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<td><a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2014.943531">https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2014.943531</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLISHER</strong></td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERSION</strong></td>
<td>Modified from original published version to conform to ADA standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CITABLE LINK</strong></td>
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<td>This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor &amp; Francis in <em>The European Legacy</em> on July 29, 2014, available online: <a href="http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/10848770.2014.943531">http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/10848770.2014.943531</a>.</td>
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Militant Democracy: The Legacy of West Germany’s War on Terror in the 1970s
By Alan Rosenfeld

Abstract

In the 1970s the Federal Republic of Germany found itself locked in a battle with leftwing extremism, when groups of self-styled urban guerrillas attempted to press through a radical agenda using methods that included bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations. This essay examines the counterterrorist initiatives of West Germany’s ruling social-liberal coalition as anti-state violence forced officials to reconsider the principles of democracy and state power. With the collapse of the Weimar Republic casting an ominous shadow, political leaders gradually forged a consensus around the concept of “militant democracy.” In practice, this meant a more centralized state, prepared to forcefully defend the lives and property of its citizens against terrorist attacks. Although the country embraced a new image of German militarism in the form of counterterrorist commandos, citizens expressed a growing concern over computerized crime fighting as an intrusive surveillance of their private lives.

When the West German counterterrorist team GSG 9 stormed a hijacked Lufthansa jetliner in the Somali capital of Mogadishu just past midnight on 18 October 1977, it brought about a violent conclusion to an unsuccessful extortion attempt by a four-person Palestinian commando and the end of a horrifically frightening four-day long ordeal for more than eighty passengers and crew members on board.1 This federal counterterrorist offensive, dubbed “Operation Fire Magic,” also provided a dramatic demonstration of the state’s new hard-line approach to terrorism and marked the triumph of streitbare Demokratie, or “militant democracy,” a concept that Bonn’s ruling coalition of Social Democrats (SDP) and Free Democrats (FDP) had gradually come to embrace during West Germany’s “red decade.”2

The successful liberation of German hostages abroad stood out in stark contrast to the botched attempt to free Israeli hostages at the Munich Olympics just five years earlier.3 At that time, West Germany lacked any semblance of a federal counterterrorist force, and the failed liberation attempt was conducted by local policemen without any specialized training, ending in a bloodbath that took the lives
of all nine remaining Israeli hostages, five of the eight Palestinian assailants, who
dubbed themselves “Black September,” and one West German police officer. Far
from a matter of happenstance, the distinct outcomes of these two crises reflected an
evolving understanding of the relationship between liberty and security and the
increased centralization of state power at the expense of West Germany’s individual
states, or Länder. Although the 1972 Munich attack and the 1977 Lufthansa hijacking
were conducted by Palestinian organizations, the emergence of a domestic urban
guerrilla movement in the 1970s—featuring the notorious Red Army Faction (RAF)—forced the left-of-center SPD/ FDP alliance to deviate from Chancellor
Willy Brandt’s bold assurance of unfettered democracy and to find common ground
with the conservative opposition in matters of counterterrorism.

The tactics of urban guerrillas convinced contemporary observers that they were
witnessing a veritable “era of terror.” During this period, the CIA recorded a nearly
seven-fold increase in global acts of terrorism, from 110 in 1970 to 738 in 1978. Further
data reveals that Western Europe was the world region most intensely
besieged with such attacks throughout the decade and beyond, until being surpassed
by the Middle East in the late 1980s. Terrorism on the European continent was
hardly an unprecedented occurrence, with the guerrillas of the 1970s evoking
memories of the wave of anarchist violence nearly a hundred years earlier as they
employed a strategy reminiscent of the “propaganda by deed” tactics advocated by
their nineteenth-century forerunners. However, it was not only the frequency of
attacks in the 1970s and what Walter Laqueur has termed the increasing “brutalization
and dehumanization of the choice of targets,” but also the development of states’
coordinated counterterrorist responses that marked this decade as the site of a radical
rupture in the evolution of modern terrorism. The Federal Republic of Germany was
a crucial battleground for this transition, with tensions reaching a peak during the so-
called German Autumn (Deutscher Herbst) of 1977. While the actions of the German
guerrillas never threatened the existence of the Republic, they did expose
contradictions inherent in the modern democratic state’s dual commitment to
guaranteeing civil liberties while safeguarding the lives and property of its citizens.

This essay explores the dynamic relationship between terrorism and counterterrorism
in West Germany in the 1970s, as the ruling SPD/FDP partnership struggled to carve
out a viable balance between freedom and security. Standing in the ominous shadow
of the collapse of the first German Republic and the thorough dismantling of
democratic structures and values by the Nazis, members of the social-liberal coalition and conservative opposition—the Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Socialist Union (CSU), or “Union”—shared a commitment to defending Bonn’s constitutional order and ensuring the long-term survival of democracy on German soil. Nevertheless, the specter of Weimar and a republic lost did not provide a singular, unified lesson, but rather raised a series of questions: What is the precise relationship between liberty and security? How can the modern democratic state provide one without endangering the other? When confronted with anti-state violence, is the centralization of state power an ally or an obstacle to the survival of constitutional democracy?

The Urban Guerrilla Challenge

The West German militants who entered the urban guerrilla underground largely embraced the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist objectives of the more broadly-based student revolts of the late 1960s but emphasized the necessity of immediate action. The Red Army Faction, for example, placed a resolute emphasis on the privileged place of praxis in the theory–praxis dialectic, and—quoting Mao Zedong—demanded “personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality” instead of incessant cycles of theorizing and dogmatic debates. Much like the protestors of 1967–68, the urban guerrillas of the 1970s gravitated towards anti-imperialist rhetoric emanating from the Third World. Whether identifying themselves as anarchists or communists, German guerrillas were united in their rejection of racism, imperialism, and authoritarianism, and a shared commitment to the principle of egalitarianism and support for the downtrodden masses of the globe. The guerrillas’ concerted effort to focus on issues of oppression and exploitation overseas helped mask their failure to cultivate a mass base of support at home.

The genesis of West Germany’s guerrilla movement has typically been traced to the outbreak of leftwing political excitement that engulfed the Federal Republic in the late 1960s. The alliance between Christian and Social Democrats in the “Grand Coalition” of 1966 prompted the formation of a vibrant Außerparlamentarische Opposition (extra-parliamentary opposition, or APO) movement to the left of the SPD, as college campuses became saturated with anti-imperialist organizations. The fatal shooting of unarmed student protestor Benno Ohnesorg by a police officer in June of 1967 and the near-fatal shooting of APO leader Rudi Dutschke by a rightwing extremist the following spring served to further radicalize—yet fracture—West
Germany’s New Left. Such was the turbulent atmosphere in which future RAF co-founders Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin detonated incendiary bombs in two Frankfurt department stores as a form of “protest against the indifference towards the war in Vietnam.” For some scholars, this symbolic destruction of property constitutes a precise transitional moment from student protests to armed struggle, what Gerd Koenen has referred to as the “founding act of German terrorism.”

This transitional moment in West German protest culture coincided with a global shift in anti-imperialist politics in which acts of terrorism became increasingly common. Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blind have posited 1968 as a crucial turning point in the history of contemporary terrorism, citing the emergence of the urban guerrilla program in Latin America and militant Palestinians’ newfound strategy of using “terrorism as a publicity stunt” as two significant developments. The July 1968 hijacking of an El Al jet en route from Athens to Cairo, carried out by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), sparked a spate of copycat operations, including the dramatic hijacking of five commercial airliners in the Dawson’s Field incident of September 1970. The shift from guerrilla warfare to a form of transnational terrorism that “instantaneously demolished the spatial domain of the conflict zone” presented state leaders with a new set of security challenges. Furthermore, through hijackings of commercial jetliners and the assault on the Munich Olympics, Palestinian militants demonstrated how an operation could be—in the words of Black September—”100 percent successful from a purely propagandistic point of view,” even if it was a tactical failure.

Over the course of the 1970s, West German guerrillas expanded upon the rhetorical strategies deployed at the Frankfurt arson trial by arguing that the burden of the Nazi past saddled Germans with a special moral obligation to assist the national liberation movements in Palestine and Vietnam. Members of Tuparamos West Berlin—the first German urban guerrilla troupe—decried Zionist expansion in the wake of the Six-Day War as a “new fascist genocide” and demanded “clear and simple solidarity with the fighting fedayeen” in Palestine. Group members gave tangible expression to this rhetoric by traveling to the Middle East to receive their practical training at Palestinian paramilitary camps, swelling the ranks of “revolutionary tourists” from the western world. The RAF, whose members had also trained with Palestinian guerrillas, justified its May 1972 bombings of American military facilities in Frankfurt and Hamburg by describing the “American Luftwaffe” campaign in North Vietnam as another act of
The group proclaimed exultantly that West Germany would “no longer be a safe-haven for the strategists of extermination in Vietnam.” By deploying the word Ausrottung (extermination)—a term indelibly linked to the Nazis’ mass murder of European Jews—the RAF sought to present the United States as inheritors of fascist barbarism. The group’s focus on U.S. aggression in Southeast Asia also allowed it to exploit the extreme disapproval of the war in the Federal Republic, in hopes of expanding its network of supporters.

This constant interplay of violence and communication was the principal method the rebels relied on to offset the imbalance of power vis-a`-vis the state—a method the RAF referred to as “armed propaganda.” The young militants rejected the attempts of politicians to dismiss them as terrorists, envisioning themselves instead as urban guerrillas. At the same time, they wore their propensity for violence as a badge of honor, describing it as a “perfectly adequate means” of achieving their goals. The RAF openly advocated the use of “revolutionary terror,” arguing that “terror against the state’s ruling apparatus [was] a necessary element” of their struggle. This conscious use of violence and fear was not conceived as a direct path to victory but merely as a way of generating revolutionary conditions in society.

The blueprint for action, adopted from the Brazilian Carlos Marighella, was centered on the strategy of provocation. Marighella had designed an urban form of antistate resistance whose core tenets deviated sharply from rural guerrilla warfare. Instead of striving to establish physical control over a specific territory and eliminate enemy soldiers, Marighella’s program stressed a combination of violence and the exploitation of mass media coverage in order to provoke state authorities into excessive “police terror,” thereby turning the populace against the state. This urban guerrilla model posed a particular set of challenges for democratic governments whose leaders were not prepared to use airstrikes or artillery within their own urban centers. Furthermore, cities were saturated with potential guerrilla targets, including administrative buildings, banks, corporate headquarters, and media outlets. Finally, urban guerrilla strategists argued that the anonymity of the metropolis would enable group members to blend into the civilian population to evade detection and capture.

Although West Germany’s urban guerrillas consistently vilified the mainstream press, their programmatic plan necessitated mass media coverage. The conservative Axel Springer media conglomerate sparked the vitriol of the RAF to such an extent that the group targeted Springer’s Hamburg headquarters during its 1972 bomb campaign. On
the other hand, the mass media—Springer included—served as the primary transmitter of the urban guerrillas’ ideological message, amplifying their political platform to reach a much broader audience. The guerrillas depended on the exploitation of mass media to communicate simultaneously with a variety of target audiences, including the general public, state authorities, guerrilla group members and supporters, and like-minded organizations outside the Federal Republic. The founder of Tupamaros West Berlin, Dieter Kunzelmann, revealed in his 1998 memoirs how “one can use the media, so that despite the negatively-colored press coverage, one can spread and popularize the precise ideas they want to suppress or conceal.” The urban guerrilla project was thus largely an attempt to consciously manipulate mainstream press coverage in the service of propaganda goals. However, while guerillas depended on media exposure, their ability to control it was not nearly as absolute as Kunzelmann suggests. For example, the RAF’s 1972 bomb campaign prompted an eruption of false bomb threats across the country, which the media inaccurately attributed to the group. Reports of a series of bomb scares over the course of a single day in Frankfurt—targeting a high school, a post office, and an office building—were detailed in an article carrying the headline, “The Red Army Faction Confesses to the Assassination.” Furthermore, the attainment of press coverage all too often became an addictive end goal for urban guerrillas—a barometer for measuring group success.

Attempts to assess the precise relationship between the protest culture of the 1960s and the lethal guerrilla violence of the 1970s have been mired from the start in polemics. When German guerrillas began to supplement their bombings of public buildings with assassinations and kidnappings in the mid-1970s, politicians of the coalition and opposition hastened to heap blame upon their adversaries and draw connections to the student protests of the previous decade. The central issue at hand was whether or not the guerrillas could be located within the German tradition of leftist politics. For leading conservative politicians such as Franz Josef Straub (CSU), the urban guerilla movement was unmistakably a “fringe offshoot of the so-called New Left, as it developed at the end of the 1960s.” Union colleague Alfred Dregger (CDU) accused West German universities of tolerating a “climate of spiritual and physical terror,” and the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School came under particularly intense scrutiny. Social Democrats responded by arguing that, “the terrorists [were] anything but ‘leftists’ in terms of the political spectrum and parliamentary politics.” Speaking before the Bundestag in 1975, ex-Chancellor Willy
Brandt instead chided the CDU/CSU for having prompted disgruntled youths to seek refuge in terrorist violence by ignoring the voice of “an entire generation of young people” during the student protest years.\(^{37}\)

While it is undeniable that future urban guerrillas played notable roles in the comparatively peaceful protests of the 1960s, these linkages are often overstated. True, Dieter Kunzelmann went from being a key figure in both the Situationist and commune movements of the 1960s to become a driving force behind the creation of a German guerrilla movement, and RAF core members Gudrun Ensslin and Horst Mahler had been active in the SDS and APO.\(^{38}\) However, while two of the four Frankfurt arsonists of 1968—Baader and Ensslin—graduated on to careers in the guerrilla underground, their accomplices subsequently abandoned militant politics.\(^{39}\) More significantly, the number of 1960s social dissidents who joined the armed resistance in the 1970s paled in comparison to the masses of young West Germans who committed themselves to what was called the “long march through the institutions”—the conscious decision to initiate progressive reform through legal and nonviolent means.

Through their headline-grabbing actions, West Germany’s urban guerrillas forcefully injected themselves into an ongoing dialogue on political violence and the violability of property. Although Rudi Dutschke and other prominent voices within the APO movement had openly called for the use of violence in the 1960s, they attempted to delineate a sharp line between “violence against things” and “violence against people.”\(^{40}\) Public opinion polls conducted in 1978 showed that this difference still resonated with West Germans ten years later, as nearly one in four of those surveyed viewed “violence directed against property” as “perfectly permissible” while only 7 percent of the public expressed an acceptance of violence against people.\(^{41}\) West German politicians, however, uniformly rejected this theoretical distinction. Franz L. Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg (CSU) explicitly took issue with the scholars of the “Frankfurt School,” whom he claimed had “taught that violence against things is justified,” a stance which “inevitably led to the next step of violence against people.”\(^{42}\) Hans-Dietrich Genscher (FDP), who served as the Minister of the Interior during the Munich Olympics and the Foreign Minister at the time of the Mogadishu rescue mission, claimed that anyone who accepted Dutschke’s line of division was guilty of “open[ing] the door to terror.”\(^{43}\) Genscher believed strongly that it was the state’s duty to protect citizens’ “property in addition to life and limb.”\(^{44}\) Writing for Die Zeit,
the SPD’s Diether Posser argued that the “dividing line between violence against things and violence against people could not be maintained” in practice, because the state’s constitutional duty was “to protect not only the life, bodily integrity, and liberty of citizens, but also their property.” The views expressed here demonstrate the emergence of an interparty consensus that foreshadowed the articulation of a German definition of terrorism broad enough to include attacks against property.

The relationship between the protest movement of the 1960s and the terror scare of the 1970s is further complicated by the role of agents and informants—from both German states—whose machinations often facilitated guerrilla attacks. Working for the West German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Peter Urbach served as the primary procurer of weaponry for the nascent Tupamaros West Berlin in 1969, even providing the (malfunctioning) time bomb group members planted in West Berlin’s Jewish Community Center set to detonate during a memorial service on the thirty-first anniversary of Kristallnacht. The use of informants continued to occupy a prominent role in West German counterterrorist tactics throughout the 1970s and beyond, as officials at both the federal and Land levels plotted to infiltrate the inner circles of the Red Army Faction. On the other side of the Cold War divide, the efforts of the East German Stasi to both clandestinely “resettle” fugitive guerrilla dropouts and provide paramilitary training to active RAF members in the early 1980s came to light soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall. However, it was not until the 2009 discovery of incriminating Stasi files that the public first learned of direct East German involvement in the event most singularly recognized for having radicalized the APO movement. As it turns out, Karl-Heinz Kurras—the West German police officer who fatally shot the unarmed student Benno Ohnesorg in June 1967—was actually a Stasi informant. These examples underscore the dynamic interplay between terrorism and counterterrorism and confound any attempt to either cleanly link or divide the protests of the 1960s from the armed struggle of the 1970s.

From Preventive Crime Fighting To Militant Democracy

Terrorist violence posed a delicate problem for the administrations of Willy Brandt (1969–74) and Helmut Schmidt (1974–82), the first Social Democratic chancellors on German soil in nearly forty years. Having come into office under the pledge of “dare more democracy,” Brandt reached out to the protest generation of “68ers” by implementing amnesty policies and reaffirming citizens’ right to demonstrate against the state—a sharp change in course from the enactment of emergency decrees the
year before. On the other hand, the new social-liberal administration faced tremendous pressure to prove the state more durable than its Weimar forerunner in being prepared to use force to guarantee order and stability. Brandt’s coalition immediately embarked on an ambitious program of social reform and spending, exhibiting what some German scholars have subsequently described as “planning euphoria.” Backed by vast increases in state expenditures, the social-liberal coalition attempted to harness the power of data processing and prognostication to cybernetically design a crime-free society. It was the ongoing struggle against terrorism in the 1970s, however, that forced coalition leaders to abandon their “high-modernist” program of clandestine preventive crime fighting dependent on computerized data collection and prognostication and instead embrace a more visible and reactive form of militant democracy that came to fruition at Mogadishu.

As one might expect, the historic collapse of Germany’s Weimar Republic and the failure of its democratic leaders to prevent a National Socialist takeover in 1933 dictated the politicians’ attitudes to extremism in the postwar period. The dominant historical narrative taught West Germans that Weimar’s demise had resulted from its inability to solidify and defend democratic values in the midst of a rising tide of political extremism. According to Willy Brandt, the founders of the Federal Republic therefore “wanted a forceful, militant democracy,” capable of “prevent[ing] a repetition of Weimar.” Indeed, the Weimar shadow loomed large in the Konrad Adenauer era of “No Experiments!” as the Bundestag passed laws banning the rightwing Socialist Reich Party in 1952 and the Communist Party of Germany in 1956. When faced with urban guerrilla violence two decades later, political leaders from both the ruling coalition and the conservative opposition felt compelled to repeatedly reassure the public that, “Bonn will never become another Weimar.”

The Federal Republic’s central position in Cold War geopolitics provided a second pillar with which to buttress the rhetoric of militant democracy. West Germany’s entrance into NATO in May 1955, coupled with rearmament and the establishment of the Bundeswehr six months later, firmly cemented its westerly orientation. These developments were accompanied by the prosecution of more than 100,000 court cases over a five-year period directed against communists, socialists, and opponents of rearmament. The state’s vigilance against extremism continued in the 1970s through the institution of the controversial Radikalenerlass—known colloquially as the “job
ban”—which allowed the government to screen applicants for constitutional loyalty as a prerequisite for employment in the civil service.

Although Social (SPD), Free (FDP), and Christian (CDU/CSU) Democrats presented a unified front against extremism in the postwar decades, they remained at odds over the proper balance of power between Bund (federal government) and Länder (individual states). Following the centripetal tendencies of the Weimar Republic, which only accelerated under Nazi rule, the most vigorously contested topic during West Germany’s foundational moments was the issue of centralism versus federalism.55 The fact that these debates resulted in the creation of a less centralized state is hardly surprising, given federalism’s deep roots in German history and the French desire to implement a more “rigid decentralization of Germany” in the immediate postwar period.56 The West German constitution, or Basic Law, of 1949 weakened the office of the presidency, granted increased powers to a Bundesrat comprised of elected representatives from the various Länder, and arguably “did not facilitate cooperative federalism.”57 These underlying tensions bubbled up to the surface again in the 1970s, as the SPD/FDP alliance embarked on a massive campaign of political centralization under the banner of “inner security.”

When members of the social-liberal coalition took office in Bonn in October 1969, it was not counterterrorism but rather the modernization of crime fighting that stood at the top of their agenda, billed as a “crash program in inner security.”58 Far from being a response to terrorism—which had yet to emerge in West Germany—the planned overhaul stemmed from the parties’ acceptance of a recent paradigm shift in the fields of sociology and criminology in which offenders were largely viewed as products of their environments.59 As Minister of the Interior, Hans-Dietrich Genscher (FDP) was the individual tasked with implementing this comprehensive reform project. Genscher’s FDP insisted that presenting liberty and security as competing alternatives was a false dichotomy, envisioning instead a complementary relationship. In its “Freiburger Theses” of 1971, the party maintained that it was the state’s duty to construct a modern security apparatus capable of shielding its citizens from violent crime and defending their civil liberties.60 In the SDP, Genscher’s Free Democrats found willing partners for the rapid “construction of a gigantic bureaucracy” within the Ministry of the Interior.61

Undeterred by the economic recession of 1973, the social-liberal coalition managed to push through enormous expenditures aimed at modernizing “inner security” forces,
starting with the Federal Criminal Office (BKA). While the number of total police personnel in the Federal Republic grew by 41.6% in the 1970s, the BKA saw its staff size balloon from 930 in 1969 to 3,536 employees by 1981—a nearly fourfold increase.\textsuperscript{62} The BKA’s budget allocation displayed an even more pronounced growth rate, rising from DM 54.8 million in 1971 to DM 290 million ten years later.\textsuperscript{63} The intensification of urban guerrilla violence undoubtedly facilitated the drastic expansion of BKA capabilities. However, the struggle against terrorism also provided the spendthrift coalition an unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate the necessity of those expenditures.\textsuperscript{64}

The Brandt administration viewed the centralization of state power as an instrument of democratization and therefore promoted the extension of the police powers of the Bund at the expense of the Länder. Karrin Hanshew has argued that the socialliberal modernization program was undertaken largely in an effort to “overcome the inefficient and irregular application of state power at the local and Land levels.”\textsuperscript{65} The ruling coalition thus hoped to harness the strength of the Bund in order to safeguard civil liberties against local abuses. The centralization of police power was a point of contention among officials at the Länder level and among leading conservatives like Franz Joseph Strauß, who decried the “appetite of big brother Bund, which always seems more insatiable as [its] avowed goals reveal an ever increasing exclusion of the Länder in the realm of inner security.”\textsuperscript{66} In practice, Willy Brandt’s challenge to “dare more democracy” not only meant the expansion of federal power but also the intensification of state methods of control for the protection of the ordinary citizen.\textsuperscript{67} The key to unraveling this apparent paradox is to examine the coalition’s romance with preventive crime fighting at the start of the 1970s.

Table 1 BKA Budget and Staff Increases, 1969-75

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<td>1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>54.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>136.8</td>
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This data comes from Dieter Schenk, Der Chef; Johannes Schepel, “Die Innere Sicherheit: zur Entwicklung des Ausbaues staatlicher Gewaltmittel”; Die Zeit, “Innere Sicherheit kostet viel
Under Hans-Dietrich Genscher’s direction, the Brandt administration embraced an innovative approach to crime fighting that harnessed the power of computerized data processing to anticipate and control the potential for violence before it emerged. The idea was that by performing comprehensive analyses of the conditions and environments that gave rise to crime, police forces could concentrate on early detection and prevention rather than on reactive crime fighting. When Genscher installed Nuremberg Police Chief Horst Herold as BKA president in 1971, the BKA lacked a functional computerized system, which meant that detectives were forced to rely on manhunt cards that were only updated twice a month. Herold, whose system had produced a drastic reduction in crime rates in the city of Nuremberg, was the perfect man to remedy this. He viewed data as a type of “raw material... more meaningful than coal and steel a hundred years before” and computers as the machinery that transformed this raw data into prognostic indicators, anticipating criminal activity before it actually occurred. In what became known as the “Nuremberg Model,” computers churned out up-to-the-minute data and predictions that would be handed over to police officers. The ultimate objective was what Herold termed the “preventative planning of a cybernetically steered society” free of crime. Results aside, Herold’s infatuation with technology and his dogged determination to computerize crime fighting caused him to be mocked as “Commissar Computer.” In truth, Herold—who had embraced the nascent field of critical criminology—was at the forefront of a global transformation as industrialized nations rushed to modernize their police forces. This trend was echoed in the concurrent wave of computerization in the rapidly expanding field of privatized security services.

The intensification of urban guerrilla violence soon forced Horst Herold and the ruling coalition to deprioritize the implementation of preventive crime fighting so that the BKA chief could assume control of the state’s struggle against terrorism. In a sense, this marked a victory for the coalition’s desire to centralize police power. It was unquestionably the challenge of counterterrorism that persuaded the interior ministers of the individual Länder in 1972 to grant Herold and his BKA final authority over all police activity within the Federal Republic. The passage of the “BKA Law” the following year codified the office’s expanded leadership role in the realm of crime.
fighting. Herold has thus been justifiably credited by his biographers as the “motor of the war on terror” and the “most successful terrorist hunter in the Federal Republic” in the 1970s. However, the urban guerrillas’ demonization of Herold as the “theoretical head of the counterrevolution” was quite misleading. In fact, the BKA boss was a member of the SPD and had tutored members of the JuSos (Young Socialists) in dialectical materialism in the late 1950s. While chief of police in Nuremberg, Herold had publicly voiced his support for the APO movement, pleading with law enforcement officials to accept the criticism of the nation’s youth and pledge themselves to reform society, rather than simply cracking down on the demonstrators. However, the challenge posed by urban guerrilla violence forced Herold-the-idealist to cede ground to Herold-the-pragmatist, and the head of the BKA abandoned his dreams of preventive policing in favor of traditional tactics like manhunts and house searches.

This examination of Horst Herold’s career trajectory underscores the importance of not treating the West German state as a unified—and over-reactive—monolith, as was often the case in early studies of the country’s struggle against terrorism. Instead, one must also examine calls for more resolute and visible displays of state force (emanating from CDU/CSU politicians as well as the general public), and consider instances in which interparty agreement and public approval created traversable paths towards the implementation of policy. Presenting the social-liberal coalition’s counterterrorist initiatives as excessive elides the fact that such activity was consistently outpaced by a grassroots demand for increased police power and more severe government measures. One of the clearest examples can be found in popular demands for the reinstatement of the death penalty, a measure that coalition leaders consistently rejected despite data indicating that most West Germans would have favored the measure. And while magazines such as Der Spiegel and Stern often took critical stances towards government countermeasures, the Springer publications were hardly alone in demanding a tougher stance against the urban guerrilla threat. During the Movement 2 June’s kidnapping of West Berlin mayoral candidate Peter Lorenz (CDU) in 1975, the illustrated weekly magazine Quick claimed that “memories of the Hitler era have caused a mounting complex that leads to far too much ‘liberality’ in matters of ‘inner security’ and produces everywhere an exaggerated fear of a German police state.”
Public opinion surveys repeatedly revealed an overwhelming desire for increased security in the 1970s, despite germinating fears of an Orwellian-style culture of intrusive surveillance. According to a nationwide poll conducted by the Allensbach Institute in 1972, 64% of West Germans felt that there were too few police officers, while only 4% of those surveyed found the police presence to be excessive; 69% percent of respondents declared their readiness to accept government surveillance and a limitation of rights as part of the state’s fight against terrorism in 1975, with another 10% undecided. Finally, in a 1976 poll seeking to determine which word from the social-political lexicon West Germans deemed most pleasing, “security” ranked at the very top.86

Furthermore, the conservative opposition in Bonn always demanded more resolute action from the Brandt administration.87 For members of the Union, the surest remedy for political extremism was greater police power and harsher legislation. Speaking before the Bundestag after his kidnapped party colleague Peter Lorenz had been released in exchange for imprisoned guerrillas, Alfred Dregger (CDU) raised the specter of Weimar when he warned that history would repeat itself if Bonn did not “possess the means to defend itself against those who wish[ed] to abolish it.”88 His party comrades released an official position statement on “inner security” six months later in which the CDU championed a series of measures to combat the urban guerrilla threat. Suggestions included limiting suspects’ rights, imposing stricter prison sentences, increasing police surveillance powers, and cracking down on the nation’s universities, which Union politicians viewed as breeding grounds for leftwing extremism.89 In another Bundestag speech, Dregger articulated the Union stance succinctly: “only a strong state [could] be liberal,” a position also supported by leaders in the country’s Protestant and Catholic communities.90 During the anxious moments of the German Autumn, CSU politicians were even alleged to have demanded the execution of RAF prisoners every thirty minutes until hostage Hanns Martin Schleyer was freed.91 Importantly, Union leaders such as future chancellor Helmut Kohl insisted that state officials had a duty not only to protect the “freedom of the individual” but also “his peace and private property.”92 This standpoint presaged future state definitions of terrorism, which included explicit references to attacks on property.

Helmut Schmidt’s ascent to the post of chancellor in May 1974 brought the social-liberal counterterrorist program into closer alignment with the conservative
opposition. The state’s face-off with terrorism entered a more ferocious stage with the kidnapping of CDU politician Peter Lorenz in February 1975 followed by the occupation of the West German embassy in Stockholm in April—both in hopes of forcing prisoner releases. Schmidt adopted an increasingly hard-line approach to terrorism over this period, finding common ground with the CDU/CSU in terms of a commitment to the aggressive defense of citizens’ lives and property. Although the Chancellor acquiesced to the demands of Lorenz’s kidnappers, his decision was influenced by a number of mitigating factors, including the police’s inability to locate the captors’ hideout, Schmidt’s battle with a high fever, and Helmut Kohl’s personal intervention to save his close friend. Following the controversial release of five imprisoned guerrillas, Chancellor Schmidt announced his future uncompromising stance to the nation: “For combating these terrorists only the third core principle of the penal code consequently remains in effect, namely security. That means we must bring them behind bars.”

When a RAF commando laid siege to the German embassy in Stockholm the following month, taking hostages and demanding a similar prisoner exchange, Schmidt formed an emergency “large crisis team” that included members of the CDU/CSU. The chancellor’s about-face from the Lorenz incident and his adamant refusal to negotiate with the guerrillas was thus an interparty decision.

Schmidt’s administration soon partnered with the Union to introduce sweeping changes to the West German legal code. The addition of Paragraph 129a in 1976 criminalized membership in a terrorist organization—defined in broad terms—regardless of whether or not a particular defendant had participated in any terrorist actions, providing a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment. Further legislative reforms passed in the same year expanded telephone tapping and banned the publication of texts threatening the “existence and safety” of the republic. Finally, the so-called Kontaktsperregesetz (Contact Ban Law) of 1977, initially promoted by the CDU/CSU, enabled authorities to hermetically seal off inmates from the outside world and from one another whenever “danger emanated from a terrorist organization.” The intention and result of all of these measures was undoubtedly the restriction of civil liberties in the name of greater security.
The German Autumn Revisited

Time and time again the Republic’s federal structure proved itself a major stumbling block in the state’s struggle against terrorism. The principle of the autonomy of the Länder prevented federal police forces from lending aid unless a Land government had expressly requested their assistance. In practice, this meant that Bavaria was ultimately in charge of security for the Munich Olympics and that the makeshift counterterrorist unit sent into action against Black September assailants was led by the local Munich police chief. However, the fact that Black September demanded the release of more than 200 comrades in Israeli prisons necessitated the involvement of federal officials. This situation was duplicated five years later at Mogadishu, when the hijackers of a Lufthansa passenger jet insisted upon the release of prisoners in Turkey. Furthermore, the participation of West German guerrillas in multinational commandos conducting operations across national borders required increased international cooperation between sovereign states, a responsibility that only the Bund was capable of assuming. Schmidt’s administration was confronted with two such cases in the form of the December 1975 attack on the OPEC headquarters in Vienna and the July 1976 hijacking of an Air France jet to Entebbe, Uganda.

The events of the mid-1970s thus accelerated a move towards the increased centralization of state power in matters of crime fighting. After the hostage standoff in Stockholm, the Conference of the Ministers of the Interior, or IMK—which had once been a passionate defender of Länder interests—agreed to the expanded leadership role of the BKA, thereby undermining West Germany’s federalized structure. The creation of a separate “Terrorism Division” within the BKA complete with more than 200 employees the same year (1975) provided Horst Herold’s office with the requisite resources to assume this added function. Finally, the interparty crisis team formed by Schmidt during the Stockholm incident provided a crucial precedent for the creation of an unofficial entity that was to become the effective “ruling body of the nation” during the German Autumn—a development that signaled the strengthening of the executive branch in addition to the increased centralization of state power in moments of crisis.

By 1977, the Red Army Faction’s strategic program had deteriorated into a desperate attempt to secure the release of jailed comrades—a stage in the group’s development scholars have dubbed the era of the “free-the-guerrilla guerrilla.” For many observers, the RAF’s revengeful assassination of Attorney General Siegfried Buback
on his way to work—along with his driver and another civil servant—signaled the movement’s downward spiral into barbarity. This operation was in turn followed by the assassination of Dresdner Bank Chairman Jürgen Ponto inside his suburban Frankfurt home in late July, in what appeared to have been a botched kidnapping attempt. These actions certainly did nothing to persuade Chancellor Schmidt to revert from the hard-line stance he established two years earlier. Pressure on the social-liberal coalition to take more aggressive action against the guerrillas only mounted, as Helmut Kohl and the Union demanded that Bonn “immediately and definitively draw a clear line of division” between justifiable protest and acts of “terror.” The litmus test emerged in September with the RAF’s kidnapping of industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer.

In Schleyer, RAF members believed they had found the perfect bargaining chip to force the release of eleven imprisoned comrades and generate broader support for their political platform. As “double president” of two of the Federal Republic’s leading employer associations, Schleyer had established himself as a well-known television personality and a symbol of West German industrial politics. He thus possessed the essential “exchange value” the kidnappers coveted. Schleyer’s career path also provided his RAF captors with an arsenal of potential propaganda material. Not only did the Daimler Benz executive have a persona that prompted the New York Times to dub him as the “caricature of the ugly capitalist” but, as a former member of the SS, he had also played a prominent role in the Nazi occupation of Prague. In the postwar era Schleyer had helped sustain dictatorial regimes in Latin America and facilitated the hiring of fellow ex-Nazis, including the infamous Adolf Eichmann.

Despite Schleyer’s scandalous résumé, his kidnapping resulted in a public-relations disaster for the urban guerrilla movement. By incorporating the murder of four attendants—one driver and three bodyguards—into the hostage-taking action, the RAF commando had ascribed a higher value to Schleyer’s life and reproduced the very class hierarchies they had repeatedly denounced. This was “revolutionary” politics at its worst, provoking the ire of the New Left and other guerrilla organizations. Considering the response from the general public, which included majority support for the reinstitution of the death penalty, the Chancellor’s decision to unleash “militant democracy” was an easy one. On the day of Schleyer’s
kidnapping, Helmut Schmidt promised West Germans that the state would “respond with all the cruelty necessary.”

A vital component of Schmidt’s uncompromising approach was the implementation of a national Nachrichtensperre (news gag order), an initiative that only the Bund could accomplish. In addition to securing the release of jailed comrades, the RAF commando had intended to create a national media spectacle that would demonstrate the group’s power vis-a`-vis the state. In fact, the kidnappers’ list of demands included provisos that their communiqué be read in its entirety on the evening news and that the freed prisoners be allowed to address a live television audience. The state’s ability to cut off the RAF’s access to the mainstream media shocked Schleyer’s captors, who felt “narrowly restricted” in their ability to conduct their mission as planned. After six weeks of confusion and the joint suicides of RAF leaders inside Stammheim Prison, the kidnappers ultimately murdered their hostage before unceremoniously dumping his body just across the French border.

Although the tragedy of the Schleyer standoff is typically portrayed as the defining moment of the state’s engagement with terrorist violence, the drama that unfolded in Mogadishu arguably carried greater significance, by offering a visible manifestation of the rhetoric of “militant democracy” in action. The PFLP “Martyr Halimeh” commando’s hijacking of a Lufthansa passenger jet en route from Mallorca to Frankfurt on October 13 was carried out in support of the Schleyer action and with the assistance of RAF guerrillas living in the underground. In addition to fulfillment of all the demands established by Schleyer’s German kidnappers, the Palestinian hijackers insisted on the release of two comrades imprisoned in Turkey and the disbursal of 15 million U.S. dollars. After several days of anxiety with stopovers in Cyprus, Bahrain, Dubai, and Aden, and with the lives of eighty-six passengers and five crewmembers at stake, Chancellor Schmidt ordered the state’s new GSG 9 counterterrorist unit into action for the very first time. Authorized in 1973 in the wake of the hostage crisis at the Munich Olympics, the formation of the GSG 9 was part of a European-wide trend in the establishment of “elite counterterrorism teams.”

The significance of the GSG 9’s deployment is not merely a matter of the overwhelming tactical success it achieved at Mogadishu, but can also be found in positive reactions to the forceful display of German militarism on foreign soil. In addition to liberating all ninety remaining hostages, the GSG 9 was credited with repairing the German national image and pride by transforming “German discipline
and precision...into instruments of humane action.” Unlike the abuse of state power under the Nazi regime, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt argued that the state’s militaristic display demonstrated a “humanization of politics,” drawing West Germans “closer together.” Die Zeit columnist Theo Sommer captured the mixed feelings of relief and pride his fellow citizens felt when watching the GSG 9’s homecoming ceremony: “the courageous task force lined up in casual rocker clothes. ... Nothing could reflect the republic’s self-image more impressively or agreeably than this carefree disposition.” The GSG 9 gave visible expression to a postwar version of a martial masculinity that stood in sharp contrast to its Nazi forerunner. West Germans felt a “new appreciation” of the state in light of Mogadishu, because—in the words of Federal Minister of Justice Hans-Jochen Vogel—the public recognized that “it was the state that saved the hostages and brought the fathers, mothers, and children back to their families.” The events at Mogadishu thus helped spawn a new “foundational myth” grounded on an acceptance of the use of state power in defense of citizen-families.

**Conclusion**

While West Germans celebrated the “rocker cops” of the GSG 9, public criticism of the Orwellian methods of surveillance employed by the BKA mounted, eventually prompting the retirement of Horst Herold three years short of 1984. At a time when the concept of data security was just beginning to enter the German lexicon, disapproval of Herold’s BKA reached new heights with feature stories in two leading newsmagazines—Stern and Der Spiegel—on the bugging devices and secret computers of an emerging West German Überwachungsstaat (surveillance state). For example, while the BKA’s realization that members of the guerrilla underground preferred to pay their electric bills in cash helped lead to the arrest of a RAF fugitive, the collection and analysis of bank account information for thousands of uninvolved citizens triggered a national scandal. The Federal Constitutional Court reprimanded the state’s executive branch and affirmed the individual’s right to protection against the compilation and dissemination of personal data in the landmark “census verdict” of 1983, a massive blow to Herold’s Nuremberg Model of preventive crime fighting. In the end, West Germans were more prepared to accept the visible militarism of the GSG 9 than the state’s clandestine monitoring of individuals’ private lives.

In many ways, the GSG 9’s emphatic display of force at Mogadishu marked a severe departure from the preventive methods trumpeted by social-liberal leaders at the start
of the decade, demonstrating that old-fashioned armed force could still fill an essential function in the modern age of computerized surveillance. The Brandt administration’s utopian vision of a crime-free society and the use of state power as an instrument of unfettered democracy gave way to a pragmatic partnership with the CDU/CSU Union: the ruling coalition secured the centralization it had desired, and, in exchange for regional autonomy, the conservative opposition earned the type of unyielding counterterrorist response it had long demanded. The German Autumn thus enabled the formation of an interparty consensus on “militant democracy.” The creation and deployment of the GSG 9 also signaled West Germany’s transition away from a purely criminal justice response in favor of a hybrid “war model” approach to counterterrorism.\textsuperscript{125} (Indeed, although Federal Republic leaders have generally resisted the urge to call upon the GSG 9 in domestic incidents, the paramilitary force has more recently been deployed in military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.)\textsuperscript{126} As a paramilitary counterterrorist unit, the GSG 9 was merely the West German iteration of a strategy that was quickly becoming the norm in Western Europe in the 1970s, with similar forces established in Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain.\textsuperscript{127}

In addition to the international convergence of counterterrorist approaches, the 1970s witnessed the emergence of international collaboration in the realm of counterterrorism. The rise of transnational attacks, including the spate of plane hijackings from 1968 onwards, convinced state leaders of the necessity of transnational responses, and by the middle of the 1970s West European governments had begun to deepen their counterterrorist cooperation.\textsuperscript{128} The hostage liberation operation at Mogadishu serves as a case in point. The man West Germany tapped to head the GSG 9—Ulrich Wegener—had trained with the British and Israeli Special Forces and had (unofficially) been present as an observer during the Israeli counterterrorist mission “Operation Entebbe” the previous year.\textsuperscript{129} The GSG 9 unit that stormed the hijacked Lufthansa jet with Wegener was even supported by two British counterterrorism experts, providing further evidence of emerging interstate partnerships.\textsuperscript{130} Not surprisingly, one key facet of European integration in the 1980s and 1990s was the continued intensification of collaborative efforts in the struggle against transnational terrorism.\textsuperscript{131}

While the Federal Republic’s acceptance of “militant democracy” provided a potent remedy to the threat of organized anti-state violence, it comes with an acute risk—namely the destruction of democratic values in the name of democracy. When
German émigré Karl Loewenstein formulated the concept and called for the “temporary suspension” of “fundamental rights,” he did so at a time—1937—when the proliferation of single-party dictatorships presented a very real threat to the survival of constitutional democracy in Europe. It is clear that the urban guerrilla movement of the 1970s never produced a mass following let alone endangered the very existence of democracy—in West Germany or across the European continent—as did the rise of fascism in the 1930s. Moreover, particularly in the state’s use of informants and spies, the West German history of “militant democracy” should caution us about the abusive potential that the rhetoric of counterterrorism offers officials at the federal, provincial, or local levels. For example, authorities portrayed the 1978 bombing of a prison wall in the town of Celle as a failed attempt of the RAF to liberate ally Sigurd Debus, resulting in an extended prison sentence for the inmate, who perished three years later in a hunger strike. Only in 1986, in what came to be known as the “Celle Hole” incident, was the operation disclosed to have been an elaborately staged plot executed by agents of the government of Lower Saxony. In addition to the bombing itself, the sordid affair involved the recruitment of criminal accomplices, auto theft, passport forgery, and the planting of escape tools in Debus’s cell. Refusing to back down from criticism, Minister-President Ernst Albrecht (CDU) defended the controversial measures by insisting that his office had “proved that the word ‘militant democracy’ was not [just] a phrase.” In the end, we must recognize that the “state” is not a monolith but a collection of individuals whose misuse of power—if left unchecked—can do as much damage to constitutional democracy as armed militants.

Notes

1. Research on this work was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies. I would like to thank Robert G. Moeller for his feedback on an earlier draft. “GSG 9” is an abbreviation of Grenzschutzgruppe 9, the “Border Protection Group 9” of the federal police. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) carried out this hijacking in support of jailed German comrades from the Red Army Faction. For a detailed account, see Butz Peters, Tödlicher Irrtum: die Geschichte der RAF (Berlin: Argon Verlag, 2004), 397–470.


3. For a comprehensive examination of the Munich Olympics, including security measures and the hostage crisis, see Kay Schiller and Christopher Young, The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern Germany (Berkeley, CA: University of California
Press, 2010), and Matthias Dahlke, Der Anschlag auf Olympia ’72: Die politischen Reaktionen auf den internationalen Terrorismus in Deutschland (Munich: Martin Meidenbauer Verlag, 2006).

4. The name “Black September” was chosen to evoke memories of the violent conflict between Palestinian militants and the Jordanian Army in September of 1970.


6. These CIA figures are taken from Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, “From 1968 to Radical Islam,” in The History of Terrorism from Antiquity to Al Qaeda, ed. Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 244.


8. For further comparisons with the nineteenth-century anarchists, see esp. Andreas Elter, Propaganda der Tat. Die RAF und die Medien (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008), 58–70; and Olivier Hubac-Occhipinti, “Anarchist Terrorists of the Nineteenth Century,” in Chaliand and Blin, History of Terrorism, 113–31.


11. The members of Tupamaros West Berlin and Movement 2 June viewed themselves as anarchists, while the Red Army Faction guerrillas embraced the Marxist-Leninist tradition.


Also see al-Gashey’s comments and a Black September communiqué on the success of the operation, as quoted in Elter, Propaganda der Tat, 134–35.

19. Five hijackings were attempted in all, beginning with four simultaneous hijackings on September 6. The passengers and crew on one of the targeted planes, El Al flight 219, managed to foil the attack and capture assailant Leila Khaled.


26. Kollektiv RAF, “Das Konzept Stadtguerilla,” in Texte und Materialien der RAF, 44. The RAF’s vision of “armed propaganda” bears striking resemblance to the concept of “propaganda of the deed” developed by nineteenth-century anarchists.

27. Michael “Bommi” Baumann, How It All Began: The Personal Account of a West German Urban Guerrilla (London: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2000), 27. Baumann was a member of Tupamaros West Berlin and Movement 2 June.


34. This difficult undertaking has been tackled in considerable detail by scholars such as Gerd Koenen, Wolfgang Kraushaar, and Jeremy Varon, among others.

Maier criticized the New Left for promoting an attitude of “negation” on university campuses in the late 1960s.


The West German “SDS” was an abbreviation for the Socialist German Student League, which played a prominent role in the extra-parliamentary opposition movement of the late 1960s.

The other two Frankfurt arsonists, Thorwald Proll and Horst Söhnlein, served out their prison sentences and never became involved in the urban guerrilla movement.

See Rudi Dutschke, as quoted in “Die Saat der Gewalt,” Die Zeit, 2 June 1972, and Dutschke’s speech at the International Vietnam Congress in February, 1968 in West Berlin, as quoted in Peter Brückner, Ulrike Meinhof und die deutsche Verhältnisse (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 1995), 139.


See Stauffenberg’s comments in Werner Birkenmaier, “Ist die Frankfurter Schule an allem Schuld? Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von Kritischer Theorie und Terrorismus,” Stuttgarter Zeitung, 17 December 1977, 49. Stauffenberg is the third son of Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, the architect of the 1944 assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler known as “Operation Valkyrie.”


Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Erinnerungen (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1995), 141. Militant Democracy: The Legacy of West Germany’s War on Terror in the 1970s 585


See Varon, Bringing the War Home, 276; and Hanshew, “Daring More Democracy?” 120.

Brandt, as quoted in Varon, Bringing the War Home, 277.
52. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) successfully campaigned for re-election in 1957 under the slogan “Keine Experimente!”


63. Schenk, Der Chef, 122; and Jana Kunath, RAF: Die Reaktion des Staates auf den Terrorismus der Roten Armee Fraktion (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2004), 39.

64. See Scheiper “Wandel in staatlicher Herrschaft,” 211.


71. Schenk, Der Chef, 54.


73. Scheiper, Innere Sicherheit, 226–27.


76. Schenk, Der Chef, 150.
77. Binder, Terrorismus, 74; also see Schenk, Der Chef, 82.
78. Bundeskriminalamt, Festschrift, 87; and Hauser, Baader und Herold, 19.
79. This label is taken from Volker Speitel, as quoted in Schenk, Der Chef, 249. Schenk provides similar commentary from Andreas Baader.
80. Hauser, Baader und Herold, 93.
81. Herold as quoted in Schenk, Der Chef, 44.
84. Fifty-seven percent of the public supported the reinstitution of the death penalty following the kidnapping of CDU politician Peter Lorenz. See Der Spiegel, 10 March 1975. During the RAF’s 1977 kidnapping of Daimler executive Hanns Martin Schelyer, Quick magazine claimed that two-thirds of the public favored reinstitution of the death penalty. See “Kopf ab für Terroristen?” Quick, 22–28 October 1977.
90. See Alfred Dregger, VDB (VIII) Deutscher Bundestag, 53. Sitzung, 28 October 1977; the September 1977 statement from the Council of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), as quoted in Binder, Terrorismus, 96; and Maier, “Der neue Terrorismus,” While serving as the Bavarian Minister of Culture and Education from 1970 to 1986, the Catholic Maier wrote extensively on the relationship between religion and politics.
91. See Uta Demes, Die Binnenstruktur der RAF. Divergenz zwischen postulierter und tatsächlicher Gruppendynamik (New York: Waxmann Verlag, 1994), 223. According to Demes, the Süddeutsche Zeitung reported on 10 September 1977 that Christian Socialist Union leaders discussed shooting RAF prisoners every ten minutes until Schleyer was freed.
94. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, VDB (VII) Deutscher Bundestag, 155. Sitzung, 13 March 1975. See also Demes, Binnenstruktur der RAF, 64. For a discussion of Bundestag debates after the Lorenz case, see also Weinhauser, “Zwischen ‘Partisanenkampf’ und ‘Kommissar Computer’,” 256.
95. Paragraph 129a defined terrorist organizations as any groups carrying out murder, genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes.
96. See Bundeskriminalamt, Festschrift, 94–95; and Varon, Bringing the War Home, 261.
97. Helpful in this regard are attorney Jens A. Brückner’s comments, as quoted in Scheiper, “Wandel in staatlicher Herrschaft,” 189. See also Belinda Davis, “Jenseits von Terror und Rückzug: Die Suche nach politischem Raum und Verhandlungsstrategien in der BRD der 70er Jahre,” in Weinhauser et al., Terrorismus, 165.
98. Schwelien, Helmut Schmidt, 262.
99. Munich Police President Manfred Schreiber led a team of untrained officers. See Weinhauser, “Zwischen ‘Partisanenkampf’ und ‘Kommissar Computer’,” 283–84; and
Genscher, Erinnerungen, 148. Militant Democracy: The Legacy of West Germany’s War on Terror in the 1970s 587

100. Willi Winkler, Die Geschichte der RAF (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2010), 336.

101. West German participants in the hostage-taking raid on the OPEC headquarters included Hans-Joachim Klein and Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, and those involved in the hijacking of an Air France jet to Entebbe, Uganda included Wilfried Böse and Brigitte Kuhlmann from the group “Revolutionäre Zellen.”


110. Varon, Bringing the War Home, 250.

111. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, as quoted in Scheiper, “Wandel in staatlicher Herrschaft,” 188.


113. Wisniewski, Wir waren so unheimlich consequent, 51.


115. Peters, Tödlicher Irrtum, 430; and Wunschik, Baader-Meinhofs Kinder, 268. The commando named itself after West German Brigitte Kuhlmann—known to them as “Halimeh”—who was fatally shot during the Israelis’ hostage liberation at Entebbe. See Winkler, Die Geschichte der RAF, 334.

116. Peters, Tödlicher Irrtum, 434; Winkler, Die Geschichte der RAF, 336; Andreas Mussolf, “Terrorismus im öffentlichen Diskurs der BRD: Seine Deutung als Kriegsgeschehen und die Folgen,” in Weinahuer et al., Terrorismus, 312; and Wunschik, Baader-Meinhofs Kinder, 33.

117. Schiller and Young, The 1972 Munich Olympics, 207.

118. “Das Drama der 45 Tage: (Dokumentation der Bundesregierung), Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung: Auslandsecho auf die Entführung von Hanns-
Martin Schleyer und die Folgen,” Die Zeit, 4 November 1977. Note that the assailants had already executed flight captain Jürgen Schumann.


123. See Bundeskriminalamt, Festschrift, 91–93.


126. One notable exception involves the GSG 9 attempt to apprehend RAF fugitives in 1993, which led to the controversial death of RAF member Wolfgang Grams.

127. Chalk, West European Terrorism, 104.


129. Wegener’s training with British and Israeli Special Forces is mentioned in Winkler, Die Geschichte der RAF, 335.

130. Winkler, Die Geschichte der RAF, 341.


133. For more on the “Celle Hole” affair, see Winkler, Die Geschichte der RAF, 424–27; and Thomas Moser, “RAF un kein Ende,” Deutschland Archiv: Zeitschrift für das vereinigte Deutschland 42.2 (2009): 319. Moser discusses several other controversial uses of agents and informants.