

REFUSING TO BE “GOOD GERMANS”: NEW LEFT VIOLENCE AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

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I am honored by the task of addressing the history of the Red Army Faction (RAF) on the occasion of the forty-year mark of the terrible “German Autumn” of 1977.¹ My presentation concerns a vitally important, but often minimized, aspect of the RAF phenomenon: the international scope of left-wing radicalism and, more particularly, the concomitant existence of self-described “revolutionary armed struggle” groups like the RAF in various societies around the world. This global context, I will argue, has powerful implications for how we might understand the RAF, both in historical and in normative terms. Before I address that context, however, I would like to sketch the place the RAF has in specifically German history and memory. The sketch will help to highlight the potential liabilities of an unduly national, and thereby parochial, view of the RAF, and the benefits of an international perspective.

The conflict between the RAF and the West German state was indeed a major episode in postwar German history. The RAF was a tiny organization, whose initial “hard core” had as few as twenty members, most of whom were imprisoned by 1972. Several times over, the group regenerated itself, but in the periods of its highest activity, in the mid 1970s and 1980s, as few as several dozen members were directly active in operations. So, too, the scales of its violence were small. By late 1978, the end of the RAF’s first phase, twenty-eight people had been killed by left-wing violence—a number dwarfed by annual deaths from auto accidents.²

And yet, the RAF had an impact vastly disproportionate to its scale of violence. This is true of all terrorisms, which use fear to compensate for military disadvantage and the media to amplify the psychological effects of their violence. (Only in recent years have terrorists such as Al Qaeda sought to engineer acts of mass, indiscriminate violence; historically, violent groups on the left, who of course reject the label of “terrorism” and claim populist aspirations, have for the most part carefully selected human targets and worked to limit the numbers of dead and wounded.) This disproportion was, however, especially severe in the German case. Evidence of the imbalance abounds.

In broadly discursive terms, the RAF’s members were in the 1970s the object of relentless, even obsessive, media attention; the main figures of

Baader, Meinhof, Ensslin, Meins, and Mahler became not only household names, but, within an evidently dramatic narrative structure, characters in a protracted, tragic saga that for years consumed the German public. In an institutional register, the RAF was the cause of a massive mobilization of security forces and the expansion of the national security apparatus, as well as the cause of special—and highly controversial—anti-terrorism laws restricting such things as political speech and the rights of legal defense. Within the ideological realm, the RAF inspired fierce debates within the left over strategy, tactics, and values. For countless others in German society, the group was a touchstone for conflicting feelings and attitudes toward the postwar state.

Perhaps most importantly, the group was regarded by leading figures in public life as a powerfully destabilizing force that conceivably threatened the very existence of the Federal Republic. That anxiety took many forms. Among the most dramatic was Willy Brandt's warning in 1977 to the RAF's putative "sympathizers": "To those directly aiding terrorism, I say again: Stop every form of assistance—before it's too late. Otherwise our country becomes a living hell, where father mistrusts son, where neighbor suspects neighbor, the state spies on its citizens, and . . . deadly violence rule[s] the streets. Help us avert this nightmare . . . if you refuse, the nightmare could become a reality."³ Here the "existential threat" was not the violence itself, but the mistrust and even hysteria it might breed, breaking down the democratic solidarity presumably holding society together. Equally remarkable was Bundespräsident Walter Scheel's declaration at the funeral of Hanns Martin Schleyer that the weeks of his kidnapping have "clearly been the worst in the history of the Federal Republic." The RAF, in Scheel's stern words, practiced "naked barbarism" and was "the enem[y] of every civilization." It negated by its very presence the core values on which the postwar Republic was based and therefore had to be eliminated.⁴ The RAF, in sum, was simultaneously the cause of a security crisis, a political crisis, a constitutional crisis, and a crisis of confidence for the new nation.

The RAF was also, in its own day, a key point of engagement of the German arts and intellectual life. The leading lights of postwar culture—from the Nobel laureate Heinrich Böll, to the painter Gerhard Richter, to the pioneers of the New German Cinema, to scholars like Jürgen Habermas and Oscar Negt—all delivered major treatments, either of the group or the climate in which it operated. Academic and other researchers, finally, dissected the origins, operations, and evolution of the RAF, refining in the process the tools used by social science to understand political violence.

Important in its own time, the RAF persists in German culture and memory. Though it no longer has "sympathizers" or imitators, it does

have something like political fans: largely young people, for whom the romantic rebels in the film *The Edukators* (*Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*) may be seen as archetypes, who viscerally identify with the totalizing critique of democratic capitalism of 1960s- and 1970s-era militants and at least yearn to express their disgust in emphatic ways. Chock full of fascinating themes and storylines, the RAF's history has by now inspired thriving genres of fiction, film, theatre, and the visual arts, which are themselves objects of sophisticated analyses, university instruction, and journalistic comment.⁵

The RAF also endures as a source of controversy, in which old debates and even wounds have been repeatedly pried open (though not necessarily advanced) by such "events" as the 2004 exhibit "Zur Vorstellung des Terrors" at the Kunstwerk museum, the possible parole of RAF prisoners, new forensic insight into RAF crimes and revelations about the extent of the RAF's dealings with the East German Stasi, or, simply, the anniversaries of 1968 and 1977 and the ubiquitous reflections on the meaning and impact of the era's radicalism they ritually summon. By now there are whole eras of the RAF's cultural reception and legacy, as well as analyses of their evolution. This current anniversary season has featured an almost uncanny quantity of commemorative events, media, and publications, adding to the voluminous empirical research of recent years into nearly all conceivable aspects of the RAF's history. Implicit or explicit in so much of this material is consideration of whether and to what extent the social movements associated with 1968 should be judged in light of the violence of the mid-1970s, as well as how both 1968 and 1977, figuratively speaking, should be understood with respect to the Nazi period and the postwar founding (1933 and 1945 or 1948, respectively). RAF has, in short, a conspicuous promiscuity, conjoining various epochs in the German past as Germans ponder their collective identity and historical experience.

In this sketch, I have underscored the importance of RAF within German history and to German culture. In powerful respects, the RAF conflict is a German story whose dynamic was conditioned by the specificity of both the German past and postwar German consciousness. Indeed, the story has most often, and most famously, been told this way. Common to so many treatments is a view of the RAF conflict as a consequence of both the Weimar and Nazi pasts. The narratives vary in their particulars and their politics, ranging from resurgent descriptions of the RAF as "Hitler's Children," defined by ideological zealotry and a contempt for democracy, to, at a far less common extreme, portrayals as truth-tellers about the constitutive rottenness of postwar society, as well as the victims of an overbearing state.⁶ Less partisan analyses present the RAF saga as, in essence, a sharply German psychodrama, in which youth-

ful attitudes toward everything from the Vietnam War to the postwar state, the Palestinian conflict, and virtually all forms of adult and institutional authority were driven by anger, shame, and resentment stemming from Germany's past.⁷ The RAF's violence, aimed at a postwar state they and others on the left errantly deemed "fascist," was therefore a case of displacement and misrecognition based in tortured, post-fascist psychology.

I favor a dialogic model stressing the volatility of competing perceptions. In this model, the Federal Republic's defenders were concerned that their fledgling democracy could be done in by an extremism similar to that which had wrecked Weimar. This led the state and some opinion makers to overreact to the RAF, arguably breeding more violence through harsh security measures and their vilifying rhetoric. The left, for its part, feared that authoritarian tendencies had persisted in the postwar state, and interpreted its actions—especially the policing of the New Left and then the RAF—as signs of a resurgent fascism. Germany's special past, in short, led to an exaggerated, mutual enmity and extreme self-righteousness on both sides that served to intensify the conflict. By extension, the RAF phenomenon, at least in part, was a secondary trauma stemming from the poorly processed, primary trauma of the fascist past.⁸

Understanding the role of the fascist past is valuable, if not indispensable, to understanding the RAF conflict, especially its intensity and longevity. But attention to this aspect can also be limiting and even distorting, especially with respect to the RAF's origins and early impetus. Far from unique, the RAF was one of many groups in the advanced industrial world, emerging from the student movement or "New Left" of the 1960s, that sought to create a revolution by means of what they termed "armed struggle." In all cases I know, such groups were aggressively anti-capitalist, opposed to American military and economic power, and inspired by anti-imperialist movements in the Third World. Emulating urban guerrillas in Latin America and insurgencies in Asia, they targeted the police and the military, as well as the sites and symbols of state and corporate power. And they saw themselves as part of a militant vanguard contributing to a global socialist revolution. The RAF, by one valid description, was an instance or manifestation of a global phenomenon driven by a global logic.

The RAF's fellow travelers were many. First and foremost were Italy's Red Brigades—the biggest and most active of such groups, whose members and numbers of attacks were in the thousands, and which came the closest to actually challenging their state's grip on power. The RAF was also joined by the Japanese Red Army Faction, a small but very violent group, notorious for grisly attacks on its own members. Germany, Italy, and Japan are all, of course, former fascist powers, suggesting that

the emergence of violent groups from the student movement in those societies is attributable to the absence of longstanding democratic traditions and to legacies of authoritarian rule. Observing this, some researchers have sought to derive a hard sociological rule with respect to violence in the 1960s, holding that where democracy was strongest and most deeply rooted, violence was least prevalent.⁹ If the RAF, by the terms of this analysis, is not a narrowly German story, it is at least a post-fascist story.

The post-fascist analysis has some value, but it, too, proves reductive. England, a longstanding democracy, did have a small armed struggle movement led by the Angry Brigades, which committed bombings from the underground. In France, students and workers almost succeeded in creating a revolution in 1968. Though intense street battles were part of the tumultuous May, the conflict failed to take on a strongly militarized cast. Nonetheless, post-1968 Maoist groupings practiced a militant labor violence, and a small “armed struggle” contingent, led by the short-lived group Action Directe, did eventually emerge. And then there was the violence of American radicals, which recent research (including my own) has done much to document and interpret.¹⁰ The Black Panther Party initially practiced “armed self-defense,” but soon moved toward more intense combat couched in a rhetoric of revolutionary insurgency. The Weather Underground, forming in 1969 (as “Weatherman”), was only the most notorious group from the student and youth movement to practice violence. The numbers of violent acts during this tumultuous period are staggering. Between January 1969 and April 1970 alone, researchers counted as many as 2,800 political bombings and arsons (attempted or successful)—figures which dwarf those for peak years in Germany.¹¹ A great volume of the violence may have been motivated, at bottom, by anger at the Vietnam War and the desire to stop it. But even more or less spontaneous strikes against the war machine were typically accompanied by a rhetoric of revolution, oozing everywhere from New Left and Black Power circles circa 1969. Fascinating both in its own right and in comparison to Germany, the US case is so important because it shows that longstanding democratic traditions provide no immunity against violent forms of civil conflict and a broader fascination among swaths of the public with revolution by means of war.

The groups mentioned above comprise just one species of violence in the 1960s and 1970s from non-state actors. Armed struggle groups, some with decades-long histories, also existed in the context of nationalist causes in Northern Ireland, Palestine, Quebec, and the Basqueland; to oppose authoritarian governments in Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Iran; and, most influentially and consequentially, as part of campaigns against colonial or neo-colonial regimes in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia,

and Africa. It is commonly asserted that we live today in an “Age of Terror.” To be sure, the violence of Islamic and other extremists is especially virulent and deadly. But in terms of the quantity and reach of non-state violence (though not the body count), the 1970s is most certainly a historic high-water mark, in which something like a cosmopolitan, international, and transnational *culture* of armed struggle existed. (A precious scene from Stephen Spielberg’s *Munich*, in which a shadowy figure awkwardly promises the same safe house in Greece to Palestinian, Basque, German, and other fighters, offers an image of this culture.) It was by no means a coordinated movement, consisting instead of a diversity of specific causes, tactics, and agendas. But between groups, there were ideological and operational continuities, occasional political and tactical alliances, and, to varying degrees, a *subjective* sense of being involved in the same broad struggle.

This brings me to my first, preliminary point about basic frameworks for seeing the RAF. The RAF has certainly been characterized as an instance of “terrorism.” As defined by governments, legal structures, and security experts, “terrorism” is an ahistoric designation that refers to a violent *modus operandi* (i.e., the use or threat of force to achieve a political end, by a standard phrasing), irrespective of any particular context. The RAF would appear to meet this clinical definition, and may well be worthy of the highly pejorative connotations of the term in common discourse. (It did murder, maim, and terrorize on behalf of a cause one might question or condemn.) Whatever one’s view, the RAF conceived its violence as “revolutionary armed struggle”—a historically specific form of political practice ascendant in the postwar period on a global scale and which had a particular etiology, texture, and set of meanings. Its deep roots certainly lie in the Russian Narodnik, anarchist, and communist movements of the late nineteenth century. In its twentieth-century guise, armed struggle developed overwhelmingly in the context of anti-colonial campaigns, from Cuba, to Algeria, to Vietnam. Groups within these larger movements generated both the military form (urban guerrilla, foco, etc.) and—drawing from indigenous resources, from Marxism, and from a liberal, universalistic rhetoric of independence and self-determination—the political language of emancipation that captivated rebels in other societies, including Germany. From the standpoint of the *long durée*, colonialism, or, more precisely, its protracted undoing, is the predicate or condition of possibility for the emergence of the RAF. Put otherwise, the violence of the RAF, the Weathermen, the Red Brigades, and the like depended on a kind of grand ideological support—the imagination of a comprehensive emancipation through revolution—that was central to the *zeitgeist* of the 1960s and which reflected profound, global socio-political

transformations. Any analysis that ignores or minimizes this constitutive context misdescribes what it seeks to illuminate.

Our recent times provide roundabout confirmation of the salience of the global context to the New Left violence of the 1960s and 1970s. In the wake of 9–11 and with another American war breeding the hostility of the global left, there have been understandable concerns that a “homegrown terrorism” like the Weatherman and RAF of yore may again develop in Western societies. It has not. The reason is likely not a deficit of anger or, as in many societies, much stricter surveillance and tougher laws. Rather, contemporary rebels simply do not have access to the kind of emancipatory vision and conception of global struggle that drove 1960s militants. (The characters in *The Edukators* give some indication of this; the strident critique of capitalism and proclamations of socialism’s certain victory are replaced by their laconic complaint of the super rich: “You have too much money.”) And, with even Third World versions of Marxism all but eclipsed, such a vision is extremely remote. Thankfully, violent jihad has had almost no cross-cultural appeal and, whatever Bin Laden’s occasional condemnation of the West’s cultural imperialism and soulless consumerism, has not captivated the global left.¹² And though militancy has made a comeback in the Western anti-globalization (or “global justice”) movement, it does not remotely resemble the kinds of clandestine action seriously pursued in the 1960s and 1970s. The kind of leftwing violence of past decades—whether termed “armed struggle” or “terrorism”—may truly be history.

I would now like to narrow my focus to a comparison of the two groups I know best, the RAF and America’s Weather Underground, the leading violent group from the US New Left and the closest thing to an American counterpart to the RAF. In short form, Weatherman emerged as a faction in Students for a Democratic Society in 1969. After bloody street battles with police, the group went underground in early 1970. In March, a cell in New York City, set to attack a military dance that would likely have resulted in deaths, mishandled its bombs, causing an explosion that killed three Weathermen. The group then rethought its path, attacking thereafter property only and avoiding human injury. As the Vietnam War wound down, and the radicalism of the 1960s waned, the group lost a sense of purpose, voluntarily disbanding in 1976–7 after having committed a little more than two dozen bombings. (There were, it should be noted, many other, lesser known or anonymous bombing collectives, active mostly between 1969 and 1971).

The RAF formed in 1970, and for its first two years did little else but elude capture, rob banks, and engage in occasional, and sometimes deadly, shootouts with police. With its “May Offensive” of 1972 it escalated its violence to attacks on US military bases and German law en-

forcement and the judiciary, resulting in a number of deaths. When its leaders were captured, the worst violence—committed to force their release—and greatest drama began. The first phase of the RAF's history ended with the German Autumn, by which point its vaunted anti-imperialist struggle had plainly devolved, in the words of one critic, into a "private war" with the state, obsessively trained on the prisoners' fate and the alleged misdeeds of the security apparatus.¹³ The two groups had, in sum, remarkably similar origins, but soon pursued very different paths, separated above all by their very different attitudes toward taking human life.

My goal is not to detail the histories of the groups, which are surely well known. Rather, I would like to present and elucidate four inter-related dimensions to their violence. These I term the political, apocalyptic, existential, and ethical. Sometimes mutually reinforcing, but sometimes also in conflict, these categories provide a conceptual framework for understanding the cause, course, and character of the groups' "armed struggles." More specifically, they enable one to see how closely matched their core motivations and basic worldview were, at least in their early phases. These similarities, I shall argue, reflected broader continuities between the West German and American student movements (as well as those in other places). The roots of the RAF, by extension, were far from uniquely German, reinforcing the salience of the international context and consideration of the place of Germany in the postwar world. By the same token, appreciating the groups' similarities also makes their differences stand in relief.¹⁴

There is a second grand purpose to my comparison. As I indicated above, substantial debate surrounds the relationship of the RAF to the social movements of the West German 1960s—whether its violence extended or repudiated the New Left's core values, sensibilities, and attitudes. Similar questions hover over the Weathermen and the American New Left. My analysis suggests that both groups, while clearly minorities within the left, represent the intensification of tendencies within the dissident student and youth cultures in their respective societies; it makes little sense to rigidly segment their "armed struggles" from the New Left cultures from which they emerged. Violence, in short, was a possibility implied or even dictated by forms of radical thought and practice developed from the mid-1960s on. This does not mean, however, that violence somehow represented the essence of the student, youth, and antiwar movements in America, Germany, and elsewhere. These were internally diverse movements, with multiple tendencies, logics, possibilities, and trajectories, and whose majorities rejected, whether in word or deed, "guerrilla" violence. To judge the movements by their most extreme

manifestations is historically irresponsible, if not politically and morally reckless.

This injunction brings me to my final broad point, which may well arouse some controversy. My contention is that there were genuinely progressive aspects to each “ingredient”—the political, apocalyptic, existential, and ethical—in the radical cultures from which the violence of the Weathermen and the RAF was born. Each also had latent or inherent dangers, which both groups (though to dramatically different degrees) came to realize or embody, as they crossed lines both articulated and invisible. I therefore try to chart a course between either cheap valorization or reductive and needlessly vituperative condemnation as I approach what is surely the most challenging question posed by the violence of 1960s-era militants: how to judge it in political and moral terms. From my extensive research—and especially knowing well the political biographies of many Weathermen, which typically include years of conscientious dissent prior to joining the group and careers of valuable service to various communities after leaving—I have always felt that the most constructive approach to New Left militancy is to see the admixture of good and bad in it and to try to understand from it both how movements can become degraded, and how their pathologies may be reversed.

The Political

The members of the Weather Underground and the RAF, as well as other activists in their New Left milieu, saw their lives and actions in deeply political terms. The groups’ *raison d’être*, by extension, was fundamentally political, defined by their goal of creating revolutions by means of “armed struggle.” How they became radicalized to that degree is the story of the 1960s itself.

In most societies that boasted a New Left—dissident groups of students and youth who sought to move beyond the language and politics of traditional communism—there was a shift over the course of the decade from “protest to resistance to revolution.”¹⁵ This was certainly true in the American and West German cases, where what started as essentially reform movements, intent on better fulfilling their societies’ democratic promise, moved in the space of a few short years to the belief that their societies had to be built anew.

In the American setting, young people were first politicized and then radicalized, above all, around the issues of race and the Vietnam War. In the mid-1960s, a new generation of African American activists emerged on the national scene, expressing a strident politics of Black Power. Partly, they sought to overcome the perceived limitations of the southern, largely non-violent civil rights movement, in favor of a more comprehen-

sive political and psychological empowerment, achieved by more confrontational means. Partly, Black Power proffered an anti-imperialist politics derived from anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Latin America challenging global structures of white supremacy.¹⁶ White activists, such as those who formed Weatherman, learned about America from the Black Power movement and about politics from Black Power militants. In some New Left circles, the notion developed that whites had the obligation to identify politically with the most militant segments of the most oppressed population—urban blacks—who increasingly saw themselves as members of an internal colony in need of what amounted to “national liberation.”

The Vietnam War had been the subject of significant student and youth protest since 1965. Despite its growing numbers and militancy, the movement, however, hardly slowed the war, which ground on with tragic intensity and a military draft that chewed up young lives. In response, many activists escalated their protest, hoping to impede the war through direct, and often illegal, interference with its prosecution. In ideological terms, some concluded that the war was not an isolated foreign policy mistake, but instead a structural necessity of American capitalism, which oppressed racial minorities at home just as it brutalized people of color in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere. The fundamental insight propelling the New Left’s radicalism was a synthetic one: that racism, economic exploitation, and militarism were constitutive parts of the same broad system. As greater numbers of young leftists became rapidly acquainted with Marxism, the critique of “imperialism” came to dominate in radical circles. The often vicious police response to antiwar protest and, certainly, to black radicalism only seemed to confirm the venal quality of “the system” they opposed. For many, this core analysis, the heart-rending destruction in Vietnam, the harrowing experience of police violence, and the apparent promise of resistance to US power worldwide all pointed to the conclusion that only something as bold as revolution would right the many wrongs of America and relieve the world of the suffering it caused.

The reasons for the radicalization of West German youth are, *prima facie*, less obvious. The Federal Republic did not have America’s racial problems or gross inequality; it was not prosecuting the Vietnam War; and the example of East German communism hardly made a revolutionary socialist alternative seem compelling. And yet, German dissidents came to identify with the plight of the Vietnamese, as well as other victims of American military power. Here Germany’s relationship with the United States loomed large. The United States had been the Federal Republic’s great protector and moral benefactor—affiliating with America meant entrance into liberal, democratic modernity. For many

young Germans especially, seeing the United States bully a peasant nation struggling for self-determination not only exposed the hypocrisy of American power, but dramatically reduced Germany's moral standing in their eyes. For them to critique US power was simultaneously to indict the political establishment of their own society, if not also question its basic worth. No doubt, a self-serving psychology played a role in West German hatred for the Vietnam war: condemnation of the war, which some activists castigated as "genocide" and thus a repetition of the Nazis' crimes, diminished the far greater sting of Germany's sinful past by relativizing German crimes. But the opposition of the West German New Left to the war—a conflict almost universally condemned by students and youth worldwide—hardly depended on any covert, psychological motive.

Furthermore, Marxist analyses were not nearly so taboo in Germany as in the United States; the jump from a critique of the war to a systemic condemnation of "imperialism" was far easier to make than for American radicals. Consequently, the West German New Left fairly quickly adopted a position of support for the Vietnamese "liberation movement," not just the demand of an American withdrawal from Vietnam. Affiliating with an international revolutionary culture, moreover, permitted German leftists, in plainly attractive ways, to transcend their "Germanness" and craft a trans- or supra-national political identity. So many of the signal events of the German movement—from the demonstration against the African strongman Moise Tschombe, to the "flyer action" protesting the Vietnam War and the "pudding attack" prank against Vice President Humphrey, to, of course, the protest of the Shah of Iran ending with the shooting of Benno Ohnesorg—were directed at "foreign" injustices and Germany's alleged complicity in them, and not at any conventionally domestic issue.

A portion of the New Left in the United States and West Germany was, in short, progressively gravitating toward the goal of something as fantastic, inspiring, and implausible as revolution. They initially had, however, little sense of how, as a practical matter, to bring revolution about. The New Left in both societies remained, after all, relatively small and isolated movements that hardly commanded the allegiance of the "masses." Their societies, moreover, seemed to preclude in their very structures any hope of a revolutionary insurrection, given their affluence and the integration of the working class into the benefits of the consumer economy.

The New Left, in short, faced a crisis of narrative in which the "traditional" revolutionary script, which counseled the patient building of a mass communist movement rooted in economic grievances, seemed inadequate to the political circumstances and demands of the time. The

“solution” to this crisis was to construct a new revolutionary narrative, whose frame of reference was now global. A German activist described the essentials of this new narrative:

Imperialism, not the proletariat, constitutes the totality of the world . . . How can revolutionary forces assert themselves? The answer was: the subject of the world-wide revolutionary process is the oppressed, rendering the world’s principal contradiction that between imperialism and the Third World. In the metropolises enlightened persons—and that meant above all the intelligentsia—must unite with the suffering masses of the Third World and themselves employ illegal, direct action against the state apparatus to weaken the imperialist powers.¹⁷

In this model, Third World liberation movements were the new revolutionary vanguard; the realization of global revolution, however, required militant resistance in the centers of imperialist power.

“Armed struggle” in both the United States and West Germany was a radicalization of this paradigm. The Weathermen’s founding manifesto declared that “the main struggle going on in the world today is between US imperialism and the national liberation struggles against it,” and instructed that the task of revolutionaries worldwide was “to solve this principal contradiction” on the side of “the oppressed.”¹⁸ The statement also called for the building of cadres of radical youth, akin to China’s “Red Guards,” who would wreak havoc throughout America. The Weathermen, in addition, were enamored with the model that the French intellectual Régis Debray, in a widely read text, insisted worked in Cuba.¹⁹ In that model, the daring acts of a militant minority could incite others to mass insurrection; indeed, the Weathermen saw themselves as that vanguard whose self-sacrifice, soon enough in the form of clandestine struggle, would light the spark to turn pervasive discontent into a revolutionary conflagration. The group’s signature call, which sought to translate foreign battles onto American soil, was to “Bring the War Home.” However implausibly, Weatherman originally promoted “armed struggle” as a means of doing what other political approaches could not, and explicitly dubbed it “a strategy to win.”²⁰

The RAF’s founding ideology was a close echo of Weatherman’s. Quoting Mao Tse-Tung’s assertion that US imperialism was really a “paper tiger,” Meinhof argued that “there is absolutely no reason to rule out or exclude any region or country from the anti-imperialist struggle.”²¹ Freely admitting that “The Urban Guerilla Concept comes from Latin America,” she contended further that “[t]he situation there is the same as here—a revolutionary intervention coming from relatively weak revolu-

tionary forces.” Her grand conclusion, and the premise of the RAF, was that “the organization of armed resistance groups in West Germany”—contrary to the arguments of the more established, communist left—was “correct, possible, and justified.”

Even at the time, this notion of the viability of violent revolution seemed farfetched and even reckless to many on the left; in hindsight, it may appear wholly ludicrous. But in certain circles at least, it represented a compelling narrative predicated on an analysis of the nature of global conflict, the strength of revolutionary forces worldwide, the internal weaknesses of capitalism, and the inadequacy—to both the political and moral exigencies of the day—of traditional models of social change. This narrative, moreover, was available to activists worldwide and took root, at least as an articulated option, most everywhere students and youth wanted radical change. In this light, the specificities of the German or American (or Italian or Japanese) contexts recede, and the power of an international discourse—circulating by virtue of the very structures of global commerce and communication that capitalism had developed—asserts itself.

Revolutionary anti-imperialism also offered First World radicals a potentially seductive vision of themselves and the world. Sometimes American and German radicals suggested that their actions would merely facilitate a process of global revolution that was already inexorably happening, and led by someone else: the Algerians, Vietnamese, Cubans, and so forth. At other times, they argued that because they were at the nerve centers of global power—in the “belly of the beast,” as the metaphor ran—the liberation of everyone else depended on their efforts to weaken the “empire” from within. Rudi Dutschke, less prone to bluster than the RAF’s ideologues, nonetheless warned at the famous “International Vietnam Congress” in 1968 that a US victory in Vietnam could usher in a “new period of authoritarian world domination from Washington to Vladivostok,” and then implored, “Comrades, we don’t have much time. How this period of history ends depends primarily on our will.”²² The revolutionary narrative, in short, gave New Leftists an important role in a nearly mythic process of global liberation. Whatever the reputation of the Weathermen and the RAF as desperados, demons, and romantic nihilists like Bonnie and Clyde, they actually participated in the powerful Utopian impulses of their times (even if their lives also had an aura of doom) that sought to defy the accepted limits of the possible, as well as a politics of solidarity, in which First World activists demonstrated concern for the plight of the Third World oppressed and felt some political responsibility for their fate.

Moreover, one could argue (and indeed I have argued) that the violence of the Weathermen and other militants, irrespective of their gran-

diose goal of advancing “revolution,” contributed to a domestic climate of chaos that imposed a political limit on the length and intensity of the Vietnam War. (Some former members themselves confess, in retrospect, skepticism about their violence as a mean of revolution, but defend it, in both tactical and moral terms, as a response to the Vietnam War.) The RAF can less easily claim any kind of mediated impact on the war. Nonetheless, some of its violence, such as the killings in 1972 of US military personnel on bases in Germany, obeyed a political calculus connected to the war. The RAF’s charge was that American soldiers would nowhere in the world be safe, so long as the Vietnam conflict—with its horrific wasting of Vietnamese life—continued.

Further, both groups pursued a systemic analysis that sought to address fundamental imbalances of global wealth and power in a way that would move beyond the staid politics and apologia for totalitarianism of much traditional communism. And it represented an attempt to intervene boldly in what seemed a critical juncture in world history, in which “freedom” for untold millions was a new possibility.

But it also held great hazards, principally the tendency to conflate or altogether collapse contexts in the assumption that the struggle for global justice can and should be fought everywhere by the same means. The failure to make qualitative distinctions could be striking. Erich Fried, an otherwise insightful poet in Germany, offered the verse: “Saigon is Berlin/The Americans here/Are the Americans there.”²³ The image is of two societies occupied by a foreign, American army propping up pseudo-democracies in the name of anti-communism. It is a short leap to imagine West German rebels as the equivalent of the Viet Cong—a vainglorious identity the RAF would soon assume. The affective dimensions of an overwrought sense of solidarity could be disturbing as well. When merely contemplating street combat with police, a Weatherman declared, “we began to feel the Vietnamese *in ourselves*.”²⁴ Among the many criticisms of this kind of presumptuous “affinity,” that of Jürgen Habermas, uttered before the Weathermen and the RAF even formed, was among the most cogent: “Moral outrage at the barbarity of the Americans’ action in Vietnam is understandable. But emotional identification with the role of the Viet Cong or the Vietnamese guerrillas has no political basis.”²⁵ The decisive proof of the absence of such a “political basis” was the unequivocal failure of the Weatherman’s and the RAF’s “armed struggles” to lead or catalyze anything like an actual, popular revolutionary insurrection in their societies. Lacking this kind of popular support, their armed struggles lacked both a *social* mandate and, by extension, the political legitimacy that violence had elsewhere in the world, where rebel insurgents led large populations against patently oppressive regimes.

The Apocalyptic

The Weatherman's and the RAF's image of armed struggle, as a means of revolution especially, was not only horribly mismatched to the conditions in their societies, but also conspicuously vague. Neither group specified how exactly it was to seize power nor, certainly, what its societies would look like after a projected revolution. The groups were, in large measure, proponents of a messianic Marxism, long on prophetic indignation and trafficking in what Ulrike Meinhof's foster mother called a "contourless vision of the Coming Time."²⁶ Their politics, put otherwise, had an apocalyptic dimension comprising the following premises: that the existing society is corrupt; that its corruption is so great that it cannot be reformed and must therefore be destroyed; and that its destruction creates the possibility for emergence of something radically new, different, and better. Whether or not explicitly stated, this broad view underwrote the ethos of would-be guerrilla warriors and those who cheered them on. A famous slogan of the German New Left instructed, "Destroy that which destroys you." A radical newspaper reporting on Weatherman bombings proclaimed: "Our humble task is to organize the apocalypse!"²⁷ Another, celebrating the burning of a California bank, insisted "Out of the bankruptcy of AmeriKKKa will come a new country and a new people."²⁸ The rhetoric of Weatherman and the RAF itself pulsed with fierce condemnations of capitalism and proclamations of the power, promise, and certain victory of the guerrilla movement.

However ominous such language, belief in the generative power of destruction is a quality of so many utopian movements, and so many revolutions—especially those that aspire to conquer tyranny. A certain degree of audacity, grandiosity, and even zealotry has likely been present in, if not essential to, all ambitious moral crusades, whether abolitionism, labor radicalism, or various campaigns of national liberation—all of which accomplished valuable things. Indeed, an eschatological outlook is deeply embedded in the modern secular political imagination, especially in the West, and its adoption by New Left radicals is neither exotic nor pathological.

Such an outlook, however, also has pronounced dangers. With respect to Weatherman and the RAF, it encouraged them to take their violence out of the realm of political calculation and into what sociologist Mark Jurgensmeyer calls "cosmic war"—an epic struggle of good versus evil, transcending political particulars, and settled in some larger scale of time.²⁹ This permitted both groups to rationalize failures and defeats and press on despite their tiny numbers; losses in the here and now would be redeemed by eventual victory in some unspecified future. And since that endpoint could not be known, struggle became an end in itself—divorced

from the achievement of any specific political or strategic goal—as well as a means to transcend death. Holger Meins's words, deep into his mortal hunger strike, are here resonant: "The only thing that matters now is the struggle—now, today, tomorrow, whether we eat or not . . . Everyone dies anyhow, what matters is how . . . Fighting the pigs as a human being for the liberation of man. Fighting to the last. Loving life, disdaining Death."³⁰

More troubling still, a framework of cosmic war allows one more easily to judge—and even to sacrifice—others by the terms of some grand liberation narrative or script that separates the world into the saved and damned. A Weatherman conceded that in the group's most intransigent phase, its attitude was "We're ready to fight and die . . . and either you're on our side or you're on the side of the pigs."³¹ Weatherwoman Susan Stern confessed to reaching the point of feeling that "everybody" who fails to support the revolutionary struggle "has to die";³² a comrade in the group argued that if fascism were necessary to keep white Americans in line after the revolution, "then we'll have fascism."³³ One New Left critic of the Weathermen aptly decried such conclusions as evidence of the "horror of inhuman logic"—a logic that combined a callous hyper-rationality with a morbidly transgressive imagination to sanction nearly limitless murder.³⁴

Weatherman's excesses were mostly rhetorical. Following the 1970 explosion, the group steadfastly rejected being killers and mostly avoided dehumanizing language and militant bluster. They demobilized, in other words, "cosmic war," settling with their occasional bombings of property for more modest, symbolic gains in something far short of a guerrilla war. In fact, during most of its existence, the Weatherman's violence amounted to relatively minor property damage, often exacted in response to egregious cases of state violence, such as the massacre of inmates at Attica prison in 1971 and the notorious "Christmas bombings" of North Vietnam in 1972.

Not so the RAF, which escalated its violence as the 1970s wore on, callously denouncing its victims or disregarding the worth of their lives altogether (as in the case of the drivers of and security detail for its political "targets") by not even addressing their murders. Meins's words, which decry the enemy in absolute terms, are again resonant: "Either a pig or a man/Either survival at any price or struggle unto death/Either problem or solution/There is nothing in between . . . It's simple. Fighting the pigs as a human being for the liberation of man."³⁵

In sum, both groups, reacting to conditions of oppression and suffering, fell prey to the grim faith that violence could be its own cure—that a fallen world could be redeemed by blood. In 1969, a radical professor at Berkeley intoned, "We have to remake ourselves, but not in the humane

ways we might wish. We have to learn to discipline ourselves, to hate, to destroy, and to kill. This society will be liberated, but at the cost of much blood."³⁶ In this sense, there was a sacrificial quality to their conception of "struggle." Certainly products of their own times and societies, they also exemplified the tendency, observable in so many historical instances, of cultures of resistance to devolve into cults of violence that lose touch with the ethical principles originally and ostensibly animating them, and which sanctify both violence and its perpetrator. An American leftist, aghast at the Weatherman's most grisly rhetoric in its most militant phase, captured the essence of this slippage with his lament, "Understanding that killing is necessary is one thing. Reveling in it is another."³⁷ Here he captures a critical distinction between viewing violence as a political and moral exigency—such cases may exist—and exalting violence as something ennobling. Viewed in the latter way, it is unbound by limits.

To be sure, conditions specific to Germany drove the RAF over a moral abyss the Weathermen only peered into; but the broad, shared sin was a militarism which had spread in the 1960s beyond governments to countless groups, fighting for causes good and ill in ways cruel, craven, and constrained.

Existential and Ethical

The violence of New Left radicals in the United States and West Germany had, finally, existential and ethical roots, which were themselves tightly woven together. An elemental critique of the global New Left was that postwar consumer society was at its core inauthentic, encouraging self-satisfied complacency and estranging individuals both from one another and from their own moral potential. The antidote to this perceived inauthenticity was ethical and political commitment, defined centrally by action. As one Weatherman eloquently put it:

You had a responsibility to link your conduct to your consciousness. If you believed something, the proof of that belief was to act on it, not to espouse it with the right treatises. We were militants. We were militants before we were thinkers. Militancy is a stance in the world that says that I'm going to put my body somehow in the way of the normal functioning of things. The statement is my body standing in the way which opens up a public space where lots of people have to think and act differently. Militancy was the standard by which we measured our aliveness.³⁸

This attitude was at the heart of so much of the activism of the era, from sit-ins, to freedom rides and marches, draft resistance and draft board raids, building takeovers, blockades of war materiel, and stand-offs with aggressive police. Countless thousands of people—many of them

young and in the context of so many causes and in so many societies—put their comfort, safety, and even lives on the line for the sake of a higher good, be it peace, equality, or freedom. “The sixties,” as defined by their world-changing social movements, are indeed unthinkable without militancy and self-sacrifice.

Yet as the decade ground on, and the New Left grew more radical, its militancy hardened. In some circles, the critique of “inauthenticity” morphed into a critique of the poverty of discourse, of language as such, as a means of social change. Activists in the United States, Germany, and elsewhere rejected first lawful and then peaceful protest altogether as ineffective. At an extreme, some held that violence was the only proper response to a system constituted by violence and a way of speaking its “language.” In addition, some radicals eventually deemed violence the highest form of militancy—the true measure of one’s commitment and capacity for solidarity.

The declared purpose of both the Weathermen and the RAF was to distinguish themselves on the left by at last putting revolutionary words into action. The Weathermen boasted of being “a movement that fights, not just talks about fighting.”³⁹ Toward this end, its collectives instituted for a time harrowing rituals to drum up its members’ courage and overcome all kinds of ingrained ideological and emotional barriers to violence. Implicitly drawing on Fanonian and Sartrean images of violence as a form of inner liberation, a Weatherman at one point declared, in a remarkably severe utterance, that “carrying out acts of armed resistance against the state is the highest form of human being.”⁴⁰ The RAF proclaimed in an early statement, “We will not talk about armed propaganda, we will do it.” It later declared that a real revolutionary is “anyone who starts to fight.”⁴¹ And it, too, exalted the man (or woman) of action—quintessentially Andreas Baader—as the embodiment not just of the revolutionary ideal, but true vitality. This too could be the fate of idealistic youth in the 1960s—the rapid matriculation through an ultimately cynical education that spins Aristotelian and Weberian premises into a dire formula: that the essence of life is politics, the essence of politics is power, and the essence of power is violence; therefore, to embrace conflict and to engage in violence is to experience politics—and life—in its most essential or vital form.

New Left radicals also justified their provocative acts within a broadly ethical mandate. In simplest form, that mandate held that one had a moral obligation to aggressively resist evil, irrespective of its political consequences. What mattered was the demonstration of non-compliance with a destructive social machinery; the extent of the risk and self-sacrifice, by extension, was the measure of the righteousness of the act. Just before Weatherman’s “Days of Rage,” in which a few hundred

members threw themselves into combat with heavily armed police, Weatherleader Bernardine Dohrn declared: "We aren't going to be good Germans in a fascist state." A radical journalist, deeply critical of the Weatherman on political grounds, wrote approvingly of this *ethical* logic: "That's it on the line, and forget the rest. Right on Bernardine."⁴² A Weatherman-like collective combined existential and ethical themes in a communiqué to accompany a 1969 bombing: "What we want is salvation from a meaningless annihilation. To not be cremated for coka-cola and plastic flags . . . on the moon . . . In a time when all action seems meaningless at least we won't be good Germans."⁴³

Clearly, the notion of the "good German" was a trans-cultural one, invoked by radicals worldwide as shorthand to justify resistance in moral and highly individual terms, playing to the witness of history and, perhaps, God. For Germans in the 1960s, the idea obviously had a special resonance. So much has been said and written about how the German past functioned for postwar radicals as an impetus to militancy. A single, poignant quote from the RAF's Horst Mahler will carry here much of that analysis: "The essential, highly personalized problem was this: How did your parents behave [during the Nazi period]? The question also had implications for us—namely, that whenever events occur that even in a distant way recall the twelve years [of Nazi rule], we must actively resist them."⁴⁴ German dissidents, in short, felt a special obligation of resistance, implied in their frequent invocation of the Nazi past—by the RAF, but also by many others—to condemn everything from the Vietnam War and West Germany's tacit support for it, to "Zionism" (in their frequently mangled understanding), the tabloid press, the police and broader security apparatus, the criminal justice system, and, of course, penal institutions like Stammheim. The great irony is that this heightened sense of the obligation to resist injustice drove the exaggeration of that injustice, leading in turn to increasingly militant and morally dubious acts of "protest." This militancy increased state repression, only sharpening denunciations of, and attacks against, the state, ratcheting up once more the state's response. The German conflict thus had the quality of a vicious circle, instigated, in part, by the desire of young West Germans not to be "good Germans." But that core desire was not confined to Germany, and drove militancy in other places.

A sense of personal moral responsibility to advance justice and an existential ethic demanding action can propel social movements. It may share in the pathos of the Lutheran creed, "Here I stand, I can do other," updated by Camus for postwar times in his influential text *The Rebel*.⁴⁵ Taken to extremes, they also have marked dangers, exemplified by the Weathermen and the RAF: the privileging of action over thought; the denigration and crippling of critical thinking; the quest for individual

purity; making a willingness to engage in violence the measure both of one's individual liberation and moral worth; and—notwithstanding the optimism of the heroic guerrilla narrative—the succumbing to a tragic view of self and world. Most importantly, there can be a short distance between the veneration of self-sacrifice and the sacrifice of others, dying for a cause and killing for a cause.

Furthermore, the moral and existential justification of militancy can work against its political logic by bracketing the question of consequences: if all that matters is the ardor of the act, it becomes irrelevant whether it materially advances one's broad political cause or—by increasing repression, alienating allies, and even compromising one's values—actually works against its ostensible goals. Finally, the very existence of structurally distinct and often competing logics—one political/strategic, which judges the means by the ends, and another ethical/existential, which stresses the valor of the deed—can horribly confuse one's purpose and degrade one's cause.

* * *

I have presented here the Weathermen and the RAF as different iterations of a conception of “struggle” rooted both in global structures and a discourse on revolution widely flourishing in the late 1960s. The national contexts of course mattered, especially in giving the German conflict its intensity and, from the mid-1970s on, its terribly involuted quality. So, too, particular binational relationships, such as that of the Federal Republic and the United States, mattered greatly. The analytical challenge, in this and other cases of global protest movements, is to integrate an understanding of the international, regional, and national contexts. Excessive attention to national dramas, be they political, psychological, or cultural, threaten to distort one's understanding of individual movements by submerging the very spires of global connection that animated them.

I have also argued that there were broadly positive qualities to the militant cultures from which the Weatherman and the RAF emerged and that those qualities turned blatantly negative when taken to reckless extremes. Acknowledging this mix greatly aids, I think, in understanding a phenomenon almost as enigmatic as the existence, in the first place, of these “armed struggle” groups: the pronounced fascination with them even decades later (especially the German preoccupation with the RAF). Such fascination, I would hazard, is for at least some the projection backward of contemporary political frustrations and an expression of their wish to find in the past both insight and inspiration. Accepting the legitimacy of, rather than decrying, this glance backward and the impulses behind it better qualifies one to argue how much caution can be read from

the tales of the Weathermen and the RAF, and how little inspiring—and indeed tragic—it is when movements waste their talent and promise.

Notes

¹ This is an expanded and partially modified version of the lecture I gave at the GHI in October 2007. I would like to extend thanks to the German Historical Institute, both for inviting me to give this lecture and for supporting me in the research that forms the basis for it. In 1997, when I was writing a dissertation on left-wing violence, I had the pleasure of participating in the GHI's Third Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History. For two days, sixteen graduate students—half of us North American and half German (including some from the former East)—sat in this sumptuous setting, discussing each others' work with an uncommon intimacy. I delighted in the pomp and ceremony. But more than that, I was so impressed by the respect we were shown as scholars, no matter our young age. It was clear to me then, and remains clear today, that the GHI is deeply committed to scholarship, seeding our projects with resources and gracing our profession with a dignity it is too rarely shown, especially in this society.

² Walter Althammer, *Gegen den Terror* (Stuttgart, 1978), 57.

³ Quote from Sepp Binder, *Terrorismus: Herausforderung und Antwort* (Bonn, 1978), 105–6.

⁴ Walter Scheel speech in *Zum Gedanken an die Opfer des Terrorismus* (Bonn, 1978), 12, 9.

⁵ A superb new edited volume, with international contributors, examines in detail the RAF's varied legacy: Gerrit-Jan Berense and Ingo Cornils, eds., *Baader-Meinhof Returns: History and Cultural Memory of German Left-Wing Terrorism* (Amsterdam, 2008). Separate essays explore treatments of the RAF in film, on the stage, in novels, and in other media.

⁶ In a recent, controversial work, Götz Aly revives somewhat the notion, originally asserted by Jillian Becker, that Germany's 68ers were the progeny of fascism, sharing in its hideous mentalities and conduct. Götz Aly, *Unser Kampf. 1968—ein irritierter Blick zurück* (Frankfurt, 2008).

⁷ This is the broad approach of Gerd Koenen in *Das Rote Jahrzehnt 1967–1977: Unsere kleine deutsche Kultur-revolution* (Cologne, 2001), who explains and largely denounces the German left by means of historically conditioned generational psychology. In a more recent work, Peter Schneider provides a less severe and more judicious critique of the psychic mechanisms within the West German New Left. Peter Schneider, *Rebellion und Wahn: Mein '68* (Cologne, 2008).

⁸ I deal with the issue of the German past at length in my *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*.

⁹ This is the conclusion of Donatella della Porta in a cross-country comparison in her *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (New York, 1995).

¹⁰ Noteworthy are Daniel Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (San Francisco, 2005) and the film *The Weather Underground* by Sam Green and Bill Siegel, The Free History Project, 2003.

¹¹ *Scanlan's* I, no. 8, January 1971.

¹² There are exceptions, such as the infamous "shoe bomber" and Muslim convert Richard Reed. Currently, two German converts to Islam are facing serious charges for alleged terrorist plots in Germany. Souad Mekhennet, "Germany Charges 3 Jailed in '07 in Bomb Plot," *The New York Times*, September 3, 2008, A9.

¹³ Jochen Reiche, "Zur Kritik der RAF" in *Jahrbuch Politik* 8 (Berlin, 1978), 22.

¹⁴ I therefore disagree, though with some qualification, with Gerd Koenen's judgment that "one will find a quite different mindset and mode of action" between the Weathermen and the RAF, buttressed by his ill-chosen example, "One of the Weatherman women, Jane Alpert, told Daniel Cohn-Bendit in the late 1980s: 'I have never meant to do harm to our

country.' This is exactly what a young German leftist never could or would have said." Gerd Koenen, "Armed Innocence, or 'Hitler's Children' Revisited" in Berendse and Cornils, *Baader-Meinhof Returns*, 27–28. To be sure, the German radicals displayed over time a fierce edge or intensity that American radicals generally either lacked or shed, and the groups' histories were in important respects dramatically different. Further, some American militants saw themselves as the true patriots, whose militant support for the Viet Cong and their goal of Vietnamese self-determination was an affirmation of America's own revolutionary heritage. But, as I argue here, the basic paradigm of armed struggle was initially the same. And, whatever Alpert—who was not in fact a Weatherwoman, but part of a different group—said years later about her feelings all along, some American radicals expressed a fervent wish to obliterate the American political, social, and economic structure as it was known. Further, the Weathermen and others were roundly denounced as traitorous, terrorist, America-haters.

¹⁵ This is the evolution presented by Kirkpatrick Sale in his classic *SDS* (New York, 1972). To varying degrees, it describes as well the core narrative of the New Left in countries other than the United States. My use of the label "New Left" in the American context refers to the white student and youth movement, epitomized by SDS, and not the Black Power movement and other forms of African American activism. This conforms to commonly accepted definitions of the New Left, though some scholars use the term more inclusively.

¹⁶ The international origins of the American Black Power movement have been the subject of much recent research, notably Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, 2007) and Peniel Joseph, *Waiting to the Midnight Hour* (New York, 2006).

¹⁷ Jürgen Horlemann, quoted in Gerd Langguth, *Die Protestbewegung in der BRD, 1968–1976* (Cologne, 1976), 208. This was Horlemann's characterization of the influential position developed by Rudi Dutschke in the mid- to late 1960s.

¹⁸ Karen Ashley, Bill Ayers, et al., "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows" in *Weatherman*, ed. Harold Jacobs (California, 1970), 51–53.

¹⁹ The text is Régis Debray, *Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*, trans. Bobby Ortiz (New York, 1967).

²⁰ Bill Ayers speech, "A Strategy to Win" in Jacobs, 190.

²¹ The quotes are from the widely anthologized *das Konzept Stadtguerilla*. Written by Ulrike Meinhof in 1971, some time after the RAF's formation, it is hardly a definitive statement of the RAF's ideology, whose often contradictory elements are expressed in a host of communiqués and treatises by diverse authors. It nonetheless conveys many of the RAF's core premises and beliefs. I am drawing from a translation by Anthony Murphy available at www.germanguerrilla.com/red-army-faction/71_04.html.

²² *Der Kampf des Vietnamesischen Volkes und die Globalstrategie des Imperialismus: Internationaler Vietnam-Kongress* (Berlin, 1968), 123.

²³ Erich Fried, "Gleichheit Brüderlichkeit," in *CheSchahShit: Die Sechziger Jahre zwischen Cocktail und Molotov* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1986), 207.

²⁴ Shin'ya Ono, "A Weatherman: You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows" in Jacobs, 224.

²⁵ Jürgen Habermas, "Scheinrevolution unter Handlungsdruck," in *APO: Geschichte der ausserparlamentarischen Opposition in Quellen und Dokumenten, 1960–70*, ed. Karl A. Otto (Cologne, 1987), 284.

²⁶ Renate Riemeck, "Wahres über Ulrike," in *Dokumente einer Rebellion: 10 Jahre "konkret"—Kolumnen* (Copenhagen, 1972), 105.

²⁷ *Berkeley Tribe*, October 16–23, 1970, 7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, April 10–17, 1970.

- ²⁹ Mark Jurgensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley, 2000).
- ³⁰ "der letzte brief von holger meus (am 31.10.1074)," in RAF, *texte: der RAF* (Malmö, 1978), 14.
- ³¹ Interview with David Gilbert, Columbia Oral History Project, 346.
- ³² Susan Stern, *With the Weathermen: The Journey of a Revolutionary Woman* (Garden City, N.Y., 1976), 87.
- ³³ Quoted in Harold Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman* (California, 1970), 343.
- ³⁴ *The Berkeley Tribe*, January 9–15, 1970, 5.
- ³⁵ "der letzte brief von holger meus (am 31.10.1074)," *texte: der RAF*, 14.
- ³⁶ *Leviathan*, November 1969, 22.
- ³⁷ *The Berkeley Tribe*, January 9–15, 1970, 5.
- ³⁸ Author interview with Bill Ayers.
- ³⁹ "Bring the War Home," *New Left Notes*, July 23, 1969.
- ⁴⁰ *Ann Arbor Argus*, December 31, 1969, 3.
- ⁴¹ RAF, "Den antiimperialistischen Kampf führen!" in *texte: der RAF*, 477.
- ⁴² *Ann Arbor Argus*, November 18–December 11, 1969, 8–9.
- ⁴³ Quoted in John Cohen, "Introduction" to Samuel Melville, *Letters from Attica* (New York, 1972), 77.
- ⁴⁴ Horst Mahler and Gerhardt Baum, "'Wir müssen raus aus den Schützengraben,'" *Spiegel* 52 (1979), 37.
- ⁴⁵ Camus, it should be noted, in the *Rebel* and elsewhere insisted that moderation and the recognition of moral limits were integral to the very notion of rebellion.