, cooperated with *Verfassungsschutz*; 1989, pardoned; 2009, arrested in connection with the 1977 assassination of Attorney General Siegfried Buback; 2012, sentenced to four years in prison.

Beer, Henning: b. 1959; brother of Wolfgang Beer; 1979, joined the RAF; 1982, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1995, released from prison.

Beer, Wolfgang: 1953-1980; brother of Henning Beer; 1973, joined the RAF; 1974, arrested; 1978, released from prison, participated in the dpa occupation, arrested and sentenced to one year in prison; 1979, released from prison and went back underground with the RAF; 1980, died in a car accident while living underground.

Berberich, Monika: b. 1942; 1970, founding member of the RAF, arrested the same year; 1976, escaped from prison, recaptured two weeks later; 1988, released from prison.

Berger, Manfred: career criminal who cooperated with the *Verfassungsschutz* in what became known as the Celle Hole, a police action meant to free guerilla prisoner Sigurd Debus in the hope he would lead police to underground members of the RAF.

Boge, Heinrich: b. 1929; 1981-1990, president of the BKA.

Boock, Peter-Jürgen: b. 1951; 1974, went underground to form a guerilla group with Waltraud Liewald and Klaus Dorff; ex-husband of Waltraud Liewald; 1976, joined the RAF; 1980, broke with the RAF; 1981, arrested, cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1984, received three life sentences plus fifteen years; 1986, on appeal his sentence is reduced to a single life term; 1991, new charges against Boock on the basis of information provided by the defectors to the GDR; 1992, Boock publicly admits his part in the shooting deaths of the bodyguards during the Schleyer kidnapping; 1998,

pardoned.

Börner, Holger: 1931-2006; SPD politician; strong opponent of a 1985 coalition with the Green Party; 1986-1987, president of the Federal Council.

Brandt, Willy: 1913-1992; SPD politician; 1964, federal chairman of the SPD; 1966-1969, minister of foreign affairs and vice chancellor; 1969-1974, chancellor, 1974, chairman of the Socialist International (Second International).

Braun, Bernhard: 1946-2009; 1971, joined the RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1989, released from prison; 2009, died of cancer.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew: b. 1928; born in Warsaw, Poland; educated in Canada and the U.S; 1960, advisor to John Kennedy during the elections; 1976, Democratic President Jimmy Carter's national security advisor; 1985, a member of Republican President Ronald Reagan's Chemical Warfare Commission; 1987-1988; a member of U.S. National Security Council-Defense Department; 1987-1989, served on the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board; 1988, co-chair of Vice President George Bush Sr.'s National Security Advisory Task Force.

Buback, Siegfried: 1920-1977; 1974-1977, attorney general; 1977, assassinated by the RAF.

Carlos (Ilich Ramírez Sánchez): b. 1949; guerilla mercenary closely tied to the Palestinian movement; 1994, arrested in Sudan and extradited to France; 1997, sentenced to life in prison; 2003, aligned himself with fundamentalist Islam, stating his support for Osama bin Laden and the 9/11 attacks; 2005, adopted the name Salim Muhammad.

Croissant, Klaus: 1931-2002; lawyer for prisoners from the RAF; 1977, arrested and sentenced to two and a half years for supporting a terrorist organization; upon his release he began cooperating with the MfS; ran (unsuccessfully) for the *Alternative Liste* in the 1980s.

Dahl, Harry: b. 1930; colonel in the GDR's MfS; responsible for providing support to West German guerilla groups; arrested following the collapse of the GDR and tried in the FRG, released after serving a brief sentence.

de Jong, Dionysius: 1959-1978; Dutch border guard; 1978, killed in shootout with RAF members at the Dutch border.

Debus, Sigurd: 1942-1981; active in the KPD in the 1960s; 1969, joined the KPD/ML; 1971, joined the *Hamburger Aktion Zentrum*; 1973, went underground to form an independent Hamburg-based guerilla group; 1974, arrested during a bank robbery; 1975, sentenced to twelve years; 1981, died participating in the RAF's eighth collective

hunger strike.

Dellwo, Hans-Joachim: b. 1955; brother of Karl-Heinz Dellwo; 1977, arrested on charges of supporting a criminal organization; cooperated with police and prosecutors; relocated to Canada upon his release from prison.

Dellwo, Karl-Heinz: b. 1952; 1975, joined the RAF and participated in the Holger Meins Commando's hostage taking at the West German embassy in Stockholm, where he was arrested; 1977, received two life sentences; 1995, released from prison.

Dorff, Klaus: b. 1949; 1974, went underground to form a guerilla group with Peter-Jürgen Boock and Waltraud Liewald; 1976, arrested; 1978 sentenced to thirteen years in prison for an alleged bank robbery.

Drenkmann, Günter von: 1910-1974; social democratic president of West Berlin Supreme Court; killed during an attempted kidnapping by the 2JM meant to avenge the death of Holger Meins.

Dschihad, Chalid: PFLP (SC) member; 1979, began providing the BND with information about the West German guerilla; 1983, disappeared, presumed dead.

Dümlein, Christine: b. 1949; 1978, joined the RAF; 1980, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR, where she lived with her partner Werner Lotze; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors, released after one day as the only charge against her was supporting a terrorist organization, and the statute of limitations had expired.

Dutschke, Rudi: 1940-1979; leading APO and SDS activist; 1968, victim of an assassination attempt, shot in the head and suffered serious brain damage; 1979, founding member of the Green Party, drowned the same year when he had a seizure while taking a bath, the result of injuries sustained in the 1968 assassination attempt.

Dutzi, Gisela: b. 1952; 1981, joined the RAF; 1983, arrested; 1985, sentenced to eight and a half years for membership in a terrorist organization, weapons possession, and possession of false ID papers.

Dyck, Elisabeth von: 1950-1979; SPK member, assistant to lawyer Klaus Croissant; 1977, joined the RAF; 1979, shot dead by police.

Eckes, Christa: 1950-2012; 1973, joined the RAF; arrested February 4, 1974; 1977, sentenced to seven years in prison; 1981, released and returned to the underground; 1984, arrested; 1992, released from prison; 2011, refused when subpoenaed to testify at the trial of Verena Becker in connection with the 1977 assassination of Attorney General Siegfried Buback; 2012, died of cancer.

Ensslin, Gudrun: 1940-1977; 1968, participated in the Frankfurt department store arsons; 1970, founding member of the RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1977, sentenced to life in prison, killed in prison during the events of the German Autumn.

Filbinger, Hans: 1913-2007; 1933, member of the paramilitary Stormtroopers; 1937, joined the Nazi Party; served as a Navy judge during the Third Reich; 1966-1978, CDU president of Baden-Württemberg.

Folkerts, Knut: b. 1952; 1976, joined the RAF; 1977, arrested in Utrecht, Holland, following a shootout with police, sentenced to twenty years in prison in Holland; 1978, extradited to the FRG; 1980, received a life sentence for two counts of murder; 1995, released from prison.

Friedrich, Ralf Baptist: b. 1946; 1977, joined the RAF; 1980, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR, where he married fellow RAF defector Sigrid Sternebeck; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1992, sentenced to six and a half years in prison.

Fritzscher, Ronald: b. 1951; 2JM member; 1975, arrested; 1989, released from prison.

Genscher, Hans-Dietrich: b. 1927; FDP politician; 1969-1974, federal minister of the interior; 1974-1992, federal minister for foreign affairs.

Gérard, Jean Paul: member of the *Noyaux armés pour l'autonomie populaire*, precursor organization to *Action Directe*; 1980, arrested for bombing the Paris offices of the *Bundesbahn*; 1981, received amnesty.

Goder, Angelika: b. 1950; 2JM member; 1978, participated in the liberation of Till Meyer, arrested in Bulgaria and extradited to the FRG.

Goemans, Johannes: 1954-1978; Dutch border guard; 1978, killed in shootout with RAF members at the Dutch border.

Grams, Wolfgang: 1953-1993; 1978, RAF supporter, arrested in the aftermath of the shooting of RAF member Willy Peter Stoll, held for 153 days; 1980, received remuneration for the time he had been held in prison; 1984, joined RAF; 1993, set up by a movement infiltrator and killed in shootout with GSG-9 agents in Bad Kleinen.

Grashof, Manfred: b. 1946; 1970, founding member of the RAF; 1972, arrested prior to the May Offensive; 1977, sentenced to life in prison; 1988, pardoned.

Gratt, Thomas: 1956-2006; Austrian supporter of West German political prisoners; 1977, participated in the 2JM kidnapping of businessman Walter Palmers in Vienna,

arrested in possession of weapons and ransom money at the Italian border; 1979, sentenced to fifteen years in prison in Austria, pardoned and released after thirteen years; 2006, committed suicide.

Groenewold, Kurt: b. 1937; lawyer for prisoners from the RAF; 1975, subjected to the *Berufsverbot*; 1979, received two-year suspended sentence for having facilitated *Info System*, between 1973 and '76, *Berufsverbot* lifted except for criminal cases; 1981, *Berufsverbot* completely lifted.

Grosser, Karl (Carlos): b. 1956; alleged RAF supporter; 1981, arrested and charged with being an aboveground RAF member; 1982, sentenced to three years for supporting a terrorist organization; 1985, arrested for an alleged RAF robbery of two money messengers; 1993, released from prison.

Haag, Siegfried: b. 1944; lawyer for prisoners from the RAF; 1975, joined the RAF; 1976, arrested; 1979, sentenced to fifteen years in prison; broke with the RAF in prison; 1987, released from prison.

Haag, Sybille: b. 1942; ex-wife of lawyer Siegfried Haag, active in prisoner support work.

Haddad, Waddi (Abu Hani): 1927-1978; 1967-1970, leading figure in the PFLP's military wing; expelled from the PFLP at some point in the 1970s; established the PFLP (EO) in the early 1970s as a body separate from the PFLP; 1977, poisoned by the Mossad; 1978, died.

Haig, Alexander: 1924-2010; 1974-1979, NATO supreme commander; 1979, survived RAF assassination attempt; 1981-1982, U.S. secretary of state.

Hammerschmidt, Katharina: 1943-1975; 1970-1971, RAF supporter; 1972, turned herself in following the May Offensive; 1973, begins suffering symptoms from cancer, yet denied appropriate medical care; 1974, finally released from prison to receive medical treatment; 1975, died of cancer.

Hansen, Hans-Wilhelm: b. 1952-1978; police officer killed in 1978 in a firefight with RAF members.

Happe, Manuela: b. 1956; 1984, joined the RAF, arrested a few months later; 1986, sentenced to fifteen years in prison for membership in a terrorist organization and attempted murder of a police officer; 1995, released from prison.

Harb, Nabil: 1954-1977; PFLP (EO) member; killed during the Mogadishu action.

Härlin, Benny: b. 1957; 1977, suspected editor of *radikal*; 1983, arrested for promoting terrorism; 1984, sentenced to two and a half years in prison, elected to the European

Parliament on the Green ticket, thereby providing him with immunity from imprisonment; 1990, the sentence was overturned by the BGH, returned to Germany.

Hausner, Siegfried: 1952-1975; SPK member; 1971, arrested; 1972 sentenced to three years in youth custody; 1974, released from prison, joined the RAF; 1975, participated in the RAF Holger Meins Commando's hostage taking at the West German embassy in Stockholm, died as a result of injuries sustained during the action.

Heißler, Rolf: b. 1948; 1970-1971, member of the Tupamaros-Munich; 1975, joined the RAF after release from prison as part of a prisoner exchange for CDU politician Peter Lorenz who had been kidnapped by the 2JM; 1979, shot in the head and arrested; 1982, sentenced to life in prison; 2001, released from prison.

Helbing, Monika: b. 1953; 1977, joined the RAF; 1980, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1992, sentenced to seven years in prison; 1995, released from prison, living under a new name.

Herold, Horst: b. 1923; 1967-1971, president of the Nuremberg police; 1971-1981, president of the BKA.

Hofmann, Sieglinde: b. 1945; SPK member; 1975, joined the RAF; 1980, arrested in Paris and extradited to the FRG, sentenced to fifteen years in prison; 1995, several days before her release date, brought up on new charges based on the testimony provided by the defectors to the GDR, sentenced to life in prison; 1999, released from prison.

Hogefeld, Birgit: b. 1956; 1984, joined the RAF; 1993, arrested following a shootout with police in Bad Kleinen, during which Wolfgang Grams was killed; 1996, received three life sentences; 2011, released from prison.

Hoppe, Werner: b. 1949; 1970, joined the RAF; 1971, arrested; 1972, sentenced to ten years in prison; 1979, released from prison on grounds of ill health.

Jakobsmeier, Ingrid: b. 1953; 1978, participated in the dpa occupation and sentenced to one year in prison; 1980, joined the RAF; 1984, arrested; 1993, sentenced to an additional fifteen years in prison on the basis of information provided by the defectors to the GDR.

Jünschke, Klaus: b. 1947; SPK member; 1972, joined the RAF, arrested a few months later following the May Offensive; 1977, sentenced to life in prison; 1977, distanced himself from the RAF; 1988, pardoned.

Kamp-Münnichow, Karin: b. 1955; alleged guerilla supporter; 1980, arrested in Paris with women from the 2JM and the RAF.

Karry, Heinz Herbert: 1920-1981; FDP politician; 1970, minister of the economy in the *Land* of Hessen; 1981, shot in the legs by the RZ for his role in Startbahn West, died as a result of a severed artery.

Keplinger, Othmar: Austrian supporter of West German political prisoners; 1977, participated in the 2JM kidnapping of businessman Walter Palmers in Vienna, arrested in possession of weapons and ransom money at the Italian border; 1979, sentenced to five years in prison, later reduced to four years.

Khaddafi, Muammar: 1942-2011; 1969, seized control of Libya in a bloodless coup; regularly accused of masterminding or supporting terrorist attacks in the West; 2011, killed during a civil war that erupted in Libya following the events of the Arab Spring.

Klar, Christian: b. 1952; 1976, joined the RAF; 1982, arrested; 1985, received five life sentences plus fifteen years in prison; 2007, denied clemency; 2008, released from prison.

Klein, Hans-Joachim: b. 1947; 1974, joined the RZ; 1975, seriously injured participating in the Vienna OPEC action; 1977, left the guerilla, issuing a critical assessment and mailing it with his gun to *Spiegel*; 1979, released a book critically assessing the guerilla struggle; 1998, arrested in France and extradited to the FRG, acted as a crown witness to avoid a life sentence and was sentenced to nine years in prison; 2003, pardoned.

Kletzhändler, Edith: 1923-1979; 1979, killed by a ricocheting bullet during a shootout between police and RAF members in a shopping mall in Zurich, Switzerland.

Klöckner, Michael: b. 1955; suspected editor of *radikal*; 1983, arrested for promoting terrorism; 1984, sentenced to two and a half years in prison, elected to the European Parliament on the Green ticket providing him with immunity from imprisonment; 1990, the sentence was overturned by the BGH, returned to Germany.

Klöpper, Gerald: b. 1954; 2JM member; 1975, arrested; 1980, sentenced to eleven years and two months in prison.

Klump, Andrea: b. 1957; 1978, worked on the Russell Tribunal; 1984, went underground to avoid arrest; 1987, sought refuge in Syria, then Lebanon, with Horst Meyer, Barbara Meyer, and Simon Thomas, all of whom were being sought by the West German police in connection with RAF activities; 1988, involved in an attempt to bomb a disco popular with U.S. military personnel in Rota, Spain; 1989, incorrectly identified as one of the people involved in the RAF assassination of Alfred Herrhausen; 1991, involved in a bombing in Budapest of a busload of Russian Jewish immigrants transiting Hungary to Israel, claimed by the Movement to Free Jerusalem; 1995, began living with Horst Meyer

under an assumed name in Vienna, Austria; 1999, arrested following a shootout with police in Vienna, in which Horst Meyer was killed; 2001, sentenced to nine years in prison in connection with the attempted bombing in Rota, Spain; 2004, sentenced to an additional twelve years in connection with the Budapest, Hungary bombing.

Knoll, Michael: 1949-1978; 1977, joined the RAF; 1978, killed in an exchange of fire with the police.

Kohl, Helmut: b. 1930; CDU politician; 1969-1976, president of Rhineland-Palatinate; 1976-1982, head of CDU/CSU parliamentary faction; 1982-1998, chancellor.

Krabbe, Hanna: b. 1945; SPK member; 1975, joined the RAF and participated in the Holger Meins Commando's hostage taking at the West German embassy in Stockholm, where she was captured; 1977, received two life sentences; 1996, pardoned and released from prison.

Kreisky, Bruno: 1911-1990; Socialist Party of Austria member; 1959-1966, minister of foreign affairs; 1970-1983, chancellor.

Kröcher-Tiedemann, Gabriele: 1951-1995; 1972, joined 2JM; 1973, arrested; 1975, released from prison as part of a prisoner exchange for CDU politician Peter Lorenz who had been kidnapped by the 2JM; 1975, participated in the Vienna OPEC action; 1977, arrested in Switzerland following a shootout in which she shot two Swiss border guards; 1987, extradited to the FRG; 1990, acquitted on charges related to the 1975 Vienna OPEC action; 1991, released from prison; 1995, died of cancer.

Kroesen, Frederick: b. 1923; 1979-1983, commander of the NATO Central Army Group; 1981, survived RAF assassination attempt.

Kuby, Christine: b. 1956; 1978, joined the RAF, arrested a few months later; 1979, sentenced to life in prison; 1995 released from prison.

Kunzelmann, Dieter: b. 1939; 1967, founding member of Kommune 1; 1969, founding member of the Tupamaros-West Berlin; 1970, arrested; 1975, released from prison; 1983-1985, *Alternative Liste* member of the West Berlin Senate.

Lapeyre, Michel: member of the *Noyaux armés pour l'autonomie populaire*, precursor organization to *Action Directe*; 1980, arrested for bombing the Paris offices of the *Bundesbahn*; 1981, received amnesty.

Liewald, Waltraud: b. 1950; 1974, went underground to form a guerilla group with Peter-Jürgen Boock and Klaus Dorff; was married to Peter-Jürgen Boock; 1976, joined the RAF, arrested a few months later in Vienna following a bank robbery; 1977, sentenced to twelve and a half years in prison.

Lochte, Christian: 1935-1991; 1981-1991, head of the Hamburg *Verfassungsschutz*.

Lorenz, Peter: 1922-1987; 1969-1981, chairman of the West Berlin CDU; 1975, kidnapped by the 2JM and exchanged for five political prisoners.

Lotze, Werner: b. 1952; 1978, joined the RAF; 1980, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR, where he lived with his partner Christine Dümlein; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1991, sentenced to twelve years in prison, reduced on appeal.

Loudil, Klaus Dieter: career criminal who cooperated with the *Verfassungsschutz* in what became known as the Celle Hole, a police action meant to free guerilla prisoner Sigurd Debus in the hope he would lead police to underground members of the RAF.

Ludwig, Karl-Heinz: b. 1943; taxi driver, arrested with Sigurd Debus in connection with an underground group.

Lummer, Heinrich: b. 1932; CDU politician; 1981-1986, mayor and minister of the interior in West Berlin.

Magg, Karola: b. 1949; alleged guerilla supporter; 1980, arrested in Paris with women from the 2JM and the RAF.

Mahler, Horst: b. 1936; 1964, began acting as lawyer for the SDS and the APO; 1969, cofounded the Socialist Lawyers Collective; 1970, founding member of the RAF, arrested the same year; 1974, formally expelled from the RAF, affiliated himself with the KPD/AO; 1975, refused to leave prison as part of the Lorenz exchange; 1980, released from prison; 1997, publicly acknowledged his support for the neo-nazi *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*; 2000, joined the NPD; 2003, founded the Holocaust denial organization, the *Verein zur Rehabilitierung der wegen Bestreitens des Holocaust Verfolgten*.

Maier-Witt, Silke: b. 1950; 1977, joined the RAF; 1980, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1991, sentenced to ten years in prison; 1995, released from prison.

Maihofer, Werner: 1918-2009; FDP politician; 1972-1974, federal minister for special affairs; 1974-1978, federal minister of the interior.

Mayer, Roland: b. 1954; 1976, joined the RAF, arrested a few months later; 1979, sentenced to fourteen years in prison; 1988, released from prison.

Meinhof, Ulrike: 1934-1976; 1959, joined the illegal KPD; 1959-1969, *konkret* journalist; 1960-1964, editor-in-chief of *konkret*; 1964, left the KPD; 1970, founding member of the

RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1974, sentenced to eight years in prison; 1976, killed in prison.

Meins, Holger: 1941-1974; 1968, produced the film *Wie baue ich einen Molotow-Cocktail* (How Do I Make a Molotov Cocktail?); 1970, worked on the West Berlin left-wing magazine 883, arrested and held for one month as the suspected bomber of a police radio vehicle, joined the RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1974, died on hunger strike in prison.

Meyer, Till: b. 1944; 1972, founding member of the 2JM, arrested the same year; 1973, escaped from prison; 1975, arrested; 1978, broken out of prison, arrested by West German police in Bulgaria shortly thereafter; 1986, released from prison; 1992, exposed as having been an informant for the MfS.

Mohnhaupt, Brigitte: b. 1949; 1971, joined the RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1977, released from prison, returned underground; 1982, arrested; 1985, sentenced to five life sentences plus fifteen years in prison; 2007, released from prison.

Möller, Christian: alleged member of the RZ and the Carlos group; 1977, arrested with Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann after a shootout with border guards at the Swiss border, in possession of phony ID papers, weapons, and money from the Palmers ransom; sentenced to eleven years in prison.

Möller, Irmgard: b. 1947; 1971, joined the RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1976, sentenced to four and a half years in prison for membership in a terrorist organization; 1977, the only survivor of the Stammheim killings; 1979, sentenced to life in prison for two bombings during the May Offensive and for shooting at police at the time of her capture; 1994, released from prison.

Müller, Arndt: b. 1942; lawyer for prisoners from the RAF; 1977, arrested and charged with supporting a terrorist organization; 1980, sentenced to four years and eight months in prison.

Müller, Gerhard: b. 1948; SPK member; 1971, joined the RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1974, served as a crown witness against prisoners from the RAF; served a six-and-a-half year sentence, upon his release was relocated to the U.S.A.

Newerla, Armin: lawyer for prisoners from the RAF; 1977, arrested and charged with supporting a terrorist organization; 1980, sentenced to three and a half years in prison.

Nicolai, Regina: b. 1954; 2JM member; 1980, arrested in Paris.

O'Hara, Patsy: 1957-1981; Irish Republican; 1971, shot and injured manning a Republican barricade; 1974, interned in Long Kesh; 1975, joined the Irish Republican

Socialist Party and the Irish National Liberation Army, arrested and held in remand for six months; 1976, arrested and held in remand for four months; 1979, arrested for possession of a hand grenade; 1980, sentenced to eight years in prison; 1981, died on hunger strike in prison.

Ohnesorg, Benno: 1940-1967; shot dead by undercover police officer Karl-Heinz Kurras at an anti-Shah demonstration in West Berlin on June 2, 1967.

Oriach, Frédéric: b. 1953; member of the *Noyaux armés pour l'autonomie populaire*, precursor organization to *Action Directe*; 1980, arrested for bombing the Paris offices of the *Bundesbahn*; amnestied in 1981; 1983, sentenced to six years in prison for a series of actions carried out in 1982, reduced to five years on appeal; 1986, released from prison; 1987, sentenced to six months in prison after voicing support for the 1985 *Action Directe* assassination of General René Audran.

Otto, Roland: b. 1950; 2JM supporter; 1975, arrested following the shootout during which Werner Sauber was killed and Karl-Heinz Roth was seriously injured; 1977, charges dropped.

Oxford, Hermann: 1928-2003; FDP politician; 1975, West Berlin mayor and minister of the interior; 1976, resigned his post following the prison breakout of Inge Viett, Julianne Plambeck, Gabriele Rollnik, and Monika Berberich; 1983-1985, West Berlin minister of justice.

Palmers, Walter: 1903-1983; Austrian businessman; 1977, kidnapped by the 2JM, released for ransom payment.

Pauli, Walter: 1953-1975; police officer; 1975, killed in a shootout in Cologne with 2JM associates Werner Sauber (also killed), Karl-Heinz Roth (seriously injured), and Roland Otto.

Pitsch, Reinhard: b. 1953; Austrian supporter of West German political prisoners; 1977, participated in the 2JM kidnapping of businessman Walter Palmers in Vienna, arrested and sentenced to three years and eight months in prison.

Plambeck, Juliane: 1952-1980; 1972, founding member of the 2JM; 1975, arrested; 1976, broke out of prison; 1980, joined the RAF, died in a car accident the same year.

Pohl, Gisela: 1945-2012; wife of RAF member Helmut Pohl; active in prisoner support work; 2012, died of cancer.

Pohl, Helmut: b. 1943; 1970, joined the RAF; 1971, arrested; 1973, released from prison and returned underground; 1974, arrested; 1979, released from prison and returned underground; 1984, arrested; 1998, pardoned and released from prison on grounds of ill

health.

Pohrt, Wolfgang: b. 1945; left-wing intellectual; 1982, supported amnesty campaign for prisoners from the RAF; currently associated with the *Antideutsche* movement.

Ponto, Jürgen: 1923-1977; 1960-1977, chairman of the Dresdner Bank; 1977, shot dead by the RAF during a bungled kidnapping attempt.

Prieß, Rosemarie: b. 1951; 1977, arrested as an alleged RAF supporter, released soon after; 1978, participated in the dpa occupation, arrested and sentenced to one year in prison.

Proll, Astrid: b. 1947; 1970, founding member of the RAF; 1971, arrested; 1973, released to a prison hospital due to ill health caused by sensory deprivation and isolation while in prison; 1974, escaped and fled to England where she lived under the name Anna Puttick; 1978, arrested in London and extradited to the FRG; 1980, sentenced to five and a half years in prison, but immediately released on the basis of time served.

Proll, Thorwald: b. 1941; brother of Astrid Proll; 1968, participated in the Frankfurt department store arsons, went underground when released awaiting the outcome of an appeal, but later turned himself in and served his sentence.

Raspe, Jan-Carl: 1944-1977; 1967, founding member of Kommune 2; 1970, joined the RAF; 1972, arrested following the May Offensive; 1977, sentenced to life in prison, killed in prison during the events of the German Autumn.

Rattay, Klaus-Jürgen: 1962-1981; 1980, joined the West Berlin squatting scene; 1981, run over and killed by a city bus during a demonstration to protect squatted houses.

Reagan, Ronald: 1911-2004; 1941, elected president of the Screen Actors Guild; cooperated with the FBI in the late 1940s, providing them access to SAG's books and identifying suspected communists in Hollywood; 1967-1975, Republican governor of California; 1969, turned police loose on students occupying People's Park in Berkeley, resulting in one death; 1981-1989, president of the United States; 1983, ordered the invasion of Grenada to overthrow a Marxist-Leninist government, introduced Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars"); 1986, launched the War on Drugs, bombed Libya in retaliation for a bombing at a discotheque in West Berlin that was popular with U.S. military personnel; supported the Contras in Nicaragua throughout the 1980s; 1994, diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

Rebmann, Kurt: 1924-2005; 1977-1990, attorney general.

Reinders, Ralf: b. 1948; 1972, founding member of the 2JM; 1975, arrested; 1978, sentenced to fifteen years in prison; 1990, released from prison.

Roll, Carmen: b. 1947; SPK member; 1972, joined the RAF, arrested the same year prior to the May Offensive; 1976, released from prison, moved to Italy.

Rollnik, Gabriele: b. 1950; 1974, joined the 2JM; 1975, arrested; 1976, broke out of prison; 1978, arrested in Bulgaria; 1981, sentenced to fifteen years in prison; 1992, released from prison.

Roos, Helga: b. 1954; alleged RAF supporter; 1978, participated in the dpa occupation, arrested and sentenced to one year in prison; 1981, arrested following the RAF's attempted assassination of U.S. General Frederick Kroesen and charged with being an aboveground RAF member; 1983, sentenced to four years and nine months in prison.

Rössner, Bernd: b. 1946; 1975, joined the RAF and participated in the Holger Meins Commando's hostage taking at the West German embassy in Stockholm, where he was captured; 1977, received two life sentences; 1992, released from prison on grounds of ill health; 1994, pardoned.

Roth, Karl-Heinz: b. 1942; SDS member in the 1960s; 1975, cofounder of the theoretical journal *Autonomie*, seriously injured and arrested in a shootout with police in Cologne during which Werner Sauber was killed; 1977, acquitted and released from prison; remains active as a left communist intellectual.

Ruhland, Karl-Heinz: b. 1938; 1970, RAF supporter, arrested the same year, soon became the first RAF associate to serve as a crown witness.

Salameh, Ali Hassan (Abu Hassan): 1940-1979; chief of Al Fatah's security organization, a leading figure in the Black September organization; 1975, becomes PLO's liaison to the CIA; 1979, assassinated by the Mossad.

Sauber, Werner: 1947-1975; 2JM member; 1974, moved to Cologne to work as a factory organizer under a false name; 1975, died in a shootout with police in Cologne.

Scheel, Walter: b. 1919; 1968-1974, chairman of the FDP; 1969-1974, vice-chancellor and minister of foreign affairs during Willy Brandt's Social-Liberal Coalition; 1974-1979, president during the first five years of Helmut Schmidt's administration.

Schelm, Petra: 1951-1971; 1970, founding member of the RAF; 1971, killed in an exchange of fire with the police.

Schiller, Karl: 1911-1994; 1933, member of the paramilitary Stormtroopers; 1937, joined the Nazi Party; 1946, joined the SPD; 1966-1972, minister of the economy; 1971-1972, minister of finance.

Schiller, Margrit: b. 1948; SPK member; 1971, joined the RAF, arrested a few months

later, sentenced to two years and three months; 1973, released from prison and returned underground; 1974, arrested; 1979, released from prison; 1985-1993, lived in exile in Cuba; 1993-2003, lived in exile in Uruguay; 2003, returned to Germany.

Schily, Otto: b. 1932; lawyer for prisoners from the RAF; 1979, founding member of the Green Party; 1989, left the Green Party to join the SPD; 1994-1998, chairman of the SPD parliamentary faction; 1998-2005, federal minister of the interior; 2005, joined the boards of two biometric security firms.

Schleyer, Hanns Martin: 1915-1977; former SS member and leading West German industrialist; 1977, kidnapped and executed by the RAF during the German Autumn.

Schmidt, Helmut: b. 1918; SPD politician; 1967-1969, chairman of the SPD parliamentary faction; 1969-1972, federal minister of defense; 1972-1974, federal minister of finance; 1974-1982, chancellor.

Schmitz, Sabine: b. 1955; alleged RAF supporter; 1976, arrested and charged under §129.

Schneider, Gert: RAF member; 1977, arrested in Amsterdam; 1978, extradited to the FRG; 1980, sentenced to fifteen years in prison; 1983, broke with the RAF; 1987, released from prison.

Schneider, Jürgen: alleged RAF supporter, 1981, arrested and charged with supporting a terrorist organization; 1982, sentenced to two and a half years in prison.

Schröder, Gerhard: b. 1944; lawyer and SPD member; 1978-1980, represented former RAF member Horst Mahler, winning his freedom from prison; 1988, successfully represented Mahler in his effort to regain the right to practice law in the FRG; 1990-1998, president of Lower Saxony; 1998-2005, chancellor of the FRG.

Schubert, Ingrid: 1944-1977; 1970, founding member of the RAF, arrested the same year, sentenced to thirteen years in prison; 1977, killed in prison.

Schulz, Adelheid: b. 1955; 1976, joined the RAF; 1982, arrested; 1985, received three life sentences; 1994, charged with the 1978 shooting death of a Dutch border guard on the basis of information provided by the defectors to the GDR; 1998, released from prison on grounds of ill health; 2002, pardoned.

Seckendorff-Gudent, Ekkehard von: b. 1940; physician, RAF supporter; 1980, received asylum in the GDR; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors, released after one day as the only crime he was charged with was support for a terrorist organization, and the statute of limitations had expired.

Shultz, George: b. 1920; 1969-1970, U.S. secretary of labor; 1972-1974, U.S. secretary of

the Treasury; 1982-1989, U.S. secretary of state.

Siepmann, Ina: b. 1944; nurse, alleged 2JM supporter; 1974, arrested; 1975, released from prison as part of a prisoner exchange for CDU politician Peter Lorenz, who had been kidnapped by the 2JM; 1978, following the Till Meyer breakout, she relocated permanently to the Middle East; 1982, killed in Lebanon by an Israeli airstrike during the Sabra and Shatila Massacre.

Söhnlein, Horst: b. 1943; 1968, participated in the Frankfurt department store arsons, released while awaiting an appeal; 1969, turned himself in and served his sentence when the appeal was denied.

Sonnenberg, Günter: b. 1954; 1976, joined the RAF; 1977, shot in the head and arrested; 1978, received two life sentences; 1992, released from prison.

Speitel, Angelika: b. 1952; ex-wife of Volker Speitel; 1977, joined the RAF; 1978, shot and arrested; 1979, sentenced to life in prison; 1990, pardoned.

Speitel, Volker: b. 1950; ex-husband of Angelika Speitel; assistant to lawyers representing prisoners from the RAF; 1977, arrested, cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1979, released from prison and relocated to Brazil.

Stachowiak, Ilse: b. 1954; 1970, joined the RAF; 1971, arrested, released the same year and returned underground; 1974, arrested; 1978, released, the last four months of her sentence being converted into three years of probation.

Stahl, Wolfgang: b. 1952; participated in underground group with Sigurd Debus.

Staub, Ernst-Volker: b. 1954; 1984, arrested in the company of RAF members; 1990, released from prison and went underground; 1999, allegedly involved in the robbery of an armored car in Duisburg; one of three alleged former RAF members still being sought.

Sternebeck, Sigrid: b. 1949; 1977, joined the RAF; 1980, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR, where she married fellow RAF defector Ralf Baptist Friedrich; 1990, arrested and cooperated with police and prosecutors; 1992, sentenced to eight and a half years; released and living under a new name.

Stoll, Willy Peter: 1950-1978; 1976, joined the RAF; 1978, shot dead by police.

Strauß, Franz Josef: 1915-1988; CSU politician; 1953-1955, federal minister for special affairs; 1955-1956, federal minister for atomic issues; 1956-1962, federal minister of defense; 1966-1969, federal minister of finance; 1978-1988, president of Bavaria.

Ströbele, Hans-Christian: b. 1939; lawyer for prisoners from the RAF; 1969, cofounder of

the Socialist Lawyers Collective; 1978, founding member of the *Alternative Liste*; 1978, cofounder of **taz**; 1985, joined the Green Party.

Stürmer, Gudrun: b. 1950; 2JM member; 1978, participated in Till Meyer liberation, arrested shortly thereafter in Bulgaria and extradited to the FRG.

Taufer, Lutz: b. 1944; SPK member; 1975, joined the RAF and participated in the Holger Meins Commando's hostage taking at the West German embassy in Stockholm, where he was captured; 1977, received two life sentences; 1995, released from prison.

Tauras, Jürgen: b. 1951; sometime between 1974 and 1976, joined with the underground group that had been established by Klaus Dorff, Waltraud Liewald, and Peter-Jürgen Boock; 1976, arrested; 1978, sentenced to seven and a half years in prison for illegal activities.

Teufel, Fritz: 1943-2010; 1967, founding member of Kommune 1; 1972, founding member of the 2JM; 1975, arrested in connection with the 2JM's Lorenz kidnapping, he was held for five years before presenting an alibi (he had been working under a false name in an Essen factory at the time); 2010, died of Parkinson's disease, shortly after his interment the urn containing his ashes was stolen only to turn up a week later near Rudi Dutschke's grave.

Thatcher, Margaret: b. 1925-2013; 1959-1970, British Conservative Party member of parliament; 1961, parliamentary under secretary at the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance; 1967, selected for the U.S. Foreign Leader Program, joined the Shadow Cabinet as fuel spokesperson; 1970, secretary of state for education and science; 1975-1979, leader of the opposition; 1979-1990, prime minister; 1982, launched Malvinas War in response to the Argentine invasion of the British-controlled South Georgia and Falkland Islands; 1984, survived IRA assassination attempt; 1990, forced to resign over her opposition to joining a single-currency European Community; 2013, died of a stroke, occasioning spontaneous street parties and celebrations across the UK.

Thimme, Johannes: 1956-1985; 1976, affiliated himself with the RAF support scene; 1977, arrested in connection with the Buback assassination; 1978, sentenced to one year and ten months for membership in a terrorist organization; 1979, released from prison; 1981, arrested and charged with supporting a terrorist organization, sentenced to one and a half years; 1982, released from prison; 1985, killed when a bomb he was helping to plant exploded prematurely.

Viehmann, Klaus: 2JM member; 1978, arrested, sentenced to fifteen years in prison.

Viett, Inge: b. 1944; 1972, founding member of the 2JM, arrested the same year; 1973,

broke out of prison; 1975, arrested; 1976, broke out of prison; 1980, joined the RAF; 1982, left the RAF and received asylum in the GDR; 1990, arrested, the only RAF defector to the GDR who did not provide evidence against other guerillas, although she did provide information about her contacts in the MfS; 1997, released from prison.

Vogel, Andreas: b. 1950; 2JM member; 1976, arrested, sentenced to ten years in prison; 1980, affiliated himself with the RAF's positions while in prison.

Vogel, Hans-Jochen: b. 1926; Hitler Youth squad leader prior to being conscripted in 1943; 1950 joined SPD; 1976-1983 minister of justice; 1987-1991, leader of SPD.

Voigt, Helmut: b. 1943; head of the MfS's international terrorism section, contact for West German guerilla groups, involved in relocating RAF defectors to the GDR; 1994, sentenced to four years in prison for supplying the explosives used in the Carlos group's 1983 bombing of the French cultural center in West Berlin.

Vollmer, Antje: b. 1943; Green Party member elected to parliament in 1983, 1987, and 1994; 1988, with left-wing novelist Martin Walser launched an initiative for dialogue with prisoners from the RAF; consistent supporter of amnesty for prisoners from the RAF.

Wackernagel, Christof: b. 1951; 1977, joined the RAF, arrested in Holland; 1978, extradited to the FRG; 1980, sentenced to fifteen years in prison; 1983, broke with the RAF; 1987, released from prison; relocated to Mali.

Wagner, Rolf Clemens: b. 1944; 1975, joined with the underground group that had been established by Klaus Dorff, Waltraud Liewald, and Peter-Jürgen Boock; 1976, joined the RAF; 1979, arrested in the aftermath of a bank robbery in Zurich, Switzerland, and extradited to the FRG; 1985, received two life sentences; 1993, sentenced to twelve additional years in prison on the basis of testimony provided by former defector to the GDR Werner Lotze; 2003, pardoned on grounds of ill health; 2007, briefly threatened with reimprisonment after stating in an interview that the Schleyer kidnapping was a legitimate action.

Walser, Martin: b. 1927; *Gruppe 47* novelist; 1988, with Green Party member Antje Vollmer launched an initiative for a dialogue with prisoners from the RAF.

Wessel, Ulrich: 1946-1975; SPK member; 1975, joined the RAF, killed during the Holger Meins Commando's hostage taking at the West German embassy in Stockholm.

Wieland, Gert Jürgen: b. 1943; participated in underground group with Sigurd Debus.

Wischnewski, Hans-Jürgen: 1922-2005; SPD member; 1959-1961, chairman of the *Jusos*; 1966, federal minister for economic cooperation; 1970, member of the SPD's executive

committee; 1974, secretary of state; 1974-1976; minister of state at the Department of Foreign Affairs; 1976-1979, minister of state at the federal Chancellery; 1977, government envoy to Third World countries during the German Autumn; 1979-1982, deputy chairman of the SPD; 1982, minister of state at the federal Chancellery.

Wisniewski, Stefan: b. 1953; 1975 or 1976, joined the RAF; 1978, arrested at Orly Airport in Paris; 1981, sentenced to life in prison; 1999, released from prison; 2007, Peter-Jürgen Boock claimed that Wisniewski was the shooter in the 1977 assassination of Attorney General Siegfried Buback, Verena Becker is alleged to have made similar claims, no charges were ever laid as these claims were not considered credible.

Zeis, Peter: BAW prosecutor involved in numerous RAF-related trials, including the Stammheim trial of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Ulrike Meinhof, and Jan-Carl Raspe.

Zimmermann, Friedrich: 1925-2012; 1943, joined the Nazi Party; 1948, joined the CSU; 1982-1989 minister of the interior.

Zitzlaff, Wienke: b. 1931; RAF member Ulrike Meinhof's sister; active in prisoner support work.

Armed Struggle in West Germany: A Chronology

1967

June 2, 1967

Student Benno Ohnesorg is shot and killed by undercover police officer Karl-Heinz Kurras during a demonstration against a visit by the Shah of Iran to West Berlin. Initially acquitted, Kurras is retried, convicted and spends four months in jail. He is allowed to retain his job.

1968

April 3, 1968

Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Thorwald Proll, and Horst Söhnlein firebomb two Frankfurt department stores to protest the escalation of the Vietnam War. They are arrested the next day.

April 11, 1968

Student leader Rudi Dutschke is shot three times, including once in the head, and seriously injured, in West Berlin. The shooter, Josef Bachmann, is a young right-wing worker from Munich, who claims to have been inspired by the *Bild Zeitung*. The shooting sparked weeks of violent unrest, primarily directed against the Springer Press, the publisher of *Bild Zeitung*. The Springer Press is blockaded in West Berlin. Attacks against Springer Press facilities occur all over Europe. In Munich, two demonstrators are killed in clashes with the police. Demonstrations and clashes occur for the rest of the month in cities throughout West Germany.

October 31, 1968

The Frankfurt *Landgericht* (Regional Court—LG) sentences Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Thorwald Proll, and Horst Söhnlein to three years

in prison for the April department store arsons in Frankfurt.

1969

June 13, 1969

Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Thorwald Proll, and Horst Söhnlein are released while their case is appealed. All except Söhnlein immediately go underground. Proll will part ways with Baader and Ensslin in December 1969. On November 21, 1970, he will turn himself in to the authorities, serving less than a year and being released in October 1971.

1970

February 12, 1970

Fifty-two psychiatric patients form the *Sozialistischer Patientenkollektiv* (SPK—Socialist Patients Collective) in Heidelberg. The group's motto is “Turn Illness Into a Weapon.”

April 4, 1970

Andreas Baader is arrested in West Berlin.

May 14, 1970

An armed group breaks Andreas Baader out of the library of the Institute for Social Research, where he has obtained permission to work with Ulrike Meinhof on a book about juvenile detention centers while serving his sentence. An Institute employee, Georg Linke, is shot and injured.

May 22, 1970

The West Berlin radical left-wing magazine 883 publishes *Die Rote Armee aufbauen* (Build the Red Army), an initial text from the group that would go on to found the RAF. A second text is published in 883's June 5 edition.

June-August 1970

Twenty West Germans, most of whom will later found the Red Army Faction (RAF), receive training in an Al Fatah training camp in Jordan.

September 29, 1970

In West Berlin, three simultaneous bank robberies are carried out by people who will go on to found the RAF and the 2JM. The robberies net 220,000 DM.

1971

May 1, 1971

Das Konzept Stadtguerilla (The Urban Guerilla Concept) is released. The name Red Army Faction (RAF) is used for the first time.

June 1971

Über den bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa (Regarding the Armed Struggle in West Europe), a document signed The RAF Collective, but entirely the work of Horst Mahler, is released. The rest of the RAF reject the document, and the pursuant tension will eventually lead to Horst Mahler being expelled from the group.

June 24, 1971

SPK members exchange fire with the police at a traffic checkpoint, injuring one police officer. The SPK's office is raided that evening. The SPK dissolves itself, a number of its members going underground and joining the RAF.

July 8, 1971

Thomas Weissbecker, Michael "Bommi" Baumann, and Georg von Rauch go to trial for beating *Quick* journalist Horst Rieck. Baumann and Weissbecker are released on bail. Von Rauch, facing other charges, with a possible ten-year sentence, pretends to be Weissbecker (the two men resembled each other) and leaves with Baumann. Weissbecker is later

released by the embarrassed authorities. All three go underground. This marks the beginning of the process leading to the 2nd of June Movement (2JM), a West Berlin-based guerilla group. Weissbecker joins the RAF and will be shot by police in March 1972.

July 15, 1971

During the first large-scale manhunt for members of the RAF, Petra Schelm becomes the first member of the RAF to be shot dead by police. Werner Hoppe is arrested.

September 1, 1971

Horst Herold is named head of the *Bundeskriminalamt* (BKA). He immediately begins centralizing the manhunt for RAF members and constructing what will become the most extensive police computer database in the world.

1972

May 1972

A major RAF document entitled *Stadtguerilla und Klassenkampf* (The Urban Guerilla and Class Struggle) is released. The document is sometimes referred to as *Dem Volk dienen* (Serve the People).

May 11, 1972

Responding to the mining of Haiphong harbor and the intensified carpet-bombing of Vietnam, the RAF's Petra Schelm Commando bombs the Headquarters of the U.S. Army V Corps in Frankfurt. One lieutenant colonel is killed and thirteen soldiers are injured.

May 13, 1972

The RAF's Thomas Weissbecker Commando bombs the police headquarters in both Augsburg and Munich.

May 15, 1972

The RAF plants a bomb in the car of Judge Wolfgang Buddenberg, head judge for the trial of RAF member Manfred Grashof. (The judge had ordered Grashof held in strict isolation despite the serious injuries he sustained during a shootout at the time of his arrest.) Buddenberg's wife is seriously injured, when she, instead of him, uses the car.

May 19, 1972

The RAF's 2nd of June Commando bombs the Springer Building in Hamburg. Despite three warnings, the building is not cleared and seventeen workers are injured.

May 24, 1972

The RAF's July 15th Commando bombs the Headquarters of the U.S. Army in Europe in Heidelberg. Three soldiers are killed.

May 28, 1972

A false communiqué is issued claiming that the RAF will place three random car bombs in Stuttgart on June 2, the anniversary of the killing of Benno Ohnesorg.

May 29, 1972

The RAF issues a communiqué addressing the false communiqué regarding the attacks threatened against Stuttgart.

May 31, 1972

A recorded message from Ulrike Meinhof is played at a teach-in in Frankfurt organized by the prisoner support group Red Aid. The BKA initiates a massive manhunt for RAF members, known as Operation Washout.

June 1–July 7, 1972

In the wake of the May Offensive, numerous RAF members are arrested in a series of separate incidents. Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Holger Meins, Jan-Carl Raspe, Ulrike Meinhof, Klaus Jünschke, Irmgard Möller, Gerhard Müller, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, and Bernhard Braun are all captured, and Katharina Hammerschmidt, a supporter being sought, turns herself in on her lawyer's advice.

November 1972

The RAF releases a major document entitled *Die Aktion des Schwarzen September in München—Zur Strategie des antiimperialistischen Kampfes* (The Black September Action in Munich: Regarding the Strategy for Anti-Imperialist Struggle). In it, they use the Black September attack in Munich as a starting point for a sweeping discussion of anti-imperialist resistance in West Germany and throughout the world.

1973

January 17–February 16, 1973

Forty prisoners from the RAF participate in the first collective hunger strike, demanding an end to isolation and the closing of the dead wing at Cologne-Ossendorf prison.

May 8–June 29, 1973

Eighty prisoners from the RAF participate in the second collective hunger strike, demanding integration into the general prison population and free access to political information.

November 16, 1973

The Revolutionary Cells (RZ) attacks ITT in West Berlin in response to the company's role in the September 11 Chilean coup. This is the first action by a new guerilla group that will quickly take its place alongside the RAF and the 2JM as a force to be reckoned with.

1974

February 4, 1974

In simultaneous predawn actions, RAF safehouses in Hamburg, Frankfurt, and the Netherlands are raided. RAF members Helmut Pohl, Ilse Stachowiak, Christa Eckes, and Eberhard Becker are arrested in Hamburg, while Margrit Schiller, Kay Werner-Allnach, and Wolfgang Beer are arrested in Frankfurt.

September 13, 1974

Ulrike Meinhof announces the third collective hunger strike of the prisoners from the RAF while testifying at Andreas Baader's trial. For the first time, the prisoners demand association with one another rather than integration into the general prison population. Meinhof releases a *Provisorisches Kampfprogramm für den Kampf um die politischen Rechte der gefangenen Arbeiter* (Provisional Program of Struggle for the Political Rights of Imprisoned Workers), the only RAF document ever issued in which prisoners in general are addressed.

September 27, 1974

Monika Berberich reads a statement expelling Horst Mahler from the RAF during a trial at which she is testifying. Mahler has by this time joined the Maoist KPD/AO.

November 9, 1974

RAF member Holger Meins dies after two months on hunger strike. Demonstrations break out all over West Germany.

November 10, 1974

Günter von Drenkmann, president of the West Berlin Supreme Court, is killed during an attempted kidnapping by the 2JM. A communiqué explains the action was in retaliation for the death of Holger Meins.

November 11, 1974

In Berlin, a mass demonstration to support the prisoners and protest the death of Holger Meins draws 15,000 people.

November 18, 1974

Holger Meins is buried in the family grave in Hamburg. Five thousand people attend the funeral. As Meins's coffin is lowered into the ground, student leader Rudi Dutschke, in what will become an iconic moment in West German left history, steps forward, and standing over the grave, gives the clenched fist salute, shouting, "Holger, the struggle continues."

December 7, 1974

A bomb explodes in Bremen Central Station, and five people are injured.

December 9, 1974

The RAF issues a communiqué denouncing the Bremen bombing as a police action.

1975

January 1975

The *Internationales Komitee zur Verteidigung politischer Gefangener in Europa* (IVK) is founded by lawyers of political prisoners.

January 1, 1975

The *Lex Baader-Meinhof* (Baader Meinhof Laws) come into effect. Among other things, the laws allow the court to exclude defense attorneys who are suspected of forming a criminal association with their clients and allows trials to continue without the accused present if the reason for the absence is deemed to be the fault of the prisoner, e.g., the result of illness due to hunger striking.

January 20, 1975

Spiegel publishes an interview with prisoners from the RAF Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Ulrike Meinhof, and Jan-Carl Raspe.

February 2, 1975

The RAF writes a letter to the hunger striking prisoners asking them to call off their hunger strike and promising to pursue the struggle from there on in.

February 18, 1975

The construction site of the planned Wyhl nuclear power plant is occupied in the opening salvo of what will become a powerful antinuclear movement in West Germany. This initial occupation is soon cleared by police.

February 23, 1975

Over 20,000 people reoccupy the nuclear power plant construction site in Wyhl.

February 27, 1975

The 2JM kidnaps Peter Lorenz, CDU candidate for mayor in West Berlin. The Lorenz kidnappers demand the release of six imprisoned guerillas: Rolf Pohle, Rolf Heißler, Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, Verena Becker, Ina Siepmann, and Horst Mahler. All except Mahler, who declines to be released, will be flown to sanctuary in South Yemen, and Lorenz will be released unharmed.

March 20, 1975

Elisabeth von Dyck is arrested along with Petra Krause and three Swiss citizens in Zurich, Switzerland.

April 24, 1975

The RAF's Holger Meins Commando, which includes a number of former SPK members, occupies the West German Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden

and demands the release of twenty-six political prisoners. During a tense standoff, the guerilla executes the West German Military and Economic attachés. Police storm the building after explosives the guerilla had laid detonate. RAF member Ulrich Wessel is killed, and Siegfried Hausner, Hanna Krabbe, Karl-Heinz Dellwo, Lutz Taufer, and Bernd Rössner are all captured. Hausner, who is seriously injured, is denied appropriate medical care; he will die ten days later.

June 4, 1975

The European Commission of Human Rights declares that prisoners from the RAF have been held in unacceptable conditions since 1972.

June 29, 1975

RAF supporter Katharina Hammerschmidt dies of cancer in a West Berlin hospital, having been held in prison and denied adequate treatment until it was too late.

1976

March 16, 1976

The Hamburg LG sentences RAF member turned state witness Gerhard Müller to ten years in prison. In exchange for his cooperation, Müller is never charged with the murder of police officer Norbert Schmid. Instead, he is released after six and a half years, paid 500,000 DM, and relocated to the U.S.A. RAF member Irmgard Möller is sentenced to four and a half years.

May 9, 1976

RAF member Ulrike Meinhof is found hanged in her cell. The state claims it is a suicide. Fellow prisoners and supporters assert that she was murdered. An International Investigatory Commission into the Death of Ulrike Meinhof will be established and will eventually rule that the

evidence indicates murder. Bombings and demonstrations will occur throughout Western Europe for several weeks in response to Meinhof's death.

June 27, 1976

A mixed commando made up of members of the PFLP (EO) and of the RZ hijack an Air France airliner traveling from Tel Aviv, Israel to Paris, France, and divert it to Entebbe, Uganda, demanding the release of fifty-three political prisoners in Israel, West Germany, France, Switzerland, and Kenya. The West Germans demanded were RAF members Werner Hoppe, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Ingrid Schubert, and 2JM members Ralf Reinders, Fritz Teufel, and Inge Viett.

July 1976

The influential French newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique* interviews prisoners from RAF and their attorneys.

July 4, 1976

An Israeli special operations force storms the airliner in Entebbe, killing the four guerillas, three hostages, and a squad commander, as well as forty-five Ugandan soldiers. RZ members Wilfred Böse and Brigitte Kuhlmann lose their lives in the action.

July 7, 1976

RAF member Monika Berberich and 2JM members Juliane Plambeck, Gabriele Rollnick, and Inge Viett overpower a guard and escape from the Lehrter Straße Women's Prison in West Berlin.

July 21, 1976

RAF member Monika Berberich, who escaped from a West Berlin prison with three other women on July 7, is rearrested.

October 30, 1976

Eight thousand people participate in the first occupation of the proposed nuclear power plant site in Brokdorf. The occupation is broken up with what the mainstream radio station NDR refers to as “unbelievable brutality.”

November 13–14, 1976

Forty thousand people participate in a renewed occupation of the proposed nuclear power plant site in Brokdorf. Approximately 1,000 people are injured by police clearing the site, some seriously.

1977

February 8, 1977

RAF member Brigitte Mohnhaupt is released from prison and immediately goes back underground.

March 19, 1977

Twenty thousand people demonstrate against the construction of a nuclear power plant in Grohnde.

March 29–April 30, 1977

Prisoners from the RAF begin their fourth collective hunger strike, demanding to be treated as guaranteed by the Geneva Convention, association in groups of no less than fifteen, abolition of isolation, an international investigation into the deaths of Holger Meins, Siegfried Hausner, and Ulrike Meinhof, and an end to psychological warfare through false flag actions and communiqés.

April 7, 1977

The RAF’s Ulrike Meinhof Commando assassinates Attorney General Siegfried Buback, his driver, Wolfgang Göbel, and a bodyguard, George Wuster.

April 28, 1977

The Stuttgart *Oberlandesgericht* (*Land* Court of Appeal—OLG) finds RAF members Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Andreas Baader guilty of six murders and thirty-four attempted murders in connection with six bomb attacks. Baader is sentenced to life plus twenty years, Raspe to life plus ten years, and Ensslin to life plus six years.

April 30, 1977

The minister of justice for Baden Wurttemburg agrees to meet the prisoners' demand for association. In response, the prisoners end their hunger strike. Shortly thereafter work begins on the seventh floor of Stammheim to allow association with additional prisoners from the RAF.

May 3, 1977

RAF members Günter Sonnenberg and Verena Becker, the latter a former 2JM member, are arrested in Singen. Following a firefight, Sonnenberg is shot in the head and Becker in the leg.

July 8, 1977

Klaus Croissant, an attorney who has defended imprisoned RAF members, flees to Paris to escape increasingly threatening harassment. He holds a press conference at which he requests political asylum.

July 30, 1977

Jürgen Ponto, the president of West Germany's largest bank, the Dresdner Bank, is shot and killed in his home. The RAF claims responsibility. Susanne Albrecht, who is the sister of Ponto's goddaughter, was recognized, and so signs her name to the communiqué.

August 9, 1977

Prisoners from the RAF participate in their fifth collective hunger strike in response to an attack on the Stammheim prisoners. Some of the prisoners

escalate to a thirst strike almost immediately.

August 22, 1977

The RZ attacks the MAN installation in Nuremberg in response to the company's role in the production of nuclear weapons, particularly in South Africa.

August 30, 1977

The RZ carries out attacks against the Klein and Schanzlin & Becker AG installations in Frankenthal in response to the role that both companies play in the production of nuclear weapons.

August 25, 1977

A RAF commando carries out a failed missile attack against the BAW office in Karlsruhe. The missile failed to launch due to a technical error.

September 2, 1977

Following the breakdown of negotiations between Amnesty International and the federal government, the prisoners break off their hunger and thirst strike.

September 5, 1977

West Germany's top industrialist, and former SS officer, Hanns Martin Schleyer is kidnapped from his limousine in Cologne by the RAF's Siegfried Hausner Commando. His chauffeur and three bodyguards are killed.

September 22, 1977

RAF member Knut Folkerts, a suspect in the Buback assassination, is arrested in Utrecht, Holland, following a shootout in which police officer Arie Kranenberg is killed.

September 24, 1977

Fifty thousand people participate in an antinuclear demonstration against a fast breeder reactor in Kalkar.

October 2, 1977

Volker Speitel and Rosemarie Prieß, workers in Klaus Croissant's office, are arrested on a train in Puttgarden.

October 13, 1977

A four-person PFLP (EO) group calling itself the Commando Martyr Halimeh of the Struggle Against World Imperialism Organization hijacks a Lufthansa airliner en route from Majorca to Paris, taking it first to Rome, then to Cyprus. They issue a communiqué saying their action is meant to reinforce the demands of the Siegfried Hausner Commando.

October 18, 1977

The Lufthansa airliner, which has made its way to Mogadishu, is stormed and three of the four hijackers are killed, the fourth is badly injured.

Shortly thereafter a state official announces the alleged suicides of Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin and the attempted suicides of Jan-Carl Raspe and Irmgard Möller. Raspe subsequently dies of his injuries. Only Möller survives, and she refutes the state's suicide contention.

October 19, 1977

The Siegfried Hausner Commando issues a final communiqué, announcing that Schleyer has been executed. His body is found in the trunk of a green Audi 100 in the border town of Mülhausen, France.

October 25, 1977

Hanns Martin Schleyer is buried.

President Walter Scheel describes the war against the RAF as a war of civilization against barbarism.

October 28, 1977

Chancellor Schmidt addresses the Institute for Strategic Studies in London, England, requesting that NATO respond to the Soviet Union's deployment of SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe. This speech will subsequently be viewed as the origin of NATO's "double-track" strategy.

November 9–13, 1977

The 2JM kidnaps industrialist Walter Palmers in Vienna. He is released in exchange for a ransom of 31 million shillings, which is divided amongst the 2JM, the RAF, and a Palestinian group.

November 11, 1977

RAF members Christoph Wackernagel and Gert Schneider are arrested in Amsterdam.

November 12, 1977

RAF prisoner Ingrid Schubert, one of eleven prisoners demanded in exchange for Schleyer, is found hanged in her cell in Munich. The state claims it is suicide, but friends and family believe it is murder.

November 17, 1977

Attorney Klaus Croissant, who has defended imprisoned RAF members, is extradited from France to West Germany and immediately imprisoned in Stammheim.

November 19, 1977

Irmgard Möller begins a hunger strike for association with fellow prisoner from the RAF Verena Becker.

November 23, 1977

Thomas Gratt and Othmar Keplinger, two Austrian students active in the *Arbeitskreis politische Prozesse*, are arrested in connection with the 2JM's

Palmers kidnapping.

November 28, 1977

The trial of RAF member Verena Becker begins. She is charged with attempted murder, robbery, and membership in a terrorist organization. *Arbeitskreis politische Prozesse* founder Reinhard Pitsch is arrested in connection with the 2JM's Palmers kidnapping.

December 20, 1977

RAF member Knut Folkerts is sentenced to twenty years in prison in Utrecht, Holland.

Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, who had been close to the 2JM for years, and Christian Möller are arrested following a shootout with Swiss border guards at the Swiss border with France.

December 28, 1977

The Stuttgart OLG sentences RAF member Verena Becker to life in prison.

1978

January 18, 1978

The trial of attorney Kurt Groenewold on charges of helping organize the illegal communications system used by prisoners from the RAF begins in Hamburg.

January 21, 1978

RAF member Christine Kuby is arrested in a shootout with police in a Hamburg drugstore. Kuby and a police officer are injured. Kuby was attempting to use a forged prescription to buy narcotics for fellow RAF member Peter-Jürgen Boock, a drug addict.

January 27–29, 1978

The Tunix Congress is held in West Berlin. A broad cross section of the left

meets to discuss how to proceed after the German Autumn.

February 1, 1978

Prisoners from the RAF held in Holland begin a hunger strike, demanding an end to isolation and bans on visits, free access to literature, and to be flown to a country of their choice.

March 9, 1978

Former defense attorney Klaus Croissant's trial begins. Croissant refuses to distance himself from his former clients.

March 14–April 20, 1978

Prisoners from the RAF participate in the organization's sixth collective hunger strike, demanding to be treated according to the Geneva Convention's guarantees for POWs, association, the return of the confiscated writings of Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe, Andreas Baader, Irmgard Möller, and Ingrid Schubert, and an independent investigation into the murders of prisoners from the RAF.

March 25–April 4, 1978

The Third International Russell Tribunal meets in Frankfurt to examine the human rights situation in West Germany, particularly as regards the *Berufsverbot*. The tribunal is derided by the state and the media.

March 26, 1978

Waddi Haddad, leader of the PFLP (EO), dies in East Germany. Sources close to the U.S. and Israeli counterinsurgency structures will confirm that he had been poisoned by Mossad. Following his death the PFLP (EO) will dissolve, some of its remnants becoming the PFLP (SC), the May 15 group, and the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Factions (FARL).

April 10, 1978

The trial of 2JM members Ralf Reinders, Fritz Teufel, Ronald Fritzsche, Gerald Klöpper, Andreas Vogel, and Till Meyer in connection with the Drenkmann assassination and the Lorenz kidnapping begins in West Berlin under Judge Geus, the same judge who acquitted police officer Karl-Heinz Kurras in the shooting of Benno Ohnesorg. Reinders, Teufel, and Fritzsche assault their court-appointed attorneys.

April 26, 1978

The Stuttgart OLG sentences Günter Sonnenberg to two life terms in prison.

May 11, 1978

RAF member Stefan Wisniewski is arrested at Orly Airport in Paris. He is in possession of a letter from Karl-Heinz Dellwo, a prisoner from the RAF, and forty capsules of narcotics for RAF member Peter-Jürgen Boock.

May 12, 1978

RAF members Sieglinde Hofmann, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, Rolf Clemens Wagner, and Peter-Jürgen Boock are detained in Yugoslavia.

May 27, 1978

Two armed women pretending to be attorneys and calling themselves the Nabil Harb Commando break 2JM member Till Meyer out of Moabit Prison in West Berlin. Plans to break 2JM member Andreas Vogel out at the same time are thwarted.

June 1, 1978

The law establishing that meetings between political prisoners and their attorneys will take place through a glass partition comes into force.

June 5, 1978

2JM member Klaus Viehmann is arrested in West Berlin.

June 8, 1978

Gerhart Baum (FDP) replaces Werner Maihofer as minister of the interior.

June 21, 1978

2JM members Till Meyer, Gabriele Rollnick, Gudrun Strumer, and Angelika Goder are arrested by heavily armed West German police in Varna, Bulgaria. Bulgarian police do not intervene and the four are flown back to West Germany.

June 27, 1978

2JM members Inge Viett, Regina Nicolai, and Ina Siepmann are detained in Prague, Czechoslovakia. After several days, the East German MfS intervenes to gain their release.

July 10, 1978

The Hamburg OLG sentences attorney Kurt Groenewold to two years' probation and a fine of 75,000 DM for supporting a criminal organization.

July 25, 1978

In what will come to be known as the Celle Hole scandal, intelligence agents blow a hole in the wall of Celle prison in an effort to break Sigurd Debus, a captured guerilla, but not a RAF member, out of prison in the hope that he will establish contact with the underground while under police surveillance.

August 1978

Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Khaddafi travels to the FRG for medical treatment; he meets with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and agrees to deny sanctuary to members of the West German guerilla, and to pressure the PLO to do the same.

RAF members Christian Klar, Heidi Schulz, and Willy Peter Stoll narrowly escape police after chartering a helicopter to check out possibilities for a

prison break.

August 4, 1978

RAF member Wolfgang Beer is released from prison.

September 6, 1978

RAF member Willy Peter Stoll is shot dead by police in a Chinese restaurant in Düsseldorf.

September 21, 1978

Karl-Heinz Dellwo begins a hunger and thirst strike demanding transfer to another prison and integration into the general prison population.

September 24, 1978

In a shootout in a wooded area outside of Dortmund, police officer Hans-Wilhelm Hansen is killed and RAF member Michael Knoll suffers fatal injuries, dying on October 8.

Angelika Speitel is injured and arrested. Werner Lotze manages to escape.

October 1978

Prisoners from the RAF being held in Holland, Knut Folkerts, Gert Schneider, and Christof Wackernagel, go on hunger strike; the Dutch state secretary of justice responds by extraditing the three to the FRG.

November 1, 1978

RAF members allegedly shoot and fatally injure Dutch border guards Dionysius de Jong and Johannes Goemans at the Kerkade border crossing in Holland.

November 6, 1978

Eleven people calling themselves the “Willy Peter Stoll and Michael Knoll Commando” are arrested after occupying the offices of the *deutsche presseagentur* (dpa) in Frankfurt in an attempt to send out a message about the

prisoners' conditions, especially those of Werner Hoppe and Karl-Heinz Dellwo. The eleven will receive one-year prison sentences as a result of this occupation.

November 17, 1978

When the West German government refuses to exchange them for eight exiled Croat fascists being held in Germany, Yugoslav authorities release RAF members Sieglinde Hofmann, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, Rolf Clemens Wagner, and Peter-Jürgen Boock, who were arrested on May 12. They depart to the Middle East.

December 14, 1978

The Stuttgart OLG sentences Volker Speitel to three years and two months in prison and Hans-Joachim Dellwo to two years in prison for supporting a terrorist organization. Both decide to cooperate with the police in exchange for reduced sentences, new identities, and relocation to another country.

December 15, 1978

The International Investigatory Commission into the Death of Ulrike Meinhof releases its findings, which indicate that Meinhof was dead before being hanged.

1979

January 1979

The Russell Tribunal holds a second round of hearings, this time addressing political censorship, prison conditions, and the power wielded by the *Verfassungsschutz* in the FRG.

The beginning of the “second oil shock.”

Representatives of the PLO, including the organization's security chief Ali Hassan Salameh, meet with West German officials in Austria, hammering out an agreement to cooperate to prevent guerilla attacks in Western

Europe and to help locate members of the RAF abroad.

January 16, 1979

The Shah of Iran flees the country; the monarchy will collapse in the coming weeks as rebel forces overwhelm troops loyal to the old regime.

January 22, 1979

Ali Hassan Salameh, PLO security chief and liaison with the CIA, is assassinated by the Mossad in Beirut.

February 1979

Amnesty International sends a *Memorandum on Prison Conditions of Persons Suspected or Convicted of Politically Motivated Crimes in the FRG* deploreding the ongoing use of isolation on political prisoners.

February 8, 1979

Werner Hoppe, whose health has been seriously damaged by years of isolation, is released from prison on compassionate grounds.

February 16, 1979

The Stuttgart LG sentences attorney Klaus Croissant to two and a half years in prison and four years of *Berufsverbot* for supporting a terrorist organization.

March 31, 1979

Days after the Three Mile Island nuclear accident in the United States, 100,000 people demonstrate in Hannover against the Gorleben nuclear waste disposal facility.

April 20, 1979

More than seventy prisoners participate in the seventh collective hunger strike, demanding the end of isolation, the application of the minimum guarantees of the Geneva Convention, and the release of Günter

Sonnenberg.

May 2, 1979

The Hamburg OLG sentences RAF member Christine Kuby to life in prison.

May 4, 1979

RAF member Elisabeth von Dyck is shot in the back by the police in Nuremberg, dying instantly.

Margaret Thatcher becomes Conservative prime minister of the United Kingdom.

May 31, 1979

The Heidelberg LG sentences Irmgard Möller to life in prison for her role in the RAF's May 1972 offensive.

June 1979

The *Internationale Kommission zum Schutz der Gefangenen* (IKSG) evolves out of several parallel prisoner support initiatives, including the International Investigatory Commission into the Death of Ulrike Meinhof, the remnants of the Committees Against Torture, and the FRG Relatives Committee. The IKSG will fill the void left by the IVK, which had essentially been forced to disband by the repression that followed the German Autumn.

June 6, 1979

Monika Berberich, Angelika Goder, Gabriele Rollnik, and Gudrun Stürmer, announce they are escalating to a thirst strike, calling for Irmgard Möller to be immediately granted association.

June 9, 1979

RAF member Rolf Heißler is shot in the head without warning and

arrested in Frankfurt.

June 15, 1979

Amnesty International contacts the Baden Württemberg and federal authorities about reports that the hunger strike has reached a critical stage for a number of prisoners, especially Irmgard Möller.

June 25, 1979

The RAF's Andreas Baader Commando attempts to assassinate the NATO supreme allied commander, U.S. General Alexander Haig.

June 26, 1979

Prisoners from the RAF call off their hunger strike.

July 17, 1979

President Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua is overthrown by the Sandinistas and flees to Miami, where he is denied entry by President Jimmy Carter. He finally receives asylum in Paraguay.

September 25, 1979

RAF member Helmut Pohl is released from prison.

November 19, 1979

RAF members Christian Klar, Rolf Clemens Wagner, Henning Beer, and Peter-Jürgen Boock rob a bank in Zurich of an estimated 548,000 Swiss francs. Making their getaway, they shoot two police officers, and passer-by Edith Kletzhändler is killed by a ricocheting bullet. Another civilian is shot. Rolf Clemens Wagner is arrested in Zurich later the same day.

November 30, 1979

RAF member Angelika Speitel is sentenced to life in prison.

December 10, 1979

NATO agrees to deploy medium-range Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe.

December 24, 1979

Former student leader and Green Party founder Rudi Dutschke drowns in his bath in Århus, Denmark, after suffering a seizure as a result of brain damage sustained when he was shot in the head on April 11, 1968.

Soviet troops enter Afghanistan.

1980

An interview with RZ representatives addressing the antinuclear struggle is published.

January 4, 1980

U.S. President Carter suspends ratification of SALT II.

January 23, 1980

U.S. President Carter declares the oil crisis to be the “moral equivalent of war” and expounds the “Carter Doctrine,” declaring that “Any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”

January 31, 1980

On the basis of testimony supplied by former RAF supporters Volker Speitel and Hans-Joachim Dellwo, the Stuttgart OLG sentences attorneys Arndt Müller and Armin Newerla to four years and eight months and three years and six months respectively for smuggling weapons and explosives into Stammheim.

February 1980

Christine Kuby, Christa Eckes, Inga Hornstein, Anne Reiche, and Brigitte Asdonk are all strip searched and moved to a new high-security unit in Lübeck-Lauerhof. The women respond by going on hunger strike, demanding their transfer out of the dead wing.

February 6, 1980

The America House in Frankfurt is occupied in solidarity with the prisoners from the RAF.

March 4, 1980

The roof of the America House in Hamburg is occupied in solidarity with the prisoners, especially the women at Lübeck-Lauerhof.

May 5, 1980

2JM members Ingrid Barabaß and Regina Nicolai, RAF member Sieglinde Hofmann, and two other Germans (Karola Magg and Karin Kamp-Münnichow) are arrested in Paris. They are immediately placed in strict isolation in Fleury-Mérogis prison.

May 6, 1980

Massive rioting occurs against a military swearing-in ceremony in the city of Bremen.

May 16, 1980

The America House in West Berlin is occupied in solidarity with the prisoners from the RAF.

June 1980

Der Minister und der Terrorist (The Minister and the Terrorist), a book-length conversation between Federal Minister of the Interior Gerhart Baum (FDP) and former RAF member Horst Mahler is released.

June 2, 1980

The 2JM members remaining at large release a communiqué announcing the organization's dissolution and merger with the RAF. Some 2JM members in prison will release a document distancing themselves from this fusion later in the month, but the 2JM will never claim responsibility for another action.

July 11, 1980

Ingrid Barabaß, Karin Kamp-Münnichow, Karola Magg, Regina Nicolai, and Sieglinde Hofmann are extradited from France to the FRG.

July 12, 1980

The Paris offices of the *Bundesbahn*, the West German railway company, are bombed in protest against the previous day's extraditions. Jean Paul Gérard, Michel Lapeyre, and Frédéric Oriach of the NAPAP are arrested shortly afterwards.

July 25, 1980

RAF members Juliane Plambeck, formerly of the 2JM, and Wolfgang Beer are killed in a traffic accident outside of the town of Unterriexingen.

July 31, 1980

The Düsseldorf OLG sentences RAF member Knut Folkerts to life in prison for three murders.

August 25, 1980

Sixteen-year-old Olaf Ritzmann is hit by a tram while fleeing a police attack on a demonstration against an appearance by CSU leader Franz Josef Strauß in Hamburg. He will die of his injuries four days later.

September 1980

The first meeting of Women Against Imperialist War is held in Hamburg.

September 5, 1980

The Düsseldorf OLG sentences RAF members Christoph Wackernagel and Gert Schneider to fifteen years in prison for attempted murder and membership in a terrorist organization.

September 12, 1980

NATO generals seize control of Turkey in a coup d'état. Over 600,000 people will soon be arrested, most will be tortured, and hundreds will be sentenced to death.

September 17, 1980

A Sandinista commando assassinates ousted President Anastasio Somoza in Paraguay, where he had received asylum.

September 26, 1980

The Düsseldorf OLG sentences RAF member Rolf Clemens Wagner to life in prison.

October 1980

Susanne Albrecht, Werner Lotze, Christine Dümlein, Monika Helbing, Ekkehard von Seckendorff-Gudent, Sigrid Sternebeck, Ralf Baptist Friedrich, and Silke Maier-Witt leave the RAF. They are provided with new identities and sanctuary in East Germany.

NATO Review publishes an article by Paul Johnson, an advisor to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, declaring that governments must not concede "to terrorist convicts the privileged status of political prisoners," or yield "to demands... for official enquiries, or international investigations, into alleged ill-treatment of terrorist suspects or convicts."

October 5, 1980

Helmut Schmidt is reelected chancellor; Social Democrats continue to rule West Germany in coalition with the Free Democratic Party.

November 4, 1980

Republican Ronald Reagan wins the U.S. presidential election.

December 12, 1980

A squatters' demonstration in West Berlin evolves into a major riot, with over one hundred arrests.

1981

At some point during the year, Verena Becker begins cooperating with the *Verfassungsschutz*. She will inform the secret police that Knut Folkerts could not have been the shooter in the Buback assassination, information that remains suppressed for decades.

January 19, 1981

Lawyer Hans-Christian Ströbele receives a suspended sentence for supporting a terrorist organization.

January 20, 1981

Ronald Reagan is sworn in as president of the United States. Alexander Haig will be his first secretary of state.

January 22, 1981

RAF defector Peter-Jürgen Boock is arrested in Hamburg.

February 6–April 16, 1981

More than 100 political prisoners participate in the eighth collective hunger strike of prisoners from the RAF, demanding association, treatment in accord with the Geneva Convention, and the release of seriously ill prisoner Günter Sonnenberg.

March 1–October 3, 1981

Irish Republican political prisoners embark upon a hunger strike. By the

time it is called off, ten of their number will be dead.

March 4, 1981

Members of the FRG Relatives Committee occupy the offices of *Spiegel* magazine, in an attempt to force the media to begin reporting on the hunger strike.

March 8, 1981

On International Women's Day, Women Against Imperialist War march on Lübeck-Lauerhof prison in support of the prisoners.

March 13, 1981

The first national squatters' congress takes place in Münster.

March 15, 1981

A group of West German doctors signs an open letter supporting the prisoners' demands and condemning isolation conditions for political prisoners and force-feeding.

March 23–29, 1981

During Women's Week, 300 women march on NDR, a public broadcaster, to call attention to the hunger strike.

March 31, 1981

Following public disagreements with Minister of the Interior Gerhart Baum, Horst Herold resigns as head of the BKA.

April 16, 1981

The hunger strike is called off in response to a government guarantee that prison conditions will be improved. Hours later the news comes through that Sigurd Debus, a political prisoner participating in the hunger strike, died of a brain hemorrhage as a result of being force-fed. As news of his death reaches the streets, rioting breaks out in West Berlin. There will be

numerous retaliatory bombings and protests throughout the FRG in the weeks to come.

August 4, 1981

French police officer Francis Violleau is shot and seriously injured in a confrontation with Inge Viett in Paris. Viett is one of the 2JM members who had joined the RAF when the organizations fused.

August 26–September 19, 1981

The Tuwat Conference is held in West Berlin.

August 31, 1981

The RAF's Sigurd Debus Commando bombs the headquarters of the U.S. Air Force in Ramstein injuring twenty people and causing 7.2 million DM in damage.

September 13, 1981

A demonstration against Alexander Haig in West Berlin escalates to serious rioting.

September 15, 1981

The RAF's Gudrun Ensslin Commando attacks the car carrying the head of the U.S. Army in Europe, General Frederick Kroesen, with a bazooka. The armor-plated vehicle survives the attack. Kroesen and his wife suffer permanent damage to their hearing.

September 21, 1981

The trial of RAF member Sieglinde Hofmann, charged in connection with the assassination of Jürgen Ponto, begins.

September 22, 1981

During an action to clear squatted houses in West Berlin, police chase protesters into the street, where one squatter, Klaus-Jürgen Rattay, is hit by

a municipal bus and killed.

Sixteen houses are occupied on Kiefernstraße in Düsseldorf. These will become a major hub of activity for anti-imps in the years to come. Also around this time, the Hafenstraße squats are established in Hamburg; these will in time become an important *Autonomen* stronghold.

October 16, 1981

Alleged RAF supporter Helga Roos is arrested in connection with the attack on Kroesen.

November 2, 1981

The occupation at the planned site of the Startbahn West expansion is violently cleared by police.

December 4, 1981

The Düsseldorf OLG sentences RAF member Stefan Wisniewski to life in prison for his role in the Schleyer kidnapping, among other things.

1982

Inge Viett leaves the RAF and is provided with a new identity and sanctuary in East Germany.

Verena Becker gets word to the other prisoners from the RAF that she had given information to the *Verfassungsschutz*, and offers to kill herself. The others take their distance from her, but discourage her from doing herself any harm.

May 1982

The RAF releases a major theoretical text reevaluating their practice and opening a new phase in their relationship with the aboveground movement. This paper, *Guerilla, Widerstand und antiimperialistische Front* (The Guerilla, the Resistance, and the Anti-Imperialist Front), calls for a front involving the guerilla and the aboveground anti-imperialist

movement. This document becomes known as the May Paper.

June 1, 1982

In a coordinated offensive against NATO-related institutions, RZ cells bomb the U.S. Army Headquarters in Frankfurt, AFN in West Berlin, ITT in Hannover, IBM and Control Data in Düsseldorf, and the U.S. Army Officers Clubs in Hanau and Gelnhausen.

June 4, 1982

The RZ firebombs the arms company Bourns Ketronic Flug Technik in Hamburg.

June 5, 1982

The RZ bombs the Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institute in Tübingen.

June 6, 1982

Israel invades Lebanon in order to attack the Palestine Liberation Organization.

June 10, 1982

In Bonn, 500,000 people demonstrate peacefully against the NATO Summit and President Reagan's visit to West Berlin. In the lead up to the protest, a split developed around strategy and tactics, between the mainstream left, which favored a peaceful protest, and the anti-imperialists and *Autonomen*, who favored a more confrontational approach. On the same day 100,000 demonstrate peacefully in West Berlin.

June 11, 1982

Thousands riot in West Berlin against Ronald Reagan's visit. Numerous houses are raided and ransacked by police on the same day. Two hundred and seventy one people are arrested.

June 16, 1982

The Frankfurt OLG sentences RAF member Sieglinde Hofmann to fifteen years in prison for her role in planning the attempted kidnapping that led to the Ponto assassination. The women arrested with her are sentenced to five to six years in prison.

July 16, 1982

George Shultz replaces Alexander Haig as U.S. secretary of state.

September 16–18, 1982

Supported by Israel, members of the Lebanese Phalange enter the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and carry out a massacre. Some estimates put the number of victims at well over 3,000. It is believed that former 2JM guerilla Ina Siepmann died fighting as part of a Palestinian women's brigade resisting this slaughter.

October 26, 1982

People taking a walk in the woods outside of Heusenstamm stumble upon a RAF supply depot. Shortly thereafter another depot is discovered outside of Anmühle.

November 10, 1982

The Düsseldorf OLG sentences RAF member Rolf Heißler to two life terms plus fifteen years for the murder of a police officer and membership in a terrorist organization.

November 11, 1982

RAF members Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Adelheid Schulz are arrested at the RAF's Heusenstamm arms depot.

November 16, 1982

RAF member Christian Klar is arrested at the RAF's Anmühle arms depot.

1983

March 1, 1983

RAF member Gisela Dutzi is arrested in Darmstadt.

March 6, 1983

In federal elections, the SPD manage to form a minority government in coalition with the FDP. The Green Party enters the *Bundestag* for the first time.

March 13, 1983

The Dusseldorf OLG sentences Adelheid Schulz and Rolf Clemens Wagner to life in prison.

March 23, 1983

Reagan proposes the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which would use ground- and space-based missiles to try and neutralize a nuclear attack. This is widely viewed as a move that would facilitate a U.S. first strike against the Soviet Union.

April 10, 1983

Alleged RAF supporter Inge Krobs is arrested in Frankfurt.

May 2, 1983

The Stuttgart OLG sentences alleged RAF supporter Helga Roos to four years and nine months in prison.

June 25, 1983

U.S. Vice President George Bush Sr. visits Krefeld in North Rhine Westfalia. *Autonomen* and anti-imps demonstrating in the city are attacked by the SEK and suffer numerous injuries and arrests. Conservatives in the “peace” movement condemn the radicals.

Autumn 1983

Grußaktion an die politischen Gefangenen (Greetings Action to the Political Prisoners), mobilizing supporters to write letters to political prisoners.

October 1, 1983

Following a vote of no confidence the FDP breaks with the SPD, allying itself with the Christian Union parties. Helmut Kohl becomes CDU Chancellor in a CDU-CSU-FDP Coalition government. Former Nazi Friedrich Zimmermann (CSU) becomes minister of the interior.

October 25, 1983

U.S. Marines invade Grenada.

November 24, 1983

Susanne Matthes, who had been active at the women's resistance camp at Hunsrück, is raped and murdered in West Berlin. A week later, 2,000 women attend a response demo in West Berlin.

1984

May 7, 1984

The Stuttgart OLG sentences RAF defector Peter-Jürgen Boock to three times life plus fifteen years in prison for his role in the murders of Ponto and Schleyer and the attempted attack on the BAW.

March 26, 1984

The RAF robs a bank in Würzburg, making off with 171,000 DM.

June 22, 1984

RAF member Manuela Happe is captured in Deizisau.

July 2, 1984

RAF members Helmut Pohl, Christa Eckes, Stefan Frey, Ingrid

Jakobsmeier, Barbara Ernst, and Ernst-Volker Staub are arrested in Frankfurt after one of them accidentally discharges a gun into the apartment below their safe house. The neighbor calls the police when he sees a hole in his ceiling and a bullet lodged in his floor.

July 9, 1984

Heidi Hutt is arrested and charged with supporting a criminal organization in connection with the RAF group arrested on July 2.

December 4, 1984

In trial statements prisoners from the RAF Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Christian Klar offer an appraisal of the RAF's 1977 offensive, as well as analyzing the situation facing the left in the post-1977 period. Prisoners from the RAF commence their ninth collective hunger strike, setting off an unprecedented wave of attacks from the aboveground resistance. Shortly thereafter, the first issue of the illegal RAF support newspaper *Zusammen Kämpfen* (Struggling Together) appears.

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THE AUTHORS

André Moncourt is the pseudonym of a writer with his political roots in the movements of the seventies and eighties.

J. Smith is the pseudonym of an activist who has been involved in the radical left for over twenty years.

Both feel very lucky to have had a chance to tell this story.

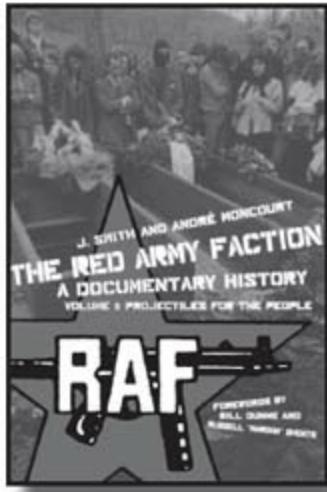
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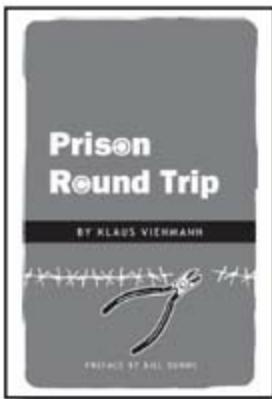
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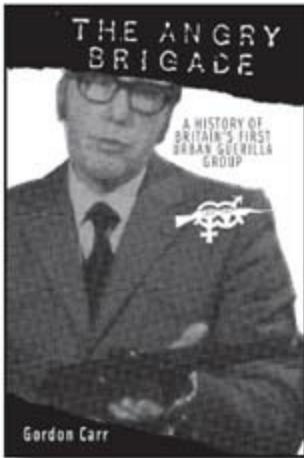
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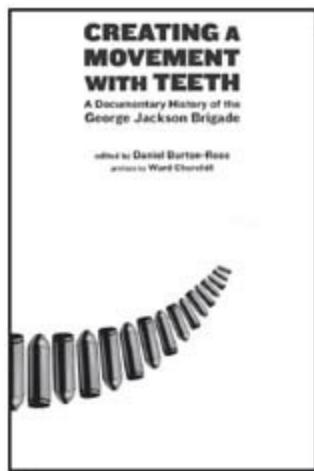
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Many of the texts in this book— as well as supporting documents providing added contextualization— were first published to this website, devoted to archiving documents and analysis about the urban guerilla in the Federal Republic of Germany.

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