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## 5 Vendetta: the Red Army Faction against the West German state

The Red Army Faction (*Rote Armee Fraktion*, RAF) was responsible for the most turbulent episode of West-German history.<sup>1</sup> During the so-called *Deutsche Herbst* (German Autumn) of 1977 the group managed to capture the attention of the entire nation when, after having committed a string of assassinations, they kidnapped Hanns-Martin Schleyer, chairman of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations and the Federation of German Industries. The group demanded the liberation from prison of RAF-members who had been arrested in 1972, among them the illustrious leaders Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe and Irmgard Möller (Ulrike Meinhof, another leading member, had committed suicide in 1976).<sup>2</sup> In the ensuing weeks, Germany witnessed a stand-off between the RAF and the state, neither of which wanted to flinch.<sup>3</sup> What made these events even more dramatic was that they took place against the background of a country that was still coming to terms with a troubled history of political violence. The RAF and its supporters claimed that the West-German state was a fascist regime in disguise, and that the group's killings and kidnappings of the preceding years could be justified as legitimate acts of resistance. On the other hand, though, there were those who felt that the RAF's ruthlessness and absolutist mind-set was similar to that of the Nazis. This perceived similarity led some to unflatteringly label the RAF 'Hitler's Children'.<sup>4</sup>

The crisis reached its climax in October 1977. To back up the RAF's demands while simultaneously pressing for the liberation of their own members, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) hijacked the *Landshut*, a plane with German tourists on 13 October. The

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this chapter have been published in Van Dongen, "Law Enforcement as Politics by Other Means: Lessons from Countering Revolutionary Terrorism."

<sup>2</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, "Die Schleyer-Entführung," in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 270–271.

<sup>3</sup> K. Hanshew, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 217.

<sup>4</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 200.

plane eventually landed in Mogadishu, where all passengers were held hostage. After a prolonged siege German Special Forces stormed the plane on 18 October. The passengers were saved, and three of the four hijackers were killed.<sup>5</sup> On hearing that the attempt to liberate them had failed, the four incarcerated RAF leaders killed themselves, with the exception of Möller, who tried but failed. Schleyer did not survive either. His kidnappers had made good on their threat to kill him if they would not get their way. Before the German Autumn, the RAF had ardent supporters as well as vehement opponents, but the outcome of the kidnapping of Schleyer and the hijacking of the *Landshut* changed this. Public opinion turned against the RAF, which survived as an organisation, but only to commit occasional assassinations with little impact - except the personal tragedies they caused - before it disbanded itself in 1998.

Possibly as a result of the drama involved in the RAF's operations and the polarisation of West-German society over the RAF and its message, the country never ceased to be interested in the history of its most notorious terrorist organisation. This became clear in 2008, at the release of *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex*, a movie about the group. With an audience of almost 2.5 million viewers, the movie roused considerable debate, as some felt that it glorified the terrorists and others complained about the graphically displayed violence.<sup>6</sup> Given this ongoing fascination with the events surrounding the RAF, especially the German Autumn, it should come as no surprise that many German journalists and historians have

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<sup>5</sup> B. Peters, "Die RAF Erleidet Ihre Grösste Niederlage," *Welt Online*, October 14, 2007, <http://www.welt.de/politik/article1263664/Die-RAF-erleidet-ihre-groesste-Niederlage.html>.

<sup>6</sup> "Baader Meinhof Film Stirs Controversy in Germany," *Telegraph*, September 20, 2008, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/3024047/Baader-Meinhof-film-stirs-controversy-in-Germany.html>; "Baader-Meinhof: The Truth behind the Twisted Myth," *Times Online*, December 11, 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article5133354.ece>. The movie ended on nr. 13 on the list of movies with the highest numbers of visitors in 2008 in Germany. For the number of visitors and the ranking, see [http://www.wulfmansworld.com/Die\\_besten\\_Filme/Kinocharts/Kinocharts\\_2008\\_-\\_Plaetze\\_11-20.htm](http://www.wulfmansworld.com/Die_besten_Filme/Kinocharts/Kinocharts_2008_-_Plaetze_11-20.htm).

written extensively about the self-styled 'urban guerrillas'.<sup>7</sup> Although these publications are generally thoroughly researched and in some cases take the shape of massive volumes, they tend to remain descriptive, containing little analysis of the facts that are being presented. This gap is not filled by the more academic literature, where the RAF is notably absent. For instance, the academic journals *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* and *Terrorism and Political Violence* combined contain only two articles on the RAF in the issues that have been released after the group's dissolution in 1998.<sup>8</sup> This chapter will draw on the more descriptive literature about the RAF to draw the group's history into the academic debate about counterterrorism effectiveness. On the basis of the secondary sources just mentioned, but also using primary sources like communiqués, group correspondence and interviews and memoirs of former members, it will be shown how both the state and the RAF got so caught up in their confrontation, that both lost track of the importance of popular support, with the RAF eventually losing the political battle as a result.

## 5.1 The Red Army Faction

### 5.1.1 Ideology

Like the Weather Underground, the RAF grew out of the protest movement of the late 1960s. In Germany as well as in the US, students adopted themes imperialism, sexism and racism, and created a wave of demonstrations, sometimes resulting in violent clashes with the police.<sup>9</sup> A

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<sup>7</sup> See e.g. S. Aust, *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex*, 2nd ed. (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe Verlag, 1997); W. Kraushaar, ed., *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus* (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006); K. Pflieger, *Die Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF). 14.5.1970 Bis 20.4.1998* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007); B. Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum: Die Geschichte Der RAF* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2007). See also Der Spiegel's collection of articles on the RAF: [http://www.spiegel.de/thema/rote\\_armee\\_fraktion/](http://www.spiegel.de/thema/rote_armee_fraktion/), accessed 12 October 2010.

<sup>8</sup> M. Gutmann, "Notable Literature on Germany's Red Army Faction within the Context of 'Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus,'" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 4 (2008): 371–75; A. Moghadam, "Failure and Disengagement in the Red Army Faction," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 2 (2012): 156–81.

<sup>9</sup> G. Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1987), 23–29.

particularly German twist to the social turmoil was added by the country's Nazi-past. The younger generation in West-German society was becoming increasingly critical of the older generation, which had contributed to the Nazi atrocities yet still held important positions in the economy and public administration of the country.<sup>10</sup> This suggested continuity between Nazi Germany and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), a view which profoundly influenced the RAF and would become one of the major arguments it used to justify the use of violence.<sup>11</sup>

In spite of the similarity of their views, it would not be fully accurate to say that the RAF grew out of the student movement. None of the founding and leading members of the RAF were students. Rather, they were part of the so-called *Ausserparlamentarische Opposition* (APO, Extra-Parliamentary Opposition), a loosely affiliated movement that included not only students, but also peace activists, and people who were concerned about government repression.<sup>12</sup> The RAF can be understood as one of the radical spin-offs of this movement after it had started its decline. Where most protesters abandoned the movement after it fell prey to internal discord, the RAF was made up of activists who, fearing that the rebellious spirit of '68 might get lost, felt that fighting on was now more important than ever.<sup>13</sup>

Disappointed by the results of the largely non-violent actions of the sixties, the RAF decided in 1970 to up the ante and announce the beginning of the armed struggle. The occasion was the freeing of Andreas Baader. In 1968 Baader and three other members of the APO had set fire

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<sup>10</sup> P. Groenewold, "Deutscher Frühling - Deutscher Herbst: De Mediastrijd Om de Culturele Hegemonie in de Bondsrepubliek Duitsland Tussen de Polen van 1967/68 En 1977," *Groniek* 145 (1999): 410-411.

<sup>11</sup> "Ich Bin Nicht Bereit, Die RAF Als Kriminalfall Zu Besprechen," *Der Freitag*, December 21, 2007, <http://www.freitag.de/2007/51/07511801.php>.

<sup>12</sup> P.A. Richter, "Die Außerparlamentarische Opposition in Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1966 Bis 1968," *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 17 (1998): 35-55.

<sup>13</sup> P. Melzer, "Maternal Ethics and Political Violence: The 'betrayal' of Motherhood among the Women of the RAF and June 2 Movement," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 47, no. 1 (2011): 88-89.

to a magazine store in Frankfurt, for which he was sentenced to three years in prison.<sup>14</sup> He appealed against this verdict and took the opportunity to flee abroad, but was arrested when he came back to Germany.<sup>15</sup> In 1970, some friends of Baader's, including the radical leftist journalist Ulrike Meinhof, decided to liberate him. On the pretext that Baader had been working on a book with Meinhof before his arrest, she managed to persuade the authorities to allow Baader to go to a library to study some materials for their research project. The group members then entered the building, overpowered the guards and liberated Baader.<sup>16</sup> Afterwards, the RAF published its first communiqué, called *Building the Red Army* (*Die Rote Armee aufbauen*), which proclaimed the foundation of an urban guerrilla force to overthrow the existing order.<sup>17</sup>

Several more position papers followed, as the RAF initially put a lot of effort in explaining its position and strategy to the public. The most important were *Das Konzept Stadtguerilla* (*The urban guerrilla concept*), *Über den bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa* (*On the armed struggle in Western Europe*) and *Dem Volk dienen. Stadtguerilla und Klassenkampf* (*Serving the people: urban guerrilla and class struggle*). Although they did spell out the RAF's political rationale, it is questionable whether these papers yielded the RAF much working class support, as they were long, pretentious, and drawn up in tiresome and at times impenetrable prose, which included sentences like: "It is not about going it alone, but about creating out of the daily struggle, mobilisations and organisational processes of the legal left a political-military *vanguard*, a political-military core that has to develop an illegal infrastructure - which is a precondition, a necessity for the ability to act - under the conditions of repression, of illegality, of practice and that can give the legal struggle in the factory, in the neighbourhood,

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<sup>14</sup> "Die Frankfurter Brandstifter," *Zeit*, November 8, 1968, [http://www.zeit.de/2006/09/II\\_1968\\_45\\_nettelbeck\\_prozess/komplettansicht](http://www.zeit.de/2006/09/II_1968_45_nettelbeck_prozess/komplettansicht).

<sup>15</sup> J. Becker, *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Gang* (London, Toronto, Sydney and New York: Granada Publishing, 1977), 120-124.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-128.

<sup>17</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, "Die Rote Armee Aufbauen. Erklärung Zur Befreiung Andreas Baaders Vom 5. Juni 1970," in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 24-26.

on the streets, at the universities continuity, orientation, strength and purpose to that, which the development of the political and economic crisis in the imperialist system will be all about: the conquest of *political* power.”<sup>18</sup>

The political logic that arose out of these papers was twofold. First, the RAF saw itself as part of an international anti-imperialist struggle that was primarily waged by national liberation movements in the Third World. It felt that Germany was an important ally of the US, and often underlined West-German complicity in the Vietnam War by pointing to the fact that American planes left for Vietnam from German airbases.<sup>19</sup> By waging an urban guerrilla against the West-German state, the RAF tried to bring the imperialist machine to a halt.<sup>20</sup> That the group did not see its own armed struggle as a solely German matter is also clear from their ambition to win over Kim Il Sung, the North Korean dictator, to their cause. In a 1971 draft letter to ‘the Great Leader’, Ulrike Meinhof explained the RAF’s position in the fight against imperialism and requested assistance in building and training RAF-cadres.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> “‘Wir Werden in Den Durststreik Treten’: Spiegel-Fragen an Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof, Gudrun Ensslin Und Jan-Carl Raspe,” Spiegel, 1976, 53. The original sentence is “Es geht nicht um den Alleingang, sondern darum, aus den Tageskämpfen, Mobilisierungen und Organisationsprozessen der legalen Linken eine politisch-militärische *Avantgarde*, einen politisch-militärischen Kern zu schaffen, der eine illegale Infrastruktur – die Voraussetzung, Bedingung von Handlungsfähigkeit ist – unter den Bedingungen der Verfolgung, der Illegalität, der Praxis entwickeln muss und der den legalen Kämpfen in der Fabrik, im Stadtteil, auf den Strasse, an den Universitäten erst Kontinuität, Orientierung, Stärke, Ziel geben kann, zu dem, worum es in der Entwicklung der ökonomischen und politischen Krise des imperialistischen System gehen wird: der Eroberung der *politischen* Macht.”

<sup>19</sup> O. Tolmein, “RAF - Das War Für Uns Befreiung”: Ein Gespräch Über Bewaffneten Kampf, Knast Und Die Linke Mit Irmgard Möller, Aktualisierte und erweiterte Neuauflage (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 2005), 41.

<sup>20</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, “Das Konzept Stadtguerrilla,” 31; Rote Armee Fraktion, “Dem Volk Dienen. Stadtguerilla Und Klassenkampf,” in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 116.

<sup>21</sup> U. Meinhof, “Brief Der Rote Armee Fraktion in Der Bundesrepublik Und Westberlin an Die Partei Der Arbeit Der Volksrepublik Korea Mit Der Bitte Um Unterstützung Durch Militärische Ausbildung Und Politische Zusammenarbeit,” December 10, 1971, <http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019711210.pdf>.

The second main component of the RAF's strategy was 'propaganda of the deed', that is, the creation of revolutionary spirit by violent action. In *The urban guerrilla concept*, the RAF admitted that the revolutionary forces in Germany were weak, but at the same time the group stressed the possibility that violent action would show the working class that the state was not as strong as many assumed. By simultaneously unveiling the state's weaknesses and demonstrating the determination of the revolutionaries, the RAF wanted to stir the masses into action. The state had to bear the brunt of the attacks not only because of the support and alliance to the US, but also because it was inherently evil. Again, the RAF saw continuity between Nazi Germany and the FRG and believed that the FRG's true nature - a fascist dictatorship - was hidden behind a mask of political and economic concessions. This view would lead the group to interpret many of the counterterrorism measures discussed below as signs that the mask was slipping and that the armed struggle had forced the FRG to show its true colours. Such policies, so the RAF believed, would only accelerate the downfall of the capitalist system. The RAF was convinced that the masses would rally around them to stand up against the state and the agents of repression.<sup>22</sup>

But outspoken and elaborate as the RAF may have been, there were limits to the group's writings. First, the RAF's main papers contained lengthy sections of social analysis and strategic reflection, but, even by the members' own admission, offered no clues about what would happen once the capitalist system had been overthrown.<sup>23</sup> The group's communist affiliation was clear, if only from its name, but there was no mention of a council or soviet system, a dictatorship of the proletariat or any other kind of post-revolutionary order. The RAF leadership saw themselves as destroyers only, and did not feel responsible for ideas about what to do

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<sup>22</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, "Über Den Bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa," in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 103-105.

<sup>23</sup> K. Kellen and W. Reich, "Ideology and Rebellion: Terrorism in West Germany," in *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998), 56-57.



after the fall of the capitalist system.<sup>24</sup> What is more, the strong emphasis on the articulation of the group's ideology did not survive the initial stage of group's existence. After the strategy papers mentioned above had been published in the early seventies, it took the RAF a decade before it came up with another one. As the group got deeper and deeper involved in armed struggle, it paid less attention to the explanation of the ideological foundations of its attacks. The papers from the early seventies were, however flawed, richer in analysis than the group's later writings, which, for instance, contained no examinations of the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces in society. Instead, they vaguely stated the need to fight for human self-determination and dignity.<sup>25</sup> (The decreasing articulacy of the RAF's writings and the meaning of that development will be explained below in the section on law enforcement.)

### **5.1.2 Organisational structure and culture**

The RAF is often used as an example of 'old' terrorism and in that capacity contrasted with 'new', Al Qaeda-style terrorism. One of the main arguments for this distinction is the organisational structure of terrorist groups. 'Old' terrorist groups are supposed to be more hierarchically structured than their recent and more loosely organised counterparts.<sup>26</sup> While the RAF should not be understood to have had a military-like organisation with an elaborate division of labour, it is true that it had a leading centre that guided the cells functioning below it and constantly questioned whether group members were worthy of RAF-membership.<sup>27</sup> Many cadres admired the founding core of the RAF because of their

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<sup>24</sup> M. Schiller, *"Es War Ein Harter Kampf Um Meiner Erinnerung": Ein Lebensbericht Aus Der RAF* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 2007), 143; see also Karl-Heinz Dellwo's similar position in *"Wir Mussten Verlieren," Einestages*, October 11, 2007, [http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/authoralbumbackground/441/\\_wir\\_mussten\\_verlieren.html](http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/authoralbumbackground/441/_wir_mussten_verlieren.html).

<sup>25</sup> S. Schweitzer, *Rote Armee Fraktion: Ideologie Und Strategie Im Wandel. Eine Analyse Der RAF von 1970 Bis 1992* (Bremen: Europäischer Hochschulverlag, 2009), 109–112.

<sup>26</sup> M. Crenshaw, *The Debate over "Old" Vs. 'new' Terrorism*, Prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (Chicago: American Political Science Association, 2007), 25–27.

<sup>27</sup> Moghadam, *"Failure and Disengagement in the Red Army Faction,"* 161–162.

determination, perceived political sophistication and their ability to get under the skin of the authorities.<sup>28</sup> Ulrike Meinhof had built a reputation for herself as a journalist for the left-wing magazine *konkret*, whereas the others had drawn attention by prominent roles in radical and violent actions of the late sixties. Many looked up to them as true challengers of dictatorial state power. As we will see below, the imprisonment of the leaders of the first generation added an element of martyrdom to their outlaw status.

The most important factor, however, was the authority exuded by Andreas Baader. While Ulrike Meinhof was the voice of the RAF, Baader was its undisputed leader.<sup>29</sup> According to first-generation member Astrid Proll, “[e]verything in the RAF centred around Baader.”<sup>30</sup> With his street urchin-image, his car stealing skills and his undisguised contempt for intellectual prowess, he seemed to derive his status from his credibility as a man of action rather than from his deep understanding of the group’s ideology. An important element of his charisma was the swagger he portrayed. Baader was a vain man, craving female attention, fast cars and stylish outfits, the latter to the point where he refused to wear a uniform instead of his trademark jeans and leather jacket during drilling exercises in a PFLP-training camp (on which more below). His confidence and defiant attitude had already gained him some notoriety during the trial for the 1968 arson and later made him by all accounts an appealing figure to many people in the RAF and its support groups.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> “Interview Mit Margrit Schiller, Ehemaliges Mitglied Der RAF,” *Tazmag*, April 30, 2000, <http://www.alhambra.de/zeitung/juni2000/interviewschiller.htm>; S. Wisniewski, *Wir Waren so Unheimlich Konsequent ...* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 17.

<sup>29</sup> W. Kraushaar and J.P. Reemtsma, “‘Die Entscheidende Triebkraft Besteht in Einem Unbändigen, Alles Ausfüllenden Hass’: Interview Mit Dem Ehemaligen Präsidenten Des Bundeskriminalamtes Dr. Horst Herold,” in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 1389.

<sup>30</sup> “Baader-Meinhof: The Truth behind the Twisted Myth.”

<sup>31</sup> W. Winkler, *Die Geschichte Der RAF* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2008), 126–127.

Baader, to whom other group members referred as 'the general-director' (*Generaldirektor*), also used bullying manners and fits of rage to vest his authority. He was very hard on people whom he felt had failed in their tasks. In this he spared no one, reportedly calling Ensslin "silly bitch" and Meinhof "fat cow".<sup>32</sup> Other members of the group, even those who were part of the leading core, tolerated this behaviour and accepted Baader's scoldings.<sup>33</sup> In 1976, during the trials for the RAF attacks from 1971 and 1972, the public prosecutor had a stake in demonstrating that the RAF was a centrally guided organisation, as that would allow him to pin the blame on the captured leaders. A RAF-member who acted as a crown witness had testified that Baader was the leading figure, but four other RAF-members that were called on as witnesses denied this, claiming that Baader was not a leader in the conventional sense, but rather inspired others to independently maximise their own potential. Ironically, in doing so they only confirmed Baader's status, as their statements about the functioning of the RAF closely followed instructions from a note that he had sent them several weeks earlier.<sup>34</sup>

A particularly interesting feature of the RAF's leadership is that they could play their leading role even after they had been incarcerated. Crucial to this ability to maintain their leadership was the so-called 'info-system'. The lawyers of the imprisoned leaders took written messages from their clients to other imprisoned RAF-leaders and to the RAF-members outside prison. This way, the leadership managed to coordinate the activities from the cadres that were still at large. After the arrests of

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<sup>32</sup> "Baader-Meinhof: The Truth behind the Twisted Myth."

<sup>33</sup> Schiller, *Es War Ein Harter Kampf Um Meine Erinnerung*, 46–48.

<sup>34</sup> Compare A. Baader, "Stück Zur Operation Und Organisation Der RAF," June 1976, [http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760700\\_01.pdf](http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760700_01.pdf), to R. Augustin, "Zeugenaussage Im Stammheimer Prozess," March 8, 1976, [http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760803\\_02.pdf](http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760803_02.pdf); B. Mohnhaupt, "Gefangene Aus Der RAF Im Stammheim Am 22.7.1976," July 22, 1976, [http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760722\\_01.pdf](http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760722_01.pdf); I. Möller, "Zeugenaussage Im Stammheimer Prozess," March 8, 1976, [http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760803\\_01.pdf](http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760803_01.pdf); H. Pohl, "Protokoll Leo. Aussage von Helmut Pohl in Stammheim," July 22, 1976, [http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760722\\_02.pdf](http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760722_02.pdf).

the leaders of the first generation in 1972, the membership organised around the lawyers' offices, which served as coordinating centres for the RAF's activities.<sup>35</sup> When preparing or carrying out violent actions, the cells acted on a need-to-know principle, and not all cells knew what other cells were doing.<sup>36</sup> Only the leadership had full situational awareness. With such an organisational structure, it was possible that some RAF-members were surprised by the group's most spectacular actions, such as the hijacking of the *Landshut*, the plane that was supposed to take German tourists to Mallorca but was captured by the PFLP to help the RAF free its imprisoned leaders.

The compliance of the RAF's cadres was further cemented by severe group pressure. The RAF-leadership demanded from its members a clear and decisive break with the past. Shortly after she joined the group, first-generation member Margrit Schiller was told: "With the decision for the underground struggle, our personal lives are now at the service of this struggle. What was before, no longer counts."<sup>37</sup> With nowhere else to go, it was difficult for individual members to go against the prevailing consensus on major issues. Loyalty to the group was thus guaranteed. Former members recall how the atmosphere discouraged the airing of dissenting views stifled fundamental discussion.<sup>38</sup> Political views that differed from the consensus in the group were considered betrayal, and were often ascribed to personal shortcomings of those who held them.<sup>39</sup>

Even members in the leading circles were not safe from severe criticism and expulsion. After their incarceration in 1972, tensions among the RAF's leaders ran high. First, Ulrike Meinhof had an axe to grind with Horst Mahler, who joined the RAF after having been Baader's lawyer during the

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<sup>35</sup> Pflieger, *Die Rote Armee Fraktion*, 44–45.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>37</sup> Schiller, *Es War Ein Harter Kampf Um Meine Erinnerung*, 40.

<sup>38</sup> "Von Gewalt Und Terror Zur Gewaltfreien Aktion: 'Irgendwann Ging Es Nicht Mehr,'" *Zivil*, April 1999, <http://unsere.de/raf.htm>.

<sup>39</sup> "'Wir Wollten Alles Und Gleichzeitig Nichts': Ex-Terrorist Volker Speitel Über Seine Erfahrungen in Der Westdeutschen Stadtguerilla," *Spiegel*, July 21, 1980, 38–39.

trial for the 1968 arson in the department store. Meinhof and Mahler had different perceptions of the role of the German masses, to which Mahler felt the RAF owed some accountability. Meinhof on the other hand, believed that the fascist nature of the FRG called for violent action, regardless of what the working class was thinking.<sup>40</sup> In 1974, Mahler was expelled from the RAF. The accompanying statement was an example of how political differences of opinion were made personal. In it, the RAF claimed that Mahler was an egotist who only worked for the RAF to make a name for himself as one of the main publicists of the radical left. The statement further accused him of bossing people around and said that Mahler had never understood what the RAF was about. The core of the problem was formulated as follows: "The problem with Horst Mahler is and always has been that he has remained a dirty, bourgeois chauvinist."<sup>41</sup> The next victim was Ulrike Meinhof herself. She was facing strong criticism from Baader and especially Ensslin, both of whom claimed that Meinhof was still too bourgeois and betrayed the RAF by behaving the way she did, thus explaining their differences of opinion with Meinhof by her personal flaws.<sup>42</sup> She became increasingly isolated from the other imprisoned RAF-members and no longer took part in the group's common statements in the court room. Also, during one of the court sessions, the other leaders distanced themselves from a RAF attack that was widely known within the group to have been organised by Meinhof.<sup>43</sup> As a prison guard at Stammheim observed: "Night after night Meinhof wrote political communiqués in her cell, only for Baader to tear them to pieces, unread. Ensslin detested her, Raspe ignored her."<sup>44</sup> Probably as a result of the rejection by her former comrades, Meinhof

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<sup>40</sup> B. Gierds, "Das 'Konzept Stadtguerilla': Meinhof, Mahler Und Ihre Strategischen Differenzen," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 256.

<sup>41</sup> M. Berberich, "Erklärung Der Gefangenen Aus Der RAF Zum Ausschluss von Horst Mahler Aus Der RAF," September 27, 1974, <http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019740927.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Pflieger, *Die Rote Armee Fraktion*, 63–64.

<sup>43</sup> K.H. Dellwo, *Das Projekt Il Duce: Der Aufbruch Einer Generation, Die RAF Und Die Kritik Der Waffen* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2007), 126.

<sup>44</sup> "Baader-Meinhof: The Truth behind the Twisted Myth."

committed suicide on 9 May 1976. The other imprisoned leaders claimed that she was murdered.<sup>45</sup>

### 5.1.3 Modus operandi

Having few members with previous experience in waging armed struggle, the RAF decided after the liberation of Andreas Baader to take some time to prepare and build the necessary expertise for armed attacks. The first priority was the acquisition of IDs, cars and money needed for the terrorist campaign. The Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella authored the widely-influential *Mini-manual of the urban guerrilla*, in which he argued that bank robberies were good opportunities for a beginning group to train and prepare for real operations.<sup>46</sup> The leadership of the RAF were among Marighella's many followers, and they, too, saw such relatively low-key operations as a crucial part of the preparation for the actual confrontation with the armed representatives of the capitalist system.<sup>47</sup> That preparation was needed, is clear from the wrap-up of one burglary, when Meinhof decoded her instructions wrongly and consequently sent a package containing stolen passports to the wrong address.<sup>48</sup>

As one of the goals of their attacks was to generate mass support, the RAF was careful not to hurt innocent bystanders. Generally, the RAF's attacks had specific targets, such as the police and the military, which allowed them to spare the uninvolved. Figure 15 shows that the casualty rates of the attacks of the RAF's first two generations were generally low. One exception was the bombing of the building of Springer Publishers (*Springer Verlag*), where 24 employees got injured. In the communiqué that explained this attack, the RAF pinned the blame on Springer

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<sup>45</sup> J.C. Raspe, "Erklärung von Jan-Carl Raspe Im Prozess in Stuttgart-Stammheim Am 11.5.76," May 11, 1976, [http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760511\\_01.pdf](http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019760511_01.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> C. Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (St. Petersburg, FL: Red and Black Publishers, 2008), 52.

<sup>47</sup> Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum*, 206–207.

<sup>48</sup> Becker, *Hitler's Children*, 235.

Publishers, stating that the company's management cared so little about their personnel that they had not found it necessary to clear the building after the RAF had warned them that there was a bomb inside.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, there were limits to the RAF's consideration. For instance, the category 'innocent bystanders' did not extend to bodyguards and drivers. The RAF considered staff complicit in the crimes of their bosses, arguing that those in supporting roles could know about the activities their bosses were involved in. For instance, drivers were shot both in the operation to assassinate federal prosecutor-general Siegfried Buback and the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, "Sprengstoffanschlag Auf Das Springer-Hochhaus in Hamburg," in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 147. This communiqué puts the number of wounded on 17, but according to the Global Terrorism Database, arguably a more objective source, 24 people got injured. See <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/IncidentSummary.aspx?gtidid=197205190001>.

<sup>50</sup> "Buback-Mord: Ex-RAF-Terroristin Verena Becker Will Aussagen," *Spiegel Online*, May 3, 2012, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/ehemalige-raf-terroristin-verena-becker-sagt-zu-buback-mord-aus-a-831106.html>; "RAF-Terror: Der 'Deutsche Herbst,'" *Spiegel Online*, October 21, 2002, <http://www.spiegel.de/sptv/special/a-220284.html>.

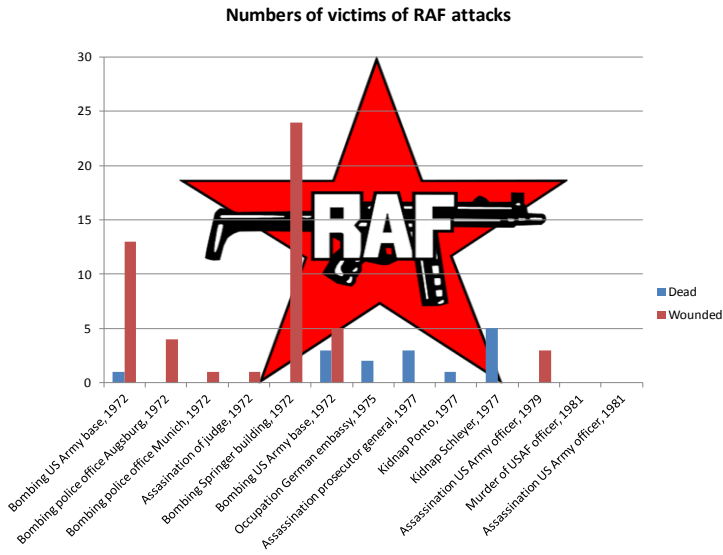


Figure 16. Numbers of dead and wounded as a result of attacks of the RAF's first two generations

The first attacks of the RAF were aimed against military or police targets. After the 1972 wave of arrests, it took the organisation some time before the capacities needed for violent action were restored. The second phase consisted of assassinations and hostage takings that were meant to force the authorities to free the imprisoned leaders. This phase culminated in the German Autumn. The combined kidnapping of Schleyer and the PFLP's hijacking of a plane with German tourists on board was supposed to force the German government to set the RAF-prisoners free, but failed miserably, ending with the collective suicide of the RAF-leadership. The group took a while to recover from this blow, but then went back to the type of attack that had been committed by the first generation in the early seventies. RAF-attacks after 1979 were mostly assassinations of military officers or businessmen who supposedly played an important role in the military-industrial complex.

In considering the violence committed by the RAF, it should be noted that it did not owe its reputation to its planned attacks alone. On several



occasions, RAF-members were involved in shoot-outs with the police. In some of these cases the police was closing in on the RAF, in others they stumbled more or less by accident on some RAF members during an ordinary traffic control. These confrontations resulted in casualties on both sides, when RAF members tried to escape or prevent the arrest of one of their own by opening fire.<sup>51</sup>

#### **5.1.4 Decline and aftermath**

The RAF's 1977 offensive was an unmitigated disaster for the group. The assassinations of Buback, the hijacking of the *Landshut* and the kidnapping of Schleyer had failed to liberate the group's leaders, leaving the second generation heavily demoralised.<sup>52</sup> Also, the brutality of the actions had alienated the RAF from its support base. The widely-shared perception, also among the radical left, was that the RAF had gone too far. As time went by, the RAF became more and more out of touch with the leftist protest movement, which moved on to new issues, such as nuclear weapons and the environment. The RAF failed to incorporate new themes like these in its agenda, and stuck to its resistance against the military-industrial complex.<sup>53</sup>

This lack of connection to a constituency became even more of a problem after 1982, when the leadership of the RAF's second generation were arrested, the RAF was taken over by a third generation. This generation, even more so than the first and the second one, failed to link its attacks to a revolutionary strategy. It was quite successful in staying out of the hands of the police, and to this day it is unknown who were in the RAF's third generation, but its attacks on the military-industrial complex stood on their own, leaving the public in the dark as to the logic behind the RAF's violence. As a result, the group became more and more isolated from its potential support base.

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<sup>51</sup> J. Herf, "An Age of Murder: Ideology and Terror in Germany, 1969-1991" (presented at the The "German Autumn" of 1977: terror, state and society in West Germany, Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2007), 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum*, 476.

<sup>53</sup> Winkler, *Die Geschichte Der RAF*, 361-362.

In addition to this isolation, the RAF faced some internal problems as well. Some in the RAF were unhappy about its actions, especially the murder of the 19-year-old soldier Edward Pimental, who was lured out of a bar and killed, only because the RAF needed his ID to enter the US army base where he was stationed.<sup>54</sup> Several group members, including some imprisoned veterans from earlier generations, felt that the group had crossed a line. They even had a hard time believing that the murder was committed by the RAF, and entertained the possibility that it was the work of forces that wanted to tarnish the RAF's reputation.<sup>55</sup> The discord and confusion became especially obvious after a RAF communiqué stating that an attack against the German minister of agriculture had been called off because innocent bystanders might get hurt, was followed by another communiqué saying that the first communiqué was disinformation spread by the German security service.<sup>56</sup> The RAF was further embarrassed when the Provisional IRA distanced itself in 1985 from the RAF's Patsy O'Hara Commando. To underline its solidarity with other groups, the RAF had taken to naming its operational units after deceased members of foreign terrorist groups. For the murder of Ernst Zimmerman, the director of a company that supplied parts of fighter jets to the German air force, the RAF had assembled a cell named after Patsy O'Hara, a Provisional IRA-member who died in a hunger strike in 1981. The Provisional IRA, however, did not appreciate the gesture and said in a reaction to the assassination that the RAF had blemished O'Hara's name.<sup>57</sup>

Geopolitics did not work in favour of the RAF either. The fall of communism dealt the group a severe blow. Not only had its proclaimed ideology lost all credibility as a viable alternative to the existing order it

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<sup>54</sup> A. Strassner, *Die Dritte Generation Der "Rote Armee Fraktion": Entstehung, Struktur, Funktionslogik Und Zerfall Einer Terroristischen Organisation* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2003), 146.

<sup>55</sup> Tolmein, *RAF - Das War Für Uns Befreiung*, 181.

<sup>56</sup> H.J. Horchem, "The Decline of the Red Army Faction," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 3, no. 2 (1991): 70-71.

<sup>57</sup> "Terror: 'Da Waren Superprofis Am Werk,'" *Spiegel*, July 14, 1986, 28.

was fighting, the group was also discredited by former members who had fled to the GDR after leaving the RAF and were now arrested. They admitted that the leaders of the RAF had killed themselves in 1977, that the murder allegations were meant to create a myth to discredit the German state and that the detention of the leaders of the RAF had not been as brutal as they had made it out to be.<sup>58</sup> In 1993, the group committed its last attack and in 1998 released a lengthy communiqué in which it announced its dissolution, unequivocally stating that “the urban guerrilla in the form of the RAF is now history”.<sup>59</sup>

When looking back on their past in the RAF, former members differ in the extent to which they still embrace the ideas they held then. Most of them served long prison sentences, but several spoke to the press after their release. As has just been mentioned, some members were critical about the RAF and rejected its killings and group pressure. For example, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, formerly known as the group’s hard core ideologue, had abandoned her radical views by the time she was released from prison in 2007.<sup>60</sup> Others, even though they may have been critical of the way the RAF had operated, were less willing to distance themselves from their terrorist past. For instance, Margrit Schiller named her children after Ulrike Meinhof and Holger Meins, a RAF member who died in a hunger strike. Karl-Heinz Dellwo, involved in the occupation of the German embassy in Stockholm in 1975, later said in an interview about his time in the RAF: “I cannot simply say I regret it.”<sup>61</sup> Similarly, former RAF-member Christian Klar said: “I am unwilling to discuss the RAF as a case of crime.”<sup>62</sup> Like Klar, Astrid Proll refused to doubt the group’s intentions: “Those who died in Stammheim were people who committed inhuman

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<sup>58</sup> See e.g. “‘Ich Bitte Um Vergebung’: Spiegel Interview Mit Dem Aussteiger Baptist Ralf Friedrich Über Sein Leben In Der RAF,” *Spiegel*, August 20, 1990.

<sup>59</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, “Auflösungserklärung Der RAF,” August 20, 1998, <http://www.extremismus.com/terror/rafdox30.html>.

<sup>60</sup> “Gefängnisleiter Über Brigitte Mohnhaupt: ‘Sie Ist Keine Hardlinerin,’” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, January 23, 2007, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/gefaengnisleiter-ueber-brigitte-mohnhaupt-sie-ist-keine-hardlinerin-1.315485>.

<sup>61</sup> “Ich Kann Nicht Einfach Sagen, Ich Bereue Das,” *Tages Anzeiger*, April 6, 2010.

<sup>62</sup> “Ich Bin Nicht Bereit, Die RAF Als Kriminalfall Zu Besprechen.”

acts not because they were criminals, evil or monstrous, but because they could not endure the unfairness and oppression in the world.”<sup>63</sup> The most ardent believer of the former RAF-members is probably Irmgard Möller, a leading member of the first generation. She always kept insisting that Meinhof, Baader and the other RAF-leaders had been murdered, that the RAF had contributed to the US defeat in Vietnam and that its terrorist attacks were justified. Her views, which she summed up in the confident claim that “[t]here is nothing to regret”, have not essentially changed since the Stammheim trial.<sup>64</sup>

## **5.2 Counterterrorism principles and the Rote Armee Fraktion**

### **5.2.1 Restraint in the use of force**

In the years preceding the founding of the RAF, there were two incidents that particularly contributed to the radicalisation of the parts of the protest scene that would later spawn the RAF and other terrorist groups. First, there was the death of Benno Ohnesorg, who was shot in the head for unknown reasons by a police officer during a demonstration against the shah of Persia on 2 June 1967.<sup>65</sup> A pacifist and a member of an evangelical student union, Ohnesorg was a poor fit with the profile of the

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<sup>63</sup> “Baader-Meinhof: The Truth behind the Twisted Myth.”

<sup>64</sup> “‘Es Gibt Nichts Zu Bereuen’: Die Ehemaligen Terroristin Irmgard Möller Über Ihre RAF-Vergangenheit,” *Spiegel*, April 21, 1997.

<sup>65</sup> The Bewegung 2. Juni, another West-German radical-leftist terrorist group, took its name from the day Ohnesorg died. The plot of Ohnesorg's death thickened further when the news came out that the police man in question was secretly working for the East-German Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Ministry for State Security, MfS). See “Aktenfund in Der Birthler-Behörde: Stasi-Mitarbeiter Erschoss Benno Ohnesorg,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 21, 2009, <http://www.faz.net/s/RubFC06D389EE76479E9E76425072B196C3/Doc~E254C1CCAF2444DE9909C2BA756B19170~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html#BF0AAF638E494E8DB124487A50BB38DF>. In 2012, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that the shooting was premeditated and was covered up by the police. See “New Probe into 1967 Killing: Police Covered up Truth behind Infamous Student Shooting,” *Spiegel Online*, January 23, 2012, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/new-probe-into-1967-killing-police-covered-up-truth-behind-infamous-student-shooting-a-810877.html>.

dangerous radical out to overthrow the state.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps because of his clear commitment to non-violent action, his death sent shockwaves through the protest movement. Gudrun Ensslin, then member of the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition and later one of the leading members of the RAF, attended a meeting of the SDS *Sozialistischen Deutschen Studentenbund* (SDS, Socialist German Student Union) on the night of Ohnesorg's death, at which she allegedly cried out: "You can't argue with them - this is the Auschwitz-generation!"<sup>67</sup> Already at this early stage, Ensslin seemed to adhere to the view that the FRG was the continuation of the Nazi regime with other means. In her view, the state had shown its true colours by killing Ohnesorg.

The second main incident that radicalised the student movement was the attempt on the life of Rudi Dutschke, the iconic leader of the student movement. On 11 April 1968, Dutschke, a leading member of the SDS, was shot near his house in West-Berlin. He was hit in the head twice, and survived the attack only with severe brain damage. He died in 1979 after a fit of epilepsy which was the direct result of his injuries from 1968.<sup>68</sup> Although the perpetrator was not operating on orders from the authorities, the protest movement held them morally responsible, claiming that the perpetrator was enticed to his act by the media and the government, which had demonised Dutschke and depicted him as a danger to German society.<sup>69</sup> While it is true that the state had nothing to do with the shooting of Dutschke and that the RAF did not yet exist when these incidents took place, the harsh state measures against the student protests contributed to the formation of the RAF and its view on the state

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<sup>66</sup> J. Borneman, *Belonging in the Two Berlins: Kin, State, Nation* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 252.

<sup>67</sup> "Mit denen kann man nicht diskutieren – das ist die Generation von Auschwitz!" M. Sontheimer, "High Sein, Frei Sein," *Spiegel*, 2007, 98.

<sup>68</sup> F. Bohr and K. Weigrefe, "Überwachung von Rudi Dutschke: Der Klassenfeind Liest Mit," *Spiegel*, July 9, 2013, <http://einestages.spiegel.de/s/tb/28988/rudi-dutschke-umfassende-ueberwachung-durch-den-verfassungsschutz.html>.

<sup>69</sup> "1968: Berlin Student Unrest Worsens," BBC News, April 14, 1968, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/14/newsid\\_2524000/2524577.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/14/newsid_2524000/2524577.stm).

in the sense that they brought about a realisation that non-violent means had run their course. The deaths of Ohnesorg and Dutschke had convinced the radical fringe of the protest movement that harder measures were needed. In fact, in a piece on the Black September, a Palestinian terrorist group that took eleven Israeli athletes hostage during the 1972 Olympics, the RAF criticised the protest movement's unwillingness to fight on. The group took their former allies to task for retreating to a petty bourgeois position immediately after state repression - the attack on Dutschke was explicitly mentioned - had become serious.<sup>70</sup>

Police repression remained a problem after the RAF had been founded. Crucially, the group could feed off the state's overly heavy-handed approach during the period when the leaders of the first generation were in prison, that is, from 1972 to 1977. Their protest against the conditions under which they were held in custody is often associated with the Stammheim prison in Stuttgart, but started earlier, when the members were still in different prisons across Germany. The key to the increase in the group's support was the publicity the leaders successfully sought for their allegedly bad treatment. In the communiqués they sent from prison during their imprisonment and in an interview with *Der Spiegel* in 1976, they claimed the German government tried to break them psychologically by keeping them in isolation, forcefeeding them, harassing their lawyers and forging and stealing documents that the defence lawyers could use in court.<sup>71</sup> On several occasions, the RAF went on a hunger strike to protest against this maltreatment. One of their members, Holger Meins, died during the third hunger strike, but in the interview with *Der Spiegel* in 1976, the remaining members claimed that the authorities had killed him. They asserted that Meins' will had been crushed by brutal and violent force-feeding and that the portions he had been given after his resistance had been broken, were not enough to survive. Thus, the police and prison

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<sup>70</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, "Die Aktion Des 'Schwarzen September' in München: Zur Strategie Des Antiimperialistischen Kampfes," in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 169.

<sup>71</sup> "Wir Werden in Den Durststreik Treten," 52-53; Rote Armee Fraktion, "Hungerstreikerklärung Vom 13. September 1974," in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 190-92.

guards could act as if they had done everything they could, while they had in fact put in a conscious effort to let Meins die. In the RAF's reading of events, the media were in on the plot as well. Baader, Ensslin, Meinhof and Raspe took the fact that no media outlet had published this version of events as a sign of the high extent to which the media and the state were intertwined.<sup>72</sup>

Far-fetched as these allegations may sound, the RAF's narrative did resonate with certain segments of the German population. Part of the explanation for the public's openness to these suggestions can be found in the heavy-handed ways in which the state tried to track down and capture the RAF. Particularly important in this campaign was the newly energised *Bundeskriminalamt* (BKA, Federal Criminal Office). Until the early seventies, law enforcement had primarily been the prerogative of the West-German states (*Länder*), but the challenge posed by the RAF led to a widening of the mandate of the BKA, which operated on the federal level and was assigned the responsibility for the apprehension and bringing to justice of those involved in the urban guerrilla.<sup>73</sup> In its attempts to crush the RAF, however, the BKA alienated the public through deliberately planned shows of force. At an early stage, it was decided to make clear to the RAF that the BKA had superior operational capabilities and that the RAF could never win this confrontation. West-German counterterrorism was in that way meant to send a message, but was also a reflection of how serious the police took the situation. As has already been mentioned, the RAF engaged on several occasions in shoot-outs with the police, which was as a result extra cautious in dealing with "the number 1 enemy of the state". It used extensive manpower to set up roadblocks to check all cars for RAF-members or sympathisers, and policemen openly carried machine guns when they were on the job. The BKA also made extensive use of helicopters and did searches in houses, especially in the commune scene where the RAF originated and where many of its supporters were. In one of these raids, 175 people were

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<sup>72</sup> "Wir Werden in Den Durststreik Treten," 53.

<sup>73</sup> Aust, *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex*, 214.

arrested, only to be released the next day.<sup>74</sup> As even BKA-chief Horst Herold himself later conceded, measures like these turned parts of the population against the state and boosted the image of the RAF.<sup>75</sup> The fact that the authorities had to go to such lengths to quell the RAF's resistance made the group seem more powerful and dangerous than it really was.

The lack of restraint in the use of force and the media coverage around the treatment of RAF prisoners had a strong influence on various support groups that bought into the RAF's narrative. At this point, in the early 1970s, the RAF still managed to send a message that appealed to a variety of groups and organisations in its *Umfeld*. These groups took up the RAF's cause and protested on its behalf, and some members moved underground to join the urban guerrillas. First, the RAF could count on the support of a group of lawyers who were sympathetic to their cause. These lawyers shared the RAF's perception of continuity between Nazi Germany and the FRG, pointing out that many judges and law professors had fulfilled similar roles in the Third Reich. The younger generation of lawyers wanted to distance themselves from the older generation and did so by positioning themselves as challengers of state power rather than contributors to it, the latter attitude being customary throughout the fifties and much of the sixties. Also, the younger lawyers had long hair, wore jeans in courtrooms and accused judges and other lawyers of fascist sympathies, thus openly dissociating themselves from the code of behaviour that was customary in German courtrooms at the time.<sup>76</sup> Some of these lawyers, such as Klaus Croissant, had important roles to play in the second generation of the RAF. Not only were they instrumental in running the info-system that kept the RAF-prisoners in touch with each other and with the members outside, they also set up the *Komitees gegen Isolationsfolter* (Committees against Isolation Torture), groups of

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<sup>74</sup> K. Weinbauer, "'Staat Zeigen': Die Polizeiliche Bekämpfung Des Terrorismus in Der Bundesrepublik Bis Anfang Der 1980er Jahre," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 437–442.

<sup>75</sup> Kraushaar and Reemtsma, "Die Entscheidende Triebkraft Besteht in Einem Unbändigen, Alles Ausfüllenden Hass," 1382.

<sup>76</sup> S. Reinecke, "Die Linken Anwälte: Eine Typologie," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 949–950.



sympathisers, both in Germany and abroad, that organised rallies and demonstrations urging for better treatment of the RAF-prisoners. These groups became hotbeds of RAF-sympathisers, and proved a fertile recruiting ground for radicals who wanted to take up arms to continue the fight of the imprisoned leaders. For instance, Karl-Heinz Dellwo and Stefan Wisniewski, both of whom wrote memoirs that are referred to in this chapter, joined the RAF after having worked in a *Komitee gegen Isolationsfolter*, as did Christian Klar and Susanne Albrecht, both of whom were involved in the failed kidnapping of banker Jürgen Ponto in 1977.<sup>77</sup> Some of the lawyers around whom these groups were organised even joined the armed struggle themselves. A prominent example is Siegfried Haag, who had defended Andreas Baader and Holger Meins in court before going underground and recruiting several other members of the RAF's second generation. In 1975 Haag was involved in the planning of the hostage taking at the German embassy in Stockholm, one of the RAF's most infamous actions.<sup>78</sup>

Another stronghold of support for the RAF was the *Sozialistisches Patientenkollektiv* (SPK, Socialist Patients Collective). This group originated in the anti-psychiatry movement, which denounced psychiatry as a control mechanism in the hands of the ruling classes to maintain the capitalist order.<sup>79</sup> With this anti-authoritarian background, the organisation enthusiastically supported the RAF's challenge to the state.

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<sup>77</sup> B. Peters, "Deutscher Herbst: Die Legenden Der RAF," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 7, 2007, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/gesellschaft/kriminalitaet/deutscher-herbst-die-legenden-der-raf-1435963.html>; B. Peters, "Der Terror von Stockholm," *Welt*, April 25, 2005, <http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article667026/Der-Terror-von-Stockholm.html>; K. Seifert, "Kritik Der Gewalt," *Freitag*, July 1, 2013, <http://www.freitag.de/autoren/seifert/kritik-der-gewalt>; M. Wehner, "Stefan Wisniewski: Bei Der RAF Trug Er Einst Den Kampfnamen 'Fury,'" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 23, 2007, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/stefan-wisniewski-bei-der-raf-trug-er-einst-den-kampfnamen-fury-1434780.html>; L.B. Keil and S.F. Kellerhof, "Aufstieg Und Fall Der Zweiten RAF-Generation," *Welt*, February 12, 2007, <http://www.welt.de/politik/article698722/Aufstieg-und-Fall-der-zweiten-RAF-Generation.html>.

<sup>78</sup> Hanshew, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany*, 222.

<sup>79</sup> C. Brink, "Psychiatrie Und Politik: Zum Sozialistischen Patientenkollektiv," in *Terrorismus in Der Bundesrepublik: Medien, Staat Und Subkulturen in Den 1970er Jahren*, ed. K. Weinbauer, J. Requate, and H.-G. Haupt (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2006), 134–53.

Several SPK-members joined the RAF in the mid-seventies and became part of the RAF's second generation, among them Margrit Schiller.<sup>80</sup> The RAF could further count on the support of the *Rote Hilfe* (Red Help), which provided legal assistance to left-wing extremists who were standing trial. In the case of the RAF, the *Rote Hilfe* was involved in drawing up reports about the mistreatment of the prisoners and the unfairness of their trial.<sup>81</sup> *Rote Hilfe*-member Volker Speitel and his wife Angelika joined the RAF after the death of Holger Meins.<sup>82</sup>

The imprisonment of the leaders was thus by no means the end of the organisation. The RAF, with the help of their lawyers, managed to generate the support of various elements in the radical leftist scene. They did so by using the counterterrorism policy against them to discredit the FRG. Part of the RAF's appeal was provided by the confirmation that the state's policy seemed to give to the RAF's narrative. The RAF deeply distrusted the state apparatus, which it suspected of hiding a dictatorial, fascist face behind a democratic mask. The state measures to restore order seemed to confirm this view. On the radical left, many interpreted the measures discussed above as a sign that the FRG was turning back into a police state. This perceived severity of the problem also boosted the image of the RAF, not only because they were fighting the good fight, but also because they were up against a formidable and ruthless enemy, which lent a degree of heroism to their efforts. They were revered as martyrs to their cause.<sup>83</sup> Several members who of the RAF's second generation later explained that they were drawn into the group by the example that was set by the incarcerated leaders of the first generation. The first generation had fallen into the hands of the powerful, fascist enemy, which put a

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<sup>80</sup> L. Passmore, "The Art of Hunger: Self-Starvation in the Red Army Faction," *German History* 27, no. 1 (2009): 51; Schiller, *Es War Ein Harter Kampf Um Meine Erinnerung*, 20–39.

<sup>81</sup> See e.g. *Rote Hilfe, Vorbereitung Der RAF-Prozesse Durch Presse, Polizei Und Justiz* (Berlin: Rote Hilfe, 1974).

<sup>82</sup> "Wir Wollten Alles Und Gleichzeitig Nichts," 37–38 and 41.

<sup>83</sup> K. Bauer, "'From Protest to Resistance': Ulrike Meinhof and the Transatlantic Movement of Ideas," in *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the US in the 1960s*, ed. B.J. Davis et al. (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 185–186.

moral obligation on other radicals to continue the fight. This self-sacrifice, especially poignant in the cases of Ulrike Meinhof and Holger Meins, who were both perceived to have given their life to the cause, gave some activists in the RAF's support groups the idea that they could no longer stand by and refuse to take up the gun.<sup>84</sup> Even some on the left who were initially critical of the RAF joined the fight after Meins' death, feeling that other means to help the prisoners had failed.<sup>85</sup> Many felt that they were morally obliged to dedicate their lives to the fight against the state the way Baader, Meinhof, Ensslin, Meins and the others had done before them. Feelings of guilt towards the imprisoned fighters are frequently mentioned by second-generation members as a reason to go underground and carry on the fight the RAF was waging.<sup>86</sup>

The RAF is thus a clear case of how a counterterrorism policy can turn the population, or at least certain segments of it, against the state. Part of the explanation in this case was that West-German counterterrorism neatly fitted the RAF's narrative. The RAF-leadership managed to spin the heavy-handed policing, the allegedly bad treatment in prison and the harassment of the lawyers in its favour. The result was a replenishment of the ranks of the RAF by members of the support groups mentioned in the previous paragraphs. These recruits teamed up with the remains of the RAF to commit attacks that had more impact than the attacks of the first generation. Thus, this is a confirmation of the program theory formulated in chapter 1: the excessive use of force will escalate the conflict by increasing the support base of the terrorist group and can consequently considered counterproductive. The West-German government took measures that in effect strengthened the position of the RAF, which got more political support and recruits as a result of the government's heavy-handedness.

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<sup>84</sup> D. Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 169.

<sup>85</sup> Wisniewski, *Wir Waren so Unheimlich Konsequent ...*, 18.

<sup>86</sup> "Wir Wollten Alles Und Gleichzeitig Nichts," 41.

In fairness, though, this case also demonstrates the importance of the perception of the use of force over the actual use of force. While it is true that the BKA operated visibly and at times intrusively, the complaints about the penitentiary conditions in Stammheim prison, where the RAF-members were held after 1974, were grossly exaggerated. The group members were allowed to spend eight hours a day together, could read books and newspapers, watch TV and play records, and had access to cooking facilities.<sup>87</sup> Some of the lawyers had taken their complaints about the treatment of the RAF-leadership to the European Court of Human Rights, but lost their case. The Court examined the situation and, having noted that the prisoners were not in isolation and that there were various ways in which they could occupy themselves, ruled that the complaints were unfounded.<sup>88</sup> The verdict was of little use to the German government, however, as it was not issued until after the collective suicide of the leaders in 1977. As for the fate of the leaders, Meinhof and Meins were not murdered, and neither were Baader, Raspe and Ensslin. Nevertheless, the RAF was able, at least with regard to Meinhof and Meins, to present their deaths in a way that gained them both popular support and new recruits. This became significantly harder when the RAF had lost its popular support after the Schleyer kidnapping. In the early 1980s, imprisoned RAF-members played the same card, complaining about the penitentiary conditions and depicting the state as fascist. By that time, though, the RAF had lost much credit as a result of the brutal murders it committed, so there was hardly any reaction to their outreach efforts at all, not even when Sigurd Debus died in 1981 as a result of a hunger strike.<sup>89</sup>

### **5.2.2 Rule of law**

Some of the state actions that antagonised the population and allowed the RAF to play their role as heroic freedom fighters were not instances of the

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<sup>87</sup> "Baader-Meinhof: The Truth behind the Twisted Myth."

<sup>88</sup> M. Jander, "Isolation: Zu Den Haftbedingungen Der RAF-Gefangenen," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 986.

<sup>89</sup> Winkler, *Die Geschichte der RAF*, 378.

use of force, but were taken in the legal sphere. After an initial reluctance to take legal measures and widen the legally defined powers of the organisations dealing with the RAF, the German government took some far-reaching steps to facilitate its fight against the self-proclaimed urban guerrillas.

First, there were the sections 129 and 129a of the Criminal Code, which penalised founding, being a member of, recruiting for and supporting of a terrorist organisation, with the term 'terrorist' explicitly used in section 129a. These laws, to which the 'terrorist' clause was added in 1976, were formulated broadly, as the government wanted it to apply not only to the RAF itself, but also to its support base, for which it used the term 'sympathisers'.<sup>90</sup> The sections 129 and 129a could be - and were - applied liberally, and cast suspicion on the entire leftist, countercultural scene from which the RAF originated. People could go to prison for carrying banners with texts suggesting that the FRG was an imperialist state or that the Stammheim prisoners were murdered.<sup>91</sup> Also, the police used this law as a pretext for performing the intrusive and frequently violent house searches discussed in the previous paragraph. By introducing and applying this law, the state had defined as an enemy anyone who expressed the slightest criticism that was in line with the message of the RAF. This, too, contributed to the impression that the FRG was a dictatorship in disguise.<sup>92</sup>

The second set of controversial laws concerned the legal procedures during a trial, more specifically the role of lawyers. The ties that bound the RAF and their lawyers had not escaped the authorities. They knew about the lawyers' complicity in the info-system, and from the conduct of the legal defence in the courtroom it was clear that they sympathised with

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<sup>90</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 257.

<sup>91</sup> U. Berlit and H. Dreier, "Die legislative Auseinandersetzung mit dem Terrorismus," in *Protest und Reaktion*, ed. F. Sack and H. Steinert (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984), 280, [http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-322-96991-0\\_5](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-322-96991-0_5).

<sup>92</sup> Kraushaar and Reemtsma, "Die Entscheidende Triebkraft Besteht in Einem Unbändigen, Alles Ausfüllenden Hass," 1382.

their clients. The lawyers tried to disrupt the trial by questioning the legitimacy of the court and allowed Ensslin, Raspe, Baader and, before her suicide, Meinhof to play on the media and air their political views.<sup>93</sup> Sabotaging the trial was made easier by the fact that the RAF was defended by a large group of lawyers, which slowed down the trial significantly. To put an end to this so-called block defence, the government introduced a law that put a maximum of three on the number of lawyers that could defend one suspect and stipulated that a lawyer could only represent one client per trial.<sup>94</sup> Also, it was now allowed to continue a trial in the absence of the suspects. The members of the RAF frequently misbehaved to the point where they had to be removed from the courtroom, and their hunger strikes did not help the swiftness of the trial either. To keep the delays to a minimum, it was decided that the physical presence of the suspects was no longer necessary.<sup>95</sup> In a letter to the chairperson of the Dutch social-democratic party PvdA, Ien van den Heuvel, Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt defended these measures by pointing out that they only served the purpose of avoiding that suspects disrupted their own trials and were not specifically aimed at the RAF.<sup>96</sup> The latter part of Brandt's explanation lacked credibility, as the new legal procedures were clearly adopted in response to the RAF's behaviour in prison and the court room.<sup>97</sup>

To further undermine the RAF's legal defence, it was decided to ban lawyers from cases in which they themselves were suspected to have

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<sup>93</sup> B. de Graaf, *Terrorists on Trial: A Performative Perspective*, Expert Meeting Paper (The Hague: ICCT, 2011), 11. For an example, see the speech by Andreas Baader in which he tries to explain the state response to the RAF's campaign by what he believed was the fascist nature of the state. A. Baader, "Andreas Am 26. August 1975," in *Texte Der RAF* (Frankfurt: Verlag Bo Cavefors, 1977), 75–88.

<sup>94</sup> O. Gätje, *Der Gruppenstil Der RAF Im "Info"-System: Eine Soziostilistische Analyse Aus Systemtheoretischer Perspektive* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 32–33.

<sup>95</sup> K.G. Horbatiuk, "Anti-Terrorism: The West German Approach," *Fordham International Law Forum* 3, no. 2 (1979): 179–180.

<sup>96</sup> W. Brandt, "An Die Vorsitzende Der Partij von de Arbeid, Frau Ien von den Heuvel," November 27, 1974, 3–4, [http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019741209\\_02.pdf](http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019741209_02.pdf).

<sup>97</sup> Graaf, *Theater van de Angst*, 239–240.

taken part. As all Baader's lawyers were suspected of violations of article 129a, they were taken off the case at the beginning of the Stammheim trial.<sup>98</sup> The complicity of the lawyers in the activities of the RAF was also the reason behind the 1977 Contact Ban (*Kontaktsperre*), which outlawed all contact between the RAF-prisoners and their lawyers. Previously, another law had allowed prison authorities to read correspondence and listen in on conversations between lawyers and prisoners, but after Schleyer had been kidnapped, contact was banned altogether. The West-German government feared that the operation would be led from the prison cells of Stammheim, and in a testament to the unity across political parties in dealing with the crisis, the West-German parliament, the *Bundestag*, swiftly accepted this law, which became active in a mere two weeks after it had been introduced by the government.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, there were the increased powers that the BKA had been granted in the fight against the RAF. In order to get the job done, the BKA received material and technological resources, including the means and legal powers to engage in 'dragnet policing' (*Rasterfahndung*).<sup>100</sup> Introduced by Horst Herold, the BKA director responsible for the organisation's increasing prominence in the 1970s, *Rasterfahndung* was the name for the BKA's profile-based searches in a wide variety of public and

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<sup>98</sup> E. Foth, "Terrorismus Vor Gericht," *Deutsche Richterzeitung*, September 2001.

<sup>99</sup> For the motivation behind the Contact Ban, see Justizministerium Baden-Württemberg, "Antrag Der Frau Gudrun Ensslin Und Der Herrn Arndt Müller Vom 11. September 1977 Auf Erlass Einer Einstweiligen Anordnung Dem Antragsteller Müller Zu Gestatten, Mit Der Antragstellerin Ensslin Ungehindert Verteitigergespräche Zu Führen," September 16, 1977, 5 and 10., <http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019770916.pdf>; For the swiftness of the decision making process regarding the Contact Ban, see Amnesty International, *Jahresbericht 1978: Deutschland*, 1978, [http://www.amnesty.de/umleitung/1978/deu03/001?lang=de&mimetype=text/html&destination=node%2F2904%3Fpage%3D2%26country%3D77%26topic%3D%26node\\_type%3D%26from\\_month%3D0%26from\\_year%3D%26to\\_month%3D12%26to\\_year%3D1990%26result\\_limit%3D10%26form\\_id%3Dai\\_core\\_search\\_form%26submit\\_x%3D59%26submit\\_y%3D6](http://www.amnesty.de/umleitung/1978/deu03/001?lang=de&mimetype=text/html&destination=node%2F2904%3Fpage%3D2%26country%3D77%26topic%3D%26node_type%3D%26from_month%3D0%26from_year%3D%26to_month%3D12%26to_year%3D1990%26result_limit%3D10%26form_id%3Dai_core_search_form%26submit_x%3D59%26submit_y%3D6).

<sup>100</sup> While similar techniques have later been used by intelligence agencies, *Rasterfahndung* will not be considered a form of intelligence gathering in the current study. It was carried out by the BKA, a law enforcement agency that had no intelligence mandate and did not concern the infiltration or the bugging of the RAF, nor did it involve any attempts to get RAF-members as informers. Thus, it cannot be considered intelligence gathering in the sense described in paragraph 3.3.10.

private databases. The BKA drew up a profile, made up of certain behavioural patterns, of a RAF-activist or sympathiser and then went through all these databases looking for people who matched this profile.<sup>101</sup> This suggested that the presumption of innocence was suspended, as the mere correspondence to a certain profile was enough to raise suspicion. Also, *Rasterfahndung* meant a violation of citizens' privacy, as data that were collected for very different reasons were now used for internal security. For instance, the BKA had noticed that RAF-members often paid the rent for their safehouses in cash. To further its *Rasterfahndung* efforts, it received access to electronic data showing which renters had been paying in cash instead of by money transfer.<sup>102</sup> That the BKA preferred to err on the safe side is clear from the numbers of entries in the database. In 1979, it contained the names of 4.7 million people and 3100 organisations.<sup>103</sup> The results, however, were marginal, since only one RAF-member (Rolf Heissler, in 1979) was arrested after having been identified on the basis of a *Rasterfahndung*-profile.<sup>104</sup>

All these legal measures antagonised the RAF and its support base in much the same way as the applications of force discussed in the previous paragraph. As it was clear that the adjustments of the legal and procedural rules were a reaction to the threat posed by the RAF<sup>105</sup>, they gave the impression that the state was not in control and had to resort to

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<sup>101</sup> R. Groetker, "Looking for Mohammed: Data Screening in Search of Terrorists," in *Ethics of Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism* (Piscataway and Lancaster: Transaction Publishers and Gazelle, 2005), 303.

<sup>102</sup> B.W. Schermer, *Software Agents, Surveillance, and the Right to Privacy: A Legislative Framework for Agent-Enabled Surveillance* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2007), 154.

<sup>103</sup> "Jahrestag Der Schleyer Entführung: Mord Und Terror Im 'Deutschen Herbst,'" *Stern*, September 4, 2007, <http://www.stern.de/politik/deutschland/jahrestag-der-schleyer-entfuhrung-mord-und-terror-im-deutschen-herbst-596891.html?eid=501091>.

<sup>104</sup> M.G. Hannah, *Dark Territory in the Information Age: Learning from the West-German Census Controversies of the 1980s* (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 15–16; G. Capoccia, "Germany's Response to 9/11: The Importance of Checks and Balances," in *The Consequences of Counterterrorism*, ed. M. Crenshaw (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010), 328.

<sup>105</sup> U. Wesel, "Strafverfahren, Menschenwürde Und Rechtsstaatprinzip: Versuch Einer Bilanz Zur RAF-Prozesse," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 1053.



extraordinary instruments. This confirmed the perception of the state as a fascist state whose mask was about to slip. Also, it fed a notion of the inherent untrustworthiness of the state. If it kept violating its own rules, for instance by introducing the *Kontaktsperregesetz*, there was no telling how far it would go.<sup>106</sup> These legal measures added to the use of force in the previous paragraph in alienating the population and can similarly be considered the opposite of its program theory: the new laws were another form of counterproductive overreaction that affected the rule of law and gained the RAF sympathy and support.

### **5.2.3 Long-term commitment**

On two occasions, the RAF tried to blackmail the West-German government into releasing the imprisoned leaders. In 1975, a RAF-cell named the Holger Meins Commando occupied the German embassy in Stockholm. They held the embassy personnel hostage and demanded the release and safe exit of a string of RAF-members. The operation ended in a miserable failure for the group: one of the operatives accidentally set off an explosive, and all hostage takers were either shot or arrested in the ensuing chaos.<sup>107</sup> Two years later, the RAF's second generation kidnapped Hanns-Martin Schleyer to use him as a bargaining chip. During the German Autumn, the pressure on the West-German government was further increased by the PFLP, which hijacked the *Landshut* and demanded the release of the RAF leadership.

The RAF felt encouraged by the success that the *Bewegung 2. Juni* (2 June Movement B2J) had gained by carrying out operations of this kind.<sup>108</sup> In February 1975, the B2J had kidnapped the prominent Christian-democrat Peter Lorenz. The group threatened to kill Lorenz unless the government agreed to the release from prison of several B2J members. On this occasion, the government gave in. The prisoners were, in accordance with the B2J's demands, put on a plane to Aden, at which the B2J released

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<sup>106</sup> Wisniewski, *Wir Waren so Unheimlich Konsequent ...*, 44.

<sup>107</sup> Peters, "Der Terror von Stockholm."

<sup>108</sup> Pflieger, *Die Rote Armee Fraktion*, 56.

Lorenz unharmed in a park in Berlin.<sup>109</sup> Inspired by this example, the RAF occupied the German embassy in Stockholm, but this time the government refused to give in. Later, during the Schleyer kidnapping, the government did talk to the kidnappers, but never negotiated any terms for Schleyer's release. Instead, the government kept buying time by insisting at various stages that the kidnappers provide evidence that Schleyer was still alive. The BKA had started an extensive search for the kidnappers and their hostage, and the idea was that buying time would allow the BKA to get to Schleyer before it was too late. Schleyer was never found, however, as the kidnappers managed to frequently move him from one safehouse to another. Only after his death did it transpire that the kidnappers had taken him to the Dutch seaside town of Scheveningen and later to Brussels.<sup>110</sup>

The 1977 crisis was handled by the Crisis Staff (*Krisenstab*), a two-level platform presided by Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and intended to facilitate consultation between all major players involved. The Crisis Staff, which consisted of Chancellor Schmidt, several federal and state level ministers, the leaders of the main opposition parties and BKA-chief Horst Herold, was an informal body with a secret decision making process and no parliamentary oversight. Due to its secretive and informal nature, it is still not fully known what went on in the Crisis Staff, but it is clear that there was little challenge to the hard line advocated by Schmidt. On the contrary, the group discussed the possibility of killing RAF-prisoners in retaliation.<sup>111</sup> These extreme measures were never carried out, but the Crisis Staff did act on its strong determination not to give in to terrorist demands. As will be demonstrated in the section on the counter narrative, Schmidt saw the RAF as a gang of cruel, ruthless murderers and was little

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<sup>109</sup> "Peter Lorenz Entführt," *Einestages*, February 27, 2008, [http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/topicalbumbackground/1436/peter\\_lorenz\\_entfuehrt.html](http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/topicalbumbackground/1436/peter_lorenz_entfuehrt.html).

<sup>110</sup> P. Prillewitz, "Ontvoordershuis RAF Onlangs Verkocht," *Historiën*, November 20, 2008, <http://www.historien.nl/ontvoordershuis-raf-onlangs-verkocht/>.

<sup>111</sup> "RAF-Krisenstab Erwog Erschießung von Häftlingen," *Welt*, September 6, 2008, 49–51, <http://www.welt.de/politik/article2404289/RAF-Krisenstab-erwog-Erschiessung-von-Haefftlingen.html>.

inclined to accommodate them. He was unwavering in his intention not to repeat the events of 1975, when the B2J had effectuated the release of its prisoners by kidnapping Lorenz.<sup>112</sup> The Crisis Staff did not give in and chose to stick to the hard line, fearing that new concessions would lead to similar incidents and the liberation of RAF-prisoners to an upsurge in terrorist activity. It decided to deploy the Special Forces to storm the *Landshut* and free the hostages.

The absence of concessions to the RAF (measures of performance), which constituted the West-German government's non-compliance with terrorist demands (output), was in accordance with the program theory from chapter 1. It also achieved its desired effect: the outcome of the Schleyer kidnapping and the hijacking of the *Landshut* dealt a heavy blow to the RAF's morale.<sup>113</sup> The combination of the failure of the operation of 1977 and the deaths of the leaders dealt a heavy blow to the group's fighting spirit. Many members found it difficult to stomach the fact that they had failed to achieve the objective of liberating the prisoners, whom they felt were needed for a resumption of the campaign against imperialism. There was widespread feeling that the efforts of the preceding years had been in vain and the group was unsure about how to continue.<sup>114</sup> Also, the state's performance dispelled the myth of the weak state. Despite the perceived state cruelty, the RAF believed that the FRG was weak-kneed and would give in once it got threatened by the death of one of its citizens.<sup>115</sup> The state-induced failure of 1977 left the RAF in disarray (outcome) as a result of which several members left the group in disillusion (measure of effectiveness).

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<sup>112</sup> "Deutscher Herbst: 'Ich Bin in Schuld Verstrickt,'" *Zeit*, August 30, 2007, 9, <http://pdf.zeit.de/2007/36/Interview-Helmut-Schmidt.pdf>.

<sup>113</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, "Guerilla, Widerstand Und Antiimperialistischen Front," in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 291.

<sup>114</sup> Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum*, 476.

<sup>115</sup> Wisniewski, *Wir Waren so Unheimlich Konsequent ...*, 48.

#### **5.2.4 Law enforcement and direct action**

The FRG's fight against the RAF was to a large extent based on law enforcement. Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt explained the logic behind this approach in a 1975 government statement. He claimed that force did not help against terrorists who were willing to risk their lives. The only viable option was to rid society of terrorism by arresting terrorists.<sup>116</sup> (Schmidt strangely ignored the necessity of force in this approach.) As we have seen in the section 'Restraint in the use of force', he made good on his words, making extensive use of the police to track down and apprehend the members of the RAF. The RAF remained active for a long time, managed to avoid arrests, especially the third generation, and carried out terrorist attacks until the group dissolved in 1998. There is, therefore, much ground to claim that the BKA failed to confirm the programme theory for 'law enforcement and direct action'. But German law enforcement efforts did have an effect that hurt the RAF, albeit not in a way that was intended.

As Schmidt made clear in the statement referred to above, his idea was to debilitate the organisation by getting as many RAF-members as possible behind bars. However, the first thing that should be noted when examining the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts against the RAF is the group's resilience in the face of these arrests. The arrest in 1972 of the leaders and many cadres of the first generation seemed to seal the group's fate, but at that time the worst was yet to come. Through the info-system the imprisoned leaders could communicate with the underground members. These messages included orders on how to organise the campaign against the treatment of the RAF prisoners. This campaign gained the RAF the support it needed to win new recruits that could carry on the armed struggle. Baader, Meinhof, Ensslin and Raspe functioned as a strategic command, outlining the general direction of the RAF's activities. Especially important in this regard was Brigitte Mohnhaupt, who was among the cadres who got arrested in 1972. Immediately after

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<sup>116</sup> H. Schmidt, "Regierungserklärung 13.3.1975," March 13, 1975, [http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019750313\\_02.pdf](http://www.labourhistory.net/raf/documents/0019750313_02.pdf).

her release in 1977, she went underground to join the RAF's second generation. The leadership had extensively instructed her on how to carry the campaign forward, pressing hard for actions that would lead to their liberation. Her close connections to Baader and the others and her status as a former inhabitant of the Stammheim prison helped her become the leader of the RAF's second generation. She gave an impulse to a group that was adrift and steered it in the direction the imprisoned leaders wanted. After her arrival the RAF started planning actions to force the German government to liberate the imprisoned RAF-leaders and cadres.<sup>117</sup> These efforts culminated in the German Autumn, when Germany was the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer and the hijacking of the *Landshut*. Clearly, the arrests had failed to eliminate the terrorist threat.

Several years later, in 1982, this pattern of arrests and group renewal repeated itself, albeit with less dramatic consequences. The leadership of the second generation, including Brigitte Mohnhaupt, Adelheid Schulz, and Christian Klar, were arrested and the police confiscated a large arms cache.<sup>118</sup> However, the fight then carried on by the RAF's third generation. To this day the third generation of the RAF is shrouded in mystery and it is not yet fully clear who its members were.<sup>119</sup> Some have even argued that the third generation should not be considered part of the RAF because there was no personal overlap between the third generation and the previous ones.<sup>120</sup> Regardless of the validity of this argument, the 1982 arrests of the leading members of the second generation did not put an end to the RAF and gave rise to a new generation, which was able to remain at large until its dissolution in 1998.

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<sup>117</sup> T. Wunschik, "Aufstieg Und Zerfall: Die Zweite Generation Der RAF," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 474.

<sup>118</sup> P. Merkl, "West German Left-Wing Terrorism," in *Terrorism in Context*, ed. M. Crenshaw (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 168.

<sup>119</sup> J. Pekelder, *The End of the Baader-Meinhof Group: The Long Goodbye of the RAF between 1977 and 1998* (Zaragoza: Fundación Manuel Jiménez Abad, 2010), 6.

<sup>120</sup> Merkl, "West German Left-Wing Terrorism," 161.

From these resurgences of the RAF it is clear that the BKA's law enforcement efforts were not successful in the conventional sense: the arrest, trial and detention of the RAF-members did not lead to a disruption of the organisation. The state did generate the output of the program theory on law enforcement efforts and direct action formulated in chapter 1, as it managed to arrest RAF-members, including those from the leading circles. But these arrests did not lead to the desired outcome, with the RAF re-establishing itself after the waves of arrests of 1972 and 1982. The arrests did, however, contribute to the political defeat of the RAF, which saw its support base decline from the mid-seventies on and was an isolated splinter group for the larger part of its existence. Although the group certainly had itself to blame for its increasing isolation, the role of the state should not be overlooked.

Although the group's chances for political success depended on the willingness of the population to make a revolution, the RAF increasingly seemed to fight for the group's own personal interests rather than for the bigger cause they outlined in their strategy papers. In response to the state interventions against the group, the RAF let itself to be dragged down in a vendetta against the FRG, with the public in the role of passive - and increasingly uncomprehending - bystanders. The government's attempts to stop the RAF deflected the group's attention from political action and brought about a focus on the plight of the group members. As much of the RAF's activities were aimed at the liberation of its leaders, former B2J member Gerald Klöpper, mockingly referred to the RAF as "free-the-guerrilla guerrillas".<sup>121</sup> This perception is lent credence by the RAF's communiqués from the seventies. The strategy papers from the early seventies, such as *The urban guerrilla concept* and *On the armed struggle in Western Europe*, were quite political writings. They were underpinned by quotes from and references to Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse-tung, and contained lengthy sections explaining the current situation in Germany and the role of the urban guerrilla. The terrorist attacks that the RAF committed in the subsequent years, however, were never explicitly

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 182-183.

related to the social analysis in the early papers or explained as necessary parts of a strategy to achieve a political goal.

To further underline this point, it is instructive to look at the motivations of the RAF's attacks before 1978. The table below shows the attacks and the reasons for the target selection as laid down in the communiqués explaining the attacks. The justifications have been put in the category 'political' (the attack served a political goal) or 'personal' (the attack is an act of revenge, an attempt to free RAF-members or in another way serves the direct, personal interests of the RAF). The page numbers refer to the pages in *Texte und Materialien zur Geschichte der RAF*, a volume containing all of the RAF's communiqués.<sup>122</sup> From looking at this table, it is clear that there was little altruism in the RAF's use of violence. Most attacks were about perceived wrongs that had been done to their own members. The confrontation with the state had become personal.

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<sup>122</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion, *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997).

Title communiqué	Date	Page	Reason	Politics	Personal
Anschlag auf das Hauptquartier der US Army in Frankfurt/Main	14-5-1972	145	Protest against the war in Vietnam		
Anschläge in Augsburg und München (1)	16-5-1972	145	Revenge for death Thomas Weisbecker (RAF-member)		
Anschläge in Augsburg und München (2)	16-5-1972	145	Revenge for death Thomas Weisbecker (RAF-member)		
Anschlag auf den BHG-Richter Buddenberg in Karlsruhe	20-5-1972	146	Revenge for alleged mistreatment of Manfred Grashof (RAF-member)		
Sprengstoffanschlag auf das Springer-Hochhaus in Hamburg	20-5-1972	147	Attempt to stop alleged anti-communist smear-campaign		
Bombenanschlag auf das Hauptquartier der US-Army in Europa in Heidelberg	25-5-1972	147-148	Protest against the war in Vietnam		
Besetzung der deutsche Botschaft in Stockholm	24-4-1975	193-196	Liberation of prisoners		
Erschiessung des Generalbundesanwalts Buback	7-4-1977	267-268	Revenge for deaths of Meins, Meinhof and Hausner		
Erschiessung von Jürgen Ponto und Anschlag auf die Bundesanwalt in Karlsruhe (1)	14-8-1977	269	Protest against alleged mistreatment of prisoners		
Erschiessung von Jürgen Ponto und Anschlag auf die Bundesanwalt in Karlsruhe (2)	14-8-1977	269	Attempted kidnap of Ponto to use him as a hostage in the campaign to free the imprisoned leaders		
Entführung von Hanns-Martin Schleyer	5-7-1977 to 18-10-1977	270-273	Liberation of prisoners		

Figure 17. Motivations behind RAF attacks

Until the German Autumn, the RAF still managed to generate support by presenting itself as selfless freedom fighters against a covertly fascist state. The events of 1975 and especially 1977, however, undermined that image, as the violence committed by the RAF was not clearly part of a campaign that was waged on behalf of a constituency.<sup>123</sup> To outsiders the RAF's assassinations and kidnappings looked like random acts of brutal violence, not like painful but necessary steps toward a higher goal. The German Autumn was followed by an outpour of sympathy and support for the state in its fight against the RAF. Churches, universities, trade unions and other civil society organisations condemned the approach of the RAF and rallied behind the government's attempts to put an end to

<sup>123</sup> W. Kraushaar, "Einleitung: Zur Topologie Des RAF-Terrorismus," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 24-27.



the bloodletting.<sup>124</sup> This was a crucial factor in the deterioration of the RAF's public image. In a rare moment of critical reflection on the group's history, Stammheim-survivor Irmgard Möller later freely admitted that the group had not pitched their violent actions the right way and that their political intentions were lost on the general public.<sup>125</sup> In the same vein, several members later regretted their failure to make clear why Schleyer - and not someone else - had been kidnapped, adding that they easily could have explained this by pointing at their victim's history in the SS.<sup>126</sup>

In order to explain why law enforcement pressure had this effect on the RAF, we have to turn to the organisational structure and culture as outlined in section 5.1.2. As has been discussed there, the RAF depended on loyalty to the group and the leadership. The leaders were revered as martyrs, members were expected to give up their lives to participate in the group and it was impossible to make suggestions for shifts in strategy. This organisational culture made the RAF insensitive to the ideas and views of anyone else but the leadership. As a result, the group, after it had been decapitated, acted on the loyalty towards and the need for the leadership, ignoring beliefs and perceptions among the group's constituency. In the words of former member Dellwo: "We lost the feeling for where the others in society were that we wanted to reach and had to reach if the cause was to have any success at all."<sup>127</sup> As a result of the RAF's organisational introversion and the rank-and-file's devotion to the leadership rather than to the downtrodden masses or the proletariat, the German government, by directly engaging the RAF, managed to bring the group to the point where fighting off the challenge posed by the state

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<sup>124</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 280–281.

<sup>125</sup> Tolmein, RAF - Das War Für Uns Befreiung, 98. See also Dellwo, *Das Projektil Sind Wir*, 133.

<sup>126</sup> "Ex-Terrorist Verteidigt Schleyer-Entführung," *Welt*, October 17, 2007, [http://www.welt.de/politik/article1271567/Ex\\_Terrorist\\_verteidigt\\_Schleyer\\_Entfuehrung.html](http://www.welt.de/politik/article1271567/Ex_Terrorist_verteidigt_Schleyer_Entfuehrung.html); Wisniewski, *Wir Waren so Unheimlich Konsequent ...*, 30–31.

<sup>127</sup> "Wir haben das Gefühl dafür verloren, wo anderen in der Gesellschaft waren, die wir erreichen wollten und die wir erreichen mussten wenn die Sache nur irgendwie Erfolg haben sollte." See Dellwo, *Das Projektil Sind Wir*, 132.

became the most important goal. In doing so, the RAF scored some operational successes, but lost sight of what was needed to achieve political success.

Instead of fighting against imperialism and oppression, the RAF became reactive, and related the state's countermeasures only to itself: group survival and restoration of the leadership became the principal goals. As the table above shows, the RAF had lost the initiative to the state. After 1972 the RAF's actions were almost exclusively reactions to arrests, detentions, shoot-outs and manhunts. The group never restored the connection with its support base and was forced to operate more and more as an underground, secretive cult. If anything, the group further alienated the German left and even its own imprisoned members by such actions as the murder of Edward Pimental. As a result of the group's increasingly sectarian nature the RAF became increasingly difficult to understand for outsiders. The group's writings were became more and more arcane, there was no real contact with the leftist protest scene.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, the group dynamics, unchecked by any outside influence, made the need for violence a foregone conclusion. Rather than working to regain popular support, the RAF became increasingly self-referential, and seemed to care less and less about what its ideas and actions meant to anyone outside the group.<sup>129</sup> Some have argued that the group depoliticised in the later stages of its existence and became solely about violence. Horst Herold was among those who noticed an increasing lack of political sensitivity on the part of the RAF. Taking note of the fact that the RAF's final communiqué had been issued on Adolf Hitler's birthday, he remarked: "A RAF in the way I know them, would not disband on a day like this."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Schweitzer, *Rote Armee Fraktion: Ideologie Und Strategie Im Wandel*, 80–82.

<sup>129</sup> Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State*, 134.

<sup>130</sup> In Herold's exact words: "An einem solchen Tag löst sich eine RAF, wie ich sie kenne, nicht auf." See "Abgang Ins Ungewisse," *Spiegel*, April 27, 1998, 32.

### **5.2.5 International cooperation**

We have seen above that one of the reasons why the RAF is often seen an example of 'old' terrorism, is its organisational structure. Another reason is its supposedly 'national' character, that is, the group's tendency to limit their activities to one country. The RAF, however, did have some connections abroad, the most important of which were the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (German Democratic Republic, GDR) and the PFLP.<sup>131</sup> It has never been established exactly what material support the GDR provided, but it is safe to say that it primarily functioned as a transit route and a safe haven. The GDR was engaged in detente politics at the time and kept somewhat aloof. It could not afford to openly support the RAF.<sup>132</sup> According to one former member, the GDR facilitated the RAF's activities, but did not try to control it: "There were no dependencies, orders or jobs at all."<sup>133</sup> Already in 1970, Meinhof had contacted the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (Ministry of State Security, MfS), hoping that they would allow the RAF to practise and train in the GDR. She was turned down, but nonetheless the MfS was interested in the West-German radical left and had some grudging respect for the urban guerrillas. MfS-officials arranged the contacts of the RAF with terrorist groups in the Middle East. In later years, the GDR was a safe haven for terrorist drop-outs. The RAF got in touch with the MfS in order to work out a solution for some group members who wanted out, but could not stay in West-Germany. The outcome was that the GDR adopted the former RAF-members, providing housing and false identities. They lived there low-key until the collapse of the communist regime in East-Germany.<sup>134</sup> As has already been mentioned, some former RAF-members were arrested

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<sup>131</sup> "Wolf in Der Wüste," Spiegel, March 2, 1992, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13681438.html>.

<sup>132</sup> T. Wunschik, Das Ministerium Für Staatssicherheit Und Der Terrorismus in Deutschland, 2002, <http://www.extremismus.com/texte/rafmfs.htm>.

<sup>133</sup> The original quote is: "Es gab überhaupt keine Abhängigkeiten, keine Befehle, keine Aufträge." "Für Jeden Eine Nummer," Spiegel, June 18, 1990.

<sup>134</sup> M. Jander, "Differenzen in Antiimperialistischen Kampf: Zu Den Verbindungen Des Ministeriums Für Staatssicherheit Met Der RAF Und Den Bundesdeutschen Linksterrorismus," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 696–713.

and brought to trial after the dissolution of the state that had hidden them.

That international cooperation was important to the RAF became clear during the climax of the German Autumn, when the PFLP hijacked the *Landshut* on the RAF's behalf, although it also demanded the liberation of two PFLP-members who were in custody in Turkey. In the early seventies, the RAF had undergone some training in a PFLP training camp. This was not an unqualified success, as the RAF questioned the relevance of many of the exercises for the urban guerrilla and the PFLP took offence at the obnoxious attitude of their German guests.<sup>135</sup> In 1976 however, relations improved. Several RAF-members again underwent training in a Palestinian training camp, and the two groups decided to undertake joint action to liberate their imprisoned members. After her release from prison, Brigitte Mohnhaupt took the lead in the organisation of this operation and met with her Palestinian colleagues to discuss the specifics.<sup>136</sup> The operation was intensely coordinated, as one participant later recalled, with the RAF providing the PFLP with the grenades they could use during the hijacking.<sup>137</sup> The decision to kill Schleyer after the *Landshut* had been stormed by German Special Forces, was a joint one.<sup>138</sup>

The RAF is also associated with so-called euroterrorism, an ill-fated initiative to create a front of radical leftist terrorist groups in Europe that rarely went beyond words. The partnership between the RAF and the radical-leftist French group *Action Directe* was the only one that involved operational cooperation. The bombing of the American army base where Edward Pimental had been stationed, was followed by a joint

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<sup>135</sup> Becker, *Hitler's Children*, 219–220.

<sup>136</sup> T. Skelton-Robinson, "Im Netz Verheddert: Die Beziehungen Des Bundesdeutschen Linksterrorismus Zur Volksfront Für Die Befreiung Palästinas (1969-1980)," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 884–885.

<sup>137</sup> "Ein Ehrenvoller Auftrag," *Spiegel*, January 16, 1995.

<sup>138</sup> Skelton-Robinson, "Im Netz Verheddert," 889.

communiqué of the RAF and *Action Directe*.<sup>139</sup> The two groups hailed their team work as the hallmark of a new phase of anti-imperialist cooperation, but soon afterwards *Action Directe* fell apart as a result of the arrest of their leading core.<sup>140</sup> Other connections were even more modest in scope. The Catalan First of October Anti-Fascist Resistance Groups (*Grupos de Resistencia Antifascista Primero de Octubre*, GRAPO) showed some solidarity with the RAF's hunger strikes, and there was some logistical cooperation with the Belgian CCC. The *Brigate Rosse*, or Red Brigades, the Italian left-wing terrorist group, was less than enthusiastic about cooperation with their German comrades. They always kept the RAF at bay and were not open to German overtures.<sup>141</sup>

The West-German government did participate in some policy initiatives to enhance cooperation between countries in the fight against terrorism. Most notably, there was the Trevi group, where European Community member states exchanged information and intelligence on terrorism and related topics. This forum had grown out of meetings in response to several terrorist incidents on European soil in the late sixties and early seventies.<sup>142</sup> Although the Trevi group rightly acknowledged the international dimension of terrorism, the consequent intelligence exchange had no noticeable effect on the RAF, as the latter's international contacts took place in countries outside of the EU. The members of the Trevi group simply had no knowledge of the activities of RAF members in Yemen, Libya and the GDR, countries where the preparation of the 1977 offensive took place.

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<sup>139</sup> Rote Armee Fraktion and Action Directe, "Für Die Einheit Der Revolutionären in Westeuropa: Gemeinsame Erklärung von RAF Und Action Directe," in *Texte Und Materialien Zur Geschichte Der RAF* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1997), 328–30.

<sup>140</sup> Crenshaw, "How Terrorism Declines," 83.

<sup>141</sup> C. Daase, "Die RAF Und Der Internationale Terrorismus: Zur Transnationalen Kooperation Klandestiner Organisationen," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. W. Kraushaar (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 2006), 905–29.

<sup>142</sup> J.D. Occhipinti, *The Politics of EU Police Cooperation: Toward a European FBI?* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003), 31.

### 5.2.6 Offering a counter-narrative

We have seen above that the RAF had a narrative that would help its constituency understand what the armed struggle was about. The FRG, so the RAF believed, was in essence a fascist state that thrived on the exploitation of the masses, both in Germany and abroad. It would take any measure necessary to put an end to internal opposition, by which the RAF primarily meant itself. The perceived maltreatment of the RAF-members in the Stammheim prison was, not without success, used to underscore the dictatorial nature of the FRG. Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, however, gave his own reading of events in an attempt to discredit the RAF and its actions. In his public statements, he never failed to play on the disgust that his audience might feel towards the RAF's killings. He stressed the criminal nature of the RAF's actions, referring to them as "murderers" and "criminals", qualifications that were a far cry from the image of the brave, selfless guerrilla fighters that the RAF wanted to put across.<sup>143</sup> To these accusations, Schmidt regularly added allusions to insanity on the part of the RAF. He called the group and its ideology "blind with rage" ("*blindwütig*") and averred that its motivations were "criminal delusions" ("*verbrecherischen Wahn*").<sup>144</sup> Another rhetorical weapon Schmidt used was the emphasis on the futility of the RAF's violence. The Chancellor claimed that there was a strong unity among democratic forces to stand up against the RAF's attempts to bring about change in unconstitutional ways. He and other government officials also highlighted that the FRG had enough tools at its disposal and was not afraid to use them, as long as the response to the terrorist threat remained within the framework of the constitutional order.<sup>145</sup> This so-called 'militant democracy', so Schmidt claimed, had enough support and

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<sup>143</sup> H. Schmidt, Helmut Schmidt Zum Tode Holger Meins, 1974, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kMTglb0CHI&NR=1>; H. Schmidt, "Regierungserklärung Des Bundeskanzlers Helmut Schmidt Am 15. September 1977," 1977, 4, [http://www.derhistoriker.de/deutsch/99+Regierungserklaerung\\_Schmitt\\_15-09-77.pdf](http://www.derhistoriker.de/deutsch/99+Regierungserklaerung_Schmitt_15-09-77.pdf).

<sup>144</sup> H. Schmidt, Fernsehansprache von Bundeskanzler Schmidt Zur Schleyer Entführung Im Terrorherbst 1977, 1977, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMxJ0Kn1r6o&NR=1>.

<sup>145</sup> B. de Graaf, "Counter-Narratives and the Unintentional Messages Counterterrorism Policies Unwittingly Produce: The Case of West-Germany," in *Countering Violent Extremist Narratives* (The Hague: NCTb, 2010), 14.

resolve to make the RAF's attempt at revolution futile, which he expressed when he addressed the RAF directly in one of his speeches: "You are wrong: the masses are against you."<sup>146</sup> One particularly impressive instance of the government's use of a counter-narrative took place at the funeral of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, when Federal President Walter Scheel took the opportunity to not only discredit the RAF, but also praise the freedom, democracy and pluralism of the Federal Republic. In his speech, he portrayed Schleyer as an exponent of German democracy and pluralism, and said that his death had been a sacrifice, as it showed terrorists and radicals that this line of action would get them nowhere.<sup>147</sup>

Regarding the effectiveness of the West-German counter narrative, it should be noted that the RAF's actions spoke louder than the government's words. In terms of the program theory, the state did create the output, as Schmidt's words were addressed to the nation in broadcasts on public television. However, the population only assented to the government's counter narrative after the RAF had confirmed it by its brutal actions of especially 1977. Before 1977 the government's counter narrative was the same, but failed to avoid polarisation. It was thus not the airing of the counter narrative that turned the population against the RAF, but the group's callous use of violence.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The nature of West-German counterterrorism as applied against the RAF (see figure 18 for an overview) becomes clear when we consider which policy options were left out. Since Helmut Schmidt, Horst Herold and other major West-German administrators saw the RAF as a criminal gang and refused to interpret the threat as a political challenge, there were no attempts to address root causes, negotiations were out of the question and it was not until the early nineties, when the RAF had practically ceased to exist, that an amnesty regulation was implemented. The FRG's hard line

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<sup>146</sup> "Sie irren sich: Die Massen stehen gegen Sie." Schmidt, "Regierungserklärung Des Bundeskanzlers Helmut Schmidt Am 15. September 1977," 5.

<sup>147</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 279–280.

against the RAF was also clear from Helmut Schmidt's characterisations of the group mentioned in the section on counter-narratives. The attempts by the government to portray the RAF as a band of out-of-control criminals may not have been effective, but the uncompromising stances made it clear that the government would not be swayed into negotiations about the group's demands. In this sense, Schmidt's counter narratives can be viewed as an extension of the government's long-term commitment. The government's intransigence in the face of the RAF's displayed the same distaste of the terrorist group. There was nothing that even hinted at the suggestion that the government might treat the RAF's demands as legitimate. Overall, the West German government went all out and never gave an inch.

The results of this approach are mixed. First, the perception of the RAF as a mortal enemy led to the adoption of measures and practices that could be characterised as overreaction. The house searches, the roadblocks, the *Lex RAF* and the *Rasterfahndung* were counterproductive in the sense that they seemed to confirm the RAF's assessment of the state and consequently boosted the group's image. In roughly the first half of the 1970s, the RAF's support base increased and the government's counter narrative failed to convince at least parts of its target audience. The German response to the RAF's terrorism clearly confirmed the notion that overly repressive countermeasures can fan the flame of a terrorist threat.

What is interesting on the other hand, though, is that the law enforcement efforts were important in generating political success for the FRG, even if they were not an unqualified success in the conventional sense. Rather than operationally disrupting the RAF, the impact of the FRG's repressive measures was enough to make the RAF to fight for its life as an organisation rather than for its political goals. Although the RAF's reaction could have been different and depended on its own organisational make-up as much as on the state's counterterrorism, the latter certainly played a role in the group's political marginalisation. As the RAF's struggle was increasingly seen as serving only the group's own interests, the brutality of its actions became unacceptable to the public.



This started the RAF on the path to the political insignificance that characterised its position in the 1980s and 1990s. The case of the RAF thus shows that repressive measures can have political effects, even in the absence of clear operational success. The marginalising effect of the law enforcement pressure on the RAF was undoubtedly unintended, but it does shed an interesting light on the dynamic between repression and terrorism. It suggests that terrorist groups that struggle for their own survival fail to reach out to their constituency. In such cases, they may win a few battles, but they will certainly lose the war.

	Outcome	Explanation
<i>Red Army Faction</i>		
Restraint in the use of force	Violations counterproductive	Lacks of restraint in the use of force gained the RAF the sympathy and support of the radical left in Germany, and contributed to the group's radicalisation
Rule of law	Violations counterproductive	The controversial legislation that was clearly designed to fight the RAF, convinced the RAF's support base that the group posed a serious challenge and that the government was repressive
International cooperation	Not applicable	Germany was involved in various international counterterrorism bodies, but none of these efforts affected the RAF
Long-term commitment	Effective	During several hostage situations, the government refused to give in to the RAF's demands, which caused exasperation in the group, although it did not dissolve until 1998
Addressing root causes	Not applied	
Law enforcement and direct action	Effective	As a result of the arrests, especially those of the leadership, the RAF began to wage a violent campaign for its own survival, and consequently became detached from its support base
Offering a counter narrative	Ineffective	The government did try to depict the RAF as deluded criminals, but it was not until the RAF began to carry out callously violent actions that potential supporters turned against the group
Offering exits	Not applied	
Offering non-violent alternatives	Not applied	
Intelligence gathering	Not applied	

Figure 18. Counterterrorism principles as applied against the RAF