

“An Age of Murder
Ideology and Terror in Germany, 1969-1991”

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It is best to begin with the obvious. This is a series of lectures about murder, indeed about an age of murder. Murders to be sure inspired by political ideas but murders nevertheless. In all, the *Rote Armee Fraktion* (Red Army Fraction, hereafter, the *RAF*) murdered thirty-four people and would have killed more had police and intelligence agencies not arrested them or prevented them from carrying out additional “actions.”¹ Yesterday, the papers reported that 32 people were killed in suicide bomb attacks in Iraq, and 34 the day before. Neither of those war crimes were front page news in *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. So there is an element of injustice in the amount of time and attention devoted to the 34 murders committed by the *RAF* over a period of 22 years and than to the far more numerous victims of radical Islamist terror. Yet the fact that the murders of large numbers of people today has become horribly routine is no reason to dismiss the significance of the murders of a much smaller number for German history. Along with the murders came attempted murders, bank robberies and explosions at a variety of West German and American institutions. The number of dead could have been much higher. If the Red Army Faction had not used pistols, machine guns, bazookas, rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), bazookas, remote controlled bombs and airplane hijackings, and if the West German radicals of the 1970s to 1990s had only published turgid, long-winded Communist manifestos, no one would have paid them much attention at the time. I doubt that the German Historical Institute would have decided to sponsor a series about Marxist-Leninist sects of the 1970s.

First, to understand the impact of the *RAF*, we need to expand our focus in time and space. The periodization of West German terrorism was not limited to the German fall of 1977. The *RAF* began in 1970 and did not dissolve until 1998. It waged an almost thirty year war against the Federal Republic of Germany. Moreover, as a number of contributors to Wolfgang Kraushaar’s indispensable two volume collection, *Die RAF und der Linke Terrorismus*, (in particular Martin Jander, Thomas Skelton Robinson and Christopher Duse) have pointed out, the *RAF* must be understood in the context of its international

connections to the to the international terrorist networks focused in the Middle East as well as to the Soviet Union.² Contrary to tendencies to romanticize the *RAF*, it's international links—and the trans-national link to East Germany—belie efforts to present it as an isolated group. These links were crucial to understanding its political significance. That lay in a larger political effort that combined the various motivations of West German terrorists with the efforts of Communist intelligence services to weaken West German ties to the United States and of Palestinian terrorists organizations to weaken or break—or at least raise the cost—of West German support for the state of Israel. In this sense, the story of West German terrorism is a chapter in the history of the Cold War. The *RAF* wanted to destroy both capitalism and liberal democracy in the Federal Republic in the hopes of giving support to an expected global communist revolution led by “liberation movements” from Vietnam to the Middle East and Latin America against global imperialism led by the United States. In those 28 years, more than a thousand police and government officials worked to capture members of the Red Army Faction. The publicly available files of government investigators and trial records encompass 11 million pages.³ Work in the archives of the intelligence services of the former Communist states, including those in East Germany, is still in early stages while the files of Western intelligence agencies—the CIA, US military and diplomatic intelligence services, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, *Bundeskriminalamt* and the West German Justice Ministry files—will hopefully be made available to researchers in accord with the thirty year rule.

Second, the terrorism of left-wing groups beginning with the Tupamaros and the June 2nd movement in West Berlin in 1969 and then evolving into the Red Army Fraction was a chapter in the history of two major European and German political traditions: Communism, and anti-Semitism. To be sure, many Communists and anti-Semites did not engage in politically inspired murder but the terrorism that emerged in West Germany in 1969 had its fundamental ideological roots in the Communist tradition. German left-wing terrorism is incomprehensible outside that context. In addition, Communist states—East Germany, perhaps the KGB—and movements of the radical left inspired by Communist anti-imperialism—

most importantly radicals in the Palestinian Liberation Organization and its offshoots—offered money, weapons, fake travel documents, travel assistance and escape routes.⁴ The communism and the Marxist-Leninist analysis of fascism that was central to it is no less indispensable for understanding why the postwar new left sects in Germany, Italy and Japan were so much more murderous than was the aftermath in the United States, France and Britain. For the Communist interpretation of the causes of the Axis dictatorships was that they were the product of capitalism. Hence, as capitalism was reproduced in all three societies—and as many persons who had served the governments of Imperial Japan, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany returned to positions of influence in the postwar democracies, the terror groups could draw on a long communist tradition, sustained as well by the existing Communist regimes including East Germany, which described and denounced Italian, Japanese and West German democracies as in fact being were in fact “fascist” or “neo-fascist” governments.⁵ Moreover, and very importantly, the Vietnamese Communists’ Tet Offensive was a military failure and propaganda success for the international left interpreted it as evidence that the United States might be defeated in Vietnam.

Third, this age of murder was also a product of the intersection of anti-Semitism with left-wing radicalism. Indeed, as Wolfgang Kraushaar among others has noted, a peculiarity of the German—but also Italian and Japanese terrorists of the 1970s and 1980s—was its close links to Palestinian terrorist groups. Indeed, he makes a good case that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict became even more central for West German radicals than did the war in Vietnam. The placement of a bomb by the West Berlin Tupamaros in the Jewish Community Center in West Berlin in 1969 and the 1992 attempt in by the *RAF* to blow up a bus in Budapest filled with Russian Jewish emigres on their way to the Budapest airport and from there to Israel are two anti-Semitic acts that serve as starting and endpoints to the age of murder.

The writing of history often entails an injustice in so far as we pay more attention to the perpetrators of crimes than to their victims. Tragically the latter often vastly outnumber the former, even when both numbers are considerable. The commentaries about the *RAF* suffer from this injustice as well

so that the names of the most prominent killers become familiar while the identities of their victims sink into oblivion. At the many trials, and then in some recent books by authors, such as Butz Peters and Anne Siemens the family members, friends and colleagues of the murdered have rescued their memory from oblivion. So before we turn to historical analysis or avoid the essential with flight into theories and causal analysis, I think it appropriate to spend a few minutes reading to you the names of the people murdered by the *RAF* murdered and to recall when, where and how they were murdered. The *RAF* dismissed them as “pigs” or in more intellectual moments as “character masks” for capitalism.

Not one of these people had done anything to deserve having their lives cut short and their families and friends shattered.

(Summarize. Reading list of names in a lecture doesn't work really. Select some or shorten entries).

1. **Norbert Schmidt**, 33, October 1971, a policeman in Hamburg, shot while checking the identities of two *RAF* members.
2. **Herbert Schoner**, 32, December 22, 1971. Police officer shot by the *RAF* in the course of a bank robbery in Kauserslautern.
3. **Hans Eckardt**, 50, March 3, 1972. Police (Kriminalhauptkommissar), shot to death in the course of the arrest of two members of the *RAF*, Manfred Grashof and Wolfgang Grams in their safe house apartment in Hamburg.
4. **Paul A. Bloomquist**, 39, May 11, 1972. First Lieutenant in the United States Army, murdered when the *RAF* set off a bomb in the Main headquarters of the US Army in Frankfurt.
- 5-7. **Clyde R. Bonner**, Captain in the United States Army; **Ronald A. Woodward**, specialist in the US Army; and **Charles Peck**, also specialist in the US Army, all killed by the *RAF*'s bomb attack on the European headquarters of the US armed forces in Europe on May 24, 1972.
8. **Andreas von Mirbach**, 44, May 24, 1975, military attache of the German Embassy in

- Stockholm. Shot several times at close range by *RAF* member and thrown down a set of stairs in an effort to compel the West German government to release previously imprisoned members of the *RAF*.
9. **Dr. Heinz Hillegaart**, 64, May 24, 1975. The economics attache in the Stockholm Embassy, shot in the back of the head and killed by the *RAF* in the Embassy seizure.
 10. **Fritz Sippel**, 22, May 7, 1976. Police chief of the town of Spendingen (near Offenbach), shot in the head by a *RAF* member in the course of a check of identity papers.
 11. **Siegfried Buback**, 57, April 7, 1977, (*Generalbundesanwalt*), the Attorney General of the Federal Republic (1974-1977), murdered in his official car on the way to work by an *RAF* member firing a rapid fire weapon from a motorcycle.
 12. **Wolfgang Göbel**, 30, April 7, 1977, Buback's driver, murdered on the same day and in the same way.
 13. **George Wurster** (33), April 13, 1977, in charge of chauffeurs of the Attorney General's office. He sat next to Buback in the back seat and died of his bullet wounds a week later.
 14. **Jürgen Ponto**, 53, July 30, 1977, (*Vorstandssprecher*), chief executive of the Dresdner Bank, shot to death with five bullets fired at close range by *RAF* members Christian Klar and Brigitte Mohnhaupt in his house in Oberusel. His wife, Ignes Ponto, witnessed her husband's murder.
 - 15-18 On September 5, 1977, the *RAF* kidnapped Han-Martin Schleyer in Wuppertal-Elberfeld. Schleyer was *President der Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Arbeitgeberverbände (BDA)*, President of the National Association of German Employer Groups, the main national association of German big business. Schleyer had been on a *RAF* hit list found by the police and thus had extra security. The kidnapping, in which about 20 members of the *RAF* participated, began with a massacre carried out with machine guns and machine pistols of the drivers of his two car convoy and his body guards. They were: **Heinz Marcisz** (41), Schleyer's driver; **Reinhold Brändle** (41)

- driver of Schleyer's second security car; **Helmut Ulmer** (24); a police officer in the accompanying car; and **Roland Pieler**, (20), police officer who sitting in the backseat of the security car. Both Brändle and Pieler's bodies were riddled with over twenty bullets.
19. **Arie Kranenburg** (46), September 22, 1977, (*Hauptwachtmeister*) a police official in Utrecht in the Netherlands, shot by *RAF* member Knut Folkerts in a car rental office.
 20. **Dr. Hans-Martin Schleyer**, 62, October 18 or 19, 1977, murdered by *RAF* member with three shots to the head in an as yet unknown location. After a call from the *RAF* to officials, his corpse was found in the trunk of an Audi in Mulhausen, Germany.
 21. **Hans-Wilhelm Hans** (26), September 24, 1978, police official shot as he and several colleagues surprised *RAF* members Angelika Speitel, Michael Knoll and Werner Lotze when they were engaged in target practice in a forest near Dortmund.
 22. **Dionysius de Jong** (19), November 1, 1978, a Dutch customs officer, shot after he and colleagues stopped *RAF* member Rolf Heißler as he illegally crossed the border from Germany to the Netherlands.
 23. **Johannes Goemanns** (24), November 14, 1978, a Dutch customs officer who died of wounds suffered in the same shoot-out in which Rolf Heißler died.
 24. **Edith Kletzhändler** (56), November 19, 1975, a housewife shot in the throat by a bullet fired by *RAF* members Wagner, Klar and Beer who were firing at police.
 25. **Dr. Ernst Zimmermann**(55), February 1, 1985, chairman of the executive committee (*Vorstandsvorsitzender*) of the MTU, the Machine and Turbine Union, murdered by a *RAF* commando with a bullet to the head in his home in Gauting.
 26. **Edward Pimental** (20), August 8, 1985, American soldier. *RAF* member Birgit Hogefeld met him at a club, invited him to an apartment where he was shot by *RAF* members in order to get the use of his army ID card.

- 27-28. **Frank Scarton** (20), American soldier, and **Becky Bristol** (25) civilian employee, both killed on August 8, 1985 when the *RAF* used Pimental's ID card to enter and place a bomb on the United States Air Force base in Frankfurt/Main.
- 29-30 **Prof. Dr. Karl Heinz Beckurts** (56), July 9, 1986, member of the board of directors of the Siemens corporation and responsible for research and development; and Beckurts's driver **Eckhard Groppler**, both killed in the same *RAF* car bomb attack in Straßlach in Bavaria.
31. **Dr. Gerold von Braunmühl** (51), October 10, 1986, Political Director of the Federal Republic's Foreign Ministry, close adviser to Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, (and former member of the German Embassy staff in Washington) shot at close range in front of his home in Bonn. His wife heard the shots and found his body lying in the street.
32. **Dr. Alfred Herrhausen** (59), November 30, 1989, (*Vorstandsspecher*) Chief executive officer of the Deutsche Bank. Murdered by the *RAF* on his way to work by a bomb that blew up his armored, chauffeured car.
33. **Dr. Detlev Rohwedder** (58), April 1, 1991, Chief executive officer (*Vorstandsvorsitzender*) of the "Treuhandanstalt," the German government office responsible for privatizing and in some cases closing former East German factories. An *RAF* sniper murdered Rohwedder with a shot to into his bedroom window from a distance of about 80 yards (60 meters). Rohwedder's wife, Hagar Rohwedder, an administrative judge, rushed to his aid and was shot in the arm.
34. **Michael Newrzella** (25), June 27, 1993, senior officer of the GSG-9, (Border Guards, Group 9) the counter-terrorism unit of the German Federal Police, shot by *RAF* member Wolfgang Grams in the train station in Bad Kleinen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

To this list should also be added **Günter von Drenkman**, President of the West Berlin Superior Court. He was assassinated by members of the June 2nd movement on November 10, 1974. While we don't know

of all of the attempted murders that the German police and intelligence services were able to prevent, several notable events are public knowledge: the aforementioned bomb placed by the June 2nd Movement, placed a bomb in the Jewish Community Center in Berlin in 1970; an unsuccessful attempt on August 25, 1977, to launch 42 projectiles filled with 150 kilos of explosives at the offices of the offices of the Justice Ministry (*Bundesanwaltschaft*) in Karlsruhe; and of course the hijacking of an Air France plane to Entebbe in 1976, and a Lufthansa flight to Mogadischu in 1977. You will recall that the Entebbe hijacking was distinctive because the terrorists, including, Wilfried Bose, product of the left-wing scene in Frankfurt, separated Jews from non-Jews at the Entebbe airport. Only the armed intervention Israeli and German commandos respectively saved the lives of the hostages with the exception of the German pilot and an ill, elderly Jewish passenger in Entebbe. Were it not for the intervention of the security services and occasional technical errors by the *RAF*, the toll of those murdered could have gone well into the hundreds. The history of West German terrorism has been dominated by works about the *RAF*. In a recent collection of interviews edited by Anna Siemens, *Für die RAF war er das System, für mich der Vater: Die andere Geschichte des deutschen Terrorismus*, (For the *RAF* he was the system. For me, he was my father) the widows and children of those they murdered speak.⁶ It is well worth reading. Mirbach's son, Clais notes that in their interviews with the German media, former members of the *RAF* admit to a mistake here and there but all in all often present themselves as courageous idealists fighting for a better world. They remind him of former Nazis who repressed their responsibility after World War II and "did not want to know anything about the grief of their victims." And that, he continued, was a peculiar twist of history as anger over the repression of the Nazism's victims was one root of the student movement and later of the *RAF* and thus one cause of his father's murder.⁷ Corinna Ponto, the daughter of Jürgen Ponto, reflects on how close her mother came to being murdered by the *RAF* when they killed her father and how lucky she was to be on a trip to London. Noting that all of the *RAF*'s victims were innocent of any wrongdoing she stresses that to even speak of "the innocent at all in this connection is a

completely false use of language.” She recalls that during the funeral for her father, and despite intense police presence, the *RAF* set off a bomb in the family’s backyard as a message of intimidation to her mother not to testify in any future trial. this, despite intense police presence. The family left Germany and came for a time to the United States for a time.. The employees of the Dresdner Bank in Frankfurt staged a protest march in the center city against the *RAF*. [In the reading I’ve done for this lecture and in my memory, I don’t recall a single large demonstration against the *RAF* from the left. So many of the same people who said that the government exaggerated the threat, never went out on the street to denounce the murderers.]

Frau Ponto speaks movingly of what a murder means. Her young children were deprived of the opportunity to kid around, argue and discuss with their grandfather. “A part of their history has been stolen. Murder is always also murder combined with robbery (*Raubmord*). One thing is clear: the *RAF* perpetrators had and have the opportunity to become ‘ex-perpetrators.’ ...Whoever has been a victim, can never become an ex-victim. Many of the *RAF* perpetrators are today often spoken of as ‘ex-terrorists.’ This ‘ex’ is a privilege. I will not acknowledge that anyone is an ex-murderer or an ex-child kidnapper. But everyone called the people who were in the *RAF* ‘ex-terrorists’ and today they live in our society. The ‘ex’ gets transformed from a minus into a diffuse plus.”⁸ Gabriele von Lutzau, the stewardess aboard the hijacked Lufthansa flight, and the co-pilot Jurgen Vietor was asked if she had any interest in talking to one of her former captors to discuss her motives. “I’m not interested in the background, in her history or in understanding her. This women acted without a single moment of humanity. Her attitude was ‘we are better than you. We’re going the righteous way against Western imperialism.’ Her distorted view of reality is not one I ever want to face again.” This willingness to give voice to the victims is a welcome change from a media obsession—and some now embarrassing radical chic among intellectuals—about the *RAF* members.

The relationship of the West German new left to subsequent terrorism has aroused a great deal of

debate. The following strikes me as fair and plausible. The Red Army Faction and its circles of sympathizers were by-products of the new left and of its disintegration. To be sure, many members of the 1960s left rejected terrorism. Yet it is no less the case that the new left attack on Western democracy as a sham, as capitalism as an unjust and irrational system and anti-communism as a tool to maintain imperialism by depicting a non-existent threat all placed Western democracy on the intellectual defensive. Kraushaar has recalled that in September 1967, two prominent leaders of West German SDS (*Sozialistische Deutschen Studentenbund*) wrote what became known as the *Organizationsreferat*, "Paper on organization." It was presented to a meeting of SDS in Frankfurt/Main in 1967 and was passed by majority vote. Speaking under the flag of the Vietcong, they argued that "the propaganda of bullets in the 'third world' must be complemented by a propaganda of the deed in the metropolises. It is there that an urbanization of rural guerrilla activity is historically possible."⁹ Written with a grasp of the Marxist theory, it lent intellectual legitimacy to political violence several years before the idea became the *RAF*'s practice. It also weakened the opposition to the use of violence in a larger leftists circles.

By 1969, the new left was making headlines for its disruptions of the German university lectures and exams. Theodor Adorno, co-author of *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, one of the most influential works of left wing social criticism of the postwar era, found himself at the center of these disputes. In a letter of June 19, 1969 to Herbert Marcuse, his old friend, fellow member of the Frankfurt School, and by then international hero of the new left, Adorno spoke of his depression over the fact that leftist radicals had been broken up his lectures twice that summer semester and that he had to call the police to restore order to the Institute for Social Research building. He complained that the radical left was preventing others from speaking and attacking professors. "The danger that the student movement will turn toward fascism is one I take more seriously than you do. After people here in Frankfurt screamed at the Israeli Ambassador, I'm no longer convinced of the assurance that this has nothing to do with antisemitism. ...You must once look into the manic, cold eyes of those who even when appealing to us (Fr. School) turn

their rage against us.”¹⁰ Adorno was not reassured by Marcuse’s rejection of the possibility that the student left might revert to fascist methods. In a statement of July 17, 1969, he described the efforts of radical students to break up end of the semester sociology exams as follows in the course of which one young man physically struck the sixty-six year old professor.¹¹ That Adorno had been struck was news.

In 1970, professors at the Free University of Berlin, including Thomas Nipperdey and Ernst Nolte, helped to form the *Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft*. The *Bund* journal indicated that Adorno’s experience was not unique.¹² On three occasions in 1972 and 1973, communist students threatened to shoot a professor of English at the Free University of Berlin because he would not permit disruptions of his class. In November 1973 at the University of Tübingen, following an open tribunal organized by one communist political group, a professor and two students were physically thrown out of the classroom and onto the floor. In December 1973, after an introductory economics course was disrupted for the fifth time, the president of the university closed the economics department for a week. In doing so he said that the events recalled the beginnings of Nazi domination when Marxist and Jewish professors were attacked by right-wing extremists. In February 1974 at the University of Heidelberg, radical leftists placed a stink bomb in the office of political scientist Klaus von Beyme and sprayed paint on the walls of his office after a lecturer’s contract was not renewed. In the fall of 1976 in Heidelberg, police were called so frequently to keep university buildings open that they were eventually required to remain permanently in the buildings. In December 1976, at the Free University of Berlin, communist students displayed the following opinions about faculty members on posters: “Hang (Horst) Möller,” “(Ernst) Nolte will be liquidated–Möller castrated–Miethke kidnapped–AND THEN studies will be done right.”¹³ According to a survey of 3,000 university professors by the Allensbach Institute in 1977, 10% said they had been attacked in leaflets and posters. Those who had publicly criticized the radical left reported receiving anonymous late-night phone calls and threats of physical violence.

These incidents reflected an important change in the political orientation of the West German left

that emerged from the 1960s. From above, Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr's policy of *neue Ostpolitik* brought with it a reluctance to criticize the Communist government of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. That, so the argument went, would undermine detente. From below, the revival of Marxism led to an association of any kind of anticommunism with Nazism with the result that the young democratic left—led by persons such as future German Chancellor Schröder—entered student government coalitions with smaller Communist sects to their left. The era of a popular front replaced that of Social Democratic anti-totalitarianism of the 1950s and early 1960s. In this climate, those who criticized communism or revolution or used the word “totalitarianism” to describe communist regimes and movements could be dismissed as counter-revolutionaries or fascists. The East German and Soviet equation of anti-communism with fascism seeped into West German Marxist discussions.

As is now well known, Israel's victory in the Six Day War in 1967 accelerated a bizarre and enduring transformation within the West German left away from the strong support for Israel of the Social Democrats of the first postwar decades to a growing hostility. This shift rested on a number of what became familiar comparisons or rather assertions of similarity between Fascism and Zionism, Israel and Nazi Germany and Al-Fatah and anti-fascism. Within the radical left, advocates of the new hostility to Israel spoke of overcoming the “*Judenknax*” short for *Judenkomplex*—“that is a supposed guilt about the Holocaust under which West Germans were said to be suffering.”¹⁴

Kraushaar thus makes a compelling argument that the *RAF* did not have its origins on the periphery of the radical left. Rather its key ideas came from well within it. He draws attention to what he calls “the badly neglected” ideas and activities of one Dieter Kunzelmann, the first of West German radicals to take the idea of urban guerillas seriously when he founded the Tupamaros West Berlin in fall of 1969. The noun “Tupamaros” came from the name of a terrorist group in Uruguay composed of students inspired by the Brazilian legislator and Communist, Carlos Marighella. In spring 1969, Marighella published *The Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla*. It was quickly translated into many

languages by left-wing movement presses and became a bible for terrorists around the world. (I saw it in my taxi driving days in New York at book stores near Columbia University). In 1971, Rowholt, the German publisher of a series of left wing paperbacks, published *Handbuch der Stadtguerilla*. In 110 pages Marighella made the case for a shift from Guevara's adventures in the countryside to formation of small groups of unconnected cells of 4-5 persons within cities who would engage in political murders, kidnappings, robbery and attacks on political institutions with the intent of shattering the ability of the ruling powers to maintain law and order. These actions would, he predicted, spark a mass revolt. The tactic failed everywhere. Marighella, was shot and killed by Brazilian police in Sao Paolo in November 1969 only five months after he published the original edition of the *Minimanual*. (He was 58 years of age.) The first sentence captured its key message: "The urban guerrilla's reason for existence, the basic condition in which he acts and survives, is to shoot." It included chapters on assaults, surprise, the bank robberies, occupations, ambushes, street tactics, strikes and work interruptions, desertions, seizures, theft of ammunition and explosives, liberation of prisoners, executions, kidnaping, sabotage, terrorism. armed propaganda, the war of nerves, rescue of the wounded, the seven sins of the urban guerrilla (inexperience, vanity, boasting, etc.) and popular support.¹⁵ Kunzelmann's accomplishment and later that of the RAF lay in applying Marighella's doctrine to West German circumstances. The fact that the author had been shot, far from indicating that there may have been a flaw in the doctrine, added to his luster as a martyr of the revolution.

The idea of the urban guerilla and the attack on Israel and on West German Jews became radical left wing practice in on November 9 (yes, the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*) 1969. On that day, a bomb was found in the Jewish Community Center in Berlin. In his *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, Kraushaar has filled in details of this bizarre and disturbing event. The bomb did not explode, a result that was intended by Albert Fichter, the man who admitted to Kraushaar that he made and placed it there. Four days later, "Shalom and Napalm," one of the most infamous yet defining statements of then

emerging terror scene was published in *Agit 883*, a magazine of the radical leftist scene in West Berlin.¹⁶ The authors wrote that “the victorious end of the war in Vietnam” will mean “the beginning of Vietnam wars on all fronts.” Their focus was on the Middle East. There European and American capital supported “the Zionists in their aggressive military operations” in the Arab world. West German restitution payments (*Wiedergutmachung*) and development aid contributed to the Zionist defense budget. “Under the guilt laden pretext of coming to terms with the fascist atrocities against the Jews, they (West German government and industry) make a decisive contribution to Israel’s fascist atrocities against Palestinian Arabs.”¹⁷ With the following sentences, the leaflet’s authors then accepted responsibility for placing a bomb in the Jewish Community Center:

...The neurotic-historicist examination of the historical lack of legitimacy of an Israeli state does not overcome this helpless anti-fascism. True anti-fascism is the clear and simple expression of solidarity with the fighting fedayeen. No longer will our solidarity remain only with verbal-abstract methods of enlightenment a al Vietnam. ..The Jews who were expelled by fascism have themselves become fascists who, in collaboration with American capital want to eradicate the Palestinian people. By striking the direct support for Israel by German industry and the government of the Federal Republic, we are aiding the victory of the Palestinian revolution and force for the renewed defeat of world imperialism. At the same time, we expand our battle against the fascists in democratic clothes and begin to build a revolutionary liberation front in the metropole. BRING THE BATTLE FROM THE VILLAGES INTO THE CITIES! ALL POLITICAL POWER COMES FROM THE BARREL OF A GUN.” Signed, Black Rats, *TW Schwarze Ratten, TW, (Tupamaros West Berlin)*¹⁸

For the West Berlin Tupamaros, a focus on the Nazi past and the fate of the Jews was an expression of

neurosis, a kind of guilt complex that stood in the way of psychic health and clear thinking. The Israelis were the new Nazis and the Palestinians anti-fascist heroes. This line of reasoning lifted the burden of the Nazi past from its advocates and opened the way for West German radicals to attack on Israelis and Jews with a clear conscience. Kraushaar views it as the kind of “defensive anti-Semitism” which Theodor Adorno found prevalent in West German society in the 1950s, one in which the actual relation of perpetrator and victim was reversed, facts were denied and avoided while anger was expressed at the Jews for the damage they had supposedly done to postwar collective narcissism. Kraushaar views Kunzelmann’s reference to the *Judenknax* as a leftist variant of the defensive anti-Semitism Adorno had observed fifteen years earlier. Yet as East German Communists had demonstrated since the anti-cosmopolitan, this escape from the continuities of German history had been the norm in East Germany for twenty years before Kunzelmann and the West Berlin Tupamaros emerged. Here again, the interaction of indigenous West German with a trans-national diffusion of ideas from East to West Germany deserves mention.

On November 15, 1969—the same day that anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in Washington D.C. and here in Dupont Circle were accompanied by tear gas, battles with police and thousands of people chanting Ho-Ho-Ho Chi Minh, NLF is going to win—the Tupamaros in West Berlin distributed another leaflet, “Transform Your Hatred into Energy.”¹⁹ It called for the creation of urban guerillas. “Transform your hatred into energy!...fight in the street...make terror in all corners of the city. Good targets are the American industrial facilities, banks, police stations and anything that makes men into slaves...” This marked the first time that a radical leftist group explicitly advocated “terror.”²⁰ The irony of this historic moment has been eloquently expressed by Ulrich Enzensberger, a former member of the West Berlin radical commune scene noted the irony of this attack at the same time that the West German government under Willy Brandt was doing more to face the facts of the Nazi past. In his words: “Just in the moment when the social liberal coalition in connection with the decisive point about Germany’s postwar borders

decided to accept responsibility for German crimes, the revolt of postwar youth against the older generation shifted into irresponsibility. Among quite a number of us, the effort to escape from German history via the path of revolution ended [in a situation in which] with a clear conscience, we continued our own most evil traditions.”²¹ West German terrorism was also the third of German Communism’s attacks on Social Democracy in the 20th century, the first two being during the last six years of the Weimar Republic, and then in the “forced unification” and suppression of the SPD in postwar East Berlin.

Die Rote Armee Fraktion published its first manifesto on June 5, 1970.²² It followed an armed attack on a jail in West Berlin that led to the escape of Andreas Baader during which one of the prison guards was badly injured. In June and July 1970, members of the *RAF* traveled to Jordan where they received weapons training in from the PLO and its offshoots. “The concept of the urban guerilla,” the *RAF*’s first “position paper,” appeared in April 1971 and was followed soon after by the longer statement “On the Armed Struggle in Western Europe” (*Über den bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa*) and a year later by “Serve the People” (*Dem Volk Dienen*).²³ “The Concept of the Urban Guerilla” imported Marighella’s ideas to West Germany. All were long-winded and repetitive.

“On the Armed Struggle in Western Europe” was the *RAF*’s defining statement. Meinhof included 48 footnotes and thus much evidence of the *RAF*’s immersion in the Communist tradition.²⁴ Meinhof drew inspiration from the Paris Commune, the October “Revolution” of 1917 and the “peoples war” in China. These events made clear that “armed struggle” was “a central problem of revolutionary theory” and was in fact the “highest form of class struggle.”²⁵ In light of the fact that many commentators have suggested that West German terrorism was an effort to overcome past shortcomings regarding the Nazi past, it is important to note that here the *RAF* authors placed German history into a trans-national narrative of capitalism and international imperialism. In the authors’ words, “Auschwitz, Setif, Vietnam, Indonesia, Amman” demonstrated that “massacre does not belong to the past of systems of domination that have been overcome but rather now as before belong to the instruments of the dominant [rulers].”²⁶

Far from addressing the distinctive features of the Holocaust, the *RAF*—fifteen years before the famous *Historikersstreit*—denied the uniqueness of the Final Solution and compared it to a variety of recent conflicts stemming from anti-colonial or communist insurgencies.

Like the terrorist splinter groups in the US, Italy, Japan and France, the *RAF* authors found the new revolutionary vanguard in is the student and youth movements in the “metropolises” who would form links with the revolutionaries in the third world. Meinhof brought Marighella to Germany, without giving him due credit.²⁷ Unlike the countryside, the big city offered anonymity. On the one hand, it was filled with sympathizers, safe houses and apartments and on the other hand it had many targets. As Marighella pointed out, “the enemy” never knew where an attack would come. He had to protect many targets but could not be everywhere at once. These targets, “the class enemy,” included things--businesses, government buildings—and persons, policemen, government officials and judges. Hence, the authors noted, “a few fighters can hold down strong forces of the enemy.”²⁸ Again, as Marighella pointed out, bombardement against urban guerillas is rarely successful. “On Armed struggle in Western Europe” was, thus a striking example of the flow of ideas from Brazil and Uruguay to Germany and Europe, that is from what was then called the third to the first world..

Meinhof evoked a Lenin quite different from the one sure to emerge from leftists familiar with his famous criticisms of “infantile leftism.” Three decades before major studies by Richard Pipes, Orlando Figes and Nicholas Werth on terror in the Lenin era were published, the *RAF* authors drew on the letter and spirit of the public and well known Lenin to underscore his own support for terror.²⁹ “Lenin,” they wrote, “would be horrified” by use of quotes from his own works to suggest he opposed use of terror.³⁰ They then cited two of Lenin’s early writings on the subject. First his notes for the Second Party Conference of the Russian Social Democratic Party of 1905 in which he insisted that “Terror must in fact merge with the mass movement;”³¹ and second, his 1906 essay on “on Partisan War” in which he wrote that “Armed struggle has two different goals which must be kept separate from one another. This goal of

this battle first of all is killing individual persons...subalterns in the police and army, and second, theft of money from the government and private persons.”³² The *RAF* authors concluded that “Lenin had especially advocated the first goal of armed struggle, that is, the liquidation of individual functionaries of the apparatus of oppression.”³³ In view of their repeated and emphatic evocation of their communist convictions, it is interesting to note how infrequently the word “communist” is associated with the *RAF* in much of the literature. So I will restate what I said at the outset: the history of 20th century Communism in Germany, Italy, Japan, France or the United States includes movements like the *RAF*. They should not be studied only under the separate category called the history of terrorism.

(Albert Camus in *The Rebel* had explored the links between Lenin and terrorism but, it was safe to say that the radical left was not preoccupied with what that former leader of the French Resistance against the Nazis had to say about the disastrous consequences of philosophical justifications for murder. (Camus’ anti-terrorist manifesto of 1951 was first published in German translation by Rowohlt in 1953 with the title *Der Mensch in Revolte*. Between 1953 and 1969, it had sold a modest 30,000 copies. The decade of terror was good for sales. By the time seventh Rowohlt edition was published in 1977, sales had almost tripled to 80,00 copies.)³⁴.

The *RAF* meant what they said. In 1970, “theory” became practice. *RAF* members robbed several banks in Berlin and in October. The police found and arrested a number of them. In July, one of their members, Petra Schelm was killed in a shootout with police. In October and December of that year, *RAF* members murdered two policemen, Norbert Schmid and Herbert Schoner. In 1972, the group set off bombs at United States army headquarters in Heidelberg and other installations in Munich, Augsburg and Hamburg which caused four deaths and injured thirty people. Placed in solitary confinement to prevent them from conspiring in prison with their lawyers to plan further attacks, they described this treatment as “isolation torture” and asked instead to be treated as prisoners of war. (It is interesting in retrospect that the West German government did not bring charges of war crimes against the

RAF.) Periodic hunger strikes aroused sympathy from left wing and some left-liberal circles, more sympathy apparently than these people expressed for those the *RAF* had killed and injured.

In November, 1972, Palestinian terrorists kidnaped Israeli Olympic athletes at the Munich Olympics. In the midst of efforts to free the hostages, the kidnapers instead murdered their hostages. Following the murders, Meinhof wrote and the *RAF* issued “The Action of Black September in Munich, On the Strategy of Anti-Imperialist Struggle” (*Die Aktion des Schwarzen September in München. Zur Strategie des Antiimperialistischen Kampfes*).³⁵ In this remarkable text, she again made clear how crucial anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism would be in the history of the *RAF*. Far from condemning the murders of the Israeli athletes, she celebrated the deed. “The action of Black September in Munich ...was simultaneously anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and internationalist...What she called the Munich “action”–note her avoidance of the word murder--drew attention to “Israel’s Nazi fascism” and served as an example of “how practice pushes theory forward.”³⁶ “Just as the essence of imperialism is fascist, so anti-fascism is in its tendency anti-imperialist.” Ergo, the attack on the Israeli athletes was anti-imperialist and hence anti-fascist.

The *RAF* was thus part of this global anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, communist revolution and had nothing to do, as some of its critics suggested, with the anarchism inspired by Blanqui to Kropotkin.

Meinhof expressed hatred at West Germany’s only recently elected left of center government. Chancellor Willy Brandt would have been surprised to learn that since he and the Social Democrats entered the Bonn government in 1966, more “democracy” had been abolished in the Federal Republic than was the case in the seventeen years before under all CDU [conservative Christian Democratic Union] governments taken together.”³⁷ The Social Liberal coalition had created a “*schmeckhafte Imperialismus*” a “tasteful or palatable imperialism.”³⁸ The goal of the West German government was “not to be in any way inferior to the Moshe Dayan fascism–Dayan this Himmler of Israel.”³⁹ Following the death of its athletes, “Israel cries crocodile tears. It used its athletes as the Nazis used the Jews–as fuel to be burned

for its imperialist policy of extermination.”⁴⁰ The “action” of Black September in Munich was thus a great revolutionary accomplishment. It had “torn away (*entlarvt*) the character masks of the social liberal coalition and their propagandists” by pushing the contradictions of imperialism to their limit. “The Arab peoples have massively understood that in West Germany that face an imperialist strategy of extermination.”⁴¹ Of course the deaths of the Israeli athletes were not the fault of the terrorist as it would be “idiotic to believe that the revolutionaries wanted it. They wanted the release of the prisoners..”⁴² The terrorists of Black September were in fact blameless for the deaths of the athletes. “They took hostages from a people that has pursued a policy of extermination against them...They did not want to kill...The German police massacred the revolutionaries and their hostages.”⁴³ The statement ended with a round of rousing communist slogans including: “The action of Black September in Munich will not be extinguished from the memory of anti-imperialist struggle. Solidarity with the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people! Solidarity with the revolution in Vietnam! Revolutionaries of all lands, unite!”⁴⁴

As I noted earlier, Meinhof and her comrades deserve space in subsequent histories of European and German anti-Semitism. As a strategic document, it also made clear that the *RAF* was going to do all it could to make the Federal Republic pay as high a price as possible for its support for Israel. Far from coming to terms with the Nazi past, the *RAF*-like East Germany—took aim at West German forms of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, especially its diplomatic, military and economic relations with Israel.

Following a now minutely documented series of attacks and then arrests, the leaders of what became known as “the first generation” (there were three) of the *RAF* were arrested in 1972. In April 1974 they were transferred to a high security prison in Stammheim, not far from Stuttgart. They lived there preparing for their trials until all but one succeeded in committing suicide in October 1977 following the successful liberation of hostages on a Lufthansa jet in Mogadishu and the end of their hopes that those hostages could be a bargaining chip to gain their release from prison. The conditions of their life and deaths in Stammheim were soon surrounded with a cloud of lies, lies unfortunately believed

by parts of a leftists and liberal public inside and outside the Federal Republic that was willing to believe the worst about the Germans after Hitler, even in the era of Brandt and Schmidt. Butz Peters, in his important recent work, *Tödlicher Irrtum* draws on massive and numerous legal and parliamentary investigations to set many myths aside and restore the mundane though still awful truths the *RAF* did its best to obscure.⁴⁵ In fact, the *RAF* turned Stammheim prison into an organization center for the conduct of terrorist operations.

In Stammheim, the *RAF* prisoners, Baader, Ensslin, Meinhof and Raspe were not at all isolated. They were all together on the seventh floor of the prison, a floor reserved for them alone. They were able to meet, drink coffee, smoke and discuss the political situation. Horst Bubeck, the prison warden, ordered guards to remain “15 to 18 meters” away from them. For eight hours during the day, the cell doors of the *RAF* prisoners were open so the prisoners could walk around the seventh floor at will. For the first and last time in the history of the Federal Republic, two basic rules of prison management were broken. First, those accused in a crime were allowed to have contact with one another—and thus coordinate their stories before trial. Second, men and women were not kept separate from one another. Each had a cell of up to 150 square feet. One floor below, where common criminals were placed, six men shared a cell that was intended for three. Each of the *RAF* prisoners had a television, radio, stereo record player, typewriter and a large number of books. The other “non-political” prisoners were only allowed television once a week. Moreover, the four *RAF* prisoners had access to fresh fruits and vegetables, yogurt, and fresh meat and a “sport room” with exercise machines, a book room with over 300 volumes and a trial room with about 300 “*Aktenordner*” or German style bound files related to their cases. Baader complained of back pains so—again according to detailed testimony taken by the *Oberlandsgericht* (comparable to a State Supreme Court) in Stuttgart—Bubeck approved visits three times week by a masseuse to ease his aching back. Baader played his stereo so loud that it could be heard two floors below.

Prisoners complained to Lubeck. One prisoner asked if “they are having parties up there.”

Lubeck, in order to avoid a hassle with Balder, said he couldn't hear a thing. A group representing the 800 common criminals in Stammheim sent a letter to Lubeck to protest the "privileges for the *RAF*."

The *RAF* prisoners repeatedly refused to have any contact with other prisoners—(actually proletarians and lumpen proletarians), supposedly out of fear of informers. They also knew if pictures of them together with other prisoners appeared in newspapers, their theme of "isolation torture" would collapse. The *RAF* was able to convince their sympathizers and a public outside Germany always ready to believe the worst about a German prison, that they were being horribly mistreated.

Meinhof, the former journalist—and Balder invited the Jean Paul Sartre to Stammheim. On December 4, 1974, the French philosopher, arrived. He spent an hour in the visitor's room with a translator, Lubeck and Balder. Afterwards, Sartre said at a press conference at the Stuttgart main train station that "Balder had the face of a man who'd been tortured. It's not the torture of the Nazis. It's another torture, one that leads to psychological disturbances. Balder and the others lives in a white cell. In this cell they hear nothing other than three times a day the steps of their guards who bring them food. The light is on for 24 hours."⁴⁶ The following day, the German and European press ran front page stories about Sartre's criticism of the *RAF*'s treatment in Stammheim.

In fact, Sartre's utterances added chapter to the history of gullible intellectuals who served as front men for totalitarian regimes and movements. Lubeck pointed out that Sartre said in the visitor's cell, but had not been in Baader's. Had he done so he would have see that Baader's room was anything but all white. His wall were adorned with a poster of Che Guevara and multi-colored maps. He, like the other *RAF* prisoners had a window. Lubeck called Sartre's claims "sheer lies, nothing else." The lights were not on 24 hours a day. They were turned out in each cell each night at 10 in the winter and 11 in the summer. Every day, the *RAF* prisoners sat together for several hours and talked. Prison officials were ordered remain out of earshot. But for a left wing public outside Stammheim, who knew only the Horst Lubeck was a German prison official, Sartre's word to contrary was more convincing.

The *RAF* had earlier demonstrated an ability to convince a circle of sympathizers and part of the media that it was being mistreated in prison. In 1974, Holger Meins, who been arrested in a shootout with police in 1971, went on a hunger strike—for two months. He refused all efforts to feed him. He died on November 9, 1974. Otto Schilly then was one of the *RAF*'s lawyers. You will recall that he later became the Attorney General of the then unified Germany. After 9/11 a famous photo was taken of him next to John Ashcroft, the conservative Attorney General of the United States and Schilly's comrade in the recently declared "war on terror." In 1977 a younger and different Otto Schilly declared that the *RAF* prisoners engaged in hunger strikes had been "executed."⁴⁷ Hundreds of *RAF* sympathizers came to Mein's funeral and burial in Hamburg, some carrying banners claiming that "the guerilla Holder Meins was murdered by the state security and justice officials." Rudi Dutschke stood by Mein's grave, raised his right arm and clenched fist and yelled, "Holger, the struggle continues." (*Holger, der Kampf geht weiter!*) Indeed it did. Mein's long, extended suicide was turned into the myth of his murder at the hands of the "fascist state." It became one of those key "facts" that led younger people such as Sigrid Sternebeck, Ralf Baptist Friedrich, Silke Maier-Witt and Susanne Albrecht to join the *RAF*.

On October 18, 1977, after learning that the GS-9 commandos had freed the hostages in Mogadishu and that therefore the only bargaining card for getting out of prison was gone, Andreas Balder, Jan-Carl and Gudrin Ensslin committed suicide. Irmgard Moeller tried but failed to kill herself with a knife.⁴⁸ She was rushed to the hospital where the doctors saved her life, a gift she repaid by spreading the lie that her associates had been murdered. Balder and Rasps killed themselves with self-inflicted gunshots to the head. Ensslin hanged herself. (Meinhof had sunk into depression due partly to conflicts with the other prisoners and had committed suicide a year earlier). Of course the *RAF* sympathizers and the *RAF* lawyers claimed they were all murdered. That legend continued into the 1990s in the radical left in West Germany and probably elsewhere. In 1990 on the thirteen anniversary of the suicides, over 500 *RAF* sympathizers marched through Berlin shouting: "*Nichts ist vergessen, nichts ist*

vergeben.” “Nothing is forgotten. Nothing is forgiven.”⁴⁹ All of many subsequent investigations by medical experts came to the opposite conclusion: the *RAF* prisoners committed suicide. After hearing from 97 witnesses, an investigation of the Baden-Wurtemberg state parliament (*Landtag*) also arrived at that conclusion. In two trials in Stuttgart, several of the *RAF* lawyers were found guilty of smuggling the guns into the prison that Balder and Rasps used. In 2002, eight years after her release from prison, Möller insisted that the German intelligence services, the government of the Federal Republic and NATO, and of course—who else-- the CIA were all involved. As you might expect, the conspiracy theory found many adherents.

Members of the *RAF* observing events from a distance in their refuge in Saddam Hussein’s Bagdad knew better. As Peters points out, in one of the trials in Stuttgart one of the *RAF* members, Monika Helbing testified that Brigitte Mohnhaupt, the true iron lady of the *RAF* terrorist scene in the 1980s, yelled at her comrades to stop crying and screaming when they heard the news of the Stammheim deaths. “What’s going on here, a funeral with weeping women? (*Klageweibern*) Can you really see the *Stammheimer* (the Stammheim prisoners) only as victims. That [the suicides] was an action (*Das war eine Aktion*). Do you understand? An action. You assholes can stop bawling.”⁵⁰ Mohnhaupt continued that “the suicide action” was the prisoners’ means of advancing the *RAF*’s goals.

Susanne Albrecht, who as a friend of the Ponto family rang the front door that made possible his killer’s unforced entry, testified that even within the *RAF* the “collective suicide” in Stammheim was a secret. “Behind the lie,” she said, “stood a corresponding political calculation...Toward those outside the *RAF*, only that could be said which corresponded to the groups ‘theoretical self-conception,’ but not that which corresponded with the reality.” Indeed, she continued that the suicides in Stammheim became the group’s “greatest taboo” because—again quoting her, “the claim that they had been murdered build a whole political movement from which the *RAF* gained legitimation as well as support.”⁵¹ Only the twelve members of the *RAF* then in Bagdad and members of the hard core elsewhere knew the truth. They kept it

secret and were able to count on hundreds, and in the climate of 1977, thousands of supporters to repeat the lies about their suicides in legal, above ground political activities. In so doing, they could also count on intellectuals such as Sartre to repeat fictions about Stammheim as a symbol of the violation of human rights in the Federal Republic.

As came out in subsequent judicial proceedings, the weapons used in the suicides were smuggled into the prison by their lawyers, Arendt Muller and Admin Gnarly. Metal detectors were rudimentary and astonishingly, often not used. The police never suspected that lawyers would smuggle weapons into a prison. But by hollowing out the inside of books, they did just that. After his death, the prison officials collected 470 books and 400 magazines from Balder's cell. Ensslin had 450 books and 400 magazines and brochures and Rasps had 550 books and 280 magazines and brochures. It was a massive amount of paper and—as anyone here who does serious work in a study knows—it was very difficult for anyone else to find anything. Again, the alleged “fascist” prison guards left the mass—and mess—of books and paper alone and the guns were hidden within it. After the suicides, the prison officials also found 650 grams of explosives, cables and no less than ten hiding places made with tools and carefully covered up with plaster that the *RAF* prisoners had simply taken from materials during some renovations in the prison. Far from “isolation torture,” the *RAF* prisoners could simply talk to each other by sticking their heads out of their windows and turning right and left but they also managed to use their stereos and radios to build an internal speaker system. They heard the news of the liberation of the hostages in Mogadishu on the evening news of ARD from *Sender Freies Berlin* around 12:40 am. They received the news and communicated it among themselves, and, in Mohnhaupt's words, carried out “the action.”⁵²

As I pointed out earlier, the second and third generation of the *RAF* continued to engage in murders and violent attacks until 1992.

Conclusion

First, the most important point to make about the West German terrorists is familiar. Like the

terrorists that Fyodor Dostoyevsky described so well in *The Devils* or that Albert Camus examined so acutely in *The Rebel*.⁵³ These people did evil things because they came to believe in absolute righteousness of a set of wrong ideas. Their inhumanity was inseparable from the ideas of communism and armed revolution. To be sure, like all major political and intellectual traditions, the communist idea in the twentieth century took a variety of forms, some of what had nothing to do with terrorism and political murder. Yet some did and they are too often left out of the history of European communism.⁵⁴ In the polarized political climate of recent decades, such an insight is sometimes called conservative or at times neo-conservative and there is something to be said for the label. Yet doing so underestimates some of the self-reflection of West German leftists. In the midst of the German fall, Rudi Dutschke distanced himself from terror when he wrote in *Die Zeit* that “we know only too well what the despotism of capital is. We do not want to replace it with a despotism of terror.”⁵⁵ In view of those already murdered by the *RAF*, Dutschke’s second thoughts came rather late. Yet they were better late than never. Coming from Dutschke they helped to stimulate an impressive and important rethinking and deradicalization of the West German left. Likewise it was, as they say, no accident, that it was one of Adorno’s students, the social theorist Detlev Claussen, who in 1976 clearly and unequivocally denounced the anti-Semitism that led to Wilfried Bose’s “selection” of Jews and non-Jews in Entebbe in an essay entitled “Terror in the Air, Counter-revolution on the Ground” and published in the leftist magazine *Links*.⁵⁶ It was this, in many ways impressive and historically distinctive, deradicalizing and self-reflective left that formed the Green Party and, at times in fits and starts but without political violence, accepted the rules of the game of liberal democracy. Just as the emergence of the *RAF* was a chapter in the history of communism, so its demise was due to this history of deradicalization with the West German left as well as the all encompassing collapse of the Communist states in Europe in 1989-1990.⁵⁷ The romance and lure of communist revolution was replaced for younger generations with realities about police states and economic failure. Moreover, after 1989-90, the Communist intelligence services that had offered money,

weapons and escape routes were now out of business.

Second, there is much research to be done in the archives to find out what the West German government under Brandt, Schmidt and Kohl knew about Soviet and East German support for the *RAF*. Is it really credible that they had no idea of their involvement until 1990 when ten *RAF* members being sought for crimes were arrested in East Germany? What did the West German government and its intelligence services know and when did it know it about foreign support for the *RAF*? Was there a reluctance to discuss the issue publicly for fear of endangering the policy of Detente? There is much research to be done in the archives of the former Communist governments. Perhaps files survived the chaos of 2003 in Bagdad and are in the archive of Kanan Makiya's Iraq Memory Foundation. There is also much work to be done in the archives of the United States government including those of the State Department and the American Embassy in Bonn, as well as those records of the Central Intelligence Agency and the United States military in the Federal Republic. Hopefully, these records will now be open given that thirty years and more have passed since these events took place. This chapter of the Cold War deserves attention from the Cold War International History Project based here in Washington. There is a great deal of research to be done as our understanding of these events moves from the level of journalism to historical work in the archives.

Third, the *RAF* made an unintended contribution to the collapse of the romance of revolution in Germany. Having fanatically pushed a set of assumptions to their absurdly logical conclusion, they demonstrated yet again how dangerous and destructive totalitarian ideas are. In this sense, again unintentionally, the *RAF* fostered the above mentioned deradicalization evident in the now famous careers of former radical leftists such as Joschka Fischer and Otto Schilly. The *RAF* terrorists left a legacy of violence, destruction and grief. They made no contribution whatever to understanding Germany's past and succeeded only in ending the lives of thirty-four people who at the time of their murders were active contributors to a free and democratic society. They failed to turn Germany into a police state. The

universities, press and intellectual life remained vital and pluralistic. In 1979, two years after the Stammheim suicides, a new left-wing party, the Greens emerged and remains an important component of German politics.

Third, while the *RAF* murders caused prominent West German leftists to step back from taking the leap to political murder, reflection on the horror of the *RAF*'s actions may have stiffened the resolve of the West German establishment to resist political and military pressures coming from the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact and Middle Eastern dictators. During the middle of the German Fall, Chancellor gave a speech in London at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The London speech," as it came to be known was a complex, dry, technical analysis of medium range nuclear arms negotiations. It was the beginning of what became the NATO double-track decision of 1979. I thought then and believe to this day that the implementation of that decision—more than anything that happened in Afghanistan or Central America—was the decisive turning point in world history that marked the end of the global momentum to the radical left and the beginning of the end of Communism in Europe. When I interviewed Schmidt in 1985 while doing research for my history of the battle of the euromissiles, it didn't occur to me to ask him if the experience of the years of terror had stiffened his resolve to resist Soviet pressures. Coincidence in time does not prove causality, but it does make it a possibility, and not only regarding Schmidt but also Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher, Helmut Kohl, Schmidt's successor in the Chancellor's office and many other West German government officials and persons in public life. While the *RAF* members would certainly be unhappy to hear this, it may be that they made an important yet unintentional contribution to the collapse of Communism in Europe.

1. The Red Army Fraktion or *RAF* was also often referred to as the “Baader-Meinof Gang” with reference to two of its founding members, Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof. Meinhof’s leadership role was surpassed by others. The group referred to itself as the *RAF* and it is this term that is used in this essay.
2. Martin Jander, “*Differenzen in antiimperialistischen Kampf: Zu den Verbindungen des Ministerium für Staatssicherheit mit der RAF und den bundesdeutschen Linksterrorismus,*” Thomas Skelton Robinson, “*Im Netz verheddet: Die Beziehung des bundesdeutschen Linksterrorismus zur Volksfront für die Befreiung Palästinas (1969-1980),* pp. 828-904; 828-904; and Christopher Duse, “*Die RAF und der internationale Terrorismus: Zur transnationalen Kooperation klandestiner Organisationen,*” in Wolfgang Kraushaar, ed., *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus*, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006), pp. 696-713, 828-904, and 905-929. Also see Christopher Andrew and Wassili Mitrochein, *Das Schwarzbuch des KGB 2. Moskaus Geheimoperationen im Kalten Krieg* (Berlin: Propylaen, 2006).
3. Butz Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum: Die Geschichte der RAF* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2007), p. 17.
4. Richard Herzinger, “Deutsch-palästinensische Achse des Terrors,” *Die Welt am Sonntag, Dossier* (September 2, 12007), p. 17. Martin Jander’s research in the Stasi files indicate that the *RAF* had multiple contacts and forms of assistance from the East German intelligence services. See Martin Jander, “*Differenzen im antiimperialistischen Kampf: Zu den Verbindungen des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit mit der RAF und dem bundesdeutschen Linksterrorismus,*” in Wolfgang Kraushaar, ed., *Die RAF und der Linke Terrorismus, Bd.I* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006), pp. 696-713.
5. For analysis of these comparisons, see Dorothea Hauser, “*Deutschland, Italien, Japan: Die ehemaligen Achsenmächte und der Terrorismus der 1970er Jahre,*” in Wolfgang Kraushaar, ed., *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus, Bd. 2* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006), pp. 1272-98; and Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004). On the centrality of anti-fascism in the history of 20th century Communism, see Francois Fret, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Communist Idea in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Deborah Fret (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
6. Clais von Mirbach in “Wer ist v. Mirbach war die erste Frage der Mörder an die Geiseln,” in, Anne Siemans, *Für die RAF war er das System, für mich der Vater: Die andere Geschichte des deutschen Terrorismus* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 2007), pp. 66-67.
7. Clais von Mirbach in “Wer ist v. Mirbach war die erste Frage der Mörder an die Geiseln,” op. cit., p. 67.
8. Siemans, *Für die RAF war er das Systems...*, pp. 120-21.
9. Rudi Dutschke and Hans Jürgen Krahl, “*Organisationsreferat,*” *Diskus-Frankfurter Studentenzeitung*, 30 Jg., Nr. ½, (February 1980), pp. 6-9, cited by Wolfgang Kraushaar, “Rudi Dutschke und der bewaffnete Kampf,” in Wolfgang Kraushaar, Karin Wieland, and Jan Phillip Reemtsma, *Rudi Dutschke, Andreas Baader und die RAF* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), pp. 20-21. On Dutschke and political violence, also see Michaela Karl, *Rudi*

Dutschke.Revolutionär ohne Revolution (Frankfurt am Main, 2003).

10. Theodor Adorno, "Nr. 338 Brief an Herbert Marcuse, 19. Juni 1969," Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Falschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995, Band 2: Dokumente* (Hamburg: Roger and Bernhard bei Zweitausendeins, 1998), pp. 651-52.
11. "Theodor W. Adorno, "Am 14. Juli sollten die Vordiplom-Klausuren..."
12. See Jeffrey Herf, *War by Other Means: Soviet Power, West German Resistance and the Battle of the Euromissiles* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), pp. 101-104. The founders of the *Bund* included Richard Lowenthal, Herman Lübbe, Hans Maier, Thomas Nipperdey, Elisabeth Nölle-Neumann, Ernst Nolte, Walter Rüegg, Erwin Scheuch, Helmut Schelsky, Frederick Tenbruck and Ernst Topitsch.
13. Ibid.
14. Dutschke, however, had a more nuanced view. In his notes of 1967, he wrote that "The founding of the state of Israel was the political emancipation of Jewry. It must absolutely be preserved." (*Die unbedingt erhalten bleiben muß*) If the Israeli "system of domination" that served as a outpost of American and English interests would be displaced with an embrace (*Verbrüderungen*) with the Arab mass that would be "human emancipation." But in order to reach this goal, Israel needs to be preserved, "The Arab great power chauvinism ...is the pendant to Israeli imperialism." Rudi Dutschke, "Notizen," *Mappe 2, Blatt 1/2, June 1967, K21/48, Archiv des Hamburger Instituts für Sozialforschung*, cited in Kraushaar, *Rudi Dutschke*, op. cit., p. 48.
15. Carlos Marighella, *Urban Guerilla Minimanual* (Vancouver, CA: Pulp Press, 1974); and on the web at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marighella-carlos/1969/06/minimanual-urban-guerrilla/index.htm>
16. "Schalom + Napalm," *Agit 883*, November 13, 1969, 1. Jg. , Nr. 40, p. 9, cited by Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im jüdischen Gemeindehaus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), p. 46. The leaflet was also translated and reprinted in Bommi Baumann, *Wie Alles Anfing, How it all Began: The Personal Account of a West German Urban Guerilla*, trans. Helene Ellenbogen and Wayne Parker (Vancouver, CA: Pulp Press, 1977), pp. 57-58. The literature on the West German left and Israel is now extensive. See for example, Martin Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke: Zur Geschichte eines schwierigen Verhältnisses*, 2nd and revised ed. (Frankfurt/Main: Herg and Herchen, 1994); and Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, op. cit.
17. "Schalom + Napalm," Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, op. cit., pp. 46-48.
18. Ibid., p. 48
19. "WANDELTEUREN HASS IN ENERGIE" *Flugblatt-Aufruf zur Vietnam Demonstration am 15. November 1969 in West-Berlin, Archiv des Hamburger Instituts für Sozialforschung*, cited in Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, op. cit. P. 56.

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20. Dieter Kunzelmann, "Brief aus Amman," cited by Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, pp. 66–72, original in *Agit 883*, 27 November 1969, 1. Jg.Nr. 42, p. 5. Several days later, the Tupamaros West Berlin sent a taped confession and justification for the attempted bombing of the Jewish Community Center. A woman's voice declared that "[Axel] Spirnger, [the publishers of a range of conservative newspapers], the West Berlin Senate and [Heinz] Galinski [the Chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany] want to sell us their *Judenknacks* We won't join that business....[West German restitution payments to Israel] *Wiedergutmachung* finances a new fascist genocide...Learn from the one who placed the bomb in the Jewish Community Center (*Jüdische Gemeindehaus*), learn from the Tupamaros, Che lives! Vietnam is not here. Vietnam is in America. But listen: Palestine is here, we are fedayeen. This afternnon we fight for the revolutionary Palestinian liberation front, Al-Fatah. Strike now (*Schlag zu*)" Ten days later, Kunzelmann published a "Letter from Amman," in *Agit 883*. There he repeated and accentuated these same points. "Palestine is for the FRG what Vietnam is for the Amis. The left has not yet understood that. Why? The *Judennax*. Those who fight fascism are for Israel." Things are not so simple. It is essential to grasp the "fascist ideology of Zionism" and replace "simple philosemitism with clear solidarity for Al-Fatah, which in the Middle East has taken up the battle against the Third Reich of yesterday and today."
21. Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kummune I: Berlin 1967-1969*, (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 2004), p. 368.
22. "Die Rote Armee aufbauen: Erklärung zur Befreiung Andreas Baader vom 5. Juni 1970," in *RAF: Rote Armee Fraktion: Texte und Materialien zur Geschichte der RAF* (West Berlin: ID-Verlag, 1977), pp. 24-26.
23. "Das Konzept Stadtguerilla, April 1971,"; *Über den bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa, Mai 1971*,"; and "Dem Volk Dienen. Stadtguerilla und Klassenkampf, April 1972," in *RAF: Rote Armee Fraktion*, op. cit., pp. 27-48, 49-112, and 112-144.
24. "Über den bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa, Mai 1971," in *Rote Armee Fraktion: Texte und Materialien zur Geshichte der RAF*," (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1977), pp. 49-111.
25. Ibid., p. 50.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 72.
28. Ibid., p. 73.
29. See Richard Pipes, ed., *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive*; with assistance from David Brandenberger and translations by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990); Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924* (New York: Penguin, 1996); Nicholas Werth, "A State Against Its People: Violence, Repression, and Terror in the Soviet Union," in Stephanie Courtois, ed. *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, pp. 33-268.
30. "Über den bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa, Mai 1971," op. cit., pp. 78-79.
31. Ibid., p. 80.
32. Ibid., p. 81.

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33. Ibid.
34. Albert Camus, *Der Mensch in Revolte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1953). Figures on print runs and editions from the *Deutsche Nationalbibliothek*. Based on his reading of these most famous of Lenin's texts, Camus wrote: "Forsake of justice in far-away future, it [Lenin's doctrine of revolution] authorizes injustice throughout the entire course of history and becomes the type of mystification which Lenin detested more than anything else in the world. It contrives the acceptance of injustice, crime, and falsehood by the promise of a miracle," Albert Camus, *The Rebel* (New York: Knopf, 1956), p. 233.
35. "Die Aktion des Schwarzen September in München. Zur Strategie des Antiimperialistischen Kampfes," *Rote Armee Fraktion: Texte und Materialien...*, op. cit., pp. 151-177.
36. Ibid., p. 159.
37. Ibid., p. 171.
38. Ibid., p. 172.
39. Ibid., p. 173.
40. Ibid., p. 173. The German reads as follows: "Israel vergießt Krokodilstränen. Es hat seine Sportler verheizt wie die Nazis die Juden-Brennmaterial für die imperialistische Ausrottungspolitik."
41. Ibid., p. 175.
42. Ibid., p. 176.
43. Ibid., p. 177.
44. Ibid., p. 177. Note again that the essay rejected that notion that there was anything at all unique about the Holocaust. In the Federal Republic, efforts to dissolve the uniqueness of the Holocaust did not begin with Ernst Nolte and the conservative historians of the 1980s. As far as I recall and have read, the RAF's comparisons did not meet with anywhere near this level of indignation. On the contrary, they entered into and reflected the moods of the radical left.
45. On the RAF in Stammheim, see Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum...* op. cit., pp. 305-52.
46. Sartre cited by Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum*, p. 330.
47. Ibid., p. 321.
48. Peters, "Die Todesnacht in Stammheim," in *Tödlicher Irrtum*, op. cit., pp. 450-67.
49. Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum: Die Geschichte der RAF* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2007), pp. 785.
50. Ibid., p. 452.
51. Ibid., pp. 452-53.
52. Ibid., pp. 453-60.
53. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Demons: a novel in three parts*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage, 1995).
54. For an excellent synthetic history of the communist idea in the twentieth century, see Francois Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Deborah Furet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). The German edition received the Hannah Arendt Prize in Germany and that one of the members of the jury was Daniel Cohn-

Bendit, a leader of the May revolt in 1968 in Paris and later active member of the Green Party in Germany.

55. Rudi Dutschke, “*Kritik am Terror muß klarer werden*,” *Die Zeit*, October 1977. Also see Rudi Dutschke, “On Terrorism,” translated by Jeffrey Herf in *New German Critique*, No. 12, 1977. Also available at: <http://www.trend.infopartisan.net/trd0407/t060407.html>. The German reads: “*Wir wissen nur zu gut, was die Despotie des Kapitals ist, wir wollen sie nicht ersetzen durch Terrordespotie.*”

56. Detlev Claussen, “*Terror in der Luft. Konterrevolution auf der Erde*,” in *Links. Sozialistische Zeitung Nr.80/September 1976*, 6ff. Also see Detlev Claussen, *Vom Judenhaß zum Antisemitismus. Materialien einer verleugneten Geschichte*. (Neuwied: Darmstadt, 1987).

57. On the concept of deradicalization, see Jerry Z. Muller, *The Other God that Failed: Hans Freyer and the Deradicalization of German Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987)