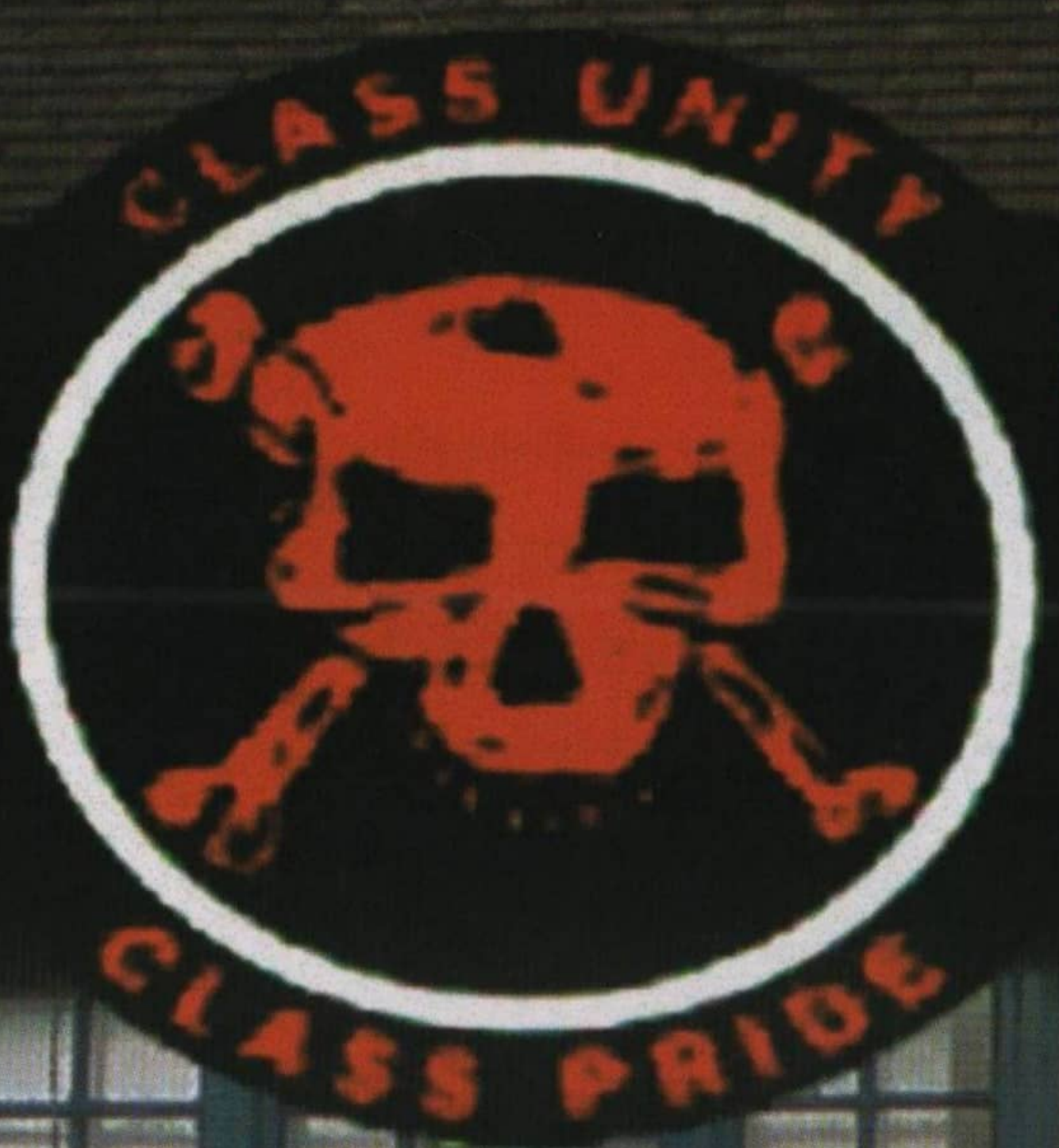


CLASS WAR



TOUCH OF CLASS

WHAT'S WRONG WITH
WETHERSPOON'S

THE
TOUCH OF CLASS
DARTS
PO
SKY
SLO. MACHINE

BASH
THE
RICH

COMMUNIT
POLICING

RED ARMY FACTION

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second issue of *Touch of Class.*

Three of the articles in this issue focus on topics affecting us in our everyday lives: community policing, pubs and gentrification. Little has been written by anarchists about the recent changes in neighbourhood policing, and Edward McKenna's piece goes some way towards remedying that. Although not as widely discussed as topics like public order policing, community policing gives most people their first unwelcome taste of the cops, and as such should receive greater examination – a fault remedied here.

Leon Wilton takes Wetherspoon's to task. The pub chain's certainly not received the attention it deserves despite being a high street staple up and down the country. Although he doesn't mention the chain's antipathy to beer mats, Leon gives the company a good going over – and CAMRA aren't ignored either as their role in supporting Wetherspoon's is scrutinised.

Edward McKenna returns with a look at affordable housing, a motive force behind November's Bash the Rich demo. The spread of gentrification over the last few years has left only the rich in a position to be able to buy a house. But there's somewhat more to gentrification and affordable housing than that, and Edward looks at both the theory and practice of gentrification, which might be more honestly called social cleansing.

And Paul Stott analyses the Red Army Faction's revolutionary potential, as well as the threat it posed to the West German state. Springing out of Germany's radical ferment at the end of the 1960s, the Red Army Faction made headlines throughout the 1970s and '80s, only disbanding in the 1990s. Strangely little's been written about them in English from a class struggle anarchist perspective – something Paul sets right for us here.

The next issue of *Touch of Class* will be out next Easter, and will comprise six or so articles on religion. To find out more, please email us at: londoncwf@yahoo.co.uk

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September 2007

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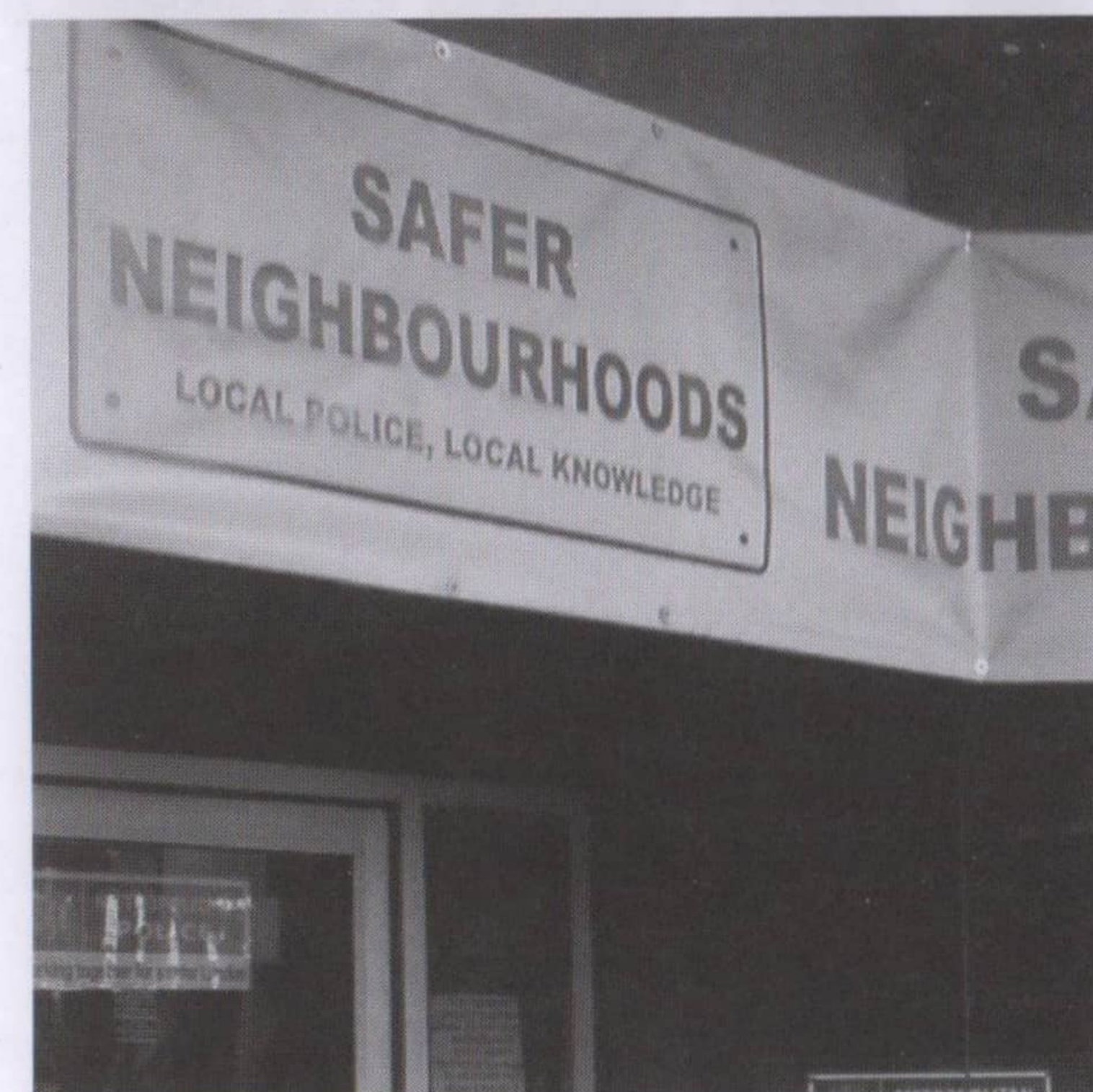
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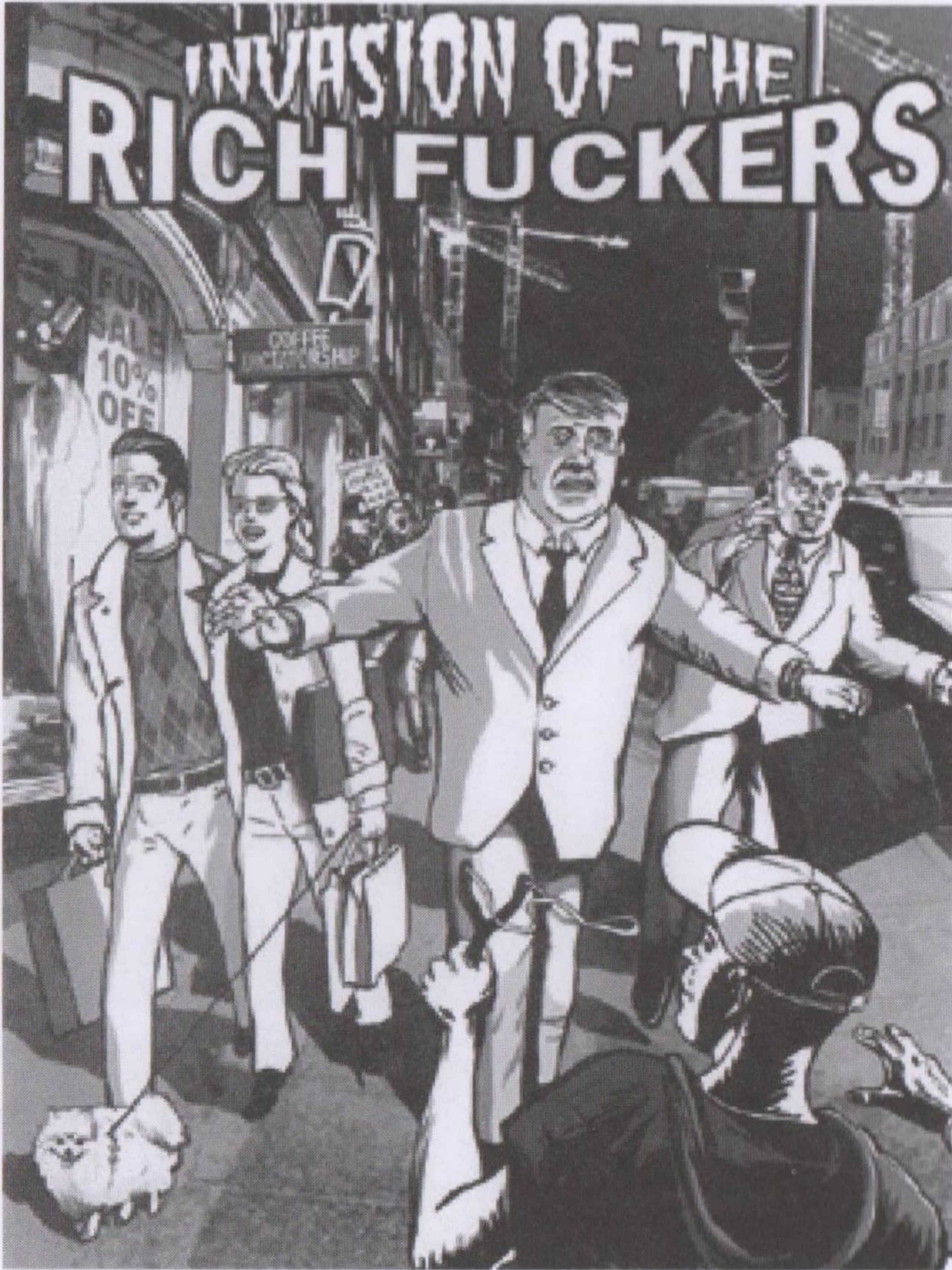
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Our Back Cover shows two pictures from Camden, north London. We used a picture of the "Touch of Class" massage parlour for our front cover last issue. As it did not have a license, legally the Fire Brigade did not need to inspect the premises. They became a death trap. On 11 March 2007 it burnt to the ground, killing two people.



RETURN OF THE YUPPIES

The Bash the Rich demonstration in November marks the start of a new campaign for affordable housing and against gentrification. Here **Edward McKenna** takes a look at the issues behind the initiative.



Gordon Brown recently said that affordable housing was one of the great causes of our time. For a change, he's right. Only his solution – shipping the working class out to the flood plains of the Thames gateway, out of sight and out of mind – is wrong. What we at Class War want is, affordable housing for the working class in working class areas and an end to the influx of yuppies who distort and socially cleanse whole districts of Britain's cities. Of course, gentrification's no new thing: in 1964, Ruth Glass described the process of gentrification thus:

One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower... Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupants are displaced and the who social character of the district is changed.¹

Gentrification, then, is a process driven by the middle class, in which they 'invade' and conquer an area, expelling the

original inhabitants. It is an aggressive manoeuvre in the class war. And since Glass' description of gentrification it has become, if anything, even more forceful.

What were previously staunch working class areas in London have now suffered the blight of yuppie infestation. From Limehouse to the Angel, yuppie flats are going up at an unprecedented rate. But it's not just in London: areas of Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham are all suffering the same fate. The social cleansing inherent in gentrification has never been such a threat to so many working class communities before.

The very term 'community' is indicative of several characteristics: shared heritage, shared values, shared status – and shared culture. It isn't just about keeping an eye on your neighbours or helping people, it's about the equivalence between people. Although we recognise that no community is free from conflict, and that few communities are homogenous, there is a tradition of working class solidarity which scares the middle and ruling classes: hence their attempts to divide us to rule us more easily. Like shipping working class people off to the new towns in the past, or decanting people into soulless estates, gentrification is a tactic to disperse our communities and marginalise the class.

The pursuit of gentrification is seen as laudable – from a middle class perspective. It's a bit like moving abroad for them, as our class and the areas in which we live are effectively a foreign country to them. This was made pretty explicit in 1890, when the founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, writing about the working class, echoed the title of Henry Stanley's book about exploring Africa, calling his own 'In Darkest England'. In this book, the working class are depicted as degenerate savages:

As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England? Civilization, which can breed its own barbarians, does it not also breed its own pygmies? May we not find a parallel at our own doors, and discover within a stone's throw of our cathedrals and palaces similar horrors to those which Stanley has found existing in the great Equatorial forest?²

Little has changed since Booth wrote. Indeed, for today's yuppies, moving into our areas is seen as a civilizing process, an uplifting process, and the modern equivalent of the imperialist 'white man's burden'. Areas in the first stage of gentrification are said to have been 'discovered', as though no one had lived there before. Areas infested with yuppies are seen as 'up and coming', where once they were 'downmarket'. The entire exercise is touted as an excellent investment, which is precisely how English, French and Spanish colonial ventures were described. Where once the middle and ruling classes chanced their money on despoiling foreign lands, now they often take the safer option of despoiling working class areas. So safe, in fact, that their latest wheeze is buying homes in the names of their children, often when their offspring are barely out of nappies, as an investment for their future. Returning to the similarity between gentrification and imperialism, the yuppies who invade our areas frequently live apart, regarding themselves as a superior caste, in the same way that colonial settlers in Africa kept themselves separate from the natives. They're quite happy to live among us, as long as we know our place. And, of course, the yuppies frequently have second homes where they can recharge their batteries: as one yuppie put it, about living in Islington's Barnsbury, 'it might be more difficult to live here if we didn't have the escape to Somerset that we have, the house down there'.³ So, at one fell swoop they're

managing to screw two working class communities, in this case one in Islington and one in the West Country.

And, as colonists sought out dominions for natural resources to exploit, so yuppies follow not just the 'up and coming' area, but also good state schools. A good school will attract yuppies to its catchment area like wasps to jam.

What all this means in concrete terms is that the working class are priced out of areas in which we grew up, that the amenities on which our communities were founded – shops, pubs, post offices, venues – are either sold off for yuppie flats or shops, or transformed into hideous caricatures of themselves. Locals' pubs have been especially affected, as they can fetch higher prices for development as flats than they can should they remain pubs. And over the past ten years many, if not most, pubs have changed beyond recognition. The introduction of every 'gastropub' and winebar means the destruction of one more community hub. Every yuppie boutique or coffeeshop means one less space for a shop which caters to working class people. Working class success in school can be self-defeating as it can lead to an influx of the middle class, seeking to capitalise on our children's achievements. And all this adds up to a cultural alienation from what was once a working class area, where working class people feel excluded from streets we've known for years.





Changing patterns in land tenure also play a part in excluding working class people. Private rented accommodation is bought up, reducing the housing stock available for locals. The influx of yuppies also drives prices out of ordinary people's reach – effectually preventing locals affording a property they find. It's telling that this has now gone so far that many middle class people are no longer in a position to easily afford to buy a house or flat in their own areas, which in turn fuels another cycle of gentrification.

But gentrification could not exist without a range of service providers, most obviously estate agents and property developers. Any campaign which focuses on affordable housing will have to address these facilitators, who smooth the path of gentrification and play a large part in making working class areas attractive for yuppie invasions. Estate agents like Foxtons, well-known for their crested minis, actively promote gentrification. They seek to extend it throughout London – and beyond – probably without thinking, and certainly without caring, for the social consequences of their actions. What they desire is what Ruth Glass feared, when, in 1973, she warned that 'the real risk for Inner London is that it might well be gentrified with a vengeance, and be almost exclusively reserved for

selected higher class strata'.⁴ This is the dystopian end to which yuppie estate agents and property developers wish to take us.

It is a vision which can be seen coming into reality, for example as the yuppie colonies along the canal near Angel spread further east to join up with the other colony in the Limehouse Basin. In north and east London this is creating a lattice-work of gentrified areas which live alongside sizeable working class populations, but where the economic force wielded by the yuppies exerts an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. In these situations the gentrification process takes on a life all its own in which businesses catering for the incomers survive while the yuppies rarely spend any money in the local pre-existing independent supermarkets, tending to drive instead to large Tescos or Sainsburys miles away. So, when yuppies move in, there is, counterintuitively, a reduction in the amount of money spent in local small businesses not catering for the middle class newcomers, as one yuppie moving in often means one family moving out. By these means, yuppies shape the local economy in a negative fashion, simply by withholding their money from nearby businesses. This is reinforced by the sort of shops which follow them into

a new area, which only in few cases cater for the local working class – boutiques, posh hair salons, gastropubs, winebars and so on. This reinforces the spiralling decline of the invaded working class area as rents rise because landlords see what they can get away with. Yuppie shops thus proliferate, and often with the connivance of the local council.

Councils are by no means neutral bystanders or honest brokers in all this. They frequently actively support the gentrification process. In Hackney, for example, the council's leaping into bed with property developers to profit from their greatest asset: social housing and the other buildings the council owns. In recent years many buildings, formerly council offices or community amenities, have been flogged off by the council for changing into yuppie flats, which is what happened to the old education services offices. Up the way in Islington, a top primary school in the Angel was sold to property developers, despite widespread opposition, including from Tory magazine *The Spectator*. Breaking up working class communities through development of estates can be done in a variety of ways, which can clearly make large sums of money for someone: and a bit of digging will frequently find councillors with their snouts right in the trough.⁵

To sum up, then. The working class is, as ever, under attack on a variety of fronts. These coalesce in two immediate threats: to our areas and amenities from gentrification, and to our health and well-being through a lack of affordable housing. Though this article's concentrated on the role yuppies buying property play, the public and private rented sectors are also very important. The 'right-to-buy' scheme has seen stocks of social housing decline, at a time when the growing number of households mean there should be an increase in provision. The knock-on effect from this growth in demand, and from the increasing yuppie property speculation, has seen rents in the private sector rise to an exorbitant level. Areas like Notting Hill see this taken to extremes: part of London which, well within living memory, was a working class district, is now the home of chinless wonders, yuppie scum and the ruling class, with the working class sidelined. Notting Hill isn't where our campaign finishes, but where it starts. It will be continued in working class communities across Britain.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Ruth Glass, *Introduction to London: aspects of change* (London: Centre for Urban Studies, 1964), p. xviii
- ² General William Booth, 'The Way Out', in Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History c.1880 – 1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 46
- ³ Quoted in Tim Butler, 'Living in the bubble: gentrification and its 'others' in North London', in *Urban Studies* 40.12 (2003), pp. 2477-78
- ⁴ Ruth Glass, 'The mood of London', in D. Donnison and D. Eversley (eds.), *London: Urban Patterns, Problems and Policies* (London: Heinemann, 1973), p. 423
- ⁵ A subject we look forward to returning to in the future.



**'WE Must DEVASTATE
the avenues WHERE
the wealthy Live!'**

WHAT'S WRONG WITH WETHERSPOONS?

Leon Wilton takes a look.



Since opening their first pub in 1979, J D Wetherspoon has become one of the UK's most popular and successful high street free house brands, and one of the biggest pub chains in England offering cheap prices with a no-frills pub atmosphere; no wonder Wetherspoon's became everyone's friend overnight. But if we look behind the cheap façade and shabby furniture fittings we will see some ugly dealings and realise not all is rosy with Wetherspoon's.

The local is a vanishing sight in the areas where we live, and for many people there is no longer anything very local, as we live in an increasingly uniform, anonymous environment of identikit shops, chain stores, multi-national fast food outlets and shopping centres. Now pubs can be added to this list of Legoland amenities. At the moment at least 20 pubs close every month. Half of those that remain are in the hands of pub corporations. Rural pubs are disappearing, leaving many villages empty, not just of a place to drink but of a focus for the community. In towns, giant high street drinking sheds – known in the trade as 'high-volume vertical drinking establishments' (try saying

that after a few ropy be vies in Wetherspoons!) opened in their place. Unlike other chain theme pubs like O'Neill's, All Bar One, The Slug & Lettuce and so on, Wetherspoon's targeted their pubs at working class towns across England. By doing this, they attracted a lot of working class people who had been priced out of other bars; and of course Wetherspoon's welcomed their customers with open arms.

When Wetherspoon's moved in, not only did they offer cheap drinks but they made sure that they undercut every local in the area, mainly the independent pubs. This has been described by critics as the 'McDonaldisation' of the traditional pub. Tim Martin, founder of the Wetherspoon's empire, claims the late Sam Walton, creator of the Wal-Mart retail giant, as his top hero: something which shouldn't surprise many people.

Wetherspoon's would notice that a lot of local pubs were already suffering a loss of trade as beer prices rocketed each time there was a budget and a lot of people

decided to drink at home with their contraband from France and supermarkets. How could they compete with Wetherspoon's prices? The tactic by Wetherspoon's was to approach little breweries all over England who, like the free houses, are suffering and demanded that they only sell them beer closes to the sell-by date at knock down prices – and they could afford to buy big amounts. The little breweries, who are proud of the quality of their beer, had to give in to Wetherspoon's tactics, despite being disgusted at their devious ways. The same tactics are used with the big breweries by: all very well, but again the customer is the one being ripped off. One former landlord recently reported how embarrassed he was when the food was delivered: it was always on the sell-by date, which is how they manage to keep food prices low. By renting and not buying their large pubs they can shut up shop when they want, putting profit before people.

"Most of the time, [customers] don't actually know what they're drinking, most of the time it's just another beer", according to Tim Martin, showing his contempt for Wetherspoon's customers.

Customers Care

Although Wetherspoon's make themselves out to be a caring company, the way they treat their staff is appalling. Wetherspoon's workers are not allowed to join any kind of union and are paid the minimum wage despite working long and often anti-social hours. The staff, who mainly consist of students, have a high turnover and are therefore easily browbeaten by management. Another policy Wetherspoons has introduced is TV in their pubs without

the sound on, or only on for major football matches. They believe that they are losing out after their strict policy of no music, TV or footy's backfired, as increasing numbers of middle class people want to watch sport.

This is irritating: but their ban on hats is a ridiculous tactic. Take, for example, the case of Christopher Wardell, who is boycotting Wetherspoon's William Stead pub in Darlington after being told he won't be served wearing his 'beloved' bowler hat. OAP cancer sufferer Margaret Bartlett lost her hair during chemotherapy: Wetherspoon's Square Peg, in Birmingham, barred her for wearing a hat. Bans on caps have been imposed across entire towns – take Bolton, for example – in an effort to make sure 'anti-social' people can be caught on CCTV. Even in these cases, Wetherspoon's is ahead of the competition in enforcing a ban on hats, no matter how ridiculous it makes them look.

And their attitude to the rest of people's dress is just as authoritarian and arbitrary: a case in point is that of toddler Charlie Elliott, who was with his parents at a Wetherspoon's-owned Lloyds Bar in Leicester, when the family were approached by staff who demanded the removal of his England shirt. It seems that a two year-old's footy top could provoke trouble... In another daft decision, the Square Peg – again! – operates a ban on England or St George's shirts – on St George's day, whilst being happy to host St George's day drinks promotions. Other similar cases of nonsense include those of Glenys Steele, 60, who was halfway through a meal at her local Wetherspoons with two elderly ladies with learning difficulties when she was banned from ordering a pudding because she was wearing tracksuit pants. She had been working out at the





gym! There's also the case of granddad-of-five Eddie St Leger, 67, who was a regular at his local Wetherspoon's until he was asked to leave, again because of wearing sportswear.

No-frills pubs operator JD Wetherspoon is considering allowing TVs in its bars in a bid to lure football-loving drinkers away from rival ale houses. Here we see a tactic by Wetherspoons that can only get worse when we see our locals disappear and all we have left are the pub-companies telling us what to wear, what we should drink and how much we should drink even what we should say, as we saw when Wetherspoon's proposed banning swearing in their Coventry pubs. And as for being told what to think, who can forget when Tim Martin, Wetherspoon's chairman, spent tens of thousands of pounds of his own money to fill Wetherspoon's pubs with anti-euro beer mats and posters? And at the same time maintaining that politics is of little interest to him.

Not all the blame should be put onto Wetherspoon's as we see our locals disappear and maybe one day some of them will become a museum just to remind us what we have lost, as we see the government force a no-smoking policy on all pubs. Coupled with unnecessary noise restrictions and strict licensing laws, the place of the pub as a central focus of the working class community's disappearing. And just as we are surveilled at work, so we are at play: all Wetherspoon's pubs are festooned with CCTV, sometimes also covering the toilets, as at the Wetherspoon's in the

Elephant and Castle. A pub in which you can relax without appearing on camera for posterity is increasingly becoming a rarity.

The Gastro Experience

In the free Wetherspoon's magazines recently was a two-page article praising the smoking ban and claiming that they would like to attract more families for a great eating experience in a healthy smoke-free atmosphere – do we see another dodgy tactic? Contrary to the impression they try to give, that all the food's freshly prepared by a chef, in reality the food's along the lines of a pre-cooked, ready-frozen and heated-up baked potato shipped from a factory in some other part of the country. Does that appeal to you that much? Add some frozen pre-packaged chilli, squeeze out some little packets of foil-wrapped butter, complemented with a bit of soggy lettuce ... The meals are nothing more than microwave meals, little packets of frozen pasta dishes, frozen curries and rice, frozen everything. They only have to go in the microwave, so you can't even call it cooking – so much for the healthy experience, but with a lot of pubs doing this, with two meals for a fiver you are certainly getting what you paid for.

"We were charged for two main meals and drinks with only the waiter offering any apology. A very poor and dangerous [with the risk of food poisoning] experience. A total disaster from start to finish. Bad manners bad service and, to boot, a health risk."

- Customer from the Wetherspoon's in Windsor

"And that's before we even get onto the subject of the food. Truly, the Landlord knows little of real ale and thinks a top-up is something to do with his mobile phone."

- Sheffield CAMRA branch on Wetherspoon's

The Special Relationship

The pub revolution won't be started by half hearted campaigners like CAMRA (Campaign For Real Ale). Not only have CAMRA taken it upon themselves to invest in the pub giant but at the recent 2007 CAMRA beer festival in Earl's Court they invited Wetherspoon's to have a stall at the event. Recently a trend's developed where they praise Wetherspoon's outlets highly on their real ale guides. It's a bit like inviting Tesco's to a farmers' .

The Campaign for Real Ale, producers of the 'Good Beer Guide' for 30 years, must hold the record for the shortest time between public ignorance and public ridicule of a

British institution. The real-ale bore was an instant British stereotype. Bearded and jerseyed, he mutters darkly about nitro-kegs and short measures – ‘a scandal that cost millions of pounds a year in lost beer’, as Roger Protz duly rumbles in this year’s ‘Good Food Guide’.

“Can someone please have a word with the management in this pub, the beer is constantly shite, as is the usually waste of space managers. I noticed on the wall a new beer award! How on earth did this pub get it, are you backhanding CAMRA? I will not be going back there again, for another 30p I can get a drink that is in date by friendly bar staff.”

- Bristol CAMRA group

Why CAMRA has started a relationship with Wetherspoons is anyone’s guess. Maybe it is because in 1990 there were more than 6,000 breweries in the UK. Today, there are just

over 500. Thirty-three have closed since 2001, taking more than 130 beer brands with them. With dwindling real ale drinkers the membership must have dwindled so much that they had to take sweeteners from Wetherspoon’s, maybe to pay for their printing costs and beer festivals. We did ask CAMRA why they have shares in Wetherspoon’s – and also Punch Taverns, another of Britain’s biggest pub companies – but they didn’t reply.

Surely it’s time for people who enjoy their locals where there is still a sense of community to start to realise that this will all disappear overnight unless some action is taking to prevent it. Support your local, tell the big pub chains that they are not welcome and start organising. But don’t forget your enemies like Wetherspoon’s will be lurking around the corner.



NOT WAVING BUT DROWNING

In the last *Touch of Class* we looked at public order policing. In this issue we examine the increasingly pervasive presence of the police in society.

On 3 May ten year-old Jordan Lyon saved his step-sister from drowning, and in doing so lost his own life. A recent inquest heard that two Police Community Support Officers – PCSOs – had attended the scene but had done nothing to attempt to rescue Jordan. What's come out since has brought home just how poorly trained these so-called police really are, and how little most people know about them. This article aims to shed light on this neglected subject.

The last decade has seen an expansion in both the 'traditional' police and also in a range of auxiliary policing bodies. There has been little comment on this in the anarchist – or socialist – media, perhaps because it isn't as sexy as looking at the growing arsenal of repressive technology to which the cops have access. However, the Territorial Support Group and its tactics are at one end of a policing continuum, an end relatively few people ever come into contact with. Most people who encounter

the police do so at the other end of the spectrum, the end occupied by the likes of bog-standard plod, Police Community Support Officers and Special Constables. The changes made to this area of policing have a far greater effect on the lives of working-class people than the arcane details of the police's public order strategy.

For many years the policing family simply consisted of cops and Special Constables, who were generally wannabe cops or do-gooders like racing driver Nigel Mansell.¹ However, the number of people prepared to join up as Special Constables – voluntary part-time police – dwindled in the late 1990s and early 2000s: for instance, Thames Valley Police saw the number of Specials halve between 1996 and 2004.² It seemed, briefly, that the penny had dropped, that finally everyone knew that being a Special Constable was a wanker's game. Yet just a year later, in 2005, the police were announcing the first rise in the number of Specials since 1945 after a successful recruitment campaign.³ This was on



the back of the introduction of Police Community Support Officers in 2002.⁴

Police Community Support Officers, according to the North Yorkshire Police website, support the police by performing 'primary roles of "eyes and ears" and "observe and report"'.⁵ In other words, they act as scouts and spies for the traditional police. Bereft of proper powers, PCSOs are there to make up the numbers – to make up the numbers of ethnic minority cops, targets for which are impossible for their 'proper' cop colleagues to meet. London's PCSOs have been ordered not to touch people, which rather makes a mockery of them.⁶ However, their complete and utter worthlessness was highlighted by recent revelations about their effectiveness. Figures released in August showed that PCSOs in West Midlands, Northumbria, Staffordshire, Dorset and Dyfed Powys failed to detect any offences: and their colleagues elsewhere also performed dismally. Their ability to 'observe and report' may be exaggerated. And the Met's 3,650 PCSOs managed to hand out a paltry 340 fixed penalty notices between them in the past year – so far they don't appear a great asset to the police.⁷ But appearances can be deceptive: criminologist Les Johnston has pointed out that while the Met are struggling to get people from black and Asian communities to join up as 'proper' plod, there is not such difficulty attracting ethnic minority PCSOs.⁸ Police forces desperate to meet their ethnic minority recruitment targets by the 2009 deadline, and PCSOs appear to be the way they've decided to achieve this. This is not to say that they are giving up on recruit plod, or that they are going to find it easy, but it is a rather devious and underhand way of approaching the problem, a policing version of creative accounting.

While PCSOs are supposed to act as 'eyes and ears' for the 'proper' police, Specials really are out there observing and reporting. The 14,021 Special Constables in England and Wales go out on patrol, deal with minor incidents and conduct house-to-house enquiries – the recruiting propaganda says they 'get involved in all aspects of police work'.⁹ Although anyone can join the Specials, there are a number of schemes aimed at specific trades and professions. For the private sector in London, there is Employer Supported Policing. People who join up under this scheme patrol 'key areas' of the city, and, depending on their job, around their workplace.¹⁰ Though the police identify a range of benefits for the Special, these – such as increased confidence, assertiveness, conflict resolution – could be better gained under other, more socially acceptable, circumstances.

One troubling aspect of the new policing is the emphasis on recruiting council and NHS staff as Special Constables. Last summer, for example, the Met launched the Borough Beat scheme, which aims to get council employees to sign up to become Special Constables. Although so far it has been remarkably unsuccessful – for instance, in Barking and Dagenham, only one person, Jason Britchford, has so far signed up – the Borough Beat scheme is the latest in a series of initiatives focussing on getting public sector workers to join up.¹¹ Elsewhere in the public sector, Hospital Watch, a scheme in which the Met trained NHS staff to become Special Constables so they could increase hospital security, was piloted at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead in 2005, with the aim of rolling it out across the NHS.¹² Although little has since been heard of the project, the police's aim is clear: to recruit volunteers from the public sector – and, more, from services which can provide useful information to the police. However, if someone's working for both the police and an employer, where does their policing role end? When someone serves two masters, one of them has to lose out. Would it be the Special's employer? Or the police? Quite possibly the former. However, you don't need to be a Special to be working 'with' the police. Binmen, road sweepers and dog wardens in South Gloucestershire have agreed to act as mobile Neighbourhood Watch representatives.¹³ This follows a report from government spending watchdog

STEPHEN SIGNS UP TO KEEP US SAFE

HIGHLIGHTING all that is good about where you work and live, our Be Proud campaign focuses on a scheme to keep the hospital wards safe.

Wayne Nowaczyk
wayne.nowaczyk@wme.co.uk

KEEPING people safe has put Stephen Paskell on the beat at the heart of a £150m hospital.

The Police Community Support Officer works in a police station amid the wards, hi-tech labs and operating theatres of the Royal Glamorgan Hospital in Llantrisant.

The station is part of South Wales Police's drive to generate neighbourhood policing on the doorstep – with partners sharing the cost. It improves personal security while helping staff reduce the opportunity for crime.

Few individuals could claim to be better qualified for the role than Steve, 31, who worked as a fireman in Berkshire where he was also a school parent governor before returning to Wales and retraining as a PCSO, spending nearly three years on the beat in the Rhondda.

He started work at the RGH just before Christmas – traditionally one of the busiest and potentially most troublesome periods for emergency rooms – which he got through without ever having to call for police back-up.

He lives with wife Emma, 29, a former pupil of Pen-coed Comprehensive, and their three children Lauren, eight, Connor, six, and three-year-old Millie in Llantrisant.

The Whichurch High School old boy said: "When we came home from Berkshire, I knew I wanted to do something meaningful that might make a difference to the community and ended up as a PCSO in the Rhondda which I enjoyed greatly."

"I have the powers to deal with most things and I've not needed to call for police back-up which is gratifying."

Stephen was seen as an ideal candidate when the hospital signed up to the neighbourhood policing partnership.

The hope is that in future there will also be a police presence in retail centres, educational institutions and community facilities.

He said: "We hope to reduce crime on this site, introduce a structured crime prevention policy and to increase the police presence."

"I give authoritative guidance to people, reassure those waiting in casualty or outpatients, endorse a zero tolerance approach to abuse of NHS staff, keep an eye on security in our car parks and spread those messages through briefings and a website to other Trust hospitals like Llysoyppia."

Fonystrip & Rhondda NHS Trust director Adrian Jones said increasing the sense of safety was a top priority.

He said: "The introduction of our own Police Community Support Officer demonstrates the Trust's commitment to engage with others in tackling crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, whilst also promoting crime prevention."

"Steve has been well received by staff, patients and visitors and I am certain his experience and abilities will prove extremely valuable."

Keep reading the Echo for more stories about the people and local organisations that are making a difference in your community, and making life better.

SAFETY FIRST Stephen Paskell on duty at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Llantrisant. PICTURES: Mark Fraser ©

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

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the Audit Commission, which said 'frontline workers' had a role to play in making neighbourhoods safer.

The Specials and the PCSOs link together in the new Big Idea in community policing: Safer Neighbourhood Teams. These are teams of one sergeant, two constables and three PCSOs, based in every council ward. They were launched by former Met commissioner John Stevens in 2004 in London, and have since started being rolled out across the country. SNTs are meant to be the policing arm of the local community, prioritising the community's concerns. For instance, it was reported in September that the Nags Head SNT in Islington, north London, was targeting the sale of counterfeit cigarettes using a sniffer dog, after 'local residents and businesses' said they felt cigarette sellers were their 'number one problem'.¹⁴ Yet there appears to be some confusion about the role of 'the community' in working with the SNTs. September also saw the expulsion of a member of a Citizens' Panel, the body which determines the community's priorities, in Camden, north London.¹⁵ The vice chair, one Beverley Gardner, was thrown out after speaking to the press without police permission, scandalous behaviour described by SNT leader Sgt Mark Harries as 'reprehensible, bordering on the criminal'. In other words, the Safer Neighbourhood Teams are the senior partners in any relationship with the community, that should the community's interests coincide with the police's then all well and good; if not, the community's interests will be ridden over roughshod. In any case, who are the community? In parts of the country, the part of the local population the SNTs listen to will be those who materially support them. Take south London's Eltham, for example, where a Co-op supermarket is providing a police office for the local SNT.¹⁶ One would assume that the cops based there will take a stiff line on shoplifting from their benefactors, and their priorities may be skewed in more subtle ways too, pursuing crimes which affect businesses more than those which affect local residents.

There are two apparently divergent trends in British policing today. On the one hand there is 'a visible drift to a militaristic domain ... surveillance, body armour, an increasing use of firearms by armed response units, riot shields, CS spray, DNA databases, the introduction of longer, side-handled truncheons, CCTV systems, and a drift towards compulsory ID cards', all of which 'impinge upon the public vision at every turn'.¹⁷ On the other, there is a range of new, civilianised members of the policing family, supposedly serving the community by responding to their concerns more readily than the traditional police

force. Yet these latter groups fit easily into the idea of a militarised force, albeit not performing the role of what P.A.J. Waddington described as 'the strong arm of the law'.¹⁸ SNTs, PCSOs, Special Constables and so on fill the role of scouts, aiming at – if not yet fulfilling – providing low-level intelligence on the communities they operate within. The visible presence they provide is not really all that useful in terms of preventing crime – SNTs are not 24-hour entities, finishing work for the day in the early evening. And PCSOs and Special Constables don't get involved in public order work, essentially doing donkey work the 'proper' cops don't want to. SNTs, too, are restricted in the sort of work they do, being exempt from policing football matches or demonstrations.¹⁹ Instead of those areas, they concentrate on getting to know one area – which will, in future, mean that there are local specialists on call should a large public order operation take place in unusual territory. The SNT role also links into 'political' and security policing: as Sir Ian Blair, in his typically banal style put it, 'national security depends on neighbourhood security'.²⁰

Another lesser known para-police formation is the Police Cadets. The Metropolitan Police Volunteer Police Cadets caters for people from 14 to 21 and, according to the Met's website, the cadets 'often perform duties in support of local policing plan objectives'.²¹ These tasks are things like 'crime prevention initiatives, message/leaflet delivery, test purchase of alcohol, fireworks and knives and involvement in non-confrontational local events'. Other forces run similar schemes, though the particulars vary from place to place. They have quite a membership for such a little-known organisation, claiming more than 1,000 members in London alone. The Police Cadets appear similar to the scouts, only with a more sinister agenda: among their proclaimed objectives is to 'create a uniformed group of young men and women who have a suitable level of fitness'. But fitness for what? The question is not answered.



As the family of Jordan Lyon have found out to their cost, PCSOs are really just there to make up the police's numbers. Yet they are going to increasingly be a first point of contact between working class people and the police proper – many thousands are due to be recruited in the next few years. And although their powers have been derided above, they do have some powers denied the normal cops – foremost among which is the power to require a name and address under certain circumstances, like suspecting someone of 'anti-social behaviour'. Plod can't do this: pseudo-plod can. Their powers are more likely to be augmented, rather than diminished, which may spark incidents in the future. Safer Neighbourhood Teams, with their PCSO component, will be one facet of policing to watch in the future, as the way they develop will affect the use of higher force options on the policing continuum. Will they use their local knowledge to defuse potential trouble? Or will they call in the heavier policing options in tense times?

Until the next time – keep 'em peeled.

FOOTNOTES

¹ http://www.gpmasters.com/Drivers/bio_mansell.aspx

² <http://archive.oxfordmail.net/2005/4/15/3811.html>

³ <http://www.crimlinks.com/Feb25b2005.htm>

⁴ Les Johnston, 'Diversifying Police Recruitment? The Deployment of Police Community Support Officers in London', in *The Howard Journal* 45.4 (2006), p. 388

⁵ www.northyorkshire.police.uk/initiative-pcsos.asp

⁶ *The London Paper*, February 26, 2007

⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, August 20, 2007

⁸ Johnston, 'Diversifying Police Recruitment?', p. 389

⁹ Simon Bullock and Natalie Gunning, 'Police Service Strength' (*Home Office Statistical Bulletin* 13/07), p. 2; <http://www.london.gov.uk/londoner/06july/p6a.jsp?nav=safe>

¹⁰ <http://met.police.uk/employersupportedpolicing/esp.htm>

¹¹ *Barking and Dagenham Post*, 20 August, 2007

¹² *Personnel Today*, December 13, 2005

¹³ 'Street cleaners to help tackle crime', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/bristol/6708269.stm>

¹⁴ 'Dog sniffs out illegal cigarettes', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/london/6992825.stm>

¹⁵ *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 13 September, 2007

¹⁶ "'Cop shop" opens in supermarket', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/london/4410519.stm>

¹⁷ M. Young, 'Dressed to commune, dressed to kill: Changing police imagery in England and Wales', in K.K.P. Johnson and S.J. Lennon (eds.), *Appearance and Power* (New York: Berg, 1999), p. 34

¹⁸ P.A.J. Waddington, *The Strong Arm of the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

¹⁹ 'Bobbies on beat scheme launched', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/london/3599751.stm>

²⁰ 'Local police unit scheme extended', <http://news/bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/london/4597004.stm>

²¹ <http://www.met.police.uk/cadets/>



THE RED ARMY FACTION: A REVOLUTIONARY THREAT TO THE GERMAN STATE?

Paul Stott examines the Red Army Faction.

I will examine their history, actions, size, influence, and the response of the German state to the group. I make use of communiqués from the RAF, and some of the standard books on German left-wing terrorism. Please note it is not the intention of this article to debate the deaths of RAF members in prison, nor the various theories that surround those events.

With the collapse of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1989, Germany was unified in 1990. Whilst concerns existed, particularly on the left about this, the RAF did not prosper in the newly unified Germany. To find out why, it is necessary to note the arrests of members following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the groups final attacks and their 1998 closing statement. I will suggest that if a motivating factor for the RAF was guilt about the Second World War, that issue remains, in different forms, in German politics today. Did the RAF articulate this, or merely reflect an on-going issue in Germany?

Given the working relationships with terrorist organisations from the Middle East, those from elsewhere in Europe, and more seriously the evidence that has emerged of support (and direction?) from within the old GDR, were the RAF

merely puppets in Cold War games? Here it is necessary to cite the views of GDR spymaster Markus Wolf, and revelations that have emerged from the break up of East Germany.

So, the three questions this article examines are:

- Did the RAF constitute a genuine threat to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)?
- Have the ideas and ideals of the RAF endured in Germany, especially since reunification?
- Can the RAF be considered a truly revolutionary grouping?

Introduction

The Red Army Faction's story came to an abrupt end in 1998 with the publication of a formal closing statement – 'the urban guerilla in the form of the RAF is history'.¹ This eight-page statement traced the groups course from 1970, explained failings but offered no apology – 'we stand by our history'. Towards the close 26 names were respectfully listed, many familiar to most Germans, some, like Andreas Baader or Ulrike Meinhof, probably known to all. It was a list of RAF members who had not survived to be a part of the group's dissolution. Discussing her photographic memoirs of her time in the RAF, former member Astrid Proll commented 'they are witnesses of deaths in an undeclared war and witnesses of tragedy. They show vividly how a ruthless and useless struggle developed from a spontaneous rebellion which the state answered with exaggerated severity'.²

Going Underground

The RAF emerged from the street battles of the student left in the late 1960s. As Bommi Baumann argues in his memoirs of his time as an 'urban guerilla', from taking part in riots there existed the potential to take things further: 'you can see the possibilities, a small determined group can further conflict like that a little more, can throw terrible wrenches in the works'.³



Individual RAF members appear to have been radicalised by both the German police's willingness to shoot demonstrators and the specific history of their own country. After the June 2, 1967, police shooting of student demonstrator Benno Ohnesorg, Gudrun Ensslin commented 'they'll kill us all. You know what kind of pigs we are up against. This is the Auschwitz generation. You can't argue with the people who made Auschwitz. They have weapons and we haven't. We must arm ourselves'.⁴

Terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman sees the RAF as part of the revolutionary spirit of left wing terrorists at that time, but stresses that they were particularly influenced by the fact that the Americans had military bases in West Germany, used to service the Vietnam War. Once more death and destruction was being spread from Germany, but this time there was to be opposition. Tom Vague argues the actual name Red Army Faction emerged as an anti-fascist joke, due to what the Royal Air Force and Red Army had done to the Nazis.

From these roots, small-scale fire bombings began, and by 1970 two groups of young Germans had already traveled to Jordan for arms training with the Palestinians.⁵ By way of conclusion, Joanne Wright comments 'police action in the years 1967-72 is recognised by most commentators as

being a significant, perhaps even the most significant factor in attracting people to the RAF in the early years'.⁶

The main RAF communiqué explaining the move from open to underground activity is 'The Concept of the Urban Guerilla', written by Ulrike Meinhof in 1971. This argues that although they had wished to combine guerilla activity with grassroots work, this had not proved possible, due to state surveillance of meetings and discussions. The document goes on to say that if revolutionary war is being waged against American imperialism, no territory should be ruled out of this struggle. People are also warned against getting involved with the left for reasons of fashion or trendiness. The route they are taking is clear: 'we have learned that individuals cannot combine legal and illegal activity'.⁷

The Temperature Rises

In May 1972 the RAF detonated five bombs across the FRG, aimed at American, police, legal and media targets. Four people were killed. Hans Josef Horchem sees such violence as a threat that no sovereign state could ignore: 'it challenges the state institutions responsible for security. They have to respond'.⁸ The response had in fact arguably begun in 1971 when Horst Herold was appointed Chief



Commissioner of the FRG's criminal investigation service, the BKA. He began reconstituting its work, and in particular developing surveillance and computer systems to record vast amounts of data. On May 31 1972 the entire police force of the FRG was mobilised for a national anti-terrorist sweep search - Operation Watersplash. Such actions would be unusual in any liberal democracy, but in one with such weak roots as West Germany, less than 30 years after the collapse of the Nazis, they raised serious questions. Published in Germany in 1976, Sebastian Cobler's **Law, Order and Politics in West Germany** expresses real concern at the expansion of the FRG's security apparatus, especially during in a time of industrial peace and high levels of prosperity. He sees a country uncomfortable with democracy to the extent of banning the Communist Party in 1956, an act that other European democracies would surely not have contemplated. Joanne Wright argues the FRG was on the front line of the Cold War (in fact Germany was literally divided by it) and this could easily lead to a siege mentality: 'the West Germans felt their state under a more extreme threat than it actually was'.⁹

As the police became increasingly militarised and the hunt was on for the RAF, instances emerged of innocent civilians being shot by jittery officers. When terrorists were arrested the media, police and politicians railed against 'sympathisers' who offered support to activists such as

the RAF. As some RAF members, like Horst Mahler, came from legal backgrounds, the lawyers of terrorist suspects were soon seen as particularly suspect, especially when it came to spreading communication between jailed and free members.

The government's most controversial legal measure, from 1972, was known as Berufsverbote (roughly 'to ban from their profession'). This restricted jobs in the large public sector to those who were not members of groups considered a threat to the state. However Cobler sees this as being used in practice as a stigma, with people's friends and acquaintances coming under suspicion. A substantial bureaucratic apparatus developed to examine candidates' job applications and to interview people about their political opinions. Inevitably it developed a life of its own, spreading through the private sector.¹⁰ Although Cobler did not see this as fascism he argued 'West Germany is on the way to becoming a Big Brother police state'.¹¹

Peter Merkl contrasts, unfavourably, the West German government's response to the size and nature of the actual threat. 'A good dozen RAF terrorists seemed to have the state over a barrel and the public in such a desperate state of mind that only the most extreme and often constitutionally dubious means were capable of calming the exaggerated fears of the moment', he wrote.¹² Perhaps worse, Merkl sees the RAF as becoming

ROSSO, 1975

GERMANIA la nostra tortura è meglio: non lascia tracce

42

Nei paesi in cui, come nella R.F.T., le condizioni marginali sono gestite democraticamente, la tortura fisica, quella che lascia tracce, è un fatto importante. Essa contraddice la presunzione di umanità, dello stato di diritto, nella quale si fonda il potere. La tortura che non lascia tracce invece permette al potere di distruggere il nemico, senza dover temere della reazione dell'opinione pubblica. Nelle carceri della R.F.T. si fa uso della tortura dell'isolamento, della "privazione sociale". Ci appare fondamentale il fatto che, contrariamente a quanto avviene nei confronti di altri prigionieri politici che dall'inizio della loro prigionia, i compagni della R.A.F. venissero associati, senza ulteriori distinzioni ad un velo e proprio prigionieri di distruzione, con privazioni e isolamento sociale, il programma veniva eseguito con impeccabile diligenza, in modo salvaguardando sistematico, basandosi sul procedimento con cui i compagni della R.A.F. venivano portati in prigione il 4 febbraio del '74, durante il trasporto in carcere erano stati tutti ricapocati.

Il principio di questo modo di torturare si basa appunto sulla privazione. Non si tratta di agire direttamente sul corpo, e soprattutto sono da evitare torture poi osservabili e quindi facilmente denunciabili.

Non si viene certo privati della facoltà fisica della parola, dell'udito (infatti né lingue né orecchie vengono tagliate); si viene privati invece della possibilità di comunicare, unica funzione di questi organi e che solo alimenta il cervello.

Non si viene certo privati della facoltà della vista, la luce degli occhi non viene accolta; si viene privati piuttosto della possibilità di vedere qualsiasi cosa con gli occhi.

Non viene sottratta la capacità soggettiva degli organi di senso, ma bensì il loro soggetto, il loro senso appunto: per cui essi diventano inutili, senza funzioni, esseri.

Il fatto che proprio i compagni della R.A.F. debbano venire distrutti di sembra cosa inconfutabile, e a nulla valgono i tentativi della stampa borghese a mistificare o negare.

Stando all'archivio apparso sullo SPIEGEL, smonta un solo compagno della R.A.F. Roland Augustin, sarebbe l'isolamento totale, nel braccio morto del carcere di Hannover. A parte il fatto che questa versione dei fatti è semplicemente una menzogna, e non corrisponde affatto alla situazione reale, omette completamente di parlare degli effetti della tortura - del fattore tempo - e non dice che da anni, precisamente dal 1970, tutti i compagni della R.A.F. subiscono indiscriminatamente "le misure" di isolamento.

E per quanto riguarda i contatti tra prigionieri, concessi qua e là, le misure sarebbero state "scopiate". L'isolamento effettivo veniva garantito, per esempio, dal fatto che i compagni potevano accedere a manifestazioni, collettive, solamente scritte da agenti. In questo modo i prigionieri politici si rifiutano di partecipare alle passeggiate nel cortile o ad altre manifestazioni collettive.

All'inizio dello sciopero delle fame il punto di partenza era costituito proprio dall'isolamento di tutti i compagni della R.A.F. Alcune concessioni erano state fatte a Holger Meins, e a Berlino non si praticava questa tortura; eccezione fatta per la volta che ci fu il processo e Berlino, occasione in cui Ulrike Meinhof venne rinchiusa completamente da sola nella torre di Berlino-Moabit. Il punto cruciale di questa tortura consiste nella sua differenziabilità nei confronti dei singoli prigionieri. Eccone la motivazione, per bocca dell'ex procuratore federale Martin: "Un costante controllo medico e psicologico assicura che le condizioni di detenzione siano sempre conformi alle condizioni fisiche e psichiche del prigioniero in questione".

Quindi, secondo Martin, non è compito dei medici e degli psicologi della prigione, di trattare malattie latenti o addirittura di prevenirle, ma bensì il loro compito, consiste nel controllare condizioni di detenzione che si "addecano" alla "relativa condizione psico-fisica del singolo detenuto", si tratta di affrontare "individualmente" il prigioniero. È a disposizione tutto l'apparato medico-diagnostico affinché la "costituzione psico-fisica" possa essere considerata quasi "data". Non resterà quindi che comunicare alle istanze esecutive, come disse il tortore nel modo più "indicato". In modo da condurre criticamente alla distruzione, evitando l'evidenza dell'improvvisazione.

In questo "obscuro" l'isolamento sono previste delle variazioni: alcune misure possono venir sciolte. Per esempio è previsto il totale divieto di parlare, vengono eseguite razzie nelle celle, la luce accesa di notte, il taglio delle stoffe, le limitazioni negli scambi epistolari, la privazione di ogni oggetto d'arredamento, l'incubo del braccio morto, ecc.

Quindi: è solo la complessività delle misure dell'isolamento, e il fattore tempo, che determinano l'effetto della tortura.

Quando si parla di adempimento di tipo in-

Sartre va a trovare Baader. E dichiara...

44

Ho visitato Baader. Ora cercherò di spiegarvi le sue convinzioni politiche e vi fornirò qualche notizia circa la sua vita nel carcere. Inizierò quindi con la domanda di tipo politico. La prima è relativa ai rapporti tra il suo piccolo gruppo e le masse.

Baader ha detto che il suo gruppo era effettivamente un piccolo gruppo che inizialmente si poneva l'obiettivo di stabilire un legame organico con le masse operaie. Ma anche riconosciuto la necessità di portare avanti un lavoro politico propedeutico verso le masse dei lavoratori ma che anche l'azione del suo gruppo si rendeva necessaria per permettere di sviluppare all'interno della classe nuovi livelli organizzativi. La sua organizzazione la definisce provvisoria ma necessaria, dato che, a causa del periodo nazista, il proletariato tedesco non può più riaccacciarsi, senza soluzioni di continuità, alla sua storia.

Ha detto inoltre, che il suo gruppo intendeva stabilire legami organici con le organizzazioni rivoluzionarie del terzo mondo, sia con quelle degli stati arabi che si erano staccate dalle vecchie avanguardie politiche, sia con quelle dell'America Latina, che portavano avanti la lotta contro la politica americana. Anche la R.A.F. aggiunge, si propone di combattere la politica americana, tentando di far arretrare la fortissima influenza USA nella R.F.T.

Disse inoltre che il metodo di lotta scelto, non è definibile a priori, esso si rende necessario solo nella situazione storica presente e, aggiunge, che lo scontro all'interno della R.F.T. fu lo considerava come un momento della lotta tra le masse e il capitalismo. Contro colui, cioè, che ha prodotto queste masse, ovvero il proletariato e le masse contadine. E così che lui preferiva la lotta nella R.F.T., come una guerra civile, lo ha potuto accennare solo a questo discorso con lui perché avvenne solamente una ora di tempo e, data l'importanza del problema, per il quale non è possibile trovare facilmente una soluzione, si poteva solamente condurre una discussione. Consideriamo inoltre che la maggior parte del tempo era necessaria per le traduzioni. Baader ha riconosciuto, e sarebbe meglio dire concesso, che le condizioni in altri paesi, quali la Francia o l'Italia possono essere considerate diverse, nella misura in cui essi non vi è stata un'esperienza simile a quella tedesca con il fascismo. Ed è quindi non discute la possibilità che determinati metodi di lotta possano assumere altre forme in questi paesi. Baader ha unicamente tentato di determinare il metodo di lotta per quanto riguarda la R.F.T.

Durante il colloquio io mi sono reso conto della sua debolezza fisica, della sua magrezza. Considerai che avesse perso almeno 15-20 chili, vi di che aveva molta ragione e che lo si vedeva una volta di più ogni volta che muoveva la bocca... Il suo viso era come schiacciato, e vevo il volto di un uomo torturato che era esposto dalla fame. Gli ho chiesto il perché di questo aspetto ed egli mi ha risposto che faceva lo sciopero della fame, lo sciopero della fame assieme ad altri detenuti della R.A.F. per protestare contro le condizioni di detenzione a cui sono sottoposti. Baader e gli altri vivono in celle bianche. In queste celle non si sente nulla all'interno dei paesi dei secondini, tre volte al giorno, che portano il cibo. Non è sopportabile lo stare 24 ore su 24 sotto la luce. Alle 23 in alcune celle si spegne la luce, in altre non la si spegne mai. Non è la tortura fatta dai nazisti, è un altro tipo di tortura, una tortura che tende a provocare disturbi psichici. In questo modo che un essere umano venga totalmente staccato da tutto. Mentre sto qui a vi parlo sento dai rumori, che provengono da voi tutti, sento dei passi. Questo non avviene. Ciò che è importante per un detenuto di questo tipo di detenzione, è di poter ricardarsi, in qualche modo, della vita. In quel carcere di tutto ciò non vi è nulla. È il silenzio. L'uomo sente solamente i passi dei suoi secondini e guarda le sue quattro pareti bianche. Questo sono le loro condizioni di detenzione. In questa situazione da anni vivono i detenuti. Con il loro sciopero tentano di modificare queste condizioni di detenzione.

Un detenuto è innocente finché non ha subito un processo e, nel carcere, deve essere trattato come un innocente. Perché allora questo trattamento? Possiamo individuare almeno tre motivi per cui si tenta di distruggere la capacità fisica e intellettuale di un essere umano: per renderlo incapace di difendersi nel carcere; per farlo diventare pazzo; per ucciderlo, come si è visto. La legge è contro la tortura, quindi contro questo tipo di detenzione. Esiste la Legge per i diritti dell'uomo, e l'ONU, che lottano contro ogni tipo di tortura, anzi, di più, essi affermano che ogni uomo in stato di deten-

visuale alle condizioni psico-fisiche del singolo detenuto si comprende anche il fatto di una temporanea interruzione dell'isolamento totale.

Immediatamente è chiaro lo scopo: l'interruzione dell'isolamento fa sempre parte della tortura. Dice una compagna, che per mesi è stata relegata nel tratto morto della prigione e che poi è uscita: "... come metodo clinicamente è da paragonare a quello che fanno per esempio con i lupanari: li springono a stadi di estrema eccitazione - sono torture mentali - poi poco prima che muoiono, li riempiono di Pentoli che dà improvvisamente distensione ed uccide. Il prigioniero, come ci si aspetta perde ogni misura. Parla".

Lo scopo quindi sono le confessioni. A parte dall'esempio citato possiamo capire immediatamente l'altro scopo di questa tortura: si vuole determinare che il prigioniero che viene tratto dal totale isolamento del braccio morto venga colto dal panico, dall'angoscia di venire nuovamente isolato. Nel caso in cui questi invece non si faccia prendere da questo terrore, tenterà di fare qualsiasi cosa per non tornare in isolamento. E lo può evitare solo nel caso in cui collabori con i suoi aguzzini. Lo scopo sarebbe raggiunto: il prigioniero annulla la sua identità politica, che regge proprio e si concretizza solo nel fatto che egli si oppone totalmente a quelli che vogliono ad ogni costo d'agire di lui.

Quindi, scopo della tortura dell'isolamento è innanzitutto la distruzione dell'identità politica; si tratta di costringere il prigioniero ad abbandonare la lotta, di distruggere la sua capacità di agire. Questo interesse particolare alla distruzione emerge dagli accordi in merito all'isolamento da parte della O.V.A. Così si esprime a suo tempo il giudice Haackmann contro Ronald Augustin: "... è assolutamente da evitare che il detenuto Augustin possa contrarre contatti di tipo fisico, orale o di qualsiasi altro tipo con altri detenuti. Pertanto durante l'intervallo è il caso che nessun altro detenuto si trattienga nelle sue vicinanze..."

Da un lato questa tortura dell'isolamento deve servire quale ricatto alla confessione. E dato che fino ad ora i compagni della R.A.F. hanno tacito, deve servire il loro allontanamento. D'altro lato, come emerge anche dagli atti contro il se Stachowia, l'interesse della prigione sta anche nel fatto di impedire contatti tra prigionieri politici e altri detenuti. "... L'accusa la presente il reato in materia di sicurezza". Era stata richiesta la revoca della detenzione singola. E ancora: "La detenuta la parte di un gruppo anarchico, che vuole rovesciare con ogni mezzo l'ordine costituito, e in modo particolare le istituzioni punitive. Tutte le pubblicazioni che smontano oggi le paranoie parlano di resistenza in carcere, di insurrezione dei prigionieri".

La natura dell'isolamento è volta quindi anche contro tutti gli altri prigionieri, e vuole impedire che si stabilisca un contatto, una collaborazione, la solidarietà tra prigionieri.

(WWA, n. 24 - gennaio 1975)

a political football in the FRG's party system. The Christian Democrats looked for the opportunity to abuse the Social Democrats (and any liberal intellectuals who dared speak up) as terrorist sympathisers, whilst the Social Democrats and their coalition partners 'felt that it had to prove its dedication to the anti-terrorist campaign by building up the police apparatus and by a show of toughness and quick success'.¹³

This was a heady brew, but it did not translate into political support for the RAF. Indeed, Jeremy Varon argues that in terms of winning support to their already tiny numbers, the events of May 1972, and the state response, were in fact a disaster for the RAF. The left found little to agree with ideologically in the RAF's description of West Germany as fascist, and was concerned that the group's violence would both encourage state repression and alienate the mass of Germans.

There was also more withering criticism for the RAF. Anarchists viewed the RAF as vanguardist, and having only one possible method of development – an escalation of armed actions, which could not be expected to result in victory. Even if it somehow did, this argument insists 'you can't blow up a social relationship. The total collapse of this society would provide no guarantee about what replaced it'.¹⁴ Eqbal Ahmed takes the view of the classic debate between Marxists and Anarchists on violence: 'the Marxists argued that the true revolutionary does not assassinate. You do not solve social problems by individual acts of violence'.¹⁵ Perhaps not surprisingly Varon concludes 'in the wake of the May actions, the RAF suffered a double marginalisation, first from the mainstream of German society, and second from the very movement to which it looked for support'.¹⁶

Round Two

As serious as events had been, the German authorities had reasons to be satisfied. Most of the RAF's core was in prison, with Albert Parry stating that 'soon the police asserted that the RAF was reduced from its former strength of 60 members to 20 or less'.¹⁷ It is perhaps worth reading those figures again – whatever the RAF were, they surely could not be considered a mass revolutionary threat, as themselves, to the West German state. Indeed in numerical terms, they could probably have fitted into a railway carriage.

Given where most of its number now resided, it was perhaps inevitable that the RAF and its supporters, turned

attention to its prisoners. Behind bars, a serious situation was emerging. Varon sees the RAF as having a valid point when it comes to political status for its members in prison – RAF suspects were treated entirely differently from all other prisoners, even pre-trial. Astrid Proll and Ulrike Meinhof for example, were both placed in complete isolation for some months. Such conditions eventually led to a developing protest movement and hunger strikes, culminating in the death, by force-feeding, of RAF prisoner Holger Meins in 1974. The formation of prison support organizations like Red Aid and the Committee Against Torture By Isolation brought the RAF into contact with wider activists again, although this was arguably not political activity that looked to reach out to the masses on the issues directly affecting them. 'By the mid 1970s the RAF had virtually ceased producing anything approaching a systematic geopolitical analysis or programme of action', one observer notes.¹⁸ The group was turning inwards.

Some support had been rekindled however, especially by iconic (and deeply unpleasant) images such as the autopsy photograph of the starved body of Holger Meins, who weighed under six stones at the time of his death.¹⁹ Although still small, Tom Vague argues the RAF's numbers were increasing: 'from 1970 to 1972 the cops were after about 40 people, by 1974 this figure had leaped to 300 and the BKA has 10,000 names on its sympathisers file'.²⁰ Perhaps the most unusual of these new activists were the Socialist Patients Collective (SPK) a group of mental patients from Heidelberg, radicalised by their doctor, Dr Huber, who believed it was capitalist society making them



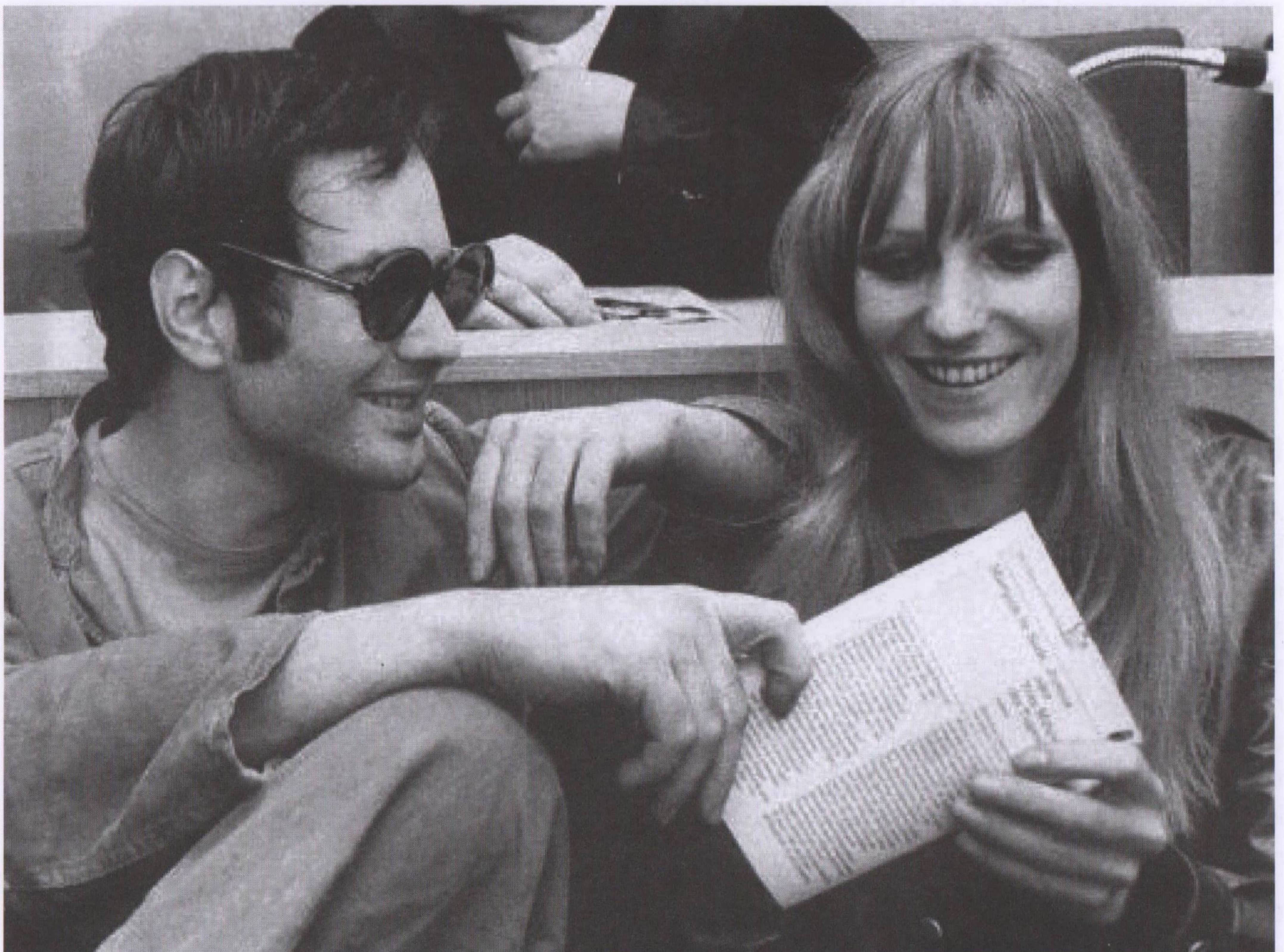
sick. As terrorist actions began to be launched to demand the release of RAF prisoners, in 1975 SPK members were amongst those involved in a deadly siege at the German Embassy in Stockholm.

The events of 1977, often referred to as 'the German autumn', were to bring to an end the lives of the several of the RAF's founders, and to involve the West German state in arguably the greatest crisis it was to face. After an often farcical trial held at a specially constructed courtroom at Stammheim Prison in Stuttgart, the 'first generation RAF' was convicted of a range of terrorist offences, including murder, attempted murder and bomb attacks. On 5 September what Vague terms the 'second generation RAF' kidnapped the German employers leader Hans Martin Schleyer, killing three policemen and his driver in the process.²¹ The release of 10 RAF prisoners was demanded. With the government of Chancellor Schmidt playing for time, on 13 October a Lufthansa holiday flight returning from Palma de Mallorca to Frankfurt was hijacked. The hijackers, from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) demanded the release of the RAF prisoners, plus \$15 million. As the plane moved around a succession of airports with terrified crew and passengers, the German government prepared

commandos to storm the plane. The murder of one of the pilots indicated the threat to all involved. On October 16 the plane was successfully stormed at Mogadishu in Somalia, with all the passengers being liberated unharmed, and three of the four terrorists killed.

At some stage that night, or in the early hours of the morning, Baader, Ensslin and Jan Carl-Raspe allegedly committed suicide in their cells at Stammheim, whilst Irmgard Möller was found, alive, in her own cell with four stab wounds to the chest. Demonstrations broke out across Europe, the hostage Schleyer was killed by his captors, and there were angry scenes at the huge police operations that surrounded the dead prisoners' funerals.

If the RAF had hoped that provoking the government would lead to some form of sustained revolt, they had however been disappointed. Former German guerilla Hans Joachim Klein argues that the RAF's aims were always clear – to make the fascism that was latent in the FRG open.²² When that happened the masses would rally round. In her analysis of the RAF's propaganda, Joanne Wright concurs: 'the RAF's strategy for revolution is based on its continuing use of violence which it hopes will provoke enough government



repression that the people will regard the RAF as their defenders and saviours and thus rally to their cause'.²³ Whatever had happened at Stammheim, the RAF's theory was not proved correct. Albert Parry comments 'in all such battles, little sympathy for terrorists is evidenced by broad strata of West Germans'.²⁴ Chancellor Schmidt appeared to have won the day.

The group's closing statement of 1998 admits the problems the Lufthansa hijacking caused for both its reputation and its actual existence – 'the RAF had gambled everything and suffered a huge defeat ... the RAF had neither the political nor the military might to direct the situation after the subsequent reaction'.²⁵ In fact, they had arguably broken with society as a whole. This was not violence in support of the Vietnamese or Palestinian liberation struggles, or even the German working class. Instead the RAF's Palestinian supporters were seemingly willing to murder German holidaymakers to get RAF members out of prison and get their hands on 15 million dollars. A more generous, but hardly different viewpoint comes from the German anti-fascists *Autonome Antifa*: 'The RAF could never recover from its defeat in '77. The state had succeeded in creating a permanent gulf between the guerilla and the extra parliamentary-left, and solidarity from the general public was now completely out of the question'.²⁶

This was perhaps a problem though, not of the state's making, but the RAF's. In her study of terrorist propaganda, Joanne Wright argues that for a group to receive public support it must show that its objectives are important enough to justify the tactics it has adopted, and that other methods are not available. Had the RAF done so? Varon thinks not: 'from the start its writings were fragmentary, sloganistic and on important points, contradictory'.²⁷

The RAF's Endurance and Influence

Perhaps surprisingly the RAF was to survive after Stammheim, and to re-emerge in the 1980s, with a strongly anti-NATO perspective. They began to look not towards the Palestinians, but to comrades in arms from neighbouring European terrorist groups. Given this it is necessary to look at the RAF's influence over the wider left, and to ask whether ties with organisations like France's *Action Directe* were potentially revolutionary, or merely a case of small, isolated groups coming together for comfort and ideological sustenance.

The American Georgy Katsiaficas carried out a major study of what he refers to as 'Europe's autonomous social

movements' in the period from the late 60s to the late 1990s – virtually the entire lifespan of the RAF.²⁸ To Katsiaficas progressive political forces emerged that were challenging the conservatism that had run in Germany from the extreme days of Hitler to the more recent *Berufsverbot*. He traces the roots of Europe's current anti-capitalist protests back to Germany, to a 1980s political group known as the *Autonomen*. Mostly young, they practiced direct action, were staunchly anti-fascist, and amongst many other actions supported squatting campaigns and the anti-nuclear movement. When President Reagan visited West Berlin in 1987, the *Autonomen* put 50,000 people on the streets, effectively closing much of the city. Their political activity was mass based, even to the extent that they often lived in group houses – they did not drop out of society as the RAF had, but sought to do political work in their own communities.

Looking towards the political mainstream, the Greens were even more different to the RAF – rejecting violence per se, and stressing the need for peace, healing and sustainability. Despite only being formed in 1979, the German Greens took two million votes in the 1983 federal elections. Peter Merkl concludes that the RAF failed to adapt as Germany became more progressive and moved to the left over time – society becoming more liberal whilst the RAF was stuck in a groove. Varon concurs with this, pointing out that not only did the left come to gain influence across the country in the years after the German autumn, but that low level political violence – such as May Day riots – became a part of the German political environment, without any great crises comparable to 1977. As German democracy became stronger, so the RAF became weaker.

Some RAF activity occurred in the late 1970s – most notably a 1979 attempt on the NATO Supreme Commander Europe, General Alexander Haig in Belgium. Vague argues that RAF attempts to rebuild were damaged by arrests and the discovery of an arms cache in 1982, but that 'as Andreas Baader predicted in his final statement, after the deaths of the RAF founders things internationalised'.²⁹ Come January 1985 the RAF announced a pact with the French *Action Directe* organization, looking to concentrate on fighting NATO and American imperialism. Within a month the group had carried out its first killing since 1977. Joanne Wright comments 'the RAF's concentration on this tactic coincided with the rising tide of anti-Americanism and anti-nuclear feeling beginning to sweep many countries in Western Europe'.³⁰ With links also developing with Belgium's *Communist Combatant Cells (CCC)* and

an Italian splinter group from the Red Brigades, could a substantive internationalist movement be built, on anti-imperialist principles?

The answer, quite simply, was no. Firstly this was not internationalism as Marx or Lenin intended it, with the mass of workers or peoples uniting around agreed principles of solidarity or socialism. There is no evidence that the huge numbers of Europeans opposing US bases and nuclear deployment looked to these groups with any serious degree of admiration or support. In fact the same structural problems around size and influence remained, whether the RAF had links to similarly based organisations in neighbouring countries or not. The Belgian police were able to sweep up the CCC's four-strong leadership in 1988, and the French authorities did the same to Action Directe a year later. The RAF was alone again.

The Collapse of East Germany

Rapid political change was to come to Germany in the late 1980s, but it was to come from the East, not in the West. With significant numbers leaving East Germany, the economy stagnant and the government wavering without clear direction from the USSR, the Berlin Wall fell on 9

November 1989, and on 3 October 1990 Germany was reunited. These were difficult times ideologically for many on the left in both parts of Germany. Some people in the East, at least, had believed in the idea of East Germany as a barrier against any rekindled fascism. In the West the idea of a Greater Germany was one that worried many anti-fascists, especially when reports emerged of racism and violence in the old east. Would a revanchist Germany look to regain even more territory further east?³¹

From the start the RAF had stressed their anti-fascist credentials. Varon observes how often RAF communiqués talked of 'fascism', and their belief that Germany had not been properly de-nazified after the war. In West Germany 'the RAF was fighting a new behemoth that bore tracks of the old'.³² Given this background, could the RAF stimulate resistance to a unified Germany, or perhaps even lead such resistance? An August 1990 statement threatened to launch an offensive against a 'Greater Germany' which would become a 'fourth Reich'. On November 30 1989 the RAF killed Alfred Herrhausen, the head of Deutsche Bank. Herrhausen was set to play an important economic role in the reunification of Germany.

Yet again however the RAF's military activities were arguably far in advance of the political reality. Germans who had been divided by the Cold War for some forty years were not looking to put the wall back up again. There was also a second reason why the RAF was not to lead any opposition to the prospect of a united Germany, and it was to raise serious questions about just what, and whom, had motivated the group.

The RAF and Its Independence

Between June and July 1990 a serious of arrests occurred of RAF members, by an emboldened BKA. As the authorities had failed to convict a single RAF member since the early 1980s this would have been significant anyway, but the importance of the arrests of figures such as Susanne Albrecht and Sigrid Sternebeck is that they were all arrested in the old east, having been there for some time. In his major study of the Stasi, John Koehler devotes a whole chapter to the Red Army Faction.³³ Koehler sees three distinct RAFs – the one of the Andreas Baader/Ulrike Meinhof era, those active in the 1980s (who often 'retired' to East Germany), and those committing acts following the collapse of GDR. He cites the 'obvious skill' of this third group as indicative of serious military training.

MORDVERSUCH

in Berlin

10.000 DM BELOHNUNG

Am Donnerstag, dem 14. Mai 1970, gegen 11,00 Uhr wurde anlässlich der Ausführung des Strafgefangenen ANDREAS BAADER in Berlin-Dahlem, Miquelstr. 83, und seiner dabei durch mehrere bewaffnete Täter erfolgten Befreiung der Institutsangestellte Georg Linke durch mehrere Pistolenschüsse lebensgefährlich verletzt. Auch zwei Justizvollzugsbeamte erlitten Verletzungen.

Der Beteiligung an der Tat dringend verdächtig ist die am 7. Oktober 1934 in Oldenburg geborene Journalistin

Ulrike Meinhof

geschiedene ROHL.

Die Gesuchte hat am Tattage ihren Wohnsitz in Berlin-Schöneberg, Kufsteiner Str. 12, verlassen und ist seitdem flüchtig. Wer kann Hinweise auf ihren jetzigen Aufenthalt geben? Für Hinweise, die zur Aufklärung des Verbrechens und zur Ergreifung der an der Tat beteiligten Personen führen, hat der Polizeipräsident in Berlin eine Belohnung von 10.000.- DM ausgesetzt. Die Belohnung ist ausschließlich für Personen aus der Bevölkerung bestimmt und nicht für Beamte, zu deren Berufspflichten die Verfolgung strafbarer Handlungen gehört. Ihre Zuerkennung und Verteilung erfolgt unter Ausschluß des Rechtsweges. Mitteilungen, die auf Wunsch vertraulich behandelt werden, nehmen die Staatsanwaltschaft in Berlin, 1 Berlin 21, Turmstr. 91 (Telefon 350111) und der Polizeipräsident in Berlin, 1 Berlin 42, Tempelhofer Damm 1-7 (Telefon 691091) sowie jede andere Polizeidienststelle entgegen.

Berlin im Mai 1970



Personenbeschreibung: 35 Jahre alt, 165 cm groß, schlank, längliches Gesicht, langes mittelbraunes Haar, braune Augen.

Der Generalstaatsanwalt
bei dem Landgericht Berlin

Using evidence from plea bargaining, Koehler concludes that RAF members received training from Stasi experts at the Objekt 74 camp in Briesen, East Germany in 1981. In April 1991 charges were laid against six former GDR counter-terrorist experts for aiding the RAF, although only one was eventually convicted. To Koehler such behaviour was not private adventurism on behalf of the officials concerned. He quotes GDR defector Colonel Rainer Wiegand on the RAF: 'their asylum and training were the results of deliberate political considerations by the East German state and party leaders'.³⁴

A similar viewpoint emerges from the KGB defector Vasili Mitrokhin. He makes the accusation that with KGB leader Andropov's knowledge, the Soviet's ally, East Germany became a state sponsor of terrorism. Due to this support the RAF was able to regroup after the disasters of 1977: 'with training, weapons, funds and false identity documents provided by the Stasi, the Red Army Faction launched a new offensive during the early 1980s'.³⁵ Perhaps a definitive view could be expected from the Stasi's best known spymaster, Markus Wolf. As head of its foreign intelligence division, was he sending RAF members west to wreak havoc? If he was, he disguises it successfully in his memoirs.³⁶

Wolf makes clear his distaste for the RAF's tactics, arguing class-based politics left no room for random violence. Having accepted that Department XXII of the GDR security forces looked after RAF members given sanctuary, he stresses his first concern was that any individuals arriving in the East may in fact be Western agents. For safety reasons, they were thus required to live quiet lives. Perhaps paradoxically though, Wolf concurs with Koehler's description of military training, and adds that this occurred under Stasi control in South Yemen as well as East Germany. He also admits that the relationship between RAF members and their hosts was somewhat fraught, quoting RAF member Helmut Pohl: 'there was a climate of constant irritation between us. By the end, we were probably as unbearable for them as they were for us'.³⁷

Some other points need to be considered here. Koehler names the first RAF member to seek safe haven in the East as Inge Viet, in March 1978 – that is, some eight years after the RAF's foundation and, perhaps significantly, less than six months after the RAF's crushing defeat of autumn 1977. Taking eight years to cross a few miles east is an indication that the RAF were not ideologically taken with the East, nor were they a creation of East Germany. Indeed this timeline would appear to absolve the GDR regime of any direct involvement in the German autumn or the attacks

that preceded it. Attacks after 1981 however, have to be considered a different matter. Secondly, it is important to note that ideologically the RAF did not promote the Eastern regime. If, as Pohl and Wolf suggest, any relationship between the GDR and the later RAF was one of mutual irritation, it may be stated that even if the GDR provided much more than a 'port in a storm' for the RAF, it was not a particularly profitable relationship for either party. If elements in the former GDR looked to the RAF to disrupt German unification, they backed a loser. Those who read the RAF's statements however, and saw condemnations of imperialism as also including the imperialism of the Soviet bloc surely cannot read Koehler or Wolf's revelations without feeling a sense of disappointment.

Further questions exist about the RAF's autonomy. Discussing its formative era, Bommi Baumann raises some disturbing questions about the German state's attitude towards leftist groups who were willing to use violence. When a bomb was found in a West Berlin squat in 1969, prior to Richard Nixon's visit to the city, Baumann alleges that it had been supplied by a police agent provocateur, Peter Urbach. On another occasion weapons were handed over. This man went on to sell dope with a morphine base – Baumann regarding this as a deliberate police strategy to spread hard drug addiction amongst activists.³⁸ If this was happening in 1969, did it happen later? It is worth noting, however, that despite the allegations that have emerged across Europe – some substantial – about secret state manipulation of groups like the Red Brigades in Italy as part of Cold War machinations, no comparable evidence exists that the West German secret services guided or manipulated the RAF.³⁹ Indeed, the usual pattern was for a number of arrests to be followed by lean years for those involved in fighting German terrorism.

The issue of the RAF and Middle Eastern groups also deserves consideration. These links existed from the groups formative days, indeed in her highly critical history of the RAF Jillian Becker argues it was the Palestinian cause that gave the RAF a 'moral excuse' to commit violence in the spirit of 'self-righteousness'.⁴⁰ J Bowyer Bell sees an ideological bond between first and third world revolutionaries: 'they shared the same dreams, and thus employed the same tactics, appropriate or not, against a single enemy'.⁴¹

Training was provided by Palestinians, and several acts of solidarity occurred between the two parties – most famously the unsuccessful 1977 Lufthansa hi-jacking. Was this a partnership of equals? Hans Joachim Klein suggests

not, arguing that it was not Palestinian organisations that were essential to the RAF, but Arab governments: 'for every action in support of the liberation of prisoners the guerillas are dependent on others because they need countries where they can seek refuge. They depend on others for their money and weapons.'⁴² Speaking in 1978, Klein's view is that the need for unmolested exile in Arab countries meant the RAF had become dependent on PFLP leader Waddi Haddad, and that the price for this was German involvement in PFLP attacks - one's which Klein argues were sometimes unprincipled and anti-Semitic.

As the 1980s developed though, the Palestinian/German relationship appeared to fade. Indeed the RAF's move towards anti-NATO targets within Germany arguably took them into the sphere of more suitable ideological bedfellows. It is noticeable that when the RAF developed links in the mid-80s with groups from France and Belgium, it was as an openly declared partnership. It is such factors that lead Merkl to conclude that the RAF has not been led or manipulated: 'the RAF has always maintained its autonomy'.⁴³

What Did You Do In The War Daddy?

No discussion of post war German politics, especially when it concerns a group as overt in its statements as the RAF, can avoid discussing German conduct in the Second World

War. Jeremy Varon comments that 'historians generally concur that post war Germany avoided systematically confronting its fascist path'.⁴⁴ Although the East German state talked up the German resistance to Hitler, in the West ex-Nazis were to be found throughout the ruling elite. When discussing a meeting between Chancellor Schmidt and his intelligence chief Herold about the Schleyer kidnapping, Tom Vague points out 'the two former Wehrmacht officers agreed not to deal over the former SS man'.⁴⁵

Sixties counter-culture had a unique twist in Germany. Radical youths questioning their families' values were not just questioning those who may have lived bourgeois lives, but often those who had run Germany during its darkest days. Looking at the holocaust and anti-Semitism, Jocelyn Hellig considers the view that 'ordinary Germans, therefore, tortured and killed Jews without scruple and indeed with sadistic enjoyment, often going beyond the call of duty in performing their tasks'.⁴⁶ That is a heavy psychological burden for subsequent generations to bear.

Merkl comments that analysis of data on RAF and other left-wing prisoners found that they tended to come from 'good' backgrounds, and the immediate post-war generation, i.e. born between 1941-55.⁴⁷ Was guilt about the war the motivating factor for the RAF? Certainly their actions were dominated by talk of imperialism, fascism



and avoiding a fourth Reich, although noticeably their ideological position on the Jewish state of Israel was one of unfaltering opposition. The difficulty with accepting this position is that many other Germans were racked with guilt about their country's war record, and felt the need to avoid any repetition of the Second World War. Rather than articulate views of guilt concerning the war, the RAF arguably reflected on-going debates and issues within the country. The peace activists of the Greens, and the anti-fascist Autonomen held such opinions, but they did not, on the whole, denounce the West German state as fascist.

On 1 May 2006 I was in Leipzig for the May Day commemoration and anti-fascist protests. Due to fierce street clashes between anti-fascists and the police, a planned march by neo-nazis was curtailed after only a few hundred yards. Amongst those harrying the fascists were a group of young Germans waving Israeli flags, shouting the refrain 'nie mit Deutschland' – 'never with Germany'. When I met some of these activists at a squat I noted they sported small Star of David lapel badges, and even Israeli Defence Force pins. When I jokingly asked whom they would be supporting in the 2006 World Cup, the answer 'England' came back immediately. This is the Anti-Deutsche Antifa - anti-German anti-fascists.

The Anti-Deutsche Antifa may not share the same position on the Middle East as the RAF. But their determined anti-fascism, rejection of the country of their birth and fear of its militarism is equally striking. Volker Radke articulates this, arguing that rather than being deservedly punished and dismantled after World War 2, the FRG was needed to fight off the Eastern Bloc.⁴⁸ De-nazification ended abruptly, and the fascist elite was given a second chance. Re-unification was equally wrong, and worse gives Germany credible ambitions to be a world power again.

Over sixty years after the Second World War, certainly for these Germans, it remains the event that shapes their political identity. That at least is something today's Anti-Deutsche Antifa share with yesterday's Red Army Faction.

The RAF's Legacy

The RAF's course ran from the days of student rebellion, through domestic and international terrorism peaking in the hostage crises of the German autumn of 1977. Seemingly defeated, the RAF was to remerge in a series of attacks in the 1980s, before a fresh wave of arrests weakened the group as the political division of Germany ended. In 1992 cessation, and a devastating attack on Weiterstadt

prison in 1993, proved to be final blips, before formal dissolution in 1998. The RAF did endure – in the terms of a terrorist group 28 years is a long time. At several times when the group could have been written off – 1972, 1977, 1982 or 1990 – it did continue to operate and attack its perceived enemies. However this was endurance at a very low level – Wright points to some of the inconsistencies in estimations of the group's size – which seem to vary from a low point of 10 to a highpoint of 500.⁴⁹

Although the FRG clearly felt threatened by the RAF, that is not the same thing as actually being threatened. The crisis that came was arguably one that was at least in part of the government's making. On the Cold War fault line of Europe, and having failed to properly address its Nazi past, for all its prosperity West Germany presented a large, soft underbelly to sixties radicals who questioned its values. The touchy nature of West German democracy reacted so badly when challenged, it is tempting to speculate how the FRG would have survived if threatened by a greater numerical force than the RAF. In time however German democracy proved itself less brittle, and as more progressive elements emerged, it was the RAF themselves who were unable to adapt and appeared rooted in Germany's past.

Reading the interviews and writings of former German Guerillas, common themes emerge. Bommi Baumann, Hans Joachim Klein and Helmut Pohl all stress how the activism of the terrorist lifestyle separated the individual guerilla from those he or she was supposed to represent. As Klein observes, 'to begin with you tell yourself that you are going to master the pistol, but in time it's the pistol which dominates you.'⁵⁰ For those on the German left, the RAF exists as an example of how not to struggle.

At one level the RAF has no other legacy in modern Germany. There is no political party, publication or group that traces its lineage to the RAF. The prisoners who disbanded the group were not able to create a political organization in its place. RAF prisoner Helmut Pohl had hoped as far back as 1996 for an organisation to emerge from the RAF's 1992 cessation, but nothing came of his wishes.⁵¹ This failure was perhaps to be expected – 'for people involved in concrete social confrontations, like unemployed people, the Latin American solidarity movement or anti-fascists, there was little common ground for discussion with the RAF.'⁵²

Indeed only two links appear to remain between the RAF and contemporary German activism. Andreas Baader's former lawyer and eventual RAF prisoner Horst Mahler remains a controversial figure in German politics – but on

its far right, not its left. At the 2006 Anarchist Bookfair in London, I met several German members of the Socialist Patients Collective. Whilst once the group laid siege to the German embassy in Stockholm, before blowing it up, today they seem more concerned with selling tapes of Dr Huber's speeches, and the latest reprint of 'Turn Illness Into A Weapon.'

Times change, and people change with them.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Both quotes from Red Army Fraction, 'The Urban Guerilla Is History: The Final Communique From the Red Army Fraction (RAF)' (March 1998) at <http://www.etext.org/Politics/Autonome.Forum/Guerrilla/Europe/Red.Army.Fraction/march.1998.communique>
- ² Astrid Proll, Baader Meinhof – 'Pictures on the Run 67-77 (London: Scalo, 1998), p.7
- ³ Bommi Baumann, How It All Began – the Personal Account of a West German Urban Guerilla (Vancouver, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2000) p.43
- ⁴ Quoted in Tom Vague, Televisionaries – The Red Army Faction Story 1963-1993 (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1994) p.10.
- ⁵ Andreas Baader was amongst the second group. The trip was not a success, with the behaviour of the Germans, including the rather foppish Baader, irritating their hosts to the extent that they were asked to leave. See Vague op cit
- ⁶ Joanne Wright, Terrorist Propaganda: The Red Army Faction and the Provisional IRA, 1968-86 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991) p. 178
- ⁷ Red Army Faction, The Concept of the Urban Guerrilla, in Walter Laqueur (ed.) Voices of Terror – Manifestos, Writings and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Other Terrorists From Around the World And Throughout the Ages (New York: Reed Press, 2004) p.168.
- ⁸ Hans Josef Horchem, 'West Germany's Red Army Anarchists', in Conflict Studies, 46, (June 1974) p.12
- ⁹ Wright op cit, p.176
- ¹⁰ Sebastian Cobler Law, Order and Politics in West Germany (London: Penguin, 1978). See for example p.34
- ¹¹ Cobler op cit p.143
- ¹² Peter Merkl, 'West German Left-Wing Terrorism', in M Crenshaw (ed.) Terrorism In Context (Penn State Press, 1995) p. 165
- ¹³ Merkl, op cit. p.208
- ¹⁴ Anonymous, You Can't Blow up A Social relationship – The Anarchist Case Against Terrorism (Tucson: See Sharp Press, 1998), p.20
- ¹⁵ Eqbal Ahmad, Terrorism Theirs and Ours (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001) p.21
- ¹⁶ Jeremy Varnon Bringing The War Home: The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies (London: University of California Press, 2004), p. 214
- ¹⁷ Albert Parry, Terrorism: From Robespierre to the Weather Underground (New York: Dover, 2006), p.398
- ¹⁸ Varnon op cit p.223-4.
- ¹⁹ Reproduced for example on the front cover of The German Guerilla: Terror, Reaction, and Resistance (Orkney: Cienfuegos Press & Soil of Liberty, 1981).
- ²⁰ Vague, op. cit. p.55
- ²¹ See Vague, op. cit. p.74.
- ²² See the interview with Klein in The German Guerilla: Terror, Reaction, and Resistance
- ²³ Joanne Wright, op. cit. p.11
- ²⁴ Albert Parry, op. cit p.401
- ²⁵ RAF closing statement, op cit.
- ²⁶ Autonome Antifa, The RAF is Dead – But the Struggle for Liberation is Not! (June 1998) at <http://www.etext.org/Politics/Autonome.Forum/Guerrilla/Europe/Red.Army.Fraction/antifam-article.july.1998>
- ²⁷ Varon op cit p.65
- ²⁸ Georgy Katsiaficas, The Subversion of Politics – European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life (Oakland: AK Press, 2006).
- ²⁹ Vague op cit p.97
- ³⁰ Wright op cit p.113
- ³¹ Many of these concerns are summarised in Reunited Germany The New Danger – A Searchlight Special in Association With Antifa Infoblatt (London: Searchlight, 1995). On the feelings of East German communists for their country see Markus Wolf with Anne McEvoy Man Without A Face – The Memoirs of a Spymaster (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997).
- ³² Varon, op cit p.245
- ³³ See Chapter 11 of John O Koehler, Stasi – The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police (Boulder: Westview, 1999)
- ³⁴ Koehler, op. cit. p.400-401.
- ³⁵ Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, The Mitrokhin Archive (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 511
- ³⁶ Markus Wolf with Anne McEvoy, op. cit.
- ³⁷ Wolf, op. cit. p. 279
- ³⁸ See Baumann op. cit., p.13 (on the bomb) p.56 (on drugs) and p.95 on weapons
- ³⁹ On the issues surrounding the Red Brigades, see Daniel Ganser, NATO's Secret Armies – Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe (London: Frank Cass, 2005)
- ⁴⁰ Jillian Becker Hitler's Children – The Story of the Baader Meinhof Gang (London: Granada Publishing, 1978), p.18
- ⁴¹ J Bowyer Bell 'A Time of Terror – How Democratic Societies Respond to Revolutionary Violence' (Columbia University: Basic Books, 1978) p. 68
- ⁴² Klein interview in The German Guerilla: Terror, Reaction, and Resistance, p.31
- ⁴³ Merkl, op cit p. 170
- ⁴⁴ Varon, op cit p.246
- ⁴⁵ Vague, op cit p.75
- ⁴⁶ Jocelyn Hellig, The Holocaust and Anti-Semitism - A Short History (Oxford: One World Publications, 2003), p. 56
- ⁴⁷ Merkl, op cit p. 202
- ⁴⁸ Radke's is one of the few anti-Deutsch texts available in English thus far. Volker Radke Anti-German For Beginners (1/11/2004) at <http://www.volkerradke.looplab.org/sonderweg-en.html>
- ⁴⁹ Wright, op cit p.190-191
- ⁵⁰ Klein interview in 'The German Guerilla: Terror, Reaction, and Resistance'

(Orkney: Cienfuegos Press & Soil of Liberty, 1981) p.56

⁵¹ Pohl's 1996 interview at Interview With Political Prisoner Helmut Pohl On The Politics of the Red Army Fraction (June 15 1996) at <http://www.etext.org/Politics/Autonomie.Forum/Guerrilla/Europe/Red.Army.Fraction/pohl.interview.1996>

⁵² Autonome Antifa, op cit

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