

TERRORISM IN GERMANY: THE BAADER-MEINHOF PHENOMENON

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Stefan Aust

Editor-in-Chief, *Der Spiegel*, 1994–2008

Recently on Route 73 in Germany, between Stade und Cuxhaven, my phone rang. On the other end of the line was Thilo Thielke, SPIEGEL correspondent in Africa. He was calling on his satellite phone from Darfur. For two weeks he had been traveling with rebels in the back of a pick-up truck, between machine guns and Kalashnikovs. He took something to read along for the long evenings: *Moby Dick*. He asked me: "How was that again with the code names? Who was Captain Ahab?" "Andreas Baader, of course," I said and quoted Gudrun Ensslin from a letter to Ulrike Meinhof: "Ahab makes a great impression on his first appearance in *Moby Dick* . . . And if either by birth or by circumstance something pathological was at work deep in his nature, this did not detract from his dramatic character. For tragic greatness always derives from a morbid break with health, you can be sure of that."

"And the others?" the man from Africa asked, "Who was Starbuck?" At that time, that was not a coffee company—also named after *Moby Dick*—but the code name of Holger Meins. Starbuck was the chief mate on the whaling ship *Pequod*, whose role Melville described in this way: "Starbuck's body and Starbuck's coerced will were Ahab's, so long as Ahab kept his magnet at Starbuck's brain; still he knew that for all this the chief mate, in his soul, abhorred his captain's quest." This did nothing to change the fact that, after a dramatic arrest—naked down to his underwear—he later died in a hunger strike, while Andreas Baader lasted longer by eating secretly.

Jan-Carl Raspe had gotten the name "Zimmermann" (carpenter) from Gudrun Ensslin. Again, Melville's description of this role: "He was like one of those unreasoning but still highly useful, *multum in parvo*, Sheffield contrivances, assuming the exterior—though a little swelled—of a common pocket knife; but containing not only blades of various sizes but also screwdrivers, cork-screws, tweezers, awls, pens, rulers, nail-filers, countersinkers. So, if his superiors wanted to use the carpenter for a screwdriver, all they had to do was to open that part of him, and the screw was fast . . ." Jan-Carl Raspe turned out to be the tinkerer who had developed the highly efficient communications system from cell to cell in Stammheim prison, which must have been used, among other things, to arrange the prisoners' collective suicide.

A couple more code names from *Moby Dick* and the RAF passed back and forth over the telephone wire from the northern German Lowland to the Sudanese rebel zone. Queequeg, for example, Melville's noble savage, the "idolator at heart, he . . . lived among these Christians, wore their clothes, and tried to talk their gibberish." His real name was Gerhard Müller, who later became the chief witness for the prosecution against the RAF. And then, of course, came the question: What did the RAF have to do with *Moby Dick*? The answer derives not only from the fact that this novel about the pursuit of the white whale, the Leviathan, was part of the standard reading of all the RAF prisoners. The group apparently found the romantic apotheosis of their struggle in this novel: the idea of revolution as the hunt for the white whale as a fight against the state, which they called "the machine." As the epigraph to *Moby Dick* reads: "For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin, CIVITAS), which is but an artificial man." Melville quoted this from the beginning of Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

Isolated from the world like the crew of a ship of the dead, the RAF leaders led an almost mystical life in the high-security ward of Stammheim prison. It was thus no coincidence that Gudrun Ensslin and her comrades discovered Melville's classic novel in the loneliness of their cells. The story of Captain Ahab's fanatical hunt for the white whale bears all the traits of a revolutionary anticapitalist parable. The murderous struggle of Baader and his crew against the Leviathan state bore the characteristics of a metaphysical final struggle much like the one that monomaniacal Captain Ahab was leading in his war against the whale. "I'd strike the sun if it insulted me," Ahab says about himself in Melville's novel, musing: "How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond." A crew on a boat, in the middle of a hostile sea—this must be how Gudrun Ensslin saw the RAF when she borrowed code names from the crew of the *Pequod* in order to rally the troops outside, beyond the prison walls, and to inspire them to commit ever more horrifying crimes against the common enemy.

It was one of those moments that make you feel you are edging closer to the truth when, more than twenty years ago, among the 60-running-meters of investigative files collected in my home I came across the secret message in which Gudrun Ensslin bestowed code names from *Moby Dick* on her fellow prisoners. Only then did I read this novel in the original and begin to sense the degree to which the prisoners had romantically imbued their struggle against reality. They transformed themselves into icons, and they became icons, with all the consequences that entailed,

with all the severity and brutality against alleged opponents, innocent bystanders, against their comrades and, in the end, against themselves.

There was another book in the canon of the prisoners in Stammheim and elsewhere. It was Bertolt Brecht's *Die Maßnahme*, known in English as *The Decision* or *The Measures Taken*. I came across it, too, in sifting through writings they circulated in prison. Ulrike Meinhof had quoted from the play:

It is a terrible thing to kill.
But not only others would we kill, but ourselves too if need be
Since only force can alter this
Murderous world, as
Every living creature knows.¹

This motto determined the actions of the RAF—and of almost all terrorists in this world, be they politically or religiously motivated. They share the suicidal element, the murder of the self alongside the murder of others. Terrorists see themselves as martyrs; through their example, their experiment on living objects, they want to go down in history, or at least go to paradise with its seventeen virgins. Thus, the Attas and the Baaders certainly have much in common—yet each also belongs to a particular time and is embedded in a revolutionary mainstream, whether socialist or Islamist in nature. Both of these martyrs came close to achieving their goal of using their own death to attain immortality. We wouldn't be here talking about this today if Andreas Baader had not shot himself with a pistol smuggled into the high-security wing of Stuttgart-Stammheim prison thirty years ago, in the fall of 1977. If Gudrun Ensslin had not hanged herself in her cell. And without the senseless struggle of "six against six million," as Heinrich Böll put it, I would not have written my *Baader-Meinhof Komplex*.²

There's no question about it: the history of the RAF is part of the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. It was the greatest challenge of German postwar society, and, concerning its effects on domestic policy, it is no doubt comparable to the meaning of 9/11 for the United States. And, of course, both instances of terrorism have something to do with circumstances in their respective countries. This is even easier to see in the case of the RAF than with the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. Briefly, the latter surely had to do with the role of the United States in the Middle East, with the unresolved Palestinian crisis, with the power of oil, with widespread re-islamification, that is, with a global situation of conflict—a statement that is certainly not meant as an excuse for the murderous pilots. But every kind of terrorism is always embedded in a larger conflict. Only out of such a conflict does terrorism draw its power and win support for its murderous clandestine groups. So

when we look at the history of the RAF, it relates to German history—both before and after World War II. The RAF is like an auxiliary craft floating along in the stream of time, a gunboat, if you will. This does not diminish the responsibility of those involved, but explains it, perhaps.

I surmise that I was invited to this conference because I wrote a book in which I reconstructed the history of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Ulrike Meinhof as precisely as possible. I was only able to do this because my own biography ran parallel at times, so that, from my own experiences and professional observations as a journalist, I could follow many of the events as they occurred. That's why I would like to portray the different episodes from my own subjective point of view.

I was still going to school in the small northern German town of Stade when I met Klaus Rainer Röhl, the editor of the leftist magazine *konkret*. At the time, I worked with his little brother for the school newspaper. Röhl was married to Ulrike Meinhof, then editor-in-chief and later columnist for *konkret*. I met her, too, and watched her contributions to the critical TV program "Panorama." When I finished high school, Röhl asked me if I wanted to sign on at *konkret*. And I did. It was the beginning of the student movement, and, working at *konkret*, I was in the thick of events. In addition to Ulrike Meinhof, I met Rudi Dutschke—the most prominent spokesperson of the student movement who advocated a less radical approach—as well as Jan-Carl Raspe and Horst Mahler, and Mahler's friend Otto Schily, who would later defend many of them in court. I witnessed the demonstrations against the Vietnam War and for Ho Chi Minh. I witnessed how eggs were thrown at the *Amerikahaus*, and how eggs became paint bombs and then cobblestones. *konkret* published texts by Peter Weiss, a German poet I had studied intensively for my *Abitur* (high-school graduation exam). In these texts, Weiss called for the creation of "two, three, many Vietnams." I was a participating observer of the events that transformed boring daily life in West Germany into an adventure. On the front wall of the main lecture hall of the Technical University of Berlin, Che Guevara's dictum appeared in giant letters, "It is the duty of the revolutionary to make revolution!" It was only a matter of time before slogans calling for the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and so on followed.

When *Kommune 1* (the first politically-motivated commune in Germany founded in January 1967) called for the torching of department stores in a satirical flyer, it was only logical that sooner or later someone would toss a Molotov cocktail in the outerwear department. At that time Ulrike Meinhof praised the progressive moment of the illegal deed. From there, it was only a small step into the abyss. Meinhof and her circle directed their protest against the American war in Vietnam, which generated images of previously unimaginable horror—all in the name of the

Free World. The cast of characters at the time included the lawyer Horst Mahler, who at first had socialist and later national-socialist leanings. In an interview in 2007 he said, "We were all very moral, so that didn't leave us cold. I still remember that, during a television report on Vietnam with horrifying images, Ulrike Meinhof jumped up, sobbing, and said that she would not put up with it, that this was debasing, and said: we have to do something; we cannot just sit back in our easy chairs."

The war in Vietnam. The mightiest war machine in the world battling a guerilla army. Bombs, napalm, stripping the jungle. These were the images that went round the world, fixed themselves painfully in your mind and demanded a response. Vietnam became the touchstone for the morality of the free West, and for many at that time, the original sin. Suddenly, there were once again "just wars" for some. Ulrike Meinhof remarked on this in a televised discussion: "We are acting for those who are trying to free themselves from terror and violence. And if no means other than war remains for them, then we are for their war. And we are against those who escalate their terror up to the use of nuclear weapons, something currently being discussed in regard to Vietnam."

Outrage turned into protest, protest into resistance, and resistance into violence. From the very beginning, parallels were drawn to the Third Reich. For example, Ulrike Meinhof said, "In the moment when you become serious about solidarity with the Vietnamese, when you become intent on weakening the American position everywhere in the world, so that the Vietnamese people derive some benefit, then I know, then I really don't see the difference between the terrorism of the police that we have already experienced in Berlin and are threatened with now and the stormtrooper terror of the Thirties." In the perception of the rebelling students and their advocates, the state became a police state. And the provocateurs of *Kommune 1* were only too happy to tease out the enemy in the police. It was a culture of political "happening" that attracted many. And it began to become a game with violence.

The wall at the headquarters of the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS) on Kurfürstendamm in Berlin featured the slogan: "It's burning, it's burning, a department store is burning. . . ." Rudi Dutschke sat on a table in front of it being interviewed for television on the subject of violence. In his husky and sonorous voice, he lectured, "In the metropolises, we are required—those of us who are allowed to develop a little bit of consciousness—we must proceed against this system—which necessarily pushes us all toward catastrophe—against this system with all our power." And as if it were the most casual thing in the world, he added, "We should not dispense with our own means of violence from the outset because that would amount to granting free reign to the organized violence of the system."

Their “own means of violence” was not long in coming. Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin set fire to two Frankfurt department stores. When they were arrested for this, Gudrun Ensslin’s father, a Protestant minister, said, “It astonished me that Gudrun, who has always thought in a very rational, intelligent way, has experienced what is almost a condition of euphoric self-realization, a really holy self-realization . . . To me, that is more of a shock than the fire of the arson itself—seeing a human being make her way to self-realization through such acts.” Life-threatening arson as “really holy self-realization”!

Then Baader was liberated from prison. Shots were fired, Ulrike Meinhof jumped out the window of the Institute for Social Questions in Berlin and went underground with the others. With the assistance of the Palestinian Liberation Organization’s representative in Berlin—even then the Palestinian conflict was a red thread in the continuity of terror—the fugitives escaped via East Berlin to Beirut. The East German secret police, the Stasi, followed all of this, of course, but did nothing to put a stop to these would-be terrorists’ game. Later, lucrative connections evolved between Stasi and RAF members, but at the time, no one really saw this coming. From Lebanon, the Baader group traveled by car to Jordan, where they attended an El Fatah training camp. They were allowed to complete a fast, intensive military training course designed for urban guerilla fighters. The leader of the camp was the director of secret service for El Fatah, Abu Hassan Salameh, known as “The Red Prince.” He was a close associate of Yasser Arafat, the future Nobel Peace Prize laureate who supported all terrorism in the Middle East. A few years later, the Red Prince was a dead prince. The Israelis drew him into a trap and murdered him. I mention this just to briefly shed light on the decades-old murderous association of German and Palestinian freedom fighters.

I received an almost immediate eyewitness account of life in the training camp. A friend who had worked with me at *konkret* and who had first introduced Ulrike Meinhof to Baader, Ensslin, and Co. had gone with them to Jordan. The Berlin police knew that he had lived with Ulrike Meinhof and suspected him of being a gunman in Baader’s liberation, even though he had not taken part. As a result, he topped the list of wanted criminals. Rightfully afraid that he could wind up behind bars despite his innocence, he did the most foolish thing he could have done—he accompanied the Baader group to the guerilla training camp. There he crawled through the desert sands alongside Baader, Mahler, and Meinhof, but soon began to quarrel with his old drinking buddy Baader. Baader and Mahler were behaving like Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, and this travel companion found it all a bit ridiculous. But Baader and his future Red Army cohorts had no sense of humor. They made plans to kill their terror-resistant companion and disguise it as a shooting accident.

The Red Prince prevented this; the Berliner left the camp, returned to Germany, and got in touch with me. Therefore, at a time when many still sympathized with the supposedly revolutionary Robin Hood group around Baader, I had a pretty clear and unromantic view of the whole thing. It could only end in murder, prison, suicide, and increasing security measures by the West German state.

After several weeks, the group returned to Germany, but not before they arranged the ultimate childcare project with the Palestinians for Ulrike Meinhof's seven-year-old twin daughters. These two were to be installed in an El Fatah children's camp and trained as young guerillas. We thought this somehow unsuitable for little girls from a Hamburg suburb, whose father, Klaus Rainer Röhl, was trying to find them through Interpol. We found out where the children were being held, established contact with their care providers, said the code word, and I flew to Sicily to meet them as the purported envoy of the group. The operation was a success; when the real envoy of Baader and his women showed up to dispatch the girls to the Jordanian camp, they were no longer there. They then tried to shoot us in Hamburg, but, as you can see from my appearance today, this failed.

My interest in the RAF, as Baader and his faithful followers soon called themselves, did not wane, however. After all, I already had an advantage in terms of information. Now, at that time, the public television networks tended to see the topics on which one worked as an indication of one's political proclivities. So if you dealt with the RAF, you were soon seen as a sympathizer; if you reported on DKP (Communist Party) members being barred from public employment, you were suspected of communist leanings; if you investigated the safety of nuclear power plants, you were regarded as a disguised eco-freak. Soon, I was all of these put together, as my palette of topics was large. But the subject of terrorism captivated me, especially since I had come to know more about it than the police allowed. Whenever something happened, I had to—and was allowed to—report on it for TV. Thus, I became familiar with the bizarre world of secret services, their informants, the traps they ensnared even themselves in; I saw prisons and courtrooms from the inside, read meter upon meter of police and judicial records, and acquired a more than passing knowledge of the law.

The RAF's active underground campaign began. It primarily consisted in robbing banks to fill the coffers for the revolution. Even the largely impractical Ulrike Meinhof was deployed in these efforts, once even leaving the loot behind. The second front in the revolutionary campaign was the question of logistics: where could they sleep without being betrayed? They formed a circle of supporters without concerning themselves much with the voluntary or forced nature of people's cooperation,

or that those who harbored them might themselves wind up being pursued by the police. And, of course, the illegal campaign required the acquisition and falsification of identification papers and the theft of automobiles. In stealing many cars, the RAF actually invented something, although they never registered it at the German patent office—the so-called corkscrew that enabled one to remove cars' ignition locks in the blink of an eye.

This rather prosaic practice of revolutionary struggle received powerful theoretical nourishment in a variety of writings penned primarily by Ulrike Meinhof. The anti-imperial struggle drew its theoretical foundations above all from the ideas of the fading student movement. In a sense, it was the mainstream oppositional leftist thought of the time. But the consequences were different, more radical. They did not want to merely talk about revolution and call for it in other parts of the world, but wanted to make it happen here and now. The only thing that could make this plan fail was the reality of the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1960s. There was no revolutionary proletariat, it was hard to see the government as a fascist police state, there were no concentration camps or torture, there was the rule of law. But they would provoke the state into showing its true fascist face, normally so well hidden and disguised. That would move the masses to revolt. That was the theory, anyway, admittedly a bit simplified.

The logistics phase of building up the RAF lasted a couple of months. Then they were ready to take up the battle with their own homemade bombs. On May 11, 1972, three pipe bombs demolished the entrance gate and officers' clubhouse of the Fifth US Army Corps at IG-Farbenhaus. The outcome: thirteen wounded and one dead. The letter claiming responsibility was signed "Kommando Petra Schelm." Schelm had been a young hairstylist and fell in with the RAF through a friend. She had been killed in a police raid, becoming the first casualty on the RAF's side. Her death had briefly roused public solidarity with the underground fighters. On May 19, 1972, a bomb exploded in the Springer House in Hamburg. Seventeen people were wounded, two of them seriously. On May 24, bombs planted in cars detonated fifteen seconds apart in front of the US Army's European headquarters in Heidelberg. Three American soldiers were killed; five were wounded. The revolutionary game had turned deadly serious. Previous sympathizers noticed this, too. The RAF group zigzagging across Germany found it increasingly difficult to find accommodation. In the end, they were all betrayed.

The photos of the shootout and arrest of Andreas Baader and Holger Meins in Frankfurt went round the world. Above all, the image of Holger Meins, gaunt and naked down to his underwear, came to be the emblem of persecuted guilt. At last, the state presented itself to the RAF the way

they wanted it to—as a police state. One after the other, all the significant members of the group were captured by the police. Ulrike Meinhof was ratted out by her host in Hanover. Gudrun Ensslin dropped a pistol from her handbag in a Hamburg boutique, which caused the saleswoman to call the police. Then they were all in prison. Calculated from Baader's liberation, the underground fight had lasted just over two years. Only during their incarceration did the RAF attain the importance that it had failed to achieve through its actions. It became a subject for its own sake. It acquired a capital, called Stammheim, and its own high-security wing in Stammheim prison. It was the second birth of the RAF, assisted by the Federal Prosecutor's Office, the court, politics, and the West German public.

The perpetrators shifted into the role of victims. In guilt-hungry post-war German society, this granted them a strength that was not expected, and they exploited it without reservation. Gudrun Ensslin's father, the Protestant minister, had already transfigured his daughter's motives in this direction during the arson trial: "They must have wanted to tell us—Look, this is where we are, where you have brought us. It is the position you have put us in." Finally, they had come into their martyr role. Masterfully, they played it on the keyboard of those persecuted and tormented by the Unjust State. It was a piece that the machinery of the state accompanied just as willingly and foolishly.

In the end, the RAF had only one remaining purpose: the liberation of its incarcerated founders. To achieve this, the RAF mounted an attack on the German embassy in Stockholm, in which embassy employees were virtually executed and which ended in catastrophe when the explosives they had brought went off prematurely. Then the RAF tried to abduct a banker who was shot when he resisted. The Federal Prosecutor General was murdered in broad daylight. These actions were part of the operation known by the group as "the Big Raushole," or the "Big Rescue", and they culminated in the abduction of Hanns Martin Schleyer, head of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) and the Federation of German Industries (BDI). All of his bodyguards and his driver were brutally shot. When the state failed to give in, a Palestinian squad hijacked the Lufthansa jet *Landshut* on the way from Palma de Mallorca to Frankfurt. In Mogadishu, the German counterterrorism unit, GSG 9, was able to liberate eighty passengers and crew members. After that, the RAF founders imprisoned in Stammheim, Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe, committed suicide.

For many supporters and sympathizers both in and outside of Germany, this raised them completely to the status of martyrs. As I quoted before:

It is a terrible thing to kill.
But not only others would we kill, but ourselves too if need be
Since only force can alter this
Murderous world, as
Every living creature knows.

In the Dornhalden Cemetery of Stuttgart, the funeral of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe was attended by supporters, who perceived them primarily as victims. They regarded their suicides as murders, regardless of whether or not the prisoners had killed themselves in their cells. The real victims of the RAF—the bodies torn apart in the bombings, the policemen who were shot, the executed Federal Prosecutor General and his security detail, and the abducted and executed leader of industry—were acknowledged with a shrug of the shoulders, sometimes even with “hidden joy.”

The founders of the RAF, Baader, Meinhof, and Ensslin, were transformed into icons. Indistinct drawings representing photos of their bodies became highly valued works of art that made it all the way to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The quasi-religious character of their mad crusade had made them immortal in the worldview of many a German leftist. It had lasted from June 2, 1967, to October 18, 1977—ten years that shook the republic. “I want to have done something,” Gudrun Ensslin said after torching two Frankfurt department stores, and her father, the Protestant theologian, had spoken of “a really holy self-realization.” Her mother, too, Ilse Ensslin, had said admiringly, “I feel that by her act, she did something liberating, even for our family.” Ilse Ensslin herself claimed to have been suddenly “freed of a constraint and fear that—rightly or wrongly—dominated my life” after visiting her daughter in prison. The overly strict conscience that had been nurtured in the Ensslin pastoral household clearly thrust its way violently out. Thus Gudrun’s struggle against the “Schweinesystem” had had religious features from the beginning.

She and her comrades had never seen themselves as terrorists but rather as freedom fighters resisting an inhumane “system,” legitimated by an almost religious right to resist tyranny in any form. For the most part, they simply blinded themselves to the bloody, inhumane reality of their own actions. Only in Ulrike Meinhof’s allusions to Bertolt Brecht’s revolutionary drama *The Decision* could one occasionally catch a glimpse of her awareness of the monstrousness of her behavior: “And what baseness would you not commit could you rid the world of all baseness?” she quoted Brecht, and added: “Sure, it’s a disgusting thought.”

Even during their lifetime, the founders of the RAF in Stammheim had become screens onto which anything could be projected. Their image

as the greatest enemies of the state found its counterpart in their transfiguration into icons by the second generation of RAF members. Freeing their founders had become the second generation's whole purpose in life. To murder or, if necessary, die for them had become the categorical imperative of revolutionary self-realization. When the prisoners on the seventh floor of the Stuttgart-Stammheim prison had freed themselves from the high-security wing by suicide, the RAF lost its aim.

Years later, several RAF members gathered together in a therapy group to work through their common terrorist past. One of the perpetrators in Stockholm, Karl-Heinz Dellwo, came to the following realization:

Strangely, their deaths reconciled me to them later. The feelings that flared up when I got the news contained rage—because they had vanished and left us to deal with the mess they had made. Today I tell myself: They adhered to political criteria or returned to them. Disproportionality is barbarism. For years everything had revolved around freeing the prisoners. Some of us had died for that; others went to prison or faced other consequences. We were responsible for several victims; in the end, the whole morality of the RAF reached a tipping point—the liberation of the prisoners always took center stage. With their deaths, they were also simply setting a limit. The message was: Don't do anything for us anymore. End it or find a new purpose for yourselves! Their staging of their death had a lot in it: it was a last kick against the power from which they saw themselves fully freed. The reemergence of the old moral—'we are the projectile!' But also acceptance of responsibility, maybe even something like penance and the recognition that means and ends were out of proportion.

Like many in their generation, they had stepped up to battle the old and the supposed new fascism. They had sought to change this killing world with violence, had made themselves into lords over life and death and had become guilty like many from their fathers' generation. Some in the RAF recognized this. Others still don't see it today. Up to the German Autumn of 1977, twenty-eight people had lost their lives in attacks or firefights. Seventeen members of this urban guerilla troop had died. Two completely uninvolved bystanders had inadvertently been shot by the police. Forty-seven dead. That is the sum of seven years of underground warfare in the Federal Republic of Germany—seven years that changed the Republic. The state had armed itself with new laws, in its policing, and in the consciousness of the broad population. The country had be-

come less liberal. But even the upgraded police apparatus was unable to stop the war of the next RAF generation.

The bloody end of the "German Autumn" of 1977 was not the end of terrorism in Germany. The new RAF had learned new lessons. It no longer left any traces. It murdered by ambush. When some in the group no longer wanted to participate, they secretly took refuge in the GDR. Everyone who opted out received three thousand marks from RAF coffers as start-up capital for their new lives in East Germany. There was enough money. Just from the 1977 abduction of the Austrian industrialist Walter Palmer, the "Bewegung 2. Juni" (or Movement of the Second of June) in 1977 had taken in 4.5 million marks in various currencies, which this group later brought with them to the RAF. The Stasi not only gave retiring RAF members a secure place to escape to but also maintained contact with the RAF squads in the West and offered these still active troops a refuge for rest and relaxation from the underground war. Once, Stasi officials even spent weeks with seven second-generation RAF members, including Christian Klar, at troop training facilities, organizing shooting practices and giving them lessons in explosives technology and how to handle Soviet-model rocket-propelled grenade launchers. While the RAF-retirees grew accustomed to life under real-existing socialism, the RAF published a strategy paper for the first time since Ulrike Meinhof's 1972 text "Concept Urban Guerilla." The 1982 paper was called "Guerilla, Resistance, and Anti-Imperialist Front." In it, the RAF admitted, "We committed errors in 1977 and the offensive became our most serious defeat." They criticized the hijacking of the Lufthansa jet *Landshut* by Palestinian allies, but declared that the RAF emerged "stronger than before" from the German Autumn of 1977. The point now was "to develop a new strategy of attack in the imperialist centers."

What that meant was clear soon enough—murder, plain and simple. In February 1985, a bomb attack on Ernst Zimmermann, the head of MTU, Germany's leading aircraft engine manufacturer, resulted in his death. In August 1985, the American soldier Edward Pimental was murdered to obtain his entry pass to the US base in Frankfurt. The bomb attack then carried out there cost two people their lives. In July 1986, a bomb attack on Siemens manager Kurt Beckurts killed him and his driver Groppler. In October 1986, Gerold von Braunmühl, an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was murdered. In November 1989, the head of the Deutsche Bank, Alfred Herrhausen, was killed by a bomb; his driver was injured. In April 1991, Detlev Karsten Rohwedder, the director of the *Treuhand* (the agency that privatized East German enterprises) was murdered. His wife was injured. In all probability, the RAF was responsible for this, although no conclusive evidence for this has been found.

In June of 1993, the Verfassungsschutz, Germany's Office for the Protection of the Constitution, managed to plant a spy in the new RAF leadership. At that time, Birgit Hogefeld and Wolfgang Grams jointly led the organization. There was a plan for the GSG-9 to arrest the two of them in Bad Kleinen, but things went wrong. One GSG-9 officer was killed, Wolfgang Grams shot himself, and Birgit Hogefeld was arrested. Although the RAF could not really do much without Grams and Hogefeld, it still took the RAF another five years to more or less officially call an end to the madness. On April 20, 1998, the news agency Reuters in Cologne received an eight-page fax from Chemnitz, in which the RAF announced, "The urban guerrilla in the form of the RAF is now history. . . . The end of this project shows that we were not able to succeed on this path." No remorse for the victims of the "urban guerilla," no self-criticism, no guilt. Just the laconic statement that the armed struggle had been wrong because it had no prospect of success. After listing the names of all the RAF members who died in the struggle, the statement concluded with a quotation: "The revolution says: I was, I am, I will be again." Rosa Luxemburg had written this in January 1919, one day before she was murdered. The murderous and suicidal rage that had begun on May 14, 1970, with Andreas Baader's liberation was over after twenty-eight years.

Notes

¹ Bertolt Brecht, *Collected Plays* (London: Methuen, 1997), 3: 87.

² Stefan Aust, *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex* (Hamburg, 1985), third, enlarged edition (Hamburg, 2008); English translation: *The Baader-Meinhof Group: The Inside Story of a Phenomenon* (London, 1987); updated English edition forthcoming with Oxford University Press, 2008/09.